

# Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

## Appalachian Hiker

www.tidewateratc.com

Banner Photo by Mark Ferguson

December 2021 - January 2022  
48th Edition, 6th Issue

### PREZ SEZ

#### A Day in the Park

December--billions of leaves coming down on the lawn, the hunt for formerly live Christmas trees, endless annoying commercials on TV, crowded stores, and--thankfully--a Day in the Park. On Saturday, December 4th, we can get together face-to-face, enjoy each other's company, talk about the year ahead, and the tribulations of 2021 that are behind us.

Sharon Salyer and her team have put together a wonderful event to substitute for the usual Holiday Party that COVID stopped. This celebration will be a day filled with hikes, schmoozing, eating, and fun. We will also have a few logo items on sale for those people looking for a new TATC ballcap or T-shirt.

Look for the details elsewhere in this newsletter.

#### Mal's article on the Fall Maintenance Trip

Mal Higgins, long-time member of TATC and our club's legal advisor, has written an article about the Fall Maintenance Trip. Mal describes the fun we all had, our success tidying it up the A.T. for the fall/winter season, and a cautionary tale about a member in trouble on the trail. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

The incident was a timely reminder that the A.T. can be physically challenging and assistance may not be near at hand. The Board will address the issues revealed by this event during its December 1st meeting. We'll keep the membership advised of its conclusions and actions to reduce the risks.

#### Winter Wildlife Festival

The City of Virginia Beach will again sponsor the annual Winter Wildlife Festival on January 29, 30, and 31st. Birds, whales, snakes, owls, and other wildlife are the subjects of seminars, on-the-ground explorations, and off-shore voyages intended to expand your understanding of the critters that live in and around the Hampton Roads area.

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

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On Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup>, TATC and other non-profits such as the VA Department of Wildlife Resources, First Landing State Park, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will staff tables at the Princess Anne Recreation Center. They want to acquaint visitors with the challenges they face and the work they do to improve our environment. TATC presence at the festival has two objectives. We want to tell the story of our service locally as well as on the A.T. We also want to encourage like-minded people at the festival to join our ranks for the camaraderie and sense of accomplishment that membership in TATC brings.

Two teams of two people will staff the table with the first shift starting at 10:00 and the second beginning at 12:30. We need volunteers for those shifts. If you would like to meet people and tell the TATC story, please send me an email at [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com). I'll provide more details. Having done this in 2019, I can say that it was a fun experience. I'm sure you would enjoy it. Here is the link to the festival's website. <https://www.vb.gov/government/departments/parks-recreation/special-events/Pages/winter-wildlife-festival.aspx>

### Sawyer News

Clubs in the central and southern Virginia area told the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (our umbrella organization) months ago that our members U.S. Forest Service sawyer certifications were expiring. Without the appropriate certifications, our members are not permitted to use crosscut or chainsaws on U.S. Forest Service land. Consequently, we would not be able to fulfill our maintenance responsibilities.

The USFS was sympathetic, but the fires in the west were absorbing all their sawyers including those who could recertify volunteers. ATC made a concerted effort to persuade the Forest Service to adjust the rules so that experienced senior volunteers could recertify. ATC announced success last Friday. Starting in January, C-level sawyers from other clubs will start recertifying TATC members with A and B certifications.

This is a major change in the certification process and will be a significant benefit to TATC. More details will be announced as they become available.

### 500 for 50

The Board decided on the Fiftieth Anniversary Project at its last meeting. TATC intends to plant 500 trees for our 50th year anniversary. The plantings will be in the Hampton Roads area and other locations needing reforestation. We contacted government officials in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake and received an enthusiastic response. Details are being worked out, but one thing is clear. We will need volunteers who like to dig, plant, and water. We'll be in touch.

### Reinvigorated Local Trails Maintenance

Great credit goes to Dave Plum and Ellis Malabad for reinvigorating the local trails maintenance programs. Virtually stopped by COVID, the restart required them to encourage the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (First Landing State Parks) and the City of Virginia Beach to re-engage in the pre-COVID partnership with TATC. That happened. Our latest task was a physical structure mapping exercise for First Landing State Park. Volunteers downloaded an app that permitted identification of the structures by latitude and longitude. Once collected, the data was delivered to FLSP officials who will use it to build their maintenance plans for 2022. They were very grateful for TATC's support.

### COVID Vaccinations and Work with the US Forest Service

TATC has been advised that the U.S. Forest Service may require all volunteers to be vaccinated before they can work on Forest Service land. The regulations have not been finalized but may require club presidents to sign affidavits certifying that they have inspected vaccination certificates for all volunteers working on USFS land. We will keep everyone apprised.

I hope to see you all at the Day in the Park celebration on December 4th. Until then, happy trails.

Lee



**SAVE the DATE**  
*Saturday*

**Dec. 4, 2021**

TIDEWATER APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB's

*Day in the*  
**Park**

**First Landing State Park**

**Shelter #1, Conservation Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23451**

Mark your calendar to join TATC for a winter celebration in beautiful  
First Landing State Park! We're planning a day of fun:

**Hiking • Horseshoes • Cornhole • Dinner & Dessert • Campfire and s'more!**

For more information, contact Sharon Salyer: [happycampers33@hotmail.com](mailto:happycampers33@hotmail.com)



*Plus*



This is the last weekend the park is open for camping.  
Site availability and reservations are available through  
[www.ReserveAmerica.com](http://www.ReserveAmerica.com).



## Minute for Maintenance

At this years fall maintenance, 15-17 October, we had 50 volunteers and what a great group of people! We were able to tackle both lower and upper lakes of Sherando; clear off 3 major blow downs in the Three Ridges Wilderness; clean up both Shelters; pack out tons of trash from St. Mary's Wilderness; and also clear off several blow downs on the Mine Bank Trail. I have only been the Trail Supervisor for less than a year and it is amazing the amount of dedication this group of volunteers have towards the Appalachian Trail. It is such a pleasure working with you all and the Appalachian Trail is lucky to have such dedicated folks. The TATC appreciates every one of you for helping out. Thank you and look forward to next year!

Happy Trails,  
Britt Collins  
TATC Trail Supervisor  
[trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com](mailto:trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com)

## 1/4 to 1/2 AT Hike

Description: I intend to hike 1/4 of the AT each year for the next 4 years. You could sign up for this hike and then decide on the others later. I'm looking for people who are ready to do 18-20 miles/day average for about 30 days. We will have town/resupply stops. It will be like thru-hiking but shorter overall duration. Hike is still in the planning stages, so we can discuss options. I am fully vaccinated and attendees would also need to be fully vaccinated.

When: Approximately April 15 - May 15, 2022.

Where: Route 11/Windsor Rd, near I81 (mile 544) near Atkins, VA to Pine Grove State Park, PA (mile 1100). Roughly from the 1/4 to the 1/2 way points NOBO.

Contact: Donald Williams at [vacitizen76@gmail.com](mailto:vacitizen76@gmail.com)

## Save the Date!

Giving Tuesday is November 30, 2021! Give back to the Trail by donating to the ATC and our mission to protect, manage and advocate for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Here's how you can help:

Get a head start and [donate now](#) or later!

Share information about the campaign with family and friends!

[Find an opportunity](#) to volunteer on the Trail!

**DONATE**



## **TATC Elections January 12, 2022 - Slate of Officers Announcement**

The Nominating Committee submits the following slate of Officers for the TATC Board for fiscal year 2022-2023. Please tune in via Zoom for the January 12, 2022 membership meeting and vote in your next Board:

President- Lee Lohman  
Vice President- Andy Grayson  
Treasurer- Cecil Salyer  
Secretary- Steve Clayton  
Trail Supervisor- Brittany Gonzales  
Assistant Trail Supervisor- John Sima  
Counselor- Bill Bunch

Any club member is eligible to run for any one of these positions. Additional nominations can be made at the January 12, 2022 membership meeting or by contacting the Nominating Committee at [nominations@tidewateratc.com](mailto:nominations@tidewateratc.com). Job descriptions for each position are available in the Bylaws on the TATC website.

The Nominating Committee members are Lisa Hall, Tim Hall, Tom Merece, Pete Burch and Michelle Cobb, chair. Our sincere thanks go out to each candidate.

### **Konnarock Trail Crew**

Konnarock is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's flagship crew program, founded in 1983 and named after its original base camp in southwest Virginia. The crew works on the Appalachian Trail from Rockfish Gap, near Waynesboro, Virginia, to the Trail's southern terminus at Springer Mountain in Georgia. The program is a joint venture of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the 12 southern Trail clubs, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service.

At Konnarock, volunteers of diverse ages, backgrounds, and experience levels work together to build durable trail that will last for generations. After five days of working as a team, learning new skills, and living in the backcountry both the crew and the trail is transformed. No experience is necessary, but you must be 18 years or older. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy provides training, equipment, and room and board. Crews are transported in U.S. Forest Service vehicles from the base camp in Sugar Grove to a primitive, backcountry tent camp near the project site.

Check the following link for new trail crew opportunities as they are planned and scheduled:

<https://appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer/trail-crews/konnarock-trail-crew/>



## Help from the Navy

The Fall Maintenance Trip is TATC's signature event of the year. That's not surprising. Fall maintenance offers cooler weather, beautifully colored leaves, and camaraderie. Not only do we get a substantial turnout of members, we're fortunate to have non-members join to help out.

This year, eight members of the Navy and their families swing-bladed, lopped, and trimmed the overgrowth around the Upper Lake at Sherando. They worked hard and had a lot of fun. The children helped too and had a blast playing in the water. (See the picture below.)

TATC is very grateful for the participation of:

Tim Centonze  
Wyonna Centonze  
Shannon Beckett  
Elise Hawkins  
William Hawkins  
Terrance Dallas  
Christopher Ciacimano  
Rob James



Lee R. Lohman  
President  
Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

## My Greatest Adventure

Jerry Lee Cobleigh

Over 50 years ago, while stationed in the military at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, I had the experience of the greatest adventure of my life. I climbed the Mount Pinatubo Volcano seven times in a year and a half with My Boy Scout Explorer Post 932 as their Explorer Post Advisor. I made it to the summit for the first time on my seventh and final attempt.

Myself and five of my Explorer Scouts were on the climb, and two of us made it to the top. We covered the top of the Mountain with a bed sheet and took a picture of it with our names on it. Many years later on the 15th. of June 1991, Mount Pinatubo erupted, and it was the second largest volcanic eruption in 100 years. The largest volcanic eruption of the twentieth century was Mount Novarupta in Alaska on June 6th, 1912.



The Mount Pinatubo eruption was ten times larger than the eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington State on May 18th, 1980. The eruption of Mount Novarupta was thirty times larger than the eruption of Mount St. Helens. The eruption of Mount Pinatubo created a caldera lake a mile and a half wide. It was so devastating that it blew 20 million tons out of the earth and closed down the two largest military bases in the World (Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base). Mount Pinatubo Crater Lake is now a very large tourist attraction. I went back over there on May 7th, 2017 and hiked up to the Mount Pinatubo Crater Lake with a Filipino Tour Guide. The awesome view of the Mount Pinatubo Crater Lake was one of the most incredibly beautiful sites that I have ever seen. This truly was "MY GREATEST ADVENTURE EVER"

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#### Interesting Web Sites on Google:

Trekking Mount Pinatubo - <http://www.trekkingpinatubo.com>

Drones over Mount Pinatubo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrOiiG5KHVw>

Eruption of Mount Pinatubo - <https://www.usgs.gov/news/remembering-mount-pinatubo-25-years-ago-mitigating-crisis#:~:text=The%20world's%20largest%20volcanic%20eruption,and%20lahars%20swept%20down%20valleys>

Eruption of Mount St. Helens - <https://www.usgs.gov/news/mount-st-helens-1980-eruption-changed-future-volcanology>

Eruption of Mount Novarupta - <https://www.nps.gov/katm/learn/nature/valley-of-ten-thousand-smokes.htm>





## Sherando Maintenance and St. Mary's Wilderness

By Mal Higgins

The October 2021 TATC Sherando maintenance trip to work on TATC's 11 miles of the A.T. and other trails was again successful this year, even with COVID still affecting certain parts of this much enjoyed semi-annual tradition. Perhaps 50 or so participants, most of them camping once again at the Williams Branch picnic area, turned out at 8:00 a.m. Saturday, October 16 for the safety briefing and job signups with Trail Supervisor Britt Collins and Assistant Trail Supervisor, John Sima. John had scouted the loop of Maupin up the A.T. and back on the MauHar Trail and had current information on blowdowns. Britt once again provided snack packs. John, acting as tool boss, had all tools laid out for the crews.

The entrance to Sherando Lake Recreation Area is still controlled after hours by an electronic gate requiring entering a code to make the arm lift. Sherando is still only open to folks with reservations for overnight camping and not for day use at the beach, lake, or elsewhere. But, the weekend event felt almost like pre-pandemic days,

Five of us wanted to get back into St. Mary's Wilderness from the lower side on the St. Mary's Falls trail to do whatever we could on the approximate two mile hike back to the falls. So, Bruce Davidson, Duncan Fairlie, Lance Deaver, Tom Miano, and I carpooled in Bruce's car to the entrance parking area, passing through Vesuvius and arriving to a full parking lot. Given the threat of rain we were surprised it was already full at about 9:00 a.m.

We set off and did minor lopping and swing blading. We had to rock hop and splash across the river five times before reaching the falls. More than once my feet were off the "hopping rock" and in the river.

The trail is in despicable shape, almost not a trail in places. There are no blazes or other markings to even identify which of various routes that seem to be a trail is the right choice. Because of past flooding of the St. Mary's River, the trail is vulnerable to wash outs, as it generally follows a gorge created by the river, and can't be moved higher on the gorge wall. The fact that this is a "Wilderness" is a bit of a misnomer because of the high foot traffic volume. I think the USFS needs to rethink its stewardship and structural maintenance efforts here. Many wilderness trails at least have occasional markings, signs, or blazes.

Rain began and so the wet feet were just part of the enjoyment. We began picking up a fair amount of trash, abandoned bottles, T-shirts, a towel, a bottle of vodka (we poured it out) and had a nice haul. We enjoyed the falls, and ate our lunch huddled under a rock overhang. A family came up about the same time and I was impressed by the wife who had hiked in on crocs with a sleeping baby under a blanket in her arms. She made it look easy, and had to have crossed the river the same five times we did.

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As we hiked back we picked up more trash and met a steady flow of more day hikers—some looked fit enough, and several were backpacking for overnight stays. Returning to the Williams Branch site, we were relieved the rain had stopped. But once again in the interest of minimizing COVID exposure there was no group catered community meal at the end of the day Saturday. We all boiled our Ramen noodles/rice/ bad meals and shared the day's adventures.

One of the teams, which had also gone into St. Mary's Wilderness from the Mine Bank Trail encountered much difficulty when a team member developed severe leg cramps probably due to glycogen depletion and became nearly incapacitated. That team of four folks was greatly delayed in reaching its predetermined trail head pick-up location and had not arrived back at Sherando by 6:00 p.m. at sunset. Efforts by members of TATC to contact the team by cell phone (using an available Wi-Fi connection in Sherando) were unsuccessful. The team was deep down the Mine Bank trail and moving at a halting pace. Two folks at Williams Branch drove to the Mine Bank trail head and determined that the team's vehicle was still parked there at around 7:30 p.m. Back at Williams Branch serious consideration was given to reaching out for county or sheriff search and rescue team help, as the situation suggested an emergency. While the situation was fluid, the missing maintenance group made it back to Williams Branch camp site about 9:00 p.m.

Leadership of TATC is considering how to establish a protocol in the future to set up a plan for possible use of the "InReach" device satellite technology at base camp to which a member of a team in trouble could hike to a location with a cell signal and contact the base camp (Williams picnic ground) with text or email to report the situation.



## Cabin Work Report for November

In keeping with our covid concerns over the last year or so, I kept the number of participants down, and also spread out. Everyone who participated was supposed to be vaccinated, and I believe everyone assured me they were.

The main job was cutting firewood. Last Nov. (2020) both chainsaws that we had gave out before the humans operating them did, and we didn't cut as much wood as I'd hoped. There was still a good deal of wood left over, stacked here and there out in the woods, but the main woodpile, close to the cabin and covered with a tarp, was very very low.

Tom Meree and Bruce Davidson both brought (and operated) their own saws, and Peter Burch generously volunteered to come from Sherando and use his saw as well.

I had both TATC saws with me (but the smaller one didn't work at all, and the larger one-- the Cabin saw-- would probably have only worked for an hour or so). I brought them so that Peter Burch could assess them (turns out he got the smaller saw working on Sunday, down at Sherando; the Cabin saw needs to be replaced).

One club member came early, since he wasn't free over the weekend; he fetched water for the cabin, worked on the cabin access road, and hiked the White Rock Falls Trail to give me an up to the minute report on it. He arrived on Wed. He left Friday afternoon, just after the two of us walked part of the property boundary together.

All of the other participants arrived Friday afternoon. There were 9 of us Friday night, with 2 of us tenting out. Three people stayed in the loft; four downstairs, including the one husband and wife team.

The weather was absolutely perfect the 6 days I was at the cabin, and the leaves were at their peak of color change. The spring was running fine as well.

On Saturday we had 3 saws running from about 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., with an hour off for lunch. Peter Burch put 3 trees on the ground that had previously been cut, but had gotten hung up in other trees. Three or four other standing dead trees were felled and cut up into fire wood.

While wood was being cut a couple of people transported it up to the wood chopping blocks, where several people took turns splitting it. Others stacked it in the woodpile.

We completely re-stocked the covered woodpile, and now most of the wood in it is split and ready to use. Quite a bit of wood was stacked where we cut it and renters can transport it as needed.

Three different people, on Thursday or Saturday, saw a bear (or maybe it was 3 different bears) -- all within about 150 yards of the cabin.

Patrick Hayes did strain a muscle while splitting fire wood-- the only thing close to an injury.

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The couple, at the cabin for the first time, really took to it and enjoyed themselves. On Sunday I orientated them as to the cabin rules and procedures; we walked down to the cemetery, and I went with them on an hour-long hike thru the Blue Ridge Train Tunnel from the Afton trailhead.

I stayed on another night, picked up the repaired saw at Sherando, and returned to Norfolk on Tuesday.

A very successful and enjoyable cabin work trip.



On Friday, Nov. 5, late in the afternoon, I walked out to White Rock Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway - where we park our cars while at the cabin. I counted a total of 50 cars in the gravel parking area, and on the grass to every side of it. It seems, especially since the Pandemic, that the two hiking trails that start from that gap have become incredibly popular (our club, the cabin committee specifically, has the responsibility of maintaining the 2.6 mile White Rock Falls Trail; I am not sure who looks after the trail on the west side of the Parkway, the 2.5 mile White Rock Gap Trail, which descends the ridgeline and goes down to Sherando Campground). Fifty cars may be a record for this parking area.

It is almost a case of the trails being 'loved to death'. On Sunday, the 7th, there were again huge overflows of parked vehicles at Reid's Gap and at the Humpback Rocks Parking area, and even at the tiny Dripping Springs Overlook situated about half way between the two (where the A.T. crosses the Parkway). There is only space for maybe 4 cars at the Dripping Springs Overlook, and it was full, but there were at least a dozen cars left along the very narrow shoulder of the Parkway just to the south, creating a dangerous passing hazard.

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It makes me both sad and mad to report that some of the people using these trails are slobs and abusers, and / or totally clueless: during the work weekend I was able to hike about a mile of the White Rock Falls Trail and I saw again where someone has spray painted graffiti on at least one tree (the same smiley face design I'd seen on the trail in 3 places the year before-- and which I'd spray painted over with tree-colored paint); also along the trail, and especially in the parking area itself, were about half a dozen dog poop bags, complete with dog poop, left by the dog owners for someone else to pick up and dispose of. I fail (terribly) to understand the psychology of someone who would collect their dog's droppings but then leave them beside the trail or around the trailhead parking area for everyone else to see or step on, someone else to deal with.

Worse than that, on this same busy day, I walked about 75 yards down the trail and was presented with the spectacle of a large pile of human waste left completely out in the open one foot from the edge of the trail. Toilet paper too. Who wants to see this? Who would think for one second this is how it is done? I imagine the person who did this all but ran from the scene, and never looked back.

I had no shovel or other tools to bury or relocate the pile, and could barely bring myself to deal with something of this sort (I don't get paid extra for handling hazardous waste-- come to think of it, I don't get paid at all!). And I grow ever more weary dealing with people who do such things as paint on trees and leave a foul mess like this right beside a trail for everyone else to see and have to experience. I did take about 30 seconds to cover the abomination with a pile of dead leaves (which were in abundance), then I placed several small tree branches on top of them, to keep the wind from blowing them away. Then I went on down the trail, shaking my head - the person responsible couldn't have done the same thing, couldn't have gone 30 feet to either side of the trail before they dropped their trousers?

I also noted that the fairly new sign the Park Service put up at the parking area, identifying the gap and giving the elevation, is now full of graffiti as well, and if you go just a few feet into the woods you can't help but see toilet paper everywhere, and plastic bags whose contents you probably don't want to know about.

Other news: Royal Oaks rental cabins and chalets, located about 2.5 miles from our cabin, at the intersection of the Parkway and county road 814 (in the tiny community of Love, Virginia), has now been sold and will soon be under new ownership. The outgoing owner, Keith, was very friendly and helpful - for years he allowed club members to leave their vehicles on his property when the Parkway was closed because of ice and snow. Some of us tried to return his kindness by occasionally renting one of his larger chalets and spending a weekend there - I once watched a full 'blood-moon' rise over the mountains in January, from the hot tub on the deck of our chalet. We always had a great time staying there and always appreciated his friendship and help. There were times he ran a deli as well, and he had some food supply items and bags of ice for sale in the office building too - I was a customer every chance I got.

I believe the cabin/chalets will still be open for use thru about the first week of January, and the prices might even be a bit reduced up until then, with the place still in Keith's hands. The new owners may spend a couple of months making some changes; I heard they plan to reopen sometime in March.

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As for wintertime parking: After the first of January do not park on Royal Oaks property without expressed permission. Also: DO NOT park near or on land belonging to the small church that is right beside the Royal Oaks property. Instead: there are wide gravel shoulders alongside route 814, right next to the cemetery there at the top of the hill, and a place for a couple of cars a stone's throw from the Parkway itself. DO NOT block the Park Service gate, and best not to leave your car on the shoulder of the Parkway at all.

It might be smart to bring a shovel to leave in your car, in case a snow plow walls you in, or if it snows a foot while you are staying at the cabin. As an alternative: you could try driving as far into the Shenandoah campground as is open, and then hiking in from there, though that involves at least a 2.5 mile uphill walk to the Parkway (on the White Rock Gap Trail).

A more distant property is also for sale - the large piece of land immediately south of Rockfish Gap, upon which sits the mansion called Swannanoa. I believe the person who owns Swannanoa also owns the land down the hillside, right up to route 250 and Interstate 64. You may have noticed that, for years, right there at Rockfish Gap, entrance to Shenandoah National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway, there have been a number of old commercial buildings falling farther and farther into disrepair - a gas station, an old motel (or two), a Howard Johnson's restaurant. To me it has been an utter amazement and travesty that such derelict and unsightly structures would be allowed to exist at the entranceway to two National Parks, and yet county officials have done nothing about it.

If and when the land changes hands, maybe the new owner will be more responsible, or maybe the county will be encouraged to finally take action. It could be the site of a nice park and visitors center, something that complimented and honored the nearby National Parks, instead of wrecked buildings with holes in the roof, surrounded by overgrown shrubbery, old metal signboards, and a couple acres of pavement.

One final note: on Saturday afternoon, just after we'd finished our work and were relaxing, a young couple (with a dog) came walking up to the cabin. They said they were looking for the White Rock Falls Trail, but I doubted that. We gave them a bit of a hard time (only half jokingly), and directions to the trail, and they soon left. But it turns out two of our club members had been walking out to the gap to get something from their car and they'd passed this couple, and they'd told them they were on a dead-end private road, that it wasn't the White Rock Falls Trail - and yet they'd walked back to our property and our cabin just the same. It is a case of people seeing our cabin access trail and following it back to see where it leads - not being dissuaded by the signs we have posted or people that tell them it is not whatever hiking trail they claim they are looking for.

Last spring a club member was by himself at the cabin, in the early afternoon half asleep in the loft when he heard the cabin door being opened. He called out, since he was expecting me to be showing up anytime, 'Bob, is that you?' No one answered, but the door closed. He got up, went downstairs and outside, and saw a young couple down near the outhouse. They too claimed they were looking for the White Rock Falls Trail-- which again, I doubt.

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Maybe some people, like I said, see the unmarked trail to the cabin going off into the woods and follow it out of curiosity. Maybe some go on-line and see the cabin access route marked on any number of maps or hiking trail websites. It seems odd and wrong to me that trails or old roads that are on private property should be shown on maps that anyone can find with just a bit of searching. About 2 years ago we noticed that the on-line maps of the Blue Ridge Parkway, when you zoomed in, showed the trail to the cabin, showed the cabin and outhouse and springs, and even identified the access road as leading to "Appalachian Trail Cabin". But it is private property - we've had cases of vandalism to the cabin and we try to keep its location secret - who gave them permission to do that and why would they include that information on their map? We contacted them and they took it off-- not that it won't soon return, and not that other trail mapping websites won't carry the same information, inspiring people to come back and trespass on our land, in spring some of them to be bold enough to walk up and open the cabin door, to step inside without even knocking or calling out, 'hello, anyone home?'

I hate "No Trespassing" signs, but they may soon be coming to our cabin access trail. Though of course, some people will walk right past them without a thought in their head.

Bob Adkisson

Best Lumberjacking video at the cabin:

Peter at the saw. Tom in the foreground

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/xtmpq4BojPNPMFhP6>

Mountain wheelbarrow at work video

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/ucpFsXP7HsUFLjZ66>



## TATC at First Landing State Park Fall Fest

October 16, 2021

Dave Plum and Michael Horrell attended the Fall Fest and set up the TATC exhibit display. This annual event at the park is used to educate visitors about the way many different groups assist the park. We were fortunate, in that we were given a premier location right in front of the rear entrance to the park's office building. This also happened to be in close proximity to the Friends of FLSP booth where they were cooking hot dogs and hamburgers and giving them away for donations. Bad for Dave and Mike as they had to endure the aroma of freshly grilled hot dogs and burgers, but great for Dave and Mike as they could judge when the long line was shorter so we could grab a bite to eat with no long wait in line!

During the afternoon event, we had a steady stream of interested park visitors curious about how a club with our name could be associated with a trail some 200 plus miles away from Virginia Beach, but also affiliated with FLSP. Many of the visitors were interested in our role on the AT as well as at the many local trail where we assist state and local government trail/park owners.

Several younger adults were interested in membership and wanted to know how they could participate in the club's activities as they had children with them that ranged in ages from 2-17. This is something we may need to consider as we look to add new, younger family members to the club's roles.



Mike had a great time with the kids that stopped by and always had a question ready for them which he told them had no wrong answer. "What do you know about the Appalachian Trail?" While very few knew anything about the AT, they were interested in looking at the maps and they walked away a little bit educated with a souvenir TATC whistle.

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Dave also had the opportunity to meet Parker, the State Park's official mascot who came by the display to check out items Jim Sexton has assembled to help promote the club. The logo whistles were a hit with the younger crowd. The logo bottles of hand sanitizer were the second most popular item. Jim is in the process of requesting a resupply of swag for the next pop-up event.

Several visitors picked up the business cards with the QR codes for getting information on the club and for membership. We also took in a paid Family Membership application for the Ferrara family.

Dave was also able to get another couple of visitors who were interested in helping clear invasive plant species at Pleasure House Point and other local trails.

All in all, this was a fun event and is something the club should plan to participate in every year. It is normally held on a Saturday afternoon in mid-October.





## **TATC to GPS Map Physical Trail Infrastructure at First Landing State Park**

After several months of planning by Ellis Malabad, Margaret Pisone, Dave Plum and FLSP Volunteer Coordinator Tanya Wysoker, TATC volunteers will begin the task of walking every trail in FLSP and obtain the location of every bench, memorial bench, boardwalk, bridge, trail head sign, exercise equipment and overlook. The teams will also inspect the items, photograph it and assess the condition and determine what, if any, recommended repairs or maintenance is needed., In addition, if the survey teams see something that could be considered a hazardous issue, they will immediately GPS the location, photograph it and send the information to Tanya who will forward the information to the appropriate park ranger to deal with.

To get to this point Ellis, Margaret and Dave met with Tanya several times to develop the plan and determine the best method to identify the items. Although this may seem like a straightforward matter, the plan and the manner in which the data was to be recorded, transmitted and delivered to the park ARC/GIS mapping team took some time because they weren't really sure what they were looking for and how the data would be used.

When completed, the park will be able to pinpoint these items on the Avenza map app that currently allows park users to see where they are in the park. If you have not used this cool, FREE mapping App, we recommend you download it to your smart phone from wherever you get you Apps. Many other State Parks in Virginia also use Avenza, but it is not known if they are doing similar things to augment their map.

TATC teams have been formed that consist of a minimum of three people. Each team has set their schedule to hike their selected trail, obtain the data, record it digitally and on paper and then drop the information off at the FLSP trail center before Thanksgiving. It will then be up to the park's staff to get the data into their database and eventually onto the Avanza map for use by the visiting public.

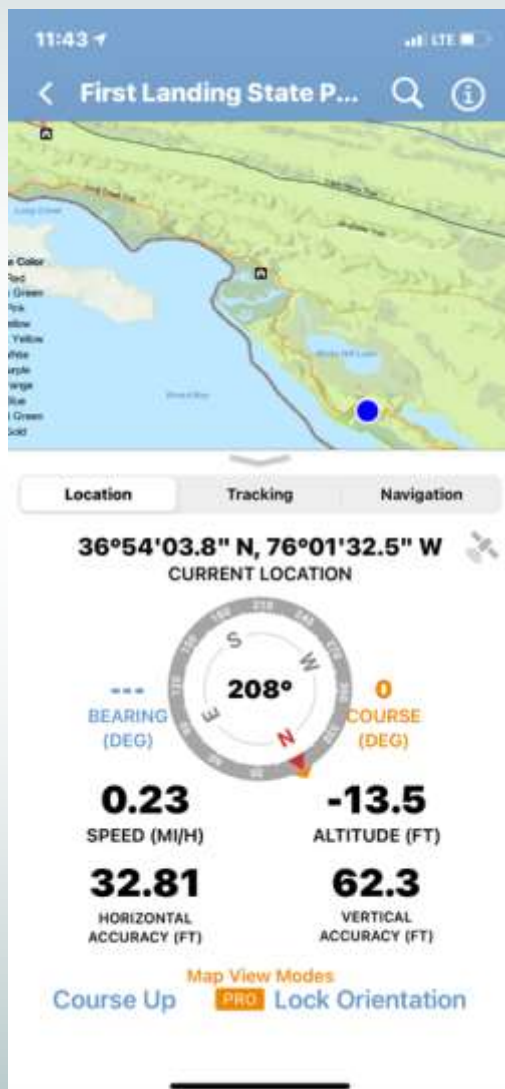
Rosemary Plum selected Long Creek Trail and her team consisted of Mal Higgins, Svetlana Kononov and Dave Plum. On a beautiful Veterans Day morning they met at the Trail Center, discussed who was doing what and made sure everyone understood the form and the mission. At the end of the 4 hour hike the team collected 37 GPS points of physical improvements, including a somewhat hidden box culvert under the replacement bridge on Long Creek trail, just east of the White Hill Lake trail junction with Long Creek trail. Apparently, this box culver was originally constructed to allow tidal flow from Broad Bay to enter White Hill Lake and vice versa. Over time, the trail must have been under water many times and the park then constructed the bridge over the box culvert. Check it out on your next hike!

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Below is a screen shot of the FLSP Avenza map showing the Longitude and Latitude of the trail junction of Long Creek and the west end of Osprey Trail. The picture is an example of what will be submitted to the FLSP rangers. You can see the trails mapped in corresponding colors that match the trail blazes. In some of the views using Avenza there will be a small grey circle which must be centered over the blue dot to record the correct location of the map user. The neat feature of Avenza is that it will track your location even if you don't have cell service.

Below are several pictures taken during the Long Creek Trail Hike/survey.



Left: Avenza Screen Capture at Trail Junction with Lat./Long.

Above: Rosemary Recording Data

Below: Box Culvert below Bridge on Long Creek Trail



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Left: Svetlana Recording Data at a Trail Post

Above: Part of the Team posing for a Photo Op.

Below: Mal and Dave confirming Coordinates



These photos and the writeup is only a small snapshot of all the work that was done at FLSP.. Many thanks go out to all the Team Leaders: Ron Leta, Kaci Midgette, Michelle Cobb, Rosemary Plum, Scott Stufflebeem, George Huebscham, Bill Leber, Diane Leber, Stephanie Stringer, Margaret Pisone, Carolyn Sanford and their crews for volunteering their time an effort to gather this data for the State Park. Ellis Malabad was instrumental in organizing the entire operation and deserves a big Thank You!

Dave Plum



## TATC Maintenance in First Landing State Park

On November 10, 2021, ten TATC members volunteered their time to work on the Live Oak and Cypress Swamp Trails in First Landing State Park. We had John Oakes, Jane Oakes, Steve Clayton, Dave Plum, Rosemary Plum, Zack Isenhour, Kaci Midgette, Bill Bunch, Marti Malabad and myself. I am very proud of the work we accomplished. We cut back the encroaching vegetation. Thanks to John's pulaski work, we removed several stumps people had been tripping on for quite some time. Generally, we spruced up our adopted trails to the point that when we were winding up our work Tanya Wisoker, the Volunteer Coordinator, commented on how good the trails look. When you come to the Day in the Park in December, be sure to hike our near-by adopted trails.



## The Great Eastern Trail (GET)



The Great Eastern Trail Association, working with the American Hiking Society and local trail partners are creating America's newest long distance hiking trail. This path is 1800 miles long and crosses nine states. The Great Eastern Trail (GET) provides a premier hiking experience on a series of existing trails that are being linked to each other into a long-distance footpath in the Appalachian Mountains stretching from Alabama to the Finger Lakes Trail in New York.

<https://www.greateasterntail.net/>

Benton MacKaye's original vision for an Appalachian Trail in the 1920's showed a network of "braided" trails running the length of the Appalachian Mountains. In 2000 Lloyd MacAskill of PATC published an article in the Appalachian Trailway News calling attention to the existing trails to the west of the AT and saying "Don't look now, but parts are already in place."

The work on this trail is being performed by volunteer effort. The organizational scheme involves existing volunteer trail clubs, augmented where necessary by new volunteer groups.

Volunteers work closely with governmental entities, but the emphasis is on volunteerism. The model for this trail is based on the original Appalachian Trail, which was initially constructed almost entirely by volunteer effort

GET is primarily a hiking trail and its support comes from hiking trail clubs. There are parts of existing trails where local public land managers welcome non-motorized riding activities. There will be no attempt to change the nature of those trails or the user groups. Thus, parts of the trail will also be open to equestrians and mountain bikes. The Trail will be non-motorized throughout. No motorized segments will be incorporated, but road shoulders or dirt jeep/ATV trails are used as a temporary expedient in places where no hiking trails exist. The objective is to avoid roads entirely.

The initial mission of the project was to establish an organizational structure that encompasses the entire length of the trail, including all organizations involved, and begin building capacity for new trails in those areas where there are gaps. In August of 2007 the trail groups involved in the effort incorporated as the Great Eastern Trail Association.



## TATC in Nelson County

The TATC display table was set up in the foyer of the Nelson County Library in Lovingson Virginia on Thursday, October 14, 2021. Nelson County is an A.T. Community and TATC was showing our presence in the area in which our section of the A.T. is located to see if we could recruit some new volunteers.



Wherever you are in the world, we are grateful for all you do to make the Appalachian Trail a continued source of inspiration to all.



**APPALACHIAN TRAIL**  
CONSERVANCY®



## Blue Ridge Tunnel Trail

*By Bob Adkisson*

Over the last year or two there have been a couple of TATC newsletter articles about the new Blue Ridge Tunnel Trail that runs underneath Rockfish Gap, there where Albemarle, Nelson, and Augusta Counties come together, and where Interstate 64 crosses the gap and intersects with both the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Skyline Drive. Somehow state routes 250 and 6 squeeze in there too, plus of course the Appalachian Trail. There is even county road 610, climbing south out of Rockfish Gap-- it is the original route of the A.T., from the 1930's.

It is kind of a crowded spot, one full of history!

I just received an update about the trail from the Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation, which helped to fund, promote, and drive this project forward to completion. I thought I'd share the news that was in this update.

The three mile long trail officially opened to the public on Nov. 21st, 2020, and yet, in Sept., 2021, the trail had its 100,000th visitor! They were surprised to be greeted by Nelson County officials who rewarded them with an overnight stay in the tiny but historic town of Afton (it must have been in a B&B, as there are no motels there; the only public building I know of is the Post Office, right on route 6 and a stone's throw from the active rail line).

The newsletter I received also mentioned how, in Sept., Nelson County Parks and Recreation was the recipient of 2 awards honoring the Blue Ridge Tunnel Rehabilitation and Trail Project-- it won the Best Small County Achievement (population 50,000 or less), presented by the Virginia Association of Counties; In Oct. the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society awarded Nelson County with the Best New Renovation / Addition For Parks, Playgrounds, Blueways, Greenways, Trails (population under 25,000).

If you've taken the time to visit the tunnel, and perhaps (how could you resist?) even walked thru it, you will agree the county, and all responsible, have done a great job bringing this tunnel out into the light and giving it to the people to enjoy. It is an amazing place, with an interesting back-story (the story is told in several signs and displays along the route).

Plus: it is easy to access!

The tunnel and the approach trail are so historic and scenic, so unique, every club member who ventures thru Rockfish Gap should stop and visit it at least once. I'd recommend starting at the east end of the trail, in the town of Afton-- from there it is about a mile of nearly flat walking to reach the tunnel entrance. The trail thru the tunnel is itself nearly flat, and just under a mile in length. The tunnel is straight as an arrow, so you can see the light at each end as you make your way thru it. Exiting the west end of the tunnel, now in Augusta County, the trail remains flat for another 100 yards or so, then it leaves the route of the original 1858 rail line and, disagreeably, climbs rather steeply up to the trailhead just off of route 250. It is a nice walk thru the woods (and private property) for about half a mile, but it is sure to make your heart pound and is out of character with the rest of the trail.

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Perhaps one day the powers that be will find the funds to extend the trail directly to the edge of Waynesboro, with a nice easy railroad-like gradient. Maybe there could be an ice cream shop at the trailhead there, one that also sells flashlights and batteries!

The private land the trail passes thru on the Augusta County side of the tunnel belongs, I believe, to the landowners of the Royal Orchard property; they own the bulk of Scott Mountain (over 10,000 acres?), which is immediately to the north of Rockfish Gap. The Appalachian Trail used to pass along the spine of this 3 mile long ridge and it was the first section of the trail I ever hiked. I instantly fell in love with it, and was very upset and disappointed when, sometime in the 1980's, the A.T. route had to be shifted off of the crest and closer to the Skyline Drive-- the landowner complained of hikers abusing his land and some of the domestic animals (horses, cows, and goats) that roamed the open pastures.

I once spent an hour or two happily lost on the computer, reading about Royal Orchards-- fascinating if slightly discombobulated stories of the history of the place, how the stone castle came to be built, the battles with the Federal Government involving the path of the Skyline Drive back in the 1930's, etc. I just typed in ROYAL ORCHARD and dived right in]

The update or article I just received mentioned a website for the Blue Ridge Tunnel: [TheCoollestHikeInVirginia.com](http://TheCoollestHikeInVirginia.com). Check it out. There are also history books about the original tunnel, if you really want to learn more.

And too, if you've never noticed it: there atop Rockfish Gap, at milepost zero for the Blue Ridge Parkway, there is a large wooden sign that reads:

"Rockfish Gap-- low passageway across Blue Ridge, elevation 1,909, served buffalo, Indian, and covered wagon. Thomas Jefferson came via stagecoach in 1818 to Rockfish Tavern. He presided over a prominent group, resolved to locate the University of Virginia 'in the salubrious climate of Charlottesville'. In 1858, after 8 years of ordeal, Claudius Crozet completed a railway tunnel beneath the gap, in use for 84 years."

Supposedly, when built, the original train tunnel was the longest such tunnel in the world. It was replaced in 1942 by a parallel tunnel, which is still in active use, with both freight and passenger trains passing thru daily (Amtrak has 3 trains per week using the tunnel: running from Washington, D.C. to Charlottesville, the train ducks into the tunnel a mile west of tiny Af-ton, passes thru Waynesboro, stops in Staunton, Charleston, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and ends up in Chicago-- this train is called The Cardinal).

# 2,194.3

There is officially more of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) to love in 2022, with its official length becoming 2,194.3 miles!



The total length of the A.T. changes slightly each year due to footpath relocations and more precise measurement techniques. The 1.2-mile increase for 2022 was due to three significant relocations in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and on the Connecticut/New York border.

## **Build Back Better Act Passes in the House of Representatives**

The House of Representatives passed the largest climate investment in U.S. history, the Build Back Better Act on November 19, 2021. The Act supports crucial funding for conservation programs across public lands, including the A.T., and addresses growing climate change impacts. The ATC's Federal Policy staff continues to be your voice in Washington, D.C., making clear the role of the Trail in fighting climate change and advocating for improved land conservation.

[LEARN MORE](#)





We hope you'll join us next year for the A.T. Vista event in New Paltz, N.Y., where you can see the passion and dedication of the Trail Conference community on display. You'll find their stories throughout our [website](#) and on our social media pages: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). You'll also find them on the trail, day in and day out, caring for our lands, our trails, and each other.

Stay up-to-date with the Trail Conference by [signing up for our newsletter](#).

We are still seeking: Volunteers to assist in 2022 planning and implementation activities. View the various A.T. Vista 2022 volunteer position needs and sign up today. Program registration discounts are provided to all volunteers!

Hike Leaders, Workshop Assistants, Excursion Chaperones! We need volunteers to lead or co-lead hikes in New York or New Jersey, chaperone one of the many fun excursions, or provide assistance during a workshop session. (You don't need to be from the area to volunteer in any of these roles!)

Email us at [atvistainfo@gmail.com](mailto:atvistainfo@gmail.com) or sign-up on the Volunteer Link

Donations - \$10 or more to support the A.T. Vista program.

[Donate](#)

### **Mission of the A.T. Vista**

Provide a forum for the engagement of activities on and near the Appalachian Trail, offering hiking, educational, cultural, and historical learning programs, working with trail clubs, local communities and nearby partner organizations

Stay in Touch as we prepare for A.T. Vista 2022

[atvistainfo@gmail.com](mailto:atvistainfo@gmail.com)

[www.atvista.org](http://www.atvista.org)

[www.atvista2021.org](http://www.atvista2021.org)

[www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org)



Within a few miles of one of Virginia's busiest and most populated regions is the Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area, a largely unspoiled area of marshland and scattered woody hummocks. Here, taking the opportunity to hunt, fish or view wildlife and wetland habitats makes the noisy activity of the Hampton Roads region seem distant.

The Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area consists of 1,537 acres of brackish marsh and small pine islands along the south side of the lower James River. The major marsh vegetation on the area is marsh mallow, smartweed, saltmarsh cordgrass and black needlerush. The primary tree species is loblolly pine. Wax myrtle, often entangled with greenbrier, make parts of the area impenetrable. There are three major creeks on or bordering the area, and a number of small waterways and several ponds, both brackish and freshwater. Much of the area is subject to tidal flooding.

Amenities: The area has interpretive signs and trails, and has been designated a Watchable Wildlife Area. The boardwalk gives birdwatchers, hikers and photographers some unique opportunities. A public fishing pier is located at the north end of the James River Bridge. There are two parking lots, both entered from U.S. highway 17. A boardwalk, viewing platform and trail, financed through the Non-game Wildlife and Endangered Species Program, allows easy walking access for viewing the marsh.

Website: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wma/ragged-island/>

Map: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Ragged-Island-WMA-Map.pdf>

Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

Directions: From I-64 in Newport News, take Exit #263 for US 258/Mercury Boulevard South. Follow this road to its intersection with US 17 South, then follow US 17/US 258 across the James River Bridge. After crossing the bridge, take the first exit to the left and enter the parking lot of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources' Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area.

Site Contact: Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Region 1 Office: 804-829-6580  
[BirdingTrail@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:BirdingTrail@dwr.virginia.gov)

# One Bear, Once – One Bear, Twice – One Alligator, Twice

By Bob Adkisson

## One Bear, Once (Part 1)

In late April of 2019 I made the hour-long drive down to North Carolina's Merchant Mill Pond State Park-- for a solo, 2 day, 1 night canoe trip. I arrived late in the afternoon because .... life: getting a late start, packing, shopping, last minute things, stoplights, whatever.

I tossed all my gear into the canoe and paddled off, onto the dark waters of the always mysterious and fascinating lake, chock-full of stately cypress trees and twisted, tortured tupelo (both heavily festooned with swaying beards of Spanish moss). I wanted to paddle to the upper end of the lake (if I could find it) and go a couple of miles up the swampy channel to the far east end of the park. This I did, only getting half lost, in shallow water, once or twice. On river-left is an open field near the edge of state land, and I stepped out of the boat there to stretch my legs and answer a call of nature.

I could see both by my watch and the position of the sun that it was getting late-- time to paddle back and find my campsite, set up my tent and eat *before* it got dark.

I got to the camping area at dusk and picked a site, erected my tent, sat at the table and had a quick, simple meal. There was a family at another campsite, about 60 yards away, with some noisy children, but as soon as it got dark they went silent.

The next day I got what for me was an early start-- about 9 a.m. I eased along the wooded shoreline about 300 yards and came to another camping area and suddenly realized-- by mistake, I'd spent the night in the group camping area, not the separate campground I'd signed up for at the visitor's center. Oh well, no harm, no foul.

As I passed by an occupied, lakeside campsite, I did spy a big water moccasin at the base of a cypress tree-- it was enjoying the early spring sun.

Another thing I wanted to do on this trip was to paddle down Lassiter Creek to the town of Gatesville, about 6 miles below the small dam that creates the mill pond. This involved finding a short steep path up onto the road shoulder, near the south end of the dam, carrying my gear and then boat across the county road and then down the other side, via some old wooden steps, to a dock; I put my boat back in the water there. It was a 5 minute operation, a bit of a work out, then I set off down the swampy creek on the back of a nice current, threading my way thru a large, ancient forest of cypress.

There were mileage markers, and for about the first mile all of the shoreline (when I could see it) was state land, part of the park. There was one tough bit-- a fallen tree blocked about half of the channel, and a thick mixture of leaves and debris had formed, making a 40 yard section of the river like trying to paddle thru gumbo.

Otherwise it was pretty clear sailing, with deep water and a definite channel, a slight current, and ever changing scenery on both shores. Some of the land now was privately owned, a bit of it had been clear-cut; there were wetlands and some small hills, bird life and turtles and jumping fish, a deer, a sleepy beaver and a beautiful day to enjoy. There was one piece of land, privately owned, but with a couple of signs welcoming people to stop and rest a spell at a picnic table; a sandy road led off into the woods, probably towards the owner's house.

Then I passed a young couple in a canoe paddling upstream--the night before they'd stayed at one of the camping sites on two parcels of land owned by the state park, another mile down the creek. I wanted to check out these sites, which I half felt I'd known about, but at the same time maybe I'd just noticed them on the latest edition of the park map-- maybe they'd been added since the last time I'd paddled this section (5 or more years earlier).

I first came to 3 closely spaced campsites and a small dock on the river right on dry land about 3 feet above the level of the creek. There were a couple of picnic tables too, but I didn't see anything in the way of a toilet.

Next, about half a mile downstream, came two private homes on river-left, sitting atop a hill about 30 feet above the creek. About a quarter of a mile farther, at a fork in the channel, I followed a sign to the right, directing me to another dock, and 3 interconnected wooden platforms, campsites built over a wetland area. This was at about mile marker 4.

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The river now was wider, but soon there was a slightly confusing choice of channels-- as it turned out they went around the left or right side of a couple of wooded islands. The park map wasn't very helpful and I just guessed which was the shorter route and hoped that they all wound up in the same place.

Soon I reached the town of Gatesville with a small town park just beyond the highway bridge. It was about 1 p.m. and I stopped here, had lunch at the picnic pavilion. There was a short boardwalk nature trail, not in the best of repairs, and about 100 yards away was a gas station / convenience store. As I sat, ate, and relaxed, the park was visited by a couple of semi-shady locals. They stayed in their cars nearby, doing various, perhaps nefarious things on their lunch break.

Time to head back the 6 miles to the mill pond and my car--neither the slight current or the light, disinterested wind slowed me down much. After about 4 miles I got to the spot with a clear cut area on the right bank, with some sunny, weedy uneven terrain. I heard something, or caught a glimpse of movement, and there it was, angling away from me and up a slight hill-- a small black bear.

I couldn't tell from its unhurried, unworried pace, if it was even aware of my presence, about 50 feet from it.

It was only in my sight about 5 seconds before it disappeared into the brush and over the rise. But then I noticed that about 30 yards up ahead the clear-cut ended and the shady, sheltering woods again lined the creek bank. I thought-- just maybe the bear would angle back down to the water's edge, and so I quickly paddled up and quietly stopped in mid-stream. I got my camera out, hoping to see it again.

Several seconds ticked by, then suddenly I saw something coming right at me. I almost, instinctively, ducked down to get out of its way. But it wasn't the bear-- it was a full grown turkey, wings outstretched, gliding about 8 feet over my head! What the heck I thought-- no one expects to have a huge turkey come at them like that....

Then I thought-- maybe the bear had surprised the turkey, maybe tried to catch it, and the turkey lit out over the creek and into the swamp to get away from it. Something sure put it to flight, and sent it in my direction.

It landed in a tree in the swamp, about 30 yards behind me.

The whole encounter put a smile on my face-- instantly the trip was made special, memorable. Encounters like this, no matter how brief, are one of the main reasons I like to get out into nature (seeing a bear, almost getting knocked out of my canoe by a turkey-- it is hard to top stuff like that).

About half an hour later I reached the dock and the road, carried my boat and gear over to the mill pond and paddled the last 100 yards--to the boat ramp and my car. Soon I was all loaded up and on my way home.

## **One Bear, Twice Part 2**

Two years later, in early April (of 2021), I went back to canoe Merchant Mill Pond-- to camp one night on the lake, and then to spend a second night along the creek, about 4 miles below the pond.

The night spent on the lake was uneventful, and this time I found the campground I was supposed to be at. Geese honked, owls called, I could at times hear some distant, annoying machinery.

On day two, I again I portaged my boat and gear over the county road and into Lassister Creek, just below the spillway dam. The difficult spot, with a tree half blocking the creek and a thick, gummy buildup of leaves and debris, was gone, the way clear and easy. That first mile below the dam is especially pretty and I was enjoying steering the canoe around the trees when, at about the same time, I both heard and saw something just off to my right-- a large bear was at the base of a huge cypress tree, 40 feet away. It's back was to me, but it was obviously aware of my presence. It paused, considering what to do, and then, with tremendous strength, it flattened its body against the tree, dug in its claws, and started hauling itself up the limbless trunk. Reaching for my camera, I had to stop and hold my breath-- cypress knees rose all around the watery base of the tree, and I was afraid that if the bear slipped and fell it would impale itself horribly.

It continued up, maybe 50 or 60 feet, and then it slipped inside a vertical opening in the trunk-- an 18 inch wide, 10 foot high slit in the tree, with a large cavity just within. I finally got my camera in hand and tried to get a photo, but I was pretty much restricted to a view that was looking right up into the sun-- the bear was all but invisible in the glare. I hung out for maybe 5 minutes, but the bear was tucked away in a safe and secure spot and not about to show itself again.

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Reluctantly, I went on.

Within about half a mile I passed, on my left, the open area where I'd seen a bear 2 years earlier, where the turkey passed just a few feet above my head, apparently trying to get away from it.

Later I stopped at the private 'park' and took a 20 minute break there. It was dedicated to a family member who'd passed away a few years earlier. Then I went on another mile or so to the campsite I'd reserved (there is a \$15 per night camping fee). I had the pick of the 3 actual sites, had the place all to myself. It was nice, secluded, quiet-- no children running around, yelling and squealing and chasing each other for nearly an hour.

That night I did hear something walking around in the woods nearby-- no idea what. I also heard dogs barking (I'd forgotten that the two houses mentioned earlier were only a quarter of a mile away).

The next morning, I broke camp at a leisurely pace, paddled the last 2 miles down to the small, riverside park in Gatesville, and once again had lunch in the picnic pavilion. As I was about to head back to the pond and my car, an older couple from Raleigh pulled up. There was a canoe atop their car and it turns out they too were swamp rats, familiar and experienced with the waters of eastern North Carolina. We talked for over half an hour and of course it turned out they knew people I knew-- like the couple who owned and operated a canoe rental and livery service just outside the east entrance to the Okefenokee Swamp Wildlife Refuge in south Georgia; they were close friends with this couple, who'd I'd hired 3 or 4 times to shuttle me to various put-in or take-out spots around the perimeter of this vast and beautiful swamp.

I then paddled back up towards Merchant Mill Pond, thinking all the way about the bear in the tree-- would I see it again, could I remember and find the exact tree where I'd seen it last?

No worries-- though I really hadn't been paying close attention at the time, on the way back upstream I spotted the tree, and when I paused and looked around, I noticed the same bear (I'm sure it was the same bear) on a large horizontal limb near the very top. I got my camera out (the sun wasn't a problem this time) and I took several good telephoto shots of the bear standing there, looking down at me. It was incredible-- I couldn't believe my good luck! I felt so privileged to see the bear again.

Only, after about 5 minutes, I could tell the bear seemed worried, afraid even that I was still hanging around. He probably associated people with hunters, gunshots, baying dogs and being pursued. Sure enough, it soon climbed down about 15 feet and inserted itself back into the cavity in the tree trunk, where it felt safe.

I only stayed another minute or two, just time enough to get a photo of the bear inside the tree. It put its right arm out of the hole once, with the elbow bent, and it reminded me of a train engineer sitting at the window of a locomotive, dutifully keeping his eye on the gauges and at the same time watching the scenery roll by.

I had no right to such rewards, but I gladly accepted them nevertheless. Back at my car, I drove home a happy man.

### **One Alligator, Twice Part 3**

On the recent weekend of Nov. 19--21 I again returned to Merchant Mill Pond-- just me and my canoe. I camped the first night on the lake, with all 10 campsites except my own deserted. On Saturday I paddled over to the spillway and the creek leading down to Gatesville, with plans to return to the same campsite 4 miles below, with far fetched hopes of seeing the bear again-- for the 3rd time.

But first, only 150 yards from my lake-side campsite, I spotted an alligator, about 8 feet long and sprawled across the base of a cypress tree. It was my first sighting of an alligator in the mill pond in about 8 years. I got a photo just as it slid from its perch and sank out of sight into the black water.

About 20 minutes later I reached the portage trail that crossed the county road. I walked over and looked at the creek and immediately knew it wasn't to be-- there wasn't enough water to float my canoe, there was no way to paddle down the creek to the campsite I hoped to stay at. Instead I paddled over to the visitor's center and made arrangements to stay on the lake a 2nd night.

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I paddled past the 2 camping areas (regular campsites-- 10 of them-- and the separate group campsite-- with spots for 3 groups), then around a major bend in the lake. There was at least one group of paddlers staying at a group site, and several of them were out on the lake in the late afternoon. I shadowed them at a distance, got a few photos of them on the spooky, beautiful, tree-filled lake. Here and there were some maple trees, and some small bushes growing out of cypress stumps-- all very colorful and at their peak. I met up with several groups of Canada Geese and wood ducks, there were many turtles out, and prehistoric blue herons seemed to be everywhere too.

I eventually found my way back to my site and set up the tent again. I enjoyed a 2nd night alongside the lake; a nearly full moon quietly passed among the stars that night.

The next morning, on my way back to the car, I passed by that same certain cypress tree, and sure enough, though it was pretty chilly out, there was the same alligator lying in the sun, catching some rays, a turtle doing the same on the gators back.

This time the alligator never opened its eyes or moved a muscle—I slid silently by, about 10 feet away, and got a couple more good photos.





# The Mountain and the “Monties”

FROM THE ATC BLOG SITE:

KACIE L. SIMMONS, AMERICORPS NCCC-NORTH CENTRAL REGION

NOVEMBER 24, 2021

Before this year, I had never driven a 15-passenger van, steered a tractor, installed drywall, repackaged nearly 39,000 pounds of macaroni, crawled through a cave, traveled extensively throughout the United States, climbed a mountain or set foot on the Appalachian Trail (A.T.).

Since becoming part of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a national service program where young adults (ages 18-26) spend 10 months traveling around the country in teams of 8-12 members, I have had all of these experiences and more.

Our eight-person team, “Maple 3,” hails from different states across the country and has been working on a variety of service projects: taking care of the Olentangy Watershed in Ohio, preparing Camp Esquagama for campers in Minnesota, repacking and rescuing food in Iowa and working on and along the A.T. in Carrabassett Valley in Maine. When we were told that our next project was going to be maintaining the boundary of the A.T., climbing mountains was not what I had in mind. Yet here I was, faced with a geographical culture shock: a mountain.

The half-mile hike up the service road to our housing at Maine Huts & Trails Stratton Brook Hut quickly put me in place. Gone was the belief that hiking multiple miles per day was going to be easy. As a veteran walker from the flat prairies of suburbanized Texas, the steepness of the Trail was a whole new adversary. Thankfully, I wasn’t alone in my newfound challenge. Only a few members of the Maple 3 had any experience hiking in rugged, mountainous terrain. While everyone is incredibly skilled and disciplined in some form or another, all of us were challenged daily, pushing ourselves to new physical, mental, emotional and spiritual limits.

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Our first few days on site were a nice introduction to the work of maintaining the boundary of the A.T. We learned about the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), which manages, maintains, and advocates for the A.T. and its surrounding landscapes, and met the ATC Land Stewardship Technicians, our sponsors who help maintain, monitor and mitigate threats to the A.T. corridor. By maintaining the boundary, the A.T. corridor is visible to those that use the land, helping protect the Trail corridor from encroachment, timber theft, illegal dumping, hunting and more.

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***An NCCC member measures the distance and sightlines between A.T. boundary blazes, ensuring that they can be easily seen.***

Our days were filled with hiking incredibly steep, rugged areas both on and off the Trail, which had us drenched in sweat and/or rain, exhausted and starving for dinner. You could find us shoving food in our faces at the trucks as we regrouped and cleaned up for the day, and then again in the kitchen for a hefty pre-dinner.

Despite the hard work, none of it negatively impacted our moods — if anything, it made us all feel better and more accomplished. There is something great about seeing your teammates grinning about how they've now hiked a mountain. We got to spend all day “playing” in the forest, surrounded by natural beauty, searching for “Monties” (short for monuments – metal survey markers) and yellow blazes on the A.T. boundary line.

For me, the best day was also my hardest when we hiked to the summit of North Crocker Mountain. As the fourth highest mountain in Maine, Crocker Mountain's peak is at 4,228 feet. Our mission was simple: hike to the summit via the A.T., bushwhack to the corridor boundary and complete the boundary recovery on the hike down.

While we started at a good pace, I quickly found myself falling to the back of the line on the hike up. I was getting tired and anxious, feeling like we'd never make it to the top. Still, we kept climbing. The ATC crew and our team kept motivating each other, taking breaks when we needed them and playing word games and riddles to distract ourselves from the exhaustion we felt creeping in. After what seemed like hours, we finally made it to the top and, with an incredible view, we sat down for the most delicious lunch that I've ever had.

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***An A.T. boundary monument (also affectionately known as a “Monty” by the NCCC crew).***

With full bellies, we bushwhacked our way to the boundary line, which is painted with yellow blazes. We repainted these blazes so that they could be seen on both sides of the boundary and cut any brush that prevented a clear line of sight between blazes. We followed this boundary line down the mountain, clearing and repainting blazes until we came across a survey monument. Once found, we would clean it, flag it with a pink piece of nylon fabric and log any information that could be useful to future surveyors. Once the day ended, we were tired yet joyous — we had all officially climbed a mountain.

Before I began this role, I had heard that AmeriCorps was going to be the toughest job I'd ever love. That description describes my time with AmeriCorps and the ATC very well. Many of the days were tough and long, forcing us to climb both literal and proverbial mountains. But these rugged paths would lead to new amazing experiences every day. We got the chance to learn so many new things: why our tasks were important, about the communities we were serving and — maybe most importantly — learning new things about ourselves and what we are capable of accomplishing.



## The Weak Link

By Tom Miano

Mountain biking in the Maze in Canyonlands National Park in Moab, Utah is like skiing The Highlands in Aspen, or surfing The Pipeline in Oahu, or snowshoeing The High Peaks in the Adirondacks, it's simply the best. So when my son called in January, 2020 and asked, "Hey Dad, want to go mountain biking, hiking, and camping for a week in Moab next September?" I was all-in. (These days whenever my grown kids—all in their 30s and 40s and none living in Hampton Roads—call, asking to spend time with me, it needs little prompting. Think of the last verse of Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Hat"… woe is me!)

Of course, little did we know Covid would be as damaging physically, mentally, and socially as it has been. Needless to say, last September's trip to Moab was cancelled. As the virus waned in October, he called again and asked, "Want to try again next September?" Obviously, I answered, "Yes." With the addendum, "If we are still incarcerated from Covid next September, please take me deep into the woods and leave me."

Fast forward to September this year, and the day before we are to leave, I decided I needed to procure a gift for my first wife of 40-plus years (she refers to me as her last husband) for allowing me to play with the kids for a week. Knowing what pleases your wife is a gift I have, so I knew exactly what she desired the most: Wendy's Junior Chocolate Frosties. We've worked out the logistics of this marriage gifting stuff: She gets Wendy's Junior Chocolate Frosties and I get a Dura-ace equipped titanium Lemond road bike and a Z-pack Duo-plex tent, a fair exchange. You see I am such a considerate husband that I purchase the Wendy's key tags for 2-bucks every December. The key tags give you free Wendy's Frosties for a full year. Shhh, don't tell her.

Off I go to Moab for a full week of mountain biking, hiking, and camping.

Full disclosure and some background is needed: I owned a local bike shop for over 21 years, so biking is in my blood. Back in the early 70s in my first semester of college I bought a used 26" wheel, road bike Montgomery Ward Special from a college friend for \$19—a full six inches too small. I still have this bike to this day, as it is used as a Christmas decoration with flashing lights surrounding the wheels. I rode the bike everywhere while at ODU, as I did not get a car until the second semester of my senior year, and then the used Toyota was a gift from another friend. On my current Lemond road bike, I have over 100,000 miles, so as I mentioned, biking is thick in my blood. Years ago I am proud to say, I could hang with the best on Peter Teeuwen's Rides (the father of cycling in Hampton Roads). Of course Father Time has caught-up, and now my goal is not to get dropped by the 80 and 90-year-olds with whom I often ride.

Mountain biking is a different sport than road riding. In many ways, mountain biking to road biking is like cross country skiing to downhill skiing. I do have a pro, high-end mountain bike, but it has about 30 miles on it over the last 20 years. The bikes we rented in Moab were current high-end Santa Cruz or Specialized bikes, so no excuses for the bikes. Of course one day of rental was over six times the cost of the bike I rode for four years in college.

Bottom line: I was the weak link in our seven-person group. I finished last every day. Rather than providing a day-by-day account, let me give you my impressions.

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We started riding each day at 9:30 am and rode until 6:30 in the evening. It seemed to me about every eight to ten minutes we were anaerobic—gasping for air. We stopped about 1 pm for a pre-packaged lunch, though several times lunch was quickly, and always deliciously, whipped-up by our two guides. Lunch lasted about 30 minutes, then back on the trails, and sucking for air in just a few minutes. This was the fourth mountain bike trip to Moab for Rachel, my daughter-in-law and a hard-core year-round bike commuter in Boston. She commented that this was the most difficult. For Tony, another participant and the best mountain biker in our group, it was his fifth time. He too mentioned these trails were the most difficult. Both of our guides stated that in their 12 and 13 years respectively, two days of this year's ride were the most grueling that they had guided.

I was out of my league. Mountain biking these trails in the Maze District in Canyonlands National Park this year was like trying to keep up with Lance Armstrong on Alpe D'Huez when he was pumped full of EPO.

When we arrived at camp at 6:30 pm, the sun was starting to drop, so you almost immediately needed to set up your campsite. We changed locations everyday but one, but each location was breathtakingly beautiful. All of our campsites were perched on a peak overlooking spectacular rock formations, and often with some view of the Colorado River.

After setting-up your campsite, a quick toilette wipe was necessary to pull all of the sand out of your nose, eyes, ears, and hidden body-parts from when you fell off your bike in the deep sand that you could not pedal through. No showers in the desert. I must confess that although you could not shower after exercising all day, after a few days, one got accustomed to it. Simply removing the sand from your body was very pleasurable and cleansing.

By 7:30, our guides had cooked a delicious, healthy dinner every evening, with no shortage of portions. Dinner included salmon appetizers, and fresh fruit desserts with whip cream toppings or home-made brownies (note: Utah style not Colorado!). The food was simply outstanding.

We had all of the beer you could drink, but frankly you only wanted one or maybe two. During dinner, and for an hour or so afterwards, you poured as much fluid as possible into your body, usually something easily palatable like Ginger-ale, because during the day it was impossible to keep up with fluid loss. Of course we all carried a Camelback, but the daytime temperature was 95F, and the ambient temperature of the water quickly rose by 11 am. By early afternoon, it was very difficult to drink, and nauseating by 4 pm, still with 2 ½ hours of intense riding left.

By 9:30 pm, everybody was talking about sleep, so off to bed we went, because the next day, you had to rise by 7:30 am, break camp, eat breakfast, and head-out at 9:30 for another full day of mountain biking. There were no night time shenanigans.

Several days included a two to three hour hike in the middle of the day. All of these hikes were much more difficult than hiking The Priests and Old Rag on the same day. One day we did an all day hike. First we descended 800 vertical feet, on a very narrow trail, crossed the bottom of the desert for eight miles, then ascended 700 steep vertical feet to our next campsite. On the way down, we scrambled a 25-foot rock that had natural rock climbing pockets (our guide used the term "moles" but pronounced them as "molies") from which you placed your fingers and toes. Please note, you did not place your foot or hand, only toes and fingers. She offered to tether anybody who felt uncomfortable, but no one did. She went first, then verbally guided where you should place your toes as you descended, because you could not see the moles from the top.

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I chuckled later in the evening because when it was my turn, this is how it occurred:

Rachel, the Guide (about 4'11" tall): "Ok, face the mountain and come down backwards. The first step is a little longer, about two feet."

Me: Thinking, "Ok, no problem, you can do this. I'm 6'2" and she's only 4'11". I can find the pockets much more easily."

Rachel: "Just a little more for the first mole. Ok, a little more. Just a little more. There you almost have it."

Me: Thinking, "Whew! Glad I got that first step completed."

Rachel: About half-way down, she says, "Now the next step is a little longer, about two-and-a-half-feet."

Me: Stretching about as far as I think I can, but don't feel any pocket. She senses I'm getting a little uncomfortable.

Rachel: "Ok, it's only 10-12 more inches."

Me: Thinking, "10-12 inches, man, I'm stretched about as far as I can."

Rachel: "Only 8 more inches. Almost there."

Me: "Where is that pocket?" But finally, after stretching as far as possible, I found it.

Me: Upon arriving on the less than three feet ledge on which she was standing, she asked my youngest son, a strong climber, to stand behind her, just in case somebody fell and knocked both her and the descending climber another 200 feet off the face of the mountain. I thought, "That's reassuring."

Honestly, the climb was very exciting. All-in-all the hike that day was both invigorating and beautiful. I believe all of you TATC folks could easily accomplish the hike. In addition, we viewed and studied many petroglyphs. Petroglyphs are ancient rock carvings of pictures of the mountains, Native American deities, and (perhaps) very pregnant chiefs etched on the rocks. Ancient rock paintings are called pictographs. We were told that many scholars believe ancient leaders were more matriarchal than patriarchal. All along the journey we saw many petroglyphs, some 8-10,000 years old. Amazing stone etchings!

On another full day of mountain biking, we snuck in a three hour hike to swim in the Colorado River. This was an out-and-back hike of 4-5 miles, with steep descents, and obviously equally steep ascents. Jumping in the Colorado River was a nice relief from the heat, but since I knew we had another six-plus hours of difficult mountain bike riding, I didn't want to get my mountain bike shorts soaking wet and ride in them all afternoon, although I am certain they would have dried. I opted to only wade up to my knees. I also started the return ascent to the bike drop-off solo since I was the weak link.

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I was reasonably confident I could find the trail. There were many cairns along the descent, although there was a stretch where there were none. Since much of the hiking was on rocks, you had to be alert as to where you had been, and only once did I get off trail, but quickly found our scent.

Google the Maze or Canyonlands National Park for many beautiful pictures and descriptions of what the park offers. The National Park Service describes the Maze District in Canyonlands as, "Due to the district's remoteness and the difficulty of roads and trails, travel to the Maze requires more time. Visitors must be prepared for self-sufficiency and the proper equipment or gear for self-rescue. Rarely do visitors spend less than three days in the Maze, and the area can easily absorb a week-long trip."

I cannot remember the names of each peak on which we camped, but these are some of the highlights: The Doll House, Maze Overlook, Land of Standing Rocks, the Golden Stairs, and the Orange Cliffs — each as beautiful as the next.

After the ride on the last day, we flew on a small, 8-seater plane, from the edge of the Maze for an hour flight back to Moab, while the sag-wagon transported our bikes and gear back for their six hour truck ride. Coincidentally this is the same flight route Bob took in the spring after his kayak adventure down the Colorado River. We were told the river was much more full in the spring. We were also told that because of the long term drought that the overall region has had for almost a decade, and the recent and noticeable effects of climate change, the desert and Colorado River has become even drier.

I believe we need to be better stewards of this old earth.

Already in the two weeks since returning from Moab, I've been to Pocahontas State Park outside of Richmond camping for a night and mountain bike riding for two days. Pocahontas is known for having lots of fun mountain bike trails. Pocahontas is a jewel for local riding.

Everybody asks if I will do it again. As the ancient saying goes, "Next year, in Jerusalem Sicily Moab!"



## USFS Saw Extension

Saw Extension: The US Forest Service issued an extension to sawyers that have expired or will expire so that their certifications remain in effect until December 31, 2022. ATC, with financial assistance from APPA, has been working to keep pace with saw safety training courses, and our USFS partners continue to assist with course delivery as possible given the continued constraints of COVID-19. Our aim is to reduce the backlog of recertification needs by continuing to coordinate workshops, provided we can do so safely.

### Volunteer Numbers and Hours are in for Federal Fiscal Year 2021

There are a total of 3,758 volunteers reported for the period October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. They collectively contributed 142,649 hours to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, with an estimated value of \$4,071,202, according to Independent Sector. What a tremendous impact! I've attached a summary of the submitted data that captures categories of work, age distribution (when reported), and notable accomplishments.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy		2021 Volunteers in Parks and Volunteers in Forests Report								10/13/2021			
Trail Clubs/Trail Crews/ATC Offices	Volunteers in Parks (VIP)				Volunteers in Forests (VIF)				Worked Unduplicated Combined		Travel	Advocacy	
	Volunteers	Field/work	Other	Total VIP	Volunteers	Field/work	Other	Total VIF	both	workers			VIP and VIF
Maine A.T. Club (includes Maine Trail Crew)	429	5993	4355	10,348					429		10,348		
Appalachian Mountain Club					120	1120	132	1,252	120		1,252		536
Randolph Mountain Club					4	20	64	84	4		84		8
Dartmouth Outing Club					88	900	50	950	88		950		150
Green Mountain Club					256	2879	100	2,979	256		2,979		1631
AMC-Berkshire Chapter	124	4936	467	5,403.0					124		5,403		1188
AMC-Connecticut Chapter	102	3527	588	4,115.0					102		4,115		1677
NY-NJ Trail Conference	220	4564	709	5,273.0					220		5,273		1755
Wilmington Trail Club	4	12	10	22.0					4		22		15
Batona Hiking Club	14	283	20	303					14		303		136
AMC-Delaware Valley	54	433	65	498					54		498		164
Keystone Trails Association	9	178	36	214					9		214		38
Blue Mtn. Eagle Climbing Club	92	2550	245	2,795					92		2,795		894
Allentown Hiking Club	58	857	134	991					58		991		282
Susquehanna A.T. Club	49	518	35	553					49		553		203
York Hiking Club	11	123	15	138					11		138		36
Cumberland Valley A.T. Club	58	1309	657	1,966					58		1,966		370
Mountain Club of Maryland	47	1128	215	1,343					47		1,343		261
Potomac A.T. Club	542	23777	8811	32,588					542		32,588		6835
Old Dominion A.T. Club	36	953	612	1,565	4	59	108	167	3	37	1,732		438
Tidewater A.T. Club	5	40	40	80	75	610	21	631	10	70	711		358
Natural Bridge A.T. Club	21	244	0	244	97	5420	2710	8,130	17	101	8,374		2555
Roanoke A.T. Club + McAfee Knob Task Force	87	4066	122	4,188	108	2340	83	2,423	23	172	6,611		
Outdoor Club at Virginia Tech					61	797	15	812		61	812		104
Piedmont A.T. Hikers					53	2947	1345	4,292		53	4,292		936
Mount Rogers A.T. Club	27	74	8	82	72	1660	433	2,093	27	72	2,175		615
Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club					201	5573	272	5,845		201	5,845		1882
Carolina Mountain Club					194	7207	502	7,709		194	7,709		2497
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club	138	3472	1159	4,631	25	716	173	889	14	149	5,520		1954
Nantahala Hiking Club					57	2543	2481	5,024		57	5,024		368
Georgia A.T. Club					217	12170	3299	15,469		217	15,469		5500
Appalachian Trail Conservancy: Crews, Councils, Bo.	64	1526	3853	5,379	30	1181	0	1,181	1	93	6,560		85
A.T. Communities				0				0		0	0		
A.T. Educators & Student Service Learning				0				0		0	0		
TOTALS	2,191	60,563	22,156	82,719	1,662	48,142	11,788	59,930	95	3,758	142,649	33,371	28
			VIP				VIF						
Total volunteers (minus duplicates)	3,758												
Total volunteer hours Trailwide	142,649												
Total hours, including Travel and Advocacy	176,048												
Value of A.T. Volunteerism (based on Independent Sector figure estimated April 2021)													
				\$4,071,202.46									



## Outdoor A.T. Hall of Fame Ceremony Honors Trail Legends

11/22/2021

A crowd of approximately 85 honored the 2020 and 2021 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame inductees at the A.T. Hall of Fame Outdoor Induction Ceremony, held on November 20, 2021. The venue for the event was the Furnace Stack Pavilion at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, near Gardners, PA. Emcee for the Banquet was Sandra "Sandi" Marra, President & CEO of the Board of Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The outdoor event was in place of the 2020 and 2021 Banquets, which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

The 2020 Hall of Fame class is Chris Brunton of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; Warren Doyle of Mountain City, Tennessee; the late Thurston Griggs of Baltimore, Maryland; and the late Jim Stoltz of Helena, Montana.

Brunton, known to most as "Trail Boss", has served for decades as district manager for an A.T. section in West Virginia and Virginia for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, including three miles that he personally maintains. Doyle ranks high on the list of those who have inspired others to attempt an A.T. hike, partially due to his amazing personal hiking exploits. In addition, he played a leading role in founding the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association, the leading organization devoted to encouraging long distance hiking and promoting the interests of hikers. Griggs worked relentlessly to preserve and protect the Appalachian Trail-- mostly in Pennsylvania and Maryland. One of his great achievements was working on a project to expedite the purchase of the Bagtown Road property in Maryland, which has since been named the Thurston Griggs Trail, a side trail to the A.T. Stoltz, universally known as Walkin' Jim, was a musician, author, photographer, artist, and environmental activist. Between hiking trips, he would produce and perform original shows of his travels with photography and music, always incorporating his keen sense of environmental awareness and justice for all things wild.



Chris Brunton



Warren Doyle



Thurston Griggs



Walkin' Jim Stoltz

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The 2021 Hall of Fame class is 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.

Broome's 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. Clark has been an integral part of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club for almost 60 years. To many, His 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. One of the Trail's premier historians, Johnson's definitive history of the A.T., "From Dream To Reality". has just been published by ATC. He was a longtime member, trail maintainer and leader of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, including service as President. Skeen is a role model for outdoor stewardship and education. As a member of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club for over several decades, she has been recognized for her commitment to youth outreach and trail maintenance. She's been described as the epitome of dedication and hard work.



**Harvey Broome**



**Steven Clark**



**Thomas Johnson**



**Marianne Skeen**

Additional information about each inductee can be found at the Museum's website, <https://www.atmuseum.org/hall-of-fame.html> Each Hall of Fame honoree or representative received a hiking stick custom carved by John "Bodacious" Beaudet. The Museum hopes to return to its traditional indoor Hall of Fame Banquet in 2022.

#### About the Appalachian Trail Museum Society

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society, a 501-C-3 not-for profit organization formed in 2002, organizes programs, exhibits, volunteers and fundraising nationwide for the Appalachian Trail Museum. The museum opened on June 5, 2010, as a tribute to the thousands of men, women and families who have hiked and maintained the approximately 2,190 mile long hiking trail that passes through 14 states from Maine to Georgia. Located in the Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Gardners, Pennsylvania, the museum is conveniently near Carlisle, Gettysburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Additional information is available at [www.atmuseum.org](http://www.atmuseum.org).



## Local Trails

There is a lot of activity ongoing with the local trails committee. They continue to support the GPS mapping project for FLSP. Approximately half of the trails have been surveyed to locate physical improvements along the trails. The remaining trails should be completed by Thanksgiving. In addition to obtaining the GPS location, the condition of each improvement is also noted and reported to FLSP maintenance rangers. This includes benches, trail ID posts, bridges, boardwalks and overlook structures. Thanks to Ellis Malabad for heading up this effort. Eventually the park will include this information on the FLSP Avenza Map App that you can download for free on your smart phone. Most state parks in Virginia are developing trail information to show on Avenza.

A small group of workers showed up at Hoffer Creek Wildlife Preserve in Portsmouth on Nov. 4 to help remove invasive species. Another work day is going to be held tentatively on December 11, which is a Saturday. Be on the lookout for an announcement, and sharpen up your gas-powered, hand-held trimmers and saws to help clear out the area that was initially cleared by goats eating the wisteria and other plants.

Work at Pleasure House Point on October 27th had to be cancelled due to staffing issues with the city of Virginia Beach. It looks like we will be back out there in January 2022.

The local trails committee also manned an information table at FLSP's Fall Fest on October 16th. There was a lot of interest in our club and much interest in membership. The Ferarra family signed up for a family membership at the festival. If you are around Virginia Beach next October, plan to attend this informative event. It is usually held on Saturday in the middle of the month.

Dave Plum, PE

[heydave9@verizon.net](mailto:heydave9@verizon.net)



# 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, December 1, 2021 7:00pm-9:00pm

**Where:** Venue TBA

**Contact:** Lee Lohman [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com)

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

## **TATC Day in the Park**

**When:** December 4, 2021

**Where:** First Landing State Park, 2500 Shore Dr, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Shelter # 1, Conservation Court

**Contact:** RSVP to Sharon Salyer at [happycampers33@hotmail.com](mailto:happycampers33@hotmail.com)

**Description:** We'll be celebrating the season with fun, friends, food and more!

Arrive anytime after 1 pm. Group hikes begin at 1:30 pm, meet at Shelter #1. Or join in a round of Horseshoes, Cornhole and more.

4 p.m.: Fried chicken and fix in's, followed by dessert and fellowship around the campfire into the evening.

Directions and parking: From Shore Drive, turn at the Park's Trails entrance sign. Parking is \$7 for those without a State Park Pass. Parking for Shelter #1 is located in the first lot past the Trails entry station, on the right. Go to the end of Conservation Court, Shelter #1 is on the right. Restrooms are adjacent to the shelter - bring your mask for building entry.

Misc.: Cost for TATC's Day in the Park is \$5 per person, children under 12 eat free. To lessen our footprint on the park, please bring your non-disposable plate and utensils for dinner. Water will be provided. Please note that Virginia State Parks do not allow alcohol at the shelters.

TATC merchandise will be available to club members for purchase, so remember your checkbook.

Camping: No need to hurry off, this is the last weekend of camping at the park! Site/Cabin availability and reservations are available at [www.ReserveAmerica.com](http://www.ReserveAmerica.com)

## **TATC Board Meeting**

**When:** Wednesday, January 5, 2022 7:00pm-9:00pm

**Where:** Online via Zoom App

**Contact:** Lee Lohman [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com)

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

*(Continued on next page ...)*

# 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 General Membership Meeting**

**When:** Wednesday, January 12, 2022 7:00pm – 9:00pm

**Where:** Location to be determined.

**Contact:** Lee Lohman [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com)

**Description:** TATC General Membership Meeting

**Program:** TATC Elections

## **Virginia Beach Winter Wildlife Festival**

**When:** January 29, 2022 - Saturday - 10 AM - 3 PM

**Where:** Princess Anne Recreation Center, Virginia Beach, VA

**Contact:** Lee Lohman, [president@tidewateratc.com](mailto:president@tidewateratc.com)

**Description:** TATC will have a table at this festival. It is a celebration of coastal wild-life and nature! See all the festival highlights at the link below:

<https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/special-events/Pages/winter-wildlife-festival.aspx>. Contact Lee to volunteer for this event.

### **TATC Facebook Site**

*Check our Facebook Site, our Club's Website,  
and our periodic Blast Emails for Updated Club News.*

### **TATC Facebook Site**

### **TATC Website**

### **TATC MeetUp Site**





## TATC Officers & Board

Position	Name	Email Address
President	Lee Lohman	<a href="mailto:president@tidewateratc.com">president@tidewateratc.com</a>
Vice President	Vacant - TBA	<a href="mailto:vicepres@tidewateratc.com">vicepres@tidewateratc.com</a>
Treasurer	Cecil Salyer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@tidewateratc.com">treasurer@tidewateratc.com</a>
Secretary	Steve Clayton	<a href="mailto:secretary@tidewateratc.com">secretary@tidewateratc.com</a>
Trail Supervisor	Brittany Collins	<a href="mailto:trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com">trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com</a>
Assistant Trail Supervisor	John Sima	<a href="mailto:assistantts@tidewateratc.com">assistantts@tidewateratc.com</a>
Counselor	Bruce Davidson	<a href="mailto:counselor@tidewateratc.com">counselor@tidewateratc.com</a>
Counselor	Ellis Malabad	<a href="mailto:counselor@tidewateratc.com">counselor@tidewateratc.com</a>
Counselor	Kari Pincus	<a href="mailto:counselor@tidewateratc.com">counselor@tidewateratc.com</a>
ATC RPC Representative	Ned Kuhns	<a href="mailto:rpcrep@tidewateratc.com">rpcrep@tidewateratc.com</a>
Alt ATC RPC Representative	Jim Sexton	<a href="mailto:rpcrep@tidewateratc.com">rpcrep@tidewateratc.com</a>
Cabin Committee	Bob Adkisson	<a href="mailto:cabin@tidewateratc.com">cabin@tidewateratc.com</a> or 627-5514
Cabin Committee	Gregory Hodges	<a href="mailto:cabin@tidewateratc.com">cabin@tidewateratc.com</a>
Calendar	Tony Phelps	<a href="mailto:calendar@tidewateratc.com">calendar@tidewateratc.com</a>
Education	Vacant - TBA	<a href="mailto:education@tidewateratc.com">education@tidewateratc.com</a>
Hikemaster	David Altman	<a href="mailto:hikemaster@tidewateratc.com">hikemaster@tidewateratc.com</a>
Historical	Jim Sexton	<a href="mailto:historical@tidewateratc.com">historical@tidewateratc.com</a>
Land Management	Nalin Ratnayake	<a href="mailto:landmgt@tidewateratc.com">landmgt@tidewateratc.com</a>
Local Trails	Dave Plum	<a href="mailto:localtrails@tidewateratc.com">localtrails@tidewateratc.com</a>
Membership	Kama Mitchell	<a href="mailto:membership@tidewateratc.com">membership@tidewateratc.com</a>
Membership	Sharon Salyer	<a href="mailto:membership@tidewateratc.com">membership@tidewateratc.com</a>
Merchandise	Vacant - TBA	<a href="mailto:merchandise@tidewateratc.com">merchandise@tidewateratc.com</a>
Newsletter	Jim Sexton	<a href="mailto:newsletter@tidewateratc.com">newsletter@tidewateratc.com</a>
Outreach	Vacant - TBA	<a href="mailto:outreach@tidewateratc.com">outreach@tidewateratc.com</a>
Past President	Rosanne Cary	<a href="mailto:pastprez@tidewateratc.com">pastprez@tidewateratc.com</a>
Programs	Vacant - TBA	<a href="mailto:programs@tidewateratc.com">programs@tidewateratc.com</a>
Timekeeper	Bill Lynn	<a href="mailto:timekeeper@tidewateratc.com">timekeeper@tidewateratc.com</a>
Tool Boss	Gene Monroe	<a href="mailto:toolboss@tidewateratc.com">toolboss@tidewateratc.com</a>
Webmaster	Jim Sexton	<a href="mailto:webmaster@tidewateratc.com">webmaster@tidewateratc.com</a>



## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos from Sharon McQueen and Richard Douglas

Sharon, Tom (standing) Bob, Peter, Milton, Richard (Back), Jeff (standing), Bruce & Peter. Volunteers not in photo Matt & Patrick.





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos from Sharon McQueen and Richard Douglas

Sharon Stacking Firewood





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos from Sharon McQueen and Richard Douglas

Tom at the Saw





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Peter skipped lunch for saw maintenance





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Jeff, Peter, Bob, Milton, Bruce, Richard, & Tom





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Tom (background blur), Patrick, Jeff, & Bruce.



## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

### **TATC Putman Cabin**





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Sharon in the Polish wheelbarrow being carried by Peter Stanko and Milton Beale





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Richard Douglas on the cabin porch





## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Cabin from just uphill and at the chimney end



## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

Cabin Ladder to Loft

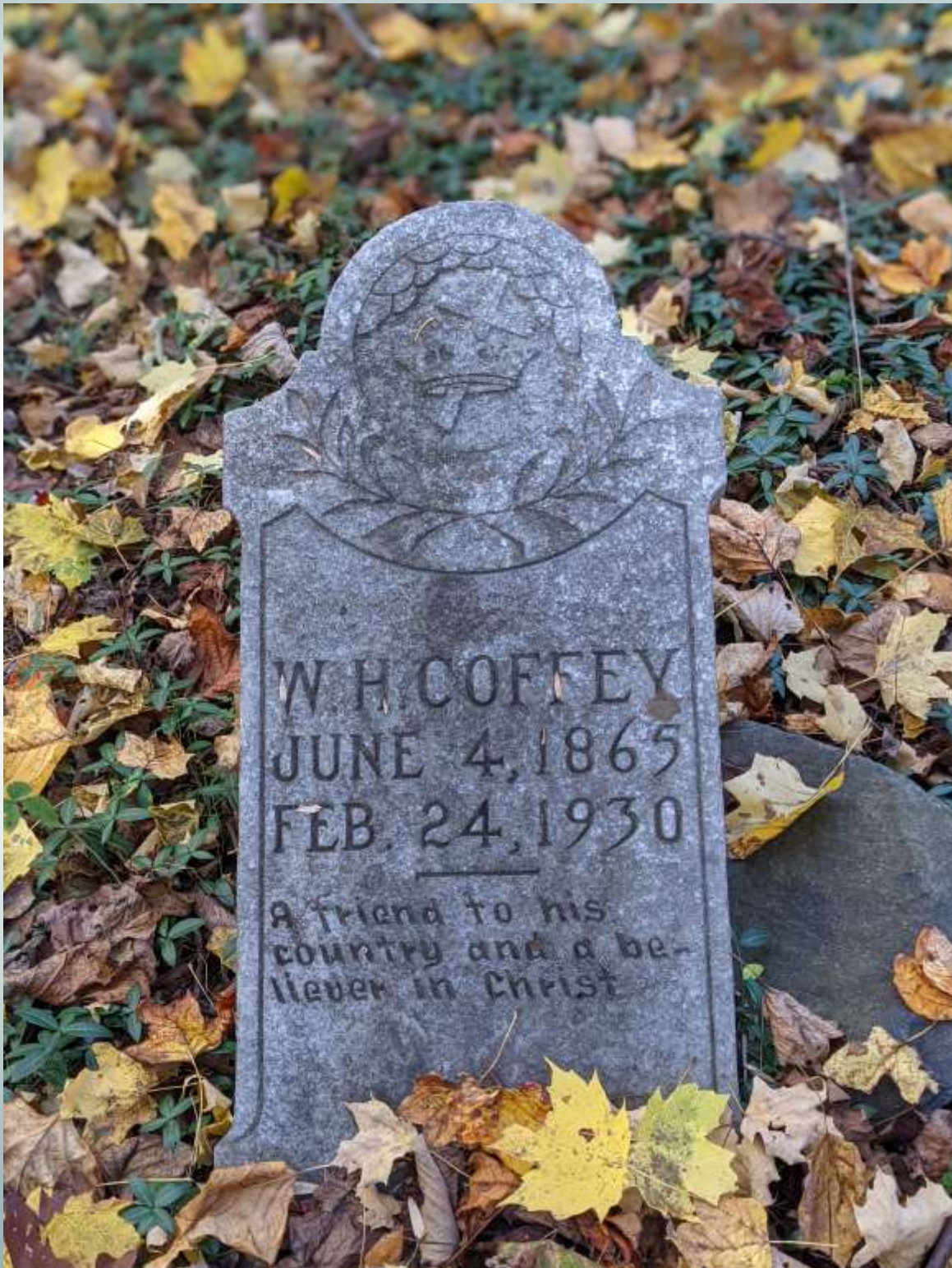




## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

WH Coffey Headstone

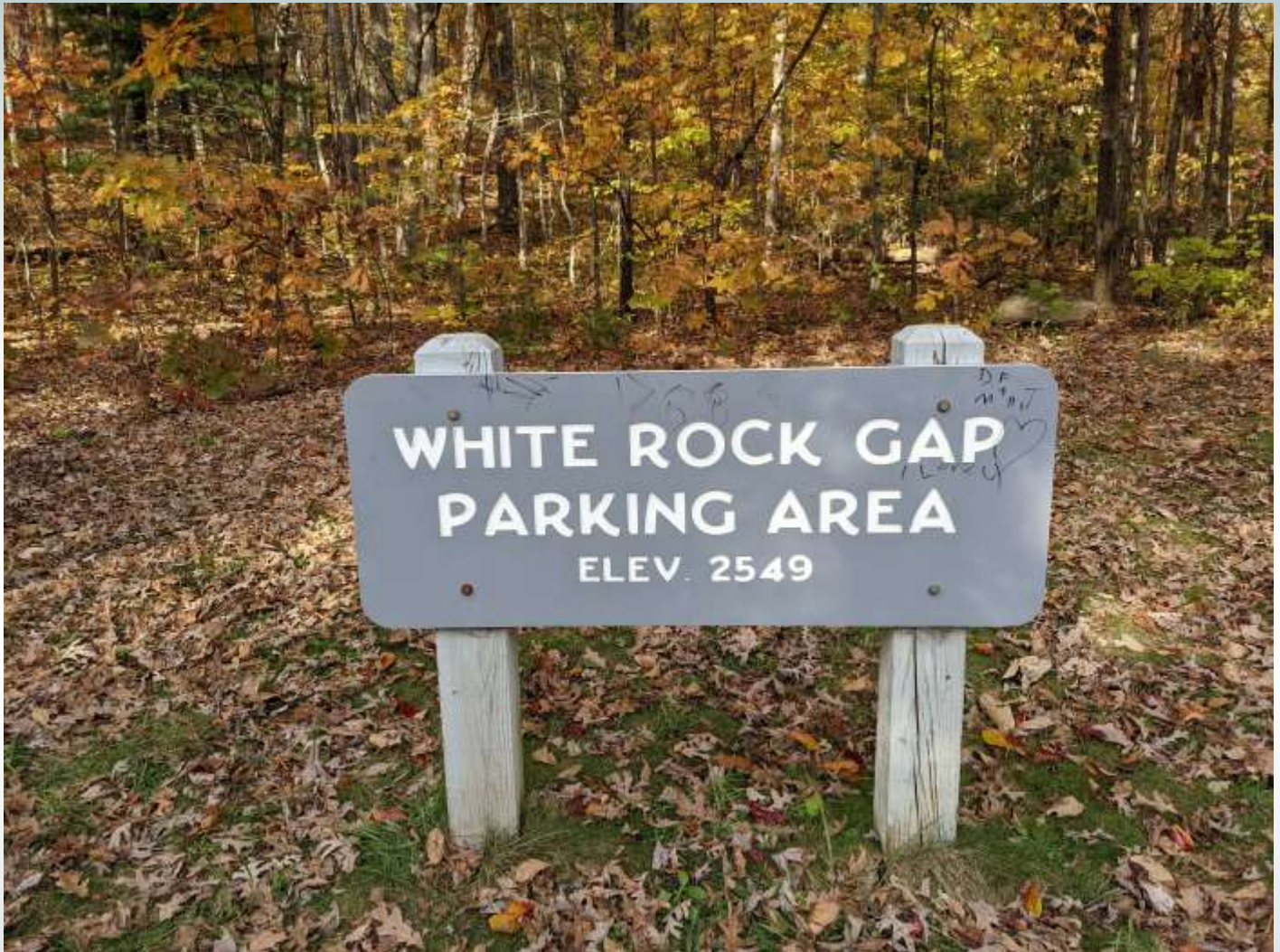




## **TATC Cabin Work Trip**

Photos by Richard Douglas and Sharon McQueen

White Rock Gap sign, with graffiti on it



# The Blue Ridge Tunnel

Photo by Sharon McQueen

## THE BLUE RIDGE TUNNEL

### VIRGINIA'S NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

At the close of the eighteenth century, Virginia stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ohio River. The coastal plain, Piedmont, Blue Ridge Mountains, and Alleghany Mountains lay between, with the James River running east to west. From the earliest days of westward expansion, Virginians struggled to move goods and people across this lengthy span of miles. Pioneers followed the James and other rivers westward and established settlements while depending on wagons, rafts, or bateaux for transportation.

George Washington, a major proponent of canals, saw the importance of connecting Virginia's tidewater with the Ohio River. Following his lead, the General Assembly chartered the James River Company in 1785. Its two-fold purpose was building a canal around the Falls of the James in Richmond and eventually linking the tidewater with the Ohio by canal. Little progress was made on the latter. Then, in 1815, the General Assembly approved a commission led by Chief Justice John Marshall. The commissioners' exploratory trip along Virginia's rivers resulted in a report that strongly endorsed continuing the James River Canal westward.



In 1835, the James River and Kanawha Canal Company—successor to the James River Company—was chartered under the leadership of Joseph Carrington Cabell. The company was Virginia's great internal improvement enterprise for decades. Meanwhile, railroads gained primacy, but a great obstacle remained: the Blue Ridge Mountains. To overcome this barrier, Virginia's Board of Public Works incorporated the Blue Ridge Railroad Company in 1840. The plan called for building a line from a point near Metchum's River in Albemarle County through the northern tip of Nelson County on the west side of Rockfish Gap. On the west side, the line would continue down to Waynesboro in Augusta County. The total length was almost seventeen miles and included four tunnels. The privately owned Virginia Central Railroad assumed control when the line was finished in 1850 and continued building west until the Civil War. Virginia and West Virginia finally achieved the goal of connecting the tidewaters of the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River in 1873—the same decade in which the James River and Kanawha Canal ceased operation.





# **The Blue Ridge Tunnel**

Photo by Sharon McQueen





# TATC Fall Maintenance

Photos from Randy Smith





# TATC Fall Maintenance

Photos from Randy Smith





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Photos from Randy Smith





# TATC Fall Maintenance

Photos from Randy Smith





# TATC Fall Maintenance

Photos by Randy Smith





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Photos from Randy Smith





# TATC Fall Maintenance

Photos from Randy Smith





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**Lee does safety briefing and plan for the day**



# **TATC Fall Maintenance - St. Mary's Trip**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**Tom, Lance, Duncan, Bruce, and Mal ready to hike**

## **TATC Fall Maintenance - St. Mary's Trip**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**Tom hopping across St. Mary's River**



## **TATC Fall Maintenance - St. Mary's Trip**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**Lance deploys a new crossing technique**



## **TATC Fall Maintenance - St. Mary's Trip**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**Duncan thinking about getting dry**

## **TATC Fall Maintenance - St. Mary's Trip**

Photos from Mal Higgins



**St. Mary's Falls with Bruce, Tom, Duncan, and Lance**



## **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Photo from Brittany Collins





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Mine Bank Trail

Photos by Jim Sexton





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Mine Bank Trail

Photos by Jim Sexton





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Mine Bank Trail

Photos by Jim Sexton





# **TATC Fall Maintenance**

Mine Bank Trail

Photos by Jim Sexton

