

# A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

May — June 2012



INSIDE: Walking This Planet | Troutville, Virginia | Appalachian Crayfish

C. Aldridge  
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**On the Cover:** Like many of his fellow thru-hikers, self-taught painter, Charles Aldridge is content to not have a definitive reason for, or description of, his journey on the Appalachian Trail. “If you haven’t completed a thru-hike, no words can explain the experience; if you have, no words are necessary,” he says. “How do you explain this spectacle of life?” He is, however, able to provide some charming, wordless descriptions by recreating glimpses from his 2011 Georgia to Maine trek through his acrylic paintings. (page 26)

*Boardwalk heading into Atkins, Virginia.*

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Volume 8, Number 3  
May — June 2012

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The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail — ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

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**THOUGHTFUL WORLD. ON A SMALL ISLAND OFF THE SOUTHERN COAST OF SOUTH KOREA, A** group of local women “free-dive” — equipped with only an amazing set of lungs, goggles, and weighted vests — into the East China Sea to harvest fresh sea snails, abalone, and other shellfish. Their harvest is then sold to locals, tourists to the island, and nearby restaurants. These Jeju Island women divers — also called haenyeo — are renowned historically for this practice dating back hundreds of years, and today, as their ranks dwindle, they still hold an almost mythical and heroic standing, not only for their strength and mermaid-like lung capacity, but for the reason that they use this particularly pure diving method: sustainability.

Last year, Jeju Island hosted the second annual World Trail Conference, during which representatives from a worldwide network of trail organizations dedicated to developing, managing, and protecting walking and hiking trails met (page 18). As she walked the island’s Jeju Olle Trail, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s director of conservation, Laura Belleville, was fascinated to learn the history of the famous women divers. “My first day on Jeju, I walked around with a representative from Canada’s Bruce Trail, and we were offered sea snails from a diver who still had her wetsuit on. She just came out of the water. She must have been about 75 years old,” explains Laura. “These women forgo using diving equipment so that their harvesting never becomes unsustainable — they can only harvest in smaller quantities. That conservation message resonated as we walked the path, discussing the conservation issues of the day.”

Protection of such local, natural resources is a global thought process; and responsible promotion is often the key. “Natural resources are our most valuable asset for growing the local economy,” says 4-H extension agent Ty Petty, who worked with a small group of 4-H teens to create a map and brochure of the Trail in Unicoi County (page 10). “Although everyone in the community has heard of the Appalachian Trail, less than 10 percent of county residents have ever hiked on it,” he says. The 4-H group’s recent hard work, miles of A.T. hiking, and use of advanced Global Positioning System technology is now serving to inspire others to experience the Trail in Tennessee.

A similar message of thoughtful, effective community work resonates in the officially designated Trail Community of Troutville, Virginia (page 38). “The town itself reflects the combined efforts of [locals] to literally build a five-acre park from the ground up,” says Trail Town author Leanna Joyner. “This project organically bubbled up in the community to become the pride of the town and a model of success for what a community-driven vision of the future might be.” Today, the park hosts a farmers market each Sunday, where residents sell vegetables straight from their own gardens, and the clerk at one of the locally-owned stores saves a few cartons of farm-fresh eggs for regular customers.

From a small island on the other side of the world to the Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee, to an inviting Trail town in Virginia, it is always possible to promote sustainability — knowing that, hopefully, millions of others are doing the same with their own local, natural resources. “[At the World Trail Conference] Karim El-Jisr, from the Lebanon Mountain Trail, reminded us of the maxim “Think Global, Act Local,” says Laura Belleville. And while we all cannot possess the almost otherworldly abilities of Jeju Island’s women divers, if we are thoughtful of our neighbors (close by and a world away), and thoughtful of keeping our impact low, every individual can use their own simple tactics to protect and preserve the balance of the natural wonders on every corner of the planet. The ripple effect of one person’s small act has the capacity to create an enduring result. ⬆

**Wendy K. Probst** | *Managing Editor*



Wearing a lead-weighted vest and goggles, the haenyeo plunge into 20-meter depths to harvest fresh seafood for local markets and visitors to Jeju Island — all in the name of sustainability. Photo courtesy *My Mother the Mermaid (Ineo Gongju)*

*A.T. Journeys* welcomes your comments, story suggestions and photographs. Queries may be submitted via e-mail to [editor@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:editor@appalachiantrail.org).

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# WALKING THIS PLANET

Representatives from Trails spanning the globe gathered on Jeju Island in South Korea for the World Trail Conference



The Jeju Olle Trail second annual Walking Festival, during the World Trail Conference, attracts participants from around Korea to Jeju Island.

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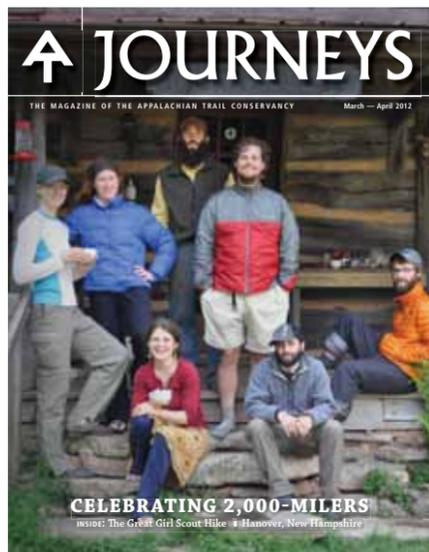
#### Promoting the Trail from the Ground Up

A 4-H group of teens from Unicoi County, Tennessee became avid hikers and GPS experts in a successful effort to promote their section of the Trail.

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#### Creative Observation

Following his 2011 thru-hike, Chuck "Guinness" Aldridge began a passionate pursuit to recreate moments from his time on the A.T.



**I HAD BEEN ANXIOUSLY WAITING** for my first electronic version of *A.T. Journeys* — my room has a one-foot stack of the paper versions that I am reluctant to dispose of. Now, with each new addition, I can electronically squirrel them away and never feel guilty. So stupid that something as simple as this brings such joy to my life. The other neat thing is, as I type up my Trail journals, I copy and paste [links] from your publication just to tie it all together. While I can't be on the Trail everyday, I can better enjoy it every day with your next evolution. I don't feel like I am giving up anything, I feel like I have gained instead. On a final note, I read where [Tim Meadows] took 35 years to complete The A.T. (Trail Stories: "Ever Present Opportunity," *A.T. Journeys* March/April). Again, a ray of sunshine in my day. I have been hiking it for about 20 years unless you count back in 1964 when I went on the A.T. my first time with my father and a Boy Scout troop. Anyhow, I may one day strike a pose on Katahdin much as Emma "Sprout" Hileman did in the March/April 2012 edition. My hair will be much grayer and less amorous I am sure.

"JASH" (*Just a Section Hiker*)  
PALMERTON, PENNSYLVANIA

**AS USUAL, I ENJOYED READING MY** recent copy of *A.T. Journeys*. The [March/April] Overlook column featured a picture of Angela "Chowhound" and Shawn "Chuckwagon" Grenier. I don't often get

to provide "Trail magic," but I met these two hikers at New Found Gap in the Smokies. I was passing through the gap after hiking the Benton MacKaye Trail and gave [them] a lift to the grocery store in Gatlinburg. I was glad to see they completed their journey to Katahdin. I also liked the notes on the international 2,000 milers ("2,000-Milers," page 21). I was lucky enough to meet "Nuts" who was from Germany. We started hiking from Springer the same day. Nuts was only able to stay on the Trail for a few months but we hiked together on and off most of the way to Erwin, Tennessee. He made me laugh when he entered the cabin we rented at the NOC and announced, "Lucy. I'm home!" I just wanted to thank the publishers of *A.T. Journeys* for helping to keep the memories of my thru-hike alive by bringing a bit of the A.T. to my living room.

Ken "Pilgrim" LaFlamme  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

**AFTER READING THE ARTICLE** ("Overlook," March/April) by [ATC's] "fearless leader" Mark Wenger, I had some thoughts that reflect his thoughts. On my first hike of the Trail in 2006 I took lots of pictures of places, but my journal was primarily about the people I met at those places. When my wife and I hiked the Trail from 2008 to 2010 we concentrated in syncing our pictures and journal. He is accurate in stating that the pictures of Trail scenery do not do the places justice. But for those of us that were at those places, the pictures serve to bring back very vivid memories with or without a camera. We volunteer in a local nature park and walk the trails of that park most mornings. It still amazes us that sounds, smells, or a sunrise will initiate thoughts within both of us. I don't know of any A.T. hiker that we have met that doesn't have vivid life-long memories of the Trail and her people. On the A.T. you are accepted just because you showed up. It truly is like a big family.

Charlie & Nancy Zapp  
SAINT LEONARD, MARYLAND

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING** *A.T. Journeys* each time it's published, but

we were especially delighted with the content and style of the March-April 2012 edition, where you really highlighted the hiking community. While we know that much of the ATC's emphasis must necessarily be on wisely preserving and protecting the A.T. corridor, it was just plain delightful and memory-charging to see all of the focus on hikers once-or-more-in-a-lifetime great adventures, captivating stories, and totally beautiful photographs. Do us a favor and do it again!

Sue "Mama Lipton" Spring & Tom  
"Flatlander" Evans

LAKEVILLE, CONNECTICUT

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

**I JUST FINISHED READING MY** first on-line version of *A.T. Journeys* — not only was it a great issue, but I loved seeing my name in print! It is also a great way to enforce the "green" culture we aim to perpetuate. Thanks ATC for making us greener. Thanks also for the warm tribute to Buffalo Bobby ("As I See It," March/April); I too, had the pleasure to walk many miles with him, "Trolley Stop" and "Guardian" last year — all true gentleman. He will be alive in my memories forever.

Kerry "Scribbles" Smithwick

**RECEIVED MY A.T. JOURNEYS** yesterday and it was outstanding! Liked seeing the 2,000-miler report and all the photos of the 2,000-milers.

Bill Cooke

CORRECTIONS

In the March/April feature "Revealing Microscopic Wilderness" the inset image of a "water bear" on page 32 should have been credited to Photo Researchers, ScienceSource/Naturesource; photographers: Meckes/Ottawa.

*A.T. Journeys* welcomes your comments.

The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives.

Not all letters received may be published.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Please send them to:

E-mail: [editor@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:editor@appalachiantrail.org)

Letters to the Editor

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807

# CELEBRATE THE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPLETION OF THE A.T.!

## Harpers Ferry & Bolivar West Virginia

AUGUST 11-12, 2012

### BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!

And enjoy a parade where A.T. hikers are encouraged to represent their "class years" through the decades — and volunteers will represent their Trail Clubs. Participants are encouraged to get creative with props, gear, signs, and banners! Those cheering on parade participants are welcome to bring water guns (but no water balloons please).

Enjoy:

- Watermelon Eating Contest
- Music by Eric "Fiddler" Zimmerman, Mary Sue "Southern Harp" Roach, & Randy "Windtalker" Motz
- Delicious food
- "Camp A.T."
- Sunset poetry reading
- Night Sky astronomy
- Ice Cream Social
- Raffles

Learn more with important programs such as:

- Leave No Trace, presented by Tom Banks
- Women's Hiking and Thru-hiking Workshop with Lauralee Bliss
- Animals of the A.T., A Sunset poetry reading, & Night Sky Astronomy with Jeff Haas
- Wildflowers of the A.T. and A History of the A.T. in Virginia, by Leonard Adkins

Featured speakers include:

- Gene Espy, 2nd A.T. thru-hiker ('51)
- Larry Luxenberg, A.T. Museum President
- Mark Wenger, ATC Executive Director
- Pam Underhill, A.T. Park Superintendent
- Rebecca Harriett, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- Harry Bridges, 50-year Potomac A.T. Club member

Kids activities:

- Temporary tattoos
- Relay races
- Gear-related contests
- Mini 14-state A.T. hike
- Climbing wall

Experience Harpers Ferry highlights, including:

- Spectacular day-hikes, Rafting & tubing along the Shenandoah & Potomac rivers,
- Biking & zip line canopy tours



Sponsored by: the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Friends of the A.T. in Harpers Ferry & Bolivar, and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park For more information about the Harpers Ferry Celebration as well as other festive 75th anniversary celebrations along the A.T. near you visit: [www.appalachiantrail.org/events](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/events)

Kweli Kitwana provides indispensable volunteer work at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia as the A.T. Ambassador to Bolivar and Harpers Ferry.



**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT A.T. VOLUNTEERS THE IMAGE THAT** usually comes to mind is a Trail maintainer keeping the A.T. in great shape. Trail maintainers are our most valuable volunteers; without them there would not be an Appalachian Trail as we know it. They are also the most visible volunteers. They are active in all aspects of Trail work, from basic maintenance to major projects such as building bridges and shelters and constructing new sections of the Trail. For many years there were few A.T. volunteer jobs other than being a Trail maintainer. While they are still our most valuable and needed volunteers, there are now other ways to give back to the A.T.

The Trail to Every Classroom program promotes resource stewardship, recreation and community engagement by getting students engaged in A.T. activities. This particular program uses volunteers to help schools conduct hikes on the Trail. We believe that students who are part of this program will be more inclined to become involved in the stewardship of their community and public lands. Getting young people outside is important to their health and the health of the outdoors. Youth that are taught to enjoy the outside world will grow to be adults who will work to protect and conserve our natural heritage. Students will become A.T. volunteers in the future as a result of their contact with the Trail, and their volunteer work, at such an early age.

The A.T. has a 250,000-acre corridor and the surrounding landscapes are rich in natural and cultural resources. Threats to the environment of the A.T. include encroaching development, acid rain, invasive species, polluted water, and climate change. These threats can have a negative impact on the Trail. Volunteers are needed to monitor and collect data on rare species, diminishing American chestnut trees, invasive species, and seasonal life cycles. Monitoring projects are aimed at assisting cooperative management partners in the development of effective, adaptive management strategies, and ensure the long-term health of A.T. resources.

There are many other ways to be an A.T. volunteer. Our 31 maintaining clubs offer local volunteer opportunities to work on the Trail. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Trail crew program gives volunteers who do not live near a club a chance to do A.T. maintenance. We always welcome volunteers at the ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Finding a volunteer opportunity is easier now that we have an online volunteer database. The ATC volunteer database is an online searchable database of all volunteer opportunities related to the Appalachian Trail. You can find the volunteer database on our Web site.

As a volunteer-based organization we depend on our volunteers. They built the A.T. and continue to maintain and protect it today. Giving back is the best way keep the A.T. experience for future hikers to enjoy. We hope that our volunteer programs appeal to people with diverse talents, interests, and experience levels. We hope you'll get involved. ⚡

J. Robert Almand | Chair

*As a volunteer-based organization we depend on our volunteers. They built the A.T. and continue to maintain and protect it today.*

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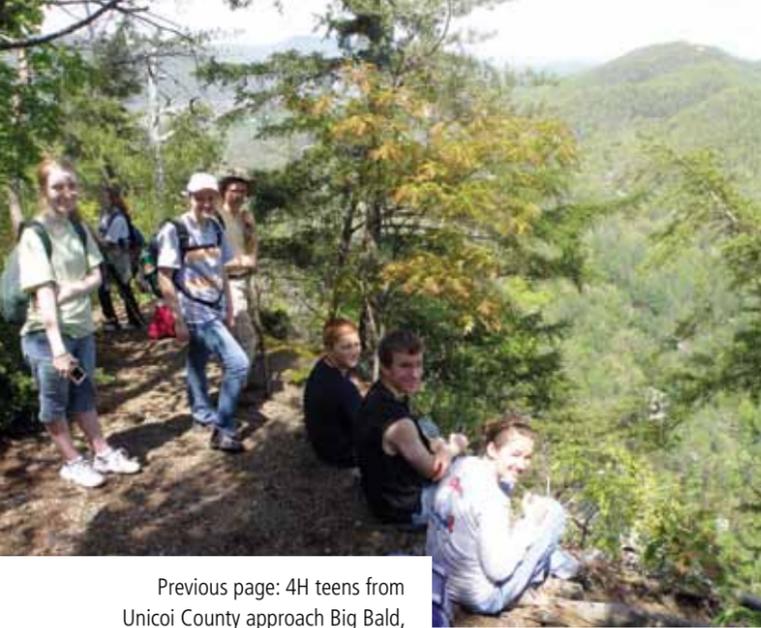
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BY TY PETTY

# PROMOTING THE TRAIL FROM THE GROUND UP

When Unicoi County, Tennessee was named one of only four Appalachian Trail Communities back in 2009, the local 4-H extension agent challenged a group of the most active teenage 4-H members to create a service learning project involving the A.T. that would have a positive effect on the community. Many of the students had participated in hikes organized by 4-H once or twice a year so they had an interest in local trails. However, most of them had never hiked on the Appalachian Trail or on any trail longer than four miles.



Previous page: 4H teens from Unicoi County approach Big Bald, during a section of their 53-mile A.T. hike to collect GPS data for the creation of a local A.T. map and brochure; This page from top: the group enjoys the view along the Trail overlooking the Nolichucky River; Biologists at the Big Bald Banding Station explain their annual bird research to the data collection team.

Unicoi County is a small county located in north-east Tennessee, about 30 miles north of Asheville, North Carolina along I-26. Unicoi is the most mountainous county in Tennessee and more than half of the land is part of the Cherokee National Forest. Natural resources are our most valuable asset for growing the local economy, yet we were lacking the promotional tools needed to attract visitors to our pristine trails. Although everyone in the community has heard of the Appalachian Trail, less than 10 percent of county residents have ever hiked on it. Our vision is to build on the excitement of the A.T. Community designation to make Unicoi County a major destination for outdoor adventure, and to promote active lifestyles among our local residents.

Our goal was to build a poster map highlighting the local sections of the A.T. and create a local Trail brochure. The 4-H'ers had all participated in geocaching activities using GPS units for an electronic scavenger hunt, but that was the extent of our GPS experience. We were suddenly on the verge of becoming avid hikers and GPS experts. There are five sections of the Appalachian Trail located along the state border either in Unicoi County or just across the state line in North Carolina. The 53 miles of the A.T. included in our project begin at Devil Fork Gap and travel north to Iron Mountain Gap. Before we could think about creating the promotional materials, we needed to go hiking, make observations, and record GPS data along the Trail.

We chose the easiest and shortest section for our first hike during spring break, from Indian Grave Gap to Chestoa, along the Nolichucky River. This section began as a mostly level ridge top hike before descending 1,700 feet to the Nolichucky River.

Along the way we stopped and had lunch at Curly Maple Gap Shelter and carefully hiked along a near vertical cliff a few hundred feet above the Nolichucky River.

Our next hike started at Spivey Gap and descended 1,500 feet to the other side of the Nolichucky River. The first couple miles of the Trail included our first challenging uphill section in which one of the fifth graders suddenly sat down in the middle of the Trail with no warning and wasn't sure if she could continue. Her older sister explained that she has asthma, but did not bring her inhaler. After about 10 minutes of calm patience, she was ready to hike again with no ill effects. No Business Knob Shelter was a welcome site since it signaled our lunch break. While all 16 of our hikers were eating, one of them suddenly proclaimed that there was a snake right above our 4-H agent's head. Luckily he enjoys snakes and the whole group had a good laugh once we knew it was just a black rat snake. As we began to descend a quick 2,000 feet over the last two miles of the Trail, we were impressed by the views overlooking the Nolichucky River.

Later in the summer, we hiked from Iron Mountain Gap to Indian Grave Gap. This section of the A.T. is the most well-known to local residents since it crosses Beauty Spot, a popular bald mountain peak with beautiful views, which is accessible by car. Besides basking in the sunshine on Beauty Spot's grassy bald and enjoying a quick siesta, the group loved hiking through the spruce forest that they nicknamed "the black forest." The blueberry bushes along this section of Trail offered a sweet treat and greatly improved morale after climbing to the top of Unaka Mountain. During fall break, we hiked from Sams Gap to Devil Fork Gap. This is where the students encountered their first



After a challenging uphill section, the group takes a much needed lunch break at No Business Knob Shelter.

outdoor privy, although nobody was in a hurry to line up and use it. This section was relatively easy, and ran through mostly dense forest.

Although we didn't know it at the time, we saved the best for last. During spring break, a year from when we had started hiking, we completed the 53-mile journey with the longest and most challenging hike. The 13.4-mile section beginning at Sams Gap ascended over 1,300 feet to Big Bald before dropping down to Spivey Gap. This hike featured lots of surprises. After the first couple of challenging miles, we had a teenager who was on the verge of quitting. However, as we approached a clearing with a beautiful view of the top of Big Bald, she became inspired and determined to finish the hike. We found the most amazing 360-degree views that we could imagine waiting for us at the top of 5,516 foot Big Bald, which is the highest point in Unicoi County. This was a great place to enjoy lunch and take lots of photos. Just below the peak, we encountered the Big Bald Banding Station, where biologists use netting to catch birds for research before banding their legs with an ID tag and releasing them. Lucky for us, they were just as passionate about educating students about birds as conducting their research. We learned all about their research project, which is conducted annually — almost every day in September and October — and we had the opportunity to release the last few Tennessee warblers from our own hands.

Now that we had finished hiking, taking photos, and collecting GPS data, it was time to build a map. We received an ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) 4-H software grant to install an advanced GIS mapping program called ArcGIS on several computers. GIS stands for Geographic Information System and really just means advanced GPS mapping. A dedicated group of 10 teenagers met weekly after school for two hours to learn GIS mapping skills and build the map. It took months to create the map, but we knew it was worth it when we saw the fruit of our labor. We were privileged to have Julie Judkins, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's community program manager, visit with our 4-H GPS team midway through our project. She inspired us with the history and beauty of the A.T. — stories of real hikers, and even presented us with A.T. volunteer pins.

In addition to the map, we also created a detailed local Appalachian Trail brochure to help day hikers get out and enjoy the Trail. We spent hours and hours going through hundreds of photos to pick the right

Clockwise from far right: A detailed, local A.T. brochure was created to help day hikers get out and enjoy the Trail; The completed map, created with an advanced GIS mapping program called ArcGIS, highlights local sections of the Trail; Saving the best section for last during a hike along the 5,516-foot-high peak of Big Bald with 360-degree views of Unicoi County.



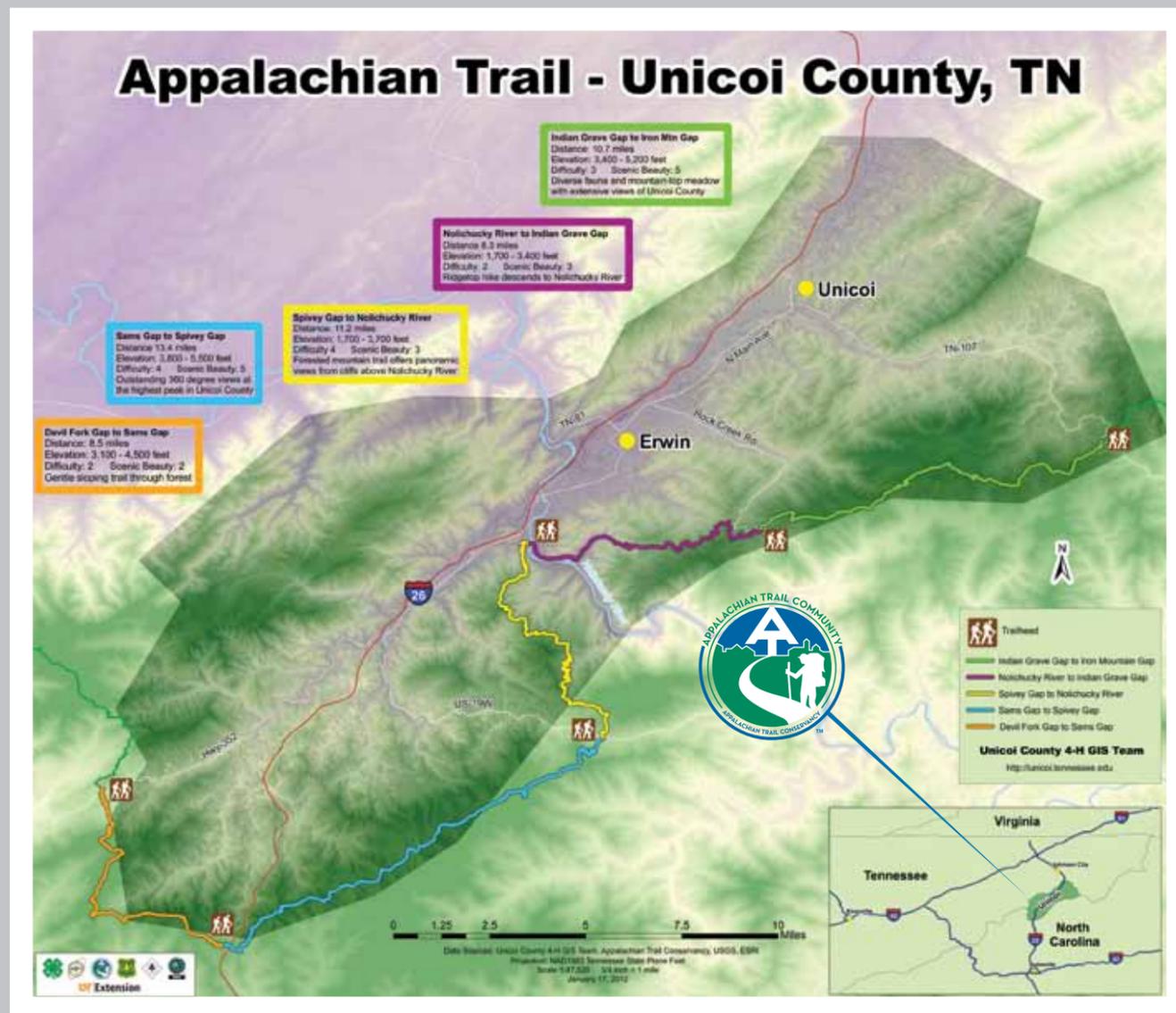
ones for the brochure. The one we debated the most about was at the top of the front tab, which is the first photo visible on the brochure rack. We settled on a photo of a hiker sitting in the grass on top of Big Bald with only his hiking shoes visible and a beautiful view in the distance. The brochure includes some basic Trail facts and hiking tips. There is local information about Unicoi County, a locator map, and contact information for the Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Forest Service. We also give credit to the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club and the Carolina Mountain Club, which are responsible for the massive job of maintaining the A.T. in Unicoi County. The back of the brochure includes a cutout of our A.T. map, driving directions to the trailheads, and a basic description of each of the five local Trail sections. The Trail descriptions include distance, recommended direction for a day hike, difficulty, scenic beauty, elevation range, and highlights of each section.

Once we had a final product, our challenge was to fund the printing of all these publications. We have received strong support from a variety of sources including local government, local residents, University of Tennessee Extension, Tennessee Geographic Information Council, and private businesses. Our team was recently awarded a Kodak American Greenways Grant through the Conservation Fund to expand our Trail promotion project and create a local greenways guide. Our 4-H GPS Team has also made more than a dozen presentations locally and around the state to promote the A.T. and our 4-H GPS project. The A.T. promotion project has been featured in several local newspaper articles, and we have found overwhelming support everywhere we turn. Whether it is a local civic group or government entity, there are always lots of positive comments. Local residents frequently tell us they are so glad we finally have a tool to promote the beautiful Appalachian Trail in our community — and we have heard many reports of how the brochure and map have inspired people to take a hike. The A.T. brochure and poster map are currently on display at the Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station, and Unicoi Town Hall.

**THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN A WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR OUR YOUTH, OUR COMMUNITY, AND OUR FORESTS.**

We are now starting to work on new projects including the Top 10 Trails of Unicoi County, a Nolichucky River Recreation Guide, and a County Recycling Centers Map. This project has been a win-win situation for our youth, our community, and our forests. Young people have gained an understanding of nature and conservation, GPS technology, graphic design, achieving goals, public speaking, and teamwork. They have also developed an interest in hiking and nature that will last a lifetime. [A](#)

Ty Petty is a 4-H extension agent with the University of Tennessee Extension - Unicoi County. There is a 4-H program in every county along the Trail. If you would like to get more information about how you can partner with youth to promote the A.T., contact [typetty@utk.edu](mailto:typetty@utk.edu) or start a conversation with your local 4-H Agent.



# I TRAILHEAD I

PHOTO BY JOHN CAMMEROTA

## 2012 North Carolina A.T. License Plate Grants Awarded

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the North Carolina Appalachian Trail License Plate grants. This spring \$35,000 was granted to 12 individuals and partner organizations including Trail clubs, schools, botanists and ecologists, environmental and conservation groups, and civic organizations. A.T. specialty license plate sales in North Carolina bring the ATC about \$120,000 each year.

The recipients are: the Baatany Goat Project, East Tennessee State University, Friends of the Smokies, Hot Springs Tourism, Nantahala Hiking Club, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, Southern Appalachian Raptor Research, South East Ecological Design, Summit Charter School, Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club, and the Wilderness Society's Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards.

The program is funded by drivers who purchase and renew their North Carolina A.T. specialty plates. Twenty dollars from each license plate is returned to the ATC to support its work in the state, and is used to fund the grant program for A.T. greenway acquisition, and to help support the work of the ATC Southern Regional Office in Asheville, North Carolina. A.T. specialty plates are a way to support the ATC in its work to sustain the Trail into the future, and are currently offered in Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia.

For more information about the ATC license plate program visit:  
[appalachiantrail.org/plates](http://appalachiantrail.org/plates).

## NATIONAL TRAILS DAY® 2012

**NATIONAL TRAILS DAY (NTD) IS A CELEBRATION OF TRAILS THAT** evolved from the report of President Ronald Reagan's President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. In 1987, the report recommended that all Americans be able to go out their front doors and, within 15 minutes, be on trails that wind through their cities or towns and bring them back without retracing steps. The recommendation, dubbed Trails for All Americans, became the impetus behind several public and private parties joining American Hiking Society in launching National Trails Day in 1993. This annual event now always falls on the first Saturday in June, and will be held this year on June 2.

Trails do not just magically appear for our enjoyment; it takes many hours of planning, labor, and negotiating to develop them. National Trails Day, the only nationwide celebration of trails, increases awareness about trails and celebrates the hard work and support of many people and partners — including volunteers, land agencies, and outdoor minded businesses. It is also a day to introduce people to the many joys and benefits of trails. America's 200,000 miles of trails allow us access to the natural world for recreation, education, exploration, solitude, inspiration, and much more. Trails take us to good physical and mental health by providing us with a chance to breathe fresh air, get our hearts pumping, and escape from our stresses.

National Trails Day events involve a broad array of activities, including hiking, dog walking, bike riding, trail maintenance, birding, wildlife photography, geocaching, paddle trips, trail running, trail dedications, health-focused programs, and children's activities. Whatever you like to do outdoors, there is bound to be an event to fit your interests. Since 1993, National Trails Day has grown to inspire many thousands of people to enjoy trails on the same day nationwide. All 50 states have had events, as well

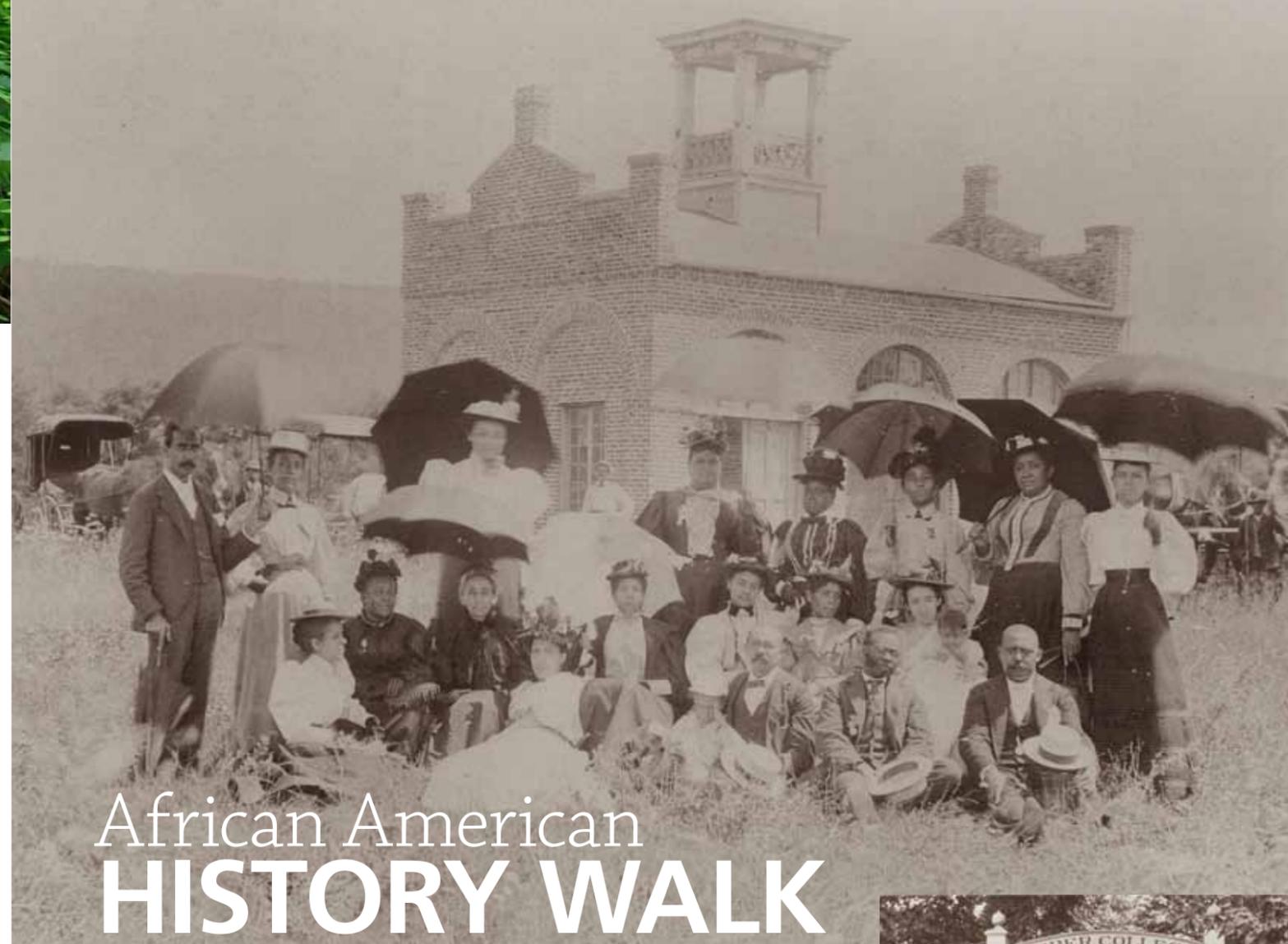


**SINCE 1993, NATIONAL TRAILS DAY HAS GROWN TO INSPIRE MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO ENJOY TRAILS ON THE SAME DAY NATIONWIDE.**



as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Canada, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. NTD is now a permanent fixture on the calendars of trail clubs, businesses, and government agencies. Hundreds of thousands of people now have a greater awareness of trails through a wide variety of NTD events — including trail dedications, hikes, bike and horse rides, paddle trips, trail maintenance, and many other activities. Event hosts have included local hiking clubs, federal agencies, municipal parks, retailers, land trusts, and many other businesses and organizations.

For more information visit: [www.americanhiking.org/National-Trails-Day](http://www.americanhiking.org/National-Trails-Day).  
Text courtesy of the American Hiking Society



## African American HISTORY WALK

### IN HONOR OF NATIONAL TRAILS DAY, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Conservancy (ATC), in partnership with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, will lead a special African American History Walk, on June 2, 2012, to highlight some of the rich history to be found along the Harpers Ferry section of the Appalachian Trail. Two historic buildings, normally closed to the public, will be open for the event. Walk participants will learn about Storer College, one of the nation's first institutions of higher learning open to African Americans, and will be given the rare opportunity to view the inside the Curtis Freewill Baptist Church and the Lockwood House, where the college's first classes took place. Walkers will also learn about the Niagara Movement, considered to be the cornerstone of the modern Civil Rights era, and John Brown's Raid, which focused the nation's attention on the moral issue of slavery and headed the country toward civil war.

The one-and-a-half-mile guided walk will begin at the ATC's Visitor Center and end by following the Appalachian Trail downhill past numerous scenic spots and historic structures from Jefferson Rock to the Point in lower town. Two versions of the walk will be offered at different times; an easier route through Camp Hill in the upper town, and a more rugged version that will follow the A.T.

Kweli Kitwana, A.T. Ambassador to Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, will lead the hike, along with long-time Harpers Ferry National Park rangers and historians David Fox and Guinevere Roper. ↗

For more information and to sign up, email Laurie Potteiger at: [lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org).



From top: Students and faculty pose at the entrance to the Storer College campus on Camp Hill in the early 1900s; Members of a pilgrim party from the National League of Colored Women pose — in 1896 — in front of John Brown Fort, which stood on the Alexander Murphy Farm on a bluff overlooking the Shenandoah River; Photos Courtesy National Park Service, Harpers Ferry National Historic Park.

# WALKING THIS PLANET

**REPRESENTING TRAILS FROM AROUND THE WORLD,** 10 trail managers gathered last November in the final session of the 2011 World Trail Conference hosted on Jeju Island, South Korea. Karim El-Jisr, from the Lebanon Mountain Trail, reminded us of the maxim “Think Global, Act Local.” We were collectively reflecting on the conference and thinking about where we might go with our newfound connections. A worldwide network of trail organizations dedicated to developing, managing, and protecting walking and hiking trails — what could this offer us locally, back home on our own turf?

We arrived in Jeju Island, South Korea from Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Lebanon, Canada, Germany, Japan, and the United States. As the director of conservation for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), I was the fortunate representative for the A.T. at the second meeting of world trails. The conference was hosted by a highly energetic non-profit organization, the Jeju Olle Foundation, with support from the South Korean Central Government. The conference hosts generously underwrote the entire cost of travel and meeting support for the 10 representatives. The foundation and the central government were clearly committed to catalyzing discussions about trail related issues from trail construction to trails in the context of broader conservation initiatives.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LAURA BELLEVILLE

2011 WORLD TRAIL CONFERENCE HOSTED ON JEJU ISLAND, SOUTH KOREA.



**ALL OF THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TRAILS ARE AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR ENGAGING PEOPLE IN BROADER CONSERVATION ISSUES. TRAILS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSLATE A LARGER LANDSCAPE THAT INCLUDES BOTH NATURAL AND HUMAN DIMENSIONS.**

Clockwise from top: World Trail Conference festival parade; Opening session of the conference with Myung-sook SUH (far right), Tony Varcoe from Australia, and Jackie Randle from Canada (far left) — Myung-sook, founder of the Jeju Olle Trail, was the energy behind coordinating the conference; International participants in front of the Jeju Olle Trail logo, constructed of tangerine crates; Jeju City at night.



I quickly learned that South Koreans love to hike. They appreciate the opportunity that trails offer to connect people and the country's landscapes. To showcase Jeju Island — recently confirmed as one of the New7Wonders of Nature — the Jeju Olle Foundation has developed a walking trail around the entire perimeter of this volcanic island situated off the southwest coast of Korea. Jeju is a relatively rural area, famous for its tangerines and strong women divers. The Jeju Olle (olle meaning small path) was initiated by Suh Myong Sook, a former Seoul journalist, leading a harried and hectic lifestyle. Suh escaped her busy days for a trek on the Camino de Santiago in Spain. A year after her return to Korea she seized on the idea of slowing down and experiencing nature to create a new trail on Jeju Island. Walking is becoming more popular and widely embraced by Koreans as they seek opportunities to reconnect with their natural and cultural heritage through a series of developing walking trails across the country. International trail representatives walked sections of the Jeju Olle each day of the conference. It was the perfect opportunity for casual conversations that led to deeper appreciation among the participants regarding the meaning trails have in the representative countries. We had a lot in common.

Most notably, all of the conference participants acknowledged that trails are an important tool for engaging people in broader conservation issues. Trails offer an opportunity to translate a larger landscape that includes both natural and human dimensions. As we walked the Jeju Olle it was fascinating to learn the history of the famous Jeju women divers, and to pass divers offering freshly harvested sea snails for lunch while learning that these women divers forgo using more advanced diving equipment so that their harvesting never becomes unsustainable. Without this diving equipment, the women can only harvest in smaller

Clockwise from top: Conference participants on a coastal section of the Jeju Olle Trail — a footpath around the entire perimeter of this volcanic island situated off the southwest coast of Korea; View from the Jeju Olle Trail south of Seogwipo-si; Jeju women divers offer freshly harvested sea snails on the edge of the water to trail festival participants — these divers forgo using scuba equipment so that their harvesting remains sustainable.



**THE PROMISE OF OUR INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF TRAILS IS OUR COLLECTIVE WORK TO VALUE AND CONSERVE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES, AND TO PUT THOSE OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXPLORERS.**





quantities. That conservation message resonated as we walked the path, discussing the conservation issues of the day. Conversations drifted to the sustainable tourism initiatives in Germany, the land protection challenges in Canada, and the recently passed progressive climate change policy in Australia. I learned that my new Australian connection had been examining the citizen-science based program on the A.T. and was interested in modeling the rare plant monitoring program. He wanted to learn more about what was happening to understand climate change impacts along the Appalachian Mountain range through citizen-science based programs. We both acknowledged the value of engaging people firsthand in scientific inquiries and the value of trails in offering citizen-scientists the opportunity to access natural areas. New Zealand's Milford Track representative, Reg Kemper, chimed in that New Zealand park managers firmly believe that trails are not an end unto themselves, but a means to engage broad audiences in understanding conservation and sustainability issues. I share

Above: Tim Lindstone-Scott, representing the Cotswold Trail in Great Britain, enjoys a hike along the Jeju Olle Trail; Opposite page: Ivy Lee, of the Jeju Olle Foundation, hikes with conference participants.

his perspective and offered background regarding Benton MacKaye's initial vision for the Appalachian Trail.

Heading up a steep hill, a young Korean woman approached me. She was working for a new trail on the mainland and was eager to receive information about trail building techniques and asked about the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's publications. I was honored to be able to offer her publications such as the ATC's well-used *Trail Building and Maintenance* book –by director of conservation operations Bob Proudman. In return the women offered that if I was ever back in Korea she would be happy to arrange a Buddhist temple stay for me as she had recently completed a work assignment at a temple that has developed an overnight stay program in an effort to share the Buddhist experience with a wider audience. I appreciated the spiritual references she made to her peaceful and simple time at the temple and her desire to now work on a project that, in its own way, extends the opportunity for many others to slow down,



IT WAS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR CASUAL CONVERSATIONS THAT LED TO DEEPER APPRECIATION AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE MEANING TRAILS HAVE IN THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNTRIES. WE HAD A LOT IN COMMON.



enjoy, and fully experience whatever the trail has to offer if the walker or hiker is open to it.

At this point, Carmen Pita of the Santiago de Camino in Chile (also known as The Way) told us about the history of the Camino. The pilgrimage to Santiago is the most outstanding and most profoundly experienced religious phenomenon of the Middle Ages, a fact that was recently recognized by the European Parliament, which designated the Way the First European Cultural Itinerary, and by UNESCO, which declared it a World Heritage route. Today, thousands of Camino de Santiago walkers follow the same pilgrimage each year in an effort to find their own version of peace in the context of a very rich history.

Another common theme among the trails was funding. Some of the represented trails were wholly funded by federal dollars as the trails are actively managed by government agencies. Trails in Great Britain, like the Costwold Trail that Tim Lidstone-Scott represented, is an example of one such trail. Tim was keen to understand the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's role and the volunteers' role in trail maintenance and

trail community members interested in converting their homes into lodging for hikers. Funding also supported the actual renovation costs for interested residents. The gradual rise of ecotourism as a post-conflict recreational industry in Lebanon intrigued Karim and his colleagues. Beginning in 2001, they began thinking of ways to help develop local ecotourism products in Lebanon, focusing on the Batroun region. The Lebanon Mountain Trail was inspired by the Appalachian Trail, and our very own former executive director, Dave Startzell, has been an important mentor for the development of the trail in Lebanon. In fact, I learned from several trail representatives at the conference that the model of the A.T. was shared by Dave in trips to the Bruce Trail in Canada and the trails of Great Britain.

Before the end of the conference participants were invited to join the 2011 Jeju Olle Walking Festival. The theme of the festival was Discover Love on the trail. The second annual Jeju Olle Walking Festival was all about love and attracted visitors from around Jeju and nearby Asian countries to join the international trail representatives. The experience reminded me of the famous A.T. festival in Damascus, Virginia where hikers descend on the area to celebrate connections made on the Trail and share the passion for the experience the Trail offers to everyone. Jeju Olle festival planners were trying to show traditional Jeju style to visitors. There was traditional food prepared by local residents with an emphasis on locally harvested vegetables, seafood, and meat. Festival organizers were "dreaming about the festival, and all the village people are in the festival; and that would be wonderful" said Lee Jae Ha. "If this festival is successful and lasts until the next generation that means the next generation will get more benefit. This does not mean economic things; they will get more experience. We should meet more people from everywhere."

Certainly the next generation will experience a world that in many ways is much smaller than the one we are living in due to new technologies and the ability to easily travel to small corners of the planet. The downside of this transition is the risk of losing the character, the natural and cultural heritage, and uniqueness of our special places. The promise of our international network of trails is our collective work to value and conserve unique experiences, and to put those opportunities out there for the next generation of explorers seeking experiences that ground their lives, remind them of the diversity of cultures and natural areas that enrich all of our lives, and hopefully, just hopefully, inspires that walker and hiker to support our work to manage and protect these special places. Trail organizations working together at some global scale create a lot of leverage to be heard. This network also offers the opportunity to learn from one another, to share unique cultural viewpoints. In many ways, it's these diverse networks that help us see the world in a clearer way and to develop our paths, personally and professionally, with fresh perspectives. ▲

To learn more about the World Trail Conference and the World Trail Network visit: [www.worldtrail.org](http://www.worldtrail.org).

↓

**TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOGETHER AT SOME GLOBAL SCALE CREATE A LOT OF LEVERAGE TO BE HEARD.**

↑

protection. He offered that a similar model may be needed for the expansive trail system in his country. The financial downturn has taken a hard hit on his economy, as it has in the United States, and nearly 50 percent of his trail funding was in jeopardy. Tim was particularly interested in the economic benefits trails offer to neighboring communities. He hoped that making this case to communities would inspire more active community volunteer projects to manage trail resources. Tim was eager to find a way to convert the emotive value that visitors place on their walk along the Cotswold Trail, and other destination trails, into a literal financial value, manifested in a donation to protect the destination's assets. I suggested to him that the ATC and our partner volunteer clubs and agency partners were also interested in linking the Trail to Trail communities in an effort to develop mutually supportive trail management projects and marketing approaches. Karim El-Jisr shared with us how recent funding for the Lebanon Mountain Trail managing organization has helped them develop projects to support sustainable tourism along this relatively new mountain trail. Funding supported the development of training workshops for

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PHOTO BY JOHN CAMMEROTA

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## *creative* OBSERVATION

Chuck "Guinness" Aldridge is a retired educator and self-taught artist who learned his craft by observation and began painting in earnest following a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail in 2011. His acrylic paintings have allowed him to recreate moments from his time on the Trail. In addition to these Trail glimpses, he has created a series of important venues (hostels, delis, pubs, etc.) he calls, "Just Off the Trail."

"It's understandable that rarely do you find a person with a crystal clear answer for why they are walking the A.T. Reasons vary as much as the people completing the thru-hike," says Chuck. "I suspect that the poet Pablo Neruda might accurately reflect the thru-hiker in the line: 'I stroll along serenely, with my eyes, my shoes, my rage, forgetting everything.'" When asked to explain his own decision to thru-hike the Trail, he says, "the best answer that came to me on the Trail, and remains with me today, is that it was a big adventure." He then pondered, "How do you explain that you're absorbed in assuring yourself that the trees and mountains and streams still exist, and the joy that you find day after day when you find they still do? How do you tell someone that your pulse responds to the rhythm of the Trail? You really can't, so you just hike."

Creek crossing just past Fitzgerald Falls near Greenwood Lake, New York



C. Aldridge  
12

Saddleback Mountain, Maine



Opposite page: Bear Mountain, New York; This page from top: Appalachian Trail Railroad Station just outside Wingate, New York; Spring Creek Bar-B-Q, Monson, Maine. ↗



Above: Matthew "Pyro" and Elizabeth "Blazer" King take a break on Big Cedar Mountain Georgia during their first section hike with their father on the A.T.; Inset: Elizabeth and Matthew on another portion of their initial Georgia hike; Right: Matthew on top of Cheoah Bald, North Carolina, in 2008.

# FINDING TIME

**MY FRIEND KEN HONICK WAS AN ACTIVE** volunteer for the A.T. for many years through his service as a board member and treasurer of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. In the spring of 2007, my conversations with Ken prompted me to ask my then seven-year-old son an unusual question one evening. After I had tucked him into bed, I asked "how would you like to hike the Appalachian Trail with me?" His reply was simple. He said "sure." He had no idea of the magnitude of the challenge that he so quickly accepted. The reason he said yes so quickly is likely due to his love of nature and the environment. Although we had previously spoken of

the A.T. from time to time, I'm certain that my son had no idea that the Trail covered more than 2,000 miles and stretched from Georgia to Maine.

The next morning my son and I were discussing the A.T. at the breakfast table when my daughter (age nine) spoke up and said, "what about me?" While I quickly went through a calculation in my mind of the challenges of backpacking with two young children (versus one), I did not hesitate to reply, "of course you are welcome." Over the next few weeks we discussed plans for hiking in the summer of 2008. I could not yet imagine backpacking with seven- and nine-year-old children. I



**THAT WAS THE PROMISE I MADE TO MY CHILDREN. I TOLD THEM IF THEY WANTED TO CONTINUE HIKING THE TRAIL, I WOULD GET THEM TO MAINE BEFORE THEY FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL.**

thought they needed a year before we undertook such a challenge. As the spring ended, our trip gradually moved up, and we planned to hike five days in the coming July.

On July 19, 2007, my son, my daughter, and I got into my car, we waved goodbye to mom, and we began the nine hour drive from our home in Sarasota, Florida, to Dahlonega, Georgia. We spent the

night at Josh and Leigh's Hiker Hostel and were driven the next morning by Leigh to the forest service road .9 miles from Springer Mountain. We had planned a five-day hike, and we had high hopes of hiking most of Georgia's 80 miles. We quickly learned that wearing a backpack, hiking up and down mountains, and coping with uneven trail caused our actual miles to be far short of the distance we previously thought was possible. After four-and-a-half days we reached Neels Gap, which was 30.5 miles from Springer Mountain.

At Neels Gap, I asked my son and daughter if they wanted to continue hiking the A.T. the following summer. Both said yes, and I began calculating how long it would take us to reach Maine. My daughter



**AS I LOOKED AT MY TRAIL MAP THE SPACE BETWEEN THE SECTION HIKE FLAGS RESEMBLED THE PROGRESS OF A TRAIN BUILDING MOMENTUM AS IT LEFT THE STATION AND HEADED DOWN THE TRACK. WE WERE PICKING UP SPEED AND OUR PROGRESS TO KATAHDIN SEEMED UNSTOPPABLE.**



was entering the fifth grade in the fall. I roughly estimated that if we hiked about 18 days each summer, we could reach Katahdin before my daughter graduated from high school. And that was the promise I made to my children. I told them if they wanted to continue hiking the Trail, I would get them to Maine before they finished high school.

To track our progress toward Maine, I bought the four-foot-long strip map of the A.T., and after every section hike I would add a flag marking our progress. After two summers and three section hikes we had reached Fontana Dam. As I added the new flag to mark our progress my wife looked at the map and said "is that all." It is true that we had only covered two-and-a-half inches of the four feet between Springer Mountain and Mount Katahdin. Yet I had not expected huge mileage gains in the early years. My son and daughter were carrying their own backpacks and gear. We were all sharing one three-person tent, which I carried. I also carried the water filter, stove, all of our food, and often most of our water. Needless to say, my pack was heavy, and my son and daughter's packs were heavy for them.

With each year our progress increased. In 2009 we covered the 257 miles from Fontana Dam to Watauga Lake. In 2010 we covered the 273 miles from Watauga Lake to McAfee Knob. After each section hike I continued to add a flag to the map.

As we prepared for our 2011 hike I looked at the map and focused on our 2011 destination — Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the psychological half way point of the A.T. Once we reached Harpers Ferry, no longer could someone say "is that all." Yet this was also the time that I realized that the map marked more than our progress toward Maine. Due to my promise to get my son and daughter to Katahdin before my daughter finished high school, my A.T. map also marked the remaining time before my daughter would head to college. Now as I looked at my Trail map the space between the section hike flags resembled the progress of a train building momentum as it left the station and headed down the track. We were picking up speed and our progress to Katahdin seemed unstoppable. All of a sudden I realized my daughter's high school graduation seemed way too close. Until this time I had wanted to put miles behind us so we could get to Maine. Now for the first time I saw our progress up the A.T. happening too quickly.

On July 1, 2011, we finished our 2011 section hike when we walked into Harpers Ferry, a day ahead of schedule. Upon our arrival in Harpers Ferry my daughter celebrated reaching another town, my son celebrated backpacking more than 1,000 miles, and I quietly celebrated that one-half of the Trail was still in front of us. ⬆

Opposite page: Cliff "Just Dad" King and his trail-blazing children reach the "half-way" point in 2011; Clockwise from top: Elizabeth enjoying Dismal Falls, Virginia, in 2010; Hiking another section in 2010 near Thomas Knob Shelter, Grayson Highlands, Virginia; The trio at Newfound Gap, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in 2009.



## Appalachian Crayfish

The presence of crayfish in our Appalachian waters verifies that the ecosystem is healthy and balanced. Photo by Fred Graham

**ON A 2003 THRU-HIKE I CLIMBED THE STEEP,** mud-slick ascent of Sarver Ridge and walked along the windy crest that creaked in the haunting, dense fog, half-fallen trees, and large rock piles. With the last vespers of light piercing the mist, everything I passed seemed to look back at me, and I relished the company I would find once I descended the fresh side trail to the new Sarver Hollow Shelter. I arrived at the full shelter, dropped my pack, and grabbed my water bottle.

I eased my bottle into the spring-fed pool and quickly recoiled at the sight of a crustacean in my Appalachian waters. The crawdad scuttled backward and out of sight, and I dunked my bottle as I marveled at my newfound discovery. I had always considered crawfish (also called crayfish) synonymous with the Cajun cuisine of the Mississippi Bayou, but never had imagined they lived in the fresh water springs and rivers of Appalachia.

It was six years after my first Appalachian crawdad sighting until I saw another one on the Trail. It wasn't in the water; instead, it traversed the soaked ground in its mud-cloaked camouflage between the picnic table and Doc Knob Shelter. I almost missed seeing the slow advance of the aptly nicknamed "mudbug," but my hiking partner spied it. Hikers who encounter crayfish along the Trail can be assured that they are a natural and important part of the ecosystem. Since forests along the Appalachian Trail include the headwaters of 64 major watersheds there is ample territory for them to live. The *Cambarus* species is the primary one found in the Appalachian mountains; it is one of more than 350 species in North America, most of which are found in the southeast.

These ten-legged critters are in the same class (*Crustacea*) and order (*Decapoda*) as crabs, shrimp, and lobster — most closely resembling the latter, only

smaller. Crawdads are one to six inches in length and can vary in color and body markings based on the species, subspecies, geographic territory, burrowing instincts, and preferred aquatic habitat: spring, river, pond, lake, swamp, or subterranean waters. Crayfish generally live between two and four years, but may live as many as ten. Female crayfish carry between 20 and 700 eggs during their gestation on the underside of their tails. During this time, female crayfish are referred to as "in berry" since the cluster of eggs looks like a large blackberry. After crayfish are hatched, they stay near the mother for up to four months before becoming independent. As crayfish grow, they must occasionally molt their outgrown shell; this most frequently occurs in the first year of life.

As aquatic fauna, crawdad's feather-like gills facilitate under water breathing, antennae help "taste" the water to sense for food, and the fan-shaped tail is swept underneath it to propel it backward for a quick retreat. Their jointed-legs place them in the phylum *Arthropoda*, and if a hasty retreat should fail resulting in loss of limb, it can be regrown though it may be smaller or misshapen. Crayfish serve as a vital link in the aquatic ecosystem, in part, because their opportunistic feeding habits improve water quality. They dine on most anything, including algae, living and

### CRAYFISH SERVE AS A VITAL LINK IN THE AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM, IN PART, BECAUSE THEIR OPPORTUNISTIC FEEDING HABITS IMPROVE WATER QUALITY.

decaying vegetation, as well as living and dead animals, like worms, small fish, or other crayfish. In turn, they are eaten by a wide array of predators, including large fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Trout, bass, herons, ducks, turtles, water snakes, salamanders, bullfrogs, raccoons, and black bear are among more than 240 wild animals that eat crayfish.

The greatest threat to native crayfish is the disappearance of habitat and competition posed by non-native crayfish species released into their territory. Since Crustacea are sensitive to the presence of metals and pesticides, monitoring crayfish may serve as an early warning indicator of pollution or environmental degradation. The presence of crayfish in our Appalachian waters verifies that the ecosystem is healthy and balanced. The ongoing preservation of the A.T. and its 17,000 streams, 100 rivers, and 75 lakes ensures the enduring haven for this endemic fauna of the Appalachian range. ↗

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# OPEN INVITATION

*A Trail-side town full of homespun goodness and a thriving sense of community.*

TROUTVILLE, VIRGINIA



A mile from where the Trail crosses U.S. Route 11 in central Virginia, one walks into the unique downtown of Troutville and steps back in time. It's easy to imagine that this is the type of place that Earl Shaffer or Gene Espy would have experienced on one of the earliest thru-hikes of the Trail. It has the kind of small town charm that lends the potential for you to know residents on a first name basis during a short stay, and extends an open invitation for hikers to camp in the town's beloved park. It's a community of caring built on people familiar with all their neighbors. The store clerk at the locally-owned market saves a few cartons of farm fresh eggs for regular customers. Residents can easily pop in for a conversation with the mayor, and a civic group plants and tends potted flowers throughout the town.

Just like an old-timey barn raising, the town itself reflects the combined efforts of community members to literally build a five-acre park from the ground up. From clearing the weeds to building swing sets made of art deco lawn furniture, residents invested themselves in revitalizing the vacant land into a kid-friendly park that now has a playground, walking track, basketball and tennis courts, and picnic shelters. Season-

ally, Saturday farmers markets are held in the park, and other special events occur throughout the year. This project organically bubbled up in the community to become the pride of the town and a model of success for what a community-driven vision of the future might be.

Troutville provides an ideal setting for prudent thru-hikers determined to take a town stop for a resupply and shower without the distractions of ubiquitous dining

and indulgences of other Trail towns. Hikers can pick up or post mail, shop at the Thriftway market, shower at the fire station, and grab a bite of dinner off the moderately priced Casual Pom menu at the Pomegranate Restaurant before deciding to camp overnight in the town park or resume walking.

Hikers aren't the only ones who

Clockwise from top: Troutville resident Sybille Nelson sells rhubarb and shallots from her garden at the Farmers Market in the Town Park; A.T. advisory students from Central Academy Middle School display official A.T. Community signs during the presentation of their Trail experiences at the designation ceremony, photos by Len Miller; Art Deco swings are a highlight of the five-acre town park — built by members of the community, photo by Leanna Joyner; Thriftway store owner, Paige Weddle and employee, Margaret Hatcher with the hiking and biking register, photo by Len Miller.



From left: ATC's director of conservation, Laura Belleville, presents an A.T. Community designation sign to Troutville Mayor, Bill Rader, photo by Len Miller; An open door policy at the fire station gives hikers and cyclists on epic journeys the chance to grab a free shower, photo by Leanna Joyner.



enjoy the quaint charm of this town and make the most of the basic necessities clustered around the town's center. Visitors on another epic journey intersect the A.T. in Troutville. The TransAmerica Bike Trail, which connects the coast of Virginia to the coast of Oregon is routed through several communities near or alongside the Trail, and Troutville is one of two communities where the A.T. literally passes within town limits and is inter-

sected by the TransAmerica Trail — Damascus, Virginia is the other. Trail registers at Thriftway and at the park document the travels of both cyclists and hikers in this community aiming to define itself by these types of recreational opportunities. In 2010, the community solidified another outdoor recreation destination with the creation of the Woodpecker Ridge Garden. A series of hawk observation decks, butterfly gardens and interconnected trails are ideal for bird watching and meandering. To formally establish Woodpecker Ridge, a permanent conservation easement was placed on 106 acres within the Appalachian Trail viewshed that ensures the preservation of the landscape appreciated by A.T. hikers today.

## AS A DESIGNATED A.T. COMMUNITY, TROUTVILLE WILL UNDERTAKE THE CREATION OF A SIDE TRAIL FROM ITS TOWN PARK TO THE TRAIL.

too. Other improvements envisioned by the plan include working with state agencies and local jurisdictions to slow traffic on U.S. Route 11, extending sidewalks through the length of the town, and establishing a library. Additionally, the community is working to breathe new life into the former schoolhouse so it can be used as a community center and visitor bureau.

Troutville also became a designated A.T. Community in December 2011 as part of its vision to become a premier destination for outdoor recreation. As a designated A.T. Community, Troutville will undertake the creation of a side trail from its town park to the Trail on the ridge to the southeast of town. In concert with the extended sidewalks,

Extolling the beauty and quality of life found in this relatively rural basin of southern Botetourt County, community members hope to capitalize on these strengths as part of its strategic plan. Focusing on recreation-based tourism, the community intends to draw businesses with an interest in serving the needs of hikers and cyclists, including a diner to serve a breakfast and lunch, which residents can enjoy

this will provide a loop hike for residents and visiting day hikers, as well as other town visitors. The town also plans to work with the A.T. cooperative management partners to enhance the trailhead parking area and kiosk at the southern end of town along Route 11.

Some people who live in Troutville already take advantage of the Trail by running on it in the morning, walking to unwind after a day of work, or connecting with friends in the nearby town of Daleville. To bring greater focus to the Trail as a neighborhood resource, the community is holding the first annual Troutville Trail Days on Friday and Saturday, June 1st and 2nd at the town park. The event will have guided hikes, a children's activity area, "Trail 101" clinics on hiking, live music, and food. As part of the event, on Friday middle school students will be participating in Leave No Trace activities, testing water quality in Buffalo Creek, which runs through the park, and will help lead the recycling efforts for the event.

On September 29, the community will offer a 1.5-mile hike from Daleville to Troutville for A.T. Family Hiking Day. Outdoor activities that day will culminate with a picnic in the park. Visitors to Troutville for any of these grassroots events can expect nothing less than homespun goodness and a thriving sense of community. With recreation and small town charm at its crux, Troutville's future is getting its polish, along with a lot of potted flowers. ♣

Leanna Joyner writes from Asheville, North Carolina: [www.leannajoyner.com](http://www.leannajoyner.com).

### Do you have that perfect photograph of the Appalachian Trail?

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is seeking high-resolution digital images or slides of scenes on the Trail for its 2014 calendar. Each selected image is worth \$200. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2012.



For guidelines visit: [appalachiantrail.org/2014calendar](http://appalachiantrail.org/2014calendar) or send an e-mail with "2014 Guidelines" as the subject line to: [publisher@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:publisher@appalachiantrail.org)



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DON'T MISS THE FUN

## TRAIL DAYS Damascus, Virginia May 18 – 20

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Visit the Appalachian Trail Conservancy booth to show your ATC pride and take part in quizzes, get your temporary ATC tattoo, and win prizes. Presentations will be held by three-time thru-hiker and *A.T. Journeys* contributor Jennifer Pharr Davis and the Trail's legendary, second ever thru-hiker and author of *The Trail of My Life: The Gene Espy Story*, Gene Espy.



Artwork for the 2012 Trail Days logo was submitted by Jennifer Smith's art students from the Damascus Middle School and Holston High School. The chosen logo was designed by Angel Huggins, who is a sophomore at Holston High.



workers stationed at Camp Enotah at Vogel State Park. Vogel State Park and the Walasi-Yi building at Neels Gap, through which the A.T. passes, were also constructed by the CCC men in this era. The Blood Mountain Shelter was transferred to the U.S. Forest Service in a land exchange agreement in 1956. The rooms, windows, and doorways of this rugged stone structure remain unchanged, but modifications to the roof and floor have occurred over the years. The original roof is thought to have been of hand-split wooden shakes, replaced and repaired at different times using a variety of materials. The original dirt and stone floor was im-

proved with concrete and plywood in the 1980s in an attempt to make the shelter cleaner and more comfortable. Unfortunately, the ravages of severe weather and thoughtless people who vandalized and abused the structure took their toll. The solid rock walls remained unaffected on the windblown and rocky summit of Blood Mountain in testament to the craftsmanship of the depression-era workers of the CCC, but the overall condition of the shelter had reached a sorry state, until recently.

renovation. GATC president, Shelley Rose, appointed Gary Monk as project manager aided by a volunteer working group of David Stelts, Roy Stallings, Jerry Seabolt, and Lawson Herron. Because the shelter is located in the Blood Mountain Wilderness, the use of motorized equipment, including power tools and motorized vehicles, is not allowed. As a result, all of the shelter work, including the construction, transportation of building materials, and removal of demolition and construction debris had to be done using non-powered hand tools and pack animals. This is where a mule named Possum enters the story. In the spring and

and replaced with white oak. A new fire retardant roof of cedar shakes was installed with a 20-year warranty. In compliance with USFS directives, no windows or doors were installed, although the frames were replaced. All exposed wood was coated with Australian timber oil. The fireplace was rockedin with native material. Cabin and property owners on the Slaughter Creek Road were notified by the GATC president, Shelley Rose, before the project began. GATC received several emails of support from the cabin owners and several times the cabin owners provided workers with biscuits, jelly, and coffee.

This was cold, difficult, and arduous work for



proved with concrete and plywood in the 1980s in an attempt to make the shelter cleaner and more comfortable. Unfortunately, the ravages of severe weather and thoughtless people who vandalized and abused the structure took their toll. The solid rock walls remained unaffected on the windblown and rocky summit of Blood Mountain in testament to the craftsmanship of the depression-era workers of the CCC, but the overall condition of the shelter had reached a sorry state, until recently.

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC) is pleased to report that the Blood Mountain Shelter has now been restored. After a year and a half of planning and coordination, and a total of 3,217 volunteer hours over 20 months, the restoration was completed in December of 2011. The project began in March 2009 when the GATC was contacted by the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. One year later, in March 2010, the Waterfall Foundation granted the GATC \$51,000 to undertake renovation of the shelter roof. The GATC collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to develop a plan of action, including an evaluation by USFS archeologist Stacy Lundgren, who researched the history of the shelter; and in December of 2010, USFS provided GATC with an approved plan for the

summer of 2011, the GATC and the USFS agreed on all specifications, and bids were invited for construction work and pack animals. The GATC board contracted with Bona Fide Construction of Athens, Georgia, and Packer Dewey Campbell (Possum's owner) of Ellijay, Georgia. During August, the timbers were kiln dried, and in September the pack animal route was reviewed, scouted, photographed, and approved by USFS and GATC.

The on-the-ground work began on September 9 with the clearing of a mule route that put the pack animals on the Slaughter Creek Trail for about a mile and less than 1/8 of mile on the A.T. After 14 days of construction and 32 round trips by the pack animals, the work was complete. These trails and the mule route were then rehabilitated by 32 GATC members and guests. The first pack animal event was conducted on October 24 and the final pack animal event was on December 13, 2011. During all pack animal operations, GATC volunteers were at trail crossings and at the shelter to alert hikers and to ensure safety at the crowded work site. The USFS posted signs closing the shelter to camping during the construction and signs alerting hikers to the use of pack animals during this period.

At the shelter, all wooden materials were removed

the construction personnel, volunteers, the pack animals, and their wranglers. We are happy to report that there were no injuries sustained by wranglers, pack animals, contractors, or volunteers. Volunteer project manager Gary Monk and his team of volunteers, most of whom had not worked around mules and horses before, developed a deep respect for the capabilities of these sturdy animals. Possum and the other mules and horses got the job done while exhibiting unmistakable mule-like characteristics. Gary reports that he learned the hard way how to feed carrots to his mule "Matti" after he got his fingers bitten. He also learned why wranglers and cowboys have to be very stern, when Possum decided to lie down right in the middle of all the other animals and their loads and needed to be "persuaded" to get back to work.

It was a long and complex process and GATC wants to thank everyone who helped make this a successful endeavor. You might want to make the trek up Blood Mountain to see the fine work that was done. All who live in Union County should be proud to have this unique historic structure on the highest point on the A.T. in Georgia as part of our local heritage. ⬆

From far left: Possum the mule; A new fire retardant roof of cedar shakes was installed; Possum, Mattie, and the other mules and horses got the job done while exhibiting unmistakable mule-like characteristics; A carpenter installs a window header. All of the work, including transportation of building materials, and removal of demolition and construction debris had to be done using pack animals; The completed shelter, photo by Gary Monk.

## MUTUAL DETERMINATION

BLOOD MOUNTAIN SHELTER, GEORGIA

**HAVE YOU EVER HIKE**d along the Appalachian Trail to the top of Blood Mountain? If not, you are missing a treat. In addition to the fantastic views and sense of accomplishment for completing the difficult climb, hikers are rewarded with the opportunity to see the historic old Blood Mountain Shelter. The Blood Mountain Shelter was originally constructed from local stone from 1934 to 1935 for the Georgia State Parks system by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

**IT HAS BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR HERE AT THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC)** especially in the area of new corporate partnerships and giving opportunities. Businesses are looking for simple yet innovative ways to support and give back to causes that they care about and that their customers care about. In this case, these causes involve consumers like you. Consumers say that social responsibility remains important to them. Consumers, like you, who choose to make purchases at companies who support causes they care about and who research companies' social responsibility agendas before making these purchases.

To this end, we are excited to announce that we have launched a new program that gives back to the ATC while you sleep! Over the next year, we will be engaging hospitality owners along the Trail in our A.T. Community designated towns and beyond to participate in our "Lodging Give Back Program." The program offers the opportunity for hotels, inns, and bed & breakfasts along the A.T. to donate a portion

of their sales to help support the mission of the ATC. Patrons will have the option to donate a part of their stay to help support the ATC's efforts to conserve the footpath, viewsheds, and environmental and cultural resources along the Appalachian Trail. Christian Asam, president and owner of the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown, West Virginia — located a few miles from Harpers Ferry — stated, "the Bavarian Inn is proud to help support the Appalachian Trail Conservancy by showcasing to our guests our commitment to the protection and preservation of the Appalachian Trail." For more information on the Lodging Give Back program, or if you know of any lodging owners who might be interested in participating, please have them contact me at [amccormick@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:amccormick@appalachiantrail.org) or visit: [appalachiantrail.org/lodginggiveback](http://appalachiantrail.org/lodginggiveback).

Another approach to our corporate partnerships are licensing arrangements that allow manufacturers of outdoor gear, apparel, and the like the opportunity to place our logo on their product and then donate a portion of their sales back to the ATC. While this is not a new

concept, we are excited to announce that Eagles Nest Outfitters (ENO), the Asheville, North Carolina based hammock makers, have unveiled their new ATC-logo hammock — with 100 percent of net proceeds coming back to ATC! Nate Nakaji, marketing manager for ENO said "Everyone at ENO has a genuine passion for the outdoors. [As a] two-time thru-hiker, I wanted to form a partnership with the ATC; and what better way to do so by offering our bestselling hammock and strap. We want as many people possible enjoying and protecting the A.T. while relaxing in the comfort of their ENO hammock. ENO is proud to be a supporter of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy." Additionally, former thru-hiker Joseph "the Yogi Master" Front and ABC/Frontline productions owner recently launched a customizable T-shirt program that not only allows you to create a t-shirt with your favorite A.T. related picture and caption, but, again, allows a portion of sales to come back to the ATC. "Since thru-hiking in 1992, the A.T. has been a large part of my life. I gained so much from that experience, and over the years I have been working with the ATC to try and give back however possible. While at Trail Days last year I was talking to [the ATC's] Laurie Potteiger and other staff at the ATC booth and looking at all the beautiful images that people have from the Trail. I wondered how cool it would be if people could have their favorite images from the Trail on an official ATC-logo shirt. That was the when I realized, that being in the industry, I had the knowledge and contacts that could make such a [product] possible." Be sure to check them out at [appalachiantrail.photo-tee.com](http://appalachiantrail.photo-tee.com) and at our booth at Trail Days in Damascus, Virginia this May. Also, David DunLeavy, wildlife artist and creator of A.T.-inspired t-shirts, is donating a portion of his sales back to the ATC. Watch for new updates to our websites and for a complete listing of products who give back to the ATC through sales at [appalachiantrail.org/shopforatc](http://appalachiantrail.org/shopforatc).

Finally, thank you to all of our corporate partners who support the ATC in a multitude of ways. We look forward to working with you in 2012 and beyond! 🌱

**Amy McCormick** | Assistant Director of Development, Corporate & Foundations



Assistant Director of Development, Corporate & Foundations, Amy McCormick.

To see a complete listing of the ATC corporate partners visit: [appalachiantrail.org/partners](http://appalachiantrail.org/partners).



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| PUBLIC NOTICES

**Hiking Partners**

Hiking partner wanted for **section hike starting at Pearisburg, Virginia** and heading north for nine days, starting May 25. Contact Robert at: [dr\\_pacman@mchsi.com](mailto:dr_pacman@mchsi.com).

Male from the Netherlands, 48, **looking for fellow A.T. hikers to join him in July or August**, for a 14- to 20-day hike. Have done a lot of hiking in Europe and want to visit the A.T. this summer. I hike between 10 to 20 miles a day easily but also enjoy taking it easy and enjoying nature, or visiting a town. I have no preference for what part of the Trail I can join people; any part will do. Contact: [a.vanschaik@shm.nl](mailto:a.vanschaik@shm.nl).

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**In Search of**

Wanted to Buy: **1934 Guide** to the Appalachian Trail in Maine. Contact: [walkinhome1@yahoo.com](mailto:walkinhome1@yahoo.com)

**For Your Information**

The **Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Induction** will be held on June 8 at the historic Allenberry Resort in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. The charter class, inducted in 2011, included six pioneers who brought the Trail from an idea to completion and the first two to hike its 2,000-plus miles from Maine to Georgia in a single year. That class included: Myron Avery, Gene Espy, Ed Garvey, Benton MacKaye, Arthur Perkins, and Earl Shaffer. Five additional Trail pioneers will be inducted as the 2012 class. Mark Wenger, executive director of the

Appalachian Trail Conservancy, will be the featured speaker. Inductees are honored in the Appalachian Trail Museum, in Pine Grove Furnace State Park. For more information visit: [www.atcmuseum.org](http://www.atcmuseum.org).

**Junior Ranger Day** is July 21-22, 2012 at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Kids of all ages are welcome to gather together to learn about the A.T. and how to get out on the Trail by taking part in the Junior Ranger program. Stop by the visitor center to receive a Junior Ranger booklet, complete the activities, and receive a Junior Ranger badge! For more information visit: [appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events).

**Help Wanted**

**Seasonal Positions and Internships** with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

**Seasonal:**

- Boundary Technician

**Internships:**

- Community Outreach Intern
- Membership and Development Intern

For detailed information about individual opportunities and to apply visit: [appalachiantrail.org/jobs](http://appalachiantrail.org/jobs). ↗

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AS I SEE IT |

**ONE CRISP, SUNNY WEEKEND DAY, I DECIDED** to tackle "Nature Deficit Disorder" head on by piling the family into the mini-van and heading up to the north Georgia mountains to the Appalachian Trail. I grew up hiking on the Trail with my dad, so there's no reason my kids shouldn't enjoy the same adventure.

"We've got water, a day pack with snacks — which I'm happy to carry — and a camera. I think we've got everything we need for an easy day hike," I said with confidence, and we were finally underway. There soon followed dissent in the back seat: "Noooo, we watched that last time. It's my turn to pick," said one sibling to the next. Apparently, the movie selection for the car ride was not going smoothly. "When I was a kid, we had to cooperate in the car and count cows or play the license plate alphabet game, or even 20 questions," I said, playing to an audience of sighs and rolling eyes. "Fine, I'll just listen to something much better, if you want to watch that," said sister to brother as she exchanged her in-car audio headsets for her personal ear buds hooked up to a different device. Then there was peace. At least until he unplugged her ear buds for reasons known only to the species of "annoying little brother." My wife soon sorted it all out with great alacrity as I drove blissfully along. It was quiet — all in the backseat ended up watching something on the official in-car screen. But I didn't leave well enough alone and said, "hey, why don't you all skip the movie and look at this beautiful scenery?" Not even an acknowledgement from the crew in TV-land. Maybe kids spend so much time in the car these days shuttling back and forth that this is the sedative we've created for them to deal with it. Or maybe we parents sedate them to sedate ourselves. Who knows?

"OK, we're here," I announced, after we'd traveled the time it takes for one movie and the two arguments that went with it. We got the gear together and headed over to the A.T. My wife took the daypack, fearing I would smash the snacks, and I took the water. "Which way?" asked my daughter when we reached the Trail. "Well, it starts in Georgia and goes all the way to Maine. We're in Georgia; which way do you think we go?" I replied. Why couldn't I just have pointed? "How should I know what state we're in? I've been watching movies," my daughter said. And then a shock came over her face: "We're going all the way to Maine? Today?" "No, that's 2,000 miles and takes several months," I said. "Oooh, we'll miss school," said the son. "Wait," he reconsidered, "that means baseball and swim practice too. Nope, won't work." "I guess we should go north," said my daughter, "which way is that?" Her brother, the Scout, then pointed to the handy compass atop his

aluminum hiking stick. And off they went. We parents trailed behind. It soon turned steep, and my wife said the burn sort of felt like aerobics class. The daypack was passed to me.

We caught up to the kids who were playing in a creek. Their shoes and socks were stacked neatly on a rock. There was great glee; they had cornered a crayfish. We let them play, and I revised my secret plan of reaching Plumorchard Gap Shelter. I had only wanted to make it to there just to see again the special camping place my late father and I had shared. "They're sweet; why don't you take a picture of that?" my wife asked as my son held a crayfish for his sister to name and pet. I would have, but the camera was apparently



still in the car instead of the daypack. I then tried the camera on the cell phone, and it passed for a photo. We kept going on the Trail and took a break for lunch at a scenic over-

## AS WE HEADED BACK DOWN THE ROAD, I GLANCED BACK AND SAW MY DAUGHTER WATCHING THE WILDERNESS OUT THE WINDOW.

look. "Is this what America looked like in 1491?" my daughter asked. There was nothing but rolling forests, slightly speckled with the beginnings of fall foliage as far as the eye could see; there was no sign at all of human activity. "Yes, I suppose this was a lot what it looked like," I said. About that time another hiker passed by. She volunteered to take a picture of the four of us with my cell phone. We then continued hiking, but not much farther realizing it was time to start heading back.

When we reached the car and started the trip home, the kids were quiet. I tilted the rearview mirror a little to see them: one asleep and the other with heavy eyelids. My daughter caught me looking at her, and said, "don't worry, we'll make it to Plumorchard Gap next time." I didn't know she even knew about that place. As we headed back down the road, I glanced back and saw my daughter watching the wilderness out the window. Her grandfather and I had camped along that Trail as had generations and generations before us. As a species and as a family, we suffer when we leave it too far behind. ↗

*John Harrison and his family*  
LIVE IN DUNWOODY, GEORGIA.

"As I See It" is a monthly column from guest contributors representing the full range of the ATC partners, members, and volunteers. To submit a column for consideration, please email [journays@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:journays@appalachiantrail.org) or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.



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MATTHEW AND ELIZABETH KING ON ROUND BALD,  
(NORTH OF CARVERS GAP) TENNESSEE,  
PHOTO BY CLIFFORD KING.