

June 2016 Mountain Trips
MAC & Potomac Valley Chapter ARS
(Tentative Plans as of 5/10/2016)

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With late freezes and heavy rains, the weather has certainly damaged many spring garden displays. It must have affected the native azaleas and rhododendrons in the mountains but we have no idea what to expect. The following itinerary is our best bet for what hope to see and when that will be. Feel free to join us on all or part of our trip, but keep in touch as we may change locations and focus on the trip depending upon the weather forecast and what seems to be in flower.

1. Mount Rogers and Grayson Highlands - Saturday, June 11:

Drive to Grayson Highlands State Park to admire *R. calendulaceum*. If there is time, take moderate hike out to Rhododendron Gap along the Appalachian Trail to see the *R. catawbiense*.

Hotel - Probably the Econo Lodge in Marion, 1420 N Main St, Marion, VA 24354

Phone:(276) 783-603

- 6/11 – Explore Grayson Highlands State Park for much of the day and head to Maropn, VA, for the evening.
- 6/12 – Check out Black Mountain in southwest Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Head to either Mountain City or Elizabethton, TN for the evening.

2. Roan Mountain - Sunday through Tuesday, June 12 - 14:

This is probably the most scenic hike on our trip, so we want to hike Roan on the day that promises to have the best weather and good views. It is a moderate hike with majestic views with *R. calendulaceum* and *R. catawbiense*. NASCAR has scheduled big racing weekends in Bristol for 6/17 – 6/19 and 6/23-6/26 which usually swamps all hotels in the region so we avoid those dates. The Southern Appalachians Highlands Conservancy (<http://www.appalachian.org>) has shifted their annual June Jamboree back to 6/11. They also arrange hikes in the Roan Mountain area so some may prefer to join them instead of going to Grayson Highlands.

Americourt Hotel Elizabethton

1515 19E Bypass, Elizabethton, TN 37643

Phone: (423) 542-4466

or

Americourt Hotel Mountain City

450 Dotson Lane, Mountain City, TN 37683

Phone: (423) 727-7311

- 6/12 – If time allows, consider a quick trip to Roan Mt. or Snake Mt. in late afternoon. Possibly visit J. Jackson & Lindy Johnson but call first: (423)-571-2227
- 6/13 – Spend the day on Roan Mt., weather permitting. Pack lunch.
- 6/14 – Alternative hike date for Roan. Second option is to get on Parkway at Boon and see Linville Falls and other spots on the upper Parkway. Stop by Mount Mitchell if weather is clear. Possibly visit Red Max. Return to the hotel for the evening.

3. Lower Blue Ridge Parkway to Wayah Bald - Wednesday, June 15:

This lower section is one of the prettiest sections of the entire Blue Ridge Parkway, so we will spend much of our travel time enjoying vistas, native azaleas, rhododendrons, and wildflowers.

Microtel Inn Franklin

81 Allman Dr, Franklin, NC 28734

Phone: (828) 349-9000

- 6/15 – Leave early in the morning and travel south to I-26 to Asheville. Get on the Blue Ridge Parkway heading south and end up in Franklin by the evening.
- 6/16 – Drive to Wayah and Wine Spring Bald in the AM. Explore the area looking at *R. arborescens* and *R. calendulaceum* forms. Drive to Robbinsville, NC, for the evening.

4. Hooper Bald - Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 16 - 18:

This is an easy hike to see *R. calendulaceum* and the Hooper Bald renovation project. We hope to spend one day doing some clearing but there are possible side trips to other locations.

Microtel Inn, Robbinsville, NC

111 Rodney Orr Bypass, Robbinsville, NC

Phone: (828) 479-6772

- 6/16 – Check into the Microtel Inn and go to Hooper Bald in the evening if there is time.
- 6/17 – Spend the day on Hooper Bald. Cut back weeds, check plantings. Admire azaleas.
- 6/18 – Possibly do some exploring for *R. cumberlandense* on Cherohala Skyway, or head south of Robbinsville to Murphy and check out places like Slaughter Mountain.

5. Gregory Bald & the Smokies - Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, June 19 - 21:

This is a strenuous hike to see native azaleas on top of Gregory Bald. Trip takes 3 or more hours each way, unless you are old and fat. Then allow 4 to 5 hours each way. We want to hike when weather conditions are promising so we will choose the most promising day for the long hike.

Best Western Cades Cove Inn

7824 E Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Townsend, TN 37882

Phone: (865) 448-9000

- 6/19 – Buy food for hike and breakfast. Get to bed early in preparation for Gregory Hike.
- 6/20 – Hike Gregory Bald, weather permitting. Very early rise... Leave motel at 6:00 AM!
- 6/21 – Alternative date for Gregory hike. If hike was successful on Monday, we can visit other places in Smokies, such as the Jump Off or even Mount LeConte to see “Smokianum.” That assumes that people can still walk since the Gregory trip is usually quite taxing.

6. On Your Own - Wednesday, June 22 -23:

- 6/22 Head for home, tour the Parkway looking for *R. maximum* forms, or visit nurseries to buy plants. Possibly spend the night in Mountain City and dine at Suba’s Restaurant.

Americourt Hotel Mountain City

450 Dotson Lane, Mountain City, TN 37683

Phone: (423) 727-7311

East Fork Nursery – Vivian Abney (native azaleas)

2769 Bethel Church Road, Sevierville, TN 37876

Phone: (865) 453-6108