



# JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / FALL 2016

## Coexisting with Black Bears

Rest Easy: Inns, Hostels,  
and B&B's for Any  
Type of Hike

Exploring Nature:  
Autistic Children Find  
Their Footing on the A.T.



## MISSION

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.

# JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / FALL 2016

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A.T. Sunrise on Jane Bald near Carvers Gap in North Carolina/Tennessee  
Photo by Malcolm MacGregor ("Diversity and Light," page 36)

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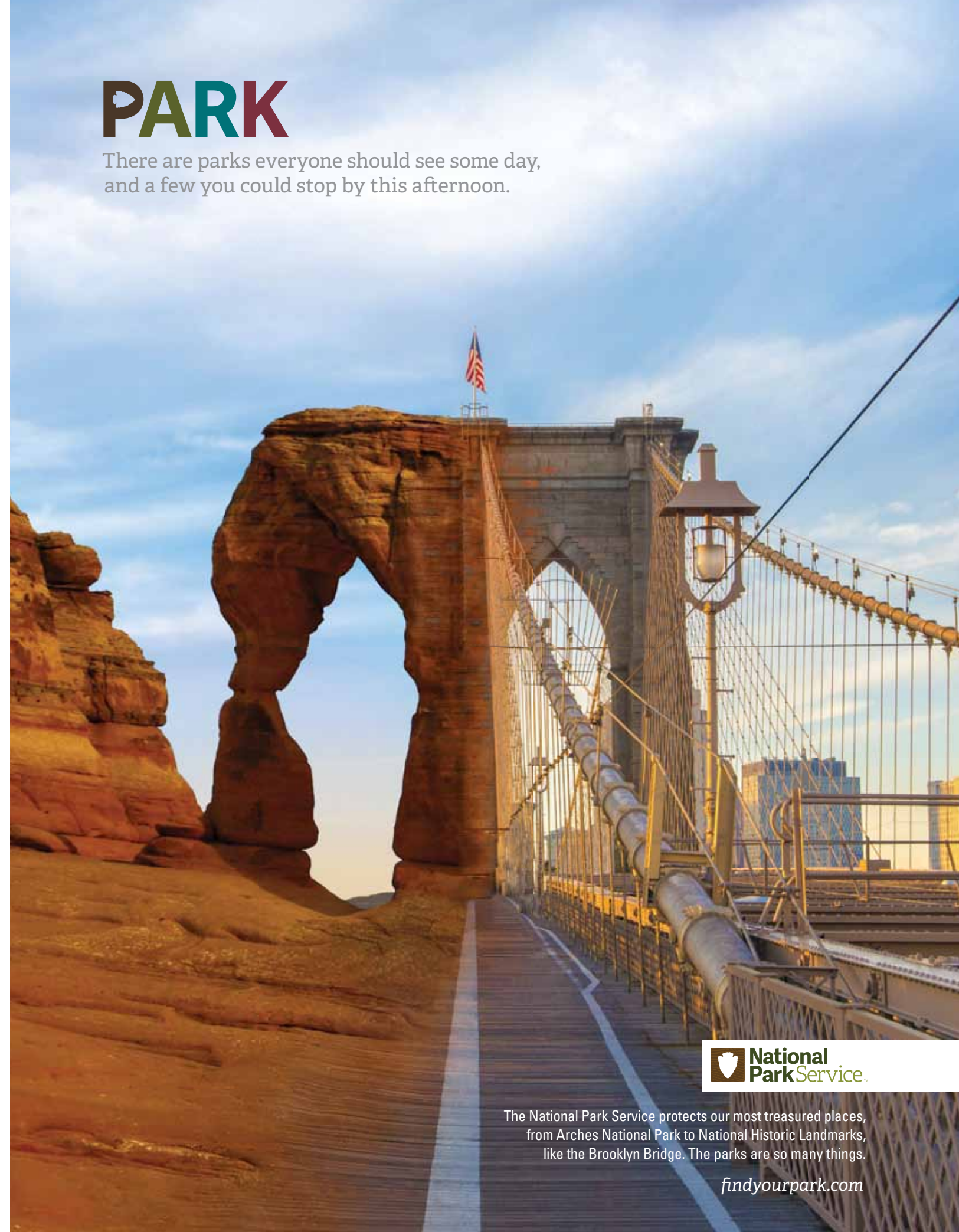
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## Partners for the A.T.

**T**HE ORIGINAL APPALACHIAN TRAIL was built by volunteer Trail clubs with Appalachian Trail Conference (now Conservancy) support from 1925 to 1937. For the next 30 years it was managed, maintained, and relocated where necessary through that strong partnership. In 1968, it was designated as the first National Scenic Trail through an act of Congress, and the National Park Service was granted the responsibility for the overall management and protection of the Trail. Our 1983 cooperative agreement with the Park Service confirmed the intent of Congress and the federal government to continue and build upon the capacity of the clubs to have the lead day-to-day responsibility for managing the Trail.

Given this history, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the 31 Trail maintaining clubs often proudly point out our Trail was a volunteer project from the very beginning, not a federal program. We acknowledge and appreciate the important role of the Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service (with more than one third of Trail mileage on national forest lands in the south and north) and 70-plus state agencies. For the most part, this unique collaborative approach has worked very well, and it saves taxpayers more than \$6 million a year compared to what it would cost if the Trail was staffed and managed like a traditional national park unit.

However, now more than ever it is critical we take advantage of the resources, the visibility, and the credibility this approach provides for the A.T. I am proud that the experience of hiking on the Appalachian Trail is more popular than ever. It is also the reality that our publicly owned and permanently protected Trail corridor is vulnerable to numerous outside threats:

adjacent subdivision and commercial development, proposed transmission lines, gas pipelines and wind turbines, and climate change to name a few.

Managing and protecting a 2,190-mile-long Trail with multiple partners is neither simple nor easy. This was underscored in my mind in August when the country celebrated the 100th birthday of the National Park Service. The 413 national park units range from the famous early parks like Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon to recent additions such as the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Maryland and the brand new Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA) staff is challenged by the fact the A.T. is not managed like a traditional national park. Both APPA and the ATC are very dependent on the nearly 7,000 volunteers who contribute many hours and much energy and commitment to whatever role they have with their Trail club.

This was underscored at our recent biennial retreat with club leaders where we spent a busy weekend together discussing issues like Trail maintainer safety, how to recruit a younger and more diverse volunteer force, and how we can communicate more effectively. It was a very high-energy group that reinforced our collaborative responsibilities for managing and protecting the A.T. for future generations.

This partnership of clubs, the ATC, and public land managing agencies is often referred to as a “three-legged stool,” and it can only continue to be successful if we reinforce each other’s strengths and commitment to the Appalachian Trail. 📍

**Ronald J. Tipton** / Executive Director · CEO



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# my story

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[myATstory.org](https://myATstory.org)



» Young black bear in Shenandoah National Park. Photo by Mark Gatewood

# 20

## BEAR IN MIND

Black bear populations along the A.T. corridor appear to be on the rise — along with the need to educate hikers and protect the bears so that the two can continue to peacefully coexist.

### 12 / CREATURE COMFORTS

Inns, hostels, and B&Bs in Trail Communities from Georgia to Maine have carved out a niche for themselves and offer comfortable lodging — for any type of hiker — that is as unique as the region they reside in.

### 26 / EXPLORING NATURE

The A.T. provides a sense of freedom, exploration, and sanctuary for two families with autistic children.

### 32 / SWEAT EQUITY

A dynamic and energetic group of millennials get an outdoor education and help to break through walls and obstacles that may have kept some populations from working and recreating along the Trail.

### 36 / DIVERSITY AND LIGHT

Landscape photographer Malcolm MacGregor spends some of his favorite moments exploring the diverse landscape of the A.T. in the highlands and woods of North Carolina and Tennessee, capturing everything from the varying colors of the seasons to crystal clear starry night skies.

### 18 / TRAILHEAD

Success for New Monson Visitor Center; Hunting Season Safety Tips

### 44 / PROFILES

While completing the Trail is still on Colin Beasley's bucket list, these days he dedicates a lot of his free time to providing leadership and sharing his 35 years of professional experience through serving as a volunteer, advisor, and donor to the ATC.

### 46 / TRAIL STORIES

Why one young family made a thousand-mile round-trip drive for a short but very sweet day hike on the Trail.

### 55 / AS I SEE IT

More than six years of hiking trips in each state the Trail passes through provided one "empty nest" couple the opportunity to explore numerous towns (and try diverse restaurants, lodging, and regional specialties) adjacent to the Trail.

### 04 / WELCOME

### 08 / LETTERS

### 10 / OVERLOOK

### 50 / TRAIL GIVING

### 54 / PUBLIC NOTICES

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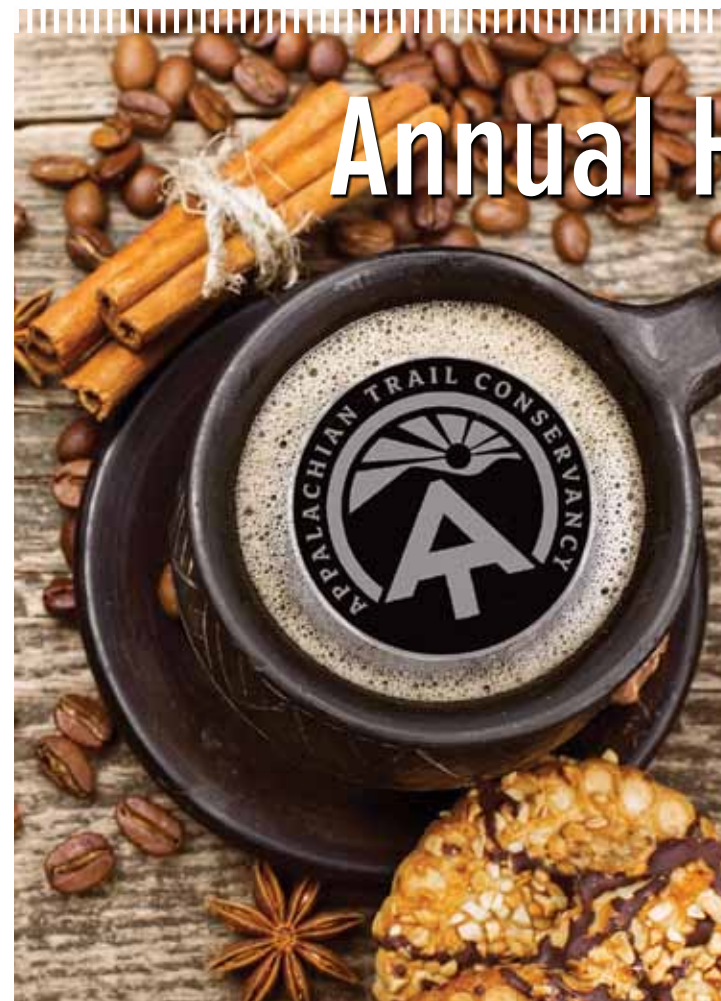
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# Annual Holiday Party Dec. 3 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ATC Visitor Center  
Harpers Ferry  
West Virginia

**Celebrate the holiday season with the ATC!**  
Enjoy homemade refreshments and meet with the ATC staff and volunteers. This event is also the perfect opportunity to shop for Appalachian Trail-themed merchandise for the hiker on your list. For more information visit:

[appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events)



**STARTING TO HIKE THE TRAIL IN 1969** seems like the dark ages now. Things were much more primitive. It has been a lifetime experience for me. Your continuing upfront coverage of trail crews and maintaining is ever so appropriate. Your superb magazine makes the mimeographed magazine from the 60s almost cave like. Several years ago I penned a ditty: "It Takes a Long Time to Make a Trail," which supports your work. Thanks.

*There will always be a messer  
To leave a tin at the fire  
Or foil on the ground, yessir.  
Or a stash of trash in the woods  
While others carry out their goods.  
It takes a long time to make a trail*

*And in an eyeblink, litter comes so fast  
More in a decade than in a hundred past.  
There was a time when cleanliness was  
beyond the pale.*

*For years upon years it seems  
There were so few to make a mess.  
It takes a long time to make a trail.*

*I like new words, don't you?  
Like cyberspace, surfing, gorp and E-mail.  
Here's a word, biodegrade,  
Not a word a hundred years ago  
When our native fathers walked this  
sylvan glade.*

*What's left a hundred hence on this Trail  
Depends on little bits by you and me.  
It takes more thought and purpose now  
To keep things tidy, don't you see?  
It takes the likes of you and me.*

J.M. Duncan  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

**READING YOUR "WELCOME" EDITORIAL** in the Summer issue, I applaud your effort to recognize the work of the many Trail maintaining clubs, some of them you mention by name. I realize that listing all 31 of them goes beyond the space allocated for your column. But a list could have been included elsewhere in the issue, and it would have made a great supplement to what the [magazine] tells us about the Trail and who and what keeps it going. Case in point: the backside of the issue invites the reader to "become a volunteer with a Trail club or Trail

crew." [I have been a Trail adopter and corridor monitor for more than 20 years and am a member of the Ottauquechee section of the Green Mountain Club]. I checked the ATC's website for a club list and found it. You need to do quite a bit of browsing, though, and you have to go even deeper to find addresses and "about us" information. The membership size for each club is of interest — you use that info (not by number but in general terms) in your column. This would be a nice addition to the list, as well as the club addresses.

Heinz Trebitz  
THETFORD CENTER, VERMONT

**EDITOR'S RESPONSE:** Thank you for the excellent suggestion to run the names of and information for the ATC's 31 Trail maintaining clubs — we have done so in this issue. We profoundly appreciate all they do for the Trail year after year.

**I PASSED THROUGH YOUR HQ ON THE** 14th of June. If I remember correctly, I was [somewhere near] hiker 700 for the year and hiker 516 to finish at Katahdin. Thanks to you and [the] whole Appalachian Trail Conservancy for [all the] work you put into the Trail. It's organizations like yours that make it a special experience and make dreams come true. Good luck to you all in the future.

Tad "Windwalker" Sigman  
BOULDER, COLORADO

### Prep, Advice, and Hiking Lessons

**f** I have learned that wet rocks may or may not be slippery, wet tree roots are always slippery, most people you meet "out there" are decent, you don't need much "stuff" to be comfortable and happy, and nature has a wonderful way of healing your spirit and taking away stress. Linda Hagstrom

**f** Yay for privies! Yay for the Trail clubs! Thank you volunteers! Woody Hester

**t** @uriahhon Oh the hard way it was. My advice... Spend the money... Shake it down... Throw it out. If you leave for five days and use something on one of them only...Toss it. If you didn't use it every day... You didn't need it. Happy trails

**t** @jfhayj327 Always research and plan for water refill locations, your water filter pump is probably the most important piece of equipment you have!

**t** @adventure\_in\_a\_backpack Always give someone your plans and a deadline to contact help!

**t** @trail\_surfers Always listen to your body and always take a puff coat.

**t** @riddicker I wish more people would "forget" GPS and learn "old fashioned" map and compass techniques. It's called orienteering, the military used to call it land navigation or land nav. 📍

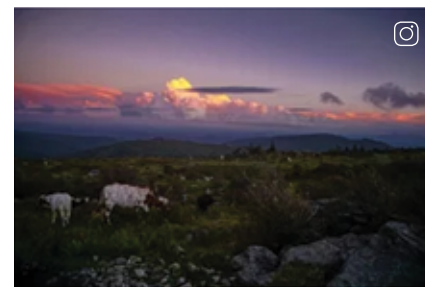
A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments.

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.



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Sometimes the trail sucks. Other times you get cows and sunsets.  
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A.T. Journeys is the official magazine of the A.T. and the membership magazine of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy — a national not-for-profit corporation with more than 43,000 members from all 50 U.S. states and more than 15 other countries. Our readers are adventurous, eco-friendly outdoor enthusiasts who understand the value in the protection and maintenance of the Trail and its surrounding communities.

Advertising revenues directly support the publication and production of the magazine and help meet the ATC's objectives.

# VAT

**WINSTON CHURCHILL ONCE SAID:** "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time ..." (in a House of Commons speech on November 11, 1947).

I sometimes think that the same can be said for the Appalachian Trail's Cooperative Management model.

Recently, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board, Stewardship Council, and the National Park Service (NPS) Appalachian Trail Park Office (APPA) have been taking a close look at this model. We are attempting to better define roles and responsibilities. The ATC is also looking to establish an effective working relationship with the Northeast Regional Office of the National Park Service to which APPA reports. The history, culture, and structure of the A.T. Cooperative Management model are unique within the NPS system. Successfully managing, maintaining, and preserving this 2,190-mile and 250,000-acre National Scenic Trail requires a level of staffing that no individual park office can provide. Therefore, making sure our dedicated and skilled base of volunteers stay committed and engaged is critical.

That being said, back when the ATC "invited" the federal government to take on the A.T., it was due to the recognition that the monumental task of acquiring the land necessary to permanently protect the Trail could only be accomplished by the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, and a number of states. The partnership forged as a result of the National Trails System Act of 1968 was designed to guarantee the Trail's future protection. It also made the Trail a unit of the National Park System and added a level of regulations and oversight to which we must adhere.

For better or worse, the ATC, our Trail

maintaining clubs, and our federal, state, and local partners are joined together in perpetuity in order to meet our mutual goals for protecting and managing the Appalachian Trail for future generations. And there really isn't a way to separate the parts without destroying the whole. Collaborating to ensure that our partnerships remain sound and effective is of the utmost importance.

There are certainly struggles for the A.T. community as we work through more reporting requirements, tightening regulations, and stricter rules. But I contend there is also opportunity for the ATC and the Trail clubs to significantly improve our operations by becoming more professional and accountable to meet the immense obligation we have agreed to undertake to properly manage and maintain the Trail.

The Park Service is facing the potential for significant tightening of its budget along with a shrinking work force. Allowing for less bureaucratic communication and more flexibility in how the work gets done will enable the NPS to recalibrate how it creatively partners with outside groups to meet its mission. Further fine tuning the A.T. volunteer partnership model can lead to it becoming a shining example of true public/private cooperation for the future of the Park Service.

Overall, our "three-legged stool" is still pretty strong, even though at times the legs seem uneven and shaky. Winston Churchill also said: "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often." It is imperative that we all continue to push for positive and effective change in order to ensure that the Trail is protected and, in the midst of all this, remains unchanged. ⬆

Sandra Marra / Chair



The balanced partnership of the ATC, Trail clubs, and public land managing agencies is fondly referred to as the "three-legged stool"



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# creature Comforts

FOR EVERY TYPE OF HIKER AND  
HIKE STYLE, THERE IS A COZY PLACE  
TO STAY THAT HAS YOUR BACK  
(LITERALLY) ALONG THE TRAIL

There is something to be said for waking up, rolling over, and seeing the familiar nylon of your tent that seems to hug you in your sleep. As you open your eyes, you are immediately assaulted by the friendly reminder that you're in the midst of an amazing outdoor adventure.

And yet, after days of pretending your sleeping pad is an actual mattress, you may find yourself prioritizing comfort over the beautiful frustration that is sleeping outside. You crave sheets, a pillow that is not a stuff sack full of your clothes, running water, and maybe even a meal that does not have to be cooked over a portable stove. And then there are those of you who might just want to take a day hike and take in the atmosphere and comforts (including a shower, a good night rest, and a tasty dinner at a local restaurant) in the town or community that surrounds — and can often enhance — that day's A.T. hiking experience.

It's okay—we get it. Luckily, the copious amounts of hostels, bed and breakfasts, inns, motels, and hotels found along the Appalachian Trail have your back (and, if you are backpacking, you might just need that extra support by day five of sleeping on the ground or in a shelter). The businesses that have established longevity in addition to a good reputation understand what it means to meet the needs of all types of hikers in a variety of ways. The owners of these places have carved out a niche, bit by bit, and in doing so, they have become as unique as the region in which they reside.

Just take it from Paul “Ole Man” and Jaime “NaviGator” Renaud, who run the Appalachian Trail Lodge in downtown Millinocket, which is the closest town to Baxter State Park and Katahdin in Maine. Their business is unique in that it is the last lodging option in town before northbound hikers reach Katahdin and the first that southbounders encounter as they begin their 2,190-mile journey. The lodge also has a bit of history to it, something that the average hiker might not even realize: Earl Shaffer, whom many consider to be the first A.T. thru-hiker, stayed there on his anniversary hike in 1998.

“We get so many different people here,” Jaime said. “Being at the end and the beginning, people come here and they are [often] either done, or they are starting, so it makes for a whole different kind of person on the Trail depending on what point they are at. Southbounders are always so excited—they want to know everything and hear advice from us.”

Fortunately, those looking for insight about the Trail or how to best hike it are in the right place, because Jaime and Paul have close to a decade's worth of experience as owners and operators of the lodge. Over the years,



Located one-half mile off the A.T., Woods Hole Hostel in Pearisburg, Virginia (owned and run by Michael Lasecki — shown here — and his wife Neville Harris) offers different styles of accommodations, local and home grown organic meals, and even massage therapy. Photo by Ben Benvie

BY ANNE BAKER





to fully immerse themselves in the town's history and culture, creating a business that was not just a place for someone to rest, but also support Chris's interests in eco-tourism.

"When the town [of Harpers Ferry] started looking at outdoor recreation as both a way to serve the tourists coming into town and as a way of economic development, it seemed like a natural cause for me to get involved in," said Chris, who serves as chair of the Trail and Town Alliance of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar, a group that seeks to better understand and address the needs and interests of hikers, recreationalists, and other visitors to the A.T. and beyond. Although a majority of guests do choose to day hike while they are in the area, it is not always on the A.T., Chris explained. Some choose to hike in Harper Ferry National Historical Park, for example. "But many of our guests stop in at [ATC headquarters] and enjoy the visit, and some of them make goals for hiking later on — so it's a great partnership and promotion for the Trail and the town," he said.

The Town's Inn, also in Harpers Ferry — only a few steps from the Trail — welcomes hikers 24/7 and offers everything from casual fine dining, shuttle services, and basic resupply items in a clean, rustic, home-like atmosphere on their historical property. "Since I live on the premises, if someone knocks at the door or calls even after midnight, I'll respond and try to help," says energetic owner Karan Townsend. Karan says that the inn serves a diverse clientele of nearby residents and visitors, "many of whose journey through the 'green tunnel' could be enhanced by experiencing a little local culture within the towns on or near the Trail."

they have realized that what it takes to succeed in the competitive environment of hiker lodging is to offer not only what hikers need, but what they need in a particular area — and as the A.T. community knows, that can vary depending on where you are on the Trail.

"Some hostels might not have the hiker services combination. Over the years, we've become more business oriented — it's more of a formal business now," Jaime said, explaining that they offer a variety of lodging that ranges from a hostel-style bunkroom to a hiker family suite, as well as mail drops, food drops, laundry facilities, and even showers for people just passing through town. The lodge also offers shuttles, which is a crucial part of Paul and Jaime's business, as shuttles are often needed in this area.

Paul and Jaime's business model has been successful, and they have established the longevity, as well as the stellar reputation, that so many hostel owners dream of. When they first began operating the lodge, they relied on word of mouth as advertising, but they also took care to establish a strong relationship with Baxter State Park, which resulted in quite a bit of referral activity. For example, when the duo first took over the lodge in 2007, they had approximately 700 guest during their first season; in 2015, they served more than 2,000.

As the A.T. community up and down the Trail continues to grow, it is crucial for hikers to remember the important principles of Leave No Trace apply off the Trail, too. Hostel owners and lodge operators rely on hikers for their livelihood, but they also rely on common courtesy. "It's all about respect, but I have to tell you not everyone has that. Most hikers are on the Trail taking care of the space around them and being considerate of others; that

should happen in towns, too," said Jaime.

With a continued increase in the number of Trail users, there can never really be too many places for hikers to choose from. Yet because there are so many options out there, we are highlighting those that are committed to promoting, preserving, and maintaining the A.T. in accordance with the mission and vision of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Most of the places we've listed are found in designated A.T. Communities, and many are A.T. Community Supporters, including Laurel Lodge in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, a craftsman-style bed and breakfast owned and operated by Chris Craig and Ed Wheelless. The two combined their personal interest in outdoor recreation into a business venture, opening the lodge in 2007 after an extensive renovation.

"[Ed and I] chose to move to Harpers Ferry from Washington, D.C. because we love to hike and bike, and we also love this town's history," Chris explained. "I had been a teacher for 20 years, so I was ready for a career shift, and Ed is a gourmet chef as an avocation, so he had interest in the bed and breakfast so he could use his talents." The two did not stop there, though — they chose

YOUR A.T. HIKING AND LODGING EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE AS INDIVIDUAL AS YOU ARE — AND WILL DEPEND ON YOUR SPECIFIC CREATURE COMFORT NEEDS WHILE AWAY FROM YOUR HOME. SO, PICK A HIKE STYLE (DAY, SECTION, OR LONG-DISTANCE), AND GET READY TO ENJOY THE COMMUNITIES AND THE DISTINCTLY-DEVOTED

## LODGING BUSINESSES THAT SURROUND

## THE A.T. — NO NEED TO SKIP THE PILLOW OR

## THE SHOWER. HAPPY HIKING (AND RESTING).



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Fontana Dam, NC, 828.498.2211

[fontanavillage.com](http://fontanavillage.com)

**ATC STAFF SAYS** "My family and I spent two of our most memorable and enjoyable vacations here — one in 1973 and one in 2005."

#### Elmer's Sunnybank Inn

Hot Springs, NC, 828.622.7206

[sunnybankretreatassociation.org](http://sunnybankretreatassociation.org)

**NEED TO KNOW** Organic vegetarian meals are prepared from scratch.

#### Woods Hole Hostel

Pearisburg, VA, 540.921.3444

[woodsholehostel.com](http://woodsholehostel.com)

**NEED TO KNOW** Stay in the cabin for a bed and breakfast feel or in the bunkhouse to save money.

### Bears Den Trail Center/ Bears Den Hostel

Bluemont, VA, 540.554.8708

[bearsdencenter.org](http://bearsdencenter.org)

**NEED TO KNOW** Bears Den is owned by the ATC and operated by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). Although the place offers rooms, the property is only 150 yards from the A.T., making it a great spot to set up camp in case you do want to have a comfortable camping experience.

### \*Teahorse Hostel and B&B

Bolivar, WV, 304.535.6848

[teahorsehostel.com](http://teahorsehostel.com)

**NEED TO KNOW** Teahorse also welcomes cyclists. No alcohol is allowed.

### Church of the Mountain Hostel

Delaware Water Gap, PA, 570.476.0345

[churchofthemountain.org](http://churchofthemountain.org)

**NEED TO KNOW** This donation-based hostel is one of the longest-running hostels on the A.T. Only serious long-distance hikers are allowed to stay there (meaning no slackpackers or anyone arriving in a car).

### Shaw's Hiker Hostel

Monson, ME, 207.997.3597

[shawshikerhostel.com](http://shawshikerhostel.com)

**ATC STAFF SAYS** "The hidden gem here is 'The Poet's Gear Shop,' a made-over garage with a well-chosen selection of lightweight gear. Poet [one of the owners] offers shakedown to help hikers lighten up, much like Mountain Crossings at Neels Gap does."

### Appalachian Trail Lodge

Millinocket, ME, 207.723.4321

[appalachiantrailodge.com](http://appalachiantrailodge.com)

**NEED TO KNOW** The owners' knowledge of the A.T., especially the challenges of climbing Katahdin and Baxter State Park regulations, make this a great place to stay.

### IF YOU WANT TO CHECK OUT SOMETHING NEW

#### Virginia Creeper Lodge

Damascus, VA, 276.451.8516

[virginiacreeperlodge.com](http://virginiacreeperlodge.com)

**NEED TO KNOW** This lodge offers spa services, fishing guides, and bike rentals. The owner, Stuart Wright is very supportive of the ATC, and recently provided a great rate to the ATC's Conservation leadership Corps participants.



Left: Bears Den Hostel in Bluemont, Virginia offers comfortable rooms and an area to tent camp. Photo by Ben Benvie; Below: The Town's Inn in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia offers casual fine dining, shuttle services, and basic resupply items in a clean, rustic, home-like atmosphere. Photo by Alex Uhlenhopp







From far left: The foyer at Laughing Heart Lodge. Photo by Sandra Friend; A hearty breakfast at Shaw's Hiker Hostel. Photo by Ben Benvie

**IF YOU WANT A PRIVATE ROOM**  
**Laughing Heart Lodge**  
 Hot Springs, NC, 828.622.0165  
[laughingheartlodge.com](http://laughingheartlodge.com)

**NEED TO KNOW** *Laughing Heart Lodge is best known in the A.T. community for its hostel, but it also has an impressive-looking lodge and cabin.*

**\*Holiday Lodge**  
 Pearisburg, VA, 540.921.1551  
[facebook.com/pearisburgva](https://facebook.com/pearisburgva)  
**ATC STAFF SAYS** *"For four years straight, [owners Micky and Sonu Chalwa have] thrown a pool party for the Konnarock Trail Crew and donated two weeks' lodging for contractors working on the Bluff City relocation. [The owners are] always looking for new ways to support the Trail and hikers."*

**\*Cobblestone Hotel & Suites**  
 Waynesboro, PA, 717.765.0034  
[staycobblestone.com/pa/waynesboro](http://staycobblestone.com/pa/waynesboro)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *This multi-story hotel is popular with backpackers, since it's just over two miles from the Trail, and there's a grocery store, laundromat, multiple restaurants, and more all close together.*

**\*Gelinas Manor Bed & Breakfast**  
 Boiling Springs, PA, 717.258.6584  
[gelinasmanor.com](http://gelinasmanor.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Gelinas, located near the Trail's midpoint, is within 100 yards of the A.T.*

**\*Burgundy Lane Bed & Breakfast**  
 Waynesboro, PA, 717.762.8112  
[burgundylane.biz](http://burgundylane.biz)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Burgundy Lane provides shuttles (and slackpaks) from the A.T., which is significant since it's five miles away from the trailhead.*

**Norwich Inn**  
 Norwich, VT, 802.649.1143  
[norwichinn.com](http://norwichinn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *This classic inn is right across the river from Hanover and Dartmouth College.*

**IF YOU CARE ABOUT HISTORY**  
**\*MacArther Inn**  
 Narrows, VA, 540.726.7510  
[macarthur-inn.com](http://macarthur-inn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *This inn offers a \$10 round-trip hiker shuttle from the Trail, and there are a range of rooms at different prices. There's a Mountain Music Jam at the hotel every Thursday night with hearty home-cooked meals available, too.*

**\*Town's Inn**  
 Harpers Ferry, WV, 304.932.0677  
[thetownsinn.com](http://thetownsinn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *The Town's Inn was recently featured in the "Hell's Kitchen" reality TV show when Gordon Ramsey and his crew did a makeover on the business.*

**The Quarter Way Inn**  
 Between Marion and Bland, VA, 276.522.4603  
[quarterwayinn.com](http://quarterwayinn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *This seasonal business is closed for remainder of 2016 but will reopen in April 2017.*

**Open Arms Hostel**  
 Luray, VA, 540.244.5652  
[openarmsluray.com](http://openarmsluray.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Just like the name implies, Open Arms welcomes visitors who are hiking, biking, running, or touring the local sites.*

**The Farmhouse Inn**  
 Rangeley, ME, 207.864.3113  
[thefarmhousemaine.com](http://thefarmhousemaine.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *The Farmhouse isn't exactly new, but owners Shane and Stacey Vorous have reinvented the place to provide a relaxed and rustic atmosphere.*



The café at the Town's Inn. Photo by Alex Uhlenhopp

**IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UPSCALE**  
**Martha Washington Inn**  
 Abingdon, VA, 276.628.3161  
[themartha.com](http://themartha.com)  
**ATC STAFF SAYS** *"I've met section hikers who raved about staying at the Martha, getting massages and walking over to the Barter Theater for a play mid-hike."*

**General Francis Marion Hotel**  
 Marion, VA, 276.783.4800  
[gfmhotel.com](http://gfmhotel.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Ranked one of National Geographic's Top 150 Hotels in North America, this place retains the ambiance of the 1920s.*

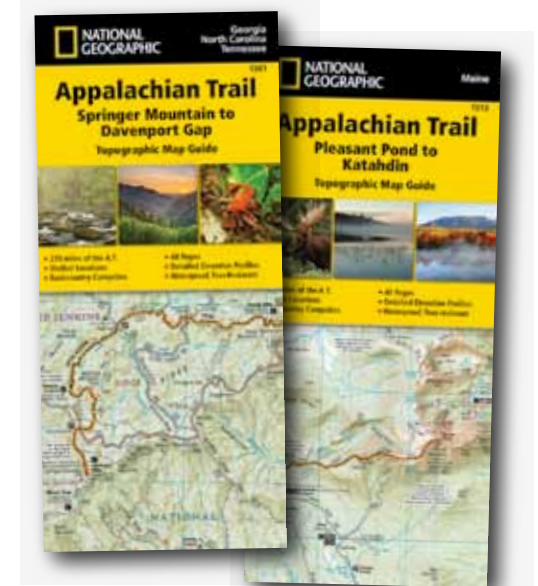
**Collins House Bed and Breakfast**  
 Marion, VA, 276.781.0250  
[collinshouseinn.com](http://collinshouseinn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Collins House is walking distance to the historic Lincoln Theater, and if you time it right, you could catch some bluegrass and old-time music.*



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**\*Mountain Crossings**  
 Blairsville, GA  
[mountaincrossings.com](http://mountaincrossings.com)

**\*Top of Georgia Hostel & Hiking Center**  
 Hiwassee, GA  
[topofgeorgiahostel.com](http://topofgeorgiahostel.com)

**\*Hikers Inn**  
 Damascus, VA  
[hikersindamascus.com](http://hikersindamascus.com)

**\*Big Walker Motel**  
 Bland, VA  
[facebook.com/bigwalkerroe](https://facebook.com/bigwalkerroe)

**\*Mountain Home Bed & Breakfast**  
 Front Royal, VA  
[facebook.com/mountainhomeinfrontroyal](https://facebook.com/mountainhomeinfrontroyal)

**\*Harpers Ferry Vacation Rentals**  
 Harpers Ferry, WV  
[harpersferryvacationrentals.com](http://harpersferryvacationrentals.com)

**\*Harpers Ferry Hostel and Campground**  
 Knoxville, MD  
[hiosa.org/hostels/maryland/knoxville/harpers-ferry](http://hiosa.org/hostels/maryland/knoxville/harpers-ferry)

**\*Mountain Village Farm B&B**  
 Kingfield, ME  
[mountainvillageinn.com](http://mountainvillageinn.com)

In addition to these businesses, [Whiteblaze.net](http://Whiteblaze.net) maintains a comprehensive list of hostels and lodging offerings, and you can always do more research by using the *Thru-Hikers' Companion*, published annually by the ATC in cooperation with the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association and sold at the Ultimate A.T. Store: [atctrailstore.org](http://atctrailstore.org).

**Deer Head Inn**  
 Delaware Water Gap, PA  
 570.424.2000  
[dearheadinn.com](http://dearheadinn.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *The inn is the oldest continuously running jazz club in the country, so be sure to check out the famous jazz jams.*

**IF UNIQUENESS IS YOUR THING**  
**Holy Family Church Hostel**  
 Pearisburg, VA, 540.921.3547  
[holymfamilypearisburg.org](http://holymfamilypearisburg.org)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *This is one of the oldest church hostels along the A.T. and is run by a small Catholic church. Donations are accepted.*

**Three Springs Hostel**  
 Vesuvius, VA, 434.922.7069  
[threespringshostel.com](http://threespringshostel.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Three Springs is situated on 11 acres in the George Washington National Forest. The owners are organic farmers, and intend for the property to become a sustainable farm.*

**IF YOU WANT TO SEE IT BEFORE IT'S GONE**  
**\*Laurel Lodge**  
 Harpers Ferry, WV, 304.535.2886  
[laurellodge.com](http://laurellodge.com)  
**NEED TO KNOW** *Laurel Lodge is outdoor oriented and caters to hikers and cyclists. The owner, Chris Craig, is continuing a section hike of the A.T. and Laurel Lodge will close for business at the end of this year.*

**OR REST YOUR HEAD AT ONE OF THESE HIKER-DEDICATED AND COZY LODGING BUSINESSES**  
**\*Blood Mountain Cabins and Country Store**  
 Blairsville, GA  
[bloodmountain.com](http://bloodmountain.com)



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# TRAILHEAD

\* ATC DIRT \*

## WILDERNESS SKILLS



Members of the Conservation Leadership Corps — the product of a partnership between the ATC and Groundwork USA — take a break during their Wilderness Skills Institute training in western North Carolina, where they spent 10 weeks learning and exploring numerous facets of work done on the A.T.



## Successful First Season for Monson Visitor Center

As the busy hiking season comes to a close, the newest A.T. Visitor Center in Monson, Maine, has had a great first season with more than 2,000 visitors. The staff of the center looks forward to reopening in June of 2017 and to continue to welcome, inform, and help hikers prepare for the unique circumstances and environment in the last section of the Trail, which extends through the boundaries of Baxter State Park.

For more information visit: [appalachiantrail.org/visitorcenter](http://appalachiantrail.org/visitorcenter)



A.T. hikers “Crash,” “Red,” and “Night Owl” at the visitor center. photo by Patricia Harding



## HUNTING SEASON SAFETY

Hunting regulations vary widely along the Appalachian Trail. Although the A.T. is a unit of the National Park System, it traverses a patchwork quilt of public lands managed for many different purposes. Hunting is permitted within close proximity of some parts of the A.T. in every Trail state. Many segments of the A.T. in Pennsylvania north of the Cumberland Valley and a few miles of the A.T. through the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management area in northern Virginia are game lands managed primarily for hunting. Both hikers and hunters are advised to “know before you go.”

- Consult a current official A.T. map to learn which agencies own and regulate the land
- Know local hunting seasons
- Wear a blaze-orange hat, clothing, or gear visible from 360 degrees
- Avoid deer firearm season (usually October through January) by hiking in one of these national parks: C & O Canal National Historical Park, Maryland; Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia; Shenandoah National Park, Virginia; Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia; Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

For more information and to see ATC’s “2016-2017 Hunting Season Guide by State” visit: [appalachiantrail.org/hunting](http://appalachiantrail.org/hunting)



A hiker with blaze orange on her pack on the Trail in North Carolina/Tennessee. photo by Laurie Potteiger



# BEAR IN MIND

WITH BLACK BEAR POPULATIONS ALONG THE A.T. CORRIDOR ON THE UPTICK, BOTH HIKER AND BEAR SAFETY ARE OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE

T

here's a lot to love about black bears, but what bear specialist Jaime Sajecki of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries admires most is their ingenuity.

Early in her career, Sajecki was working with a team of researchers utilizing traps to study bears. "On the first morning we found a tiny bear cub screaming," she said. They released it, but the next morning they found the same cub in the trap. This time taking a nap. "We guessed that the mama bear was using it as a safe place to keep her cub while she looked for food. It seems the mom realized there was a free meal and that the cub would be safe. It was so cool."

Sajecki has been managing Virginia's black bear population and educating the public about bears since 2007. When she arrived, the state was in the middle of a bear boom. From 2000 to 2010, the bear population grew by as much as 10 percent in some regions of the state. According to Sajecki, bear numbers in Virginia have stabilized in the last few years, but other regions throughout the A.T. corridor are noticing an uptick in the number of black bears. In Vermont, for example, the state's fish and wildlife division estimates a population of 6,000 bears, which is at the upper end of their population goals.

And with more bears in the woods, there's a greater probability a hiker will meet one on the Trail. "It's inevitable that those interactions will be more frequent," says the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) director of landscape conservation Dennis Shaffer. "The results of those meetings — whether they're positive or very negative — will depend on how well we educate and prepare hikers."

In fact, the ATC and partner organizations are not only taking steps to ensure the safety of hikers, but are considering the wellbeing of the bears too. "Black bears are these amazing animals and a huge part of the A.T. landscape," says Laura Belleville, the ATC's senior director of conservation. "At the end of the day, we need to be thoughtful about our interactions with bears. Too much of it will impact the species and impact the recreation experience."

Sajecki believes that the black bear's greatest quality — their cleverness — is the creature's burden too. "Bears are really good at adapting, especially when natural food sources are low. They figure out how to get into stuff and get away with it," she explains. "They're so smart that they're hard to outwit. Unfortunately, if there are too many negative interactions with bears then they often end up being perceived as a nuisance. For people, it's inconvenient and annoying."

BY JACK IGELMAN





## POPULATION FLUCTUATION

A century ago, a chance meeting with a bear in Virginia, or anywhere, was an extraordinarily uncommon experience in the wake of unregulated hunting of bears for food and hides, and intensive timber harvesting and land clearing up and down the East Coast. In Virginia, says Sajecki, the bear population was virtually wiped out, with only a tiny remnant of the species holed up in remote areas of the mountains and near the coast. But over the course of the century, large-scale land purchases by the federal government to create national parks and forests, as well as sustainable hunting regulations, helped secure more bear habitat and the population began to rebound.

But since bears are notoriously slow reproducers (they have the second lowest birth rates of any North American land mammal), it can take a very long time for populations to rebound. "Starting in the 1970s, and for the next few decades, the bear population started to grow," explains Sajecki. In 1957 there were approximately 1,000 bears. And following the population surge in the 2000, the number of bears has likely stabilized in Virginia. In Virginia today, there are about 17,000. "It's hard to tell what's happening on a yearly basis," says Sajecki. Changing hunting regulation, weather variability, and other factors can impact birth rates and population. "From where we stand now we have a stable population, but that may not be the case two or three years from now."

While the number of bears on the landscape matters, Sajecki says that experts also pay attention to the landscape's "biological carrying capacity." In other words, the number of bears the environment can handle. In addition to factors such as the size of the area and the availability of food, it also depends on the number of bears acceptable to people. "A corn farmer may not want any, but a wildlife enthusiast may want a thousand bears," explains Sajecki. "When you exceed the biological capacity, the population threshold becomes a function of tolerance. Unfortunately, bears tend to be way more tolerant of us, than we are of them. If there are bears tearing into packs and trash cans, then tolerance becomes lower."



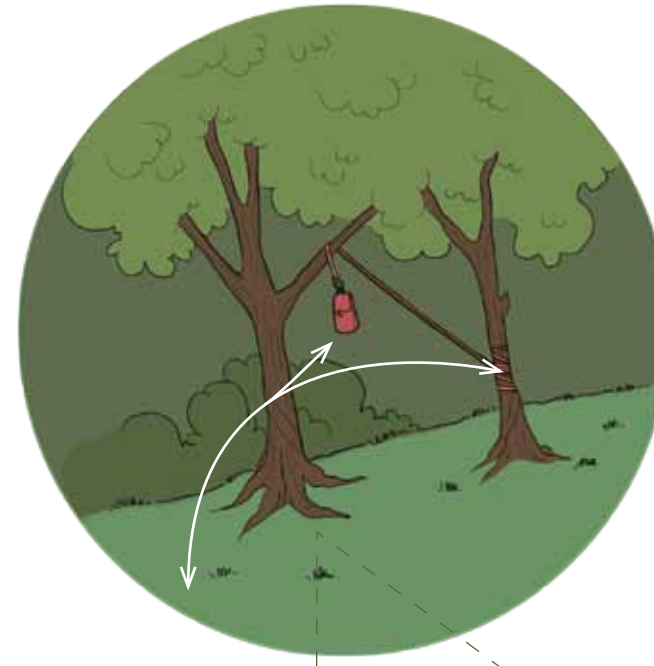
The U.S. Forest Service recommends: "Don't leave food, beverages, or packs unattended even for a few minutes. It's an open invitation for everything from ground squirrels, gray jays, ravens, and even black bears to stop by and make off with the loot." Black bear with backpack. Photo by Ben Benvie

## COHABITATION EDUCATION

Dave Hardy, the director of trail programs with the Green Mountain Club (GMC) in Vermont says there was a spike in the number of bear-related incidents at their most popular camp sites on Camel's Hump on the Long Trail. "In the past, we've done very little to deal with black bears. I've seen very few in the woods and I've been doing this for 24 years," said Hardy. "For us, the jump in bear incidents highlighted the fact that [some hikers] haven't been practicing clean camping. As an organization, we felt we needed to raise awareness and take stronger measures at more frequented sites."

While bear populations may indeed be growing in Vermont, Hardy believes that development may be putting a squeeze on their habitat, pushing them toward easy food pickings at popular campsites and shelters. In response to the incidents at Camel's Hump, the GMC installed bear boxes and focused resources on raising awareness of bears to their membership and the public. Hardy says the heightened attention may have paid off. Despite a dry summer, the number of incidents decreased at Camel's Hump.

And while bear visits at campsites on the A.T. in the southern part of the state have been minimal, it may just be a matter of time before they begin showing up. "The sites on Camel's Hump are busy, but nothing compared to some of the A.T. sites in southern Vermont," says Hardy. "We haven't seen it crop up [on the A.T.] yet, but we're waiting for it. The primary objective is to keep hikers and black bears safe. A big part of this is that people need to be better informed, and as Trail managers we need to be willing to help that process along through education and, sometimes, management."



Keep bear bag 6 feet from tree trunk, 12 feet from the ground, and 6 feet from limb above — or use bear canisters

Hang food at least 200 feet from sleeping area

200 FEET

200 FEET

200 FEET

# COEXISTING

EDUCATING BACKPACKERS TO FINE TUNE THEIR "CAMPCRAFT" SKILLS IS VITAL TO KEEPING BLACK BEARS FROM PEOPLE AND VICE VERSA ON THE TRAIL



Designate your tent and sleeping area as a food and beverage-free zone. Don't sleep in the clothes you cooked in; hang them with your food

Keep sleeping area, cooking and fire area, and hanging food 200 feet from each other

Shaffer of the ATC agrees that preparation is vital, but not nearly as easy as it sounds. He points out that coexisting with black bears hasn't been a part of the management conversation along much of the Trail.

"These are big changes even for most experienced outdoors people. Many have built their habits around not needing to worry about bears," says Shaffer.

### CONFRONTATION CORRELATION

One exception to that is the 70 miles of A.T. across the spine of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the Tennessee/North Carolina state line, where Smokey Bear is the park's mascot. As a result, backpackers and Trail managers in the Smokies are typically better educated and prepared to deal with bears and minimize interactions.

But not only are maintaining bear systems expensive, they're often ineffective. The ATC's southern regional director Morgan Sommerville says that for every system park managers have implemented — from elaborate food hanging systems to boxes — the bears have a solution. The most effective system has been food lockers; however, misuse and trash left by humans has made them unusable. "What we want is for people to not take bears for granted and to take greater responsibility to sever the ties of bears associating people with food," says Sommerville who is an advocate of packing in his own bear-resistant food canisters to protect food and carry out waste. In fact, using bear canisters are recommended from Springer Mountain to Damascus on the Trail. "Ultimately, we want to avoid any serious injuries to hikers," says Sommerville.

Last March, a hiker on the A.T. in the Smokies was bit on the leg by a bear while sleeping in a tent, but the exact number of bear encounters on the A.T. isn't clear. The ATC's Trail information specialist Tenny Webster hasn't yet established a reliable method to aggregate reported encounters from their 80-plus partners. However, he's begun to compile bear encounters and incidents that have led to some sort of action, such as a Trail or shelter closure. Last year, the numbers seemed to be up some. "And those are just the encounters that I end up reading about in my inbox," says Webster.

Sommerville and Webster agree that educating backpackers to fine tune their campcraft skills is vital to keeping bears from people on the Trail. Skills such as making a critter-proof bear hang, picking up bits of micro-trash at a campsite, or digging a proper cat hole for human waste.

While it stands to reason that novice hikers are less likely to be prepared, wise-to-ways backpackers could stand a refresher too. "Let's face it — even a really experienced hiker will make mistakes, drop their guard, or be lulled into complacency from time to time," says Webster. He adds that while leaving a sloppy campsite or shelter will place a hiker at greater personal risk, it also creates more risk for future Trail hikers.

Indeed, while the possibility of a human tragedy on the Trail is alarming, for the bear, the consequences of becoming hooked on Pop-Tarts and jerky can be grave too. "We have to grapple with how to deal with bears that become too comfortable around humans, whether it's hanging around shelters and campsites, ravaging food bags, biting people, or worse," says Webster who points out that dangerous bear encounters can lead to euthanizing the animal.

### ADMIRATION & PRESERVATION


Nancy Bell of the Conservation Fund in Vermont says that most bears are extremely reclusive animals and will avoid people at all costs, but once they find a human food source they become habituated, which is a risky proposition for a wild animal. "Food is the source of their existence to survive and reproduce," she says. "Bears are opportunistic and have an extremely keen sense of smell. So once they know there's a food source, then that's the end of the bear."

While high-impact camping practices may be a trigger for bear activity, there may also be reasons why bears are looking for food in the first place. In particular, aging forests that lack of variety of aged tree growth can impact bear behavior. "If you have mature forest with tall oaks and plenty of acorns then bears won't have a problem finding food. But if the oaks don't produce, food bags with a buffet of interesting things all of a sudden look pretty good to a bear," says Sajecki.

One solution is to more effectively manage forests for mixed-aged stands — from early successional habitat to old growth — that provide a range of fare so bears and other animals aren't dependent on just one food source. This is precisely why dealing with more frequent bear encounters with humans on the Trail requires more than just a low-impact ethic, hanging food, or hiding it in boxes.

Bell helped spearhead the Green Mountain Bear Corridor initiative, a project spanning two decades that conserved more than 20,000 acres in Vermont to protect bear habitat. She explains that bears require large, individual home ranges that can span from six to 60 square miles per bear. So the constant threat of forest fragmentation due to pipelines, highways, and other types of development can impact a bear's ability to find food. "It really underscores the need to secure wildlife corridors," says Bell, who points out that the Vermont initiative was successful because it developed a broad coalition of support from public land managers, private landowners, and other stakeholders.

Shaffer says that coexisting with bears — from a large landscape perspective or at a campsite — epitomizes one of the central challenges that the ATC and its partners face in trying to manage the Trail experience: getting people outdoors while at the same time, leaving nature intact. As a college student, Shaffer recalls a weekend trip to the Smokies in which a bear poked his nose into their tent. After a quick sniff, it fled. An experience that could easily be classified as the most rewarding or most horrifying incident on the Trail, depending on your point of view.

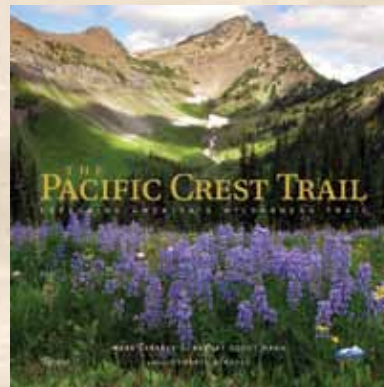
"Once the bear heard us, he had no desire to be around us," says Shaffer. "For me, there's a mixed bag of fear and awe. Bears are so rarely seen that it was an incredible experience. We absolutely want people to enjoy nature but, at the same time, it really underscores the importance of preparation and having a deep sense of respect for these beautiful and majestic creatures." 

For more information about black bear awareness and best practices for hiking and camping safely (for bears and humans) visit: [appalachiantrail.org/safety](http://appalachiantrail.org/safety)



## LOOKING FOR THAT SPECIAL, STUNNING GIFT?

1



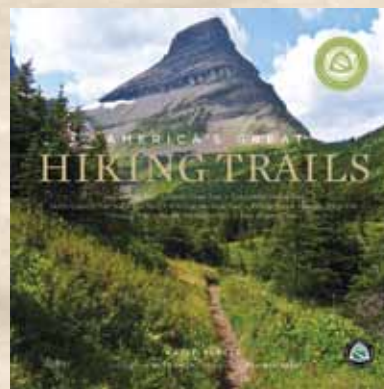
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By Mark Larabee and Barney Scout Mann with a foreword by Cheryl Strayed

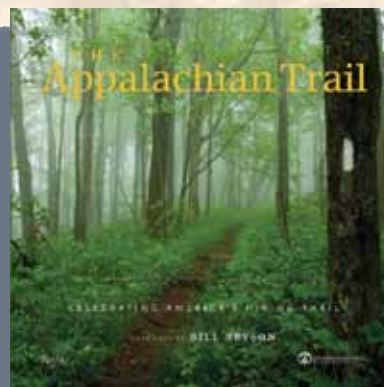
2



2 *America's Great Hiking Trails*

By Karen Berger with a foreword by Bill McKibben

3



3 *The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating America's Hiking Trail*

By Brian B. King with a foreword by Bill Bryson

Each large-format volume book is \$45 to ATC members. All three are available for shipment after mid-October.

Buy direct from the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store and ensure a maximum return to the Trail

TWO DOZEN NEW PRODUCTS, from books to blankets, are en route to the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store — be sure to look for your new catalogue in the mail in early November! And find all of them at the Ultimate A.T. Store, which has a new look and easier navigation.

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# EXPLORING *nature*

AUTISM IS A GROUP OF COMPLEX BRAIN DEVELOPMENT DISORDERS, AND MORE THAN ONE MILLION CHILDREN IN AMERICA ARE IN THE AUTISM SPECTRUM. THIS IS THE STORY OF TWO FAMILIES WHO FOUND A SANCTUARY FOR THEIR CHILDREN ON THE TRAIL.



## NICHOLAS BRAHM

It's not unusual to hear Nicholas Brahm singing a song for all the woods to hear when he's hiking. He's not picky with his song repertoire. It could be Jingle Bells (in July), or a car commercial jingle he's heard on TV or a heavy metal Kiss song.

Whatever pops into his eleven-year-old head. He memorizes every jingle and song he hears and feels moved to express himself when he hikes. Yet he has no other functioning speech.

Perhaps this is Nicholas's way of expressing the joy that he feels while on the Trail, in the woods. Singing is sure-fire proof that one is a happy soul, for he has no other way to express himself verbally. Singing makes Nicholas's father, Rick, thrilled because Nicholas is autistic, and out here, on the Trail, Nicholas shines the brightest. And so, the New Jersey Sussex County family returns to the A.T. again and again.

Nicholas began his hiking life as an infant, in a child carrier on his father's back, along with his older brother, Tyler. It wasn't until Nick turned one that he was diagnosed as severely autistic. The trips to the woods didn't stop after that — they increased. "I knew being outside was good for [both of] them," Rick shares. "No one had to tell me that, I just knew it. We had to do something to help, and the Trail was Nick's happy place. It is necessary for a feeling of normalcy as a family."

At five years old, in New Jersey's Culver's Gap area, they discovered Nick's intense love of scaling rocks. They had been sticking to safer, smoother dirt roads



Nick (foreground) with his brother Tyler on the Trail near the Massachusetts border. Photo by Richard Brahm

BY CINDY ROSS





From top: Nick and Tyler take a break at the ATC's Boiling Springs Visitor Center in Pennsylvania during a hike in the area; The boys take on Knife's Edge in Pennsylvania  
Photo by Richard Brahm



and then rail trails up to this point. Clamoring uphill, ever over rough sections, became great fun for Nick. He never trips or stumbles or falls. That's amazing, because autistic folks can be challenged physically as well as mentally. "Nick might be walking down a smooth dirt road," his father says, "and that one stray rock will trip him up — maybe because his guard is down, but on the Trail, he's focused and he's happy."



Autistic kids have a tendency to wander off, which is a real concern for a parent when on the A.T. in the wilds. But with the local sheriff's department program called Project Life Saver, Nicholas wears a tracking device. He was slowly introduced to it, with the help of his school and his parents, to help him get used to wearing the device. Together, with his vividly bright tie dye T-shirts that he al-

ways wears hiking, he won't be able to get lost too quickly. He rarely gets too far ahead of his family and if so, his older brother just catches up to him.

Nick's father knows how much joy hiking brings to his son before they even set foot on the Trail. When Nick sees his father putting on his hiking clothing and boots, he is immediately ready to explore. When they are hiking, Nick never tires, balks, or complains, no matter how rough the terrain. Last summer the boys hiked seven days in a row, covering seven miles at a shot, and Nick — and Tyler — loved every minute.

Another way his father knows hiking is a good thing for his son, is Nick normally hates wearing shoes and opts for going barefoot whenever possible — wearing his hiking boots, however, makes him very happy. And because of all the superb exercise and fresh air they enjoy on their hikes, Nick sleeps much easier at night, which can be a challenge for the family of an autistic child. They can now knock out 10- to 12-mile-days without a problem. Nick's mom, Lynne, is an antique "picker" and explores venues for her business while the men in her family hike, dropping them off and retrieving them after their mileage is completed.

Nick is not a fan of an out and back route so his dad tries to select loops or "lolly-pop" trail designs to keep him interested. It comes as no surprise that both the boys' goal, is to complete the whole Appalachian Trail someday. They have already hiked everything consecutively from Virginia's Blackburn Center to Vermont's Route 9. A more immediate goal is to hike in each state and re-hike New Jersey for the fourth time.

"Nick will, on occasion, stop and look at a white blaze. It's so strange; he has passed thousands with no reaction and out of nowhere he points one out. Autism really is a puzzle," says Rick. Another, newer goal is to incorporate camping and then



Carson and his mom (with Carson's nephew, Elijah) at Max Patch in North Carolina  
Photo by Melissa Hodges

backpacking. "Nick loves the subsequent nature of the Trail. The footpath stretching before him draws him out as though it's coaxing him to follow," says Rick. "The exploring nature in him wants to see what is around the next bend. I love the fact that the A.T. takes us to places we would never normally go."

As far as other outdoor activities go, Rick isn't sure about cycling — he fears he may not be able to get him to stop. Paddling is another winner though, so Nick enjoys tandem kayaking with his dad and also adores swimming. Nothing quite beats hiking, however, and the Brahm boys will continue racking up the miles, the states, and the happiness as they work at their goal. Tyler has also benefited and recently won a citizenship award at his middle school. "We feel that because he is out hiking and not [so heavily connected to technology] he has become a quality individual," explains Rick. "Dealing with his brother has given him quite a bit of [broader] understanding and he even volunteers at Nick's special needs soccer team. Hiking, for all

of us, in all seasons, is a key to staying pretty healthy. Autism has forced us to live a more 'outside the box' lifestyle, but we do have fun."

## CARSON BURCH

For Carson Burch, the act of looking at a tree in the woods and then tracing the trunk up to the canopy does huge things. It's a simple act that most of us do automatically when we are out hiking, but for a boy who has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism, it is therapeutic.

It began when Carson's mother, Melanie, questioned her son's continued delays in fine motor coordination specific to handwriting. After taking Carson to a developmental optometrist, she learned that although her young son had perfect visual acuity (20/20 vision), he had delayed visual skills in the areas of eye tracking and teaming, convergence, and near-far focusing. It is believed that Carson's poor visual-motor skills caused problems in school when he looked up from his notebook on his desk to the blackboard. Carson's eyes could not



Carson looking pleased during a hike at Yorktown Battlefield in Colonial National Historical Park. Photo by Melanie Burch

“HIKING, FOR ALL OF US, IN ALL SEASONS, IS A KEY TO STAYING PRETTY HEALTHY. AUTISM HAS FORCED US TO LIVE A MORE ‘OUTSIDE THE BOX’ LIFESTYLE, BUT WE DO HAVE FUN.”

efficiently make the transition in focusing. Also, although Carson read well above his grade level, the smaller print of higher-level reading books highlighted his eye tracking problems. Carson’s mom thought vision therapy would be prescribed, but was floored when she received the very unusual advice from the developmental optometrist to, “take him outside. He would benefit most from being in the natural world and walking.”

Melanie is a science teacher who has been in

love with nature all her life and has raised her children there. She was no stranger to knowing how our senses are incredibly stimulated in the outdoors, as opposed to a limiting classroom. Carson’s form of autism includes a challenge with how his brain organizes the information coming in through his senses. He has a visual-vestibular dysfunction that involves the part of his inner ear system, which works with the brain and his sight to control balance and eye movements. In the natural world, Carson’s eyes are challenged to focus differently and work together. Carson naturally looks up and down and side to side as he tracks the abundance of movement that is constantly happening outdoors. The muscles in his eyes actually grow stronger as they “track.”

So Melanie began to hold “class” in the big outdoors — hiking trails and stopping at Carson’s favorite spots to read books. They also hiked along the beach, where they built primitive shade shelters and read in them; they routinely conducted learning in the great big arena of the natural world.

As far as hiking goes, the family’s activities always included hiking, as Melanie loved the sport her whole life and shared it with Carson beginning when he was a few weeks old. “For all practical purposes, he has grown up on [hiking] trails,” Melanie explains. “At first, Carson was a passive hiker, either carried by me or pushed in a jogging stroller. As he began to walk, our hikes were sometimes shorter, but always included him meandering and leading the way.”

Although Carson was not formerly diagnosed with autism until he was seven, the early signs were present. Carson’s most prominent issues were in the areas of speech and sensory processing. Early on, Melanie found that having her son outside and simply listening to birds seemed to be soothing. Many days he enjoyed listening to a bird call CD when he was inside playing.

“At first, it was challenging to motivate Carson to want to hike,” his mother shares. “Often times, the first mile was the absolute worst. He would throw fits, sit down and refuse to budge, and complain incessantly. I pushed Carson because I knew it would help him develop a more efficiently functioning sensory system.” But over the years and many miles in his hiking sandals (he prefers sandals with socks as opposed to tight hiking boots), Carson’s creative mind transforms each hike into a fantasy that comforts him. Melanie claims that Carson has never been afraid to dance in the rain — unless there is thunder.

So when the National Park Service neared their 100th anniversary, Melanie challenged her son to

become involved. Their young neighbor and friend, Katie, had fallen very ill with Spinal Muscular Atrophy- Type 2 (SMA) and was wheelchair bound and on a ventilator. In order to raise funds and awareness of what she was going through, as well as celebrating our national park system, Melanie suggested they set a goal of hiking 100 miles in July 2016.

Mother and son kept a log of all their trips and mileage and recorded their progress. They experienced a very slow start to their 100-mile month as they had to deal with an intensely hot summer and excessive rain, making it more uncomfortable than usual. But “Carson was a trooper,” his mother reported. When motivation hit an all-time low, the reasoning, “let’s do it for Katie,” helped them rise to the occasion and continue, because they could and Katie could not.

Carson is highly intelligent and completely aware that although his 100-mile hiking goal was a challenge, it was also good for him. It was making him more coordinated bilaterally, as he utilized his left/right discrimination process as he walked (even tying his shoes is a challenge). Carson knows he needs to be challenged physically and the Trail is a perfect place for this to occur. Like Nick, Carson too prefers a loop trail as opposed to an out and back design.

Carson is quick to comment, however, “I hate walking/hiking because it makes my feet feel like they are going to fall off.” Still, his mother is quick to point out to him that his feet have always seemed to remain attached to his legs. I am not convinced about his supposed “dislike” for the sport considering his 100-mile-challenge presented him with a big dose of adventure and novelty, which his mother admits he thrives on.

Both mother and son learned a lot about perseverance through the experience and, not surprisingly, the impetus to set more goals for themselves and even bigger adventures is a future plan. Like Nick, Carson has his eyes set on the entire Appalachian Trail. He says, “Mom, why can’t we just hike the A.T. and get it all over with at once? After all, it is long enough.”

Cindy Ross is currently finishing up work on a new book, *A BIG Life — Adventures in Creative Parenting*, about how her family used experiential education to learn. She first learned how beneficial the Trail and the natural world is on her A.T. thru-hike in 1978/79. In her spare time, she leads recovering Veterans from VA hospitals into the wilds on healing adventures, through her non-profit, River House PA.



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Appalachian Trail strip map, four issues of *A.T. Journeys*, discounts at the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store and other select retailers, volunteer opportunities, and invitations to special events. Best of all, you’ll help us protect an irreplaceable American treasure!

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A.T. FALL BY JOHN CAMMEROTA



# SWEAT EQUITY

GETTING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE WORKING ON TRAILS AND BRINGING MORE FACES OF THE GLOBAL MAJORITY TO THE A.T.



Historically, the type of person swinging an axe in the woods has a beard on his face and a complexion as white as wonder bread. The lack of diversity in the outdoor stewardship game has been obvious and something everyone wants to help change. Along with being mostly men, it's no secret that the majority of people working in and enjoying our public lands are white. The National Park Service's most recent demographic studies said that 78 percent of people on trails were white and only around 16 percent were black and/or Hispanic. Much to my delight, 2016 was a very different year.

As a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Next Generation Advisory Council, which is made up of some very empowered and impassioned minds focused on getting more young people working on trails and seeing more faces of the global majority on the A.T., I feel fortunate that we are not in it alone.

At the start of the summer, I was lucky enough to attend the Wilderness Skills Institute (WSI) in western North Carolina. This two-week outdoor education extravaganza is the best place to get a crash course in Wilderness Management, Leave No Trace, or to achieve your dream of becoming a crosscut sawyer. This conference is the product of tireless efforts from the ATC, the

U.S. Forest Service, and Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS). The best part about the WSI is that it's free to all attendees.

The Wilderness Skills Institute attracts some "rock stars" of the recreational ecology and wilderness realms. The two-week course is packed with all sorts of folks who love to look after and care for their public lands. The



Clockwise from above: Stephen Eren with fellow Next Generation Advisory Council members Kelly Garvy and Kristen Murphy on an A.T. outing; CLC member Jerimiah Roy takes a break from Trail work with a SWEAT crew volunteer; Stephen (front right) with fellow Next Generation members Brady Adcock, Marcela Maldonado, and Tony Richardson on the trail to the Len Foote Hike Inn; Jerimiah at Max Patch; Kelly, Kristen, and Stephen in Amicalola Falls State Park

BY STEPHEN EREN





From left: CLC member Niasha Hamilton gives her Leave No Trace topic talk during the Master Educator outing; CLC members celebrate at the end of their Leave No Trace Master Educator class

classes, sweats together, stinks together, and then camps together. There were no cultures colliding, but rather a jubilation that an awesome program like the CLC exists. “There were so many people that made everything feel comfortable. They didn’t make you feel like an outsider,” says CLC member Adriana Rodas of Elizabeth, New Jersey. Niasha Hamilton of Niagara Falls, New York got to connect to people she normally wouldn’t have crossed paths with, “I met some really great people with the same outlook on nature as me, which can be hard to find living in the city.”

The most important part of exposing young people to a professional world is giving them the tools to be successful in it. The CLC started out their season with a broad set of classes to give them some of those tools. At the Wilderness Skills Institute, CLC members acted out scenarios with fake but realistic wounds in their Wilderness First Aid class, got to learn the heralded honor of using a crosscut saw, and also learned about backcountry ethics and minimizing impacts while enjoying our public lands in the Leave No Trace training class.

After the WSI training ended, the CLC members got a chance to test their new trail skills immediately. They spent several weeks in the backcountry for two sessions on two of the ATC’s Trail Crews — the Smokies Wilderness Elite Appalachian Trail Crew (SWEAT) and the Konnarock Trail Crew. While with Konnarock, they helped to relocate more than 1,400 feet of the A.T. outside of Hot Springs, North Carolina. On the SWEAT crew, they worked on some of the most isolated places along the Trail. The group shadowed ridgerunners, practicing their education and interpretation skills in Virginia and brought their personal land ethos to a new level.

The CLC members then got the chance to upgrade their Leave No Trace certifications to Master Educators in the Grayson Highlands. Afterward, they chatted with hikers, engaging them on having fun outside without damaging the land. Learning the importance of citizen-science was another fundamental component of the program. They volunteered with MYLES of Science, a program in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park offering students opportunities to hike along the A.T. while they collect data for citizen-science projects related to climate change and acid deposition impacts and surveyed salamanders and trees in the Smokies. CLC member Lucy Crespo, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, enjoyed the field data collection the most. “My favorite part was working at the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center in the Smokies, studying the bioindicator species and collecting data on how the trees are doing throughout the season,” she says.

They blistered their hands removing invasive species in Virginia and around Fontana Village outside of the Smokies. They also learned more than just about the physical labor that goes into Trail maintenance and construction, but about how the Trail is managed as a whole while meeting with members




of some of the 31 volunteer Trail maintaining clubs, National Park Service and Forest Service leaders, and a full range of partners that care for their slice of heaven between Georgia and Maine. Over two and a half months, the group got to see exactly how 2,190 miles of the A.T. are held together. Whether they had a full picture of the Appalachian Trail before the summer doesn’t matter; they do now.

Breaking through walls and obstacles that may have kept some populations from working and recreating along the Trail will not happen overnight. It will certainly take more than one Trail crew and we know that. The partnership between Groundwork USA and the ATC is a crucial pillar in the ATC’s Broader Relevancy Initiative.

Though their 10-week program has come to an end, the CLC members are far from done. Adriana Rodas was invited to teach Leave No Trace practices to her local Girl Scout troop. There, she’ll get to educate her friends and future generations on the importance of limiting your impact in the outdoors. Lucy Crespo

is ready to shift her professional focus to the woods. “[This summer] convinced me more that I want to pursue an outdoor career someday,” Lucy says. After such a positive experience working with Great Smoky Mountains National Park Superintendent Cassius Cash, Jeremiah Roy has a new life goal of becoming a park ranger. Niasha Hamilton wants to help change the current outdoor zeitgeist and help add some new faces to the woods. “I’m planning on using my psychology degree to find a way to make races of all kinds feel comfortable enough to come enjoy the beautiful views and nature that the world has to offer.” As exciting as the last few months for CLC members were, I’m even more excited about their future. The truth is our public lands need more help than ever.

From our parks to our forests, public lands are under a lot of stress. We see it from invasive species to overcrowding. Present and future problems are complex and diverse. We need a new generation with diverse backgrounds and perspectives to help keep our national treasures bountiful. 

Stephen Eren is a member of the ATC’s Next Generation Advisory Council — a diverse group of leaders of ages 18 to 28 who encourage their peers to become involved in the management, preservation, and stewardship of the A.T. The ATC is dedicated to involving millennials and seeking input from this generation to explore effective methods of advocacy, conservation, and the creation of stewardship ethics. Stephen is a native of Durham, North Carolina and a 2011 graduate of Virginia Tech, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Conservation and Recreation Management and minored in Forestry.

For more information about the CLC and the Next Generation Advisory Council visit: [appalachiantrail.org/leadership](http://appalachiantrail.org/leadership)



On the A.T. near  
Hampton, Tennessee

## DIVERSITY AND LIGHT

A landscape photographer for almost 10 years, Malcolm MacGregor often retreats from his home in Raleigh, North Carolina to the Appalachian Trail with his camera, wife, and two children in tow. Born and raised at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, and having lived in east Tennessee, he is constantly drawn to the A.T. for its diversity in vistas and scenic opportunities. He spends much of his time in the mountains with his family hiking and camping, but at night he heads out alone with his camera to capture his favorite subjects: the movement of the stars and the early morning light of sunrises.

[www.photomalcolm.com](http://www.photomalcolm.com)



Overmountain Shelter,  
Roan Mountain, North Carolina



Milky Way — A.T. Roan Highlands,  
North Carolina/Tennessee



## BALTIMORE JACK



Baltimore Jack photo by Richard Bailey; Jack at ATC headquarters during his '95 thru-hike

L.A. TARLIN - "BALTIMORE JACK"  
50 Gloucester St. #2  
Boston, MA. 02115

"There is a road, no simple highway,  
Between the dawn and the dark of night,  
And if you go no one may follow,  
That path is for your steps alone."

# Your Steps Alone

By Bill O'Brien

**IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO QUOTE A** Grateful Dead song at the beginning of a rumination of "Baltimore Jack" Tarlin. Jack passed away unexpectedly this past May in North Carolina, catching the Trail community by surprise on the eve of Trail Days, where he could always be

counted on to hold court in his usual way. In the past few years he was looking more and more like Jerry Garcia, who co-wrote the above lyrics to "Ripple." Sadly, Jack met an untimely end just as Garcia did. Born in '58, the man we never knew as Leonard Adam Tarlin would've been 58 in November.

Jack was a man of many words. If there was an issue, question, or comment about the Appalachian Trail, Jack could unleash a torrent of words to express his views, the length of his dialogue not necessarily equal to his grasp of all the facts. But that didn't stop him, and we loved him for it. Sure, he could prolong a meeting like no one else, but looking back now we are going to miss how he could string together a million sentences without ever taking a breath in between. I always thought he should have gone into politics. In his native greater Boston, he would have fit right in, especially with his Red Sox Nation bonafides.

I remember an Appalachian Long Distance Hiker Association (ALDHA) Gathering at Gettysburg where Jack had

asked for a few minutes to speak at the Friday night opening. The minutes ticked by as Jack kept talking. People in their hard seats started squirming a little, but once Jack got warmed up, he was good to go. When he finally finished and walked to the back of the room where I was standing, I leaned over and whispered jokingly to him, "You do know who Edward Everett was, right?"

Jack recoiled at the historical reference to the day of the Gettysburg Address, when the loquacious Everett preceded Lincoln's two-minute eloquence with a speech that lasted two hours. Only Jack, a student of history, could appreciate the joke. Most times, Jack's preponderance to preach was welcome, especially by the A.T. dreamers he cared so deeply about, never having forgotten his own baptism by fire on the Trail and how he failed in his first attempted thru-hike, only to come back more determined than ever and proceed to hike the whole A.T. a total of eight times.

On other occasions, his onslaught of words was pointed, even heated, usually when he was online, a place he seemed to inhabit when he wasn't on the Trail or at a hikers' get together. His web posts could fill a book easily, and maybe someday they will. His online battles were already legendary, and there is nothing further to be said about them that Jack didn't already say himself.

A little more than a week after he died, I met some thru-hikers and section-hikers on the A.T. at the Home Place in Catawba, Virginia on my way to Trail Days in Damascus. Some of them had met Jack near the start of their hikes, and they were all equally shocked to hear of his passing. Jack would've been in his element soaking up their stories and imparting a few of his own. One of the hikers had the unique Trail name of "Simple Highway." When I asked him how he got that name, he quoted the aforementioned lyrics from the Grateful Dead. Later, as I continued my drive to the first Trail Days in ages that would convene without "Baltimore Jack," I played that song over and over and could not help but think that Jack will always be there — at Trail Days, at ALDHA's

annual Gathering, on the A.T. itself — as long as there are free spirits like him who follow their own path.

Bill O'Brien is a former ATC Board of Managers member, former head of ALDHA, and currently ALDHA's newsletter editor. He hiked the A.T. twice.



Jack lends a hand and his enthusiasm at Trail Days in 2012 photo by Laurie Potteiger



After worn-out knees prevented him from hiking long distances, Jack devoted much time and energy to giving back to the Trail he loved so much. Helping novice thru-hikers succeed and supporting the individuals and institutions within the Trail community became his mission. Each year for the rest of his life, he would start his pilgrimage afresh, working a few weeks at various outfitters or hostels along the Trail, beginning each time in Georgia and wending his way north to New England, spending his winters in Hanover, New Hampshire. In his free time, he spent countless hours advising hikers through the popular online A.T. discussion forum, WhiteBlaze.net. He wrote one of the site's most popular articles, a streamlined guide to resupply options that enabled hikers to free themselves of elaborate pre-planned maildrops and easily negotiate the maze of options along the Trail. This simplified the logistics of long-distance hiking for untold numbers of hikers. Jack's participation in the innovative and impactful Damascus "Hardcore" Trail crew was part of the chemistry that made it so successful. The allure of his famous lasagna dinners, as well as his celebrity, charm, and wit, were an important draw of this groundbreaking volunteer effort. The 35th annual ALDHA "Gathering" in Williamstown, Massachusetts, in early October was dedicated to "Baltimore Jack." **By Laurie Potteiger** / Information Services Manager



## COLIN BEASLEY

⬆️  
Above: Colin at Amicalola Falls in 2014; Right: Enjoying some family time with his wife and daughters at Moosehead Lake in Maine

By Beth Griffin

**“IT WAS AT GULF HAGAS IN MAINE THAT** the Appalachian Trail really captured my imagination,” recounts Colin Beasley, a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) Advisory Circle. “My wife and two girls and I vacationed at Moosehead Lake for many years. The beauty of the area was a draw, of course, but we looked forward especially to hiking at Gulf Hagas and meeting A.T. hikers. I guess that’s where the dream took hold.”

Since those early years in Maine, Colin has had an A.T. thru-hike on his “bucket

list.” He suspects those hikers he met in Maine probably planted the seed in his head and heart. “I think everyone has his own reason for taking on the challenge of the Trail; I think mine is just because it’s there and it caught my imagination all those years ago.”

Colin did start that hike in 2014, but had to get off the Trail due to a serious illness. It took several weeks to regain his health, and by then he’d missed the window for a thru-hike. Completing the Trail is still on his bucket list, whether it’s a thru-hike or in sections. He says he’s come to realize that it’s the activity and all that comes from it

that’s important — it’s not the destination, but the journey. So if it takes a long time, he’ll be okay with that.

While Colin waits for the opportunity between major life events, such as the arrival of grandchildren, to get back on the Trail, the ATC has benefitted greatly from his passion. Colin joined the Advisory Circle as an inaugural member in 2015. The Advisory Circle is a diverse group of individuals who provide thoughtful leadership, expertise, and significant outreach on behalf of the ATC. Now retired, Colin worked for and with Verizon for 35 years and has shared his experience in operations, net-

“My experience with the ATC staff and the ecosystem of volunteers and partners wrapped around the Trail is that everyone is very dedicated to, and passionate about their work ...I want whatever I do to support those who are committed to the goals of the ATC.”



work planning, engineering, marketing strategy, resource allocation, and project management with the ATC. He has helped us with, among other things, preparing for a major new customer service management software transition, conducting staff interviews to help determine personnel resource trends, and in strategic planning for the next ATC Leaders in Conservation Gala to be held in Washington, D.C. in July, 2017.

Since retirement, the New England native has been applying himself to many things besides the Trail that interest him. He balances “life of the mind” pursuits such as reading, writing, and his ATC volunteer work with hiking and other interests that keep him outside and active, including cleaning kennels at his local animal shelter. “When I am outside and moving, I have the time to reflect about all those things that interest me,” he explains.

Colin’s commitment to the Trail as a volunteer, advisor, and donor remind us that there are many ways to support this important resource. Motivated by a personal sense of civic responsibility, Colin also expresses a humility for the visionaries whose resolve created the Trail and all

that the volunteer and partner network continues to accomplish year over year. He recognizes that the country would look very different if it weren’t for the efforts of those early Trail-blazers and the hard work of all those engaged with the Trail today.

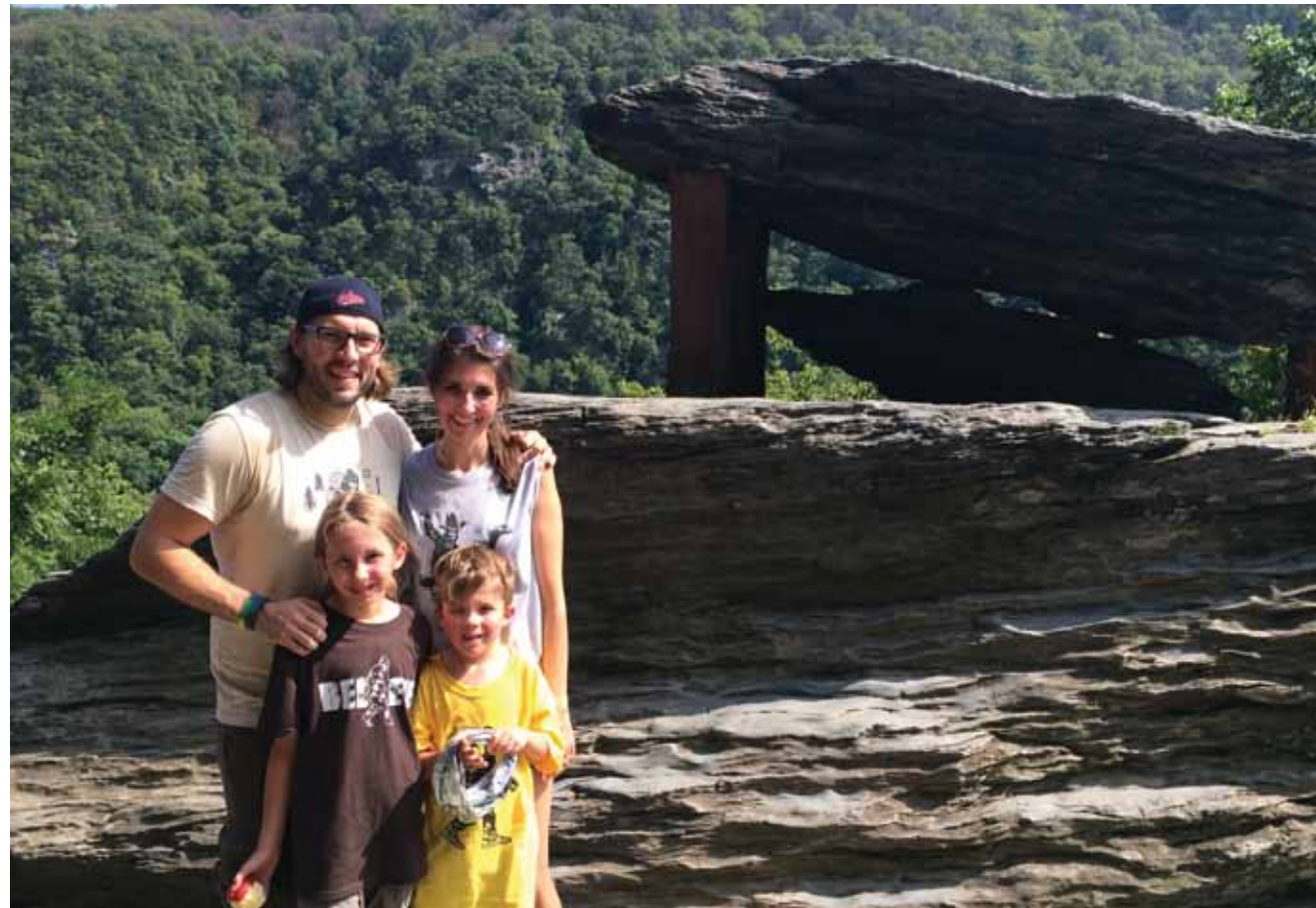
“My experience with the ATC staff and the ecosystem of volunteers and partners wrapped around the Trail is that everyone is very dedicated to, and passionate about their work with the Trail. I want whatever I do to support those who are committed to the goals of the ATC,” he says.

“The care taken to consider the various stakeholders and to insure everyone is rowing in the same direction is incredible. The fact that it works — with so many organizations and people involved — is a testament to [their collective dedication]. I applaud everyone involved for making it work and keeping the Trail as their goal.” And the ATC applauds you Colin, and the thousands of volunteers, donors, and members like you, who commit their passion and sweat, and who are a treasure to the Trail. ⬆️

For more information about the ATC’s Advisory Circle visit: [appalachiantrail.org/leadership](http://appalachiantrail.org/leadership)

# Why We Drove Our Children Nine Hours to Hike 1.3 Miles of the A.T.

By Jacqueline Davis



Clockwise from above: The Davis family at Jefferson Rock in Harpers Ferry during their A.T. hike; The children get a good look at the Shenandoah River; The family stops for a photo at the ATC Visitor Center just before setting out

**"I HAVE A CRAZY IDEA," SAID MY** husband as he walked into the room with *Backpacker* magazine in his hands, a finger marking a place among the pages. "Let's hike the Appalachian Trail."

He showed me pictures of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where he thought we could sign up to hike a portion of the Appalachian Trail for an event called A.T.

in a Day, a chance to join hikers from around the nation in a celebration of the Trail, with the goal of every mile being hiked in one day, August 20, 2016. I looked at the pictures of the rocks of the Potomac, the green of the mountains, the peak of the town's church steeple, and my soul cried, "Yes."

That's all it took. A few weeks later, we



shoved bags and snacks in our car and hit the road for the A.T. It's important to note that we live in Indiana, and the portion of the Trail we decided to hike was 500 miles away. We didn't care. Never mind the fact that we have school-aged children. I figured if they could walk fifteen miles at Disney World in a day, they could certainly walk the 1.3 miles of the A.T. on Loudon Heights we had signed up for. All that mattered was that we could be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

We began our adventure at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) headquarters in West Virginia, considered the halfway point on the 2,190-mile Trail that leads from Maine to Georgia. Geared with only our matching Sasquatch T-shirts, due to a mild interest in the subject of Big Foot, and some water bottles, we felt ready for the journey.

A step in the ATC's Visitor Center (located below the headquarter offices), and I realized perhaps we were not in the same league as true thru-hikers. A glance in the Hiker's Lounge proved this. A lone soul sat on the couch, his forehead in his hands, his clothes and skin dirty and sweaty, while his body absorbed a moment of comfort before heading back out into the wild.

After we received some guidance for the best route along the Trail and while we purchased souvenirs, our weary traveler from the lounge strode past us, his body groaning, his steps labored. And I suddenly noticed just how much perfume I was wearing. I watched him push through the door, the bell above him signaling another hero had just passed before us.

We took off on our hike with the





↑  
A tired but  
enthusiastic Davis  
family A.T. selfie shot



energy and enthusiasm felt at the start of something new. The kids were bouncing around us, jumping up to touch the first A.T. marker on a tree that would lead us into the unknown. The portion of the Appalachian Trail we chose to hike was diverse. We first walked across a bridge overlooking the Shenandoah River with cars racing along the highway next to us. Turning our backs to the noise, we were confronted with the beauty of the water,

were bound to descend. It was on these inclines that I encouraged my children to press on, to embrace the beauty around them, and to remember they had encountered far worse in their past. A lesson on life, to be sure.

As the sweat beaded on our foreheads and also soaked through our shirts, I reminded the children of Disney World, of the many miles they had logged there in the heat. And I spoke of magic, for this

My youngest ran to the front of the pack, brushing past each of us, his small feet bounding over rocks, into dips, and around mounds... He was in his element, an element I never knew was his until this moment, and he was radiant.

deep blue and flowing around the almond-colored slabs of rock that looked as if they had been tossed there mindlessly yet with beautiful precision. Before us were the green rolling hills of Virginia, our next destination on the Trail. It was here where my imagined views of the A.T. met with reality, and we were surrounded by trees that seemed to stretch to the sky; the ground beneath our boots rocky and haphazard. It felt as if we constantly climbed upward, yet at some point we

was a concept my children understood, having experienced a version of it at Disney. People talk of Trail magic, of how travelers have been blessed in ways they need while on the A.T. Certainly, I could make some connection between the two.

We hiked on through Virginia, back through West Virginia, then on to Maryland. At this point, our 1.3 mile hike had lengthened, for we longed to see more. My daughter fell behind to serve as scout for Big Foot. My youngest ran to the front

of the pack, brushing past each of us, his small feet bounding over rocks, into dips, and around mounds. He nearly marched as he led us with an occasional look back but mostly a focus on the Trail ahead. I slowed as I watched him discover a passion. I saw a part of him I didn't know existed bubble to the surface and shine through. He was in his element, an element I never knew was his until this moment, and he was radiant. "Daddy says I'm a hiker," he said, a look of bemused triumph on his face. Yes, son, you are.

As we neared the end of our journey, I realized I had witnessed magic. Not Disney magic or Trail magic, but the magic of watching my son become more of who he is meant to be. For it is truly a magical moment to be able to witness such an event. We reached the end of our hike, tired, sweaty, and parched. As we stepped from the forest and into town, we were leaving the Trail different people than when we had entered. We were stronger, closer, and more like the traveler we had seen in the visitor center, people who have been changed by the Appalachian Trail. The 1,000-mile round-trip trek and days it would take to recover from our travels were absolutely worth it; for this Midwestern family will never be the same having witnessed the magic of the Appalachian Trail. 📍



## We Couldn't Do it With Out You

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy would like to thank its 31 affiliated A.T. maintaining clubs for their continued hard work and dedication — without which, the footpath would not be what it is today.

Our Trail maintaining clubs are responsible for most of the day-to-day work of keeping the A.T. open. In addition to Trail maintenance, club volunteers build and repair shelters and other structures, monitor and protect the Trail corridor, monitor and manage rare plants and invasive species, develop management plans for their sections, and much, much more.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
A TRAIL CLUB NEAR YOU.  
[APPALACHIANTRAIL.ORG/TRAILCLUBS](http://APPALACHIANTRAIL.ORG/TRAILCLUBS)

ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE EBERTS

### NEW ENGLAND

Maine Appalachian Trail Club : [matc.org](http://matc.org)  
Appalachian Mountain Club : [outdoors.org](http://outdoors.org)  
Randolph Mountain Club : [randolphmountainclub.org](http://randolphmountainclub.org)  
Dartmouth Outing Club : [outdoors.dartmouth.edu](http://outdoors.dartmouth.edu)  
Green Mountain Club : [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org)  
AMC Berkshire : [amcberkshire.org/at](http://amcberkshire.org/at)  
AMC - Connecticut Chapter : [ct-amc.org/ct/index.shtml](http://ct-amc.org/ct/index.shtml)

### MID-ATLANTIC

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference : [nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org)  
Wilmington Trail Club : [wilmingtontrailclub.org](http://wilmingtontrailclub.org)  
Batona Hiking Club : [batona.wildapricot.org](http://batona.wildapricot.org)  
AMC - Delaware Valley Chapter : [amcdv.org](http://amcdv.org)  
Keystone Trails Association : [kta-hike.org](http://kta-hike.org)  
Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club : [bmecc.org](http://bmecc.org)  
Allentown Hiking Club : [allentownhikingclub.org](http://allentownhikingclub.org)  
Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club : [satc-hike.org](http://satc-hike.org)  
York Hiking Club : [yorkhikingclub.com](http://yorkhikingclub.com)  
Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club : [cvatclub.org](http://cvatclub.org)  
Mountain Club of Maryland : [mcomd.org](http://mcomd.org)  
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club : [patc.net](http://patc.net)

### VIRGINIA

Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club : [olddominiontrailclub.onefireplace.org](http://olddominiontrailclub.onefireplace.org)  
Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club : [tidewateratc.com](http://tidewateratc.com)  
Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club : [nbatc.org](http://nbatc.org)  
Outdoor Club at Virginia Tech : [outdoor.org.vt.edu](http://outdoor.org.vt.edu)  
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club : [ratc.org](http://ratc.org)  
Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers : [path-at.org](http://path-at.org)  
Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club : [mratc.pbworks.com](http://mratc.pbworks.com)

### SOUTHERN

Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club : [tehcc.org](http://tehcc.org)  
Carolina Mountain Club : [carolinamountainclub.org](http://carolinamountainclub.org)  
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club : [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)  
Nantahala Hiking Club : [nantalahahikingclub.org](http://nantalahahikingclub.org)  
Georgia Appalachian Trail Club : [georgia-atclub.org](http://georgia-atclub.org)

# T

## THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Conservancy (ATC) is blessed to have the support of individuals from all walks of life. Our volunteer Trail maintainers are the life-blood of protection and management of the Trail. Our Board of Directors, Stewardship Council, Advisory Circle, and Next Generation Advisory Council provide support, leadership, and guidance. And, of course, we have 46,000 members who provide critical financial support needed to fund our work up and down the Trail.

Friends of the ATC have been known to come up with unique and creative ways to help share the story of the Trail and increase financial and advocacy support. I would like to share two (very different) approaches a couple of our friends have taken. Dr. Clifford "Doc Bear" Andrew is working through a 10-year, end-to-end A.T. section hike he began in 2012. This year, as he celebrates his 70th birthday, he has committed to raising \$10,000 for the ATC and the Scenic Rivers Land Trust. As he hikes, he is sharing his story in letters to his friends describing his journey and providing a link to support the ATC through the "Honorary Gift" link on the ATC's website. Cliff explains the importance of his outreach as follows: "Over the years as a physician, I have developed an understanding of the importance of physical exercise in health; as a naturalist, a sense of wonder in the world around us, and as a local land trust president, an appreciation of the need for preservation of our country's remaining wilderness areas."

While the Trail was built and is maintained as a footpath, our friends are drawn from many communities that care about the varied benefits of public



lands: air, water, and habitat protection, economic opportunity for neighboring communities, and outdoor recreation. KC diCostanzo, is owner of Thunder Moon Farm in Dutchess County, New York. KC and her equine partner, Zeus, compete in eventing (dressage, cross country, and show jumping.) She came to us last year with a unique suggestion for reaching out to attendees of equestrian events who often have an affinity to outdoors and land preservation. While recognizing the A.T. is not open to horses, KC offered to share information about the Trail, and opportunities for attendees to become ATC members. After her first 2016 three-day event, KC shared that she was "surprised and encouraged by the high level of interest and excitement around hiking the Trail, and the work the ATC is doing." She plans to continue to act as an ambassador for our efforts.

We appreciate your support in all of its forms, and ask that you do all you can to help the ATC ensure the Trail's vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come. 🌱

Happy Trails,  
Marie E. Uehling / Development Officer



KC with ATC Advisory Circle member Stancy DuHamel at an equestrian event this summer

PHOTO BY CAROLYN HANDLER

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Experienced 67-year-old hiker seeking hiking partner(s) to **trek the Colorado Trail starting mid-July 2017**. Contact Flagman at: 828-349-4629/tomfuller@joimail.com / P.O. Box 444, Franklin, NC 28744.

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is **recruiting for several internship positions for the spring of 2017** including: Market Research, Public Relations, Social Media, Visitor Services, Development Database, Development Events, and Lands Steward. Interns work on a wide variety of projects and tasks including everything from membership and development to conservation. An internship at the ATC is an excellent way to gain a hands-on, work-learn experience in a specific area of interest or field of study. For more information and to apply visit: [appalachiantrail.org/careers](http://appalachiantrail.org/careers).

Stay safe from ticks! **Send your favorite clothing to Insect Shield to be factory treated** with permethrin, lasting for 70 washings. Visit: [www.insectshield.com/atc/isyc](http://www.insectshield.com/atc/isyc) to learn how and enter the promo code ATC2 to receive a 10% discount.

**Join the ATC Visitor Center**

**Volunteer Team** in Harpers Ferry. Do you love the A.T. and enjoy meeting and greeting people? Then consider assisting a few days a month at ATC headquarters. Volunteers are needed on weekends. More information is available at: [appalachiantrail.org/volunteer](http://appalachiantrail.org/volunteer) (search for “2017 ATC Visitor Center Volunteer”) or email: Jeff Metzger at: [jmetzger@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jmetzger@appalachiantrail.org).

**FOR SALE**

**Town home for sale. Newland, North Carolina.** Approximately six miles to A.T. crossing Hwy 19E ascending Big Hump Mountain cross Tennessee/North Carolina balds to Carvers Gap. Two BR, 11/2 bath maintenance-free townhouse: \$84,900. Contact: Tom@albaresources.com.

**UPCOMING ATC EVENTS SAVE THE DATE**

December 3, 2016

**Holiday Party**

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: [appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events)

April 22-23, 2017

**Flip Flop Festival**

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: [appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events)

August 4-11, 2017

**ATC Maine Conference**

Waterville, Maine: [atc2017.org](http://atc2017.org)

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length.



[editor@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:editor@appalachiantrail.org)  
Public Notices  
P.O. Box 807  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807

**THE YEAR 2010 WAS A YEAR OF** change for my husband and me. Our youngest son was heading off to college and we needed to find something to do. We had been busy with our two sons’ school activities and heavily involved with the high school football team and boosters club. But, as anyone in a similar situation knows, no one wants to be those people who can’t seem to move on after their own offspring have graduated.

Since we’ve always enjoyed hiking and traveling, it seemed like a reasonable goal to explore the A.T. Job requirements, college tuition payments, and the need for a nice bed and private bathroom meant that we weren’t destined to be thru-hikers, so the goal was set to hike 15 to 20 miles in every state the Trail passes through. We started with states in close proximity to our home in Pennsylvania and soon found the book, *The Best of the Appalachian Trail Day Hikes* by Logue, Logue, and Adkins essential in our planning. We chose hikes that sounded enjoyable as well as within our capabilities, and that were fairly close to a town where we could have a nice dinner and find lodging at various inns.

Six-and-a-half years later, we’ve achieved our goal and had the opportunity to explore numerous towns adjacent to the Trail from Georgia to Maine. We had fun trying various wineries in Georgia, Virginia, and Connecticut, learned some history in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, as well

“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:



[journays@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:journays@appalachiantrail.org)  
or write to Editor/As I See It  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
P.O. Box 807  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425



Karen and her husband Dave at a favorite A.T. spot — Jane Bald — in North Carolina/Tennessee

as the Robert Todd Lincoln House in Manchester, Vermont, and explored the college towns of Dahlonega, Georgia, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and, of course, Hanover, New Hampshire. Since we knew we wouldn’t travel the whole Trail, we wanted to make sure we included some of the quintessential Trail towns such as Hot Springs, North Carolina and Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania, as well as the Mountain Crossings store in Neels Gap, Georgia.

Dried fruit, nuts, and granola bars satisfied us during the day, but we appreciated the chance to try diverse restaurants and regional specialties for other meals including fried brussel sprouts in Kent, Connecticut, traditional pot roast in Vermont, the creamiest grits I’ve ever had in North Carolina, and a great cup of coffee in Millinocket, Maine.

It’s hard to choose a favorite hike on the Trail, but we both agreed that the balds in North Carolina and Tennessee would be on the top our list for their uniqueness and 360-degree views. We knew we wouldn’t be quite satisfied though unless we reached the summit on Katahdin. We had tried once in 2013, but were rained out and one thing we had learned early on in these adventures was, “respect the mountain.” They’re beautiful and majestic, but also formidable and at times, dangerous. As much as we had wanted to achieve our goal, we knew it

wouldn’t be that time. So, back again in 2016 and on a sunny, warm day in June, we had our first glimpse of the Katahdin sign and knew that the idea we had had in our kitchen in 2010 was going to come to completion.

Our sons, who have since graduated from college, were able to join us occasionally and both were with us on our second Katahdin attempt. We all agreed that every friend, family member, and even casual acquaintance we know will be getting a Christmas card picture of the four of us on the summit this year.

Benton MacKaye said, “There are three things: to walk, to see, and to see what you see,” and we’re grateful for his vision as well as the work that of all the Trail clubs and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy do to maintain this beautiful Trail. Though our original goal was met, we now know of so many other hikes we want to try on the A.T. and nearby places we want to explore. We join with so many others who have hiked on the Trail, whether thru-hikers, section hikers, or day hikers like ourselves, when we all ask the same question: “When can I get back on the Trail again?”

*Karen and Dave Gorgonzola  
LIVE IN HONEY BROOK, PENNSYLVANIA*



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LINDSEY HAMMOND ON THE TRAIL AT JEFFERSON ROCK IN HARPERS FERRY,  
WEST VIRGINIA PHOTO BY ALEX UHLENHOPP