

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 2019

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

March 16, 2019
Annual Meeting and Potluck

Workhikes

Monday, February 25 - 8:30 AM

Monday, March 4 - 8:30 AM

Monday, March 11 - 8:30 AM

Monday, March 25 - 8:30 AM

Trail Supervisor - Jim Webb
540-266-8537 – TrailSupervisor@ratc.org

BOARD MEETINGS

Glenvar Public Library
3917 Daugherty Rd, Salem 24153
(All members are always welcome.)

Monday, January 7, 7:00 PM

Monday, February 4, 7:00 PM

Monday, April 8, 7:00 PM

Hike Leader Training

Saturday, March 30, 9:00 AM

Josiah Leonard 540-986-5301

HikeMaster@ratc.org

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***** Last Printed Copy *****

Many of you have responded that you are satisfied looking at the Blazer online and we have recorded that. But we have mixed those who requested a printed copy with those who have never stated a preference. I believed that failure to discontinue implied that you wanted to continue receiving the printed Blazer. So if ***** Last Printed Copy ***** is printed on your label, and you want to continue receiving the printed Blazer, you need to email treasurer@ratc.org or phone Terri at 375-2650 to tell her.

Bob Peckman

President's Report

As we wrap up 2018 I want to thank everyone for their many contributions to the Appalachian Trail and wish everyone Happy Holidays and a great 2019!

Many of you either own or have observed Virginia Appalachian Trail Conservancy license plates. Our family has two (2) AT plates, i.e., THRU16 and HOOSHR. Proceeds from license plate sales are routed back to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), which uses a portion of those proceeds to fund the ATC Ridge runner program, among other initiatives. ATC, in turn, distributes a portion of the proceeds to the seven (7) Virginia AT clubs. I am pleased to report that RATC will be receiving proceeds in 2019 to pay for Wilderness First Aid training for five (5) RATC Hike Leaders. Thank you to RATC Hike master, Susan Herndon-Powell for her efforts to nominate this use of AT license plate proceeds!

Under the leadership of Kathryn Herndon-Powell, Dave Youmans and Brian Boggs, the McAfee Knob Taskforce completed a successful 2018 season, i.e., March – October.

- * 38 Volunteers – 175 patrols
- * 1,125 Volunteer Hours
- * 18,486 Visitors Seen
- * 560 Gallons of Trash Removed
- * 46 Fire Rings Dismantled

Thank you to this group of volunteers and another outstanding example of volunteers providing their talents and time to serve the AT!

Very exciting news! About a year ago, Acting A.T. Chief Ranger Carin Farley worked with the Blue Ridge Parkway to create a shared A.T./Blue Ridge Parkway law enforcement position. In mid November, Brian Wilson was hired for that position! Ranger Wilson lives in Vinton and has worked for a variety of National Parks, as well as for the US Forest Service, which should give him an excellent background for this position. Ranger Wilson attended the RATC Holiday Potluck and we look forward to working with him going forward.

The December 2018 issue of the RATC Trail Blazer will be the final edition distributed to all RATC members via US Mail. Instead, future editions will be distributed via email and posted on the RATC website (ratc.org). However, members who prefer to receive a paper copy going forward may continue receiving a paper copy by sending a written request to the RATC Treasurer. This RATC board decision, made after careful thought and discussion, recognizes that electronic communication versions provide rapid access to information and reduce costs associated with printing and mailing a hard copy newsletter. Bob Peckman, who has skillfully published and distributed a high quality RATC Trail Blazer for many years, will continue in his role as Trail Blazer Editor.

Several action items have been completed since the last Trail Blazer. These include:

- * Between November 29 and December 2 a group organized by Josh Kloehn, ATC and consisting of Konnarock alumni, Natural Bridge AT Club, Potomac AT Club, RATC and ATC volunteers braved cold temperatures and rain to complete the three (3) year Sinking Creek relocation project. This was a team effort and once again demonstrates the strong commitment of partners/volunteers to maintain the AT. This was a priority for RATC to complete this relocation prior to the 2019 hiking season and we are grateful and appreciative of the many volunteer hours that went into completing this long standing project. Special thanks to Bruce Agnew and Jim Webb for their significant contributions to this project!
- * Replacement of Pickle Branch Shelter privy and approximately forty (40) steps leading to Pickle Branch Shelter water source.
- * Addition of eighty (80) stone steps on AT approaching Dragon's Tooth, significantly increasing the safety of this heavily used section.
- * Addition of thirty five (35) wood steps to Andy Layne Trail to improve safety of steep section near trailhead parking lot.

* RATC Holiday Potluck on December 8 with excellent presentation by Tim Lewis of his participation in the Inca Marathon. Event was well organized by Scott Karns and attended by approximately 80 RATC members.

Congratulations to Diana Christopulos who has been appointed to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy President's Advisory Committee. In this role she will advise Suzanne Dixon, ATC President regarding overall ATC management and strategy. Diana continues to be a dedicated steward of the AT as she monitors the Mountain Valley pipeline and works with other partner organizations to insure Mountain Valley follows all rules and regulations.

Weather this fall, i.e., Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael took a toll on our section of the AT with multiple trees/obstructions across the AT and damage to bridges. Bridges over Dismal Creek and Sinking Creek were damaged with subsequent repairs. The bridge over Craig Creek on the Andy Layne Trail, i.e., route to

Tinker Cliffs, was completely knocked off its foundation and swept down the creek. This is a very popular hiking route. RATC volunteers led by Jim Webb replaced and repaired the bridge within several days at cost of approximately \$1000 in lumber and materials.

At this point we anticipate two (2) openings on the RATC board beginning March 2019. This is a great opportunity to increase your involvement in RATC and ATC. If you are interested in these RATC board openings or know someone who may be interested, please reach out to me.

Mark your calendar for March 16, 2019 as date for RATC Annual Meeting with location and time TBD.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve. I welcome your comments and suggestions in an effort to be sure RATC fulfills our mission to be stewards of the AT. I hope to see you on the AT, hiking or performing trail maintenance.

Jim Beeson

Member News

We are happy to welcome the following new members:

*Anja Whittington
Carter Bailey
Tracy Prillaman
Conner Radtke
Mary Lou Legg
Colin Stewart
Michelle Cook*

*Brent & Katherine Jones
Jon Shaffer
Jennifer Steding
Janet & Tim Jonas
Carissa Crowe
Steve & Erin Hawkins
Lisa Marsh*

*Nancy Galvan
Daniel Willard
Susan Sanders
Mark Brenton
Layne Lee
Eric Hanson
Sean O'Hare*

113-Mile Patch:

Bill Hackworth

Contributions:

*Siegfried Kolmstetter
Donna Logan*

*Stafford Query
Eric Giebelstein*

*Walter Mushlitz
(non-member from Easton PA)*

Hikemaster's Report

As I am writing this, we just received a whopping 13 inches of snow in the Roanoke Valley! I took the opportunity to dust off my snowshoes and snowshoed around some of our great local parks. I hope you also had the opportunity to enjoy the snow.

This is a great time of year to think about all the trails you want to hike in the coming year. Several of our hike leaders have just put a few hikes on the winter calendar. Consider joining us to explore the magic of a wintery forest. You can sign-up for all RATC hikes through our Meetup page. We would also like to encourage anyone interested in leading hikes for RATC to sign up for our next New Hike Leader Training on Saturday, March 30. You can register for the New

Hike Leader Training by emailing me at hikemaster@ratc.org or by signing up through the Meetup event.

Sadly, this will be my last New Hike Leader Training. I will be vacating my position as Hike Master and turning over the reins to the very capable Josiah Leonard, who is currently serving as a Counselor on RATC's board. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the RATC board and look forward to continuing to stay active with the club. Please welcome Josiah as he transitions into his role as Hike Master. He will be co-hosting the New Hike Leader Training with me. Happy Trails!

Susan Herndon-Powell

Sinking Creek Relo - Open'er Up!



This was a super team

Sinking Creek History:

Konnarock weeks at Sinking Creek:

2016 - Weeks 8 & 12

2017 - Weeks 4, 9 & 10

2018 - Weeks 2, 7, 8, 9 & 10

Over the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Konnarock seasons, there were 136 volunteer-days (Konnarock & RATC) for a total of 4,477 hours to the Sinking Creek Relocation. There were also RATC work hikes not counted in this total. It was still unfinished and RATC wanted to see this section open for the 2019 hiking season.

This technical project was completed in the Trail Crew off-season thanks to an incredible "Special Forces" effort coordinated by Josh Kloehn. Once Dina Bennett donated lodging at Mountain Shepherd Wilderness Survival School, and Janet Gibbons volunteered her time to cook for the crew, Josh put the call out to seasoned volunteers from Konnarock, RATC, NBATC and OCVT. Those folks rallied, with as many as 22 volunteers showing up in chilly, sometimes wet conditions to make sure the final portion of this relocation

would be as durable, sustainable, and downright beautiful as the trail that had been built over 10 weeks of Konnarock. In total, 31 volunteers contributed 545 hours over the 5-day Special Forces week. Over 200 rock steps were counted on the final day.



Konnarock volunteers enjoyed a fantastic meal at the RATC Corn Boil. The immense mutual respect between the local RATC volunteers and the Konnarock crew has been a really enjoyable part of this project. The beautiful stone work reflects the expertise of the Konnarock crew leaders as well as seasoned RATC and Konnarock volunteers, and even some experts like Fred Lashley and Artie Hidalgo who came from far away when they heard there was some technical trailbuilding going on.



From the start, this project has benefited from a great deal of support from RATC. Trail Supervisor Jim Webb worked with the crew just about every Konnarock week, alongside other dedicated RATC members. Each summer, the



Last but not least, I'd like to particularly thank some community partners in Craig County who played a big role behind the scenes. Joe's Trees provided a convenient and scenic field camp for the Konnarock Crew for 3 summers, complete with outrageous luxuries like wifi, flush toilets, and amusing barnyard animals. And Special Forces week could not have happened without the hospitality of Mountain Shepherd, enhanced by Janet's great cooking.

The best photos by far are the ones taken by Roanoke Times photographer Matt Gentry, AKA Sharpie, who came out to cheer the crew along (with donuts!) and sketch on the final day. Here's the link to the album:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/atconservancy/albums/72157701244843162>

Kathryn Herndon-Powell



See that cut ribbon flying in the air!

Hike Reports

Saturday, September 22, 2018 8:00 AM Dripping Rock - Old AT - Shamokin Gorge

David Horst (leader) + guest, Josiah Leonard, Terri McClure, Tom, Carina Hughes, Jonathan Kitchens, Julie Petruska

Sunday, September 30, 2018 8:00 AM Pine Swamp VA-635 - VA-632/John's Creek Rd RATC Hike #10

Kathryn & Susan Herndon-Powell (leaders), David Wickersham, Josiah Leonard, Jenny Steding, Carissa Crowe, Ken Myers, Dee Case, Randy & Jill Pennington, and Clare Weaver

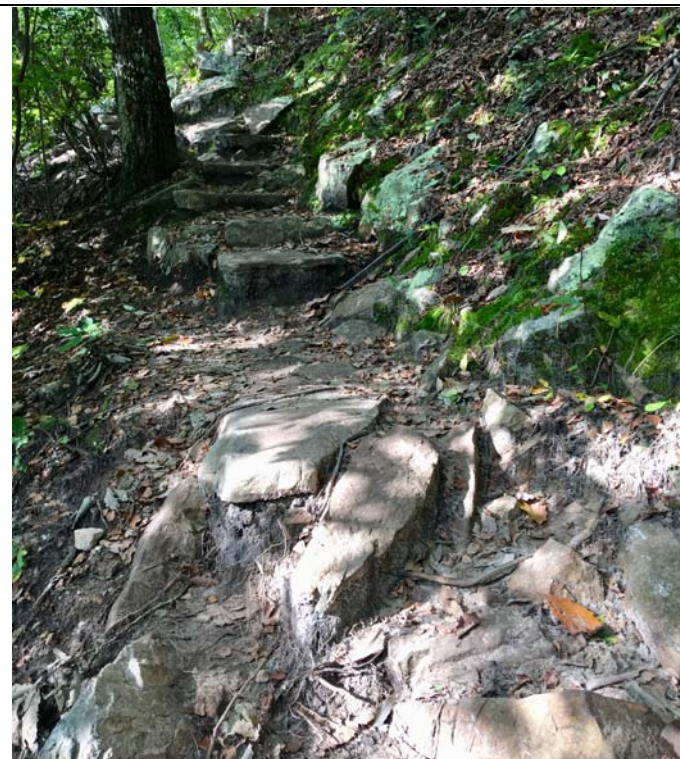


After meeting briefly at the Orange Market, we divided into two groups, one that would hike north from Pine Swamp and the other that would hike south from John's Creek. It was a lovely day for a hike, partly cloudy that gave way to sunny skies so that each group had a great view at Wind Rock. Both groups met in roughly the middle of the hike just south of VA-613 and exchanged keys for the drive home. This allowed us to only have to bring four cars and help us maximize the daylight hours.

Monday, October 1, 2018 8:30 AM Work Hike on the AT

Jim Webb (Leader), Bill Neilan, Mark Farrell, Bob Egbert, Brent Scott, Jerry Anderson, Mike Vaughn, Jim Beeson

We had been working most of the summer on the trail up to Dragon's Tooth and this was the first day we had moderate temperatures. The high was 76 degrees. This was our seventh work hike rehabbing



Before & After

Webb



the trail up to the Tooth. Since there were eight of us, we separated into two groups. We managed to work at four separate spots along the trail, mainly installing steps in steep, rough areas. About a half dozen south-bound thruhikers of various ages

passed by during the day. They were very grateful for the improvements to the trail. We also saw about the same number of section hikers as well as some day hikers. By the end of the day we had installed 12 stone steps and cribbed about 15 feet of trail. We also leveled a large stone slab that was being used as part of the trail treadway. This brings to 77 the total steps installed along this section of trail over the course of the seven work hikes there. We have worked our way about halfway up to Dragon's Tooth from Lost Spectacles Gap.

**Friday, October 12, 2018 8:00 AM
Caldwell, Switzer & Prices Mountains Loop**

Josiah Leonard (leader) and Julie Petruska

This hike began to feel as if it were cursed with bad weather as our first date in June was cancelled due to anticipated severe weather (that ultimately did not materialize) and our second date saw the remnants of Hurricane Michael cause some of the worst flooding seen in parts of the Roanoke Valley since 1985. We were finally able to make it to the woods the day after the flooding, but not before our already small group was cut in half as one participant had her car stuck at Carilion and another had all routes to the hike blocked. Nevertheless, we persisted.

The weather for our hike was stunning – clear, blue skies, seasonally cool temperatures, and a light breeze. We got started with a brief warm-up along a forestry road and our first creek crossing of the day before trekking off-trail to the ridge of Switzer Mountain. We had a couple of exceptional viewpoints from which the entire hike route could be seen. We made it to a major slot in the ridge, then descended all the way back to Kelly Creek. We then did a “hollow follow” to a gap in Price Mountain, then passed over knob after knob on the Price Mountain Trail.

Crossing Va. 606, we completed the southern section of the loop, following the long and windy road along Broad Run Mountain and climbing to the ridge of Caldwell Mountain from the saddle. We had to search a little while to find the right spot to veer off the ridge to find the impressive rock slide on the western slope, but we were glad we did as it provided the best viewpoint of the day with

unobstructed views into Craig County and beyond. The original plan was to scale down the rocks and along a fork of Catawba Creek back to the car, but with time running short, we decided to scale back to the ridge to follow the spine of the ridge as it crashed to the creek. Easier said than done. But, after some fancy foot work and Julie opting to slide at one point, we arrived at the creek, crossed, then found the car. Julie is hereby awarded at least her second lifetime “Good Sport Award.” A stop at Ballast Point on the way home was never more refreshing or deserved!

**Monday, October 15, 2018 8:30 AM
Work Hike on the AT**

Bill Neilan, Dave Horst, Mark Farrell, Susan Terwilliger, Julie Petruska & Jim Webb

Cooler weather was the order of the day as we headed up the Dragons Tooth trail to the AT. This work hike I wanted to try something new. On the trail, erosion had opened a hole in the trail all the way to bare rock. It was difficult to climb over in dry weather and dangerous in wet weather.



The Hole is Gone

Webb

The process starts with jamming some large rocks into the bottom of the opening and build on those. Add crushed rock until it is filled to the top. The large rocks keep the crush from falling out.

**Saturday, October 20, 2018 8:00 AM
Terrapin Mountain Loop**

Josiah Leonard (leader), Jenny Steding, Wilma Vargas, and Stephen Foster

We had a cool, overcast day for hiking Terrapin Mountain, a jewel of a mountain on the eastern flank of the Peaks of Otter / Apple Orchard Massif. It was great to welcome a first-time RATC hiker (Stephen), one of our club's newest active members (Jenny), and one of our club's most well-travelled hikers (Wilma).

The hike started with a grueling, steep climb up the eastern slope of the mountain with grades frequently going well above 20%. Even after reaching the ridge and turning south, the climb was still arduous, but every group member handled the climb well. We stopped for our first viewpoint toward the James River Face Wilderness, then kept trudging our way toward the summit. The summit proper is wooded, but just beneath the summit we reached Turtle Rock with its stunning view toward the Peaks of Otter to our south and across the Virginia Piedmont. We ate lunch, but the persistent, cold wind encouraged us to keep the break short.

Once in the lee of the mountain, it was a fairly steep drop to Camping Gap, then an easy descent to Reed Creek through pleasant forest. Wilma earned the "best creek-crosser" award as she weaved her way across both wide crossings without getting wet or taking off her boots. Stephen was in the running until he accidentally threw his shoe into the second crossing! Wilma's daughter and her friend joined us for the final leg of the hike as we rolled over the descending ridges of the mountain and crossed several smaller streams, some with moderate waterfalls. The sun, which could not seem to break through the stubborn clouds and fog, finally made an appearance as we neared the end. We had a great hike with a very capable group!

**Friday, October 19 to Wednesday, October 24
Andy Layne Catawba-Creek Bridge**

Homer & Therese Witcher, Kevin Witcher, Dave Horst, Mike Vaughn, Bill Neilan, Mark Farrell, Dave Youmans, Jim Beeson & Jim Webb

Every now and then, we have to take time out from our normal routine of trail maintenance to respond to an abnormal occurrence or emergency, Such was the case after hurricane Michael.



It's Gone!

Webb

Craig Creek on the Andy Layne trail has a history of flooding in heavy rains. It proved this again in mid October when hurricane Michael dropped 3-4 inches of rain on our area. The bridge over the creek did what it is supposed to do: it floated off the far foundation and swung back to allow the water to flow. This has happened many times before.

The problem this time however is that the foundation on the other side of the creek was washed away. Not only did we lose the foundation but the flooding also washed away 3 feet of the opposing bank, which meant the stringers crossing the creek would now be too short.

The first item that needed to be done was to build a new foundation on the other side of the creek. We received permission from Roanoke Cement to drive the materials for the foundation down thru the fields to the fence and carried them the rest of the way.

Building the crib for the foundation went pretty quickly but filling it with rock took 5 people a full day to complete. Almost 10 tons were required.



Foundation Crib

Webb

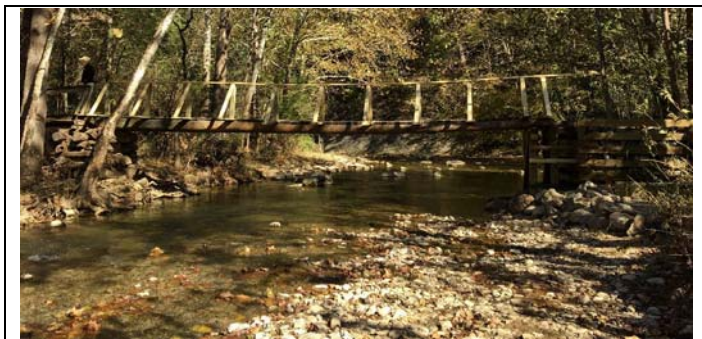
Next, we had to winch the stringers, one by one, across the creek and up onto the completed foundation. Since the stringers were now too short, we had to get creative with a couple of supports out in front. Re-decking was completed and a new handrail was added since the old one was lost in the flood.



Stringers

Webb

The bridge was completed with 4 days of work over 5 days with only a few wet feet.



Finished Bridge

Webb

(Editor's note: When Andy Layne maintained this section it was part of the AT. It was hastily assembled when Dr. Johnson threw us off McAfee's Knob. From the bridge it went straight up the creek to Lost Spectacles Gap. The current bridge was just a log and a handrail and Andy had to replace it at least once per year. We did not put his name on something he loved but rather something he hated with a passion but did because he loved the AT with a passion. Those who knew Andy are blessed.)

**Wednesday, October 24, 2018 9:00 AM
Dragon's Tooth**

Carissa Crowe (leader), Terri McClure, David Youmans, and Mia



View from Dragon's Tooth

Crowe

Mia, Terri, David, and I descended upon Dragon's Tooth. It was a crisp fall morning so we were bundled up in many layers. We met at 9 am near the trail entrance and shared back stories as we had never met before. We became fast friends.

The walk up was densely populated aside from a local group organized by the city. We passed them and offered encouragement along the way. Ridge Runner Dave dropped back a few times to check on other hikers and to offer support and wisdom. Mia, Terri, and I continued to swap stories, share snacks, and stroll along like we were on holiday until we made it to the summit and back. All in all, we had a splendid day filled with nature, good humor, and fresh air.

**Sunday, October 28, 2018 9:00 AM
John's Creek Mountain / Kelly's Knob**

Joe Berney (leader), Michael Lee, David Jones, Dee Case, Dave Ropiski

We started with a cool, windy and misty morning, climbing to the ridge of John's Creek Mountain. We stopped at Kelly's Knob for a visit and photo op, and then descended the trail on down to Laurel Creek Shelter. The sun came out, the sky turned blue and we began removing layers. After a quick lunch, we continued north down across the rolling pastures to some beautiful vistas with leaf colors showing, across Hwy 42, up the bald and down again to the parking area.



The conversation was great. Hearing the stories of Dave's previous TWO thru-hikes and David's thru-hike was informative. We passed many more SOBO thru-hikers than we expected and a few section hikers.

**Monday, October 29, 2018 8:30 AM
Andy Layne Trail Bridge**

Jim Webb, Laura Legere, Mike Vaughn, Mark Farrell, Georgia Shaurette, Bill Neilan, Jim Beeson, and Paul Tillinghast



The ramp puts the icing on it. Webb

With beautiful fall weather in the air, we met at the Andy Layne trailhead for our work hike. Part of this work hike was to install a ramp on the recently repaired bridge over Catawba Creek. We split into two groups with Jim B., Bill N. and Jim W. building the ramp while the remainder went back up to the hill nearest the parking lot to prepare to install some log steps on the steep uphill section.

Everything went smoothly with the ramp, and we soon rejoined the others and proceeded to install ten log steps. We will have to return in the near future and install another 12 - 15 on this section.

**Saturday, November 1 to 4, 2018 8:30 AM
Pickle Branch Shelter
Privy Move & Water Trail Rehab**

Homer & Therese Witcher (leaders), Jim Webb (leader), Kevin Witcher, Mark Farrell, Susan Terwilliger, Fred Meyer, Nathan & Taylor Peterson, Jayden Durham, Adam Day, Mike Vaughn, Darin Witcher, Brenin Witcher, Ryan Witcher, Bill Neilan, John Hvozdovic, Bennett Witcher, Laura Puckett, Tom Twomey, David Youmans

On November 1, Homer, Therese, Kevin and Jim started digging the new hole for the privy. We also scouted out trees for the steps on the water trail. On November 3, a couple of trees were felled for the new steps on the water trail. Everyone set to work, carrying the logs, digging on the privy hole, staining over the graffiti on the shelter and rehabbing the water trail.

On November 4, there were 2 crews, one rehabbing the water trail and the other digging on the privy hole. By 11 o'clock, the privy hole was over 5 feet and everyone set to work moving the privy over the new hole and covering the old hole.



Down



Down



**And Down she goes.
Where she stops...5 Feet Peterson**

**Sunday, November 11, 2018 9:00 AM
Hay Rock**

Chris Means (leader), Kris & Bob Peckman, Madeleine Taylor, Brian Boggs, Maya Bohler, Theresa Conti, Carol Rowlett, Shawn Buck, and Lin Yeng

Nine friends and myself tackled an 8-mile in and out AT day hike near Daleville, VA on Sunday. We represented the RATC and ROAG hiking clubs and at a brisk 25 degrees at the onset it didn't take us long to warm up, considering the first 1.5 miles are mostly uphill. We had some clear weather affording us spectacular views of Carvins Cove, which is by the way the second largest municipal park in the US!! A great day to be outside for sure. Be well peeps... and Get Your Outside On !!!

**Monday, November 12, 2018 8:00 AM
Pearis Cemetery to Big Horse Gap
RATC Hike #11**

Susan & Kathryn Herndon-Powell (leaders), Susan Terwilliger, Georgia Shaurette, Laura Legere, Dina Bennett, Ken Myers, Matthew Burnett
And guest Mitchell Imbriani

It was chilly and overcast when we dropped off two cars at Pearis Cemetery on our way to Sugar Run

Gap on Monday, November 12. After hiking north on the AT about a mile from Sugar Run Gap, we stopped for a view of Wilburn Valley and a group photo. Good thing we did because it turned cloudy and rainy soon after we departed the view. Upon arriving at Docs Knob Shelter, we encountered two thru-hikers and one section hiker eating their lunch out of the rain. We took the opportunity to eat an early lunch ourselves. The rain soon turned to sleet and a group decision was made that two of us would hike back and move all the cars to Pearis Cemetery. We were concerned the road to Sugar Run Gap would turn icy with the falling temperatures. That plan worked well, and Georgia Shaurette and I met the remaining hikers with hot cocoa on Cross Ave before the group made their final descent back to Pearis Cemetery. A hearty group of hikers we were!

**Monday, November 12, 2018 8:30 AM
Pickle Branch Shelter Water Trail Rehab.**

Jim Webb, Mike Vaughn, Mark Farrell, and Jim Beeson



This hike was a follow up to the work that we did when the privy was moved last week. We had gotten off to a good start at repairing the steps down the water trail to the creek using a combination of natural rock features and log steps. After removing 4 rotten steps, we added 18 new ones. The log steps were cut from a stand of White Oak near the top of the hill and carried down to the creek.

This work hike was no different as we again cut the steps from the top of the hill and carried them down. With rain due to start at about noon, we hurried and installed 10 steps before the rain drops spoiled the party.

It looks like one further trip over here will be needed to finish the trail.

**Friday, November 16, 2018 10:00 AM
McAfee Knob**

Chris Means (leader), Josiah Leonard, Madeleine Taylor, David Horst, Terri McClure, Ken Myers, Nancy Wallace, Julie Petruska, Paul Winter, Laura Legere, Jennifer Frye, and Mike Vaughn

This past Friday at McAfee Knob was without a doubt one of the most beautiful cold weather day hikes I've ever done in my life. I led a group of 10+ hikers from the RATC up to the Knob from the Rt 311 side starting out at 10 am. Roanoke just missed a size-able ice storm Thursday night by about 2 degrees, but McAfee Knob did not.



Be well peeps... and ... Get Your Outside On !!!

**Tuesday, November 20, 2018 8:30 AM
Pickle Branch Shelter Water Trail Rehab.**

Jim Webb (Leader), Mark Farrell, Mike Vaughn, Jim Beeson, Sandie Myers

This was our third work hike installing steps on the side trail down to Pickle Branch from the shelter. Hikers use the trail to get drinking water while staying at the shelter. The trail is about 200 yards long with the last 60 yards being very steep down to the creek. On the previous two hikes we had installed 26 new log steps on this section. We were hoping to finish the project today.

It was cloudy, cold, and windy when we started out. We were able to start out at a trail neighbor's property, which reduced the hike by about a mile. The trail up was alongside beautiful Pickle Branch. We had to cross the creek three times, however. Upon arrival, three of us started installing steps that had been cut previously, while Jim and Mark went up and cut down a tree for additional logs. The tree was located a few hundred yards from the work site so it was a long way to carry each cut log. The work went quickly in the cool weather. By one o'clock we had installed 15 steps, completing the set of steps down to the creek. We were all very happy with the results. It will be much safer for hikers going down there now.

**Sunday, November 25, 2018 11:00 AM
Jenny's Knob to Kimberling Creek**

Joe Berney (leader), Michael Lee, Dee Case, Ken Myers, Jennifer Harvey Frye, Susan Saunders, Shawn Buck, and Maria Bowling

We started the hike on what was a beautiful late November morning. The skies were clear with the temperature in the low 50's. After stopping for a quick photo at the RATC section sign we began our trek north, along the crest of Jenny's Knob. We noticed an unusual, but funny sign along the trail letting us know that "Jet Skis prohibited in this area". After cresting the peak, we visited the shelter, and then made our way down to the road crossing where we began our ascent of the next uphill. We stopped along the peak for a quick lunch, continued a ridge-walk to a camp area where we stopped for a group photo op, then began our descent. Almost at the end, we encountered a large fallen tree in the most inopportune spot, a steep, muddy slope. We carefully negotiated the tree and finished shortly after on the bridge where we once again took a few minutes for a group photo. As usual, the company and conversation were the highlight of the hike! A great group to hike with.

**Monday, November 26, 2018 8:30 AM
Work Hike on the AT**

Jim Webb, Mike Vaughn, David Horst, Jim Beeson, Sandie Meyers, and Bill Neilan

It was a seasonably cool day when we started out from the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. Surprisingly, we all got quite warm on the hike up to Lost Spectacles Gap, probably due to all of the tools we were carrying. We moved up the AT about a quarter mile to a rough section of the AT that needed some steps. We started work there preparing the trail for steps and looking about for rocks to use as steps. Sandie also got busy making crushing rocks with her new rock hammer. While we were working three south-bounders passed by. One had started out from Mount Katahdin on June 26. This was quite late in the year to see thru-hikers. The work went steadily and by 2:00 we had installed ten stone steps and 20 square feet of cribbing.

This was the next to last work hike for the year. It has been a great year for trail maintenance on our section of trail. Among other accomplishments, we have installed over 250 stone or log steps this year. These include 87 stone steps on the trail up to Dragon's Tooth, 50 steps near Rocky Gap, 41 steps on the blue blazed trail near Pickle Branch Shelter, and 36 steps on the Andy Layne Trail.

**Wednesday, November 28, 2018 9:00 AM
Carvins Cove - Brushy Mountain**

Maya Bohler (leader), Mary Harshfield, Madeleine Taylor

On this coldest day of the year so far only 3 hardy people showed up. The weather forecast was for sunny, cold and high winds, with wind chill temperatures in the 20s. Several people backed out at the last minute.

We met at the parking lot on Timberview Rd., all bundled up in our winter gear. We hiked up to Brushy Mountain. Since we were concerned about the high winds on the ridge we decided to change our plans and shorten the hike. Instead of following the fire road to the southwest to the end of the Carvins Cove Preserve we went in the opposite direction as far as the Gauntlet. From there we descended to the Horsepen and hiked back to our cars. Most of the time we were sheltered from the heavy winds.

The day was clear and sunny and turned out much more pleasant than expected. The 6-1/2 mile hike was perfect for the cold day, and we had a good time.

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

Both hikers and leaders, please go to <https://www.ratc.org/regional-hiking-resources/> and click on Bob Peckman's Regional Hike List to consult the hike descriptions at <http://peckmanjazz.com/HIKERATC.HTM> Tell me how to make the descriptions better. Try to use the name and description when posting a hike on Meetup, or maybe suggest changes or new hikes.

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. Make requests if we don't fill your needs.

Hikes are rated by length and terrain so hikers can evaluate them based on their individual strengths.
 Easy terrain – Greenways or old roads
 Moderate terrain – Typical AT
 Strenuous terrain – long climbs and rough trails
 Challenging – neglected trails and bushwhacking

Shuttle lengths are included to calculate carpool fees of \$0.10/one-way mile. We carpool to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging the carpool. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the carpool fee is for the driving expenses.

If you are new to hiking or unfamiliar with the hike, contact the leader who will be glad to help you evaluate whether the hike is appropriate for you and also if you are properly equipped. Hike leaders should recommend that you don't come if you are not prepared with equipment or condition.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. RATC needs you! Get on Meetup and lead a hike or contact the leader on a hike and offer to assist. Come out for the next hike-leader training. Contact Susan Herndon-Powell, hikemaster@ratc.org.

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New and 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 the instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips.

Name(s) _____	New Member Packet Fee	\$5.00 _____
Address _____	Indiv. # of years _____	x \$15.00 _____
City _____ State ____ Zip _____ - _____	Family # of years _____	x \$20.00 _____
Home Phone _____ Second Phone _____	Individual Life membership	\$250.00 _____
Email _____	Family life membership	\$300.00 _____
Dues are payable in January of each year. Make checks payable to RATC.		
Please send dues and any questions about money or membership to		
Treasurer, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024, or use PayPal at ratc.org.	Donation	\$ _____
	Amount Enclosed	\$ _____

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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