

Reflections

False Cape State Park

by Bruce Julian

False Cape State Park has been a great place for hiking, biking and kayaking over the years for members of TATC. Most members have visited the park, and some have done just one of those, and others have joined my wife Margaret and me and done all three in one trip into the park.

Margaret and I joined TATC the year we were married, 20 years ago, and have enjoyed every year we have spent with this great group of trail maintainers. I have spent many hours volunteering on the beautiful Appalachian Trail that we all love, but also many of us have been trail maintainers and volunteers at city, state and local parks, helping wherever we can. I had already been volunteering at False Cape for 10 years before joining TATC, so when I found out how much this group loved the outdoors and maintaining trails a bell went off in my head. I started planning week long trips to False Cape State Park.

For the last 19 years we cut new trails, maintained trail, built, painted and rebuilt boat docks for four local parks in the Tidewater area. While doing this we hiked, biked and kayaked and have enjoyed it all. With the help of False Cape State Park, I set up a three-day paddle weekends, paddling from Little Island Park down to Back Bay to the Environmental Education Center (EEC). The EEC is made available to groups interested in learning about and improving the environment of the bay and wetlands. For six years with two trips each year our trail club enjoyed spending time on Back Bay and in the EEC there at the park.

The triathlon I set up fifteen years ago and for fourteen of those years we had anywhere from eight to twenty-eight club members biking, hiking and kayaking a twenty-mile route into and back out of the park. The fifteenth year was 2020 and COVID 19 struck, and so we could not do a triathlon, but hopefully I can once again set up another triathlon for our club members to enjoy in the near future.

With the club being around for 50 years I hope all the new members and old ones can help keep it going another 50 years. The Appalachian Trail and local trails need the volunteers of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club for many years to come.

[Editor's Note: Bruce was recognized by Virginia State Parks as its 2015 Volunteer of the Year. In 2017 Bruce received the President's Award from the National Association of State Park Directors for his service of over 17,000 volunteer hours in False Cape State Park over 25 years. The award was made to Bruce in Missoula, Montana.]