

A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Spring 2015



CELEBRATING 2,000-MILERS

National Forests and the A.T. / A Community Defends Its Landscape
ATC 2015 Biennial Conference



On the Cover:

2014 2,000-miler Sabrina "Cliffwalker" Wright takes on Mount Madison in New Hampshire

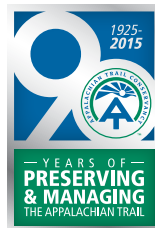
"The day before this we hiked from Mizpah Spring Hut to Madison Spring Hut. As we left the Lakes of Clouds Hut and ascended Mount Washington, the weather turned. About half way up it started hailing sideways," explains Sabrina. "The fog was so thick you could only see about 20 to 40 feet and we had to decide whether the summit buildings or the hut below was closer. We pushed for the summit. The hike was hours above tree line in freezing rain. It was one of my most difficult days. So in this photo, the next morning, I am struggling to regain the optimism that carried me 1,858 miles — it was a turning point for me. I knew the Whites and Maine were physically the most demanding part of the Trail, so the best I could do, the only thing I could do, was keep walking."

Photo by Sabrina's husband and thru-hiking partner Douglas "Stakes" Wright

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A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 11, Number 2
Spring 2015

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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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Growing the ATC Brand at Age 90

LAST MONTH WE BEGAN THE CELEBRATION OF THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Until 2005, we were the Appalachian Trail Conference, and that name represented the history of the volunteer role in constructing and managing the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. That year we changed our identity to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in order to present the organization's role in the long-term protection of the amazing natural and cultural heritage of the A.T. and the surrounding landscape and adjacent communities.

During the past decade we have evolved to assume new responsibilities that include broader constituency building and a focus on resource protection beyond the Trail corridor. However, at our core we are still focused on the ongoing stewardship of the A.T. in partnership with our 31 Trail maintaining clubs, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the states along the Trail.

The ATC is engaged in enhancing its "brand" in ways that enable us to be effective in advancing our new five-year Strategic Plan. I was able to see this happening first-hand in January when I attended the Outdoor Retailer's winter show in Salt Lake City. This is the largest gathering of the outdoor industry in the United States other than the summer version of this same event. The ATC staff, consultants, and our board's marketing and communications chair, Betsy Thompson, came to this event with the intention of expanding our corporate partnerships and relationships with outdoor merchandise manufacturers and retailers.

We had many very positive meetings with current corporate partners such as REI, Woolrich, ENO, and Point6, and also talked with a number of other outdoor equipment and clothing manufacturers and retailers. It was exciting to hear the obvious

level of enthusiasm for collaborating with the ATC by these companies. They clearly understand the broad appeal of the Appalachian Trail and the role of the volunteers and Trail clubs in providing a wonderful hiking experience, which is accessible to such a large population in the eastern United States.

Three examples stand out: Woolrich has created a special blanket design for the Appalachian Trail, Continental Divide Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail, with all of the proceeds for the sale of the first 50 of each blanket going to the ATC, Continental Divide Trail Coalition, and the Pacific Crest Trail Association. ENO is marketing a line of its popular hammocks and giving the ATC a generous percentage of the sales receipts. And REI is both a donor and sells a large volume of the ATC's books, maps, and merchandise manufactured by our partners such as Woolrich blankets and ENO hammocks.

This matters not only because it is an important source of revenue for the ATC, but also because it is a clear demonstration of how valued the Appalachian Trail and ATC brands are to consumers and to hikers. This is a tribute to us, but, more importantly, to the amazing army of A.T. volunteers and the 31 Trail maintaining clubs that manage and maintain the world's most popular long-distance hiking trail.

Our staff, Stewardship Council, and Board of Directors are proud to be part of the ATC and to work with this unique and inspiring volunteer corps." ▲

Ronald J. Tipton | Executive Director/CEO
Follow Ron on Twitter at: twitter.com/Ron_Tipton



2014 2,000-Miler Trey "Bikini" Trawick takes a selfie with his hiking pole along the A.T. at Tinker Cliffs in Virginia

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22 Celebrating 2,000-Milers

In 2014, a record number of hikers registered their completion of all 2,189-miles of the A.T. — including section hikers and alternative style thru-hikers.

30 When the Dealing's Done

Last Spring, an aggressive bid to construct a sprawling casino and resort just a stone's throw away from the Trail in New York's Sterling Forest State Park met unexpected resistance from a large community of citizens.

36 Spectacular Terrain

A now protected 6,000-acre parcel of land, just downslope from the A.T. corridor and southeast of the Saddleback Mountain ridgeline in Maine, is the poster child for climate change adaptation, working forest, and multi-use access for recreation.

38 TOUGH LOVE

Since 2001, the volunteer work project known as Hard Core has been notable because it entices current A.T. thru-hikers to take two days off from their long haul to do tough work on the Trail beneath their boots.

| 14 | GUIDED BY A PLAN

The A.T. cuts through eight national forests from Georgia to New Hampshire, making the ATC's involvement in forest planning essential to the protection of the Trail.

Storm clouds and sunbeams over the Blue Ridge Parkway in Nantahala National Forest — by Jerry Greer



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ATC and *A Walk in the Woods*; Thru-hiker Registration Proves Popular; New Official Trail Length

42 | ATC PROFILES

Terry Lierman leverages his professional experience and his natural talent for bringing influential people together to benefit the A.T.

44 | TRAIL STORIES

A Trail enthusiast finds inspiration, receives an on-line hiking education, and makes a new friend while following a particularly spirited thru-hiker's blog posts.

46 | ATC 40TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

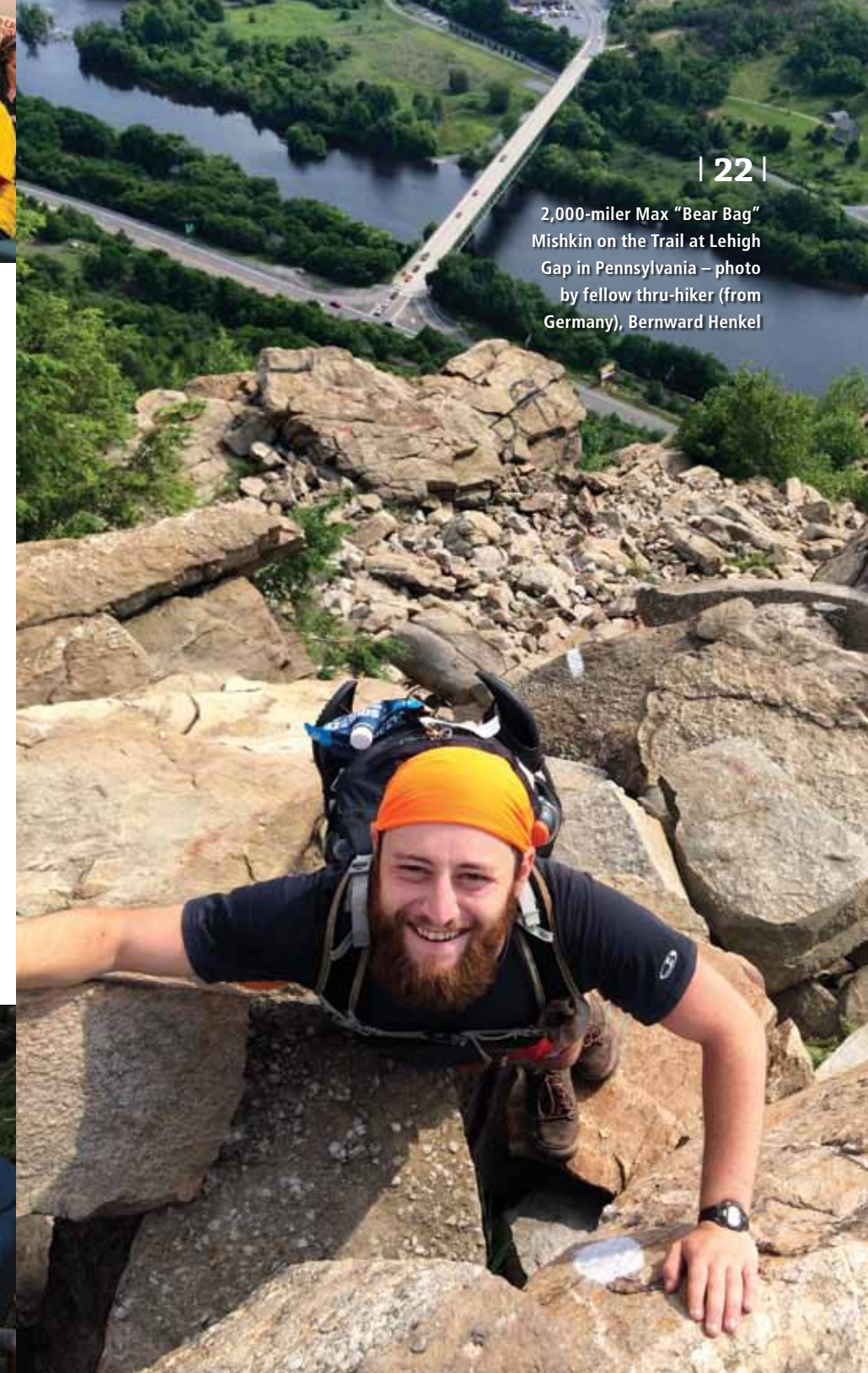
This July, the Shenandoah Valley — with its sweeping natural beauty and deep historical significance — provides the ideal location for workshops, outdoor education, local entertainment, and hikes for A.T. fans of all kinds.

55 | AS I SEE IT

A long-distance section hiker becomes "at home" with herself and learns that less can be more in all areas of her life.



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2,000-miler Max "Bear Bag" Mishkin on the Trail at Lehigh Gap in Pennsylvania — photo by fellow thru-hiker (from Germany), Bernward Henkel



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YOUR FEATURE DISPLAYING Matt Gentry's pencil sketches of his time on the A.T. is outstanding! ("When Time Stands Still" Winter 2015). In this world of universal digitalization, his painstaking impressions harken back to an earlier time, to Whitman and Thoreau and others who took the time to look, consider, and play back their thoughts and senses on paper. I would love to see them all and ponder.

Mike Maffett
LAKE BURTON, GEORGIA

AFTER RECEIVING THE WINTER issue of *A.T. Journeys*, I was glad to see the article on "Flip-Flopping" ("Flip-Flop Kick Off"). Flip-Flopping is a great benefit to Trail maintaining clubs by spreading out the bubbles of hikers (I work with Piedmont A.T. Hikers in southwest Virginia). I was also glad to see that photo of flip-floppers "Phoenix" and "Johnny Appleseed" with whom I hiked in New Hampshire in August 2014. I left them just before Franconia Notch at the threat of a really bad storm, and am happy to see they completed their hike. Many thanks for a great publication!

Ron "Tarheel" Hudnell
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

THE "WILDS OF WINTER HIKING" from the Winter 2015 issue brought a flood of cold memories to me. I started my NOBO thru-hike last year on February 8. I was prepared for the cold and snow but was surprised to be struck so hard by it before getting out of Georgia. On just my fifth day on the Trail, I left Low Gap Shelter in eight inches of snow. The snow had been light on the previous two days but February 13 would prove to be one of the most difficult, exhausting days of my entire thru-hike. I had yet to see another thru-hiker as I left the shelter. I spent the day breaking Trail in driving snow and frigid temperatures. I stumbled, slid, and fell numerous times. I crawled through laurel thickets where branches were weighted down with the heavy wet snow. Knee-deep drifts covered the ridgetops and I searched frantically for white blazes in the frozen white forest, losing the Trail countless times and retracing my tracks to find the

last blaze. After seven hours of this frozen hell, I finally made it to Blue Mountain Shelter only to find it filled with snow. I was wet and cold and the forecast was calling for another foot of mountain snow. I couldn't stay. I pushed on 2.5 more miles to GA 17/75. Totally exhausted, I ran and slid that last 2.5 miles and arrived at the road just before dark. I was picked up by a firefighter from Helen, Georgia who was heading into work early because the weather was expected to be so bad. He told me I was lucky to get there when I did because no one would have crossed that mountain road after dark. I spent the night and dried out in Helen. Fortunately the forecast was wrong and there was no new snow overnight. I was relieved, when I started back on the next morning, to find tracks in the snow. Finally, someone else was breaking Trail. I followed the fresh tracks to Tray Mountain Shelter where I found three other hikers. I was glad to see that there were some other hardy (or crazy) souls out there with me. It was a rough way to start a 2,189-mile journey, but after enduring that first week, the rest was a piece of cake.

Jared "SPARK" Sparks
MARION, VIRGINIA

THE NEW A.T. JOURNEYS FORMAT with [four issues per year] "Four Seasons to love the A.T." is great. The Winter 2015 issue was a fine start. On my 1951 hike, the Damascus Police chief saw me with my backpack and hiking staff and duly asked "What are you doing in Damascus?" When I told him I was hiking the Appalachian Trail the excited chief drove me around, showing me the sights, gave me free food from his restaurant, and put stamps on the picture postcards that he had given me to send out. He even offered the jail for overnight. The postmaster was also friendly and helpful. As time went on it did not take long for Damascus to recognize A.T. hikers and grow into the busy A.T. town with "the Place" and the many Trail-related stores and activities. I have participated in many of the A.T. celebrations. The early parades had no water guns!

Gene Espy
MACON, GEORGIA

I READ SANDRA MARRA'S "Overlook" column [Winter 2015] with some concern. Reading between the lines, I wondered if "volunteer registration systems to manage key bottleneck areas" could potentially lead to a permit system similar to what already exists in Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah national parks. Too many restrictions take away from the freedom and impromptu nature of a hike — whether it be a thru-hike or day hike. I am also holding my breath regarding the movie *A Walk in the Woods* and if it will truly represent the typical Trail experience. Although it has been many years since I read the 1998 book, my primary impression was that my 15-year section hike of the entire Trail was absolutely nothing like what Bill Bryson experienced and wrote about. I was very glad that what I had experienced was more aligned with the dozens of other books and articles I have read about A.T. experiences. For once, I hope Hollywood does not "follow the book precisely" and that Robert Redford will present a more accurate account of the wonderful A.T. experience.

Richard G Gabriel
MARIETTA, GEORGIA

RESPONSE FROM THE ATC: *Our hope is to keep the system voluntary and to keep the A.T. as unregulated as possible, in keeping with the principles by which the A.T. has been managed for decades. The more people who participate in the voluntary registration system, and make an effort to select start dates with fewer people or even choose non-traditional itineraries, the less likely a formal permit system will be considered.*

IN READING THE ARTICLE "Priority Privies" in the Winter 2015 issue, I was reminded of a couple of articles in the ATC's membership magazine from back in the 1980s. The one had to do with some M.I.T. students building a solar outhouse, the purpose of which was, not to warm the structure but to dehydrate the waste. This was to allow for the building not to have to be relocated so often. Technology advances with time and I have no clue as to whether the solar outhouse experiment was successful or not. The other article had to do with



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someone's selection of their ten favorite outhouses on the Trail. This generated many letters from readers agreeing or disagreeing with the writer's selections who offered their "top 10" lists. I always enjoy reading each issue of *A.T. Journeys* as I receive it. Keep up the good work.

Richard B. Lutz
 LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

WE HAVE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS when too many people hike, camp, and use our great natural resources. I hope that thoughtful policy will prevail. I have hiked [in a few of these areas] and noted that where they [encourage itineraries] and limit how many can be in a group helps with the preservation, and the sounds of nature. I am a 60-year-old person who has, like many others, dreamed to one day walk the long path of the A.T. And with some luck and good health I hope to. And I hope that it's not a highway. If it takes limiting the hikers per day or some other method, we need to do so. And I want to thank all of the people who are working on this problem. We cannot stick our heads in the sand.

Daniel Knott
 LAMBERTVILLE, NEW JERSEY

[READING YOUR] MOST RECENT issue (while sitting out a blizzard here in Maine) was most enjoyable. But the picture on page 46 ("One Day at a Time") is not Tuckerman's Ravine, but rather the Great Gulf, a huge glacial ravine anchored by Mount Washington, then ringed by Mount's Jefferson, Adams, and Madison. The A.T. skirts the first two peaks but goes over Madison then down the Osgood and Madison Gulf Trails as it crosses the lower portion of the Great Gulf on its way to the Old Jackson Road and Pinkham Notch. My first visit was in 1956, and it is still, in my view, one of the very special places in the White Mountains. Interestingly, it was the first designated "wild" area, later re-designated as a wilderness area, in the White Mountain National Forest. Thanks for the great magazine and all you do for the Trail.

Ken Gordon
 WINDHAM, MAINE

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

Happy Birthday to one of my favorite organizations and people. Thanks for all you do to preserve the A.T.

Rebecca Harriett

I always experience an uplifting in body, mind, and spirit when out in the wilderness. I come back feeling refreshed and cleansed. I think it's the most natural of scenarios for humans to be immersed in nature — it's what we are hardwired to do. It is our roots, and when we become disconnected from it our soul starves a bit.

Vincent DiCostanzo

Can't imagine our country without the National Parks. In a nation filled with the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life and with all of the problems life brings to the table, it is good to know there is an escape from reality just down the highway — a place where nature provides the entertainment. Teaming wildlife, nature's laboratory of geysers and mineral pools, waterfalls in abundance, and towering trees lining a padded forest. Jagged mountain peaks and deep caverns. A getaway where nothing exist but time and wonder. It saddens me to think these refuges would ever disappear.

Suzanne Grayson-Clarke

Thank you all present and past who have helped maintain the treasure that is the A.T. for all who have hiked it, those who dream of hiking it, and those who are just grateful that it exists — a place of beauty and tranquility in a busy and noisy world. 🌲

Carl DeAndrade

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:
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COMING OUT OF WHAT HAS BEEN A LONG AND SNOWY WINTER, OUR THOUGHTS turn to sunny and warmer days along the Appalachian Trail. After late winter emergency weather alerts by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to those planning a long hike, spring is more than welcome! For hikers it is time to plan both long treks and short outings. For volunteer maintainers it is time to see what the winter has wrought along their sections. The promise of spring helps to renew our energies and our love of the outdoors.


I have to be honest, though, that while the East Coast has been in a deep freeze I was lucky to observe it from a distance. My husband and I spent January through March on a small Island off of Puerto Rico called Culebra. Just seven miles long, it boasts some of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean. It is also home to some lovely coral reefs, which allow for great snorkeling. It's a far cry from the mountains of the Appalachia's — yet my short time here has shown that all caretakers of valuable resources struggle to balance use with protection.

The island depends on tourism; yet as the visitor numbers grow, the impact to the beaches and the reefs are of concern. In addition to increased tourism, the resources are also being impacted by climate change and warming water temperatures. A large swath of the island and coast fall under the protection of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, yet some of the beaches are owned and managed by Culebra and in turn the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. As with the A.T., there is much to do and little money to support the work. The parallels are striking.

So while I have been away I have also been reminded of the challenges facing the ATC and its Trail clubs in maintaining the delicate balance between increasing attention to the A.T. and our brand while recognizing the resource itself requires sensitive management and protection.

This issue of *A.T. Journeys* celebrates those who have completed the Trail in the past year. It is a great accomplishment, which deserves ample acknowledgement — 901 people registered their completion of the A.T. in 2014. We are sure to see at least as many if not more this year. In addition, we continue to prepare for the possibility that after the movie *A Walk in the Woods* is released later this year our 2016 numbers could grow exponentially.

One way we are looking to better manage thru-hikers and overnight sites is through instituting a voluntary registration system that enables hikers to self-disperse their start dates to reduce crowding. This is expected to be especially important at the southern end of the Trail, where thousands of thru-hikers start in March and April. The system also promotes alternative start locations, such as Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, which further disperses use. So far the voluntary registration has received a very positive level of acceptance — as of March 15, more than 1,250 prospective A.T. thru-hikers have participated. A longer-term goal is ensuring that all users learn at least the basics in Leave No Trace principles.

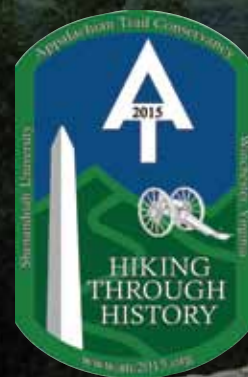
The board and staff of the ATC continue to commit to effective Trail stewardship and protection. "Effective Stewardship" is the first of the five goals in our new Strategic Plan. We also recognize that in order to have the resources necessary to be successful in this endeavor we must continue to build and expand our constituency. By taking a measured and thoughtful approach we believe we can successfully ensure the Trail's relevancy while also protecting its natural and cultural resources as well as the intangible characteristics that draw us all there in the first place. 

Sandra Marra | Chair



2014 2,000-miler Paul "PapaPaul" Eveland takes on Katahdin during his alternative-style "flip flop" hike of the Trail —

by Michael Eveland



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BY JACK IGELMAN

IF ENGAGING IN LENGTHY AND COMPLEX BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES SOUNDS BACKBREAKING, THEN NATIONAL FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING MAY NOT BE FOR YOU. BUT FOR THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY'S (ATC) CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP TEAM, NOTHING COULD BE MORE CRUCIAL FOR THE LONG TERM PROTECTION OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL. "WE WOULD PUT NATIONAL FOREST PLANNING AT THE VERY TOP OF OUR PRIORITY LIST," SAYS THE ATC'S DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION OPERATIONS BOB PROUDMAN. "[LAND MANAGEMENT] PLANS ARE THE WAY WE PROTECT WHAT WE CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR MISSION WITHIN THE NATIONAL FORESTS."

While the Trail itself is a unit of the National Park Service, the national forest system is the Trail's largest land-owner: 45 percent of the Trail cuts through one of eight national forests from the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia to the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. And the strategy for managing each federal forest is dictated by a land management plan that, by law, requires a revision every 15 years and is driven by an elaborate public revision process that is designed to generally take three to four years.

The purpose of a forest plan is strategic, and while it doesn't approve any site-specific projects, it does however, set overarching goals and desired conditions for the well-being of each national forest. Currently there are 127 national forests in the United States and its territories that require a plan. Among those, many are overdue or were delayed as the federal government developed a new planning process. Recently, the George Washington National Forest in Virginia completed a plan revision, and currently underway is a plan revision that manages the Pisgah and the Nantahala national forests in North Carolina.

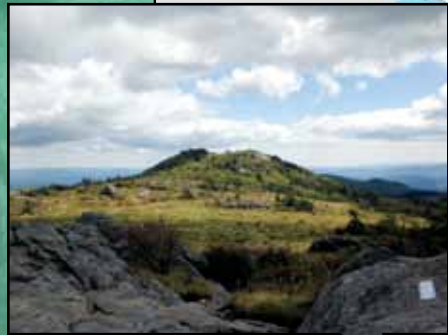
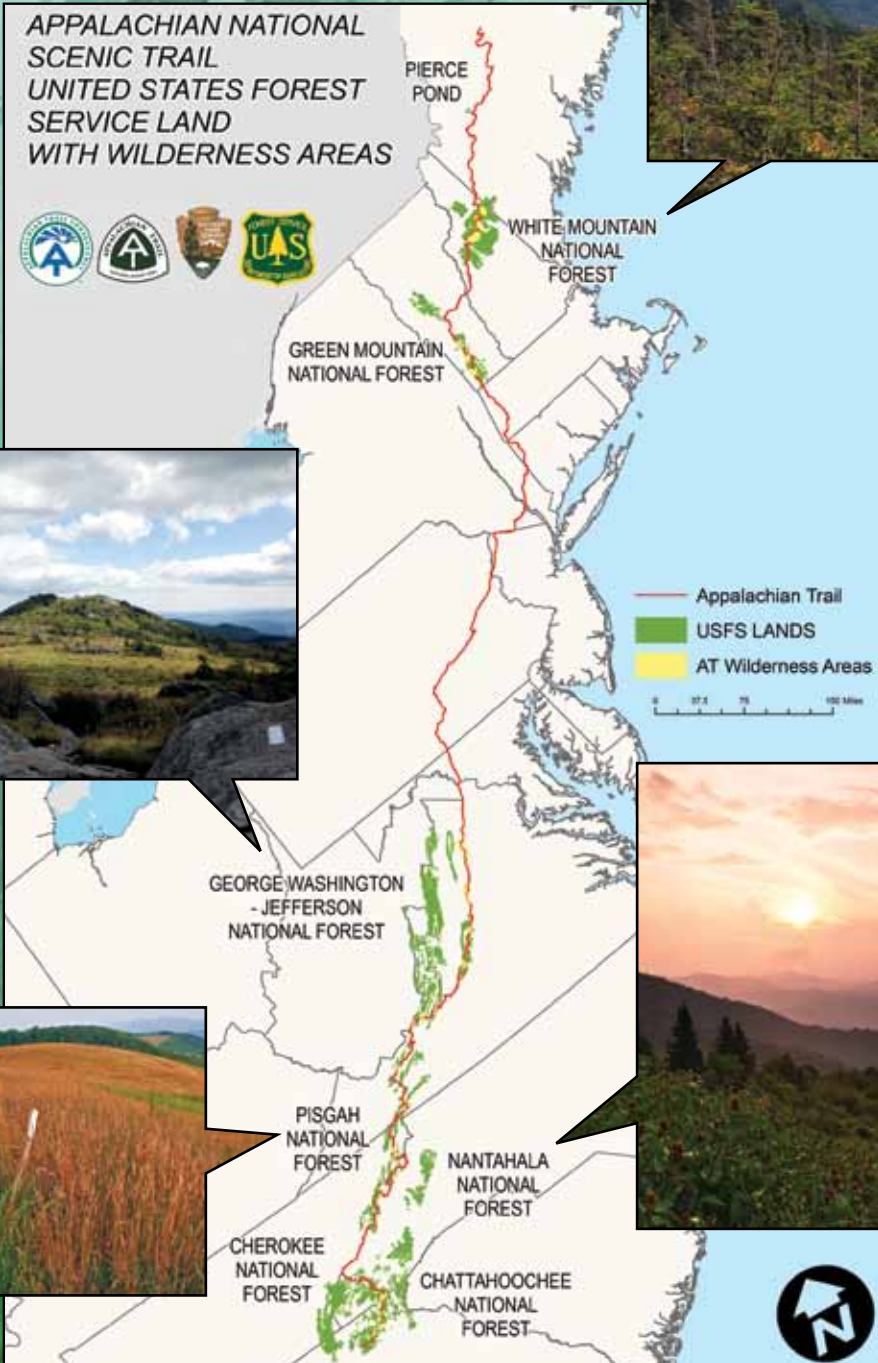
"National Forests are such an important part of the A.T. Landscape," says Laura Belleville, the ATC's director of conservation. "We care about forest planning because it's such a big part of the broader protection [of the A.T. experience]." And since backpacking is just one of dozens of recreational and economic uses allowed in national forests, for A.T. advocates, forest planning is a prime opportunity to share with forest planners the values of one of the nation's most treasured trails. But forest planning hasn't always been open to the public.

Organized in 1905, the U.S. Forest Service was created to manage 21 million acres of forests in the western United States set aside by President Grover Cleveland in 1897. Eventually, the Forest Service turned its attention to the east: the passage of the Weeks Act in 1911 gave the

federal government the ability to purchase private land from willing sellers in order to protect the headwaters of rivers and watersheds.

But until 1976, the public was excluded from participating in the process of deciding when, where and how to manage public forests. The passage of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 became the central legislation governing the management of the nation's public forests and enabled greater environmental protection of public forests through increased citizen and scientist participation by requiring that each national forest be guided by a plan. The legislation also empowered citizen groups and conservation organizations, such as the ATC, to use

Beauty Spot — a treasured portion of the A.T. along the Tennessee/North Carolina border in the Unaka Mountains — is surrounded by Cherokee National Forest lands
— by Jerry Greer



Insets from top: Kinsman Mountain, White Mountain National Forest – by Laurie Potteiger; A.T. George Washington National Forest – by Andrew Downs; Sunset over Blue Ridge Parkway — Nantahala National Forest; A.T. Max Patch, Pisgah National Forest. This page: A.T. Unaka Mountain, Cherokee National Forest – photos by Jerry Greer.

forest plans as a means to influence policy, which can include logging practices, recreational uses, and other resource-harvesting practices.

The ATC’s southern regional director Morgan Sommerville says the ATC has been participating in forest policy in one form or another since 1925, when the Appalachian Trail Conference was established and whose executive committee included Forest Service representatives. But nearly a century later, the threats to the Trail are different and safeguarding the A.T. experience for hikers more challenging.

“Since the Trail is so long and skinny, we’re very vulnerable to external threats,” explains Proudman. “For us, protecting the experience is critical.” That means regulating impacts from other uses of the national forests — such as timber harvesting projects that may impact the viewshed, energy infrastructure projects, related road building, or protecting the night sky from light pollution.

For example, the ATC’s New England Regional director Hawk Metheny says they appealed the Deerfield Wind project in Vermont — the first wind project approved within a National Forest. In that case, the ATC withdrew the appeal after the Green Mountain National Forest supervisor agreed to mandate the use of radar-activated lights on the wind turbines that flick on only when aircraft approach. “Forest planning is a very important process; it’s what will hold our standards,” Metheny says, adding that forest planning is the ATC’s opportunity to ensure each forest plan includes clear language regarding potential threats to the A.T.

Metheny participated in the Green Mountain and White Mountain national forest plan revisions in the mid 2000s and was pleased with the outcome, in particular, each plan recognized the Trail corridor as a distinct management area that provides additional protection. The A.T. management area or prescription area may be a mile wide in national forest plans centered on the footpath and zoned for protection or retention as viewed from the Trail using Forest Service scenery management criteria.

While the next forest plan revisions in New England may be more than a decade away, Metheny says the ATC is also looking ahead to other large landscape altering threats, in particular, energy infrastructure. For instance, he points out that future natural gas pipelines serving southern New England will bisect the Trail and may have a scenic impact, require new service roads, or fragment the forest, among other concerns.

While the National Trails System Act provides guidelines and standards to protect the scenic value of the Trail corridor,

the National Forest system has a multi-use mandate, which means it manages the forest for a wide range of uses: from timber harvesting, mining, and a plethora of recreational uses, to snowmobiling and paddling. The mandate makes it difficult to balance the inevitable conflicts among recreational users and economic interests.

Kristen Bail, supervisor of the National Forest’s North Carolina office, which manages the four national forests in the state, is overseeing the Pisgah-Nantahala revision that is slated to be completed in late 2016. The Pisgah and Nantahala forests management plan are among eight national forests to implement new planning guidelines, known as the “2012 planning rule,” that will govern the process. Bail said that there are two pillars of the revision process directed by the new guidelines: collaboration with users of the forest and using the best available science.

“WE CARE ABOUT FOREST PLANNING BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A BIG PART OF THE BROADER PROTECTION OF THE A.T. EXPERIENCE.”

“That’s the difficult balance,” Bail says, pointing out that what the public wants and the best-available scientific information may not necessarily align. Nevertheless, she said the Forest Service wants to be responsive to the intent of the public. “Allowing folks to engage with each other enriches the conversations,” she said.

Sommerville is paying especially close attention to the management plan revision process on western North Carolina’s 1.1 million acres of national forest that are home to 239.6 miles of the Trail and some of the A.T.’s most beloved sections — including the Roan Highlands. And three decades ago, the last round of national forest planning in North Carolina wasn’t so smooth.

In the late 1980s, citizen groups mobilized in droves across western North Carolina to respond to what they felt was a wrongheaded forest plan that called for extensive clear-cutting and mineral exploration. Fueled by widespread opposition to an early draft of the plan, a grassroots effort by citizen groups led to an appeal and a major overhaul of the original Pisgah-Nantahala land management plan. The resulting plan, finalized in 1994, was considered one of the most environmentally sensitive management plans in the nation.

Recently, planners were reminded of the discord that can occur in forest planning, when a draft land management area proposed by the Forest Service in the fall of 2014 raised the ire of environmental advocates who are concerned that the proposal, if implemented, would open ecologically sensitive areas to timber harvesting and road building. Sommerville has stayed abreast of the concerns, but says that the ATC stays focused on issues that directly impact the A.T. specifically, rather than commenting on forest planning as a whole.

Continued on page 54

| TRAILHEAD |

EARLY MORNING ON JO MARY LAKE, MAINE – BY GERARD “JURY DUTY” CASEY

New Official Length of the A.T.

Re-measurements and relocations of the Appalachian Trail have brought the total official mileage of the footpath to 2,189.2 miles, an increase of 3.9 miles from last year’s mileage of 2,185.3. This mileage is carefully documented in the Trail’s official guidebooks, which include the *Appalachian Trail Data Book* and the *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers’ Companion*. Both books are published by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC).

Every year, the latest mileage and shelter information is updated through volunteers who are constantly working to improve the Trail, with volunteer Daniel D. Chazin of Teaneck, New Jersey leading the efforts since 1983. This year, more than half of the changes in the mileage are in southwest Virginia, with two miles added to the total following a re-measurement by volunteers.

Increases were also reported in New York and New Jersey (0.1 mile); central Virginia (0.1 mile); Tennessee-North Carolina (1.5 miles); and North Carolina-Georgia (0.2 mile). “The ATC’s guidebooks are invaluable planning resources for any Appalachian Trail hiker, whether they are out for a day hike or hiking the entire length from Maine to Georgia,” explains the ATC’s information services manager, Laurie Potteiger. “These guides contain the latest information from volunteers who measure, maintain and manage the Trail and those who hike it regularly.”

Current editions of official A.T. guidebooks and maps are available from the Ultimate A.T. Store at: atctrailstore.org or by calling 1-888-287-8673

License Plates Generate Record Funds in Virginia

A RECORD AMOUNT OF FUNDS GENERATED FROM SALES OF THE VIRGINIA A.T. specialty license plate have been applied to the protection and stewardship of the Trail in Virginia. The \$45,000 generated enabled the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to fund numerous projects including open area management in Shenandoah National Park, Trail construction projects with the Konnarock Trail Crew program, outreach to young people throughout the state, and the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club’s efforts to replace a critical bridge in southwest Virginia.

“While it’s no silver bullet to the vast array of challenges facing the Appalachian Trail, license plate funds are a critical part of Trail stewardship and allow us to empower our volunteers and engage Virginia’s communities in protecting the Trail and the Trail experience,” said Andrew Downs, the ATC’s central and southwest Virginia regional director. “Along with an Appalachian Trail Conservancy membership, owning an A.T. license plate is an excellent way to directly turn your contribution into improvements that can be seen first-hand on the Trail. If you’d like to see license plate funds at work, visit the new sections of the Appalachian Trail at Thunder Ridge, or visit a meadow in Shenandoah National Park and see the great work the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is doing.”

Funds generated by the Virginia A.T. specialty license plate were applied to Trail projects by the ATC’s Central and Southwest Virginia Regional Office in Roanoke in cooperation with a task force from the eight official Trail maintaining clubs in the state. “The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club was quite delighted to receive funds that enabled the clearing of several large pastures that preserve the Trail viewshed and that also assisted in reducing the spread of highly invasive vegetation,” said Potomac Appalachian Trail Club president, John Hedrick, emphasizing the critical support that the A.T. specialty license plate program provides to Trail maintaining clubs.

In addition to the A.T. specialty license plate in Virginia, plates are also available in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. Depending on the state, a portion of the cost of each plate (between \$10 and \$20) is returned to the ATC. “I can’t overstate the importance of every hiker becoming a member of the ATC, and every member in Virginia proudly displaying an A.T. license plate,” said Downs. “This form of engagement will help ensure that the A.T. and its natural beauty will be around for our children to enjoy. It’s also a good-looking plate and a great way to make your support for the Trail visible — no wonder it’s gaining popularity!”

For more information about A.T. specialty license plates visit: appalachiantrail.org/plates.



Owning an A.T. license plate is an excellent way to directly turn your contribution into improvements that can be seen first-hand on the Trail.

A Walk in the Woods Presents Big Opportunities and Challenges



Scene from *A Walk in the Woods* — by Frank Masi — image courtesy Sundance Institute

WHEN THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY’S (ATC) EXECUTIVE director Ron Tipton attended the premier for *A Walk in the Woods* at the Sundance Film Festival this past January, he felt it was not possible to watch the Robert Redford production without comparing it to “its Pacific Crest Trail counterpart,” *Wild*. “While Redford and his sidekick Nick Nolte (playing book author Bill Bryson and his long-lost high school buddy Stephen Katz) are far removed from Reese Witherspoon, there are important thematic connections that make *A Walk in the Woods* very special in its own way,” says Tipton. This point was driven home during an introduction of the movie by Director Ken Kwapis, who said that the film had three co-stars: Redford, Nolte, and the Appalachian Trail.

Not only does the movie present the experience of hiking the A.T. in a very positive way, the ATC is pleased that it emphasizes proper hiking and backcountry ethics, which are paramount to the Trail’s continued protection and to the unique experience that the 2,189-mile footpath has to offer.

Because the ATC anticipates a major surge in hiker use of the Trail as a result of the movie, we are in the process of creating a comprehensive management plan to preserve the “A.T. experience” over the next several years. In addition to all of our partners along the Trail, the ATC staff has created *A Walk in the Woods* Task Force, led by southern regional director Morgan Sommerville, that will work with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and others among our volunteer leadership on a plan with many features that will engage the public through education and increased resources. As part of this task force, a voluntary thru-hike registration system, which will help disperse overnight hikers, especially during early spring at the A.T.’s southern terminus of Springer Mountain, has already been implemented and has received a positive response from the hiking community so far.

The ATC has received Leave No Trace’s Master Educator designation — eight staff members are certified as trainers and two as master educators. In addition to our Leave No Trace certified staff training and our volunteers and Ridge Runners, our goal is also to provide Leave No Trace training courses in communities along the Trail in places like local REI stores. (We hope to partner with REI and other outdoor manufacturers and retailers to implement our strategies for these Trail management initiatives.) The ATC currently has 12 to 15 Ridge Runners and would like to expand that number to 20 by the end of 2015. These on-the-Trail Ridge Runners will be on high alert looking for inexperienced hikers, vandalism, poor Leave No Trace practices, and will also offer educational opportunities for visitors.

The ATC is also working with the film producers to promote the movie and to do so we have assembled a team of experienced staff and volunteers who have worked with similar high-profile events. Redford’s Wildwood Enterprises has a distribution partnership with Broad Green Pictures, a new distribution company that has bought the rights to several major motion pictures recently, including *A Walk in the Woods*. The ATC plans to partner with Wildwood and Broad Green on promotion of the movie because it is a unique opportunity to present the A.T. experience in theaters around the world. “We believe our connection with the movie will result in an increase in members for the ATC, positive exposure for the organization (and our “brand”), Trail clubs, and volunteers. In addition, it will provide major opportunities for us to raise money to manage the expanded use of the entire Trail by long-distance and day-hikers as a result of the film,” says Tipton.

There are important thematic connections that make A Walk in the Woods very special ... This point was driven home during an introduction of the movie by Director Ken Kwapis, who said that the film had three co-stars: Redford, Nolte, and the Appalachian Trail.



From above: Hikers who register will receive an A.T. commemorative thru-hiker hangtag that they can wear on their packs to let others know that they have taken part in helping to protect the Trail; A 2015 thru-hiker who registered with the voluntary system displays his hangtag on Springer Mountain – by Jim Fetig

Voluntary Thru-hike Registration Proves Popular

IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL EXPERIENCE FOR thru-hikers and better manage this natural resource, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), in cooperation with its partners, has launched a new voluntary registration system for those attempting to hike the estimated 2,189-mile-long Trail in one year. This registration system was begun to ease impacts from the increased number of hikers expected after the release of two hiking-related films, *Wild* and *A Walk in the Woods*.

As of March 15, more than 1,250 prospective A.T. thru-hikers have used the ATC's new thru-hike registration system to help disperse overnight hikers during the high-use March/April period at the A.T.'s southern terminus of Springer Mountain, Georgia. We are very pleased to see such a level of acceptance of this system, which allows A.T. users to help solve persistent A.T. management problems in the least impactful way. Hikers who register will also receive an A.T. commemorative thru-hiker hangtag that they can wear on their packs to let others know that they have taken part in helping to protect the Trail through their voluntary registration.

In recent years, the A.T. thru-hike experience has at peak use times suffered severe overcrowding at the southern end of the Trail. Crowding intensifies because hikers tend to start thru-hikes around specific dates, such as March 1, March 15, and April 1 — and on weekends. Overcrowding puts undue pressure on the finite number of shelters and campsites and on the water, plants, and wildlife near these accommodations. When too many people are crammed together at campsites, vegetation is trampled, trash may accumulate, and unsanitary conditions can ensue. Outbreaks of norovirus have occurred several times in the last few years, and can spread rapidly in locations where there are high concentrations of hikers. These issues that arise due to overcrowding can be detrimental not only to the A.T. but also to the hiker's overall experience.

"With a large number of new hikers expected along the Appalachian Trail in 2015 and especially in 2016, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy hopes that this new voluntary thru-hike registration system will allow hikers to know in advance when overcrowding along the Trail will exist, and then adjust a thru-hike start date to their advantage — the solution is simple, the hikers need to spread out," explains Morgan Sommerville, the ATC's southern regional director.

The biggest surprise of the registration system has been the popularity of non-traditional itineraries, often called "flip flops," among the class of 2015. Some hikers may not even be aware that options other than starting at Springer and Katahdin exist. The voluntary registration process itself helps raise awareness of these alternative approaches and provides links to an in-depth page on the ATC's website that explains more about the advantages of these variations.

To date, just under 100 prospective thru-hikers have indicated they would start at a location other than Springer or Katahdin — more than twice the number of those signing up for southbound, and several times more than any previous year. About half of those are choosing to start in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia and hike northbound. A desire to help conserve the Trail is the motivation for some; for others it's to avoid the

crowds. Starting mid-Trail also means beginning in easier terrain than at either end of the Trail and allows a longer window to complete a thru-hike, even while waiting for milder weather to start.

The biggest concern we've heard from hikers about the registration is the fear that this system is simply a step toward further regulation and required permits. In fact, it is our hope that the voluntary system will give hikers enough information to allow them to spread out on their own so that regulation is not needed. The A.T. already has successful models for voluntary registration: the Green Mountain Club, Appalachian Mountain Club, and Maine Appalachian Trail Club all have voluntary registration systems for groups in their heavily-used areas.

Users of this voluntary registration system should keep in mind that it does not provide hikers with guaranteed spaces along the A.T. or serve as a substitute for any required permits. At this time, registration is only open for 2015. Registration for 2016 will be available on December 1, 2016. The ATC welcomes your comments and feedback on the 2015 trial process as we expect to provide an improved system for 2016.

For more information, to view updated charts, and to register your thru-hike visit: appalachiantrail.org/thruhikeregistration



The ATC hopes that this new system will allow hikers to know in advance when overcrowding along the Trail will exist, and then adjust a thru-hike start date to their advantage.

Candidates for 2015-2017 ATC Board of Directors

THE SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR THE NEXT TWO-YEAR TERM OF THE Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board of Directors beginning in July 2015 includes six new board members as well as nine returning board members. All positions will be voted upon July 18 during the ATC business meeting at the Biennial Conference membership meeting in Winchester, Virginia.

A nominating committee chaired by member Bob Almand is proposing the following individuals for ATC officer positions: chair, Sandra Marra of Alexandria, Virginia; vice-chair, Greg Winchester of Milton, Georgia; secretary, Elizabeth P. Thompson of Ridgefield, Connecticut; and treasurer, Arthur P. Foley of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Nominated for their first terms on the board in director positions are: Norman Findley of Atlanta, Georgia; Ruben Rosales of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Colleen Peterson of Frostburg, Maryland; Jennifer Pharr Davis of Asheville, North Carolina; Daniel Howe of Raleigh, North Carolina; and John Noll of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Nominated for reelection as directors are: Mary Higley of Naples, Florida and Plymouth, Massachusetts.; Beth Critton, of West Hartford, Connecticut; Edward Guyot of Keene, New Hampshire; Rob Hutchinson of Atlanta, Georgia; Nathaniel Stoddard of Eagle, Colorado.

Leaving the board at the end of this term are Clark Wright (vice-chair) of New Bern, North Carolina; Carrie Rodriguez-Tweeten of Raleigh, North Carolina; Samuel Sarofeen of Auburn, New York; Marcia Fairweather of Silver Spring, Maryland; Terry Lierman of Chevy Chase, Maryland; and Richard Daileader of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Alternate candidates for officer and director positions can be nominated through petitions signed by at least 50 ATC members and sent before June 18 to Executive Director Ron Tipton at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Votes by ATC members must be cast in person at the Biennial Conference membership meeting in Winchester this July.



Tick-Borne Diseases

Ticks, which carry Lyme disease and other serious illnesses, are a risk on any hike. The northeastern United States, from Maryland to Massachusetts, has the highest concentration of reported cases of Lyme disease. Although Lyme disease is the most common, there are six tick-borne illnesses present on the A.T. The characteristic "bull's eye" rash sometimes occurs with Lyme disease,

but not always. Symptoms that may indicate tick-borne illnesses and a need for medical attention include; fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches. Most humans are infected by nymphs, which are about the size of a poppy seed and difficult to see. Check yourself for ticks daily. When hiking in prime tick habitat, (grassy, brushy, or woodland areas) your chances of being bitten by a tick can be decreased by taking these precautions:

Prevention:

- ▶ Use insect repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin
- ▶ Treat clothing with permethrin (kills ticks on contact) / wear light-colored clothing
- ▶ Perform daily tick checks; removing an embedded tick within 24 hours reduces risk of illness

Removing embedded ticks:

- ▶ Use tweezers to grasp tick as close to skin as possible — pull away in an upward motion
- ▶ Disinfect site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide

For more information about tick-borne illnesses and symptoms visit: www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is seeking volunteers to assist with the 2015 Biennial Conference "Hiking Through History," co-hosted by the Potomac

Appalachian Trail Club and the Mountain Club of Maryland. Scheduled for July 17-24 at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia, the conference will feature hikes, workshops, entertainment, and more. Volunteers are needed to lead hikes and excursions, help with registration, provide information to guests, support workshops, promote the conference and assist with parking, camping, and reception coordination.

Volunteer shifts range from four hours to a full day and are open anytime during the week. All volunteers will receive a free T-shirt and are invited to attend a special volunteer appreciation reception on the evening of Tuesday, July 21. "Volunteers have always been critical to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's operations, and this conference is no different," said Steering Committee co-chair Lee Sheaffer. "We are expecting well over 1,200 people to attend, so we need hundreds of volunteers to make the event a success."

The Biennial Conference brings together hikers from across the United States who are passionate about the Appalachian Trail. The event features hundreds of organized hikes on the A.T. and other trails in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Attendees will also have the chance to attend informative workshops and go on a variety of adventure and history excursions. Each evening of the conference includes music by local bands and inspirational presentations on a wide array of topics. ⬆

For more information and to sign up as a volunteer visit: atc2015.org



IN THE PAST YEAR, A RECORD 1,041 2,000-MILER APPLICATIONS

WERE RECEIVED. THE GRAND TOTAL OF COMPLETED HIKES

STANDS AT MORE THAN 15,500.



"FLIP FLOP" THRU-HIKER CHRIS "SIX SLASH" SCHLACK

— BY FINN "POLITICIAN" MELANSON



FROM LEFT: JASMIN AND DERRICK FAUNCE; RYAN MACY;
JOANNE RENFRO, HANNAH ALLEN, AND SARAH STANISHEWSKI

THIS LISTING INCLUDES THOSE WHO HAVE reported hike completions of the entire Appalachian Trail to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) since the last listing in *A.T. Journeys* a year ago. A record number of 1,041 2,000-miler applications (1,041) were received during this 12-month period. Of this year's listing, 901 are from 2014; the rest are from previous years going back to 1973 (there is no time limit on reporting a hike completion). The breakdown of 2,000-milers in 2014 includes 127 section-hikers, 633 northbound thru-hikers, 71 southbound thru-hikers, and 70 alternative-itinerary thru-hikers (those who either started or ended their hikes at a location other than Springer Mountain, Georgia, or Katahdin, Maine).

The smallest category of thru-hikers is also the fastest-growing and has all but caught up with southbound in popularity. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy actively encourages these thru-hikers following alternative itineraries, often known as "flip flops," to help spread out the flow of hikers. Hiking sequences that start mid-trail, heading northbound on the first leg and staying ahead of the "bubble" of the thousands who started in Georgia, are most helpful in reducing crowding. Flip flop thru-hikes are not just good for the Trail; variations can also offer hikers benefits in terms of starting in gentler terrain. If timed right, they can also allow for a longer window of mild weather.

The grand total of 2,000-miler hike completion reports now stands at more than 15,500. The ATC extends a heartfelt thank you to the many dedicated volunteers who did most of the work of processing the 2,000-miler applications, sending out certificates, and compiling this listing.

2014

- Abler Joe | *Yo Joe*
- Abramson Larry | *Low Gear*
- Accomando Katie | *Voodoo*
- Adams Connor | *Wise Guy*
- Adams Gordon C. | *Crazy Chester*
- Adams Steve | *Mighty Blue*
- Agee Gary | *50/50*
- Ahern Devin | *InfraRed*
- Ainscough Darrell | *Darrell*
- Akers Ashley | *Tricks*
- Akers Colton | *Aquaman*
- Akers Emily | *Nails*
- Albert Michael | *Stealth*
- Alford Colby | *Hero*
- Allen Hannah | *Tatiana*
- Alles Zach | *Shaggy Moe*
- Alspach Steve | *Chuckwagon*
- Ambrus Adam | *Ace*
- Ammenheuser Alexandra | *Oops!*
- Andersen Matthew | *Bagger*
- Anderson Cory | *Silver Stag*
- Anderson James D. | *Night Wind*
- Anderson Jeff | *Chef*
- Anderson Meagan | *K-Womp*
- Andrew Adair E | *Bud*
- Annan Richard | *Hawksbill*
- Anthony Travis | *Marathon Man*
- App Lawrence | *App-Man*
- Archer Kaelan | *ramble*
- Armbruster Michele | *Pintsize*
- Armstrong Mark | *Ireland*
- Arndt Alexander | *Odysseus*
- Asplin Amanda | *Pretty Bird*
- Asplin Christopher | *Big Gulp*
- Atkins Thomas | *Sprout*
- Aton Alexis | *Doc*
- Bacon Shareen | *Squirrel*
- Bahnon Bahne | *Mosey*
- Bailey Thomas | *Freerange*
- Baker Alana | *Lotus*
- Baker Lee A. | *Ye Olde C.O.*
- Baker Troy | *Rough Bananas*
- Baldwin Ashli Katniss | *Neverclean (KAT)*
- Ball Anna K. | *Birdy*
- Banjak Carolyn | *Freckles*
- Bareuther Erica | *KOKO*
- Barkell Leland H. | *Forester Gump*
- Barnett Abigail | *Simba*
- Barrett II Thomas H. | *High Loon*

FROM LEFT: SHARON O'HARA; AMANDA SOTO; PHIL AND THEA
HANOOD; ALESSANDRA PISTORE AND TEDESCHI GIANCARLO

■ LIFE MEMBERS / ■ CURRENT MEMBERS / We would like to express our appreciation for those 2,000-milers who have chosen to support the Appalachian Trail as Appalachian Trail Conservancy members.



Barrow Benjamin | *Socrates*
 Barth Joshua | *Ketchup*
 Bartkow Piotr | *Zebra*
 Bartlett Tripp | *Tomahawk*
 Bartmann Simon | *Gargamel*
 Bauter Noah | *Sloth*
 Beatrice Sarah | *Too Long*
 ■ Beauchamp Sue | *Rerun*
 Beaulieu Ryan J. | *Fresh*
 Becker Aaron | *Gilligan*
 Beckett Ellie | *Sparky*
 Bendel Brittany | *Peaches*
 Bennett J. Scott | *Coach*
 Bentley Larry | *Big Mac*
 Benton Ian T. | *Coconut*
 ■ Berbert Rebecca | *Zig Zag*
 Bergstrom Paul | *Sun Bear*
 Bernaiche Nicholas F. | *Alpine Monkey*
 Berry Nigel | *Timeout*
 ■ Berryman Al Aggie | *AI*
 Beyer Thomas | *Geo*
 Bianchi Christopher | *Baguette*
 ■ Bibby Thomas A. | *Mr. Bibby*
 Bickford Robert | *World Star*
 Biggerstaff Gordon | *Celtic*
 Biggerstaff Kate | *Babs Bunny*
 Binder Erik | *Bottle Cap!*
 Bird Tim | *Shakespeare*
 Bison Jacob | *Bison*
 Bispham Jim | *Milky*
 Black Garrett | *Unplugged*
 Blake Erica | *Braveheart*
 Blakeley Justin | *Pine Cone*
 ■ Blevins Haley | *Murphy*
 Blunk Collin | *Teton*
 ■ Bock John | *Bypass*

Bock Melody | *Songbird*
 Boles Matthew | *Cool Breeze*
 Bolstridge April | *Toots*
 Booker, Jr. Donell O. | *MECCA*
 ■ Borden Timothy R. | *Big Spoon*
 Borelli Rita Jett | *Jett Cat*
 Bowe Jack | *Jack Attack*
 Bowman Jordan | *Yo Teach!*
 Branch Andrew | *Spiff*
 ■ Brantley David | *Cabo*
 ■ Braunstein Jessica | *Socs*
 ■ Bredlau Patrick | *R.W.*
 Breinke David | *Problem Bear*
 Brocar Jason | *MAV*
 ■ Brooks Kenneth H. | *Mailman*
 ■ Brown Anne | *Nubbins*
 Brown Caleb | *Thunderfoot*
 ■ Brown Caleb S. | *Green Ghost*
 ■ Brown Ian S.
 ■ Brown Kathryn A. | *Painted Lady*
 ■ Bucklin Stacey | *Stylez*
 Bunting Clint | *Lint*
 ■ Bush Christiana | *Torta-lean-y*
 Bush James | *The Mechanic*
 Bush Paul | *Just Paul*
 Bushnell Alexander | *Waldo*
 Butler Jared | *Tree*
 Byrum Hunter | *Yeti Legs*
 Calkins Matthew | *Flatlander*
 Calloway Joseph | *Lonestrider*
 Campbell Michael | *Midnight Sparkle*
 Canup Elijah | *Impact*
 ■ Cappello Deborah | *Flinch*
 Carey Michael | *Superman*
 Carley Don | *3 Thumbs*
 ■ Carlson Steven | *Just Steven*

Carson Matthew | *Ferris*
 Carter Christopher | *Shea*
 Carter Kayla | *Blossom*
 ■ Casey Gerard | *Jury Duty*
 Cash Caitlyne Presti | *Sweet Puddin'*
 Caskey Brian | *Pooh Bear*
 Casson Kevin | *Cros*
 ■ Cate Tom | *Casper*
 Cathro James | *Caveman*
 Cathro Lindsay | *Lightfoot*
 ■ Chaney Matthew | *Sweet as a Peach*
 ■ Chapoton Dan | *HighLiner*
 Chedsey Meredith | *Blaze*
 Chew Andrew | *Chewy*
 ■ Brown Anne | *Nubbins*
 Chism Jessie | *Safety First*
 Chrobot Benjamin | *Shybear*
 Cintron Sean A. | *The Priest*
 Clark Alora | *Spoons*
 ■ Clarke Key | *Bird Legs*
 ■ Clemmey Lisa A. | *Hobo-Nobo*
 Coate Patricia | *TeaBird*
 ■ Cocherell David | *Doc*
 Cockfield Alexandra | *Baloo*
 Cole Nina | *Hyperbole*
 Collins Tyler | *CLAM*
 Compton Aelin | *Birch*
 ■ Conway Kelly | *Baby Steps*
 Cook Douglas | *Spock*
 Coombs Evan | *Toast*
 Corbitt Christina | *Flea Bag*
 Corcoran Robert XC | *Crow*
 Cordle Nicholas S. | *CHANCE*
 Cordova Josh | *Rocky*
 Cormier Luke | *Monkey*

Cornell Brian | *Knots*
 Cornell Nick | *Top Nach*
 ■ Couzins Jeff | *Simple*
 ■ Cowden Rex | *Willis*
 ■ Cox Amberle A. | *Foxy*
 Cox Gabriel | *XLer8*
 Cox Kimberly | *Firebolt*
 Cox Rachel | *Save the Snails*
 ■ Cox Spencer Wayne | *Deuce*
 Coy Ian | *Timber*
 ■ Chaney Matthew | *Sweet as a Peach*
 Cramer Jeffery J. | *Jeff*
 Craver Ben | *Neon*
 Crosby Jeffrey | *Chainsaw*
 ■ Crowley Casey Timothy | *Rza*
 Crume William Hayden | *Chair*
 Cucciniello Emilio | *Turbo*
 Culhane John
 ■ Culley Eric | *Ajax*
 Cunnington William | *Cornwall*
 ■ Curtis Christopher Scott | *Puzzle & Sidekick the Penguin*
 Cypcar Rebecca | *Persistent*
 Damon Dustin | *Dirt*
 Davenport John | *Spaghetti*
 Davis Christopher | *Boston Chris*
 de Korver Erica Sumo | *the Fire Maiden*
 ■ de Sosa Michael A. | *Mad Jac*
 ■ Deckebach Michael | *Predator*
 ■ Decker Dan | *Walk Worthy*
 DeGregorio David | *Digger*
 Dehnen Tim | *Pocketfive*
 Dempsey Michael Al | *Borland*
 Denny David | *Denny the Kid*
 Denton Jacob | *Blazing Sandals*
 Depenbrock Christopher | *Solitude*

Despres Jack | *Rowdy*
 ■ Dinges Mark I. | *Plantman*
 Diviesti Dean | *Snowbunny*
 ■ Dodds Steve | *MDot*
 Doebly Valerie | *Tenzing*
 ■ Donahoo Rex | *Fifteen*
 ■ Donnelly Matt | *Machine*
 (with Warrior Hike)
 Donoghue Kimberley | *Twist*
 Doucet Kaitlyn | *Hiccup*
 Downey Randolph W. | *ROCK*
 ■ Doyle-Jones Patricia | *Red Robin*
 Drozd Ronald | *Tonto*
 Drzascz Joanna | *Spider*

■ Fernald Alice | *Kozi*
 Fersch Brian D. | *Owl*
 ■ Fetig James | *Sisu*
 Fewtrell Warren | *Swayed*
 Figulski Rob | *Figgy*
 Fincher Curtis | *Smiles*
 Fincher Sable | *Sabertooth Sabe*
 ■ Finn Chelsea | *Canary*
 Finseth Arlen | *Naked Ninja*
 Fisher Emily | *Sunshine*
 Fitzpatrick Eli | *Trudge*
 Fleetwood Sara Gail | *Little Foot*
 ■ Fletcher Charles | *Dean Right Here*
 Fletcher Richard | *Fletch*

Glynn Travis | *Easy Rider*
 Gokey Reed | *Sky Eyes*
 Goodrich A. K. | *Sky Chicken*
 Gordon Glenn | *Thin Mint*
 Goretoy Eduard | *Spiderman*
 Gosiak Andy
 Graff Adam Robert | *Hesychast*
 ■ Graff Christine | *Nepsis*
 ■ Grant Bruce | *Bruce*
 Grant Russell | *3 x 5*
 Grayson Isaac T. | *Hoosier*
 Greene Michael S. | *Grasshopper*
 Grieg Chris | *Long Haul Trucker*
 Grigsby Jessica | *Gia*

■ Harris Travis M. | *Billygoat*
 Harrison Adrian Felix | *Felicit*
 Harver Emma
 Hasenauer William Michael | *Route Step*
 Hatton Dale | *Redleg*
 Hayes Jeffrey G. | *Speedo*
 ■ Hayes Nancy L. | *Grunt*
 ■ Healy Thomas J. | *Toasted Toad*
 Hebert Kevin Abear | *(in the Woods)*
 Heiser Katie | *Trippy*
 ■ Hellewell David | *GOLIATH*
 ■ Helm II Harold H. | *Slomosey*
 ■ Henkel Bernward | *Isnt Black*
 ■ Hennessy Phillip A. | *Happyfeet*



■ Drzymala Chelsea | *Sunrise*
 ■ DuBose Tom | *Taz*
 Dunlap Brandon | *Peaches*
 Dunlevy Sarah E. | *Faith*
 Dwyer Joseph W. | *Ground Score*
 Earl Anthony | *The Greatest of All Time*
 Ebstein Ian | *Swayze*
 Edwards Anthony E. | *Hydro*
 Edwards David | *Trigger*
 Edwards Michael | *The Mad Scientist*
 Ehlers Jule | *Cowboy*
 Ehrgott Cristin | *Dragonborn*
 ■ Elder Linda | *Heartwood*
 Elia Ashlee | *Cheeky Chi*
 Ellis Steven R. | *Journeymen*
 Ellis Thomas | *SABRETOOTH*
 Ellison Kevin | *Sock Fat*
 Epling Muriel | *Nora V.*
 Evans Brett | *Cruise*
 ■ Eveland Paul | *Papapaul*
 Everson Tristan | *Sockless*
 ■ Ewing Charles | *Boomer*
 Farrell Jesse | *Gentle Spirit*
 ■ Farrington Laura | *Navigator*
 Fast Julie Kickapoo | *Pogono*
 ■ Faulk Dianna | *Das Slöth*
 Faunce Derrick | *Gramps*
 Faunce Jasmin | *Grams*
 Feather Marshall | *Mambo #5*
 ■ Felts Kyle | *Kalpaca*
 Feminella Matthew J. | *Red Foot*
 Fenn Maegan | *Sweet Tooth*
 Ferguson Benjamin | *Gargoyle*
 ■ Ferguson Tom | *Caribou*

Flood Kyle | *Macgyver*
 ■ Flynn James | *Solo*
 Flynn Landon C. | *Fruit Punch*
 Flynn Matthew | *Wolf Burger*
 Fogg Neil | *Marathon*
 Foley Erin | *Tigger*
 Forbes Derek | *SPOT*
 Foster Jesse | *Dr. Zoom*
 Fox Corey | *Shaman*
 Frederickson Casey | *Funsie*
 Freehoff Scott | *Baird*
 ■ Friedman Edward M. | *Fast Eddie*
 ■ Frost Dharma | *Raindancer*
 Fullam Tim | *Just Tim*
 Furmanski Elizabeth | *Moose*
 Fussner Isaac | *Bio-Hazard*
 Gale Jacob | *Hiker Monkey*
 Galloway Kevin | *Hummer*
 ■ Gamble Lucy | *Peppa*
 ■ Gardner Guy | *AstroGuy*
 ■ Garrett Darrel W. | *Sore Toe*
 Gasser Thomas | *Chocolate*
 Geer Alexander S. | *okrates*
 Geer Elizabeth Dawn | *Honeybun*
 ■ Gentry Matthew | *Sharpie*
 Gerardot Justin | *Bud*
 Giancarlo Tedeschi | *Italian Stallion*
 Giannis Mark | *Arbor*
 Gieschen, Jr Michael P. | *Rocky*
 ■ Gift Jennifer | *One Day*
 Gilfeather Michael | *Wingin' IT*
 ■ Gilfoy Tom | *Pelican*
 Gilliland Jacob | *Fish*
 Glafcke Andrew T. | *Bamboops*

■ Grimm Pat | *The Machine*
 Groce Matt | *HYDRO*
 Grunke Michael | *Chopsticks*
 Grunstra Timothy | *Timon*
 ■ Guerrero Meghan | *Kid*
 Gwozdek Michael | *Gameshow*
 Hahn Roger | *Deja Vue*
 ■ Haimowitz Jerry | *42*
 ■ Hajduk Greg | *Wiki*
 Halberstadt Anna Ruth | *Purple Blaze*
 ■ Hale Jeffrey | *Lightrning Bolt*
 Hall Charles | *Two Forks*

Henry Megan | *Violet ♥*
 Henschel Kevin | *Seabiscuit*
 Herbert Kathryn | *Mary Poppins*
 ■ Hess Steven | *SherPA*
 Hessel Tolin | *Tinder*
 Hettig Roxanne | *Huffle Puff*
 Hevrin Bill | *Hemlock*
 Hewitt Dylan
 Heying Mark R. | *Cruces*
 Hiatt Cathrine Brown | *Watermelon*
 ■ Hiatt Joseph Harrison | *Bellows*
 Hicks Benjamin | *Happy*

FROM FAR LEFT: CATHERINE HIATT; CHRISTINA MONTELLO; SHAWN OLSAVSKY, THOMAS GASSER, SILVIA KIRCHNER, AND ALLAN OLSAVSKY; JASON BROCAR

■ Hall Ken | *Lighterknot*
 Hall Wayne | *Crinkle root*
 Halterman David | *Liver*
 Hamilton Kaden | *Mother Earth*
 ■ Hammonds Kristo | *The Lion*
 Hamner Jason | *Radagast*
 ■ Hanavan Teri | *Hopper*
 Hancock Erik | *Hard Head*
 ■ Hanood Phillip | *Runaway*
 ■ Harlacher Drew | *Mr. Jingles*
 Harmon Max | *Pan*
 Harps Alex | *Gearhead*
 Harrington Nancy Claire | *Chicklette*
 ■ Harris James R. | *Frog Fellow*

Higginbotham Luke | *Hansel*
 Higginbotham Rachel | *Gretel*
 Hilbrands Catherine | *Tuesday*
 Hill Jim | *Dos Equis*
 Hilla Joshua D. | *Pippin*
 ■ Hines John | *Top O'*
 ■ Hinman Tim | *Lord Willin*
 Hnatow Joel | *Cowboy*
 Hohle Aaron | *Sole Power*
 Holderfield Casey | *Roots*
 Holleman Hank | *Stevie Wander*
 Hollingshead Patricia | *Landslide*
 ■ Holyoke Alban | *Grease*
 Homkes Austin | *Birdman*



- Horton Lucas | *Big Bear*
- Hoskins Dani | *Swiper*
- Houghton Bethany | *Indie*
- Hudetz Naomi | *The Punisher*
- Huebner Wolfgang | *Wogg*
- Hughes Jeffrey | *Legs*
- Hull Christy | *Blood Root*
- Huneycutt Johnny | *Big Daddy*
- Hunt Derrick | *Dunt*
- Hunter-Duvar Josh | *Skippy*
- Hutchinson Keith | *Cheyenne Walking Bird*
- Iannotti Michael | *Lieutenant Dan*
- Inman Matt | *just matt*
- Jackson Alexis | *Flex*
- Jackson Gilliam | *Doyi*
- Jackson Jillian Joy | *Pockets full of Diamonds*
- Jackson Kevin | *Two Pack*
- Jacoby Jeremy | *Knives*
- Jaconetty John | *Gadget*
- James Amy | *Mossy*
- James Charlotte | *Invisible Bear*
- James Jason D. | *Beanhook*
- James Susannah | *Flicka*

- Keener Isaac | *Pilgrim*
- Kegel Christine | *Mononoke*
- Kelley Evan | *The Professor*
- Kelly Matthew | *Chewie*
- Kempnich Shannon | *Princess North Star*
- Keplinger Bryan | *Roc Doc*
- Keul Kris | *Gazzelle*
- Khurana Neha | *Sprout*
- Hunter-Duvar Josh | *Skippy*
- Hutchinson Keith | *Cheyenne Walking Bird*
- Kiel James W. | *Ronin*
- Kiernan Kevin | *WEATHERMAN*
- Kiffney Tom | *Prom Queen*
- Kimberly Chris | *Growler*
- Kinder Becky | *Wilson*
- Kinder Darrell | *Sharkman*
- King Charles | *Shellback*
- King Kyle | *The Hungarian Revolution*
- King Peter C. | *Lucky Pierre*
- Kinnick Michael | *Z*
- Kirchner Silvia | *Cheese*
- Klein Maximilian | *Mad Max*
- Klockenga Nick | *Twizeler*
- Klopfert John | *Lynx*

- Lebrija Alex | *Tex*
- Lecompte Mike | *Scuffy*
- Leffel R. Dawkins | *Walkabout*
- Leighnor Mike | *Ravencloud*
- Lepore Roni | *Ram Sham*
- Leslie Kirk | *Iron Man*
- Lessner Matt | *Reboot*
- Lesswing Frederick | *Gizmo*
- Letellier Jessica L. | *Emerald*
- Levendusky Thomas | *Green-Bean*
- Lewis Jenna | *Sassafras*
- Lim Jhong Hyuck | *Rodeo*
- Lim Jung Y. | *Catch Me If You Can*
- Linder Suzanne | *Dr SML*
- Lipps, Jr. Donald G. | *Bucketlist*
- yes Little Terry | *Canyon Man*
- Liu Daniel | *Cloudwalker*
- Locke III Charles T. | *mOnk*
- Loen Jeffrey S. | *Forty year plan*
- Lorenz Martin | *Alpine Pirate*
- Lottman Sean | *Dingo*
- Luce Megan | *Knee Deep*
- Mackay Jason | *Side Show*
- Mackay Kyle | *Took*
- Macy Ryan | *Treefrog*

- McCabe-Marcell Patrick | *Marshmallow of the Mountain*
- McCallum Jared | *Scout*
- McCarthy Kayla | *Popeye*
- McCarthy Mollie | *Bad Camel*
- McConville Garry | *Naturally Hob*
- McDaniel Eric | *Wanderbus*
- McDevitt Jack | *South Bound (Headin' North!)*
- McDowell Gretchen | *Crabapple*
- McGann Timothy | *Tadhg*
- McGill Colleen | *Holy Mackerel "Mack"*
- McGraph Adama-Malkia | *Wild Child*
- McHenry Erin | *Blazer*
- McKasson Kenton | *Kodiak*
- McKee Ryan D. | *Texaco*
- McKeith Ryan | *Hollywood*
- McKenna Joseph | *Handsome*
- McKeon Jeremy | *Mayonnaise Pockets*
- McKinney John | *Cactus*
- McMahan Linda Elaine | *Moose whisperer*
- McMahon Mitchell | *Snorlax*
- McNealy Maxwell | *Rocksloth*
- McPeak Jay | *Hat Trick*



- Montello Christina | *Frogmonkey*
- Montgomery Jim | *Old Blue*
- Montgomery Rodney | *Rotten*
- Moore Theron | *Thistle*
- Morris Christopher | *Yoda*
- yes Morrison Carl | *Cardinal*
- Morton David | *Ghostbuster*
- Moyer Phillip | *Moses*
- Mraz Curtis | *Fancy Pants*
- Mullen Greg | *Spoonful*
- Mullen Ryan M | *Ryan*
- Munnely Leslie | *Lately*
- Murray Mollie | *Double Dog*
- Murray Zach | *H²O*
- Murray, Jr. Philip | *ONWARD*
- Myers Craig | *G-Pa*
- Nadeau Christopher | *Blue*
- Nagle Lauren | *Rosie*
- Nantz Doug | *Chivo*
- Napolitan Joseph | *Crush*
- Nardella Felicia | *CANADIAAAH!*
- Narron David | *Osprey*
- Naseri Noah | *Botany*
- Neal Brittany | *Rodeo*
- Nelson Christopher | *Uff Da*
- Neufeld Alex | *Frodo*
- Neumann-Chun | *Benjamin Banyan*
- Neumann-Chun | *Nicholas Koko*
- New Ricey Clarkson | *Papapuchi*
- Newman Grant | *Golly Green Giant*
- Newman Matthew D. | *HEET*
- Nichols Grant | *Lucky B*
- Niedenthal Alexis | *Moxie*
- Nitsch Sophia | *Dinosaur*
- Noel Thomas | *Moe*
- Nogly Hubertus | *Running Nose*
- Norton Roger | *Taz*
- Nurse Van Meter Abby | *Spice Kit*
- Nowak Keith | *One-a-Day*
- Nowak Maxwell | *Mad Max*
- Nowatnick III Robert | *Scout*
- Oakes Isobel | *Road Runner*
- O'Brien Stephanie | *Turtle*
- O'Hara Sharon | *Cozy*

- Olsvasky Shawn | *Indiana Jones*
- O'Neil Rachel | *Dairy Queen*
- O'Neill Mark | *Opus*
- Oots Joseph Taylor | *Space Blanket*
- Ordemann Emma | *BEAST*
- Ostovich Jacqueline | *Scout*
- Ouellette Phillip | *Honky*
- Pagonis Dion | *Dion*
- Palmer Charles | *Ground Floor*
- Paquin William
- Paradine David | *INDIANA*
- Parkinson Gary | *AZ Cruiser*
- Partin Danny | *Blueberry Bear*
- Parton Wayne | *Jelly Bean*
- Patton Joseph | *Bearjuice*
- Paul Brandon | *Maverick*
- Pedersen Richard | *Geardog*
- Pendleton Michael T. | *Survivorman*
- Perry Jacqueline | *Gun Powder*
- Perry Stowe | *Flint*
- Pesci Kristopher T | *rue Story*
- Peterson Doug | *Down*
- Peterson Lindsey | *Low*
- Petri Eric | *Pound Puppy*
- Pettifor Joseph | *Union Jack*
- Phillips William M. | *Rumbles*
- Pike Terry | *Thor the Red*
- Pirie Robert E.
- Pistore Alessandra | *Dragon Fly*
- Reinis Dan | *Pumba*
- Reisinger Nan | *Drag'n'fly*
- Renault Tracy | *SaS*
- Renfro Joanne | *Johawk*
- Potter Eugene K. | *S³*
- Poulin Roger | *Ad-Cane*
- Powers Brandon | *Grizzelle*
- Prater Evans | *Jukebox*
- Preiss Ines | *Trail Snail*
- Preller Drew | *BOOTBURNER*
- Price Hannah | *ListeN*
- Prill Andrew C. | *Mr. Truth*
- Pritchard II Robert D. | *Fifer/chester*
- Procopio Dennis | *Mr. Fusion*
- Profit Kristopher | *Motown*
- Prouty Jonny | *Rockman*

- Provencher Jake | *Camel/Bullseye*
- Pruitt Joshua | *Fresh*
- Pruner Marcia K. | *Sweet Peace*
- Pulver Aaron | *Yankee*
- Punch Benjamin | *Jolly*
- Purcell Mark Count | *Daddy*
- Pyle William C. | *Daddy | Long Legs*
- Quesinberry Sam | *Spruce*
- Quinn Tyler | *Thirsty*
- Quitmeyer Henry | *Peg Leg*
- Rakowsky Edward D. | *"D"*
- Randall Christopher | *Quiet Flight*
- Randle James | *Poncho*
- Rapp Jason | *Clifty*

- Robertson Tavis | *Moses*
- Robinson Jared | *Grizzly Grouse*
- Robinson Jim Gray | *Squirrel*
- Robinson Marji | *Flossie*
- Robinson Marty | *Iron Will*
- Rodenhauser Tristan | *Vista*
- Rodriguez Christopher | *Neck Bone*
- Rodriguez Julie | *5Star*
- Rodriguez Melissa | *Da Vinci*
- Romano Jessica | *J-Rex*
- Rombach Milan | *Pyro*
- Rosenbaum Jon | *UPS*
- Rosenberg Michael | *Marathon*
- Roth Ramsay | *Stardust*

FROM FAR LEFT: AKHIL REDDY; ANNE BROWN; JEFF LOEN; ADAIR ANDREW; CHRIS BIANCHI



- Janisko Cheryl | *Movin' On*
- Jaworski Brian | *TRAIN*
- Jeanes Mary | *Soleil*
- Jen Michael | *CAT*
- Jepson Susan | *Preacher*
- Joffrion Susan | *Dallas*
- Johnson Blaize | *Haiku*
- Johnson Christopher
- Johnson Jake | *Professor*
- Johnson Jeffrey | *Baby Steps*
- Johnson Peter | *Samurai*
- Johnson Tom | *Mex B*
- Jones Jacob | *Shakes*
- Jordan Andrea | *Scuttlebutt*
- Josefowski Robert | *Mumbles*
- Joseph Adam T. | *Surge*
- Judy Richard | *Peregrine*
- Kaeck Eloise | *Tailgate*
- Kaltenhauser Benjamin | *Misty Pony*
- Karakowski Tom | *Tom Sawyer*
- Kassay Joe | *Seymour*
- Kee W.J. Wesley | *Outback*

- Klump Jim | *Slim*
- Knighton Christopher | *Junco*
- Knowles Kenneth | *Real Talk*
- Kochetta Nicholas | *Gulliver*
- Koenig Michael | *Go FAR*
- Kool Hannah | *Pockets*
- Koons Larry
- Krosnick Adam | *Sweet Tea*
- Kuehn Dawn Elisha | *Ginger*
- Kuehn Jeremy Paul | *Gilligan*
- Kuhn Jackie | *Left Turn*
- Kuhn Joshua S. | *Trotter*
- Lackey Anna Caitlin | *Rocket Girl*
- Laemmer Volker | *Wild Boar*
- Lakis Maggie
- Lalich Christopher | *Dune*
- Lamar Thaddeus | *No Pants*
- Lambert Timothy | *Captain Rico*
- Langer Philipp | *Pillow*
- Layne Christopher | *Fifty*
- Leach Cathey | *Mama Bear*
- LeBlanc Christopher | *Chickenfat*

- Magee Thomas | *Trip the Light*
- Magerowski Greta | *Early Bird*
- Mahan Gabriel | *Archangel*
- Mahoney Ryan A. | *Chops*
- Mahony Hillary | *Duff*
- Maidment Jonathan | *Money Maker*
- Malagrifa Richard | *Hog Driver*
- Malatia Randall S. | *Sharpknife*
- Malchow Forest | *Slowbro*
- Malchow Ryan | *Slumberjack*
- Maness Merritt S. | *hakin*
- Mangan Peter | *Dependable Pete*
- Manning Daniel | *Handsome Dan*
- Mantay Jonathan | *Pop*
- Martin Terry J. | *Birdman*
- Martin Timothy | *Half Rack*
- Martin II Thomas N. | *White Rabbit*
- Martin, Jr. Kenny | *Kenny*
- Matson James | *Lazor Cat*
- Mawdsley Alan | *Double Nickel*
- Mayer Joachim | *Joe*
- McBride Kelly | *Pocket*

- Meek Benjamin Bengus | *Khan*
- Mendelsohn Loren D. | *The Professor*
- Merchant Rachel | *Bama*
- Merriman Thad | *Lunch*
- Messick John | *Dare Ya*
- Meyer Brandon | *Hotspot*
- Meyer Thomas | *Panzer*
- Michael Nathaniel
- Miklic Michael C. | *Springside*
- Miles Christian | *Vagabond*
- Miller Alex | *Padre*
- Miller Jenna | *Rain*
- Miller Jessica R. | *Dancing Feather*
- Miller Stephen J. | *Nugget*
- Mills Samatha | *Ar□□*
- Mills Wesley | *Cowboy*
- Minnich Christopher | *Studmuffin*
- Mishkin Maximilian | *Bear Bag*
- Mishler Emily J. | *Fiver*
- Missi Rachel | *Ray Charles*
- Mondragon Samantha | *Sweepers*
- Monroe Trevor | *Sharkbait*

Schoff Adam J. | *Aquaman*
 Schreck Rodney J. | *Rodn Real*
 Schreiner Drew | *Juke Box*
 ■ Schroeder Jack | *Tye-Dyed Bandit*
 Schuette Chandler | *Cape*
 Schwing Christopher | *Sandals*
 Scott Jeff
 Scott Laura | *Bugout*
 ■ Scott Monte
 Sease Molly | *Smilie*
 Seifarth Bryan | *Swiper... that sneaky fox*
 Selden April | *Ladybug*
 Sexton Dillon | *Schwepes*
 ■ Shanahan Paul | *Lone Wolf*
 ■ Sharpe Steve | *Not Worthy*
 ■ Sheffer Phyllis | *Saybak*

Soash Douglas | *Toto*
 ■ Soto Amanda | *Pizzazz*
 ■ Sparks Jared | *SPARK*
 Spence Randy | *Ocone*
 Spong Erick | *Ghost*
 Spong, Jr. Robert E. | *Shortcut*
 ■ Springer Robert E. | *Bob*
 Squire James | *Ski*
 ■ St John Mark | *Gandalf*
 ■ Staggs Eli | *Shinbone*
 ■ Stanishevski Sarah | *LYONS*
 Stauffer J. D. | *Moose*
 Steele Ethan H. | *Torch*
 Steeves Christian | *K-Bar*
 Stephansky Ryan | *Mowgli*
 Steuk Katerina | *Wall-E*

Treanor Keith | *Happy Hiker*
 Tresch Bathia | *Swiss Miss*
 Tresch Marco | *Nobody*
 Trevett Martial | *Martial Arts*
 Tsao Craig | *Affirm*
 ■ Tsigounis Mark | *Achilles*
 Tubbesing Carmen | *Pickles (Wees)*
 ■ Tustin RayLynn | *Bluebird*
 ■ Unger Mike | *3D*
 ■ Upcavage Marly | *Joules*
 ■ Stanishevski Sarah | *Chip*
 Upchurch Betty
 Upchurch Jonathan
 Van Keuren Jaime | *19*
 Van Wingerden Robyn | *Dory*
 Vance Mat | *Merical*
 Vanderlinde-Abernathy David | *Croc*

Wells Tom | *Cardioman*
 Wells William | *Cola*
 Wendling Alexandra | *Shrimpette*
 Wersing Elliott E.
 ■ Weschler Matthew | *Hungry Horse*
 Wetherington Eric | *Gumby*
 ■ Whatmoor Scott Dean | *Dos Lekis*
 White Tucker | *Timon*
 Whited Sam | *Thespian*
 Wiant Curtis | *Fireball*
 Wiggans Ethan | *Chip*
 Willette James
 Williams Kyle | *Titan*
 ■ Williams Sam | *Short Haul*
 ■ Williams Scott A. | *Shroomer*
 Williamson Josh | *2 Putt*

Bolster Ellie | *Rigs*
 Boyle Riley | *Wiki*
 ■ Brown Jim | *Tuesday*
 Cloud Destry | *Atreyu*
 Costello Joe | *Pressure "D"*
 Cyr Wayne | *O.S.D.*
 Diamond William | *Slider*
 ■ Dugan Gerald D. | *Sherpa Chief*
 Dzurny Gabriel | *McLOVIN*
 Feider-Sullivan Clayton | *Tugboat*
 ■ Fenik Sharon | *SOHO*
 Gallucci Michael | *Woodrow*
 Gentry Carlie | *Rainbow Braid*
 ■ Giblin Nathan | *Big Yankee*
 Gong Cathy | *Bear*
 Grant Byron Andrew | *Bugaboo*
 Griffith Jr. Thomas B. | *SNO*
 Gunther Michael | *Dirty Rice*
 Hartranf Jonathan R. | *Johnny Blaze*
 Heady John M. | *John & Blue Dog*
 Heinbockel Thomas | *Tarzan*
 Hopkins Scott | *Sweet Brown*
 Howe Will | *Bailer*
 Hughes David | *Candyman*
 ■ Johnson Maggie
 Johnson Matthew | *Cerveza*
 ■ Karst Lisa | *Peru*
 Kellenberg Alex | *Whistler*
 King Jeffrey | *Pivot Dude/Pivot Man*
 Kingsbery Alexander | *Scott Buckeye*
 ■ Kirk Brandon | *Lone Wolf*
 Lehman Nicholas K. | *Pretzel*
 Maney Wil Vinson | *Coon*
 Mason Amy Renee | *Honey Badger*
 Miller Brent Y. Yul | *The Mule*
 ■ Moriarty Nicholas | *Wicked Miner*
 Nelson Eric | *Moto!*
 O'Rourke Cian | *Lucky (Irish)*

Patton III John R. | *Walking Stick*
 Powers Brian | *Frodo*
 Powers Joanne Kay | *Winterborn*
 Price Jared
 Prince Scott | *Sherpa*
 Purvis Josh | *Maverick*
 Quinn Chris | *Sir Stoooge*
 ■ Ratliff Betty J. | *B.J.*
 ■ Ratliff Roger E. | *Ever Ready*
 Rutter David | *BLAST*
 Ryan Jeff
 ■ Sherman Robert | *Twitch/(Twitchy)*
 Siebert Garrett | *White Rushin*
 Smith Joshua Capel | *Milkrun*
 ■ Sobalsky Katie | *Piper*
 Song Ian | *Kiwi*
 Stofko Matthew J. | *Steel Matt*
 Struttman Brent | *Danko*
 Stutterheim Katelyn | *Giggles*
 Tolton Sam | *Bon Air*
 ■ Torrey Raymond J. | *Ramblin Ray*
 VanderEspt Scott | *Hover Job!*
 Wagner Richard | *Rich*
 Weiss Vaughn | *Half-Life*
 Winzler Julie | *GIGS*
 Womack Garrett | *String Bean*

2012-2001

'12 Belcher Carey | *Carry-On*
 '12 Bonham Zach | *Cliff-hanger*
 '12 Claytor Hannah | *Antsy*
 '12 Edwards Kevin | *Polaris*
 ■ Heater Monica L. | *Dimples*
 '12 Horan Ryan | *River*
 '12 Janssen Herma | *Socks*
 '12 Johnson Walt | *Robo Jesus*
 '12 Mann Kelly | *Jo Tink*
 '12 Simms Andrew | *Bootleg*

'11 Bland Gil | *WreckDiver*
 ■ '11 Carlin Tom | *CRUZ Doggie*
 '11 Crites David | *Niners*
 '11 Leighton Keith | *Big Country*
 ■ '11 Purro Christopher | *MOJO*
 '10 Rosengarten David | *Mohawk*
 '09 Cowart Richard Tyler | *Six String*
 '09 Dunlop Matthew A. | *Squatter*
 '09 Iverson Aaron | *Double Bag*
 '09 Jones Dustin | *Son*
 '09 Jumper Laura | *Lulu*
 ■ '09 Platz Adam | *Dinnertime*
 '09 Slay Jon | *Salty*
 '09 Stone Christopher | *Spurrojo*
 '09 Sullivan Anna | *A (of T & A)*
 '09 Sullivan Tomas | *T (of T & A)*
 '09 Troeger Laura | *L-Train*
 '08 Cole Anna Blinn | *Bluebird*
 '08 Cole Garrett | *Buster*
 '08 Hillyer Robert | *No Car*
 '08 Hulsey Jason | *Freestyle*
 '07 Hickenlooper Tom | *Gopher*
 '06 Chambers Jim | *Just Jim*
 ■ '05 Martin A. Dale | *New Heart*
 ■ '04 Aulick JoAnn G. | *Crazy Quiltin' Mama*
 ■ '04 Johnson Alice Knox | *Manic Mama*
 '03 Harwell W. Raleigh | *Space Monkey*
 '02 Chambers Jim | *Just Jim*
 '02 Grosenbeck John | *Turtle*
 ■ '02 Grosenbeck Kerrie | *Willow*
 '02 Howard Peter | *Trail Blazed*
 '01 Pfeifer Teresa | *Bluebird*

1999-1973

'99 Anderson John A. (Jay) | *Dodger*
 '99 Bonder Scott | *Grizwald*
 '99 Broward Benjamin K. | *Gandalf*
 '99 Hedgepeth III Albert William | *Prince Albert*
 ■ '99 Loomis, Jr. Corydon M. | *Beaver 1*
 '99 Moundalexis Nancy | *Natty*
 '98 McElyea Rob | *Faith Walker*
 '98 Popovich Nicole | *Hey Hey Go Away*
 '98 Rock James | *Mountainman*
 '98 Stephens Zach | *Smiley*
 ■ '96 Gentry J. Eril | *Bhoota*
 ■ '94 Crose Hunter | *Hinckley*
 '94 Donley Ross | *Blue Mummy*
 ■ '94 Kerr Loren | *Turtle*
 '91 Borden J. Allen | *Dawg Doc*
 '91 Stein Mitchell | *Maingey Moose*
 '90 Post Tim | *Maine or Bust*
 ■ '89 Piper Robert E. | *The Bellkeeper*
 '88 Foote Theron | *Dudeth*
 '83 Monahan Kevin | *Space*
 '82 Stout David Layton | *Traveler*
 '80 Schwartz Susan E.
 '78 Secrist James | *Jim*
 '76 Gudger David T.
 '76 Wallace Edwin
 ■ '74 Fortunato Donald J.
 ■ '73 Judy Richard | *Peregrine*



Sherman, Jr. | *Henry T. General*
 Shirley Angela E. | *Talkie*
 Shirley Bradford E. | *Walkie*
 Shissler Daniel | *Almost*
 Sicheneder Rachel | *Spike*
 ■ Silberblatt Whitney | *Tip Toe*
 Simondi Delight V. | *Cowgirl*
 ■ Sincell Daniel | *The Nearly-Weds*
 ■ Sincell Shanna | *The Nearly-Weds*
 Siornicki Dean | *Pitstop*
 Sitarski Adam | *Paperweight*
 ■ Sizer II Gary L. | *Green Giant*
 Skelton Caman | *Bones*
 Sklar Emily | *Giggles*
 Slay Kent | *O.K.*
 Slaybaugh Brittany | *Flashlight*
 Smith Andrew | *Finn*
 ■ Smith Andrew Lester | *Racewalker*
 ■ Smith Brooks H. | *Wing It*
 Smith Clayton | *Hunter & the Fat Kids*
 ■ Smith David S. | *ShortStop*
 Smith Elizabeth | *Poho*
 Smith John Paul | *West*
 Smith Kevin | *Smurf*
 Smith Lindsay | *Hunter & the Fat Kids*
 ■ Smith Michael J. | *Eastwood*
 ■ Smith Sam | *Forrest*
 ■ Smith Sean | *Santa*
 Smith Trevor | *Hafftu*
 ■ Snyder Janet K. | *Cherry Cola*
 ■ Snyder Mark K. | *Chasing Cherry Cola*
 Snyder Steven | *Bangarang*

■ Strain Katie | *Cupcake*
 ■ Strout Keith | *DbLR*
 Stutz Ian | *Pneumo*
 Suantika Christine | *Crunchie*
 ■ Sullivan Bradley | *Owlbear*
 ■ Swan Hallie | *Sonic*
 ■ Sweeny Rob | *Bacon Dog*
 Sweitzer David | *Bagheera*
 ■ Swensgard Jesse | *The Viking*
 Taber Louis | *Ground Fault*
 ■ Tamsen Dustin V. | *Fuji*
 ■ Tandy III Thomas K. | *TK*
 Tate Hunter | *Hot Sauce*
 Taylor Jesse M. | *"Iron Chef"*
 Taylor Kasie | *Moxie*
 Teich Greg
 Terry Jay | *Putter*
 ■ Thayer Cecil E. | *Stitch*
 ■ Thill Terry | *Tbird*
 Thomas Christian | *Buddy Backpacker*
 Thomas Dayna | *Chin-Up*
 ■ Thomas Dustan | *Dawg*
 ■ Thomas Eric | *Worldly*
 Thomas Kolton | *Koltrain*
 Thomas Leah | *Stumbles*
 Thomsen Charles F. | *Charlie "T"*
 Thuma Dean | *Roadrunner*
 ■ Thyssen Christopher | *Emperor*
 ■ Tomczyk Thomas | *Laughs a Lot*
 ■ Tomlinson Joan | *Blue Jay*
 Travers Bennett | *Tandem*
 ■ Travers Jerry | *Buzz*
 Trawick Trey | *Bikini Line*

■ Vann Lelia B. | *Princess*
 Varga Balazs | *Figure 8*
 Vargas Joseph C. | *Dr.*
 Vince Jacob | *Brace*
 Vincent Jeffrey | *Lost Boy*
 Voigt Alex | *Paperboy*
 ■ Vuolo John F. | *J5*
 Wadsworth Ian | *Longlashes*
 Waechter Tobias | *Rotmann*
 ■ Wakefield Mark | *The Lorax*
 ■ Walker Jim | *Reset*
 Walters Murphy | *Papa Skwatz*
 ■ Walther Michael David | *Guy on a Buffalo*
 Ward Richard | *42*
 Warners David | *Whiffle*
 ■ Warrington John | *Dreamer*
 ■ Warrington Justin | *Wazi*
 Warzinski Alexander | *Grubnugget*
 Watercutter Neal Winston | *REDHAWK*
 Watson Nicola | *Tesla*
 ■ Watts Randy | *Coach*
 Weaver Luke | *Dr. Hatchet*
 Weber John T. | *Moaglee*
 Weber Marci | *Mariposa*
 Weber Samuel | *Muffin Man*
 Wecht Tyler | *Chinook*
 Wedel Joseph | *Sprinkleburst*
 ■ Weismiller Lisa | *diet coke*
 Weiss Alex B. | *Trademark*
 Weiss Henning | *The Captain*
 Weissman David | *Fifol*
 Weister Jason M. | *Tumbles*

■ Willner Albert S. | *Wingnut*
 Wilson Cody James | *Swash*
 ■ Wilson Judge | *Kentucky*
 ■ Winter Mike | *Cannonball*
 Wolf Eric Papa | *Wolf*
 Wood Chelsea S. | *quirrel*
 ■ Woods Jeremy C. | *RARE BREED*
 Woolf Elizabeth Ann | *Friday XIII*
 Wresilo Gregory J. | *Spirit Hawk of Love*
 Wright Cori | *Raven*
 Wright Douglas | *Stakes*
 ■ Wright Sabrina Rose | *Cliffwalker*
 Yeager Aaron | *Little Spoon*
 Yontz Alex | *Breakfast*
 Young Frank | *Mission*
 ■ Young Pat | *Hudson*
 Zay Chayse | *Science Tooth*
 Zickefoose Kevin | *Fire Bird*
 Ziegler Christopher | *TODD*
 ■ Ziegler Michael J. | *Backstroke*
 Zucconi David G. | *ZooMan*
 Zukas Ethan | *Blood Cookie*
 Zukas Zachary | *The Conductor*
 ■ Zumsteg Elaine Cadigan | *Cadishack*
 ■ Zumwalt James W. | *Ishmael*

2013

■ Annett Taylor | *Yardsale*
 Backus Adam | *Planet*
 ■ Baker Thomas J. | *Radar*
 Barnett Clint | *Howbout...*
 ■ Blemings Ryan | *Echo*
 Blubaum Edgar L. | *Cobweb*

FROM FAR LEFT: JEFF AND CHRIS JOHNSON; A.K. GOODRICH; RODGER POULIN AND RONI LEPORE; CAITLYNNE CASH



WHEN THE DEALING'S DONE

BY RODGER FRIEDMAN

Last spring, one of the world's largest and most aggressive multinational conglomerates tried to win approval to build a sprawling casino on a parcel of land surrounded by New York's Sterling Forest State Park, a stone's throw from the Appalachian Trail. The sponsors rolled into town broadcasting money and inevitability. They met unexpected resistance from a large community of citizens devoted to maintaining the integrity of the forest. Rag-tag and underfunded, this community of volunteers challenged the casino through legal, social, and media channels. By the first day of winter, the casino's bid had failed, its office had closed. Its envoys had been chased away. Here is the story.

Protected waters: 288-acre Sterling Lake is a visual and ecological gem in Sterling Forest State Park – by Michael Adamovic

In the off-year election of 2013, voters in New York approved an amendment to the state's constitution to expand casino gambling. The amendment, enticingly called "the Upstate Gaming and Economic Development Act," invited the gambling industry to establish casinos on non-tribal land, to bring much-needed relief to economically deprived regions of the state. The first four licenses would go to locations upstate, including the desperate Catskills region, where the weedy shells of Borscht Belt resorts lay just outside of boarded-up towns.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo established a Location Selection Board to examine the proposals and mete out the four licenses. Initially, 19 offers in various locations were submitted into competition for the four approvals. When the proposals came in, the most opulent projects were not up in the Catskills, but closer to the city, in relatively affluent Orange County, which is not commonly considered "up-state." The biggest, most expensive, most lavish, and potentially most lucrative proposal came from Malaysia's Genting Group. Genting scouted out a pocket of private land as near to New York City as the new law would permit, just off the New York Thruway, right in the middle of Sterling Forest State Park, in view of the Appalachian Trail.

Genting officers, led by a corporate VP named Christian Goode, rode into the unsuspecting town of Tuxedo in early Spring with basic plans in place for "Sterling Forest Resort," a vast pleasure palace with piercing spires, set off against the backdrop of the abutting forest preserve. Their job was to garner local support (one of the criteria for licensing), to smooth out obstacles, and then to prove to the Selection Board that no other proposal could match their potential for vacuuming up the New York City gambling market.

Perhaps they expected to be greeted as liberators in the little town of Tuxedo. However, after the first special town meeting at the end of April 2014, when Goode revealed the project to local citizens with much razzmatazz, the morning papers reported that "his reception was not exactly warm." Local people who spoke at the meeting "slammed the project," according to the (Middletown) *Times Herald Record*, including one who mourned for the stars he would never again see from his home.

Those grumblings from the crowd at the first town meeting

eventually flowered into a strenuous opposition movement. Tuxedo residents began gathering in neighborhood living rooms, seeking leadership in local neighborhood associations and interest groups such as the Sterling Forest Partnership (a longstanding forest advocacy group). As the meetings gathered mass, they moved from living rooms to larger halls; and the local interest groups formed alliances with regional forces. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) was one of the very first to provide much-needed encouragement and financial assistance to the Sterling Forest Partnership. By late June, a full working coalition had emerged, with the Sterling Forest Partnership, the ATC, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, New Jersey Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the New York New Jersey Trail Conference, Parks & Trails New York, the Palisades Interstate Parks Commission, several locally-focused groups in neighboring counties, and, unofficially, the Open Space Institute (OSI), and Scenic Hudson, Inc.



The casino project would have constructed 1.5-million square feet of commercial space enclosed by Sterling Forest Park, including a seven-story 1,000-room casino-hotel (with spires projecting 218 feet into the sky) and parking for 9,000 vehicles.

COURTING DISASTER

The casino project would have constructed 1.5-million square feet of commercial space enclosed by Sterling Forest Park, including a seven-story 1,000-room casino-hotel (with spires projecting 218 feet into the sky), parking for 9,000 vehicles, which would not have been sufficient for the 7,000,000 projected visitors per year arriving in some 19,000 cars per day. The two-mile traffic jam between the dedicated thruway interchange and the main entrance to the hotel would have sliced across known wildlife migration routes, and would have divided the state park into two separate fragments. The Ramapo Aquifer, with headwaters in Sterling Forest, lay downstream of the project, affecting drinking water for millions as well as wildlife habitat.

Over the summer, Genting cleared several of the hurdles that were part of the selection process. It secured the Tuxedo Town Council's vote of support, it convinced the town council to re-zone the property for gaming, it signed a "host agreement" with the town, and it managed to guide the town through the process of finalizing a scoping document for the environmental review process, deflecting almost every challenge to the draft.

Meanwhile, the Gaming Location Selection Board began to receive mail. Ron Tipton, executive director and CEO of the ATC, sent two vigorous letters to the board spelling out the ATC's dedication to protect the A.T. corridor, as well as the state and federal obligations to preserve the scenic nature of the lands adjacent to the Trail. Tipton's letters were joined by strong statements from Wendy Janssen, superintendent of the National

Parks Service A.T. Park Office, from several other regional and national foundations, including the Linnaean Society of New York, the Senate of the State of New Jersey, and even former New York Governor George Pataki. Several organizations, including the ATC, urged letters from their general membership. The board informed us in response to a Freedom of Information Law query that by December it had received 3,278 letters opposing the Genting casino, and only 150 supporting it, by far the most correspondence of any of the casino proposals.

In response to this unexpected density of opposition, Goode and his PR team scrambled to present the project as though it was sensitive to environmental concerns. With increasing frenzy, the PR pitch shifted emphasis, going so far as to claim positive improvements over existing conditions in Sterling Forest, and enhancements to the state park. "We are committed to building an environmentally sustainable resort that will complement and enhance the surrounding parkland," Goode wrote to Scenic Hudson. "We believe the resort adheres to the spirit of the Highlands Conservation Act by taking all possible measures to preserve the water, forest wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region." Genting arranged formal meetings with the OSI, NRDC, the New York New Jersey Trail Conference, and the New Jersey Highlands Coalition to rehearse this line. Even though none of the targets bought in, Genting re-purposed these meetings, frequently displaying the groups' familiar logos in subsequent public presentations as if they were seals of approval, along with words to the effect of "we based our plans on discussions with NRDC, OSI, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and the New Jersey Highlands Coalition." A real stretch.

PROMISES MADE

From the beginning, the Genting Group established a policy of promising very large sums of money in return for support and advancement. A week before the deadline for the Tuxedo Town Council to vote whether or not to submit a "letter of support" to the Location Selection Board, Goode promised the Town a million-dollar incentive, purportedly to cover the cost of consulting fees; by week's end, the incentive figure had tripled to \$3 million. Over the following weeks, he promised Tuxedo \$50,000,000 off the top if the Sterling Forest site was successfully licensed, and many millions more in tax revenue and material benefits. When a local school budget referendum failed, Genting wrote a "goodwill check" to the school district in the amount of \$340,000 to cover its shortfall. Goode negotiated a deal with the Village of Tuxedo Park (an enclave within the Town of Tuxedo) awarding \$10,000,000 upon licensing in return for a pledge to withhold opposition to the casino during the selection process — not even to support it. Ultimately, he even offered to pay \$450,000,000 to the State of New York in return for a gaming license (more than six times the required fee).

Clearly the wallets were open. (Goode publicly justified these over-the-table payouts as "sharing economic benefits," which, he said, is "respectful and appropriate.") For the purposes of this account, the most significant of these financial rewards was pledged to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC), the bi-state managerial body, created by Governor Theodore Roosevelt in 1900, that oversees Harriman and Sterling Forest state parks, among others. PIPC compliance was a key element in Genting's

THE TWO-MILE TRAFFIC JAM BETWEEN THE THRUWAY INTERCHANGE AND THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE HOTEL WOULD HAVE SLICED ACROSS KNOWN WILDLIFE MIGRATION ROUTES, AND WOULD HAVE DIVIDED THE STATE PARK INTO TWO SEPARATE FRAGMENTS.

scheme, as the casino required building a dedicated exit off the New York Thruway, and that exit would encroach onto a slice of Harriman State Park land, under PIPC's control.

In early June, Goode presented an elaborate 35-page document to PIPC offering to solve practically every lingering problem on the commission's to-do list (improving infrastructure, restoring trails, preserving the archives, maintaining camps, shining up the modest museum at headquarters). He also promised that Genting could provide "general financial support." This "general financial support" was later clarified as a percentage of the casino's earnings, a contribution Genting estimated to amount to \$30,000,000 annually. In return, Goode wanted the PIPC to send a letter of support to the Location Selection Board, and accede to a land swap or provide easement that would permit the thruway interchange plans to go forward.

On September 14, 2014, at the regular meeting of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Genting's momentum crashed. In response to Genting's pleadings and promises, the commission passed a resolution that declared that granting access to PIPC property "is not in accordance with our stewardship mission and the public trust to preserve the scenic beauty, natural resources, and public enjoyment of Sterling Forest and Harriman State Parks." There would be no thruway interchange, and that meant, in effect, there would be no casino.

Goode and his subordinates continued the pursuit, claiming they did not need PIPC's permission, and that they would go ahead with the interchange. If they had, they would have encountered several legal obstacles. Overriding the PIPC resolution would have required acts of legislature in both New York and New Jersey (PIPC is a bi-state agency). Furthermore, PIPC executive director James Hall indicated the possibility of covenants and restrictions in the property deeds that limit commercial construction on the site to less than one tenth the casino's projected 1.5 million square feet. Subsequently, attorneys working with the Sterling Forest Partnership, in



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Sterling Forest State Park comprises 21,935.08 acres of pristine natural refuge and serves as a watershed for millions — the project would have affected drinking water as well as wildlife habitat. Photo by Michael Adamovic



particular Neil Woodworth of the Adirondack Mountain Club, confirmed evidence of the deed restrictions and developed a legal argument for them.

At the end of September, the Location Selection Board held a 12-hour public hearing on the Hudson Valley and Catskill region casino proposals. Any individual could sign up in advance to deliver a four-minute statement to the board. With few exceptions, everyone who addressed the Genting proposal spoke against it, including attorney Albert K. Butzel, who informed the board of the many legal challenges the project would face if it were approved.

Goode and his PR department, however, hatched a stunt to overwhelm the public hearing with a pro-Genting presence. They bussed in hundreds of employees and their families from Genting’s facility in New York City, all dressed in uniform T-shirts emblazoned with pro-casino slogans. None of these interlopers approached the microphone, but they presented a visual message of mass support. The Selection Board was not fooled. When asked about the massive pro-Genting audience, Selection Board chair Kevin Law told a reporter, “We didn’t just fall off a truck yesterday. We sort of know the testimony we are getting from genuine people versus hired guns.”

Stymied by the PIPC, and facing legal obstacles galore, Goode nevertheless steamed ahead. In compliance with New York law, Genting presented a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) to the Tuxedo Town Council, detailing (or more accurately, minimalizing) the consequences of the casino and its traffic on

natural resources and on quality of life in the surrounding area. As if in collusion with the developer, the council opened this nine-pound document to scrutiny and public comment for the briefest period allowed under state statutes. The town council agreed to one public hearing (which extended over two sessions in early December), where expert consultants and lay citizens alike exposed the failings, falsehoods, anomalies, insufficiencies, and shoddy research in the DEIS.

Karen Lutz, the ATC’s Mid-Atlantic regional director, spoke eloquently at the hearing about the protection of the A.T. corridor.

The park’s unbroken deep-forest habitat is important for the survival of many resident and migratory species; A closed sign at the now debunked “Sterling Forest Resort” visitor center — there would be no casino — photos by Rodger Friedman

She reminded the dais of the region’s natural gifts, saying they came as a result of sacrifice, money, and hard work. “Those precious resources did not come without significant investment of public funds required for both the Appalachian Trail corridor and Sterling Forest,” she said. “This proposal would diminish that investment and betray the public trust. This area was given to you as a gift by the hard-fighting advocates ... who ensured the protection of the Appalachian Trail

and Sterling Forest. It seems that you are now willing to gamble that gift away.” Her presence helped demonstrate to the town council that the project before them held national implications, and wasn’t simply a local matter.

Finally, on December 17, 2014, the Location Selection Board announced its findings. Only three of the four licenses would be granted, one to a proposal in the Catskills, one near Albany, and one in the Finger Lakes region. No applicant in Orange County was licensed. From the platform, Kevin Law explained that any casino in Orange County would diminish the chances of success for the Catskill region.

Yet Law elaborated to reporters that some Orange casinos — he didn’t name which — “had legal and environmental issues, as well as local opposition, and that was taken into consideration.”

While Orange County was swept off the table with a stroke, in retrospect we understand that the Sterling Forest casino was the most promising proposal in the pool from a financial perspective, and that the board was charged with making 70 percent of its decision on the basis of economic prospect alone. Had so many people and organizations and environmental agencies not convened to make the choice of Sterling Forest impossible to consider, the board would have had a difficult time justifying its dismissal. “The thing that impressed me the most was the patient vigilance of a passionate, well-educated, and informed group of local citizens who refused to give up the battle to protect the landscape they love. And of course that landscape includes the A.T.,” says the ATC’s Mid-Atlantic regional director Karen Lutz. “[They] were very appreciative of, and grateful for ATC’s investment of time, money, and commitment to help with the fight. This one truly was a David and Goliath story, with an extremely satisfying ending.”



Spectacular TERRAIN

BY WILLIAM L. PLOUFFE AND CLAIRE POLFUS

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL DOES NOT CROSS A SINGLE paved road for more than 30 miles as it climbs over six 4,000-foot mountains, down steep ravines, and across unbridged mountain rivers in western Maine between the towns of Rangeley and Stratton. From the traverse of the Saddleback Range, the broad vistas of the western Maine mountains inspire a thirst for adventure in hardy hikers, but the mountainsides also provide habitat for many of Maine’s most iconic forest species. The area has seen a long history of timber management. Narrow gauge railroads carted off hundreds of trees from remote high elevation camps around the turn of the last century. Today, although the timber industry continues to utilize the forest, the remote camps have faded into the regenerating forest. In 2002, when the majority of the region remained in large private holdings, the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust (MATLT), the land conservation-focused partner of Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club

determined that this section of the A.T. and its environs should be a focus for its land conservation efforts and began to call the area the Maine High Peaks Region. The name stuck and is now used by multiple groups in the area to characterize the region. In 2006, after the success of the ATC and our partners to conserve Mount Abraham, a mountain adjacent to the A.T. with the second largest alpine area in the state, the MATLT commissioned an ecological study of the High Peaks by Peter S. McKinley, Ph.D. The study provided guidance about future conservation goals in the area, where large tracts were changing hands and the future of the vast forests, remote mountains, and important wildlife habitat — all critical to the A.T. experience — was uncertain.

The Orbeton Stream Easement area protects 6,000 acres on the south flank of Saddleback Mountain (shown here), one of the premier alpine ridge hikes in Maine. Photo by Claire Polfus

One of the study’s focus areas was a 6,000-acre parcel of land in Madrid Township, just to the south and east of the Saddleback Mountain ridgeline. A ski resort sits on the northwestern slopes of Saddleback Mountain but the south side of the ridge is remote, forested and accessible only on foot or by a network of logging roads and snowmobile trails. This parcel, just downslope from the A.T. corridor, abuts 1,300 acres owned by MATLT and a smaller parcel owned by the ATC. McKinley named this the Orbeton Stream parcel.

The land is owned by Linkletter Timberlands, LLC, a family business located in Athens, Maine and the majority is actively managed for timber production. Like many timber companies in the state, however, the Linkletter family keeps their property open to outdoor recreation in areas where active logging is not occurring. The entire southern portion of the property is crossed by Maine’s Interconnected Trail System for snowmobiles and the Moose Loop for all-terrain vehicles. A number of foot trails, including the Fly Rod Crosby Trail (the brainchild of MATLT board member Lloyd Griscom, which was named for Maine’s first registered guide), also now traverse the property. In the east, the

parcel is bisected by Orbeton Stream, which was the site of the successful reintroduction of spawning Atlantic Salmon in 2012.

“Plain old vanilla forest” is how McKinley recalls one conservation official referring to the Orbeton Stream parcel. What McKinley saw was nothing of the sort. He saw a landscape that can anticipate climate change, with a diversity of ecological communities along an elevation gradient that range from eastern hardwood forests through the subalpine spruce fir areas and up to the alpine tundra on the area around the Appalachian Trail. In other words, the ecological communities in the Orbeton parcel are already coping with a range of climatic conditions. As the climate changes, it is more likely that areas such as the Orbeton, which already host a diverse range of species and topography, will be able to adapt more quickly than areas without topographic or species diversity. The forests of the Orbeton parcel not only provide habitat for Canada lynx, pine marten, moose, black bear, and countless species of songbirds and birds of prey — they provide an area through which species can migrate in response to the host of climatological changes in our future.

One local landowner McKinley contacted felt the same way. Lloyd Griscom’s family owned a number of properties in Madrid Township, including a few camps within the Orbeton Stream Linkletter parcel. He also lived in on the edge of the Orbeton property, and from his house Griscom would lead McKinley to see some of the undocumented features of the area, like the Orbeton Gorge and the trails leading to the ridges jutting from the Saddleback massif. He also introduced McKinley to Robert

Linkletter. Rather than finding a businessman whose concerns were limited to harvesting, McKinley, himself a former forest products company scientist, was pleased to find an outdoorsman who was intrigued by what McKinley was saying about the forests of Orbeton. He was happy to take McKinley out on the logging roads in his truck to show him the land. He was open to the idea that this land should be conserved.

What McKinley had in mind, based on his field work and data mining, was a different kind of large landscape conservation, one which had its genesis in the stance of Drs. Born and Davis at the Maine Mountain Conference in 1972: the mountain is as much the valley as it is the summit and ridges. It was a conscious effort

IT WAS A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO LOOK BEYOND NOVEL FEATURES LIKE UNHARVESTABLE ALPINE AREAS OR VIEWS FROM SUMMITS... [IT WAS] THE POSTER CHILD FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, WORKING FOREST, AND MULTI-USE ACCESS FOR RECREATION.

to look beyond novel features like unharvestable alpine areas or views from summits. The Orbeton Stream project was the poster child for climate change adaptation, working forest, and multi-use access for recreation.

After the publication of *An Ecological Study of the High Peaks Region of Maine’s Western Mountains*, McKinley and Griscom both joined the MATLT Board. The two met with Linkletter and began to talk about a conservation easement over the property that would allow for the contin-

ued harvesting of forest products according to best practices. Future development would be strictly prohibited.

MATLT’s efforts significantly raised the visibility of Maine’s High Peaks, and in 2012 the land trust joined with the Trust for Public Land and Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust to obtain funding from the U.S. Forest Service’s Forest Legacy Program for the Orbeton Parcel. With further assistance from the High Peaks Alliance, an organization dedicated to ensuring and enhancing public recreational access and opportunities in the Maine’s High Peaks, and a variety of other partners in the region, the Orbeton Parcel was finally placed under a working forest conservation easement at the end of 2014.

Today, due to these efforts, over ten miles of spectacular terrain on the Appalachian Trail is buffered by what was once referred to as “plain vanilla forest” but is now recognized as of great economical, ecological and recreational importance. MATLT’s Saddleback property and the Orbeton easement combined with the state lands on Mount Abraham, the Crockers, and the Bigelow Preserve add thousands of conserved acres to the A.T. realm, thus ensuring that the wildness, remoteness, and solitude that is at the very heart of the Appalachian Trail experience, will remain forever a part of Maine’s High Peaks. ⬆

Claire Polfus is the ATC’s Maine conservation resources manager. William L. Plouffe is a former ATC board member.



BY JACK TARLIN

TOUGH LOVE



THE UNLIKELY LURE OF TWO STRAIGHT DAYS OF RUGGED WORK WITH ROCKS AND ROOTS KEEPS THRU-HIKERS COMING BACK — AND GIVING BACK — FOR YEARS TO COME.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT VOLUNTEERISM HAS always been integral to the existence of the Appalachian Trail. For nearly a century, from its very inception, the overwhelming majority of the work done to build, improve, and maintain the Trail has been performed by volunteers.

For some 14 years, one such volunteer effort has been unique. Since May of 2001, the two-day work project known as Damascus Hard Core (based out of Damascus, Virginia during Trail Days) has at times been the largest annual maintenance program on the entire A.T., and it is further noteworthy because many participants are actually hiking — in most cases thru-hiking — when the event takes place, and decide to devote precious time off from their journeys to give something back to the Trail that they have come to love.

Longtime Trail maintainer Bob Peoples, who has also operated the legendary “Kincora” hiker hostel for two decades, is one of Hard Core’s founding fathers, and, along with his friends and colleagues from the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club (TEHCC), helps co-ordinate the event every May.

From a humble and simple beginning, Hard Core has grown in popularity and participation every year. The work that the Hard Core crews have accomplished is nothing short of astounding. TEHCC Trail projects coordinator Carl Fritz, who has helped oversee Hard Core since its early days, reports some amazing statistics: by the time the 2015 weekend is over, Hard Core workers will have contributed more than 20,000 hours to the A.T. And they’ll have built, re-located, re-furnished, and repaired more than 50,000 feet of the Trail.

Over the years, Hard Core workers have done remarkable things. At the very first event, more than 15 tons of gravel was hauled to the Trail, by hand, in five-gallon plastic buckets. On another occasion, lumber for a new shelter was carried, again by hand, over a mile-and-a-half to the jobsite. Since 2001, Hard Core crews have built new Trail, re-located or re-habbed miles of damaged or worn out Trail, created new campsites, built bridges, and even put up entirely new shelters. In 2006, Mountaineer Shelter was essentially completed in just two days. It should also be remembered that all of this labor is entirely voluntary. Project manager Fritz estimates that if the combined work of Hard Core crews had been performed by outside contractors, the labor costs would have run half a million dollars.

Since a modest start, with perhaps 30 participants, the annual event has become so popular that work spots are coveted, and must be reserved ahead of time in order to guarantee a place. Many of the participants are affiliated with TEHCC. TEHCC members Bruce and Mary Cunningham, and Ed Oliver, have been with the project since its first year. Just by themselves, along with Peoples and Fritz, these five stalwarts have contributed more than 40,000 hours of volunteer work to the A.T.

Of the others who sign up to work, half of each year’s reserved spots are for people who’ve worked on the project previously. Many of these folks, almost all of them former thru-hikers, return time and again to help out. Many have come back five times or more. A few have been there ten times, and a handful, like Lewis “Camo” Moyers, haven’t missed a single Hard Core since 2001. The annual enthusiasm of Trail club members and hikers is wonderful, but according to Bob Peoples, the best thing about each succeeding year is the part played by new hikers (half of each year’s

From far left: Thru-hikers carry a log that will be cut into steps farther up the Trail at Pond Mountain; Lewis “Camo” Moyers, “Lumpy”, “Kbar”, Scott “Flying Porkchop” Ourth, Michael “Moose” Laude, and Adama-Malkia “Wild Child” McGraph take a break from their Hard Core work. Bob Peoples signs up eager thru-hiker “Big E” for the crew. Photos by Laurie Potteiger and Adama-Malkia McGraph



reserved spots are saved for them) who are actually hiking on the A.T. that year. For most of these individuals, this is the very first Trail work they've ever done.

"Getting new folks involved is really what it's all about," says Peoples. "What we're doing here is creating the next generation of stewards for the A.T. Some of these guys are going to stay involved with Trail work, and will be helping the Trail for the rest of their lives." Peoples is correct, and has the letters and post cards to prove it. One year, his personal group of "rock crew" workers, included thru-hikers from Germany, Russia, Australia, and Israel. All of them went on to contribute to Trail projects in their own countries. Another long-time Hard Core participant, Laura "1 Pint" Reed, is presently helping to build trail in her new home — Antarctica. Hard Core Damascus evidently has a very long reach.

This year's project will be in the southern Roan Highlands, a particularly spectacular stretch of Trail near the Tennessee/North Carolina border. According to Peoples, the crew, 125-strong, will be "re-furbishing" up to three and a half miles of Trail, which will mainly involve improving the present Trailbed, making it more comfortable, and in fact, safer for hikers. "Basically," says Peoples, "it's two days of lots of rocks and roots for everyone, but with this many people involved, all working together, we can really make a difference."

Attendance at the 2015 Hard Core is expected to be an all-time high, and after a decade and a half, it has appeared that this year's event would sadly mark the end of Damascus Hard Core. The reason was simple: there are no more sections of the Trail in this area that require Trail work of this magnitude. In short, after 14 years of un-remitting hard work, Hard Core may have rendered itself obsolete. Recently however, a conversation in the Mount Rogers highlands has breathed new life into the future of the storied Trail crew. Andrew Downs, the ATC's regional director in Virginia, a former thru-hiker and five-year veteran of Hard Core, has been working with Terry Walker, president of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail

Club and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area to identify work that might benefit from an annual "army" of help from A.T. hikers. "Hardcore gets too much good work done to sit idly by and watch the program slip away," says Downs. Andrew and the team from Mount Rogers hope to have an announcement at this year's Hard Core event.

Looking back, Peoples is proud of what he and his friends have managed to accomplish. "We got more than 600 hikers to take part," he said. "All of them were happy to take time off from their own hikes in order to help out. And most of them had never done an hour's work of Trail maintenance in their lives. But we hope, in fact we know, that for some of these men and women, this won't be their last time. These are some of the people who will be preserving the A.T. for years to come. The work they do now will remain there to benefit their children and grandchildren." And he's right. It's already happened. Recently, ten-year-old Kendall Abruzzese received her first volunteer Trail patch, a reward for completing 50 hours of work on the A.T. Her father, "Forest Phil" Abruzzese is credited with coming up with the original idea for Hard Core.

Clockwise from top left: 2,000-miler Paul "Ole Man" Renaud from Millinocket, Maine; Kim Peters of TEHCC; '97 thru-hiker Franklin "Ox" LaFond of TEHCC; '04 thru-hiker and volunteer from the Green Mountain Club, Wayne "Mad Hatter" Krevetski; 2014 thru-hiker Alice "Kozi" Fernald paints a blaze after earning her 50-hour patch last year. Photos by Laurie Potteiger and Tim Stewart



thru-hiker asked me to check out her just completed new blaze. "I guess you've seen a bunch of these before," she said. "How does this one look?" I told her I thought it looked just great. "It's a special one," she explained. Not in any way intending to impugn her ability to slap six inches of white paint on a tree trunk, I asked her what exactly was so special about it. "This one is special, Jack," she said, "because it's always going to be mine." ♡



APPALACHIAN TRAIL GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE

LET'S REMOVE 1LB FOR EVERY MILE OF THE A.T.

BY MARIAN ORLOUSKY

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL Conservancy (ATC) would like to invite all Trail volunteers to join the 2015 A.T. Garlic Mustard Challenge. Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) has been chosen as the invasive Trail plant of the year, so the ATC is encouraging volunteers to remove garlic mustard along the A.T. Beginning in April, the ATC and its Trail maintaining clubs will host a series of work projects geared toward teaching volunteers how to identify garlic mustard and prevent its spread. The goal for the 2015 challenge is to collectively remove 2,189 pounds of garlic mustard, representing one pound of garlic mustard for every mile of the Trail. We are encouraging all of our members to help us reach our goal.

"Invasive" is a term given to non-native species, which when removed from their native range, have proven to be extremely problematic and detrimental to native species. Garlic mustard, also known as Poor Man's Mustard, is an invasive herbaceous plant native to Eurasia. It is capable of out-competing native plants by depriving them of sunlight, moisture, and space. It also uses a form of competition called allelopathy, which means it releases a chemical compound into the ground that can inhibit the growth of surrounding plants. Garlic mustard is a biennial plant, meaning it has a two-year life cycle. In its first year it develops kidney-shaped leaves that grow close to the ground in what is called a basal rosette; the leaves smell like garlic when crushed. In their second year, the plants grow upward and develop small flowers, each with four white petals arranged in a cross. By middle to late June the flowers are replaced by slender seed pods, each capable of spreading hundreds of seeds once mature.

Because it is so easily pulled from the ground, garlic mustard is an excellent candidate for manual control efforts. The best time to pull garlic mustard is early spring when the second year plants have grown in height and produced flowers. To prevent spread, it is best to conduct

removal efforts before the seed pods mature in early summer. The mature basal rosettes of first year plants can also be pulled in late fall since they won't develop seeds until the next summer.

Garlic mustard is however also a wild edible. It was originally introduced to the U.S. by European settlers for its variety of dietary uses. The leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds are all palatable. Most commonly, the young leaves of second year plants are added to salads or tossed

in a batch of mashed potatoes; they are tasty, versatile and high in vitamins C and A. The seeds also contain a variety of beneficial nutrients and can be used just like traditional mustard seeds. The large tap root can be collected from late fall into early spring and has a tangy, spicy flavor often compared to that of horseradish. So, before you take all the garlic mustard out with the trash you might want to try making a savory pesto. ♡

Garlic Mustard Pesto

- 1 cup garlic mustard
- ½ cup basil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 oz. toasted pinenuts
- 4 oz. olive oil
- juice of 1 lemon

In food processor combine all ingredients except olive oil. Puree and then add olive oil with processor running.

How to Participate in the Challenge

- Join one of the scheduled Trail club pulls or confirm a new work site with local ATC regional staff.
- Get a supply of industrial weight trash bags of 33 or 45 gallon capacity.
- Pull all the garlic mustard you can! Be careful not to pull or trample any native plants.
- Tie and mark the bags as "invasive plants" and properly dispose of in the landfill.
- Email GMchallenge@appalachiantrail.org and report the size and number of bags you filled, or the exact weight of all garlic mustard you removed.

To participate in any of the planned events email: GMChallenge@appalachiantrail.org
Marian Orlousky is the ATC's northern resource management coordinator.



common CAUSE

TERRY LIERMAN HAS A KNACK FOR bringing people together to support a common cause. That is because he has a particular fervor for getting involved and participating in what matters to him. He passed this message on as the keynote speaker to the graduating class at his Alma mater, Winona State University. “I stressed the importance of being involved — as a human being, as a citizen, and as a family member,” he explains. And, for Terry, there is never a moment to waste. “As precious as time is, there is also time to do a lot of work that will benefit a lot of people,” he says. His sincerity in this matter is as obvious as his good humor and seemingly endless energy.

Terry is steeped in public service. For more than 40 years he has put his time and professional expertise in health and public policy into the creation of successful organizations including the Children’s Research Institute, National Coalition for Cancer Research, Pancreatic Cancer Network, Partnership for Prevention, and NOFAS — National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. He has

also served on numerous boards such as Children’s Hospital National Medical Center and UNICEF, and currently serves as the Chair of the board for the Institute of Human Virology and on the board for PeacePAC. When asked how he keeps up the momentum, Terry simply says, “It’s genetic — I get it from my parents.” He says this with both honesty and wit but he has a deep appreciation for using time well. “Time is the most precious thing we have — I take it seriously.”

These days, he has expanded his focus by deciding it is time to do something for the environment as well — and as with everything else he puts his mind to, he means business. That is where his service on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) Board of Directors comes into play. The ATC’s board chair, Sandi Marra describes Terry as “the quintessential matchmaker” because he is so respected and liked by so many influential people in the Washington, D.C. area. Through these connections, he has worked to introduce the ATC to both political and industry leaders who can help move the organization forward.

Terry became a member of the ATC more than a decade ago because the A.T. was so close to his home in the Maryland metropolitan area. With each issue of *A.T. Journeys* he became more interested in the Trail and all that it involved. When he worked as Chief of Staff to Congressman Steny Hoyer, who

was then the Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, former ATC executive director Dave Startzell would stop by Terry’s office during Hike the Hill (an annual event where ATC staff members travel to Washington, D.C. to renew relationships and inform congressional staff of the status and needs of the Appalachian Trail and request appropriations to support key federal land acquisition projects along the A.T.). Dave’s visits only served to further stoke his interest and awareness of the work the ATC does to promote and protect such an incredible natural resource. His close friend and long-time A.T. hiker and supporter, Virginia Congressman Don Beyer, who often enjoys talking about the Trail, encouraged Terry to become more involved. So he did — as a member of the ATC’s Board of Directors. “Terry is a great, great friend of the Trail and of ATC,” says the ATC’s executive director Ron Tipton. “He leverages his political savvy, policy expertise, and wide range of friends and colleagues in many different ways for the benefit of the A.T.” And after four years as a board member, his genuine desire to help the ATC is never trumped by his busy schedule. “I appreciate that Terry is always available,” says the ATC’s director of membership and development, Royce Gibson. “He has a hundred irons in the fire but makes you feel like your project is the only one on his plate.”

As a board member, Terry has two primary goals: oversight and helping financially. He also believes that, as a protected corridor along the eastern U.S., the Appalachian Trail has the capacity to safeguard key natural resources — keeping the East Coast and therefore a portion of the U.S. more environmentally sound. “Think of the Trail as the spine of this country going from Georgia to Maine and all the air coming from the west to the east,” he says. “The A.T. helps clean the air that we breathe.” Terry’s vision of moving the ATC forward includes a continued expansion of programs that make the Trail more available and obvious to the public — specifically so that it will attract more minorities and people from a more diverse group of communities. “To me, the A.T. is a national treasure, that is 2,189 miles long going through 14 states, that we have to do a better job of expanding accessibility to,” he says. “[We need to] increase our outreach to *everyone*.” This all ties into his belief that health is a major factor in what the A.T. has to offer: a healthier environment, protected water sources, protected wildlife and plant life — but also something to be utilized to improve physical health.

With his background in founding and working with so many organizations that are focused on youth, health, and public service, it should come as no surprise that Terry’s three children have followed in his footsteps by serving others in their professional careers (his daughter is a civil rights lawyer and a Delegate in the Maryland legislature, one son works in the White House, and another son works for CASA — a national organization that works to protect immigrants, civil, and human rights). “I am living proof that apples fall a *long* way from the tree,” he jokes, then says with sincerity, “The bottom line is that I want to be my kids when

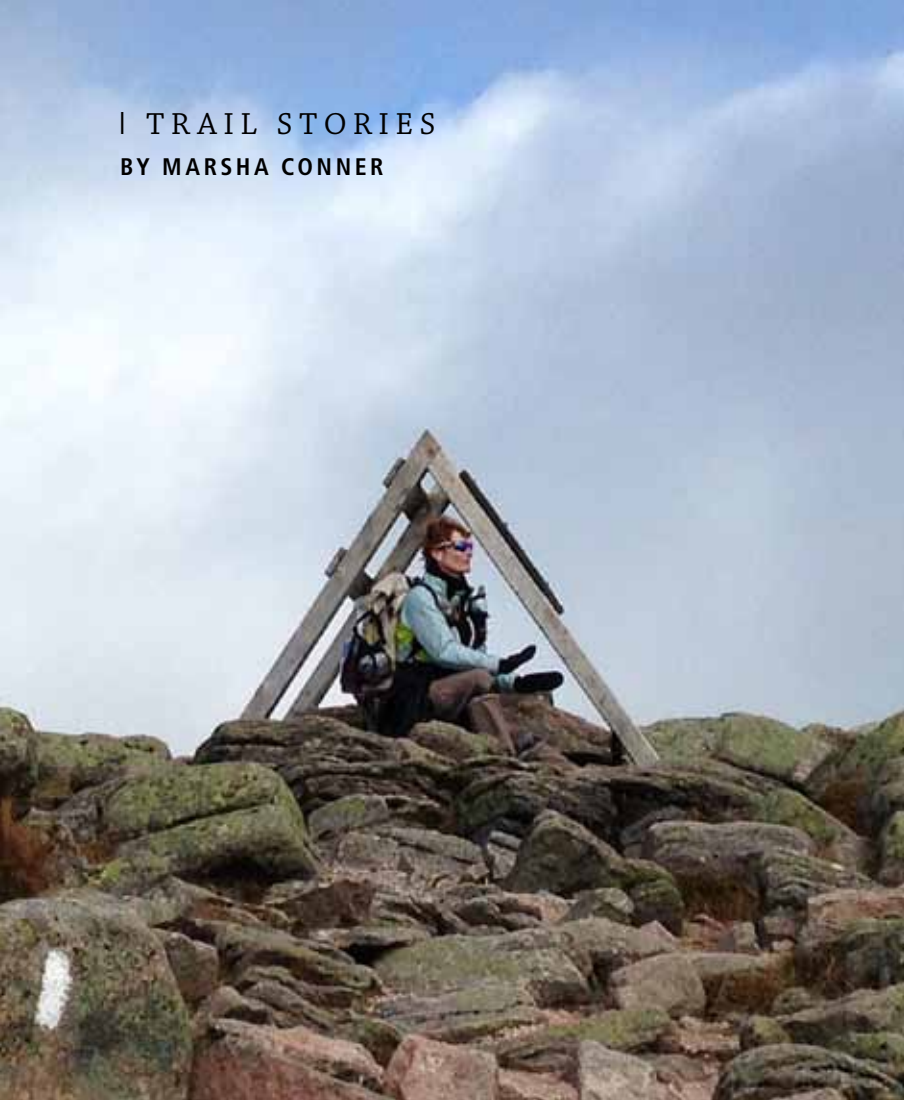
“AS PRECIOUS AS TIME IS, THERE IS ALSO TIME TO DO A LOT OF WORK THAT WILL BENEFIT A LOT OF PEOPLE.”



Terry (right) and Congressman Jim Moran at the 2014 ATC Leadership in Conservation Awards Gala in Washington, D.C.

I grow up.” And his three young grandchildren are of course, the apples of his eye — three terrific reasons for why protecting and promoting the future of a place like the A.T. means so much to Terry. “It is good for the environment, good for our health, and it’s beautiful,” he says.

Terry continues to pass his support of the Trail on, not only by serving on the ATC’s board, but by spreading the word about the A.T. and the ATC as often as possible. One way he does this is by giving multiple subscriptions of *A.T. Journeys* as gifts to friends and family members — he hopes that more people will do the same. “It’s just the natural magnificence of it all,” he says. “The whole idea of the Appalachian Trail being a national treasure is to encourage others to understand its value and support its success — not just for the sake of the areas surrounding and near the Trail but for the whole country.” ♡



vicarious VENTURE

DURING THE SUMMER OF 2013, I ATTENDED the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Biennial Conference in Cullowhee, North Carolina. At the end of a workshop I attended, the speaker told everyone about the website: trailjournals.com. I made a mental note to research it later. Later, turned out to be in March of 2014. Within days, I was reading blogs from hikers on trails around the world, but the A.T. was my focus. Potential thru-hikers were blogging rapidly and their enthusiasm became my enthusiasm. I currently live within an hour of the arch at Amicalola Falls in Georgia and have hiked numerous sections of the Trail in the southern region, but a thru-hiker on the A.T. — well, that is a badge I may not ever earn. There is a big difference in being a day hiker on the Trail several times a year, and hiking for six straight months from Georgia to Maine. So, in 2014, I decided to try and virtually “hike” the A.T. through the footsteps of those

Patty takes a moment at the end of her hike

actually on the Trail by following them via trailjournals. I randomly began picking hikers to follow in the April flood of entries. Male and female, solo and groups, young and old; I followed a diverse group of twelve hikers. I laid out maps on my desk, pulled resource books to have available, and I began a daily process of tracking “my hikers” northbound on their journeys.

Within the first week of my armchair adventure, the Georgia mountains had claimed two of the hikers due to medical injuries. Early into North Carolina, cold and loneliness took its toll on more. Slowly but surely, one of them was really beginning to catch my attention. No major gear issues, none of the typical injuries, a sure pace right through Georgia, and really upbeat blogs; my goodness, this hiker seemed to really be enjoying the miles on the Trail every day. The hammock-sleeping system she used caught my interest, so I sent her an email to see if I could learn more about it. I was pleasantly surprised when I not only received a reply, but a mini-lesson from the field with pictures to follow — wow. It was at about this time that this hiker also received a Trail name — “Red Robin” — for her red hair and early morning routine. It would be weeks before the fact that she had a given name registered with me: Patty Doyle-Jones.

An equine veterinarian, Patty, had recently lost her vet practice partner of 10 years, Dr. Rick Doran, to ALS. They had worked together performing countless surgeries on horses, and training other young surgical veterinarians. Losing him at the young age of 59 was not supposed to happen and it jolted her into grasping the reality that time does not wait for anyone to empty their bucket list. She needed to burn her footprint on the Appalachian Trail, from Springer Mountain to Katahdin. Patty wanted to accomplish the big one: A.T. thru-hiker, class of 2014. So she scheduled a leave from her practice and decided her A.T. hike would be dedicated to the memory of Dr. Doran, and would also serve as a fundraiser for research to find a cure for ALS.

Patty displayed a passion for hiking the A.T. that seemed well above the norm, as were her level of fitness and emotional demeanor. I decided that she would be a great teacher. Her blogs were full of detailed information about the Trail, her daily performance, and the geography and history of each day’s journey. I emailed her more questions and I received more answers. I found myself following her hikes daily, studying Trail locations, watching weather forecasts, and calculating mileage during the day. By the time Red Robin took her first “zero day” at Nantahala Outdoor Center, I felt certain only an unforeseen injury or circumstance would prevent her from reaching her goal.

There was no given day or moment that I officially began “shadow hiking” the A.T. with Red Robin. It was just a process that began with a discussion about hammocks and grew into genuine dialogue week after week. In the evenings, I would find out what the 10, 15, or 20 miles that day had been like: the views, the swims in the rivers and lakes, the hostel stays, the wildlife, and the interesting hikers she encountered. My “need to know” intensified as Red Robin moved northbound. My questions were steady and there were always answers, explanations, and pictures. In late May, Red Robin had covered 600 miles in 47 days and was “loving it.”

When the rain and storms rolled through, it was hard to tell if she was happier walking in the rain or sleeping in it. She was in her element and was enjoying every change in the weather, the terrain, and the scenery with an open heart. It was all part of the total experience. Daily mileage began to increase slightly as the Virginia section of the Trail ran in conjunction with part of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive. Shoes were being replaced monthly. At the ATC Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, Patty Doyle-Jones signed in as thru hiker # 867 and had her picture taken.

As Red Robin continued northbound, the warmth of the summer brought the berries out on the Trail along with the bugs. At that point she was close enough to her home territory of New Jersey that friends and family met her to share a few miles together. From Pennsylvania north, I was in unfamiliar terrain as I followed the daily journey. This only made my shadow hiking more interesting. Matching the pictures uploaded with the daily blogs was like having my own photojournalist online. The geography was changing week by week.

In early August, as Red Robin entered Vermont her blog mentioned that she had less than 500 miles to go. With 11 states covered, she was down to the last three — maybe the toughest mileage she would hike yet. The beauty of the Vermont’s Green Mountains held my attention and hill after hill, vista after vista,



she walked covering Stratton Mountain and Killington Peak. In mid-August she spotted an elusive moose while at the Lonesome Lake Hut in New Hampshire. Looming ahead were the Presidential Range and Mount Washington in the White Mountains. No car ride or cog rail up Mount Washington, Red Robin stayed on the Trail to reach the top of one of the most rugged mountains in the U.S. I felt guilty that I was not at least hiking up Blood Mountain in Georgia every day to pay my dues for shadow hiking the New England states with her.

On August 26, one of the toughest miles on the Trail awaited Red Robin. The Maahoosuc Notch is one long mile of boulders, not rocks mind you, but vehicle-sized obstacles. I felt fairly certain it was not calling my name anytime soon. When it was time to take the ferry ride in a canoe across the Kennebec River in Maine in early September, she knew the ultimate prize was not far away. There were still tough miles to go, with the Hundred-Mile Wilderness ahead. Red Robin took the wilderness by storm, “strolling” up to 20 miles a day, taking a cold swim in Cooper Falls, and even finding time to become a poet in the evenings. On September 13, she exited the wilderness, saw Katahdin in the distance for the first time, and remarked, “the idea that I would summit that rock ahead was surreal.” I could only imagine the emotions that any thru hiker feels at this point.

Patty registered as hiker # 494 at Baxter State Park to climb the 5.8-mile Trail to the top of Katahdin. A very strenuous eight-to-twelve-hour round trip, hikers must launch no later than 10 a.m. On September 14, the first summit climb was started, but with low ceilings and questionable weather, the decision to turn around was made at Thoreau Springs. You do not want to finish a journey of this magnitude lost in the clouds. Back on the Trail the next day, the clouds had lifted and the mountaintop was visible. Today would be the day, and emotions became stronger as she hiked steadily higher. When she first saw the iconic wooden sign for Katahdin, she felt “overwhelmingly honored.” It was for real, the journey complete, her goal had been reached. Patty sat on the summit for a long time; as long as she needed to absorb it all. Then she walked through the twilight and into the dark to descend. At 9 p.m., Patty blogged: “The day, the summit, the hike was done. She was definitely one of many that won.” When I read the news, I felt like I had won too. 📌



Patty gets ready to start her journey in Georgia; One of Patty’s carefully constructed hammock-sleeping systems at Hog Camp Gap along the A.T. in Virginia

OH SHENANDOAH

The serene beauty and rich history of the Shenandoah Valley provides the backdrop for a week of unforgettable experiences.

NESTLED BETWEEN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS to the east and the Allegheny Mountains to the west, and stretching 200 miles from Harpers Ferry, West Virginia to Roanoke, Virginia, lies the Shenandoah Valley; an area well-known for its spectacular natural beauty and deep historic roots. At the very heart of the valley stands the city of Winchester, Virginia, the site of this year's 40th Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Biennial Conference, "Hiking Through History." From July 17-24, hiking enthusiasts from across the country will converge on the beautiful campus of Shenandoah University to participate in this fun and informative, weeklong, family-friendly event.

Winchester's origins go back to 1729 when Quakers moved south from Pennsylvania into what would eventually be called the Shenandoah Valley. The promise of religious toleration brought a steady stream of Lutherans, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Anglicans to the area. However, beginning in 1754, the peace and serenity of the valley was suddenly shattered as the dark clouds of war gathered over Winchester with the start of the French Indian War. In the 1750s, Fort Loudoun guarded



over Winchester from the top of the hill on what is now known as Loudoun Street. It was from here that twenty-two-year-old George Washington got his start, when, in May 1754, Virginia



Clockwise from left: A.T. at Little Stony Man overlook in Shenandoah National Park; A group from Princeton University at White Oak Canyon in Shenandoah National Park – photos by Lee Sheaffer; Commemorative statue of "the hiker" near the Memorial Bridge and Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia – by Georgia Harris; The Entrance to historic Old Town Winchester – by Chris Slabinski

militiamen under his command ambushed a French patrol. In the ensuing years, Washington continued to protect the valley's settlers from the French and the Pontiac Indians to the west. Washington's headquarters, which are open to the public, still stand on Cork Street.

Winchester again came to the forefront of American history in the 19th century due to its strategic location during the Civil War. General "Stonewall" Jackson, whose legendary Valley Campaign and envelopment of the Union Army at Chancellorsville are still studied worldwide as examples of innovative and bold leadership, quartered in Winchester during the winter of 1862. His headquarters at North Braddock Street are a must-see on a visit to the area. During the Civil War, control of the Shenandoah Valley was critical to the fate of Virginia and the Confederacy. Because of this, seven major battles occurred in the valley around Winchester between 1862 and 1864, including General Philip H. Sheridan's final campaign to crush Confederate hope in the valley. This campaign included "the Burning," the fiery destruction of the region's agricultural wealth.

Winchester is also the hometown of legendary country music singer, Patsy Cline. Her home still stands on South Kent Street, and although it is now closed, you can still see Gaunt's Drug where she was a soda jerk and Triangle Diner where she waitressed.

THE CAMPUS

The Shenandoah University campus is located near hundreds of miles of outstanding hiking trails, including the Appalachian Trail, which is only an 18-minute drive away. The University is also close to numerous Civil War battlefields, such as Manassas, Gettysburg, and Antietam, and is only 90 minutes from Washington, D.C. Winchester is a delightful small town with a vibrant culture and history — a city with one foot still firmly rooted in the past and the other moving toward the future.



What to Do and See at the Biennial Conference

HIKING

The rich history of the Shenandoah Valley blends with its natural beauty in 70 unique and carefully selected guided hikes; some of which are offered up to four times with many on the A.T. That's 180 hiking opportunities during six days. In addition to amazing scenic areas, there will be nature, history, and photography themed hikes, plus five sunset hikes. Many hikes showcase the Civil War, Revolutionary War, Civilian Conservation Corps construction and/or WWII POW camp sites. The hikes take place, not only on the Appalachian Trail, but on other beautiful trails in nearby national



and state parks and forests in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and of course, Virginia. Several hikes will conclude at a local restaurant or winery, and there are numerous hikes where you can take a swim.

This is a "family-friendly event, so a team of family hiking specialists have designed 30 hikes suitable for most families that are five miles or less, plus 115 hikes suitable for most children eight years and older that are nine miles or less.

EXCURSIONS

Thirty-five exciting excursions are scheduled to highlight the beauty, culture, history, and opportunities for adventure that abound in the Shenandoah Valley and surrounding areas. Trips to Washington, D.C., Harpers Ferry, Gettysburg National Battlefield Park, Antietam Battlefield, the Appalachian Trail Museum, historic Front Royal, the Virginia Arboretum, Rapidan Camp, a scenic train ride along the Potomac River, stargazing at Sky Meadows State Park, visits to local wineries, and trips along the C&O Canal offer many opportunities to experience all the area has to offer. Close to the university, there will be excursions to the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and a walking tour of Old Town Winchester, with stops at many of the historic sites located there. And for the adventurous, there will be kayaking and canoeing, tubing and rafting trips, zip lining, rock climbing, horseback riding, and a trip to the spectacular depths of Shenandoah Caverns.

WORKSHOPS

Exciting and informative workshops will be held during the day on Saturday, July 18 through and into the evening of Monday, July 20. Workshops are being offered in 11 different tracks, including: A.T. — The Trail, A.T. — The



Whitewater rafting on the Shenandoah River – photo courtesy of River Riders; Black bears are often spotted in Shenandoah National Park – by Lee Sheaffer

Communities, Creative Arts, Environment, Hiking and Backpacking Skills, History, Natural Wonders, Other Trails, Youth/Outreach, Trail Maintenance and Management, and Volunteer Leaders and Club Management. Experts in all these areas will provide valuable information and insight that will be beneficial to both you and your trail organization.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

“Hiking Through History” will have something for everyone. In addition to all the hikes, excursions and workshops offered, there will also be special activities such as classes in basic bicycle maintenance, First Aid certification, a two-day wilderness First Aid class, field workshops about traditional edged tools and rigging, and even classes on knitting hats and T-shirt design. And, for the first time at an ATC Biennial Conference, there will be two-day and four-day slackpacking trips on the A.T., with overnight stays in Potomac Appalachian Trail Club cabins and hostels. In addition, each day there will be yoga classes to help you limber up for the day’s activities or unwind after a long day on the Trail.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Many of the hikes, workshops and special events at this year’s conference are appropriate for families with both small children and teenagers. Shenandoah University adjoins Jim Barnett Park, which offers miniature golf, hiking and biking trails, fishing, tennis, and indoor and outdoor pools. Winchester is also the home of the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum with displays and activities for all ages.

ENTERTAINMENT & PRESENTATIONS

An amazing and diverse offering of entertainment concludes each day’s activities, beginning with a special hammer dulcimer performance to open the ATC Business Meeting on Saturday evening. Every other evening, conference attendees will be delighted by stand-up comedy and quality bands performing every style of music from bluegrass and classic rock, to folk, country, and pop. If music is not your cup of tea, each evening there will also be informative and inspirational presentations on a range of topics, such as Alaska’s Wild Peninsula, Exploring Wild and Remote Patagonia, Raptors of the Shenandoah Valley, A Pictorial History of Virginia’s Appalachian Trail, An Unsupported Thru-Hike in Record Time, and Best Foot Forward, the inspirational story of a one-legged A.T. hiker.

EXHIBITS

Beginning at 1 p.m. on Friday, July 17 until Sunday, July 19, at noon, the ATC, conference hosts, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and Mountain

Club of Maryland, along with many other Trail clubs from all along the A.T., will host exhibits in the registration area. Representatives from local tourism bureaus, state and national parks, local outfitters, as well as companies and organizations involved with the Appalachian Trail or outdoor recreation in general, will be on hand to provide valuable information, services, and products. The hours for lunch at this year’s conference have been extended, so that you will have more time to discover all the amazing things in the exhibit hall. And, if you bring your children or are involved in youth outreach, be sure to visit the special Leave No Trace (LNT) Youth Activities Center located in the Exhibit Hall. ⬆

For more information and to register visit: www.atc2015.org

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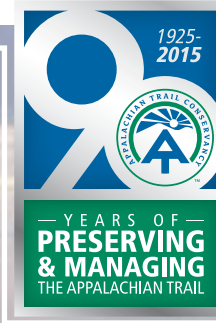
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DYLAN HEWITT AND EMMA HARVER – MCAFFEE KNOB SUNRISE

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) CONTINUES TO CHANGE and grow along with our new five year Strategic Plan, and I am excited to share with you some new ways to support that critical effort.

A.T. Blue Ridge Mountains – by Peng Wang



First, we have created a Leadership Circle for supporters giving \$1,000 or more annually with a new and expanded set of benefits and recognition (see details on the next page). Benefits include tickets to our annual Leaders in Conservation Awards Gala, invitations to exclusive events with ATC experts and executive director Ron Tipton, and direct access to a personal ATC liaison. Funds raised through the Leadership Circle support our core programs and ongoing commitment to preserve, manage, and enhance the Appalachian Trail for today, tomorrow, and centuries to come.

Second, we have invited a diverse group of select individuals — an Advisory Circle — to provide expertise and broader outreach for the ATC. Members of the Advisory Circle are characterized by the following: connections to key decision makers, policy experts in areas critical to the ATC’s success, experience in philanthropy and/or conservation, and a strong knowledge of and devotion to the Appalachian Trail. We welcome them to our leadership and are grateful for their commitment. We are especially pleased that board member Terry Lierman and supporter Jeffrey Leonard have agreed to co-chair the Advisory Circle.

These are exciting times and important times for the ATC and the Trail as we expand our capacity to steward this important cultural and environmental treasure. I thank each and every one of our volunteers and supporters at all levels, and feel lucky to work with so many dedicated men and women in such a focused and effective organization. ⬆

Marie E. Uehling | Major Gifts Officer

Funds raised through the Leadership Circle support our core programs and ongoing commitment to preserve, manage, and enhance the Appalachian Trail for today, tomorrow, and centuries to come.

new
ANNUAL FUND LEADERSHIP CIRCLE LEVELS

Our Annual Fund giving program has expanded with new levels and exciting benefits to help us enhance our ability to build a strong foundation and capacity to fund our Five-Year Strategic Plan.



Join our Leadership Circle!
For more information, contact:
Marie Uehling at 304.885.0462 or
muehling@appalachiantrail.org



www.appalachiantrail.org/annualfund

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Remembering John Harney — ATC supporter for many years

Elyse Harney smiles when recollecting the many years that she and her late husband, John Harney, spent getting to know Appalachian Trail thru-hikers as their journeys took them into the Harney's hometown of Salisbury, Connecticut. "There were blueberries everywhere that summer," she says. Through raising five children and having owned Salisbury's White Hart Inn, Elyse and John developed a strong connection with the Trail's Berkshire Range. John spent endless days getting to know and love the ins and outs of the area's mountain range; sometimes for the enjoyment of skiing and others as a diligent parent trying to stay one step ahead of his sons who were innately drawn to the mountain's untamed adventure. Elyse enjoyed hosting hikers at the inn where they were offered a brief respite of meals, showers and soft bedding in exchange for stories of adventure and good company. Even after their children were grown and the inn was sold, Elyse and John remained active supporters of the Trail — John through the A.T. Rescue Squad and Elyse through her continued hospitality out of their Salisbury home. The A.T. in the Salisbury area has continued its attraction for the Harney family — its rolling mountains are filled with memories of adventure, passion, tranquility, youthfulness and a strength that has always endured.



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GUIDED BY A PLAN

Continued from page 17

As for the current plan under revision, Sommerville is content. “There may be a few little tweaks,” he says. “But the current plan offers excellent protection for the A.T. That said, we understand the need to revise the plans.” Belleville adds that participating in forest planning helps ensure that each of the eight forest plans is consistent in the protection of the A.T. corridor with strategies and guidelines related to timber harvesting and energy infrastructure. For example; the ATC’s participation in the recently-revised George Washington National Forest plan may impact how other forest plans along the A.T. corridor address hydraulic fracking.

In 2011, the ATC publicly expressed environmental concerns related to hydraulic fracturing (“fracking” for short) in the George Washington National Forest during its plan revision that was finalized in November 2014. Belleville wrote in the winter issue of *A.T. Journeys* that “the ATC is pleased with the U.S. Forest Service decision to significantly balance and limit the extent of possible drilling” in the forest.

While the planning process can be contentious, the ATC has maintained an excellent relationship with the Forest Service and stays in close contact at all levels — from the district ranger stations to the Forest Service chief in the nation’s capital. In general, says the ATC’s executive director Ron Tipton, the Forest Service has done an excellent job planning and protecting the A.T. “They’ve been great stewards, but we have bigger opportunities on the horizon,” he says.

While maintaining the relationship with the nation’s public foresters is vital, Proudman adds that the ATC is able to participate at the highest level of forest planning thanks to a dedicated cadre of volunteers. “While we think national forest planning is extremely important, frankly, it can be a bit mundane,” jokes Proudman who is grateful to the volunteers who have donated countless hours to understand the forest plans in a professional capacity. “What motivates them is their love of the Trail and the national forests.”

As for future forest plans, Belleville and her colleagues are focused on the cumulative impacts of energy infrastructure throughout the A.T. corridor, such as natural gas pipelines, wind power, and hydraulic fracking, to name a few. And while the ATC will continue to advocate in the public process, Belleville hopes even more A.T. users and advocates will get involved in national forest planning.

“We don’t take the current protections that we have for granted,” she says. “That’s when things change; when you stop paying attention.” ⚡

Jack Igelman is a writer based in Asheville, North Carolina.

For more information about forest planning visit: www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule

PUBLIC NOTICES

Hiking Partners

Hiking Partner wanted. Male, 66-year-old experienced hiker (A.T, BMT, PCT, etc.) **seeking partner(s) (male or female) to trek the Long Trail.**

Contact Tom: (828) 349-4629 or tomfuller@joimail.com.

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For Your Information

The **19th annual Trailfest in Hot Springs, North Carolina will be April 17- 19.** Trailfest began as a celebration for the hikers coming through Hot Springs on their way to Maine and has continued to attract hikers as well as others who want to join the festivities. Food, music, hiker games, and other events

will be available. Always plenty to do in Hot Springs. Come and join us! For more information visit: www.hsclc.org/newsevents/trailfest.html.

ATC Summer 2015

Internships. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is recruiting for several internship positions for the Summer 2015 including: Trail Skills Training; Public Relations; Marketing Assistant; Event Planning; Visitor Services; Development Database; and Development Events; and Land Stewardship. For position descriptions, more information, and to apply visit: appalachiantrail.org/jobs.

Photography volunteer needed. ATC HQ in Harpers Ferry. West Virginia needs volunteers who enjoy meeting people and can take candid snapshots of thru-hikers and section-hikers during June and early July. Volunteers can assist any day of the week, but are needed especially on weekends. For more info or a volunteer application contact Laurie at: lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org. ⚡

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EACH SUMMER, I PACK UP THE DEHYDRATED MEALS I PREPARE DURING THE spring months, re-seam my tent, kiss my husband goodbye, strap on my backpack, and take off for three weeks with two close friends to “LASH” the Appalachian Trail. Over the past nine years, I have section hiked approximately 75 percent of the A.T. and I hope to complete the remaining miles of the Trail over the next few years.

Last year, while out on the Trail, I learned that some members of the hiking community refer to section hikers as LASHERs: Long A** Section Hikers. I found the word lash interesting because it conjured up images of receiving abusive punishment. I know my non-hiking family and friends think this. When I return home bruised, scratched, and bug-bitten, they shake their heads in disbelief that anyone could actually enjoy extended time away from the comforts of home out in nature without a shower, washing machine, or indoor plumbing. Although I have hiked some challenging sections of the A.T. in less than ideal conditions including a slippery fall on Wildcat Mountain, blizzard-like snows and gale wind on top of Mount Madison in New Hampshire, and raging flood waters while trying to cross the Piscataquis River in Maine, I find nothing abusive or torturous about “LASHing” the Trail. I love it! I did find this term to be an accurate descriptor for my mindset during my early years out on the Trail. But, the encouraging thing is I have learned some important life lessons from backpacking the A.T.

I began section hiking the Trail in celebration of my empty nest. After helping to launch three independent young adults out into the world, it was my turn to pack my sack and nudge myself forward out of my own safety zone. So, with my husband’s blessing, I joined up with two compatible friends that also enjoy hiking and backpacking and we donned our Trail names, our 50-pound packs, and off we went on our first three-week adventure in 2006. (We have since replaced outdated gear and cut our pack weight down to under 32 pounds.) Although I expected to learn about my strengths and personal resiliency while out on the Trail, I did not realize how much I would learn about my relationship with myself and how much I was in need of practicing self-compassion.

My first year section hiking, I quickly discovered that my greatest threat while out on the Trail was not rattlesnakes, mother black bears protecting their cubs, falling trees, or fear of injury, but my own mind — my fears of not doing enough, being good enough, or competent enough. I packed my insecurities right along with my dehydrated yogurt and the added weight held me down from being completely present to the beauty around me. My second year on the Trail showed me that if there is an easy way to do something, I will complicate it because I errantly think that something has to be difficult to be done right. I grew to see how less can be more in all areas of my life. Less planning, less control — more spontaneity, more fun.

After my third year on the Trail, I was finally loosening up and I can now confidently affirm that my inner “lashings” are down to a dull murmur that I hardly hear at all. As a student of yoga, I find backpacking the A.T. to be an impressive teacher to any student walking its path. My spirit craves the simplicity of Trail life: I carry only what I need; I need only what I carry. My pack is not burdened with extraneous things. On the Trail, I have to make choices about what I really need to sustain myself for six or seven days until I re-supply in town. A constant emptying and refilling. I have to literally weigh my wants and needs. I resupply in town, fill my backpack and the process starts again of unburdening myself, not just physically but mentally too, until my consciousness empties all the nonessential thoughts and is free to be totally present to the beautiful universe around me.

Each year, I exit the Appalachian Trail more confident and more at home with my sense of self than when I stepped onto it three weeks earlier. The time spent hiking brings me closer to my own center. The more challenging the terrain, the more present I am in the moment — breathe in, step up, reach hand up on rock, scramble up, exhale until there is no separation between my concept of myself and the path below my feet. ⚡

Patricia “Traildancer” Steely
LIVES IN PALMYRA, PENNSYLVANIA

“As I See It” is a column from guest contributors representing the full range of ATC partners, members, and volunteers. To submit a column (700 words or under) for consideration, please email journeys@appalachiantrail.org or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.



Patricia on the A.T. at Lehigh Gap in Pennsylvania



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2014 2,000-MILERS CHRIS "BAGUETTE" BIANCHI, LANE "BANGARANG" SPANBAUER,
BRANDON "GRIZZELLE" POWERS AND JESSICA "DANCING FEATHER" MILLER; A.T.
POCHUCK BOARDWALK, NEW JERSEY. PHOTO BY MICHELE PAPALEO