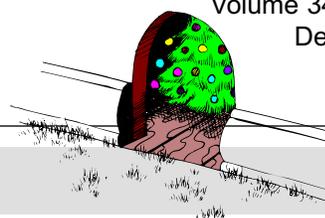




# The Potomac Appalachian

The Newsletter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club  
 118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, VA 22180-4609  
 www.patc.net

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## Do you Know About Our Ski Touring Section

*This is part two of a two-part article.*

As noted in last month's article in *The Potomac Appalachian*, the PATC Ski Touring Section (STS) has identified a wealth of locations in and around the Mid-Atlantic states suitable for cross-country skiing during the wintertime. But the likelihood of snow in the region on a particular weekend is uncertain at best. And the availability of snow at a specific location is even less certain. Some skiers overcome this problem by bringing both ski gear and hiking boots on a scheduled trip, thus guaranteeing that they can spend quality time outdoors regardless of the snow conditions. But others address the problem by scheduling ski trips to more distant venues where the odds of snow are more in their favor.

STS offers several out-of-region ski trips each winter. Two favorite locations are the Tug Hill plateau in upstate New York and the White

*See Ski, page 7*



*Bert Finkelstein (STS Chair), Diane Weil, and Steve Brickel skin in falling snow in Ste-Agate-des-Monts, Quebec, February 2005.*

Photo by Robert Swennes

## PATC's Annual Meeting is a Great Success

PATC's 78th annual meeting was held at the beautiful Meadowlark Gardens for the fourth year in a row, on the evening of Nov. 8. The guest speaker, Michael Petty, a professor of history, entertained us with his descriptions of the journey of Lewis and Clark, as well as with information about his recent journey following in their footsteps. Door prizes following the theme were awarded, and following a dinner of Chinese food and dessert, the official meeting began.

Tom Johnson started off the meeting with general comments, a financial report, and the introduction of the guest speaker. Following the entertainment came the announcements of the various



Photo by Vince Ferrari

awards given annually by the club. Full details of the awards, along with many photos from the evening, will appear in next month's *Potomac Appalachian*. □

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## Council Fire

President Tom Johnson chaired the regularly scheduled PATC Council Meeting on Oct. 11, 2005, at Club Headquarters. Tom introduced special guests Lori Watkins, Bears Den manager, and Bob Williams, ATC director of land conservation. Wilson Riley, director of administration, announced the roof replacement would start the next day (Oct. 12) and would take several days. He requested that committee chairs should submit their annual reports by Oct. 31. He also announced that the bill for the insurance renewal for the year was \$47,047. Tom reported that chapter presidents had significantly simplified the Duties and Responsibilities that Council approved in September; Council approved the changes. Treasurer Ric Francke said that PATC has several large bills due in the near term, and there may be a need to shift money between budget items. He noted that nothing is in the 2006 budget for land acquisition.

### Trails and Lands

Vice President for Operations Bruce Glendening reported that the IT Committee had just met before the Council meeting and there were several new volunteers that had strong IT skills that they planned to use in integrating the PATC administrative databases. PATC is also experimenting with electronic conferences; some people may become more involved if they do not have to travel to Vienna.

Supervisor of Land Chris Mangold and Hiking Co-chair Karen Brown provided a slide show program with lessons learned on the Vos Track selective timber-cutting project. The presentation emphasized the importance of having a local person available to minimize site damage on this type of project.

### Facilities

Supervisor of Facilities Mel Merritt introduced a motion authorizing the PATC president to sign a lease with ATC on managing the Bears Den facility, with authority to accept minor changes. Trail Patrol Chair Katrina Hedlesky asked that there be an accommodation for the Ridgerunners in the business plan. Council approved the motion.

### Other Activities

Vice President for Volunteerism Lee Sheaffer presented the names recommended by ExCom for awards. Council approved honorary Life-Memberships to Kerry Snow, Carol Niedzialek, and Park Anderson. It also authorized an appreciation award plaque for non-PATC member George Boisse who has done extensive work at Rosser-Lamb. Lee said that PATC planned to have a booth at the annual Shenandoah Valley Balloon Festival on Oct. 14-16 at Long Branch in Millwood, Va. If any PATC member would like to become the librarian/archivist succeeding Carol Niedzialek, who is retiring from the position, please contact Alan Day at [dayalan@nova.org](mailto:dayalan@nova.org).

*Maps* – Digital Map11 South District SNP Supplemental Budget will be more expensive than budgeted but existing funds can be shifted around to cover the cost.

*Risk Management* – Larry Marcoux is contacting other clubs to determine how they handle risk-management issues.

*Ski Touring* – Steve Bergstrom reported that the Ski Fair is scheduled for Nov. 5.

*Shelters* – The paperwork has been submitted for the Vos shelter; Henry Horn has not received any approvals for the shelter from Maryland.

*Cabins* – Silberman Cabin is under roof, progressing well, expects to stay within budget.

*Naturalist* – Water quality season is between Oct. 16 and Nov. 30.

*Regional Partnership* – Kerry Snow reported that the Stewardship Council met about two weeks ago; Sandy Marra also represents PATC.

*Trail Patrol* – Leave No Trace and hike leader training is starting. □

—Alan Day, Secretary

### HOW TO CONTACT US: HEADQUARTERS, SALES, CABIN RESERVATIONS, AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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**Phone #:** 703/242-0315

24-hr. Activities Tape #: 703/242-0965

**To receive an information packet:** Extension 10

**Club President (leave a message), Tom Johnson:** Extension 40

**Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
and Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 2 p.m.

**Facsimile #:** 703/242-0968

**Club e-mail:** [info@patc.net](mailto:info@patc.net)

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[www.patc.net/about/contact.html](http://www.patc.net/about/contact.html)

or call the main club phone number.

Contact list published twice annually in the *PA*.

## Tom's Trail Talk – Volunteers – What Are Your Rights?

A group composed entirely of volunteers relies on comity for effectiveness. It's not like going to a paying job, and no one has to do anything. A volunteer who becomes disaffected can walk.

To get things done, PATC has a hierarchical organization, with some volunteers who supervise work and others who work under direction. Everyone in PATC has a boss to whom they are supposed to listen. I even have one – my district manager (DM). If I don't do what he says, I am going to feel some heat. So what happens when a volunteer disagrees with his "supervisor"? Let's say that I feel unjustly criticized by my DM. And let's say, further, that he is so unhappy with my performance as a trail overseer that he has just told me that he has appointed a new overseer in my place. Does the club have any procedure for working this out?

The answer is, yes, we do. We have several procedures that have been enacted by Council. The first is titled "Guidelines for Communicating with PATC Volunteers." It states that volunteers and supervisors are obliged to communicate openly with each other. If a supervisor has a problem with the work that a volunteer is doing, he or she must tell the volunteer directly. No fair hiding the disagreement or surprising the volunteer.

But what if nothing is working, and the volunteer must be removed? In this case I must be informed in writing why I am being removed. My DM can fire me (despite the fact that I am the club president) but he has to explain to me why it did not work out.

If I still disagree and want to keep my job, the second procedure kicks in. It is called the Dispute Resolution Policy. I can elevate my dispute to the supervisor of trails, and if I am still unhappy, I can refer it to the vice president for volunteerism. He (in this case it is a he) will try to resolve the dispute and may appoint a mediator. If, after 30 days, the dispute still exists, it will be referred to the Executive Committee, whose decision in the matter will be final. (Since I am a member of Excom, I would have to recuse myself from the decision.)

A third procedure, stated in our bylaws, is titled Discipline of a Member. It relates to disciplinary issues and does not appear to apply to the above case. I would not refer my dispute under that provision.

Do my DM and I get along? I assume we do since he has not notified me of any deficiencies. If he has a problem with me, I sure hope I will not be the last to know. I would like to have a chance to correct the problem. □

—Tom Johnson

## Johnson Cabin Gets a Cook Shed

Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Thomas Jorgensen's "Southern Slackers" work crew, the diminutive Johnson Cabin now sports a first-rate cook shed. For three consecutive weekends in August the Slackers trooped out to the Vining Tract and worked their hearts out. Based on the design of the cook shed at the Blackburn Trail Center, Johnson Cabin's is 10' x 15' with a

work table across one end, a grill, and space for a small picnic table.

The double-size bunk bed makes Johnson Cabin rated for four occupants, but with a 7' x 15' footprint it is perhaps better suited for two or a family of four with small children. The new cook shed opens up some more real estate for warm weather cooking, dining, and



*The completed cook shed expands the living space significantly and is a nice way to enjoy the outdoors.*



*Jerry Bortner checks the plumb of a post being held by Ken Lyons and Bob Edwards while Thomas Jorgensen (now you know where the Slackers got their name) takes a break.*

lounging. It offers a view of the adjacent (uninhabitable) Louraine Morris house.

Johnson Cabin is located at the far west of the Vining Tract, an 0.8-mile hike in from the parking area. It is situated perfectly for those who want to "get away from it all" or who want to explore the many trails in the immediate area. □

—Ken Lyons

## C&O Canal National Historical Park Wins Award for Top Federal Volunteer Program

“Take Pride in America” is a national partnership program that engages, supports, and recognizes volunteers who work to improve the nation’s public lands.

“You have touched others with the gifts of your time and talent,” said Interior Secretary Gale Norton. “Your efforts at stewardship on behalf of public lands in this country are a testament to the value that volunteers provide to all Americans.”

Showing a significant increase in the number of volunteers and hours contributed over the past year, the park’s VIP program grew from 1,847 volunteers to 2,396 volunteers, who contributed an estimated value of \$840,041 to the park. One staff person directs the park’s VIP program with the help of an intern who works with the park’s five visitor centers.

The park’s VIP program has been designed to run virtually independently in order to allow park staff to concentrate on other necessary duties. With partnerships across multiple organizations, the VIP program’s efforts focused on recruiting and retaining students and senior citizens in 2005.

The park’s VIP program engages youth, students, and seniors in volunteering for the bike patrol program, administrative work in the visitor centers, as campground hosts or living history interpreters, docents at lock houses, trail maintenance volunteers, campground hosts, resource management assistants or volunteers who conduct annual winter bird surveys, and level walkers who walk the towpath and update park staff on conditions.



Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton recently presented volunteers and employees of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park with “Take Pride in America’s” federal volunteer program award, the highest designation for a federal agency volunteer program. The park’s award is for its VIP program.

In Montgomery County, in partnership with PATC, volunteers donated time to maintain the network of trails in the Great Falls area, helping to keep popular trails open and safe. The PATC volunteers led a group to implement the park’s Leave No Trace program in order to reduce visitor impact on Bear Island, home to the popular Billy Goat Trail. Through a conservation grant from REI Outfitters, PATC joined the Nature Conservancy and the park’s VIP program to provide Leave No Trace training to 10 trail stewards who provided education to hikers on how to minimize impacts on the Billy Goat Trail. □

—Excerpted from [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

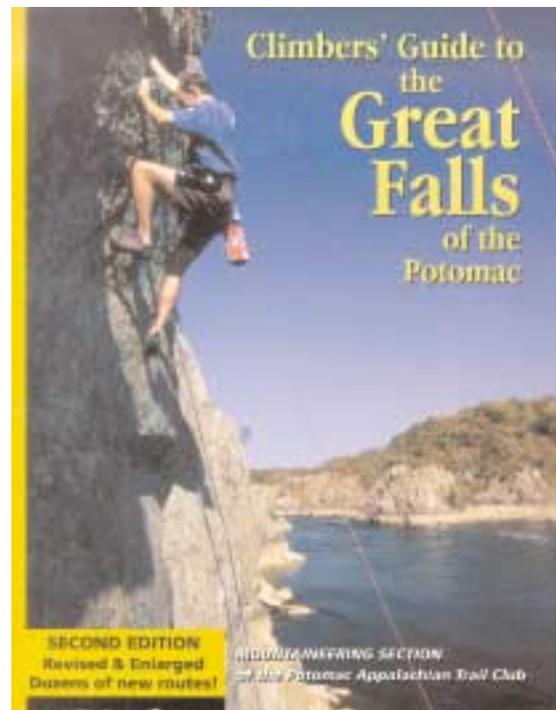
FROM THE PATC STORE

## Climbers’ Guide to the Great Falls of the Potomac

2001, Second edition

(Second Edition; Tate; 2001; 190pp.) This guide provides maps, descriptions, and ratings of technical climbing routes along the Potomac River; covers both the Maryland and Virginia shorelines. The revised edition includes dozens of new routes, and extremely easy-to-read, updated maps and photos for locating climbs.

Retail Price: \$12.95 non-member or \$10.36 member, plus \$2.00 shipping and 5 percent VA tax. You can call to place your order (703/242-0693) or go to [www.patc.net](http://www.patc.net). Item: PC190 □



## Do You Love Kids and the Outdoors?

Coming on May 6-7 is the 2006 PATC Family Weekend. Families, especially those with young children, are invited to gather for hiking, camping, eating, and having fun. Of course individuals are welcome too. We'll be at Bears Den this year, which offers a variety of hikes, lodging options, and spaces for activities. We are now looking for volunteers to lead activities, including hikes, nature crafts, games and a sing-a-long. Activity ideas are also welcome. Lead an

activity of your own creation, or we can assign you one that meets your interests. Not feeling like leading? We could use a few folks to shuttle gear and to work in the kitchen. Complete registration information will be available in February. Anyone with ideas or who wants to volunteer is encouraged to contact Anne Regan (Anne.c.regan@verizon.net) 703/689-3883 soon. Looking forward to a memorable weekend with your help. □

—Anne Regan

## Ridgerunners Needed in 2006

PATC, in conjunction with ATC, wants to hire five Ridgerunners starting in April or May 2006. If you like to backpack, are experienced hiking on trails, are good at interacting with people, and would like to get paid for it, then please contact us. We provide additional training, including wilderness first aid and Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics.

Starting in spring 2006, the PATC Ridgerunners will backpack on their sections of the AT from SNP to Michaux State Forest in southern Pennsylvania, staying near shelters and other facilities. Ridgerunners work with the public, trail community, and officials along the AT to enhance the public's enjoyment of the trail and to help protect it. Duties include:

- *Providing general support to hikers and campers, including directions and other information*

- *Educating hikers on the importance of minimizing their impact on the trails and surrounding resources*
- *Inspecting the AT and trail-related facilities and reporting on their condition to PATC and others*
- *Performing light maintenance on the trail.*

As ambassadors on the trail, they will meet and greet hikers and provide literature to inform visitors about the AT, particularly concerning LNT principles. Ridgerunners will encourage the best behavior on the part of hikers, facilitate a positive trail experience (especially for those who are poorly prepared), and elicit the support of trail neighbors, who may not understand or use the trail properly. Ridgerunners by their presence will discourage and mitigate misuse of the AT and its environs by performing educational and public relations functions. □

## ATC Hosts Holiday Open House

ATC will host its second annual Holiday Open House from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, 2005.

All are invited to stop by for hot cider, coffee, and cookies with ATC staff and volunteers and to shop for gifts, maps, and guidebooks in our visitor's center. Authoritative information about AT history, conditions, and hiking is also available at the visitor's center. Be sure to check out ATC's 10.5-foot-long, three-dimensional relief map of the AT, and explore our interactive multimedia presentation.

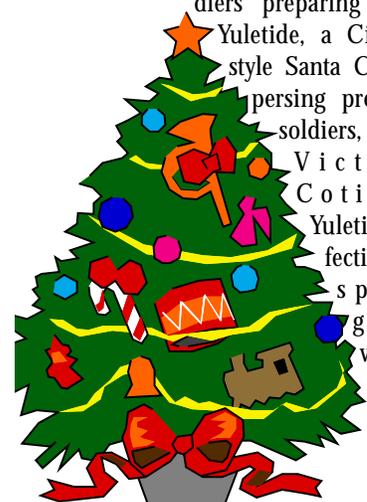
Founded in 1925, ATC is a volunteer-based, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, management, and promotion of the AT as a primitive setting for outdoor recreation (on foot) and for education. Visit [www.appalachiantrail.org/directions](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/directions) for directions to our visitor's center at 799 Washington St., Harpers Ferry, or call 304/535-6331.

Dec. 3-4 is one of two Old Tyme Christmas weekends presented by the Harpers Ferry Merchants Association in conjunction with Harpers Ferry Main Street and the town of Harpers Ferry. For more information, visit [www.harpersferryinfocenter.org](http://www.harpersferryinfocenter.org).

In conjunction with Old Tyme Christmas, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park [www.nps.gov/hafe](http://www.nps.gov/hafe) will again present "Prospects of Peace: A Soldier's Prayer" on Dec. 3 and 4. This special program will focus on Yuletide 1864 when Harpers Ferry soldiers attempted to create their own version of Christmas on the battle front. Programs and activities will feature local citizens and soldiers preparing for the

Yuletide, a Civil War-style Santa Claus dispersing presents to soldiers, a Victorian Cotillion, Yuletide confections, and special guided walking tours. □

—Laurie Potteiger



## Trail Overseers - Appointed in October

### Shelter Overseers

**Brian Call**      **Annapolis Rocks**

### Trail Overseers

**Tom Burson**      **Potomac Heritage Trail - Water Tower to Live Oak Drive**

**Bob Austin**      **Bull Run-Occoquan Trail - Soccer Field Bridge to Bull Run Marina**

**Lee and Leslie Manning**      **Little Stony Creek Trail**



## Bob Pickett's Appalachian Nature: The Environment

### ATC Pushes for the Environment

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the chapter clubs are leading PATC to take a more active and responsible role in protecting our lands. Through ATC's leadership, each club monitors state and federally protected species, and many clubs measure air and water quality along their trails and properties. Conservation easements have become a major tool in protecting the environment of our hiking areas, as they increase the value of our hiking experience. And, of course, nothing better typifies this burgeoning direction more than the change in name of our governing organization, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

As PATC's landholdings continue to grow with purchases along the Tuscarora Trail and acquisitions of land tracts throughout the region, the need for a conservation policy that can guide us in all of our club's activities becomes ever more important.

### Maintaining a Stable Ecosystem

Through time and evolution, the endless variety of living conditions throughout the world has created the same number of life forms. And within each set of living conditions, or habitats, these living forms have adapted and competed to create a community that makes the most efficient use of the energy made available by the habitat. What's more, these living members have maximized their efficiencies by not only benefiting from the other community members, but, in many cases, by becoming obligate dependents upon others within the community. The welfare of one species is dependent on the well-being of others. This is truly the intricate web of life. And it is in balance. A mature community, or ecosystem, is the most efficient and complete user of the available energy. In this natural world, no nutrients are wasted. The waste products of some are the fuel for others.

At times, I feel extremely fortunate to be living at this particular time in history. We have progressed to a point where we have the knowledge of how our natural systems work, and we still have some of the original virgin lands to experience. However, in just two or three more generations, the virgin lands of our planet will be gone. What's just as remarkable is that 100 years ago, half of the Potomac River watershed was still virgin woods, and only 16 generations ago, the

whole of North America was virtually untouched by European hands!

### Human Pollution

So much is happening to our planet in such a short time. The implications of our human population and technological byproducts have been a deterioration of our land, air, and water. And, as they deteriorate, so do our natural systems, and no one knows what will happen if these communities collapse.

The biggest pollution source in the world is fossil fuel combustion. Many of the environmental problems affecting our forests result from our fossil fuel dependence. These impacts include global warming, air quality deterioration, oil spills, and acid rain. Over the past 150 years, burning fossil fuels has resulted in more than a 25 percent increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, the source of "greenhouse warming." Utilities that use coal to generate electricity produce two-thirds of the nation's sulfur dioxide emissions. The transportation sector is responsible for close to half of the U.S. emissions of nitrogen oxides; power plants produce most of the rest. Nearly 50 percent of the nitrogen oxide in the atmosphere and 70 percent of sulfur dioxide are a direct result of emissions released when coal is burned. Both of these create acid rain.

In the short term, pollution emission can be reduced. Such reductions can be dramatic. If you recall the Eastern North American blackout in August 2003, most of the power plants in southeast Canada and the Northeast and Midwest United States were turned down. Compared with the same time a year prior, testing in Pennsylvania revealed a 90 percent drop in sulphur dioxide levels, a 50 percent drop in ozone, and a visibility increase of 30 miles. We can reverse the pollution trends!

In the long term, alternatives to a fossil fuel economy will have to be developed. If we have learned anything, it should be that we should follow the examples of nature. It seems that an economy based on the unlimited (and free) solar energy is the obvious answer. Hydrogen may become the "energy carrier of the future," based on the splitting of water, using solar energy directly or indirectly via electricity. Hydrogen would then be used as a substitute for natural gas.

*See Bob, page 14*

## Emergency Response Training and Trail Patrol

Presents

### Basic Wilderness First Aid and CPR and AED

Jan. 21 and 22, 2006

Day one of this two-day class covers Adult CPR and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and American Heart Association First Aid. You will receive a textbook and a certification card good for two years. Day two is American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) Basic Wilderness First Aid. You will learn how to do patient assessments, bleeding control, splinting, and other basic first aid skills in the wilderness setting. There is plenty of hands-on time and paramedics with years of backcountry experience teach the classes.

Cost of the class is \$120 for Trail Patrol Members and \$130 for Non-Trail Patrol members. Pre-Registration is required before Jan. 13, 2006. For more information or to download the registration form, go to [www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol.com](http://www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol.com) or contact Saleena DeVore at [tp1staid@patc.net](mailto:tp1staid@patc.net) or 540/972-8394.

### Correction

We regret and retract errors reported in the November 2005 Council Fire regarding the motion to oppose the proposed Georgetown University boathouse. The corrected version reads as follows:

The Sept. 13, 2005 Council approved a motion to join the Defenders of the Potomac River Parkland in opposing plans for a 19,000-square-foot private boathouse on land currently within the C&O Canal National Historical Park. (For details, please refer to the November 2005 *PA* article "Massive Private Building Threatens Potomac Gorge and C & O Canal Park" by Sally C. Strain, DC Coordinator, Defenders of Potomac River Parkland.) □

**Ski, from page 1**

Mountains of New Hampshire. The section “discovered” the Tug Hill area about eight years ago. Prior to that PATC skiers were traveling to the Lake Placid area of New York (<http://www.lakeplacid.com/>) to ski at one or more of the ski touring centers there and along the 50-mile Jackrabbit Trail. If the snow conditions are good, Lake Placid is a winter sports Mecca not to be missed. The Tug Hill area north of Syracuse, N.Y., is a bit shorter drive, is less glamorous (and less expensive), and has somewhat more dependable snow. The greater snowfall is due to “lake effect” precipitation caused by air passing over Lake Ontario. The Tug Hill region has two dependable ski centers. Salmon Hills (<http://www.salmonhills.com/>) is a commercial operation that can draw crowds similar to those of a downhill ski resort. Osceola (<http://www.uxcski.com/>) is a smaller, family-run business with some excellent groomed trails and more solitude. The Tug Hill region also has a wealth of state forests that offer wintertime

backcountry skiing opportunities. STS currently offers two trips to this region each winter.

The White Mountains area of New Hampshire offers a wide range of downhill and cross-country skiing options. The section organizes trips to this area every year or two. They are always fully subscribed. Most skiers fly from the Washington area up to Manchester, N.H., and then travel by rental van on to the ski areas. Lodging is normally in rented townhouses in the nearby towns of North Conway, Glen, and Jackson. Two ski centers have particularly drawn the praise of our members and many return visits. They are the Jackson STC ([www.jacksonxc.org/](http://www.jacksonxc.org/)) in Jackson, N.H., and the Bretton Woods STC ([www.brettonwoods.com/xcountryski/](http://www.brettonwoods.com/xcountryski/)) on the grounds of the grand Mount Washington Hotel. Both offer miles and miles of beautiful tracked skiing trails and have first-class ski shops. Other ski centers abound in the region, though many of them cater to skate skiers rather than classic track skiers.

STS is venturing even further afield in the search for good snow and great cultural experiences. Two years ago the section sponsored a 10-day trip to Garmisch, Germany. The skiers lived in typical German vacation apartments in the town, shopped in the local stores, and enjoyed the cuisine at several town restaurants. Garmisch ([www.garmischpartenkirchen.de/](http://www.garmischpartenkirchen.de/) [click English]) has been a tourist destination for hundreds of years. In the event of a winter warm spell, one can simply travel south into the Alps of Austria to find pristine ski trails at higher elevations. STS will be offering the Germany ski trip again this coming February. Competing with the Germany trip this season will be a fascinating hut-to-hut Nordic skiing trip in the French and Italian Alps. This mid-February trip will include four days with a guide on La Haute Trace des Escartons. It includes an optional three-day stay in Paris.

Last winter the section broke new ground in North America by sponsoring a week-long trip to the Laurentian region north of Montreal. The group stayed in the first-class Far Hills Hotel near the town of Val-Morin, enjoying 5-course dinners each evening and a wide range of skiing venues each day. The French Canadian towns and ski centers offered a wealth of cultural and recreational opportunities. This year the Ski Touring Section will conclude its out-of-region excursions with a ski trip to Bryce Canyon National Park ([www.nps.gov/bcrca/](http://www.nps.gov/bcrca/)) in Utah the first week of March. At a time when spring is edging into Washington, Bryce Canyon is still locked in winter. At an elevation of 9,000 feet, the canyon area can have ample snow cover until late in the spring. A large motel complex just outside the park boundary will serve as the skiers’ base of operations for excursions into the national park. This will largely be backcountry skiing in a gentle, rolling countryside set with ponderosa pine and the incredible red hoodoo geological sculptures for which Bryce Canyon is famous.

There is something magical about cross-country skiing. Whether enjoyed due to a sudden snowfall at your front door or on a trip to the countryside, it is winter recreation at its finest for fit people of all ages. Traveling to more distant locations to ski, whether in this country or abroad, adds another rich element to the experience. Geographic wonders outside the Mid-Atlantic region and the new cultural experiences inherent in these more distant excursions can give you fond memories for life. □

—Robert Swennes

Event	Ski Location	State	Start	Return	Ski Days	Notes
3	Laurel Highlands (Trail Prep)	PA	2-Dec	4-Dec	0	Work Crew
4	White Grass	WV	9-Dec	11-Dec	2	Season Opener
5	White Grass	WV	16-Dec	18-Dec	2	Pre Holiday Escape
6	Tug Hill	NY	29-Dec	2-Jan	4	New Year's Trip
7	Local Pick-up trip	snow	2-Jan	2-Jan	1	
8	Blackwater Falls	WV	6-Jan	8-Jan	2	
9	Laurel Highlands	PA	6-Jan	8-Jan	3	
10	Tug Hill	NY	13-Jan	16-Jan	3	MLK
11	New Germany	MD	13-Jan	16-Jan	3	MLK
12	Laurel Highlands	PA	13-Jan	16-Jan	3	MLK
13	Canaan Valley	WA	13-Jan	16-Jan	3	MLK
14	Canaan Valley	WV	19-Jan	22-Jan	3	
15	Camp Sequanota	PA	20-Jan	22-Jan	2	Learn to Ski
16	Laurel Highlands	PA	20-Jan	22-Jan	2	
17	Blackwater Falls	WV	20-Jan	22-Jan	2	
18	Blackwater Falls	WV	27-Jan	29-Jan	2	
19	Local Pick-up trip	snow	28-Jan	28-Jan	1	
20	Blackwater Falls	WV	3-Feb	5-Feb	2	
21	Local Pick-up trip	snow	4-Feb	4-Feb	1	
22	Whitegrass	WV	10-Feb	12-Feb	2	
23	France		10-Feb	19-Feb	7	President's Day
24	Garmisch, Germany		11-Feb	20-Feb	7	President's Day
25	Ski Dance	PA	17-Feb	20-Feb	3	President's Day
26	Canaan Valley	WV	17-Feb	20-Feb	3	President's Day
27	Elk River Touring	WV	24-Feb	27-Feb	3	
28	Local Pick-up trip	snow	25-Feb	25-Feb	1	
29	Bryce Canyon National Park	UT	1-Mar	5-Mar	3	
30	Rangeley Lakes Loppet	ME	1-Mar	5-Mar	3	Gliding Gourmet

Please note that this trip schedule is tentative and subject to change.  
Cancellation policies may result in trips being closed out earlier than expected;  
please reserve space early.

# Backpacking in the Land of the Giants at Sequoia National Park

## Memorial Day Weekend 2005

Following recommendations by *Backpacker Magazine*, we followed the Middle Fork Trail as a “backdoor” entrance to the high country and as an early season backpacking trail. This trail is named after the middle fork of the Kaweah River, which the trail follows. The source of its waters is snowmelt from the Great Western Divide, a range of mountains making up a section of the Sierra Nevada range. The faces of the Great Western Divide would tease us around each bend of the trail. Due to a larger-than-usual snow pack this year, we were unable to access the High Sierra Trail, our first backpacking choice. But the weather had not heated up sufficiently into the 90s to deter us from this relatively low-lying trail (starting at 3,000 ft).

Beginning on the Friday evening of Memorial Day weekend, Anneil Miller and I set off from the Buckeye Flats trailhead toward Panther Creek three miles away, our first stop of the trip. The first creek crossing we came to, 1/8th of a mile from the trailhead, required a bootless crossing. Moro Creek was running fairly well with snowmelt. The creek flows down from Moro Rock from whose bald head you receive a 360 degree view of the Great Western Divide and surrounding Sequoia National Park.

We encountered a fellow backpacker who was returning half blind because he had fallen and broken his glasses. He warned us of a mother bear and cubs he had encountered earlier on the trail, so we kept our eyes peeled. As the late evening sunlight shown on white globs here and there on the hills, we found that they were yucca plants in bloom. This was our introduction to a fabulous season of flower blooms. The path curved around hillside after hillside, here a dip, there a dip, everywhere grand scenery. We enjoyed viewing Castle Rocks on our right – a rock climber’s granite dream – Moro Rock to our left and rear, and always the Great Western Divide before us. The evening calls of the robins and other native birds blended in with the warm smells of the manzanita and chaparral. A beautiful evening for a hike.

Eventually our campsite was reached, and we hurriedly set up camp before darkness set in. Even though we had a bear canister, we still had “smelly” leftovers that we did not want the bears to enjoy. So, we set about hanging a bear bag. Looking around for a rock to help



Photo by Susan By

*The Great Western Divide.*

toss the line over a tree limb, I pulled one out from under a tree near a rock face. A few seconds later I heard a rattling bzzzz. Yowzer. We shone our lights, and not two feet from where I pulled that rock, a rattler sat coiled and buzzing. He was pretty mad, as he kept buzzing for five minutes. We hoped he would not skulk into camp later in the night and wreak revenge. When dinner was over, I strolled down the trail on night errands and looked up at the night sky. The sky was cloudless, with stars so bright they looked like they were on fire. Being somewhat of a scaredy cat, I didn’t remain gazing for long due to the rattlers and bears that might come waltzing down the trail.

## Saturday

The next morning dawned bright and clear. Since my internal time clock was still on Eastern Standard Time, I arose at 5:30 to watch the sun rise and kiss the faces of Castle Rocks. As it rose, it warmed the landscape from blues into golds. Such beauty our Maker has surrounded us with. Our “civilized” lives keep us within our four walls and work schedules, away from the beauty of the countryside! Thank goodness we are able to break free now and again to enjoy these vistas.

Our trail mileage for Saturday would be a less strenuous day of 6.5 miles. Our first challenge was crossing Panther Creek. By tiptoeing and careful foot scrambling, one could cross the stream with boots on. We learned from a camper at Panther Creek that about 11 folks were camped there last night. The camper

was bringing out extra gear to the trailhead as the group was base camping for the Memorial Day weekend.

During snack break we really wanted to stay in the shade of the younger sequoias and sugar pines, but the embracing jaws of friendly female mosquitoes were too much for us, so we were condemned to the sun and scrubbrush on the trail. Nearly every twist and turn around each ridge brought new vistas of the Great Western Divide’s snow-capped peaks. Each vista made you want to take out your camera and capture just that particular cloud shadow or mood, but we restrained ourselves.

The crossing of Mehrten Creek was definitely a boots-off affair, with the snowy cold water refreshing our warmed feet. As I had finished my boot preparations ahead of Anneil, I decided to slowly walk up the hill and enjoy the pines there while I waited. As I approached the crest of the hill, I heard this noise of scuffling and moving about and kind of thought it might be people – but you never know. So, I started talking. As soon as I saw the cinnamon brown fur with ears, I did a quick about face and started back toward Anneil, making loud conversation. The bear kept scuffling and finally got the point to head off up the hill and let us go around. Anneil wanted to get a picture of it but I talked her out of it. From then on I made loud conversation with myself, making sure I talked going around curves. This area of wilderness is the real deal. No bars between you and the zoo.

*See Giants, page 15*

## Hiker's Notebook

**Common Name:** American Mistletoe (Old English *mistel* from *mistel* meaning dung and *tan* meaning twig), Birdlime, Herbe de la Croix, All-Heal, Golden Bough.

**Scientific Name:** *Phoradendron serotinum* (from Greek *phor* meaning thief and *dendron* meaning tree as it “steals” nutrients from the host tree), *P. flavescens*, *P. leucarpum* (yellow flowers and white berries, respectively, are the basis for the alternate species names).

**Potpourri:** Mistletoe is hemiparasitic in that it is a green plant that photosynthesizes its own food while simultaneously getting water and nutrients from the host tree. When a mistletoe seed germinates, it emits thin root-like structures called haustoria that penetrate the bark of the host tree and extend up to a foot inside the branch. Healthy trees can tolerate a few mistletoes, but the branch to which it is affixed may die. In some cases, an abnormal growth called a witches broom may form to further damage the plant.



Mistletoe produces small, sticky white berries that are very attractive to a variety of birds, particularly the thrush, the European mistel thrush having been so named for this behavior. When the birds feed on the berries, they excrete the living seeds that then adhere to the branches in the vicinity. This explains why infestations of mistletoe typically occur in clusters in the upper branches of trees where birds perch.

The etymology of the word mistletoe is subject to some conjecture. The most common assertion is that it derives from the belief that mistletoe grows from bird dung (hence dung twig). Another possible derivation is from the old Dutch word *mist*, meaning **birdlime**, as the berries were used to make birdlime, a sticky substance used to catch birds. Mistle may also derive from *mistl*, meaning **different**, as the mistletoe differs from its host tree. In Brittany, it is known as **Herbe de la Croix**, as it was believed to have been the wood used to make the cross on which Christ was crucified. The mistletoe was purportedly turned into a parasite due to this transgression.

Mistletoe was revered by the Druids as a sacred and magical plant. They conducted an elaborate ceremony at both the winter and summer solstices in which they donned white robes and searched the woods until they found mistletoe, severing it from the tree with a golden knife. They believed that the possessor of the mistletoe was protected against all manner of evil, and they sent their acolytes around with branches of mistletoe to herald the New Year. Its reputed powers included curing diseases, increasing human and animal fertility, and keeping one safe from witches. It was called **all-heal** in Celtic.

In Norse Mythology, Balder, the god of light and son of Odin and Frigga, became troubled by dreams that he would die. As this would end all light and life, Frigga extracted a pledge from every living thing to do no harm to Balder. She overlooked one plant, however; the lowly parasite mistletoe. Loki, the Norse pantheon's mischievous god, learned of this and fashioned an arrow of mistletoe and persuaded a blind god named Hod to shoot it at Balder, killing him. Frigga asked if anyone would descend into the kingdom of Hel, the Norse god of the underworld, to rescue him. Hermod, another of Odin's sons, descended but Balder was lost. The tears shed by Frigga are said to have been the source of the pearly white berries of the mistletoe.

In Greek mythology, mistletoe figures into the legend of Aeneas, who, according to Virgil's Aeneid, was the legendary founder of Rome on his return from the Trojan War. Aeneas wished to go to Hades to visit his deceased father to learn of his future. In order to get to Hades, he had to pass through a dark and impenetrable forest. Two doves guided him to a mistletoe plant, which provided a flickering light as a **golden bough**. When he emerged from the forest, he confronted the ferryman Charon with the bough, who reluctantly agreed to take him across the river Styx where he met his father.



Since the Middle Ages, the use of mistletoe in superstitious rituals and medicinal decoctions has been well documented. It was tied in bunches and hung over doors to protect both humans and animals from witches and other demons. It was placed in cradles to protect infants from faeries. In Sweden, it was kept in the home to prevent fires, possibly due to a belief that mistletoe came to a tree due to a flash of lightning. It was widely used in the treatment of epilepsy due to its purported lessening of the convulsive nervous actions. In Sweden, epileptics carried a knife with a handle made of mistletoe wood to ward off attacks. The English custom of kissing under mistletoe is believed to have started with the Celtic notion that mistletoe improved fertility. A young lady standing beneath a mistletoe bough cannot refuse to be kissed. However, if she is not approached by a willing young man, she will not marry in the following year. □

—William Needham

Visit the Hiker's Notebook Web site at: [www.mwrop.org/W\\_Needham/h\\_notebook.html](http://www.mwrop.org/W_Needham/h_notebook.html).

## Chapters

### Charlottesville Chapter

The Charlottesville Chapter hikes every Saturday; summer, winter, and in between. Hikes are usually 8 to 10 miles. We usually maintain trails on the last Saturday of the month. Meet at Sprint parking lot, 2307 Hydraulic Road, at 9:00 a.m., with food and water for the day. The majority of hikes are in the south and central districts of SNP, with some in the north district and in George Washington National Forest. Our Chapter hikes are posted at [www.patc.net/chapters/char/hikes.html](http://www.patc.net/chapters/char/hikes.html). INFO: Jere Bidwell 434/295-2143 or John Shannon 434/293-2953.

### North Chapter

The North Chapter of PATC conducts monthly trail work trips on the Maryland and Pennsylvania sections of the AT and on the Pennsylvania sections of the Tuscarora Trail. We also lead hikes on these and other trails. Maryland AT work trips are generally held on the first and third Saturdays – contact Nancy Hammond ([mdtrail@yahoo.com](mailto:mdtrail@yahoo.com)) 301/739-0442 for information. Pennsylvania work trips are generally held on the AT on the first Saturday and on the Tuscarora on the third Saturday – contact Pete Brown ([peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net](mailto:peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net)) 410/343-1140. Pennsylvania AT work trips also include an optional Saturday evening dinner at the Gypsy Spring Cabin. For information on upcoming hikes, contact Chris Firme ([bncfirme@innet.net](mailto:bncfirme@innet.net)) 717/765-4833. For general chapter information, contact chapter president Pete Brown or visit the North Chapter home page ([www.patc.net/chapters/north/](http://www.patc.net/chapters/north/)).

### Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Chapter sponsors hikes in national and state parks and forests in the Shenandoah Valley vicinity, open to the public, on a monthly basis except during the winter. Hikes are posted in the Forecast. Other activities are in the NSV Chapter Newsletter. For further information contact Betsy Fowler ([efowler@shentel.com](mailto:efowler@shentel.com)).

### Southern Shenandoah Valley Chapter

See [www.ssvc.org](http://www.ssvc.org) or the one linked to the PATC Web site for descriptions of hikes and work trips. We usually hike in the southern and central districts of the SNP and in the GWNF. Contact the listed hike leader for information about a specific event, or contact Mark Gatewood 540/248-0442.

### West Chapter

The West Chapter meets twice a year in March and September. The Chapter maintains a section of the Black Locust circuit trail in Gambrill State Park near Frederick, Md. Work trips and hikes are usually scheduled monthly from March through December. We also lead overnight weekend trips for day hikes or backpacking. All activities are listed in the PA Forecast. For further information contact Dave Jordahl ([westpatc@hotmail.com](mailto:westpatc@hotmail.com)) 304/876-7062 (evenings) or 240/777-7741 (days).

### Ski Touring Section

The Ski Touring Section has served since 1974 to introduce Washington area residents to cross-country skiing and to provide cross-country skiing opportunities to experienced skiers. The Section sponsors winter weekend ski trips for all levels of skiers to nearby mountains in Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, as well as periodic social events year round. INFO: Bert Finkelstein ([bertf@erols.com](mailto:bertf@erols.com)) 703/715-8534.

### Mountaineering Section

We're a diverse group of local Washington, DC area climbers. Young and old, male and female, crag rat, sport climber, and alpinist, active and armchair types – we all enjoy climbing in its many varieties. We also share common interests in promoting safe climbing, conserving the outdoors, developing new climbers' skills, representing the Washington area climbing community, and having fun! We provide instruction for those wanting to learn the basics – we're not a school, but we can get you started. We go climbing, either locally or further afield, nearly every weekend. In the winter we organize trips to the Ice Festivals in the Adirondacks and the White Mountains for beginning and advanced ice

climbers. For further information contact Ozana Halik, ([mrkayak1@verizon.net](mailto:mrkayak1@verizon.net)) 703/242-0177, or Mack Muir ([MackMuir@edisaurus.com](mailto:MackMuir@edisaurus.com)).

### PATC Hikes

PATC offers organized hikes appealing to the diverse interests of our members. There are K-9 Hikes, which invite you to bring your favorite dog; Family Hikes tailored to kids; Natural History Hikes stalking the fascinating but often elusive flora and fauna of the region; hikes featuring varying levels of difficulty with the Easy Hikers, In-Between Hikers, and Vigorous Hikers; Birding Hikes with experts to help sight and identify our avian neighbors; Historical Hikes tracking little-known structures in Shenandoah National Park; Series Hikes tracing the entire length of the Tuscarora Trail or the trails of Pennsylvania, section by section; Backpacking Hikes traversing the tracts of West Virginia and Southern Virginia; hikes scheduled for weekends; ones scheduled for weekdays; Geology Hikes led by experts from the Smithsonian focused on the unique stratigraphy of our area; Mushroom Hikes with mycologists; Waterfall Hikes to beat the summer heat; and Outreach Hikes to get together with the members of area groups like the Sierra Club or the Congressional Hikers. That is just to name a few. Check out the Forecast calendar and hear updates on the weekly tape (703/242-0965).

### Other Clubs' Hikes

Capital ([www.capitalhikingclub.org](http://www.capitalhikingclub.org)) and Wanderbirds ([www.wanderbirds.org](http://www.wanderbirds.org)) hike on Saturdays and Sundays, traveling by bus and leaving from downtown, with suburban stops as well. Center Club, Northern Virginia Hiking Club and Sierra Club hike on both Saturdays and Sundays using carpools, which often leave from a suburban Metro stop. Schedules are available at PATC Headquarters and are published in area newspapers on Fridays. The schedule of West Virginia Highland Conservancy outings in the Monongahela National Forest and surrounding areas is on their web site at [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org).

## KEY to Forecast Activities

All events are marked for easy identification. Late changes or cancellations are listed on the weekly information tape (703/242-0965), which is updated on Sunday evening for the following seven days. The Forecast can also be found on PATC's Web site at [www.patc.net/activities/forecast.html](http://www.patc.net/activities/forecast.html).

-  Hiking Trips
-  Backpacking Trips
-  Trail Work Trips
-  Cabin/Shelter Work Trips
-  Ski Trips
-  Special Events
-  Meetings
-  Classes
-  K9 Trail Blazers (dogs permitted)

**Note to all hike leaders:** Please ask non-members on your hike if they would like to join PATC, then get names and addresses so a club volunteer can send them information packets. Thanks!

## Meetings

### Meetings

Meetings are held at PATC HQ, 118 Park Street, S.E., Vienna, Va., unless otherwise noted.

### New Members (PATC) – First Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Curious about the club? Want to learn more? The best way is to attend a New Members meeting (but you don't have to be new to qualify). Refreshments will be served. Directions to PATC: Take Rt. 123 into Vienna, Va., and turn east on Park St. (Rt.675) to 118 Park St. on your left. INFO: Georgeann Smale ([gsmale99@yahoo.com](mailto:gsmale99@yahoo.com)) 301/581-9584.

### Mountaineering Section – Second Wednesday

7:30 p.m. – We meet every month on the second Wednesday except for August, unless noted in the Forecast. INFO: Ozana Halik ([mrkayak1@verizon.net](mailto:mrkayak1@verizon.net)) 703/242-0177 or our Web site: [www.potomacmountainclub.org](http://www.potomacmountainclub.org)

### Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

Business meeting - Last Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. INFO: Doug Sigman ([join@smrg.org](mailto:join@smrg.org)), 703/255-5034, or [www.smrg.org](http://www.smrg.org).

### PATC Council – Second Tuesday

The council meets at 7:00 p.m. sharp. The PATC Council meets every month to conduct business of the club and once a year for a dinner meeting. All members are always welcome. Come see how we make decisions about your club. INFO: Wilson Riley ([wriley@patc.net](mailto:wriley@patc.net)) 703/242-0693 x11.

### Trail Patrol – First Tuesday

7:30 p.m., except January. Trail Patrol volunteers are PATC's goodwill trail ambassadors to the hiking public. They provide a visible, reassuring presence on the trails, and strive to educate the public on good hiking practices, minimum impact hiking, and camping ethics. Patrol members are trained in land navigation, emergency procedures, radio communications, and personal equipment. All Trail Patrol volunteers are also expected to become certified in a recognized basic first aid course. Some equipment and uniform items are provided upon completion of training. INFO: Katrina Hedlesky ([trailpatrol@patc.net](mailto:trailpatrol@patc.net)) 703/533-3652, or see our section in PATC's Web site: [www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol](http://www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol).

## December

**1 (Thursday)**

**DEADLINE – January Potomac Appalachian Material due to editors 5:00 p.m.**

All items for the next issue of the newsletter due. Send Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to the editor at lindashannonb@earthlink.net. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

**1 (Thursday)**

**SPECIAL EVENT – Hiking the AT (REI) College Park, MD**

7:00 p.m. Bob Phillips will discuss his 2001 thru-hike of the 2,168 mile AT from Georgia to Maine. Included in the presentation will be the history of the trail development, hike preparations, cost, the equipment needed (and not needed), trail shelters, hostels, the people on and around the trail, and all aspects of an AT thru-hike. He will also discuss many of the unique trail "traditions." All of this will be discussed around his 60-slide presentation which vividly demonstrates the unique nature of this national treasure. Q & A will follow. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**3 (Saturday)**

**CLASS – Couples Ultralight Backpacking (REI) Bailey's Crossroads, VA**

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Yes! You really can enjoy backcountry adventures together safely and comfortably and have more fun! Instructors Alan Dixon and Alison Simon of Backpacking Light Magazine believe most couples can travel the backcountry with 14-16 lb. packs for a 3-day trip and still be warm, comfortable, and safe. Their techniques and light-gear discussions are valuable to all backpackers, especially to women, and couples wishing to start, continue or resume backcountry hiking adventures. Registration is necessary. The \$25 fee includes the class and all course materials. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**3 (Saturday)**

**HIKE – K9 Trailblazers Washington, DC**

We will be hiking into Washington, DC to take in some of the seasonal sites. The hike will be about 5 miles, starting at Theodore Roosevelt Island and then heading along and across the Potomac into DC. We'll hike past several monuments and also make our way to the National Christmas tree and Christmas Pageant of Peace festivities before heading back again. This hike has little elevation change but involves crossing busy streets and other urban challenges. This is a joint hike with K9 Trailblazers so well-behaved dogs are welcome as long as you keep them on leash and scoop after them. Maps, chocolate, and dog biscuits provided at the trailhead. Bring snacks, and water for you and your dog. Visit [www.k9trailblazers.org](http://www.k9trailblazers.org) for more details. INFO: Jeff Bolognese (jbolognese@k9trailblazers.org) 410/247-4434.

**3 – 4 (Saturday – Sunday)**

**CLASS – Wilderness First Aid (WSC) Alexandria, VA**

A program of the Wilderness Safety Council, this 18-hour class includes classroom study, hands-on practice, and results in a two-year certification. The cost is \$160. More information and registration at: <http://wfa.net>. INFO: Christopher Tate (ctate1@webmentor.com) 703/836-8905.

**4 (Sunday)**

**HIKE – Sunday Hikers Great Falls, MD**

We're going to tackle the infamous Billy Goat Trail on this early-December hike, and add a loop around Great Falls Park to see the gold mine as well. The total distance will be about 7.5 miles, with minimal elevation change. However, the Billy Goat is a tough trail, with plenty of rock scrambling to do. This hike will be canceled in the event of icy trail conditions. INFO: Vince Ferrari (vincentferrari@gmail.com) 301/249-2210.

**4 (Sunday)**

**TRAIL WORK TRIP – South Mountaineers Appalachian Trail, MD**

Join us for a fun-filled event involving dirt and teamwork. Newcomers always welcomed. We meet in Frederick County, Md., at 9:00 a.m. Please bring layers if it is chilly. Bring water, lunch, gloves, and boots. INFO: Nancy Hammond (mdtrail@yahoo.com) 301/739 0442.

**6 (Tuesday)**

**CLASS – Map and Compass 101 (REI) Fairfax, VA**

7:30 p.m. This clinic will cover the basics such as understanding map symbols, orienting the map and compass, triangulation, declination adjustment, and reading terrain features. Participants are encouraged to bring their own compasses. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**6 (Tuesday)**

**HIKE – Vigorous Hikers Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA**  
Climb Rose River Fire Rd. connecting to scenic Rose River Loop Trail. Climb to AT south to the Lewis Falls. Return via Rapidan Fire Rd. & Dark Hollow Falls Trail – 18 miles 4,300 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

**6 (Tuesday)**

**MEETING - Trail Patrol, 7:30 p.m. NO REGULAR MEETING IN JANUARY**

**7 (Wednesday)**

**CLASS – GPS 101 (REI) Rockville, MD**

7:30 p.m. Learn how GPS receivers work and what affects accuracy, as well as features, benefits, and how to choose a model. We'll also include a brief overview of online resources and batteries, water and shock resistance, and accessories. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**7 (Wednesday)**

**CLASS – Snowshoeing 101 (REI) Bailey's Crossroads, VA**

7:30 p.m. The best way to enjoy winter snow is on snowshoes. REI's experienced mushers will discuss and demonstrate snowshoe design, binding adjustment, footwear, stance, gait, turning, ascending and descending, and the use of poles. Get a leg up on the best winter fun: Snowshoeing! INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.



**7 (Wednesday)**

**CLASS – Snowshoeing 101 (REI) College Park, MD**

7:00 p.m. Extend your hiking, climbing and running seasons into winter. This clinic will show you how to get started in this fast-growing activity. How to select snowshoes, what basic skills are needed, and some suggestions for local treks will be discussed. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**7 (Wednesday)**

**HIKE – Easy Hikers Washington, DC**

The Easy Hikers will hike about four easy miles through the National Arboretum. Meet at 10:15 a.m. in the main parking lot immediately inside the R Street entrance. Bring lunch and water. Directions: Take the Baltimore-Washington Parkway south from the Beltway. At the split with I-295, bear right on New York Avenue toward Washington. Continue 2 miles to Bladensburg Road, a major intersection. Turn left and go 0.4 miles on Bladensburg Road to R Street, NE. Turn left and go 0.3 miles to the Arboretum entrance gate. INFO: Nancie Coan (Nanco4000@yahoo.com) 202/338-4580.

**7 (Wednesday)**

**HIKE - Midweek Hikers Location to be determined**

The PATC Midweek Hikers carpool each Wednesday from the Washington, DC area to various trailheads. Hikes are at a moderate pace and about 8 to 12 miles in length with varied elevations. Current information, including meeting place, time, leader's name and phone number, and a detailed description of the hike are available on the PATC Activities Recording: 703/242-0965.

**8 (Thursday)**

**CLASS – GPS 101 (REI) College Park, MD**

7:00 p.m. Learn how GPS receivers work and what affects accuracy, as well as features, benefits and how to choose a model. We'll also include a brief overview of online resources and batteries, water and shock resistance, and accessories. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

**10 (Saturday)**

**HIKE – Long Distance Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA**

17-mile circuit hike starting at Pine Hill Gap and ascending Hot Short Mountain. Return via Nicholson Hollow Trail and Robinson Mountain. Last 4 miles on Fire Road through Nethers. Elevation gain 4000 feet. INFO: William Needham (Needham82@aol.com) 410/884-9127.

**10 – 11 (Saturday – Sunday)**

**CABIN WORK TRIP – Cadillac Crew Harpers Ferry, WV**

If you have been out on at least one work trip with the Cadillac Crew this year, please join us and help celebrate the holidays and another great year of trail work. The Crew will set up the Christmas decorations for Highacre on Friday night, do some yard work on Saturday and Sunday, or some trail work nearby, and there will be opportunities to visit historic Harpers Ferry and local hiking trails. Community meals on Saturday night and Sunday morning. Overnight at Highacre House. INFO: Jon or Katherine Rindt (jkrindt@adelphia.net) 540/635-6351.

**10 – 11 (Saturday – Sunday)**

**CABIN WORK TRIP – Vining Tract Stanardsville, VA**

Come join us on the Vining Tract for a weekend of cabin construction and trail projects. The logs are in place at the new Butternut cabin, and now it's time for chinking. We also have trails to build and main-

# FORECAST

tain. Community meals. Overnight at Conley.  
INFO: Hugh Robinson (mes.htr@verizon.net)  
703/525-8726.

## 11 (Sunday)

### HIKE – In-Between Hikers Frederick, MD

Join us in Gambrill State Park for a late autumn hike in this scenic section of the Catoctin Mountains located in central Maryland, under an hour's drive from Washington. The trails in this park offer beautiful views of the city of Frederick, Middletown Valley, South Mountain, and beyond. This moderately-paced, 8-mile hike will feature several steep climbs on rocky trail mixed with long stretches of easy, level ridge walking. Total ascent will be near 1,600 feet. Hike leaders: Bryon Lawrence and Susan Frey. INFO: Bryon Lawrence (bryonlawrence@hotmail.com) 301/668-6446.

## 11 (Sunday)

### HIKE – Natural History Cultural Hike South District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

The leaves are down, the snakes are asleep, the poison ivy leaves and nettles are gone and the humidity is low. That means it's time to brush off our own Len Wheat and get him to lead us to a number of cemeteries and home sites in the Park. We'll be starting our hike at Swift Run Gap (Rt. 33) and bushwhacking down the original road on the west side to a number of interesting sites. We'll only travel about five or six miles, but, being a bushwhack, this must be considered a moderately difficult hike. INFO: Bob Pickett 301/681-1511.

## 11 (Sunday)

### HIKE – North Chapter New Bloomfield, PA

Blue Mountain section: PA Rte 74 to PA Rte. 34/Sterrets Gap. 9.4 miles-moderate hike. Elevation change of 500 feet. We will have some road walking before hiking back towards the ridge. We will be hiking back onto the ridge, which will take us to Sterrets Gap on Rte 34. We will also be hiking through one of the State Game lands SGL 230. No hunting on Sunday. INFO: Christopher Firm (bncfirme@innet.net) 717/794-2855 after 6:00 p.m.

## 11 (Sunday)

### TRAIL WORK TRIP – Massanutten Mountain New Market, VA

Help pitch in to get the Massanutten Mt. Trail South back into shape. We will meet in the parking lot of the Forest Service Parking Lot at 9:30 a.m. This is one of the more scenic parts of the Massanutten Mountain Trail South. Experience is unnecessary. Training and tools can be provided. This trip is subject to prevailing or forecast weather. Please check before going to the meeting site. INFO: Tate Heuer (tate@wth2.com) 202/255-6055.

## 11 (Sunday)

### TRAIL WORK TRIP – South Mountaineers Appalachian Trail, MD

The South Mountaineers' final event of 2005: please bring lunch, water, gloves, boots, and layers for the chillier air. Thanks to all who volunteered this year. Enjoy the holiday season and see you again in 2006. INFO: Nancy Hammond (mdtrail@yahoo.com) 301/739-0442.

## 13 (Tuesday)

### CLASS – Snowshoeing 101 (REI) Fairfax, VA

7:30 p.m. Don't let a little snow keep you inside. Snowshoeing is easy and fun. We'll show you how to select the right shoes for your needs – whether you're training or sightseeing. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 13 (Tuesday)

### HIKE – Vigorous Hikers

Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA  
Hike high along the AT from Panorama to MP 49.2 (Fisher Gap). 15.5 miles and 3,500 ft. elevation gain. Several close approaches to Skyline Drive where any dropouts could be accommodated. INFO: Cliff Noyes (hclmnoyes@yahoo.com) 540/373-8267 or Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## 13 (Tuesday)

### MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

## 14 (Wednesday)

### CLASS – Backpacking 202: Winter (REI) Bailey's Crossroads, VA

7:30 p.m. The Mid-Atlantic region is not Antarctica. With good planning and preparation, proper gear and clothing, and good camping and hiking skills, winter in the backcountry can be very enjoyable. Clear air, solitude, great wildlife viewing conditions, and tracks in the snow are things everyone should experience. Join us for an enjoyable evening preparing to go outdoors for the winter! INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 14 (Wednesday)

### CLASS – Snowshoeing 101 (REI) Rockville, MD

7:30 p.m. Don't let a little snow keep you inside. Snowshoeing is easy and fun. We'll show you how to select the right shoes for your needs – whether you're training or sightseeing. INFO: Mark Nelson (mnelson@rei.com) 703/379-9400.

## 14 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Easy Hikers Washington, DC

Hike 4 easy miles on the Glover Archibald Trail, along Foundry Branch from Van Ness Street, NW to Georgetown. After lunch in the Georgetown Park Mall Food Court, all decorated for the Holidays, we will return to our starting point by Metrobus. (Bring \$1.25, or 60 cents for seniors exact change for fare). Meet at 10:15 a.m. on the parking lot of the National Presbyterian Church, Van Ness Street entrance. Please carpool, as space on lot is very limited. Directions: From Maryland take Wisconsin Avenue (MD Rte 355) inbound from the Beltway about 5 miles to a right turn on Van Ness. Go one block to church parking lot on left. From Virginia cross Key Bridge, turn right on M street. Move immediately to the left lane, and turn left on 33rd street. Follow it until it merges onto Wisconsin Avenue. Proceed 2+ miles to a left turn on Van Ness Street. Church parking lot is one block on the left. Bring water. Hike is canceled if DC Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather. INFO: Gary Abrecht (GAbrecht@AOL.com) 202/546-6089. Cell phone day of hike: 202/365-2921.

## 14 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

## 14 (Wednesday)

### MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

## 17 (Saturday)

### HIKE – Waterfall and Wildflower Series North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA

A 17-mile circuit on the Appalachian, Bluff, Jordan River, and Mount Marshall Trails with about a one-mile round trip bushwhack to the falls on the Jordan River. Total elevation gain is 3,000 feet. PATC Map 9. A 12-mile option is possible with a car shuttle. INFO: Jack Thorsen (thorsen4@Juno.com) 703/339-6716 or William Needham (Needham82@AOL.COM) 410/884-9127.

## 20 (Tuesday)

### HIKE – Vigorous Hikers

North District, Shenandoah National Park, VA  
Overall Falls. From Thompson Hollow climb Overall Run, view the falls, continue to Mathew's Arm and Elkwallow, returning via Beecher Ridge. 16 miles and 3,500 ft. climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## 21 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Easy Hikers Derwood, MD

Meet at 10:15 a.m. at the Shady Grove Metro Station, W. end of the red line. Turn right upon exiting, to meet near the tunnel exit. Call leader for alternative and/or driving instructions. We will walk a total of about 5 miles, either to Rockville or Gaithersburg to buy lunch. We will finish our hike after lunch and return via bus or Metro. INFO: Margaret Chapman 301/869-9291 M, T, Th, or 301/977-8988 eves. after 4:00 p.m.

## 21 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

## 27 (Tuesday)

### HIKE – Vigorous Hikers

Central District, Shenandoah National Park, VA  
Little Devil's Stairs. Ascend the stairs to Keyser Run Rd, to AT south over Hogback for views, then descend Piney Ridge Trail to return on Hull School Trail. About 13 miles and 4,100 ft climb. INFO: Chris Nolen (chrishiker@erols.com) 301/469-8931.

## 27 (Tuesday)

### MEETING - Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (Business meeting), 7:30 p.m.

## 28 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Easy Hikers Washington, DC

A 4.5-mile hike from the Ellipse to Union Station. Meet at 10:15 a.m. at Smithsonian Mall Metro. View National Christmas Tree, then walk to base of Lincoln Memorial, down Smithsonian Mall by World War II Memorial, to U.S. Capitol to see Capitol Holiday Tree. End at Union Station, decorated in holiday splendor, and enjoy seasonal model train display. Eat lunch in food court before dispersing. INFO: Jim Flanigan (jflanigan@aol.com) 202/554-3775.

## 28 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

# January

## 1 (Sunday)

### DEADLINE – February Potomac Appalachian Material due to editors 5:00 p.m.

All items for the next issue of the newsletter due. Send Forecast events to PA-Forecast@patc.net and all other articles to the editor at lindashannonb@earthlink.net. NOTE: Do not send photos or articles to headquarters. E-mail for address.

## 3 (Tuesday)

### NO MEETING - Trail Patrol - No Regularly scheduled Meeting in January

## 4 (Wednesday)

### HIKE – Midweek Hikers Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

## 10 (Tuesday)

### MEETING - PATC Council, 7:00 p.m.

## FORECAST

11 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers

Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

11 (Wednesday)

MEETING - Mountaineering Section, 8:00 p.m.

14 (Saturday)

HIKE – Long Distance

Front Royal, VA

Circuit Hike to Signal Knob at the northern end of Massanutten Mountain. Scenic views of Shenandoah and Potomac River Valleys. Continue over Three-Top Mountain to Powell's Fort and return via the Mudhole Gap Trail. 17 miles with elevation gain of 3000 feet. Moderate pace. Inexperienced hikers contact leader for requirements. INFO: William Needham (Needham82@aol.com) 410/884-9127.

14 (Saturday)

HIKE – North Chapter

New Bloomfield, PA

Tuscarora Trail Hike IX: Blue Mountain section: PA Rte. 34/Sterrets Gap to the Scott Farm. 6.4 miles-moderate hike. Elevation change of 800 feet. This hike will finish the Tuscarora Trail for all you hikers. Thanks for coming. INFO: Christopher Firme (bncfirme@innet.net) 717/794-2855, after 6:00 p.m.

18 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers

Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

21 – 22 (Saturday – Sunday)

CLASS – Wilderness First Aid

Vienna, VA

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. This two-day class provides American Heart Association certification in Adult CPR, AED, and Basic First Aid. The second day the student will learn American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) Basic Wilderness First Aid. All certifications are valid for two years. Cost of the class is \$120 for Trail Patrol Members and \$130 for Non-Trail Patrol Members. Pre-Registration is required by Jan. 14. Go to [www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol.com](http://www.patc.net/volunteer/trailpatrol.com) for more information and the registration form. INFO: Saleena DeVore (tp1staid@patc.net) 540/972-8394.

25 (Wednesday)

HIKE – Midweek Hikers

Location to be determined

See December 7 event for more information.

31 (Tuesday)

MEETING - Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (Business meeting), 7:30 p.m. □



## Talkers Need Tools Too!

It turns out that tools aren't just for trail or cabin work trips – Trail Talkers also need tools with which to spread the word about the wonderful things PATC does for trails and trail land conservation. Trail Talkers are those members who have volunteered to give talks on behalf of PATC at schools, festivals, Boy Scout/Girl Scout gatherings and other community events. If you've ever done a science project in school, you probably have the necessary skills to help our Trail Talkers. At present, the Club has two display boards that tell the story of PATC in words and pictures. These need to be updated and additional displays are needed to spread the word throughout the Metro D.C. area as well as into the areas to the West of D.C., such as Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg and even Elkins, WV. Put your creativity and design skills to use for PATC! Help us with our new displays to entice new trail enthusiasts. Contact Linda Rudy at [lindarudy@att.net](mailto:lindarudy@att.net) for further information. □

## PATC Tent is a Welcome Shelter at the Apple Butter Festival

The 33rd annual Apple Butter Festival was held Oct. 8 and 9 in Berkeley Springs, W. Va. The festival, a celebration of autumn in the hills of West Virginia, which goes on rain or shine, featured local arts and crafts, produce, baked goods, wine, and jams. Rain or shine took on new meaning as PATC volunteers set up the bright yellow PATC canopy on Friday in a downpour that would continue through the next evening. By Saturday morning, apples were cooking in a cauldron in the town square, vendor displays were set up along the main street, and the smells of Italian sausage, barbecue, fried potatoes, and other delights were filling the air. It was clear that nobody's spirits would be dampened by a little rain. The PATC tent received a steady stream of visitors inquiring about the nearby Tuscarora Trail, club activities, maps, trail access, thru-hiking, cabins, and a wide variety of outdoor concerns. By Sunday evening, PATC volunteers Jeff Seal and Barb Nash, though glad for a chance to dry off, agreed that it had been a worthwhile way to spend a rainy weekend. □

—Jane Thompson

## TAILS FROM THE WOODS by George Walters

LOUIE TAKES MARTIAL ARTS LESSONS



"TAI CHI CABIN USERS!!... MEET NINJA MOUSE!"

## Wilderness Areas

Wilderness areas are the reservoirs of biological diversity. It is here where the natural processes of nature have the best chance of survival. Compared with young forests, it is in the old-growth forests where research tells us more species of every kind – trees, birds, salamanders, snakes, insects, ferns, mosses, lichens, and fungi – can be found. They can provide critical wildlife habitat corridors connecting disjunct wildlife populations. This not only allows for increased gene pool flow, but also reduces the harmful impact of “edge effects” of invading plants, animals, and diseases.

PATC has a vested interest in the protection and creation of wilderness areas. Only areas that have been previously identified as roadless areas are candidates for wilderness designation, according to federal definition. Each U.S. National Forest is required to update its Land Management Plan every 15 years.

Unfortunately, under the current administration, hopes for wilderness creation and forest protection do not look promising. For example, last updated in 1986, the Monongahela National Forest has just completed its draft Environmental Impact Statement, but a proposed management plan recently announced by the U.S. Forest Service would open all or parts of at least nine of the 16 backcountry roadless areas in the Monongahela to logging and road building: The Forest Service proposal would triple both the acreage and volume of logging and raise the maximum size of clear-cuts from 25 acres to 40 acres.

## PATC's Role

PATC has always been involved in conservation. We have a PATC conservationist, whose role is to support the preservation, conservation, scenery, forestry, and wildlife on and near footpaths. We also have a PATC naturalist, whose primary objective is to provide scientific advice to the club and to promote “good science” in all PATC's work.

So, how does the PATC address conservation?

- *We address conservation issues by reaching out to PATC members to address conservation issues;*

- *We actively get involved in issues that affect both hiking trails and the hiking experience in the Mid-Atlantic region by communicating with state and federal legislatures on issues important to PATC;*

- *We strive to strengthen PATC's presence in the Mid-Atlantic region as a leader in conservation, hiking, and land protection; and*

- *We actively support Leave No Trace. What is needed now is to augment the LNT concept to our everyday life and society as a whole. We need to tread lightly on our natural resources. We can do this in everything we do, from recycling, energy conservation, supporting energy-efficient, nonpolluting technologies, to supporting political platforms that respect, support, and protect the natural environment.*

In my work with the Lamberts at our Shaver Hollow campground, I've hosted numerous Boy and Girl Scout troops. At some point early in the weekend, I always like to ask what they like about being in the woods. As you might imagine, I get many answers from the silly to the sensitive. But, the answer that touched me the most was made by a young boy who replied, “I don't know, it just feels good.”

We members of PATC are the fortunate ones for whom a trip into the woods is a common event. While our reasons for hiking may be personal and varied, I have no doubt we all benefit from the beauty of nature that we see and feel.

I believe we must be more active in participating in these land use updates and other federal, state, and local actions that impact our hiking environment. We must be more vocal, more advocacy-oriented, and more politically aware of our opportunities to make a difference.

Conservation simply means to conserve. A conservancy conserves natural resources. And that is what the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is focusing its attention toward in this new century.

Aldo Leopold said, “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” □

—Bob Pickett

## Giants, from page 15

didn't want to leave even though they banged pots and made noise. They eventually scared him up our way, they said. Great. He must be the one we saw yesterday. We followed as many of the bear protocols as possible: unzipping all zippers on our backpacks, cooking food at least 75 feet away from our tents, and hanging the bear bag suspended between two trees at least 10 feet off of the ground. (OK so we didn't follow the 100-foot rule but hey, we were as far as possible from our site without eating in range of the college students.) I stuffed torn bay leaves into the packs, hoping the aroma would deter and cover up any conceivable food smells. I hoped the bears were not like the lacrimonious leeches inhabiting Lacrimose Lake in Lemony Snickett's A Series of Unfortunate Events, who attack if you've

eaten food in the last hour. As twilight fell, we enjoyed the alpenglow on Castle Rocks across the river, touched by atmospheric rays of light tinged pink and gold.

## Monday

Our campsites were unmolested during the night, thank God. The bruin was distracted with easier goodies elsewhere. We ate breakfast by the rushing creek, packed up, and were on our way down the trail by 8:00 a.m. or so. It seemed to me that the majority of our hike was downhill. If so, we must have had good endurance uphill when we began our trip. We did not have our daily bear sighting today, thank goodness. The bears left us in peace.

We stopped to chat with a few folks about the weather and discovered that the 70s and 80s

we had been experiencing were actually unusual. Folks usually experience 90+ soaring temps during Memorial Day weekend. Another blessing heaped upon us. The unusually large amount of snowfall helped keep seldom-seen streams in working order and ignited explosions of flowers. The snow pack managed to flood out a couple of campgrounds, beaches and roads – even Yosemite in a place or two. We heard that this year had been the best for waterfalls in quite a while.

Once we packed the car and bid farewell to the trailhead, we proceeded to spend money at the Foothills Visitor Center and to pick a ranger's brain about where we had recently hiked. We learned a few hints, which will only draw us to return to such a gorgeous area again someday. □

—Susan Bly

## Giants, from page 8

Without further incident, we eventually descended a hill opposite a smooth granite dome face to Buck Creek. This creek crossing was a breeze as a nice metal bridge had been constructed over it, making this one of the instances where we were thankful for our tax dollars at work. They had to have flown the steel in to this area as I don't know of too many hikers or mules who enjoy carrying steel beams on their shoulders for miles at a time. The creek was flowing rapidly, with brown/white silted water from snow melt, over large boulders. No sane person would have attempted a crossing without a bridge.

We made camp and proceeded to enjoy a relaxing afternoon, catching up on camp chores and exploring the surrounding area. I learned pretty quickly to do the Indian tribal dance in my flip flop camp shoes over pine needles, as red ants love to nibble on tender hiking toes. I discovered a couple pieces of bark that the creek had crafted into beautiful circular works of art. Water crafts nearly all the objects it embraces into round smooth subjects. Another find was aromatic oblong leaves. We found out later that these were bay leaves. We chose to crush some to place in our packs to help deter bears and other critters nostrils.

Later, we shared our campsite with two light-weight backpackers. I am still not convinced about open-tarp tenting as I can't stand the thought of the mice, spiders, and now bears traipsing over me. And oh yes, Anneil lifted the loose board covering the log chair at the picnic table and lo and behold, a small black scorpion appeared.

## Sunday

The next day was a day hike/backpacking day. We were up and moving at 5:30 a.m., stealthily making breakfast as the lightweights were sleeping nearby. We had a gorgeous breakfast view of the sun striking Tharpe's Rock at about 9,800 feet above us, along the High Sierra Trail, of course. Life is great when you can sip hot chocolate and watch a feeder stream of Buck Creek cascade down a rock face way up there at nearly 10,000 feet. Our present elevation was about 5,000 feet.

We put on hiking boots around 7:30 and headed toward Redwood Meadow to gaze at really big trees. We took our time gazing at the various rock formations of Tharpe's Rocks and Teapot Dome at various twists and turns of the trail. What really caught our eye when we rounded a turn was the truly open vista of



Photo by Susan Bly

### *Kaweah River, try to cross this!*

Eagle Scout Peak and its fellow peaks. Their snowy flanks make it still too early to explore, utilizing the High Sierra Trail, but after viewing them from below, we vowed to come back and do that trail someday.

While admiring the relatively large sequoias on the way down the hill, I noticed gash marks on a couple of them and the ubiquitous scat pile in the trail. This was a foreboding of what was to come, but mere food for thought at that particular moment.

We had to cross two streams to reach Redwood Meadow. The first crossing of the Kaweah was no problem as it was covered by a bridge, but the crossing of Granite Creek was not. Well, as has been mentioned before, snowmelt was an issue. The Granite Creek crossing would pose no problem at all during other times of the year. Its somewhat shallow waters and smooth-looking rock bed lured me to at least try. About halfway across the smoothly raging calf-high torrent, I had visions of my body sweeping down the rapids, never to leave California. So, I carefully recrossed to the same shore and gave up the trail chase to Redwood Meadow. Anneil had no thoughts of even attempting a crossing, smart woman that she is. But at least I tried. So, on with the boots and to try to make our way to Bearpaw Meadow, an alternate objective.

Up the ridge we climbed, passing another passage to Redwood Meadow but that involved crossing Granite again and Eagle Scout Run, which we thought would probably be impassable. (Of course we later found out

that one or both of the creeks have bridges over them. So much for not buying the complete trail guide beforehand.)

As I gained some distance between Anneil and myself, I made sure to whistle, break sticks, talk, and make noise in general, having remembered yesterday's bear encounter. After a while, I stopped in some sugar pines to wait for Anneil to catch up. When I saw her in the distance, I just happened to glance to my right and notice the black shape (with ears) accompanied by the familiar shuffling. We had another bruin on our hands. Great Josephine. I must have passed him earlier and never knew it. So, I start yelling at Anneil that there's a bear off to her left, my right. She starts yelling back and in the general squawk of two women, he manages to think clearly and head down over the bank toward the Kaweah, and not to come rushing across the trail and further into the woods between us. We drew a big sigh of relief and moved on. What else can you do? Welcome to the Western wilderness, kiddo.

We shortly arrived at the Kaweah, and we realized that we had another impossible stream crossing between us and our destination – Bearpaw Meadow. It's not fun being thwarted twice from your goals in one day, but we managed to take this in stride. Better to be alive and kicking than near dead and twitching. We backtracked to the awesome vista of the Great Western Divide and had lunch. Anneil accidentally spilled tuna juice on her shorts so you know what the bears would be thinking as she went by: "Mmm. Walking fish. I enjoy these buffets on legs they send us now."

We made our way back to Buck Creek and our tents, enjoying sights of the various rock outcroppings along the way. It was sort of sad to be retracing our steps so soon. One always likes to see and experience new things, hence loop hiking. We packed up our backpacks and headed down to Mehrton Creek, making plenty of noise in order to avoid bear encounters. We crossed Mehrton safely but found that the camping spot we wanted was overtaken by five packs. So, we had to take the scenic view site looking out toward Castle Rock, down to Mehrton Creek. But this campsite was only 10 feet off of the trail. Oh well. After supper, we had a conversation with our fellow campers, who were college age. They said that there was a troublesome brown bear with a green ear tag that had come into their camp that afternoon. He

See *Giants*, page 14

## TRAILHEAD

After a really dry September, remnants from Hurricane Rita soaked the region over a period of several days. Some areas didn't see sun for almost a week, but dismal days were tolerated because the rain was sorely needed. Warm weather in September delayed the peak fall colors by a couple weeks, and the majority of the leaves are still on the trees as we go into November.

Stranger weather came the evening of Oct. 24 as a combination of moisture and a cold front deposited five to eight inches of wet, heavy snow on leaf-laden trees at elevations between 2,500 and 3,000 feet. The results, as you would expect, were broken limbs and small split trees littering the trails at these elevations. Skyline Drive was closed, trapping visitors at campgrounds and lodges for a day or two. Urgent requests went out to overseers to clear the affected trails. We hope this isn't a portent of the approaching winter.

### Little Stony Creek Trail

The Great North Mountain PATC District is very pleased to announce that an orphaned trail that is quite important to PATC has found a new status and overseer! Little Stony Creek Trail, the easiest access to Sugar Knob Cabin, has been adopted by PATC with the graces of the Lee District, George Washington National Forest. And Stonewall Brigade rock-solid trail worker Lee Manning has graciously assented to be its overseer. The Stonewall Brigade PATC volunteer work crew visited Little Stony Creek Trail on the monthly October work trip to clear the way for Lee to take over a trail in good shape. Nasty blowdowns were jettisoned and greenbrier was nipped back, while the crew enjoyed a very productive day.

Little Stony Creek Trail has an amazing magical trait--when one is weary, hiking downhill and approaching the trailhead, many have witnessed this mysterious power of the trail to begin repeating itself over, over, and over again. Around the next bend and ... the same exact trail segment. And around the next turn ... the same exact trail segment again. And just when one thinks the trailhead and parking lot is near ... the exact same trail segment again. The canyon is too deep and narrow for GPS units to work – scientists are baffled. The current co-district manager is convinced that there is some sort of power vortex at work. But don't let the word out, or the town of Sedona, Ariz., may get upset at the competition.

Whatever the cause, welcome and many thanks to Lee Manning for taking on the task of dealing with the usual brush, blowdowns, hiker assistance, and waterbar cleaning. Perhaps over time Lee will grow younger and younger as he learns to "channel" the power vortex! Now that would certainly be a way to attract new overseers! Hmmm, has it been mentioned that beautiful Long Mountain Trail also has no current PATC status, no overseers, and could also have power vortices? Is anyone interested?

### 10,000 Hours in SNP Central District

The Blue and White Crew re-visited the Milam Gap to North Hazeltop section of the AT in September, taking up where they had left off the month before, cutting new sidehill and installing numerous checkdams and waterbars. An afternoon downpour forced the crew off the trail in the early afternoon and back to the comforts of the Pinnacles Research Station. S.V. Dove, looking healthy and happy, was able to join the crew for dinner, along with his wife, Janet, and daughter,



Photo by Walt Smith

*Acme Treadway Co. is constructing serious tread for the Biby Wilderness Trail, which provides access to the Tuscarora Trail across PATC's Biby Tract in Shawneeland west of Winchester, Va.*

ter, Sissy (photos at: <http://blueandwhitecrew.org/PhotoGallery.php>). Sunday found the crew out with weeders for an end-of-the-season touch-up to several AT sections. No representatives from international Blue and White Chapters were able to attend in September (the July trip was attended by our Costa Rican organization, August by the Chinese delegation), but Eric Motzno joined the September festivities as a representative of the B&W Deep South Branch, driving up from North Carolina.

Blue and White Crew members welcomed the ATC Mid-Atlantic Crew to the SNP Central District in October. The ATC crew re-built another section of Civilian Conservation Corps-era cribwall, near Hawksbill. Patrick Wilson, representing PATC and the B&W Crew, took the crew to dinner in Sperryville on Saturday evening (Nice, Mean, or New, Patrick?).

PATC volunteers contributed more than 10,000 hours of trail work in the Central District of SNP in 2005! The 2005 records go to Mike Dyas, with more than 1,000 hours of combined work and travel, and Patrick Wilson, with more than 900 combined hours. Many thanks to all the trail maintainers who keep the Central District in such great shape.

*See Trailhead, page 17*

Trailhead, from page 16

## Trail Work in Arizona

Bernie Stalman, PATC DM who relocated to Arizona a couple years ago, reports trail work is still a challenge out West and somewhat different than in the East. Erosion is an even bigger problem, and workers have even gone to placing 36" diameter culverts in washes with sides so steep that it is not practical to slope the trail to the bottom. Bernie is hoping they can riprap and add headwalls with BIG rocks so it doesn't wash out in the monsoon rains. One problem – the locals don't understand what a BIG rock is! Unlike nettles and briars, a recent weeding trip involved the removal of mimosa, which is a weed with leaves that grab your skin and leave it bloody. He has never seen anything like it in the East. So far, no rattlesnakes or illegals, just weeds and HUGE grasshoppers.

## What's in a Name

PATC members have been meeting and conferring for months with representatives from other Eastern trail clubs to come up with a new name for the second long hiking route through the Appalachians. PATC's portion of the project runs from the Allegheny Trail near Lake Sherwood, WVa., to Pennsylvania's Link Trail north of Cowans Gap. This will be via the Tuscarora Trail and connecting trails to the southwest. Let PATC President Tom Johnson know if you would like to get involved!

Coming up with a name for this new trail has not been an easy process. Future use of the A-word, as in the Western Appalachian Alternative, has been banned by the American Hiking Society at the request of ATC. Mid-

Atlantic trail clubs meeting at PATC's Gypsy Spring Cabin last May suggested the name Atlantic Crest Trail. Later, representatives objected that the route was neither Atlantic nor on a crest, nor yet a trail! After a series of conference calls, the Great Eastern Trail emerged as the leading contender. Through a tug-of-war process, the southern terminus has also migrated from NW Georgia to south Florida, but this is also subject to change.

The latest word from Tom Johnson is this: As of three weeks ago the trail groups involved in this new trail met by telephone and selected the name Great Eastern Trail. Also, on November 5 the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Mid State Trail Association, Link Trail Association, PATC, and American Hiking Society met at Blackburn Trail Center and formed a new organization, the Mid-Atlantic Foot Trails Coalition, to put the new trail on the ground. This trail will include 153 miles of the Tuscarora Trail, plus a link to the Allegheny Trail in West Virginia.

## Rain, Rain, Go Away

Over a dozen Cadillac Crew volunteers braved continuous rain Saturday, Oct. 8, while constructing the Millrace Trail. Margie Knott's cabin provided dry relief to the wet, weary, and muddy workers. The trail will connect a parking area and existing Sleepy Creek WMA trail to the Tuscarora Trail near Shockey's Knob Shelter. So far, a mile of the trail has been completed from the Sleepy Creek parking area off Packhorse Road to Little Brushy Creek. Alan Day GPSed the progress, and the overlay on a Topographic map is available at <http://day-hikes.org/maps/Millrace-CC-areas.JPG>.



Photo by Dick Dugan

*Ben Fitzgerald and Madison Brown finish the construction of a rock check-dam during the North District Crew week in early September.*

## Hoodlums Hold Oktoberfest

A few days before the Hoodlums' Oktoberfest Worktrip weekend, the weather did not look very promising. The forecasters were calling for a rainy weekend with periods of heavy rain, perhaps an inch or two. We decided to make a go of it anyway and play it by ear, and nine hearty trail workers showed up Saturday morning at Compton Gap. It was pouring in the metro area and this may have accounted for a number of no-shows, but it was raining very little in the park and we worked virtually all day without having to put on raingear. In fact, the softened earth actually aided the digging of several hundred feet of sideslope on the AT just south of Compton Peak, which was the primary goal of the day. The crew also installed rock waterbars and improved the rock lateral drain just below the stream crossing and did a little work on the newly blazed extension of the Compton Peak east view trail that leads down to the columnar jointing basalt formation.

It drizzled briefly at day's end just as the Oktoberfest meal was being put on the table at Indian Run Hut Saturday evening. However, the rain was too little, too late to slow down all the good work that was done or to dampen the spirits of the crew, feasting on good German food mit Bier.

Please send any interesting tale, technical advice, individual or group accomplishments, and trail maintenance questions to Trailhead, c/o Jon Rindt, 621 Skyline Forest Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630 or to [jkrindt@adelphia.net](mailto:jkrindt@adelphia.net). □



Photo by Dick Dugan

*Madison Brown, Ranger Don and Steve O. ponder lateral drain work on Jeremy's Run. Photo taken during the North District Crew Week, Aug. 28.*

## SNP Announces Parkway Night Closing During Hunting Season

Portions of Skyline Drive, the famed mountain road through SNP, will be closed at night during hunting season, Park Superintendent Chas Cartwright announced. He noted that this is the 27th year that this closure has been undertaken and stressed its importance at reducing illegal hunting activity within the park, a sanctuary for wildlife, during the Commonwealth's hunting season outside the park.

From Nov. 14, 2005, through Jan. 7, 2006, the Skyline Drive between Front Royal (mp 0 at U.S. Highway 340) and Thornton Gap (mp 31 at U.S. Highway 211), and between Swift Run Gap (mp 65 at U.S. Highway 33) and Rockfish Gap (mp 105 at U.S. Highway 250), will be closed daily between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. The central portion of the drive, between Thornton Gap and Swift Run Gap, will remain open for overnight access to Skyland Resort and Big Meadows Campground until those facilities close on Nov. 27.

Then, beginning Nov. 28, 2005, through Jan. 7, 2006, the entire length of Skyline Drive will be closed daily from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 a.m. Cartwright said, "By closing portions of the Skyline Drive, rangers are able to concentrate patrols on problem areas and increase contacts along the park boundary."

Not that many trail overseers work on their trails after dark during the next two months, but it is a good reminder that hunting season is upon us. This is particularly important for trail maintainers and cabin users who access their trails along the park boundary area. The standard precautions are to wear bright clothing and don't travel alone. □

—Shawn Green, Park Trails Coordinator

Cartwright also reminded the public that the park has a reward program to assist in combating illegal hunting in the park. "A reward will be paid to anyone who furnishes

information which leads to the conviction of any person who hunts, transports, or attempts to transport illegally taken wildlife within the park," said Cartwright. Anyone with information about such activities should call the nearest Ranger Station or Park Headquarters (toll free, (1-800/732-0911); or (540/999-2227). The identity of persons furnishing information will be kept strictly confidential, and a person does not have to reveal his or her name. □

—Karen Beck-Herzog

## 'In the Streets' Gives Trail Talkers a Chance to Show Their Stuff

For several years, on the first Saturday in October, Frederick, Md., has opened its streets to pedestrians, vendors, musical groups, and local organizations. Clyde Hicks has always saved PATC a prime spot in front of his store, The Trail House. Many passers-by showed an interest in PATC as our volunteer Trail Talkers – John Beutler, Bryon Lawrence, Kristin Leahy, Linda Turner, and Nancy Hammond – chatted with them about what we do. By sharing time at the PATC display, the Trail Talkers were able to enjoy the festivities, too.

Many thanks to Clyde, who greatly helped us out by letting us store the display in The Trail House before and after the event – making the logistics for the day much easier for the volunteers! □

—Jane Thompson



### POTOMAC APPALACHIAN

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### Attention Federal Employees

PATC is participating again this year in the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area. Please consider a donation to PATC. Our 2005 designation number is 7956. The fund will be active through December. Thank you for your support, and thanks to the members who contributed via the CFC last year.

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## PATC Tract Managers Needed

Volunteers needed to manage PATC owned Lands. Several locations available. Properties are up and down the AT in Virginia and Maryland and along the Tuscarora In Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. If interested please contact Chris Mangold at 301/898-7979 or e-mail at csm5749@yahoo.com.

## Who's Minding the Store? You Can!!!

PATC is looking for a new chair of the Sales Committee. Duties would include: advise and supervise paid and volunteer sales staff, help with inventory of all PATC publications, establish sales policy and publication pricing, work closely with publication and maps committees to target future updates and publications. Anyone interested in this position please contact: Lee Sheaffer, Vice President-Volunteerism (thumpers@visuallink.com) 540/955-0736.

## Computer Help Wanted

Don't want to get your hands dirty? If not there's still a way to help your club. If you're computer savvy, think about assisting PATC in planning and maintaining its information technology system. We've bought new computers and need members' expertise in bringing the club into the 21st century. If you have any of the following skills and are interested and available, please contact Vice President for Operations Bruce Glendening at info@patc.net for further information. We are in search of professional programmers with training and skills in the following:

*Microsoft Access   Exchange 2003   HTML   Small Business Server 2003  
Webmaster   MS-SQL Server   ASP   Networking in general*

## TRAIL OVERSEER DISCOUNTS

**PATC OVERSEERS GET DISCOUNTS** from the following merchants who support our volunteer programs: Blue Ridge Mountain Sports (Charlottesville, Tidewater) – 20%, Hudson Trail Outfitters (Metro D.C.) – 20%, The Trail House (Frederick, Md.) – 15%, Casual Adventures (Arlington, Va.) – 10%, Campmor (mail order via PATC HQ) – 10%, Weasel Creek Outfitters in Front Royal – 10%, The Outfitter at Harpers Ferry – 15%, and the sole source (Harrisonburg) – 10%. Check the back page of the *PA* for the latest trail, cabin, and shelter overseer opportunities. All PATC members receive a 10% discount from Blue Ridge Mountain Sports and Ranger Surplus (excludes BSA merchandise). Be sure to have your membership ID or overseer ID ready when you shop.

**ARCHIVE HELP WANTED:** The Archivist needs help in transferring files from file cabinets to archive boxes, and moving the boxes onto shelves in the Archives Room. Please call or write Carol Niedzialek, 301/949-9729, cactuss3@earthlink.net.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** at events to help at the PATC booth. Would you like to share your joy of hiking and help spread the word about PATC and its mission to preserve hiking trails? PATC will greatly appreciate your assistance in spreading the word about our organization. Through you, we will be able to extend our outreach and membership efforts. Events we currently need help at are listed in the *PA* under Visit PATC at an Event Near You! If you are interested in volunteering for one of these events, future events, or speaking engagements, contact Jane Thompson, supervisor of information, education, and activities, jayteehike@yahoo.com or 301/349-2496. PATC needs you to talk trails!



# PATC Swap Meet

**Notices are published free of charge for PATC members only. PATC cannot vouch for any of the advertised items. No commercial advertisement or personal notices unrelated to hiking will be accepted. Deadline for inclusion is the first day of the month preceding issuance of the newsletter. Notices will be run for three months, at the discretion of the editor, unless we are otherwise advised. □**

## HIKING PARTNERSHIPS

**WANTED: HIKING PARTNER.** I live in the Baltimore area, retired school teacher and seeking a hiking partner(s) to share in car shuttle for section hiking the southern half of the AT. The outing could be up to 10 days at a time. Contact: Ron Bungay (ronbungay@comcast.net) or 410/242-4592

**HIKING ENTHUSIAST SOUGHT** for role as Scoutmaster of outdoors-focused Boy Scout Troop 97 in Silver Spring, Md. More info? Contact Jim Van Cott: (301/565-0486) CJPAVC@yahoo.com.

**WANTED: HIKING/CAMPING PARTNER:** I live in Gaithersburg, Md., and am looking for hiking and camping buddies within 120 miles of the DC area. I am 29 and willing to hike/camp anywhere. I also have a dual propane stove that I am giving away. Any takers? Contact Jeffrey Scott (knight\_1\_nu@yahoo.com) 301/466-3373.

# Trail, Shelter, and Corridor Overseers / Monitors Wanted

## CORRIDOR MONITOR OPENINGS

Tom Lupp, 301/271-7340

tlupp@erols.com

Wilson Gap – VA – PATC Map 7

Ashby Gap South -VA – PATC Map 8

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE SHELTER CREW IN MD

Dicks Dome Shelter – Northern VA –Map 8

Henry Horn, 301/498-8254

ATHike@aol.com

## OPEN TRAILS – CONTACT THE DISTRICT MANAGER FOR THE SECTION THAT INTERESTS YOU.

### PENNSYLVANIA MAPS 2-3, 4, J, & K

Opportunity to work long hours with no pay or benefits. Generous allowance of blisters, stinging/biting insects, and poisonous plants. Little or no supervision. Work hours optional. Location somewhere on the Tuscarora Trail in Pennsylvania. No certification from your doctor or hospital required.

Pete Brown, 410/343-1140

peter.brown4@worldnet.att.net

**PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-overseer**

Hemlock Road to Mountain Rd (4.9 miles)

**PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-overseer**

PA 233 to Bill Miller Trail (3.9 miles)

**PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-overseer**

Bill Miller Trail to Cowpens Rd (4.7 miles)

**PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-overseer**

Cowans Gap State Park to US 30 (6.7 miles)

**PA Tuscarora Trail [J] – Co-overseer**

US 30 to PA Rte. 16 (1.9 miles)

**HARPERS FERRY/ASHBY GAP AT & BB –  
MAP 7 & 8**

Chris Brunton, 703/924-0406

trailbossbtc@msn.com

**Appalachian Trail**

Loudoun Heights Trail to Powerline  
(2.3 miles)

**ASHBY/POSSUMS AT/BB [RTE. 50 TO SNP]  
– MAP 8, 9**

Lloyd Parriott, 540/622-2743

laparriott@hotmail.com

**Appalachian Trail**

VA 55 to VA 638 (2.1 miles)

**Appalachian Trail – Co-overseer**

Tom Floyd Wayside to SNP boundary  
(1.1 miles)

**Barking Dog Trail**

AT to Barking Dog Spring/Rte 604  
(0.34 mile)

**SNP NORTH DISTRICT APPALACHIAN TRAIL  
– MAP 9**

Dick Dugan, 304/856-3511

rdugan@frontiernet.net

**Appalachian Trail**

SNP boundary to Compton Gap (2.0 miles)

**Appalachian Trail**

Behms Gap to Pass Mountain Hut Trail  
(1.9 miles)

**SNP CENTRAL BLUE-BLAZED [NORTH END]  
– MAP 10**

Dan Dueweke, 703/266-3248

danjan3@cox.net

New overseer opportunities coming available soon. Choice trails rich in Shenandoah history. Don't miss this rare opportunity to stake your claim.

**SNP CENTRAL BLUE-BLAZED [SOUTH END]  
– MAP 10**

Steve Paull; stevepaull@yahoo.com

**Lower Hawksbill Trail**

Hawksbill Mt. To Hawksbill Gap (0.9 miles)

**Salamander Trail**

Hawksbill Summit to AT (0.7 miles)

**Entry Run Trail (lower)**

John's Rest Access Road to Park Boundary  
(1.7 miles)

**Entry Run Trail (Upper)**

Park Boundary to Pocosin Fire Road (0.8 miles)

**TUSCARORA CENTRAL – MAP L**

Walt Smith, 540/678-0423

wsmith@visuallink.com

**Tuscarora Trail**

Yellow Spring Road to Capon Springs Road

**Tuscarora Trail**

Southern Rockfield to Pinnacle Powerline  
(2.3 miles)

**MASSANUTTEN SOUTH – MAP H**

Tate Heuer, 202/255-6055

tate@wth2.com

**Massanutten Mt. South Trail**

Pitt Spring to Morgan Run Trail (1.4 miles)

FR 65) (3.3 miles)

**Massanutten Mt. South Trail**

Morgan Run Trail (1.4 m FR 65) to Fridley

Gap (2.3 miles)

**Massanutten Mt. South Trail**

Fridley Gap to Boone Run Trail (3.1 miles)

**GREAT NORTH MOUNTAIN – MAP F**

Hop Long, 301/942-6177

theFSLongs@comcast.net

**Gerhard Shelter Trail**

Tuscarora Trail to Vances Cove (1.5 miles)

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA – MAP N**

Mark Anderson, 202/462-7718

dc.trails@verizon.net

**DISTRICT MANAGER NEEDED**

**Valley Trail**

Boulder Bridge to Military Road (2.2 miles)

**Dumbarton Oaks Trail**

Whitehaven St. to Rock Creek Park

(1.0 miles)

**Western Ridge Trail**

Military Road to Boundary Bridge

(2.7 miles)



**The Potomac Appalachian**

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