



# THE BLAZE

Newsletter of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club | Spring 2019 | April, May, June

On December 2, 2018 fifteen Emory and Henry students, two staff, and four MRATC members worked to improve trail and replace blaze posts near 601. The students are members of Emory and Henry's Outdoor Program. MRATC hopes to continue our work with local youth groups including E&H and Holston High School this spring.



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.

## THE MRATC BOARD

The club welcomes two new Board members, elected at the Feb. 23, 2019 Annual Meeting: Beth Minnick and David Hatcher.

At our November meeting, the Board voted to continue with our five person Steering Committee leadership model, which we began last year, after we discovered that no one wanted to be designated "president." After another year of working with this model, we will consider changing the club's bylaws to reflect this structure, rather than going back to having the positions of president and vice president.

A list of the current MRATC Board, Steering Committee Chairs, and Task Coordinators is included with this newsletter, with contact information in case club members would like to contact any of them during the year.

Thanks to Bill Hurlbaeus, who is leaving the Board after serving for many terms! Bill, who also served as the club's representative to the ATC Regional Partnership Committee for over ten years, will continue as RPC Alternate and as AT Community rep. for Marion/Smyth County.

### VDOT REP. SPEAKS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Our guest speaker at the Annual Meeting was Dennis Sanders from the VA Dept. of Transportation. He talked and showed diagrams of the proposed expansion of AT parking lots at Elk Garden and Fox Creek. Considerations include impact on natural resources, including some rare plants at Elk Garden. VDOT also plans installation of road crossing signs where the AT crosses high speed roads in VA, such as Rte. 58, to warn drivers of vehicles to watch for hikers crossing the road.

### MRATC RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

The club Recreational Activities Committee is responsible for coordinating club hikes, especially fun hikes, and for coordinating food for potlucks and our Hardcore effort.

During the past year we have had lots of fun hikes with varying attendance. 8-10 persons attended the biggest hikes and only 2-4 went on others. A few hikes were cancelled due to weather or lack of interest. Some of our most successful hikes were to Roan Mtn, Grayson Highlands State Park, and the Cleveland Barrens. One of the hike leaders newish to us is Marcia Pruner. She has a wealth of knowledge, and knows some hikes in places most of us haven't been. In previous years, and also presently, we have explored the AT in our area and nearby, along with the Clinch Mtn Wildlife Management Area and various places on the Iron Mtn trail and small trails that connect to the AT. We've also hiked in some of the Bristol parks. Thank you to all the hike leaders this past year: Marcia Pruner, Doug Levin, Jim Warden, Anne Maio, Sharon Trumbley, Anna Sherrill and Carol Broderson. We have been trying to get all participants to let hike leaders know if they plan to hike with us, using the [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com) address, and this has been mostly successful. If hike leaders know who plans to come, they can easily notify participants if there is a change or cancellation.

Potlucks have been held for the Konnarock Crew and for our November partnership meeting. We also fed the Hardcore participants. We are beginning to plan for this effort again, to held May 19 and 20, 2019.

Submitted by Sharon Trumbley

### TRAILS REPORT

The 2018 trail season finished strong, with a great group effort by Staff and Students from Emory & Henry College, installing new blaze posts and doing major side-hill restoration on the AT south of Route 601, Beech Mountain Road.

The first two months of the 2019 trail season were relatively quiet due to the Government Shutdown and of course, the weather. However, some trail work was gotten in, with Section Monitors completing their annual trail section assessments, which form the basis for the upcoming 2019 trail group work projects.

The remainder of the trail activity for the quarter was in the area of project planning.-

- The Trail Committee met in January to discuss member assignments for the upcoming season as well as possible future equipment purchases and the continued maintenance of existing tools.
- Planning for the Dickey Gap Bridge Replacement Project continued with the adoption of a final bridge design, the development of a materials list and appropriate purchase sourcing.

Andrew Downs, VRO Regional Director, has awarded MRATC \$ 1,300.00 to cover the cost of the materials for this project. THANK YOU ANDREW!!

Planning for the building and site location of the bridge continues. More to come in the future!

- Planning has begun for 2019 HardCore. The planned work site for this year is a continuation of the section just south of the boundary with Grayson Highlands State Park that was started last season. We have received a VRO grant for \$1400.00 and a \$250.00 donation from Appalachian Long Distance Hiking Association, both to be applied to this years HardCore effort. Thank you Andrew and ALDHA !! Our next HardCore planning meeting is March 17, 2019 at 2:00 PM, at the Damascus Public Library. If you are interested, please come and join us.

Be on the look out for new VDOT signage at AT crossings on all public road crossings. VDOT will begin installation of this signage sometime in March and continue until all crossings are posted.

If you are or have been a sawyer, please contact Gerry Davis regarding recertification. He can be reached at [grdavis53@mac.com](mailto:grdavis53@mac.com)

The 2019 trail season begins March 1<sup>st</sup>. Group trail work days are scheduled for March 2 – 9 – 16 and 27<sup>th</sup> of March. Come out and join us for the fun, fresh air and the Trail! Happy Hiking.

### WILDFLOWER UPDATE

The Natural Resources Committee, which monitors wildflowers and rare plants, invites all interested participants to come hiking with us on the following dates: Saturday, March 23, Saturday, April 20, Saturday May 4, Saturday, May 25, and Wednesday June 5. Details will be announced the week before the hike. Email Carol Broderson [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com) to be included and get more information. **Nature Note:** the very first wildflower, hairy bittercress, is making an appearance. The plant has a divided leaf and a tiny, white flower. Look for it among the weeds in your garden. Other mustard family members are gardener's favorites: broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, radish, kale and cabbage. At the height of spring, yet another mustard, creasy greens, will blanket the hayfields.

### MRATC ACTIVITY SCHEDULE, April-May-June, 2019

**Trailwork 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, please contact listed hike leader to check on last minute plans – or contact Trail Supervisor, Doug Levin, at [mratcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mratcinfo@gmail.com) or 276-698-2805 for information on trail work or to report trail work needs! Updates are also posted on [www.mratc.org](http://www.mratc.org)/Current Week's Information and on our Facebook page: Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club.**

**To participate in any Recreational (fun) hike, email [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com) by the day before the hike, so that you will be notified of any last minute changes or cancellations.**

**MRATC FRIDAY HIKERS - A moderately paced hiking group.**

Hikes are announced mid week. Contact Judith Foster at [jaf@centurylink.net](mailto:jaf@centurylink.net) or 276 623 2408 to join a hike.

**April - Reminder: to participate in any hike, please notify hike leader by the day before at the latest**

**Work Hike [mratcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mratcinfo@gmail.com), Fun Hike [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)**

**Friday Hike [jaf@centurylink.net](mailto:jaf@centurylink.net)**

**3 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**6 Saturday.** Hike at the Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve in Russell county and see many spring wildflowers. Hike about 5 miles moderate with ups and downs. Meet 9:00 AM at Food Country on Rt 19 just outside of Abingdon. Leader: Marcia Pruner.

**10 Wednesday.** Trail work.

Club meeting 7 PM at Washington County Public Library in Abingdon. All welcome!

**12 - 14 Fri. eve – Sunday.** Wilderness First Aid/CPR for those who have registered.

**13 Saturday.** Earth Day in Abingdon, Fields Penn House, 9 A.M. – 1 P.M. Theme: Sustainability. MRATC will have a booth. Need 4 people to staff it for two shifts. If interested in helping with staffing contact Whitney Peters thru [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com).

**17 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**20 Saturday.** Wildflower/Rare plant hike with possible monitoring of Fringed Phacelia in Whitetop Mtn area (details will be announced closer to hike date). Leader, Sharon Trumbley.

**24 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**27 Saturday.** 10:30 – 5. MRATC and the ATC will have a booth at Abingdon's Spring Festival (aka Va Creeper Trail Festival). Need about 8 people to staff club's booth and ATC's booth in shifts for the day. [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)

**May - Reminder: to participate in any hike, please notify hike leader by the day before at the latest**

Work Hike [mratcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mratcinfo@gmail.com), Fun Hike [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)  
Friday Hike [jaf@centurylink.net](mailto:jaf@centurylink.net)

**1 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**4 Saturday. Wildflower/rare plant hike.** Contact hike leader, Carol Broderson for details: [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com).

**8 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**10-12 Friday eve., Saturday, Sunday.** Naturalist Rally. Konnarock Community Center. See website: [blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mrn](http://blueridgediscoverycenter.org/mrn) for complete list of activities. Club members will be leading naturalist walks.

**15 Wednesday.** Trail work.

**17 – 19 Friday & Saturday.** Damascus Appalachian Trail Days. The club will have a booth and we will sign up hikers for Hardcore project. We will march in the parade at 2 p.m. Saturday. Come join us! Check Trail Days website ([www.traildays.us](http://www.traildays.us)) for schedule of activities. **We need lots of club members to help!** [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)

**19-20 Sunday & Monday.** Hardcore project – Whitetop Mtn.. Club members needed to transport hikers to and from their work site Sunday and Monday and back to the A.T. on Tuesday morning, 5/21. Also need people to bake and to help serve food at the hikers' campsite. [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)

**25 Saturday (Memorial Day).** **Wildflower/rare plant hike.** Contact hike leader, Carol Broderson, for details: [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com).

**June - Reminder: to participate in any hike, please notify hike leader by the day before at the latest**

Work Hike [mratcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mratcinfo@gmail.com), Fun Hike [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)  
Friday Hike [jaf@centurylink.net](http://jaf@centurylink.net)

- 1 **Saturday.** National Trails Day. Trail work.
- 5 **Wednesday. Wildflower/rare plant hike.** Contact leader, Carol Broderson, for details: [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com).
- 8 **Saturday.** Trail work.
- 12 **Wednesday.** Hike in Grayson Highlands State Park: waterfalls and high country, 5-8 miles. Details will be announced closer to date. Leader, Sharon Trumbley.
- 15 **Saturday.** Trail work.
- 26 **Wednesday.** Trail work.
- 29 **Saturday.** Fun Hike on the AT from Cross Mtn. Rd in

Shady Valley, TN, past the Nick Grindstaff monument to Iron Mtn Shelter, 9.2 miles in and out. Meet at the caboose in Damascus at 8:30 AM to carpool. Leader: Anne Maio.

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Mt Roger's Appalachian Trail Club currently has 204 members (some of these are family or household memberships). During the past year we've had 32 new members. Annual memberships expire March 1. If you haven't renewed your membership for this year, a membership form is part of this newsletter for you to mail in. We hope you will renew if you haven't already.

Here are the new members from this past year: Sara and David Abbott, Andrea Aloisio, Darrell Blankenship, Christopher Bobko, Mark Bobko, Ryan Bowyer, Benjamin Casteel, Charma Casteel, Bruce Cook, Jo Lynn Drew, Bob Hardee, Kimberlie Harmon, David & Sandie Hatcher, Tambra Holmes, Phillip Imel, Jodi Kemple, Roy E Knight, Norma Koscinski, Ken Lumsden, Elizabeth Minnick, Owen Parks, Dan Pettingill, Steven Rodgers, Jeannette Sanders, Stan & Anne Tucker, Montanna Walters, Jeri Ward, Richard Weintraub, Becky White, and Kathleen Ziglar.

#### EMORY AND HENRY STUDENTS WORKING ON THE TRAIL SOUTH OF 601



Remember that if you order merchandise online from [amazon.com](http://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>

Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club  
P.O. Box 789  
Damascus, VA 24236

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

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General questions: [mtrogersatc@gmail.com](mailto:mtrogersatc@gmail.com)  
Trails Committee: [mratcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mratcinfo@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: Kathy Walker, 276-475-3548 [mratctreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mratctreasurer@gmail.com)

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