Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

**Trip orientation and introductions, Welcome dinner**

Meet at 5 p.m. at Mount Rogers Outfitters, an outdoor store on the main street of the small town of Damascus, Virginia. If you are flying in, the closest airport is Tri-City airport (TRI) in Bristol, VA and you can arrange a shuttle from there with Mt Rogers Outfitters. We'll have dinner out and then go to Between the Trails, our lodging for the trip. We'll review the trip and go over the information you need to make sure that you stay healthy and happy for the week! D

DAY 2

**Hike Dicky Gap to Fox Creek Gap**

Our first day on the AT! Leaving Damascus we'll make note of the wooden stairway descending the final few feet from Straight Mountain to the final path into Damascus. We'll pass this landmark each morning until, on our last hiking day, we descend it and walk into Damascus. After shuttling to our 'put in point' and taking the requisite first pictures, we'll be off. Our trail starts at Dicky Gap, where the AT skirts the northern slope of Iron Mountain, passes through deep canopy, and continues along rolling terrain sprinkled with rocks, boulders, and a few steeper climbs before reaching our first AT shelter: Hurricane Shelter. After a brief stop we'll continue our climb to the top of Iron Mt. From there we descend to Fox Creek Gap with its cascades and pools of refreshing cold mountain water --- a beautiful spot to enjoy before being picked up and shuttled back to Damascus for that promised shower and a great home cooked meal. Mileage: 8.5 B, L, D

DAY 3

**Hike Fox Creek Gap to Massie Gap**

Starting at our ending spot from yesterday we'll begin a sustained but moderate climb up the northern side of Pine Mountain to another AT shelter -- Old Orchard. This part of the trail is very pretty with lots of small water crossings and beautiful foliage, flowers, and rocks. We'll take a break here before continuing our climb to the top of Pine Mountain where the views are magnificent. After admiring the view, we'll descend to an area known as The Scales. Passing through The Scales we will once again climb - this time up Stone Mountain with beautiful vistas accompanying us. This will be our first opportunity to see the wild ponies that inhabit this part of the trail as well as giving us a great view of the fall foliage around us. As we re-enter the forest canopy, we'll be walking thru the Little Wilson Wilderness area and over both Big Wilson Creek and Little Wilson Creek before arriving at another AT shelter -- Wise Shelter. Leaving the shelter we will make our way, yes - you guessed it, 'up', toward Massie Gap where our shuttle will be awaiting our arrival. Mileage: 9.8 B,L,D

DAY 4

**Hike Massie Gap to Elk Garden**

Although the mileage may appear to be less for today, it is the most strenuous day of the week and one of the prettiest days of the trip! Old growth forest, Grayson Highlands, Fat Man’s Squeeze, Wilburn Ridge, Rhododendron Gap â€“ all these are part of our path today. Vista after vista and "sound of music" moments await. The AT shelter in this section is Thomas Knob -- another perfect opportunity for a break and gazing at the panoramic vista from the rocky prominence just behind the shelter. Leaving the shelter area, we will take a bit of a side trip as we follow the path that leads to the top of Mount Rogers, the highest peak in Virginia. The hike to the top (optional) will take about 1 hour and steadily climbs with an elevation gain of about 500 feet in less than 1 mile. There are no views from the summit but the old growth forest we hike through is beautiful. Returning, we'll continue toward our destination for today, Elk Garden. Mileage: 7.1, optional mileage +2.0 B,L,D

DAY 5
Back to Elk Garden this morning, we continue making our way south. Our destination today is Creek Junction Station - right where the AT and the Virginia Creeper Trail intersect and the former location of a stop on the railway line servicing Damascus and Abingdon. Our hike continues to give us beautiful meadows, gorgeous views, and dense canopy. Today we’ll enjoy the view from Buzzard Rock and drink in the beauty of a lovely patch of pine forest. The AT shelter we pass today, Lost Mountain Shelter, is located among one of those pine forests and offers a beautifully peaceful setting for a shelter - if that shower and another great meal weren’t awaiting us perhaps we’d just stay the night! But, we will continue, crossing and following Laurel Creek to the intersection of the Virginia Creeper Trail and the AT where our shuttle is waiting. Mileage: 10.3 B,L

**DAY 6**

It’s hard to believe but this is our last day (at least for this trip!) on the AT. We’ll pick back up at Creek Junction Station, keep hiking south and walk triumphantly into Damascus! Along the way we’ll stop by a deep woods pond for a frog concert, summit Straight Mountain overlooking the Virginia Creeper Trail, and enjoy that stairway walk we’ve passed each day, down to our final path into Damascus. Mileage: 13.5 B,L,D

**DAY 7**

After sharing one final breakfast, you are free to leave any time after breakfast on Saturday. Please note, for planning purposes, the airport is approximately 1 hour from Damascus.