

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Appalachian Hiker

www.tidewateratc.com

Banner Photo by Mark Ferguson

April 2021 - May 2021
48th Edition, 2nd Issue

PREZ SEZ

Hello, My name is Lee Lohman. I succeeded Rosanne Cary as President of TATC on March 1st. Also joining the Board were Dave Altman, Vice President; Cecil Saylor, Treasurer; Britt Collins, Trail Supervisor; John Sima, Assistant Trail Supervisor; and Gene Monroe, Tool Boss. All of us wish to thank the departing Board members for their efforts to smooth the transition. We are deeply grateful.

The COVID-19 lockdown restricted many of our activities throughout the winter. The coming of spring and the coming of sufficient quantities of vaccine suggests that more person-to-person activity on and off the trail will be forthcoming. With that in mind, the Board authorized the Spring Trail Maintenance. Britt has set the date as May 14-15-16. More details follow.

Because of the lockdown, Zoom activity has been, well, zooming (couldn't resist), and between 30 and 40 members have attended our General Meetings. The Board has made serious efforts to make them engaging and informative. The Board recognized that Zoom would never replace the camaraderie of a Mary Pretlow library meeting, but they hoped that speakers like John Gignilliat, who recounted his thru-hike at the last meeting, would help members retain an affinity for the trail. I think the Board's efforts have been successful. Attendance numbers have been stable. Thank you all for attending.

While TATC activity on the trail declined, activity at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has not. Just ask Ned Kuhns or Jim Sexton, our representatives to ATC. ATC subdivisions VARO (the ATC's Southwest and Central Virginia Regional Office) and SORO (the Southern Regional Office, which covers our area and further south) held one four and one five hour meeting over March 12th and 13th weekend.

During the meetings, ATC addressed their outreach efforts to local communities along the trail, new agreements that clubs must sign with the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and APPA, the Department of the Interior office that manages the Blue Ridge Parkway, and their initiatives in the area of Justice, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), and many other topics.

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Regarding JEDI, the most recent issue of A.T. Journeys Magazine contains three articles that participants in the meeting were asked to read. Entitled The A.T. and Race, Native Lands, and Acknowledgement, It All Began with a Question, What Are You?, the articles explain a major ATC effort to address Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in their organization and on the trail. ATC has hired several specialists to help them frame their policies and strategies on these issues. The articles are worth reading as ATC approaches to these concerns will probably affect all clubs in the future.

ATC also announced that they were reorganizing their management structure. (I know you all are dying to see their organization chart, but I will spare you.) The bottom line is that Kathryn Herndon-Powell will become our new ATC Regional Manager and our main point of contact.

ATC also announced Mia Fernandez as the new Ridgerunner for our area. For those of you who may not be familiar with the role, the Ridgerunner hikes back and forth on the A.T. helping thru, section, and day hikers with problems, doing minor maintenance, admonishing those who are misusing the trail, and reporting on trail usage and problems. The latter function is of enormous importance to us. Since we are so far away from our part of the A.T., we depend on the Ridgerunner to inform us about downed trees, washed out water bars, etc.

Both Kathryn and Mia will introduce themselves during the Zoom General Membership Meeting on April 14th.

To keep you in the loop, TATC and the U.S. Forest Service are negotiating a new Sponsored Group Volunteer Agreement (VSA) that defines when, where, and how we will maintain the A.T. The Forest Service is proposing new language that strengthens reporting requirements. We would have to report the number of members engaged in maintenance, where they worked, and the approximately number of miles maintained. We are eager to discuss these requirements as they may represent a substantial time commitment.

Perhaps the most pressing issue comes from the following draft VSA provision, "The USFS {Ranger District and/or Forest} and {club} recognizes that users of the A.T. may occasionally perform the beneficial services such as trash collection, unplanned phenology monitoring, or other tasks included in the attached descriptions of services while recreating on the Trail. These users will only be considered volunteers if the primary intent of the A.T. use is/was volunteer service and they have coordinated their service with {Club} such that {Club} has the opportunity to provide oversight for the service activity and to coordinate the activity with the land management partner."

This implies that a member or small group of members who decide to perform maintenance may not be covered by USFS tort or liability protection unless TATC approves their activity in advance. We asked the Forest Service to clarify the meaning of this provision and how they expect us to comply.

Now, as a reward for reading through all the organizational details, there is a reward--maybe. Jim Sexton kindly sent out an e-blast last week announcing the REI discount coupon contest. Ten members correctly answered the contest question and received a coupon, but there are TWO left.

The coupons are valid from April 9 to 12 and entitles the winner to a 25 percent discount on total purchases of \$200 or more, a 20 percent discount on purchases under \$200, and a 15 percent discount on a variety of gear including GPS equipment, action cameras, and bike trailers. The physical coupons are for use in the store. The code on the coupon can be used for online purchases.

The first two members to answer the following question correctly will win. Since REI is donating the coupons, I thought we might key the question to them. So, what year was REI founded?

Send your answer to President@tidewateratc.com. Please state below your answer whether you intend to use the coupon online or in the store. We'll email the code to the winners who will use it online. We'll snail mail the coupon to those who want to use it in the store, which by the way, is located at 350 Independence Blvd. in Virginia Beach. Here's the Google Maps link: <https://goo.gl/maps/uVfuecExX9TYNq7LA>

The contest will close 24 hours after you receive this newsletter.

Stay safe,
Lee Lohman
President - Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club
president@tidewateratc.com

Minute for Maintenance

We have settled on the weekend of May 14th-16th for our Spring Maintenance Weekend, the details have been worked out for the campsite area. We are going to stick with how the Fall Maintenance Weekend was done. Here is what we know so far:

- Must be COVID Certified
- The number of participants is limited to 30, first come, first served. Thus far, 2 people have signed on.
- Camping will be Sherando's group site Williams Branch Picnic area.
- There will be no club-provided Saturday dinner. Participants must provide their own food, all meals; however, there will be a trail "snack sack" provided to all before leaving for work Saturday morning

We are asking that all Section Leaders visit their areas prior to this weekend and report back on conditions, since there will not be any group walk-thrus. If you are unable to get to your section just let John Sima or myself know.

If we are comfortable with more people we can up the number. Thoughts??

If there are any questions or concerns about this, please, let me know.

Respectfully,

Brittany Collins
Trail Supervisor
trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com

General Meeting Preview Lee Lohman

Our next General Membership meeting will be on April 14th. In addition to our usual reports and other club business, we're going to introduce Kathryn Herndon-Powell, who was newly appointed to be TATC's first point of contact with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. We've worked with Kathryn extensively in a different capacity. We are lucky to have her attending to TATC concerns.

Mia Fernandez will be our second guest. Mia was recently hired as the Ridgerunner for our part of the trail. She will succeed Jim Baum, who many of you know. We will miss Jim, but Mia brings that same kind of can-do spirit to the job. TATC participated in the hiring process. We learned that she spent time working on outdoor activities in Montana and also camped out there for a month. She'll fit right in.

Finishing up April's meeting will be a PBS video on **The Tunnel**. It is the old/original mile long train tunnel underneath Rockfish Gap, between Waynesboro and Charlottesville, Va., and has recently been opened to hikers. Some of our stalwarts like Mal Higgins, Bob Adkisson, and Jim Sexton have already hiked and think it is a must do if you're in Nelson County. The tunnel is not just a hole in the mountain. It has a history that's worth knowing. We'll be showing the video at the end of our meeting with commentary by anyone who has made the trek.

If you are free on April 14th at 7:00pm, please tune in. Jim will send out an email later in April with the Zoom link.

Membership Committee April 2021 Newsletter Article

There's light at the end of the COVID tunnel thanks to the vaccine rollout, and TATC members are gearing up for an exciting spring and summer filled, once again, with plenty of trail maintenance, fellowship, and fun! The first three months of the year were busy with a flood of renewals reminiscent of the "old days" when memberships all expired in March. Now, with the technology of Wild Apricot, we have rolling enrollment that spreads most of the committee's work out throughout the year. However, Wild Apricot imposes a surcharge for handling credit card purchases, not unlike some other businesses, and that caused some confusion over the cost of membership dues. This discrepancy wasn't clarified on the paper membership application form used by check writers. An explanation has now been added to the printable form on the website to clarify the difference between check and credit card payments.

Another challenge that has come up since the postponement of face-to-face meetings is acknowledging and posting paper applications and checks in a timely manner. Club mail is picked up from the PO box twice a month by the membership co-chairperson. Membership checks are then mailed to the chairperson who updates the membership on the TATC website and hands the checks over to the treasurer. As you can see, this can cause a delay of several days or even weeks in banks clearing checks, depending on when the application was mailed. The membership committee is working at improving the process by updating membership on the website once the co-chair sends the names of new or renewing members by email rather than waiting for checks to be received in the mail by the chairperson. Of course, the checks still won't be posted until they are received by the treasurer. Please be patient. Once we are back to meeting at the Pretlow library, this should no longer be a problem.

We continue to add new members each month. Their names are forwarded to our three counselors who point them toward members and committees that suit their needs. This has helped engage new members quickly and kept our club fresh and relevant. Here are some recent membership details that might be of interest:

Life members— family (11x2) 22. Life members – single 42. Total Life members = 64

Total Family members (121x2) = 242. Total Single members = 221 (includes life members).

New members referred to counselors and packets mailed in March = 5

Total members in March - 463

The following new member bios were received since the last newsletter. Several club members have expressed how much they appreciate reading about the new members. We can't wait to meet you in person!

Emily Argo –has been a member since September 10, 2020.

Hi! I'm from Massachusetts, but I've lived in 5 other states on both the East and West coasts and have settled in Virginia. I grew up camping and hiking with my family and lived walking distance to Acadia National Park in college, but my top 3 hikes (for the hike, the views, and/or the people) have been Mount Katahdin, Mount Washington, and Old Rag. I would like to start backpacking, so any suggestions for good backpacking routes for beginners would be welcome. I'm looking forward to exploring more of the hiking in Virginia with TATC, maintenance trips, and, eventually, using the cabin! Best, Emily Argo

Rachel Barrows – has been a member since November 22, 2020.

I was born and raised in the Pungo, Virginia Beach area on a property that included a waterway as well as woodland, where my siblings and I spent a great deal of time. I've always enjoyed the outdoors but as an adult have come to love it deeply. My work doing intensive mental health counseling with at-risk children has caused me to appreciate even more the freedom and peace that nature provides me. I do not consider myself an avid hiker even though I always listed it as my favorite thing to do! I've completed a number of hikes in Virginia state parks (local and not so local) as well as climbing the Thousand Steps in Huntington county, PA twice (no third time for me). I'm hoping that with a membership to this club I will have more consistent opportunities to participate in God's creation as well as to give back in some small way.

Rachel

Anna Lissnils – has been a member since January 12, 2021.

I am an avid day hiker and car camper but have been obsessed with the AT since I heard about it for the first time. I'm originally from Sweden but have lived in the US for 25 years. This year I have FINALLY taken the step to spend some time on the trail and I'm planning on hiking the length of the SNP in May. I'm very excited obviously. Daydreaming bout thru-hiking one day.. or maybe the hike in May will cure me from all that! Who knows but I highly doubt it...

I would love to do group hikes etc. with the TATC but unfortunately I work most weekends.. and maybe now with Covid maybe you're not doing group activities? I'm going to try to hike down to Back Bay and camp a night before my SNP hike. Apart from that I'll be trying out my new equipment in the backyard ha ha!

I'll keep an eye on inbox and your website for info on upcoming events! I'd love to take part in the maintenance trips too, when I'm able to! I spend a lot of time at First Landing and would be glad to help out there as well.

Meet a Member

My name is Dave Altman and I'm new to the area in the last year. I moved to Hampton in July after graduating college and very quickly became involved in TATC as a way to connect myself with like-minded people who enjoy the outdoors and to make an impact on maintaining the trails we all use and love. I initially joined in August of 2020 and shortly thereafter went on a cabin maintenance trip where I met a lot of great people and had a fantastic time. This experience solidified my desire to get more involved with the club which led to my running for the leadership position of Vice-President, which I currently hold. Prior to moving to Virginia, I had lived in upstate New York and backpacked extensively in the Adirondack Mountains, having completed my 46 Adirondack High Peaks shortly before leaving the area. Since moving, I've explored many new trails in the Blue Ridge Mountains and have really enjoyed getting to meet everyone and explore my new local trails.



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

The Club conducted local maintenance in First Landing State Park on Thursday March 25th. Due to covid, the club had not worked in the park for quite some time. Special thanks to nine members, who took their time to support one of the best parks in the state system: Sharon Slayer, Bob Mooney, Vic and Margaret Pisone, Bill and Diane Leber, Dave Plum, Marti and Ellis Malabad. Masks on and socially distanced, we used our own tools to work on a perfect sunny day in the seventies.

We cut the vegetation back on the Live Oak Trail so it won't be as big a problem later this summer. The roots on the REI trail were cut out so no one should be tripping again anytime soon. It was a very successful day. The park staff will be very pleased with our efforts. After our work was completed, we all gathered in the picnic area for lunch.

Photos from this trip in the Photolog section are mostly from Bob Mooney.

Ellis Malabad

Cabin Maintenance and Orientation Weekend

Friday thru Sunday, May 21st thru 23rd

The two requirements to rent the TATC cabin in the Blue Ridge Mountains are : 1. Must have completed a cabin maintenance and orientation weekend, and 2. Must be a current member of the club.

You can reserve your spot on the May 2021 trip by contacting Gregory Hodges at cabin@tidewateratc.com or by calling/testing at (757) 439-1552. Due to pandemic guidelines, the trip will be limited based on bunk space and tent space.

Thursday is an optional night if someone who is already qualified is going up that day. I may be, but it depends on who registers for this trip and work schedule.

Expect to do light maintenance including cleaning chimney, stacking firewood, weed whacking, washing windows, inventorying cupboards, etc. Recommend bringing work gloves.

The cabin is located 0.6 miles from a parking lot. Recommend having a backpack to haul in your gear and food. There is no electric. I have an introduction PDF file that I send to all trip participants.

The Tunnel

The Tunnel is a new 35-minute documentary film about the creation and the re-creation of the Blue Ridge Railroad Tunnel. In the 1850s, Irish immigrants dug this nearly mile-long tunnel. Many of them were maimed or even died. In 1944 the tunnel was closed. But in 2020, it was re-opened to the public as a remarkable historic site and tourist attraction. Click here to open: <https://youtu.be/IRJGKjT-ahQ>

Local Trails Update

We had a great response from 40 club members who are ready to get back to helping clean up and maintain the local trail system in southeastern Virginia. Phyliss Neuman has been out to New quarter Park and taken care of some minor trimming. Elis Malabad is organizing a maintenance trip for the REI trail and the Live Oak Trails at First Landing State park. I have been in contact with the City of Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation, and we may be able to get some volunteers out to Pleasure House Point for some upcoming trail work. It sounds like the City may also be looking to add to the trail network out there in the future. In addition, the City has over 20 miles of trails throughout the City that may need some assistance with maintenance. Sandy Bottom Park in Hampton is also a location where we have helped in the past and are looking to return.

If you know of a park with trails close to you that could possibly use some help, we are looking for club members to be a local point of contact and then be a work trip leader for that park. It's not difficult and there are many seasoned local trail maintainers who are willing to help you get started.

Keep your eyes on the TATC Website for future trail maintenance opportunities.

Thanks to all the Local Trail Maintainers

Dave Plum

TATC Local Trails Coordinator

localtrails@tidewateratc.com

Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

Come experience the national parks! On six days in 2021, all National Park Service sites that charge an entrance fee will offer free admission to everyone. Mark your calendar for these entrance fee-free dates in 2021:

April 17: First day of National Park Week

August 4: One year anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act

August 25: National Park Service Birthday

September 25: National Public Lands Day

November 11: Veterans Day

[*Free Entrance Days in the National Parks \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(click here\)*](#)

National parks are America's best idea, and there are more than 400 parks available to everyone, every day. The fee-free days provide a great opportunity to visit a new place or an old favorite, especially one of the national parks that normally charge an entrance fee. The others are free all the time. The entrance fee waiver for fee-free days does not cover amenity or user fees for activities such as camping, boat launches, transportation, or special tours.

The annual \$80 America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass allows unlimited entrance to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including all national parks that normally charge an entrance fee. There are also free or discounted passes available for senior citizens, current members of the military, families of fourth-grade students, and disabled citizens. Learn more about the variety of passes offered by the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass series.

Under-Bucking Tool, A Practical and Easy to Fabricate Design

Paul S Dickens, C-Sawyer Crosscut and Volunteer with TATC, PATC, CMC and SAWS

All experienced Wilderness crosscut sawyers know that often, too often, you must under buck the log down to clear the trail. Top bind can be so bad that you cannot set a wedge before the kerf closes on the saw. For these logs you must under buck, which is physically difficult and exhausting unless you have an under-bucking tool. The under-bucking tool is driven into the log parallel to the planned saw cut using the pole of a single bit axe or other driving tool. When securely set in the log, the position of the wheel on the under-bucking tool is adjusted to hold the saw in the kerf with leverage so that the sawyer can single under buck the log almost as easily as a top cut. Examples are below.

Caption below ↓ – Under bucking top bound hemlock down with under-bucking tool in Ramsey's Draft Wilderness, Virginia



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Caption below ↓ – Under-bucking tool set in top bound leaning white oak down, private land, Virginia



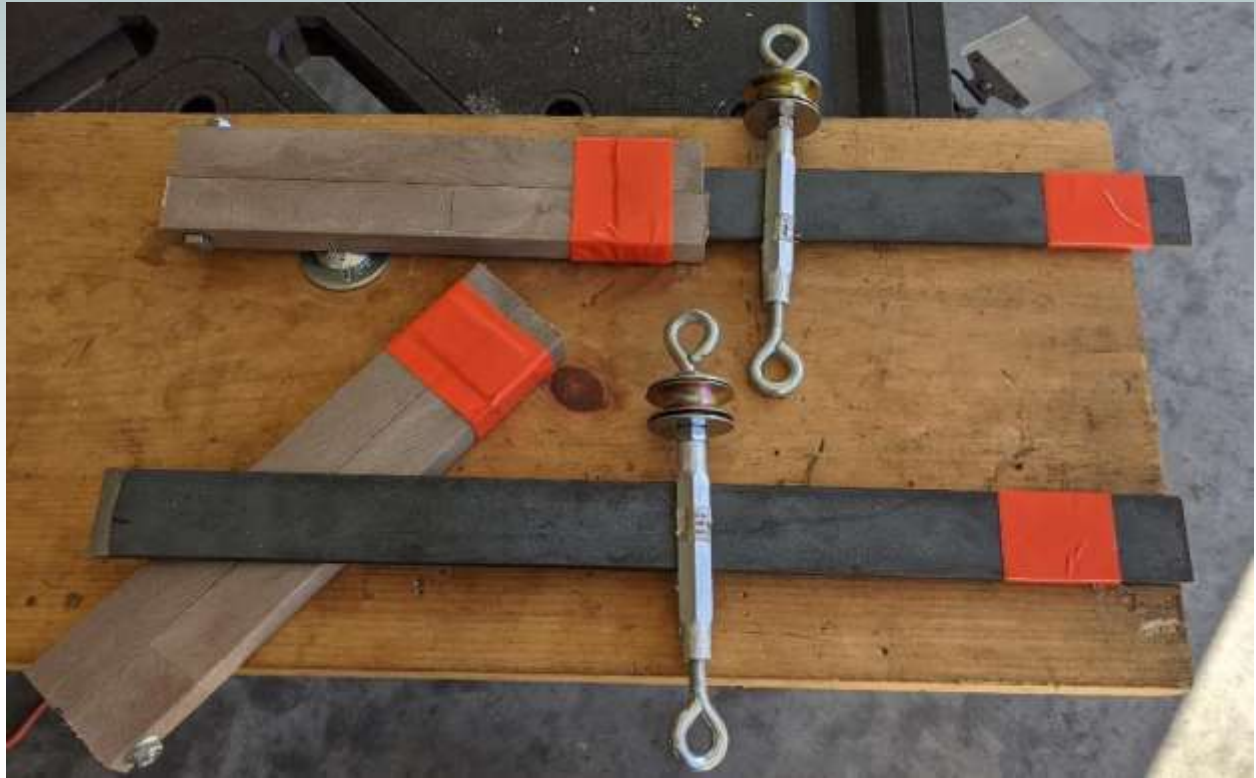
Caption Below ↓ – Under bucking a heavy top bound smaller diameter oak log in Three Ridges Wilderness, Virginia, an under-bucking tool is only way to clear logs like these with a crosscut saw, without an under-bucking tool the only way to clear smaller top bound logs is to chop them out with an axe, the log stub to right was under bucked until the undercut bound near the top of cut, the remaining top compression was then chopped out with axe.



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All trail crews using crosscut saws should carry an under-bucking tool. This important crosscut saw tool can be fabricated from readily available materials. The following is a design that works well and is of reasonable weight.

Caption below ↓ – Under-bucking tool and guard example, the orange tape is for visibility to find the tool and guard in the field when laid on the ground



Each tool is 18 inches long. They are fabricated from 1.5-inch-wide by 3/16-inch-thick piece of steel bar stock. This bar stock width and thickness are the best balance between stiffness and weight for the under-bucking tool. A grinder is used to rough shape the chisel point on each tool, which is then hand filed to an edge like sharpening an axe. The turnbuckles are 5/16-inch thread, and the wheels are pulley wheels with 5/16-inch shafts. The slot for the bar in the turnbuckles is drilled and filed to just clear the bar. The pulley wheel is held in place with 5/16-inch nuts to spin freely. The left-threaded eye bolt of the turnbuckle is used to tighten the wheel against the bar in the position desired. The plastic guards for the bar point are fabricated from left over crosscut saw guard material. Some fabrication pictures follow to illustrate how to make the tool. In this example, a 36-inch-long x 1.5-inch-wide x 3/16-inch-thick steel bar stock was used to make two 18-inch under-bucking tools.

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Caption below ↓ – First Step, cut the 3/16-inch-thick x 1.5-inch-wide steel bar stock to 18-inch length and rough shape the chisel point ends with a grinder



Caption below ↓ – Second step, file the chisel point ends of the steel bar stock to a sharp edge like sharpening an axe

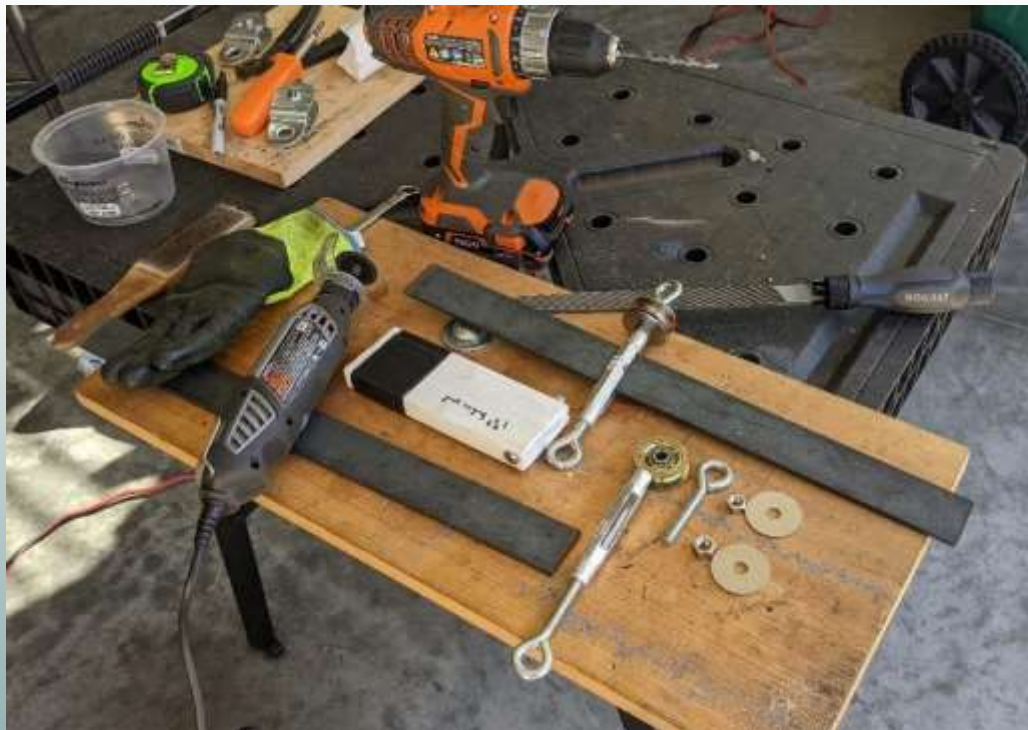


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Caption below ↓ – The sharpened edge steel bar stock and materials for the under bucking tool wheel made from 5/16-inch turnbuckles, flat washers, nuts, and pulley wheels



Caption below ↓ – Step 3, drill, cut and file slots in the turnbuckles for the steel bar stock and assemble the pulley wheels using nuts to lock the right-threaded turnbuckle bolt in place so that the wheel spins freely. The left-threaded turnbuckle bolt is loosened to move the wheel along the steel bar and then tightened to hold the wheel in the desired position. The plastic guard for the bar stock point is fabricated from saw guard plastic channel material.



The Most Important Crosscut Saw Tool – Wedges and an Axe

Paul S Dickens, C-Sawyer Crosscut and Volunteer with TATC, PATC, CMS and SAWS

A truism for crosscut saw work - it is not the saw; it is the sawyer. If the crosscut saw gets stuck by bind in a downed log you are trying to clear, it is on the sawyer. A successful crosscut sawyer for Wilderness trail work must be excellent with the use of wedges and an axe to overcome bind.

What is bind? Bind is compression in a log that squeezes and stops the saw. Bind, unless extreme, is overcome with wedges to keep the kerf open and the saw running freely. The kerf is the cut, or slot, created by the saw as wood fibers are removed. If the kerf closes due to bind, it will cause the saw to drag and can completely bind or stop the saw. Skilled crosscut sawyers always carry a wedge kit with an assortment of wedge types and a good single bit axe with a poll for driving wedges. As soon as the back of the crosscut saw is deep enough into the wood, the saw team sets a wedge. Even if the saw is running free with no sign of bind, a skilled sawyer always sets a wedge. As the cut advances, the wedge is driven deeper to open the kerf and keep the saw running free. Additional wedges are set and driven at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions and then at the 9 and 3 o'clock positions in a top cut log. These additional wedges mitigate side bind that may develop as the log is cut and help keep the saw running free in the kerf. Examples are below.

Caption below ↓ – Top, side and hanging wedges set in hemlock down to keep saw running free, Ramsey's Draft Wilderness, Virginia



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Caption below ↓ – Wedges in large spruce log to keep log from dropping and allow the saw to run freely, Shining Rock Wilderness, North Carolina



Caption Below ↓ – Driving wedges to keep kerf open, Ramsey's Draft Wilderness, Virginia



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Caption Below ↓ – Wedges set in large oak log to overcome top and side bind, aluminum wedges with additional plastic wedges were necessary to lift the log and keep kerf open for successful top cut, Three Ridges Wilderness, Virginia



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The wedge kit for Wilderness trail maintenance needs to include at least one aluminum felling wedge, one or more hard head (steel) plastic felling wedges, and several plastic felling wedges. The aluminum wedge is necessary as the first wedge set in the top cut to drive the kerf open and lift the log. Plastic wedges cannot be driven hard and often fail to drive in hard, heavily top bound logs. The plastic wedges are good for holding kerf open and can be driven hard after an aluminum wedge or a hard head plastic wedge is set in the log.

The axe for Wilderness trail maintenance needs to be sharp and heavy enough to drive wedges in the size of down to be removed. If bind is so bad it cannot be overcome with wedges, the sawyer may need to chop out the bind with their axe. Some heavily end-bound or side bound log downs can only be removed with an axe. Axe skills, in addition to saw skills, are therefore essential.

Examples of wedge kits and axes for Wilderness trail work are below. The “light wedge kit and axe” are good for logs up to about 14-inch diameter. The “large log wedge kit” is good for all sizes of downs and uses a heavier axe (3.5 lbs. or more axe head weight) to drive wedges.

Caption below ↓ – Light Wedge Kit and Axe for Wilderness Trail Maintenance, good for up to about 14-inch diameter logs, 2.5 lb. head axe



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Caption below ↓ – Large Log Wedge Kit for Wilderness Trail Maintenance, 3.5 lb. plus head axe



Cabin Report - Fiscal Year 2020

By Bob Adkisson

In 2020, for the first time ever (except for a short time to do major renovation work), the cabin was closed to use-- for 6 full weeks because of the Covid virus, and the accompanying travel and health restrictions recommended by the state, and the club board. About the same time of course (the first week of April) almost all club activities ceased, and pretty much remain suspended through to the present day, a year later.

Also of note in 2020: at the January board meeting (pre-Covid) there was a strong insistence that the rental rate for the cabin be increased, to keep up with inflation and because it'd been about 17 years since the last increase. The rate was raised from a base of \$5 per person per night to \$7 per person per night.

Instead of putting this increase into effect on March 1st, 2020, the start of the new fiscal year, I held off until I could announce it in a newsletter. But coincidentally, with the publication of the April/May Newsletter, came the state wide, and club wide, 6 week shut-down. So, in the end, it wasn't until the weekend of May 15--17 that I began charging and collecting rental fees at the new rate.

That means the new rental rate was only in effect for 9.5 months of fiscal year 2020 (the club's fiscal year runs from March 1st to Feb. 28).

But, the good news is, even with the cabin closed to use for 6 weeks (in what is usually one of the two busiest times of the year), and even with all of the health and travel uncertainties throughout the year, **overall cabin usage remained strong, and it even set a record or two.**

In fiscal year 2020 the cabin collected \$2571 in rental fees (this figure includes several small individual donations that some members made to the cabin; these donations, by 5 different renters, totaled \$103). **This is a new record for cabin income, better by \$65 than the year 2006.**

The 2nd record set was for weeknight usage (Sunday through Thursday nights)-- in 2020 the cabin was rented 93 of those nights-- surpassing the old record by a whopping 33 nights!

I think October, 2020 also broke the monthly record for most nights of rental usage ever-- the cabin was occupied a total of 24 nights, by 9 different groups of people. That was pretty amazing.

And, if all those numbers weren't enough, here come a whole lot more:

There were 52 weekends in the year 2020, and the cabin was rented 30 of them. 15 weekends went unused (that does not include the 5 weekends during the Spring shut down). These numbers indicate at least a slight falling off of usage, as compared to previous years.

In the spring and early summer the cabin committee had to cancel two scheduled work trips, because of travel and health concerns. In both Sept. and Nov. Greg and I hosted slightly pared down work trips to the cabin-- this because the supply of cut firewood was critically low and needed to be stocked up for the coming winter months.

Like I noted, over the course of the year weeknight usage was way up, to the highest level ever-- 93 nights. That may be a record hard to break (but please, with all of the retired people in the club, prove me wrong!)

Altogether the cabin was occupied 157 nights in fiscal year 2020. That too is a record, beating the previous high by 11 nights.

And again, this is with a 6 week shut down.

The biggest expense the cabin has of course is insurance. In 2020 that bill was \$1495. The annual tax on the property runs about \$250. Between Greg and I, we spent \$134 on needed items like a new tarp for the wood pile, a new splitting maul, brushes, trash bags, hinges, and nails. So, with about \$1900 in total expenses, and \$2571 collected in income (and with the cabin closed, unable to earn any money for 6 weeks last spring), this was a very good year for the cabin financially. If the cabin does as well this year maybe the board will actually consider reducing the rental rate.

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The favorite months for cabin rental last year were March (17 nights of usage), June (19 nights), Oct. (24), and Nov (18)-- those 4 months accounted for 78 nights of usage, almost half the total for the entire year.

The least favorite months were Aug., Dec., and Jan. (each with just 8 nights of usage; the month of Jan. actually didn't have any weekend usage).

Between May 15th and July 18 there was a run of 10 weekends in a row of rental use. The Autumn months had a similar run-- between Sept. 10 and Nov. 21 there were 11 consecutive weekends that the cabin was rented out. As usual, Spring and Fall were the overall two favorite times for enjoying the cabin.

In late Oct. last year there was probably another first, another unusual run-- the cabin was rented out 15 nights in a row, by 5 different renters (one of them had the cabin 2 nights, the next person had it 3 nights, then another for 4 nights, then 2 nights, then 4 nights).

One other note about usage and payments: at least 4 different people last year reserved the cabin for themselves, but then, at the last minute they couldn't go. The rule is if you don't cancel a reservation 7 days in advance, and if there is no one on the wait-list to take over the nights in question, there is a minimum fee due. All of the people paid the minimum fee (which, for a weekend, is \$20).

The 2 work trips to the cabin: actually, there was a 3rd work trip-- Jim and Chris Sexton went up in September and spent part of a day cutting firewood. That was very much appreciated, especially by all those people who rented the cabin in October-- seems like most of the firewood got used that month. Also in September Greg Hodges led a trip, with the main task to cut firewood (they also cleaned the cabin, and some folks hiked the nearby White Rock Falls Trail and did some light maintenance on it). There were 10 club members in attendance, 5 of them first timers to the cabin. The new folks were shown how to operate and care for the cabin, read through the rules, got their wings and were qualified to start renting it anytime on their own. I led a trip in November; we had 3 chainsaws and 7 people, only one of them a first timer (our soon to be new club president, Lee Lohman). We cut and stacked a lot of firewood, enough we hoped to see the cabin through the winter months.

Three very important and dear cabin friends passed away last year-- Margaret Crate last April, Ignatius "**Sig**" **Signorelli** in Sept., and **Bill Newsom** in Nov. None of their deaths were attributed to the Covid virus. All of them were in their 80's or 90's, and all led full lives, many happy years of which they spent as members of the club, enjoying long term friendships and special projects like building and maintaining the TATC Cabin. They all contributed so much to it, but they enjoyed it even more.

You can read more about them on the club's website: under the Cabin tab, go to Cabin History or Cabin Photos; under the Documents tab, scroll down to the bottom item, Remembrances. (at present, the cabin photos on the club's website are without captions. At one time they had captions, but when our website was moved to another provider (or something something something) the captions were lost. We are in the process of repairing that-- in the next few months)

A special note: most members of the club are probably not aware that last summer, in memory of Margaret Crate, Steve and Linda Crate (son and daughter-in-law) made a very generous donation to the club. Steve and Linda put in a lot of work on the cabin as well, way back when. They have both recently retired and hope to start traveling soon. Spending time at the cabin is something they plan to do as well, and maybe they will join us at the Fall Family Campout and Work Trip at Sherando next October.

With the virus not yet defeated and vaccines still being administered (I got my first shot just today!), the club is rightly taking a conservative approach to restarting activities. Greg Hodges does have a cabin work/maintenance trip scheduled for the weekend of May 21--23. All necessary precautions will be observed (as we did last Sept. and Nov. at the cabin), with perhaps some members tenting out as needed and the number of participants kept pared down. Contact Greg if you are interested in joining him or wanting to find out more.

We have not yet chosen any firm dates, but in both late September and early November there will almost for sure be two Cabin Maintenance/Orientation trips

NATIONAL WILDERNESS SKILLS INSTITUTE



The 2021 National Wilderness Skills Institute is May 24th-28th. It's a virtual event again this year, and a great opportunity for anyone who would like to learn more about wilderness and wilderness stewardship.

Registration should be opening soon, but if you'd like to learn more, visit <http://wildernessstewardship.org/NWSI>. While details are still being finalized, a class preview is below. The 1-2 hour classes will be spread throughout the day.

If you are interested in learning more about the National Wilderness Skills Institute, click [here](#). Please note that this is not the official registration - we will let you know when registration goes live.

Classes are being organized into 6 categories with the following classes under development:

Field Skills

- Trail Maintenance
- Crosscut Saws
- Hand Tools
- Pack Stock
- Backpacking
- Outdoor Cooking/Nutrition

Visitor Use Management

- Visitor Use Management Framework
- Indicators
- Lessons from the Field (showcases from various projects)
- Visitor Interactions and Authority of the Resource
- Recreation Site Monitoring
- Solitude Monitoring
- Trail Condition Reporting
- Implementing a Permit System
- Steps for Addressing Visitor Capacity
- Visitor Use Impact Restoration Actions

(Continued on next page ...)

Wild & Scenic Rivers

- History of Wild & Scenic Rivers Act
- Fire Management
- Implementing Comprehensive River Management Plans
- Outstandingly Remarkable Values
- Section 7 Analysis
- Core Competencies for River Rangers/Lessons Learned
- Wild & Scenic River Coalition

Wilderness I *(draft name)*

- History of Wilderness Act
- Wilderness Values & Benefits
- Four Cornerstones of Wilderness Management
- Understanding Wilderness Character
- Special Provisions & Prohibited Uses
- Introduction to Wilderness Stewardship Performance
- Introduction to Wilderness Character Monitoring

Wilderness II *(draft name)*

- Keeping It Wild 2
- Wilderness Stewardship Performance – Specific Elements: Natural Role of Fire, Recreation Sites, Trails, Opportunities for Solitude, and Agency Management Actions
- Wilderness Stewardship Performance Roundtable/Lighting Round: Education, Invasive Species, Motorized Use/Mechanical Transport, Cultural Resources
- Wilderness Character Monitoring: Overview, Baselines, and Monitoring
- Minimum Requirements Analysis

Joint Sessions

- Welcome and Opening Keynote
- Public Lands History
- Leave No Trace Outdoor Skills & Ethics – Introduction and Teaching Tools
- Funding Programs
- Working with Agencies & Partners
- Current Challenges & Priorities
- “Coffee Hours” – Regional Breakouts, Micro-Mentoring Sessions, Topic Breakouts including
- Wilderness Research, International/Global Initiatives, and more

“Happy Hours” - Keynote Discussion, Trivia Night, Movie Night, Regional Virtual Campfire Chats, and Next Steps

2021 FREEZEREE IN COVID TIMES

By Mal Higgins

Five TATC members managed to regather in shifts for a reunion Freezerree trip on February 3-7, 2021 at our very own Douglas Putman Cabin. The reunion tour, as we called it, included Bob Adkisson, Tom Miano, John Sima, Brian Richie and me. It was a spur of the moment organization of the trip, based on closely following the weather in Nelson County and recognizing it had just gotten snow. Because of COVID, our normal winter journey to either the New York Adirondacks or the New Hampshire White Mountains could not occur. Both states had regulations in place that required visitors from all but five New England states to quarantine themselves for 14 days and be tested. That wouldn't work, even if all we wanted was their snow!

So beginning on Wednesday, Tom Miano and Bob Adkisson arrived at the Royal Oaks Motel at the top of Route 14's intersection with the Blue Ridge Parkway. As expected the BRP was closed due to snow throughout our five days in the area. But thanks to a long standing relationship with the owners of the Royal Oaks, Keith and Chris, they allowed everyone to park on their property. So, in turn, each of us backpacked in from Royal Oaks, down the BRP 2.5 miles and the ½ mile in on the cabin trail from White Rock Gap. I showed up on Thursday mid-day and thoroughly enjoyed my solitary walk on the BRP to the cabin. The BRP was snowplowed clean, but the forest had about 4-6 inches of snow. Tom was out on a hike on the White Rock Trail to lower Sherando Lake, but I encountered Bob ambling along beginning his own hike. I suspect Bob had slept in! Bob gave me the key, and I let myself in to the cabin.

Friday was a whole lot of fun. As one would guess, Bob had a favorite bushwhack trip in mind. The snow was quite walkable with no special traction on our boots, still about 4-6 inches. So, after breakfast we switchbacked up the steep Entry Mountain behind the cabin, reaching a bit of a shoulder summit. We encountered vehicular tracks in the snow up top, perhaps a Jeep type vehicle. Bob knew of some private landowners in that area. We did skirt around an occupied home, hoping we were not spotted and made our way out to the BRP near the Priest Overlook. From here we bushwhacked down slope to an abandoned hunter's cabin. It was quite a thorny bushy mess, one probably not doable when the bushes are leafed out. The hunter's cabin has the remains of furniture, primitive electric wiring (must have run a generator) and even some ancient cans of food.

Returning to the TATC cabin on the BRP, we decided we would challenge the TATC urban legend that our wood cook stove could heat the cabin to a pleasant 50 F. Nope, not even close. We had a roaring cook stove fire all evening and the inside temperature probably hovered around 40F. John Sima came walking in at dusk and joined us.

Saturday morning as we leisurely planned a day, Tom had to leave to return to Tidewater. But Brian Richie arrived about 9:45 a.m., also walking in on the BRP from Royal Oaks. Brian swapped out his full backpack, and Bob, Brian, John and I set out for a dayhike. We walked up the Slacks Trail from White Rock Gap and reached the Slacks Overlook. We paused for a snack, and then continued up to Torry Ridge. We picked up the Bald Mountain Trail from there and "summitted" Bald Mountain. We encountered at least four trail runners running the Bald Mountain Trail in the snow. We rested and looked around the top and then descended back via the Slacks Trail to the BRP. Here we wanted to walk down the BRP (northbound) and see if we could see the TATC cabin from the BRP. Success. From a certain vantage point on the BRP, just maybe two blocks north of the Slacks Overlook, we could easily look through the forest and spot the cabin,

Saturday night we celebrated our adventure with another "Mother of All Fires" in the fireplace. Like the stove, it did not really warm up the cabin above maybe 40F. So, after our meals and talking we turned in. We were rewarded by a snowstorm that night added four inches of wet, sticky snow to the ground and all the trees. It was a beautiful sight. We closed the cabin, backpacked out to the BRP and back to our cars. We did take time to make a large smiley face on the surface of the BRP. We said our farewells, scraped the snow off the cars, and drove home. A Virginia Freezerree for the books.

A Weekend at the Cabin - Snap, Crackle, and Pop

Lee Lohman

The nominal purpose of three days at the TATC cabin was to pull down four lodged (AKA entangled, leaning) trees. The hope was that it would take a few hours to get the trees down and then we could take a hike. The “we” was my wife, Mary, my son and grandson, Eric and Maxwell respectively, plus me. Mary and I arrived on Friday about noon. After making the trek to the cabin to get the cart, we moved our camping and tree cutting hardware to the cabin. It took about an hour.

If you haven't been to the cabin, you'll need some context to understand this story. The cabin was dedicated in 1980, but the construction/development continued into the 1990's. A brief history is available on the TATC web-site at <https://tatc.wildapricot.org/A-Brief-History>.

If your image of a cabin is a rickety wooden post and beam structure, the TATC cabin will be a surprise. Built on a rise overlooking a valley, the cabin has foot thick stone walls, heavy rafters and flooring, a generous kitchen table that easily will seat ten, cabinets containing all manner of cooking equipment and tableware, cleaning products, and other supplies. The sleeping platforms are solidly built of wood providing good support for sleeping bags and pads. What doesn't it have? Well, indoor water, indoor plumbing, and electricity. After all, if it had all those things it would be a house, not a cabin. The cabin does have a primo privy. It's the cleanest, best-organized privy I've ever seen.

You get to the cabin from the White Rock Gap parking lot. It's a bit more than half a mile away. The altitude of the parking lot is 2549 feet. The cabin is at 2448 feet (lat 37° 53.436E" long 79° 03.113W). That may seem like a downhill walk, but don't be deceived. There is quite a bit of up and down on the forest trail. Cabin rental includes one golden piece of equipment--a garden cart. It's wide and deep and relatively light. For the average renter, you could pack in all of your gear and probably that of friends in one trip.

Now, back to the story. After getting our gear sorted out, Mary and I attacked the biggest of the lodged trees. Her main role was to keep the first aid kit close at hand in case things did not go as expected. I removed a four foot section at the base of the trunk. The tree did not cooperate. It sat down on its new bottom end with a thud digging itself into the dirt. The top didn't budge. That brought the tree into a more upright position--not good. The more vertical they are, the more difficult and dangerous leaners are to deal with. It was getting a bit late so we decided to wait until Saturday when reinforcements would arrive.



March 26th was a gorgeous night at the cabin. The temperature was in the low 50s. The sky was clear, and the stars gleamed like ten carat diamonds and what a moon! Dinner was steak, buttered rice, and mandarin oranges. We talked and read under the warm orange glow of the Coleman lanterns hung above the table. Going to sleep was made easy by the complete lack of noise.

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Saturday morning's breakfast was bacon bagels--yummy and filling. I didn't realize at that time how much we would need the calories. I started working over the tree again using an arborist's rope puller. The puller exerts 1,500 pound of force, but the tree wasn't having any of it. The top didn't even move. So, back to the chainsaw to reduce the size of the hinge which is the wood that supports the tree until it finally gives way. As I pulled on the starter cord, I was surprised how easily it came up. That's because the cord had just broken. So, down to the parking area to greet my arriving son and grandson and to start the journey to get a starter cord at Waynesboro's ACE Hardware about 20 miles away.

When I returned, it was time for lunch. Quesadillas with a mix of Mexican cheeses plus salsa and fruit. I spent the next two hours replacing the starter cord. I could start the saw, but it wasn't functioning properly. Maxwell spent this time supervising my efforts, exploring the woods with his dad, using his hatchet and multitool to make firewood, and just having fun being in the forest. He is a suburban kid who was suddenly free, within broad limits, to wander around with sharp implements and make himself useful. I could see the sense of accomplishment in his eyes. It made me proud to be his grandfather.

Eric and I continued to work on the tree, now called Nemesis. We had to cut away small bits of the hinge then use the puller well out of the fall line of the tree to be safe. You have to do the saw, pull, retry sequence repeatedly. It takes time. Soon it was getting darker, and it was starting to rain. That made the leaves slippery. We decided to call it quits and try again on Sunday morning. That would only give us a few hours before we all had to leave.

Dinner, courtesy of Mary, was sausages, hot dogs (Maxwell's favorite), chips, and fruit. After all the hauling and pulling the carbohydrates and protein were welcome. The rain had stopped so we made a fire in the outdoor fireplace next to the cabin. We stood around talking and listening to the fire crackle for about an hour. That was precious time. It started to rain again so we decided to call it a night.

At six the next morning, I was surprised that someone had awoken me by turning on the fluorescent lights. Then, I heard the crack of thunder. I was as loud as artillery fire. Some alarm clock. Mary told me the lightning had started at five. The rain came in Amazon jungle quantities. It was so loud it was hard to talk. So, as I was the designed cook for Sunday morning's breakfast, I made the coffee and then the pancakes. Betty Crocker has a great packaging idea especially for campers. You put 1 ½ cups of water in their pancake mix container, shake it up, and you can put it right in the pan. The shaking job was designed for eight year olds, and since we had one available, he did the shaking.

The coffee was good, but a bit strong. The pancakes were surprisingly tasty, especially slathered with honey or Mary's homemade strawberry jam. While we were eating, I kept an eye on the weather. The rain was slowing. Things looked promising for our last attempt at Nemesis. Then, the fog rolled in. It was like a giant was dragging a shower curtain in our direction. You couldn't see anything more than ten feet away.

Around 10am, the fog began to dissipate--a hopeful sign. Fifteen minutes later, we were out at the tree for the final try. I pulled on the starter cord which operated beautifully. Unfortunately, the rest of the chainsaw was on strike. Nothing could persuade it to start. I called to Maxwell to bring a bow saw from the cabin. In a few minutes, I was thinning out the hinge. I lashed the puller above the notch and to another tree and started to operate the puller handle. As I got to the puller's limit, Eric called to me that he heard cracking. Then, pop. The upper section of the tree came off the bottom. If you've never seen a big tree fall, it's a wondrous thing. Rotten parts of it seem to explode. Good wood crashes. Branches snap against each other. After it was down, we were very proud of ourselves. We roughly measured the tree. It was between 60 and 70 feet tall. We had defeated Nemesis. But, Nemesis struck back. Out of nowhere, the rains returned in force soaking equipment, supplies, and us. Nevertheless, we felt successful.

Then Maxwell, looking down the hill, said, "Papa, we have a problem. How are we going to get our stuff down the trail." The top of Nemesis had landed across the trail completely blocking it. Eric grabbed an axe and made quick work of it. Having an adult son on a camping trip is great.

This story is not really about taking down a lodged tree. It's about a family living and working together for a few days as they haven't for decades. It's about having truly free time to talk about life, the future, and whatever else you want to. And, it's about having fun at the cabin.

The A.T. and Race

Extract from A.T. Journeys, Winter 2021

By Mills Kelly

For The Past five years, I have been researching the history of the Appalachian Trail in archives from Georgia to Maine. Among the questions I've tried to answer are how major events in American history - World War II, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War — had an impact on the experiences of hikers and Trail club members. World War II and the Vietnam War were easy to locate in the archives, but no matter where I looked, it was as if the civil rights movement never happened.

I have read my way through the archives of almost every Trail club and the Appalachian Trail conservancy (ATC) and despite all my searching, I found exactly one letter among the thousands of pre-2000 documents I have examined that spoke to the issues of race and civil rights. That one letter lives in the archive of the smoky mountains hiking club in Knoxville, Tennessee.

From its founding in the 1920s, membership in the smoky mountains hiking club was open to, “any reputable white person,” according to the early club handbooks. In 1960, a member wrote to the club's president, “I think the time is ripe to amend our constitution to eliminate the racial discrimination clause. it is too embarrassing to admit to a foreigner that you belong to a club, which he could not join, though we may invite him to a hike — just on account of the color of his skin.” The club's president responded that he was sympathetic to this concern and would be happy to see the club integrated. Although I found no further discussion of the issue in the archives, the 1963 club handbook had dropped its racially exclusionary language, so perhaps that lone member's protest had an impact.

Everywhere else I looked, I kept expecting to find at least some discussion of the impact of the civil rights act of 1964 in the various archives of the southern clubs. Instead, it was as though the Trail clubs — and the ATC — existed in an alternate reality where racism was not a fact in American life.

While it might be tempting to point fingers at the southern clubs, they were not alone in limiting their membership to people who they felt comfortable with. Until the 1970s and 1980s, many, if not most of the Trail clubs had restrictive membership requirements — e.g., nomination by at least two members, participation in a certain number of club activities — that made it quite simple to discriminate quietly against people of color, Jews, or really, anyone of any race, religion, or creed. The impact of these requirements is readily apparent in the photos of annual meetings, club hikes, and Trail work that one finds in the archives. Until the late 1980s, almost every face you see is White.

The ATC was no better than the Trail clubs. Several of its annual and later biannual meetings were held in segregated resorts in the south thereby excluding anyone of color who might want to attend. In 1940, ATC chairman Myron Avery wrote an essay about the old version of the A.T. that passed south of Roanoke toward the Pinnacles of Dan. This section, he said, had a “definite charm” and some “outstanding features,” one of which was that the area's “racial stock was reputed to be perhaps the purest Anglo-Saxon in the eastern Atlantic states.” who knew that getting to meet “pure” white people was a good reason to hike a section of the A.T.?

When I bring up the topic of race and the A.T. with friends, especially white hiker friends, they often ask some version of the same question, “why do you think so few people of color hike?” or, unbidden, they offer their own theories as to why one sees so few people of color on the A.T., such as, “Their families just don't have a tradition of hiking,” or “it's probably a socioeconomic issue.” what this way of looking at the issue misses is the many ways hikers of color have been made to feel unwelcome on the A.T. over the decades. It is precisely these misconceptions that should compel us to revisit the Trail's history to understand completely the ways the Trail has not been open, welcoming, or safe to nonwhite communities.

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For example, imagine for a minute, that it's 1981 and you're a Black hiker who decides to hike the Georgia section of the A.T. Despite your misgivings about being a lone Black person in the mountains of north Georgia, you catch a bus to Springer Mountain and start your grand adventure. The hike goes well for the first few nights, but when you arrive at the Montray Shelter (now Tray Mountain Shelter) everything changes. There in the shelter log you find an entry, in all capital letters just so you can't miss it, a message with the n-word, which plainly threatens the life of any person of color who intends to stop there. After the shock of reading that threat fades, it dawns on you that lots of people have written in the shelter log since that racist threat and no one bothered to comment on it, to scratch it out, or to tear it out. They just left it there for you to find.

Robert Taylor, the first Black man to thru-hike the Trail in the 1990s, reported similarly racist behavior along the A.T. — hikers who looked at him like he might try to steal their gear, and people in supposedly friendly Trail towns who shouted racist threats as he tried to resupply or just pass through.

Those threats are not some relic of our racist past. In 2018, I hiked from Pen mar to Duncannon in Pennsylvania, where I had arranged for a shuttle driver to pick me up in front of the legendary Doyle hotel. When I called my driver to tell him I'd arrived, he asked if I would walk down to the mini mart a few blocks from the Doyle so he could pick me up there. Once I got in his car, I asked why he wanted me to walk to the edge of town. He said that because he was Black, people in town often yelled racist epithets at him and he was just tired of it.

Most white hikers also do not understand or even think about the fact that their relationships to the forests can be very different from those of Black hikers, whose ancestors were chased through those same woods by lynch mobs. Krystal Williams, a Black attorney who thru hiked in 2011, told me, "When I hiked north out of Damascus, I was reminded that I'm walking for pleasure where my ancestors' blood was spilled. I had a very visceral reaction at that moment. This reality is not understood or appreciated by many white hikers." For the past 25 years or so, the ATC and some of the Trail clubs have begun to take seriously the notion that encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion along the A.T. is a good idea. In a 2020 interview, Dave Startzell, the ATC's executive director from 1986-2011, explained that by the mid-1990s, the ATC and some of the clubs had begun discussing strategies for change, but the success of those efforts has been uneven. So, while the Trail has been known as a place for inspiration and solace for millions, communities of color continue to report negative experiences and incidents that have made the experience less welcoming and inclusive than for their white counterparts.

Exclusionary membership policies, threats in shelter logs, racist taunts in Trail towns, historic photos of Trail club and ATC meetings that show nothing but white faces, the confederate flag flying at a hiker hostel, and swastikas painted on trees at trailheads in 2020 all send the same message — the Appalachian Trail is, and always has been, a place for white people. If hikers, Trail clubs, and the ATC take ownership of the entire history of the Trail's past, rather than a partial understanding of the A.T.'s past, then the possibility of change becomes real. A clear-eyed understanding of the past opens the door for a just and equitable future for the Appalachian Trail.

NATIVE LANDS

EXTRACT FROM A.T. JOURNEYS, WINTER 2021

BY TREY ADCOCK

IT IS LATE SEPTEMBER, AND WE ARE ON A 5.5-MILE SECTION OF THE Appalachian Trail in present day southwest North Carolina looking for wisi, a mushroom more popularly known as Hen of the Woods, *Grifola frondosa*. There are three of us, myself an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation (CN), an Elder, Gilliam Jackson, from the Tutiya "Snowbird" community of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and Devyn Smith, a twenty-something year old, fresh out of college who grew up in the Yellowhill community on the Qualla Boundary. To us, this land is Tsalagi Ayehli, Cherokee Nation territory. To most, however, this is known as Nantahala National Forest.

The morning is crisp and the clouds are thick but breaking as we traverse this section of the Trail. We make good pace as this portion is mostly level with only a couple of moderately steep climbs. As we walk, we spend time making fun of each other, catching up on community news and tribal politics while patiently looking for any signs of wisi. This delicacy continues to be one of the most coveted foods of Cherokee people and we are in an intense search for our first harvest of the year. As we log a couple of miles, Devyn and I are struggling to keep up. Gill is a prolific hiker, having completed the A.T. in 2016, and he seems to glide atop the Trail while using Cherokee words to name plants, trees, colors, and an animal or two. With only 200 or so fluent EBCI Cherokee speakers remaining, words are precious. Gill graciously teaches us names in the language and we recite, desperately trying to remember.

Like the language, the harvesting of plants and wild foods is a knowledge bounded to the land. One of the many results of the forced removal and genocide of thousands of Native Americans from the southeast U.S. was that of rupturing Indigenous peoples from their food systems. While many families have held onto that knowledge, others still are looking for a way to reclaim those cultural practices that center us in who we are. Thus, this search is not simply about looking for wisi but is also an act of resistance, resilience, and reclaiming. Finally, three miles into our journey, we catch a glimpse of the most beautiful wisi we have ever seen, right off the Trail at the base of a dead oak tree. We are exuberant as we all claim to have been the first to see it. We laugh, we give thanks, and we acknowledge the special relationship and responsibility we all have to the land that provides so much.

Land acknowledgement at a base level is a recognition that you are on the lands, for various purposes, of an Indigenous people.

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NATIVE LAND TERRITORIES ALONG THE A.T.

This map illustrates the Native Land Territories along the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in the Northeastern United States and Eastern Canada. The trail is shown as a white line winding through the region. Various Native American tribes and their territories are color-coded and labeled. The map includes state and provincial boundaries, major water bodies, and a scale bar in miles.

Legend:

- Massawomeck
- Moneton
- Tutelo
- Abenaki / Abénaquis
- Lenni-Lenape
- Susquehannock
- Pocumtuc
- Munsee Lenape
- Cherokee
- Mohican
- Piscataway
- Monacan
- Nanantsoak
- Pequawset
- Manahoac
- Penobscot
- Wappinger
- Aroaguntacook
- Wabanaki Confederacy
- Pequawset
- S'atoyaha (Yuchi)
- Nipmuc

Scale: 0 80 200 300 500 600 Miles

The Appalachian Trail runs through 22 Native Nations' traditional territories and holds an abundant amount of Indigenous American history. The A.T. Native Lands Territory map was created to provide A.T. hikers with a better understanding of the territories they are traversing through. These lands are also referred to as "territories of influence," meaning this is land that Indigenous American nations and tribes hunted, traded, foraged, and defended. Beyond educating hikers, we must pay respect to our nation's ancestors.

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Our primary source of spatial data in creating the A.T. Native Lands Territory map originated from Native Land Digital (native-lands.ca), whose friendly and accommodating team pointed us in the direction of their publicly available application programming interface, which allowed access to their raw GIS (geographic information system) data. Simple analysis allowed the map to highlight relevant Native Nation's traditional territories along the Trail, while preserving careful attention to detail. The tool used in this process was ESRI's ArcGIS Pro.

During the creation of this map, collaboration with the team at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) was paramount. Guidance from ATC's GIS specialist, Josh Foster and director of outreach and education Julie Jenkins allowed the creation of the map to be a seamless and enjoyable experience. Most importantly, Victor Temprano, founder of Native Land Digital, was the point person who led me to their open spatial data. GIS and cartography cannot carry out what they do without the cooperation of those who maintain data.

*Mark Hylas, A.T. Native
Lands Territory Map creator*

(Mark Hylas is a GIS student at Central New Mexico Community College, who originally grew up in rural New York where he was a frequent hiker of the Appalachian Trail.)

For Indigenous peoples, recognizing, showing respect, and walking graciously on another people's territory has been customary for thousands of years. In the United States, with over 577 federally recognized tribal nations, this can take many forms. For some Native Nations there are very specific protocols that need to be abided by and heeded before one can be welcomed onto a land. This could include specific ways of asking permission, presenting gifts, or providing offerings to the land itself. For other Indigenous communities, there might be more of an informal disposition that is expected of guests as they enter into a relationship with both the people and the land they are guests upon. These types of acknowledgements do not serve any bureaucratic process but instead recognize the deep responsibility of reciprocity that is embedded throughout that landscape. It is an act of recognizing the various ways in which land provides, heals, and teaches. Lands that Indigenous people are often excluded from and whose histories have been predominantly erased from these spaces.

For the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), which oversees the management and protection of the A.T. that runs through 22 Native Nations' traditional territories, including a portion of the EBCI's current boundary lines near Stecoah Gap in southwestern North Carolina, acknowledging the original peoples is appropriate.

A formal land acknowledgement can be one possible way to confront the legacy of displacement and genocide that led up to the creation of the A.T. As a bureaucratic, institutional practice, land acknowledgements have been practiced in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for decades before more recently migrating into U.S. institutions such as universities, nonprofits and into art communities to name a few. In Australia, these performative acts are also known as "Welcome to Land" ceremonies, believed to be adapted from the Māori pōwhiri, a ceremony to welcome visitors that includes speeches, singing, a gift to the host and the pressing of noses (hongi). In the United States, practices of acknowledgement are often recited by a non-Indigenous person at the beginning of events, embedded within institutional documents and in some cases have multiple modes of visualizing the acknowledgement formally via posters, plaques, signage, well-crafted web pages, and other types of promotional materials.

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There is no one-size-fits-all land acknowledgement as the template and language inevitably varies. However, establishing practices of land acknowledgement can be a powerful way of showing respect, countering colonial practices and narratives like the doctrine of discovery, and initiating ongoing action through reciprocal relationships. For some activists and academics, acknowledgement is the first step in decolonizing institutional practices that furthers a settler-colonial agenda. Others argue still that unless there are serious conversations around land repatriation then an acknowledgement is simply a move to innocence rather than a call to action.

Acknowledgement statements can also be complicated if there are multiple Indigenous communities that claim ancestral ties to a territory. In addition, many communities historically moved from place to place, so a forced, structured territorial boundary is a colonial concept. The danger too for those looking to implement a land acknowledgement is that they become rote, sanitized, perfunctory statements that can lead to tokenizing the Indigenous peoples they are meant to show respect to. Central to a land acknowledgement statement must be a commitment to develop a deeper relationship with the various people and land the institution is attempting to recognize. Land acknowledgement truly becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. Statements should be considered living documents that evolve as relationships between communities, and also evolve with the land itself.

Fortunately, there are some tremendous online resources for those wanting to develop a land acknowledgement statement for their institution or community. Native Land Digital is a Canadian nonprofit organization that is Indigenous-led, with an Indigenous executive director and a majority Indigenous Board of Directors. They have created an interactive digital mapping project of Indigenous lands that also includes a territorial acknowledgement guide. The Native Governance Center is a Native American-led nonprofit organization located in St. Paul, Minnesota, which has created online tips for creating an Indigenous land acknowledgement. They also offer other factors to consider including thinking about who should be delivering the statement and understanding issues of displacement. The art and maps they have created around their own statement are particularly inspirational. The U.S. Department of Arts and Culture created, in partnership with Native allies and organizations, a downloadable #HonorNativeLand guide to provide step-by-step instructions on how to produce a statement and provides tips for moving beyond acknowledgment into action. In terms of how to deliver one, Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group provides some guidelines to follow, including providing a formal thank you to the host nation whenever making a presentation or holding a meeting, whether or not Indigenous individuals are part of the meeting or gathering.

Moving from acknowledgement to action is no easy task but a necessary first step is to begin developing meaningful relationships with the Indigenous communities that were impacted. This involves being willing to listen to the concerns and voices of the community members. What should the ATC's responsibilities be, and to whom, as current stewards of the land? What current issues are impacting specific Indigenous communities with historic connections to Appalachian Trail land and how can the ATC be a viable partner? These might lead to uneasy and uncomfortable conversations...and that can be a good, necessary point of reflection for future generations.

For more information about land acknowledgement visit: native-land.ca

Grand Canyon Rafting Trip

By Bob Adkisson

Boating thru the Grand Canyon is one of the top adventures in America, and for nearly forever (at least 45 years) I'd wanted to experience it. I'd read numerous books and articles about people hiking, rafting, kayaking, even canoeing down the canyon, from John Wesley's trip just after the Civil War to the present day. I'd read an article about 2 men who paddled kayaks from the Gulf of California upstream to Wyoming on the Colorado (and Green) Rivers. I'd watched IMAX movies and TV documentaries about the river and the national park that protects most of it. I'd looked at maps and even a few YouTube videos taken by river runners.

In November of 1976, and again in 1982, I arrived at the snowy south rim of the Grand Canyon (once traveling by thumb, once by bicycle), and backpacked down into this fantastic gorge, camping out, exploring, backpacking -- hiking somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 miles altogether (on the 1982 trip I hiked from the south rim to the north, and then back again).

Then came the year 2020.

In January of last year I signed up and paid for a 5 day/4 night rafting trip in the S.W. corner of Oregon, scheduled to start the first week of May. This trip was with a company called OARS, and I'd gone on one previous trip with them (on Idaho's Salmon R.); they were an experienced and professional company that I'd recommend to anyone.

I soon booked a flight to Boise, and I made plans to travel back to Virginia-- by train; I figured to step off the train in Staunton, Va., get a ride to Sherando campground-- just in time for the TATC Spring Maintenance trip in mid-May.

Then the specter that haunted nearly all of 2020 announced itself-- Covid 19 happened, soon followed by travel restrictions, mandates, cancellations, death and fear, and even politics.

Sure enough, OARS cancelled the raft trip, just as our club cancelled the Spring Maintenance trip.

I told OARS to hold onto my money, to apply it to some future trip I hoped to take with them.

In mid-summer my wife and I realized that our planned hiking holiday in England, with the group HF, scheduled for August/September, was going to be at the very least problematic, perhaps unwise, but also surely restricted in scope. We decided to back out of it.

That is when I got the idea of calling OARS and asking about their Grand Canyon trips-- maybe this unlikely year was the one where such a thing would actually come true.

But, I was told, all of their Autumn trips were booked up. In that case, for the heck of it, I asked about a reservation for the Fall of 2021, and again-- all booked up. Unbelievable.

I asked to be put on their waiting list and figured the chances were slim to none I'd hear from them anytime in 2020.

In mid August, as I was starting to plan some type of solo canoe trip to Utah for the Fall months, the phone rang. It was OARS calling to say they had 6 open slots on a 15 night, 225 mile raft trip down nearly the entire length of the Grand Canyon-- from Lee's Ferry to Diamond Wash, leaving September 30th.

It was an expensive gift horse, to be sure, but I dared not tell them I'd think about it and call back the next day, or even in a few hours-- I made a reservation there and then.

I'd known my wife had no interest in being on such a wild river, or on such a long trip, but I did immediately pass along the news to 2 other club members that I thought might be interested in joining me. Both passed on the possibility.

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The first thing to decide was how I would get out to Arizona: plane, train, or automobile? Rafting thru the Grand Canyon would be the trip of all trips of course, but it didn't have to be just about that. And so, again, almost immediately: I decided to drive out to Flagstaff. I'd make it a big, round adventure, I'd see some of the country between here and there, visit some of the incredible places along the way. A little bit of zigging and zagging would be fine with me, and for sure, I wanted to do some hiking in the National Parks and Monuments I'd be visiting.

And thus began 5 fun weeks of looking at road maps, picking out routes, bagging up park maps I already owned (and ordering more, along with a few guide books). Of course there was the obligatory shopping trip to REI.

I even looked at a video or two (big mistake) of rafts caught and flipped in gigantic rapids, and I shivered thinking about it (the rapids in the canyon are so strong, the water in the river so cold).

I set out on September 23rd-- the 43rd anniversary date of me climbing Mt Katahdin for the first time.

In picking the route and the places I wanted to visit, I was bothered some by continued closures and restrictions, and by the uncertainty of it all, but in the end it was hard to be negative about the opportunity to see such a big slice of America.

I tried to stay off of the interstates as much as I could and relished taking scenic 2 lane roads thru the mostly unspoiled countryside of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. At the end of my 3rd long day of driving, I arrived in Colorado Springs, Colorado at rush hour. At a stoplight I discovered Phantom Canyon in my map book, and decided to swing around to the back side of Pike's Peak and take the gravel road that traversed it. A sign at the bottom of the canyon said the road followed the route of an old mining railroad, that it climbed about 25 miles up into the mountains and national forest, over a high pass to the town of Cripple Creek and its mines.

Now was the time to take my time, to slow down and zig zag thru parts of Colorado I hadn't seen before. The leaves and scenery were at their peak in the San Juan Mtns., in the S.W. corner of the state.

After 2 nights in Colorado I crossed into Utah, passed along the south edge of the recently created, and more recently down-sized, Bears Ears National Monument. My late afternoon goal was Natural Bridges National Monument, and a 6 mile loop hike into a rugged sandstone canyon, with 3 natural stone bridges spanning it. On a long bicycle trip thru the western states, I'd stopped here 38 years before, to take the same hike (and maybe spend the night). But on that trip the rangers warned me off, saying all the recent rain had turned parts of the trail into a quagmire of sticky clay. Plus, there was a winter storm expected in the area that night. So I hurried south, to a dramatic set of cliffs, and a dramatic gravel road that somehow descended them. I camped atop the cliffs in blowing snow.

This time, after a successful hike, I effortlessly drove the 25 miles to the cliffs and, as in 1983, I arrived at dusk. I slept in the car and had calm weather, a nearly full moon to lull me to sleep.

I descended the cliffs at first light, the low angled sun turning the rocks a molten orange-red. At the foot of the long line of cliffs, this time I took the scenic route thru Valley of the Gods to the east of the main road. [In the last club newsletter there are 20 photos showing the first part of my trip: 5 mostly out of place photos of Phantom Canyon and the Cripple Creek area in Colorado; 4 photos of my hike in Natural Bridges Monument, 3 of sunrise at the cliffs, 5 of Valley of the Gods-- all in Utah; and 3 of the first day rafting the Colorado River, in Arizona]

After driving across the vast Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona, I got to Flagstaff, the meeting spot for the rafting trip. I'd arrived a full day early-- a day to unwind in a motel, to change gears, to sort thru all my stuff and get ready (also, after a 2,800 mile drive, the car needed an oil change).

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The night the trip leader and participants got together to sign forms, have our temperatures taken, and review the various Covid protocols we'd all be observing on the river, that was the night of the 1st Presidential Debate. Because of the time zone differences, by the time the meeting was over and I got back to my room the "debate" was just ending. Lucky me.

There were 6 rafts in our group, and there were 8 OARS guides/oarsmen. Two of the rafts, the gear boats, carried a guide/oarsman and his assistant/trainee. The other Four rafts each had one guide/oarsman and 3 or 4 customers each. There were 16 customers, from all over the country, mostly my age. There were 5 women and 11 men, with one 18 year old and one 90 year old. Five customers and one trainee left us about day 6 of the trip, at the Phantom Ranch area; they would hike up to the South Rim and be shuttled back to Flagstaff. That same morning, these people passed 4 new customers and one new trainee coming down the trail and joining us for the last $\frac{2}{3}$ of the trip. This was all prearranged of course, a way for some people to make a shorter, less expensive trip of it.

The water in the river was about 50 degrees, which is numbingly cold; it came from the base of the Glen Canyon Dam, about 15 miles above where we started our trip. It was a refreshing jolt to get splashed in the rapids, but none of us wanted to go for a swim. The air temperatures were I think hotter than normal-- it could be really hot out in the full sun, but the river itself spent at least half the time in the shade of the tall canyon walls. There were some shady, splashy sections where most of us wore a rain jacket over our t-shirts, but as soon as we came out into the sun the jackets came off and we dried quickly.

The weather was all but perfect and cloudless every day, for 16 days. The nights were clear and quiet, the temperatures just right for sleeping.

These were not rafts, this was not a trip, where the customers had to paddle-- we got to sit and watch the incredible scenery peacefully drift by. The single oarsman faced downstream and propelled the rafts with slow, easy strokes. People traded off sitting in the front of the raft or the back, picked a different raft and guide to ride with each day. Everyone got along, we were all on the same page and of the same mind. One man had brought along his guitar and played songs around the campfire ring every night.

It was a laid back trip. The current was good throughout and there were no headwinds to push against. We needed to average about 14 miles a day and that was easy enough accomplished. We got on the water most days by 9 a.m., took at least half an hour for lunch, and usually stopped to make camp by 4 p.m.-- if not earlier.

As for covid-19, we washed our hands a lot, we wore our mask as we stood in the food line or at the serving tables. We didn't mix with other river running groups if we were near them on shore. The trip leader took our temperatures every morning and asked how we were feeling. Everyone was fine.

And we stopped to take hikes-- I counted 12 altogether, totaling about 18 miles. The hikes were to see petroglyphs and some grain storage caves used by Native American; we went up dry side canyons to see earthquake faults and rock towers; up wide desert canyons in the sun and narrow, shaded ones, with waterfalls and swimming holes. The chances to hike and explore were welcome and priceless. Elves Chasm was the best swim spot, with a 20 foot jump into a pool of water. Deer Creek Falls, and the narrow canyon just above it, was a spectacular stopping point, and a little scary. We took about 3 hours here to relax, swim, snack, and explore. The huge cave at Redwall was perhaps the most memorable and photogenic spot on the whole river, my favorite.

We saw numerous mountain sheep and about a dozen deer. We saw blue herons and osprey about every day of the trip. We saw a couple of road runners along the shore and I spotted the one snake of the trip-- a king snake.

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We met, but kept our distance from, any number of other commercial and private groups rafting or kayaking the river. A couple of times they beat us to a campsite our guides had hoped to stay at, or their presence at a landing spot caused our leader to skip what had been planned for us there. But it was all good, it was a big river with plenty of campsites and things to see all along the way, and the guides obviously knew every inch of it like the back of their hands.

Some campsites were huge open sandy beaches where we could all spread out. Others were smaller, rockier, with individual sites scattered among the tamarisk trees and cactus. One curious site the leader chose was all rock slabs, with no easy place to even pull the boats up onto. One campsite had carnivorous ground squirrels who gnawed holes in my OARS provided dry bag.

Almost as important as the scenery and the rapids was the food. It simply couldn't have been any better. It is hard to say how they brought along so much, how they kept it cold and fresh, and were able to do all that they did, like baking cakes and other desserts. About half way thru the trip, one night they gave each of us an ice cream bar, perfectly cold.

There were maybe 15 or 20 rapids that were formidable, and maybe 100 that were mostly just fun. We had to put on helmets for the best/worst of them. It looked to me like every boat in our party made it thru every rapid perfectly-- no close calls, no one falling out, no collisions with boulders or getting trapped in eddys or whirlpools.

The 2 most powerful rapids were Crystal and Lava Falls. Running/surviving Crystal Rapid was simply a case of staying close to the right shore, away from the giant hole and waves to the left. One of the gear boat oarsmen had never paddled a raft thru the canyon before, and he did fine. Lava Falls was another matter. We arrived late in the afternoon of a long day, and were running it with the sun low and in our eyes. We pulled in to shore and all the river guides walked 150 yards down the goat path trail to scout it out. I walked about 75 yards up to a viewing area and simply did not see how we were going to run, let alone survive this rapid. I could see the raft-swallowing hole in mid-river, and the giant boulder just downstream and to the right; it looked so improbable-- like you could avoid one of them, but not both.

The guides returned and were grimly silent, focused-- the guide of my raft asked us not to ask him any questions, just grab hold of the ropes and brace ourselves. We were the 3rd boat in the line of 6. I raised my head and watched the first 2 rafts just ahead of us, watched them thread the needle, avoid disaster to either side, and make it all look so easy, so inevitable.

All of us flew right thru it.

Myself, I would have portaged along the flat left hand shore, though it was rocky and thickly vegetated and would have taken an hour or more.

Half mile below Lava Falls the first campsite was taken by a private group, and as we floated by we discovered they were well prepared to greet any groups running the rapid late that day-- about 20 people stood on the shore, or in the shallows, ¾'s or more naked, played kazoos and banged on metal pots, twirled and gyrated, mooned us and sang to us and screamed out congratulations on not flipping or drowning, celebrating all being alive at that moment, in one of the greatest places on Earth.

A couple of days later we reached Diamond Creek Wash, on Indian land, where the first of any type of road came down to the river's shore. OARS had several vehicles there waiting for us-- 2 big flat bed trucks for the rafts and mountain of gear, and 2 passengers vans for the customers. Everyone pitched in unloading the rafts and carrying gear to the trucks, then we were off in the vans, 25 miles up a rough wash-board gravel road to the town of Peach Springs and pavement. Two hours or so later we were back in civilization, such as it is-- Flag-staff, our cars, our personal gear, motels-- everyone saying goodbye and going their own separate ways. And all looking forward to a warm shower.

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It was October 15th, and my plan was to spend a night or two in Flagstaff, then head south and east, visit several National parks and monuments, and make it back to Norfolk by November 3rd, election day. I'd actually voted early, in September, just in case something caused me to run late, but still, I wanted to be home on election night when the results started coming in.

A part of me felt like snapping my fingers and being home right then and there, but I had planned to do so much more, and even via Interstate 40 I was about 3 ½ days from Norfolk.

Who knew, I didn't, that I'd wind up staying in a Flagstaff motel for 5 nights, just relaxing, changing gears, going out to eat, watching movies, relaxing.

When I finally pulled out of town I was ready to be on the road again, a totally different phase of the trip opening up before me.

Leaving Flagstaff, I took lightly traveled roads thru National Forest land to the south. Just past Happy Jack I dropped down off of the Mogollon Rim, went thru Payson and Miami, on gravel roads about half the time. A sign at the entrance to a state park where I wanted to hike said it was closed because of the virus. I zig zagged past huge open pit mines near Globe, drove thru tight, rocky canyons, saw hundreds of Saguaro cactus near Roosevelt Lake. I spent that night just off of a gravel road, about ten miles north of Interstate 10 and the town of Benson. Sightseeing now, soaking in the wide open desert country, I went thru Tombstone and the colorful, art-colony town of Bisbee (where there is also another huge open pit mine at the south edge of town). Bisbee actually reminded me of small towns along the Cornish coast in England, set as it was in a narrow valley, with tiny streets, and houses built at every angle up the hillsides.

At the large, charmless border town of Douglas I banked northward and came to rest an hour later at a diamond in the rough type of place: Chiricahua Nat'l Monument. Out of the desert, here was a mountain ridge covered with a forest of oak and pine, and rock formations that were out of this world. I set up my tent and stayed 2 nights in the tiny campground, exhausted myself on the well built trails that twisted their way around and among rock pinnacles and impossibly balanced boulders. I saw my first coatimundi, and a skunk alive in the middle of the road.

Feeling short on time, and wanting to spend more of it in Texas, I only visited one place in New Mexico-- Gila Cliff Dwelling Nat'l Monument, at the end of one of the twistiest roads I've ever driven. Another remarkable road, route 152, took me east over an 8,000 ft pass near Kingston. Soon, and with almost no choice, I was on Interstate 25, zooming south thru Las Cruces, and then on Interstate 10 with heavy traffic, going east thru El Paso.

I pushed on after dark to get to Guadalupe Nat'l Park; it was my 2nd visit to this rugged and beautiful place. My one free day in the park I hiked, up and back, in colorful McKittrick Canyon. The oaks and maples were at their peak of color change. On my previous visit, in early April a few years before, this trail had been closed for several days because of a flash flood, and I'd gone away sorely disappointed.

Carlsbad Caverns Nat'l Park, about 30 miles to the north, would have been my next stop, to take the one guided wild cave tour that I'd missed out on, on that same previous April trip. But again, a disappointment for this trip, because all cave tours were cancelled because of Covid .

With a light, freezing rain and low clouds, I headed out of Guadalupe early on a Monday morning, still heading south and east. I found sunshine again as I wound thru the beautiful Davis Mtns, had lunch in tiny Marfa, found the modest and muddy Rio Grande River in Presidio, and followed it to the small town of Study Butte, on the western edge of Big Bend Nat'l Park. Here I felt lucky to find an expensive run down motel, and I stayed two nights-- sitting out the one day of the trip with bad weather: cold gray skies, high winds, light rain showers. It was more than I felt like dealing with.

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Into huge Big Bend Park on a cool but cloudless day; I could see the sun reflecting off of snow or ice on the steep slopes of the Chisos Mtns. I drove to the river canyons at each end of the sprawling park, took several short hikes, wound up at the one open campground about an hour before sunset. It was full of course, and the lodge too (or maybe there were open rooms and campsites, but you had to have reserved them on-line, days before). I was not equipped for that, and I had no set schedule. I was out of luck.

The volunteer campground host at least was nice, and understanding, and gave me some good advice; I went and slept in the car at a trailhead about 10 miles away, on an extra rough gravel park road. As advised, I was up before any rangers could come along and hassle me, hiking up a desert trail at sunrise, to Balanced Rock. It is not often I am up with the sunrise-- but this was the perfect place to do that; the balanced rock, the bouldery hillsides, and the distant views were very photogenic at that time of day.

I went back up into the Chisos Mtns., about in the geographic center of the park, where the lodge and the one open campground were, where an added 1,000 or so feet of elevation meant there was a forest. But I was about out of time, only had a couple hours for one more hike. I sat in the car in front of the small park store and had brunch-- ice cream, crackers, a chicken salad sandwich, and a cold drink with ice. On the map I picked out a 5 mile loop trail to take, knowing that I would have to visit this park again to really see it like I wanted.

What really saved the day and animated the whole end of the trip for me was what I encountered just 150 yards up the trail from the parking lot-- a bear and two cubs, climbing and sitting in a dead pine tree next to the trail. They were, I think, pulling out and eating acorns that birds had placed in holes and cracks in the wood. I stood about 50 feet away, for about 5 minutes, watching them, enjoying them, taking photos. About a dozen other hikers piled up behind me on the trail, all watching the bears, talking in hushed voices.

I also encountered some deer farther up the trail, and beautiful woods and clearings, great campsites and views. About 3 in the afternoon I headed north, out of the park, to the small desert town of Marathon. I saw elk along the way. I found a nice old motel at the edge of town that had been renovated into something special, yet affordable. And they served dinner in a patio area outside, as the sun went down-- a perfect ending to a perfect day.

Route 90 across desolate west Texas had been in my sights for 40 years, and the next day I finally got to drive the best portion of it, east to Del Rio. From there I angled southeast to Corpus Christi, now thru pastures and woods and fields, the last part on an Interstate highway. Friday rush hour in this big coastal city, with heavy traffic and everything loud and fast and busy. For that night I had only the vague idea of going out to the Padre Island National Seashore (a long thin barrier island about a mile east of the mainland and the city) and trying to find a safe, quiet, legal spot to camp.

I can't believe how I lucked out, with perfect timing and everything: about 3 miles onto the island I followed signs to a campground, on the west or bay side. There was a gravel parking area right next to the bay with about a dozen RVs parked there; a restroom building and an unmanned pay station rounded out the amenities. A few people were fishing, or sitting in chairs mellowing out, watching the sun go down. A full moon was rising in the east. Did I already say it was perfect?

After a week in the Lone Star state, on Saturday, Halloween, I drove up the Texas coast, in a northeasterly direction, taking two short coastal ferries (the 2nd ferry got me from Galveston Island across the Houston ship channel, allowing me to bypass that mega city). Then, with 2 hurricanes having battered the west coast of Louisiana that summer, and with election day drawing near, I threw in the towel and took Interstate 10 instead of the coast route. In spite of heavy, hectic traffic and a lot of rough pavement and road work, I got most of the way across Louisiana that afternoon, found a motel and settled in for the night. A long day's drive on Sunday got me barely into Georgia and to another motel, but I did take the time to spent at least half the day on 2 lane roads in south central Alabama, trying to take a ferry across the Alabama River and making a brief visit to Selma; I crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, then went on to Montgomery.

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I took two lane back roads most of the way across Georgia, then, with the day somehow having gotten away from me, I hurried up Interstate 77 from S.C.'s capital (Columbia), went north thru Charlotte at sunset, and eventually ran out of daylight about 50 miles shy of my destination, Hanging Rock State Park (which is just north of Winston-Salem). A motel room was preferable to a night in the back of the Subaru Outback (though with the back seats folded down, and my gear all pushed to one side, there is room enough to stretch out).

So, on November 3rd, election day, I got an early start, took the extra circuitous roads around the west and north side of the state park, found the entrance, drove up to the ridgeline of this isolated and ancient clump of mountains (these are the Sauratown Mountains, with a high point elevation of 2,579 ft). Nine thousand acre Hanging Rock State Park is one of the few parks in N.C. with cabins. It has a campground too, of course, and a lake nearby (up on the ridgecrest) for swimming. This was my 2nd time to visit, and to take the rugged round-trip hike of 2.6 miles to the top of Hanging Rock Mtn. Lots of people were out this day, walking off the stress and confinement of the last 7 months, walking off the built up tension of the election. There are great views north into Virginia from the cliffs and rock formations on the summit; you can just barely see the Dan River down near the foot of the mountains.

I got back to my car by about 11:00, then headed north into Virginia and route 58-- Virginia Beach Boulevard. Once on this road, it was pretty clear sailing back to Norfolk, and the end of a 6,800 mile drive (Norfolk to Flagstaff and back).

I had floated 225 miles down the Colorado River, hiked 58 miles altogether (in 7 different parks). But more than any numbers can measure, there was all of that experience, all of those sights and moments, all of that wonder and wisdom, all of those wishes, fulfilled.



Celebrate Mother Nature - Friends of Shenandoah Mountain Warblers and Wildflowers

Spend Time with Mother Nature on Shenandoah Mountain

<https://www.friendsofshenandoahmountain.org/celebrate-mother-nature.html>

Date: May 8, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Where: Visit one or more of three Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail sites.

What better way to spend Mother's Day weekend than to explore the tremendous biodiversity on Shenandoah Mountain with your family. This will be a Bioblitz-style event for warblers and wildflowers, using iNaturalist and eBird as tools. Participants will identify as many species as possible at each of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail sites listed below. Each site will have a table with an information display and a biologist, a birder, and a Master Naturalist to help participants explore and identify what they find.

This event will be held in light rain or shine. No registration necessary. Restrooms available.



Polygala. Photo © Jeannie Holden

COVID Safe

Please bring a mask to wear in the table area. No need for masks when families are exploring on their own.

Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail Sites

Visit as many of these sites as you like:

Hone Quarry – Meet at Picnic Area, walk along native trout stream, view birds and wildflowers, tadpoles, hemlock forest, wheelchair accessible ([more info and directions](#)). Watch for potholes in paved Forest Service access road.

Braley Pond - Meet at Picnic Area, take 1/2 mile hike around beautiful pond, view birds, wildflowers, salamanders and tadpoles ([more info and directions](#))

Shenandoah Mountain Crest on Rt. 250 - Scenic view of Highland County, walking tour of Confederate Breast Works with interpretive signs, birds, history of Ramseys Draft Wilderness and Shenandoah Mountain ([more info and directions](#))



2021 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

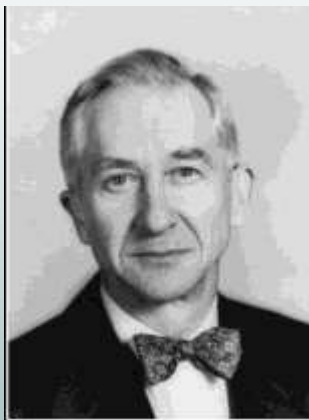
3/28/2021

The eleventh class of Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame honorees will be inducted on Saturday, November 20, during the Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Banquet at the Army Heritage & Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Because of the pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 classes will be inducted at the 2021 Banquet.

The 2021 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame class honorees are the late **Harvey Broome** of Knoxville, Tennessee; **Stephen Clark** of Waterville, Maine; the late **Thomas Johnson** of Front Royal, Virginia; and **Marianne Skeen** of Atlanta, Georgia.

Harvey Benjamin Broome was a Harvard educated attorney, but his primary life's work was as a leading advocate for preserving wild spaces in the eastern U.S. from the early 1920s until his death in 1968. Broome became an early leader of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and helped to lay out the route of the Appalachian Trail in the newly established Great Smoky Mountains National Park. When A.T. founder Benton MacKaye moved to Knoxville, TN, he and Broome formed a close relationship.

Broome led the opposition to building a trans-mountain road through the Smokies, believing that its wild nature should be preserved. Together with Mackaye and others, Broome founded The Wilderness Society and served as its President for eleven years until his death. He advocated for creation of the National Wilderness Preservation System, which occurred in 1964 when Congress passed the Wilderness Act.



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Stephen Clark has been an integral part of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club for almost 60 years. To many, Steve's name is synonymous with the 100 Mile Wilderness portion of the A.T. in Maine. In fact, he reportedly coined the term in the 1980s to describe this most isolated section of the Trail.

Here is just a sampling of the important roles Steve has performed with the MATC: Overseer of the 107 miles in western Maine, President from 1975-1977, multiple terms as an MATC Director, Overseer of the White Cap District and Chair of the MATC Privy Committee, where he led efforts to design and install solar and moldering styles. Beyond Maine, Steve served several terms on the Appalachian Trail Conference's Board of Managers. He helped to organize two of ATC's biennial conferences and received ATC's highest honor, Honorary Life Member, in 1981.



As with many Trail icons, it is exceedingly difficult to summarize **Thomas Reed Johnson's** contributions to the A.T. in a few sentences. One of the Trail's premier historians, his definitive history of the A.T., "From Dream To Reality", has just been published by ATC. Tom was a longtime member, trail maintainer and leader of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, including service as President. He was a leader of the movement to create an Appalachian Trail Museum and served as a director since the beginning. He helped to lead countless Trail events, including the 1995 and 2015 Biennial Conferences.

When the concept of this award was put forward, Tom was immediately in favor of the idea and agreed to be on the selection committee. His fellow members benefitted greatly from his calm yet passionate insights about potential Hall of Fame honorees. All of Tom's friends were shocked at his untimely passing in December, 2020. We can take some solace that he died while doing two things he loved, hiking with fellow PATC members and explaining to them the history of the place they were at.



(Continued on next Page ...)

Marianne Skeen is a role model for outdoor stewardship and education. As a member of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club for over several decades, Marianne has been recognized consistently for her commitment to youth outreach and trail maintenance. She's been described as the epitome of dedication and hard work. She has served on the board of GATC in several positions, including President, Trail Supervisor, and Director at Large. She led the GATC's Forest Plan Revision Committee for the Chattahoochee National Forest.

She served as chair for the 1993 ATC conference held in Dahlonega, GA. She was elected to the ATC Board of Managers in 1993 and served 12 years. Marianne spearheaded the GATC Outreach Program by introducing inner city children to the outdoors, emphasizing "Leave no Trace" ethics. With her direction, it has spread to many mountain community schools; and now several towns close to the AT have been designated official "AT Trail Communities". She was instrumental in developing ATC's marketing efforts including the tag line "Join the Journey". She was a strong supporter of ATC's 2005 reorganization. Marianne is a retired professor of Zoology at Emory University.



Ten classes have previously been elected to the A.T. Hall of Fame. The Charter Class, elected in 2011, comprised Myron Avery, Gene Espy, Ed Garvey, Benton MacKaye, Arthur Perkins and Earl Shaffer. Members of the 2012 class were Emma Gatewood, David Richie, J. Frank Schairer, Jean Stephenson and William Adams Welch. The 2013 Class was Ruth Blackburn, David Field, David Sherman, David Startzell and Eddie Stone. The 2014 Class was A. Rufus Morgan, Chuck Rinaldi, Clarence Stein and Pamela Underhill. The 2015 Class was Ned Anderson, Margaret Drummond, Stanley Murray and Raymond Torrey. In 2016, Maurice J. Forrester, Jr., Horace Kephart, Larry Luxenberg and Henry Arch Nichols were inducted. The 2017 Class was Harlean James, Charles Parry, Mildred Norman Ryder and Tillie Wood. In 2018, William Kemsley, Jr., Elizabeth Levers, George Masa and Bob Peoples were elected. Members of the 2019 Class were Jean Cashin, Paul Fink, Don King and Bob Proudman. The 2020 Class was Chris Brunton, Thurston Griggs, Warren Doyle and Jim Stoltz.

Complete information on the Hall of Fame Banquet will be announced soon. The Banquet will be the kickoff of the Museum's Hall of Fame Weekend. Questions about the Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Banquet may be sent to atmbanquet@gmail.com. For lodging options during the Hall of Fame Weekend, go to the Museum's website: www.atmuseum.org

Forest Service Seasonal Recreation Positions and Youth Conservation Corps

A new application window has opened for seasonal recreation technicians on the Glenwood & Pedlar Ranger District.

David Whitmore has asked that I share the relevant details.

Be aware that this announcement CLOSES **April 5th(next Monday)**

These positions will be based at Sherando Lake Recreation Area.

Follow the link to see the announcement.

[USAJOBS - Job Announcement](#)

To submit an application, click APPLY on the right hand side of the page, to begin the process.

Although you'll see that the position is called a Forestry Technician, which includes recreation duties.

Be sure to apply to the

GS-0462-04 Various VA Location 21-TEMP6-R8-5189-4DT-EL

And select your Duty location at Lyndhurst, VA.

(Don't select Natural Bridge, where there is a seasonal Timber position also being filled)

In the event that you do not qualify at the GS-4 level, I recommend ALSO applying to our YCC program, based out of Natural Bridge, VA.

The deadline for getting those applications postmarked or emailed (to me) is **April 2nd (this Friday)**.

Information about our YCC program can be found at:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/working-with-us/opportunities-for-young-people/youth-conservation-corps-opportunities>

If you have any questions about either of these programs, or how to apply, I would be glad to help.

Thank you,

Plinio Beres

Volunteer & Partnership Coordinator

George Washington & Jefferson National Forests,

Glenwood Pedlar Ranger District

p: 540-291-2188

f: 540-291-1759

Email Address: plinio.beres@usda.gov

27 Ranger Lane

Natural Bridge Station, VA 24579

www.fs.fed.us



Caring for the land and serving people

Reeds Gap or Reids Gap?

A Summary Account of a Post on Geneology.com

written by Russell Reid, 2/15/2004

On February 4, 2004, the Board of Supervisors of Nelson County, Virginia unanimously supported a resolution to the Board on Place Names of the U.S. Geological Survey recommending that the names of "Reeds" Creek and "Reeds" Gap be corrected to their original spelling, **Reids** Creek and **Reids** Gap. The change was the result of several years of efforts led by Peter Agelasto III, a property owner of part of the 18th century land of Alexander Reid Sr., through which Reids Creek flows. The proposed change had already received the support of the State Names Authority for Virginia, and, in the case of Reids Gap, Augusta County and the National Park Service.

The Board on Place Names unanimously approved the requested change February 11, 2004. The spelling change was made in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), details of which can be found at <http://geonames.usgs.gov>.

Reids Creek is a tributary of the South Fork of the Rockfish River in what since 1808 has been Nelson County. Reids Gap lies in the Blue Ridge Mountains on the line between Nelson and Augusta Counties. Sometime during or shortly before 1740, the brothers John Reid and Alexander Reid Sr., their cousin Andrew Reed Jr., and other family members migrated from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to the Rockfish River Valley in what was then Goochland County. As that county was successively divided, the valley became part of Albemarle, then Amherst, and finally Nelson County. John Reid served as an early magistrate in the area, and his son Alexander Reid, Jr., received a patent to the land in Reids Gap. After the death of Alexander Reid Sr., his son Samuel, the last member of the family remaining in the area, settled his father's estate, sold his own land, and joined his brother in Kentucky. By the time maps were drawn of the area, no family members remained to provide the correct spelling of the creek and gap.

In 2002, a family member, Russell Reid, moved to Nelson County close to the confluence of the Rockfish River and what in the 18th century was known as Corbins Creek (now Gulleyville Creek). Mr. Reid initiated the need for restoration of the family name through his geneology.com post of 2004.

TATC Membership

Please, please, go to our Website at www.tidewateratc.com and renew your Membership if it is due! And if you do not want to renew online then [click here](#) for a hardcopy membership form which you can then mail to the address provided.



A.T. Vista 2021/2022

The Inaugural A.T. Vista begins in 2021 as a virtual program, and in 2022 as an in-person program at State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz.

atvista2021.org/
www.atvista2022.org

We are still seeking:

[Clubs & Organizations to organize a local hike along the Appalachian](#) Trail or nearby Trail, August 7 or 8, 2021,
[Got a Appalachian Trail or related workshop?](#) Provide your recorded virtual workshop for online viewing,
[Volunteers](#) to assist in 2022 Planning and Implementation activities

Be a Part of the History!

With the great news of vaccines for COVID-19, the planning team for the inaugural A.T. Vista has updated the program to provide for both a virtual experience in 2021 and an in-person experience for 2022. This expanded program presents a great opportunity to allow wide participation each year, and we seek assistance from your club members.

We know it has been since 2017 that we've been together to spend time on the trail, learn, and socialize together; however, the uncertainties involved in rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations has led us to avoid a trail-wide in-person event in 2021. We want the inaugural A.T. Vista to be memorable and this expanded two-year program rollout will allow us to develop and maintain momentum so that we can continue to share in the great camaraderie of the kindred spirits that cherish the Appalachian Trail.

As we want to continue to honor the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "*An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*," the 2021 A.T. Vista program will be conducted with dispersed local hiking opportunities all along the Appalachian Trail (and perhaps even elsewhere!) plus virtual gatherings providing an opportunity for participants at any location to follow the hikes online as photos and videos are posted.

(Continued on next Page ...)

For the 2021 program, we are seeking hiking leaders from trail clubs to conduct small group hikes along the Appalachian Trail and other trails in your serving area. We are also seeking pre-recorded workshops.

We anticipate the 2021 program to be a multi-day event with local and virtual experiences available August 7-8, 2021. A general itinerary is below (details are in process and expected to be released by June 2021):

Saturday and Sunday, August 7/8 from 8AM to 5PM: Local hikes to be conducted along the Appalachian Trail (and other trails in the area).

Sunday, August 8 in the evening: A collection of videos and photos from the trail with highlighting activity from all 14 states.

We are still working out many details for this expanded program while we continue to pursue the in-person program now scheduled for August 5-8, 2022, at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz.

If you have members of your club or organization that would be interested in making this a memorable and on-going future event, email us at atvistainfo@gmail.com or sign-up at atvista2021.org to join the team. Provide the requested information below for the hikes and workshops, and if you have other ideas, feel free to send those too. The A.T. Vista organizing team will be putting together an online program and registration system based on the submitted opportunities. You may also submit your hike or workshop details online or on this site.

Hike Submission:

1. Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
2. Co-Leader Name and Contact info
3. Location
4. Trail Name/Section
5. Description to be used
6. Number of Miles
7. Level (easy, moderate, strenuous)
8. Roundtrip or one-way hike?
9. Link to website to register for the hike

Workshop Submission:

1. Workshop Name
2. Workshop description
3. Workshop Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
4. Length of session (average is expected to be one-hour)
5. Link to recorded session
6. Would you also like to conduct this workshop online or in-person for the 2022 program?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

BY SHALIN DESAI

IT ALL BEGAN WITH A QUESTION. WHAT ARE YOU?

WHEN I THRU-HIKED THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL in 2015, my first planned “zero day” was in Franklin, North Carolina. I was picked up at Winding Stair Gap by a friendly local and dropped off at a well-known motel. Exhausted and dripping from a short but heavy downpour, I walked into a room crowded by ten fellow thru-hikers. Last in line, I waited to check into a room. The desk clerk was warm to each of the hikers — asking for their identification, credit card, and how their journeys were so far. When I walked up, his eyes narrowed. He looked me up and down, a soggy hiker with his pack on his back, and asked, “What are you?”



Shalin during his thru-hike in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. –By Clayton “Ridge Rambler” Perry

At first, I was confused. Clearly, I was a hiker. But, when he asked again — this time, slower and with a greater emphasis on the word “are” — it was clear he meant my ethnicity. This was not the first time I heard this question. I could pass for a range of ethnicities with my black hair, permanent five o’clock shadow, and skin that ranges from olive-toned in winter to dusky brown in summer.

“I’m Indian American” I stated plainly. “Good,” he said curtly. He seemed relieved by my response and subsequently grabbed my driver’s license out of my hand and processed my room reservation without a word. The other hikers in the reception area shifted uncomfortably. Feeling interrogated and unwelcome, I asked him to cancel the reservation before he ran my credit card and I walked out of the motel, trudging to the nearest hostel. No one spoke to me or looked at me as I walked out.

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What became clear to me, at that moment, was that my identity would significantly shape my journey in ways good and bad. To answer the clerk's question more fully: I am Indian American, born in Massachusetts, and the son of immigrants from the state of Gujarat in western India. I am in my thirties, having thru-hiked the A.T. in my late twenties. But I grew up on trails, hiking in the Berkshires, White Mountains, and Maine since childhood. I am queer and live with my boyfriend who is a recent immigrant from India. I am part of a family that can claim to have lived the American dream, immigrating to the United States during the height of the technology boom and slowly moving up the economic ranks to an upper middle-class status. I am educated, having been schooled at top-notch institutions, and I am also professionally successful, having worked in senior management for both for-profit and non-profit organizations.

All these markers shape my Trail experience. My race and sexuality have been markers that have resulted in negative experiences along the A.T. — from one hiker suggesting my Trail name be “Osama bin Hikin” or an A.T. Community resident asking me if I was comfortable living in such obvious sin, being attracted to my own sex. My education and economic status, meanwhile, have given me access, opportunity, and comfort beyond most. The experience I had thru-hiking not only the A.T., but also the Pacific Crest Trail and the Continental Divide Trail, were marked by these personal facts and made my experiences hiking each of these trails distinctly my own.

That is both the pleasure and the problem of talking about the Trail experience. While we talk about the “A.T. experience” in monolithic ways, it is a catch-all term for the near infinite personal experiences each of us have while recreating on the Trail. These experiences are conditioned by who we are and how our identities are perceived. To ensure that each of us has a safe, welcoming, and inclusive Trail experience, we all must acknowledge that this near-infinite range of Trail experiences exist. That my Trail experience is not yours. And yours is not mine. That both are real and different.



Shalin with his Mom, Raju Desai, at Delaware Water Gap, where his parents came to meet and resupply him during his thru-hike. —By Bhupen Desai

We must also acknowledge that just because one person had a positive experience on the A.T. — free of discrimination, harassment, and discomfort — that the same may not be true for someone else with a different set of identities. The A.T. is not a separate reality from the rest of the world and is prone to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, and other forces that can make it a less welcoming, less safe, and less inclusive space. It is also a product of history and is structured by the same forces that the rest of society has been shaped by.

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A COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

Recognizing the Trail experience can vary significantly from person to person, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has worked to ensure that its management and protection of the A.T. is underscored by a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2015, the ATC identified broader relevancy as one of its main strategic priorities with the stated purpose of engaging a younger and more inclusive audience with the A.T. The ATC added a suite of programs from youth summits to education workshops to expand and diversify its network of doers and dreamers. The Next Generation Advisory Council — comprised of fifteen 18 to 30-year-old leaders — was convened to advise and to support the ATC's broader relevancy efforts. Connections were made to partner organizations through Summit Seekers — an inter-generational outdoor leadership training program designed to foster inclusion and engagement of communities of color with outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship — and other programs meant to expand the relevancy of recreating on and stewarding the A.T.

Then the tragic murder of George Floyd happened. The systematic and targeted marginalization of Black people, and the violence inflicted upon them, was nothing new. But the murder of George Floyd thrust a range of topics that were previously on the margins of conversations to the forefront: racism, white privilege, white supremacy, and racist violence. While we understood that we were dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic for only a few weeks at the time of the murder, the centuries-long pandemic of American racism moved to the front of our collective consciousness.

It was then that the ATC realized its need to commit to something larger and deeper: not just broader relevancy but justice. As managers of a public resource, our work is and should be informed by a commitment to environmental and social justice. If the resource we manage is not as safe, as welcoming, and as inclusive as it could be, then we have substantial work to do. Recognizing this, the ATC's "A Commitment to Justice" letter was shared with our constituents and, in a matter of hours, sparks flew.

"Rocks and trees don't see color." "Stick to the Trail." "Last time I checked, social justice and Trail maintenance are not the same thing!" "Black people can hike the A.T., just like me. If they don't come, it's not our fault."

These are just a few of the comments we received — among hundreds — the morning after the letter was posted. Among the comments decrying the letter, the most common themes were a denial that racism or discrimination exist on the Trail or in Trailside communities, that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion were not part of the ATC's mission or vision, and that Black people were always welcome to the Trail but chose not to come. We knew we had a problem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, EDUCATION & ACTION

Problems must be named before they are solved. The comments we received helped us name the problem we are currently confronting. When it comes to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, we are developing plans based on an incomplete understanding of how we got to where we are and what the ATC can do to craft a more inclusive, safer, more welcoming, and more diverse A.T. As a conservancy and as a broader Trail community, we must learn before we do. The process we identified starts with acknowledgement, proceeds with education, and results in action.

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Acknowledgement is the beginning. In the ATC's "A Commitment to Justice" letter, we acknowledged the issues at hand: "The A.T. is not racially or ethnically diverse. It is not accessible to people from low-income communities. It is not always a safe place for women. And, it is not relevant to many people we consider to be part of the next generation. We recognize this must change."

However, knowing how we got to this place requires us to engage in an understanding of our entire history, including the history that preceded the A.T. We must understand that public lands are stolen lands — lands acquired by the forced removal or genocide of the land's Indigenous communities. We must understand that the A.T., while a recreational opportunity to some, traverses the routes which slaves once used to escape the antebellum South. We must recognize that some Trail management practices, whether intentionally or unintentionally, led us to a demographic that is largely male, largely Caucasian, largely above 55 years old, and largely affluent.

By gaining an understanding of our entire history and acknowledging (and naming) the full range of problems we are confronted with, we can educate — and ultimately act — in a way that creates more robust and resilient solutions to today's problems.

We will invest in change, with our time and our money. But we also recognize that this issue of A.T. Journeys is part of a larger conversation about who we are and how we got here — and how we will change. It is important to recognize up front that we will make mistakes. That this must be a broad-based effort, with those who have remained silent in the past speaking up and engaging in the process. And, that we must approach each other with empathy, civility, and understanding. That some of the things we want to discuss will likely lead to discomfort but this is not an attempt to fuel guilt, but rather to acknowledge that there is a problem and, more importantly, there is a path forward.

This will not be easy, but it will result in a better and broader Trail community. We hope you will join us in this journey.

Shalin Desai is the Vice President of Advancement for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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

When: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 7pm-9pm

Where: Online via Zoom App

Contact: Lee Lohman president@tidewateratc.com

Description: TATC Board Meeting. Guests are always welcome! This meeting will be held remotely using the Zoom App. Please contact Rosanne if you are not currently on the Board, but wish to attend this online Board Meeting remotely.

TATC General Membership Meeting

When: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 7pm-9pm

Where: Online via Zoom App

Contact: Lee Lohman president@tidewateratc.com

Program: To Be Determined

Description: TATC General Membership Meeting. Guests are always welcome! This meeting will be held remotely using the Zoom App. A blast email with a link to this Zoom Meeting will be sent out next week. If you do not currently subscribe to our blast email listing and would like to receive future blast emails, then click on the following link: <http://tidewateratc.us6.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=55b4b56215f58352eca502f98&id=0eb6788ff3>

TATC Board Meeting

When: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 7pm-9pm

Where: Online via Zoom App

Contact: Lee Lohman president@tidewateratc.com

Description: TATC Board Meeting. Guests are always welcome! This meeting will be held remotely using the Zoom App. Please contact Rosanne if you are not currently on the Board, but wish to attend this online Board Meeting remotely.

TATC General Membership Meeting

When: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7pm-9pm

Where: Online via Zoom App

Contact: Lee Lohman president@tidewateratc.com

Program: To Be Determined

Description: TATC General Membership Meeting. Guests are always welcome! This meeting will be held remotely using the Zoom App. A blast email with a link to this Zoom Meeting will be sent out next week. If you do not currently subscribe to our blast email listing and would like to receive future blast emails, then click on the following link: <http://tidewateratc.us6.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=55b4b56215f58352eca502f98&id=0eb6788ff3>

Spring Trail Maintenance

When: May 14-16, 2021

Where: TATC's Appalachian Trail Section, Nelson County, VA, Camping: at Group Camping Area, Sherando Lake Recreation Area, 96 Sherando Lake Rd, Lyndhurst, VA. Williams Branch Camping Area.

Contact: Brittany Collins to sign up, trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com

Description: This is the first major trail maintenance event of 2021 and will likely be subject to some degree of Covid restrictions. As the date approaches, check our website for updates www.tidewateratc.com. Free camping and no entrance fee if gate attendant informed of your purpose. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for own food, beverage and supplies for duration of your stay. TATC supplies tools. Our grand club- sponsored dinner will not happen. Due to COVID limitations, we can only have 25 folks camping at the Williams Branch picnic area; however, if you plan on camping somewhere else and would like to join us, please let us know and we can still add you to our crew list.

This is a weekend for us to satisfy the reason for our existence: to keep the AT, Mau-Har, and White Rock Falls trails open to foot traffic. Best to arrive between noon & dusk on Friday in order to establish camp and be ready for our Saturday 8:00AM meeting.

TATC Officers & Board

Position	Name	Email Address
President	Lee Lohman	president@tidewateratc.com
Vice President	David Altman	vicepres@tidewateratc.com
Treasurer	Cecil Salyer	treasurer@tidewateratc.com
Secretary	Steve Clayton	secretary@tidewateratc.com
Trail Supervisor	Brittany Collins	trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com
Assistant Trail Supervisor	John Sima	assistantts@tidewateratc.com
Counselor	Bruce Davidson	counselor@tidewateratc.com
Counselor	Ellis Malabad	counselor@tidewateratc.com
Counselor	Kari Pincus	counselor@tidewateratc.com
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Alt ATC RPC Representative	Jim Sexton	rpcrep@tidewateratc.com
Cabin Committee	Bob Adkisson	cabin@tidewateratc.com or 627-5514
Cabin Committee	Gregory Hodges	cabin@tidewateratc.com
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Outreach	Vacant - TBA	outreach@tidewateratc.com
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Timekeeper	Bill Lynn	timekeeper@tidewateratc.com
Tool Boss	Gene Monroe	toolboss@tidewateratc.com
Webmaster	Jim Sexton	webmaster@tidewateratc.com



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



First Landing State Park Maintenance

March 25, 2021

Ellis Malabad



Fly Fishing the Rose River, Virginia

Kevin Du Bois



Fly Fishing the Rose River, Virginia

Kevin Du Bois



Freezeree 2021 Trail to TATC Cabin

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
John Sima, Brian Richie and Bob at Slacks Overlook

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021

Douglas Putman Cabin seen through forest from BRP North of Slacks Overlook

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
The Privy after Overnight Snowstorm

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Tom Miano and Bob Adkisson at Overlook

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Tom Miano, Mal Higgins, Bob Adkisson - Socially Distancing

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Brian Richie Cooking

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Brian Richie goes Dumpster Diving

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
White Rock Gap Parking Area

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Blue Ridge Parkway - Milepost 18

Mal Higgins



**Freezeree 2021
Douglas Putman Cabin**

Mal Higgins



**Freezeree 2021
Douglas Putman Cabin**

Mal Higgins



Freezeree 2021
Brian Richie and Bob Adkisson packing out from Cabin

Mal Higgins



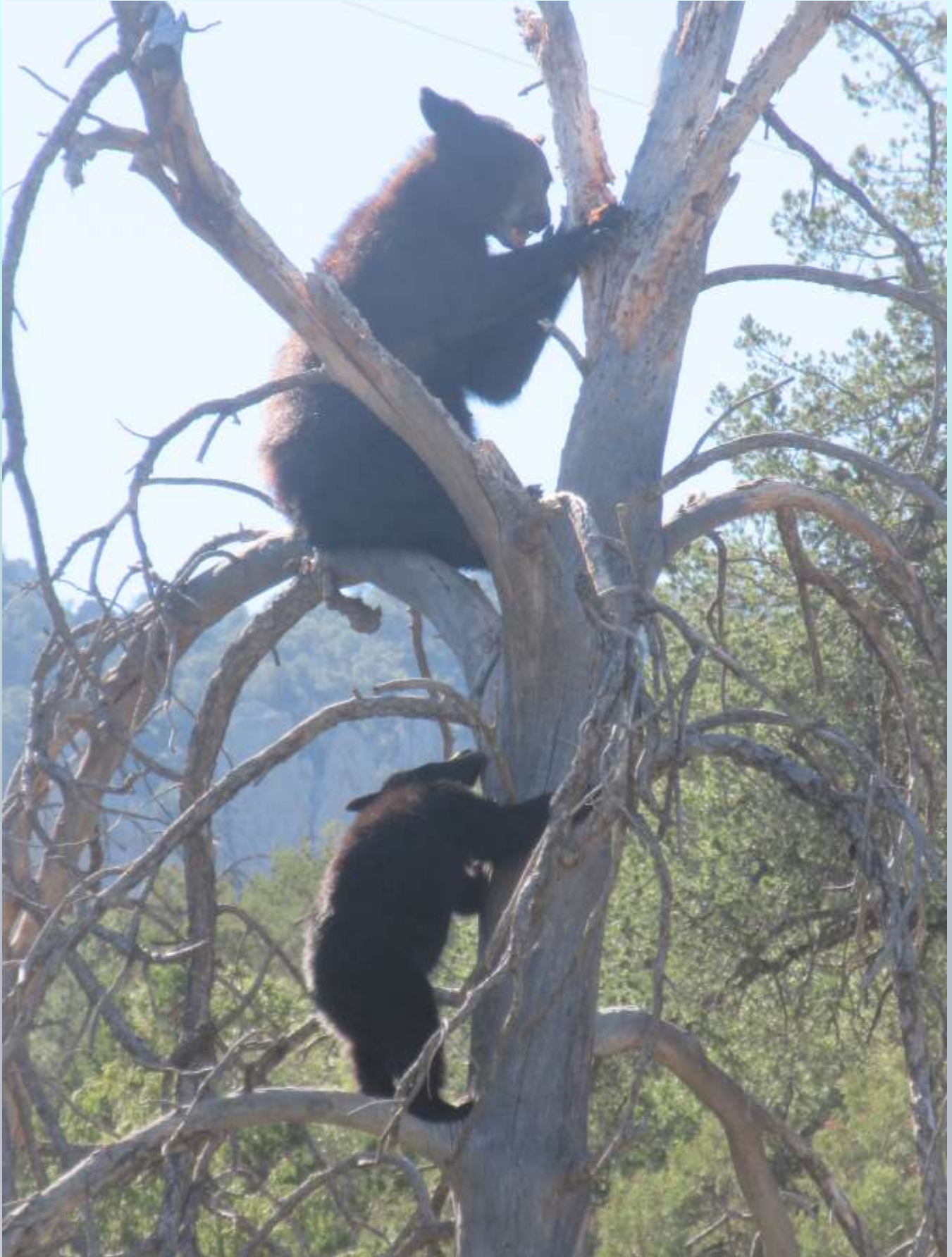
Freezeree 2021
Smiley Face Snow Art on Blue Ridge Parkway

Mal Higgins



Big Bend National Park - Bears near Chisos Lodge

Bob Adkisson



Rio Grande River - Big Bend National Park

Bob Adkisson



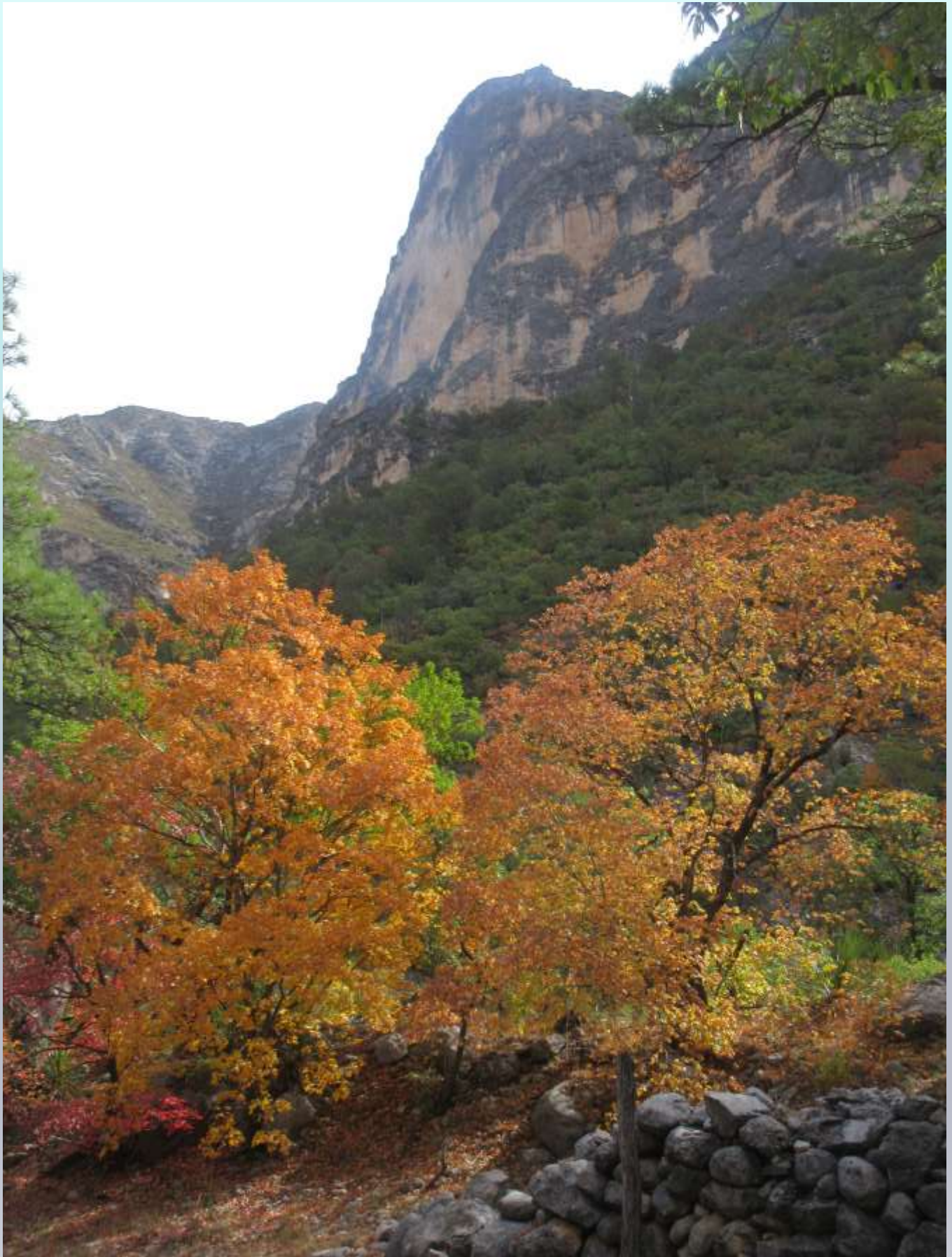
Rio Grande - Big Bend National Park

Bob Adkisson



McKittrick Canyon, Guadalupe National Park, Texas

Bob Adkisson



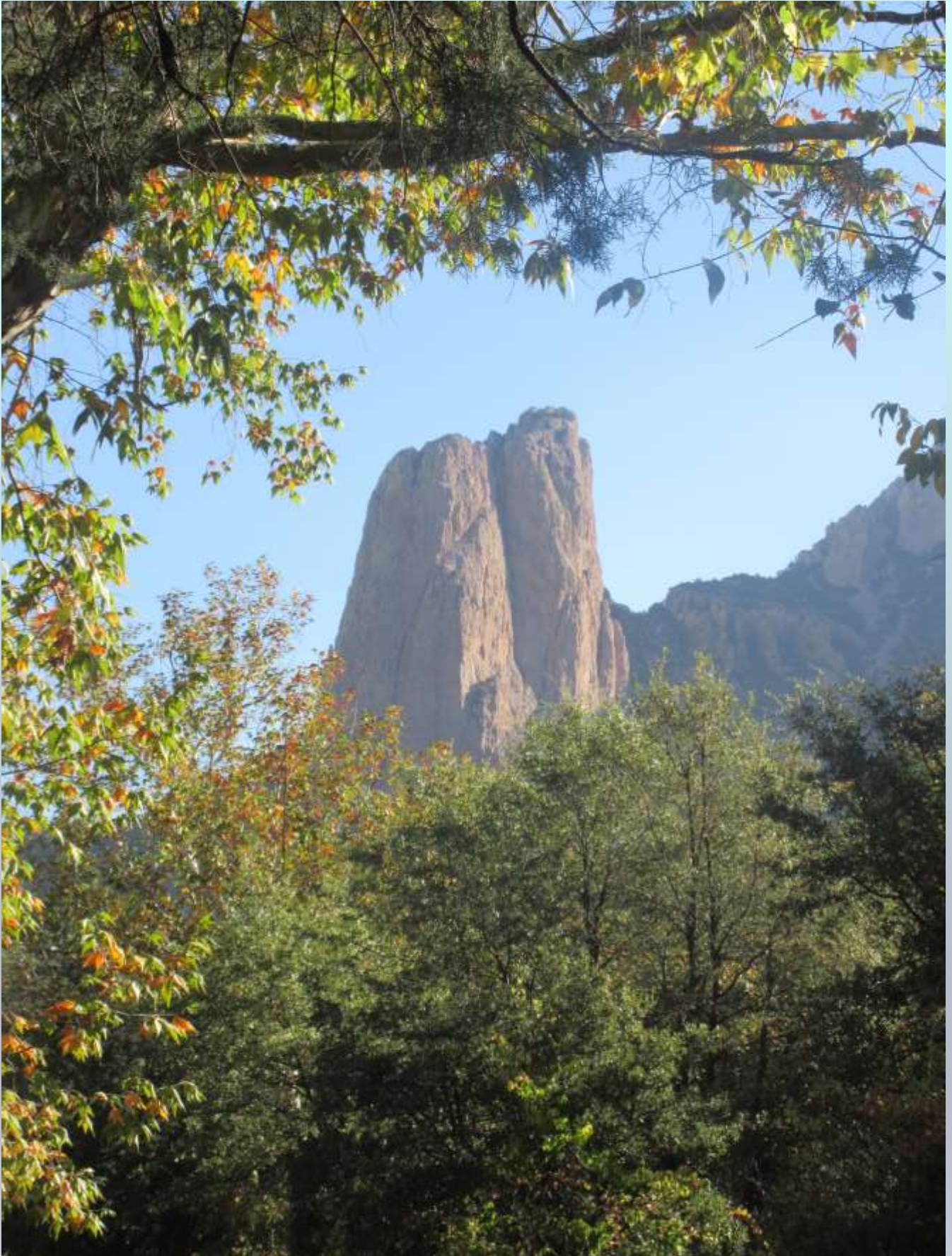
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, New Mexico

Bob Adkisson



East Side of Chira Monument

Bob Adkisson



Balanced Rock in Chiricuahau National Monument

Bob Adkisson



Balanced Rock in Chiricuahau National Monument

Bob Adkisson



Chiracuahau National Monument - Sunset

Bob Adkisson



Guadelupe National Park - Sunset

Bob Adkisson



Chiracuahau Mountains National Monument - Sunset

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip
View Down River from Indian Grain Storage Building

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Start of Trip thru Marble Canyon

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip - On the Upper River Gear Boat with Guides & Sweep Boat with Guide and Passengers

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Redwall Canyon

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Redwall Canyon

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Redwall Canyon

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip 2nd Day on Shore near Petroglyphs

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Lunch Break

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip

Walk up the Little Colorado River for a Swim

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Looking Down the Colorado River

Bob Adkisson



**Colorado River Trip
Hike up a Side Canyon to Elves Chasm**

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Big View of the Canyon Ahead

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Large Sandy Campsite

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Deer Creek, Canyon and Falls

Bob Adkisson



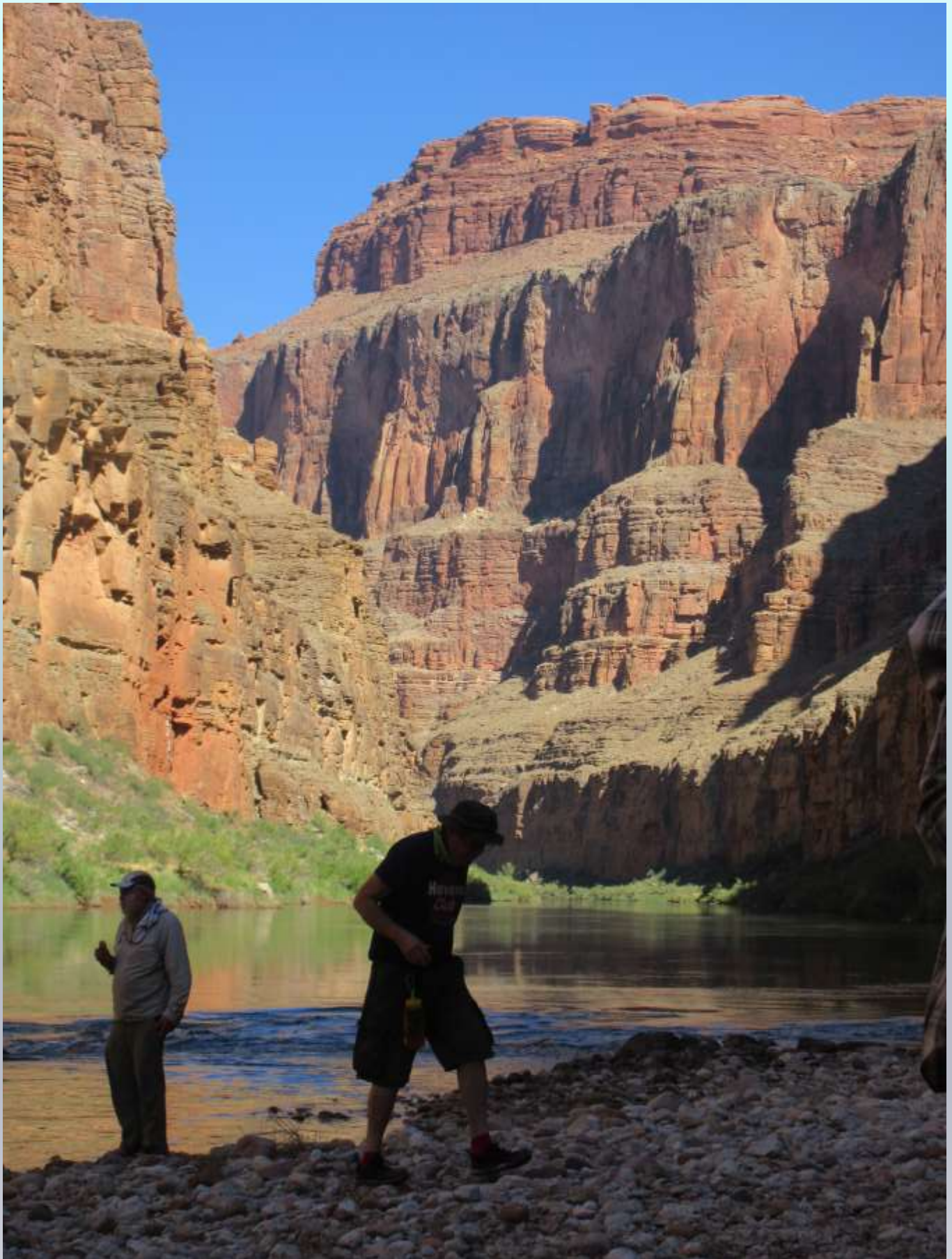
Colorado River Trip Deer Creek - Hike along a Ledge

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Another Lunch Stop

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip In the Lava Falls Area

Bob Adkisson



Colorado River Trip Last Hike up Dry Side Canyon

Bob Adkisson



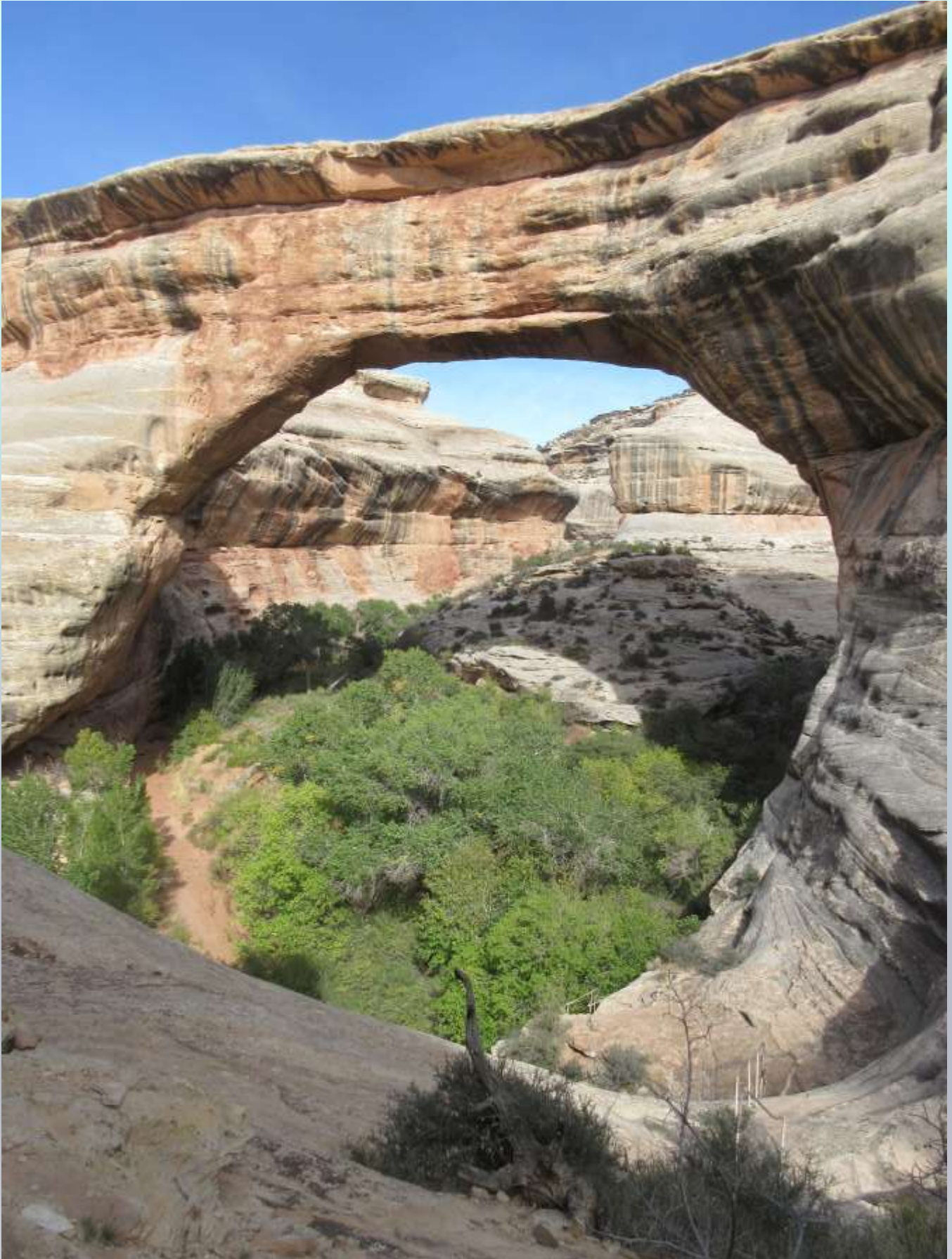
Natural Bridges National Monument, Utah

Bob Adkisson



Natural Bridges National Monument, Utah

Bob Adkisson



Natural Bridges National Monument, Utah

Bob Adkisson



Bear's Ears Mountain, Southeast Utah

Bob Adkisson



San Juan Mountain, Colorado - Last Week in September

Bob Adkisson



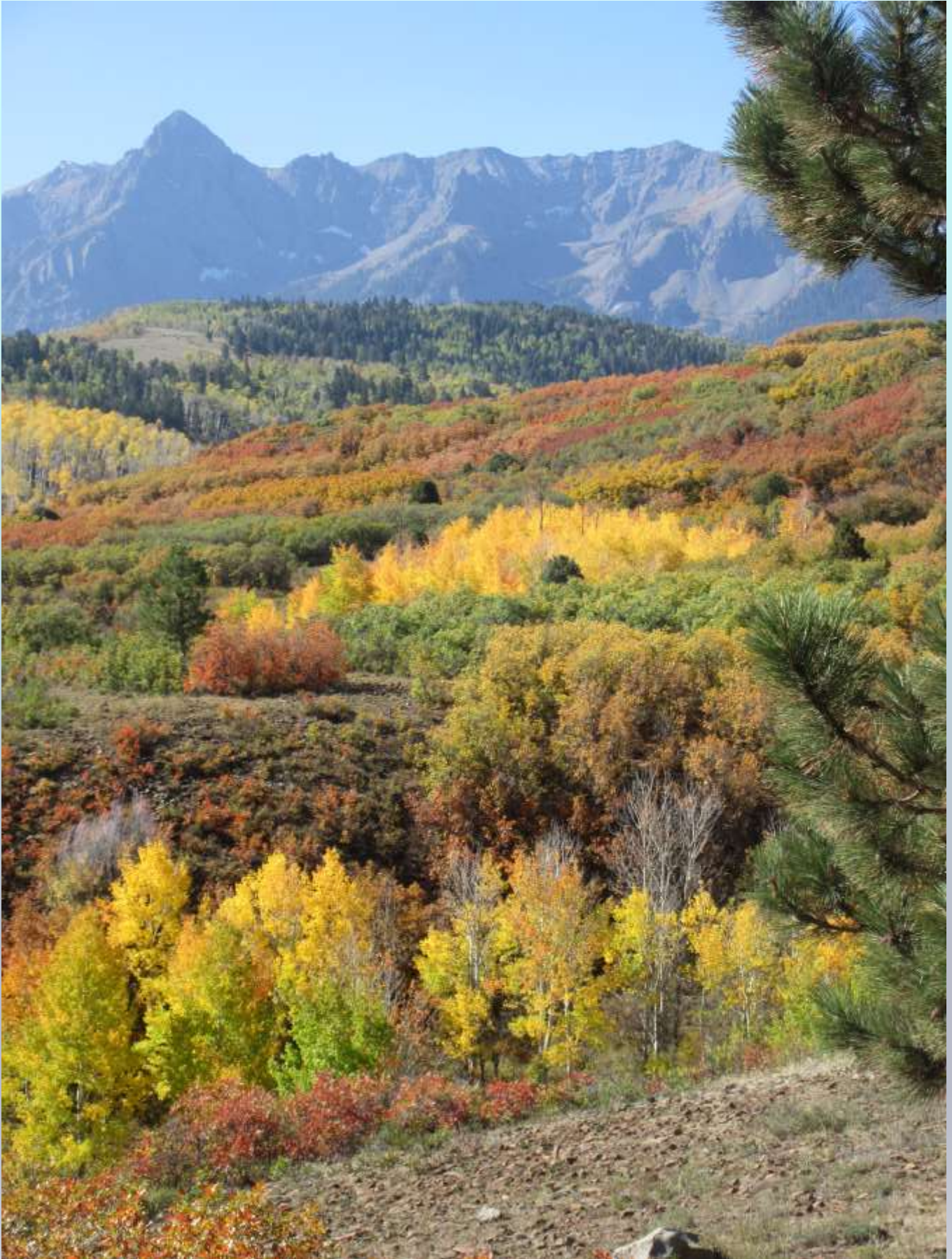
San Juan Mountain, Colorado - Last Week in September

Bob Adkisson



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San Juan Mountain, Colorado - Last Week in September

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