

The Walker

Newsletter of the Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club

Volume 24, Issue 3

May/June 2016

President's Message

Greetings!

With spring's arrival ODATC seems to have shifted into high gear. The number of club lead hikes has shot up as well as various member's travel hike plans. I hope everyone is getting out and taking advantage of the opportunities. With the hiking activity taking off we should have a great batch of short slide presentations for our May 10 membership meeting. The May meeting is planned around member slide shows of their hikes and travel as well as the pot luck. If you'd like to contribute slides for the meeting program please contact David Olli and he'll tell you how to get your slides to him for the meeting.

Due to various issues we're running a little low on Hike leaders for the rest of the spring hiking schedule. If you can lead a hike, either a short one or a long one – in town or in the mountains, please contact Jim Hunt and talk with him about putting a hike on the ODATC Activities Calendar.

The ODATC has been busy in a number of other areas in the past couple of months as well. The Boundary Monitoring crews were able to beat an early "leaf out" season to get the 2016 Boundary Monitoring completed. This is a great opportunity to get off trail and see some of the back country of our section of trail. There are a couple of monitoring sections in need of monitors and if you're interested in taking one of those on contact Mike Shelor.

As always ODATC trail maintenance crews continue to plug along on the many trail projects aimed at maintaining and improving the best section of the AT. A significant effort was completed in April to conduct a "Trail valuation" survey for ATC. Inventorying the assets of the AT increases its competitiveness for Federal funding which has historically been near the bottom of the list. One asset of note on our section of trail was the Howardsville Turnpike cribbing section. This 900 foot section of trail is built on hand laid cribbing dating from the 19th century and is 8 – 10 feet high in places. The value of this piece of trail was estimated to be around 1 – 1.5 million dollars in replacement value! The Humpback – AT loop is a great day hike and you can walk a million dollar (+) trail in the process – check it out!

ATC is also planning another "Garlic Mustard pull" competition in the near future. If you're interested in a fun competition that is helping to get rid of this very invasive understory plant please contact Mark Heede for more information.

The ODATC board continues to work with ATC and Dominion Power to identify possible trail crossings for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project. Dominion continues to project that construction will start in 2017 and continues to work with ATC to identify AT crossing locations which minimize trail and view shed impacts to the maximum extent practicable. That said, we continue to wait for a final decision by Dominion and FERC on the project's final location and continue to monitor and participate in the discussions. There will be a new Ridge Runner on our section of trail this year, his name is J. R. Davidson.

President's Message – continued

J.R. is a longtime NBATC member with an AT through hike and over 7,000 miles of trail on his resume. J.R. will be patrolling through the height of the through hiker season so if you meet him on the trail, thank him for being out there and keeping the trail a safer and more enjoyable experience for all of us.

Our Outreach team will be participating in WCVE's "Explore the Outdoors" event again this year. This is a great event for introducing kids and their parents to all sorts of outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking and the AT. The event is scheduled for May 1 and if you're interested in helping out contact Aseeyah for details.

Our club treasurer (Jack Martin) has formalized the 2016 operating budget and is coordinating an audit of the club's finances. The budget has been posted to our website under the "Members Only" section and we will try to keep it updated as we move through the budget year. Once the audit is completed we will include that information on the web page as well.

The ODATC board formed a website re-development work group at its February meeting and the group has made great progress in moving the website re-design project forward. We are hoping to finalize the initial project scope and engage the web designer in early May.

A quick summary of some of the items that were covered at the ATC's Southern Partnership meeting: We were able to network with several individuals in state and federal agencies as well as the ATC to move the Rockfish Gap Trail head stairs project closer to reality. That project is slated to be part of ODATC's 2016 Konarock project and is a sorely needed improvement at that location. If you or anyone you know has capabilities in sourcing rock and / or operating heavy equipment please contact me as soon as possible. The window on this project's coordination is small with a start date of mid-July!

The ATC is closing in on a plan to re-vamp the Biennial meetings format. If the current proposal is accepted, the meetings will rotate through the various AT regions and clubs on a 16 year cycle. The format will remain the same for the 2017 biennial (Maine), but starting in 2019 (PA) the format will change to a four day weekend event with the business meeting be a separate event. The changes are being proposed to lessen some of the burden on clubs responsible for organizing these events (such as ODATC) and focusing the membership portion of the meetings around time periods when more members are able to attend. Virginia is scheduled to host the next biennial in 2027.

The AT License plate program is doing well but can always use more participants. Consider getting one of the plates. They're good looking and a good way to support the AT.

OK – enough updates! As you can see there is a lot going on and ODATC's board and volunteers are contributing significantly to the protection and development of the AT. There's always room for more volunteers! If you're interested in helping out please contact me or any board member and we will be glad to bring you on board. Note to all volunteers and board members - Record your hours!!

Dave

ODATC Hike Rating Codes

Hiking boots are strongly recommended for all hikes. Hikers must be properly equipped, aware of their limitations & hike within their ability. In the interest of safety, activity coordinators may refuse to allow participation by club members or their guests.

Terrain

- 1 = Very Strenuous
- 2 = Strenuous
- 3 = Moderate
- 4 = Easy

Distance

- A = More than 13 miles
- B = 9 to 13 miles
- C = 5 to 9 miles
- D = Under 5 miles

CARPOOLING Please honor the following suggested donation to your driver when carpooling to and from hikes: \$10 per rider for travel to and around the Charlottesville area (60-70 miles approx.) \$15+ per rider for travel beyond Charlottesville (over 75 miles).

Trips, Treks, and Talks/Weekday Hikes

May 2 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00 pm.

May 4 (Wednesday) Westmoreland State Park – Westmoreland Co. in the Northern Neck (C/3)

Ted McGarry (218-1238). The Mountain Laurel in bloom adds to the diversity of this hike. The hike is 6 miles and includes a salt water marsh with observation tower, shark fossils on a Potomac River beach at the foot of a cliff, Coastal woods, and finishes with views of Mountain Laurel. This is not your typical Wednesday hike. The Park is no farther away than the mountains, about 1½ hours, and a Tidewater experience. Bring your park pass or pay an entrance fee. Call for trip meeting location and time. Pack a lunch.

May 9 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00 pm.

May 10 (Tuesday) ODATC General Membership Meeting at the Science Museum of Virginia – Club Night

It's our annual pot luck dinner/club presentation night and a formal return of the club gear swap! Bring a covered main and/or side dish then sit back and enjoy as members have approximately 5 minutes to briefly talk about a few of their outdoor experiences over the past year. Submit/attach no more than 5 images in an Email to David Olli at dolli@smv.org no later than Tuesday, May 3 and I'll put 'em all in a PowerPoint presentation for the evening. We're also encouraging everyone to bring any gear they're looking to barter or give away. Here's your chance to finally rid of that extra backpack, tent, camp stove, cooking gear, snake bite kit, anything clogging up your outdoor gear storage area to someone in need.

May 11 (Wednesday) BSA Camp Findley-Albright - Southern Chesterfield (C/4)

Tim Gilbert 804-304-8841 and Ann Lankey 804-338-1771. This is a new hike about 5 miles in length. It will be entirely on trails and go down to Lake Chesdin on the Appomattox River and back. It is in southern most Chesterfield. Don't go through Petersburg. The preferred route from Richmond would be to get to Rte 10 at Chesterfield C.H., Beech Rd Rte 655, Left at Nash Rd. Rte. 636, Right on Woodpecker Rd. Rte 626, Left on Nash Rd Rte. 636 continues, Left on River Rd. Rte. 602, Right on Trents Bridge Rd. Rte 628, left at 11301 Trents Bridge Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23838. We will meet at the 1st Building on the right hand side of the entrance rd. at 9:50 AM.

May 16 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5 pm.

May 18 (Wednesday) Ashland Trolley Car Line (D/4)

Jim Hunt (hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com or 730-2364). This is a 5 mile linear hike along the old Richmond-Ashland Trolley Car Line in Ashland. Meet in the parking lot behind the Town Library at 201 S. Railroad Av. in downtown. Coming from I-95, take Rte. 54 West, and after the old Ashland movie theater, turn left on Virginia Street and follow the parking signs. No dogs please. Optional lunch. Meet at 9:50 am.

May 18 (Wednesday) Beagle Gap to Sawmill Run Overlook - SNP (C/3)

Aseeyah Rhinesmith (solitude1957@hotmail.com). We will start at the Beagle Gap parking lot on the Skyline Drive and hike 5 miles north to the Sawmill Run Overlook. There we will have lunch before returning to the car for a total distance of 10 miles. If you have never hiked past the Calf Mountain Shelter this is your opportunity. Great views of Calf Mountain! We will meet at the I-64 Rockville-Manakin Park & Ride Exit 173 no later than 8:00 A.M.

May 23 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00pm

May 25 (Wednesday) 'Center of the Universe' Parks (D/4)

Jim Hunt (hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com or 730-2364). Ashland has many small neighborhood parks. We will walk through many of them as we enjoy this small college town. Meet in the parking lot behind the Town Library at 201 S. Railroad Av. in downtown. Coming from I-95, take Rte. 54 West, and after the old Ashland movie theater, turn left on Virginia Street and follow the parking signs. No dogs please. Optional lunch. Meet at 9:50 am.

June 1 Wednesday Hike Season Finale @ Lake Anna State Park - Spotsylvania Co. (C/4)

Jim Hunt (hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com or 804-730-2364). Eight mile hike in a mostly hardwood forest with occasional views of Lake Anna and creeks in the park's interior. Lunch in Mineral. The Park is about one hour northwest of Richmond. Meet at the I-64 Oilville Park and Ride Exit 167 to carpool as there is a car entrance fee. Meet at 8:30 AM.

June 6 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00 pm.

June 20 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00 pm.

June 27 (Monday afternoon) Buttermilk/Northbank Trails Loop - James River Park - RVA (C/2)

Diana Nunez-Hoyle (diana.nunezhoyle@gmail.com or 317-4779). This is one of a series of fast paced Monday afternoon hikes taking advantage of Daylight Savings Time. The 8 mile hike traverses Browns Island to the pipeline, crosses the 14th street bridge and connects with the Buttermilk via the Floodwall, recrosses the River on the Boulevard Bridge, connects to the Northbank Trail ending at the cars. Meet at the free parking lot on Tredegar St. between the Lee Bridge and 2nd St. Bring water and snacks. Dinner option at Piccola's near VCU. Meet at 5:00 pm.

Trips, Treks, and Talks/Weekend Hikes**May 1 (Sunday) Bear Church Rock (B/ 2)**

Come to church with me Sunday, May 1 - Bear Church Rock. This hike is about 5 miles each way out and back through mountain forests, with a great view point at the turn around point. There is about 2,800 feet elevation gain and loss, with a lot of up and down. The last time I did this hike, I actually did see two young black bears, but no guarantees! We will meet at 7:30 at the Rockville park and ride (Manakin (exit - 173 - on the north side of I-64 Park and Ride at exit 173 on I-64), and carpool to the trailhead, leaving the Park and Ride at 7:45. You can see photos and an account of the hike here:

<http://o2bhiking.blogspot.com/2012/06/bear-church-rock.html> Art Ritter
(o2behiking@yahoo.com) E-mail Art to confirm you are going.

May 1 to May 5 (Sunday to Thursday) Va. Creeper Trail Ride and Hike

1 May--Travel to Damascus. Happy hour, grilled hamburgers for supper as no restaurants open on Sunday.

2 May---Ride Damascus to White Top Station and return or: Shuttle to White Top Station, ride to Damascus, which is all downhill. 3 May---Hike Mount Rogers from Grayson Highlands State Park (8 miles round trip.1200 ft up)

4 May---Ride Damascus to Abingdon and back or shuttle to Abingdon and ride to Damascus. Return to home or stay another night, return home on 5 May. Headquarters will be the dancing Bear B&B in Damascus. Rental bikes are available in Damascus. E-mail Alec Alexander at jrob505@verizon.net for details

May 7 (Saturday) Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail - South of Charlottesville (B/3)

This hike is on a rails-to-trail adaptive reuse of the former railroad bed about 2 hours west of Richmond in the foothills of Nelson County. The Trail has a 100 foot elevation change and the scenic Piney and Tye River valley views. This is an out and back hike for a total of about 10 miles. Bring water and lunch for the trail. A porta potty is available at the trailhead. Bikers are welcome to ride the full 15 miles of the trail. Contact Jim Hunt for time and meeting point. hikerjimhunt@hotmail.com or 804-730-2364

May 13 - 15 (Friday - Sunday) 30th Appalachian Trail Days Festival in Damascus, VA (N/A)

The annual Trails Days Festival is held in Damascus, VA to honor hikers of the Appalachian Trail. Major events include a high-spirited hiker's parade, a hiker's talent show, a variety of live entertainment, presentations on various hiking topics, and displays by gear manufacturers, outfitters and other vendors. For more information visit: www.traildays.us. Contact Ken Baker at 804-572-3808 or lightfoot230@juno.com

May 14-15 (Saturday – Sunday) Patterson Ridge Backpack - SNP (B/3)

Jenni Pendergrass (804-221-3226 or japendergrass@hanovercounty.gov). Circuit overnighiter with camping along the Big Run Portal stream. The plan is to park at the Ivy Creek Overlook at MP 77.5, head south on the AT for about 2.5 miles and cut over to Loft Mountain Wayside for a nice lunch stop (burger and a blackberry milkshake?). After lunch, it's back down the parkway to pick up Patterson Ridge Trail. A slight bit of roller coaster hiking at first then straight down the ridge to our stream side campsite. Should be about 6 miles total for the day. Plenty of time for setting up camp, wading in the creek, more hiking or just chilling out. Sunday morning we will pick up the Rocky Mountain Run trail back to the Brown Mountain Overlook. A short walk on the parkway takes us back to our cars.

May 21 (Saturday) Annual Rivanna Trail Hike. (A/3)

Loop hike along the Rivanna Trail encircling Charlottesville generally following the Rivanna River and other streams and joining various city parks and neighborhoods. Total distance is about 19.5 miles. This is a long but fairly easy hike; don't let the distance scare

you - doable by anyone in reasonable good physical condition. Contact Ken Baker at 804-572-3808 or lightfoot230@juno.com.

May 21 & 22 (Weekend) Tinker Cliffs - McAfee Knob Hike

Leave Richmond on Saturday morning, May 21, and drive to Roanoke. I would like to start the hike where the AT crosses route 220 at Troutville. The hike would end where the AT crosses 311 at Catawba. Car(s) would have to be shuttled to the end point (my Dad lives in Roanoke if there is only one car, so he can help out here). Get lunch in Roanoke and then start the hike sometime Saturday afternoon. I would like to hike to Lamberts Meadow shelter (guess around 7 miles) and then stay the night. On Sunday, May 22, we hike out to 311 (guess around 10 miles). On Sunday we would hike by the iconic views at Tinker Cliffs and McAfee Knob. If the group is up for it we could eat at the Home Place on Sunday and then head back to Richmond. E-mail Bert Norfleet for meeting time and place.

bert.norfleet@dom.com

May 23-Wed 25 (Monday) Douthat State Park (2 nights in cabin 3BR)

Leave Mon 8:00 AM. Monday afternoon hike Beards Mountain in Douthat SP, 7 miles. Tues hike Blue Suck Falls in Douthat SP, 9.4 miles. Wed on the way home hike Mount Pleasant 5.5 miles. Cabin 3BR has 4 bunk beds in 1 room, 2 single beds in another, 1 double bed in another. So far there are 3 men signed up for 3 bunk beds. Check out the the park website for more info on the cabin and trails. The cabin has a full furnished kitchen for those who want to cook. Clifton Forge is about 8 miles away for those who like to eat dinner in a restaurant. Linens are furnished. Cost will be about \$50 for the cabin depending on the number of people and \$20 for gasoline. This is the same as the trip that Bill Tennant sponsored last Fall. Alec Alexander jrob505@verizon.net 833-0361

June 10 - 11 (Friday - Sunday) Capital Trail Biking & Camping (N/A)

Saturday at 9:30 AM we will bike to Jamestown Island from Chickahominy Riverfront Campground. Roundtrip will be 12-20 miles depending on side trails taken. Bring a lunch so we can eat on the point. The park is located at 1350 John Tyler Memorial Highway (Route 5), Williamsburg, VA 23185. Camping reservations can be made by calling 757-258-5020. Website: www.jamestowncitycountyva.gov/recreation/parks/chickahominy-park.html Contact Janet Bailey: jbcornsilk@gmail.com

June 18 - 25 (Saturday - Saturday) 31th Annual James River Batteau Festival (N/A)

A fleet of replica batteau and various canoes and kayaks navigate the James for a week from Lynchburg to Maidens Landing in Goochland. Camping is available at stops along the way. For more information visit: www.vacanals.org/batteau. I am planning a self-supported canoe trip down the James during the Festival starting in Lynchburg and finishing a few days later probably at Scottsville. If you are interested in joining me on this trip, contact Ken Baker at 804-572-3808 or lightfoot230@juno.com

Upcoming Events

Don't Forget our Annual Pot Luck Dinner!

May 10, 2016: It's our annual pot luck dinner/club presentation night and a formal return of the club gear swap! Bring a covered main and/or side dish then sit back and enjoy as members have @ 5 minutes to briefly talk about a few of their outdoor experiences over the past year. **WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS!!!!** Submit/attach no more than 5 images in an Email to David Olli at dolli@smv.org no later than Tuesday, May 3 and I'll put 'em all in a PowerPoint presentation for the evening. We're also encouraging everyone to bring any gear they're looking to barter or give away. Here's your chance to finally rid of that extra backpack, tent, camp stove, cooking gear, snake bite kit, anything clogging up your outdoor gear storage area to someone in need.

September 13 General Meeting: Speaker TBA

November 8 General Meeting: Speaker Rex Springston, retired RT-D environment/ecology reporter, topic TBA

October 23 (Sunday) ODATC's Club Picnic

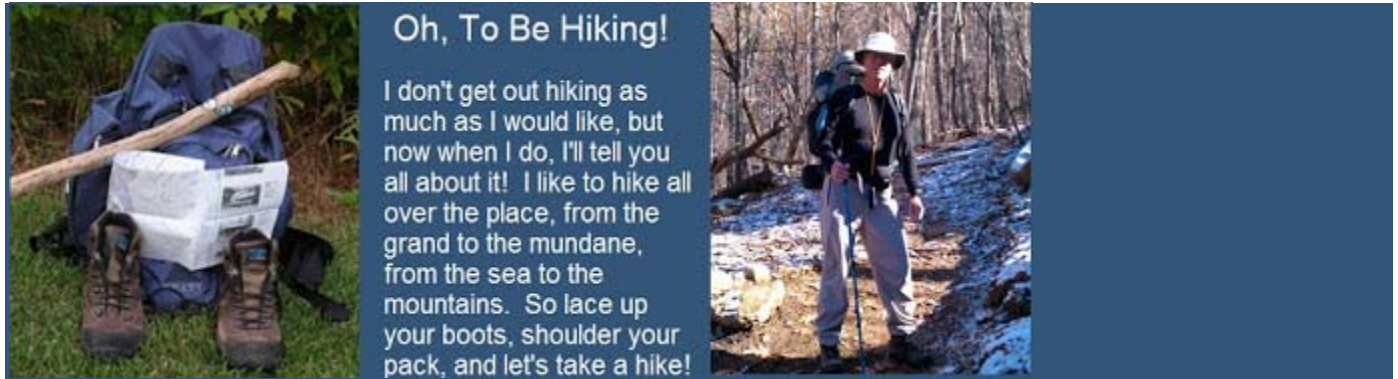
ODATC is having a club picnic for its members and guests at Powhatan State Park in the shelter by the river. The club will provide hamburgers, hotdogs and non-alcoholic drinks. Club members are asked to bring a dish. The picnic starts at 3:00 and we eat at 5:00 pm. There may be some hiking first. E-mail Cathy Maxwell at cathymaxwell@me.com if you are coming, please respond with the number of people in your party and if number of non-meat eaters.

All general club meetings are now being held on the second Tuesday of January, March, May, September and November at The Virginia Science Museum located at 2500 West Broad Street, Richmond VA 23220-2057. The meetings officially begin at 7:00 PM, but members are encouraged to arrive 30 minutes early for socializing. Snacks to share are always welcome. For more information contact David Olli at odatc.programs@gmail.com.



A great hike in the Dismal Swamp!

Courtesy of Art Ritter
o2behiking@yahoo.com



SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2016

Dismal, No; Fun and Interesting, Yes!

One of my hiking goals for the last couple of years is to lead some hikes, and as part of that, get more active in the local hiking group, the Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club (ODATC). Yesterday, my day off, I took some action towards that goal by leading a group ODATC hike on the Washington Ditch Trail in the Great Dismal Swamp. This trail goes to Lake Drummond, one of only two natural lakes in Virginia. This large (3,100 acres) lake was likely formed by either a meteor impact or by a long burning huge wild fire in a deep peat deposit. Four of us hiked this together yesterday. It was a great group of people to spend a day out together in a place that was far from dismal.



The hike was an out-and-back, with a total distance of 10.2 miles. The pathway was level, smooth, and dry, even though there was wet swamp all around us. Near the trailhead, there is an interesting "boardwalk" pathway that goes through the swamp, and it is well worth taking.



We saw a fair amount of wildlife: turtles (common snapping turtle, red-bellied slider, and yellow-bellied slider); black vultures; pileated woodpeckers; a large cottonmouth; double-crested cormorant; three unknown ducks; great blue heron; several groups of butterflies; and some kind of a carnivore from a distance. We think the latter was a bobcat, as it appeared to have (through binoculars) a cat-like face, short ears, and no prominent tail, but we couldn't rule out a grey fox. We decided bobcat, 90%. My last hike here, three years ago, [I saw this animal](#) - but not this time.

There are many other pathways to explore in what is left of this large swamp, much of which has been drained and converted to housing developments, farms, and woodlots. The part that remains (113,000 acres plus the lake) is a national wildlife refuge and "contains some of the most important wildlife habitat in the mid-Atlantic region." The Washington Ditch trail is a straight shot to the lake, and is very pleasant and interesting. Water is always to one's right walking to the lake, and quite often on the left was well. There are large stands of cypress and other water tolerant trees the entire way.

Here are a bunch of photos from our never-dismal hike, starting with Jeff, Jo Lee, and Aseeyah at the start of the hike.



This hike has some historic significance as well as great natural history. George Washington did the original survey work for a canal here.



This is typical of the swamplands along the pathway.



A raccoon passed this way and left its tracks.



Spring flowers, such as this violet, are beginning to bloom here.



This group of butterflies, which I believe are zebra swallowtails, were clustered on some animal scat. There were also a few tiger swallowtails that came in to the cluster at times.



We saw many turtles, like this yellow-bellied slider, catching some rays on this day with temperatures in the mid-Seventies (F).



Along the hike, we found many pieces of wood that had been cut by beaver and stripped clean of bark, one of their major food sources. And near Lake Drummond, we saw a beaver lodge.



Lake Drummond, one of Virginia's two natural lakes.



The lake water looks a bit like weak tea from the tannic acid.



We saw this large water moccasin (cottonmouth) near the lake shore. Although we were just feet away, it was not aggressive - nor were we. With binoculars, we could see the "pit" on its snout, which makes it a member of the pit vipers.



Swamps were once considered wastelands, but we now know that they are very important ecologically. Plus, they are just plain interesting.



Cypress "knees" are part of the root system of the cypress, and are believe to help anchor the tree's shallow roots in a wet environment and perhaps aid in the oxygenation of the tree's roots.



We all agreed that this was a fun day hike, and beat working (for those who still work). Aseeyah thought that it would be great to come back here for a night hike to explore the swamp after dark, which would be very cool with headlamps or even in a bright full moon. And she and I thought that coming here a couple of times a month year round and taking careful note of the changes would be a great natural history study (she and I are both studying in the Virginia Naturalist program).

Greetings from Membership

We have 326 Active members as May 1, 2016.

Our membership totals 421 and includes overdue renewal or lapsed members. Please kindly review your status so Treasurer, Jack, and I can maintain an orderly camp!

Welcome to New Members

As of May 1, 2016, we have two new members. Beth Lucas and Margaret Malzahn, welcome to the club!

On a personal note I would like to thank all who responded and stepped up (Austen G. and Catherine M.) to assist the club (and me) with membership duties!

Regards and safe travels,
John Spindler

Notes from the Trail – John Spindler
A missive from a woman who made donations to AT clubs

Comment: I'm hiking the southern half of the AT and am making a donation to each of the clubs that maintain a section. THANK YOU!

Diane from New York

From John:

Ms. Diane,

Thank you so much for the donation!!! We are very proud to be able to maintain "The Tail" from Rockfish Gap to Reeds Gap, one of the most well maintained sections. We have kiosks on both termini.

When are you heading out?

Best of luck, enjoy, and be safe!

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

John Spindler, Cathy & Austen Maxwell,

Membership

Hi John and you're welcome. I'm glad I'm in a position to give back a little. I leave Springer on May 16, hope to be at Harper's Ferry by mid-August. I'll be sure to extra-admire the trail from Rockfish Gap to Reed Gap.

Diane

Paul Wolfe Shelter Journal September 11, 2015

Excerpt from a thru-hiker

. . . Can't believe it's 9-11 . . . 14 yrs . . . spent time at ground zero when it was a smoldering pile. How soon we forget . . . I'm grateful to be hiking today with my lovely bride of 20 yrs who dreaded to day hike with me . . . finally ☺ . . . and my pups Digo and Esso. Grateful to be free in America and hiking the AT. . . Grateful for those who have sacrificed for our freedoms. . . Just grateful and happy. . . Blaze on!



Appalachian Trail Names

Rockfish Gap VA

The original spelling was “Roche fish,” which suggests a surname. Most likely, it was corrupted by a scribe (and now sounds like the Chesapeake-area term for striped bass). The land near the gap and the river was called Rockfish in a 1728 land grant. The site is famous for a meeting that took place here in 1818 at the Mountaintop Tavern, which no longer exists. 28 people, including former presidents Madison, Monroe, and Jefferson, and chief justice John Marshall, gathered to decide whether the University of Virginia should be located in Lexington, Staunton or Charlottesville.

Butterfly south of Rockfish Fish Gap



Blue Bells



2016 ODATC Board of Directors

(Area Code 804)

President	David Grimes	833-8974	odatc.president@gmail.com
Vice President	Open Position		odatc.vicepresident@gmail.com
Secretary	Sue Kropp	276-0070	odatc.secretary@gmail.com
Treasurer	Jack Martin	784-1979	odatc.treasurer@gmail.com
Programs	David Olli	928-8702	dolli@smv.org
Land Mgmt.	Mike Shelor	264-8308	odatc.landmgmt@gmail.com
Membership	John Spindler	746-4717	odatc.membership@gmail.com
Trail Maint.	Mark Heede	364-1658	odatc.trailmaint@gmail.com
Activities	Jim Hunt (weekend events)	730-2364	odatc.activities@gmail.com
	Ted McGarry (weekday events)	218-1238	odatc.activities@gmail.com
Newsletter	Brooks Godwin	263-6572	odatc.newsletter@gmail.com
Outreach	Aseeyah Rhinesmith	382-6186	odatc.outreach@gmail.com
Webmaster	Larry Kidd	784-3617	odatc.webmaster@gmail.com

Board meetings are typically held the first Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Meeting dates are occasionally changed so please contact the president for times and location. All meetings are open to the membership.



Lest we forget...

The ODATC Mission

- The construction and maintenance of foot trails for hikers, including the trail between Reeds Gap and Rockfish Gap.
- The provision of excursions on such trails or other areas
- Offering educational activities related to the need for preserving the great outdoors.

THE WALKER

***The Walker* is published bi-monthly
with the submission deadlines by the 15th
of the pre-publication month.
Club member stories and photos are welcome!
Please send your material to
odatc.newsletter@gmail.com.**