



Appalachian Hiker

Banner Photo by Mark Ferguson

PREZ SEZ

June-July 2026

53rd Edition, 3rd Issue

As we emerged from winter, the TATC launched several annual spring events to prepare the Appalachian Trail for the busy hiking season ahead. Here's a summary of our April and May activities.

(1) Spring Maintenance Training Weekend, April 10th-12th

This was a brand-new event – a weekend of hands-on maintenance training on the AT, with basecamp at the Devils Backbone Campsite area. Special thanks to Jim Sexton and Kaci Midgett for organizing and leading this successful training opportunity. (See the article and photos within for additional information)

(2) Spring Backpacking Walkthrough Weekend, April 10th-12th

This backpacking trip was held to assess the condition of our section of the AT and nearby trails so we could identify maintenance needs for the upcoming Spring Maintenance Weekend. John Sima, our Trail Supervisor, and John Reed, our new Tool Boss, hiked the AT/Mau-Har Loop Trail. (See the article and photos within for additional information)

(3) Spring Maintenance Weekend, April 24th-27th

This maintenance weekend focused on addressing the issues identified during the previous walkthrough event. Many thanks to:

- **John Sima (Trail Supervisor)** for leading the event, which included more than 50 TATC members who removed blowdowns, cleaned water bars and shelter areas, pulled invasive species, repainted blazes, and much more. (See John's article within)
- **Lee Lohman (Past President)** for serving as Base Camp Coordinator while the rest of us enjoyed time on the trail. (See Lee's article within)
- **Rich Seriani (Tool Boss)** and **John Reed (new Tool Boss)** for sharpening, oiling, transporting, cleaning, and organizing our tools throughout the weekend, including moving them into a "new" storage bin. Special thanks to Rich for his dedicated service over the past two years and to John Reed for making the transition look easy.
- Sawyer Crew Leaders: **Don Williams, Tom Merece, Patrick Hayes, Randy Smith, Andy Grayson, and John Sima**

PREZ SEZ	1
Minute for Maintenance	3
Harper's Creek Cleanup	5
Membership Matters	6
TATC Member Book Release	
Base Camp Coordinator	7
Invasive Species	9
Trail Blazing	10
2026 AT Hall of Fame	
Merch Summer Sale	11
Trail Maintenance Training	12
All That Jazz and More	14
Backpacking 201	20
Good Food, Great Hike	21
Review: The Allure and Peril of the AT	22
NYC in an RV?	24
Letter from the Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent	30
Tuesday Group	31
Events Schedule	35
Ads	37
TATC Board of Directors	39



- Other Crew Leaders: **Bruce Julian** – water bars, **Jim Newman** – Maupin Field Shelter and water bars, **Michelle Cobb** – Harpers Creek Shelter area, **Sandy Butler** – invasive species and **Mary Crozier** – painting white blazes (See Sandy's and Mary's articles within for additional details)
- **Bruce Davidson (Safety Chair)** for providing fully charged inReach devices and training members on their proper use for communication and safety in the field.
- **Catherine Fowler (Social Chair)** for organizing and leading our cooking team. Everyone enjoyed appetizers, fajitas with all the fixings, and desserts provided by various members.

(4) Spring St. Mary's Backpacking Maintenance Weekend, May 15th-17th

This weekend work trip took place in the St. Mary's Wilderness, with basecamp near the St. Mary's River. Thanks to Andy Grayson for organizing the event, where four volunteers cleared blowdowns and heavily overgrown vegetation along the trails. John Sima reported that the crew had a productive weekend and left with a strong sense of accomplishment. However, additional vegetation clearing is still badly needed.

Thank you to everyone who participated in these spring events. TATC would not be a viable club without your hard work, dedication, and willingness to volunteer.

All of our Swingblade & Lopperfest events have now been scheduled, with the first taking place on June 20th. Please mark your calendars, because maintaining our 10.2 mile section of the Appalachian Trail – from Tye River to Reid's Gap – is at the heart of why our club exists. If you have concerns about the physical level of work involved, please reach out to me or another club member. We will gladly work with you to find an assignment that fits your abilities and interests.

Our members also continue to support local trails through ongoing maintenance activities. Paul Heymann, our Local Trail Supervisor, organizes at least one local maintenance workday each month, so please check the calendar and sign up early. Paul has also recruited volunteers to lead maintenance events for the remainder of the year, and he would welcome additional members interested in helping in this role for future events.

Meanwhile, our Tuesday Group remains committed to hosting an outing every Tuesday. Be sure to check their calendar if you have Tuesday mornings free for a hike, bike ride, or kayak trip. Thanks to all the trip leaders who host these events, everyone who participates, and especially to Phyllis Neumann and Ellis Malabad for their continued leadership.

Lastly, twenty of us travelled to Delaware Water Gap, PA, for the 3rd Annual "For Hikers and Jazz Lovers" event during the weekend of May 16th. Please read the article by Joe Stell, our Newsletter Editor. Mike Martin, our past Merchandise Chair, who moved to New York last year to care for his mother, also joined us and contributed an article about his experience.

I must say, while the hiking is wonderful, the live jazz alone is worth the trip – and it brings back great memories of our AT thru-hiking days. Mary Carrig, owner of the Inn, has already reserved all the rooms for our 4th Annual "For Hikers and Jazz Lovers" event, scheduled for the weekend of May 15th, 2027. Next year, we plan to add paddling as another activity option. Be sure to read Mal Higgins' article, as several attendees chose to paddle down the Delaware River instead of hike. And for those who hiked the AT there – you know there were plenty of rocks to navigate!

As always, stay safe, have fun, and enjoy your time on the trails and in the woods.

– Lelia

Lelia Vann, TATC President

Minute for Maintenance



The Sherando Spring Cleaning event went great. We do these trips to help Sherando get ready for opening day. Twenty one people showed up. Jonathan Zimmerman, the Sherando Director said that even though we had less people show up, more work was accomplished than normal years. He was very pleased with our efforts. We did have one incident. One of the UTV (golf carts) parking brakes let loose and rolled into one of our own vehicles parked between the Maintenance Center & the CCC Kitchen. That is the second time this has happened. Jonathan would like to remind us there is no parking in that lot anymore. We can temporarily park and offload your vehicle, and when through offloading, you must move your vehicle to another parking area.

The Spring Backpacking Walk-thru coincided with the AT Maintenance training event, see Kaci's article for the training event. John Reed (our Tool boss) and I conducted the walk-thru. We had a great weekend up in the mountains, very relaxing! We identified a ton of blowdowns, we marked the locations & noted the sizes of trees that need to be taken care of during Spring Maintenance.

Spring Maintenance, fifty three people showed up. We had a multitude of tasks that needed to be taken care of. We had five saw crews out clearing blowdowns. Other work assignments were campsite & shelter cleanups, waterbar cleaning, lopping, etc. Mary Crozier led a crew re-blazing the trail up from the Tye River. The hiking public really was appreciative of Mary's crew work efforts, someone even made a Facebook post about it that drew a lot of attention. Andy Grayson lead a crew into St Mary's Wilderness. They concentrated on clearing the Bald Mountain Overlook trail. Rain set in around 3pm Saturday. Most of the crews had already finished up work for the day. One saw crew was still out working the upper area of Three Ridges in the rain. They didn't return to basecamp until 6:30pm. Dinner was prepared & served by Cathy Fowler's crew. Everyone enjoyed the feast and the fantastic dessert bar saw many people making several trips back including myself.

We had a St Mary's Backpacking Maintenance event May 15th-17th. Mark Wenger, Bob Veverka, John Reed and I showed up for that event. We split up into two teams. Mark & I would head down the Minebank Trail. John & Bob started at the Falls Trail parking lot and worked their way to the St Mary's River Trail. Both crews met up late afternoon Saturday. As I was going through one of the areas that Bob & John cleared, I said to myself, "Who brought a chainsaw up here"? Well done Bob & John for clearing out a massive blowdown!!! The bottom line, the St Mary's loop is free from blowdowns!!

Now the real work begins, it needs Lopping. The SAWS (Southern Appalachian Trail Stewards) is working St Mary's along the Minebank Trail. I saw evidence of their flagging potential worksites within 1/2 mile from the top. They have Volunteer opportunities set for June 8th & 27th. I encourage people to sign up with SAWS on their website under Volunteer Opportunities. They are working on "Our Trail", lets have some TATC representation!

Happy Trails, John & Kaci

Upcoming Events

June 5th-7th Devils Backbone Trail Cleanup

19th-21st Swingblade & Lopperfest #1 (CCC Kitchen)

July 17th-19th Swingblade & Lopperfest #2 (CCC Kitchen)

August 21st-23rd Swingblade & Lopperfest #3 (CCC Kitchen)

October 2nd-4th Fall AT Backpacking Walk-thru

16th-18th Fall AT Maintenance (Williams Branch) includes Sawyer cert/re-cert



Harper's Creek Cleanup, Spring Maintenance 2026



Many kudos to John Murray! The Harper's Creek privy got a first-class deep clean.



Swallowtails were in every cow pasture puddle!

Richard Tarr, John Murray & Kay Fu helped with HC campsite cleanup. Not pictured is Bill Bunch, who offered to drive our crew up the orchard road.



HC crew heading back down the cow pasture after cleanup, dwarfed by the Priest mountain.



Membership Matters



Dear TATC members and friends,

We apologize!

During our recent migration to a new member data system (WordPress), you likely experienced a number of stumbling blocks while attempting to renew your TATC membership for 2026.

All of you have been incredibly patient during our recent, challenging data system migration; we wish to express our gratitude for your understanding!

We are now requesting that you please try renewing/rejoining/revisiting your TATC 2026 membership one more time, if you haven't already done so.

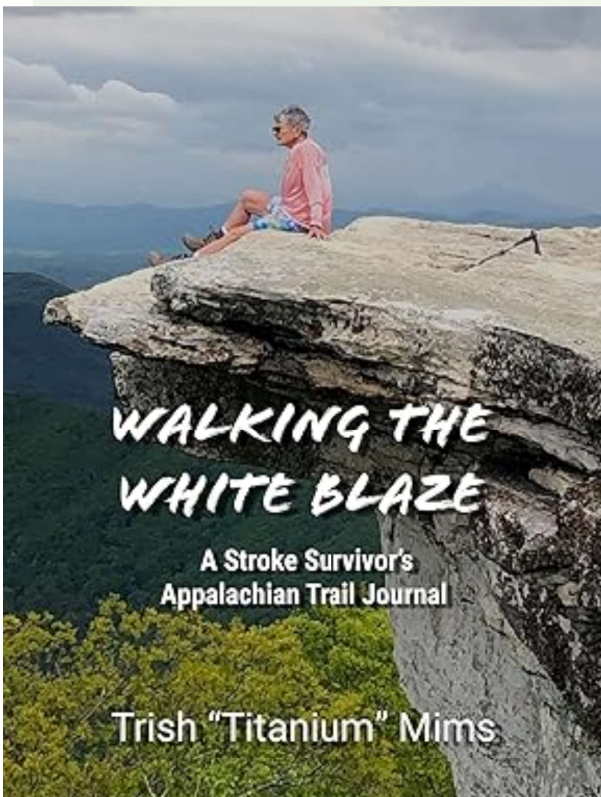
The new membership data management system works on a subscription basis, as do many such systems, so your membership will be recurring; you will remain subscribed UNLESS you cancel it. Please rest assured that you WILL receive a yearly option to cancel if desired.

Thank you for your continued support of recreational activities and community for our members through hiking, backpacking, camping, kayaking, biking and so much more!

Respectfully,

Kama Mitchell and Ed Welp, Membership Co Chairs and Jim Sexton, Webmaster

TATC Member Book Release



On May 19, 2022, Trish "Titanium" Mims suffered a stroke while attempting to become the oldest woman to solo thru-hike the AT. The long-time TATC member had already sectioned hiked more than 1600 miles.

While recovering, she has written a journal about her adventure. She hopes her book will be an inspiration to hikers and stroke victims alike.

The eBook is available from Amazon for \$4.95. You can get a free Kindle reader for your phone at the Android or Apple store. The paperback is \$7.95.

The links are:

<https://us.amazon.com/Walking-White-Blaze-Survivors-Appalachian-ebook/dp/B0H1DHQBBS>

https://us.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B0H1GTVX5T/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0

David Mims, 10 year TATC Newsletter editor

Loud and Clear, Base Camp Coordinator



TATC's piece of the AT is as much as 200 miles from where most of us live. That's unusual. Most AT clubs are much closer to their part of the trail. Many make weekly visits to their areas of responsibility--and in small work crews.

That difference in distance affects how we operate. We limit our visits to the AT. Spring maintenance, fall maintenance, and three swingblade & lopperfests during the summer (and the attendant walk-thrus) are the norm. We come in large numbers. Spring and fall events often have fifty or more people attending. It's not uncommon for some of those to be non-members.

During our larger events, John Sima, our Trail Supervisor, often puts five or more trail crews on the AT beginning about 8:45. To get that accomplished, previously, the following had to happen between assembly time at 8:00 and the 8:45 departure.

- 1) Crew leaders had to volunteer or be selected for each team.
- 2) TATC sign-up sheets had to be completed showing information about the leader.
- 3) Volunteers had to acquaint themselves with the crew team options, select one, and fill in and sign the form.
- 4) Volunteers who had not signed the US Forest Service/National Park Service volunteer form had to be identified and directed to the 301b form which they had to complete.
- 5) John had to give the overall instructions to all the volunteers as well as the USFS mandated Job Hazard Analysis briefing.

After the workday was over, each trail crew leader had to report to John confirming that all crew members returned to the trail head or base camp safely. John's crew was often the last to return.

You can see the problem.

At spring maintenance 2026, we tried something different:

- During the AT walk-thru on April 11th, John identified areas along the trail that needed attention, and he denoted all blow downs across the trail including their diameter. Once he returned home, he provided this information to Lelia along with his estimate of the number of Saw Crew Leaders needed.
- Once the type of crew leaders were identified, Lelia assisted John in identifying available members and making crew leader assignments. Lelia drafted the TATC activity forms for each crew. She also monitored the incoming signups so she could identify potential volunteers who had not signed the federal 301b form. On Friday and Saturday, she sought out these people and got the needed signatures.
- Before the Spring Maintenance event, Lelia shared the list of crew leaders with our Safety Lead, Bruce Davidson. Bruce used this information to understand who needed inReach devices ahead of time and was able to ensure they knew how to use them before they went out in the field.
- We put a trial function into effect: the Base Camp Coordinator (BCC). The BCC, Lee at this event, confirmed that the leaders:
 - Understood the check-in and check-out plan including the time, established by John, when the leaders had to confirm all of their volunteers had left the trail or to contact the BCC by inReach indicating they were delayed but OK.

- Had performed an inReach check confirming that their devices worked and that they knew how to operate them.
- Had photographed their TATC Activity Sign Up forms and then given the sheets to Lee.
- Confirmed that each leader received an AT Volunteer injury packet. This envelope contains detailed instructions on what to do if a volunteer is injured.
- Understood that they should contact the BCC by inReach or phone if they moved their cars from the location listed on the TATC Activity Sign Up form.
- Confirmed that the leaders had sufficient first aid kits and personal protective equipment for their crews.

To double check, Lee asked the drivers, as they left Basecamp, the same questions. Two had to go back to get the necessary information or supplies.

The BCC's other role was to record the return of each work crew or to acknowledge the crew leader's phone or InReach message that they were OK but delayed.

If the BCC does not receive such a message after a specified series of attempts to contact the crew leader, he is to call 911 and ask for emergency assistance. That's serious so all the crew leaders were careful to report to the BCC in person or contact him. The very last crew in, John's, sent two inReach messages.

Did the BCC experiment go well? It certainly smoothed out the administrative processes and gave the crew leaders a uniform understanding of their tasks. In future, the BCC function can be more integrated into the InReach communications system permitting immediate reaction at Basecamp if something goes wrong on the trail.

Please email Lee at pastprez@tidewateratc.com if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions about how this system worked.

Lee Lohman

Invasive Species



Invasive Species in the United States can be found anywhere from hiking in the Grand Canyon and seeking shade under a Tamarisk Tree near the Colorado River, to Yellow Clover that is covering our prairies and reducing native grasses, and who hasn't seen the devastation that Kudzu has done in the South. It was planted throughout the South to control soil erosion. It grows so quickly it can cover trees, abandoned houses, barns and out buildings in a few seasons of growth. It was brought here from Asia and is now out of control.

In the Northern US and on the Appalachian Trail, we have a major invasive species called Garlic Mustard. It was brought to the United States by the settlers from Europe for culinary and medical purposes.

This plant is rapidly spreading throughout our national forests and prairies. With the first signs of Spring, this plant will quickly start its growth pattern to overshadow other native plants. It also affects the soil with chemicals it releases that inhibit nutrients that the native plants need. One way to control small areas of the spread of Garlic Mustard is to pull the complete plant including the root up at the early growth stage. This should be done before the development of its seed pod. It should be placed in a plastic bag and disposed of. Do not compost this plant.

On our recent trail maintenance trip, Dottie Abbot, Susan Gail Arey and I pulled Garlic Mustard plants that had begun their growth spurt quickly before other natives plants started. These plants were already blooming and varied in heights. Some plants were found in groups and some stood alone. The soil was wet and the plants came up fairly easily including their roots. They were carefully placed in trashbags. We cleared the area from the parking lot of Reed's Gap to the beginning of the rocky section of the AT on Meadow Mountain. We had about two bags three-fourth full. We felt we had accomplished an important task by removing these plants.

Sandy Butler



Trail Blazing



We were two newbies blazing a bright trail! We had fun, learned a lot, met some chatty hikers and trail angels, completed our assignment, and didn't get into trouble!

The assignment was painting the faded blazes on the AT past the Tye River bridge; perfect for my first time as Crew Leader. My first challenge however was getting comfortable with the responsibility of being a Crew Leader. This was eased by the informational emails prior to the maintenance weekend, the Garmin training, and by having logistical oversight.

My second challenge? Finding a crew member tall enough to reach the higher blazes! Lelia quickly solved that problem by recruiting the "new Bill" (aka Bill 2). He turned out to be a fantastic addition to the crew - he blazed the heck out of that trail and promised to come back for future events.

Mary Crozier, Crew Leader TATC 2026 Spring Maintenance

2026 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Inductees Announced



6th May 2026, Harpers Ferry WV:- The sixteenth class of Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame honorees has been announced by the Appalachian Trail Museum's Hall of Fame selection committee.

The 2026 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame class honorees are Daniel Chazin of Teaneck, New Jersey; Elmer Hall of Hot Springs, North Carolina; Reese Lukei, Jr. of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Sandra Marra of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.



There seems to be no end to the boot tracks Reese Lukei has left on AT. He is a life and honorary member of the ATC and was on its Board three different times. For five years he edited "The Register," the maintenance newsletter for ATC Clubs. He chaired the "Youth Committee" (now called Outreach) and promoted the Boy Scout Backpacking merit badge. Reese was a founding member of the "Konarock Crew" and was crew leader for two years, and served as president of the Tidewater AT Club.

Somehow he found time to be co-founder of the "Committee of 17" which got the ATC involved in the Partnership for the National Trails System. His talents didn't stop there, as he was also National Coordinator of the American Discovery Trail, and east coast state coordinator of HikaNation, the 1981 hike across the country from California to Delaware.

TATC MERCH

Summer Sale!

June 10-16

Get yours at the
June membership meeting
or email

merchandise@tidewateratc.com



bandanas



assorted caps

mini-patches



insulated lunch bags



AN INTRODUCTION TO TRAIL MAINTENANCE WEEKEND EVENT



AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF PLANNING, TIDEWATER APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB OFFERS A WEEKEND EVENT TO TEACH TRAIL MAINTENANCE BASICS

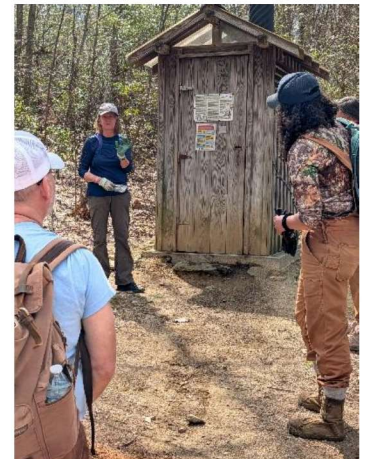
After a long-time planning, TATC was finally able to host an introductory course teaching several skills we consider essential for a typical trail maintenance event. Working in the wilderness can be overwhelming if you are unfamiliar with one or any of the aspects of trail maintaining and this event was created with that in mind. **The goal:** to help individuals gain the confidence to join our [or any] trail maintenance events. If that wasn't exciting enough, our friends at Devils Backbone hooked us up with plenty of space in TENT CITY for a basecamp.

Most people arrived Friday afternoon/evening, got checked-in, setup their tent/space and headed over to the brewery, which you can walk to through a series of trails – SO CONVENIENT! We had over thirty attendees; in addition to members of TACT there were nine Old Dominion University



Evan covering corridor management

students and their professor of Parks and Rec studies and five Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club members. Many attendees mentioned that this was exactly the kind of course they had been hoping for, as slow-paced hands-on learning opportunity.



Michelle discussing privy cleaning

On Saturday we had four groups of eight people that rotated through four sessions: Campsite and Safety with Michelle and Randy, Sawing with Pete and Lee, Erosion Control with Jim and Corridor Maintenance with Evan. The leaders were what made the event so special, each brought a wealth of experience and knowledge that even seasoned maintainers could benefit from. As this



Pete showing chainsaw technique

was the first training session offered by TATC in a long time, it was a learning experience for the organizers as well. No one complained about a last-minute change that allowed everyone to get off trail two hours early.

If you missed this training event but are interested in joining the next one, it will be the weekend September 11th -13th with basecamp at Devils Backbone.



Jim on log waterbar installation



Randy captured the nighttime magic of tent city



Most of the group, some left early to hike down

All That Jazz and More



What happens when you bring twenty or so TATC members together on a far away planet in a far away galaxy? Well, OK, it really was Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania, and a quaint 1869 hotel called the Deer Head Inn. And why? Well, our rugged TATC President, Lelia Vann, likes to hike and she also likes jazz. So, before I knew what happened, Svetlana Kononov and I were headed north to DWG and spent a fun filled three days, May 15^t-17th , hiking, kayaking, and eating with TATC members who were also teleported there.

The template was hike (and, as it turned out, also kayak) by day and listen to music at night. It began Friday night with a fine meal at the Deer Head Inn, followed by three hours of jazz performed by the Tony Miceli Quartet. The musicians performed on a vibraphone, bass, trombone and percussion. The trombonist also performed on an instrument new to me that is called—wait for it—“electronic wind instrument”.

Saturday, Lelia led a caravan of cars to the takeout point for the AT hike of the day, and by 9:00 or so, most of us were on the AT southbound with a planned 9 mile route. Good gosh—what a beautiful trail, but as is always the case with the AT, lots of uphill! Along the way, all of us on the trail hiked their own hike—some a few more miles than others!

Back at the Deer Head Inn Saturday night, Sharon and Richard hosted an “after hike” party on the outdoor second floor porch, and provided a spread of things to eat and a choice of wine or icy cold margaritas. Perfect start to the evening.

Again, it was another nice meal—the menu offered a variety of options—, and then the Jim Snidero Trio took the small stage immediately next to us diners. This trio played the saxophone (Snidero), bass, and percussion. I especially enjoyed this drummer who could make the drums bounce when he laid into them. Snidero has apparently been around for a while, has toured Europe, and produced his own CDs.

Sunday, taking the suggestion from several other TATCers who couldn't handle the Rocksylvania AT (me included here), six of us decided to kayak on the Delaware River. The alternative was a 7 mile hike on the AT. Seven “take no prisoners” TATCers needed more uphill on the AT : Lelia, Joe Stell, Mike Martin, Kaleen Lawsure, John Kuster, and Sharon and Richard. Gayle Owens and I shuttled them to the trail head, and they were able to finish their hike right at the Deer Head Inn, which actually sits next to a road that is part of the AT.

We six—Bruce & Margaret Julian, Gayle Owens, John Murray, Svetlana and I—rented kayaks from an outfitter in town, Edge of the Woods. We learned that Dan and Catherine Fowler had done the same two days previously, as they had arrived at DWG a day early. We were dropped off at a pleasant put-in on the Delaware River, Smithfield Beach, and paddled leisurely with a gentle current 6 miles, passing under the enormous I-80 bridge, before taking out down river at Kittatinny Point. The water got a bit choppy the last half mile, adding to the paddling fun.

Back at the mother ship Deer Head Inn on our last night, we enjoyed the group called the Clarence Spady Band. This was my favorite night, as Clarence, the lead guitarist and vocalist, brought with him a piano player, a bass guitar player, and of course, a percussionist. And Clarence brought the

funk—yes, story telling, jazz, rock ‘n’ roll, blues, and of all things, a long rendition of Ghost Riders in the Sky.

Then, cowboy, change your ways today, Or with us you will ride.

Trying to catch the devil’s herd, Across these endless skies.

Yippie-yi-o, Yippie-yi-yay, Ghost riders in the sky.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ5DhH8KUZ4>

Throughout our stay in DWG, we had time to amble down its short historic Main Street, sample some eateries, and go to a bakery featuring calorie laden deserts and pies, but a not so good \$5.00 hot dog and apple pie slice special. We got great ice cream across the street from the Deer Head Inn, and even visited the Fred Waring Museum. Hah, who said DWG had nothing to do. And of course the last thing to mention about our time at the Deer Head Inn is that there is no elevator, and from street level there are about sixty stairs to climb to get to your room on the fourth floor!

Mal Higgins

A big Thank You for being invited to this year’s “For Hikers and Jazz Lovers” event. This was my first participation in this yearly event. Not only was it an opportunity to hike in an area I’ve never been to, but the bigger draw for me was meeting up with some pals from the club that I haven’t seen since I moved from VA last Summer. Most of us stayed at the Deer Head Inn in Delaware Water Gap. Some people participated in hiking, some participated in kayaking and some participated in both. I was there for hiking. Of course, shade.

Saturday was supposed to be a shorter hike with Sunday being a longer hike. But to accommodate people’s schedules, it was decided to switch and have the longer hike on Saturday. Lelia worked overtime (as usual) Friday evening planning logistics over dinner and through the live jazz set so everyone knew where they needed to be and when Saturday morning.

Early Saturday morning, we shuttled cars to the AT trailhead at the AMC Mohican Outdoor Center, then carpooled back to the Inn for breakfast. We then carpooled to the AT trailhead at the Dunnfield Creek Natural Area and hiked back to our cars. Per my watch, it was just under 8¾ miles. It was a great day for hiking, sunny and not too warm. Unfortunately there were also plenty of rocks on the trail doing their best to trip you up. After returning to the Inn, we had a spread of cheese and wine, followed by dinner and another live jazz performance. I, on the other hand, skipped dinner at the Inn and the jazz performance to walk down to the Village Farmer and Bakery for dinner. I make no apologies! They had a fantastic chicken pot pie and way too many absolutely outstanding bakery items.

Sunday did not require anywhere near as much planning. We were shuttled to the AT trailhead at Fox Gap, dropped off and hiked back to the Inn. Today was also very sunny but noticeably hotter. We had some great views of the Delaware River on the way downhill. In my opinion, this was also the easier direction to hike. And we didn’t need to be concerned with rides at the end of the day. Once again, I headed down to the Village Farmer and Bakery for dinner. After the night’s live jazz performance ended, members once again assembled on the porch for stories and conversation. We also had a special guest tonight, Mary, the proprietor and owner of the Inn (I think).

Monday morning, I said some early goodbyes. Sorry to those I woke up... It was a great weekend, catching up with some and getting to know others and even meeting a new member. I’m already looking forward to next year’s get-together!

Mike Martin

Lelia, I enjoyed climbing the steps to the fourth floor at least sixteen times, looking out the windows on each level to catch my breath at the trees and flowers in the backyard. Looking down past the hand rails all the way to the first floor was also exciting, as I needed a break, and the sound from the restaurant of everyone having such a good time could be heard clear to the third floor. My only regret was that back in the 1800's, they only built four floors! You would not believe, with so many people staying, that I didn't pass anyone on the steps until Sunday evening. And, of course, it is just like hiking on the AT: the ones coming down had the right of way, so be sure to look up each flight before starting up. When someone said that we had to walk up the stairs to our rooms and I parked in the parking lot, and I saw the exterior fire escape stairs at the end of the building, I said, 'How in the world will I get Margaret's suitcase up those little steps?' But I soon found out we had the ones inside.

I am not a Jazz lover but at least those Drummers kept me awake! And the food was very good also. Four of us, Margaret, Gayle, John and the step climber, Bruce, had a great hike South on the AT, out to the overlook where we could see the Delaware River and Highway I-80. We talked to people on the trail from four different countries, and they could speak English better than some of us! We must have looked professional, because people were stopping and asking us questions about the local trails. We could only tell them that we belong to TATC and that we were from Virginia, and that we were always looking for more people to help volunteer to keep the AT looking good. One man looked so surprised when I told him that the trail was only taken care of by volunteers, and he should look up one of the clubs and join them. I passed out three TATC cards, which was all I had with me.

Six of us, Svetlana, Mal, Gayle, John, Margaret and the step climber, Bruce, paddled down the Delaware River, with the help of the current that was going our way, and saw some beautiful sights in Pennsylvania on the right side and New Jersey on the left side.

The drive up and the drive back were not to bad, with only ten slow downs, lasting no more than 10 or 15 minutes, I thought Tidewater had a lot of cars on the road but Pennsylvania has got us beat by a country mile or two. I did get Margaret to the train station on time, about 45 minutes early, but I always say: it better to be early than late. This was the first time I had been in a train station and could not believe the number of tracks running through the station and how fast they moved in and out. At Penn. Station in Newark, New Jersey, the station is right downtown, but it wasn't hard to get to, and we found a parking lot really close to the front door, and a young lady helped us find the right place to stand and wait. Getting out of Newark was a little harder and I did take one wrong turn and had to double back in order to get on I-95. Overall, the trip was perty good and we may try it again next year. Now that I know how many steps there are to climb, maybe I will bring my big pack for our clothes - that might be easier than a suitcase.

Lelia thanks for setting up the trip, it was fun.

The Old Step Climber, Bruce

The Deer Head Inn rejoices in the distinction of being the longest continuously operating jazz music venue in the US. Built in the latter half of the nineteenth century for the same purpose as the town around it - a resort at the gateway to the Poconos, where wealthy citizens of Philadelphia and New York would spend their summers vacationing in the cool mountain air -, the jazz arrived later in the mid-twentieth century, and I guess it never left. As yet another jazz novice, I shall omit the Wikipedia list of famous performers that have graced its stage, and as a skeptic, I shall do the same with the Wiki-strology list of confirmed hauntings. Suffice to say the performances were virtuoso and the building was old, creaky and bursting at the seams with charm and character. One need look no further than the first floor landing running beside the stairs, which was tilted maybe a full 15% or more across. Mary pointed out that this tilt is angled away from the stairwell, and thus serves as a safety feature.

The hiking by my reckoning was of intermediate difficulty, with comparatively short distance and moderate incline, but rocky and treacherous trail surface. These denizens of the Valley and Ridge region are a different breed of mountains to our familiar Blue Ridge, with much rounder and longer ridges, and coming this far north brings one too close to the rock splitting and scraping of past glacial maxima.

Looking north across the magnificent view from Council Rock, it was difficult not to feel a sense of history and deep time. If a river crosses a mountain range, it means it is older than those mountains. Which means the Delaware has been gliding through this spot since long before the continental crashes that made this part of the Appalachians, whose mighty forces are still clearly evident in the striations in the rocks, which are even more tilted than the passage previously mentioned. And no doubt the Lenape and their antecedents were paddling to and fro for millennia before it became a critical and bloody frontier in the French and Indian War. And two clear bookends of the industrial revolution stare one another down across the water, the railway that made the town on the near side, and the scene-stealing I-80 that bypasses it on the far, ceaselessly humming with SUVs and semi-trucks. To bring it all full circle, you could see the car park we had departed from the previous morning, and trace the ridge we had ascended and the creek at its base, and I am even reliably informed that the kayakers were picked up from the very beach clearly visible on the far bank.

I visited Columcille Megalith Park on the Monday before returning home, a fascinating site less than a mile from Sunday's Wolf Rocks Trailhead, yet somewhere none of the previous attendees knew of and about which Mary seemed reluctant to pass comment. Perhaps it was the pagan, spiritual animism that infuses the place that stops her recommending it. Or its purported ancient Celtic ties, despite being started in 1980. Either way, its free and a lovely spot to wander around for a bit.

Joe Stell







Backpacking 201: Long Mountain Wayside to the James River



In mid- April, Don Williams, TATC Education Chair, led a fantastic intermediate level backpacking trip to a remote corner of Amherst County. It was the perfect introduction to temperate mountain backpacking. A short hike in to a quiet shelter with a medium sized stream was a great way for us to familiarise ourselves with the weight of our packs and ease into the practicalities of tent site selection, water filtration and hanging a bear bag (without an audience to witness your failed attempts). Then a full day with a major climb to test fitness, followed by a stay at a busier shelter with less reliable water, an introduction to trail culture, if you will. Then a final day of mostly flat ridge, but without supplementary water points, to demonstrate water management. And a spectacular view all the way to Lynchburg as a reward, before a steep descent back into mature forests of huge chestnut oaks to reacquaint you with being below 1000ft.

And Zeus even sorted the weather out for us - cool for the short first evening hike in, sunny and hot for the tough climb, but with plenty of breeze at the top as a reward, rain in the early morning for a no-nonsense lesson in the misery of breaking camp in the wet, then sunny again by the time we reached the viewpoint so we could enjoy it all the more.

And a solid 10 miles both days - achievable but still challenging, and an easy benchmark to remember. And ending at the very river that defines Hampton Roads.

Huge thanks to Don, who put a lot of time and effort into organising not only this trip but multiple preparatory day hikes. And to Palmer Hurst for driving us all up, and his conveniently located mother, who helped with car logistics. And to Bob Viverka for his patience while bear bag training!



Crossing Brown Mountain Creek



Work it, Robo-Zeus!



The James snakes away to the left.

Good Food, Great Hike



Blogger for [The Trek](#) soon to be tackling the Tahoe Rim Trail and Backpacking 201 graduate, Palmer Hurst, shares the latest recipes in his exhaustive search for the best trail food this side of the Mississippi.

Tired of the usual backpacking food from REI? Ready to explore more interesting on trail options, both make your own and premade? Well you're in luck. I'm offering a review of a premade store bought meal as well as a recipe for a creation to make at camp!

bowl & kettle

Review



I'm reviewing one of my favorite meals to start, the Chicken Tikka Masala from Bowl & Kettle. Available at [garagegrowngear.com](#) and Bowl & Kettle's own website for about \$17, this meal is curry-forward and filling but not overwhelming. I've had it twice, most recently on the club Backpacking 201 hike, and I found it equally delicious each time. If you like Indian food, you'll find it a nice change of pace from other backpacking meals. It has that classic tikka masala flavor, although I wish the curry was heavier, and even comes with a packet of dried cilantro for topping. The sauce is creamy, and the rice sticks together well. The chicken is even blackened nicely, as if it came out of a tandoori oven. At 860kcal and 47g of protein, it has plenty of nutrition to help you sleep well and give your body recovery energy after a long

day. Cooking tip: I've found that the rice in this dish takes a little longer than the packaging suggests to rehydrate. Make sure to give it a good stir when you pour the boiling water in as well.

Recipe

Backpacking food doesn't have to be expensive, but it can taste expensive. Or at least reminiscent of a nice meal at home. This recipe is a favorite of mine: backpacking carbonara. Pasta carbonara is one of my absolute favorite pasta dishes, and this is the best approximation I can get on trail.

You'll need:

- 1 package ramen (flavor doesn't matter)
- Bacon bits (as much as you want, but at least a big handful)
- ¼ cup shelf stable grated parmesan cheese
- Dash garlic salt
- 1.5 tablespoons powdered eggs/egg crystals
- Crushed red pepper, to taste

At home, combine the powdered eggs, cheese, and garlic salt in a ziploc bag.

On trail, discard the flavor packet and make the ramen noodles as usual.

Drain off about half the water once finished cooking and toss in the cheese/egg/garlic mix

Stir until combined and eggs are rehydrated

Toss in bacon bits

Stir again

Eat.

Feel free to adjust the ratios of cheese, egg, and seasonings to find what you like best. You can leave out the egg altogether, but the sauce won't be as creamy. If you do leave out the egg, drain all of the water after the ramen is done cooking.

Review: The Allure and Peril of the Appalachian Trail

Katie Branca, former Non-Fiction Editor for *The Rumpus* and a Richmonder who fortunately prefers our trail section, and took advantage of our April trail maintenance training event reviews Steve Carpenter's recent debut.

Steve Carpenter's first book intends to do a little bit of everything. Its first 90 pages largely take the posture of an invitation (*The Allure*) to explore the history and highlights of our first National Scenic Trail. And the 50 pages that follow intend to unveil its hazards. Its tone meanders from academic to personal to "the sensational" (according to the author of its forward), and its audience, ambitiously, is everyone.

"If you have considered hiking a small part of the AT, or are an aspiring thru-hiker," or if you've already hiked the AT "but were traveling too quickly"—or "if you have no intention of ever hiking the AT" and would like to "experience some of its wonders without ever leaving the comfort of your home," Carpenter wants you to know that this book is for you.

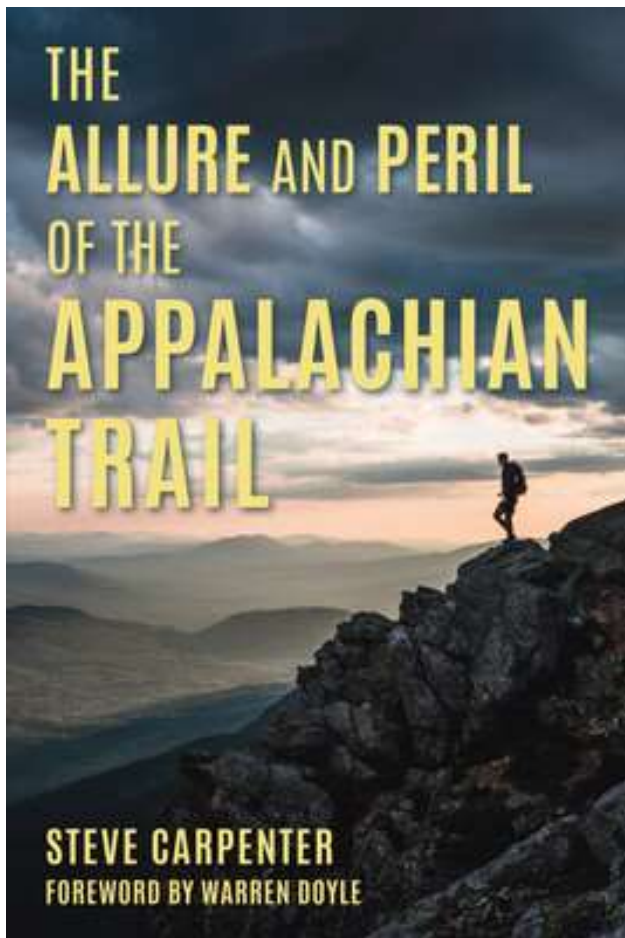
I fall through the cracks and into the same category of the author. Like Carpenter, I am a section hiker, experienced enough to tackle a hundred miles of trail or so at a time, but not quite interested in the extreme experience of a thru-hike. In reading, I found that many of the miles I have covered overlap with those that interest Carpenter. I can't help but think, as far as section-selection goes, that our author has excellent taste.

I also share Carpenter's interest in detail, which was such a focal point in the first 90 pages of *The Allure and Peril* that it almost seemed to stymie Steve's go at writing a salacious book. I didn't mind this at all. Carpenter's matter-of-fact, though pleasantly musical writing suits the delivery of research well, and researching seems to suit Carpenter. It was a delight to recognize familiar landmarks in the text and then learn more about their histories—especially histories untold by signage and your average shuttle driver.

But much as I have little interest in hiking Connecticut (a commonly reviled state among thru-hikers), I found myself moving through other sections of the book rather quickly. The guidebook section for people with limited hiking ability, for example, was lovely in its intention and clear in its execution, but something I'd recommend for a friend or family member rather than read myself. Others where Carpenter skims the surface of trail culture or remarks on the grade of the trail in New Hampshire and Southern Maine struck me as relevant only to very inexperienced hikers. Still other sections on wildlife, black flies, and ticks felt relevant only to those who live primarily indoors or far from the Eastern US—or not in the US at all.

True crime junkies (or listeners to *National Park After Dark*) might also find themselves reading sections selectively—and perhaps with some frustration. The perils outlined here are predictable. In the AT's (nearly) 100 years, murder has been extremely uncommon, and other misconduct hardly receives mention. Yes, snakes, bears, and bugs on the AT all present dangers alongside overexertion, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, dehydration, exposure, falls, and lightning.

But as Carpenter himself says, thru hikers are exposed to the greatest danger on-trail, and Carpenter is not a thru hiker. Thus, when he pivots to offering personal evidence in support of the trail's perils, he accidentally undermines the book's premise. We're asked to believe that the discovery of a bear print in the mud counts as a true bear encounter, for example; and that the



author's delay of medical treatment while at home before a section hike translates into a real trail-related medical emergency. Even the researched sections arguing for the trail's perils raised a brow. When I reached the section where Carpenter describes plane crashes not just into, but somewhat near the trail, I may have physically thrown up my hands.

In fact, I found it odd that I have faced closer encounters with the AT's shadow than our narrator, having hiked several hundred miles fewer. And though I happened across a dozen cheekily decorated piles of moose dung in Maine, I wouldn't dare consider that the magic of a moose encounter. I also wouldn't dare, given the confidence to write a book on the AT from a stance of expertise, devote any word count toward accounts of women performing sex acts (one confirmed, another supposed) or sunbathing on the trail. Carpenter considered these descriptions fitting for his *Allure* section on "Sex and Other Trail Anomalies," though I considered these sections a bit of a *Peril*, alongside detailed accounts of his seemingly persistent urinary difficulties.

I'm not sure I fault Carpenter for his attempt to write a salacious description of the AT. Sex sells, and so does danger, and Carpenter found himself in the writer equivalent of a hiker bubble. Hundreds if not thousands of books have been written about the Appalachian Trail, and more appear every year. For a historian, a new level of specificity would be necessary to unearth details not featured in Philip D'Anieri's *The Appalachian Trail: A Biography* or Sarah Mittlefehldt's *Tangled Roots: The Appalachian Trail and American Environmental Politics*. And insofar as Carpenter wanted to write his personal account, it's difficult to compete with *Grandma Gatewood's Walk* (Ben Montgomery) or *A Walk in the Woods* (Bill Bryson, of course), especially without the experience of a thru-hiker.

My intention is not to gatekeep. I believe everyone who can write is a writer and everyone who can walk outside is a hiker. But every time I see a hiker passing by, I do feel the need to announce hazards, like a snake close to the trail, a bear on it, slippery rocks, or a hairpin turn. So I'll say this to a future reader: Just as you're encouraged to hike your own hike, read your own read. If you pick up *The Allure and Peril of the Appalachian Trail*, linger in the sections that appeal to you and skip the sections that don't. Otherwise, select another book (perhaps one I've mentioned here) that matches your interests more closely and takes decidedly different turns.

Katie Branca

The Allure and Peril of the Appalachian Trail is published by Falcon Guides and widely available from major retailers.

NYC in an RV?



Yes, fellow TACT members, you CAN go RV camping in New York City—in the neighborhood of Greenpoint, in the borough of Brooklyn! [Skyline RV Camp](#) has electric hookups, free wi-fi, and bathrooms with showers (such as they are). Though it's not the most luxurious RV park on the East Coast, it is the ONLY RV park in NYC. But that's not the only reason to book a site.

The average cost of an NYC hotel room is \$250 to \$500 per day, depending on the time of year and the borough you choose (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, or Staten Island). Skyline RV Camp starts at \$85 a day, is right across the East River from Manhattan, is relatively easy to drive to, and is near the [G \(green\) subway line](#) of the [MTA](#) (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) and the [Greenpoint Ferry terminal](#) of the [NYC Ferry](#). Car camping, tents, and dogs are all allowed. And Greenpoint is a charming Brooklyn neighborhood with plenty of dining options.

INSIDER TIPS: Go for the \$85 camp sites. You can walk to the water's edge for the waterside view, and you won't be spending much time in camp anyway. Try dinner at Fornino and breakfast at Oh Mercy.



Located at the mouth of upper New York Bay, the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge connects Brooklyn and Staten Island.



Entering Brooklyn with the Brooklyn Bridge laid out before you and 20 Hudson Yards and the Empire State Building on the horizon.

My husband Richard and I enjoyed our first stay this past April. It was [nearing sunset](#) once we'd settled in, and we were ready to stretch our legs, so we took a hike over the Pulaski Bridge. The bridge spans Newtown Creek, which separates Brooklyn from Queens. The view from the Pulaski Bridge is wonderful, but even better views await you in the relatively new [Hunter's Point South Park](#) and [Gantry Plaza State Park](#), both of which are free.

Once over the Pulaski Bridge, you are at Jackson Street and 49th Ave. Take 49th to the waterfront. Don't miss the actual gantries that still stand at the historical landmark of Long Island Gantry Plaza. Be sure to walk all the way up to the historic, [neon Pepsi-Cola Sign](#) and back again. The views of the Manhattan skyline are among the very best to be had—and from this vantage point, they cost nothing.

INSIDER TIPS: Other free NYC favourites include the [Stephen A. Schwarzmann Building](#) of the New York Public Library, where you can take in excellent exhibitions and see the original [Winnie-The-Pooh dolls](#), as well as the [Oculus](#) and the [9-11 Memorial Pools](#) that sit in the footprints of the former North and South Towers

It's surprising how much nature can be enjoyed in the Big Apple if you know where to look. New York City has transformed many urban landscapes over the past two decades through ambitious and sustainable projects. The City has restored over 550 acres of natural areas, planting native species and reclaiming miles of post-industrial waterfront into flood-resilient open spaces. Gantry Plaza State Park is a great example of this transformation, but there are many to explore, such as [Pier 26](#) at Hubert Street in the Tribeca neighborhood on Manhattan's West Side. This ecologically-themed park was designed to recreate the native Manhattan shoreline that existed before human development.

Richard and I spotted a flock of Atlantic Brant geese (a lifer sighting!) on the East River shores of Roosevelt Island when we took the inexpensive [Roosevelt Island Tram](#) over from Manhattan. Once there, we also took in the historic Roosevelt Island Lighthouse and the Girl Puzzle Monument at one end of the Island and the smallpox hospital ruins and the free Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms State Park at the other. Just hop on the free, local Red Bus, which runs a continuous loop around the island.



The Empire State Building, 20 Hudson Yards & The Edge, and the Chrysler Building are all visible from the Pulaski Bridge, which spans Newtown Creek and separates Brooklyn from Queens



Atlantic Brant geese, Roosevelt Island on the East River of NYC.

There is also a [subway stop](#) (the M line) and a [ferry stop](#) on Roosevelt Island, but if you take the tram, be sure to situate yourself at a south window so you can get the best view of Manhattan. And no one will be surprised if you hum the [59th Street Bridge Song](#) and start [feelin' groovy](#) as you pass the Queensboro Bridge.



Looking north: The Queensboro Bridge with Manhattan on the left and Roosevelt Island on the right.

While exploring the many charms of [Central Park](#), Richard and I had the closest wood duck encounter of our lives. And when I stopped to ask a group of birders what they were looking at, Richard spotted a celebrity—[Birding Bob!](#) New York is certainly full of surprises. During that same stroll in Central Park, we [filmed a man playin an Erhu](#) (a traditional Chinese two-stringed instrument) as a young woman fully dressed for her quinceañera walked through my video looking for a photo shoot location. I was tempted to follow her with my camera but returned to the musician—only to find [a model dressed as an angel](#), complete with flapping golden wings, could now be spotted in my video. I love New York!



The author runs into Birding Bob and grabs a selfie!



Wood duck in The Ramble area of Central Park.



INSIDER TIPS: For gardens beyond those found in Central Park, try [Fort Tyron Park](#) and the [Met Cloisters](#) (if you haven't been, you won't believe your eyes) or head up to the [New York Botanical Gardens](#). You can take the subway to any of these locations

SUGGESTED ITINERARY: Walk a few blocks from the Skyline RV Camp to the [Greenpoint Ferry Terminal](#) and take the East River B (green) ferry across the East River to the Wall Street/Pier 11 ferry terminal. Enjoy the Manhattan skyline along the way. There is a rest room at Wall Street/Pier 11. Then take your free transfer to the St. George line (red). This will give you a fantastic tour of the Upper Bay of New York. You'll cross the East River again for two more stops in Brooklyn, passing [Govenors Island](#) along the way. Take in the view of the [Verrazzano Narrows Bridge](#) before a stop at Staten Island (St. George). Then you'll pass the Statue of Liberty and get a grand view of the lower Manhattan skyline, the [Battery](#), Freedom Tower, Little Island, and the Vessel at Hudson Yards—all for the cost of a ferry ride. This is such a great deal that you'll find at least as many tourists as locals on the St. George line.

Midtown West (Hudson Yards) is the last stop. There are rest rooms and water in the terminal, and free buses to various stops in the front of the building. Just ask. But I recommend either taking in the killer view from [Edge NYC](#) (\$34-40) or climbing the [Vessel](#) (\$10)—or both. The northern end of the Highline is there too! The [High Line](#) is a free one-and-a-half-mile elevated park and rail trail created on a former New York Central Railroad spur on the West Side of Manhattan. The north end starts near the Vessel and it ends at Gansevoort St. At the south end you can take in the [Witney Museum of American Art](#) (\$24-30) or walk over to [Little Island](#) and explore this magnificent new (2021) city park.

INSIDER TIPS: Cabs and Ubers are expensive in NYC. Take the plunge and explore other options! The [NYC Ferry](#) and [MTA](#) (NYC subway and buses) are two separate systems. Both offer reduced fares for any person 65 years or older. The application process is worth the hassle, as these rides can really add up.

The MTA fare is \$3 per ride. Reduced fare is \$1.50. You need to get an [OMNY card](#). You can apply by mail in advance, but the wait might be long. Once in NYC, you can apply at any MTA [Customer Service Center](#). Just present a driver's licence from any state and fill out a form. They will take your photo. The process takes about five minutes. You get your card on the spot. They will even help you put money on it.

[Reduced fares for the NYC Ferry](#) are \$1.45 rather than \$4.50. All you need to apply is a valid driver's licence (or legal equivalent) from any state. You will need to [download the free app](#) onto your cell phone Do this in advance of leaving on your trip.



Little Island city park (foreground) with the Empire State Building (background).

PADDLING OPPORTUNITIES: New York City offers both free kayaking programs and full-service rentals across the five boroughs. There is even an outfitter who will lead experienced paddlers on a 9-hour, 30-mile [circumnavigation of Manhattan!](#)

Free Public Programs Offered Seasonally (May-October) include the following:

- Downtown Boathouse (Pier 26, Manhattan) This is the city's largest free program. It is run by volunteers. You can take a sit-on-top kayak out for 20-30 minutes.
- Manhattan Community Boathouse (Pier 96, Manhattan) This venue offers free walk-up paddling in a protected cove with stunning skyline views.
- Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club (Brooklyn) The club provides free or low-cost paddling and tours on the historic Gowanus Canal.

The four-mile long [Hudson River Park](#) offers all sorts of boating activities: kayaking, sailing, and rowing.

Bringing your own boat? Here is a list of [NYC launch sites!](#)

If Glamping is more your style, [Collective Retreats on Governors Island](#) has “upscale tents and private suites” starting at about \$200 plus tax. But if you’re looking for a budget-friendly way to catch some Z’s in the city that never sleeps and you’ve got an RV, van, car, or tent, check out Skyline RV Camp.

Sharon McQueen, Photos by Sharon McQueen & Richard Wambold



A Greenland-style paddler and a European-style paddler on the East River with the NYC skyline behind them. The United Nations is prominent (center).



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Blue Ridge Parkway
199 Hemphill Knob Road
Asheville, NC 28803



IN REPLY REFER

April 2, 2026

Dear Volunteers,

As we celebrate National Volunteer Month, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank you for your incredible contributions to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service. Your dedication, passion, and hard work strengthen our shared mission to protect and preserve our nation's natural and cultural resources.

Each year, thousands of volunteers give their time and talents to support national parks across the country, working alongside dedicated National Park Service staff to enhance visitor experiences and conservation efforts, and this past year, volunteers played a key role in our recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Helene. Your service at the Blue Ridge Parkway has made a lasting impact.

In 2025, 1,096 volunteers contributed 39,206 hours, supporting efforts such as National Public Lands Day, living history events, music concerts, general maintenance in our campgrounds, picnic areas, roadsides and overlooks, trail maintenance on hundreds of miles of hiking trails, and citizen science surveys of our native pollinators. Whether you were welcoming visitors, leading engaging programs, roving the trails, caring for the landscape and wildlife, or preserving our cultural history, your efforts complement the work of our staff and make the park even more meaningful for all.

Your service not only strengthens our parks today but also helps ensure their beauty and significance for future generations. As we celebrate National Volunteer Month, I hope you take pride in the role you play in preserving these special places.

On behalf of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service, thank you for your commitment and generosity. We are grateful to have you as part of our team and appreciate all that you do to support both the park and the people who care for it.

Sincerely,

Tracy Swartout
Superintendent

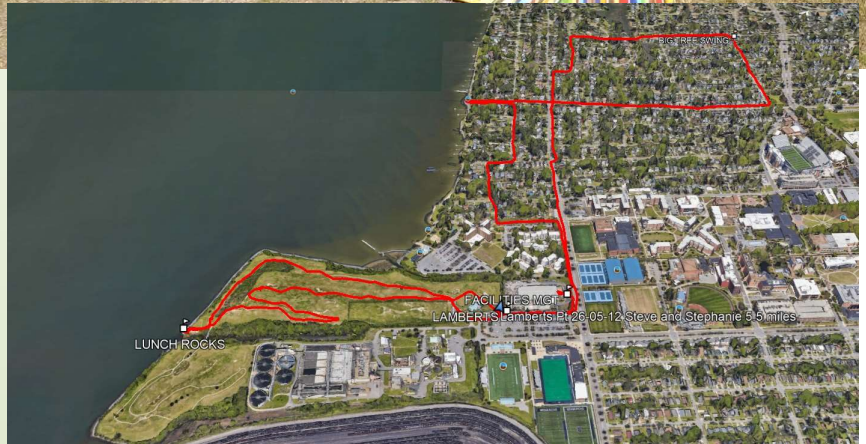
Tuesday Group



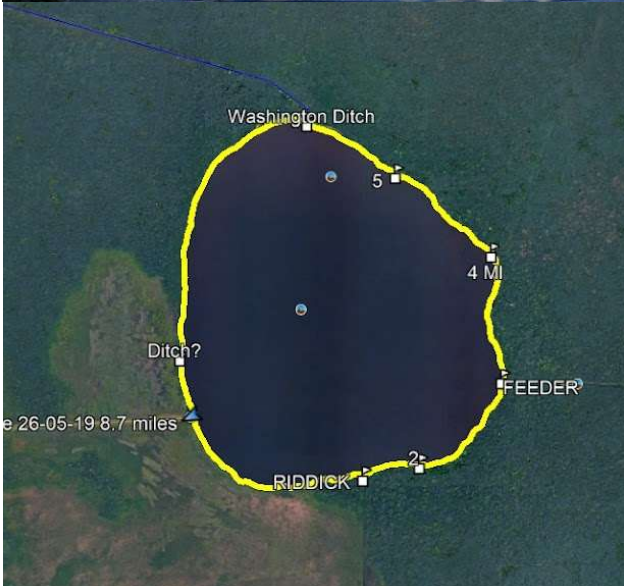
On May 5th, Bruce Julian led the TATC Tuesday Group on a 5 mile hike at False Cape State Park. It all began with a wild tram ride! Once the tram stopped, Park Manager Austin Monnett presented Bruce Julian with a lifetime achievement award and Bob Baxter received a significant achievement award. Congratulations and thanks to Bruce and Bob! Photos by Bill Billings.



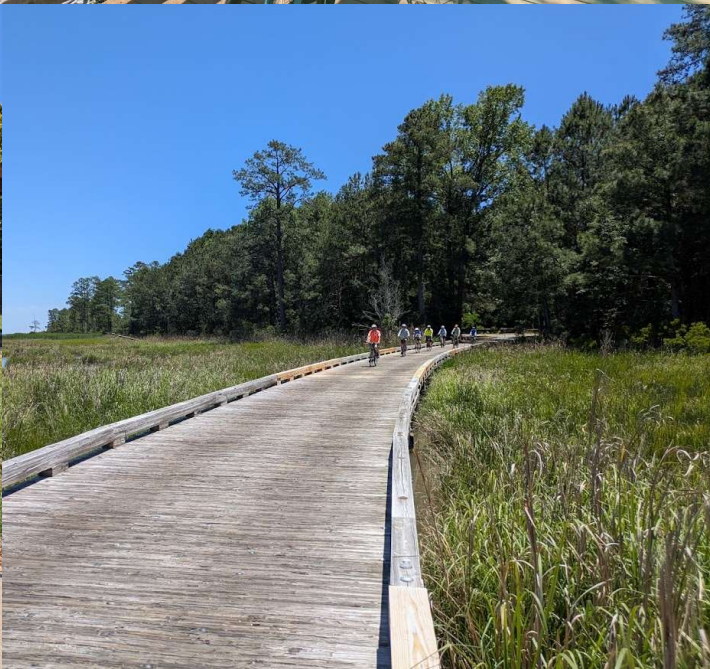
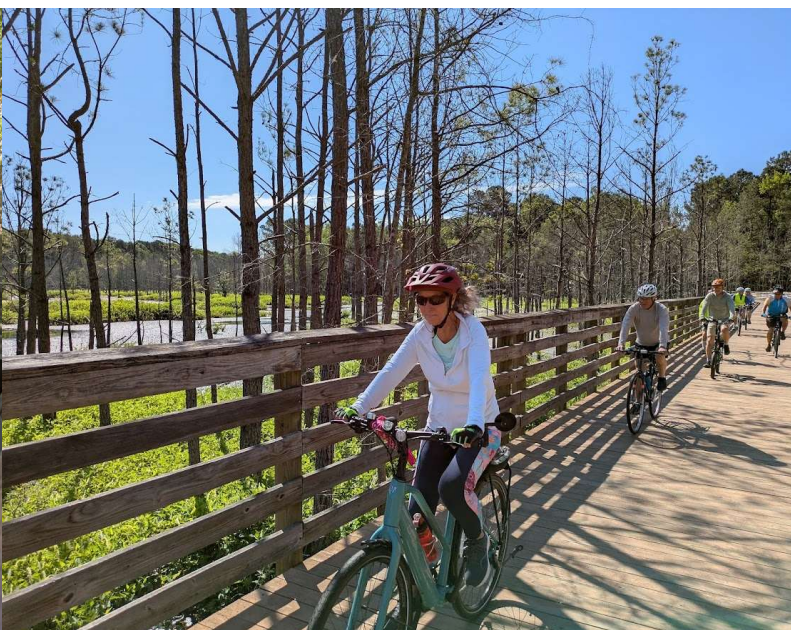
On May 12th, Steve Clayton and Stephanie Stringer lead the TATC Tuesday Group on a 5.5 mile urban hike that included the City of Norfolk's Lambert's Point Open Space, a passive/natural area open to the public. Lambert's Point Open Space contains the highest point in the City, from which one can see the downtown skyline and the best view of the Elizabeth River, bar none. As is usually the case, this Tuesday Group adventure ended with ice cream! Photos by Bill Billings.



On May 19th, Steve Lantz led the TATC Tuesday Group on a Circumnavigation paddle of the Great Dismal Swamp. It was a 95 degree day with 56 percent relative humidity. Bald eagles, ospreys, turtles, and one tiny snake were spotted. The Washington Ditch deck was the planned lunch spot, but it was found in badly collapsed condition. Photos by Bill Billings.



On June 2nd, Phyllis Neumann led the TATC Tuesday Group on a 28 mile bike ride from the Jamestown Settlement to the 10 mile mark on the Capital Trail. After the ride back, Phyllis led the group on the Jamestown Island Loop. Along the way, Vic Pisone entertained participants on a trail piano provided by Spoke & Art. The ride ended with lunch at Billsburg Brewery. Photos by Sharon McQueen.



Activities Schedule: June

For full and up to date details, contact information and sign up links, please see our [website calendar](#)

Date/Time	Description	Location
Friday 5-Sunday 7	Cabin Maintenance	White Rock Falls Trailhead, Blue Ridge Parkway, VA 23483
Friday 5-Sunday 7	Devils Backbone Trail Cleanup. Free camping at Devils Backbone Basecamp in Roseland VA Friday - Sunday with workday Saturday. ¼ mile trail. Clearing underbrush and small blowdowns, removing invasives, blazing...	Devils Backbone Basecamp, 30 Three Ridges Ln, Roseland, VA 22976
Tuesday 9 7am-5pm	Epic Nottoway River Paddle. Seven Hour, 5 Mile, One Way Paddle Down Nottoway River in Franklin, VA. Bronco Club catered lunch.	Hercules VDWR Boat Ramp, Courtland, VA 23837
Wednesday 10 7-9pm	General Membership Meeting. Program: Trail Maintenance: Water Bars (John Sima)	Episcopal Church of the Advent, 9629 Norfolk Ave, Norfolk, VA 23503
Thursday 11 9-11am	First Landing State Park Trail Maintenance. Tools will be provided, or bring your own lopper, pruner, and/or small silky saw. Event Leader: Dave Plum	First Landing State Park, 2500 Shore Dr, Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Saturday 13 8:15-10:30am	Hasty Hike. Hike several trails at FLSP totalling ~5 miles, without taking breaks. This is designed to be a workout hike averaging 20 minutes a mile or less.	First Landing State Park, 2500 Shore Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Saturday 13 6:35pm	Norfolk Tides Vs Memphis Redbirds. Minimum 20 tickets for reserved seating at field level at a special discount rate of \$17. You can buy tickets from Judy Welp.	Harbor Park, 150 Park Ave, Norfolk, VA 23510
Wednesday 17 7-8:30pm	Happy Hiker Hour - The Casual Pint of Virginia Beach. beer, pizza, and a pretzel menu from a casual eatery with tap beers and takeout cans and bottles. Outside food allowed, outdoor seating, live music.	3380 Princess Anne Rd #110, Virginia Beach, VA 23456
Friday 19-Sunday 21	Swingblade & Lopperfest 1. Camping at CCC Kitchen. On Saturday, we will get out and cut back encroaching plant growth from trails using swing blades, loppers, and shears. Additionally, we will be removing any smaller blowdowns we encounter.	Sherando Lake Recreation Area, 96 Sherando Lake Rd, Lyndhurst, VA 22952
Saturday 27 1:30-6:30pm	Second Annual TATC Back Bay/Muddy Creek Paddle & Dinner. Meet at Blue Pete's Restaurant. Paddle approximately 2.5 hours / 6 miles). Return by 4:30, load up kayaks and gather for a group dinner at 5.	1400 N Muddy Creek Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Activities Schedule: July

For full and up to date details, contact information and sign up links, please see our [website calendar](#)

Date/Time	Description	Location
Wednesday 1 7-9pm	Board Meeting	Episcopal Church of the Advent, 9629 Norfolk Ave, Norfolk, VA 23503
Sunday 5- Wednesday 8	North Bend Camping Outing. Camp, hike, bike (both in the park and on the local low traffic roads) and paddle at North Bend Park, Kerr Lake. Several sites are either on little beaches or have easy access to water for boat launching. There are also several official swimming beaches (no lifeguards). Well behaved woofers are also welcome (on leashes, of course). They have great bathrooms and showers too.	64 North End Dr, Boydton, VA 23917
Tuesday 7 3-4pm	VARO Meeting - Zoom Call.	
Wednesday 8 7-9pm	General Membership Meeting. Program: Plants of the Appalachian Trail (Dr. Kristen Wickert)	Episcopal Church of the Advent, 9629 Norfolk Ave, Norfolk, VA 23503
Thursday 9 9-11am	First Landing State Park Trail Maintenance. Tools will be provided, or bring your own lopper, pruner, and/or small silky saw. Event Leader: Cory Galdo	First Landing State Park, 2500 Shore Dr, Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Saturday 11 7:45-10am	Hasty Hike. Hike several trails at FLSP totalling ~5 miles, without taking breaks. This is designed to be a workout hike averaging 20 minutes a mile or less.	First Landing State Park, 2500 Shore Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Friday 17- Sunday 19	Swingblade & Lopperfest 1. Camping at CCC Kitchen. On Saturday, we will get out and cut back encroaching plant growth from trails using swing blades, loppers, and shears. Additionally, we will be removing any smaller blowdowns we encounter.	Sherando Lake Recreation Area, 96 Sherando Lake Rd, Lyndhurst, VA 22952
Wednesday 17 7-8:30pm	Happy Hiker Hour - The Casual Pint of Virginia Beach. beer, pizza, and a pretzel menu from a casual eatery with tap beers and takeout cans and bottles. Outside food allowed, outdoor seating, live music.	3380 Princess Anne Rd #110, Virginia Beach, VA 23456
Friday 19- Sunday 21	Swingblade & Lopperfest 2. Camping at CCC Kitchen. On Saturday, we will get out and cut back encroaching plant growth from trails using swing blades, loppers, and shears. Additionally, we will be removing any smaller blowdowns we encounter.	Sherando Lake Recreation Area, 96 Sherando Lake Rd, Lyndhurst, VA 22952

Join an Appalachian Trail Volunteer Trail Crew



Love the outdoors and want to make a difference? Volunteer with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Konnarock Trail Crew.



- **Explore the Outdoors**—From late spring through summer, volunteers spend 4 to 8 days camping and working on a section of the Trail in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, or Virginia.
- **Beginner-Friendly Volunteer Vacation**—Training, meals, tools, and gear provided. No experience needed.
- **Leave Your Legacy**—Help with projects from trail repair and relocations, rock work, or rebuilding bridges and shelters.
- **Hands-On Experience**—Work with professional crew leaders and gain skills in trail maintenance, leadership development, and recreation management.
- **Make Friends + Make Memories**—Work and have fun with others who want to protect nature and improve the A.T.

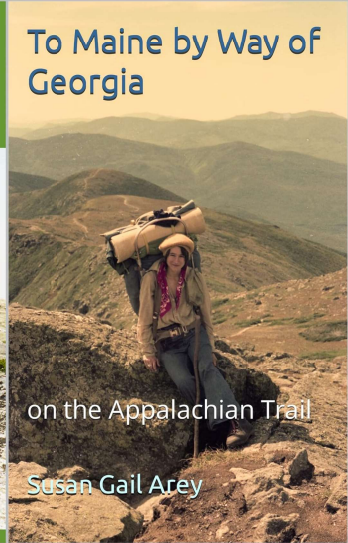
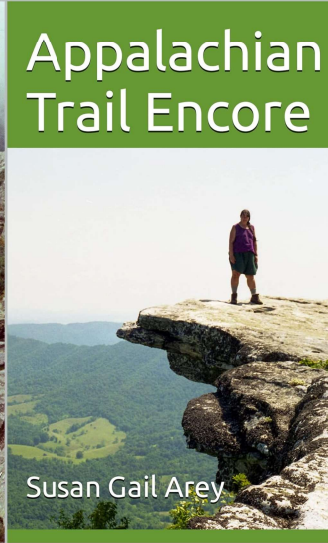
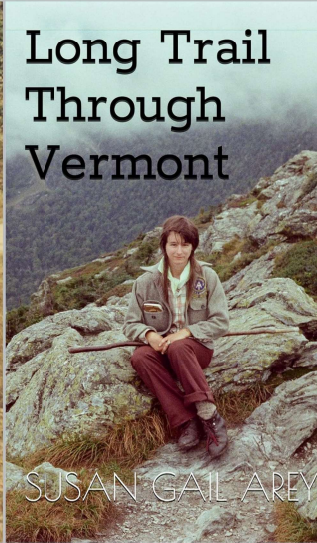


**Appalachian Trail
Conservancy**

Books by 50 Year TATC Volunteer and Author

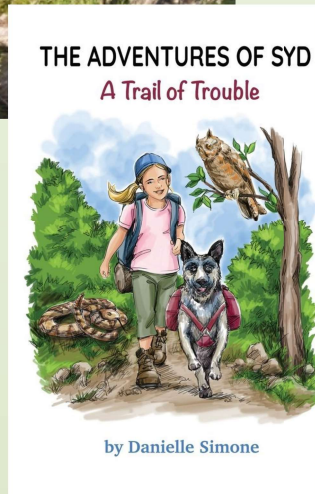
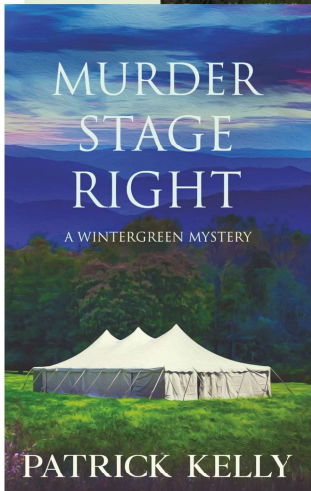
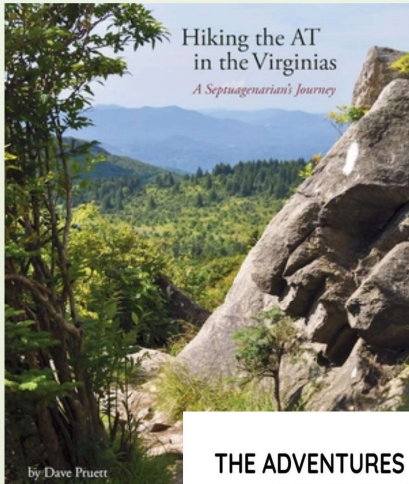
The Old Appalachian Trail in Southwestern Virginia

Susan Gail Arey



Available from fine bookstores everywhere! (and Amazon)

Other Authors



- Tours
- Hikes
- Kayak
- Wineries
- Breweries
- Birthday Parties



Customisable Group Nature Tour for up to 16 People

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club Officers and Board



Position	Name	Email
President	Lelia Vann	president@tidewateratc.com
Vice President	Jim Sexton	vicepres@tidewateratc.com
Treasurer	Andy Grayson	treasurer@tidewateratc.com
Secretary	Heather Bailey	secretary@tidewateratc.com
Trail Supervisor	John Sima	trailsupervisor@tidewateratc.com
Assistant Trail Supervisor	Kaci Midgette	assistantts@tidewateratc.com
Counselors	Jim Newman	counselor@tidewateratc.com
	Chris Butler	
	Patrick Hayes	
ATC RPC Representative	Ned Kuhns	rpcprep@tidewateratc.com
Alt ATC RPC Representative	Jim Sexton	
Awards Coordinator	Jim Newman	awards@tidewateratc.com
Cabin Committee	Chris Butler	cabin@tidewateratc.com
Education	Don Williams	education@tidewateratc.com
Facebook	Bill Bunch	facebook@tidewateratc.com
Hikemaster	Jim Sexton	hikemaster@tidewateratc.com
Land Management	Andy Grayson	landmgt@tidewateratc.com
Local Trails	Paul Heymann	localtrails@tidewateratc.com
Membership	Kama Mitchell	membership@tidewateratc.com
	Ed Welp	
Merchandise	Michelle Cobb	merchandise@tidewateratc.com
Newsletter	Joe Stell	newsletter@tidewateratc.com
Outreach	Kaci Midgette	outreach@tidewateratc.com
	Lon Carpenter	
Past President	Lee Lohman	pastprez@tidewateratc.com
Programs	Paul Heymann	programs@tidewateratc.com
Safety	Bruce Davidson	safety@tidewateratc.com
Social	Catherine Fowler	social@tidewateratc.com
Timekeeper	Greg Reck	timekeeper@tidewateratc.com
Tool Boss	Rich Seriani	toolboss@tidewateratc.com
Webmaster	Jim Sexton	webmaster@tidewateratc.com