

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Fall 2007

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.



Dick Clark wheeling the relo - by Frank Haranzo

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President's Message

As Executive Director of the Western Virginia Land Trust, I am pleased to report that your local land trust has taken a very public position to insure permanent protection of the 12,700 acre Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, which has fourteen miles of the AT on its border between McAfee's Knob and Daleville. I have copied the Position Statement below and some further details on this exciting initiative. Several days after we spoke with Mayor Nelson Harris and the Governor visited Roanoke to celebrate the conservation of Tinker Mountain by WVLT, Hollins, the Regional Water Authority and Private landowners, Mayor Harris announced his support of our efforts to preserve Carvins Cove with an easement in his state of the city address to the Chamber of Commerce. If all goes according to plan we may have an easement to Council for a vote before Christmas. What a gift to our citizens that would be.

WESTERN VIRGINIA LAND TRUST POSITION STATEMENT

The Western Virginia Land Trust recommends that the City of Roanoke place conservation easements on portions of Mill Mountain Park and Carvins Cove Natural Reserve.

Mill Mountain Park and Carvins Cove Natural Reserve are two of the Valley's most precious and unique natural resources. Preservation of these assets, through conservation easements, would clearly demonstrate that the citizens of Roanoke value green space, outdoor recreation, tourism and quality of life and want these lands protected now and for generations to come. Permanent preservation of Mill Mountain Park and Carvins Cove would also strengthen the Valley's sustainable economic future. The easements would make permanent the

recommendations of the Mill Mountain Park Management Plan that City Council approved in 2006 and the Carvins Cove Land Use Management Plan approved in 2000. The Mill Mountain easement would apply to the slopes and sides of Mill Mountain and not to the approximately 15 acres at the top of the mountain, which may not be appropriate for a state-held conservation easement due to the existing development and intensive land uses of that property. The WVLT recommends that future development on the top of the mountain be conducted according to the recommendations in the Mill Mountain Park Management Plan. A conservation easement on Carvins Cove Natural Reserve would protect a significant water supply for the Valley and fourteen miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and its watershed. This easement would provide the most cost-effective way to protect the water quality of Carvins Cove while allowing for appropriate recreational uses.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees 7/11/07

An easement on the 12,700-acre Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, the second-largest city park in America, would be the largest conservation easement in the history of Virginia. Situated just northeast of the City and located mainly in Botetourt County, Carvins Cove makes up a vital part of the Roanoke Valley's water supply and is also a prime location for outdoor recreation, including hiking, canoeing, fishing, and mountain biking. Preserving a treasure like Carvins Cove would help to showcase Roanoke as a green city that is attractive to people who want to enjoy the outdoors.

Roger Holnback

Land Management Supervisor AT Corridor Boundary Monitoring

Does doing some bushwhacking, using a quadrant compass and learning some survey map reading skills sound interesting to you? With the leadership of Sally Naser, ATC Boundary Program Manager, a group of RATC members, including Bob Stimson, Frank Harzano and Greg Bryant, did some boundary monitoring work on June 7 & 8 near the

Mt. Catawba/McAfee Knob and Daleville area. Anyone interested in spending some time working in the woods, locating and maintaining boundary medallions and blazes should contact Bob Stimson, RATC Land Management Supervisor, at bpstimson@verizon.net for details. It is a fun, challenging and worthwhile experience.

Bob Stimson

Trail Supervisor's Report

The RATC Konnarock T-shirt winners for 2007 are: Malcolm Black, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Peggy Bryant, Dick Clark, Bill Gordge, Dana Helsley, Jerry Kyle, Charles Parry, Maurice Turner, Homer Witcher and Therese Witcher. We had a total of 35 people work with the crews this summer and the Angel's Gap relocation is now completed and open.



Therese & Homer Witcher and Dick Clark
At one end of the Angel's Gap relocation
The result of many years' work - photo Frank Haranzo

Most of our work this fall will be only about ½ mile south of Angel's Gap where we plan to do a series of switchbacks on the next steep climb on Tinker Ridge. The one possible exception is the October workhike that we have again scheduled for Pine

Swamp Shelter repairs. As of now, I would say it is probably 50-50 that it will get postponed again. I hope not, but that and a quarter will get you a cup of coffee. The problem seems to be that this shelter is in the Peter's Mountain Wilderness Area. When the Wilderness Bill was passed, trail shelters were grandfathered in. However, some people in the Forest Service believe that when major repairs are required, the shelter should be torn down. Like any issue, it has two sides. But the upshot of the matter is that we will not be allowed to repair the shelter until or unless the verdict is to allow this shelter to remain in the Wilderness Area. If the shelter work is again postponed, I will reschedule the Sunday part of the work trip for Tinker Ridge.

In another issue, we have had a few overseer changes in recent months. Leonard and Laurie Adkins gave up the McAfee Knob section before starting their thru hike. Frank Haranzo and Greg Bryant have taken their section. Ed Bessel retired from Sawtooth and Sandstone Ridges and Mac McDaniel has taken his place. He joins Ralph Hart and Maurice Turner who also work on that section. Dave Hicks has also retired as overseer for the trail section from Big Horse Gap north to the powerline on Pearis Mountain. Matt Gentry will be replacing Dave. I want to thank Dave, Ed, Leonard and Laurie for many years of good service. I also want to thank Frank, Greg, Mac and Matt for volunteering to be overseers. Matt lives in Blacksburg, so Sugar Run is not too far for him to drive. He and I have already reblazed part of it.

Also, Dave Hrdlicka has retired from the Forest Service. He has been the trail liaison person from the Blacksburg office for several years. He has been a pleasure to work with, and he will be missed.

Charles Parry

Conservation Supervisor's Report

Hike to Celebrate our 75th Anniversary!

As most of you know, we are celebrating this year the 75th anniversary of the Roanoke AT Club. We had a great turnout for the corn boil, but don't stop celebrating; fall is here. I am issuing a challenge to Club members to hike 75 miles of the AT to celebrate our anniversary. You're learning this late in the year, but you can count what you have already hiked. Guidelines:

1. Count miles AT hiked between January 1, 2007 and the Annual Meeting in March 2008.
2. Record a simple list of the dates you hiked each section and the length of each section.
3. You may not count the same section twice.
4. Your miles do not all have to be on RATC's section, but what a great opportunity to get your 113-mile patch.
5. When you complete 75 miles (by March 1, 2008), turn in your records to Liz Belcher (lbelcher@roanokecountyva.gov) and receive a special 75th anniversary memento at the Annual Meeting. If you've already finished your miles, turn them in now. See you on the Trail!

And now my report:

When Bill Lamson and Dick Clark twisted my arm to come on the RATC board, my "assignment" was to update the RATC Land Management Plan. It has been several years and I still haven't done it! After all, who wants to fool with the drudgery of paperwork when they could be out on the Trail. Recent discussions with the Forest Service and ATC have prompted me to dig out our current plan. Wow, Bill Gordge did a great job on one of the first Club management plans. The only problem is that the last update, according to ATC, was in 1991. Since then, ATC has issued volumes of "guidance" and thus an update may well be a re-write. It will take lots of prodding by all of you to get me and the Board to finish this, but ask about it whenever you see us to keep us moving. You can help by sending me updates on conditions as you see them. The goal: Have an updated plan, or at least a draft, by the Annual Meeting.

Liz Belcher

Hikemaster's Report

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving. – Albert Einstein

We have a full hiking schedule this Fall. The leaves are changing and the weather is getting cooler and crisper. It's a great time to get out and get moving. Many of us in this area don't realize how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful section of the country. I receive e-mails from people from many different states who are planning hiking trips to our area. Many have read or heard about Virginia's "Triple Crown" of hiking vistas: Dragon's Tooth, McAfee Knob, and Tinker Cliffs. We will be visiting all three of these locations on our Fall hikes, so come out and join us on these or any of the other upcoming club hikes.

We have added articles about outdoor activities in both hot weather and cold weather to our web site, www.RATC.org. The articles provide information about what to wear and what to do in the event of cold

or hot weather health emergencies.

We have included a number of documents in the "Trail Information" section that are useful to members and hike leaders, including the hike sign up sheet and hike leader and overnight hike guidelines. We have also included links to information on National Forest trails in our area and locations to purchase A.T. and other trail maps.

RATC board member and secretary Fred Coughlan has completed hiking the entire 2,175 mile length of the Appalachian Trail. He completed his hike at the northern terminus of the A.T., Mount Katahdin in Maine, on August 26. Fred has been section-hiking the A.T. over the past four years. It was an eventful summer for Fred. In June he was bitten on the hand by a poisonous copperhead snake while working on the section of trail he helps maintain near Black Horse Gap.

Mike Vaughn

TRAIL CONSERVANCY SEEKS VOLUNTEER WATER-WATCHERS

What's fun and also noble and scientific and a pretty good excuse to get out of the house for a few hours, while contributing a little bit of information to a planetary body of knowledge...that just might help save Earth as we know it?

Learn more about World Water Monitoring Day on the A.T. Sign up to test water temperature, pH, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen at one of hundreds of sites along the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) from Maine to Georgia.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), feels the 250,000 acres of public lands in its care constitute a nearly perfect outdoor laboratory for monitoring the health of the environment of the eastern United States.

The ATC, launching an expansive environmental-monitoring program it calls the Appalachian Trail Megatransect, is a partner with the Water Environment Federation in hosting World Water Monitoring Day—really a month of days that begins September 18. ATC volunteers have been taking water samples in selective locations for several years, but the organization needs this kind of concentrated, trailwide effort to establish a true baseline against which later tests can be measured and to provide a useful volume of information to scientists and public policymakers.

Participation in this month-long event involves registration with the coordinators (the Water Environment Federation and the International Water Association) and purchase of a kit of materials for \$20 (includes shipping). Each kit contains enough materials for 50 tests of four factors. Go to www.appalachiantrail.org for more information, and a link to the registration site.

Although known primarily as the buffer for a storied footpath, Appalachian Trail lands also are part of 64 major watersheds. In a number of cases, protecting the watershed was at least as high a priority for public land-acquisition agencies as protecting the trail. Many of the nearly 1,800 streams, rivers, and lakes found along the footpath—which also define habitat for plants and animals—are near the headwaters of watersheds that serve metropolitan areas. Fisheries and hydropower generation likewise depend on those A.T. bodies of water. The trail's mountain location also means it "catches," with the weather patterns the ranges intercept, airborne pollutants blown from west to east.

"By monitoring at a headwaters point, it may be possible to assess the quality of water before it is naturally altered as it moves down through the watershed, is impacted by erosion and other pollution, and is changed by power plants or water-treatment plants," says Fred Dieffenbach, a megatransect-project coordinator for the National Park Service, ATC's principal partner in this and other programs.

Further information on the water-monitoring effort and the over-all project can be obtained on the ATC Web site, www.appalachiantrail.org/WWMD, or at www.wateronline.com, or by sending an e-mail to waterquality2007@appalachiantrail.org.

Contacts: Laura Belleville, lblleville@appalachiantrail.org 540-953-3571, ATC Regional Director & Matt Stevens, Environmental Monitoring Coordinator, New England office, (603) 795-4935 and Caroline Dufour, Land & Resources Coordinator, (304) 535-6331, ext. 102

Laura Belleville

Hike Reports

Sunday, May 13, 2007 1:00PM Falling Water Cascades/Harkening Hill Apologies to Dave for losing his report!

Dave Sutton & Georgia Gallaher (Co-Leaders), Linda Sutton, Peggy Bryant, Marianne Demkó, Vernon Lorish, Zetta Campbell, Harry Ballard, and Maurice Earles

After looking around the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center for awhile, we began our ascent up Harkening Hill. On top of Harkening Hill we passed through what was once an apple orchard. Additional plants we saw were squaw root, may apple, and spider wort. The view atop Harkening Hill was very scenic. It was fun climbing on top of "Balance Rock". Be careful though, it feels much looser than years before. It was a great hike with some great folks!

Thursday-Monday, June 7-11, 2007 Angel's Gap Relocation with Konnarock Crew

Charles Parry, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Malcolm Black, Steve Burt, Don Kreh, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Fred Meyer, Fred Coughlan, Dana Helsley, Kris Peckman, Bob Stimson, Jerry Kyle, Linda King, Ted Wilson and 7 more Konnarock Crew Members

After about 10 years of discussion, we finally got started on the Angel's Gap relocation. In fact, we completed about 1000 feet of new trail. We had at least two club members out each day. Due to summer school teaching, I was out only Sat. and Sun. These days were largely uneventful. Fortunately, the weather over the weekend was a bit cooler than Friday and we were mainly working in the shade, so it wasn't too hot. Three club members, but no Konnarock Crew members worked on Monday. It was a good start on a project that we hope can be completed this summer during the next two weeks of Konnarock.

Sunday, June 10, 2007 1:00PM Hoop Hole, Lower Loop

Bobbie Stichter and Charles Musgrove (leaders), Harry Ballard, Tina Gibson, Fred Meyer, Dave Miller, Penny McIver, Laura Smith, Debbie Smith, Christine Toevs

The Lower Hoop Hole is always a delightful hike with the many stream crossings, the rock walls and the stream below us. We saw some Galax, Trailing Partridgeberry, Indian Pipe and Mountain Laurel. All 10 hikers seemed to enjoy the hike that goes up and down. A nice afternoon hike.

Sunday, June 17, 2007 8:00AM Patterson Mountain

Dave Wickersham & Maya Bohler (leaders), Harry Ballard and Mark Packett

The Patterson Creek Trail System is an undiscovered gem, not because of its natural features but because it is so close to Roanoke and because the network of many trails can be combined in a number of different ways to make a hike of just about any length. In fact, you could hike from our starting trailhead all the way to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot, a distance of roughly 30 miles, with no road walking and only crossing one paved road.

The goal of this hike was to walk the Patterson Mountain Trail from end to end, a distance of 8.2 miles. This required two vehicles capable of negotiating the numerous fords on Patterson Creek Road which must be crossed to reach the north trailhead. Low-slung smaller cars are questionable but anything with higher clearance can make it.

We approached the area from Fincastle via secondary route 606. Once on the Patterson Creek Road we dropped a vehicle at the south trailhead before driving on to the north trailhead to begin the hike. The Patterson Creek Road is gated at a point about 5.0 miles beyond the south trailhead. We parked there and walked about a quarter mile past the gate to the actual trailhead.

The forecast called for temperatures in the high 80's but it was still cool and pleasant as we started the hike which is basically a bushwhack for the first mile till it crosses Forest Service Road 5020. Past that point the trail is more evident but still hard to find in places. Throughout the day Harry kept asking, "Are we on the trail?" This was a fair question since the route was in doubt on several occasions, and we were off the trail a time or two.

The ascent of Patterson Mountain begins in earnest after crossing 5020. The temperatures began to rise and we worked up a good sweat before we reached the ridgeline. Near the top we lost the trail and just climbed nearly straight up till we hit the ridgeline. There we picked up the trail again. Whether it is officially the Patterson Mountain Trail at that point I do not know but that didn't matter much because I knew if we followed it south it would take us where we

wanted to go – and it did.

On the ridge we caught a nice breeze and cruised for several miles, passing junctions with the Elmore, Helms and Tucker Trails. The trail was increasingly obvious and well marked until we passed the Tucker Trail. This final segment presented a few minor route finding challenges but not as bad as the first couple of miles.

Conditions were very pleasant the whole distance along the ridge, unlike the hot and muggy valley below. Finally we began our descent back to the valley floor. After dropping below the ridgeline we lost the breeze and some of our shade but it wasn't too long before we arrived at the car.

We completed the hike at 2:15 p.m., just fifteen minutes later than my projection. We retrieved the shuttle vehicle and headed for home to enjoy what was left of Father's Day.

**Sunday, June 17, 2007 1:00PM
Dismal Falls**

Kenny Garrett (leader), John Miller (assistant), Jesse Garrett, Lance Garrett, Peggy Bryant, Hugh Hall, Steve Tomaziefski, and Guests: Joseph Wall
And Jessica Coleman

The hike started at the blue blaze Ribble Trail and went south as planned. The leader(myself) was in the middle of the group walking asnd talking and not paying attention to details as needed. As we intersected with the white blazed A.T., we inadvertently travelled northbound instead of south towards Dismal Falls. There was a small stand of rocks at the intersection where there appeared to have been a sign at some point. We had travelled approximately a mile before I realized by the stream crossings and landmarks that were hiking north. Instead of back-tracking, we elected to hike on to Wapiti Shelter. We observed the usual trash around the pond as we strolled past. We took a long break at Wapiti Shelter before making the casual stroll back to the Ribble Trail. The weather was comfortable for a Father's Day outing in mid-June. A fun day was still enjoyed even though the plans changed mid-hike as we adapted to the leader's wrong turn.

**Sunday, June 24, 2007 8:00AM
Crabtree Falls, Priest Loop**

Kris Peckman (leader), Linda King (assistant), Maya Bohler, John Miller, Mark Packett

Perhaps the weather forecast (hot) scared off potential

hikers, because we were a cozy group of five today. Occasional cloud cover kept the heat down, so we had a lovely day for hiking after all. The hike starts with a lot of stair climbing up alongside Crabtree Falls. It has been many years since I've done this hike, so I was in awe at the magnificent stairs and platforms that have been built to facilitate safely viewing the falls, which are spectacular. I had also forgotten that this hike is ALL uphill for the first five miles, and ALL downhill for the last four. From the top of the falls, the Crabtree Falls trail continues to Crabtree Meadows, where we picked up a gravel road which leads uphill to the AT intersection. From there a right turn leads south on the AT toward Spy Rock (which you can visit on Sept. 23 when John leads a hike from Salt Log Gap to Crabtree Meadows), but we took the left turn, continuing up on the A.T. past the Priest shelter (side trail to the right) to a lookout rock on the left with (somewhat hazy today) views of Three Ridges, the Blue Ridge Parkway, lots of mountains, and (we think) Spy Rock. Maya brought her wildflower book and identified several flowers along the way, the most spectacular being several BIG columbine and a stand of fly poison between the shelter and the lookout rock. Anybody know how fly poison got its name? She was so excited by the fly poison that she left her trekking pole there, but Mark had lots of extra energy and went back from the lookout rock to get it while the rest of us finished our lunch. From the lookout rock the trail begins to go down, down, down, to the road and the Tye River. We finished hiking about 4:00 and stopped at the Montebello store (which is being enlarged) before heading home.

**Sunday, June 24, 2007 1:00PM
Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve**

Maurice Turner & Georgia Gallaher(co-leaders), Harry Ballard, Peggy Bryant, Lynn Bryant, Zetta Campbell, Hugh Hall, Debbie Smith

We car pooled from Lowe's on Rt. 220 and began our hike around 1:45. The weather was pleasant as we began our hike up the slope trail for 1.5 miles. This trail intersects with the blue east loop for 1.2 miles and then a short connector trail 0.2 miles to the 2.2 mile west loop. While the slope trail is the ascent trail, both the east and west loop trails follow the ridge line of Grassy Hill. It is a nice hike and the trail seems to get a lot of use, especially during the school season. Everyone seemed to enjoy their hike and we were finished by 5:00.

**FridaySaturday, June 2930, 2007 7:00PM
Moonlight Hike to McAfee Knob**

Maya Bohler (leader), Pat Guzik (co-leader), Dean

Jones, Logan Jones, Dick Moran, Mark Packett, Carol McPeak, Kris and Bob Peckman, Betty Remington, Debbie Stevens, Mike Vaughn, Daniel Wade

We met at the Orange Market at 7PM and carpooled to the trailhead. The week had been hot and stormy, and Saturday was our rain date. Late in the afternoon it started to clear up, and it got less hot and humid as we climbed up the trail. Most of us made it to the top before nightfall, and the few stragglers managed to get there without using flashlights which allowed us to enjoy dusk and nightfall in the woods.

As it got dark, the sky was mostly clear except for some clouds on the horizon, so it took a while before the moon started to peek out from behind the clouds. It was a beautiful sight to see the orange full moon rising and floating above the Roanoke City lights. We lingered quite a while and admired the sight.

On the way down we almost lost a member and decided to keep the group together. With our flashlights we had no trouble staying on the trail. Mark Packett found Maya's lost hiking pole for the second time in a week! Further down we took the fire road which allowed us to make good progress. It was about 11:30 PM when we got back to the parking lot.

**Sunday, July 8, 2007 7:00AM
A.T., Ribble Trail to Lickskillet Hollow**

Mike Vaughn & John Miller (leaders), David Boxwell, Carl Cornett, Fred Meyer

We got an early start and were on the trail by 9:00 a.m. The forecast was for temperatures in the 90s. The woods were still cool in the morning. We passed by many rhododendron in bloom on the way to Dismal Falls. The bushes created tunnels on the trail in several places along the way. We stopped at Dismal Falls for an early lunch. No one else was there, which was surprising, since this is a popular recreation spot in the summer. After lunch we walked on to the suspension bridge over Kimberling Creek. This is one of the longest suspension bridges on the A.T. The day was getting much warmer as we started the climb up and over Brushy Mountain. We completed the hike right at 3:00. We saw only one other hiker all day.

David is from Maryland and has been section hiking the A.T. for ten years. This was one of the last sections of trail that he has to complete. He only needs about 20 miles more to complete the whole A.T.

**Sunday, July 8, 2007 1:00PM
Petites Gap to Sunset Field**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Harry Ballard and Steve Tomaziefski

The hike started from Market Square East on route 460 We organized the car switch at the parking lot to leave one car at Sunset Field and then drive on to Petites Gap. We met about 15 people on the trail. Saw some wild columbines out. We found a bag of garbage at the Thunder Ridge shelter which we carried out. The weather was great for hiking.

**Friday - Monday, July 13-16, 2007
Angel's Gap Relocation with Konnarock Crew**

Charles Parry, Maurice Turner, Dick Clark, Eddie Baldwin, Bill Gordge, Peggy Bryant, Jim Roberson, Jim Lewis, Jim Overholser, Liz Belcher, Roger Holnback, Tim Howard, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Malcolm Black, Jimmy Whitney, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Dana Helsley, Kris Peckman, Lynn Bryant, Ted Wilson, Brian Spong, Marion Jordan, Maureen Naff, Chris Burke, Jim Kolnar, John Ervin, William Vasquez



Malcolm Black checks his work - by Kris Peckman

This time I worked the three full days with the crew. We had a good turnout and we made good progress. I guess the most notable event of the weekend was the huge boulder that I dug out on Friday afternoon and four of us with rockbars finally moved on Saturday morning. Unfortunately, we did not need steps in the area, so the rock was wasted.

**Sunday, July 15, 2007 1:00PM
Roaring Run**

Mike Ferguson (leader), Margaret, Billy & Natalie Ferguson, Carl Cornett, Pat Cousins, Ben Evans, Kenny & Jesse Garrett, Dylan McAllister, Brad McLean, Dawn Simkins

It was the perfect summer day for people to splash in the pools and slides of Roaring Run. That is exactly what several hikers did. It is never a perfect day for a digital camera to splash in the pools and slides. Unfortunately, that is what Carl's digital camera did. Aside from that financial tragedy, a great time was had by all.

**Saturday, July 21, 2007 7:00AM
Allegheny Trail to Pine Swamp**

Don Hoke & Carl Cornett (co-leaders) (A good crowd, small but good!-ed.)

We left the Hanging Rock Orange Market at 7:30. On the way, just past Paint Bank, Carl was almost T-boned by a Buffalo that had escaped his pen. He crossed the road just after Carl passed by.

We dropped one car off on top of Peters Mtn and drove to Sugar Farm Camp trail head in WV. On the way we made a side trip to a small family candy store and bakery at Gap Mills, WV and bought sandwiches, nuts, candy and chocolate chip cookies. Carl ended up eating my sandwich so I had to eat his. Carl's was excellent.

We started at 10:45, hiking through a pasture. The Groundhog trail goes up the mountain using numerous switchbacks. We didn't see any groundhogs but we did find two porta johns out in the field. One must have been a members-only john; it was locked. We rested at the top when we connected to the AT and then it was 4 miles on the AT to where the Allegheny splits off, continuing to head north along the ridge line of Peters Mtn.

About a mile farther we were hiking on a dirt road when we heard a tree limb snap and found two bears that we had somehow managed to sneak up on. I believe it was a mama bear with a two year old cub. We watched them for about 10 minutes as they went about searching the ground for food. The mama bear laid down at one time while the cub continued searching around. The cub then saw us and took off running making a huffing sound. It stopped after only about 30 feet and continued its search for food. It was like it forgot why it took off running or maybe it thought if mama ain't going to run,

I'm not either...Anyway mama bear never did see us and we stayed as long as we could but we had to get hiking. The ten minutes watching the bears gave us plenty of time to take some pictures. Unfortunately only one of mine came out half way decent.

We also watched a large owl up close for about 5 minutes. Carl spotted him, gave me the stop sign and then waved me to come closer. The owl was sitting on a low branch in a dead tree. We squatted down in the ferns and watched him for about 5 minutes trying to get some pictures. It was a large owl, a Barred owl perhaps.

That's not all, we also saw a raccoon, about a dozen deer, a couple of grouse and plenty of quail.

A little past half way we collected some water from a spring fed water pipe flowing into a pond. The people that live here even have a small golf course on a beautiful grassy piece of land on top of the mountain.

In this area for about 3 miles the trail was completely covered in ferns. It was somewhat challenging to follow the trail but we did okay.

Closer to the end we crossed a mountaintop meadow and about a mile further we reached the Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory. It has recently been painted and looked nice and clean. We actually saw a hawk go by while there, imagine that!

We arrived at the parking lot just as the sun was going down at 8:45. After driving back to pick up my car and a stop to eat in Pearisburg, it was midnight before we arrived home.

**Sunday, July 22, 2007 1:00PM
Crabtree Falls**

Kenny Garrett

892-5786

**Sunday, July 29, 2007 1:00PM
Cascades**

Mike (leader), Margaret, Billy & Natalie Ferguson, Gary (assistant), Janie, Trent, & John Bible, Peggy Bryant, David Sutton, Hugh Hall, Pat Cousins, Sherry Kessel, Sally & Sarah Sizer

*The Cascades were calling.
Due to the water that was falling.
We scrambled up the trail.
It was Sherry who slipped and fell.
We made it to the top.
Past all the dead Hemlock.
It is a sad truth it's said
Due to the wooly adelgid.
Some swam in the pool of the waterfall.
In the end a good time was had by all.*

**Sunday, July 29, 2007 8:00AM
Mount Pleasant**

Homer and Therese Witcher (leaders), Jim McNeeley (assistant), Maya Bohler, and John Miller

It turned out to be another good day for a hike so the five of us took the long ride to begin our hike to Mount Pleasant. Therese took the lead and must have been in a zone, as it didn't take long to complete our hike. As a matter of fact, the whole hike didn't take long as we were back in Daleville by 2:15 PM. We didn't see much wildlife, only a crow disguised as a hawk. The woods were almost tropical looking, however, I think the air was too hazy for pictures! Next time, we may have someone else take the lead, to avoid that blurred feeling.

**Friday - Monday, August 3-6, 2007
Angel's Gap Relocation with Konnarock Crew**

Charles Parry, Maurice Turner, Dick Clark, Bill Gorge, Peggy Bryant, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Dana Helsley, Kris Peckman, Bob Peckman, Jerry Kyle, Mike Vaughn, Theresa Knox, Bob Foutz, Billy Gibson, Tim Gruber, Fred Meyer, Frank Haranzo, Kerry Wood, Ted Wilson and 10 Konnarock Crew members.



Frank Haranzo steaming it up - by David Perry

I again worked the three full days. I spent most of my time working on a set of steps. I think we had about 15 steps in all. It became clear that we would get close to finishing this time Maurice, Dana and I did most of the work on the steps, but the Konnarock Crew kept us supplied with rocks. As the best rock supply was below the steps, they dragged most of them up with their winch. We would have never finished without their help.

Many of us stopped at the cornboil in Catawba on the way home on Saturday. As usual there was plenty to eat. On Sunday, the digging below the steps was finished and work above the steps was progressing well. By quitting time there was only a short section above the steps to complete. Dick and Frank worked up there on Monday. Later on Homer, Therese and Dick went back and opened and wheeled the new trail. It was nice to get this project done.

**Sunday, August 5, 2007 1:00PM
Fern Trail/Chestnut Ridge/Horse Trail**

Maurice Turner (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Hugh Hall, Esther Kargl, Mac McDaniel, and David Sutton

We started the hike from the parking area on Yellow Mtn.

Rd. at the parkway bridge, hiking the parkway north for a short distance to the new horse trail. This trail, rehabilitated by the midweek work group, crosses several stream beds and borders the Garden City area before it comes out adjacent to the water tank at the Star Trail. We took the Star Trail for a short distance and hiked an unestablished trail to a connector trail to the Star Trail intersection with the Monument Trail, which we took to the end. We crossed the parkway spur and took a trail back to Yellow Mountain Rd. The hike was pleasant considering the warmer temperatures, and everyone seemed to enjoy the afternoon hike.

**Sunday, August 12, 2007 8 7:00AM
A.T., Route 611 to U.S. Route 52**

John Miller & Mike Vaughn (co-leaders), Pat Guzik, and Carl Cornett

By mutual consent we started the hike an hour early to beat the heat. The only wildlife we spotted while hiking was a large doe early on and a wild turkey later in the day. We also met "Caveman" at the Helvey's Mill Shelter. He had completed Maine to the James River last year and was hiking from the James to Georgia this year. The shelter had a privy with only a screen around two sides so it afforded quite a view. We saw several different types of mushrooms but since

no one on the hike knew the good ones from the bad we left them there. We also saw a small stand of yellow flowers which may have been False Foxglove. Even though there was not a great deal of elevation change, the distance and temperature made this hike a good workout.

**Sunday, August 12, 2007 1:00PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth**

Mike Ferguson (leader)

It was very hot; nobody called; I went to the lake.

**Sunday, August 19, 2007 1:00PM
Otter Creek Trail**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Jesse Garrett, Lance Garrett, Carl Cornett, Caryl Connolly, Betty Remington, Maya Bohler, Zetta Campbell, Laura Melleman and guests: Erna Simkins, Brad, Luke, and Mark McLean, Melanie Montgomery, and Esther Kargl

The third annual Otter Creek Trail and Watermelon hike had a great turnout. We packed as many people in as few cars as possible and made our way north on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We started our stroll from the Otter Creek Parking area adjacent to the store and campground. We laughed, played, splashed a little, and talked a lot as we made our casual journey along Otter Creek towards the James River. The lack of rain over the prior weeks had the water level lower than usual. As we were walking around Otter Lake with less than a mile to go, the sky grew dark and a heavy downpour cooled us off. The rain stopped when we settled at the picnic area by the river to enjoy a cold watermelon. I believe a great time was had by all.

**Saturday, August 26, 2007 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair
Doc's Knob Blazing**

Charles Parry, Matt Gentry

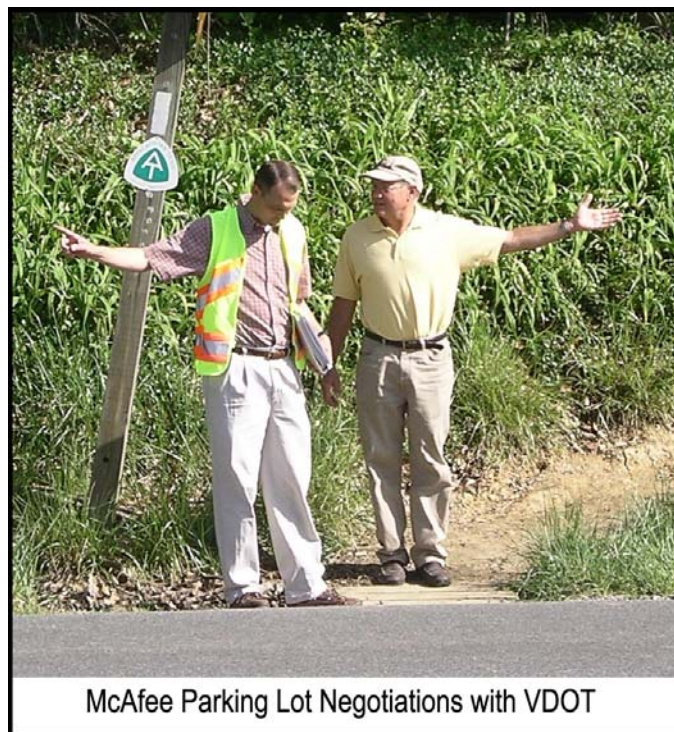
This was a partial substitution for the Pine Swamp Shelter repair trip that was canceled. Matt is the new trail overseer for the trail from Big Horse Gap to the powerline. We decided we would first reblaze from Doc's Knob Shelter to last year's relocation and then if time permitted reblaze down to Sugar Run Gap. It didn't. On the way in I blazed while Matt clipped and scraped. We also stopped to remove a few blowdowns either by dragging or using a hand saw. We left a few blowdowns that we were unable to remove, including

one huge dead oak which appeared to be hollow. It was about 2 o'clock when we reached the relocation. We ate lunch and had to walk out. It will take another trip or two to finish the reblazing south of Pearisburg.

**Sunday, August 26, 2007 1:00PM
Curry Gap to Fullhardt Knob**

Gary Bible & Carl Cornett (Co-leaders) (another good crowd ed.)

Unfortunately, Ed was unable to lead the hike this weekend. The threat of rain must have kept many hopefuls away as Gary Bible and Carl Cornett were the only takers for this hike today. We met at 460 East and were at the trailhead by 1:30. We were able to dodge the rain, and the overcast skies made for a pleasant afternoon. We moved at a nice brisk pace and didn't see any other hikers until we reached the Fullhardt Knob Shelter. There we met "Birdhouse Bob," a thru-hiker that started the same day to complete his attempt at a thru-hike started in 2005. After a quick snack and some conversation, we enjoyed the return trip down the mountain.



McAfee Parking Lot Negotiations with VDOT

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.

easy-moderate or **moderate-strenuous** – in between.

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.

Saturday, October 6, 2007 7:00AM Catawba Mtn. (Rt 311) to Lee Hollow (Rt 621)

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

Located in Roanoke and Craig County, the hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. The hike continues over Sandstone Ridge and then you begin a 1,100 foot climb to Dragon's Tooth, a rock monolith. After Dragon's Tooth, the hike descends Cove mountain to Trout Creek. The hike will then go up Brush Mountain, a 1,500 foot climb. After a four mile walk along the ridgeline the hike will conclude on Route 621.

Kenny Garrett 892-5786
Linda King 342-2411

Saturday, October 6, 2007 10:00AM Bennett Springs Loop

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$.25 carpool fee
3 miles from Roanoke

This hike begins at Carvins Cove Parking Lot (off Rt. 311, Not Williamson Rd.) The one mile ascent to the top of Brushy Mountain is quite steep, while the rest is moderate. Good views of McAfee's Knob and the valley are beautiful, while on the descent we will cross a stream several times. It's a pretty loop trail.

Jean Warren 384-6229
Dave Miller 977-3142

Saturday, October 13, 2007 10:00AM Black Horse Gap to Curry Gap on Old AT

6.7 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
8 miles from Roanoke

Approximately located along the Blue Ridge Parkway north of Route 460, this hike follows the directions given in the 1934 Trail Guide on hiking the AT between Black Horse Gap and Curry Gap, and passes by the site of the original Black Horse Tavern, over the summits of Blue Knob and Washington Knob and near the origin of Curry Creek. There is significant orienteering and bushwhacking on this hike.

Dana Helsley 977-4154
Gary Bible 977-2954

Sunday, October 14, 2007 8:00AM Rock Castle Gorge

11 miles, Strenuous, \$5.50 carpool fee
57 miles from Roanoke

Located in Patrick County, on Blue Ridge Parkway land. After a steep 2,000-foot ascent, the hike parallels the Parkway – passing alternately through woods and open fields with extraordinary views. On the descent down the other side of the gorge, the hike passes some old cabin sites and a series of interesting rock formations. The last few miles are along Rock Castle Creek – a wild stream with many cataracts.

Dan Phlegar 389-1783
Pat Guzik 540-808-9708

**Sunday, October 21, 2007 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to Andy Layne
Trail (Rt 779) 113-Mile Hike #4**

11.5 miles, Strenuous, \$.50 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

This hike offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas of the Appalachian trail in one day! The hike first climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, then follows the AT on the ridgeline to Tinker Cliffs before dropping down to Rt. 779 on the Andy Layne Trail.

John Miller 375-3250
Carl Cornett 342-3950

**Sunday, October 21, 2007 1:00PM
Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge
Shelter**

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

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

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732

**Saturday, October 27, 2007 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair**

.5 miles, Moderate, \$5.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke

We will be repairing damage to the shelter's roof caused by a fallen tree from a wind storm in April. The shelter is located in Giles County.

Kenny Garrett 892-5786
Charles Parry 540-951-1402

**Sunday, October 28, 2007 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair**

.5 miles, Moderate, \$5.00 carpool fee
60 miles from Roanoke

We will be repairing damage to the shelter's roof caused by a fallen tree from a wind storm in . The shelter is located in Giles County.

Kenny Garrett 892-5786
Charles Parry 540-951-1402

**Sunday, October 28, 2007 1:00PM
Sharp Top Mountain**

3.8 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
30 miles from Roanoke

We will be hiking to the top of Sharp Top, at the Peaks

of Otter on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Bedford County. The first half of the hike is a steep ascent with many stone steps. There is a spectacular 360 degree view from the summit.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Ed Wallace 774-0175

**Sunday, November 4, 2007 8:00AM
Cove Mountain and Little Cove Mountain
Circuit**

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

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

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Carl Cornett 342-3950

**Sunday, November 4, 2007 1:00PM
Fort Lewis Mountain**

4.2 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

This out and back hike crosses Mason's Creek before ascending Fort Lewis Mountain. There are limited views from the summit.

Dave Sutton 774-0648
Hugh Hall 725-8874

**Sunday, November 11, 2007 8:00AM
Lee Hollow (Rt 621) To Trout Creek (Rt 620) 113
Mile Hike #7**

8.8 miles, Strenuous, \$1.50 carpool fee
15 miles from Roanoke

Join us for a Veteran's day AT hike to the Audie Murphy Monument on Brush Mountain in Craig County. The monument is a tribute to the most decorated soldier of WWII, who died in a plane crash on the mountain in the 1960s.

Kenny Garrett 892-5786
Pat Guzik 540-808-9708

**Saturday, November 10, 2007 10:00AM
Apple Orchard Falls**

5.7 miles, Moderate, \$2.50 carpool fee
26 miles from Roanoke

This is a popular hike located in the North Creek camping area, near Arcadia. A blue-blazed trail, steep in places, leads uphill to Apple Orchard Falls. The falls are impressive and the trail has been greatly improved

in recent years. Beyond the falls, a crossover path leads to the Cornelius Creek Trail which follows the creek downhill - back to the parking area.

Jean Warren 384-6229
Dave Miller 977-3142

Sunday, November 18, 2007 8:00AM
Rich Valley (Rt 42) to Great Valley (Rt 11)

8.9 miles, Strenuous, \$6.50 carpool fee
63 miles from Roanoke

This hike will be on the A.T., starting on Route 42 in Bland County. Going south it will go up and over Big Walker Mountain, with a 900 foot elevation gain. It will continue on to route 11, passing the Davis Path shelter along the way.

John Miller 375-3250
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, November 18, 2007 1:00PM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob

7.6 miles, Strenuous, \$.50 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 the city of Roanoke. This is one of the premier day hikes on the entire 2,000+ mile length of the A.T.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Hugh Hall 725-8874

Sunday, November 25, 2007 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike

.5 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a short section of worn-out trail on Tinker Ridge.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Dana Helsley 977-4154

Sunday, November 25, 2007 1:00PM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike

.5 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a short section of worn-out trail on Tinker Ridge.

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732

Sunday, December 2, 2007 8:00AM
Lickskillet Hollow (Rt 608) to Jenny Knob (Rt 611) 113 Mile Hike #14

8.6 miles, Strenuous, \$6.00 carpool fee
62 miles from Roanoke

This out and back hike in Bland County is on the far southern end of the 113 mile section of the A.T. maintained by the RATC. The hike will go up and over Brushy Mountain, passing Jenny Knob shelter along the way.

Mike Vaughn 992-1350
Maya Bohler 344-6588

Sunday, December 2, 2007 1:00PM
Stony Creek to Bailey Gap Shelter

7.2 miles, Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee
miles from Roanoke

This hike will be on the A.T., starting at Stony Creek, near the Pine Swamp Shelter in Giles County. It will be an out and back hike up Big Mountain to Bailey Gap shelter.

Kenny Garrett 892-5786
John Miller 375-3250

Sunday, December 9, 2007 8:00AM
North Mountain Trail

10.4 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
16 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.

Dick Moran 389-3744
Charles Musgrove 345-7969

Saturday, December 8 2007 10:00AM
Bennett Springs Loop Hike

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$.25 carpool fee
3 miles from Roanoke

This hike begins at Carvins Cove Parking Lot (off Rt. 311, not Williamson Rd.) The one mile ascent to the top of Brushy Mountain is quite steep, while the rest is moderate. Good views of McAfee's Knob and the valley are beautiful, while on the descent we will cross a stream several times. It's a pretty loop trail. We will be going in the opposite direction of the Bennett Springs hike in October.

Jean Warren 384-6229
Hugh Hall 725-8874

**Saturday, December 8, 6:00 PM
Holiday Potluck Dinner**

The holiday Potluck dinner will be at Christ Lutheran Church on the corner of Brandon and Grandin Avenues at 6:00 PM. The Club will provide beverages and table service. Club members will provide a dish to share.

This is one of the few social events we have in the year. Come see what your friends look like without a pack and boots!

We will have a box at the door if you wish to bring a nonperishable food item to be donated to RAM House.

Program TBA.

**Sunday, December 16, 2007 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

.5 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a short section of worn-out trail on Tinker Ridge.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Dick Clark 989-7053

**Sunday, December 16, 2007 1:00PM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

.5 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

**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 _____

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

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

We will be working on relocating a short section of worn-out trail on Tinker Ridge.

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732

**Sunday, December 16, 2007 1:00PM
Dragon's Tooth via Rawie's Rest**

5.2 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
10 miles from Roanoke
This will be an out and back hike starting on route 624. The hike will ascend 1,100 feet to Dragon's Tooth, a rock monolith with good views of the Catawba valley. Along the way will be several other viewpoints, including Rawie's Rest and Viewpoint Rock.

Charles Musgrove 345-7969
Gary Bible 977-2954

**Tuesday, January 1, 2007 9:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob
& lunch**

7.4 mile, Moderate, \$0.50 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 the city of Roanoke. We will hike from 311 to McAfee's Knob and have a picnic lunch in the Devil's Kitchen. Bring anything devilish you can think of for a potluck picnic. Please call the leaders as early as possible so we can be sure we have enough supplies

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Mike Vaughn 992-1350

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**Holiday Pot-luck**

Saturday, December 8

WORK HIKES

**Sat & Sun, October 27 & 28 - 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair**

**Sunday, November 25 - 8:30 & 1:00
Tinker Ridge**

**Sunday, December 16 - 8:30 & 1:00
Tinker Ridge**

Hike Scheduling

**Contact Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – mikeva999@yahoo.com**

BOARD MEETINGS

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

**Monday, October 22, 7:30 PM
Hosted by Roger Holnback**

**Monday, November 19, 7:30 PM
Hosted by Bob & Kris Peckman**

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy