

# Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club Appalachian Hiker

[www.tidewateratc.com](http://www.tidewateratc.com)



August 2011 - September 2011

## Prez Sez

Summer is well upon us with warm days, never enough rain and plenty to do outdoors. While my poor squash and zucchini plants have succumbed to the vile onslaught of demon squash bugs, my wildflower gardens are exploding with color and are a constant source of enjoyment. The hummingbirds never cease to entertain as the males wage mock battles over the nectar feeder (which I can barely keep full) and the females watch in (what I perceive as) "annoyed amazement". The height of summer may not be ideal for backpacking as the heat, humidity and bugs tend to keep some at home. But I enjoy this time of year when the days are long and the evenings are cool and filled with the symphonic sounds of night insects.

I hope everybody had a good time at the Silent Auction held during the July meeting. There were some pretty unique objects up for grabs. I was very pleased with my acquisition, a retired sign marking the Mau-Har Trail. This is always a fun event and many thanks to Debbie Bellucci and Dottie Abbott for organizing the fun. The Auction helps to raise funds for donation to the Pretlow Library, our much appreciated host for our monthly meetings.

Several dozen TATCers enjoyed a fun-filled week at Emory and Henry College for the 2011 ATC Biennial. Ned Kuhns and co-chair David Helms (NBATC) engineered quite a coup as Virginia Journeys delivered a flawless performance of workshops, excursions, hikes, bike rides, river trips and evening entertainment. This is the fourth Biennial I have attended and by far the most enjoyable. The campus was beautiful (reminiscent of a small New England school) and the staff friendly and accommodating. The dorms (air conditioned, furnished sitting areas, full kitchens, flat screen TVs) and dining hall (variety of meat and vegetarian entrees plus ICE CREAM AT EVERY MEAL!!!) were a far cry from what I experienced when I was in college. There were hordes of volunteers assisting in all aspects of the event, from parking and sign placement to leading hikes, helping with workshops, manning information tables and general problem solving. They all wore their pistachio VA Journeys Volunteer shirts with great pride. There were attendees from as far away as Canada and Hawaii. For me, it was like spending a week with your best friends!

*(Continued in next column)*

If you were unable to attend the conference, then talk to some of the folks that did and make plans to attend the 2013 conference which will be held in Cullowhee, NC. That promises to be another outstanding event.

So, with the Biennial behind us, what lies ahead? Well, another party of course!! TATC will be celebrating our 40th Anniversary next year and plans are evolving for proper acknowledgement of this milestone. We're looking at March or April 2012 for the occasion and are considering different options for location.

I need some help planning the gala and would appreciate some able-bodied volunteers. Contact me [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com) if you'd like to help.

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*(banner photo by Mark Ferguson)*



Visit our website at  
[www.tidewateratc.com](http://www.tidewateratc.com)

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## Membership

We are 381 members strong! I am still receiving renewals from "those who forgot!" And we have some new members to welcome: Phil Reed, Dan Stranigan, Page Call, and Joan Hughes.

Don't forget, if you move, your newsletter will not be forwarded. Please e-mail or call me with your new address.

*Mary Hormell*  
Membership Committee Chair  
[membership@tidewateratc.com](mailto:membership@tidewateratc.com)

## The Swingblade, Lopper, and Hedge Shear Festival of June 18<sup>th</sup>

On Fathers' Day weekend, Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, nine of our TATC members took up one or more of the tools in the title to do battle with the encroachment of vegetative growth on the borders of the trail on our section of the AT, at least between Maupin Field and the Tye River, with the exception of a short section, and additionally a good part of the Mau-Har Trail. They swung the swingblades at the tall grasses at trailside, used hedge shears on stuff resistant to the swingblade, and used loppers on slightly thicker growth of seedlings or branches.

Bill Rogers and Tom Reed were busy on the section from Maupin Field south to the top of Three Ridges. Scott Hilton had already driven up on Friday to camp at Harpers Creek, and got an early start on Saturday morning from his tent site, heading north on the AT from Harpers Creek toward the top of Three Ridges. Phyllis Neumann drove early on Saturday morning, and had already parked at the Tye River bridge on Route 56 and gone up the trail to do work on the south half of the Mau-Har Trail by the time that Jim Sexton, Bruce Julian, Mal Higgins, Svetlana Kononov, and Mark Connolly met at the Tye River bridge to get tools from Bruce and to coordinate what they'd do on the trail, sometime after 9AM. Mal and Svetlana accompanied Jim Sexton to do trimming from Tye River up to the Mau-Har Trail junction with the AT. Mark and Bruce rode together up to the cow pasture via Harpers Creek Lane/Route 682 to get as close to Harpers Creek as possible, and then sought to hike north to catch up with Scott Hilton, already up on Three Ridges, by trimming as they went. Bruce and Mark finally met up with Scott at about 2PM and together they went back down the mountain, still occasionally swinging and clipping.

While Phyllis and, separately, Bruce and Mark drove back towards Hampton Roads area, Scott stayed over in his tent at Harpers Creek on Saturday night to venture up the mountain again on Sunday. Jim (and Chris) Sexton and Mal and Svetlana helped the economy by staying at the Amherst Motel, so they could experience more of what Amherst, Nelson, and Augusta Counties could offer. There was a report of music entertainment in Lovingston, the Nelson County seat, and a hike on Sunday morning near Waynesboro by a couple of those who stayed at Amherst, so the Trail and its local economy both benefitted from Tidewater Appalachian Trail Clubbers over the Fathers' Day Weekend.

*Mark Connolly*  
Trail Supervisor  
[trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com](mailto:trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com)

## September Photo Contest

The fall phenomenon, our famous Photo Contest, looms. At our General Meeting on September 14th, you are invited to bring those pictures you snapped this year of the Appalachian Trail and Trail Club activities to share with everyone. Please identify the picture and the photographer on the back of your print. Your best efforts will be judged by a professional photographer and will be candidates for the Club's 2012 Calendar/Planner. Our evening's speaker will talk about digital photography and what to do after you've snapped..... We look forward to the fun!

*Jane Martin*  
Calendar Committee Chair  
[calendar@tidewateratc.com](mailto:calendar@tidewateratc.com)





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## Thanks for Attending and Volunteering at Virginia Journeys 2011

By Ned Kuhns

Over the past three years, those who have attended TATC monthly meetings or read our articles in our monthly newsletter have heard our president Phyllis Neumann and me discuss Virginia Journeys 2011, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference held from July 1 – 8, 2011 at Emory & Henry College in Emory, VA which is in the southwest corner of the state. I am pleased to report that the conference was an overwhelming success due to the support of many TATC members who not only attended the week-long conference but also volunteered to help in a wide variety of assignments.

Of the 958 hikers who registered for the conference, TATC had one of the largest (if not the largest) contingents of attendees. I want to publicly acknowledge those TATC members who attended the conference and particularly to thank those who volunteered. By my count, there were **51** of us there with most remaining the entire week. On the back page of this issue, you will find a photo of those attendees who could be assembled on Sunday night of the conference.

I particularly want to thank all those who volunteered in some capacity or other. Many assisted in a variety of areas. At the risk of missing someone's contributions, I would like to acknowledge those who played a major role in making the conference such a success.

Mark Wenger was TATC's representative on the Steering Committee and was responsible for manufacturing and installing the signs and kiosks which helped direct visitors at the college. Rosanne Scott arranged for and handled all the publicity for the event, including the use of social media opportunities. Reese and Melinda Lukei presented one of the evening entertainments with wonderful photos of their Arctic and Antarctic Expeditions. Many members volunteered to lead some of the 80 interesting and informative workshops which were so well received at the conference; these included Bill Rogers, Mary Hormell, Ann Smith, Susan Gail Arey, Phyllis Neumann, Rosanne Scott, Reese Lukei, Jim Newman, John Oakes, and Alan Neumann. Assisting the workshop presenters and helping to ensure workshop attendees located the correct rooms were Phyllis Neumann, Mal Higgins, Sandy Baylor, Bill Rogers and Michael Horrell. Bruce Davidson was particularly valuable in ensuring the college's audio/visual equipment was functioning correctly for the presenters' use.

In the central registration area, Phyllis and Alan Neumann transported and set up the TATC exhibit and audio/visual equipment on which our TATC outreach presentation developed by Jim Sexton and his committee a few years ago ran continuously and attracted many viewers. Bruce and Margaret Julian transported the three large wooden kiosks to the College and erected them with the help of several others. Staffing the Workshops Desk for which TATC was responsible were Evelyn Adkisson, Phyllis Neumann, Mal Higgins, Mary Hormell, Sandra Canepa, Svetlana Kononov, Jane Oakes, Margaret Julian, Bob Safford, Ann Smith, Melinda Spence, Dottie Abbott, Margaret Pisone, and Karen Wilson.

With the large number of cars arriving and departing during the weekend, traffic control and parking became a major issue. When one of the other A.T. clubs was unable to assume that task, TATC volunteers accepted the responsibility. Standing out in the hot sun to control the traffic on various shifts were Bruce Julian, Richard Tarr, Tim Smith, Alan Neumann, Bob Safford, Michael Horrell, Vic Pisone, and Gordon Spence. Greeting attendees and controlling traffic in the Van Dyke dining hall were Bill and Marky Lynn and Mary Bechtold.

Helping to lead the 170 hikes over 65 different routes were Bob Adkisson, Mal Higgins, Bruce Julian, Jim Newman, Susan Gail Arey, Rosanne Scott and Mark Wenger. In this area, I'm sure there were other TATC leaders or co-leaders but I just don't have access to all the names.

As you can see from the above, Virginia Journeys 2011 was a total TATC club effort with many members volunteering for multiple assignments. I apologize if anyone's name was inadvertently not recognized. For those who attended and those who volunteered, I extend my grateful appreciation and thanks. The conference was a tremendous success due to your collective support.

ATC's 39<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference will be held at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC from July 19 – 26, 2013. Volunteers will be needed to assist the Deep South clubs in that endeavor so I hope you will plan to attend and volunteer there as well. I intend to!

*(See TATC group photo from Virginia Journeys 2011 on Page 16)*

## **You Need to Join the Appalachian Trail Conservancy!!!**

As TATC members, we take great pride in maintaining our 11 mile section of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) which extends 2,181 miles from Georgia to Maine. At the same time, we need to be familiar with and support the overall organization under whose guidance we operate – the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). This article is intended to introduce you to the ATC and encourage you to become a member of this important Trail management organization.

The ATC is a volunteer based, private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, management and promotion of the Appalachian Trail. With its central office in Harpers Ferry, WV and four regional offices, located strategically along or near the Trail, ATC has 40,000 members in the US and 17 countries abroad. Our Central and Southwest Virginia ATC Regional Office is in Blacksburg, VA. Our regional director is Laura Belleville, who is currently “double hatted” as ATC’s Director of Conservation. ATC is also a confederation of 31 A.T.-maintaining clubs (of which TATC is one) and individual members who construct and maintain the Trail. ATC is an umbrella organization that partners with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and numerous state and local agencies, towns and municipalities in the 14 states through which the A.T. crosses to coordinate efforts daily across the entire length of the A.T. It also helps acquire lands adjacent to the Trail; compiles and updates guidebook and map information; conducts training on the use of maintenance equipment; and provides technical assistance to A.T. clubs on Trail matters.

In 2004, ATC undertook a long-term, strategic planning process which has resulted in a number of changes to make the organization more relevant in the current economic climate. There has been an expanded marketing effort to increase awareness and appeal for support to the nation at large. There is currently a transition from sole emphasis on trail maintenance to a broader emphasis on land and resource management, while still concentrating a focus on footpath maintenance. ATC has a 15 member Board of Directors elected at each biennial meeting. The members are a diverse group from within and outside the Trail community to bring a broader perspective and to assist in the acquisition of additional resources. The next 39<sup>th</sup> biennial meeting will be held at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC from 19 – 26 July 2013 to which all ATC members are invited.

The Stewardship Council oversees policy development and programs related to stewardship of the A.T. and surrounding public lands. The Council, comprised of 15 members with representatives from the 4 A.T. regions (New England, Mid-Atlantic, Virginia and the Deep South), will promulgate rules and regulations for the A.T. under the guidance of the Board of Directors. Our Central and Southwest Virginia regional Stewardship Council representative is Ned Kuhns, one of our TATC members.

To raise and discuss regional issues as well as looking at Trail needs from a local level, Regional Partnership Committees (RPC’s) have been established in the 4 regions with members from each AT Club in the region. The Virginia RPC has two representatives from each of the 7 Virginia clubs, one of which is our Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC). As you may be aware, Mark Wenger has been designated by the TATC Board of Directors to be our primary representative and is the Chair of the Virginia RPC; Ned Kuhns is our alternate member. The RPC’s are intended to get the Clubs more involved and to forge a stronger bond on regional topics affecting the Trail. RPC’s will help shape the composition and functions of the Regional Offices through their inputs on budgets and work plans. The Virginia RPC will have its next semi-annual meeting on 1 October 2011 at a location to be determined. Agenda items will be solicited before that meeting and the meeting is open to all attendees.

If you are not already a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, we encourage you to join. TATC members receive a discounted membership fee of \$25.00 since you belong to an A.T. Club. Membership applications are available at every TATC monthly meeting from Mary Hormell or you can apply using the website [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org). If you believe in maintaining and improving the Trail, providing educational programs regarding the Trail, conserving lands adjacent to the Trail, and supporting ridge runners and caretakers on high-use section of the Trail, then you need to join ATC today.

*Ned Kuhns*  
ATC RPC Rep  
[rprep-nk@tidewateratc.com](mailto:rprep-nk@tidewateratc.com)

## Virginia State Parks Offer Opportunities for Youth and Families

Next time you are surfing the web, check out [www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov). You will discover fun programs for the family as well as special events for older teens. Below are a few programs you might find interesting.

Fun for the whole family! The **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Geocaching Adventure!** Take the whole family on modern-day treasure hunts and enjoy the great outdoors. Geocaches containing Virginia State Parks history cards unique to each park have been stashed in all state parks. Collect a card each from five parks to get a special prize. There are prizes at the 10-park, 20-park and all-park levels too. Plus, each park has a few "wild cards". They are placed in caches throughout the year. Go to [www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/geocachegame.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/geocachegame.shtml) and click on the link to sign up. You will find a list of the game's caches at [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com). The fun ends December 15, 2011.

September 1 to October 31 is **Stewardship Virginia**. This is a statewide initiative held twice each year to help citizens with projects that enhance and conserve Virginia's natural and cultural resources. It focuses on projects that:

- Enhance water quality
- Control invasive species
- Improve recreational resources
- Preserve historic and cultural resources
- Conserve natural heritage resources
- Educate people about recreational, historical, cultural, wildlife, forest and water resources
- Improve wildlife habitat and tree cover.

Getting involved is simple:

Plan and conduct a volunteer project or event. The Dept. of Conversation and Recreation will provide a resource guide.

Complete a registration form and send it. Your event will be added to DCR's website.

Give volunteers who assist you a 'thank you' certificate signed by the governor.

This would be great for the budding scientist, park ranger or botanist in the family.

In 2009, America's **State Parks Youth Ambassador** campaign was launched. This is a youth-led movement for the outdoors to raise awareness and attract the attention and support of young people in all states. Virginia's State Park Youth Ambassador Program will have at least one Youth Ambassador at every park.

To be eligible you must:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 26.
- Register as a Volunteer in Virginia State Parks.
- Commit to a tobacco free involvement.
- You and your parents must sign a video/photo release form if you are under 18.
- Furnish a short bio and current picture plus an interesting photo prior to age 2.
- Have rudimentary knowledge of the internet.
- Volunteer a minimum of 10 hours a month.

You will be provided 1) Identifiable clothing, 2) Training as needed, 3) an annual pass to State Parks at no cost and 4) loaned photo and video equipment as needed.

Questions? Contact: Office of Community Engagement and Volunteerism  
Leesylvania State Park  
2001 Daniel K Ludwig Drive  
Woodbridge, VA 22191  
703-583-5497  
[vspvolunteer@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:vspvolunteer@dcr.virginia.gov)

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Many of you are familiar with the **Virginia State Parks Youth Corps**. This program is designed to engage Virginia's youth in a structured program of important conservation and park projects on public lands. Projects range from wetlands preservation and restoration to trail restoration and construction. During the summer **Youth Conservation Corps** members participate in three-week residential programs. Spring and fall will find the **Youth Development Corps** participating in weekend programs. Crew members arrive on Friday nights, prepare a meal and set up camp. Saturday, they work on a conservation project. Sunday the young people take part in outdoor activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, canoeing and interpretive hikes.

Contact: VSP Director of Community Engagement and Volunteerism  
Leesylvania State Park  
2002 Daniel Ludwig Drive  
Woodbridge, VA 22191  
703-583-5497  
[vspycc@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:vspycc@dcr.virginia.gov)

**This year is the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Virginia State Parks. Discover Virginia!!**



Prez Sez - Continued from Page 1 ...

We are in need of a new Secretary for the Board of Directors! The position will run through the end of February 2012. The Secretary is responsible for taking the minutes during Board meetings and during a few selected official events. The Secretary should be able to attend Board meetings which are held the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm at Pretlow Library. Contact me if you are interested in this position. It's a great way to become more involved with the Club!

"National Public Lands Day" ([www.publiclandsday.org](http://www.publiclandsday.org)) is Sept. 24th and the ATC is promoting this as a day to attract families and youth to get out and hike. Nancy Rinkenberger and Rick Hancock will be offering a family backpacking weekend. What a great way to continue our efforts to attract new and younger members to TATC! Consider leading a hike at one of your favorite local parks. Contact me or Nancy ([counselor@tidewateratc.com](mailto:counselor@tidewateratc.com)) if you'd like to participate in this national event. The ATC is also offering assistance in planning, promoting and conducting an activity for this day. Contact Jeanne Mahoney ([jmahoney@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jmahoney@appalachiantrail.org)) or Julie Judkins ([jjudkins@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jjudkins@appalachiantrail.org)) for more information.

My faith in the mission of TATC as a promoter of good stewardship of the land and a supporter of the ideals of the Appalachian Trail community has never faltered. I must say that experiencing the fellowship, camaraderie and solidarity of the volunteers and attendees at Virginia Journeys has only served to reinforce my belief that this is truly one of the greatest organizations I have ever had the privilege to be a part of. Good work TATC!!

Be safe! Have fun!  
*Phyllis Neumann*  
TATC President  
[president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com)



## TATC Cabin Notes

*By Bob Adkisson*

For a pleasant change, this summer the trail club cabin has been used (and reserved for use in the upcoming weeks) more than any summer I can recall. There was even one stretch of 9 consecutive days of rental use, with 4 different people renting it two or three nights each, back to back.

For new club members, or for members that haven't yet had a chance to experience the cabin, there will be two more maintenance / orientation trips there this year: Greg Hodges will lead a trip the weekend of Sept. 23—25, and he and I will co-lead a trip on Nov. 11—13.

The cabin is located about half a miles walk off of the Blue Ridge Parkway, in Nelson County, Va., just a few miles from the section of the A.T. that our club maintains. The only requirement to rent the cabin is that you be a club member, and that you participate in a maintenance / orientation work trip, where you will learn how to operate and care for this unique club treasure.

The cabin was built by club members between 1979 and 1983 (with a few more years of finishing touches after that!) and has been rented and enjoyed by hundreds of members in the years since. The cabin is built of stone and sleeps 12 people. It is fully equipped with lanterns, pots and plates, cups and cutlery, up- and down-stairs sleeping bunks (you provide the pads and sleeping bags), indoor and outdoor picnic tables, both a wood burning cook stove and a small, 2 burner propane stove (you provide the bottles of propane—for the lanterns and the stove), a fireplace, a front deck, a spring and an outhouse. While basically a simple, primitive cabin, it is at the same time a beautiful monument, a work of art, something that every member should experience and enjoy and treasure.

Contact Greg or me to sign up for one of the two upcoming maintenance trips. Other than some light maintenance chores, I am not sure what work is planned for September, but in November we may use a chainsaw to cut and stack firewood for the winter. No experience is necessary, and about all you need bring other than some basic camping gear is a pair of work gloves. Be prepared to have a fun time in the mountains of Virginia! Our clubs 15 acres of land is surrounded on all sides by National Forest property, and there are numerous trails nearby to explore.

When club members contact me to inquire about the cabins availability I've asked that they do so by phone rather than email. One reason for this is that my computer doesn't recognize first time contact from members, and it sends their emails to the junk file, which in the past I haven't regularly checked; I have discovered emails weeks old that I didn't know anything about. Especially with my wife's help, phone messages left on our answering machine get noticed and answered much quicker.

Those interested in me having their email address can send it to me by phone or mail or in person. This would be helpful to in that, for those that regularly rent the cabin a couple of times a year, I can send out general announcements of openings instead of, like I sometimes do, making half dozen or so phone calls.

It is nearly time to prepare dates for next year TATC calendar. As a reminder, qualified club members can, by leading a group trip open to all members, reserve the cabin via the clubs calendar over a year in advance. It is basically like volunteering to lead any club hike or activity, only the cabin would be your destination and, as it were, base of operations. The person leading the trip would be the one responsible for choosing the date (first checking with Greg and myself to make sure it doesn't conflict with one of the 4 or 5 work trips we will be scheduling for the coming year), announcing the trip in the calendar and the newsletter, getting the key, collecting the rental fee from all participants, and, after the trip is over, returning the key and fees to me. Several club members have in the past led such weekend trips. They've gone day hiking and or visited nearby wineries and attractions, etc. We encourage members to continue this tradition, as we also encourage group usage of the cabin in general.

But, just as important, if you rent the cabin for a private trip, the cabin and its 15 acres of land are all yours.

As always, the cabin can be reserved 8 weeks in advance, and the basic fee is \$5 per person per night. To inquire about availability of the cabin, or if you have any questions, call me at 627-5514.

[cabin@tidewateratc.com](mailto:cabin@tidewateratc.com)



## Hiking “The Plains” in Monongahela National Forest

*By Mal Higgins*

Just three miles southwest of Dolly Sods Wilderness, West Virginia, and along the Allegheny Front lays the 6,792 acre Roaring Plains West Wilderness area. Canaan Valley State Park is about five miles north of the area. The Roaring Plains West Wilderness was created officially by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11, which added 52 new wilderness areas nationally and extended acreages on another 26 existing wilderness areas. Adjacent, but not added as official wilderness areas, lie Red Creek Plains and Flat Rock Plains.

All of these areas were explored by Bruce Davidson, Mark Connolly and me on July 15-18, 2011, on a strenuous three-night, 17 miles backpacking trip. By the time we walked out of the woods, we had crossed Red Creek four times, seen breathtaking scenery, encountered mixed hardwoods, red spruce, brush, an understory of many plants and grasses, fields of ripe blueberries everywhere, toadstools, voluminous blooming rhododendron jungles, many rock cairns, precious few blazes, and depending on your point of view, we were either swaggering or staggering.

Arriving at Seneca Shadows Forest Service campground (similar to Sherando F.S. campground near Lyndhurst, VA) we had time to climb the newly rehabilitated tourist trail up Seneca Rocks to its summit (a new access point across a concrete overflow spillway in the vicinity of the visitor’s center replaces for now the steel bridge over that branch of the Potomac R.). We car camped in two tents Friday night

The next three days and two more nights included the most blooming; white and pale pink rhododendrons I’ve ever seen, as we headed up the South Prong Trail (often an abandoned railroad grade trail) in the Red Creek Plains after parking Mark’s car just off F.S. Road 19. Following a map we’d found on a website <http://mrhyker.tripod.com/> we proceeded to locate the “Hidden Passage” transition trail through the Red Creek Plains and made it to what a hike narrative referred to as the “ever popular Seneca Meadows” a no-water, beautiful grassy campsite at about 4400 feet elevation perched on the rim looking down into a huge valley and across at North Fork Mountain. We pitched tents, and a full moon and a campfire that night were a nice ending to a day in which we saw absolutely no one else.

On day two, we struggled all day along a mostly unmarked trail (no blazes, only occasional cairns) called the Canyon Rim Trail through the Roaring Plains West Wilderness. It was in the 80s, but we resupplied with water from Roaring Creek early in the morning. We enjoyed magnificent views from “The Point”, a photo opportunity. As we crossed a large boulder field, some 15 minutes into the traverse, with the sun beating down around 1:00 p.m., and us only partly aware of where we were, a loud distinctive rattle caused Bruce to perform a graceful ballet (or some might call it a slow-motion reaffirmation that gravity always wins). The timber rattlesnake was maybe 12-15 feet from Bruce, hidden on a boulder, with his long black body stretched out and his head a foot up in the air. Wow! I snapped a photo, and Mark and I skirted wide, caught up to Bruce, noticed a newly acquired road rash all over his right arm, and got the heck out of there. Bruce was okay, thankfully, but sore.

When we arrived at our final campsite, at the junction of the Canyon Rim and Roaring Plains Trail, again a no-water site (but we’d hoarded water for this), I made the amazing discovery that I had lost my tent and fly, which I’d secured to the outside of my pack with its own straps, somewhere that day. I probably dislodged it during a nice slip and fall on the trail earlier. Bruce had the poles and stakes, but, dang--who loses a tent? Mark had an old tarp from the 1980s, and Bruce deftly rigged it and we slept under that. I had no desire to retrace our Canyon Rim traverse the final day (maybe Mr. Rattlesnake had friends, and, besides, I didn’t like my old tent that much anyway, I told myself).

We headed down the Roaring Plains Trail, connected to the Boar’s Nest Trail in the Flatrock Plains, and stumbled and slid down the steep “Sliding Board”. I got a few ground bee stings on both ankles on the Boar’s Nest Trail to make our animal encounters complete. Some CDs from our distant past (think Allman Brothers, Meatloaf, Van Morrison, Fleetwood Mac, and Bob Dylan) made the drive back to Tidewater fly by. I’m still looking for ticks.



## The A.T. Biennial Meeting

By Bob Adkisson

The first week of July the A.T. held its week-long biennial meeting, this year at Emory & Henry University, near Abingdon, Va. As you probably are aware, our very own Ned Kuhns, former president of TATC, was in charge. Our club, along with 6 others from central and southwest Virginia, provided volunteers who served on numerous planning committees and saw to all the myriad details that make a Conservancy meeting a smooth running success.

And they **were** successful!!

Having attended a dozen biennial meetings now, I have to say that I thought this was one of the better ones; from what I experienced, it was all but glitch free (that is, aside from trying to register on-line, using one of those new fangled things called a computer-- I finally had to give up, call for help, and talked the kind but luckless volunteer who answered the phone into registering my wife, grand daughter, and I; even then, I was told later that day, that person had the same frustrating time I did, trying to get the computer to simply cooperate and be reasonable).

Approximately 950 people attended the meeting, 51 of them (a club record for a biennial meeting?) from TATC. A great turnout, and a great time!

The Emory & Henry campus was green and beautiful; the dorms roomy and quiet; the hikes and excursions plentiful and varied; access to I-81 was easy, and towns like Abingdon, with restaurants and stores, was only 10 minutes away. The sprawling and wild Mt Rogers National Recreation Area, and the Appalachian Trail itself, were only 25 miles away, as was that most famous of trail towns, Damascus.

I didn't sign up for any workshops this year, but instead spent all week hiking, and one day on a bike trip for the length of the Virginia Creeper Trail, with a nice long lunch break at the half way point in Damascus. On one hike, which I co-led, I got to summit Mt Rogers, the highest point in Virginia, for only my 2<sup>nd</sup> time (the first time was on a hike during the 1999 A.T. biennial meeting, when it was held in Radford, Va.). We saw a large group of wild horses and ended the hike just as an even wilder thunderstorm broke, causing minor flooding and instantly cooling things off. Other hikes I took (2 of them) were on a huge re-location of the A.T. that occurred a few years after I completed the trail in 1977, sections along Chestnut Knob overlooking Burkes Garden valley. Another hike I took was along part of the former route of the A.T., on Iron Mtn. This relocation took place before I hiked the trail; for 35 years I'd wondered what the older route was like, and this meeting afforded me an opportunity to hike a part of it. One other hike I took was completely non-A.T. related—it was to a portion of a new Virginia State Forest and Preserve (acquired with the help of the Nature Conservancy) called The Channels. This too was a unique opportunity-- visiting an interesting new protected area, with a State forester and a Tennessee trail club geologist along to answer our questions. Because of the trouble with the computers (or the computer program) and not getting registered in a timely manner, we were wait listed for this particular hike, and it turns out no one dropped off of it to make room for us; luckily, the two men leading the trip had no problem with a few extra folks along!

Thanks to all the many folks who gave of their time and energy to make the meeting a great success. It was nice seeing and hiking with folks I recognized from previous Conservancy meeting, wonderful to visit sections of the A.T. that were new to me, or to re-hike, in a different season, other sections I was familiar with—even if it was from 34 years ago.

Another treat for us was to stop on our way home and visit with Margaret, Steve, and Linda Crate in Christiansburg. Margaret is a long time TATC member; she and her late husband Harold were two of the mainstays in the building of the trail club cabin. The two of them served the club in a number of capacities for over 20 years, and set a great example in both kindness and adventurousness.



## Morris Creek

By Bill Rogers

Morris Creek forms the southwest boundary of the Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Charles City County. I had scouted the boat ramp area earlier, and done a little hiking in the WMA, but had never paddled the creek.

I left home at 6:40 for the 60-mile drive to the WMA boat ramp. Rush hour traffic was light and moving well. I was at the ramp about 8:15. A flock of sixteen Great Egrets passed overhead. Early morning light and shadows made their passage a beautiful one. Of course my camera was in the truck...oh well. A speed boat passed going upcreek at high speed. Nice (?) wake.

I attached the wheels and pulled my craft down the ramp to water's edge, waded in, and launched, heading upstream. At home I'd left a note for Bea with a map of the creek saying that, for safety's sake, I would stay on the main channel and not explore side creeks. That way, if anything happened, I'd be easy to find. I spied a turtle - it quickly dived. Later I heard another drop from a branch into the creek.

I paddled against a very slight outgoing tide. In view of possible motorboats, and knowing they'd be in the deeper water, I stayed on the inside shallows of the many creek curves. There was but an occasional light puff of air. Marsh grass was spring-green. Blooming crimson-eyed rose-mallows lined the banks. There were occasional lavender pickerel weed blooms. A pair of ospreys near the pier screeched objections to my presence.

A bit upstream I flushed a smallish adult bald eagle from a creekside pine. Although it was fairly close, it was too fast and too difficult to catch with the shutter. As I paddled I eyed the banks, looking for possible lunch locations for a future paddle group. Soon I saw the speedboat up ahead. It bore three gents now still fishing. Although one saw me, they faced the other way and made no attempt at a greeting.

There were just a few, far-spaced, houses along the south side of the creek, each with its own pier. One pier held a pretty potted plant garden, including a brightly colored crepe myrtle. Another sported a large boat suspended under a boathouse, and two kayaks hanging under that same roof. With no surface dock at water's surface, I wondered if they climbed into the kayaks and lowered themselves into the water - but much doubted the thought.

I saw a spot on the south bank that might be good for lunch and mentally marked it for later on that day. Up ahead I spied another fisherman. Here there was an apparent channel both the left and the right. It might be an island of marsh grass, or not. I picked left. The fisherman was very pleasant and told me much about the upper creek, as far as he could take his larger craft.

Shortly after I left him the creek started to narrow. A muskrat broke the surface just feet from my kayak. But only his head showed and instantaneously he was back under water and gone. In amongst the shore brush I thought I saw a fox. But it turned out to be a small raccoon that quickly disappeared.

Where the creek had been wide with acres and acres of marsh grass and occasional woods, now the shoreline was mostly woods and very pretty. There were a few blowdowns, easily negotiated, and a couple of very large cypress trees. There was only an occasional, annoying deer fly. In two places poison ivy overhung the banks to be avoided. The creek narrowed to but the length of my kayak.

All too soon I spied the Rt. 623 bridge up ahead. But I could not get to it. That 50-yards was blocked by several blowdowns. Being alone I did not attempt to scramble over or portage around them and, instead, turned back.

I quickly confronted an optical illusion. My path was completely blocked by a blowdown. It just could not be!!! But it was not so, the blowdown was there, but the narrow, very twisting creek bent to the left leaving ample passage.

Coming around a bend I spied and flushed a female wood duck. Several times I flushed the same great blue heron as I eased my way downstream to the 'maybe' lunch spot. The tide was at ebb, and there was ample mud on which to beach the kayak. I did. Said mud was gooey, sticky, and grabby. I was very glad I had on tightly strapped sandals - they stayed on. I left my nice, comfortable, warm PFD, and hat, on a tall cypress knee forming a scarecrow 'watchman.' The climb up the very gentle slope to the plateau was easy. On top the area was a mix of pines and hardwoods, with level open ground and a log just asking to be my luncheon seat.

Hanging my shirt over a leafy branch to dry, I walked around a bit. A soda can showed several bullet holes, and there was fire ring and another can. But, for its use, the area was quite clean. I did spot a few shotgun shells wondering if the owners were shooting ducks or themselves. Just behind the log on which I sat there was a dug up turtle nest with egg shell remnants scattered about. A raccoon or fox had feasted. A trail, possibly an old farm road, led off into the woods. I sat on my log, looking out through the trees over the creek and ate my cold lunch from its little insulated bag. Ice water with Cranberry Emer-Gen-C was simply delightful. This lunch spot will be hard to beat. After lunch I hiked the trail for about 1/8th of a mile. 'Twas pretty. At the time I thought that a trip I might lead here in the future could be a paddle-hike-paddle. It was so pleasant in my shady lunch spot I hesitated to face the open (think sunny/hot) water of the creek for the return trip. But, after climbing in and getting the mud off my sandals, I was on my way. And it was warm. Later I found out the Norfolk high was 92°, probably closer to 95° farther inland where I was. The tide was incoming. Cloud reflections in the water were pretty. Along one steepish bank I heard a deer crashing away from me. Moments later, behind a blowdown on shore, I saw just the legs of another deer. Thinking of a possible photo I very slowly inched toward the blocking blowdown. But a deer it wasn't. The legs turned out to be those of a hound looking for scent of its quarry.

Just a short way downstream I jammed the kayak's bow into creekside growth to anchor the boat as I took a photo. Behind me, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a bit of motion in the water. This turned out to be a beaver swimming upstream.

All the fishermen had disappeared and I had the creek to myself. Back at the ramp I pulled the kayak onto the concrete and immediately went up to open the oven-like truck. There was just a tad of shade over next to a shot up sign and I moved it there. Then it was back down to the ramp to put wheels under the kayak and move stuff up to and into the truck.

From the WMA I headed west on Rt. 5, heading for Cul's Courthouse Grill. On the way I stopped in at the Charles City County Visitor Center restroom for a quick hands, face, arms, neck wash, and hair comb. With the truck in the shade at the Visitor Center, I walked across the street to the restaurant for a most delectable, calorie laden, chunk of bread pudding, and a large unsweetened iced tea with two lemon slices.

In my evening shower I noted, not with pleasure, that I was the victim of a number of chiggers (probably from my short walk in the woods). My idea of a future paddle-hike-paddle quickly evaporated. Paddlers normally do not do so in long trousers and walking footwear. If I lead an all-day paddle on the creek it will include some of the side creeks.

# 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.

## **August 6, 2011, Saturday NEWPORT NEWS PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

**Bill Buck, 846-1125 or BBuck\_TATC@verizon.net**

Come join us for some light trail maintenance in Newport News Park, one of the largest city parks in the United States. We will meet at the Discovery Center Parking Lot at 9 a.m. Bring water, work gloves, bug spray, and a snack. We'll be cutting back any overgrowth, picking up some light trash, and clearing leaves from the trails. This is a great opportunity to get outside and do a little bit of work to help one of your local parks. Afterwards, if you've worked up an appetite, we can "do lunch" at Legends Grille located on the premises. Newport News Park is located at 13564 Jefferson Avenue in Newport News with easy access, just off Interstate 64 via Exit 250B. To sign-up or if you have questions, please contact Bill at 846-1125 or BBuck\_TAT@verizon.net

## **August 10, 2011, Wednesday TATC GENERAL MEETING**

**Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584**

Business meeting & recognition of guests. Program: Susan Gail Arey presents a slide show of her 1998 hike on the AT from Georgia to Waynesboro, VA.

## **August 12, Friday 2011, Fri "COOL" SUMMER NIGHT AT O'SULLIVANS WARF**

**Mary Hormell, 627-2392 & Ginny Werner, 623-2345**

You are invited to join Mary & Ginny for the final "Cool Summer Night" by enjoying live music and perhaps a chilled drink in AC comfort at O'Sullivan's Warf. Beginning at 9:00PM, Nick Warner (Ginny's husband), plays in a rock-cover band. O'Sullivan's is located at 4300 Colley Avenue, Norfolk.

## **August 13, 2011, Saturday NOLAND TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

**Tim Minich, 291-8056, [minicht81@gmail.com](mailto:minicht81@gmail.com)**

Come join some of your fellow trail club members for a day working on a part of the Noland Trail. Located within the 550 acres of The Mariner's Museum Park in Newport News, the Noland Trail is a five-mile foot path following the shoreline of Lake Maury used by hikers and runners of all abilities. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot closest to The Mariners' Museum entrance (same area as the TATC Chocolate Hike starting point) and then we will caravan to the Copeland Lane entrance across from Warwick High School for a short walk to the worksite. Bring water, work gloves, bug spray, and a snack. Long pants are highly recommended. We'll be clearing large downed trees and brush along the sides of the Noland Trail about 50 yards 'east' of Copeland Lane. The work will consist of cutting branches from the downed trees and removal of the trunks back out of visual range from the trail. Tools will be provided. If time permits we will also clear some over growth areas. This is a great opportunity to get outside and do a little bit of work to help one of your local parks. Lunch will be decided at end of task. The level of effort for today's maintenance is estimated at **moderate to moderate+**.

## **August 27-28, 2011, Sat-Sun WILDERNESS FIRST AID CERTIFICATION CLASS**

**Matt Rosefsky, 434 760-4453 or [www.wfa@outdoorsocial.com](mailto:www.wfa@outdoorsocial.com)**

Learn how to care for an injured/ill person during the critical minutes or hours before ambulance or hospital hand-off. Cost is \$175. Class will be in Community Room, Hampton Town Center.

More information at [www.facebook.com/pages/Wilderness-First-Aid-Casual-Hikers-Rural-Living-Urban-Disaster-more/194517030565661?sk=app\\_6261817190](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wilderness-First-Aid-Casual-Hikers-Rural-Living-Urban-Disaster-more/194517030565661?sk=app_6261817190)

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# Activities Schedule

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**Sept 2-5, Fri-Mon BACKPACK TUSCARORA TRAIL, GORE, VA TO HANCOCK, MD**

**Mark Wenger (Animal) 757 253-0056 or [markwenger@cox.net](mailto:markwenger@cox.net)**

This is a very strenuous hike, involving 50 miles in three days from Gore, VA to Hancock, MD. Expect some rough trail conditions with major elevation gain & lost each day. We will leave from 427 Franklin St., Williamsburg at 5:00PM Friday & pick up anyone in Richmond at the WalMart parking lot off I'95 in Ashland exit 92 on the way. We will eat a quick supper on the road and drive I-95 north to 17 then north to I-66 west to I-81 north to exit 310 north on 37 to 50west to Gore and find a place to camp. On Saturday we will shuttle the vehicles or arrange a shuttle and begin the hike at Gore trying to cover at least 20 mile that day Sunday and Monday will be 10 miles and 20 miles respectively. We will drive home that Monday evening. I am trying to section hike this trail and this is the next section for me. Camping spots and water is limited. If you are up for adventure, this hike is for you. We go rain or shine.

**September 10, 2011, Saturday FIRST LANDING STATE PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

**Diana Ramsey, 619-0540**

Located off Shore Drive in Virginia Beach, meet with some of your fellow trail club members for some trail work on the Live Oak Trail. Meet at on the Trails Side of the park at 9:00AM (note directional sign "Trails"). Proceed to the new Visitors Centers parking lot. Work will consist of removing small blow downs & bush trimming. Tools provided. Bring gloves, snack, & water. Lunch to be decided at end of task.

**September 10-18, 2011 HIKE IN THE STEPS OF THOREAU**

**Gordon Spence, 490-9048 x 344 or [GordonS@HBAonline.com](mailto:GordonS@HBAonline.com)**

Gordon offers this interesting, inexpensive autumn trip to Cape Cod with a free place to camp at Wellfleet, some memorable hikes, none strenuous, including the great outer beach, Great Island, Long Point and the Wellfleet marshes at the Audubon Society Preserve. Other activities can include exploring the quaint villages on the cape. Limited to 10 persons.

**September 14, 2011, Wednesday TATC GENERAL MEETING**

**Phyllis Neumann, 566-4584**

Business meeting & recognition of guests. Program devoted to photo exhibition of judging.

**September 23-25, 2011 Fri. evening—Sun. RAFTING THE GAULEY RIVER**

**Mark Wenger (Animal) 757 253-0056 or [markwenger@cox.net](mailto:markwenger@cox.net)**

A premier whitewater experience with ACE Adventures of Oak Hill, WV. A rain or shine event with a June 1 payment deadline. We will leave from 427 Franklin St., Williamsburg at 5:00PM Friday & pick up anyone in Richmond at exit 173 commuter lot on I-64. We will take I-64 west to Beckley, then 19 north to Oak Hill. We will be camping Friday & Saturday night at ACE Adventures & will be booking our rafting trip through them. There are several trips available but most of us book the marathon which is 23 miles, 110 rapids, both the upper and lower Gauley all in one day. I will be making the reservation June 1 at which time you can make your payment. Go to the ACE website for details. The trip is not cheap, but this is one of the top whitewater rivers in the world, so you've got to be there! We go rain or shine.

**September 24, 2011, Sat ENJOY WEYANOKE BIRD & WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

**Jim & Chris Sexton, 484-2827**

Join us for a 1½ hour walk in this delightful park in West Ghent. Meet at 10:00AM at the 1501 Armistead Bridge Road gate. This is a family friendly event but not stroller friendly. Eat out afterwards.

# Activities Schedule

Continued from Page 14 ...

## **October 14-16, 2011, Fri-Sun FALL MAINTENANCE WEEKEND**

**Mark Connolly 623-0764**

Our second maintenance weekend comes with a bonus: the spectacular beauty of autumn colors! There will be a club-sponsored meal Saturday evening, other meals will be on your own. Bring appropriate clothing, gloves, boots, tent & other necessities. Form-up at 7:45 Saturday morning at our free camping site (Williams Picnic area). If arriving Friday, be aware that the entrance gate to Sherando is locked at 10:00PM

## **November 12, 2011, Saturday FIRST LANDING STATE PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

**Diana Ramsey, 619-0540**

Located off Shore Drive in Virginia Beach, meet with some of your fellow trail club members for some trail work on the Osmanthus Trail. Meet at on the Trails Side of the park at 9:00AM (note directional sign "Trails"). Proceed to the new Visitors Centers parking lot. Work will consist of removing small blow downs & bush trimming. Tools provided. Bring gloves, snack, & water. Lunch to be decided at end of task.

**Local Trails Maintenance Opportunities:** If you would like to receive E-mail notifications about TATC Local Trails Maintenance activities, please send an E-mail to Bill Buck at [LocalTrails@tidewateratc.com](mailto: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. These skills may also be used to maintain the Appalachian Trail.

**Weekday Activity 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](mailto: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 want to make reservations.

**Planning a hike or activity.** If you have hike or activities information for a trip you'd like to lead, please call Hikemaster Jim Newman at 867-6688 to leave a message or e-mail at [Hikemaster@TidewaterATC.com](mailto:Hikemaster@TidewaterATC.com) with all information to be inserted or updated. **ALL ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THIS SCHEDULE ROUTE THROUGH THE HIKEMASTER WHO FORWARDS SUCH TO THE WEBMASTER FOR WEBSITE UPDATES.** If you e-mail these items, be sure to identify yourself by full name and mention that this is a TATC event. Blank Sign-up sheets can be printed from the TATC website. **After the event, please return completed sign-up sheets to the Hikemaster, so they can be retrieved from file for a period of several years. You may take sign-up sheets to the board or general meeting following the event, or mail them to the Hikemaster: Jim Newman, 102 N. Fern Cove Court, Yorktown, VA 23693**

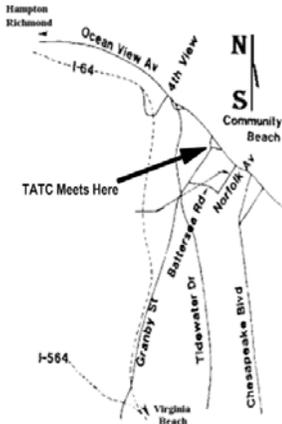
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**TATC Meetings are held at the Pretlow Library, 111 West Ocean View Ave, Norfolk, VA**

From Peninsula: Take 64 East to 4<sup>th</sup> 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

