

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2015

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

WORK HIKES

Monday, April 6 - 8:30 AM
Saturday, April 11 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 20 - 8:30 AM
Monday, May 4 - 8:30 AM
Saturday, May 9 - 8:30 AM
Monday, May 18 - 8:30 AM
Monday, June 1 - 8:30 AM
Monday, June 15 - 8:30 AM
Saturday, June 20 - 8:30 AM
Monday, June 29 - 8:30 AM

Hike Scheduling

Contact Edward Wilson

540-904-8904 – RATChikemaster@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.)

Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

Monday, April 20, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

Monday, May 18, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

Monday, June 15, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

Monday, July 20, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

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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.

You can now renew and even join at 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.

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Maria Bowling
Miles Davison
Michael Ellery
David Goodman
Jason Hammer
Tim Horne
Douglas Jackson
Sasha Lay

Brian Mason
Herve Marand
Conner McBane
Julie Petruska
William Renyer
Terry Shipley
Derrick Stewart
Bryan Turner

William Wehner
Deborah Williamson
Crystal & Tony Wright
Jay Young
Jan Erik Zeller

And the following who donated to RATC, including some who were left out in 2014:

Jan Arthur
Erin Contour
John Everett, Jr.
JoJo Gin

Kenneth Grandstaff
Linda King Conner
Christopher Lynch
Reinhard O'Neill

Terry Shipley
Nancy Stafford
Al Stewart

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

Brendle Wolfe

President's Report

It was my great honor and privilege to be elected President of the RATC at our March banquet. My first act as president will be to thank our outgoing president, Mike Vaughn. Mike has held the office for the last three years and has done an excellent job of steering the club. Many changes have come to the RATC during the last three years, some are Mike's doing, some are the work of other volunteers but at all times Mike has done his best to improve the club and help it to become a constantly better version of itself. I look forward to continuing that tradition.

My second act will be to extend Thank You to my vice president, Diana Christopulos. After I was nominated for President, Diana very graciously stepped up to help me. As many of you know, I am a graduate student at Radford University where I also work. With so many irons in the fire I sometimes find my time very limited. Diana was so wonderful to step up and offer to help make sure the RATC doesn't suffer from a time-strapped president.

In the past not much was done by the Vice President, but I imagine we'll be seeing great things from Diana so I want to say Thank You in advance.

It's a very exciting time with the RATC right now. A new board has been elected and we have a lot of wonderful projects in the works. Our board is probably the youngest it has ever been and we're looking forward to a new fusion of energy and ideas. Part of that, though, is more outreach to our members. We want you to be involved! Whether that's coming out for a hike, helping with trailwork, visiting at social events or just reading the Blazer we want your involvement! We would love to have your feedback on the direction of the club, what you like, what you don't and even more importantly we want your ideas! Please, at anytime, feel free to contact me with your feedback. I can be reached at theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com.

Chris Wilson

Hikemaster's Report

Wow, look at those temperatures and snowflakes dropping! It's officially winter out there! But, right around the corner will be spring (at least I hope)! Spring is a wonderful time to hit the trail and see wildflowers and wildlife as they begin to emerge like the rest of us.

Although the hike schedule appears slim the RATC will have plenty of hikes to help you get out and enjoy the Spring. Although not printed in the Blazer many of our hike leaders have opted to add their hikes directly to Meetup. This allows them to schedule last minute hikes around the weather and their schedules and prevents scheduled hikes from being cancelled (thanks to weather or illness).

If you haven't joined the meetup group yet, you don't know what great things you're missing! You can join at the following url:
<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/> You can also find it linked from the main RATC.com webpage.

At the March banquet it was our honor to recognize all of our incredible hike leaders! Those who led 4-6 hikes were given an RATC hat, those who led 7-8 hikes were given a T-shirt, and those who led 9 or more hikes were recognized with a hat and a T-shirt. In the last year (between October 2013 and September 2014) we offered 90 recreational hikes! And we had 27 people serve as a hike leader or assistant hike leader. And without further ado, those incredible 27 people are:

Leading 1-3 Hikes to earn our immense gratitude and huge round of applause

David Sutton
 Mangala Kumar
 Mary Beth Horst
 Doug Fowley
 Bob Peckman

Mervin Brower
 Blanche Brower
 Guy Brooks
 Mike Hopkins
 Linda King
 Maria Bowling
 Carina Hughes
 Kris Peckman

Leading 4-6 Hikes to earn an RATC Hat

Larry Austin (4)
 Fred Meyer (4)
 Ed Martin (4)
 Carey Martin (4)
 Jeff Monroe (4)
 Brendle Wolfe (4)
 David Horst (5)
 Diana Christopulos (6)

Leading 7-8 Hikes to earn an RATC Shirt

Mark McClain (7)
 Chris Wilson (7)
 Edward Wilson (8)
 John Merkwan (8)

Leading 9 or more Hikes to earn an RATC Hat & Shirt

Mike Vaughn (11)
 Edward Burgess (16)

Next year we'd like to see your name on this list! We are always looking for hike leaders. We especially need people who can offer hikes on weekends and especially people interested in beginner level hikes. If you're interested please contact me at ratchikemaster@gmail.com.

As always, happy trails!

Edward Wilson

Appalachian Trail Conservancy worried about proliferation of natural gas pipelines

In a recent letter to the **Roanoke Times**, the Conservation Director of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy noted that there are currently ten proposals for new natural gas transmission lines that will cross the Appalachian Trail, and she predicted that the number will double within the next year. There appears to be no global oversight of this rush to the Atlantic Coast.

Laura Belleville is director of conservation for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. She lives in Blacksburg.

For the past 90 years, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has served as a guardian of the nearly 2,200-mile Appalachian National Scenic Trail. **Today, we are faced with one of the most challenging threats ever to the integrity of the trail:** a series of proposals to build new petroleum pipeline corridors across the trail to transport natural gas. We want to offer additional points for consideration relevant to the article “Landowner rights vs. public need” (Nov. 9 news story).

We are specifically concerned about the **cumulative impact** of the significant number of pipelines being proposed across Appalachian National Scenic Trail landscapes. Some of these landscapes are public lands and others are private. Regardless of land ownership, we need to take a critical look at the overall impacts to these lands from this modern day “gas rush.”

There are 10 active proposals to develop gas pipelines that will cross the world-famous Appalachian Trail. Three of these are in Virginia: the Mountain Valley Pipeline, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and Spectra Energy Pipeline. **We expect that the total number of proposals to cross the trail will at least double in 2015. Double.** This is our best guess because there does not appear to be any

overarching coordination of these new lines. Coordination is needed to avoid, or at least minimize, impacts to our landscapes and protect critical resources like the Appalachian Trail and other national treasures.

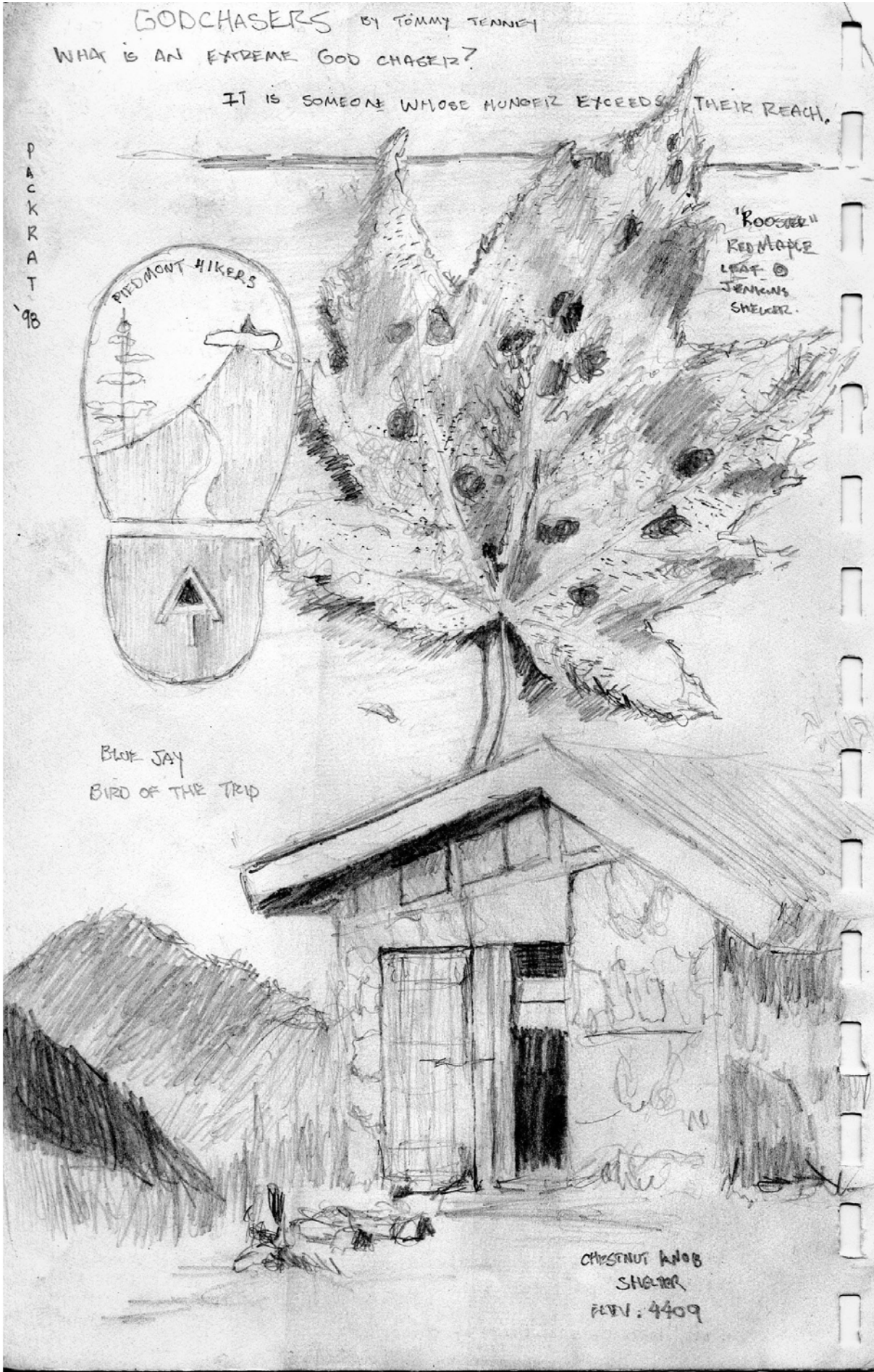
The cumulative impact of proposed and yet-to-be-proposed pipelines can be difficult to determine. But for perspective, one 2011 study by The Nature Conservancy, “Pennsylvania Energy Impacts Assessment,” analyzed Pennsylvania’s existing network of large-diameter natural gas pipelines. The study concluded that development of new pipelines will at least double, possibly even quadruple, over the next two decades. The study indicated that **between 120,000 and 300,000 acres will be affected by natural gas pipeline construction, an area larger than that affected by all other Marcellus gas infrastructure combined (i.e. well pads, roads, water containment and staging/storage areas).**

While the pipelines in a gas producing state like Pennsylvania should be denser than in Virginia and other areas that will primarily host transport lines, we simply have very little information on the impacts from extensive transport lines. We have grave concerns that we will only know the true negative effect on our lands — recreation, forests, watersheds — after the lines have been installed, when it is too late.

Domestic energy sources along with energy conservation strategies are essential. How do we balance the need for energy with protecting our lands? Certainly some places are just too important to protect to allow this type of development. It is imperative that we find the best, most thoughtful, approach to site new energy infrastructure. To accomplish this we need better national energy planning and policies, as well as a high level of coordination among all levels of government. And as a community, we need to be mindful of rushing into an economic gas boom. With unregulated booms come busts. Surely we have been there, haven’t we?

Submitted by Diana Christopulos

This is one of the sketches that Matt Gentry made on the section hike he completed in 2014.



How Did That Spiderweb Cross The Road?

Short answer: It had help.
By Daniel Engber

With spiders, the age-old question isn't why they crossed the road but how. Naturalists long believed spiders would fasten a line to a plant and carry the other end away on foot. But in 1889, spider expert Henry Christopher McCook offered an alternative theory based on webs he observed near a New Jersey boat landing, cast from shrub to shrub across open water. "How were these snares built?" he wrote. "We are constrained to call in the aeronautic habit and the air." McCook never found proof of how wind-facilitated travel works.

Almost a century later, William Eberhard, a scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, captured spiders of 65 different species and studied their strategies. He saw that some release a "bridging line" into the breeze and wait for it to snag on a branch or stone. Once the line catches, the spider reels in the slack until the line is taut enough to creep across. McCook measured a strand that spanned 26

feet, clear across a country road. The record holder, *Caerostris darwini*, or Darwin's bark spider, lives in Madagascar. Its silk stretches across lakes and rivers more than 80 feet wide.

Then there's the "balloon line." Spiders using this strategy release a strand into the air and hang onto the end. The wind catches and carries the spider and the line like Mary Poppins with her umbrella. "There are anecdotal records of spiders ballooning many, many miles," says Todd Blackledge, a spider biologist at the University of Akron. "Some are captured a thousand feet up in the atmosphere or on ships in the middle of the ocean."

But with spider locomotion, every answer begets a new question. "Can a spider, as it's flying, decide, 'I'm going down here'?" Eberhard asks. "That's a really interesting question nobody's touched." This article originally appeared in the December 2014 issue of Popular Science, under the title "How Do Spiders Cast Silk Strands Across Roads?"

Submitted by Frank Haranzo

Hike Reports

Wednesday, December 17, 2014 Mount Pleasant

Mike Vaughn (leader), Dave Youmans, Mike Smith, Madeleine Taylor, Joanne Derryberry, Jaime Duval, Hannah Wildman

After a muddy ride up a forest service road we started out on the trail at Salt Long Gap. The weather was clear and cold. After a steady three-mile climb we reached the summit of Mt. Pleasant. The views from the top of the mountain were fantastic. There was a cold wind blowing so after a short hike we continued on our loop hike over Pompey Mountain. After getting back to the parking lot four of us did the short one-mile hike on the AT up to the open bald area of Cold Mountain for additional great views of the surrounding mountains.

Sunday, December 21, 2014 Meetup Hike

A picture is worth a thousand words... well, maybe two or three.



Tuesday, January 6, 2015 Barbours Creek Wilderness Cove Branch – Potts Arm

Dave Horst (leader), Mike Vaughn, Larry Austin, Joanne Derryberry, Jeff Edwards, David Youmans.

We lost a few hikers due to some frigid weather mid-week and a resulting weather change. But the change worked well, as we had cool but sunny weather. This

hike was on old, abandoned Forest Service trails and lived up to its billing as overgrown and difficult. After a drive in that includes some four wheel drive roads, we started the hike at a remote trailhead between Shawvers Run and Barbours Creek Wilderness. Following an overgrown trail for the first mile along the upper part of the Cove Branch, we reached an old FS sign that was rotted and on the ground. If you picked it up and looked at it closely, it pointed left to the Potts Arm Trail. The right trail goes up to the infamous Potts Jeep Trail.....a rutted, muddy, muck of a road that looks like you would need a Bradley armored vehicle to navigate it. We chose the Potts Arm trail, hiking upward for the next couple of miles to the top of the ridge line. Potts Arm is a ridge about 3-4 miles long that extends off of the enormously long Potts Mountain. Heading south on the ridge line, the trail became easier to follow as it is used by hunters a good portion of the year. The trail descends after a couple of miles steeply to the beautiful and wild Cove Branch. The Branch has many cool rock formations, water falls, and swimming holes. This is where we stopped for lunch and posed for Joanne, our resident photographer, to take a group picture. The trail splits at this point. The north branch heads again up to Potts Jeep Trail. We explored this for a short ½ mile until the trail crossed the branch on a old bridge. Heading back south, we encountered what I had forewarned everyone about.....a wicked 1.5 mile section along the branch full of blow downs and rock fields, with a poorly defined trail and scant old faded blazes. Lucky we had Larry with us. Using his intuition and many years of hiking navigation skills, as well as having heritage from both Cherokee Indian and Peruvian mountain goat, Larry got out in front after I continually got us off the trail. Fortunately, we had the Branch to follow along. When Larry no longer could find the trail, he would put me out front and then chastise me for getting us lost. Eventually the trail gets past the fields of downed trees and rocks and widens to an easy walk in the woods back to the vehicles. I thoroughly enjoyed the amazing peace of this place with its solitude and wildness. Both David Y and Jeff E commented along these same lines and said that both wished we did more like this.....more to come!

**Sunday, January 18, 2015 1:00 PM
Tinker Creek Greenway
Hollins to Carvins Cove**

Kris (leader) Peckman, Paul Blaiklock, Maya Bohler, Caryl Connolly, Carl Cornett, Caralee Eicher, Abbie Feigle, Linda Harrison, Ivy Lidstone, Carol McPeak, Bill Modica, Theresa Orange, Carol Rowlett, Derrick Stewart, Steve and Sydney Stimeling, Darlene Wade, Debbie Williamson, Azita _____, & Christine Young

For all the hikers in this group, this hike was an introduction to one of the newer sections of Roanoke Valley's greenways. It was constructed by volunteers from Hollins guided by the midweek group and completed in fall of 2012.

After finding parking spaces, change and filling out envelopes to pay the Carvins Cove fee, the hikers headed up the trail. Luckily it was easy to follow, since the group stayed spread out throughout the hike. Some of the faster hikers were already on the way back before the tail end got to the Cove.

The trail takes you from the parking lot on Plantation Road uphill for 1.2 miles. At the top of the hill you get a lovely view of Carvins Cove as you enter the Cove property. That's also where the wind hit us—so much for a nice warm afternoon. Most of the group huddled behind the building at the boat dock parking lot to stay out of the wind while we had a snack. Then it was back up the trail, over the hill, and down to the parking area.

The size of this group says we need more easy hikes. We also had several new hikers who were testing their hiking legs, and several who were new to Roanoke—one had only been here two days! It was a most interesting group of people.

**Monday, January 19
Workhike**

Dave Horst, Mike Vaughn, John Miller, Susan Terwilliger, Jeff Edwards, Jonathon Giuffria, Larry Austin, Jan Erik Zeller, Jim Webb.

On a cold but sunny day, we hiked in to the Johns Creek shelter and started to work on a couple of projects. The major project was to cut some Black Locust logs, already on the ground, into 3' lengths and dig them into the hillside to create steps on a steep and eroded section. At the shelter, we also cleaned out the fire ring and returned it to its normal size. After lunch, we moved down the trail and re-dug some narrowing trail.

**Wednesday, January 21, 2015
Cascades – Upper Falls – Barney's Wall
(or Hike of the Dogs)**

Dave Horst (leader), John Miller, Mike Vaughn (& Kent), Mike Smith, Maria Bowling (& Sumner), Joanne Derryberry, Jonathan Kitchens (& his min pin), David Youmans, Madeleine Taylor (& Sassy), Jeff Edwards, Christin Kastl, and Georgia Shaurette

There were many times on this hike when I thought the dogs outnumbered the humans. Our four-legged creatures are always a welcome sight on the trail! A few

days in the 40's melted some of the ice on the lower falls, but still left a spectacular sight. Taking the lower loop to the lower falls, I am always amazed at the rock work on this trail. Even the Konnarock Crew would have to be proud. After the short 2-mile climb to the falls, we stopped to take pictures. The steps to the upper observatory area were closed due to ice....supposed to be on the falls this time of year, not the trail. I will have to talk to the park service about that.

We soon headed up the conservancy trail to the upper falls...more pictures. John Miller skipped this part and played the tortoise among the hares, continuing up the trail toward Barney's. Maria had a family obligation and left the upper falls back down the trail to the parking area. After the short visit here, the rest continued up the trail to Barney's Wall. The weather was still cloudy and windy. Mike commented that not only was there not any ice on the falls, but we would not be able to take in the amazing views that are part of the Barney's Wall experience. Jeff Edwards said that it was always cold at the Wall, even in August! But this day the Dogs...I mean Gods were with us. As Jeff, Christin, and I got to the peaceful, secluded cliffs of Barney's Wall just ahead of the others, the clouds parted, sun came out, and the wind stopped. What a beautiful sight!.....and a perfect lunch spot. Jonathan showed some of his army background, pulling out his pocket rocket, boiling water and making Ramen noodles.....feeding them to his dog, who slurped them down like spaghetti. Just as we were finishing lunch, the clouds and wind reappeared. And that gave us the signal that it was time to leave this oasis in the Blue Ridge.

Sunday, January 25, 2015

Mill Creek, Narrows to Angel's Rest and Morris Avenue, Pearisburg

Maria Bowling (leader), Ralph and Lori Robertson, Madeleine Taylor (and Sassy), Sally Howard, Chris Means, Christin & Patrick Kastl (and Max), Jonathan Giuffria, Michael Guerci, Anton Baudoin, Kris Peckman, Linda & Bill Conner, & David Youmans.



Bill Conner



Bill Conner



Patrick Kastl

Bill Conner



Chris Means



Chris Means

We were fifteen hardy hikers in all who came out the day after an ice storm to view the waterfalls at Mill Creek and climb Pearis Mountain from the northwest, meeting the Appalachian Trail about 2.5 miles south of Angel's Rest. David Youmans coordinated the car pool from Salem, and Ralph Robertson provided excellent trail intelligence, as he maintains the Mill Creek Trails almost single-handedly.

As usual, we soon split into groups of faster and slower (or more cautious) hikers, but we met up three times because I wouldn't tell anyone which way to turn at the trail intersections. I was leading from the back to be sure that we didn't leave anyone at the waterfalls, and only Ralph, Lori, and I knew the way. After crashing through the ice-encased rhododendron tunnel along the Afterthought trail, we finally turned right onto the spur trail up to the AT.

Soon we were enjoying the views from the power line clearing, had a quick lunch stop just inside the woods, and headed on toward Angel's Rest. I continued to lead from behind, as it was now a straight shot north past Angel's Rest and down to the cars. By the time I got down, folks had already gone to retrieve cars from the Mill Creek parking area, so our shuttling chores were quite efficient.

A map of the Mill Creek Trails can be found on the web site of Town of Narrows, Virginia> Information> Maps. The starting point is the north trailhead, which can be reached by entering Narrows from VA 100 N and turning left onto Northview Road immediately after passing Riffe Funeral Home. Just follow Northview to the end and through the gate. The spur trail to the AT is not on the map, but is on the Afterthought Trail, about 0.75 miles from its intersection with the Piney Road Trail.

Monday, January 26, 2015 8:30 AM
Tuesday, January 27, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike McAfee's Knob

Mike Vaughn, Emma Robbins, Trudy Stevens, Jim Webb

Another cold sunny day finds us back on the trail near John's Creek shelter installing three more log steps in the trail. After a short lunch we repositioned some large rocks into steps on an eroded section of trail.

Sunday, February 1, 2015 8:00 AM
Carvins Cove Trails from Timberview Rd

John Merkwon (leader), Maya Bohler, Rebecca Terrill, Maria Bowling, Crystal Wright, Ellie Snead, Val Dymond, Karen Callahan, Allan Dickerman, Kris Peckman and Chris Means.

Although at midweek the forecast for this Super Bowl Sunday hike was for afternoon rain, the moisture actually held off until late in the afternoon...well after we concluded our hike and about the time I finished my first course of Super Bowl hot wings. The hike itself was a 9¾-mile loop that began at the Timberview Road parking area. About .4 mile from the parking area, we took an unmapped trail to the top of Brushy Mountain and then off the mountain via the Hemlock Tunnel trail. Near the bottom of Hemlock Tunnel, we took a new 3½-mile trail that connects back to Horse Pen and the Timberview Road parking area. There were many nice views of Tinker Mountain and the new trail allows water access (swimming not allowed nor desired in the winter) to Carvins Cove in a couple of places. No major wildlife to report but Maria had her dog, Sumner, who cleared the trail of any pesky squirrels that may have been out.

**Wednesday, February 4, 2014, 8:00 AM
James Face Wilderness**

Geoff Adkisson, Jeff Edwards, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Kris Peckman with her dog Bob, Will Reyner, Linda and Bill Conner, Steve Bowles, and Dave Horst (leader).

This was really a nice cool winter day to hike with such a great group! Starting on the Piney Ridge Trail off Hunt Club Rd near Big Island, we climbed for the first 3.5 miles. A great way to get warmed up. Again, our trail-running Steve led the way up to our juncture with the Sulphur Springs trail. Usually taking the AT at this point, we decided to take the Sulphur Springs trail for some variety. An old logging or FS road, it reaches the AT in about 2 miles, close to the Belfast trail. We met a father and son who were hiking over to the Gunter Ridge trail but didn't know how to get there. They were bear hunters and checking out the trails for future use. After showing them on the map and giving them directions, our group headed north on the AT toward Matts Creek Shelter. The views of the James River far below and Glasgow were spectacular. In a short distance, the fast hikers picked out a lunch spot along the trail. When the rest got to our spot, Madeleine commented that we should have let a female pick out the spot. I had to agree with her...but slowing down Steve long enough to eat is a daunting task....so any spot looked good to me at the time. I left lunch a little earlier than the rest to head down to Matts Creek Shelter where I had heard about this new, high tech, handicap accessible privy. I just wanted to be the first to see it. And it did not disappoint. With an ultramodern ventilation system, cedar hand rails and the 36" door, it was an amazing sight. And being wheel chair accessible is always a welcome feature in the rugged terrain of a wilderness area! In a short time, the rest of the group trickled in, crossing over Matts Creek to the shelter. I took a picture of Bob as thanks for all of the work he has put in on the Blazer. I used my antiaging lens. Hope it helped, Bob. The rest of the hike from the shelter is down and along the James River to the wonderful footbridge. A short shuttle back over to the hike starting point and we were back with the vehicles. Because it is much faster for me to head south through Bedford back to Smith Mountain Lake, Geoff Adkisson and I headed south in my truck while the others were to head back through Glasgow to I-81 south to Daleville. After about 7-8 miles, I look back and there is Jeff Edwards following me. I stop to tell him this is not the way home for him. The rest of his passengers had just realized the same thing. Oh, well. Hope the scenic route through Bedford was pleasurable! Thanks to everyone for a great day!



Bob

Horst

**Sunday, February 8, 2015 8:30 am
Tinker Cliffs and Lamberts Meadow shelter**

Fred Meyer (leader), Ellie Snead, Susan Terwilliger, Alanna McWilliams, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Chris Means, Marc Williams, Crystal Wright, Kyle _____, and Brendle Wolfe

A few of us arrived early at the Daleville Park and Ride and cleaned up trash. It was very sunny and not typical of a cold wintery day. As we ascended the Andy Layne trail, we noticed several groves of trees protected so the deer would not eat them. When we arrived at Tinker Cliffs, it was very windy, but we stopped to admire the wonderful view and have a snack. We continued along the ridge meandering through a maze of tall rocks and then turned around and headed for Lamberts Meadow Shelter. It was such a nice day that when we arrived back at the trailhead, there was no room for any more vehicles.

Monday, February 9, 2015 8:30 AM
Tuesday, February 10, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike McAfee's Knob

Mike Vaughn & Jim Webb

The work hike of 2/9 was moved to 2/10 due to rain. The weather was cool & cloudy. We used large rock and logs to make three steps in a section of trail made steep by erosion.



A perfect set of steps, no way to avoid them!

Wednesday, February 11, 2015
Crabtree Falls-The Priest-Spyrock-Montebello

David Youmans, Mike Vaughn, Doug Knighton, Kris Peckman and our lame duck editor Bob, Linda and Bill Connor, Simply Hilda ____, Christin Kastl, Madeleine Taylor (& Sassy), Steve Bowles, Dave and Peggy Agnor, and Dave Horst (leader).

The Roanoke folks piled into three vehicles and headed up I-81. I went to meet Dave and Peggy at the fish hatchery in Montebello in my truck. After leaving the Agnors' vehicle there, we headed to the starting point at Crabtree Falls.....but the others were not there. Shortly after, Mike pulls in, but still no sign of the Connors' vehicle with several of the other hikers. Apparently, Kris and Linda got into a deep conversation about knitting and they missed the turn, only to end up down at the Priest parking area. Eventually, they turned around and showed up. Can't really blame them....I know how riveting conversations about knitting can be.

This hike was billed with the first 6-7 miles uphill. It did not disappoint. The falls were spectacular, with gorgeous ice formations all the way up. The group split up rapidly along the long climb up Crabtree and up to the Priest. As we approached the summit of the

Priest we were treated to amazing ice crystal formations on the trees. Steve called it freezing fog. It created a wonderful canopy along the AT up to the summit, which constantly pelted us as the ice melted from the sun and fell from the trees. At the summit the view of the ice on the trees and the crystal clear day made the 7-mile climb well worth it.

The fast group, consisting of Steve, David Y, Christin, Doug, and myself headed back down south along the AT to Spyrock for lunch. The rest stopped at the Priest to eat and take in the view before heading over to Spyrock. Mike, always the club ambassador, hiked with our new friends, Dave and Peggy Agnor for the duration of the hike. They are great hikers and we hope they will join in when we do more hikes up Lexington way.

As was the theme on this hike, the 360° views from the top at Spyrock made this climb well worth it as well. The finish of this hike is a quick, well deserved downhill from Spyrock to the fish hatchery. We did not meet up at any point as a group on this hike, as the speeds of the hikers were so varied. But everyone finished and seemed to really enjoy such a spectacular day and scenery. Bob apparently pulled a calf muscle early in the hike but finished with a smile! (The following week Bob was the lame editor. ed.)

Thanks again to everyone who participated and made this day special!

Sunday, February 15, 2015 8:00 AM
Sunday, February 22, 2015 8:00 AM
Sunday, March 1, 2015 8:00 AM
Cascades/Barney's Wall

Val Dymond, Alan and Rebecca Dickerman, Chris Means



Means

After having been postponed twice, the hike was a go, but a late change in the weather forecast deterred all but 4 hikers. Even the fearful leader decided not to drive up there by herself after no one showed up at the Roanoke meeting place. As it turned out, we should all have believed the earlier forecast, because there was no precipitation and the temperatures were in the 30s. Here's Val's report of the hike:



Means

"The Cascades and Barney's Wall were amazingly beautiful today. Allan and Rebecca Dickerman and I enjoyed the day, and we passed late arrival Chris on our way out. We're sorry the Roanoke folks missed the hike. We had no precipitation in Blacksburg so everything was clear. The Falls were more frozen than I have ever seen them. The pool below was frozen solid so you could walk right up to the Falls. YakTrax were very helpful on the Cascades trail. Hike up to Barney's Wall was a bit of a slog in 14 inches of snow. Only 1 person had been up there prior to us, but we appreciated their footprints in the snow! Our return trek was easier as it was downhill and a little more compressed from our hike up to the lookout. We had a great view at the top! We passed many dozens of people on our return hike and found the Cascades parking lot jam-packed!"

Monday, February 23, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike

Cancelled by the weatherman.

Hike Schedule

<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/#calendar>

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.

**Sunday, March 29, 2015, 8:00 AM
North Mountain**

10.4 Miles, Moderate-Strenuous
\$2.00 Carpool fee, 18 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 in winter.

Kris Peckman540-366-7780

**Monday, April 6, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

**Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Saturday, April 11, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

**Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Sunday, April 12, 2015, 8:00 AM
Chessie Nature Trail**

6.2 miles, Easy
\$7.00 carpool fee; 47 miles from Roanoke

Following a former towpath and railroad bed, the Chessie Nature trail parallels the Maury River between Lexington and Buena Vista. Flat walking with plenty of geological, natural, pastoral and historical features to observe.

Kris Peckman540-366-7780

**Sunday, April 19, 2015, 8:00 AM
Longdale North Mountain Trail**

8.4 miles, Not too Strenuous

\$4.25 carpool fee, 42 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located about 8 miles east of Clifton Forge and will be U shaped with a short shuttle. We will start the hike on top of North Mountain and do a 2-mile ridge walk to an area known as Pete's Cave, then going down North Mountain and hiking out on an old Forest Service road to our shuttle location. The ridge walk is loaded with great views and Pete's Cave is a very interesting area.

John Merkwan540-904-2299

**Monday, April 20, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

**Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Sunday, May 3, 2015, 8:00 AM
Douthat State Park**

10.0 miles, Strenuous
\$3.00 carpool fee, 35 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Bath County in the George Washington National Forest near Clifton Forge. This hike is one of many possibilities in Douthat State Park. It will include Brushy Hollow Trail, Mountain Top Trail, Mountain Side Trail, Beards Gap Trail, Beards Gap Hollow Trail, Locust Gap Trail, and Stony Run Trail with some nice views of the lake and mountains.

Douthat charges \$3.00 parking per car.

Kris Peckman.....540-366-7780

**Monday, May 4 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Saturday, May 9, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Monday, May 18, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Sunday, May 31, 2015, 8:00 AM
Anthony Knob Loop

10 miles, Strenuous
 \$4.25 carpool fee, 42 miles from Roanoke

Located about 6 miles east of Clifton Forge in the Longdale Use Area of the George Washington National Forest, this hike has a little bit of everything. There are three trails in this area: Anthony Knob, Blue Suck and YACCRS Run at 4.7, 1.4 and 3 miles respectively. Lunch will be between two of Anthony's Knobs with a far off view of Iron Gate.

John Merkwan540-904-2299

Monday, June 1, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Monday, June 15, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Saturday, June 20, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.com

Monday, June 29, 2015, 8:30 AM
Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information of this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

Jim Webb540-562-8896
.....startover14@peoplepc.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 _____

Check here to save a tree and take only an e-Blazer Donation \$ _____

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

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

Editor's Notes

Please send hike reports, including Meetup hikes, to the new Blazer editor, Leigh Stover. A list of first and last names and as much or little else as you like. The best photos have only a few people as we can't print pictures large enough to see a lot of small faces. Pictures downloaded from the net often lack the quality needed for publication, so please email jpegs.

It has been rewarding to compose your inputs into a nice publication. Deadlines have been what made this editor want to retire and this is only going to get worse. By the time the next Blazer comes out, mail from one side of Roanoke to the other will be processed in

Greensboro, NC. Some of our Blazers will go from Greensboro to Charleston, WV before delivery. So please submit your Blazer material by June 1st. The best time to write a hike report is when it is fresh in your mind and then Leigh can paste them in without waiting for a crushing deadline.

Kris & I did our first hike with RATC in 1981 even before our possessions were moved to Roanoke. Don't expect to be rid of me any time soon.

Bob Peckman

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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 Blue Ridge Land Conservancy