

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Summer 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

**Corn Boil – August 2
Catawba Center**

WORK HIKES

Monday, July 14 - 8:30 AM

Saturday, July 19 - 8:00 AM

Sunday, July 20 - 8:00 AM

Monday, July 28 - 8:30 AM

Saturday, August 2 - 8:00 AM

Sunday, August 3 - 8:00 AM

Monday, August 11 - 8:30 AM

Monday, August 25 - 8:30 AM

Saturday, September 6 - 8:00 AM

Monday, September 8 - 8:30 AM

Monday, September 22 - 8:30 AM

Saturday, September 27 - 8:00 AM

Hike Scheduling

Contact Edward Wilson
757-202-3331 – RATChikemaster@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

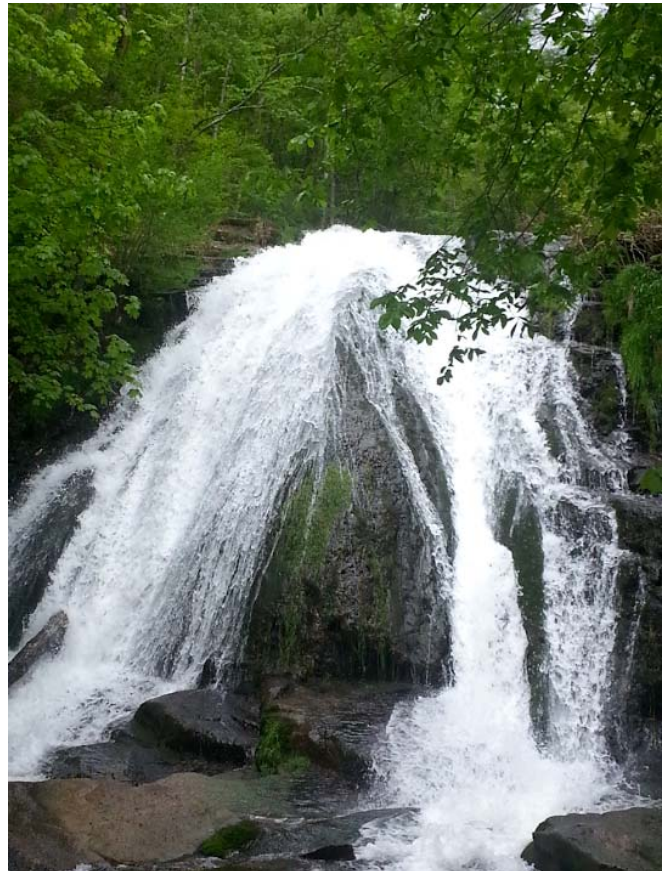
(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

**Monday, July 14, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by Roger Holnback
Salem Library**

**Monday, Sept 22, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by Blanche & Merv Brower
Salem Library**

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Roaring Run Falls – May 10, 2014. Courtesy of Mike Knowles.

President's Report

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Wilderness Act. It was signed on September 3, 1964. The original act designated 54 wilderness areas with a total of 9.1 million acres. Over the past 50 years this has grown to 757 wilderness areas in 44 states, totaling 110 million acres. The section of the A.T. maintained by the RATC passes through two wilderness areas, Mountain Lake in Giles County and Brushy Mountain in Craig County. Working with the ATC, the club will be hosting several events to mark the passage of the act. This will include recreational and work hikes in wilderness areas during the month of September. Details on other activities will be provided soon.

Working on the trail in wilderness areas provides challenges to our trail maintainers. In keeping with the purpose of the act to keep the "hand of man" limited in these special areas, maintainers are not permitted to use power tools of any kind. All trail work must be done with hand tools. In addition, since wilderness areas are roadless, all of the tools must be carried to the work site by foot.

The passing of the Wilderness Act was the culmination of a decades-long struggle by advocates of wilderness to ensure that wild places exist for future generations in America. Journeys, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's magazine,

has a very informative article about the history behind the passing of the Wilderness Act. You can read the full article at the link below: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/docs/atj/atj-may-june-2014.pdf>

Each year, our trail and shelter maintainers log over 2,500 work hours along the trail. Tasks performed include removing trees that have blown across the trail, building steps and water bars, and moving privies. Maintainers work year-round, from the heat and humidity of summer to the cold of winter. All members can assist these workers. When out for a recreational hike, please remove branches and rocks that have fallen on the trail. Also, please pick up any trash you find along the trail or at shelters and dispose of it.

If you have been out hiking on our section of trail lately you may have noticed that the kiosks we maintain have been rehabbed. They have all been recently painted. New updated trail maps have been installed along with other informational materials. Plexiglas has also been installed on them.

Mike Vaughn

Hikemaster's Report

I want to take a moment to first introduce myself. I've met many of you, but there are still lots of you I haven't had the privilege of hiking with. For those of you whom I have hiked with chances are you know me best as "the husband of Chris" who was the former Hikemaster. She was promoted to Vice President and I'm sure you'll join me in wishing her the best of luck in that new position. I'm honored and thrilled that she and RATC president, Mike Vaughn thought I was worthy of the hikemaster position. I hope I do them both proud in this new capacity on the board. I also want to wish Brendle Wolfe luck as she takes over

the position of Membership coordinator which I vacated to fill this new position.

My first hike schedule as hikemaster looks a little slim, but please don't worry! We still have plenty of hikes to keep you busy. Many of our hike leaders were unable to commit this early to hikes for this summer because of vacations and other plans but will be adding hikes (that do not appear here) to our Meetup group. So if you're not a member yet, make sure to join so you learn about all of our wonderful hikes! You can join by using the link here: <http://www.meetup.com//Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/>. The hikes will also appear on the RATC website as they are added.

I also want to offer a friendly reminder to be sure and try to rsvp 24-hours before any hikes you wish to attend. Some hikes have been filling up quickly and hike leaders have had to turn hikers away. Our club is a strong advocate of Leave No Trace and therefore we limit the number of participants we take on hikes to protect the environment and to

guarantee the safety and wellbeing of those hikers on the trip.

If you ever have questions or concerns I'd love to hear from you! You can reach me at RATCHikemaster@gmail.com.

Thank you and I hope to see you all on the trail soon,

Edward Wilson

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Kathryn Arrington
Nancy Bell
Kim & Ronald Crigger
Alan Dickerman
Karen Dillard
Elizabeth Dunn
Jeff Edwards

Patrick & Virginia Geoghegan
Josh & Gina Gilbert
Zack Lombart
Philip & Susan Moldenhauer
Matthew Newton
Sara Patterson
John Ratliff

Guelda Skaggs
Erik Storm
Leigh & Travis Stover
Andrew Velopolcak
Liza & Nicolas Virto & family
David Youmans

And the following donors:

Kathryn Arrington
Liz Belcher

Philip & Susan Moldenhauer
Bonnie Pulliam

Michael "Tobasco" Smith
Tommy Stroupe

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

Brendle Wolfe

RATC Annual Corn Boil and Potluck

Saturday, August 2nd, 6 – 9 PM

Shuck Corn & Set-up 5:00 PM

Catawba Community Center

From Hanging Rock, take Route 311 over Catawba Mountain, turn right on Route 779.

The Community Center is just after the Post Office.

RATC provides pork BBQ, corn, beverages and table service.

Bring a big covered dish (also for Konnarock Crew).

Hike Reports

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

Canceled.

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

John Merkwan (leader), Maya Bohler, Caralee Eicher, Dawn Lamb, Gloria Clifft

It was a nice day for hiking with temperatures from 40-55 degrees. This 6.6-mile hike began at the Gereau Center in Rocky Mount and had a gentle climb to the ridge line with a subsequent figure eight on the ridge top. The trail was a bit squishy in spots due to the warm-up the day before but overall this is a very well maintained trail. There were plenty of chirping birds and I'm happy to have delivered a trail first for Dawn. Believe it or not this was the first time Dawn saw a squirrel on the trail. Plenty of squirrels in town but a trail squirrel is much more elusive and usually well hidden once the lead hikers pass by. The time change caught one of our registered hikers on this first day of Daylight Savings Time--we met him coming up the trail as we were on our last mile! I'm glad he still made it out to hike and enjoy the day.

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

Jim Webb (leader), Mike Vaughn (leader), John Miller, Ken Meyers

Installed steps and water bars on Andy Layne trail.

Saturday, March 15, 2014 9:00 AM Read Mountain: Buzzard Rocks, Peak and Boulder Summit (actual hike ~ 5.5 miles)

Ed Martin and Carey Martin (co-leaders), Alex Wilhelm, Darlene Beshear, Jeff Edwards and daughter Amber Edwards, Ken Meyers, Laurie Spangler, Ron Irby, Julie Yates, Sharon Probst and grandson Elijah, and Susan Terwiliger

Thirteen hikers met at 9 AM on a beautiful sunny and breezy morning at the entrance to Read Mountain Nature Preserve. While the summit at

Buzzard Rocks was definitely windy and cold, requiring wind jackets, on the lower slope it was quite warm and jackets were rapidly shed. It is always noteworthy to me that the weather can be so different with a relatively small elevation change. This trip we had 3 younger hikers, Alex Wilhelm (Central Academy Middle School), Amber Edwards (13) hiking with her father and Elijah (9) hiking with Sharon Probst. This was a most congenial group and the younger hikers always add their special energetic tone. We passed out maps of Read Mountain to make sure no one took a wrong turn toward Bonsack and started up the excellent trail to Buzzard Rocks. After a brief lunch at (much colder and windy) Buzzard Rocks we decided to go up the peak above the rocks and from there decided to extend the hike to Boulder Summit. Hiking was nice and the weather perfect all the way. This was a typical RATC group you'd like to hike with every week!



Front 1-r: Carey Martin (shadow photographer), Alex Wilhelm, Laurie Spangler, Darlene Beshear, Susan Terwiliger, Julie Yates, ; Rear: Ron Irby, Ed Martin, Ken Myers, Sharon Probst, Elijah (grandson), Amber Edwards, Jeff Edwards.



View from Buzzard Rocks on a chill blustery day. Alex Wilhelm searches for buzzards (turkey vultures).



Read Mountain Summit was much colder than it appears here after a quick lunch. Front(l-r) KenMyers, Carey Martin, Laurie Spangler. Center row (l-r) Susan Terwiliger, Sharon Probst and grandson Elijah, Darlene Beshear, Julie Yates, Alex Wilhelm. Rear (l-r) Ron Irby, Amber Edwards, Jeff Edwards, Ed Martin. The three young hikers were agile and always fun on the trail.

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

Edward Wilson (leader), Guy Brooks

Today we were threatened with showers and that kept all but 3 away from the carpool. Sadly on the way to the trailhead the third hiker had to turn back for an emergency at home. As we drove out 460 the rain poured, and poured which made for some nasty driving. Luckily, just as we arrived at the trailhead the rain broke and the sun came out. We had a gorgeous dry hike up to the waterfall and back. The weather meant that this usually over-crowded trail was ours alone to enjoy.

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

Canceled.

**Saturday, March 22, 2014 9:00 AM
Work Hike – Bluff City trail relocation**

David Jones (leader), Carina Hughes, John Miller, James Narramore, Jim Webb

This work hike was on the Bluff City relocation near Pearisburg. As is typical when visiting this project with people who have never seen the new route, we bushwhacked down to the area where trail is being chiseled out of a rock cliff. We walked this partially completed trail and then arrived at a more

moderately sloped hillside where we would dig trail.

This section is forested and appears to offer simple side-slope trail tread digging in rich deep soil. However, what we have found on previous work trips is that the soil is not very deep, and that a firm thrust of a pick mattock into the soil is abruptly stopped by shallow bedrock.

Instead of having soil into which we can sculpt a trail tread, we have to build structures on the bedrock which will hold or reinforce the trail tread. At this site we are using rock retaining walls. And, that requires rock harvesting. To build a good wall you have to have a large selection of rocks to find the best fit. To have a large selection, you have to harvest a lot of rocks. And, the best rocks are Big Friendly Rocks, or BFR's.

We selected two short areas that needed to have rock walls and set to work. The trail supervisor always seems to see BFRs downhill from the work site, while the other volunteers assure him that he is seeing mirages, and they inform him that there are no rocks below the trail which if they did exist would require dragging them uphill. So although the trail supervisor keeps having visions of BBFRs (that is Big BEAUTIFUL Friendly Rocks) down below the trail, our group scoured the hillside ABOVE the work site, and easily slid rocks downhill to construct our walls.

Around the midpoint of the day, it seemed that rock harvesting shenanigans developed. With two groups working, one group always had to be alert when someone from the neighboring group came to "check progress." It seems that more often than not when that group member returned to his project site, he did not go empty handed, but carried a "borrowed" BFR. After a morning of rock harvesting people decided it was easier to let the other group scour the hillside and pull down rocks, then sneak over to that group and take their BFRs they had just wrestled down the mountain. Fortunately for this work trip, we had someone with extensive elementary school supervisory experience and that experience was ideally suited to keep the two groups' behavior in line.

Walking through the woods ogling rocks, grunting with glee at specific rocks, then bringing the clan together to drop to the ground and grovel with the rock, pushing and sliding the rock to a pile of other rocks is somewhat a throwback to more primitive times, to a more primitive culture. It is as if we were way back in the Paleolithic era...Or not! Maybe, we are on the cutting edge of a new work out craze—Paleo Workout! Google it! I bet if the Trail Supervisor put in the next work hike description that we were doing Paleo Workouts we would have the mountain side filled with volunteers, heck, maybe they would even pay us to come out.....

Well, for the five of us who were moving around BFRs (and some BBFRs) as afternoon progressed our rock walls were filled in from behind and a thin layer of soil put on top, such that we had a trail, albeit a short section, but a trail. Another good day well spent.

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

Jim Webb & Mike Vaughn (leaders), Dave Horst, Ken Meyers

Installed steps and water bars on Andy Layne trail.

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

Snowed out.

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

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Maurice Turner, Carl Cornett, Maya Bohler, Kris Peckman

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot where we carpooled and then drove to our starting location. The weather was cloudy, windy and was in the 40's. It was very cold in the wind. The trail was in good condition. There were 5 blowdowns but we could get across them without too much trouble. We met one section hiker at the shelter. Carl Cornett made hot chocolate for everyone with his camping cook stove. It hit the spot on a cold day. We started at 2:20 and got out at 6:30.

**Sunday April 06, 2014 8:30 AM
McAfee Parking (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob**

Brendle Wolfe (leader), John & Darlene

We started out early in the Catawba 311 parking lot. As we waited for others we ran into another RATC group headed towards Dragon's Tooth. The weather was perfect and Spring was beginning to peak out from the veil of Old Man Winter's grip. Along with spring's arrival we spotted several southbound thru-hikers. The views were great and we managed to beat the crowds. As always, we had beautiful views at the top.

**Sunday April 06, 2014 8:00 AM
McAfee Parking (Rt. 311) to Dragon's Tooth
Parking 113-Mile Hike #5**

Carina Hughes (leader), Kris Peckman (assistant), Sheila Vaughn, SusanTerwilliger and Richard Kurshan

What a perfect day to go hiking! In the morning, the temperature started in the low 40s and hovered into the 50s as this beautiful, clear, sunny day unfolded. There was a gentle breeze as we ascended and walked Sawtooth Ridge, continued down to the pastures and creeks and ascended and made our way over the rocks to have lunch at Rawie's Rest. We enjoyed the variety this hike close to Roanoke offers. It is a jewel of a hike. It was still early enough in the year where we could enjoy the views along the mountain ridge. Members of the group spotted a few cherry trees, bloodroot and trout lilies which had started to bloom. We had a delightful bunch of enthusiastic hikers who were very happy to be outside enjoying the entire experience. It was the first time we had the opportunity to hike with Richard. I hope he will continue to join us.

**Monday April 07 08 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Jim Webb & Mike Vaughn (leaders), Dave Horst, Ken Meyers

It rained on April 7, so the work hike was moved to the 8th. We installed steps on switchbacks on Andy Layne trail.

**Sunday April 13, 2014 8:00 AM
Bearwallow Gap Loop**

Larry Austin (leader), Ivy Lidstone, John Merkwon, Gary Bible, Kris Peckman, Maya Bohler, Lois Smith, Cynthia Munley, Jen Schaeffer, Nancy Chapin, Josiah Leonard and J. D. Schaefer

We had a very sunny and warm day for this hike. The hike entailed some off trail sections which took a little more time and care to hike but all seemed to enjoy the variety of terrain. We had a fantastic view from a rock outcropping on the last off-trail section but a very steep descent from the mountain top. JD had driven in from Cary, NC, to hike with us. We also had a 2012 thru-hiker, Josiah Leonard, join us. A few wildflowers were spotted but they were rather scarce this day.

**Wednesday April 16, 2014 8:00 AM
A.T. Spy Rock to Crabtree Falls**

A wide swath of Virginia was represented on this hike, with participants coming from Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Bedford, Charlottesville, and Elkton. The group included Mike Vaughn with his granddog, Joanne Derryberry, Jeff Edwards, Sally Evans, Mike Smith, newcomers James Needham and Kelly O'Rourke, and organizer Jeff Monroe with his dog. After a steep 1.5-mile ascent, the group took in the grand views from Spy Rock. The trail then leveled off, and the route followed the Appalachian Trail north into The Priest Wilderness. Everyone stopped at the wilderness boundary and spoke with that trail section's overseer before ascending to lunch at an overlook inside the wilderness. The group then backtracked on the A.T. before heading down the Crabtree Falls Trail. On the Crabtree Falls Trail, we were treated to flower identification from Mike Smith.

**Friday April 18, 2014 10:00 AM
Black Horse Gap to Bearwallow Gap
8.5 miles; Strenuous**

Cancelled-Lack of participants.

**Saturday April 19, 2014 10:00 AM
Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard**

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Caralee Eicher, Jeff Edwards (and daughter), Ernest Correale (and son), Ken Meyers

A fantastic day for a hike! Temperatures were mild, but warm as we started moving. It was a conversational and friendly bunch of hikers. Was nice to have two teenagers on the hike, they always up the energy level! It took about 45 minutes to reach the marbleyard, as we took a slow leisurely pace. We spent about an hour at the marbleyard so people had plenty of time to climb to the top and see the gorgeous views. It was a clear day so long views were had. We met several groups at the marbleyard and even saw a snake or two. The hike down went relatively quickly and sadly the day itself was over.

**Saturday April 19, 2014 8:00 AM
Half Marathon Training Hike**

Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos (leaders), Doug Fowley

It was only the three of us who challenged the Blue Ridge Half Marathon course on the week prior to the event. The route starts at the Jefferson St. entrance to Elmwood Park and then climbs to the crest of Mill Mountain, returning to the Roanoke River Greenway at Walnut, thence along the Greenway to Rivers Edge Park, into South Roanoke for an ascent of Peakwood, and finally returning to the starting point. We made it in just under 4 1/2 hours.

**Sunday April 20, 2014 8:00 AM
Chessie Nature Trail**

Kris and Bob Peckman (leaders), Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, Fred Meyer, Geoff Putnam, Bruce Sellars

On a spectacularly beautiful Easter Sunday morning, after getting a little bit lost on the car shuttle, we set out on our 6-mile walk on the Chessie Nature Trail, a hike which turned into more of a bird and flower viewing experience. What a treat we had! We started our walk a little past the beginning of the trail to avoid an old industrial area. This start point, on Old Buena Vista Road, has a parking area just across the road. Immediately we were greeted by clumps of Virginia bluebells, and shortly thereafter by several toadshade trillium. Both of these flowers reappeared throughout the hike. Further along we spotted cut-leaved toothwort, Dutchman's breeches, wild blue phlox,

golden ragwort, columbine (growing right out of a cliff beside the trail), and a whole hillside of perfoliate bellwort.



Virginia Bluebells



Toadstool trillium



Toadstool trillium & cut-leaved toothwort



Dutchman's breeches



Perfoliate bellwort

The trail was originally built for the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad (later purchased by the Chesapeake and Ohio), so it is flat, wide, and in places cut right into the rock. It follows the Maury River, which sparkled in the sunlight. In places there are remnants of locks from the canal which the railroad replaced as a means of transport, and even the cable for an old hand-cranked cable car used to cross the river. On the opposite shore there is one place where the cliffs rise to an amazing height. All sorts of birds were singing around us, not all identifiable to us, but Mary noted some yellow-rumped warblers and of course the familiar cardinals, and others spotted a red-tailed hawk. As we got closer to Buena Vista, the trail passed through cow pastures, and as we stopped for lunch, a farmer drove up and told us the trail is only 10 feet wide, indicating we should not stop there. Just

past his gate, however, was a nice place where we ate our lunch accompanied by a surprisingly calm Canada goose on her nest. Rounding the next bend after our lunch we abruptly came upon the cars to end our hike.



Canada Goose

**Monday April 21, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Jim Webb (leader), Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, John Miller, Joanne Derryberry, Lois Coche-Smith, Larry Austin

Removed rotted cribbing and redug sidehill to widen trail on Brush Mountain near Trout Creek.

**Friday April 25, 2014 8:00 AM
Fortune's Cove**

Cancelled-lack of participants.

**Saturday April 26, 2014 8:00 AM
Hanging Rock State Park**

Hike canceled.

**Sunday April 27, 2014 8:00 AM
Big Stony Creek /Bailey Gap Work Hike**

David Jones (leader), Matt Gentry, Jim Webb

Today's work plan was to install multiple water bars on steep sections of the trail up to Bailey Gap Shelter. But, with only three people coming out on this work trip, it was decided to scout a possible relocation and review work sites that have been submitted for future Konnarock work weeks.

Parking at the Pine Swamp kiosk, we headed up the blue blazed trail to the AT and then to Pine

Swamp shelter. It was not five minutes into this hike that we encountered a large, multi-tree blowdown at the intersection of the blue blaze and the AT. Since we did bring a chainsaw on the work hike, but had left it in the truck after altering our work hike plans, we decided to scout the relocation and upon returning we would get the chainsaw and remove the blow down.

The rest of the walk to Pine Swamp was unimpeded. We had one set of loppers and spent some time cutting undergrowth. After a short inspection of the shelter we headed off trail to Pine Swamp Branch. The possible relocation would roughly follow this stream and intersect the current AT eliminating about a ¾ mile horseshoe bend. Bushwhacking through dense rhododendron we felt we had a workable route to consider.

Back on the AT we headed north to look at a couple of other work sites. At the Dismal Creek bridge we sat and had lunch. The walk back to the car was fairly quick. But, near the large obstruction we had noted in the morning, we found another smaller blowdown.

We picked up the chainsaw from the vehicles and set to work on the blowdowns. It was good that the work hike plans had been changed because at least one of these blowdowns was significantly blocking the trail.

After an hour's work we were back at the cars, enjoying cold sodas.

**Sunday April 27, 2014 12:00 PM
Black Horse Gap to Curry Gap
113 Mile Hike #1**

Cancelled-lack of participants.

**Thursday May 01, 2014 8:30 AM
~~Sprouts Run/Wilson Mountain Loop~~
Floyd Fields/Sunset Field Loop**

Larry Austin (leader), Kris Peckman (assistant), Sally Evans, Sandie Meyers, Maya Bohler, Mary Harshfield

The original hike planned for this date was Sprouts Run/Wilson Mountain but due to recent rains Sprouts Run was running too high to get across the 15+ crossings. We had a beautiful day weather-wise for hiking. We started out at Floyd Field north of the Peaks of Otter along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Following Forest Road 190 for about one mile, we were able to observe a number of

wildflowers blooming along the banks of the road, including Trillium, large Bellwort, Great Chickweed, and Wild Geranium. Exiting the Forest Road the waterfalls at Gunstock Creek were running beautifully. Along this section of the Glenwood Horse Trail, Mary spotted a Scarlet Tanager and alerted us. Several of us ahead spotted another one a short distance away and watched it on a limb for a few minutes before it flew. The woods seemed to be full of songbirds and Mary (a bird watcher) recognized many of them. We entered the former site of Camp Kewanee, a boys' camp started and run by Gus Welch, a Native American, who was the quarterback for Jim Thorpe at the Carlisle Indian School. Gus was involved in coaching at several colleges and high schools in Virginia. He resided in nearby Montvale and died in 1970. We visited one of the foundations to a building on that site and reflected on his past and the importance of the contributions Native Americans have made to our country over the years. We stopped for lunch at Sunset Field with a beautiful view to the west. In the woods at Sunset Field were thousands of ramps. From Sunset Field we went a short distance down the Apple Orchard Falls Trail to its junction with the AT. We then headed south on the AT. Along the AT were thousands of Dutchman's Breeches, many still blooming, along with Blood Root, Rue Anemone, Trillium, Toothwort, and others I probably have forgotten. We ended our hike after taking the side trail to the Cornelius Creek Shelter and exiting back across the BRP to Floyd Field.

**Sunday May 04, 2014 8:00 AM
Douthat State Park Waterfalls Hike**

Fred Meyer (leader), Ivy Lidstone, Carina Hughes, Alison Hope, Cara Sponsler (a new member)

It was a wonderful sunny day and as we went up Stony Run trail, many bikers passed by us. Flowers such as violets, iris and bellworts were abundant. We stopped for lunch at Tuscarora Overlook. On the way down we also stopped at Lookout Rock and Blue Suck Falls. We finished the hike with a short section by the lake.

**Monday May 05 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Jim Webb (leader), Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Ken Meyers, John Miller

Continued to remove rotten cribbing and widen trail on Brush Mountain near Trout Creek.

**Wednesday May 7 2014 8:00 AM
A.T. Punchbowl to Long Mountain Wayside**

Jeff Monroe (leader), Sally Evans

A large crowd of two hikers braved blue skies, ideal temperatures and weekday crowds on an A.T. section hike between Punchbowl Crossing on the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Long Mountain Wayside on U.S. 60. Before the hike started, the group shuttled one vehicle to the starting trailhead and a couple of smelly thru-hikers to a restaurant in Buena Vista. Sally Evans and Jeff Monroe completed the 9.7 miles in just under 4 hours and especially enjoyed the views down to the Lynchburg Reservoir.

**Friday May 09, 2014 8:30 AM
Rt 611 to Kimberling Creek**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Sheila Vaughn, Jim Webb, Fred Meyer, Cara Sponsler, Gary Sponsler

After dropping off a car at Kimberling Creek we started on our hike at the far southern end of the section of trail maintained by the RATC. After a brief lunch stop at Jenny Knob shelter, we started our descent off the mountain to Licksillet Hollow and then finished crossing Brushy Mountain. We got caught in a heavy downpour about two miles from the end of the hike. We saw about six thru-hikers and about 10 different kinds of wildflowers in bloom, including lady slipper, trillium, and wild geranium.

**Saturday May 10, 2014 9:00 AM
Roaring Run**

Ed and Carey Martin (leaders) were joined by ex-military, hiker Mike Knowles.

The weather was fine and neither Mike nor I ever thought twice about a poncho despite a few light drops. Roaring Run is always a fun hike. We met at Park and Ride (220N) a little before 9AM to mingle a bit and choose car pool friends and enjoy the camaraderie.

Up to 11 people on Meetup had been signed up for this spectacular little hike which we extended to some nearby shale barrens. As too frequently

happens, the Meetup people didn't show up at the first mention of a raindrop falling in the area. Two of our best hikes have been in pouring rain (Hoop Hole) and totally inclement weather (Flat Top from the NW slope plus Fallingwaters). Had the people showed up, Carey and I were again going to treat them to a weiner roast for lunch as our treat. The weather was perfect for all of this.

Mike was an insatiable student concerning the geology and mining/smelting/chemistry culture of the region, which we were thankfully able to share with him. Later on Mike again proved eager for knowledge about the many wildflowers we encountered and took home pictures of them along with the scientific and common names. His photos are featured prominently in this report. Although not our field, our first two publications (Ed and Carey) were in botany (*Systematics of Orontium aquaticum*, and *Floristics of the Spring Pond Floating Mats; A Canadian Peat Bog 1000 miles too far South*).



Fringed Polygala, a seldom seen flower



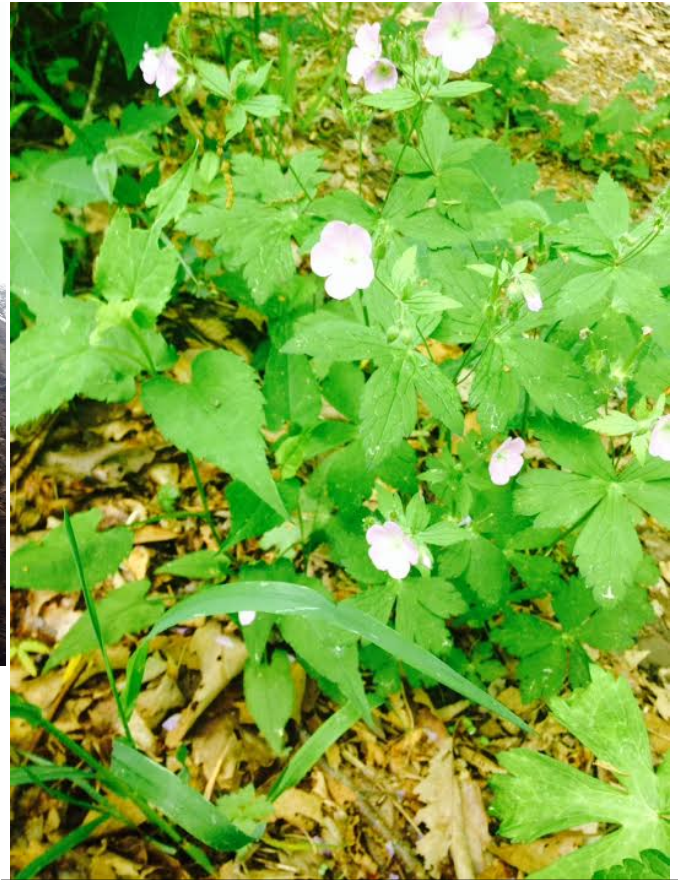
Showy Orchis



Birdsfoot Violet



Bleeding heart on a shale barren



Geraniums



Shale Barren Phlox



Rattlesnake Plantain



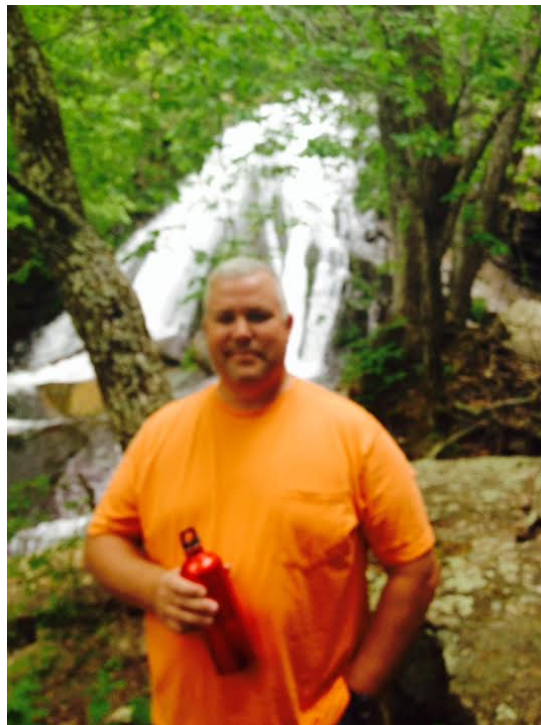
Carey at the falls

The Falls were spectacular due to recent rainfall. On a note of caution, exposed rock especially near Falls are extremely slippery whether from a light shower, dew, or mist. There had been a serious accident at the Falls a few days before resulting in the usual warning sign not to do climbing, etc or you will be arrested. While there, what we believe was a commercial group arrived via the short hike and a girl promptly took a hard fall. She was OK after some minutes of recuperating and getting abrasions bandaged. They had also left their vehicle lights on in the parking lot. Jumper cables can be handy!

"I had a great time on this hike. Ed and Carey were outstanding. They knew all of the plant life and the history of the area and were nice enough to point out various plants and items of interest along the way. The trail was nice and the falls were beautiful. I had a great time and hope to hike with them again." [Mike Knowles](#)



Ed & Carey at the falls



Mike Knowles at the falls

Our comment is that Mike Knowles is the kind of hiker one wants along each hike! We look forward to hiking with him again as with all our hiking companions.

**Sunday May 11, 2014 8:00 AM
Devil's Marbleyard Circuit**

John Merkwon (leader), Ivy Lidstone, Nancy Chapin, Bill Conner, Linda King - I mean Conner

Another nice day for a hike. Plenty of contrast on this hike by combining the Glenwood Horse, Belfast and Gunter Ridge trails into a loop hike. Initially advertised as an 8.3-mile loop but by starting at the Hellgate parking area it turned into a 9.8-mile lollipop. First up was the Glenwood Horse trail, which was a pleasant ramble through the woods. The previous day had been rainy so everything had a nice fresh sheen. Next was the Belfast Trail and its climb up and beyond the Marbleyard. No snakes to report but some idiots had recently thought tagging a few of the boulders with orange spray paint was justified. In my opinion the best part was the Gunter Ridge section which was alive with all sorts of flowers. Pink azaleas were the predominant theme but we must have seen over a dozen different types of flowers. The most notable were the Lady Slippers in full slipperdom. And oh- two bits of news - Ivy proudly reported her first grandchild and Linda and Bill announced they got married on Friday - Congratulations to all!!

**Friday May 16, 2014 8:00 AM
Tinker Cliffs**

David and Mary Beth Horst (leaders), Carol Rowlett, William Benni, Tonya Benni, Maya Bohler, Bokk Brantley, Derrick Stewart, Jimbo and Mary Harshfield, Madeleine Taylor and Sassy, and Brendle Wolfe.

We hiked up to Tinker Cliffs in great mostly sunny, cool weather. All had dinner while watching the sunset. Mary Beth made brownies and hot chocolate for dessert. Pink Lady Slippers and Jack in the Pulpit flowers were seen. Beautiful hike back down in the dark. The Bennis and Derrick Stewart were on their first RATC hikes. We hope to see more of them in the future!

**Saturday May 17, 2014 8:00 AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Daleville (Rt. 220)
113-Mile Hikes #3 & #4**

Mangala Kumar & Linda King (leaders), William Conner, Carina Hughes, Michael Hamilton,

Amanda Wharton-Stacey, Mark Milberger and Bill Reich.

The weather for this beautiful hike could not have been more perfect. We had clear skies, moderate temperatures and gentle breezes. This was a most companionable group that talked and laughed away the almost 20 miles of trail. Mangala was the pace setter and kept us going at a nice pace to get us off the trail in about 10 hours.

**Monday May 19, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Jim Webb (leader), Dave Horst, Larry Austin, Gary Bible, Lois Coche-Smith

We continued to work our way up the Brush Mountain trail, widening the trail and installing water bars.

**Saturday May 31, 2014 8:00 AM
Jenny Knob Work Hike**

David Jones (leader), John Miller, Jim Webb

Like last month, once again we only had a minimal response to our scheduled work hike. In April, we opted to change our work plan to scouting instead of digging because we did not have "many hands" to make "light work." This work hike we really needed to redig about 100 yards of trail that was badly eroding, so the decision was made to hike in and do what we could.

The work area was several miles from the road, and the day was nice so the woods walk was pleasant. It is thru hiker season and since we were walking north we got to accompany a few of the thru hikers and hear their interesting stories.

Arriving at the eroded section late morning we decided to redig some moderately eroded sections and then have lunch. After eating, we focused on a twenty-foot section that needed log cribbing. After this section was completed we worked on two other moderately eroded sections and with the long hike back to the cars and the long drive back to Roanoke we opted to call it a day.

Though we took care of some significant problem areas with today's work, carrying our tools back along "100 yards of trail that was badly eroding," it

was sadly obvious that this project was incomplete. We will have to schedule another work hike here to finalize the needed repairs.

**Sunday June 08, 2014 8:00 AM
Mt. Rogers HQ to Groseclose**

Kris Peckman (leader/sweep), Maria Bowling, Karen Callahan, Allen and Rebecca Dickerman, Val Dymond, Richard Kurshan



The description of this hike called it “downward-trending”, and while overall this is true, we had plenty of ridges to climb up and over (about six miles of them, in fact) before we began to descend. We had beautiful weather, sunny with a cool breeze to break the humidity. We did get a thundershower about noon, right of top of Locust Mt., but it didn’t last long. Wildflowers in bloom were infrequent, but we saw a few examples of rattlesnake weed, long-leaved bluets, flame azalea, mountain laurel, rhododendron (mostly fallen petals), galax, May apples budding, and fire pink.



We made a side trip to visit the 1890s Farm, part of the Settlers Museum, where some friendly fellow-visitors let us into the house with their key, so we could visit the inside as well as the outbuildings, including a well house where we refilled our water bottles. In the yard a tree was being started with great care—we guessed one of the American/Chinese chestnuts. Just a bit further on was the Lindamood School, which the father of one of the other visitors had attended. It opened in 1894 and closed in 1937, and the flag had only 44 stars.

Boys and girls caught playing together got 4 lashes, and long fingernails netted you two. Teachers had to bring coal to stoke the stove. After the school it was only a couple of miles until we reached Route 11 and the cars.



**Tuesday June 10, 2014 8:00 AM
Fullers Rock**

David Horst (leader), Fred Meyer, Maria Bowling, Joanne Derryberry, Rachael Shores, Hannah Wildman, Jeff Edwards and his daughter, Amber, Madeleine Taylor, Derrick Stewart, Mike Smith

Because of the warm temperatures, we started this hike on the little used Little Rocky Row trail until it intersected the AT. From there, we went north on the AT to Fullers Rock and on to Big Rocky Row where we ate lunch. We descended the AT south to the James River Footbridge, stopping at Johns Hollow Shelter on the way to soak our feet in the cool water. It was a great group to hike with.

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 Edward Wilson at 540-904-8904 or RATChikemaster@gmail.com.

**Friday July 11, 2014 5:30 PM
Sunset hike to McAfee’s Knob**

7.8 miles; Moderate
 \$0.75 carpool fee; 6 miles from Roanoke
 Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and Roanoke City.

**Brendle Wolfe 540-968-2750
 blwolfe@mail.roanoke.edu**

**Sunday July 13, 2014 8:00 AM
Ferrier-Lick Branch Trails**

10 miles; Strenuous
 \$1.00 carpool fee; 12 miles from Roanoke
 Located in Craig County east of New Castle on the border of Botetourt County, this lollypop hike will begin at the far end of the Ferrier Trail (where the North Mountain Trail ends) and ascend Broad Run

Mountain. From there we will head southeast going down the Lick Branch Trail and continue on a gravel road connecting to Ferrier Trail returning us back to Broad Run Mountain to complete the hike.

John Merkwon 540-904-2299

**Monday July 14, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for details.

**Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896
Startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Saturday, Sunday July 12-13, 2014
Beginner Backpacking Trip**

Open only to those who have completed one of the Backpacking 101 classes.
 More details will be given at the class.

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

**Saturday July 19, 2014 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Hike**

We will assist the Konnarock crew. Contact hike leader for details.

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

**Sunday July 20, 2014 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Hike**

We will assist the Konnarock crew. Contact hike leader for details.

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

**Sunday July 27, 2014 8:00 AM
Devil's Marblyard-Hickory Stand**

9.1 miles; Strenuous
\$5.00 carpool fee; 35 miles from Roanoke
This includes the Belfast Trail.

Fred Meyer..... 304-744-9219
..... wfmeyer@suddenlink.net

**Monday July 28, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for details.

Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... Startover14@peoplepc.com

**Saturday August 2, 2014 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Hike**

We will assist the Konnarock crew. Contact hike leader for details.

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

**Saturday, August 2, 2014 6:00-9:00 PM
Annual Corn Boil**

The 2014 annual corn boil is scheduled for Saturday, August 2, from 6-9 at the Catawba Community Center, behind the post office at 779 and 311. Join us as we host the trail maintaining crew. Bring a LARGE dish to share. Club provides all the corn on the cob you can eat! Utensils, plates, cups, etc. provided. A good time to catch up with all your RATC friends and/or make new ones. Don't miss it!

**Sunday August 3, 2014 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Hike**

We will assist the Konnarock crew. Contact hike leader for details.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058

..... dhjones@together.net

**Monday August 11, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for information.

Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896
..... Startover14@peoplepc.com

**August 15-24 2014
Backpacking Week Trip**

Spend a week on the trail mark off some of those miles on the AT. We'll pick a section of trail to complete in these 7 days. Check the meetup event for more information and to sign up.

Chris Wilson..... 757-202-3331
..... theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

**Monday August 25, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for information.

Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896
..... Startover14@peoplepc.com

**Wednesday September 3, 2014 8:00 AM
Explore Park Trails**

10-12 miles; Very Strenuous
\$0 carpool fee; 0 miles from Roanoke
We will explore between 8-10 miles of the 14 miles of trails that Explore Park has to offer. Explore Park is a designated site on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. I'll post the exact distance and trails on Meetup prior to the hike.

John Merkwon 540-904-2299

**Saturday September 6, 2014 8:00 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for information

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

**Monday September 8, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for details.

Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896
..... Startover14@peoplepc.com

**Tuesday September 9, 2014 8:00 AM
Petites Gap to James River**

9.9 miles; Strenuous
\$5.50 carpool fee; 40 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.

David Horst horstde@aol.com

**Thursday September 11, 2014 8:00 AM
Rough Mountain Wilderness**

8-10 miles; Strenuous
\$10.00 carpool fee; 70 miles from Roanoke
In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, this hike will explore the only established trail in the Rough Mountain Wilderness near Millboro. The Crane Trail may have the most remote trailhead in the George Washington National Forest, requiring a 40 minute drive off pavement. The trail is an out-and-back hike, ranging in elevation from 1250 to 2550 feet. Bushwhacking may be necessary. This will be a joint hike with the Charlottesville Chapter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and is limited to 10 participants. Roanoke-based hikers will carpool from Daleville and meet Charlottesville-based leader in Lexington before proceeding to trailhead.

**Jeff Monroe 434-962-1808
.....monrojeff@gmail.com**
David Horst horstde@aol.com

**Thursday September 18, 2014 8:00 AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls**

8.1 miles; Strenuous
\$9.00 carpool fee; 64 miles from Roanoke
This hike starts at the Montebello Fish hatchery in Nelson County. The hike starts with a steady climb up an old fire road. At 1.0 miles it intersects the A.T. The hike will then head north on the A.T. After a half mile we will reach Spy Rock. Spy Rock is a granite dome with great, 360-degree views of the Priest Wilderness area and other surrounding mountains. It requires some rock scrambling to get to the top. The hike will continue on the A.T. for another three miles to the intersection with the Crab Tree Falls trail. At 1,200 feet this falls is the highest east of the

Mississippi. We will descend along the falls trail back to the parking lot.

David Horst horstde@aol.com

**Monday September 22, 2014 8:30 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for information.

**Jim Webb..... 540-562-8896
.....Startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Thursday September 25, 2014 9:00 AM
Big Horse Gap to New River (Rt 460)
113-Mile Hike #11**

12.5 miles; Strenuous
\$8.50 carpool fee; 60 miles from Roanoke
This hike follows the A.T. north from Big Horse Gap near Dismal Falls in Giles County. It goes along the ridge line of Pearis Mountain. At 3.0 miles there is a rock cliff which provides good views of Sugar Run Mountain. The trail passes Doc's Knob Shelter at 3.8 miles. At 9.0 miles there is another cliff, which provides good views of Wilburn Valley. Angel's Rest is reached at 9.6 miles. This provides great views of the New River Valley and Peters Mountain. From there the trail begins a steady descent to Route 460.

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

**Saturday September 27, 2014 8:00 AM
Work Hike**

Contact hike leader for information

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

**Saturday September 27, 2014 9:00 AM
War Spur/AT Loop**

7.4 miles; Moderate
\$8.70 carpool fee; 62 miles from Roanoke
The hike is located in the Mountain Lake Wilderness area in Giles County. The hike starts on the Chestnut Trail, reaching the War Spur Branch Trail after one mile. The trail follows the stream, passing beneath old-growth hemlocks. It then connects with the A.T., passing several fern-ringed upland bogs. Near the end of the hike, the trail passes Wind Rock, which offers sweeping views across to Fork Mountain and West Virginia.

**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 _____	OR	Individual life membership \$250.00 _____
Email _____	Family life membership	\$300.00 _____
Check here to save a tree and take only an e-Blazer <input type="checkbox"/>	Donation	\$ _____
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282	Amount Enclosed	\$ _____

*** Or go to ratc.org ***

Editor's Notes

Notice the option on this form to read your Blazer in the online version. The eBlazer has three advantages:

1. Our major expense is printing and mailing the Blazer.
2. Trees are cut to produce the paper.
3. The pictures in the eBlazer are in living color.

The printed Blazer will always be available. But if the eBlazer would work for you, just give Brendle (or Edward or Blanche or Bob) the word and she will set that up. And, if you change your mind, she can change you back.

The membership list is maintained by our membership coordinator, Bendle Wolfe. Please send any address, phone, spelling, etc., corrections to Brendle.

Also be aware of the year after you name on mailings. If it is less than the current year, you need to pay your dues.

<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/> is the link to our meetup site. I just signed up and I love it. It's easy to do at ratc.org.

Bob asked me to cover for him as editor of the blazer while he is on his bike trip. I hope I did not make too many mistakes and that it is not obvious that Bob was absent. Thank you for sending me the hike reports and photos and a special thanks to Kris Peckman for being my proofreader.

I would also like to thank everyone who came out to the 3rd annual Troutville Trail Days and especially to those who volunteered at the ATC/RATC booth or the 5K race. This year we had 68 runners and hope to have even more next year.

Therese Witcher

TRAIL BLAZER
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