

July
2025

THE POTOMAC APPALACHIAN



- Hoodlums May Outing
- "What on Earth?"
- President's Logbook
- VolunteerFest 2025
- SNP Maps Now Offered in Digital Format
- What Makes a Cadillac Crew Trail Work Trip memorable on a Memorial Day Weekend?
- Camping, Kayaking, and Camaraderie in the Forest
- Prince William Forest Park: An Urban Oasis Where Nature and History Meet
- Getting Starry-Eyed at Glass House
- What's That Flower?

Hoodlums May Outing: Bees, Rodents, Snakes, and Poison Ivy--Another Beautiful Day in the Park

By Tom Moran

Just shy of 30 volunteers met at Shenandoah National Park's Piney River CCC Camp for the May 17 Hoodlums outing. Head Hoodlum **Tom Troutman** was on a vacation, so **Noel Freeman** and **Wayne Limberg** co-led the affair. By the end of the day they were overhead negotiating with Tom to expedite his return a.s.a.p. Still, after introductions and the safety briefing, crews were organized and dispatched to their assigned tasks for the day.

Beahms Gap Crew - Steve Parsley and Wayne Limberg led a crew that included **Richard Lee, Greg Foster, Andy Warthen, Dave Nebhut, Bob Kilby, and Don Ball** to work on the AT between Beahms Gap and Neighbor Mountain. Steve took half the crew and started at Beahms Gap and worked north, mainly weeding and repairing tread. Wayne took the other half to Neighbor Mountain and headed south clearing blowdowns including a large four-prong one reported by the Ridgerunner.



Photo by Wayne Limberg: The Beahms Gap Crew admires a just installed temporary stream crossing. From left - Richard Lee, Steve Parsley, Greg Foster, Andy Warthen, Robert Kilby, and Don Ball.

The two crews met at the large blowdown and then proceeded back down to Beahms Gap. On the way they installed a temporary stream crossing near the spring about half a mile from Beahms Gap parking lot and removed a blowdown blocking access to the spring. Recent rain meant heavy water flow, flooding the trail above the spring. The rain also meant weeds were already high but the good news was that the section has recovered from the fire last year with native plants returning, including some chestnut sprouts. Hoodlums will be returning to work on the spring and improve the stream crossing.

AT Crew - Jim Fetig led a crew to a section of the Appalachian Trail near Jenkins Gap for a collection of water control updates and improvements. Jim's crew included **Nicole Bridgland, Jay McCaffrey, John Young, Julie Bauer, and Roger Fast.**

The crew installed eight check dams forming steps in two sections to mitigate erosion issues in areas with 36-inch rise over four linear feet. In other words, a very steep

grade! They also built one rolling grade dip, which is a time consuming effort but results in a more sustainable, durable solution than the original water bar, which they retired.

Pass Mountain Crew 1- Led by **Justin Corddry, Roger Friend, Michael Gergely, Venus Foshay,** and **Rich Lordahl** met at the parking area on Route 211 by the Pass Mountain

Trailhead, and hiked up clearing blowdowns as they went. They stopped at the Pass Mountain Shelter for lunch, and met up with the second crew. While dining, they hastened the departure of a northern ring-necked snake that had taken up residence in the fire pit.



Photo by Tom Moran: Kyle Brost (L) and Joe Phillips crosscut an A.T. blowdown

Pass Mountain Crew 2- Led by **Joe Phillips**, this crew, including Tom Moran, **Marie Seymour, Rosemary Seymour,** and **Kyle Brost**, parked at Panorama and after crossing 211 hiked up the A.T., clearing a number of blowdowns on the way up to the Pass Mountain Hut, where they joined up with Justin's crew. En-route a juvenile black rat snake made a brief appearance before making a hasty retreat.

After lunch a special situation awaited them – a multi-trunk blowdown fully engulfed in a poison ivy crown that had come down with the trees. One trunk of the ivy was over 4" in diameter, and the leafy fines smothered the trail and trunks such that you couldn't see through the mass. The trail was completely blocked, the inevitable social trail had evolved but the blockage was unacceptable.

There was only room for 3-4 people to work in the vine choked corridor. Each member was able to decide if they wanted to risk the poison ivy or defer. The task first required clipping / lopping the many vines and removing them from the trail work area. Only then could the trunks be approached. In the end the poison ivy was fully cleared, and one of the two trunks before time was up. The trail was now passable, and the second trunk will be addressed in the near future. As a postscript, some minor rash was experienced by several of the crew but the mitigations employed were largely effective.



Photo by Cindy Ardecki: Hoodlums gather for dinner after work is over.

Shed Crew - Chris and Michelle Viggiano, and Cindy Ardecki joined crew lead Noel Freeman to work on one of the sheds the Hoodlums are renovating to support their North District trail maintenance activities. The work was not without its hazards – Chris, who was staining the exterior, was constantly harassed by carpenter bees upset at the intrusion on their

airspace. And the inside

crew discovered a substantial rodent incursion that caused them to adjust the scope of work for the day, pending a solution to the issue.

After work, in an All-American twist on the more typical potluck after-work gathering, Joe Woods grilled hot dogs, hamburgers, vegan burgers, and brats which were complemented by fixings and sides contributed by attendees.

"What on Earth?"

Articles and Photos by Ray Barbehenn



Sweat Bee



Figure 1 Swallowtail Butterflies

Sparkling green sweat bees, such as in the left photo, are beautiful when admired up close. However, a more common response from people tends to be, "Why are these little bees landing on my skin?! Shoo! Shoo!" sweat bees are practically harmless, but they are persistent. This one was about a centimeter long and was observed on May 8 in Duke Hollow (northern Virginia near the AT). Its stout tongue was extended, looking like a bent leg below its head, and was lapping the surface of my hand.

Swallowtail butterflies are another example of insects that are attracted to certain places for the same reasons as the sweat bees. They present a similar mystery: "Why are all of these butterflies licking the ground? Why aren't they on flowers?" Swallowtails are attracted to deposits of urine and other animal products. They are also attracted to the moist edges around puddles, and, hence, the term "puddling." The Tiger Swallowtails and dark Spicebush Swallowtail in the right photo were seen on June 5, 2017 in Duke Hollow. (In this case they were attracted to a man-made "puddle.") Surprisingly, these butterflies are probably all males! (Read on to find out why that makes sense.)

Why do some insects feed on body fluids (sweat, urine, etc.)?

- A. They need the water.
- B. They sense the small amounts of sugar in them.
- C. They are attracted to their fragrances.
- D. They need to obtain salt.
- E. Unknown.

The answer is at the bottom of the page!

Fun Facts and Musings

First and foremost, for those of us who are frightened by bees, it is great to know that sweat bees are not a threat. The sting of the female is little more than a pin prick, and a pin prick that is not easily provoked.

Sweat bees may be small but they represent the second largest family of bees, with over 4500 species worldwide, including 500 species in the United States. For those who know what the mineral halite is, the family name of sweat bees (Halictidae) provides a strong clue to their attraction to sweaty skin: "hal-" refers to salt! It is not known why sweat bees have a particular need for salt, though this is also seen in bees from other families, including honey bees. Between hikers, sweat bees spend their time foraging for pollen and nectar in flowers – food sources that are particularly low in salt. Thus, sweat (or other body fluids) appears to be a minor, but important, supplemental food source.

Far more research has been done on the puddling behaviors of butterflies and moths than bees. Indeed, butterfly puddling was a cover story in the highly prestigious research journal "Science" back in 1974. It was established that swallowtails are attracted to salt (specifically sodium) and not simply drinking water from puddles. In the following 50 years, there have been several hypotheses to explain this behavior further, but one fact demanded attention: Almost all of these butterflies are males. There has been some support for the idea that the extra boost of sodium allows male butterflies to court females more successfully. Perhaps they fly better and become more attractive to females?

Another hypothesis is that the extra sodium obtained by males helps the females to have more successful offspring. Strange as it may seem, this idea has the most support. It turns out that much of the extra sodium obtained by the male butterflies is concentrated in their tiny sperm packets ("spermatophores"). A spermatophore can contain over half of the sodium content in a male's body! When a spermatophore is transferred to a female during mating, she absorbs its sodium. Not only that, but much of the sodium is then incorporated into her eggs. Since the leaves on which caterpillars feed have little sodium, the salt from puddles ends up providing a precious nutrient for the young caterpillars! Of course, many questions remain unanswered. For example, why don't the female butterflies just puddle with the males?

Insects and other animals are salty creatures – their proverbial blood, sweat, tears, and other body fluids are all salty. Maintaining the right salt balance is essential for a multitude of purposes, including the functions of muscles and nerves. (Thankfully, it is beyond the scope of this article to explain these processes in further detail.) Suffice it to say, we hear a lot about replacing and maintaining our "electrolytes." Sodium is the major electrolyte that is so often referred to, but potassium and several other minor electrolytes are also required. Many athletes and hikers have experienced muscle (or "heat") cramps. These can be caused by muscle fatigue, but the loss of sweat and its salts are also causes in warm weather.

Sodium and other electrolytes are also lost in urine, the result of the filtering of the blood by the kidneys. Insects do not sweat, but they do have tiny versions of kidneys (the "Malpighian tubules") and a need to maintain their electrolyte balances, just like other animals. Given the need of animals to maintain their electrolyte supplies, it is not so odd that even grazing animals, such as cows and deer, are attracted to salt licks; their food, like that of caterpillars, is particularly low in sodium (salt). The tongues of many animals, including ourselves, have a special taste for salt – a testament to our need for it. (As an aside, it is now known that the various tastes are sensed all over the tongue, not just in specific regions, as most of us were taught in school!) However, we do not have a good

sense of when more is not better. Our average salt consumption is 3.5 grams a day, which is literally 10-times more than we need. It is no surprise that swallowtail butterflies are attracted to our puddles.

Answer: D!

Send your photos and ideas for topics to Ray at rvb@umich.edu.

President's Logbook

By Jim Fetig



Steve Baer and John Hedrick replace galvanized screening inside the privy compost bin at Pinefield Hut in Shenandoah National Park.

The Crapper Crew is the elite PATC group that shovels compost out of the nearly 100 privies that the club maintains. Its membership is diverse, but at the core are current and former senior leaders, yours truly included. Saying that we are willing to get our hands dirty is an understatement. That's a leadership trait.

Before we mention leadership, here's some insight into the Crapper Crew.

Like ancient alchemists, the Crapper Crew always hopes that the dross that went in transforms into gold ready to come out. Yet, each time the moldering bin is opened, there's always a shadow of a doubt. Did it work this time?

Composting is like magic. Maybe the original material didn't get the message? Were the conditions, right? Is it done yet?

With the utmost of hope we bury the shovel in the brown pile of whatever it is. When the scoop reveals potting soil, like miners striking gold, we shout "Eureka!" and dig to bare earth. Then, the outhouse scoots over and the alchemy begins anew.

Each crew member plays a role. First, there's the digger who shovels the compost out of the bin. Toward the end, they get into the bin to reach the last bits at the bottom.

After the digger enters the picker and the bagger. The picker plucks out the wipes, food containers, underwear, and other stuff that folks are supposed to know doesn't go into the privy. The picker deposits these items into a trash bag.

Last come the spreaders. The digger fills 5-gallon buckets with clean compost that the spreaders carry off to dump in the woods. They operate like a conveyor belt until there is no more.

Not all leaders need to be on the Crapper Crew and not all crew members are leaders. The club needs all kinds of enthusiastic volunteers, especially leaders willing to donate their time and talent to a good cause.

Many people I encounter in PATC want to contribute, but they are either done with the frustrations of work or they are frustrated with work and ready to be done. Most everyone just wants to have fun like the Hoodlums crew that spent the hottest week of the year splashing in Jeremeys Run while dragging steppingstones in place for stream crossings.

Yet, someone planned and organized the Hoodlums' water adventure, just as other volunteers manage our cabins, lands, training, financial investments, communications, marketing, legal representation, and all the rest.

If you can contribute, contact **Jayne Mayne**, VP Volunteerism (jmayne@patc.net) and we will find the right fit for you. Generations are changing, and we want YOU!

In other news, we have new boots to welcome.

Nora Wittmann joins us from the Kennedy Center as our new accounting coordinator replacing Jenny Keehan who did yeoman service at a critical time. Welcome Nora.

Abbie Fine is joining as our fundraiser. Fundraising is the one critical area where we could not find expertise internal to the club. Abbie is a fractional fundraiser with an outstanding track record. We have contracted for a portion of her time to help build our capacity. We put Abbie to work on our crew clearing blowdowns and pruning mountain laurel on the Hoodlums June work trip. She needs to understand what she's selling.

Most of us are here to preserve and protect our public lands. As of this writing, the sale of millions of acres of public land has been removed from the large spending bill moving through congress. If the protection of those lands holds up, for one, I am thankful.

VolunteerFest 2025

By Iva Gillett

Have you heard about **VolunteerFest**? This new event will celebrate, cultivate, and connect volunteers.

Inspired by last year's successful TrailFest, this year's VolunteerFest promises to be an equally wonderful way to spend a weekend outdoors. It is open to all PATC member volunteers with the main events scheduled for **Saturday, October 11**.

Numerous interactive learning activities in a variety of PATC skill areas will be offered in the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains; networking will be interspersed with relaxing (Did I mention a Happy Hour Saturday at 4P.M.?) plus the opportunity for leaders to find volunteers to mentor and volunteers to find leaders to help them join those ranks.



We will again be staying at Caroline Furnace Campus surrounded by the George Washington National Forest. Included in the \$25 registration is on campus lodging (cabin bed or space for your tent/camper) both Friday and Saturday nights along with our BBQ awards celebration Saturday night.

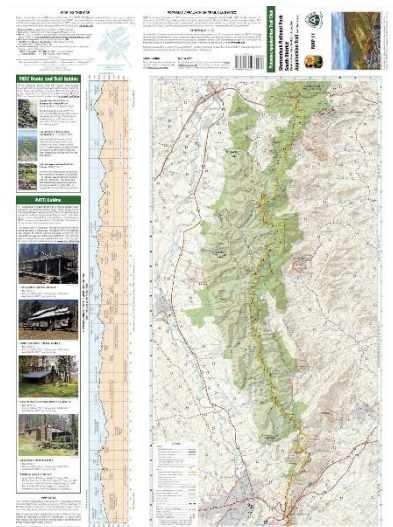
Check back occasionally for more information about activities or email

the co-chairs **Iva Gillett** lgillett@patc.net and **Jayne Mayne** jmayne@patc.net.

SNP Maps Now Offered in Digital Format

By Nancy Doyle

The newest editions of PATC's renowned trio of Shenandoah National Park (SNP) maps are now available for use on your smartphone! The digital version of these maps will be available for purchase and download exclusively through Avenza for use on your phone while hiking. Avenza is a free app for your mobile device for downloading maps from the [PATC Avenza](#)



[map store](#). Paper maps will still be available for purchase, but the newest editions are currently available exclusively through Avenza.

Fully updated using input from PATC volunteers including the GIS Committee, PATC Rangers, PATC Trail Patrol, and trail maintainers, these full color maps encompass many of your favorite places to hike, camp, and backpack in and around SNP. The latest editions of the North, Central, and South Park districts (Maps 9, 10, and 11) offer the most accurate trail locations and information available including updated trail access points, side trail closures and reroutes, stream and river variations, current parking areas, and many others. PATC maps are universally regarded as the best trail maps for Shenandoah National Park, and are the maps used by the SNP Rangers!

Each revised map features PATC's newly designed cover by Alan Kahan with a color photograph from the North, Central, and South districts of SNP. All three maps include AT shelters and PATC cabins for planning overnight trips.

The SNP North District, PATC Map 9 Edition 20 (2025), covers 28 miles of the Appalachian Trail and all side trails totaling 144 miles of hiking trails. Included in Map 9 are popular hikes including Dickey Ridge, Fox Hollow, Sugarloaf, Compton Peak, and many others.

The SNP Central District, PATC Map 10 Edition 23 (2023), covers 36 miles of the Appalachian Trail and all side trails totaling 219 miles of hiking trails. Featuring a photograph of the Old Rag rocky pinnacle on the cover, Map 10 covers the most hiked part of the park. It includes significant GPS updates to Skyland-Big Meadows horse trails, as well as Old Rag Mountain, White Oak Canyon, Hawksbill, and other popular trails and destinations.

The SNP South District, PATC Map 11 Edition 18 (2025), covers the longest section of the AT within the park, 45 miles of the AT, and all side trails totaling 148 miles of hiking trails. It also includes an elevation profile of the AT from Swift Run Gap to Rockfish Gap. Hiking trails include Blackrock, Hightop Mountain, Rockfish Gap, Doyles River, and others.

In addition to the superior data collected by the Rangers, the all-volunteer, map-making GIS Committee imported authoritative data from GIS software company Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) including a base map of LIDAR data sets used for measuring elevation to create contour line. The committee imported data from VDOT to determine boundaries, structures, and features to include on the map. Other data layers include state of Virginia administrative boundaries for counties and towns, the Virginia road centerline map data, Rapidan Wildlife Management boundaries, river and trailhead locations, mile markers, and infrastructures.

Why is a PATC map the best trail map available to hikers? The methods used to collect our data come from boots on the ground. Unlike competitors' map makers who rely solely upon satellite and second party data, PATC itself is the primary source of trail data. Volunteers measure every trail in the park according to strict internal standards and continually feed updates to the GIS Committee.

Using advanced equipment, the GPS Rangers collect point and line data to create the trail line by hiking each trail. This pinpoint data affords detailed accuracy that a satellite cannot provide. Waypoints, such as springs, shelters, benches, cabins, signage, overlooks, and walls are fully notated and photographed. Much of this precise data is included in a PATC map The Shenandoah National Park Rangers use and depend upon PATC maps to do their work for the national park. Is it any surprise that PATC maps are the industry standard that no other maps can equal? Purchase and download PATC maps [here](#).

What Makes a Cadillac Crew Trail Work Trip Memorable on a Memorial Day Weekend?

Kirsten Elowsky and Barbara Cook



Photo by Kirsten Elowsky: Saturday's trail crew, tired but still smiling. Front row: Chris G., Karen, Bill, Dan, Maria. Second row: Alice, Marty, Steve, Ellen F., Chris B., Don, Dave. Back Row: Robert and Aidan.

Let me count the immeasurable ways. Is it the work? The Cadillac Crew's Blackburn Trail Center long weekend work trip was split between trail center and trail tasks.

Heading up the trail center work, **Barbara Cook** and **John Kittridge** managed a list of continuing maintenance with **Cat Randall** and **Janet Arici** giving the new front entrance stairs

two coats of paint blending them in beautifully with the dark brown of the porch. Janet and Cat, along with **Ellen Shaw** and **Erica Glembocki**, scraped and touched up some of the weathered paint on the carriage house siding. **Jonathan Robertson**, **Steve Barber**, and

John installed trim casing on a new window on the ridge runner apartment. Steve, John and Jonathan also installed a new hiker cell phone charging station on the porch, including a new set of electrical outlets and a shelf for the phones (since most hikers approaching the trail center ask first for water and then for a place to charge their devices!). They also addressed modifying non-closing porch and privy doors.

JT Tucker took on the replacement of a set of deteriorating log steps behind the carriage house, using repurposed lumber that **John Corwith** had rescued from a neighborhood playground rebuild. Assisted by **Marty Martin** (an experienced Hoodlum who was joining us for the first time), John, Barbara, and others, JT installed the new steps and enhanced the surface drainage to provide erosion protection.

Yard mission members (JT, Barbara, **Dan Feer**, **Aidan Badwhar**, **Sandi Marra**, **Chris Brunton**, **Lynn Olsen**, and **Chris Glembocki**) tackled raking accumulated leaves off the roof, removing vines from porch screens, trimming low-hanging tree branches, hedge-trimming of overgrown shrubs, dead-heading of blooming bushes, removing leaves packed against the hiker cabin foundation, clearing of leaves and debris from a road culvert to help control erosion of the road, and excavation and partial reconstruction of a collapsed low rock retaining wall along the driveway.

Ellen S. and Erica spent an entire morning manually regrading some of the erosion damage on the access road. Marty prepared the lawn furniture by scrubbing all of the chairs/bench/lounge and arranging them on the lawn, and Janet did touch-up painting on the memorial bench. Aidan and Dan split and stacked wood in the woodshed to replenish the supply depleted by winter renters. Lastly, the crew cleaned the trail center, which is always beneficial after the winter rental season. Huge thanks to Chris B., Sandi, and Blackburn caretaker **Lauren** for hosting the crew.

Is it the people that make the work trip memorable? Tackling the trail tasks (installing rolling grade dips) this weekend was: (new) Marty Martin, (returning) **Kirsten Elowsky**, **Alice DeCarlo**, **Steve Phillips**, **Bill Greenan**, **Maria de la Torre**, Dan Feer, **Ellen Feer**, **Robert Fina**, Ellen Shaw, **Martha Becton**, **Karen Brown**, Cat Randall, Chris Glembocki, Aidan Badwhar, **Don Oellerich**, Chris Brunton (Co-District Manager), **Rob Lamar** (Co-district manager) and **Dave Jordahl**.

Starting with the safety round robin orchestrated by crew co-leader Dan Feer (ensuring we stayed safe), and the distribution of tools by Robert Fina (counting the correct amount), the crew tackled 13 rolling grade dips over the two workdays. Having Chris B. and Rob L. (co-district managers) with the crew helped us know that our most difficult aspect for the weekend would be finding mineral soil for the berms as the area was very rocky and the few

blowdown root balls had little to no mineral soil attached. Their keen local knowledge was invaluable. So, to our great fortune, the crew discovered mineral dirt just below the duff in the path of the dip's ditches. As each team cleared the outflowing trench, a hole was dug only a few feet from the final destination of the berm, saving time and less forest floor disruption.

These ingenious and sustainable water diversion trail features take time to construct and fine tune. Each one, in Kirsten's opinion, is a masterful work of trail construction. "I appreciated Martha working on my team, at one point, because she has the eye to ensure the "dip" part of the rolling grade dip has the gradual slope and curve needed for optimal water diversion. I am still learning how to master this technique," she admitted.

Is it the weekend's great selection of food that keeps us coming back? Our longer work trips require potluck meals and happy hour snacks. Starting with Saturday's dinner main entrée of Porchetta cooked by Sandi Marra (the ATC president) which fed not only the crew but several fortunate thru hikers and continuing with the Sunday's main dinner vegetarian entrée of Butternut Pecan Sweet Potato Casserole cooked by Ellen Shaw (and assisted by her returning college student son, Aidan), the crew members highlighted their culinary



Photo by Martha Becton: The crew's weekend lunch spot at Ravens Rock. It doesn't get any better than this. From left to right: Aidan, Karen, Steve E, Alice, Dan F., Don, Bill, Chris G., and Martha.

skills in the well-appointed Blackburn kitchen.

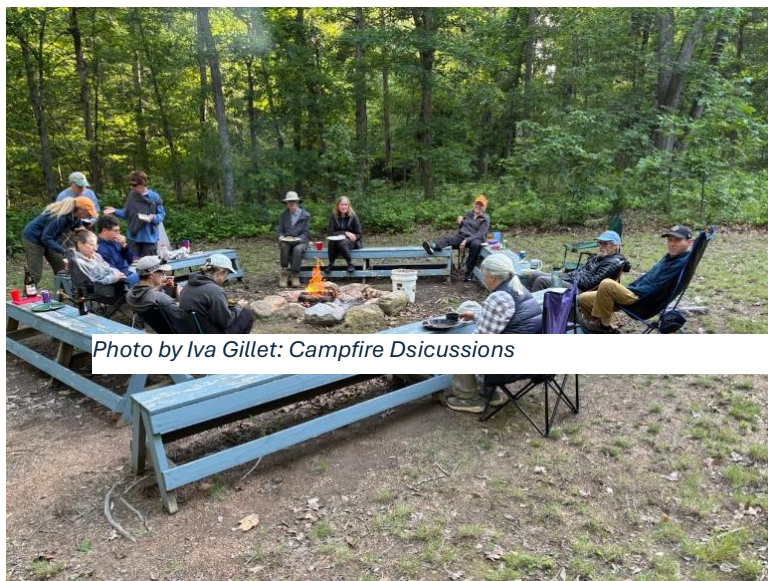
Even Karen treated us to her grilling expertise to provide the group grilled sausages. Cat keeps track of the member's monthly birthdays and treats us to our favorite dessert in celebration of this milestone. It also didn't hurt that we were treated to spectacular views at Raven Rocks for Sunday lunch.

So if this article piques your interest and if you would like to join the crew, please contact the Cadillac Crew leaders at ccrewpatc@gmail.com for the next fourth weekend of each month's work trip. I promise it will be memorable.

Camping, Kayaking, and Camaraderie in the Forest

Marian Styles

What could be better on a holiday weekend in the spring than a camping trip in a beautiful locale with fellow outdoor enthusiasts? **Iva Gillet**, PATC Committee Chair for Hikes as well as past president of the Charlottesville Chapter, spearheaded just such an outing last Memorial Day weekend. Held at the [Caroline Furnace Camp & Retreat Center](#) in Fort Valley, Virginia, this Charlottesville and Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapters' long-weekend event featured hiking, kayaking, and even learning about history.



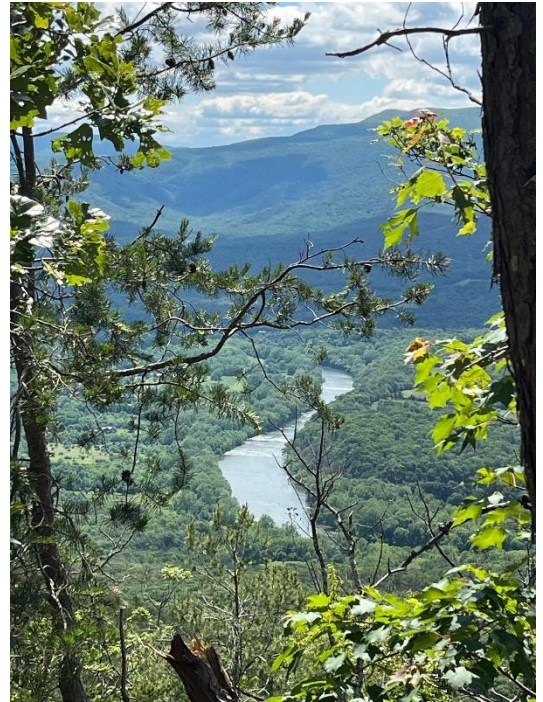
Some folks arrived Thursday afternoon to set up camp and enjoy a campfire before Friday's Indian Grave Ridge loop hike in the Massanutten range. The next morning, walking through a woodland forest on a sunny day when the mountain laurels were in peak bloom was quite a treat. Before long, hike leader **Howard Davis** briefly stepped off the trail to show us the rock piles that are rumored to be Indian graves.

Most of us considered this hike quite a challenge because of the nearly 9-mile length and a steep 1,300-foot climb to the overlook. The effort was worth it, though; our lunchtime vantage point afforded a fantastic view of the Shenandoah River. On Saturday, about a dozen people gathered to tackle an out-and-back hike at Veatch Gap in George Washington National Forest. Led by **Brian Denny**, this 7-mile hike, with about 1,100 feet of elevation gain, proved a bit easier than Friday's excursion.

However, early in the hike we found that debris had obstructed the flow of Mill Run, which had consequently diverted from the streambed onto the trail. Three intrepid hikers—**Mark Perschel**, current president of the Charlottesville Chapter; his son Mark; and **John Shannon**—could not pass up an opportunity to do some trail work. They removed branches and relocated rocks so that the stream would once again flow down its original streambed. When we approached this area on the return leg of our hike, the stream was flowing where it should have been, and the trail was reclaimed.

Saturday had turned out to be another beautiful, sunny day, and most of us enjoyed a gorgeous view of the south fork of the Shenandoah River during our lunchtime break at a rocky overlook. The trail reclamation crew had taken a different route and rejoined us later.

Kennedy Peak was our last group hike of the weekend, and this popular route attracted five non-campers who joined us for the day. The highlight of this hike is the 360-degree view from the Kennedy Peak fire tower. The Luray Valley, south fork of the Shenandoah River, and the Massanutten Range were visible from our sunny perch atop the tower. After lunch, Dave Abdallah led those who wanted to complete a 9.5-mile loop on the Stephens Trail, while Howard led a smaller out-and-back group for a 7-mile hike. During their hike back, the 7-milers paused to listen for bird songs, identify plants, and admire the prodigious mountain laurel displays.



Also on Sunday, three campers skipped Kennedy Peak to go kayaking. Iva, **Jeanne Siler**, and **Jodi Frederiksen** were treated at the outset to a bald-eagle sighting. Putting in at Bixlers Ferry, the group floated 8 miles downstream on a day with perfect weather, sighting turtles and a wide variety of waterfowl, including blue herons, geese, merganser ducks, and double-crested cormorants. Many families were grilling riverside and playing soccer, and many folks were fishing.

As you would expect, all this physical exertion sparked our appetites. Mark's famous spaghetti with meatballs or vegetarian sauce sated our hunger on Friday night, and Iva's tacos did the same on Saturday night. Everyone pitched in with side dishes and desserts. **Marit Anderson's** brownies were a particular hit.

Lest you think that the weekend was devoid of scholarly endeavors, Jodi presented a talk about the history of Caroline Furnace. The furnace produced three tons of pig iron daily during the Civil War. The slag from iron production is still scattered on the ground.

Of course, a camping trip is not complete without campfires. Jodi and Dave proved to be master campfire builders, and we gathered around their handiwork each night to eat and socialize.

Approximately 20 people participated in all or part of the weekend, some traveling from Maryland. Some stayed through Monday morning, whereas others came and went as their

schedules allowed. Participants could set up tents or campers. Cabins were also available, as were hot showers, restrooms, refrigerated storage, and all the firewood we needed.

This Memorial Day weekend was all we could have hoped for: sunny days in the high 60s, beautiful countryside, a quiet campsite, and camaraderie.

Prince William Forest Park: An Urban Oasis Where Nature and History Meet

By Tracey Heibel and Patricia Westenbroek

Nestled between I-95 and the Quantico Marine Base, sits Prince William Forest Park in Triangle, Virginia. This natural retreat from urban life played several unique roles in American history, from mining to training spies during World War II and continues to fascinate visitors near and far.

The park was home to a profitable pyrite mine in the 1880s. At the time, iron pyrite was used in many important products of the day, including gunpowder, dyes, glass, and soap. The mine closed in 1920.

During the 1930s -40s, the Civilian Conservation Corps developed this outdoor area for recreational use by the public. The property then served as a Recreational Demonstration Area during the Great Depression providing children living in impoverished urban conditions with an opportunity to escape the city and enjoy outdoor recreation.

From 1942-1945, the Park served as a training ground for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency. The U.S. spies who trained here were dropped behind enemy lines during WWII to gather intelligence to support the war effort.

In 1945, the Park was returned to the public for outdoor recreational use. Since then, the Park of 15,000 acres boasts 37 miles of hiking and multi-use trails, four cabin camps, and four campgrounds for an urban oasis, 20 miles south of Washington DC. The National Park Service's Prince William Forest Park Visitors Center continues to welcome guests to explore the Park then and now with a museum exhibit. Unable to visit in person? A few clicks away, the Virtual Museum Exhibit brings this unique history to life: <https://nps.gov/museum/exhibits/prwi>. For additional information, follow the Park on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/p/C4n7KEvLb1h/>.

Fun Fact: The Spooky Beaver crew takes its name from the history of the park. "Spooky" is a play on words taken from the OSS training days when spies were called "Spooks." "Beavers" is a salute to the successful beaver repopulation effort that took place on the

property in the 1950s when the beaver population was nearly extinct in the state of Virginia. The Park is maintained by the PATC's own Spooky Beaver Crew in close collaboration with the National Park Service.

The Spooky Beaver Crew loves all volunteers no matter what their experience level! The crew enjoys sharing their knowledge and supporting volunteers to learn more about trail maintaining. Come join us and help keep the Prince William Forest National Park trails beautiful. Check us out at www.spookybeavers.net/ or sign up on Meetup via PATC Volunteers group.



Pyrite Mine



Civilian
Conservation Corps



Spies in the Park

Getting Starry-Eyed at Glass House

By Jess LaPolla



Glass House at Night by Win Huffman

Located in the north end of Fort Valley, [Glass House](#) is the perfect getaway for friends, couples, and small families. Geology buffs will appreciate the history behind the house and location as well.

Tucked deep within the rugged landscape of Virginia's Massanutten Mountains, Fort Valley is a hidden geological marvel. Described as a valley within a valley, it was forged by tectonic forces and sculpted over millions of years. Fort Valley is a uniquely

enclosed basin, essentially making it a geologic fortress sealed by stone.

Willed to PATC by Geologist Jewell Glass, the stone cabin's screened in porch offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains, while the large deck is perfect for lounging or star gazing.

This modern cabin is equipped with a charming kitchen and dining area and can sleep up to four people. Imagine walking out onto the deck in the early morning, seeing the sun rise over hills of green and gold while the steam rises from your mug of coffee or tea. We don't know about you, but that feels like peak living to us.

If you're an avid hiker, climber, or enjoyer of nature, this location will leave you breathless. The area boasts endless opportunities for day hiking and backpacking, including sections of the Tuscarora Trail and the Appalachian Trail. From easy hikes such as the [Woodstock Tower Trail](#), to challenging adventures like [Signal Knob](#) and [Kennedy Peak](#), there is something for almost everyone. [Elizabeth Furnace Recreation Area](#) is home to beautiful hiking, picnic sites, and rock climbing.

Other recreation options around Fort Valley include horseback riding and fly fishing or boating in the enchanting Passage Creek. A spring-fed stream flowing over quartzite and ancient limestone, this crystal-clear creek supports a native brook trout population and is home to many other species of wildlife.

Check out [Fort Valley Ranch](#) and book a guided trail ride, or check out [Murray's Fly Shop](#) for fishing info, classes, and guided trips.

Fort Valley is nestled in the heart of Shenandoah County, surrounded by not only beautiful landscape but a number of quaint towns as well. Many breweries, wineries, cafes, and restaurants are but a short drive away.

Glass House is a gateway to some of the best outdoor recreation in Virginia, while offering cozy and modern lodging. Don't take our word for it though, stay a while and find out for yourself. For more information and to book, [check out our website](#).

*Access the cabin is available from the adjacent parking area. Due to water quality concerns, renters are encouraged to bring their own water.

What's that Flower?

By Richard Stromberg



Dwarf Spirea



Rock Harlequin



Figure 2 Mountain Sandwort

The Old Rag loop hike is described on pages 54-57 of PATC's "Circuit Hikes in Shenandoah National Park" and pages 252-255 of "Appalachian Trail Guide to Shenandoah National Park." In addition to the challenging rock scrambles and spectacular views, Old Rag offers interesting flowers, some of them found only in rocky places like Old Rag.

This month shows notable plants to be seen in the summer.

Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*) is a perennial that can grow over eight feet tall with flower spikes that can be up to three feet long. They are also called Fairy Candles.

Dwarf Spiraea (*Spiraea corymbosa*) is a shrub up to one meter tall. Leaves are ovate with toothed edges. The white or pinkish, tightly-packed, quarter-inch flowers grow in a flat or slightly rounded form called a corymb.

Rock Harlequin (*Corydalis sempervirens*) plants are up to 30 inches tall. The half-inch, tubular flowers are pink with a yellow tip. They are grouped into dangling clusters.

Climbing Fumitory (*Adlumia fungosa*) is a climbing vine with very slender stems. White or pinkish flowers grow in large, drooping clusters.

Michaux's Saxifrage (*Hydaticea petiolaris*) leaves are all at the base of the plant. Each leaf is thick and shiny, up to six inches long, and has five to eight teeth on each side. The inflorescence is wide and spreading. Each flower has five, long, separated, white petals. Two smaller petals point one way and three larger ones point the other way. The larger petals have two yellow dots at the base. Slender stamen filaments spread brown anthers above the petals.

Mountain Sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*) is a northern species as its species name *groenlandica* (of Greenland) indicates. It is rare in the PATC area, only found on top of Old Rag Mountain where several clumps of it grow in crevices and sandy pavements. It forms mats of leaves that look like little clumps of grass, but, if you look closely, you will see that the individual leaves are fleshy. Flower stems with up to five flowers extend above the leaves. The half-inch flowers have five white petals.

Some **American Chestnut** (*Castanea dentata*) trees on Old Rag are old and strong enough to bear fruit. The flowers are small and cluster on catkins at the end of branches. Long catkins, up to five inches, have only male flowers. Shorter catkins have male flowers at the end and a few, inconspicuous female flowers toward the base. The fruit is a spiky, two-inch ball, starting out green and turning brown when ripe and falling to the ground.

Northern Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*) is a shrub. The tubes of its yellow flowers are shorter than other honeysuckles. Five pointed, unequal lobes flare from the tubes.

Whorled Loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadrifolia*) grows up to three feet tall with a series of whorled leaves spaced up the stem giving. The whorls usually contain four leaves (hence the species name) but sometimes less or more. The leaves have no stem or a very short one. The solitary flowers grow on one-to-two-inch stems from the axils of the upper leaf whorls. The edges of the petals are smooth.

Trail Maintenance Workshop

Saturday and Sunday, September 20 & 21, 2025

Shenandoah National Park - North District

For more than 35 years, the PATC's Hoodlums Trail Crew and Shenandoah National Park staff have conducted a Trail Maintenance Workshop in the North District of the Park. The objective is to teach basic skills to new and prospective trail maintainers and to provide experienced trail maintainers advanced training in trail design, construction, and maintenance. SNP trail professionals and experienced PATC crew leaders provide instruction that will help novice and veteran trail maintainers alike. Workshop participants typically camp for the weekend at the Mathews Arm Campground in the North District of the Park. Participants will have free entry to the Park and Campground.

The Workshop will begin Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m. and end Sunday at 1:00 p.m. Participants are encouraged to arrive Friday afternoon/evening and camp at Mathews Arm, socialize with other participants, and thereby avoid an early-morning drive. The fee for the workshop, which includes dinner Saturday and breakfast and lunch Sunday is \$40.

The workshop is limited to 30 participants, which we typically reach by early-August. The registration deadline is Friday, September 5th. When we reach capacity, we will maintain a waiting list. For more information contact **David Nebhut** via e-mail: david.nebhut@gmail.com or by phone: 571-465-1041.

***Registration is almost full!**

If you are ready to register click here: [Hoodlums 2025 Trail Maintenance Workshop](#)

Participation in the Workshop is available only to PATC members age 18 and above, and registration in advance is required.

Help Wanted for August

Corridor Monitors

Tom Lupp 301/663-6644, tlupp@verizon.net

Duke Hollow ~ VA North Trail District [PATC map 8]

Ashby Gap North ~ VA South Trail District [PATC map 8]

Shelter Volunteer

Henry Horn ~ 301/498-8254, shelters@patc.net

Rocky Run Shelter [Original] ~ PATC map 5-5

Paul Gerhard Shelter ~ PATC map F

Pinefield Hut ~ PATC map 11

SNP North District Blue blazed ~ Map 9

Tom Moran ~ 703/715-0050, twmoran19@gmail.com

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

Fork Mountain Trail ~ Co ~ Piney Ridge Trail to Hull School Trail (1.1 mi)

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

Piney Branch Trail (upper) ~ Co ~ AT to Power line (2.2mi) (bottom needs help)

SNP South District Blue blazed ~ Map 11

James Surdukoski ~ 434/459-1122, buslsurdukowski@gmail.com

Brown Mountain ~ Brown Mountain 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)

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)

Tuscarora Central ~ Map L

Bill Greenan ~ wpgreenan@yahoo.com

Co-District Manager

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

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

Tuscarora Trail ~ Eagles Nest Mt. Parking Lot to Meadow Branch Trail (3mi)

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 ~ 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 South ~ Map H

Paul Boisen ~ 540/246-5662, paulboisen@hotmail.com

Massanutten South Trail ~ Pitt Spring to Morgan Run Trail (1.4 m FR 65) (3.3mi)

Roaring Run Trail ~ Catherine Furnace to TV Tower Road (3.8mi)

Pitt Spring Lookout Trail ~ Massanutten South Trail to lookout point (.27mi)

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)

North River Map-National Geographic Trails Illustrated #791

Lynn & Malcolm Cameron ~ 540/234-6273, slynncameron@gmail.com

Bear Draft ~ FR 535 to Wild Oak Trail sec C (#716)(1.5mi)

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

New Boots

New Boots Assigned in May/June

Shelters & Campgrounds

Tarah Romano Denton Shelter

Trails

Dave Jordahl AT ~ Annapolis Rocks Trail to US 40

John Kinas AT ~ Passamaquoddy Trail to Skyland Stables

Brenda Doherty AT ~ Spitler Knoll Overlook to Fishers Gap

Laura Stephens AT ~ Bearfence Loop Trail to Slaughter Horse Trail

Dave Jordahl Pine Knob Shelter Trail

Dan Marvin & Amanda Preble Tom Floyd Wayside & Ginger Spring ~ AT to shelter, tent sites,
& Ginger Spring

Ann Beale & Ed Elam Millers Head Trail

Ray Stinson Tuscarora Trail ~ Doll Ridge to Rock Marker

Ray Stinson Tuscarora Trail ~ Rock Marker to Massanutten Trail

Bill Mandros Union Advance Trail

Ralph Kerr Laurel Loop & Birch Bluff Trail

Sarah DeGennaro Theodore Roosevelt Trail

Sarah DeGennaro Valley Trail ~ Blagden Ave to Boulder Bridge