

## **TATC Cabin Report**

### **2011 Fiscal Year**

*By Bob Adkisson*

[This article appeared in spring of 2012, in the April / May edition of the club's newsletter. It is a typical annual Cabin Report, letting everyone know how the cabin fared the previous fiscal year: it notes the 4 cabin maintenance / orientation trips and what was accomplished, how much rental money the cabin took in, what the favorite (and least favorite) rental months were, and compares that to earlier years, etc. Members who have never been to the cabin are invited and encouraged to discover the cabin for themselves]

With the club's 2011 fiscal year ending Feb.29, 2012, it is time once again for the annual cabin report.

In 2011 the TATC cabin fared better than usual, in both income and general usage.

Out of 52 available weekends, the cabin was rented 34 (it has been 7 years since the cabin was used this many weekends). There were, in addition, 4 maintenance / orientation weekends, spread throughout the year, in which approximately 12 new club members were checked out on cabin operations, contributed some light to moderate work, and became eligible to rent it on their own.

That leaves 14 weekends—14 weekends the cabin went unused and vacant.

There is also weeknight or mid-week usage (Sunday night through Thursday night rentals): in 2011 this stayed at a relatively high level: the cabin was occupied 44 weeknights. But, especially with the number of retired folks in our club, you'd think this number would be much higher, every year. It certainly reflects an opportunity for people wanting to enjoy the cabin, including during the months of prime usage—go up in mid-week, if you possibly can!

The cabin took in \$2310 in rental fees (almost the exact amount as last year), making this the 5<sup>th</sup> best year ever. As you may know, the \$5 (per person per night) rental fees go to pay the hefty annual insurance bill, the small tax bill, and for a few miscellaneous supply items. The cabin is all but non-profit.

As usual, last year the spring and fall months were by far the most popular time to rent the cabin. For several years recently, March had been a pariah month, seldom used, but last year it was rented all 4 weekends. April and May, strangely enough, each had one unused weekend (they are usually booked up solid-- every single weekend). That left it to the autumn months alone to have a run of 12 straight weekends in a row of usage.

The usually slack summer months did better than usual, with 4 out of 5 weekends in July rented out. July also had one stretch where the cabin was rented 9 nights in a row, back to back rentals by a total of 4 different people!

To off set that, the month of December had 5 weekends in a row with no usage. The month was saved (and savored) only by a small group that spent 3 weeknights there, contributing \$70 to the treasury. Fortunately, after December's dismal showing, the cabin heated up (so to speak), with 7 weekends in a row of rental usage in January and February.

The four work weekends at the cabin went like this:

In mid-April the work trip was slightly short circuited by an extremely heavy rain most of Saturday. We discovered that the roof leaked around both chimneys. About 3 p.m. the rain finally stopped, and after most of us walked down into the hollow to witness the normally small and unassuming creek going wild in one long, continuous whitewater cascade, we worked on draining the cabin access road, which was also full of running water. Turns out there were a

few tornadoes in Virginia this weekend as well—one in nearby Stuart's Draft, another damaging one attendee's garage back in Gloucester. Sunday some firewood moving and splitting was done, and two trees were felled;

In early June Greg Hodges, cabin co-chair, led a work trip that concentrated on general cabin clean up and weed whacking;

In late September Greg and his wife Carol led another trip, with rain, where general cabin clean up was again the order of the day, along with some trail work, and cutting 3 fallen trees off of the access road;

In early November 12 club members (our largest work crew of the year) had great weather in which to chainsaw a large supply of firewood for the winter months;

In addition to the 4 'official' work trips, Bob Giffin rented the cabin in early August and used part of his time there to repair the leaks in the cabin's roof—a much needed, and appreciated, unofficial work trip. **Thank you**, Bob Giffin!

The cabin committee is also responsible for maintaining the nearby, 2.6 mile long White Rock Falls Trail. This too was accomplished, with several hikes on the trail throughout the year.

For new club members, or anyone interested in visiting and helping out at the club's beautiful stone cabin, there are 4 work trips scheduled for 2012. By attending one of these weekends (or even just a full day on Saturday), new members can become qualified and eligible to then rent the cabin on their own.

The work trips are on the following dates: April 27<sup>th</sup>—29<sup>th</sup>; June 8<sup>th</sup>—10<sup>th</sup>; Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>—23<sup>rd</sup>; and Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>—4<sup>th</sup>. There will be sign up sheets for these 4 trips at the club meetings, or you could call either Greg or myself to get your name on the list (or you can email the cabin committee, to ask questions or sign up; the email address is on page 2 of every newsletter, along with our respective phone numbers). If you are interested in coming and helping out, it is important for you to let the hike leader know—by getting your name on the sign up sheet. This lets us know beforehand how many workers we can expect, and therefore how much, and what work, can be accomplished.

Remember too: if you sign up for a work trip, try and follow thru on your commitment. And, if something develops that prevents you from coming, please let the trip leader know ASAP; the trip might be capped at a certain number of participants, and your dropping off means someone on the waiting list can come in your place.

Discover for yourself the trail club's greatest possession, the Douglas Putman Memorial cabin. It is just over a half miles walk off of the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, on 15 acres of wooded, club owned land, all but surrounded by National Forest property. One visit will reveal all the hard work and dedication that went into its construction. One visit could be the beginning of a lifetime of enjoyment of this unique club treasure. It could be the simple cabin in the woods you've dreamed about all your life.

In the year 2012, the cabin is available to be rented, by qualified club members, 357 nights. You can have it all to yourself, or invite friends and relatives, or throw it open to any club members who might want to join you. Remember, for private trips, the cabin can be reserved exactly 8 weeks in advance (and, if someone reserves it before you, you can ask to be placed on the stand-by list, to be called in case they cancel their reservation). If you want to host an open-to-everyone in the club cabin trip, there are no restrictions about how far in advance you can reserve it (we do this to encourage group usage).

Again—don't be shy to call or email with any questions about the cabin and how to rent it. I'd love to see the year 2012 be the best year of cabin rental ever, breaking every previous record, with dozens of new members using and enjoying it, with dozens of older members finally taking the time to rediscover it. **The TATC needn't be all work and no play**, and the

cabin is simply a great place to kick back and relax in a safe and secluded spot, surrounded by all the best nature has to offer.