

## June 2016 Mountain Trips

### MAC & Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

(Plans as of 6/08/2016)

**George McLellan:** (804) 824-1012 (cell)

**Don Hyatt:** (703) 975-0409 (cell)  
(703) 241-5421 (home)  
don@donaldhyatt.com

This is the latest update for our mountain hikes to see the native azaleas and rhododendrons in North Carolina and Tennessee. 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 our focus on the trip depending upon the weather conditions and what seems to be in flower. We won't know if we have hit peak conditions until we actually get there.

### 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 to see the *R. catawbiense* display.

**Hotel - Econo Lodge in Marion, 1420 N Main St, Marion, VA 24354 Phone:(276) 783-6031**

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

### 2. Roan Mountain and the Appalachian Trail

*Sunday through Tuesday, June 12 - 14*

This is probably the most scenic hike on our trip, so we want to hike the Roan Highlands on the day that promises to have the best weather. It can be an easy to moderate hike depending on how far one goes. The majestic views with *R. calendulaceum* and *R. catawbiense* are superb. NASCAR has scheduled big racing weekends in Bristol for 6/17 – 6/19 and 6/23-6/26 which usually swamps all area hotels so most people avoid those dates. The Southern Appalachians Highlands Conservancy has shifted their annual June Jamboree back to 6/11. They do arrange hikes in the Roan Mountain area that weekend so some people might prefer to join up with them. (<http://www.appalachian.org>)

**Americourt Hotel Mountain City (preferred)**  
**450 Dotson Lane, Mountain City, TN 37683**  
**Phone: (423) 727-7311**

or

**Americourt Hotel Elizabethton (overflow)**  
**1515 19E Bypass, Elizabethton, TN 37643**  
**Phone: (423) 542-4466**



*R. calendulaceum* at Grayson Highlands



“Grayson’s Gold” Close Up

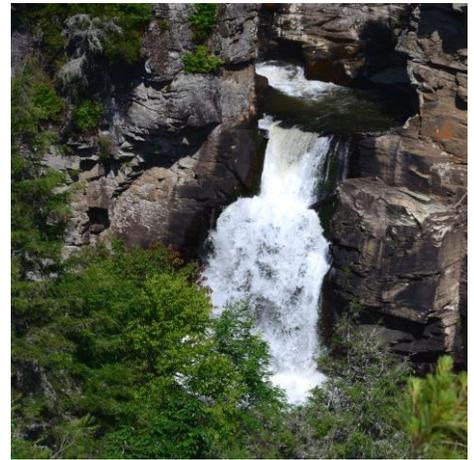


*R. calendulaceum* at Engine Gap



*R. catawbiense* and Grassy Ridge Point

- 6/12 – For those who arrive early, consider a quick trip to Roan Mt. or Snake Mt. in late afternoon.
- 6/13 – Spend the day on Roan Mt., weather permitting. Pack lunch, or pick up sandwich at Subway on 19-E that morning. If there is time, stop to see J. Jackson and Lindy Johnson that afternoon. Their garden is lovely!
- 6/14 – Get on Parkway at Boon and tour the upper Parkway. We can meet at Moses Cone Manor and then see Linville Falls and other scenic spots including Mount Mitchell. Possibly visit Red Max. Return to the hotel for the evening.



Vista from the Linville Falls Trail

### 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. Admire the fragrant *R. arborescens* on the bald and look for *R. calendulaceum* forms on the mountain. There are some excellent forms of *Kalmia* on Wine Spring Bald, too. Drive to Robbinsville, NC, for the evening.



*R. arborescens* at Wayah Bald

### 4. Hooper Bald and the Restoration Project

*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. Trim brush, cut back weeds, and admire azaleas, trying to better document forms. Across the road, take the trail to Oak Knob to check the larger azalea planting. If there is time, consider hiking out to Huckleberry Knob to appreciate the vistas.
- 6/18 – Explore for *R. cumberlandense* along the Cherohala Skyway, check out waterfalls, or head south past Murphy to investigate places like Slaughter or Blood Mountain.



"2<sup>nd</sup> Best Red" on Hooper Bald



"Best Red" on Hooper Bald

## 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 not threatening so we will choose the most promising day for the long hike. There are alternative short hikes and places to visit on the other days.

**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! We will have to take the longer Gregory Ridge Trail from Cades Cove this year.
- 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.” assuming that people can still walk.

## 6. On Your Own

*Wednesday & Thursday, June 22 -23:*

- 6/22 Head for home, tour the Parkway admiring Kalmia or looking for *R. maximum* forms. Visit nurseries to buy plants to take back to the garden. Possibly spend the night in Mountain City and dine at Suba’s Restaurant. Home on 6/23

**Americourt Hotel Mountain City**

**450 Dotson Lane, Mountain City, TN 37683**

**Phone: (423) 727-7311**

**East Fork Nursery – Vivian Abney (native azaleas, etc.)**

**2769 Bethel Church Road, Sevierville, TN 37876**

**Phone: (865) 453-6108**



**Gregory Bald Vista**



**Multicolored Gregory Bald Hybrid**



**“Smokianum” growing in a rocky cliff**



**Kalmia along the Blue Ridge Parkway**



**Heading for home after making the nursery stops**