

Oct
2026

THE POTOMAC APPALACHIAN



**-CentennialFest and Award
Nominations Closing Soon!**

-President's Logbook

-Centennial Stories

-Introducing PATC's New Supervisor of
Outreach

**-SSVC Chapter Unblocks the Carr
Mountain Trail**

-Staying Safe on the Trail

-Derocking the Roller Coaster

-Phil Paschall (May 12, 1946-July 10,
2026)

-Keep Calm and Read On: Way Out West

-What's that Flower?

Meet the Candidates: 2026 PATC Executive Committee Election

As PATC prepares to enter its second century, members will have the opportunity to help select the volunteer leaders who will guide the Club through this milestone and beyond.

The PATC Executive Committee (ExCom) is made up of elected officers who help oversee the Club's programs, operations, volunteers, trails, lands, facilities, communications, membership, outreach, and other key areas. The 2026 election will determine the next group of officers responsible for helping carry PATC's mission forward.

This year's candidates bring a wide range of PATC volunteer experience, professional expertise, and fresh perspectives on the Club's future. Get to know more about our candidates below.

Bob Gaylord: Candidate for President

Bob Gaylord brings extensive experience in both trail stewardship and PATC leadership. A longtime volunteer, Bob has served as a trail maintainer and District Manager for the Tuscarora South Trail District and currently serves on PATC's Executive Committee as Supervisor of Membership.

His experience gives him a perspective that spans both PATC's hands-on work in the field and the organizational responsibilities involved in leading the Club. As PATC approaches its centennial, Bob is seeking the presidency with an emphasis on supporting the volunteers, programs, and organizational systems that allow PATC to carry out its mission.

Lee Congdon: Candidate for Vice President of Operations

Lee Congdon is seeking to continue serving as PATC's Vice President of Operations. A PATC life member and avid hiker, Lee has played a significant role in the Club's recent efforts to modernize its technology and internal processes.

As Chair of PATC's IT Steering Committee, Lee has helped lead projects including new volunteer work-reporting applications, replacement of the Club's legacy membership management system, development of the new PATC website, and broader business-process reengineering efforts.

Lee's professional background includes serving as Chief Information Officer at Red Hat and Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Ellucian. His priorities include continuing to strengthen PATC's operations while engaging members and volunteer leaders in identifying the Club's evolving needs.

Jayne Mayne: Candidate for Vice President of Volunteerism

Jayne Mayne is seeking a second term as Vice President of Volunteerism, with a particular focus on PATC's centennial and the volunteers who have shaped the Club throughout its history.

A PATC member since 2008, Jayne has spent much of her time with the Club building volunteer programs and bringing members together. She led the hiking program for the 2015 ATC Biennial, an effort involving approximately 400 volunteers and 70 hikes. She later served as Supervisor of Membership and created TrailFest in 2024, followed by VolunteerFest in 2025. She is currently co-chairing CentennialFest 2026 and helping plan PATC's broader centennial activities.

Jayne's priorities include recognizing PATC's longtime volunteers while welcoming new generations into the Club and developing new volunteer leaders. Her professional background includes finance and budgeting, organizational development, and labor relations.

Rush Williamson: Candidate for Supervisor of Membership

Rush Williamson brings more than 25 years of PATC membership and volunteer service and 17 years of experience on PATC's Council and ExCom.

His PATC involvement began with the South Mountain trail crew. Following his 2008 Appalachian Trail thru-hike, he became a trail maintainer at Annapolis Rock and later on the Catoclin Trail. His service has also included work as a District Manager, crew chief, Trail Talker, and Supervisor of Outreach.

Rush sees membership growth and volunteer recruitment as closely connected. His priorities include building on PATC's recent membership growth, finding additional ways to introduce people to the Club, and strengthening the volunteer base that makes PATC's work possible.

Outside PATC, Rush worked professionally as a project manager and has held volunteer leadership positions with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Project Management Institute, and Boy Scouts. He received PATC's Myron Avery Award in 2012.

Matt Waurio: Candidate for Supervisor of Communications

Matt Waurio currently serves as PATC's Supervisor of Communications and has been involved in strengthening how the Club tells its story to members and the broader trail community.

During his time in the role, Matt has contributed extensively to the Potomac Appalachian and PATC's communications surrounding its upcoming centennial. He is leading the Club's

Centennial Stories/community history initiative, which is working to collect and preserve photographs, videos, documents, oral histories, and personal stories from PATC members and volunteers.

His work has also included representing and documenting PATC's involvement in the broader Appalachian Trail community, including the Club's participation at Appalachian Trail Days. As PATC enters its centennial year, communications will play an important role in connecting the Club's history with its future and sharing the work of its volunteers with new audiences.

Bob Malkowski: Candidate for Supervisor of Outreach

Bob Malkowski is seeking to serve as Supervisor of Outreach, a position focused on strengthening PATC's connections with members, prospective members, partners, and communities throughout the Club's service area.

Bob has been involved with PATC's Hikes Committee and other efforts that introduce people to the Club and its programs. His recent volunteer work has also included helping develop PATC's Centennial Stories submission system, which allows members and friends of PATC to contribute photographs, videos, audio recordings, documents, and other materials for preservation as part of the Club's history.

In the outreach role, the focus will include expanding opportunities for PATC to connect with the public through events, partnerships, ambassadors, and programs that introduce more people to the Club's trails, cabins, volunteer opportunities, and conservation work.

Anstr Davidson: Candidate for Supervisor of Facilities

Anstr Davidson is seeking to continue serving as Supervisor of Facilities, overseeing an area that includes PATC's cabins, shelters, and other facilities.

Anstr has approximately 15 years of experience volunteering at the PATC Cabin Desk and has served multiple times as Acting Cabin Coordinator. He currently chairs the Cabin Reservation Committee and previously helped draft the first half of PATC's cabin book. His trail experience includes serving as Manager of the North Massanutten Trail District and as a trail maintainer.

Anstr has also accumulated 10 years of ExCom experience, including service as Supervisor of Communications, Vice President for Volunteerism, Secretary, and Supervisor of Facilities.

His stated priorities for PATC's facilities program center on providing a positive experience for cabin renters and shelter visitors, making volunteer service rewarding, and ensuring the

Club receives a fair return from its cabin program. He also points to long-term questions involving aging facilities, volunteer recruitment, maintenance costs, potential new cabins, rental rates, and the future of PATC's cabins in Shenandoah National Park.

Pete Minderman: Candidate for Supervisor of Lands

Pete Minderman brings extensive hands-on trail and land stewardship experience to his candidacy for Supervisor of Lands.

Pete currently serves as PATC's Supervisor of Lands and is also a District Manager for the Catoctin Trail District. His involvement with PATC includes leadership in the Old Scouter Trail Crew and work supporting trail maintenance and stewardship in Maryland.

The Supervisor of Lands plays an important role in PATC's work to protect the lands and trail corridors entrusted to the Club. The position works at the intersection of conservation, property stewardship, partnerships, and the long-term protection of the landscapes that support PATC trails.

Tom Fay: Candidate for Treasurer

Tom Fay is seeking the position of Treasurer, bringing his professional and volunteer experience to one of PATC's key organizational leadership roles.

In addition to his professional background, Tom has become involved in PATC's hands-on trail stewardship work. In 2026, he participated in PATC's Crew Trail Maintainer training program with the Hoodlums in Shenandoah National Park, learning core trail-maintenance skills including erosion-control work, blazing, weeding, and other maintenance techniques. Following the training, he signed up to become the maintainer for the Sugarloaf Trail.

As Treasurer, the position is responsible for helping provide financial oversight and supporting sound stewardship of the resources members, donors, volunteers, and partners entrust to PATC.

Juliana Nicolini: Candidate for Secretary

Juliana Nicolini is seeking to continue her service as PATC Secretary.

As a member of ExCom, the Secretary plays an important role in maintaining the records of the Club's leadership and supporting effective governance and continuity. The position helps ensure that decisions, meetings, and other official ExCom business are appropriately documented as PATC manages a wide range of volunteer programs, properties, partnerships, and organizational responsibilities.

Juliana's experience on the current Executive Committee provides direct familiarity with PATC's governance and the administrative work required to support the Club's elected leadership.

Positions Without Candidates

At the time of publication, no candidates have come forward for Supervisor of Marketing or Supervisor of Trails.

Make Your Voice Heard

PATC has always been powered by volunteers. From maintaining trails and cabins to leading hikes, protecting land, welcoming new members, managing programs, and serving in elected office, members have shaped the Club for nearly a century.

The 2026 election is an opportunity for members to learn more about the volunteers who have stepped forward to serve and to participate in selecting PATC's next Executive Committee.

Voting will begin October 1st and end on October 31 – all eligible voters will receive an email from Electionbuddy with their unique link to vote, so stay tuned.

We encourage all eligible PATC members to review the candidates' full statements and participate in the 2026 election.

Learn more about the election and read the candidates' complete statements at [**patc.net/elections**](https://patc.net/elections).

President's Logbook

By Jim Fetig

I like falling asleep in my tent to the sound of gentle pattering rain drops splashing on the fly. It's soothing white noise that offers an open invitation to dreamland. I will admit to occasional rain-



induced nightmares about packing up a wet tent.

The circumstances at the Hoodlums 32nd annual training workshop was slightly different. Have you ever tried to sleep with acorns hammering your tent fly like they'd been dropped by a B-52? It would be easier following a bass drum in a marching band.

The hard mast is good news this year. That's the nuts and seeds such as acorns, hickory nuts, and beechnuts, which are high in fat and protein. The hard mast provides critical energy for bears as they prepare for winter hibernation.

What's good news for bears is bad news for campers. As old rock music reviews used to say, it's got a good beat, but you can't dance (or sleep) to it.

Mid-September is also when the weather tends to cool with hints of autumn in the air. This year's workshop featured greasy humidity and temps short of sweater weather. I left my campfire fleece at home and I'm glad I did. It would have been worthless.

The Hoodlums workshop, which takes place every year during the third weekend in September, is open to all club members. It offers tiered training appropriate for would-be maintainers with no experience, those with some experience and others who are seasoned veterans. Look for the announcement next year.

Congratulations to all the PATC club award recipients. We had an unusually high number Avery Award nominees this year. Each of them was deserving and it was a tough choice. The Avery Award is the club's highest award and denotes the volunteer of the year.

Volunteer recognition helps keep morale high. ExCom and Council have approved this year's award winners. For most people, the satisfaction of taking care of their trail section, cabin, trail patrolling, or leading hikes is more than enough. Knowing your work is appreciated generates a good feeling. It is also satisfying to recognize consistently outstanding service, especially over long periods of time.

Advocacy to protect public land is also part of the club's mission. We have recently made public comment on two issues that threaten hiker safety, and otherwise the hiking experience and our ability to adequately maintain trails.

We opposed the so called "highway to nowhere," otherwise known as the Corridor H highway running from Wardensville, WV. to the Virginia state line, where it would end abruptly at the summit of Great North Mountain. If built, this highway would require Tuscarora hikers to cross four lanes of traffic at a blind spot.

We also filed in opposition to the revision of the Travel Management Rule in National Forests. The revision would allow roads to be built in what are now protected areas where roads are not allowed.

Thanks to **Lynn Cameron** who did the research and drafting; and to **Lowell Smith**, Chair of the Conservation Committee, who edited and offered comments.

Meanwhile, I repaired a small rip in my tent fly caused by something that fell from a tree that was larger than an acorn. Couldn't find any evidence the next morning. Maybe Bigfoot?

Rain, Sunshine, Vegetation, Ugh!

By Tom Moran



By Tina Rafalovich: Indian Run Crew, from left - Tina Rafalovich, David Johnson, Jim Fetig and Sam Keener

Sadly, many trail sections in the North District of SNP suffer from excessive sunlight, which results in ash, oak, locust and other trees failing for various reasons. Add in a very wet summer, and you have the ingredients for excessive growth of unwanted vegetation.

This diverts trail maintainer attention to the urgent issue of simply keeping trails

passable, but time spent clearing blowdowns or cutting weeds comes at a cost – maintenance of water control structures, primarily water bars and check dams – ends up being deferred. Such it is that **Tom Troutman** and **Steve Parsley** headed out on the Appalachian Trail from Jenkins Gap to Hogwallow Gap, and accomplished an end-to-end weed clearing effort. Other trail maintenance will have to wait.



By Chris Viggiano: Cyndi Ardecki shows inimitable style as she cuts

Similarly, **Dan Hippe** led a small crew consisting of **Kevin McArdle** and **Julie Bauer** to his own section of the AT – from Elkwallow Wayside to Rattlesnake, which despite multiple visits in 2026, needed yet another clearing effort to keep the segment passable. Good thing this trail section has such an engaged maintainer!

Continuing the focus on keeping the AT passable, **Dave Nebhut** led a large crew to a section from Neighbor Mountain Trail to the Beahms Gap access Trail, where they fully cleared the encroaching vegetation and removed four blowdowns for good measure. They also took liberty to clip vegetation on parts of the Neighbor Mountain Trail that were almost impassable. His team included first timer

Matt Berry, along with **Richard Lee**, **Rich Lordahl**, **Robert Kilby** and **Amy Smucker**.

If you thought the weeding (and blowdown clearing) was done, you were wrong! Two crews worked the Indian Run Hut and road to clear both blowdowns and vegetation. The Hoodlums use the hut as a base for trips requiring an overnight stay, but the vegetation in the field, and blowdowns on the road make it virtually unusable at times. **Noel Freeman**,



By Tom Moran: Justin Corddry (L) looks like the cat that ate the canary, while Kyle Brost tries to cross an uneven trail

Cyndi Ardecki and **Chris Viggiano** power weeded the road and hut area, as well as down to the nearby spring that is used by through hikers. **Jim Fetig** took another crew down to clear blowdowns on the road. His crew included **Tina Rafalovich**, **David Johnson** and **Samantha Keener**.



By Rich Lordahl: An interested observer of the Hoodlums' outing

was well acquainted with the issues on Piney Branch, and once the crew reached the problem area, he took over the leadership for the restoration effort. Lateral drains were cleared of limbs and other detritus. The trail bed, much of which is an elevated “turnpike,” would have to be restored to its original height above the drains, and then packed tightly with sand and gravel that had washed out. Once Mike provided clarity and guidance, the crew enthusiastically executed and rapid progress was made. Approximately 2/3 of the over 100 ft of trail was restored, leaving more work for another day. **Kyle Brost, Mark Wrobel** and **Justin Corddry** also shared in the muddy joy of the work.

Finally, we had a crew that cleared no blowdowns or vegetation! **Tom Moran** led a crew for a hike down Piney Branch Trail, to a section of trail that has degraded over many years as spring flows have eroded the trail bed and left sections either muddy, or full of ankle-twisting rubble. This section is adjacent to the Pole Bridge Link Trail, which is maintained by **Michael Gergely**. Mike



Figure 1 By Matt Berry: Hoodlums hack their way through a veg choked trail

Welcome to PATC: Finding Your Way into the Club

By Matt Waurio



“When’s the next hike in Loudoun County?”

“Will I get poison ivy?”

“What’s a Crapper Crew?”

At PATC’s monthly New Member Meetings, there’s no shortage of questions. Hosted monthly by **Anne Brown**, these informal gatherings give new members a chance to learn how the Club works, ask questions, and – perhaps most importantly – meet some of the people who make PATC what it is.

At the September 14th meeting, about 10 excited new members joined our virtual call at 5:30pm. They got to share their background and talk directly with long-time PATC members like **Anstr Davidson** and **Jayne Mayne**. We’ve found that kind of connection is important for new members to feel

informed and involved.

It seems like a majority of our long-time PATC volunteers found their way into the Club through friends. This is, of course, fantastic. We want PATC to be a place with close connections and friendships, but not everyone joins with a friend already on the inside. For those folks, figuring out where to start can be surprisingly difficult. We’re trying to improve technologically, but nothing beats human connection. New Member Meetings fit that bill.

As an example: This weekend, I met a 20-something year-old Appalachian Trail (AT) thru hiker who wowed me with his knowledge of AT and PATC history. How many folks can knowledgably speak about the PATC Congressional lobbying era? This guy could! Despite his passion, he never became significantly involved in PATC because, essentially, he

couldn't navigate the Club. He never attended a New Member Meeting and doesn't have any friends in the Club – so he got lost, gave up, and found another group to join.

And that's the experience we want to prevent. Hopefully we'll win him over – along with many others. But we have to remember the overwhelming feeling of being a new member and offer that hand to welcome them to the Club.

That's right, PATC New Member Meetings aren't just for new members. If you want to hop in on the next one and ask a few questions (or answer a few questions), you can find info on the [PATC calendar](#). They tend to be emailed and posted a month in advance and are often scheduled mid-month on a Monday or Tuesday at 5:30pm.

If you're new to PATC, come meet us. If you've been around awhile, come help someone else find their way in.

Tornado Shuts Down SNP Central District Trails – PATC Responds

By Tom Moran



By Bruno Carlo: Roger Friend (L) and Justin Corddry doing work



By Bruno Carlo: Wedge Art

On July 21, a tornado touched down close to Thornton Gap, passed a few yards south of the Entrance Station and proceeded east, crossing Buck Hollow and Buck Ridge trails, leaving

trail-closing destruction in its wake. The extent of the trails damage was not initially recognized. A Hoodlums crew on Pass Mountain trail nearby saw massive trees down but luckily the trail was not significantly impacted. Shortly however, hiker reports began to trickle in and a reconnaissance hike up Buck Hollow revealed the blockages. The Park Service closed both trails.

Starting July 26, Maintainer **Kevin Lew** and SNP Central District Manager **Patrick Wilson** made multiple trips to the trail and were able to render it passable by trimming brush and smaller branches. However, more than 20 large trunks remained. And this is before the issues on Buck Ridge were fully understood. In order to jump start the clearing process, Patrick and co-District Manager **Josh Fuchs** reached out to the SNP North District Hoodlums to see if crew members could be recruited. Over the last three years the



By Tom Moran: (from left) Stephen Haller, Bruno Carlot, Jacob Evans and Josh Fuchs take a break after cutting a path through a nasty one in Buck Hollow

Hoodlums had developed an experienced bench of crosscut sawyers, with US Forest Service Certified and a number more with significant experience. From this ready pool, the Hoodlums were able to recruit 13 volunteers to work under crew lead Josh Fuchs to clear Buck Hollow end to end.

Because the areas of damage on both trails lie within Wilderness boundaries, no powered tools are permitted, so all the cutting was to be performed with crosscut saws.

PATC has a little-known group known as the GPS Rangers. They are versed in documenting trail locations and conditions, often being invited to work in parks outside PATC's normal range. They provided vital scouting of each downed tree, location and pictures, that

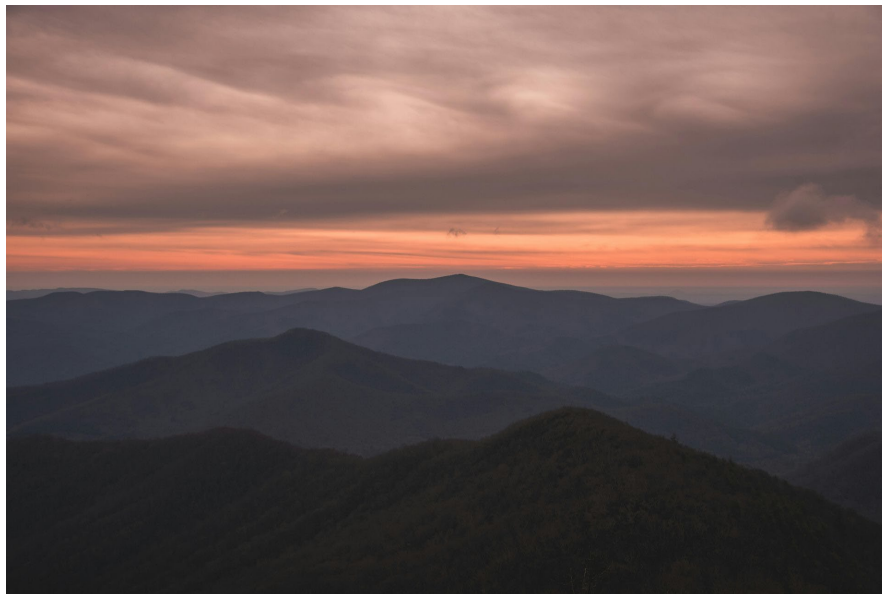
informed our planning. Leader **Jim Tomlin, Bob Macke** and **Joe Laws** made up the GPS Ranger crew that hiked both trails several days before our trip.

August 9 was a hot day, but morale was good as the crew set out. Breaking into smaller groups, they hopscotched up the mountain, slicing up the blockages. The trail was fully cleared, except for one duck-under trunk that proved the old adage – “leave it for the maintainer.” Later in the week an NPS crew cleared Buck Ridge, restoring the area to its previous condition, albeit with a lot more sun shining in.

Led by Josh Fuchs, the crew consisted of **Ed Howell, Tom Moran, Rich Lordahl, Roger Friend, Jamie Benson, Justin Corddry, Jim Tomlin, Kristin Hancock, Kyle Brost, Bruno Carlot, Jacob Evans, Tom Troutman, and Stephen Haller.**

New Shenandoah Automated Entry Gates

By Matt Waurio



For those who often travel to Shenandoah National Park (SNP), keep an eye out for the new automated entry gates scheduled for installation at all four park entrances this fall. Per the National Park Service website, the new stations are designed primarily for use when entrance stations are not staffed.

This is a continuation of the SNP move to a cashless process in 2025 – with these automated gates now permitting the collection of additional funds after hours.

Ever wonder where your entrance fees go? Well, SNP reports that 80% of the fees collected at entrance stations and campgrounds are returned to Shenandoah for projects to improve the visitor experience. That includes funds for road maintenance, signage, trail and campground improvements, repairs to historic structures, and other visitor services.

The NPS hasn't announced a specific installation schedule, so frequent visitors should watch the park website for updates. Remember that the park is now cashless so bring your credit or debit card with you for your next trip or purchase entry passes in advance through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). For more on SNP fees and the automated entry stations, visit the [SNP Fees Webpage](#).

Ski Fair

November 7, 2026



How about some outdoor winter adventures this year? The NEW **Potomac Nordic Ski Club** (formerly Ski Touring Section of PATC) will hold its annual Ski Fair at PATC headquarters Saturday November 7, 1-4 PM.

Early winter 2026 was cold and snowy in the DC metro region and it made for some great local skiing. PNSC has a full schedule of trips for the upcoming season as well as opportunities to connect with other members for that spontaneous afternoon of enjoying local snow-covered parks and trails.

Learn about all aspects of cross-country skiing from gliding thru sparkling white forests on groomed trails to deep back country treks. Hear about upcoming trips for 2026-27, see presentations on past trips, and talk to experienced skiers and trip leaders.

Close to the W&OD trail for easy bike access. Light refreshments will be served. Please join us!

Saturday November 7, 1-4 PM, PATC Headquarters. More info: <https://pnski.org/>

Think Snow!

What's That Flower—Bear Church Rock—Summer

By Richard Stromberg



Large-leaved Aster

This article shows you some of the flowers to look for in autumn on the way to Bear Church Rock in the Central Section of SNP. Bear Church Rock offers a fantastic view of fall colors in the SNP mountains with no signs of human habitation. It is just off Jones Mountain Trail. It can be accessed by going down from Skyline Drive, but I am describing the flora you may see going up from the parking lot at the end of State Route 662 on Staunton River Trail (described on pages 269-72 of PATC's "[Appalachian Train Guide to Shenandoah National Park](#)").

All species below are native unless otherwise noted.

Autumn is dominated by the Aster family and most of the species in this article are members of that family.

Large-leaved Aster (*Eurybia macrophylla*) has large, heart-shaped leaves at the bottom of the stem, up to eight inches wide. They reduce in size up the stem and lose the heart indentation. It has pale purple flowers.

White Wood Aster (*Eurybia. divaricatus*) has a flattish cluster of white flowers on top of the plant. The lower leaves are elongated heart shaped with coarse teeth. Up the stem, the leaves are smaller and the heart-shaped indentation at the petiole may not be there.

Blue Wood Aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*) is also called **Heart-leaved Aster** (*S. cordifolium*) because of the shape of the leaves. The heart-shape is often elongated, and the indentation at the stalk may be flattened, especially upward on the stem. The leaves are less than three inches wide and are toothed. The ray florets are light violet. The leaves are like White Wood Aster, but flower color differentiates them.

Wavy-leaved Aster (*S. undulatum*) leaves have wavy margins. From the widest point of the leaf, the two sides of the leaf pinch in and then widen towards the stem. They may narrow partway or all the way to the center rib of the leaf



Wavy-leaved Aster



Blue Wood Aster

but then widen again to clasp the plant stem. The leaves have few or no teeth. It has light blue-violet rays.

Late Purple Aster (*S. patens*) has 10-30 violet rays on a one-inch-wide head. The stem is rough and slender and up to three feet tall. The leaves seem like long triangles or are pinched in slightly below the middle and go beyond the stem.

Goldenrods (*Solidago*) are known for their sprays of many small flowers. **Erect Goldenrod** (*Solidago erecta*) has straight clusters of flowers at the top of the plant with flowers all around the

stem. Its leaves are sessile (attach directly to the stem without a supporting stalk).

Wreath Goldenrod (*S. caesia*) has long, narrow leaves that separate the flower clusters growing from the axils. Instead of standing upright, it often leans over forming an arch.



Wreath Goldenrod

White Snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*) can grow to five feet tall. It has branching clusters of up to 30 small flowers at the top. Individual quarter-inch flowers have five, pointed petals and protruding white stamens. Leaves grow in pairs on the plant stem and are long-pointed, egg-shaped with $\frac{3}{4}$ inch stems.

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) is like White Snakeroot except for the leaves. Boneset leaves are lance-shaped, much longer than wide and coming to a point. They have no stems. The pairs of leaves are joined at the base so that the plant's stem seems to grow through the pair.

Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*) is a tiny-flowered, white-petaled daisy. It has five stubby rays, though sometimes they are missing. The plant is only a few inches tall. The stems are hairy.

Tall Rattlesnake-root (*Nabalus altissimus*) can grow six feet tall. Clusters of flowers grow at the top. The flowers hang down like bells: white tubes with petals flaring at the end and stamens protruding. Leaves are alternate on the stem. The shape varies, with three to five lobes at the bottom and fewer up the stem, and they get smaller up the stem.



Tall Rattlesnake-root

The last flower to bloom in our area is **Witch Hazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*). It is not in the Aster family. Witch Hazel often grows as a thick, shrubby clump, though sometimes as a



Cut-leaf Grape Fern

small tree. Witch Hazel's oval leaves have wavy, rounded teeth. The flowers appear as the leaves turn yellow and fall, so the flowers stand out on leafless branches. The flowers have four long, thin, yellow petals and often grow in bunches, so you see yellow streamers in the wind. The fruit is a fuzzy, one-centimeter capsule with remnants of the four sepals remaining. It takes over a year to mature, so it remains on the bush with the new flowers.

Cut-leaf Grape Fern (*Sceptridium dissectum*) sterile fronds flare out horizontally from the stem. They have a triangular shape and are finely divided. The spore-bearing fronds stand straight up above the sterile fronds. They are finely divided and look like miniature bunches of grapes.

Common Running-cedar (*Diphasiastrum digitatum*) is a clubmoss—a non-flowering plant that reproduces via spores rather than seeds. It looks like a little Cedar tree. Dark green branches atop the shoots fan out horizontally. Club-like structures that produce the spores stick up above the leaves,

The Roadless Rule: What It Could Mean for Trails We Maintain

By Matt Waurio

PATC members spend much of our time where roads are deliberately limited. The ability for roads



to be built in some of PATC's region could change with the [U.S. Forest Service's proposal to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule](#) - a national rule that generally restricts

road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting in designated Roadless Areas on National Forest System lands. The Forest Service says rescinding the rule would return more decision-making to individual national forests and their land-management planning processes and the proposal doesn't authorize any particular road, timber sale, or other project. So, future projects would still require additional planning and review.

That said, for us in PATC, this policy issue isn't abstract or about public lands somewhere else. Changes will impact PATC, the lands we manage, and – more importantly – will eventually affect the places where people hike, camp, hunt, observe wildlife, and spend time outdoors.

For example, the Northern Massanutten Roadless Area would be impacted, with its 60 miles of trails including the Massanutten Trail and the Tuscarora-Veatch Gap Trail – most maintained or supported by PATC. The Big Schloss Roadless Area is another significant example within PATC territory. It's one of the larger roadless areas in the eastern national forests and one of the more rugged areas.

You can see for yourself via this [NFS document](#) and this interactive [NFS map](#) where the roadless areas are.

The Forest Service is accepting public comments on the proposed rule, its draft environmental impact statement, and its cost-benefit analysis. [The comment period has been extended to October 6, 2026](#) and it is hoped that you will make an informed comment after reading the documentation on the webpage. How you submit (focus on policy impacts, academic studies) matters to NFS.

So, what would actually change?

Rescinding the rule wouldn't automatically put a road through the Tuscarora Trail or authorize a timber sale on Massanutten Mountain. Instead, the proposal would remove the national-level restrictions established by the 2001 Roadless Rule.

The Forest Service says management of these areas would instead be guided by individual forest plans and other existing laws and requirements. While this may sound good on the surface, it could have negative policy implications because local forest departments may have less funding to do proper research and be more influenced by political swings. This could lead to less strategic guidance and an overall decline in local understanding of a forest's role in the larger NFS ecosystem.

When commenting, these kinds of policy changes matter. The Forest Service has specifically asked for comments on the proposed rule and its supporting environmental

analysis, so comments may be most useful when they identify specific concerns, experiences, or information relevant to the proposal.

That said, **if you use or maintain National Forest lands, your experience is relevant so please ensure that your voice is heard**. Be specific and focus on what you know and what matters to you. A short comment describing an affected place you know well and explaining why it matters can provide more useful information than a form letter.

Examples:

- What matters to you in your role as a maintainer, a hiker, a cabin renter, or a parent of children who use the land.
- How roadless conditions affect your experience hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, or observing wildlife.
- The importance of maintaining quiet, non-motorized recreation opportunities.

Remember that comments submitted to the federal docket are public. The Forest Service specifically advises commenters not to include confidential or sensitive personal information.

The [Roadless Area Conservation Comment](#) period closes October 6th.

If you would like a copy of my comment, please email me at mwaurio@patc.net.

The Tuscarora Trail Experience

By Matt Waurio

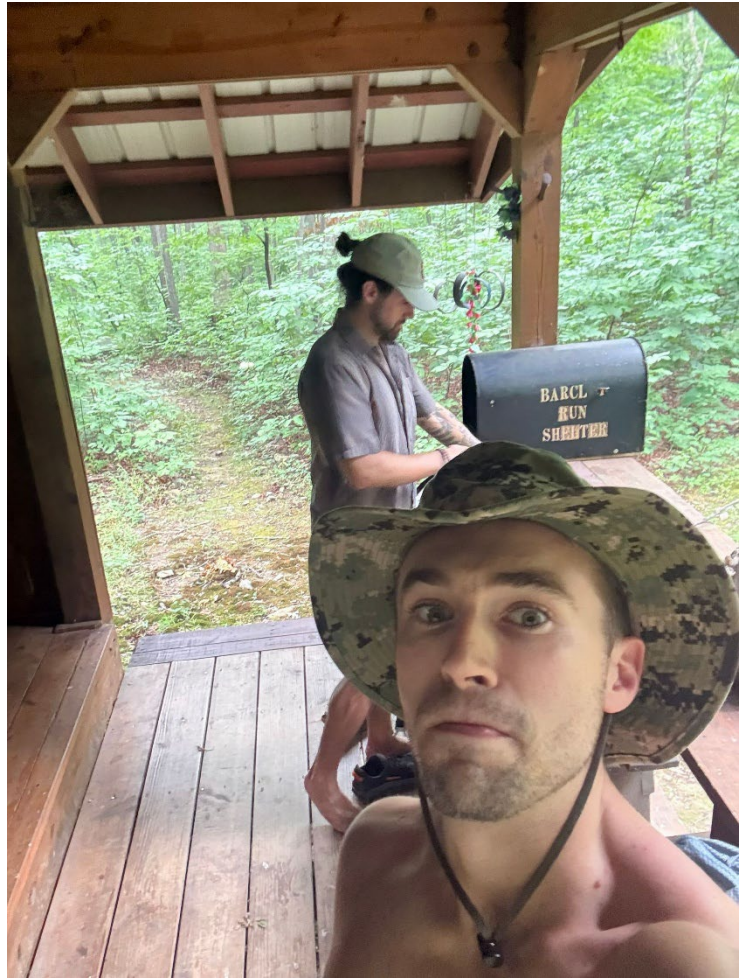
Last month, I braved the heat and traversed 40 miles of the Tuscarora Trail with a “kidnapped” PATC member. My dauntless journey through the brush no-doubt pales in comparison to that of my “hostage” - though, regrettably, I've only the capacity to tell my own tale.

Our route was decided last-minute, in the rain, by an overconfident passenger princess. This, dear reader, resulted in confusion, general shenanigans, and my driver cursing over the sound of squealing tires - none of which was entirely my fault. That road... the nearby town of Gore, VA certainly got its name from the treacherous blacktop in those mountains. Absolutely.

One mile north of our first disturbingly friendly Tuscarora intersection sign, I teetered on rocks within that green-tunnel tightrope of a trail. To the joy of my hostage, my balance pales in comparison to my overconfidence. By the approximation of my busted knee, the sedimentary rocks of that section are really, really old.

But the journey continued, dear reader, onward to mile two and three, where years of hiking experience should have assured that we were on trail. Distrustful of instincts (the beastly things cannot be reasoned with), I searched my old pack's pockets and discovered we were unencumbered by any compass, map, or reliable navigation known to man.

"We're unfettered! Our manacles are released! Navigation liberation!," I proclaimed. From my hostage, a raised eyebrow in agreeance.



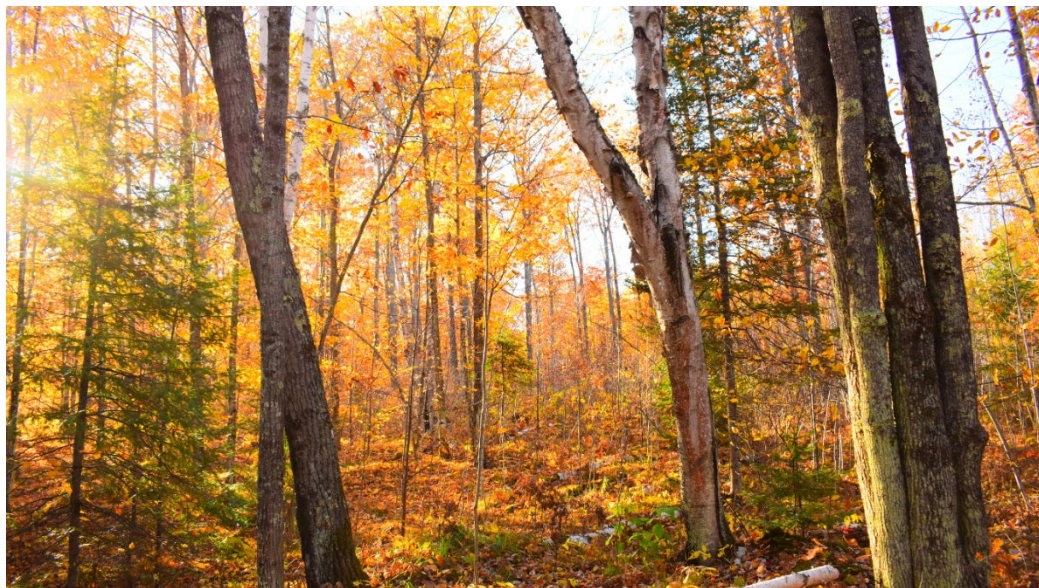
by Matt Waurio: The author and his Tuscarora “hostage”

[In all seriousness, this was a horrific mistake and if we didn't have a combined +6,000mi regional hiking experience and all the gear/food required for our trip, we'd have turned back. It put a damper on the whole trip and forced us to use phone navigation.]

This general pattern continued until we happened upon the grandest trail shelter I've ever encountered: Barclay's Run Shelter. Its grandiosity forced me to leap about, make grunting noises at craftsmanship, extoll virtues of an unsuspecting spring, and even bask in the musk of a scentless privy at least as much as I did later that evening at Basore's Ridge Shelter – now the grandest trail shelter I've ever encountered. Truly, these shelters are two structural masterpieces without the attendance they deserve. Sadly, dearest of readers, the quality of road walk eight miles before and after Basore's bunkhouse was below standard. Someone should contact the county road commission.

Anyhow, two days later, my hostage and I decided that we were hungry, had picked enough ticks off each other for one trip, and were fed up with our power dynamic. I was, for the final time, informed I was "repeating the same plant gibberish" and, just like last time, we promised to never go on another hike (of any distance) for as long as we both shall live. By way of Uber XL, we called it quits, and our driver's tires screeched on the blacktop near Gore, Va.-- All part of the Tuscarora Trail experience.

Fall Is Calling: Gear Up for the Season with PATC



There's something special about fall in the Mid-Atlantic. Cooler temperatures return, the mountains trade their summer greens for brilliant reds

and golds, and familiar trails seem brand new beneath a canopy of changing leaves.

Whether your perfect autumn day involves a long hike through Shenandoah National Park, a cozy weekend at a PATC cabin, or a warm drink after a morning on the trail, the PATC Store

has plenty to help you make the most of the season. Check out our brand-new [Leaves & Layers Fall Bundle](#) and gear up today. Read about the items in this collection below.

Layer Up for Cooler Trail Days

Crisp mornings are part of what makes fall hiking so enjoyable—and a good extra layer can make all the difference. The PATC Store carries apparel for showing your trail-club pride throughout the season, including the [PATC Logo Fleece Jacket](#) for chilly days and the [PATC Bear Long Sleeve T-Shirt](#) for those in-between temperatures when a short sleeve isn't quite enough.

Add a [PATC Logo Knit Beanie](#) to keep you warm and to increase visibility during hunting season.

Get Cozy Around the Campfire (Or the Wood Burning Stove)

Fall adventures are great, but curling up and getting cozy afterwards is half the fun. The [PATC Logo Ceramic Campfire Mug](#) is perfect for post-hike coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, while the [PATC Logo Fleece Blanket](#) makes a cozy addition to your home, cabin weekend, or campsite.

Shop PATC, Support the Trails

The best part? Shopping PATC does more than prepare you for your next adventure. Purchases from the PATC Store help support the trails, cabins, shelters, and lands that PATC volunteers care for throughout our region. The store notes that purchases help support 1,100 miles of trails, 49 cabins, 47 shelters, and nearly 3,500 acres.

So pull on an extra layer, fill your camp mug with something warm, and make plans to get outside. Fall doesn't last forever—make the most of it with PATC.

Explore apparel, maps, books, accessories, trail guides, and more at the PATC Store.

Help Wanted for October

Cabin Volunteers

Lee Howard, lhoward@patc.net

Maintainer at Meadows Cabin ~ Map 10

Co-maintainer at Old Rag Cabin ~ Map 10

Shelter Volunteer

Henry Horn ~ 301-642-1122, patcshelter@comcast.net

Paul Gerhard Shelter ~ PATC map F

Glen Tsaparas ~ 703-237-2553, poppaglen@verizon.net

Co-maintainer at South River Maintenance Hut

Ashby / Possums AT & Blue blazed [Rte. 50 to SNP] ~ Map 8, 9

Jon Rindt ~ H 540/635-6351, jkrindt@comcast.net

Maston Gray ~ 703-408-8020, graymn9@gmail.com

AT ~ Davenport Meadow Parking Area to Whiskey Hollow Shelter Road (1.3 mi)

SNP North District Blue blazed ~ Map 9

Tom Moran, (703) 715-0050, twmoran19@gmail.com

Jeremys Run Trail (middle) ~ Co ~ 8th Ford of Jeremys Run to junction Knob Mt. & Neighbor Mt. Trail (2.7mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ SNP Boundary to Thompson Hollow Trail (1.5 mi)

SNP Central District Blue blazed [north] ~ Map 10

Patrick Wilson ~ pwilson@hsc.edu

Eugene "Buz" Groshong ~ 540-522-6749, buzgroshong@verizon.net

Josh Fuchs (703) 346-4842, jrfuchs48@gmail.com

Catlett Mountain ~ Hannah Run Trail to Hazel Mountain Trail (1.2mi)

Hannah Run (upper) from Pinnacles Overlook to Hannah Run (1.9mi)

Leading Ridge Trail ~ Co-maintainer)- Jewell Road to West Park Boundary (.1mi)

SNP Central District Blue blazed [south] ~ Map 10

John Hedrick ~ 540/987-8659, jhedrick@erols.com

Cat Knob Trail ~ (Co-maintainer) ~ Laurel Prong to Jones Mountain (.5 mi)

Jones Mountain Trail ~ (Co-maintainer)- Cat Knob Trail to Fork Mountain Fire Road (.5 mi)

Jones Mountain Trail ~ (Co-maintainer) -Sag to Cat Knob and Cat Knob Trail (1. mi)

Rock Spring Parking/Cabin/Hut ~ Rock Spring Parking to AT/AT to Rock Spring Cabin & Hut (.2mi)

Rock Spring Cabin/Hut Spring Trail ~ Rock Spring Cabin & Hut to spring (.1mi)

SNP South District Appalachian Trail ~ Map 11

Bob Pingry ~ 434-981-5094, bobpingry@gmail.com

AT ~ Co ~ Loft Mtn Camp Store trail to Loft Mountain Amphitheater trail (1.3mi)

SNP South District Blue blazed ~ Map 11

Wayne Limberg, H 703-533-8639, C 703-216-2396

Jeff Landis, 540-434-6354, knobred-muddled@yahoo.com

Brown Mountain - Brown Mtn. Summit to Big Run Portal Trail (3.5 mi)

Gap Run Trail - Junction of Rocky Mount Summit Trail to bottom of Gap Run (1.50mi)

Rocky Mountain Run Trail ~ Big Run Portal Trail to Brown Mtn. Trail (2.7 mile)

Furnace Mountain Trail (Upper) ~ Furnace Mountain Summit Trail to Trayfoot Mountain Trail (2 mile)

Pennsylvania Tuscarora ~ Maps J & K

Chris Firme ~ 717-794-2855, bncfirme@innernet.net

Dave Trone ~ 717-778-1308, traildavidt@gmail.com

Pete Brown ~ 410-207-2921, trailpete@gmail.com

PA Tuscarora [J] ~ Fowler Hollow shelter to Hemlock Rd (2.2mi)

PA Tuscarora [J] ~ Mountain Rd. to Jct. PA 641 (6.2mi)

PA Tuscarora [K] ~ Alice Trail to Yellow Blazed Trail (4.2mi)

PA Tuscarora [K] ~ Yellow Blazed Trail to PA 456 (6.7mi)

Tuscarora Central ~ Map L

Bill Greenan ~ wpgreenan@yahoo.com

Co-District Manager needed

Tuscarora Trail ~ Burnt Mill Bridge to Lutkins Passage (3.2mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Meadow Branch to Eagles Nest Parking (2.2mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Larrick Overlook to Lucas Woods Trail (2mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Sleepy Creek Registration to Hampshire Grade Road (5.6mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Hampshire Grade Road to High Rock (2.7mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Co ~ Lucas Woods Trail to Powerline (3.5mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Sleepy Creek WMA Border to VA 671 (Shockeysville Road) (4.1mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ US 50 (Back Creek) to Gore Access Trail (1.3mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Co ~ Gore Access Trail to Hunters Cabin (Forest Road Crossing) (2.1mi)

Tuscarora Trail ~ Co ~ Powerline to Dry Gap (3.5mi)

Devils Nose Connector Trail ~ Devils Nose Parking Area to Tuscarora Trail (.5mi)

Spruce Pine Hollow Trail ~ Tuscarora Trail to Spruce Pine Hollow Park Trailhead (.10mi)

Massanutten North ~ Map G

Steven Parsley, 443-864-3606, mbspeak2000@gmail.com

Zoe Sollenberger, (703) 447-8636, zoe4dogs@shentel.net

Massanutten Trail 408 ~ Bear Trap Trail to Rte 675 (2.2mi)

Duncan Knob Trail 409A ~ Gap Creek Trail to Duncan Knob (2.7mi)

Milford Gap Trail ~Tolliver Trail to Hazard Mill Campground Road (1.81mi)

Bear Wallow Spur Trail ~ Mud Hole Gap to Tuscarora Trail (2.4mi)

Mud Hole Gap Trail ~ Parking off SR678 [800] to Parking off Massanutten Trail (FR66)
(4.28mi)

Shawl Gap Trail ~ SR613 [700] to MM/TT intersection at Shawl Gap (2.3mi)

Sherman Gap Trail ~ Mudhole Gap Trail to SR613 [580](5.79mi)

Sidewinder Trail ~ Mudhole Gap Trail to Tuscarora Trail (.83mi)

7-bar None Trail ~ Peters Mill Run Trail to Massanutten Trail (.46mi)

Bear Trap Trail ~ Peters Mill Run Trail to Massanutten Trail (.48mi)

Lupton Trail ~ Massanutten Trail to Peters Mill Run Trail (.43mi)

Indian Grave Ridge Trail ~ Parking lot off SR717 to Massanutten Trail (2.44mi)

Kennedy Peak Trail ~ Massanutten Trail to Tower Lookout (.24mi)

Tolliver Trail ~ logging road to Milford Gap Trail (1.79mi)

Massanutten South ~ Map H

Paul Boisen, (540) 246-5662, paulboisen@hotmail.com

Massanutten South Trail ~ Rt 211 Parking Lot to New Market Gap Picnic Area (2.1mi)

Great North Mountain ~ Map F

Mike Allen ~ 540-333-3994, michaelallen0056@gmail.com

North Mt. Trail ~ Stack Rock Trail to VA 720 (4.3mi)

Stack Rock Trail ~ Forest Rd 252 to North Mt. Trail (1.5mi)

Long Mountain Trail ~ Trout Pond Trail to FR 1621 (4.4mi)

Big Schloss Trail ~ 2.3 Mile Marker of Mill Mt. Trail to Big Schloss View (.3mi)

Mill Mt. Trail ~ Wolf Gap to Big Schloss Cutoff Trail (2.8mi)

Gerhard Shelter Trail ~ Tuscarora Trail to Vances Cove (1.5mi)

Bucktail Cutoff Trail ~ Bucktail Trail to Halfmoon Trail (2.7mi)

Bucktail Trail ~ Trout Run Road to Waites Run Road (5.2mi)

Capon Trail ~ Bucktail trailhead to Waites Run Road (2.9mi)

German Wilson Trail ~ Halfmoon Lookout Trail to Bucktail Trail (1.2mi)

Cedar Creek Trail ~ FR88 to FR1863 (4.4mi)

Old Mailpath Trail ~ Wilson Cove to TT Three Ponds Trail (2.3mi)

Sulphur Springs Gap Trail ~ SR603 to TT Little North Mountain Trail (2.9mi)

Little Sluice Mountain Trail ~ FR92 to TT Three Ponds Trail (5.3mi)

Trout Pond Trail ~ SR59 to Long Mountain Trail (2.5mi)

Falls Ridge Trail ~ FR1318 Laurel Run Spur Trail to North Mountain Trail (2.5mi)

North River Map-National Geographic Trails Illustrated #791

Lynn & Malcolm Cameron, (540) 234-6273, slynncameron@gmail.com

Braley Pond Loop ~ 491, 496, 654 from Braley Pond Parking to Braley Pond Parking (3.6 mi)

MD Montgomery County Parks ~ Map D

Lynn Gallagher ~ (301) 320-4862, or lynn.t.gallagher@gmail.com

Cabin John Trail ~ Seven Locks Rd to Tuckerman Lane

Prince William Forest Park

Dennis Calhoun, 703-583-4386, dennis_calhoun@comcast.net

Carl Nicholson, 703-314-6365, cwnicholson@gmail.com

South Valley from Scenic Drive [3rd Intersection] to North Orenda Road (1.1 mi)

Birch Bluff Trail ~ Laurel Loop Trail to Laurel Loop Trail (1.7mi)

South Valley Trail ~ Scenic Dr 3rd Int to North Orenda Rd (1.mi)

Seneca Creek State Park & Monocacy Natural Resources Mgt. Area

Jeffrey Clyman, (443) 864-4547, jiclyman@verizon.net

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ River Road to lower Berryville Road (1.5 mi)

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ lower Berryville Road to upper Berryville Road (2.1 mi)

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ upper Berryville Road to Route 28 (1.9mi)

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ Route 28 to Black Rock Road (1.2mi)

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ Route 118 to powerline (1.4mi)

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail ~ powerline to Riffle Ford Road (1.5mi)