



Working to reroute Gauntlet Trail at Carvins Cove

Photos courtesy of Pathfinders for Greenways

# Blazing the trail

Pathfinders strives to make hiking, walking and bike riding more pleasurable activities

The Roanoke River Greenway is by far the most notable in the valley. It's a class A trail along much of its length, meaning it has been paved and is wide enough for two-way traffic. There are other well-known greenways, such as the Tinker Creek Greenway in Roanoke and the Wolf Creek Greenway in Vinton, but few consider that the Mill Mountain Trail is actually a greenway, as are the networks of trails on Mill Mountain and around Carvins Cove. In fact, the Carvins Cove trails measure 142 miles in total, more than seven times the length of the Roanoke River Greenway.

"We just recently incorporated all of Carvins Cove into our comprehensive plan," says **Amy Powell**, the chairwoman of the public relations and marketing committee for Pathfinders. "We will be helping with the recreational planning."

The vast majority of trails at Carvins Cove are class C, meaning they are natural surface trails without added agents such as gravel or cinders. Many are known as great mountain biking trails.

They may be paths in the woods, but they are greenways.

Pathfinders as a group gives between 3,000-5,000 volunteer hours each year in trail building and maintenance. Powell says the group has its own equipment, including a pick-up truck, a ditch witch and a muck truck. Pathfind-

so anyone from the citizenry who wants to be considered for that board can request consideration.

Pathfinders has regular trail-building crews that work most Saturdays, coordinated by current President **Brian Batteiger**, and a midweek crew coordinated by **Bill Gage**.

by **Christian Moody**

**H**IKING, WALKING OR BIKE riding aren't much as spectator sports, but for those who want to get out and do something, they are as available as any other activity. Put one foot in front of the other to participate; and in the Roanoke Valley, there is a broad and ever-expanding network of opportunities when it comes to finding great trails.

Pathfinders for Greenways is a volunteer organization that gives involvement in the greenway process to citizens. It is a nonprofit that partners with the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, which is a governmentally appointed group that handles the nuts and bolts of the greenways — location, land, planning, funding and other aspects.

Pathfinders is a group of people who roll up their sleeves and work at making the greenways an extensive network of trails that people can enjoy.



The bridge at Fishburn Park

ers coordinates workdays, volunteers, adopt-a-greenway efforts, fund-raising and other efforts. Community groups that want to make working on a greenway a project can go through Pathfinders to get a time and place for maximum benefit. The organization will also provide educational information and speakers to any group that wants to learn more about greenways or what it can do.

The best part is that anyone can be part of it. There are no formal memberships. The Web site ([pathfinders.org](http://pathfinders.org)) gives all of the information needed to know what projects are on the slate, whom to call and where to be in order to help. There is more formal membership on the board of directors, which is a must for a 501(c) (3) nonprofit, but there is a nominating committee,

"We are always willing to do a service day for a school or a group," Powell says. "We have a list of little projects."

The group will have a public trailbuilding day on Earth Day, April 25. Additionally, Valley Forward's Gallop 4 the Greenways on May 9 will benefit Pathfinders once again. Volunteers are needed for that event, as well.

The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission is a cooperative venture among the cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County and the town of Vinton. Each locality appoints members to the advisory council and it serves as a direct liaison to the local governments.

Pathfinders for Greenways works under the same umbrella, but as a nonprofit citizens' group it is an example of a strong partnership between the public and government. The Web site is the same for both groups and information on all things greenway in the Roanoke Valley can be found there.

To get involved, visit [greenways.org](http://greenways.org).



The greenway at Murray Run