



THE BLAZE

Newsletter of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club | Summer 2019 | July, August, September



Doug Levin, Anne Maio, Carol Broderson, Beth Minnick (Club Ridgerunner) pointing to a new bear box. Doug Levin made the hand-routed sign which points to the bear box south of Rhododendron Gap since it is not visible from the AT.

The MOUNT ROGERS APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB, a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy was organized February 29, 1960. The club has maintenance responsibilities for 59.4 miles of the APPALACHIAN TRAIL in the Jefferson National Forest, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, Grayson Highlands State Park and additional trails in the area.

MRATC RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

During the spring months we've seen beautiful wildflowers on both fun and wildflower/rare plant hikes. The highlights were seen during hikes from Whitetop to Elk Garden, a hike that started at the Pinnacle near Lebanon and ended at the Barrens, and also a Friday hike to Laurel Run near Kingsport. Attendance on hikes was from 4 to 14.

During our big Hardcore event on May 19-20 the club fed workers beginning with lunch on the 19th and ending with breakfast on the 21st. During supper on May 19 we fed Hardcore workers and the Konnarock Crew, about 45 folks, but other meals (including packed lunches) were just for about 15-20 folks. Because we planned for many more folks at each meal and Hardcore participation was down, we had a lot of leftover food, which went to the Konnarock Crew for the most part.

Submitted by Sharon Trumbley

MRATC MEMBERSHIP

During the Spring quarter we've continued to have some new memberships and many renewals of annual memberships. However, there are still many members who have not renewed for 2019. During July emails and letters will be sent as last reminders to folks who haven't renewed. These folks will be taken off the newsletter and email list if they do not renew. We hate to lose folks! If you think you may not have renewed and want to check before last reminders are sent, feel free to email the membership coordinator at trumbleys@hotmail.com and check.

TRAILS REPORT

A couple of early spring storms with extra high winds provided ample blowdown work for the club March through May. The Beartree neighborhood had two areas with eight blowdowns each, requiring three work days to clear completely. David Hatcher wielded the club's new chain saw efficiently, saving time for the crews. The club cleaned out the Trimpi shelter privy in advance of through hiker traffic, adding a bit of extra aroma to the spring ephemerals in April.

Our high country black bear population must have developed social media, as they began pestering hikers at shelter locations frequently this spring. They learned to pull down hanging food packs and began entering unoccupied tents. As a precaution, two new bear boxes were added to the four installed last fall. The locations of the six boxes are: just north of Thomas Knob Shelter, west of Rhododendron Gap, between the Appalachian Trail and Crest Trail, north of Wise Shelter, north of Old Orchard Shelter, at Hurricane Mountain Shelter, and at Trimpi Shelter. Bear warning signs, giving advice about food storage, were placed at many locations along the trail. We hope that the bears will return to their native food sources soon.

HardCore 2019, held just after Trail Days in May, was a big success, with work days and no storms. Attendance was down from last year, with 28 the Trail Days booth and 10 from Konnarock. However, enthusiasm was significant progress was made on rock stairs and drainage just south of with Grayson Highlands State park. Konnarock Crew assisted and leadership.



two beautiful signing up at high and the boundary provided

Food for the two days was provided by the club. We are grateful to Marci Holland, Park Manager, for providing the shelter facilities and camping area at no charge to the club. We received a VARO grant for \$1400 and a \$250 donation from Appalachian Long Distance Hiking Association, both of which provided supplies for this year's HardCore effort. Thank you ATC -VA Regional Office and ALDHA !

MRATC ACTIVITY SCHEDULE – SUMMER 2019

July – August – September

Trail work volunteers meet at 8:30 at the caboose in Damascus unless otherwise indicated. Updates on trail work locations and recreational hike plans are sent out by email to club members a few days prior to these activities. If you don't get club email, or to check on last minute plans, please contact Trail Supervisor, Doug Levin, at mratcinfo@gmail.com or 276-698-2805 for information on trail work or to report trail work needs. For updates on or to join a recreational (fun) hike contact mtrogersatc@gmail.com. Updates are also posted on www.mratc.org/Current Week's Information and on our Facebook page: Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club.

MRATC Friday Hikers – A moderately paced hiking group. Hikes are announced early-mid week. Contact Judith Foster at jaf@centurylink.net or 276-623-2408.

July

3 Wednesday. Trail work.

10 Wednesday. Trail work.

MRATC club meeting. Abingdon Library, 7 p.m. We will discuss this year's experience with the Hardcore program, plus committee reports. All welcome!

13 Saturday. "Wildflower/Rare plant hike". Details to be announced. Email Carol at mtrogersatc@gmail.com for more information.

17 Wednesday. Trail work.

24-31 SAWS (Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards) Crew working on Mt. Rogers spur trail.

27 Saturday. Trail work.

31 Wednesday. Crawfish Valley/AT Hike. Hike approx. 8.5 moderate miles on the AT at Groseclose Va. Beautiful Crawfish Valley has an old pioneer road running through it, and we will walk approx. 3 miles of it, road and trail, to access the AT. On the AT we will go south crossing Little Brushy Mt. Hike Leader: Marcia Pruner. Let her know if you are coming by emailing mtrogersatc@gmail.com. Meet at exit 19 Lowes at 8:30 AM.

August

3 Saturday. Trail work.

7 Wednesday. "Wildflower/Rare plant hike". Details to be announced. Email Carol at mtrogersatc@gmail.com for more information.

10 Saturday. Trail work.

16-18 Summer Naturalist Rally. For list of activities, check the website www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mnrn.

17 Saturday. Trail work.

21 Wednesday. Hike in Moses Cone National Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We will take the Flat Top Tower trail from the Parkway Craft Center to the viewing tower and return. About 6 miles round trip, moderate altitude changes, great views at the tower. Travel about 65 miles one way. Meet at Lowe's exit 19 Abingdon 8:30 AM. Bring water, snacks, and rain gear if weather threatens. Please let hike leader, Jim Warden, know your are coming by emailing mtrogersatc@gmail.com.

24 Saturday. Lewis Fork/Pine Mtn hike. Meet at the caboose in Damascus at 8:30 or at Fox Creek AT pkg lot on Rte 603 at 9:15 for hike of about 7 miles. We will carpool to Lewis Fork Trail to start, then continue uphill on Cliffside, over Pine Mtn Trail to AT, and down AT to Fox Creek pkg lot to finish. Cars at both ends. Please let hike leader, Anne Maio, know you are coming by emailing mtrogersatc@gmail.com.

28 Wednesday. Trail work.

September

1 Deadline for items for Fall Newsletter.

4 Wednesday. Trail work.

7 Saturday. "Wildflower/Rare plant hike". Details to be announced. Email Carol at mtrogersatc@gmail.com for more information.

11 Wednesday. Trail work.

14 Saturday. Hike the Hidden Valley Lake/Brumley Trail area, a 9 mile loop. Start at the dam climbing to the Brumley Trail, following it east to a bushwhack down hill to an old road. Hike to Brumley waterfall for lunch. Then follow the Brumley Creek Tr about 3+ miles back to the dam. A couple of short, but steep spots. Depending on rain could get in a few short muddy areas. Meet at 9:00 Food Country on Rt 19 N of Abingdon. Hike leader: Marcia Pruner, contact her at mtrogersatc@gmail.com if plan to hike or have questions.

18 Wednesday. Trail work.

21 Saturday. Possible date for Public Lands Day at MRNRA HQ, 10 – 2, Need several club members to lead activities and staff the club's booth.

25 Wednesday. Fall Roan Mtn hike, hopefully will see some foliage. Hike from Carver's Gap to Grassy Ridge and possibly beyond and return, for 5+ miles RT. Moderate hike with elevation gain and some rock climbing, but magnificent views. Meet 8:30 AM at parking lot on left as you go to VHCC, with SW Va Cultural Center across from. Leader: Sharon Trumbley. Contact her with questions or wanting to go on hike at mtrogersatc@gmail.com.

28 Saturday. Trail work. Also, Possible date for ATC Family Hike Day, hike needed for this day, family friendly. Also: possible date for Public Lands Day at MRNRA HQ, if not held on 9/21.



June 1st, National Trails Day, project, for which club members were joined by two Scouts and their fathers as we piled brush in a campsite on the AT just south of Damascus that has been abused by people camping there for long periods of time and leaving trash.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Susan Arey of Tidewater ATC has a book for sale, *Life After the Appalachian Trail*, about the effects of hiking the AT on hikers' life choices afterwards. Interviews are illustrated with photos of the author's quilt of the Trail. Available at Amazon.com - \$17.95 (Kindle e-book \$2.99)

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS



The club participated in three community festivals in April and May. Whitney and Isaac Peters and Janet Gibbons staffed the club's information book at Abingdon's Earth Day.

At the Virginia Creeper Trail Fest later in April, Anne Maio, Sharon Trumbley and Kathryn Herndon-Powell of the ATC set up a booth of club and AT information and an activity for festival visitors to practice selecting the most appropriate items to take on a backpacking trip. (See photo of Sharon with Kathryn in a turtle costume during the event.)

A number of club members helped staff the club's booth and Hardcore project signup at Trail Days in Damascus on May 17-18. Thanks to all who helped with these outreach opportunities!

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT



The Natural Resources Committee led four outings to celebrate the spring ephemeral wildflower season. On our favorite hike between Whitetop and Elk Garden, we monitored the rare *Cardamine clematitis*, small mountain bittercress, for the first time. We also sent in reports and photographs of great Indian plantain, fringed phacelia, and American umbrellaleaf. On future outings, we'll be keeping an eye out for summer bloomers: Gray's lily, Blue Ridge St. Johnswort, beaked dodder, and Roan Mountain rattlesnake root. We'll also get out the hand lens to study grasses and sphagnum mosses on Mt. Rogers. If you're interested in mountain flora, please join us. Our next outing is a June 5 hike to Mt. Rogers. Email to join us mtrogersatc@gmail.com



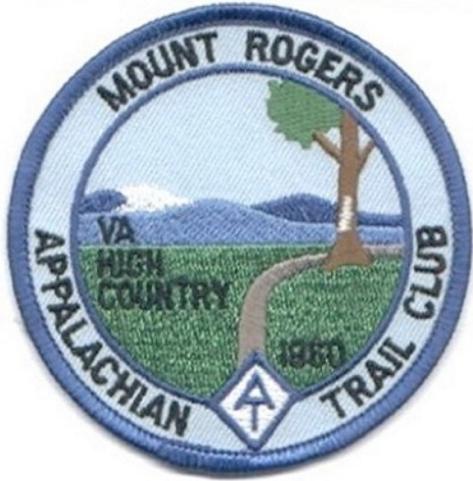
New bearbox installed at Hurricane Mtn. Shelter by club members and Evan Blevins of the Mt. Rogers NRA. Shown in the photo are Ron Bobko and Doug Levin.

Remember that if you order merchandise online from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), you can order using "Amazon Smile" and a penny for every dollar will come back to the club! Please use the following link:
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1716495>

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www.mratc.org

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Treasurer: mratctreasurer@gmail.com

MRATC information is now available via Twitter (www.twitter.com/@Mt_roversATC) and Instagram: (www.instagram.com/mountrogersATClub). Look for us under Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club