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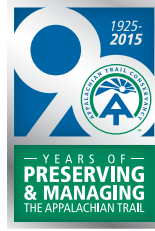
A hiker with a backpack is seen from behind, standing on a rocky mountain ridge. The hiker is looking out over a vast, green valley with rolling hills and a winding river. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The overall scene is a beautiful, scenic view of a mountain landscape.

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Fall 2015

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A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 11, Number 4
Fall 2015

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On the Cover:

Lindsey "Flash Gordon" Gordon heads down the Hunt Trail in Baxter State Park after finishing her 2013 thru-hike. Photo by John Gordon

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IN JULY, RENOWNED ULTRA-MARATHONER SCOTT JUREK COMPLETED THE ENTIRE Appalachian Trail in less than 47 days, breaking the speed record previously held by Jennifer Pharr Davis.

While the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) does not officially recognize such records, there is no question that Jurek's A.T. journey was a notable achievement. However, right after he completed his trip, Jurek was cited by Baxter State Park for violating park rules barring drinking alcohol in public, littering by spraying champagne, and exceeding the park's group size limit of 12. He has challenged the validity of these citations and the dispute may be settled in court. This incident and the park's response has resulted in media coverage by *The New York Times*, *Backpacker Magazine*, *Outside Magazine*, *Runner's World*, NPR, and many other media outlets and publications across the country. It is a national story.

Regardless of how this all plays out, it is clear Scott Jurek unintentionally brought to public attention some very difficult and complex hiker management problems that have existed at Baxter for many years. Over the past two decades the number of long-distance hikers climbing Katahdin has more than doubled. Park director Jensen Bissell has expressed strong concerns about both the growing number of hikers in Baxter and the behavior of many on the summit of Katahdin. He has challenged the ATC and the National Park Service to take significant steps to limit and better manage the use of the Trail, and has, at times, threatened to move the northern A.T. terminus from Katahdin.

I believe this is a serious problem. I also welcome the opportunity for the ATC to address the growing public interest in the Appalachian Trail, which is evident not only in Baxter, but up and down the Trail. Total annual visitation on the Trail is now estimated at three million, and thru-hiking has increased steadily in recent years. In one day this July, we had 77 hikers, who began their trek in Georgia or North Carolina, stop at our Harpers Ferry Visitor Center. And we expect the movie *A Walk in the Woods* will almost certainly result in a

new surge in both day hiking and long distance hiking on the A.T.

Led by southern regional director Morgan Sommerville and information services manager Laurie Potteiger, the ATC has developed a number of projects and strategies designed to continue to provide a high-quality Appalachian Trail hiking experience to all types of Trail users. These include a voluntary registration system for thru-hikers; encouraging those planning the traditional Georgia to Maine thru-hike to start somewhere else; more ridgerunners and caretakers; increased and sustainable managed campsites, especially in Georgia; enhanced education for new hikers before they hit the Trail; and advertising quality day-hiker opportunities near urban areas that have the necessary visitor management resources available. We estimate funding for these projects will exceed \$1 million.

This is a major challenge for the ATC, the National Park Service, other federal and state partners, and our 31 Trail maintaining clubs. Jensen Bissell at Baxter says he wants to make sure the 2,000-plus annual long-distance hikers who summit Katahdin "won't become 3,000 next year or 8,000 in 10 years." Our mandate is different; the A.T. is both a National Scenic Trail and a unit of the national park system and will be managed for the enjoyment of increasing numbers of visitors while assuring that experience is unimpaired for future generations.

It is in fact a very good thing that more people want to have the opportunity to hike on the Appalachian Trail. That makes it all the more important that we work with Baxter State Park and our other public land management partners to provide a high-quality Trail experience. ⚡

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



Hunt Trail — A.T. on Katahdin. Photo by John Cammerota

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Katahdin holds a mythical significance for thru-hikers — yet an increasing number are celebrating their summits in a way that threatens Baxter State Park’s wilderness values.

Jeffrey Stylos quietly and respectfully reflects on his 2011 thru-hike completion — self portrait

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The remote terrain along the Trail in northern New England is iconic — but its geology and geography have resulted in continuous treadway erosion and the need for constant maintenance.

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Recent large-scale improvements to the ATC Headquarters building provided an insightful education in renovation.

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Among his long list of accomplishments — all devoted to the A.T. — Bob Proudman quite literally wrote the book on Trail design and maintenance.

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Cool weather and colorful landscapes await on some short but sweet hikes along the Trail this autumn.



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Rich Daileader’s cheerful resilience and “can-do” attitude have been a valuable advantage to the A.T. and the ATC.

55 | AS I SEE IT

A long-distance hiker finds a deeper version of happiness at the end of a tough, cold, and soggy hike.

I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT what impact [*A Walk in the Woods*] will have on the A.T. I [practically] lived on the Trail for 12 years and loved every minute of it. I am also a trout fisherman. I fished many streams where the only other people were guys in my own party or at most a couple of other fishermen. After the movie *A River Runs Through It* came out, I went to fish my regular spots and fishermen waving fly rods were lined up elbow-to-elbow as far as you could see in each direction. Most of them had never drowned a worm and did not know how to fish. I found this phenomenon in West Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Michigan, Vermont, Montana, Colorado, Oregon, and Alaska. You couldn't find a place to park, much less get near the river to fish. Many of them were good people, probably most. However, because of sheer numbers they fouled the water and its environment. Those of us for whom fishing was part of the fabric of life found it disgusting. It took 15 years, more in some places, for things to get back to normal. It is encouraging to read in *A.T. Journeys* that steps are being taken to deal with the impending "circus." Have no doubt, it's coming. Many of the new people to the Trail will make a true contribution to its maintenance and preservation.

Barry Chafin
HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

I WISH TO PROVIDE SOME perspective from the hiking community with regards to the recent article in *A.T. Journeys*, Summer 2015, "The Bryson Effect." The author, Jack Igelman did an outstanding job outlining the many Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) concerns that an influx of hikers could have on the Appalachian Trail, after seeing the movie, *A Walk in the Woods*. In my experience hiking trails, I observed many people lacking an appreciative understanding of the great outdoors that true hikers acquire over years trekking in the woods. On many occasions, I witnessed inconsiderate acts by amateurish hikers, which made the veteran hikers' experience

less enjoyable. The article accurately expresses legitimate ATC concerns that novice hiker visits pose to hiking trails and the environment; also, it educates readers on the many fears nature lovers have of the weekend hiker, who unknowingly [may] damage the environment by haphazardly entering the woods and not following "Leave No Trace" practices on the Trail. The author also highlights consequences unaware guests can cause to the ecosystem, and respects those working very hard in our national parks to make them a lasting refuge for future generations.

In future issues, continue to publish articles that express to readers, when something is amiss in the woods, to please, take some action to correct it. It may be as simple as picking up trash someone indiscriminately discarded along the Trail, or something more helpful to other hikers as to clear deadfall from the Trail. [We need] to educate the public on outdoor ethics when hiking trails.

John J. Barron
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

I JUST RECEIVED THE SUMMER issue of *A.T. Journeys*, and was extremely disappointed to see that you have devoted so much space to promoting [*A Walk in the Woods*]. Let's review the background. In 1996, 45-year-old expatriate Bill Bryson hiked the Appalachian Trail, completing only 40 percent of it. In 1997, he wrote a book, [which, in my opinion] denigrated the experience and made a mockery of the Trail. Years later, 78-year-old Robert Redford teams up with 74-year-old Nick Nolte to film a fictionalized account of Bryson's hike. For an element of excitement, well-trained brown bears, which aren't even found in the Appalachians, are enlisted to terrorize the hapless non-hikers. I can only think that you are pandering to potential new members in order to improve cash flow, disregarding the impact that increased traffic will have on the Trail. Naturally the manufacturers of outdoor gear are also enthusiastic. Note that I am not an armchair hiker; over the years, I've hiked

more than 4,000 miles of the A.T. I will continue to support local Trail clubs like the Maine A.T. Club, which does an outstanding job maintaining a difficult Trail.

Brice Faller
CROTON-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK

SHEESH! A NEWCOMER TO THE Summer issue of *A.T. Journeys* might, at first glance, think that Robert Redford, Nick Nolte, and Bill Bryson created the Appalachian Trail. Fully 41 percent of its pages, plus some additional space on others, give that impression. As someone who is closing in on a fourth completion of the Trail, I hardly imagine that a book and a movie will give significant depth to the total experience of hiking it. Our culture just loves hype.

Roderick Forsman
INTERVALE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

MY TRAIL NAME, "HALF-LIFE," reveals the unusual aspect of my A.T. hike, i.e. I took over half of my life to complete the entire Trail. While it took "half" of my life to complete the A.T., I've been a hiker all of my life. My dad and my grandfather carried me up my first mountain in a pack basket. When my children reached hiking age, I decided that hiking on the A.T. would be a terrific experience for us to share. Thusly, section hiking the A.T. began. I ended up hiking many a solo mile, nonetheless, the hike has been a shared family experience throughout. When I summited Mount Washington, four generations of my family were on hand for the summit picture. [When I finished my A.T. hike in Harpers Ferry this past summer], again, four generations of family were there, my dad, now 90 years old, the oldest, my granddaughter, 4 years old, the youngest. The itinerary I followed was that of a typical thru-hiker with a flip-flop but spread over 35 years. I certainly admire thru-hikers, but I wouldn't want to trade my lifetime of hiking for the thru-hiking experience. Being able to hike the entire Appalachian Trail is an enormous privilege for which I am thankful to family and friends who supported and encouraged

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LETTERS *continued*

me as well as to the founders and laborers of the A.T., without whom the Trail wouldn't exist.

Michael "Half-life" Merwin
GRACEWOOD, GEORGIA

I HAVE WANTED TO HIKE THE Appalachian Trail for decades. I recently had the opportunity to hike 16 miles on the Trail around Caledonia State Park in Pennsylvania. It was an awesome adventure and a life-changing experience. I was present and absorbed all the beauty. When I came home everything looked different. Before I went on my hike, my flower and vegetable gardens, and my land represented work. Now I see the beauty of this land where I live. I needed that Trail. It was waiting for me and I was waiting for it.

Julia Davis
NORTH LIMA, OHIO

CORRECTIONS

In the article "The Bryson Effect" (Summer 2015) we mistakenly noted that former ATC executive director, Dave Startzell was an A.T. thru-hiker. While Dave has hiked significant stretches of the A.T. in the past two years especially, he still considers himself an "aspiring 2,000-miler" and currently hopes to finish the A.T. by 2017.

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

A Walk in the Woods
Great movie. One I would see again! I also will read the book. I love reading about people's adventures on hiking. Maybe someday I'll give it a short try.
Cindy Walker

Just watched *A Walk in the Woods*. I thought it was a great movie about two friends reconnecting and going on an adventure together. I know the ages weren't correct and some of the other things, but it really wasn't about all that. It was about two old friends reconnecting. I hike the A.T. a couple times a year. We go for three to five days — as much as time will allow in our busy lives. The A.T. allows me to reconnect

with friends from Detroit, San Diego, Wisconsin, Colorado, and I am based in North Carolina. So everybody who hasn't seen the movie yet lay off on all the comments about how it's going to mess the Trail up. The story is more about the friendship. And remember, it's everybody's Trail to like and take care of. Nobody owns it. That's what makes it great!

Keith Sizemore

Protecting the Trail

One issue of Trail disrespect I'd like to address: STOP MAKING GRAFFITI ON THE SHELTERS. Marking your Trail name or conspiracy theory website on a shelter doesn't make you more interesting.

Brandon Denney

Thought needs to be given to finding a balance between encouraging access and concomitant overuse, that's a function of providing more and more convenience facilities ... shelters, huts, lodges, etc. Keep wilderness, wilderness-like, as a primary priority.

Stu Klein

We can all be Trail stewards while on the Trail. Should you see [someone who] defies proper Trail etiquette, teach them the correct way to respect the outdoors and the Trail. A little help goes a long way, and we will have an influx of new hikers given the attention brought upon the Trail by the commercial movie releases.

Jay Kay

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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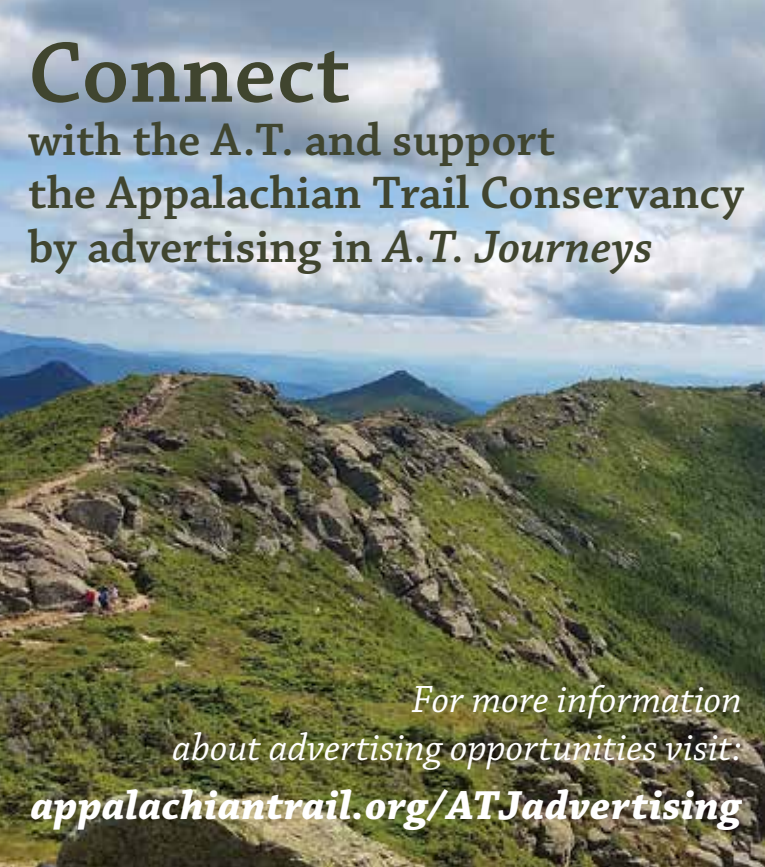
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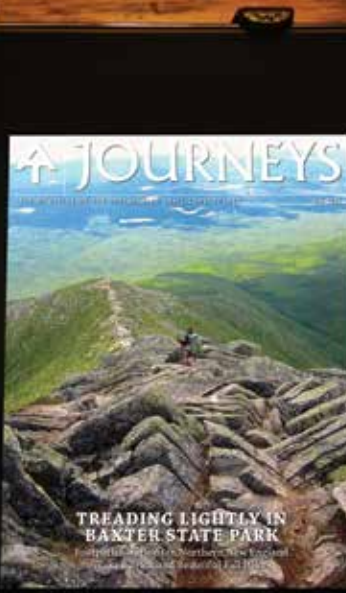


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IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, MY HUSBAND CHRIS BRUNTON AND I MOVED IN FULL time to the Blackburn Trail Center in northern Virginia to be the Potomac Appalachian Trail's (PATC) caretakers for a season. We've been volunteer managers of Blackburn for close to 30 years and had hired literally dozens of caretakers. So we were confident we knew what to expect. But the old adage of walking a mile in someone else's boots has certainly held true so far for this adventure. So, in no particular order, here are some on the ground observations from six months at a popular Trail stop off the A.T.

First of all — there are a lot of people on the Trail. I know we've been talking about this for a while and in theory we all understand the concept. But you really need to be out there to appreciate just what this increase in numbers looks like. Take Memorial Day weekend — more than a hundred people passed through Blackburn just on Saturday alone. Day hikers, weekenders, section and thru-hikers made their way not only to us, but to every surrounding hostel, campground, and shelter. We were at capacity in every sense of the word. And it's not just on holiday weekends. On any given Sunday you will see dozens of people making their way to popular overlooks in our area like Bears Den rocks, and Crescent rocks. And some sections of the Trail around these popular spots show the wear and tear.

Second, there are still opportunities to be alone on the Trail. You may need to find a free Wednesday, or decide to hike on a cloudy Sunday, but there are moments when you can have a solitary hike even in our busy northern Virginia corridor. There are sightings of bear and deer and wild turkey. And there are lots of cicadas and birds and crickets to add music to the journey.

Third, while a few long-distance hikers may misbehave, on whole our experience has been only positive. We hosted several hundred thru-hikers and long-distance section hikers during the peak season and overall we found individuals who were polite, inquisitive, and appreciative of a cold soda or fresh baked cookie. They listened to our appeal to give back after their hike, by joining a local Trail club and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). And a few stayed an extra day to help Chris around the center just for the pleasure of volunteering. When out working on the Trail and freshening blazes, we are consistently thanked for our efforts. And more than once we've had the opportunity to share with the hikers we meet how they can become involved.

Fourth, our management efforts need to focus on the multitudes of day and weekend users. These include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, school and church groups, families out for a stroll, and young people looking for some time in the woods. With these users we've had a much more mixed experience. Again, some are great, respectful, and well prepared. On the other hand we have had to help those who have poorly planned, had unrealistic expectations of what they would find on the Trail, and who were sorely in need of Leave No Trace education. And while our sections of Trail are certainly busy during the peak thru-hiker season, the real impact comes from the daily, weekly, and monthly visits of these casual users.

Fifth, while all of the above, both the good and the bad, are important, the most important thing we learned is that this national treasure continues to provide a multitude of joy and pleasure to whoever steps onto its treadway. Yes, we have to manage high-use areas, but there will still be opportunities for solitude. And while education and modeling of proper Trail etiquette are critical to protecting the resource, we can find solace in recognizing that the vast majority of people on the Trail sincerely want to learn how best to enjoy it.

Finally, after years of volunteering both on the A.T. and in Trail club and ATC leadership roles, I have come to recognize that there is no better way to understand what it is we are protecting than to be out there full time. Serving the Trail and the people who use it has been an incredible opportunity and honor — one that will provide Chris and me with a lifetime of memories. ⬆

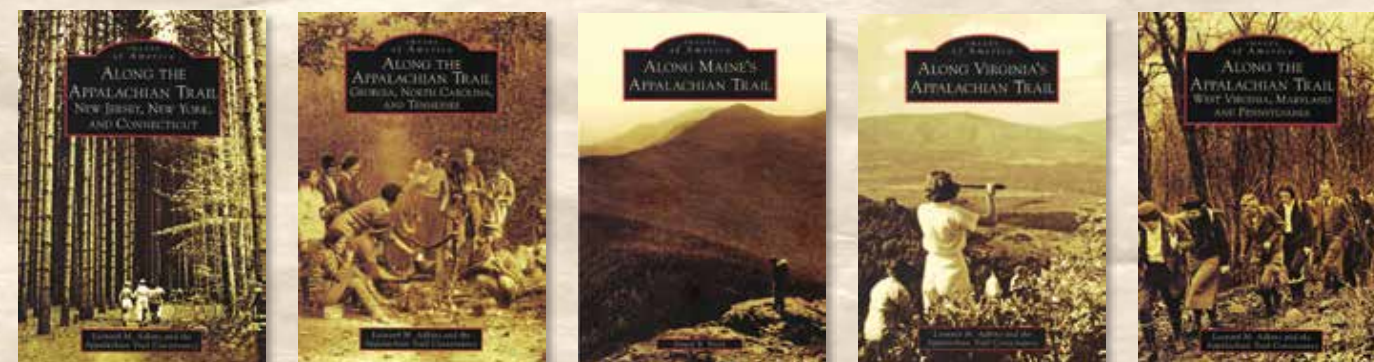
Sandra Marra | Chair



From top: Sandi with two Blackburn guests; Chris Brunton (far back center) stands happily by while A.T. hikers indulge in a spaghetti meal. Photos by Chris Brunton and Sandi Marra

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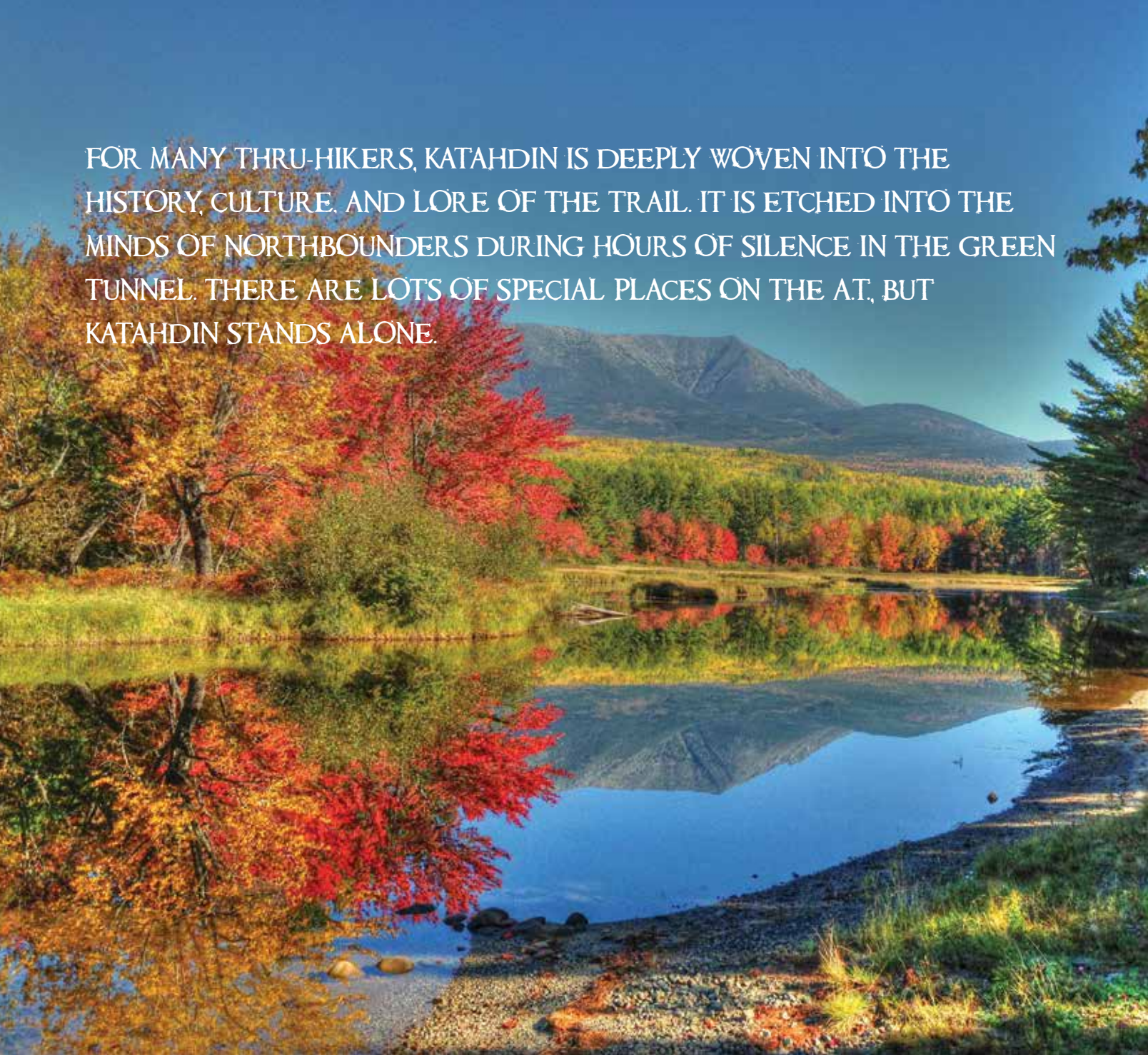
TREADING LIGHTLY ON MAINE'S
GREATEST MOUNTAIN

BY AARON MEGQUIER

October sunrise on Katahdin. Photo by Michael Rosenberg

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FOR MANY THRU-HIKERS, KATAHDIN IS DEEPLY WOVEN INTO THE HISTORY, CULTURE, AND LORE OF THE TRAIL. IT IS ETCHED INTO THE MINDS OF NORTHBOUNDERS DURING HOURS OF SILENCE IN THE GREEN TUNNEL. THERE ARE LOTS OF SPECIAL PLACES ON THE A.T., BUT KATAHDIN STANDS ALONE.



KATAHDIN, Maine's greatest mountain, has been the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail for more than 80 years. As with so many things about the A.T., we have Myron Avery to thank. Avery was a native Mainer with a deep love for the rugged, remote peaks of his home state. As the chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference — and the first 2,000 miler — he successfully pushed to have the northern terminus on Katahdin, rather than Mount Washington. Avery installed the summit sign on Katahdin on August 19, 1933, with friends Albert Jackman, Shailer Philbrick, and J. Frank Schairer. His three-word dedication speech (“Nail it up”) was laconic even by

Avery's standards, and left more time for painting white blazes.

Avery chose Katahdin as the northern terminus for good reason: it is iconic, exceptional, and utterly unlike anywhere else on the Trail. Over the past 82 years, Maine's greatest mountain has taken on a mythical significance for many thru-hikers. Katahdin is deeply woven into the history, culture, and lore of the Trail. It is etched into the minds of northbounders during hours of silence in the “green tunnel.” There are lots of special places on the A.T., but Katahdin stands alone.

Many visitors to Katahdin don't realize how deeply the mountain is rooted in the culture and identity of the people of Maine. Katahdin is sacred to the Wabanaki, particularly

the Penobscot Nation, and has been for thousands of years. The mountain is home to several Penobscot deities, including Pamola, an ill-tempered bird spirit who serves as protector of the mountain. Pamola Peak, located just across the Knife Edge from the A.T. terminus at Baxter Peak, is named in his honor.

Katahdin has inspired generations of writers, artists, and some of the greatest leaders in our nation's history. Henry David Thoreau made a pilgrimage to Katahdin in 1846, and described his existential experience near the summit in one of the most memorable passages of *The Maine Woods*. Frederic Church and other painters of the Hudson River School were regular visitors. Teddy Roosevelt summited Katahdin on August 29, 1879, the only member of his party to do so. This experience helped the young, sickly Harvard student convince himself that he could stand up to hardship and challenge. Just 22 years later, he became the youngest President in United States history and played a major role in the creation of five national parks, 18 national monuments, 51 national wildlife refuges, and 150 national forests.

In his book, *Sacred Mountains of the World*, Edwin Bernbaum placed Katahdin alongside Sinai, Olympus, and Everest as one of the world's most sacred summits. National Geographic recently named Katahdin one of the ten best summit hikes in the world. This recognition is not a surprise for those of us lucky enough to hike there on a regular basis. I don't think it would surprise Henry David Thoreau or Teddy Roosevelt either. Katahdin is truly a mountain like no other.

Baxter State Park protects a vast area of wilderness in addition to Katahdin. With 225 miles of trails spread over 327 square miles, opportunities for solitude are abundant. Moose, black bear, and loons are common. Ponds harbor some of the only wild brook trout remaining in the United States. More than 874 species of plants are found in the park, almost all of them native. The park is home to more rare plants than anywhere else in Maine, as well as one animal species found nowhere else on Earth — the Katahdin Arctic butterfly.

This world-class preserve was given to the people of Maine by a single donor, former Maine Governor Percival Baxter. Baxter was raised in a wealthy, philanthropic family, and developed a passion for the wild country of his beloved home state as a young boy. Like Myron Avery, he was a graduate of Bowdoin College and Harvard Law School.

More than 30 years before the passage of the federal Wilderness Act, Baxter articulated a philosophy of wilderness that was far ahead of his time. In 1931, he purchased Katahdin and donated it to the citizens of Maine with the mandate that it remain “forever wild.” Over the next four decades, he pursued his vision with single-minded resolve. Using his own money, he purchased 27 additional tracts of land totaling over 200,000 acres, and donated them all to the citizens of Maine via deeds of trust. His gift is among the most generous

in the history of land conservation in the United States.

Despite its name, Baxter State Park is not part of Maine's state park system. The park is independently funded by endowments set up by Governor Baxter, and receives no funding from taxes. It is independently managed by a three-member authority. Because of this unique structure, the park is able to pursue its mission with a minimum of outside political and financial influence.

The mission of Baxter State Park differs from anywhere else on the A.T. — even the 26 federally designated wilderness areas found along the A.T. corridor. According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, these areas are protected “for the use and enjoyment of the American people, in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use as wilderness.” Conversely, Baxter State Park's mission explicitly places resource protection first, and recreation second. This is rare in our modern world, and it takes time to fully appreciate the implications of this management strategy.

Thru-hikers arriving at the Baxter State Park boundary may not completely grasp that they have arrived in a place that is fundamentally different from the rest of the Trail. For hikers with a sense of reverence for the outdoors, and respect for

View of Katahdin from Abol Bridge campground in Baxter State Park. Photo by Mark Smith



Albert Jackman, Myron Avery, and Frank Schairer on Katahdin in 1933, just after the original sign was put up. Photo by Shailer S. Philbrick

their fellow hikers, entering the park and summiting Katahdin is not an issue. Instead, it is the culminating experience of their hike. Thru-hikers have celebrated responsibly on Katahdin for many years, and continue to do so. However, a small but rapidly growing number of thru-hikers

are celebrating in a way that threatens Baxter State Park's wilderness values, as well as the experiences of other visitors.

In November 2014, park director Jensen Bissell sent a letter to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the National Park Service describing his concerns. Some of the issues mentioned in the letter include: drug and alcohol use on the summit of Katahdin, sometimes in close proximity to families with young children; bringing dogs into the park with false service dog credentials; and a general disregard for park rules,

IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE FUTURE OF THE A.T. IN BAXTER STATE PARK IS IN THE HANDS OF THRU-HIKERS — INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE FINISHING THIS FALL.



especially those surrounding camping and group size. These issues have been building over many years, and have now reached a critical juncture.

Bissell's letter also highlighted the fact that Baxter State Park limits the number of visitors to protect park resources, but the A.T. currently has no Trail-wide capacity controls in place. Baxter State Park has been collecting data on thru-hiker numbers for several decades. In 1991, the park registered a total of 359 thru-hikers, including northbound, southbound, and section hikers. In 2014, the park registered 2,017 thru-hikers — a nearly six-fold increase in just over 20 years. Moreover, A.T. thru-hikers comprise less than three percent of park visitors, but consume more than 20 percent of ranger time.

Bissell's letter made it clear that the future of the A.T. in Baxter State Park — including the terminus on Katahdin

A.T. Hunt Spur on Katahdin looking south.
Photo by Ellen Gass

— depends on these issues being successfully resolved, thus raising the stakes for the A.T. community at a time when the Trail is already in the national spotlight. If the impact of Cheryl Strayed's *Wild* on the Pacific Crest Trail is any indication, the Appalachian Trail has an interesting year ahead. It remains to be seen how many thru-hikers inspired by the film version of Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods* will make it to Baxter State Park. For a park already feeling the strain, the release of this film only increases the urgency of finding solutions.

The risk of special places being worn out is real. It's a slow erosion that happens in small, incremental changes, many of which seem reasonable: a large group of hikers here, a good-natured film crew there, a summit sprayed with champagne. Each of these impacts seems minor when taken in isolation. But what happens when thousands of thru-hikers want to pop a cork in the fragile alpine zone on Katahdin to celebrate the achievement of finishing the Trail? What happens when groups of 40 or more hikers want to summit together, day after day?

In the case of Katahdin, the summit begins to feel like a loud, crowded bar. The noise of thru-hikers celebrating, which can be a daily event from late July through October, is enough to keep other hikers — particularly families with young children — from summiting at all. This is not the wilderness that drew Henry David Thoreau to Maine. It is not the spiritual center of the Wabanaki world. It bears little resemblance to the mountain that so many of us know and love.

We at Friends of Baxter State Park are working very hard to resolve these issues in partnership with the A.T. community. In July, we hosted a meeting that included representatives from Baxter State Park, the ATC, the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association, and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, as well as local business owners and current thru-hikers. The goal of this meeting was to create a task force to work on positive, collaborative solutions to the problems Baxter State Park is facing related to A.T. thru-hikers.

RESPECT THE MOUNTAIN

Everyone came to the meeting with an open mind and deep respect for the mission of Baxter State Park. After a productive conversation, each of us left with a long to-do list and a sense of shared purpose. The ATC is playing a lead role in the effort to develop and implement near, mid-term, and long-term solutions. These include communicating clear expectations to thru-hikers nearing Baxter State Park, revising 2,000-miler criteria to emphasize hiking the A.T. responsibly, promoting end-of-Trail celebrations that capture the moment within acceptable boundaries, and exploring options for increased staff presence on the A.T. approaching the northern terminus. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club and its ridgerunners are making a special effort to educate thru-hikers about Baxter State Park, while continuing the monumental effort of maintaining the treadway and Trail facilities. The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association is committed to assisting with outreach and education. Bloggers, app developers, and hostel owners are eager to help, and are encouraging thru-hikers to treat Katahdin with respect.

The take-home messages for thru-hikers are simple: celebrate quietly, hike in small groups, and save alcohol for later. If all thru-hikers follow these common-sense guidelines, it will go a long way toward improving the outlook for the A.T. in Baxter State Park.

Thru-hiker celebrations are welcome in Millinocket, the gateway community to Baxter State Park. The Appalachian Trail Cafe offers a "hiker happy hour" from 4:00 to 6:00 pm every day, sponsored by Baxter Brewing Company. This is a great alternative to a party on Katahdin, and it won't earn you a summons from park rangers. Paul and Jaime Renaud (a.k.a. "Ole Man" and "Navigator"), who completed the A.T. in 2006, operate a hostel, shuttle service, and gear shop in addition to the cafe. They serve more than a thousand thru-hikers every year and are a wonderful source of information about Baxter State Park and Katahdin.

In a very real sense, the future of the A.T. in Baxter State Park is in the hands of thru-hikers — including those who

The Appalachian Trail Cafe in nearby Millinocket offers "hiker happy hour" as a way for hikers to celebrate their summit outside of the park.
Photo by Michael Lee



are finishing this fall. But you don't need to be thru-hiking to help. If you love Katahdin, and would like to support the continued partnership between Baxter State Park and the Appalachian Trail, I encourage you to join Friends of Baxter State Park and the ATC. Membership in our organizations is a way to give back to a special place that is at the very heart of the A.T. experience.

I also encourage you to promote ATC membership to all of your A.T. friends and acquaintances. When you are on the A.T., please support the ATC's Trail-wide initiatives in Leave No Trace ethics and hiker education. Talk to thru-hikers about respecting the Trail, its users, and the special places it goes through. We not only welcome your involvement and your ideas, but we need them. With some creative thinking from Trail managers and the A.T. community, some teamwork from thru-hikers, and a commitment to working together, we can resolve these issues in a way that would make Myron Avery and Percival Baxter both proud. ♡

Aaron Megquier is the executive director of Friends of Baxter State Park.

For more information, to become a member, or help with an ATC donation visit:
friendsofbaxter.org/join
appalachiantrail.org/donate

TRAILHEAD

A.T. — SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK BY PENG WANG

Celebrate the National Park Service's 100th and Find Your Park

The National Park Service turns 100 on August 25, 2016, and everyone can take part in the celebration. The centennial will kick off a second century of stewardship of America's national parks and of engaging communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs.

In celebration of its 100th birthday in 2016, the National Park Service has launched a movement to spread the word about the amazing places they manage, the inspirational stories that the national parks tell, our country's natural resources, and our diverse cultural heritage.

Find Your Park is about more than just national parks. It's about the National Park Service working in your community through education programs, community assistance projects, and more. It's about state parks, local parks, trails, museums, historic sites, and the many ways that the American public can connect with history and culture, enjoy nature, and make new discoveries.

Visit: FindYourPark.com to sample upcoming centennial events near you, share your stories, and find your park. Participate in Find Your Park Experiences to learn, discover, be inspired, or simply have fun in national parks like the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Find Your Park is supported by the National Park Service's nonprofit partner, the National Park Foundation. For more information visit: NationalParks.org.

MOVIE REVIEW *A Walk in the Woods*



Scene from *A Walk in the Woods*. Photo by Frank Masi — courtesy of Broad Green Pictures

BY JIM FETIG

REDFORD. SLAPSTICK. NO WAY! INDEED, it's true. If you recall, Redford and Paul Newman always had comedic chemistry. To my delight, the humor in *A Walk in the Woods* was practically nonstop. The jokes kept coming. Anyone would get them, but there was enough hiker and A.T. double entendres to evoke knowing nods and smiles from the trekkers in the audience.

Potty humor on the Trail isn't new and this movie doesn't disappoint. The ubiquitous and sometimes maligned potty trowel makes more than a cameo appearance. I mean, how are you going to dig a cat hole when flushable fixtures are only a figment of your imagination? Redford with toilet paper in hand may have been added for shock value, but more likely, the trowel scenes are subliminal Leave No Trace messages using a subject not much discussed in polite, non-hiking society.

To recap for the unfamiliar, author Bill Bryson penned a best-seller in 1998 entitled, *A Walk in the Woods*. It was an account of his trip, exaggerated for effect, based on chunks of the Appalachian Trail that Bryson sampled. His sidekick, Steven Katz — played by Nick Nolte in the movie — is the foil and comedic counterpoint as their adventures unfold.

The screenplay differs a fair amount from Bryson's original story, but the essence is there. Two old comrades with diametrically opposite personalities reunite after decades for one last adventure. Neither this film, nor the recent movie *Wild* (based on Cheryl Strayed's best selling memoir) are about hiking per se. In each, hiking is the means to the end. In this case, Bryson confronts career burnout and the remedy is a romp in the woods with his old buddy Katz. Our treat is to go along for the ride and enjoy the laughs.

As with any movie about subjects we know intimately and love dearly, this movie has its share of nits to pick and quibble about. Among them, in the movie: some of the geography appears out of order or isn't actually the A.T. The duo has trekking poles strapped to their obviously empty packs, but never use them. The social aspects of the A.T. experience are mostly AWOL. Bad weather usually lasts more than 30 seconds. The bears that steal Bryson and Katz's food are brown bears, not black bears. (We know bears will do almost anything for food, but hitchhike from Montana? That's a bit much.) Neither golf carts nor any deus ex machina is going to charge to your rescue in the backcountry. But, hey, that's dramatic license.

The big question is how the movie will affect the number of hikers in the future. History is clear. Major mass media events drive numbers up. Given that most Millennials barely know who Redford and Nolte are, it may not have much effect on that demographic. Large numbers of Boomers, on the other hand, may have missed out when they were in their 20s and, like me, had to wait until retirement to find the time. Could it be that this will remind them to get off the couch and out in the woods? More likely, we may expect the number of weekenders and short-distance backpackers to increase along the entirety of the Trail. After all, Bryson himself didn't hike the whole thing. For those without the wherewithal or inclination to thru-hike, sampling chunks of the Trail is a viable alternative.

Everyone fears that hordes of uninitiated hikers can disproportionately damage the environment.

That's why the potty trowel metaphor is an effective vehicle to communicate the larger Leave No Trace message. It creates awareness and opens the door to a broader discussion of appropriate behavior and practices that mitigate human impact.

Viewers come to movies like this with a truckload of preconceptions. They've read the book, tramped around on the A.T. or other trails, and have their own inventory of intrepid experiences. Hikers want a hiking movie with which they can self-identify and that validates hiking as they understand it. In other words, hikers will tend to want a certain label and vintage of fine red wine, e.g., perfection. For some, this won't be that movie, and I'll submit that there'll never be one. So, this flick may not be what you hope for, but it will still make you laugh because if you haven't been there and done that, at least you know it happens.

A Walk in the Woods is a light comedy based on our favorite pastime with a sprig of deeply personal revitalization for the two main characters garnishing the end. They all lived happily ever after. Really? When you think about it, isn't rejuvenation a big chunk of why any of us lace 'em up and grab our trekking poles? You bet it is.

PAY IT FORWARD *Register Your Thru-hike*

THE FACTS ARE INDISPUTABLE. THE NUMBER OF THRU-HIKERS HAS BEEN increasing for decades. Mass media events such as popular books, television programs, or videos have historically driven the numbers higher. Now, for the first time ever, two feature-length films about long-distance hiking have been released within a year of each other. Both are likely to motivate even more people to hit the Appalachian Trail.

The Trail cannot accommodate everyone if they all show up at once in the same place. Shelters and campsites have finite capacity. Once that capacity is exceeded, the crowding quickly damages the quality of the hikers' experience, not to mention the destruction of vegetation, overload of the privies, and the wear and tear on the Trail itself.

Voluntary registration's purpose is to let prospective thru-hikers know when to expect crowds so they can avoid them. Everyone is free to start their hike when and where they want, but with voluntary registration they'll know what to since they can see how many people have signed up to start on which day in Georgia, Maine, Harpers Ferry, or other locations. In this way, no one should be surprised if there's no room in the shelter, all the tent spaces are filled, and they're standing in line for the privy.

Registering your thru-hike can not only reduce your stress from day one, it can also help you pay it forward. The data generated from the voluntary registration process will help the ATC determine what extra resources may be needed, such as ridgerunners, caretakers, Trail maintenance, and management needs. In 2015, more than 2,000 hikers registered thru-hikes in four categories, with a record number of hikers selecting alternative itineraries that helped spread out use. We all want those who follow us to have an equal chance to have a hike as good as or better than our own. Everyone knows that the "Trail provides." Sometimes it just needs a little help.

To find out more and to register visit: appalachiantrail.org/thruhikeregistration

Jim "Sisu" Fetig is a member of the ATC and Potomac A.T. Club. He maintains trails in Shenandoah National Park, including the A.T. section he oversees, is the ridgerunner coordinator for the Potomac A.T. Club, and volunteers at the ATC Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry. He thru-hiked the A.T. in 2014.

Biennial Membership Meeting Review Task Force

A Biennial/Membership Meeting Review Task Force has been established with ten representatives from Trail clubs, Regional Partnership Committees (RPCs), the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board of Directors to assess the operations of the ATC Biennial/Membership Meetings and to develop a recommendation for a more sustainable membership meeting program model that will highlight the components that support the requirements of the ATC's Bylaws, satisfy the needs of the ATC's members, create a more manageable workload for ATC staff and volunteers, and support the ATC's Strategic Plan. The Task Force will conduct a series of meetings to develop the recommendation with the following expected checkpoints:

Draft 1 (February 2016) — First executive review; **Draft 2** (March 2016) — Regional Partnership Committee review; **Draft 3** (July 2016) — Online webinar to be conducted for Trail club review; **Draft 4** (September 2016) — ATC Board review and approval; **Final version** (December 2016)

The ATC Bylaws require regular ATC meetings to focus on the business of the organization, including the election of the board and the consideration of motions and resolutions relevant to the corporate affairs of the ATC, to be held at times and places determined by the board, with regular meetings held no later than 36 months from the year in which the previous regular meeting was held nor earlier than 20 months after the previous meeting.

We want to hear from you.

If you have input that you would like to submit for consideration, send an email to: biennial@appalachiantrail.org or by mail to the address below. We will review information received through May 2016.

Biennial/Membership Meeting Review Input Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Visitor Center, P.O. Box 807 Harpers Ferry, WV 25425



HUNTING 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 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 visit:
appalachiantrail.org/hunting

ELLEN GASS – A.T., TENNESSEE BY BRANDON LAMOUNTAIN



The A.T. in the Berkshires

BY SILVIA CASSANO

THE BERKSHIRES REGION OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HAS AN abundance of agricultural and recreational landscapes that define it, all of which draws visitors to it in all seasons.

The 90 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Massachusetts are entirely within this region. The A.T. first enters Massachusetts at Sages Ravine, and climbs Mount Everett — the fourth tallest mountain in Massachusetts at 2,624 feet. The first town the Trail enters is South Egremont, where the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) Southern New England office, the Kellogg Conservation Center, is located adjacent to the Trail. The Trail then passes through Sheffield and Great Barrington as it heads north through state forest lands, entering the region near Pittsfield. It then ascends the historic Mount Greylock (the tallest in Massachusetts at 3,491 feet), and makes its uphill exit out of North Adams and into Vermont.

The Appalachian Trail Community of Great Barrington is currently the only designated A.T. Community in Massachusetts. Approximately 15 miles of the A.T. stretches between South Egremont and Beartown State Forest, in the town of Monterey. The town of Great Barrington is a draw to thru and section hikers as it is reachable by bus, an hour from two airports, and within a short drive from nearby cities.

Late summer is the peak thru-hiker season in the Berkshires. Residents of Great Barrington are used to seeing thru-hikers at the Route 7 crossing hitching a ride into town. Many hikers are delighted to come into town to enjoy fresh produce at the farmers’ market and often stay at nearby hotels as the distance between the shelters in this area makes it more appealing to stay in town.

Great Barrington has been gradually building community support through events and outreach over the past six years. This summer they held their third annual A.T. Community Celebration at Benedict Pond. Four hikes of varying distances were led by volunteers, followed by a potluck picnic. The ATC and A.T. Community partners at the Great Barrington Trails and Greenways have also been hosting a Family Day hike in July, to educate families on how to have a successful hike.

The Great Barrington Farmers Market has been a great partner, allowing conservation organizations to host a table on certain dates during the summer. This outreach has been getting more local support and attention, and the local community is hoping to keep it growing. “The question is, how [else] do we get Barrington to recognize and celebrate its Trail Community status?” said Adam Morris of Massachusetts Parks Department of Conservation and Recreation, an active partner and supporter of the annual celebration and the Great Barrington A.T. Community.

A local Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) teacher, Sue Garcia, has utilized the A.T. to teach her fourth and fifth graders about invasive plants and the importance of native plants. The students are also becoming great Leave No Trace advocates. A new TTEC teacher at Berkshire School in Sheffield has set up a phenology monitoring site on their campus with the help of the ATC’s seasonal staff member, Daniel Hale, who is also working on a way to use the property at the Kellogg Conservation Center to teach high school science.

Closer to the Kellogg Conservation Center, ATC staff members have been working with the Egremont Council on Aging, since May, to lead an “Egremont Walks” series along the A.T. as part of the Massachusetts “Keep Moving Fitness Program.” The series now has a good following and the group has plans to complete the A.T. between Egremont and Great Barrington by this fall.

With the recent momentum in the Berkshires revolving around the Appalachian Trail, Great Barrington hopes to continue gaining exposure so the community can realize the economic benefit as well as the conservation and recreational benefits the A.T. provides. In addition to all the formal outreach, the Berkshires are home to many A.T. volunteers, hostel and shuttle providers, naturalists, and advocates for the A.T. — without them the Trail wouldn’t be what it is today.

Silvia Cassano is the ATC’s Trail management assistant for the New England Regional Office.



The A.T. at Hop Brook Boardwalk, Tyringham, Massachusetts by Tammis Coffin

ATC 2015 Biennial Success

BY RANDY MOTZ

THE 40TH APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) BIENNIAL CONFERENCE in Winchester, Virginia this past summer certainly lived up to its name, “Hiking Through History.”

The 950-plus attendees were treated to a vast array of opportunities to catch up with old friends, hike, learn, participate in adventure and site-seeing excursions, and enjoy evening entertainment. With 70 unique hikes, over 80 informative workshops, 35 excursions, and many special activities, there was literally something for everyone. The beautiful Shenandoah University campus was a perfect location for the conference with all the facilities needed contained in a compact area that made getting from one location to another just a short walk. More than 53 vendors and exhibitors packed the Shingleton Hall Gymnasium from Friday evening until noon on Sunday. Trail clubs, state and national parks, trail and outdoor recreation-related organizations, outfitters, and authors, as well as local businesses and tourism bureaus, were rewarded with a steady stream of interested conference attendees at their tables all weekend.

No matter what your age or hiking ability, there was a hike for everyone. Intrepid hikers braved the intense summer heat to participate in memorable hikes on the Appalachian Trail, C&O Canal towpath, at local Civil War battlefields, in Shenandoah National Park, Shenandoah River State Park, and George Washington National Forest, just to name a few. Prior to the conference, each route had been hiked, some several times, and detailed maps were created by the Hikes Committee and its legion of volunteers. This gave everyone a very detailed idea of what to expect on each hike before registering. The maps of all the conference hikes, along with photos and elevation profiles of each hike, were assembled into a three-ring binder entitled, *Guidebook of 70 Unique Hikes — 2015 ATC Biennial Conference, Hiking Through History*, which was available for purchase from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) at their vendor table. The guidebook is a great way to plan your own hikes in the area. If you were not able to attend the conference, the book is available on the PATC’s website.

Workshops conducted by expert presenters covered all manner of relevant Trail-related topics, from Trail history and A.T. Communities to hiking and backpacking skills, Trail maintenance, and youth outreach. Many of the workshops were full to capacity, and if there was one complaint, it was that there were simply too many to choose from.

Excursions varied from guided walking tours of historic locations in Winchester, Front Royal, and Harpers Ferry, a train ride through the hills and valleys of West Virginia to see bald eagles, guided birding trips, bike rides on the Western Maryland Rail Trail, C&O Canal towpath and through the Antietam National Battlefield Park, and wine tasting at local vineyards. For the more adventurous, there was white water rafting, canoeing and kayaking on the Shenandoah River, zip lining, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Attendees also had the chance to go on guided tours of Gettysburg National Military Park and to the Appalachian Trail Museum, as well as on a bus trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the many monuments.

During the conference, three gentlemen were presented awards for their years of service to the Appalachian Trail. Bob Proudman, recently retired as the ATC’s director of conservation operations, was given a special award for his 50 years as a trail builder, 34 years with the ATC, in addition to his work with AMC and the National Park Service. Bob Peoples, leader of the Hard Core Trail Crew and proprietor of Kinchora Hostel, was awarded the ATC Honorary Membership for his long-term commitment to the A.T. And Hank Harman, a long-standing member of Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club, was recognized by the National Park Service for his contributions and promotion of the Appalachian Trail over the past 75 years.

The 40th Biennial Conference was one for the record books; a model of organization, quality, efficiency, and attention to detail. However, the 2015 Conference Committee could not have done it alone. It was the hundreds of passionate volunteers who unselfishly staffed the various information tables, led hikes and excursions, hosted workshops, staffed the camping area, answered attendees’ many questions, provided exceptional evening presentations, and jumped in wherever there was a need, who should really get all the credit. Without them, the conference would not have been as successful as it was. Our most sincere thanks go out to each and every one of them.



From top: Attendees hike Big Schloss — by Jayne Mayne; Families kayak on the Shenandoah River — by Dan Innamorato; Hikers enjoy the view from Compton Peak — by Vince Ferrari; Hiking Tibet Knob — by Jayne Mayne



APPALACHIAN TRAIL

GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE



Allentown Hiking Club members pulled their share of garlic mustard. Photo by Marian Orlousky

Volunteers from across the Trail rallied together this past spring to pull a whopping 2,772 pounds of garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), thus surpassing the goal of pulling one pound per mile of the A.T., or 2,190 pounds. Every pound was critical in helping us reach our goal, and the ATC would like to thank every one of the 170 volunteers who participated in the 2015 challenge.

Work projects were geared toward teaching volunteers how to identify garlic mustard and prevent the plant's spread. Garlic mustard, also known as Poor Man's Mustard, is an invasive herbaceous plant native to Eurasia. It is capable of out-competing native plants by depriving them of sunlight, moisture, and space. It also uses a form of competition called allelopathy, which means it releases a chemical compound into the ground that can inhibit the growth of surrounding plants.

The plant is, however, also a wild edible. It was originally introduced to the U.S. by European settlers for its variety of dietary uses. The leaves, flowers, roots and seeds are all palatable.

Marian Orlousky is the ATC's northern resource management coordinator.

Aves en la Kittatinny

BY ALICIA REIGEL-KANTH



Aves citizen scientists observe an Osprey — by Alicia Riegel-Kanth

THIS PAST SUMMER, ALICIA RIEGEL-KANTH AND BOB SICKLEY FROM THE Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Mid-Atlantic Regional Office joined Cindy Radich from the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club, two local expert birders, and 18 Trail newbies to learn about birding, hiking, the A.T., and the Kittatinny Ridge in Pennsylvania. This event was one of 12 hikes featured in the third annual Bird the Ridge hike series, a signature event conceived by the Kittatinny Coalition, which promotes citizen science. The coalition is co-lead by Audubon Pennsylvania and the ATC.

Thanks to Audubon's Jeanne Ortiz, this year's Bird the Ridge added a new twist: three hikes conducted in Spanish and English — known as "Aves en la Kittatinny." Each hike averaged about two miles. Ortiz planned a non-A.T. hike in Hawk Mountain's south lookout area. Another partner — Dan Kunkle of Lehigh Gap Nature Center — planned a second non-A.T. loop hike on three local trails around the property.

Riegel-Kanth planned the third hike, along the A.T., with help from colleagues Ryan Seltzer and Bob Sickley. Riegel-Kanth worked with staff of the Latino Hispanic American Community Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to recruit neighborhood residents to participate in the Aves en la Kittatinny hike. Participants ranged in age from early 20s to late 60s. They were introduced to the seven Leave No Trace principles and were given pocket-size Outdoor Ethics cards for themselves and for their families, which displayed the principles in Spanish. Riegel-Kanth and Seltzer are Leave No Trace Trainers. Sickley is a Leave No Trace Master Educator.

The Kittatinny Ridge — a Globally Important Bird Area — is a major flyway for song birds and raptors migrating from North America into Central and South America and back. The ridge is their guide. An intriguing aspect of these hikes is that participants also hail from the countries where southbound migrators seek warmer climates. Thanks to the generosity of Audubon Pennsylvania and its local chapter, Appalachian Audubon Society, each hiker was able to use a pair of binoculars and share a birding book with a buddy.

The hikers left the Peters Mountain trailhead and steadily trod carefully-crafted rock steps, through heavily wooded areas and across various overlooks toward Table Rock. The birding experts pointed out the variety of bird songs and took notes on species heard and seen. Fascinated by the Indigo Bunting and the Scarlet Tanager, participants relished the opportunity to experience the wilderness and quiet beauty of nature. They were treated to glorious views of Clarks Valley and Powells Valley; and some participants were so enchanted by their experience that they vowed to return with their families and hike the A.T. again. After a leisurely snack under the trees, the tired travelers returned home, reminiscing on the way about the birds heard and seen, what they learned about the A.T., and new friends made along the way.

Alicia Riegel-Kanth is an environmental planner for the ATC in the mid-Atlantic region.



VIDEO SERIES

"Don't be that guy"

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF AT THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) have created a series of entertaining and informative videos that will teach visitors how to reduce their imprint on the A.T. The videos, titled "Don't Be That Guy — Appalachian Trail, Leave No Trace," were released in August.

Filmed by professional videographer and former thru-hiker Tara Roberts with support from the U.S. Forest Service, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, the ATC's Tennessee License Plate Fund, and ATC volunteers, the series illustrates the proper practices for hiking and camping that minimize impacts on the A.T.

"Leave No Trace methods are needed on the Appalachian Trail, especially due to its popularity," said Tom Banks, video producer and director. "There's a lot of good information available from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, and what these videos add is information that applies specifically to the Trail. We illustrate the techniques in a direct, but entertaining, way."

The series features a clip on each of the seven principles of Leave No Trace, which include: plan ahead and prepare, travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors.

The video series is one way the ATC is preparing for a surge in Trail use following the release of the film *A Walk in the Woods*. The ATC acted as a consulting organization during production and assisted with the film's environmental messaging. "Additional effort is necessary to keep the Appalachian Trail in its natural state, especially given the increased attention that the Trail is receiving," said Javier Folgar, the ATC's director of Marketing and Communications. "Whether you are new to hiking or are an experienced 2,000-miler on the Appalachian Trail, everyone can benefit from watching these videos as a reminder of how to reduce impact."

Scene from: *Minimize Campfire Impacts 1 Appalachian Trail, Leave No Trace*



To view the "Don't Be That Guy — Appalachian Trail, Leave No Trace" video series visit: <https://goo.gl/bTYMAu>

For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/lnt and LNT.org

New ATC Website



If you've typed appalachiantrail.org into your Internet browser lately, you may have noticed a big change.

This September, we launched an updated version of our website, moving the organization into the 21st century by providing an interactive, user-friendly, and overall aesthetically pleasing experience. With new video and photo content, eye-catching graphics, and responsive design (meaning you can browse our interactive map of the Appalachian Trail or access the latest A.T. updates from your mobile device), we've maintained our status as *the* Trail information source — just in a fresh, new way.

We're particularly proud of how our site encourages people to explore the A.T. in a responsible and prepared manner. Under a new "Explore the Trail" section, users will find not only basic information on hiking and Leave No Trace principles, but also a breakdown of what it's like to experience the A.T. as a day, section, or thru-hiker. We also highlight each of the 14 states that the Trail passes through, giving a mileage overview, an elevation profile, fun facts and an image gallery.



We're willing to bet that by the time you're done perusing the site, the next thing you'll reach for is a pair of hiking boots!

Our new site also provides numerous ways for visitors to give back and protect the Trail in the form of donations, volunteer opportunities, and an online store that contributes all proceeds to protecting the A.T.

This new site represents the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, but it is also a great reminder of what the A.T. community is about. Aptly named, the "Community" section features real-time photos from the Trail, streamed to our site when someone on social media uses the hashtag #AT2015. You can also access our blog, check out the latest news releases, and find events in your area under this section. The content is inspiring, but as with everything about the A.T., would you expect any less? 🏔️

We hope you love the new site as much as we do. Send us a note and let us know what you think to: info@appalachiantrail.org.

A hiker with a dog is walking on a rocky trail. The background shows a dense forest of tall pine trees and some deciduous trees with autumn foliage. In the distance, there are mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is a scenic view of a mountain trail.

THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

The remoteness of the A.T. in Maine and northern New England is one of its greatest attributes, and also one of its greatest challenges.

BY CLAIRE POLFUS

Sustainable tread helps resist erosion along the A.T. at Rainbow Ledges in Maine. Photo by Silvia Cassano

SITTING ATOP A VERY PEAK IN MAINE'S BIGELOW RANGE, IT TAKES ONLY A SQUINT OF THE EYE AND SLIGHT SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF TO IMAGINE A LAYER OF ICE UP TO A MILE THICK COVERING THE ENTIRE LANDSCAPE. The bowl-like cirque on Crocker Mountain to my west and the miniature cryophilic plants that occupy crevices on the leeward side of my boulder perch are direct results of the past ice-age. Ultimately, however, the glaciers are most evident at my feet in the stones, boulders, and bedrock of the rock hop that makes up much of the Appalachian Trail in Maine. The glaciers churned and mashed up stone and bedrock and, as they receded, left a landscape missing an essential ingredient to trail building — soil. Because of this, they also created the beginning of one of our greatest challenges as stewards and managers of the Appalachian Trail in northern New England. >

Since 1991, when MATC began keeping detailed records, 719 rock waterbars and 6,589 stone steps (including a remarkable 857 steps up the north side of Whitecap) along with many hundreds of step stones, turnpike, and various other trail hardening and erosion control measures have been installed in the treadway in Maine.

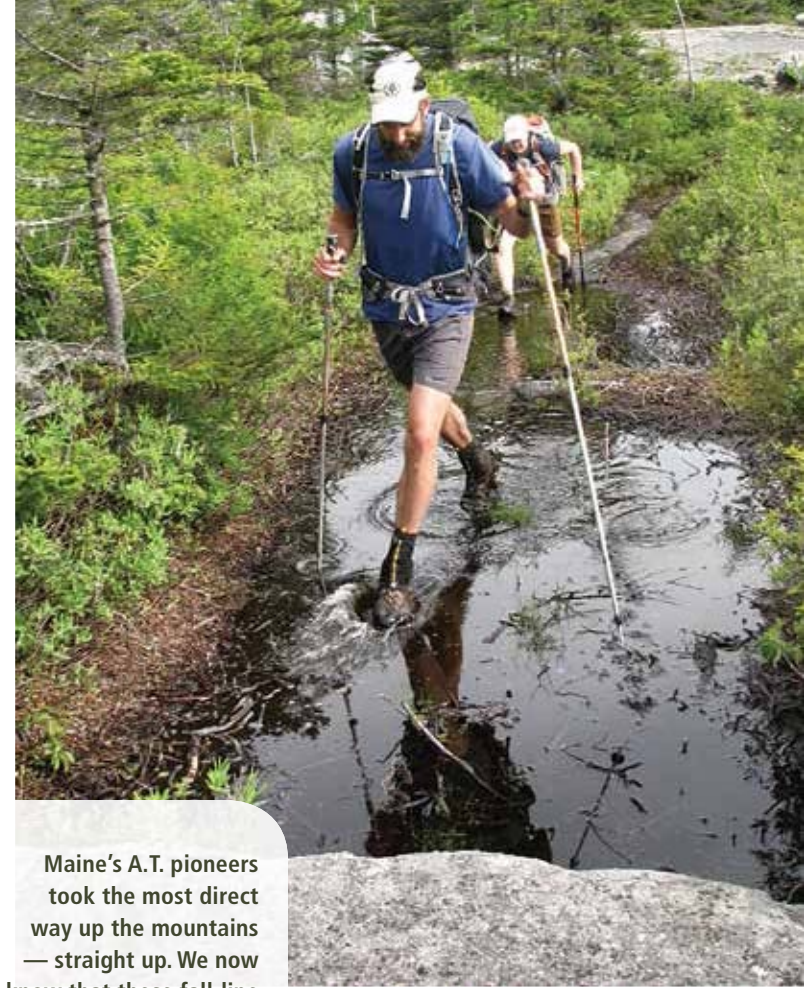
Fast forward 12,000 years and we still have a soil problem in northern New England. Soil formation depends on five factors — bedrock or source material, topography, climate, time, and soil organisms. On Avery Peak, for example, the bedrock is highly metamorphosed and relatively “hard,” the topography is steeply sloped so soil easily erodes downslope, the climate is quite cold and almost always windy, the land has been ice-free for only thousands of years (this is a short time period if you are a rock) and soil organisms, when they are present, have an extremely short summer to do their work. In other words, the inch or two of soil on the summit area, while thin, is quite an achievement. Farther downslope, soil formation is certainly more advanced, but still lags far behind the thick blanket of soil that blesses the southern half of the A.T.

Maine’s A.T. pioneers built the Trail on top of this minimal soil layer. With the imperative to follow the ridgeline, it was difficult to avoid areas with low soil. With Yankee can-do spirit in their souls, they simply took the most direct way up the mountains — straight up. We now know that these fall-line trails experience the most erosion of any type of trail because water always travels downhill on the line of least resistance. Even if there are hikers only in the summer, gravity and precipitation work year-round. Myron Avery and the others who routed the A.T. in Maine were working quickly and routing up to 30 miles of Trail in a day. Long-term sustainability took second place to the priority of quickly laying out and completing the Trail. By putting the Trail along lakes, rivers, and up mountains, the Trail designers guaranteed the almost roadless vistas, cascading waterfalls, and the nightly tremolo of loons that we consider iconic to the Maine A.T. experience. However, that same scenery along with the narrow width of the National Park Service (NPS)-owned corridor in much of Maine meant that a sustainably designed Trail was compromised in some areas.

In order to address the sustainability issues of the A.T. in Maine, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC), in collaboration with partners including the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Student Conservation Association (SCA), and the NPS, began the first Trail crew in Maine in 1975. The Trail crew has gone through a series of iterations since, but the constant has been focused work. Currently, the Maine Trail Crew, run by the MATC and funded by the NPS, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), and many other private and public grants, is made up of two leaders, two assistant leaders, four to five SCA interns, and a slew

A stone staircase (built by the MATC Trail Crew) on Pleasant Pond Mountain provides respite for hikers and protects the A.T. Photo by Claire Polfus

New England ATC staff members traverse an eroded muddy Trail on Moxie Bald Mountain. Photo by Matt Stevens



Maine’s A.T. pioneers took the most direct way up the mountains — straight up. We now know that these fall-line trails experience the most erosion of any type of trail because water always travels downhill on the line of least resistance.

have been installed in the treadway in Maine. The work to date totals out at a value over \$2 million.

MATC volunteers also put thousands of hours into maintaining the A.T. in Maine every year. Maintainers regularly implement short-term fixes

like digging drainage ditches to assist water off the treadway or medium-term fixes such as placing bog bridging over wet sections of Trail along with their regular duties of clearing blow-downs, clipping brush, cleaning out waterbars, and blazing. However, the remoteness of the A.T. in Maine, one of its greatest attributes, is also one of its greatest challenges. Not only is the total population of Maine one of the lowest of the 14 A.T. states, but most of the population lives along the coast, many miles from the A.T. MATC volunteers drive between one to four hours to their Trail sections, adding a logistical challenge that doesn’t even involve the inevitable combination of strenuous hiking and working in mud, water, rocks, and roots. Moreover, the work and volunteer season in Maine lasts from the end of May through the end of October, leaving only five to six months to do many years’ worth of work.

To add yet another challenge to the growing list of obstacles in northern New England, climate change is already throwing down its gauntlet. According to the Global Change Research Program of the U.S. Department of the Interior, heavy precipitation events have already increased 71 percent since 1958 and most climate forecasts show a similar trend in the future. Heavy



Much of the treadway on steep slopes is highly eroded and widened by hikers seeking the safest or driest way down the mountains.

rain events cause significantly more damage than rain showers because the trees, plants, and forest soils can't absorb the water as quickly as it falls, leaving it to run along the ground surface and erode our coveted treadway soil downstream. Famous events like Hurricane Irene caused massive amounts of damage and erosion on and off the Trail, while less prominent microbursts, flash rain events, and regular severe thunderstorms throughout the summer cause repeated and accumulating damage to the A.T. tread.

Similar challenges are also found in northern New England outside of Maine. Although the histories of the Trail segments, club structures, and use patterns vary a bit, the natural history is quite similar and the tread conditions tell the same story. Much of the treadway on steep slopes is highly eroded so that the Trail is gullied anywhere from 6 to 20 inches lower than the forest floor and widened by hikers seeking the safest or driest way down the mountains. Many low areas near bogs, rivers, and lakes have become sloppy messes as much as 25 feet wide. The Trail over high plateaus with organic soils turns to deep mud pits or large puddles with the slightest bit of rain. Areas where the Trail follows a sustainable alignment — or where Trail crews have placed rock steps, step stones, and waterbars — provide respite for hikers and protect the A.T., but inevitably another area with poor tread conditions lies ahead.

Recently, the ATC and the Appalachian Trail Park Office compiled statistics from eight years of Trail assessments. According to the data, 56 percent of Trail deficiencies are found in the three most northerly A.T. states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, which combine to contain only 23 percent of the total length of the A.T. The five club sections in northern New England contain anywhere from eight to eighteen deficiencies per mile compared to the mid-Atlantic, where it ranges from one to four, and Virginia and the far South where it varies from two to six. The majority of the deficiencies are severe enough that they require a Trail crew to fix them. Astoundingly, it would take more than 1,200 weeks with a four-person crew to fix all of the deficiencies along the A.T. in the three northern states, at a cost of \$6 million. At the current rate of the Maine Trail Crew, that means 25 to 35 years of hard work

— and that doesn't even include the inevitable new deficiencies that will develop during that time.

The mission of the ATC 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*. Therefore it is imperative that we work to repair the deficiencies in northern New England so that the treadway of the Appalachian Trail is truly sustainable. In order to do so, we are working within the cooperative management system to devise ways to tackle the obstacles to a sustainable Trail in Northern New England. The NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office is working to provide a framework that will lead to more regular and sustained funding for Trail crews in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont as well as supporting research on Trail sustainability. MATC is working on a large-scale project that will allow them to increase the capacity of their Trail crews. The other clubs are preparing to further utilize their crews or youth corps to work on the A.T.

These projects need the support not only of the volunteers and managers of the A.T. in New England, but of the larger A.T. community. Further fundraising, creative collaboration, and skill-sharing from partners up and down the Trail will help us to work out the immense challenge of building a sustainable treadway in northern New England. The beauty of the A.T. glows as I sit atop Avery Peak next to the sign immortalizing the Mainer who made the A.T. possible. From here I can follow the white blaze in my mind to the ridges of the mid-Atlantic, the rolling hills of Virginia, and the highest peaks of the south. All hands, backs, boots, wallets, and checkbooks must be on deck to address the growing challenge of Trail sustainability. Our goal is that future hikers will use this same, white-blazed, well-aligned Trail with suitable drainage and hardening in place to find the much revered solace that the A.T. provides for generations to come. ⚡

Widened tread near Pierce Pond. Photo by Claire Polfus

To help the ATC meet this challenge visit: appalachiantrail.org/donate

tis the season . . .



Share your love with a Gift Membership

We rely on the generosity of donors like you to help us fulfill our mission and vision of protecting the Appalachian Trail.

Membership benefits include: an oversized 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!

appalachiantrail.org/giftmembership



ATC Headquarters, Visitor Center entrance — by Dan Innamorato

RENO 101

BY STACEY MARSHALL

THE IDEA OF TACKLING A RENOVATION PROJECT AS LARGE AS THE ONE recently undertaken for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (all the while keeping the building open to staff and visitors) would challenge the determination of the most seasoned construction project manager. Add to that the cost associated with such a project and it's enough to send any finance director running into the executive director's office with spreadsheets devoted to why we should probably hold off for at least one more year. However, when looking at a project like this, one needs to keep in mind the value and not just the cost.

Built in 1892, the building on the corner of Washington Street and Storer College Place was purchased by the ATC in 1976. Over the years before the ATC's purchase, it served a wide array of purposes in the historic town, some of which included: Pop Trinkle's soda counter, the local opera house, and a combination gas station and auto sales service agency.

Considering its age, it was not surprising that the building had several structural issues that needed to be addressed. Also, as a conservation organization, we were concerned with energy efficiency and the building had only received nominal updates to this end in decades. The question was never whether or not we needed to address the building's needs, but simply: what do we sacrifice to make this a priority? Help with this decision came in the form of two generous ATC donors, George Putnam and Lenny Bernstein whose gifts covered the majority of the construction and energy efficiency upgrades.

Having never been responsible for a building renovation project of this scale, I honestly didn't know what to expect. As with any seemingly daunting task, the best one can hope for is to be open to the experience and the inevitable education it will likely provide. Therefore, I'd like to explain the lessons I learned and offer credit where credit is due.

LESSON 1 Dive in. The only way out sometimes, is through. We started talking about this renovation project years ago. While we made small valuable strides over the last several years to upgrade our energy efficiency, we never actually were prepared to move forward with structural and cosmetic needs until Ron Tipton came on board as executive director. Under Ron's leadership, the building became a priority. Within a few months of his arrival in 2013 we were in talks with architects

and setting up bids with local contractors. Ron's philosophy was simple. Make a decision — and act on it. With his guidance, and the help of many others we now have a structurally sound and beautiful building worthy of a national organization.

LESSON 2 Rely on the expertise and experience of others. Realize that you don't need to know it all — you just need to know who to ask for help. From the outset, we had a wealth of gifted

and insightful partners to help us through the project — from the incredible talents of the Mills Group architectural firm to the craftsman skills of the Minghinis construction team to the design styling of Rita Molyneaux. We were also fortunate to work with the town of Harpers Ferry whose enthusiasm about the renovations helped us to move the project along. Without these experts and partners, we would likely still be wondering if the flooring in the front of the building will hold for another year.

LESSON 3 Expect the unexpected and become a student in the art of patience. Never expect that a deadline will be met. If doors are ordered three months in advance, they will take four months to arrive. If the painters say they can be there Friday, it's more likely that they'll be there Wednesday (which requires everyone to stop what they are doing and make sure the painters have room to paint). If the electrician can only be there on Thursday, then of course the worst snow storm of the season will make the scheduled appointment impossible. I can fully appreciate why patience is a virtue. I can also tell you, that, if you need to work on your patience, then feel free to tackle a renovation project. You'll have a forced education in patience.

LESSON 4 Always have a good sense of humor. If the electrician needs to shut down the breaker box to determine what line goes where, it's best to make sure staff know they can have a two-hour lunch that day. Whenever the circular saws are running in the background and you're on an important phone call, simply act as if circular saws are the norm for your office. And if all else fails, buy everyone pizza.

LESSON 5 You will learn that the foundation of the building you work in, and more importantly the foundation of the organization you believe in, are really the people you work with every day. You will gain an incredible amount of respect for your colleagues. I cannot convey to you in words the amount of disruptions this project caused for our staff over a five-and-a-half-month period. To save money, we asked staff to help us move desks from one area to the other — even from temporary buildings nearby and back again. There was an entire week we had to ask everyone to work from home



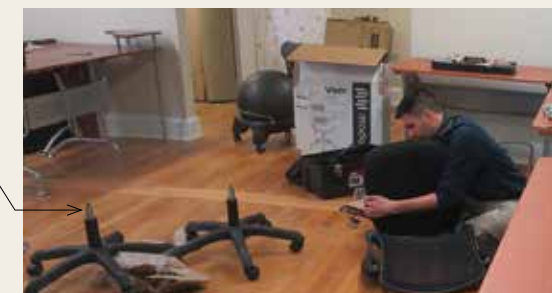
Director of marketing assembles office furniture

Marketing and Finance staff in a moment of levity

The cozy new waiting area

Sections of the building were cleared out and staff temporary relocated

A brand new front entrance for headquarters



WHENEVER THE CIRCULAR SAWS ARE RUNNING IN THE BACKGROUND AND YOU'RE ON AN IMPORTANT PHONE CALL, SIMPLY ACT AS IF CIRCULAR SAWS ARE THE NORM FOR YOUR OFFICE.

due to the floors being refinished. This is normally not a big issue, except when you're only a few weeks away from your yearly audit and you're losing critical time to prepare. There was never a time when we asked for staff to help that we didn't receive it — and receive it in spades.

WHEN I WAS FIRST ASKED TO PUT TOGETHER AN article about this, I shuddered. I am a numbers person, not a wordsmith. The idea of writing about dates and times and surprises along the way terrified me. But the more I thought about it, the more I thought what an excellent opportunity this would be to write about the ATC staff and give credit where credit is due. The ATC is blessed with an incredible staff under the guidance of a remarkable leader. As a volunteer organization, we

focus (and rightly so) on the tireless efforts and talents of our volunteers. But rarely do we look at the foundation of the ATC — the staff — and publicly thank them for their efforts. Their passion is easily dismissed by the fact that they receive a paycheck. Every individual on staff is devoted to our beloved Trail. They are as passionate about the work they do as the first volunteer that helped charter the path that is now the Appalachian Trail. We live our passion — every day. And now we have a beautifully renovated building we can be proud of as we continue our work and welcome visitors and guests to the ATC's headquarters. ⚡

Stacey Marshall is the senior director of finance and administration for the ATC.

Watchwords: Half a Century with the A.T.

BY ROBERT PROUDMAN



DESPITE MY SURNAME, I DO NOT LIKE TO CLAIM CREDIT. SO I ASKED A.T. Journeys editor Wendy Probst if I could use a pen name. Answer: No, first person singular. So, I am writing at the end of my fulltime employment with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) about my work over the past half-century, my “Swan’s Song”—presented to you with love.

As many psychologists have discovered while studying human behavior, memory is fragile and not always true. But these are my recollections as honestly told as I’m able. My credo, or watchword has been, “It’s amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” Over the decades I have quietly tackled what my close colleague Donald Owen recommended in the 1990s, “Just do the next most past-due priority,” another important watchword. Don was the ATC’s analytical “left brain” (logical and systematic) to my always imagining and intuiting “right brain” (artistic or contemplative).

So many others deserve recognition more than me—particularly the unsung Appalachian Trail heroes who work day-in and day-out to maintain, manage, promote, protect, and care for the Trail — the A.T. volunteers — heck, it was they who first taught me! Although in my heart I know I don’t need credit, so long as the job gets done, here’s a summary of my story with some of the watchwords that guided my career along the way.

I worked for about a decade with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), starting on the AMC Trail Crew in 1965, working dawn to dusk in the White Mountains for \$18.50 per week and all I could eat, rising through the ranks to become one of the AMC’s select “Trail Masters” in 1968. I recall one day “standardizing” (AMC’s word for clearing the Trail to a “standard width”) in the Mahoosucs when our all-male crew worked with nothing but our boots on. In the mid-1960s, there was little chance that anyone would happen by. Boy, did that ever change later in that decade.

From 1969 to ‘71, I spent three years as an apprentice, climbing big mountains and cutting big trees for several tree companies. Both of those activities contributed to my career as a trail designer, builder, maintainer, and — after several years of fulltime work for the AMC in the early 1970s — particularly sanitation work with Forest Service science folks and AMC huts management — I became a general all-around authority in backcountry management.

In the 1970s, the Board of Managers of the then Appalachian Trail Conference was somewhat of an “insider’s club,” caring for a Trail not nearly as well-known as it is today. Several hundred Trail club folk, Boy Scouts, and hikers sought out the ATC’s guidebooks and discovered the A.T. I attended Board meetings from

about 1972 on, and I recall saying to ATC Chair Stan Murray at one point, that my involvement as a 25-year old “is an investment in our future.” He agreed. I joined the board in 1975 as an AMC staff member from the White Mountains and was hired by the ATC in 1981.

Perhaps most wonderful in retrospect was providing staff support for many of the Trail’s greatest volunteer and staff leaders. It was also a delight to support the National Park Service (NPS) Appalachian Trail Park Office’s greatest, too numerous to list here now; and finally, to support the ATC’s executive directors, from Col. Lester Holmes to David N. Startzell and Ron Tipton.

During the gas shortage of the early 1970s, when Ruth Blackburn, later the chair of the ATC board, was negotiating with landowners throughout Maryland, I taught her how to pump gas. At a special trail-construction workshop with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club in 1978 on Blood Mountain, I stayed with succeeding ATC chair Margaret Drummond at her home in Atlanta. Margaret later became a pillar of partnerships, beloved by the U.S. Forest Service, the Trail clubs, and the ATC. In 1984, I ghostwrote the “delegation” letters to all 31 Trail clubs on behalf of ATC chair Ray Hunt essentially saying, “We accepted the delegation of these National Park lands on the Appalachian Trail Conference’s and your behalf.”

When the ATC invited the National Park Service in to save the A.T. by acquiring land, the board was very worried about hiring staff because it wanted to maintain its leadership and control over day-to-day administration. But it recognized that the ATC had to grow to meet the challenges of managing the Appalachian Trail beyond what lay people with limited time could do. Therefore, the watchword for the ATC’s earliest Trail-management staff was: “The staff’s job is to work themselves out of a job.” Bookkeepers, even executive directors, were okay. But staff in the woods?

“Do your work, follow direction of volunteer officers, then be done.” It may have been the ATC’s longest-serving Board of Managers member Arch Nichols (a perfect gentleman from western North Carolina) who said that first; or maybe Steve Clark from Maine who, with his colleagues, was worried about losing control.

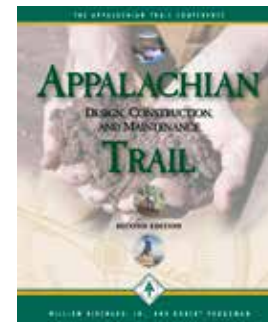
But it was ardent, often repeated, and clear. Examples of this posture abounded, even the use of diminutive titles for staff positions. Today the ATC has regional directors, but when they were first hired in 1978 and for years thereafter, “field representatives” were limited to reporting to the ATC vice chairs, the true bosses of the A.T. regions in those days.

As the supervisor of the four field representatives, I was an adept in this situation, and became director of Trail management programs. This grew to include all of the ATC’s Trail and cooperative-management programs with our clubs and agency partners up through the early 2000s when the ATC articulated its broader conservation mission and later transitioned into the Appalachian

Trail Conservancy in 2005 under what has become today the ATC Conservation Department. I’m proud to have led that seminal organization through the ‘80s and ‘90s.

Working with other staff, volunteers and NPS, I have had the privilege of helping midwife the Appalachian Trail into the world-class Trail and national park that it has become today. So, perhaps this is a suitable forum to say to my board colleagues from the 1970s, both living and passed, and to all of my friends, colleagues and supporters, that I have completed my work and have indeed worked myself out of a job. Well, mostly out: I do hope to consult and aid others as I’m able. The A.T. is in their capable hands now. As John Muir said, “The mountains are calling and I must go.”

1965



From far left: Proudman explains Trail design in 1987; Bob literally wrote the book on Trail design and maintenance; At the Great Wall in China (Bob traveled to other countries over the years to explain Trail design); Hands-on work near Depot Lake in Maine; In his office at HQ

1977

- Author of AMC’s *Trail Building and Maintenance*
- Negotiated the 21,000-acre Mahoosuc A.T. acquisition by land-trade with the Maine Bureau of Public Lands

Late ‘70s

- Designed the A.T. corridor over Mount Smarts, Mount Cube, and Atwell Hill (25 miles), and the Massachusetts section (then 86 miles)

1980

- Prepared the first A.T. corridor monitoring training program and workshops to teach monitoring to Trail clubs

1981

- Author of *Appalachian Trail Design, Construction and*

Maintenance — updated versions are still in use today as a template for trail design throughout the U.S. and internationally.

- Major designs for the corridor protection of the A.T. in the Mahoosucs of western Maine
- Designed the A.T. corridor over Catawba, Virginia, to Daleville (30 miles)
- Trained the first volunteer Konnarock Trail Crew

1986

- Trained the first Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew

1988

- Coauthored (with Don Owen) the first edition of the *Local Management Planning Guide*

1980 – 1990

- Initiated a program to remove

hundreds of buildings, dams, factories, power lines, other structures and “man-altered conditions” from the A.T. corridor.

- Hired the best people for the job, then let them do their jobs; including: southern regional director Morgan Sommerville (1983), former executive director Dave Startzell (whom I advocated strongly for — 1986), and Mid-Atlantic regional director Karen Lutz (1988)
- Started and expanded the ATC ridgerunner program in response to growth in public use and perceptions of problems such as crime and vagrancy
- Advocated for worker-safety policies that later grew into the ATC’s Saw Training and Safety Program

2000 – Present

- Played important roles in various conservation battles including: the fight with the Alpine Rose Raceway (with Karen Lutz — 2001-2006), which led to the amendment of the Pennsylvania A.T. Act requiring township zoning to protect the A.T.
- Questioned (with Laura Belleville, Dave Startzell and others) the Department of Energy’s National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors and generally opposed utilities’ poorer crossing choices affecting the Trail (2010-2014)
- Was part of the battle to prevent siting of a major gambling casino near Sterling Forest State Park in Orange County New York (2014) 🏹



VIBRANT VIEWS

With fall in full swing, an invigorating day hike on the Trail offers cool weather and a wonderful variety of colorful landscapes from south to north — so catch it while you can.

Find more day hike suggestions at: appalachiantrail.org/dayhikes

Peter's Mountain Pennsylvania

3.7

TOTAL HIKING MILES

The Peter's Mountain Loop Trail near Duncannon is about 3.7 miles long and can be hiked by most people in less than two hours. It rises about 930 feet above the trail-head and runs along the ridge for a mile offering glimpses to the north and south through the trees as well as two beautiful vistas.

PHOTO BY SEAN O'SHELL

Max Patch

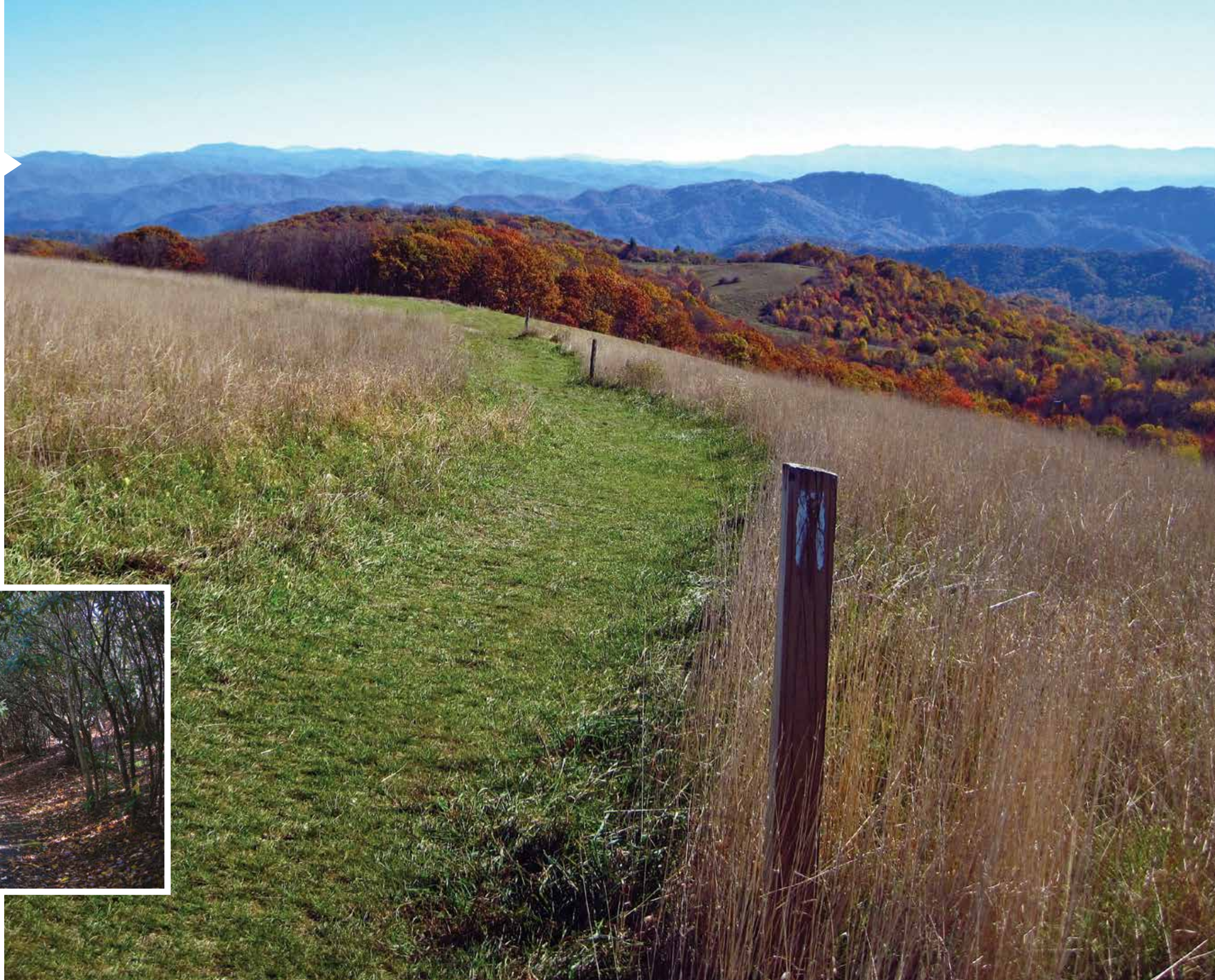
North Carolina/Tennessee

1.4

TOTAL HIKING MILES

Max Patch is a scenic grassy bald with 360-degree views of the Great Smoky Mountains to the west and Roan Mountain and Mount Mitchell to the east. The 1.4-mile loop follows the marked path to the left as you leave the parking lot, takes you across the grassy summit on the A.T., and back to the parking area. It is about 350 feet of elevation gain; an easy to moderate hike for all ages and abilities.

PHOTOS BY "WEATHERCARROT"



Schaghticoke Mountain

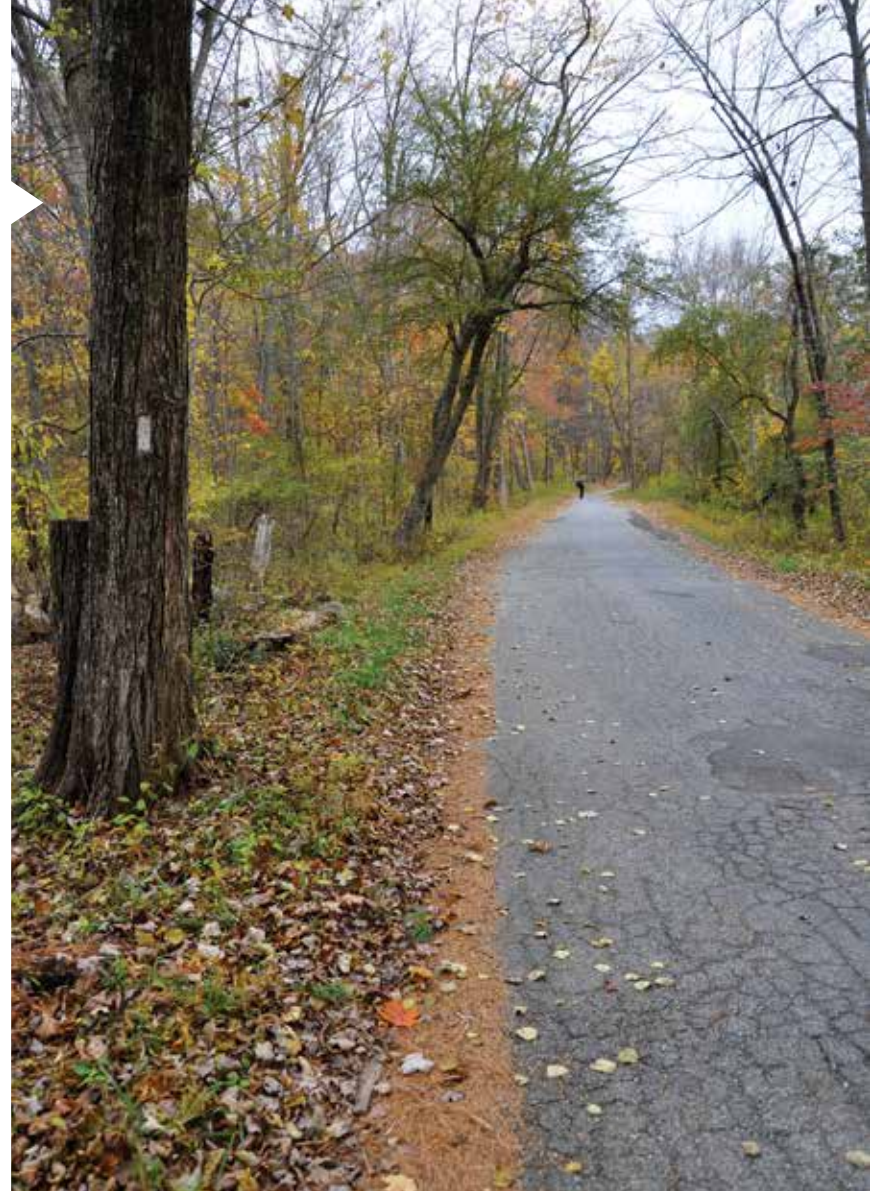
Connecticut

6.6

TOTAL HIKING MILES

A 6.6 mile out-and-back hike will bring you to "Indian Rocks" on the east side of Schaghticoke Mountain, with spectacular views looking over the Housatonic River. Begin your hike at the junction of Schaghticoke Road and Bulls Bridge Road in Kent (limited parking is available here). Take the white blazes north, and climb to where the A.T. winds between the Connecticut and New York state lines before coming to the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation, and the stony ledges of "Indian Rocks." ↗

PHOTOS BY LAURIE POTTEIGER





↑ THE HEART OF IT

Dreamer

I can't remember how I first learned about the Appalachian Trail. I do remember I was 17, a senior in high school in Katy, Texas, when my friend Laura and I decided in all of our teenage wisdom that we were more than capable of thru-hiking the A.T. We never made it past the dreaming stage, our attention shifting to our next adventurous plan. But the idea of the Appalachian Trail had taken root, and I have found that it isn't an idea that is easily put aside.

Volunteer

Around six years later, I set foot for the first time on the Appalachian Trail, just south of Marion, Virginia. I had driven from Texas with a car full of AmeriCorps volunteers to spend a week building Hurricane Mountain Shelter with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Konnarock Trail Crew. It only took one week of Trail crew for me to decide that my next job needed to be on the A.T. With a background of trail building for AmeriCorps and unashamed self-promotion, I told the ATC representative to look for my application because I wanted to work there the next year. I couldn't think of anything more fun than spending the next spring and summer on the Appalachian Trail.

Staff

I spent the next five years working seasonally and then full-time for the ATC. I built and repaired trail with the Konnarock Trail Crew in the South, monitored and maintained the boundaries of the National Park Service land that surrounds the Trail in the Mid-Atlantic and New England, and worked boots-on-the-ground in every state but Maryland. I worked daily with volunteers, who were donating their time and energy to maintain and protect the Trail. After spending long days performing exhausting manual labor, these volunteers still had the energy to stay up around the campfire telling jokes and Trail stories. I came to understand why you refer to friends on the Trail as your Trail family; the long-lasting friendships built through shared labor transcends differences that often limit friendships in the front country. Many of my co-workers and volunteers became my first Trail family, and it was from the long-distance hikers among them that I really caught the thru-hiking bug. I had wanted to thru-hike before, but now it was a desire that excited me for its real possibility. It was not just some far away dream or words written on a bucket list that I had made no effort to check off.

In my time with the ATC, I learned what it takes to

maintain a 2,190-mile hiking trail — how what you can hike in 30 minutes might take three weeks for a Trail crew to build. How the landscape around the Trail is protected by volunteers bushwhacking through unvisited areas and building relationships with Trail neighbors. How a small staff of dedicated people with a passionate love for the Trail, both at the ATC and with the National Park Service, made the Appalachian Trail the only long-distance trail passing through protected lands for more than 99 percent of its length. I learned that without the thousands of volunteers and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours spent



on the Trail each year, there would not be a footpath on which to enjoy fellowship with the wilderness. I got to be a part of the behind the scenes action that helps make the Trail what it is and guides what it will become. I learned that I was one of many people in whom the idea of the Appalachian Trail had taken root, and, when allowed to flourish, had enhanced their lives. When my time came to leave the ATC, as I was driving back to Texas, I knew my boots would find their way back to the Trail before too long.

Planner

Five years after leaving the ATC, in the throes of writing my geography master's thesis, I started planning. Always one to work better with a carrot dangling in front of me, I had decided my reward for finishing graduate school would be my long-awaited Appalachian Trail thru-hike. In between running statistical analysis and creating graphs of my data, I dehydrated applesauce (cheap and easy fruit roll-ups) and spaghetti sauce (easily my favorite meal on the Trail). I packed and repacked, bought new gear and cleaned up old. I created an Excel spreadsheet of my proposed mileage and timeline, and I called my Trail family to let them know I would soon be on the A.T. and when I expected to be passing through their area.

Thru-Hiker

On June 16, 2014, I touched the sign at Katahdin and started my thru-hike. Even though it was my first time on top of Katahdin, it felt like coming home. I had so many good memories on the Trail, and I was excited for this new adventure. I have to admit, when I worked on the Trail, I often saw emaciated looking thru-hikers and thought how much easier it would be to thru-hike than to work on the Trail. What is walking compared to moving several hundred-pound rocks into place for a retaining wall? Carrying a 20- to 30-pound pack compared to carrying a chainsaw, gas, two picks, and a sledgehammer into the worksite? This thru-hiking stuff would be easy.

As Maine kicked my butt day after day, I quickly realized that I had never given hikers the credit they deserved. Physically, I was beaten up and finding myself in a bubble between other southbound thru-hikers; I was a bit lonely as well. But always, when I

Clockwise from below: Enjoying the Presidentials in New Hampshire; Fellow hikers "Blueberry," "Sagacious," and "Rhody" brave the Polar Vortex in Tennessee — by Ellen Gass; Ellen with long-time "Trail family" member Laurie Potteiger; From left: Ellen, "K2," "Gravity," "Up in the Air," and "Rhody" in Damascus, Virginia — by Katie Sword.



Ellen and her friend Ray Brassington take in the sunrise at McAfee Knob. Photo by Brandon LaMountain

was most daunted by the fact that hiking the Trail was something different than I thought it would be, a little magic would happen to remind me where I was. In the 100 Mile Wilderness, the ridgerunner, Brawny, kept me company and encouraged me that I could do my first 18-mile day. More than once or twice, my



Ellen with her "personal Trail angel" Tom in Maine

personal Trail angel and former volunteer, Tom, showed up to hike with me or give me a place to crash for the night. While visits from Trail family like Tom were not common on the A.T., they were not rare either. Many of my former co-workers and volunteers came out and hiked with me for a day or gave me dinner and a place to sleep for the night. The excitement about meeting up with them encouraged me to keep going on rainy days (when I would've rather hid in a shelter) or to put in those extra few miles while it was still light. We sat around laughing at old Trail stories and catching up on each other's lives. My old boss, Sally, called my thru-hike "Ellen's Reunion Tour" as I seemed to hop from Trail family to Trail family, getting to include old friends in my new adventure.

When I wasn't catching up with old friends, I was

ALWAYS, IT FELT LIKE COMING HOME — THE RHYTHM OF IT ERASING THE REST OF THE WORLD AND LEAVING ME HAPPILY SITTING BY A CAMPFIRE WITH MY TRAIL FAMILY.

making new ones. While I hiked alone for much of the Trail, I relished and relied on the companionship I found along the way. My new Trail friends and I danced around campfires and hiked in the dark hours of the morning to catch the sunrise. We hiked into town for a diner breakfast and shared the joys of nights at a hostel. We commiserated with each other's pains and frustrations and celebrated with each

other's victories. They kept me going when it was so cold my boots froze and kept me laughing the rest of the time. The fellowship of my fellow hikers enhanced the fellowship with the wilderness that I found.

Section Hiker

Like all good adventures, things don't always go the way you expect. As much as I had planned and dreamed of walking all the way from Katahdin to Springer, I ended up missing a few miles along the way. There are two chunks, one in Pennsylvania, and one in Tennessee/North Carolina that I missed. I missed the first one because my Dad was coming to join me, and we wanted to hike Shenandoah National Park together. My hike-planning-spreadsheet (which at this point had become laughingly inaccurate) had predicted that I would be at Shenandoah when my Dad came to join me. However, at that time I found myself instead in Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania. Rather than hike my Dad and his new knee through the rocks of Pennsylvania, I skipped some miles and got back on at Harpers Ferry. Dad and I were rewarded with slack-packing help from Trail family, two black bear sightings, and by far my favorite week on the Trail. I skipped another section due to a sinus infection during a particularly cold period last fall (appropriately referred to as the Polar Vortex). I had thought my hike would end there, but I was convinced by my fellow hikers to get back on after Thanksgiving and finish up with them. So when, on December 16, 2014, I set foot on Springer Mountain, I was surrounded by the newest members of my Trail family as we all ended our thru-hikes together.

But of course, my time on the Trail didn't end at Springer, and a couple of months ago, a year and a few days after I stood on Katahdin, I put on my pack and got back on the Trail to tackle those last few miles. A couple of my Trail family members and I spent a weekend hiking over the balds in Tennessee as I started my new adventure as a section hiker. And, always, it felt like coming home - setting up my tent, blowing up my sleeping pad, boiling water for my mashed potatoes — the rhythm of it erasing the rest of the world and leaving me happily sitting by a campfire with my Trail family. It was as if no time had passed. I hadn't left the Trail, hadn't gotten a job or moved away from Texas. It was as if I was where I was always meant to be. I have had many roles on the Trail — dreamer, volunteer, staff, planner, thru-hiker, and section hiker. But, in my 15-year relationship with the Trail, what really matters is not what I'm doing but where I am. The Trail is more than a place, it is my heart's home, and I am happy to say that I am still (and hope to always be) hiking the Trail. ♡

SLICE OF AMERICANA



Recreation meets history and hometown style
GLASGOW, VIRGINIA



the Appalachian Trail has brought hikers into our community of Glasgow, Virginia for many years. It is located at the confluence of the James and Maury rivers in southern Rockbridge County. Hikers who have passed through this area will remember the famous A.T. foot bridge over the James River, as well as the beautiful James River Face Wilderness.

Hikers come into town to use the post office to pick up resupply packages from friends and family, and to seek out the library computers to check their email. They visit the local stores to stock up on supplies for the Trail and use the laundromat. They even sometimes pitch a tent or two, with permission, on church lawns, or the ball field.

In 2011, Glasgow was designated as an official Appalachian Trail Community. We were honored to be recognized by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) as an asset to Trail users and a good friend and neighbor to the A.T. Our partnership with the ATC and the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club has been great for the town and great for

the Trail, and we gain a lot of ideas and support from our membership in the network of 35 A.T. Communities from Georgia to Maine.

One particular small but cozy welcome to A.T. hikers who pass through Glasgow is an in-town shelter, built by a Boy Scout as an Eagle Scout project. Through improvements over the years by various local organizations, it now offers hot and cold running water, electricity, a picnic area, and a fire pit. The shelter provides an excellent place for hikers to stay and is

BY CAROLYN N. BRADLEY

The A.T. James River foot bridge. Photo by Bill Bishop

From top: The Hiker's Shelter in town – by Carolyn Bradley; A.T. in the James River Wilderness Area – by Bill Bishop



WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE WORLD-CLASS OUTDOOR RECREATION IN OUR BACKYARD, FROM HIKING ON THE TRAIL TO PADDLING ON THE JAMES AND MAURY RIVERS.



only a block away from the town's main street. Just a hop, skip, and jump away from the shelter are Scottos Pizza and a couple small grocery stores. The post office, library, and laundromat are also nearby.

Glasgow offers a bit of history and a bit of Americana. The town was incorporated in 1892 and is located south of Lexington, Virginia, home to Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute. We are a railroad and river town, but long before the railroads, there was the canal system. You can still see locks along parts of the James and Maury rivers as evidence of days gone by. The large white house located on the outskirts of town has been in the Echols family for generations. Captain Edward Echols operated a packet boat through the canal system. In 1854, a flood caused the Clinton, a packet boat captained by William H. Wood, to capsize on the James River just below Glasgow. A black slave named Frank Padgett gave his life to rescue its passengers. A monument in his memory was erected near the site, and later moved to Centennial Park in town.

In the 1890s, when there were "boom towns" springing up across the country, Glasgow was among them. Fitzhugh Lee, cousin to Robert E. Lee, headed up the Glasgow Company that was in charge of plotting out the town and selling lots. His office was located in a house that was built in 1800s by an early settler in the area, Peter Sallings. The mountain that overlooks Glasgow — Sallings Mountain — now bears his name.

During this boom period, a huge hotel was built on a ridge overlooking the town. It was state of the art for its day, which included electric lights. There was a gala ball held the evening before its grand opening, but its opening never happened. The following day creditors came in and closed it down. The end of the "boom" was at hand, and what began as a big venture for a profitable future suddenly turned into a big "bust." Parts of the hotel were later used as living quarters for local residents and as a place for local farmers to store hay. In the late 1950s and early '60s the area was cleared for a residential building site, still known affectionately as "Hotel Hill."

A sign along Route 130 in town tells of a battle between a band of Iroquois and a group of colonial militia led by Captain John McDowell, in the 1700s. Just six miles up the road is the famous Natural Bridge of Virginia, once owned by Thomas Jefferson and surveyed by George Washington. The property recently came under new ownership and will eventually become a Virginia State Park. The landmark currently operates under the name of Natural Bridge Park.



Through the A.T. Community program, Glasgow residents have become more aware of the A.T. and we are excited to welcome hikers and to explore the Trail. We are proud to have world-class outdoor recreation in our backyard, from hiking on the Trail to paddling on the James and Maury rivers. Thanks to our status as an official Trail Community, Glasgow residents have more opportunities to explore the A.T. with the guidance of experienced hikers. The Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club (NBATC), which maintains 88 miles of the A.T. through our area, adapted its regular hiking program to make it more attractive to residents of surrounding Rockbridge County.

On a special note, Rockbridge County isn't just a great place to stop during a hike, it's also the childhood home of Jon Jarvis, director of the National Park Service. This October, the A.T. Communities of Glasgow and Buena Vista, and the NBATC will be celebrating Jarvis' distinguished career, as well as an era of unprecedented protection for the A.T. and

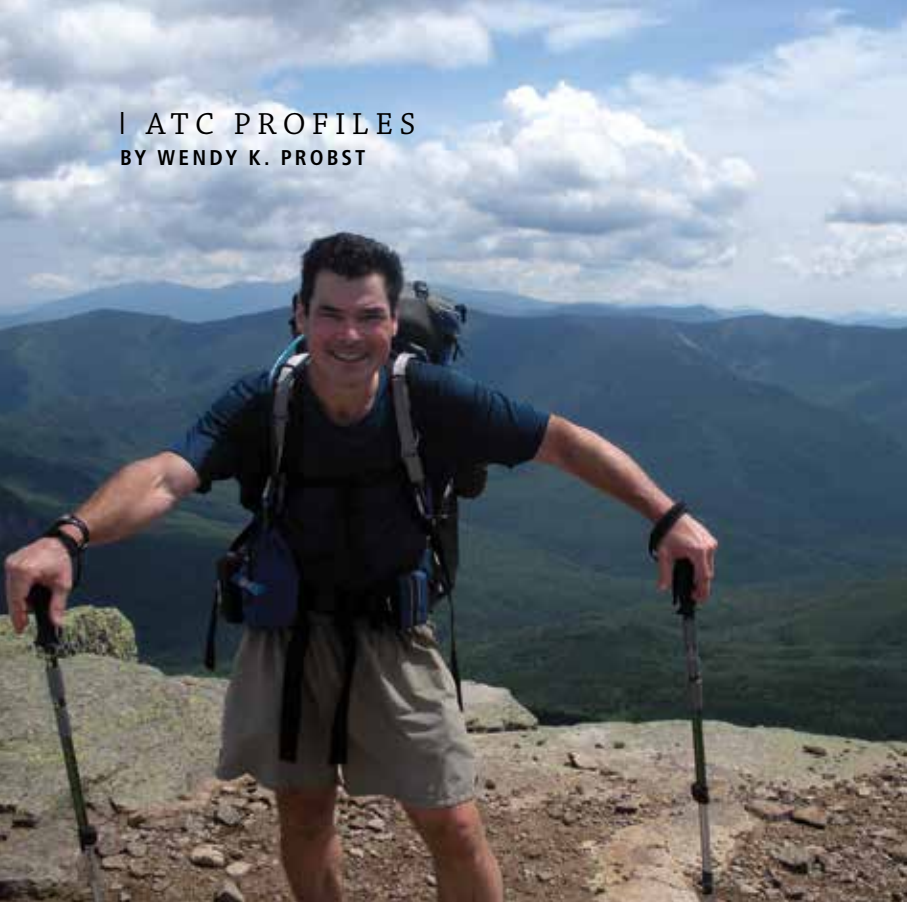
partnership between communities and Trail maintainers. A special dinner honoring director Jarvis will raise funds for a new Legacy Fund, to enable Rockbridge County teachers to take their students on field trips to the A.T. and pursue other environmental education initiatives.

Whether planning a local short hike or traveling the whole Trail, we welcome you to stop and visit with us in Glasgow, Virginia. Stay awhile and take in the local culture, meet the friendly folks here, and make some great memories. ⬆

Carolyn N. Bradley is a member of Glasgow's Park and Recreation Committee, a freelance photographer, and news correspondent for *The News-Gazette* in Lexington, Virginia.

To learn more about Glasgow visit: glasgowvirginia.org
Find out more about the A.T. Community program at: appalachiantrail.org/atcommunity

Clockwise from above: A.T. near Thunder Hill (where it intersects the Blue Ridge Parkway) – by Bill Bishop; Glasgow's famous life-sized fiberglass dinosaur, made by local artist Mark Cline; Scottos Pizza; Glasgow Public Library; Grocery Express – photos by Carolyn Bradley



GOING “ALL IN”

IN THE SUMMER OF 2008, RICH DAILEADER was working for a specialized financing firm in New York, but when the financial markets seized up, the firm couldn't raise any more institutional money. Consequently, the firm didn't have money to lend, so they let the business development partners go, one of whom was Rich. “After 25 straight years of working, I decided to take a sabbatical. An Appalachian Trail thru-hike (inspired by Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods*) was on the top of my wish list,” he explains. By making the decision to take a hiatus on the Trail, Rich took his fate by the reins and almost literally walked away from any of the negativity or bleakness that one normally associates with the loss of a job, and into a vibrant future.

With the full support of his family, Rich started planning his trip. “Before I left home, we had a going away party for me. I learned afterwards that some of the wives asked my wife, Kate, how she could ever ‘allow’ me to go on such a hike. It was tough on her, but she was incredibly supportive,”

he says. To stay in touch during his hike and to prove his full commitment to it, Rich created a blog on Trailjournals.com and linked everyone he had in both his personal and business address books to it. “I still run into business people today who remember living vicariously through me in the spring of 2009,” he says. “Thru-hikers complete their journeys with a great deal of satisfaction and pride for going ‘all in.’”

Resurgence

After his hike, Rich felt renewed and grateful. “I've learned that a long-distance hike in nature is an elixir. It is good for what ails you,” he says. “I've seen what it can do for kids, veterans, and all kinds of people who need to recharge. I was just one of the blessed few who were able to take five-and-a-half months to complete a thru-hike on the granddaddy of all trails, the Appalachian Trail.” With a fresh focus, he found a position as a managing director with Ally Financial. In his private life, protecting the A.T. for his children and grandchildren, and so many others who might find solace and renewal became a major focus. “During my thru-hike in Maine, I started hiking with this crazy lawyer, whose Trail name was ‘Thru Thinker.’ He was trying to finish his section hike, despite knee surgery earlier that year and ended up having to wait another year to finish, but for those 10 days, we became fast friends,” says Rich. It turns out that this fellow hiker was a member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Board. “He convinced me that, by joining the board, I could make sure the A.T. is around for our kids and grandkids,” he explains.

In 2011, Rich became an ATC board member with an enthusiastic agenda. “When I joined, we were still coming out of the recession and the ATC's finances were fragile. I like to think I helped the organization sharpen its pencil and control its costs,” he says. Rich took the lead as the chair of the Membership and Development Committee and the ATC's Development Department was able to excel under his leadership and encouragement. He also poured his energy into very successful donor events, one of which he organized and planned himself near his home in Brevard, North Carolina. “I love to organize and take charge of planning,” he says. “That might be why my Trail name is ‘Da’Leader of the Trail.’”

Helping Veterans

In 2012, ATC HQ staff members met with two Marine captains who were hiking the A.T. Their hike was focused on finding solace from the anxiety and trauma they had experienced in combat in the Middle East. Rich found out about the two and through them was able to contact Marine Captain Sean Gobin. “[Fellow board members] Bill Plouffe, Clark Wright and I sat down with Sean and helped him organize his thoughts about a veterans' long-distance hiking program — almost like a business plan. From there, Sean just went out and ‘took the



hill,” says Rich. This was the start of the Warrior Hike/Walk Off the War program, which is designed to support combat veterans transitioning from their military service by thru-hiking America's National Scenic Trails. “Sean, as a thru-hiker, along with the staff of the ATC, already knew about the restorative nature of ‘a long walk in the woods.’ This idea of getting our veterans out on the Trail has been an A.T. ideal since Earl Shaffer did the first thru-hike in 1948. We all came to realize that Sean was the man to lead the charge,” says Rich.

As a current board member of Warrior Expeditions, now its own 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Rich “can honestly say it is ‘kicking butt and taking

“A LONG-DISTANCE HIKE IN NATURE IS AN ELIXIR...I’VE SEEN WHAT IT CAN DO FOR KIDS, VETERANS, AND ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO NEED TO RECHARGE.”

names.” This year, veterans are out on the U.S.'s three most famous long distance trails (the A.T., the Pacific Coast Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail) as well as the Arizona, Ice Age and Florida trails. “There are even five vets canoeing down the Mississippi River,” Rich explains enthusiastically. “Next year we are launching a hike on the Mountains-To-Sea Trail in North Carolina.” Sharon Smith, an Air Force vet and 2013 Warrior Hiker is leading the way in organizing this new event.

A Bright Future

Rich ended his term with the ATC board this past summer, but is still involved with quite a few Trail clubs. “[ATC's New England regional director] Hawk Metheny and I had a challenge to see how many clubs we could belong to,” he says. “He won, but I still have [a few] that I like to support. As a member of the Carolina Mountain Club, I have a section of the Trail that I maintain in western North Carolina. There is no greater pleasure than talking your friends into joining you to do a day of Trail maintenance.”

These days, Rich still hikes as often as he can with friends and family. “My wife, Kate, has a strict two-hour or five-mile rule. She is quite happy with it,” he says lightheartedly. “My kids are in their mid-20s and hike, but it is tough to get us all together to do it; and our black lab, Ticoa, has done 33 miles of the A.T.” His 26-year old son lives in Washington, D.C. and his 24-year-old daughter in Jackson Hole, Wyoming (and has hiked the 210-mile John Muir Trail in California). “Two section hikers I met in 2009, ‘Orono’ and ‘Frosty’ come down south each year to do another 100-plus mile section,” he adds. “They let me drive them.”

Rich hopes to complete another long-distance hike in the future. As for the A.T., he simply says, “I hope [everyone gets] the chance to stand on the Trail and look south to Georgia and then turn and look north to Maine. Then walk in their chosen direction.” In this he advocates strongly for the future of the Trail and its protection. “We need to encourage the usage of this incredible national treasure,” he says, “but we first need to educate people about how to use it, respect it, and conserve it for the next hiker.”

Rich with Warrior Hiker Sharon Smith and Walk Off the War founder Sean Gobin at the ATC Visitor Center in 2013. Photo by Laurie Potteiger

spotlight on the 2015
Leaders in Conservation Awards Gala
 Washington, D.C.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THE SUMMER IS GONE. THE MEMBERSHIP AND Development team have had a jam-packed season of events with our members and corporate supporters. Thanks to all of you who attended or supported our efforts over the summer. We are moving into an equally busy and exciting fall.

We kicked off the summer with our Annual Leaders in Conservation Awards Gala in Washington, D.C. where Senator Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire and Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia received our Congressional Leadership Award. (Pictures from the event are on page 51.) The event was a great success thanks to our excellent co-chairs: Tammy Darvish, Terry Lierman, Jim Moran, and Brent Thompson. We are especially thankful for the significant Leadership sponsorships of Expedia, Inc. and PenFed Credit Union.

The 40th Biennial Meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Membership was July 17 through 24 in Winchester, Virginia and we had a great attendance and lots of activities. On Saturday night we hosted the Benton MacKaye Society and Life Member dinner where new board member Jennifer Pharr Davis was our guest raconteur and, as always, the audience loved her. The dinner was followed by the business meeting where attendees elected the 2015 to 2017 ATC Board of Directors.

In August, we began the first of our four sneak preview showings of the movie *A Walk in the Woods* in Salt Lake City during the Summer Outdoor Retailers Show. While there, we had the opportunity to thank our current partners and meet new potential partners. Point 6 socks and Salazon Chocolate hosted a happy hour for us during the show and have teamed up again this fall to bring our membership a special gift for their support. The Salt Lake City showing was followed by overflowing capacity showings in Boston, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. All the shows were well received and gave the ATC the opportunity to talk about our work and the proactive things we are doing to ensure everyone has a high quality visitor experience on the Appalachian Trail.

You will soon be receiving our year-end update in the mail or via email. As mentioned earlier, two of our corporate partners have teamed up to help the ATC reach our end-of-year fundraising goal by offering their products as a special thank you premium for your generosity. Thanks in advance for your continued support of all the work we do. Look for details in your mailboxes soon.

Once again, we are hopeful that Congress will extend the IRA Charitable Rollover provision for those who have to take a distribution. If you have questions about this or other giving options, please call me or a member of the Membership and Development team. ↗

All the best,
Royce W. Gibson | *Senior Director of Membership and Development*



Royce (right) with long-time friend, ATC supporter, and newly minted volunteer Barney Pearson at the 2015 D.C. Gala.



1 REI vice president of communications and public affairs Alex Thompson 2 ATC Board member Mary Higley and husband Kyran Kennedy 3 Chris Brunton with Congressman Don Beyer 4 ATC Advisory Circle co-chair Jeff Leonard with wife Carolyn 5 Former ATC Board member Marcia Fairweather with Bob Hughes 6 ATC executive director/CEO Ron Tipton and Senator Kelly Ayotte 7 Senator Tim Kaine with ATC senior director of conservation Laura Belleville and ATC regional director Andrew Downs 8 NPS program chief of conservation and outdoor recreation Bob Ratcliffe and AMC's deputy director of conservation Heather Clish 9 ATC Advisory Circle co-chair Terry Lierman and executive director of the Alliance to Rescue Victims of Trafficking Conchita Sarnoff. ↗

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS WITH US ANNUAL FUND LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

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

LEADER
\$100,000 OR MORE



PARTNER
\$50,000 - \$99,999



ADVOCATE
\$25,000 - \$49,999



PROTECTOR
\$10,000 - \$24,999

STEWARD
\$5,000 - \$9,999



SUSTAINER
\$2,500 - \$4,999



SUPPORTER
\$1,000 - \$2,499

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



www.appalachiantrail.org/annualfund

For Sale

McHale Pack. Custom made pack for backpacking and expeditions. CM Alpine II in Green 420/820 ripstop and Cordura double bottom. Critical Mass hipbelt is best ever in comfort and carry. ByPass shoulder straps don't lift when snugged. Will email details and photos; \$420. Contact: DanFoto@me.com.

For Your Information

Volunteers Needed at ATC HQ in Harpers Ferry. Do you love meeting people and talking about the A.T.? If you can volunteer three to four times a month and want to help the ATC provide great customer service, apply to join our amazing Visitor Center volunteer team! We also need volunteers to help with clerical work October through February, to assist with our 2,000-miler recognition program. For more info on either opportunity, email Laurie at: lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org.

2016 Caretakers Needed at Blackburn Trail Center in Round Hill, Virginia. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is looking to hire full time caretakers for the 2016 summer hiker season – April through October – at the Blackburn Trail Center. The center is located just off the A.T. in northern Virginia, 12 miles south of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. It is an extremely popular stop for day, section, and long-distance hikers and is also used for Trail crews, training seminars, meetings, and other Trail club activities. Caretakers' duties include: basic maintenance and upkeep of the buildings, grounds, and adjacent campground; meeting and greeting hikers and other visitors; and providing education and information on the Trail and Trail etiquette including Leave No Trace.

Should have experience offering comfort and company to weary A.T. hikers. Flexibility and ability to get along with a wide variety of people a must! Prefer couple with knowledge of A.T. and hikers' needs. Modest stipend offered along with housing. If interested, please email cover letter and resume to: Chris Brunton – trailbossbtc@msn.com or Steve O'Connor – soconnorc@gmail.com. Questions? Call Chris at: (703) 967-2226.

Upcoming ATC Events

Haunted Trail House: October 31 in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Get spooky with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. In the spirit of Halloween, stop by our Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry to participate in our first-ever Haunted Trail House. Featuring Appalachian Trail lore, treats, and more, this event is open to all ages.

Annual Holiday Celebration: December 5 in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Celebrate the holiday season with the ATC at its Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry. The Holiday Open House is the perfect opportunity to shop for A.T.-themed merchandise for the hiker on your list. For more information and to find out about other upcoming events visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

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

I HAD ALREADY HIKED 1,100 MILES ON THIS TRIP, BUT NONE WOULD push me like the 13.5 I ground out in late November 2008. With temperatures in the high 20s, I woke to a thick fog and a thin patina of ice coating the barren branches of Shenandoah. The fog soon gave way to a slow but constant drizzle as the temperatures rose into the 30s. I hung back in the shelter as long as possible in hope that the dangerously chilly rain would let up, but with my food supplies dwindling I knew I had to either make miles or go hungry. I finally put my head down and charged into the drizzle just after noon.

Shenandoah is not the toughest section of the A.T. by any means, but on this day a measly thousand-foot climb seemed insurmountable. It was late in the season, and I was alone in the grey void of mist that encased the Trail. With damp, numb fingers, a growing chill in my bones, and soggy boots that slid half a step down the mountain for every step up it, I barreled through the still-green rhododendrons as fast as I could. I knew that I didn't have much daylight left, and I wanted to make it to a shelter so that I could be sure of a dry night. It was so cold — and I had so little time before dark — that I had to keep moving or risk hypothermia. I spent four hours chugging ever onward like the little engine that could.

As I gritted out the longest climb of the day, the fog began to clear. More light started to filter through the haze, and the steady rain gradually became less steady before finally ceasing. I paused for the first time all day to notice a spider web twinkling with the last drops of dew illuminating its intricately repetitive spiral pattern. I checked my guidebook against my surroundings, and mentally calculated a 3.4 mile-an-hour pace over the last four hours; no wonder I was exhausted. With daylight waning, I pressed on, and soon the rolling mist gave way to clear sky as I crested the last mountain of the day. I had done it.

After four of the most miserable, damp, frigid, exhausting hours of my life, I had climbed above the clouds and now looked down on the dreary valleys and lesser peaks with the satisfaction of a newly minted god. The barren tree branches permitted a glimpse of the setting sun, and I spotted a rocky outcrop 100 feet off the Trail. I knew my final objective — the relative warmth and security of the shelter — lay no more than a quarter mile away, so I picked my way through to that perch and watched the sun sink slowly into the gloom from which I had just emerged.

As I sat, I reflected on the day I had just endured and the entirety of the hike I had completed thus far. I had come to the Appalachian Trail at least partly in an attempt to discover true happiness, and on this day I'd found it in a way that sunny skies and rolling hills just could not deliver. It was only after enduring the frustration, exhaustion, and bitter cold of a hard day's hike that I finally understood: happiness requires contrast, not mere contentment. My formerly comfortable, well-fed, air-conditioned life had left me content. But now I knew that true happiness has to be earned.

Bill "Rock Lobster" Curtin
LIVES IN CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS.



I HAD COME TO THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL AT LEAST PARTLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER TRUE HAPPINESS, AND ON THIS DAY I'D FOUND IT IN A WAY THAT SUNNY SKIES AND ROLLING HILLS JUST COULD NOT DELIVER.

Sunset above the mist in Shenandoah National Park — self portrait

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



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**Become a part of
the A.T. community.
Volunteer with a Trail
Club or Trail Crew.**

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RAY BRASSINGTON ON THE A.T. NORTH OF DRAGON'S TOOTH IN VIRGINIA. PHOTO BY ELLEN GASS