

# TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 2014

*The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is a recreational hiking association of volunteers who preserve and improve the Appalachian Trail as the nation's premier, continuous, long-distance footpath.*

## CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Banquet Potluck – March 1**  
**Biking in Denmark**  
***Kris & Bob Peckman***

### WORK HIKES

**Monday, January 27 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, February 3 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, February 17 - 8:30 AM**

**Sunday, February 23 - 8:30 AM**  
**McAfee Trail Rehab**

**Monday, March 10 - 8:30 AM**

**Saturday, March 22 - 8:00 AM**  
**Bluff City**

**Monday, March 24 - 8:30 AM**

### Hike Scheduling

**Contact Chris Wilson**

757-202-3331 – [TheShoelessWanderer@gmail.com](mailto:TheShoelessWanderer@gmail.com)

### BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.  
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

**Monday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Hosted by *John Miller***

**Monday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Hosted by *Dick Clark***

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### What about Dues...

The year after your name on the address label is how far dues are paid. If it is less than 2014 then it is time to pay your dues.

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You can now renew and even join at [RATC.org](http://RATC.org). Just click the big red button and use Pay Pal. Billing you would cost money and we are very frugal with your dues. You can still pay by check which saves us a small fee.

## President's Report

As you know, our club is responsible for maintaining 120 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Our section of trail runs all the way from Bland County to Black Horse Gap, along the Blue Ridge Parkway north of Roanoke. In addition, we maintain over a dozen miles of side trails, including the Andy Layne Trail and the War Spur Trail. Each year we report to the Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy how many hours our members worked on the trail. In the most recent year, our club volunteers worked over 4,000 hours maintaining our section of trail along with the 16 shelters in our area. Overall volunteers worked over 250,000 hours last year maintaining the 2,200 miles of the entire trail.

Our trail volunteers work year round on the trail. We have a work hike one day each month. In addition, over 40 trail maintainers do regular maintenance on the trail. As you might expect, much of this trail work is very difficult. Trail workers regularly dig new trail or move rocks to build steps. Regular trail maintenance work includes clipping and reblazing. While trail work is difficult it is also very rewarding. While not everyone in the club can go out all day and work on the trail there are numerous ways that you as a member can help support the club and the important work we do in maintaining the trail and offering regular hikes to the hiker community. These include:

**Boundary Work:** Our club is responsible for maintaining the boundaries of the trail corridor on the northern 35 miles of our section of trail that are administered by the National Park Service. Volunteers go out and walk the boundary of their assigned section and note and report any encroachments. Encroachments include such activities as logging, trash dumping, or driving ATVs on trail lands.

**Hike Leaders:** We typically offer two hikes each weekend. Hikes vary from easy (2-4 miles) to

strenuous (over 8 miles). Hike leaders coordinate preparations for the hike as well as lead the hike.

If you don't feel ready to lead a hike, you can volunteer to be an Assistant Hike Leader.

**Adopt-a-Shelter Program:** Members can "adopt" one of the 16 shelters that our club maintains along the trail. Duties including visiting the shelter and reporting on any problems with the shelter (such as a leaking roof) and cleaning the shelter and the shelter area.

**Invasive plant removal:** Participate in periodic hikes to remove invasive plant species along the trail.

**Rare plant monitoring:** Help monitor rare plants along our section of trail. You would be assigned to monitor known rare plant species at specific locations along the trail

**Social Committee:** Come out and help prepare for our three club social events we have during the year.

**Donations:** Our club has about 300 members. This brings in less than \$3,000 per year in dues. This covers less than 50% of our annual expenses, which in recent years have been over \$7,000 per year. Just printing and mailing the club's newsletter, the Trailblazer, costs \$1,600 each year. We rely on donations to help bridge the gap between our dues income and our expenses. So far this year donations have totaled over \$2,200. At dues time please consider donating a little extra to the club so that we can keep the trail open for all to use.

Please contact me at [mikeva999@yahoo.com](mailto:mikeva999@yahoo.com) if you are interested in helping out with any of these club activities or have any questions about them.

*Mike Vaughn*

## Trail Supervisor's Report

Happy New Year! Ending 2013 let's review what we accomplished and more importantly let's set our sights on even better maintenance in 2014.

As I pull together the data for our trail work this year, it seems that we have had a good year. Some of this is luck, we did not have one work hike cancelled due to poor weather, and some is due to the dedication of the RATC's maintainers.

As reported in the Fall *Trailblazer*, we hosted Konnarock for two weeks with both Konnarock crews working the second week. These three weeks of Konnarock work were done on the Bluff City relocation. We had not worked on this project since June 2011. It was a pleasant change to switch our efforts from maintaining trail tread to actually building trail. This project will continue for a couple more years with both club work hikes and Konnarock crew participation.

More relevant to you and me as members of RATC, our monthly work hikes have been well attended. As mentioned above we did not have one work hike cancelled due to weather. As such we had nine work hikes (I did not include days spent working with the Konnarock crew). Our participation in work hikes has improved, with an average attendance of 10.7 people—minimum 8, maximum 15. Last year the minimum participation was two people. Thank you for coming out to work.

Overall, through monthly work hikes and through the Overseer Program (our trail section adopter system), we had 66 people contribute 2134 hours of loving labor. And this does not include hours contributed to work on Shelters and on our boundary monitoring program where considerable work was done.

Not bad. *Now let's get busy on 2014.*

Our monthly work hikes correcting trail deficiencies and clearing seasonal undergrowth

will continue as usual. We will also host Konnarock for two weeks again this summer during which we will have scheduled work hikes. Your participation only requires contacting the hike leader and then showing up for the hike.

If you would like more responsibility and more independence in your support of the trail we have three requests for Co-overseers. These are trail adopter positions in which you would work in cooperation with the existing overseer. There are also opportunities for members to serve as boundary monitors along the Catawba Mountain/Tinker Mountain section. We really need people to volunteer and help get this program reenergized this year. Lastly we still have positions available for shelter adopters.

We have a couple of new trail volunteer ventures. One is the formation of a weekday work crew. Jim Webb and Mike Vaughn have been going out to work on the trail during the week. They have had so much fun doing this work that they want more people to join them. See the hike schedule for the days that the "Monday Maintainers" will be working. This work will be essentially the same as what we do on monthly work hikes. However with the shorter time between outings they will take on bigger projects and work on them week to week.

A second possible work crew is the "Blazers," a group that goes out periodically and repaints the white paint blazes that designate the Appalachian Trail. This "group" is still in the planning stages. As I recruit people to help I will make a plan for which sections we will blaze. The goal is to refresh the blazes every three years.

Our trail maintenance efforts are really coming along. The goal is to provide many opportunities to help with a variety of tasks so that everyone can find some way to support the RATC's mission as an Appalachian Trail Maintaining Club.

*David Jones*

## Hikemaster's Report

Isn't it amazing how time flies? Seems like just yesterday I was stepping up to become the RATC hikemaster and now the year is nearly over. It's been a year full of hikes for the RATC, in fact, we led hikes covering the entire 120 miles maintained by the RATC over three times in 2013! This has been a great opportunity for those members wishing to complete their 113-miler patch. For those who didn't get a chance to finish theirs, don't worry, we'll be hiking it plenty more times in 2014!

For those who visit our website for hike

information, you may have noticed that some of our hikes now have digital maps complete with pictures and GPS coordinates. We are slowly working on adding this for all of our hikes and we'd love to have your help with this! All you need is a smartphone and a desire to hike the trails. If you're interested in contributing, please let me know! A special thank you to new RATC member Brian Foy for his contributions to this project so far.

I look forward to seeing you all out on the trail in the new year!

*Chris Wilson*

## Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

*Nancy Chapin*

*Brian Chisom*

*Benjamin C Davis*

*Jay Dowd*

*Gloria Elliott*

*Jack Fessler*

*Kenny & Shirley Grandstaff*

*Michael Hopkins*

*Greg and Judy Jamison*

*Brian McGlothlin*

*Fletcher Meadema*

*Marc Williams*

*Ron Wilson*

And the following donors:

*David Niersbach*

*Nancy Snyder*

We look forward to meeting you soon: hiking on the trail, at work, social event, or a board meeting.

*Edward Wilson*

## Hike Reports

**Thursday, September 12, 2013 5:00 PM**  
**Tinker Cliffs (Sunset Hike)**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Doug Knightly, Madeleine Taylor

We started on the Andy Layne Trail about 5:15. It was mostly cloudy so we weren't sure if we were going to see much of a sunset. There was also a chance of rain in the forecast. The climb up the mountain was uneventful. As we expected, the clouds blocked out the sun so we weren't able to see the sunset. The view from the cliffs was magnificent however. We had a snack and headed down the mountain as it was getting dark. We soon

broke out our headlamps and continued on. Near the bottom of the mountain we encountered a four-foot copperhead snake stretched across the trail, which we had nearly stepped on in the darkness. We watched the snake for a couple of minutes under our headlamps. Eventually it slithered off the trail, allowing us to pass. This certainly was the most exciting part of the hike!

**Thursday, September 12, 2013 8:00 AM**  
**Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Sinking Creek (Rt. 630)**  
**113-Mile Hike # 9**

Cancelled

**Saturday&Sunday, Sept. 14&15, 2013 6:00 AM  
Backpacking Cranberry River**

Chris Wilson (leader), Guy Brooks and Brendle Wolfe



*Brendle Wolfe finishing her 1st back-pack hike*

What a fabulous weekend! A new location for the RATC to hike this over-nighter backpacking trip didn't live up to all the hype that surrounds it, though all agreed it was still a good spot. A long hike along a forest road probably had something to do with this review. Congratulations to Brendle on completing her first-ever backpacking trip!!

**Thursday, September 19, 2013 7:00 AM  
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek (Rt. 632)  
113-Mile Hike # 10**

Cancelled - Lack of Participants

**Saturday, September 21, 2013 12:00 PM  
Hoop Hole, Lower Loop**

Ed & Carey Martin (leaders), Joanne Derryberry, Ineke Salo, Alex Wilhelm, Ana Anderson and her well-behaved Labrador



Excellent and knowledgeable group of 6 RATC hikers braved constant rain and had a great hike! Recommend all these people to anyone for leadership and camaraderie. Wet, rainy and overcast but an enthusiastic group of 6 RATC hikers enjoyed the trail, climb, wildflowers and company. A very good hike.

**Sunday, September 22, 2013 8:00 AM  
Glenwood Horse Trail/AT/Sulphur Spring Loop**

John Merkwan (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Lois Smith and Larry Austin

As advertised the Glenwood Horse Trail portion of the hike was a bit of a bushwhack when we pushed through the pawpaws that were growing amuck on the trail. You would think with all of those pawpaw trees we would have enjoyed harvesting some pawpaw fruit at this time of year but the trees were barren. In fashioning this loop hike, I managed to include a couple of segments that neither Larry nor H.R. had been on before. The piece of unnamed trail below Highcock Knob and the section of Sulphur Springs trail heading out to the helicopter landing site were new to them. As I write this report three days after the hike, I am happy to report a chigger-free 10-mile hike on what turned out to be a most enjoyable day.

**Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:00 AM  
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606) to Jenny Knob  
(Rt.611) 113 Mile Hike #14**

Joanne Derryberry (leader), Madeleine Taylor

A gorgeous sunny day for a hike. Unfortunately only two people attended but still a great time hiking a new section. Would definitely be worth doing again with a larger group.

**Thursday, September 26, 2013 7:00 AM  
Big Horse Gap to New River (Rt 460)  
113 Mile Hike #11**

Joanne Derryberry (leader), Brian Foy, Sally Evans and David Horst

Another small group but still a great day to be out! Gorgeous blue skies and gorgeous views from Angels Rest. A wonderful day had by all!

**Sunday, September 29, 2013 8:00 AM  
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls**

Cancelled

**Tuesday, October 1, 2013 9:00 AM  
Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Curry Gap (BRP)  
113-Mike Hike #1**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Sally Evans, Madeleine Taylor, Scott Willis, Tan Le, Karen Dillard, Dave Horst

The day began with bright sunny skies as we met at the Park and Ride Lot in Daleville. We began our hike under beautiful blue sky with bright sunlight filtering through the trees. The air was cool and refreshing as we made our way down from Black Horse Gap toward Wilson Creek. As we hiked down the mountain everyone was enjoying the hike and sharing with each other. At the Wilson Creek Shelter we took a short break and decided to continue on before having lunch since it was still early. We came to a nice area just before Curry Creek and decided to have lunch. After lunch it was not long until we came to Curry Creek and then the climb of the day began up to Salt Pond Road. It was a steep and rather difficult climb and since it was early afternoon the temperature was no longer as refreshing. Everyone was at the road when I eventually arrived. After a short break, we turned to our left on Salt Pond Road and hiked the almost one mile to the intersection with the Blue Ridge Parkway and where David had left his truck.



**Scott & Karen - Burgess**

**Sunday, October 6, 2013 8:00 AM  
Work Hike, Catawba Mountain**

Cancelled due to government shutdown :-/

**Sunday, October 6, 2013 8:00 AM to  
Thursday, October 10, 2013, 6:00 PM  
PATC's Highacre House in Harper's Ferry**

Cynthia & Frank Munley (leaders), Madeleine Taylor, Mary & Jimbo Harshfield

Our October 6-10 trip to Harper's Ferry saw us do one group hike to Maryland Heights and on to Stone Fort, where we had a magnificent view of the town below and of the broad landscape, making us think to Civil War times and the Blue and Grey in battle in the forests and plains. We stayed in the Potomac ATC's four-bedroom historic Highacre, completely surrounded by national park. Our visit was right in the middle of the government shutdown, but we were mostly able to access all the trails, bars and town streets, although the museums were locked.



*Madeleine, Frank, Mary, Cynthia & Jimbo*

**Tuesday, October 8, 2013 9:00 AM  
Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville (RT 220)  
113-Mile Hike #2**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Sally Evans, Dave Horst, Linda King, Joanne Derryberry, John Hubbard, Nancy Chapin, Scott Willis, Tan Le, Steve Bowles

With the cool temps and bright sunny skies, today made for a near perfect day for hiking. We began the hike on Salt Pond Road on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We had to hike about 0.9 miles to where it intersects with the Appalachian Trail. The group stayed together for most of the trek to the AT. However, just before reaching the intersection, Sally, Dave, Linda, and Steve decided to go at a much faster pace than the main group. So they basically left the seven of us in their dust. I think they actually did the hike back to Daleville in about

2 hours and 30 minutes, which is much faster than I would ever do. Anyway, after they left, we made our way to the AT and began the climb up and around the mountain toward the Fullhardt Knob Shelter. After arriving at the shelter we took a lunch break even though it was still early in the day. Some of the group was getting a bit cold so we did not tarry long after eating and began our hike on down the mountain toward Daleville. After a 3-mile descent, we arrived at Mountain Pass Road and then the hike got more interesting.



We had discussed earlier in the day that none of us had ever seen any cows in the pasture that is located south of the road crossing. On this occasion it was a first for everyone, since there were 5 or 6 cows bedded down close to the first bridge that crossed the gully. We took photos of the cows and since Nancy was in front she disturbed one or two, but a donkey had seen Nancy and came trotting up to her as if she were a long lost friend. She petted the donkey a bit and they became instant friends. The donkey followed and nudged her all the way to the newest bridge where she had to bid him farewell, since he would not cross the bridge. He seemed to be very disappointed that she had left him behind, but I am sure he will get over it and make more friends in the coming weeks and months. After crossing the bridge we had a stiff climb up through the pasture to a very good overlook down into the valley and also Tinker Mountain in the distance. We took a couple of photos and then continued on down and crossed Route 11 near Troutville. After crossing the road, the trail eventually came out of the woods and we went under I-81 along a very narrow road. It was then a walk through what must have been farms or orchards at one time alongside

the interstate until we eventually arrived at Route 220 where we had met earlier and left the vehicles.



**Sat-Sun, Oct 12-13 8:00 AM  
Backpacking Tar Jacket Ridge**

Guy Brooks (leader), no one else attended.

I awoke to an early sunrise. The air was cool, laden with moisture. The smell of last night's campfire still lingered. The ground was damp from recent rains. I was not alone. Several others were out and about this weekend. The government was shut down, national park lands closed! There was much talk about the most current events. Many were angry. I was just glad to be out. Yesterday I hiked over Tar Jacket Ridge. I enjoyed the many views from there. Last night I camped at the northern trailhead of the Livingston Trail; a small campsite exists there next to a small creek. On day two I hiked along the Livingston Trail passing an old trailer no doubt used in its earlier life as a hunting camp. Then I reconnected with the AT hiking south back over Tar Jacket Ridge enjoying yesterday's views again. I soon arrived back at my truck, just in time to grab some lunch on my drive back home. (Good for you Guy! Ed.)

**Saturday, October 12, 2013 8:00 AM  
Apple Orchard Falls & Mountain, Cornelius  
Creek, and The Guillotine**

Fred Meyer (leader), Matthew Grice (assistant), and Susan Terwilliger

It was wet most of the day, with a light drizzle and fog. We left Sunset Fields around 9 AM and climbed Apple Orchard Mountain with the FAA air

traffic radar dome but because of the weather there was not much of a view. After we passed under the Guillotine, we headed for Apple Orchard Falls where we had our lunch. We continued to Cornelius Creek trail where we encountered a salamander. Even though there were no Rangers working today, we met quite a few hikers and had a good time.

**Tuesday, October 15, 2013 9:00 AM  
Andy Layne Trail (779) to Daleville (220)  
113-Mile Hike #3**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Nancy Chapin, Theresa Conti, Joanne Derryberry, Madeleine Taylor, Dan Dennison, Jimbo & Mary Harshfield, Maya Bohler, Mike Vaughn

It was near perfect weather conditions as we hiked the short distance from the parking lot over the small bridge that crossed the stream in the field. It was our first encounter of animals for the day, but probably not the last. These animals happened to be several large black cows in their private stream. Three or four of them were standing in the middle of the stream as we crossed the bridge beside them. They did not seem to mind that we had interrupted their morning ritual. After crossing the bridge we continued to follow the trail through the field and then came to a larger stream that had no bridge, since it had been washed away in one of the many heavy rains we have had this summer. However, the stream was at a low level now and we had no trouble rock hopping across.

After negotiating across the stream it was not long until we began the biggest climb of the day. The Andy Layne Trail is maintained very well but it is steep and on this day it was slick with damp mud in many places, which made the footing tricky to say the least. I was glad to be going up instead of coming down under the slick damp conditions. We all eventually made it up to Scorched Earth Gap and took a short break before descending to the Lambert Meadow Shelter where we took a lunch break.

After the early lunch, it was time to continue on toward Hay Rock. The trail continues down and then up and around the mountain before it eventually ascends to the ridge of Tinker Mountain. Once on the ridge it was an easy walk as we looked



down the mountain in many places where we could see Carvins Cove on one side and Daleville and the surrounding area on the other.



**Mary & Jimbo**

We eventually arrived at the massive Hay Rock. I had learned earlier that this area was especially dear to Mary and Jimbo Harshfield. It was nearly 30 years ago that a hike to this very rock resulted in a partnership that is still going strong today. I will use Mary's own words to describe that particular day. Mary said, "I had just started going to the Unitarian church and made an announcement at coffee hour that there was a hike starting at 1 p.m. at Towers parking lot. Jimbo didn't know me, but was interested in the hike, so he showed up. It turns out he was the most interesting person on the hike! He invited me out for pizza afterwards and the rest is history." I am sure the area brought back some wonderful memories for Mary and Jimbo, while we all stopped to take some photos and a little break before continuing along the ridge. We came to one last overlook and looked down to Carvins Cove. The Roanoke airport could also be seen in the distance. Then it was all downhill to Daleville and the end of a great hike with some wonderful people. I hope it was a special hike for Mary and Jimbo. The hike was especially enjoyable for me, because I always enjoy hiking with people I have met before, but on this hike I met several new wonderful people that added very much to the experience. I hope they will do more hikes in the future.

**Thursday, October 17, 2013 8:00 AM  
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek (Rt. 632)  
113-Mile Hike #10**

Ed Burgess (leader), Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Jim Webb

Even though the weather forecast was predicting rain and cool overcast conditions for the day, Madeleine, Jim and I decided to do the hike anyway. It had been cancelled last spring due to snow. Now the temperature had cooled from the summer heat and beautiful fall colors were showing in the New River Valley. Even with the forecast of rain, I still expected a wonderful hike. I was not disappointed, but it was more difficult than I expected with the fallen wet leaves covering the many rocks on this steep climb up the mountain. We arrived at the Bailey Gap Shelter just as a backpacker was leaving. We chatted a few minutes and then took a short break ourselves. It was not long until we encountered the section containing even more rocks that slowed our progress severely. Soon after the obstacle course we met Jim coming from the opposite direction and we had lunch. Jim related to Madeleine and me what to expect over the next few miles and we informed him of the difficult trail that lay ahead for him and we did our key switch.



The trail was much easier after lunch than it had been earlier in the day, but still it was rather slow due to the slick leaves and fog. When we arrived at Wind Rock it was so foggy we could see nothing of the beautiful view that is available on a clear day. We took a few photos and then headed on toward

War Spur Shelter. Just before reaching the shelter we crossed paths with a rather large blacksnake on the trail. At the shelter we took a short break and then quickly headed on down the trail to the parking area on Route 632 where Jim had left his car and headed back to Roanoke to meet Jim so each of us could get our own vehicles.

**Saturday, October 19, 2013 11:00 AM**  
**Wolf Creek Greenway**  
**(Vinton & Roanoke County)**

Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos (leaders), Caryl Connolly (& Oliver the dog), Greg Cascio, Hugh Hall, Anne Krogenas, Nancy Stafford, Soheil Sadri, Conrad & Bee Grundlehner, Gloria Cliff, Rose Willis, Paul Blaiklock, & Christina Young.

The walk along Wolf Creek Greenway is a diverse and pleasant experience - there are three parks, an attractive neighborhood, an interesting farm, and of course the beautiful Wolf Creek. With near perfect weather, we enjoyed the scenery and camaraderie, and we stopped for a filling lunch at Jerry's Family Restaurant, only about a block off the greenway at Washington Ave. Vinton & Roanoke County staff and trail volunteers have greatly improved the trail, repairing erosion areas and (once again) clearing the underpass for traffic (watch your head!).

**Sunday, October 20, 2013 1:00 PM**  
**Mill Mountain**

David Sutton (leader), Linda Sutton, Joshua, and Bailey.

The four of us eager hikers met at the Roanoke Outdoor Festival and carpooled from there to the parking lot off Riverland Dr. It was crisp and cool out as we headed up Roanoke's most notorious "hill". We ran into hiking club member Carolyn McPeak on the way up and upon reaching the star had a great view of the valley. The Discovery Center atop was open so we looked at the nature exhibits inside. We returned via the Ridgeline and Monument trails to the parking area. Bailey walked the entire hike wearing "toed shoes" and had no problems. It was a great hike.

**Tuesday, October 22, 2013 9:00 AM**  
**Andy Layne Parking to McAfee Parking**  
**113-Mile Hike #4**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Nancy Chapin, Dan Dennison, Dave Horst, Madeleine Taylor

We did the advertised hike in reverse. Nancy had to be home by 3:00 PM so she hiked up to Tinker Cliffs with us and enjoyed the beauty before going back to her vehicle at the trail head.



It was somewhat cloudy and cool as we began our hike, but at times the sun would break through the clouds and it looked as though it was going to be a beautiful day. It was not long until everyone shed the outer layer of clothes. Not that the temperature had warmed but the physical exertion of the climb had gotten everyone so warm that the outer garments were not necessary. We took a short break at Scorched Earth Gap before we began our final climb up to Tinker Cliffs.



At the cliffs we took another break to just enjoy in the beautiful valley below and McAfee Knob in the distance, take photos and chat with a southbound thru hiker.

Nancy went back to her car and we continued along the cliffs and on to McAfee Knob. It was about 5 miles or more of up and down along the ridge until we finally arrived at the Campbell Shelter. We still had about half a mile to climb before we reached the famous McAfee Knob. When we arrived at McAfee Knob we took a longer break and a lot of pictures as we beheld the beauty of the valley below and mountains and Roanoke in the distance. We eventually headed on down the mountain to the parking lot and finished the hike.

**Saturday, October 26, 2013 10:00 AM**  
**Fenwick Mines**



**Sunday, October 27, 2013 8:00 AM**  
**Salt Log Gap & Mount Pleasant Lollypop Loop**

Mike (leader) & Sheila Vaughn, Carina Hughes, Julie Buchikos, Jim Webb, H.R. Blankenship, Fred Meyer, Dawn Lamb, Brendle Wolfe, Val Dymond

After a little over an hour's drive we started out on the trail at Salt Long Gap in the Mount Pleasant scenic area. It was a sunny, cool morning with a strong breeze blowing from the northwest. After a short climb we reached Tarjacket Ridge, which offered great views to the east. Looming to the south we could see Mount Pleasant. We reached Hog Camp Gap, after descending from the ridge. Starting up Mount Pleasant we were surprised at the large number of cars in the lot there. We passed several backpackers headed out after a night out in the forest. We reached the summit about noon and stopped for lunch. We all huddled out of the wind. The views from both summits were spectacular. After a long trek over Pompey Mountain and back over Tarjacket Ridge we reached the cars tired but satisfied with a great day out in the woods.

**Sunday, October 27, 2013 2:00 PM**  
**Buffalo Mountain**

Edward Wilson (leader), Rose Willis, Jeff Park, Chelsea Richardson, Daniel Subien, Mary Ann Maxen, Nancy Smith, Patty Moxley, Blake Mitnick

This bright Sunday afternoon was a beautiful day for a stroll up Buffalo Mountain. We had several people who had never hiked this trail before so it was fun to see their reactions at the top; we also had several hikers who are regulars on this trail, but they enjoyed it just as much as well. Gorgeous clear blue skies meant we could see all the way to Pilot Mountain State Park in North Carolina. After about half an hour at the top we sadly had to meander our way back to the car.

**Tuesday, October 29, 2013 9:00 AM**  
**McAfee's Parking - Dragon's Tooth Parking**

Ed Burgess (leader), Nancy Chapin, Lois Smith, Dave Horst, John Hubbard, Hugh Hall with dog Rascal, Madeleine Taylor with dog Sassy, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Dan Dennison, Bryon Turner, Mark Taylor

A dozen hikers and two energetic canines (Sassy and Rascal) gathered on this beautiful Fall day for a hike in the woods. Hiking conditions were ideal—blue sky, sunshine, and temperatures warm enough to strip down to T-shirts (and shorts for some of us) after the first big climb up Sawtooth ridge.



That first stop was a little too distracting for some. Right after the switchback, the wider more heavily used trail leads up past rocks to a campsite and view. But that is NOT the AT. The AT veers to the right and shortly afterwards, makes another turn and leads downhill. Jimbo alerted the first group that they had left the AT, so they quickly got back on track, but Hugh and Ed missed the turn and went straight up past the rocks. Because that trail soon connects to the AT, they did not realize they were going back the way they had come. Mary and Nancy were following Ed but quickly realized that Madeleine was no longer behind them and must have gone a different way (the correct way!). A few phone calls later (to Madeleine and Ed) got everyone straightened out, but it took a while for Ed and Hugh to backtrack and catch up. The fast hikers stopped for lunch in the second meadow and waited and waited for the later group. Thank goodness for cell phones; we were able to tell them the reason for our delay so they could continue on without worries. Everyone enjoyed the changing autumn leaves--the brilliant reds and oranges and

the yellowish green hues. All in all, it was a lovely day to be out hiking!

(Write-up by Mary Harshfield)

### Saturday, November 2, 2013 8:00 AM Work Hike

Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Colleen Gentry, Matt Gentry, Jason Hoepker, David Jones, Jonathan McGlumphy, John Miller, Susan Terwilliger, Jim Webb

What a great day! Last month we were prevented from working on the trail because of the government shutdown. In my opinion we made up for the missed work hike by having a glorious day, by getting a nice amount of work done, and by having a fun group of hikers out enjoying the day, the woods and each other's always supportive and uplifting comments, especially the hike leader's comments to Matt Gentry.

Our day got off to an excellent start when Matt and Colleen Gentry arrived with a white box of doughnuts from Carol Lee Doughnuts. While people gobbled doughnuts, David Jones tried to make sense out of the pile of tools waiting in the back of the truck. During the pre-hike safety talk David informed every one we were working in a special spot, because if there was an accident there were three hospitals equal distance from our location. However, he added that they were all far away.... We did not need to utilize the emergency services of any of the hospitals.

Our purpose today was a bit subtle. Between Lick Skillet Hollow and Jenny Knob shelter a lot of the trail is a side hill traverse. And, on these side slopes, after several decades of existence the trail tread was narrowing and in the near future would collapse and slide down the hill. Our work today was to slightly dig the trail back a few inches, sculpting the trail tread. This light digging took a bit of getting used to. However, once we got into the routine, our group could quickly cover significant lengths of trail.

We had lunch at the shelter and then did more atypical work. Last week when scouting this work hike, David Jones read in the register that the water source was dry, so he went down to check it. The

trail to the creek was a steep mess. Isn't it handy when you see a problem and you know you will have a group of volunteers in the near future who will be willing to fix the problem?

After lunch everyone walked down the blue blazed trail. The Trail Supervisor told the group what to do. The group told the trail supervisor his idea was no good. Then some who had wandered off in the brush asked, "What about over here?" All agreed that lower trail was the solution. So everyone set to work to improve this trail "over there."

After fixing the blue blazed trail we picked up our belongings and tools and headed back to the cars. But, the trail supervisor would not let the group just walk out; no, everyone had to "work their way out of the woods." On the way down the mountain we stopped and redug sidehill trail at places we had skipped in our haste to get to the shelter for lunch.

Lastly, the highlight of the day must be noted. Our friend, Jason Hoepker, was out on his second work hike. What makes his work trips notable is that his first was back in March about two weeks before *starting* his Appalachian Trail Thru Hike, and now his second is only six weeks after *finishing* his Appalachian Trail Thru Hike—*what a great Thru Hiker!*

**Sunday, November 3, 2013 8:00 AM**  
**Apple Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek Loop**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Carol McPeak, Maya Bohler, Ineke Salo, Dawn Lamb

We met at the parking lot behind KFC on Route 460. We split into two cars and drove out on the Blue Ridge Parkway to Sunset Field. The weather was chilly but sunny, a very nice fall day. The parking lot was full of cars. Hiking down to Apple Orchard Falls, we met one through hiker, a family coming up from the falls and a couple who had come up from North Creek road to the falls. The trees had turned color, the view from the falls was very good when the sun came out and showed it off. There was a good flow of water over the falls. We stopped for pictures and a snack at the falls. On the way back we took the fire road to Cornelius Creek trail. When we reached the AT on Cornelius Creek we waited for everyone to catch up. We saw a hiker

going through the woods toward our sweep. He mumbled something about the leaves being hard to walk through and took off down the Cornelius trail. We started toward Sunset Field on the AT and then noticed that the hiker had actually come off the AT, but were not sure he meant to go down on the blue blaze trail. He was right about all the fallen leaves making it difficult to see and walk on the trail. We reached Apple Orchard trail and walked up to Sunset Field. We had spent 3 hours doing the hike. On the way home we saw a fox cross the road.

**Tuesday, November 5, 2013 9:00 AM**  
**Dragon's Tooth Parking to Trout Creek RT 620**  
**113 Mile Hike #6**

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, John Hubbard, Madeleine Taylor, Dan Dennison, Nancy Chapin, Joanne Derryberry, Jim Webb, Doris Mercado



Dan - Burgess



Madeleine, Doris & Dan - Burgess 11.05.2013

Where have all the beautiful colors gone? We learned very quickly that most of them were now under our feet as we began the trek up the Dragon's Tooth Trail. I did not get her name, but a lady from Lynchburg was waiting in the parking lot to travel

with us on her first trip up this mountain. We all soon began the hike up toward Lost Spectacles Gap. I was the last person in our group as we eventually came to the top of the mountain and took the blue blazed trail to the left over to Dragon's Tooth.

Once at the stone monolith we decided to have lunch or a snack and take photos. We left Dragon's Tooth in 3 separate groups, said goodbye to the Lynchburg lady, making sure she was headed in the right direction back to the parking lot, and traveled along the ridge toward Trout Creek. Madeleine and I eventually caught up with the group, since they had waited for us before the descent. We passed many huge rock piles and even a rock fence, traveling as one group until we reached the blue blazed trail that led to the Pickle Branch Shelter. Mike and Jim left us to do shelter maintenance and the rest of us continued on to the parking lot and the shuttle vehicles.

**Saturday, November 9, 2013 11:00 AM  
Roanoke River Greenway (East Roanoke)**

Mark McClain & Doug Fowley (leaders), Heather Wiley, William Worth, Larry Dennis, Conrad & Bee Grundlehner, Cheryl Penn, Donna Mitchell, Soheil Sadri, Gloria Clifft, Caralee Eicher, Julie Yates, Pat Cousins

We started out on a brisk but sunny day from the Bennington trailhead parking lot on the Roanoke River Greenway, and headed west about 3 miles to Rivers Edge Park where we hopped off the greenway, through the park and over to Crystal Spring for lunch at Fork in the Alley. We then retraced our steps to our starting place, logging about 7 miles total. Many thanks to Doug who stepped in as the unofficial co-leader, as Diana Christopulos had to miss due to her recovery from a surgical procedure a couple of days earlier (she's just fine, thankfully).

**Sunday, November 10, 2013 8:00 AM  
Broad Run Mountain Loop**

John Merkwon (leader), Lois Smith, Maya Bohler, Bob Peckman, Cynthia Munley, Rachel Green

The weather was very nice with a warmer morning and sunny day making this a very

enjoyable outing. The breeze was a bit stiff at times, especially on top of Broad Run Mountain. Cynthia reported a small tree blew over the trail in front of her, which made her a bit pensive of what may follow - I'm glad I passed through before the tree fell and fortunately no one was hurt. Because the leaves were off the trees and brush, this hike was very picturesque with nice views on either side of the ridge and the bushwhack minimal. Rachel was the seed magnet as her hiking attire seemed to be especially designed to capture every seed specimen present on the trail. This hike was 10.3 miles and it took a little over 6 hours to complete.

**Tuesday, November 12, 2013 9:00 AM  
Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Trout Creek (Rt. 620)  
113-Mile Hike #7**

Ed Burgess (leader), Madeleine Taylor, Dan Dennison, Dave Horst, Sally Evans

Brrrr ! It was cold, windy and a few snowflakes were falling as we hiked through the low-lying area of Craig Creek. Ascending Brush Mountain it didn't seem as cold. However, when we arrived at the summit of the mountain it was very noticeable. Sally, Dan and Dave, who hike at a faster pace than Madeleine or I, had gone on ahead as we came up the mountain. Just as we arrived at the summit of the mountain we chatted with a thru hiker who was hiking to bring awareness to the tick and Lyme Disease that is very prevalent along the Appalachian Trail. Madeleine, Sassy and I continued along the ridge until we arrived at the Audie Murphy monument and met the rest of our group. After everyone had taken all the photos they wished, Madeleine, Sassy and I decided to have lunch while the others continued toward Trout Creek where we had left a shuttle vehicle. Madeleine, Sassy and I ate a very quick lunch, hurriedly put on our gloves and followed the other three. It got warmer at lower altitude. Dan, Dave and Sally were sitting in the car waiting for us to arrive.

**Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:00 AM  
Fallingwater Cascades & Flat Top**

Ed & Carey Martin (leaders), Alex Wilhelm, Oksoon Kwon, Doug Fowley, Grace (Lynchburg)

Six hikers met on a wet and cloud-shrouded Saturday, to do the Fallingwaters Cascade Hike followed by an ascent to the top of the higher but less renowned of the Peaks of Otter, Flat Top. Located in Botetourt County, the loop trail to Fallingwater Cascades, a scenic stream just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, was followed by our hike to the summit of Flat Top for spectacular views, then back down. The views and experience for both hikes were exhilarating. Altogether the hikes were around 6.5 miles total. Initial elevation gain of ~2000+ feet makes this a moderate hike. In the Valley the clouds were overhead but the surface air was clear. At the Flat Top parking lot we were in a solid cloud formation with little visibility. Doug Fowley led the hike up Flat Top because he had hiked this trail more than the rest of us, and set a perfect pace for the group. Alex Wilhelm, a student at Central Academy Middle School and a frequent RATC hiker, added his good cheer and observations that add to every group he joins. Oksoon Kwon and Grace were exceptionally agile on the ascent and curious about all the flora and fauna we saw. Upon reaching the summit of Flat Top, we emerged into bright sunlight and the solid white clouds were just below us ... an invigorating experience to hike through the clouds and see the jets heading for Roanoke or Lynchburg clearly, and the Alleghenies peeking above the cloud mass below us, viewed from above in the bright sun. The pictures we took of things from the views to a sluggish water snake tell more than these words.



**Name this snake, bob@peckmanjazz.com**



**Carey, Doug, Alex, Ed, Grace & Oksoon**



**Alex, Carey & Ed**

It was a most amazing hike with the contrasting atmospheres and landscapes, first wet then dry, providing unusual contrasts. Fallingwaters had a good flow from the recent and continuing rains while icicles and ice masses were already in place ascending Flat Top. We enjoyed lunch and a nice rest in the sunlight atop Flat Top then headed back down into the clouds for our way back home. The hikers I have met on previous RATC treks were wonderful! The new hikers I met on this latest very diverse hiking experience were the same - superb! I am so glad we went. See you on more hikes, Alex, Doug, Oksoon and Grace. You're people we'd like to hike with again! Thanks all.

**Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:30 AM  
North Creek Loop**

Larry Austin (leader), H. R. Blankenship, Lois Smith and Sally Evans

The skies were overcast with mild temperatures as we began the hike. The North Creek road was closed due to repairs which resulted in our walking an additional two miles round-trip. After the initial road walk to the trail head, we followed an old logging road to its end and then headed around the side of the mountain to reach the AT just south of Floyd Mountain. The weather at Floyd Mountain was totally different. There was dense fog, wind and light rain. We stopped at the Cornelius Creek Shelter to have lunch (thank goodness there was a shelter on this hike). We then proceeded on the AT to its junction with the Cornelius Creek Trail. We decided that due to the slippery rocks we

would descend back to our beginning point on the Cornelius Creek Trail instead of the Apple Orchard Falls Trail. We arrived back at our vehicle just before 3:00 p.m. after hiking approximately 12 miles.

**Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:00 AM  
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow  
113-Mile Hike #8**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Carmen Salmon, Maya Bohler, Jim Webb, Dave Horst, Madeleine Taylor, Joanne Derryberry, Roxanne Hettig

It was a great day to be out on the trail. The weather was seasonably cool with bright sunshine. After dropping off a car at Lee Hollow we drove to Sinking Creek Valley and started our hike. Early in the hike we passed the Keffer Oak, one of the largest trees along the whole length of the A.T. All of us were impressed by it. We soon began the steep 1,800 foot ascent up Sinking Creek Mountain. After reaching the top we started heading north, passing piles of rocks stacked by farmers clearing fields on the top of the mountain years ago. The views of the surrounding ridgelines and valleys were fantastic, particularly from the rocks along the trail. After a walk of a few miles along the ridgeline, we began the long, three-mile descent to Lee Hollow, passing the Niday Shelter. We all had an excellent day out in the woods.

**Saturday, November 23, 2013 10:00 AM  
Pinnacle Rock State Park**

Edward Wilson (leader), Brian Foy, Fred Meyer, Bob Peckman and Dawn Lamb

A gray overcast sky, but not as cold nor did we get the rain predicted, so overall, not a bad day for hiking. A new location for the RATC, this served as a scouting trip to decide if it's a place to add to our regular hike list; consensus was mixed that while it was a pretty hike with a few points of interest, not certain it was worth the travel time there and back. However, for those who live a little closer it is definitely a must visit!



**Sunday, November 24, 2013 7:00 AM  
Rich Hole Wilderness North**

John Merkwan (leader), Bob Peckman, Fred Meyer, Adam Wood

The forecast was for a very cold day and Mother Nature delivered by freezing water valves and turning Gatorade into slushies. Four brave souls headed out into the Rich Hole Wilderness Area which burned in April, 2012. The brush, however, has now grown back and the 3.5 miles of ridge bushwhack lived up to its name. Rock scrambling was both fun and tiring but provided almost non-stop double valley views. The best view was when we were traversing a crease to regain the crest. It was exhausting but all-in-all I think the participants enjoyed the hike. We'll try this challenging hike again next year. Distance: A hard and long 13.8 miles taking 9 hours.



**Adam, Fred & Bob - Merkwan**

Adam Wood, Fred Meyer and Bob Peckman looking sharp in the Rich Hole Wilderness

**Tuesday, November 26, 2013 9:00 AM  
Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Sinking Creek (Rt. 630)  
113-Mile Hike #9**

Ed Burgess (leader), Melissa Talley, Jim Webb, Dave Horst, Nancy Bell, Roger Bell, Nathaniel Bell, Mary Harshfield, Maya Bohler, Madeleine Taylor, Jimbo Harshfield, Cynthia Munley, Ed Laucella, Greg Cascio

After the bad weather had postponed this hike on Tuesday, I decided to do it on Black Friday and, to my surprise, it was the largest turnout I have had on

a hike and was also the first time I hosted a hike with three generations attending. Since I do not like writing these reports, and also wanted to get another perspective of the hike, the rest of this report was written by Melissa Talley.



**Nancy & Roger - Burgess**

What started out as a chilly/brisk morning quickly evolved into a beautiful day for a 9.9-mile hike from Johns Creek to Sinking Creek. Shortly after leaving the parking lot, we were greeted by magnificent icicles and a mountain peppered with snow. Once we made it to the top of the mountain, we were able to enjoy spectacular views of the New River Valley. We all managed to make it across the first two creek crossings with dry feet but few were lucky enough to make that claim after the third crossing. The final "creek" or "swamp" crossing managed to spill over the tops of our boots/shoes so most ended up with wet feet and very cold toes. Fortunately, we were not far from our final destination.

The hike included a climb of approximately 1700 feet and a total gain of over 2000 ft. What a great way to burn off a FEW of those extra calories consumed on Thanksgiving Day!!

**Tuesday, December 3, 2013 8:00 AM  
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek (Rt. 632)  
113-Mile Hike #10**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, John Hubbard, Sally Evans, Maya Bohler, Dave Horst, Carl Reed, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Cynthia Munley, Jeff Monroe

Jim, Madeleine and I did this hike in September when it was rainy and so foggy we could hardly see

anything beyond 30 feet in most places. However, today nothing but blue skies could be seen overhead.

Due to the length and difficulty of this hike we did a key switch with one group starting at each end. The northbound group left Jeff Monroe's car at Sinking Creek so that he could hike 23 miles. When the two groups met in the middle (except Jeff) we switched keys and each group rode the other group's car home. Jeff finished before dark and drove his own car home.



**Maya, Madeleine, Cynthia & Carl - Burgess**

It was a great day for a hike and I think everyone enjoyed the outing. The forests through this area of the Mountain Lake Wilderness are beautiful but only offer one scenic overlook, which is Wind Rock. The group I was with made it to this overlook before taking a lunch break. The magnificent view from the rocks was outstanding and it has been said you can see three states from this location. I do not know if I was seeing three states but it was a fantastic view with many ridges,

one after the other in the far distance. The only downside was that the clouds had moved in as we had lunch and the wind had picked up so it was getting colder by the minute. As we were eating lunch Jeff Monroe came by and we chatted for a moment but since he had only done about 8 miles of the 23 he had planned he had to get moving. After we had eaten and started hiking again it was only a few hundred yards until we met the main group that was hiking northbound. After a brief discussion of the trail conditions, we continued on to the south and they continued on to the north.



**Sassy Layered - Burgess**

We eventually finished the hike and drove back to Roanoke. On the way back to Roanoke I called Jeff to see how he was doing, and to my surprise he had completed the 23 miles and was also driving home.

The hike today was another adventurous hike on the Appalachian Trail with some outstanding friends and hikers.

**Sunday, December 8, 2013 8:00 AM  
Work Hike, Bluff City Relocation**

Cancelled for terrible weather.

## Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:  
Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.  
Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.  
Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

**You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give**

**advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.**

**The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Chris Wilson at 757-202-3331 or [theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com](mailto:theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com).**

**Monday, January 6, 2014 8:30 AM  
Cove Mountain & Little Cove Mountain  
Circuit**

8.2 miles, Strenuous  
\$2.00 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, this hike offers creek side walking along a branch of Cove Creek, a stop at Little Cove Mountain Shelter and a view from a rock formation just a few hundred feet north of shelter.

**Mike Vaughn..... 540-992-1350  
..... [mikeva999@yahoo.com](mailto:mikeva999@yahoo.com)**

**Saturday, January 11, 2014 10:00 AM  
Ribble Trail to Kimberling Creek Rt606  
Hike #13, plus Dismal Falls**

7.8 miles, Moderate  
\$5.00 carpool fee, 44 miles from Christiansburg

Located in Giles County, this hike follows Dismal Creek for several miles. Much of the trail is lined with rhododendron. At 3.9 miles, blue-blazed trail on right goes .3 miles to Dismal Falls. We will be hiking down and around Dismal Falls and back up to the A.T. This part of the creek is very scenic. The hike ends at Route 606 and Kimberling Creek. Please note carpool is from Christiansburg.  
**Chris & Edward Wilson ..... 757-202-3331  
..... [theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com](mailto:theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com)**

**Saturday, January 18, 2014 2:30 PM  
Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail  
(Mason Creek Greenway)**

3.5 miles, Easy  
No carpool fee, In Salem

We'll go for a short hike on the valley's oldest greenway trail, take a look at the site for a proposed trail bridge over Mason Creek, then stop for a beverage and/or bite to eat on the way back at Parkway Brewing Company.

**Mark McClain & Diana Christopoulos.....  
540-355-6526 ..... 540-387-0930  
..... [mcclain.salem@gmail.com](mailto:mcclain.salem@gmail.com)**

**Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:30 AM  
North Mountain Trail**

10.4 miles, Strenuous  
\$1.00 carpool fee, 9 miles from Roanoke

The hike starts in Botetourt County and follows the border of Botetourt, Craig, and Roanoke counties, it climbs North Mountain on the gently graded Catawba Valley Trail, which begins just opposite the Andy Layne Trail on Route 779. The rest of the hike is an up-and-down ridge walk, with views on both sides visible through the trees.

**Mike Vaughn..... 540-992-1350  
..... [mikeva999@yahoo.com](mailto:mikeva999@yahoo.com)**

**Sunday, January 26, 2014 8:00 AM  
Sulphur Ridge Loop Plus**

7 miles, Moderate  
\$1.50 Carpool fee, 15 miles from Roanoke

This hike will consist of a 4.8 mile Sulphur Spring Loop with a 1 mile out and back (2 miles) on Price Mountain for a hike distance of a little under 7 miles. I expect some excellent leaf off views from Price Mountain and the Sulphur Spring Loop will be protected from the wind so this should be a nice winter hike.

**John Merkwan ..... 540-904-2299**

**Monday, January 27, 2014 8:30 AM  
Work Hike**

We will be putting in steps and water bars and doing some side hill digging on the Trail. Contact hike leaders for more specific details on location, etc.

**Jim Webb ..... 540-562-8896**  
.....**Startover14@peoplepc.com**  
**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
.....**mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Thursday, January 30, 2014 8:00 AM  
A.T., Punchbowl to Long Mountain Wayside**

10.2 miles, Strenuous  
\$6.00 carpool fee, 57 miles from Roanoke

This hike is northbound on the A.T. from the Blue Ridge Parkway, MP 51.7 near Punchbowl Shelter, to the Long Mountain Wayside, where the A.T. crosses U.S. 60. The hike starts out around 2200 feet before dropping to 1000 feet between the 2 and 4 mile marks. From there, it slowly climbs back to 2000 feet, passing by the Lynchburg Reservoir and ruins of homes owned by freed slaves after the Civil War before being evacuated in 1908. The hike is one way on the trail, so a car drop is required. Roanoke-based hikers will meet the Charlottesville-based leader at the trailhead, with details distributed after reservations close. Please RSVP at least 48 hours in advance.

**Jeff Monroe ..... 434-962-1808**  
.....**monroejeff@gmail.com**

**Saturday, February 1, 2014 10:00 AM  
Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard**

3 miles, Easy  
\$3.00 carpool fee, 35 miles from Roanoke

Located a few miles beyond Natural Bridge Station, this popular hike starts about an hour's drive from Roanoke. The route follows the Belfast Trail in the Jefferson National Forest and heads steeply uphill for

a little over two miles. At this point the Devil's Marbleyard appears just to the left of the trail. This is an eight-acre field of quartzite boulders which affords endless scrambling opportunities (watch out for snakes, though) and great views. The return is along the same route.

**Chris & Edward Wilson..... 757-202-3331**  
.....**theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**

**Sunday, February 2, 2014 8:30 AM  
Petites Gap to James River**

9.9 miles, Strenuous  
\$5.00 carpool fee, 39 miles from Roanoke

The hike is on the A.T. in the James River Face Wilderness located in Bedford and Rockbridge County. It roughly parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a stiff climb to Highcock Knob (3073') it's a pleasant downward trending hike to James River (678') with occasional views to the west and grand finale on the James River Foot Bridge, longest foot-travel-only bridge on the AT. Because this hike is through a designated wilderness area it will be limited to 10 hikers.

**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
.....**mikeva999@yahoo.com**  
**Brendle Wolfe..... 540-968-2750**  
.....**blwolfe@mail.roanoke.edu**

**Monday, February 3, 2014 8:30 AM  
Work Hike**

We will be putting in steps and water bars and doing some side hill digging on the Trail. Contact hike leaders for more specific details on location, etc.

**Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896**  
.....**Startover14@peoplepc.com**  
**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
.....**mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Saturday, February 8, 2014 11:00 AM  
Tinker Creek and Roanoke River Greenways**

4 miles, Easy No carpool fee, In Roanoke

From the Bennington trailhead we'll go to the end of the Roanoke River Greenway and over the magnificent 600' pedestrian bridge to Tinker Creek Greenway, continuing to Fallon Park. We'll have lunch at a nearby Vinton eatery before returning to our starting point. Easy with one moderate hill to climb each way.

**Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos ..... 540-355-6526..... 540-387-0930**  
.....**mclclain.salem@gmail.com**

**Sunday, February 9, 2014 1:00 PM  
Daleville Rt 220 to Mountain Pass Rd Rt 652**

3.2 miles, Easy No carpool fee, In Roanoke

This hike will head north on the A.T., passing through woods and crossing Virginia Route 11 near Troutville. It will then ascend a hill to an open field which provides good views of the surrounding mountains.

**Mervin & Blanche Brower ..... 540-387-9732**  
**mervin@brower.cc..... blanche@brower.cc**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2014 8:30 AM  
McAfee Parking to Andy Layne Parking Rt 779  
113-Mile Hike #4**

12.8 Miles, Strenuous  
\$1.00 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

This hike offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas on the Appalachian Trail, McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs, in one day. The hike starts across from the large gravel A.T. crossing parking lot on Route 311. Be extremely careful crossing route 311, visibility for cars is limited and they are moving very fast. The trail climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, passing John's Spring Shelter at 1.0 mile and Catawba Mountain shelter at 3.0 miles. At 3.7 miles reach short blue-blazed trail on left to McAfee Knob. The cliffs there offer magnificent views of the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke. The trail then follows the the ridge line to Tinker Cliffs at 8.6 miles, with views of McAfee Knob and North Mountain. Continue north on the A.T. for another half mile to Scorched Earth Gap. Go left on the Andy Layne Trail for descent to Rt. 779.

**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
**.....mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Saturday, February 15, 2014 10:00 AM  
Bottom Creek Gorge**

5.3 miles, Moderate  
\$3.50 carpool fee, 35 miles from Christiansburg

Hidden away at the corner of Montgomery, Roanoke, and Floyd counties is the Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve on top of Bent Mountain. The Nature Conservancy has developed a network of trails that pass ponds, streams and meadows and follow tunnels of rhododendron that lead you around and down to the Bottom Creek George, then up to a vantage point to see Bent Mountain Falls flow from a mountain side. Dogs are not permitted on this hike, in compliance with Nature Conservancy policy. Please note carpool is from Christiansburg.

**Chris & Edward Wilson..... 757-202-3331**  
**..... theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**

**Monday, February 17, 2014 8:30 AM  
Work Hike**

We will be putting in steps and water bars and doing some side hill digging on the Trail. Contact hike leaders for more specific details on location, etc.

**Jim Webb ..... 540-562-8896**  
**..... Startover14@peoplepc.com**  
**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
**..... mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Sunday, February 23, 2014 8:30 AM  
Work Hike**

We will make our quarterly visit to the trail up to McAfee's Knob to rehabilitate the trail tread and make any necessary trail improvements.

**Dave Jones ..... 540-552-3058**  
**..... dhjones@together.net**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2014 8:30 AM  
Fuller Rocks, Big Rocky Row**

8.8 miles, Strenuous  
\$4.00 carpool fee, 39 miles from Roanoke

This hike will start on the A.T. crossing on Hercules Road. The hike goes through an old slate mine and follows an old roadway that offers very good views. The trail connects with the AT and then we will hike south back toward the James River. The trail will cross Rocky Row and Fullers Rocks, both of which have magnificent views of the James River and the surrounding mountains. The trail will descend back to Hercules Road passing an A.T. shelter along the way.

**Mike Vaughn ..... 540-992-1350**  
**.....mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Thursday, February 27, 2014 8:00 AM  
James River Face Wilderness Hike**

9 miles, Strenuous  
\$5.00 carpool fee, 50 miles from Roanoke

This hike takes in three levels of history of the Appalachian Trail in the James River Face Wilderness Area, near Glasgow. The hike starts up the Piney Ridge Trail, which was the original A.T. alignment back in the 1930's. This section is 3.5 miles long and the elevation changes from 900 feet to 2450 feet. At the end of this trail, we head northbound on the current Appalachian Trail, working our way back downhill to the Matt's Creek Shelter. Just after the shelter, we turn off of the A.T. onto the Matt's Creek Trail, which was the A.T. until the James River Foot Bridge was built in 2000, altering the trail's river crossing location. The Matt's Creek Trail is 2.6 miles

long and climbs steeply from 830 to 1310 feet in its first mile before dropping down to around 750 feet, for a day's total of about 9 miles of hiking. The hike is one way on the trail, so a very short car drop is required (about 2 miles). Roanoke-based hikers will meet the Charlottesville-based leader at the trailhead, with details distributed after reservations close. Please RSVP at least 48 hours in advance. Group size in federally designated Wilderness Areas is limited to no more than 10 people.

**Jeff Monroe** ..... 434-962-1808  
 .....monroejeff@gmail.com

**Sunday, March 2, 2014 8:00 AM  
 Rt 641 to Rice Fields Shelter and Back**

10 miles, Strenuous  
 \$7.00 carpool fee, 70 miles from Roanoke

Start from 641 and go to the Rice Fields Shelter and back. There are several nice views along the way.  
**Fred Meyer** ..... wfmeyer@suddenlink.net  
 304-546-5572 ..... 304-744-9219

**Tuesday, March 4, 2014 8:30 AM  
 Tar Jacket Ridge, Cole Mtn- Old Hotel Trail**

11.0 miles; Strenuous  
 \$5.50 carpool fee; 57 miles from Roanoke

Located in Amherst County some 20 miles northeast of Buena Vista, this loop hike offers some of the most outstanding views anywhere in the area. The trailhead is on the Appalachian Trail at Salt Log Gap roughly 8 miles from route 60 on a dirt and gravel road. Following the A.T. south, the route climbs Tar Jacket Ridge and then Cole (a.k.a. Cold) Mountain. Both of these summits are open and offer extraordinary views in all directions – Cole Mountain especially. Less than a mile south of Cole, the route turns left onto the Old Hotel Trail at Cow Camp Gap (during the stagecoach days there was an inn in this area, but nothing remains of it today). After passing a shelter, the trail climbs a hill and then passes some old rock fences on its way to a beautiful, open park-like area (a great camp site). The last part of the hike is along a Forest Service road back to Salt Log Gap.

**Mike Vaughn** ..... 540-992-1350  
 .....mikeva999@yahoo.com

**Saturday, March 8, 2014 11:00 AM  
 Murray Run Greenway and Grandin Village**

5.5 miles, Easy  
 No carpool fee, In Roanoke

Starting at VWCC campus this hike will follow Murray Run Greenway and other natural trails to

Grandin Rd. then down to Grandin Village for lunch before returning to our starting place.

**Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos** .....  
 540-355-6526 ..... 540-387-0930  
 .....mclain.salem@gmail.com

**Sunday, March 9, 2014 8:00 AM  
 Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve**

6.6 miles, Moderate  
 \$2.50 Carpool fee, 25 miles from Roanoke

This hike is 6.6 miles on the Grassy Hill Hiking Trail System that starts at the base in Rocky Mount, Va., and climbs to the ridgeline with two trail loops along the ridge top and side slopes.

**John Merkwan** ..... 540-904-2299

**Monday, March 10, 2014 8:30 AM  
 Work Hike**

We will be putting in steps and water bars and doing some side hill digging on the Trail. Contact hike leaders for more specific details on location, etc.

**Jim Webb** ..... 540-562-8896  
 .....Startover14@peoplepc.com  
**Mike Vaughn** ..... 540-992-1350  
 .....mikeva999@yahoo.com

**Saturday, March 15, 2014 9:00 AM  
 Read Mountain**

4.5 miles, Moderate  
 \$1.00 carpool fee, 7 miles from Roanoke

Join us for a hike up the trail to the summit of Read Mountain. The trail was built by the mid-week work crew and was opened last year. There are good views of McAfee Knob from the summit of the mountain.

**Ed & Carey Martin** ..... 434-760-2513  
 540-314-5756 ..... edwardmartin@gmail.com

**Sunday, March 16, 2014 10:00 AM  
 Cascades National Scenic Trail**

4 miles, Easy  
 \$3.00 carpool fee, 30 miles from Christiansburg

Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike uses trails which run along both sides of Little Stony Creek, which ends near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$3.00) to park at the trailhead. Please note carpool is from Christiansburg

**Chris & Edward Wilson** ..... 757-202-3331  
 ..... theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

**Tuesday, March 18, 2014 8:30 AM  
Johns Creek Rt. 632 to Sinking Creek Rt. 630  
113-Mile Hike # 9**

8.3 miles, Strenuous  
\$3.50 carpool fee, 30 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Craig and Giles counties. From Johns Creek Valley, the trail climbs steeply. At 2.0 miles it crosses route 601 at Rocky Gap. At 3.8 miles a blue blazed trail on right leads to White Rock, with great views of the New River Valley. The trail then descends, passing Laurel Creek Shelter at 5.1 miles. At 7.5 miles the trail crosses Route 42 in Sinking Creek Valley.

**Mike Vaughn** ..... 540-992-1350  
.....mikeva999@yahoo.com

**Saturday, March 29, 2014 9:00 AM  
Fairystone State Park**

3-6 miles, Easy  
\$7.50 carpool fee, 73 miles from Roanoke

A unique state park in southern Virginia. We'll hike the Iron Mine Trail and possibly one other depending on the wishes of the group.

**Ed & Carey Martin**..... 434-760-2513  
**540-314-5756**.....edwardnmartin@gmail.com

**Sunday, March 30, 2014 1:00 PM  
Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge  
Shelter**

5.9 miles, Moderate  
\$2.00 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County not far from Arcadia and Buchanan. This will be an out and back hike to the Bryant Ridge Shelter on the A.T. This shelter is located on a scenic part of the creek. The shelter has three levels and is well-worth seeing.

**Mervin & Blanche Brower**..... 540-387-9732  
**mervin@brower.cc**..... **blanche@brower.cc**

**Saturday, March 22, 2014 9:00 AM  
Work Hike**

As a change of pace from installing water bars and redigging trail tread we will go build trail on the Bluff City relocation near Pearisburg, VA.

**Dave Jones** ..... 540-552-3058  
.....dhjones@together.net

**Monday, March 24, 2014 8:30 AM  
Work Hike**

We will be putting in steps and water bars and doing some side hill digging on the Trail. Contact hike leaders for more specific details on location, etc.

**Jim Webb**..... 540-562-8896  
.....Startover14@peoplepc.com  
**Mike Vaughn** ..... 540-992-1350  
.....mikeva999@yahoo.com

**Roanoke Appalachian  
Trail Club Application  
New & Renewal**

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
  2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
  3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
  4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
  5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ New Member Packet fee \$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Indiv. # of years \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Family # of years \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Individual life membership \$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Family life membership \$300.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282** Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIL BLAZER  
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club  
PO BOX 12282  
ROANOKE VA 24024-2282



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The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of  
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
and a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Western Virginia Land Trust