

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club Appalachian Hiker

www.tidewateratc.com



April 2014 - May 2014

Prez Sez

As I write the last of the latest snow has melted. One wonders if spring will ever arrive. However, looking out my window flowers are starting to emerge and the early tree buds have appeared. Yes, winter is finally loosing its grip. While it may still be right cold in our mountains here in Tidewater spring is not to be held back. For us it means many things. First, local trail maintenance resumes and you will see opportunities emerge over the next couple of months. For our beloved Appalachian Trail and other trails we maintain in the mountains, people are beginning to venture out and our intrepid trail maintainers are already making plans for our spring maintenance trip. The cabin is again accessible from the parkway and no need for the long hike in while the parkway is closed. Several of our members have posted hiking and biking and even some water activities. All of this adds up to a plethora of activities for the every member of TATC. It is now time to get out there and work and play doing what we love to do. I am excited about the many new opportunities that are presenting themselves and the many more being planned. So members join me and participate both for the good we do and to just plain have fun. See you out there.

Mark Wenger, Prez



Visit our website at
www.tidewateratc.com

(banner photo by Mark Ferguson)

Time to Renew Time to Renew

Your membership card is dated February 28, 2013. Membership renewal period is March and April of each year. A membership form (found in this newsletter and on the Website) must be filled out each year. Don't forget to sign the back!

Welcome to the following new and returning members: William & Anthony Smith, Mary Crozier, Paul Dickens, Randy Smith, Johnathon McFerrin, Al Burger, Patrick Landis, Nathan & Tonya Himley, Gayle Owens, Barbara Skarpa, John & Lisa Carwell, Tommy Dunn, and David & Christine Cooke.

Mary Hormell
Membership Chair

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Dinner Diva Team for Sherando May 17th

A few volunteers are needed for the Dinner Diva Team to shop, transport, prepare, and clean up for the club sponsored May 17th supper at the Spring Maintenance day at Sherando Lake. Devil's BackBone Base Camp will be supplying some food. We will talk about daytime activities for the dinner team. Please call Chris Sexton at 757-484-2827 to volunteer for the cooking team. No experience needed.

Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

America's Best Idea - the National Parks - is even better when it's free!

Mark your calendar for these entrance fee-free dates in 2014:

April 19-20
Opening weekend of National Park Week

August 25
National Park Service Birthday

September 27
National Public Lands Day

November 11
Veterans Day

<http://www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm>

Kids Who Want Change

Visit our website or use the following link to view an article from the Beacon on Madison Rose Galler, the nine-year-old who gave a presentation at our last TATC General Meeting:

http://www.tidewateratc.com/tatc/docs/kids_who_want_change.pdf

And don't forget to bring in your used (but clean) hiking socks to the next meeting for Madison's next project; 'Sock Hats for Cancer Patients'.

Additional Opportunities

Tuesday Group: If you would like to receive e-mail notifications of local hikes, bicycle rides, and paddles taking place during the week (usually on **Tuesdays**) please send e-mail to Ellis Malabad malabad2@gmail.com requesting to be added to the "Tuesday Group" e-mail distribution list.

The TATC/Douglas Lee Putman Memorial Cabin is available for rent. You must be a member and first attend an orientation / work weekend in order to rent. The cabin can be reserved 8 weeks (56 days) in advance. Please call Bob Adkisson at 627-5514 if you have any questions, or want to check on availability, or to make reservations.

Local Trails Maintenance Opportunities: If you would like to receive E-mail notification about TATC Local Trails Maintenance activities, please send an E-mail to Bill Buck at LocalTrails@tidewateratc.com requesting to be added to the Local Trails E-mail distribution list. Trail maintenance may include weed cutting, brush and tree trimming, removal of small blown down trees, painting of trail blazes, repairing walkways and creating trails. Other special projects may be performed, such as building water bars to prevent erosion, building and repairing foot bridges, as well as building benches and other structures. Skills used in these efforts are also useful for AT maintenance.



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1st Day Hike False Cape State Park January 1st, 2014

False Cape had their second annual 1st Day Hike and the weather was perfect for the hike from the beach over to the monument located at the state line. The plan was to take everyone on the Terra Gator down to the State line and hike to the monument which was placed there in the 1800's. All total we had 30 visitors who meet at Little Island City Park, at 1:00 pm for the 12 mile trip down the beach to the southern border of the park.

As we drove over the Beach Ramp, we left all the paved road behind. The beach was beautiful, flat, and about 150 yards wide and as clean as I have ever seen it. It was a new beach for a New Year and we all enjoyed it tremendously. The sky was clear, there was not very much wind, and the temperature was around 45 degrees; a perfect day at False Cape. Reaching the north end of the park after about a six mile trip; the beach got even wider and smoother. Driving on the beach that day, you saw blue skies, blue water as far as the eye could see, and towards the west; the high dunes that help keep the park safe. We reached the old ship wreck; "The Bark Clythia", which ran aground in 1894. With the tide out so far, you could see about 40 feet of the 250 feet of the length of the wreck. I slowed down so everyone could get a good picture of it and then moved on for the last mile of our trip down the beach.

Now the hike began. Brian, the Park Ranger started out towards the monument trail and I brought up the rear to keep everyone together as we hiked the Sand Ridge Trail. We stopped at the Ocean Pearl Trail to let everyone catch up, and we had a short informal talk about the park. Only about 10 of the group had ever been to this area of the park; so we had plenty to talk about. We then turned and started down the Ocean Pearl Trail for about .5 of a mile. At the state line we picked up the Monument Trail and soon we were at the Monument. Brian had researched about the Border Disputes that occurred in the 1600's, 1700's & 1800's, about where the border should be between Virginia and North Carolina. He did a great job of talking to our group for about 25 minutes, about what had gone on concerning this dispute, over the 200 year period. All seemed to enjoy what he had to say, and this talk ended with a big round of applause.

It was time to leave, so I led the group on the way back and we hiked into North Carolina to the first road, and made our way back to the beach and the Terra Gator, hiking about 5 miles total. This went over big with the group, hiking in two states on New Years Day, WILD ! With everyone on, with their seatbelts fastened; we started the trip north on the beach. It was still a beautiful, wide beach and we all hated to leave it on such a beautiful First Day. We made it back to Little Island City Park at 4:00 pm and everyone told us how much they enjoyed this 1st Day Hike and said that they looked forward to doing it again in 2015.

Friend of False Cape State Park & Terra Gator Driver
Bruce Julian

Be sure to visit False Cape, Spring & Fall is the best time but anytime is a great time! We are always looking for new volunteers, so stop by the visitor's office on your trip in.



FREEZEREE - Part 1: Always Rising, Never Steeply - Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Adams, Mt. Pierce, & Mt. Eisenhower

By Mal Higgins

Is there anything more delightful than a forest trail deep in snow, ascending toward some distant summit in the dead of winter? Eight TATC'ers-- JP Jones, Jim Newman, Mark Connolly, Bob Adkisson, Mal Higgins, Brian Richie, Bruce Davidson and Jerry Bauer (Brian's friend from Chicago) headed to New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest Presidential Range at the end of January and early February to get their winter fix. After a long day driving 725 miles, we arrived at the Four Seasons Motor Inn, Twin Mountain, NH (the northern end of Crawford Notch).

After breakfast at the only restaurant open early, Munroe's, we drove 15 miles to the trail head at Lowe's Store, strapped on our microspikes, hoisted winter packs groaning with "stuff", and started hiking. The trail had been used recently, and though snow in the lower forest was perhaps 18 inches, the path was sufficiently compacted that the microspikes were the best traction. We headed up 3.1 miles of Lowe's Path with a 3000 foot elevation gain with a goal of reaching Gray Knob Cabin. Gray Knob is operated by the Randolph Mountain Club, one of the Appalachian Trail maintaining clubs. Distance, elevation, and pack weight all took their toll, but eventually we all arrived. Brian and Jerry even doubled back and took some extra pack weight to get everyone safely to the cabin.

Gray Knob is roughly the size of the TATC Cabin, with a full loft for sleeping and a care taker who is responsible for cabin fee collection (\$20.00 per night), operating the wood stove, and checking on two other Randolph properties without caretakers each day on a loop hike. The stove kept the cabin at a balmy 25-30 degrees when lit (but not so balmy in the middle of the night), so Gray Knob is a comfortable place to stay. Located just below the tree line, it offers a great starting point for several Presidential peak trails. We eight were the only ones there the first night.

The next day we set out from Gray Knob on our snowshoes to summit Mt. Jefferson, the third highest peak in the Presidentials at 5716 feet. Following the Gray Knob Trail, the Israel Ridge Path, and the Randolph Path, we reached the notorious Edmands Col, named after J. Rayner Edmands (1850-1910). A large bronze plaque fixed to a giant boulder pays tribute to his accomplishments and refers to the network of trails in the Presidentials as "always rising, never steeply." This provoked some sarcastic comments. Many Mt. Jefferson hikes end at Edmands Col because of high winds and a rather steep approach. But this day winds were modest at maybe 15 mph, the temperature was in the high teens, and we snow shoed the final half mile to the summit of Jefferson. Only one traverse across a steep snow field with a long, sliding drop-off slowed us as we used ice axes and stepped carefully in the foot step pattern laid down by Brian and Jerry. After 20 minutes on the summit enjoying a view that literally stretched 70 miles to Mt. Mansfield in Vermont, we returned along the same trails to Gray Knob Cabin.

Arriving back, we cooked our separate noodle/rice meals, and turned in early. Other backpackers had arrived and Gray Knob was full with 15 folks. Jim Newman stayed up a bit later to join in an impromptu chorus of music prompted by two hikers playing the two guitars in the cabin. Gray Knob has a "smart privy" (not to be confused with a smart phone) that composts itself, and a spring a ¼ mile away for a reliable water source.

Next day, the group split, with some returning back down Lowe's Path to the cars; in planning, we all agreed we would stay in Four Seasons to watch the Super Bowl. Jerry, Brian, and I snow shoed out the door with day packs and up to the summit of nearby Mt. Abigail Adams (5355 feet). The weather had worsened overnight, and visibility was reduced to seeing only the next one or two rock cairns that marked the trail. We switched out of snowshoes and put on our microspikes.

Rime ice coated the cairns and the small tips of alpine spruce and other plants. I decided I'd return to Gray Knob once on the Abigail Adams summit, but Jerry and Brian pushed on and 45 minutes later were on the summit of Mt. Adams, the second highest Presidential (5799 feet). Winter hiking in the "Alpine Zone" above tree line is what draws us back year after year. The combination of wind, snow coated landscape, rime ice, limited visibility, and raw beauty is almost a sensory overload. This time of solitude and carefully descending, retracing one's route from cairn to cairn, watching for the scratch marks of your journey up, listening to the wind howl, peering through frosted goggles, and mentally checking your route heightens the senses.

Brian and Jerry rejoined me at Gray Knob Cabin, and we strapped on our full packs and microspikes and hiked on down to the car with only an occasional slip on the icy trail, and made it back to Four Seasons to rejoin the others. After a supper at another local restaurant, Brenda's Country Kitchen, we adjourned to the big screen TV room at Four Seasons to watch the Seattle Seahawks slaughter the Denver Broncos. At some point Brian and Jerry commenced a discussion on a player named Richard Sherman. As I had no idea who they were talking about—professional football fan that I am—I concentrated on the commercials.

Departing Four Seasons the next morning, we traveled south to Crawford Notch and parked at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Highland Center. We hit the Crawford Path on a fine day of blue skies and temperatures in the low 20s. Bruce, Brian and Jerry set a fast pace, while Jim and I followed upwards, reuniting with them just below the summit of Mt. Pierce (4312 feet). The views on the summit were again clear and distant. The group split and Bruce, Brian, and Jerry headed across a 1.5 mile traverse on the Appalachian Trail to reach the summit of Mt. Eisenhower (4760).

(Continued on Page 7 ...)

(Continued from Page 6 ...)

Jim and I stayed on Pierce, calling in some friendly, hungry Canadian jay birds, who landed on our gloved hands to enjoy granola. We then created a loop hike, descending an extremely steep section of the Appalachian Trail with huge deep, 3-4 foot drifts, to the A.M.C.'s mountain hut called Mizpah Spring. Access off Mt. Pierce's summit was poorly marked. At times, we weren't sure if we were on the A.T. It was extremely poorly blazed in both directions, and Jim and I saw only one faded, sort of white blaze in 0.8 mile of trail. We debated whether it was actually a square lichen on the tree! Mizpah Spring Hut is closed and boarded in the winter, and after briefly pausing, we took a blue loop trail called the Mizpah Cutoff trail. It was appropriately blazed with fresh blue paint, causing us to wonder why the A.M.C. A.T. maintainers on the earlier section had been so lax. We arrived back at the Highland Center almost simultaneously with the Eisenhower party.

That night, we'd reserved bunkrooms at the AMC's Joe Dodge Lodge, some 30 miles or so southeasterly in Pinkham Notch, and arrived there just after dark. After verifying the standard observation that "urinals are on the left, sinks are on the right, showers are in the rear", we got cleaned up. We walked to the dining hall and feasted on the all you can eat family style dinner that is part of the price. Next morning, it was time to end the "first half" of the Freezeree trip, and five of us began the long drive back to Virginia Beach. Snow was on the ground all the way through NH, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. We left Bruce, Brian, and Jerry behind for their "Second Half" of the Freezeree.

FREEZEEEE - Part 2: Swimming in Snow - Mt. Monroe and Mt. Washington

by Brian Richie

The 2014 TATC Freezeree trip was in two parts. After JP Jones, Jim Newman, Mark Connolly, Bob Adkisson, and Mal Higgins departed for Virginia Beach on Tuesday morning, February 4, 2014, Jerry Bauer, Bruce Davidson, and Brian Richie checked the 48 hr weather forecast: clear skies today giving way to possibly a foot of snow tonight and through tomorrow. With three days to continue peak climbing, we had to decide on the best sequence.

We wanted to climb both Mt. Monroe via the Ammonoosuc Ravine trail and, separately, Mt. Washington via the Lion Head "winter trail" from the Harvard Cabin, which is operated in the winter with a caretaker and provides an experience similar to Gray Knob Cabin. The Ammonoosuc Ravine trail starts from the Base Station for the Mt. Washington Cog Railway. The Base Station is situated 6 miles from the highway down a seldom-used road. We suspected that, if it snowed, that road would be one of the last to be plowed and we could miss our chance to climb Monroe completely, so we decided to climb Monroe first and hike to Harvard cabin in tomorrow's snowstorm. Then, weather permitting, on the third day, we would attempt climb Mt. Washington, if the snowstorm had stopped.

We then asked the AMC staff at Joe Dodge Lodge what to expect on the Ammonoosuc Ravine trail. She said that the first half was an easy grade for which microspikes would provide adequate traction and the second half was steeper finally giving way to icy ledges that would require crampons and ice axes. We quickly loaded the car and drove to the Base Station.

The Base station parking lot is located at 2500' and the trail rises another 2500' over 3.1 mi. to AMC Lakes of the Clouds Hut. From there it is another quarter of a mile and 400' of elevation gain to Monroe's summit. The trail conditions were just as we had been told and the weather was sunny and clear with light winds and temperatures in the upper teens – perfect. The trail provided many beautiful views of Washington's west side and the weather observatory on its summit. After about 3 hrs of hiking we broke out above tree line and came to Lakes of the Clouds Hut. It was closed for the winter season, covered in rime ice, and had snow drifts up to its roof. Once we left the protection of the trees, the winds became much stronger and we took shelter in the lee provided by the hut. There we ate some food and put on more layers before the final summit push to Monroe.

The trail up Monroe was buried in deep snowdrifts so we had to blaze our own trail. Bruce led and chose a steeper route that was sheltered from the wind. As this route topped out, it was near vertical and when we came over the edge, the summit greeted us with a ferocious blast of icy wind. Despite the unpleasant wind, we lingered on the summit to take in the spectacular views of Mt. Washington to the north and Mts. Eisenhower and Pierce to the south. Once we were satisfied with pictures and summit poses, we decided to descend the less steep route facing the wind and back down to the shelter provided by the hut. From the hut to the summit and back to the hut took an hour.

The hike back to car was easy hiking with a bit of glissading. Soon we were back at the car and shortly after that, back at the Joe Dodge Lodge, showered, and enjoying a hot, rib-sticking dinner.

After breakfast at Joe Dodge Lodge on Wednesday, Feb. 5 we packed our full packs and snow shoed in a blizzard on the Tuckerman Ravine trail to the Harvard Cabin. At the cabin, we met its caretaker and his wife. They were very excited about the falling snow and the skiing conditions in Tuckerman Ravine. The cabin is heated from 4-9 pm with a wood stove and the temperature can reach the upper 60's. That evening we bedded down early in preparation for our climb up Washington tomorrow.

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Annual September Photo Contest

At our General Meeting on September 10th, you are encouraged to bring pictures taken this year of the Appalachian Trail and trail club activities. We especially welcome action shots of club members working on trails, parks, and the cabin as well as other club related activities. A few tips to remember before submitting pictures:

- (1) Pictures should be photographic quality prints such as you might get developed by Walgreen's Sam's or Target.
- (2) Please submit only horizontal prints.
- (3) Please identify the subject matter of the picture and the photographer on the back of your print.

Your best pictures will be judged by a professional photographer and will be candidates for the club's 2015 calendar/planner. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of the photo contest are guaranteed a place in the 2015 calendar. When choosing the remaining calendar months we will try to match photos with the weather of the month it represents and try to include as many different photographers as possible. We look forward to see you and your best photos at the General Meeting on September 10th!

Tony Phelps
TATC Calendar Committee
calendar@tidewateratc.com

A Minute or Two for a Paragraph or Two on Trail Maintenance

It's that time again in the Spring, when TATC members' thoughts turn to Trail Maintenance. We wonder: how did the TATC section of the A.T. fare over the winter?

Our attempt to answer that question, our "Spring Walk-Through," is scheduled for Saturday, May 3, 2014. We only need a dozen or dozen and a half folks out for this reconnaissance trip, and our roster might already have them. Our base camp for the weekend is at Sherando Lake USFS Recreation Area, with tents at the small hill near the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps-built) Kitchen, which is across a small parking lot from the maintenance shed near the upper lake's dam, and just before entering the Group Camping Area, at the back end of Sherando. A "Map to Sherando Lake" is accessible at the TATC website's drop-down menu button "Trail Maintenance." But this is only the preliminary event for us, a means to check out the trail so we can know what tools to take and how many teams we'll need to do the trail maintenance work that our "Spring Walk-Through" will help us diagnose. Those who stay around until at least Sunday morning will be treated to a pancake and sausage and coffee breakfast offered up in the CCC Kitchen by the trail supervisor and a couple other folks.

The really big event, probably involving over 60 TATCers, is "Spring Maintenance and Family Camping Weekend," which is scheduled for May 16-18th, two weeks after the "Spring Walk-Through." We'll be at Sherando Lake as base camp for this event, but at the Williams Branch Picnic Area this time, the entrance to which is at the outside of the sharp turn that you'd take if you were going to the self-pay station near the pavilion and the beach at the lower lake. Those who can get there on Friday afternoon or early evening can set up their tent, maybe near the flush toilets or maybe at the back, where it's quiet, and get an evening meal cooked for themselves at a picnic table near the tent-----or maybe go out to get dinner at the "Devils Backbone," down the hill on Route 664 from Wintergreen, or go to Waynesboro. The gate to Sherando is closed to car traffic at about 10 PM, so those not yet there or those who went out for food or entertainment should get back inside the gate before 10 PM. The gate is said to be open again at 6AM. Rosters will be out on clipboards in the shelter at Williams Branch for TATCers to choose whatever team assignment seems best to conform to their interests or capabilities. Some teams will hike a good distance carrying tools to get to some downed trees to saw, while other teams will do litter clean-up not far from the trailhead where they parked, and that's not too exhausting for kids or adults. The rosters will be out again early on Saturday morning to be checked and filled out-----all before our meeting at the shelter at Williams Branch at about 7:30AM Saturday.

When we gather at 7:30AM, we'll do a safety briefing, check with our roster's team leader for the best carpool arrangement to the trailhead, and pick up our team's assigned tools to go with us in the vehicles. We'll take a bag lunch with us to eat on the trail. Also water, gloves, etc., in a daypack into which we can stuff a layer if our work makes us too warm. Then, with work on the trail for our team done in the afternoon, we'll return to Williams Branch Picnic Area in time to clean ourselves up a bit and get social, and get ready for the TATC club-sponsored Saturday night dinner, served buffet-style in the dining shelter. After dinner and dessert, some gabbing around the fireplace in the dining shelter usually takes place before folks retreat to their tents or vehicles. Come on out to support trail maintenance!

Mark Connolly,

TATC Trail Supervisor

trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com



Cabin Report - Fiscal Year 2013

By Bob Adkisson

In 2013 the club's fiscal year ran from March 1st, 2013 thru Feb. 28, 2014, and this is a report on how the TATC Cabin fared during that period.

Many of the numbers were all but identical to the year before, in fact, for the last 3 years in a row weekend usage of the cabin has been exactly the same: the cabin was rented 34 weekends, 14 weekends went unrented, and 4 weekends were taken up by maintenance / orientation work trips. Income last year was all but the same as the year before-- \$2060. One big difference was in the number of weeknights (Sunday night thru Thursday night) that the cabin was used: in 2013 usage was down significantly-- 35 nights, as compared to the previous year's total of 58. This caused the overall number of nights-of-usage for the year to drop to 102.

The favorite and least favorite months to rent the cabin stayed about the same as well, with the cabin only rented 4 nights total in the month of December. By comparison, the cabin was rented 17 nights in July and 16 in October, two of the favorite months, along with May. Also, there were runs of 7 weekends in a row of use in April / May, 9 weekends in a row in June / Aug., and 9 again in Sept. / Nov.

We had a work trip scheduled for early March (2013), but a major storm dumped over a foot of snow in the mountains, forcing us to push the maintenance back to mid-April. In April we had 10 workers, 3 of them first timers to the cabin. We moved and split firewood, then concentrated on improving drainage on the access road. A good spring cleaning was given to the cabin as well, and 3 members hiked the nearby White Rock Falls Trail, re-painting blazes and doing some light maintenance work.

The last weekend in May, Greg Hodges led the 2nd work trip of the year, hosting 16 people, 10 of them first timers! Again, more general clean up around and inside the cabin, including a good inventory of tools and supply items; the outhouse was given a good cleaning and weeds were cut back on all the nearby trails; there was a group hike of the White Rock Falls Trail and routine work was done on that (weed whacking, removing a fallen tree, cutting back small bushes).

In late Sept. Greg again led the work trip, this time with only 7 people (and only one first timer). Light work, normal clean up chores.

In mid-Nov. I led the trip. We had a total of 12 people (3 of them first timers), and the major objective was to chainsaw fire wood, re-stocking the supply for winter. In addition to the club saw, one member volunteered his as well. Several trees were felled, the wood cut and stacked. Leaves were raked from around the cabin and a couple of the log steps on the trail to the outhouse were moved a bit and re-set. On Sunday some of us took a fun hike to the Rockfish Gap train tunnels.

Also in 2013, Milton Beale cleaned out the 'grey-water' pit and replaced a couple of fading signs on the property. Bob Giffin made a couple of trips to get the cook stove back in working order, adding some new insulation and solving a problem with the stove not drawing smoke the way it should.

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to keep the cabin in good working order.

All in all it was a good year, with no major projects or problems. The situation with rock climbers on our property, climbing on the 3 large boulders just above our access road, seems to have abated. Some of them are now climbing on the rocks down in the hollow, on National Forest Land, reaching them via the White Rock Falls Trail.

One other thing of note: in late July, just after dark, my wife, grand daughter and I were walking in to spend a few nights at the cabin. We paused briefly at the bottom of the steep descent down from the Parkway, took a short breather, re-adjusted our packs then continued on. Next day, walking out to the car, we paused at the same spot along the access road to recover a hiking stick we'd left there. It was then that I noticed a grapefruit-sized hornet's nest attached to a small tree that arched over the road, only a foot above my head. We weren't stung, but it was obvious that the nest posed a serious threat to anyone using the trail; it needed to be removed.

I was stung twice while tying a small rope to the tree—both times it felt like a gunshot. The trunk was small enough to cut with loppers, and I did that, immediately running for my life. I then pulled the 4 foot long section of tree, with the nest still attached, well away from the road, using the 50 foot long rope. I let subsequent renters know about the nest, and there were ribbons along the road marking the spot as well. Turns out the hornets quickly rebuilt—a week later there was a nest in a different tree, overhanging the road and posing a threat to club members (one person was stung several times). Another cabin renter (with permission) took care of the problem, using a spray.

This is two years in a row that bees have had a nest along the access road—one year it was ground bees, the next it was a hornet's nest (a bear apparently dispatched the ground bee nest, digging it out of the ground and eating it). It has been my experience, as a hiker, that bees are the worst problem you are likely to encounter in the woods. They are hard to see beforehand, and they usually find you first. There is not much you can do but be aware you might encounter them, that and be on the lookout for nests. In my 35 or so years of going to the cabin, this is only the 2nd hornet's nest I recall there, the other one being attached to the stones on the side of the outdoor cooking area (there is a photo of Otey Shelton, using a 10 foot pole with a burning rag attached to the far end, taking care of that nest).

A few happier notes: last Autumn Margaret Crate and a grand-daughter got together and created a beautiful, customized photo book of the building of the TATC cabin. Copies of the book were offered for sale to anyone interested, and the club itself bought two copies (one for itself, and one as a gift for Phyllis Putman Sullivan, the mother of Douglas Putman, to whom the cabin is dedicated).

(Continued from Page 10 ...)

Altogether a total of 27 books were ordered and distributed to various club members (this includes two books Mrs. Putman subsequently ordered for her daughters). Things got a little complicated when, after having ordered 7 books at one price in October, a 2nd order (for 20 books) was made in December, and too late we found that the cost was significantly, unexpectedly reduced due to a sale. Margaret wanted to be as fair as possible about it, and have everyone pay the same price for the book. We averaged out the cost and tried to give everyone refunds. But..... most of the people refused their refund checks and told us to keep them—for the cabin. This we did, adding approximately \$190 to the general cabin income stream (rental money and occasional donations that people make). Both Margaret and I appreciate your generosity, and your interest in the cabin and the book. Thank you.

At the April TATC meeting I will have the club's copy of this book, BUILDING A DREAM, for members to look at, as well as the 2 photo albums that Margaret created and donated to the club several years ago. Also, especially to new members, don't forget the club's website—there you can peruse at your own leisure a long and detailed history of the building of the cabin, and view approximately 140 photos of its construction (about 2 dozen of these photos are more recent, showing some of the later additions to the cabin, what it looks like now). If anyone is interested in obtaining their own copy of the book, BUILDING A DREAM, let me know. The cost is approximately \$57, with about a 2 week delivery time.

In March my wife Evelyn and I took a short vacation to Florida and visited with TATC life members Jacque Jenkins and Bill Newsom, and former club members Karl and Melva Price. All four were, for years, involved with the construction of the cabin; photos of them can be found in all 3 places mentioned above (the TATC website, the 2 photo albums, and the book created by Margaret Crate). They are all proud of the part they played in creating the cabin, consider it one of the best things they were ever involved in, and have many fond memories of that time.

This long and snowy winter is finally coming to an end—the perfect time to go up and rent the cabin for a couple of days, to celebrate the changing of the seasons. Call, or email me, if you have any questions or want to reserve the cabin. See page 2 of the newsletter for phone numbers and email addresses. Also, don't forget that there are 2 cabin work trips this spring: April 11—13 and May 30—June 1. Make plans to attend one of these weekends, contribute a bit of work and, if you are not now qualified to rent the cabin, you will be after one maintenance / orientation trip. See the hike schedule for more details, or contact Greg Hodges or myself.

(Continued from Page 7 ...)

FREEZEREE - Part 2

(Continued)

On Thursday, Feb 6 we left the Harvard cabin with daypacks and crampons, and headed up the Lion Head winter trail route to Washington's summit. The Lion Head route is the most-commonly used route in winter because it provides more protection from the prevailing winds than other routes. One disadvantage to it is its steepness – after leaving the cabin, the trail gains 1000' in the first half mile. Good ice axe and crampon skills are required for climbing this section as falls are common and can be severe. Once at the top of the Lion Head, the trail flattens out across the "Alpine Garden" before the final uphill section to the summit. We climbed the Lion Head in great time and we were energized by our rapid progress. Once above tree line, however, snowdrifts up to 8' deep greeted us and slowed our progress to a crawl.

The night before we had discussed with the cabin caretakers whether snowshoes would be needed on account of the snow that fell the day before. They said it was unlikely, as the strong winds usually blow it all off the upper parts of the mountain. In the interest of packing light, we decided to not carry our snowshoes. Now we were forced to swim through deep snowdrifts and our progress was slowed to about ¼ mile per hour. With our progress slowed to a swim in the snowdrifts, it looked like we would not make the summit before our established 1pm turn-around time. Turn-around times are essential safety measures to avoid the dangerous possibility of descending in darkness, which is when most accidents happen.

Eventually, we cleared the snowdrifts, and rejoined the upper reaches of the Tuckerman Ravine trail to the summit. We made faster progress. We pushed our turn-around time a bit and made the summit at 1:20 p.m. We had stunning 120-mile views, snapped a few pictures, and began to rapidly descend, as we were now very much behind schedule and in danger of not returning to the car before nightfall.

We blasted down the upper Tuckerman Ravine Trail and glissaded back down the Lion Head. Glissading is sitting on your butt and sliding, usually out of control, until you hit level or hit a tree! We arrived at the Harvard Cabin, and packed up our backpacks and remaining gear. We then hustled back down the Huntington Ravine Trail, reconnected with the lower reaches of the Tuckerman Ravine Trail and arrived at the car at Joe Dodge Lodge. We arrived just after sunset.

We had a 40 minutes drive to our hotel that night so we decided to shower at the "pack room" at JDL. There, we met a group of 12 hikers and ice climbers from the Potomac ATC who were hiking into the Harvard cabin. Once showered and packed, we cleared the snow off the car and drove back to Twin Mountain, picking up dinner and cold beer on the way. We began the drive home to Newport News the next day, dropping Jerry at the Hartford, CT airport for his flight home to Chicago. Seven days of winter fun!

Oops, Almost!

(A short story of a great trip that almost got off on the wrong foot)

By Bob Adkisson

A few years ago, in early October, I'd taken Amtrak from Newport News, Virginia to Havre, Montana. An outfitter met me at the station, a rental canoe strapped to the top of his large old truck. He'd promised to bring along 3 maps he had of the Marias River, from the Tiber Dam down to where it joined the Missouri River (75 miles); I had my own maps of the Wild and Scenic Missouri, and plans to continue down it (135 miles).

First thing, we stopped at a store for my groceries, then, while he drove me to the put-in spot, about an hour away, I sat in the back and sorted thru all my gear, selecting and packing what I needed to take with me in various water-proof bags. Some things I'd leave with him (he'd be picking me up in 10 days, dropping me off in Great Falls; there I'd rent a car, go and explore a couple of National Parks, a lot of back roads). He kept pointing out antelope to the left and right, but I, unused to the wide open spaces and scale of Montana, mostly didn't see them.

As we descended into the coulee that hid the Marias River, he realized he'd forgotten to bring the 3 maps he had promised. I was disappointed and a bit concerned— both for my safety and peace of mind-- but figured I'd just have to do without them (though I'd be paddling 75 miles totally clueless as to my location). But then he offered to drop me off, go the 80 plus miles back to his home in Fort Benton and get them, and bring them to me later that afternoon— over 160 miles of extra driving for him! I guess all those extra miles just came with the territory, to a westerner.

So he dropped me, the boat, and my gear off at a deserted camping area among some aspens, a stone's throw from the Marias, and went to get the maps. I was exhausted from two nights of fitful sleep on the 53 hour train ride and would have loved to just pitch my tent, crawl into it, and go unconscious until morning, but I felt some duty to stay awake, to wait until he returned. I set up the tent, put my gear inside, had a snack. Then, the exact opposite of what I wanted to do, I decided to exercise another basic need-- take a walk, explore my surroundings.

Leaving the grove of aspen on this overcast, chilly afternoon, at first I wandered downstream, but soon decided to circle back around and head up the canyon— on the drive in I'd noticed a rough road followed the river to the very foot of the dam, about a mile upstream. Weaving thru the sagebrush, I soon started up a 30 foot high embankment. The soil on the slope was soft, a mixture of sand and gray dirt, and animal trails seemed to course around every bush and rock. I walked beneath one clump of sagebrush then started around its side to climb above it. In mid-stride (and this all happened in an instant) I noticed my next footfall would land at the mouth of a grapefruit-sized hole that was suddenly coming into view. My eyes zeroed in on the hole and noticed something just inside it—what I wasn't sure. I was able to come to a quick stop, my foot winding up about 18 inches to the side of the hole. I leaned down to see what was inside, all but filling it.

Yikes! Of all things (especially here in sagebrush country), it was a football-sized hornets nest, with half dozen hornets standing on its gray papery surface. Some animal (a cow or a deer) had recently stepped there and enlarged the hole, exposing more of the nest than the hornets probably wanted.

The hornets seemed to know I was there, seemed to be moving away from my foot, but why weren't they swarming me, stinging me, defending their nest?

I backed off a bit, thankful I was being spared, went around and to the top of the embankment. There the wind flowing down the narrow, shadowed canyon told me why the hornets hadn't attacked: it was too cold, they were stunned into lethargy.

In fact, their days were numbered—before I reached the take-out spot 10 days down-river I would get snow, a couple inches of it; the perfect end to my trip, but also the end of the hornets.

I walked the rough, rocky road to the dam, into the wind the whole way. It almost woke me up. Returning to the campsite, I checked my watch, decided to sit at the picnic table and bring my journal up to date. An hour later I was done, but still no truck. Unable to hold out any longer, I went into the tent and lay down.

Half an hour later the crunch of gravel woke me. I stumbled out and took the maps, thanked the outfitter, re-confirmed my pick-up day and time. Then, it was sweet oblivion until about 9 the next morning. Maybe 10.

I was on vacation—why hurry?

Heard but Not Seen

by Juliet B. Stephenson

I am often asked if I saw any Bear during my eight months on the Trail. Apparently, the number of bear sightings is the standard by which any thru-hike is judged. I saw several Bears, in fact. There were numerous juveniles nimbly vanishing down a hillside, one large adult (thankfully quite a distance away), and a lone cub sitting right beside the Trail, watching me curiously as I gingerly made my way past him. (Where was Mama? Would she make an appearance before I skirted around her baby?)

I spied many other wild beasts too. A lone Bald Eagle soared overhead as I hiked across Fontana Dam. An enormous Wild Turkey proudly trotted at my heels for nearly 20 minutes. (Unfortunately, it was hunting season, and I was not pleased to have found THIS new friend!) I was visited by Gray Jays intelligent enough to beg, and bold enough to actually snatch food right out of my hand. Grouse, Red Hawks, Barred Owls, and magnificent Pileated Woodpeckers round out my 'rara avis' encounters. I happily snapped a few pictures of a Bull Moose in his prime, contentedly grazing on Fireweed. Squirrels of many colors, Chipmunks, and Deer were daily sights. Both a Bobcat and a Lynx revealed themselves (at different times), and one evening I even caught a glimpse of an Otter!

I was quite fortunate to see all of these animals as I hiked through their domain. Indeed, when I close my eyes, I can still see their images vividly. Yet the creatures that really capture my imagination belong in the realm of "Heard but Not Seen". A smattering of Bears, a few Moose (Meese?), and even a trio of extinct animals fall into this category. These illusive, yet very audible, animals most certainly have stories to tell.

On a remote Southern Appalachian ridgeline drenched in heavy gray fog, the unmistakable song of a Humpback Whale echoed through the forest. The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end as a haunting melody of nasal clicks, eerie trills, and deep, soulful warbles pierced the thick blanket of silence. The diaphonics were such that I half expected to see an immense mottled fluke rise out of the murky mountain mist just ahead of me. Yet these mountains had not seen a Whale in at least 35 million years! Were these complex symphonies encased, along with quartz and feldspar, in the sandstone that was once the floor of the ancient Tethys Ocean? Some would say that I heard a Coyote, a Coonhound, or perhaps even a Chukar Partridge. Yet I know the ghost of a proto-whale swims the stygian slopes of the fog-covered Appalachians, calling poignantly for a mate, for I have heard it!

Crossing Watauga Dam, near the Tennessee – North Carolina border, I chanced upon an alate denizen of the "Heard but Not Seen" club. Although the mechanics of Pterosaur flight are not completely understood, it is believed they were capable of active flight. Fossil records show a keeled breastbone, developed for the attachment of robust flight muscles. The near-deafening "Whoop, whoop, whoop" of the vigorous downbeat of cumbersome wings just on the other side of the ridge on Iron Mountain confirmed just how robust those colossal muscles are. Perhaps I had flushed out a Pteranodon, with a 25 ft wingspan, sunning himself after a dip in the lake. Or maybe I'd disturbed a Quetzalcoatlus, with a 40 ft wingspan, quietly digesting a fish dinner. Naysayers will insist it was a Turkey Vulture, with a mere 6 ft wingspan, but the ears tell a far different story: I heard a Pterosaur!

One chilly Spring evening, just an hour after sunset, the American Mastodon lumbered into my tent site. Nestled in my sleeping bag, I suddenly felt the ground tremble with each slowly approaching footfall. Nervously peering under the vestibule of my tent, I strained to catch sight of this large, tusked Mammut. My eyes failed to register even a hint of the browsing proboscis, but my ears tracked him as he slowly, heavily, circled my tent. Many thoughts swirled in my head: "What is he doing out there?" and "When will he go away?" were foremost. "Would he mistake my trekking poles, leaning against a large oak tree, for an exotic, and rather tasty, twig?" and "Has HE any clue he's supposed to be extinct?" followed close behind. An eternity later, after numerous plodding circuits around my tent, the Mastodon snorted, and stomped off to whence he came. The morning revealed no visible evidence of my noisy, nocturnal visitor, but my ears had provided plentiful proof of the Pachyderm's presence.

Moose droppings lay thickly upon the moss alongside the boulder-filled Maine stream. The odds of seeing a Moose in this stealth campsite looked extremely good. As dusk approached, I sat quietly motionless on the bank, intent on seeing another Moose. From my vantage, I could see no movement except the water flowing over and among the rocks. Unfortunately, I found this a little too relaxing to remain hyper-vigilant for long. Bedtime comes very early for thru-hikers, and the pleasant burble of the brook had me nearly nodding off. Just after sunset, I gave up the quest and crawled into my tent.

No sooner had I settled into my sleeping bag, when it seemed as if a chorus line cattle call had been issued! Kick! Kick! Splash! Splash! Kick! The sounds of vigorous Moose athleticism reverberated all through the night air. If I got up now, I would surely see at least one animal, if not a whole slew of them! Stealthily, I unzipped my bag and then my tent. Ever so quietly, I inched my way out into the darkness and found... absolute silence!

I crouched motionless beside my tent for ten minutes or so, but to no avail. Disappointed, and wearier than ever, I returned to my tent. But just as my head hit the pillow, the kicks and splashes resumed in earnest. I could only imagine a whole line of Moose cows, attempting to dance in unison. As I drifted off to sleep, I'm quite sure I heard an exasperated Moose choreographer bellowing, "No, no, no, Ladies! I said: 'Kick, Kick, Kick, Splash, Kick, Turn, Splash.' Got it? Good! Now take it from the top!"

With a little luck, anyone can see a Moose, but not many people can overhear the preparations for a Moose ballet! The rare Appalachian Humpback Whale is almost never heard. And who knew that Pterosaurs still took to the skies? Or that the American Mastodon still lurks in the deepest of woods? These animals, a few of whom quite literally did "go bump in the night", set my mind racing much more than their very real counterparts. The "Heard but Not Seen" gang is alive and well, and resides upon the Appalachian Trail. I invite you to go and visit them yourself. Be sure to pack your imagination; you just might need it!

Activities Schedule

PLEASE NOTE: Most hikes are limited in the number of participants. The hike leader will take reservations on a first-come, first-served basis. You can include your name on the sign up sheets available at each meeting or call the hike leader. If you sign up for an activity and then decide not to participate, please contact the leader in advance.

TATC Board Meeting

Mark Wenger, 253-0056 president@tidewateratc.com

When - April 1, 2014, Tuesday

Where - Pretlow Library, West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, VA, United States

Description - Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) Board Meeting - All Welcome! Held at Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503

New Quarter Park Local Trail Maintenance

Phyllis Neumann 757-566-4584

When - April 6, 2014, Sunday

Where - New Quarter Park, Williamsburg, VA

Description - Meet at 9:30am at the inner parking lot of New Quarter Park for some light maintenance on trails built by TATC. Bring water, gloves and snacks. Tools will be provided. Plan to eat lunch afterwards at a local restaurant. No experience necessary! Contact Phyllis to sign up: phyllisneumann@hughes.net or 757-566-4584.

TATC General Meeting

Mark Wenger, 253-0056 president@tidewateratc.com

When - April 9, 2014, Wednesday

Where - Pretlow Library, West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, VA, United States

Description - 7-8:30pm Guests Are Always Welcome! Come a little early to socialize, purchase new TATC merchandise, and buy your 50/50 raffle tickets! Will discuss: general business and information on upcoming TATC activities, and will have a program presentation (to be announced).

Southern Partnership Meeting

Ned Kuhns and Phyllis Neumann - rprep@tidewateratc.com

When - April 11 - 13, 2014, Friday - Sunday

Where - Mountain Lake Lodge, Pembroke, VA

Description - Yearly meeting of Southern AT Clubs, ATC, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office, & key land management agencies. Event includes a Partnership hike, a meeting of the Konnarock Steering Committee & the Spring meetings of the SORO & the VARO regions.

TATC Cabin Maintenance Trip

Bob Adkisson, 757-627-5514

When - April 11 - 13, 2014, Friday - Sunday

Where - TATC Cabin off of the Blue Ridge Parkway near White Rock Falls Gap, Nelson, VA

Description - Cabin Maintenance / Orientation Weekend, April 11--13; Leader, Bob Adkisson (627 5514) (email address: cabin@tidewateratc.com) Come join us at the TATC cabin, half mile walk off of the Blue Ridge Parkway, in Nelson County, Va.; possibly some chainsaw work will be done, cutting firewood, and some work on the access roadway (digging and moving dirt). The cabin sleeps 12, but you are welcome to camp out. Come for all or part of the weekend. Possible community meal on Saturday night; all other meals on your own. Time for a short hike on Sunday in the area. New members can, by attending, qualify to rent the cabin on their own. Call with questions or for directions.

False Cape Beach Clean Up

Diana Ramsey, 619-0540

When - April 12, 2014, Saturday

Where - Little Island Park, Sandpiper Road, Virginia Beach, VA, United States

Description - False Cape Beach Clean Up Diana Ramsey (619-0540) (email address: magnoliafarms@cox.net) Meet at Little Island City Park at 9 am SHARP. The Terra Gator will bring you to the beach. Bring gloves, bucket, snack/lunch, and water. We'll eat at Pungo Pizza afterwards. Contact Diana to RSVP.

(Continued on Page 15 ...)

Activities Schedule

TATC Spring Walk-Thru

Mark Connolly, 623-0764

When - May 3, 2014, Saturday

Where - Sherando Lake, VA

Description - This is our reconnaissance effort to discover the effects of the winter on our section of the A.T. from Reeds Gap to the Tye River, the Mau-Har Trail, and possibly some trail in St. Mary's Wilderness. For further info: Contact: Mark Connolly, 623-0764, trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com

TATC Board Meeting

Mark Wenger, 253-0056 president@tidewateratc.com

When - May 6, 2014, Tuesday

Where - Pretlow Library, West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, VA, United States

Description - Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) Board Meeting - All Welcome! Held at Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave., Norfolk VA 23503

TATC General Meeting

Mark Wenger, 253-0056 president@tidewateratc.com

When - May 14, 2014, Wednesday

Where - Pretlow Library, West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, VA, United States

Description 7-8:30pm Guests Are Always Welcome! Come a little early to socialize, purchase new TATC merchandise, and buy your 50/50 raffle tickets! General Business, information on upcoming TATC activities, and program presentation by Reese Lukei on Botswana.

Spring Maintenance and Family Camp-Out

Mark Connolly, 623-0764

When - May 16 - 18, 2014, Friday - Sunday

Where - Sherando Lake, VA

Description - This is a weekend for us to do what the club was set up to do: Maintain our assigned section of the Appalachian Trail, the Mau-Har Trail, and possibly some trail in St. Mary's Wilderness Area. Come on out to our base camp at Sherando US Forest Service Campground on Friday, if possible, to set up your tent at the Williams Branch Picnic Area at Sherando, keeping in mind that the gate is locked at 10PM and opens on Saturday morning at 6AM. The map and directions are available at our website www.tidewateratc.com. For further info; Contact: Mark Connolly, 623-0764, trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com

Whetstone Ridge Hike

Mal Higgins, higginsmb@cox.net

When - May 18, 2014, Sunday

Where - Sherando Lake USFS Campground (Williams Branch)

Description - Don't let the magic of a Sherando AT maintenance event end on Saturday night... Join Mal on Sunday for a 10 - 11 mile day hike. Hike begins at the Whetstone Ridge parking lot on the BRP near the Rte 56 junction & proceeds south, mostly along ridgelines, to the Rte 603 parking lot. This yellow blazed trail offers some views, but is mostly an easy-paced forest walk, which we'll hike together to the end. We'll depart at 8 am from Sherando Lake USFS campground (Williams Branch) & shuttle a car to the Rte 603 endpoint. Plan on a ten hour day (including the one hour shuttle time at the start.) For further info, contact Mal Higgins.

TATC General Meeting

Mark Wenger, 253-0056 president@tidewateratc.com

When - June 11, 2014, Wednesday

Where - Pretlow Library, West Ocean View Avenue, Norfolk, VA, United States

Description - 7:00 - 8:30pm Guests Are Always Welcome! Come a little early to socialize, purchase new TATC merchandise, and buy your 50/50 raffle tickets! Will discuss: general business, and information on upcoming TATC activities, and will have a program presentation by Bill Rogers on California Hiking.

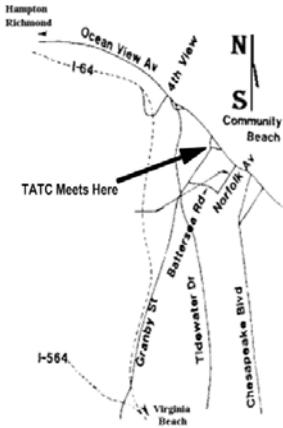
Information for Hike & Activities Schedule, TATC website listings and Meetup postings are collected & edited by the Hikemaster. Contact Juliet Stephenson at hikemaster@tidewateratc.com for publication.



Tidewater Appalachian
Trail Club
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From Peninsula: Take 64 East to 4th View Exit 273. At bottom of ramp, turn left at stop sign, turn right onto Ocean View Ave and follow over Tidewater Drive to Granby St. Take right onto Granby St., take next right onto A View Ave, and then immediately turn right onto Portview Ave., bear right around the Library into the Library parking lot, meeting is held in Meeting Room #2

From Norfolk and Virginia Beach: Take 64 West toward Hampton/Richmond. Take the Chesapeake Blvd. exit. Go to end of Chesapeake Blvd., then turn left onto Ocean View Ave. and take left onto Granby St., take next right onto A View Ave, and then immediately turn right onto Portview Ave., bear right around the Library into the Library parking lot, meeting is held in Meeting Room # 2



FREEZEREE 2014