

A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Summer 2015



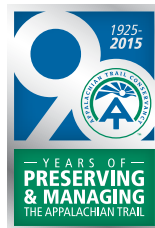
A WALK IN THE WOODS

Behind the Scenes / Q & A with Bill Bryson / Easy Day Hikes



On the Cover:

Nick Nolte and Robert Redford, as Bill Bryson and Stephen Katz, prepare to hit the Trail in the film adaptation of *A Walk in the Woods*. While some scenes were filmed on the A.T., much of the movie was filmed in and around Atlanta, Georgia. This scene was filmed in Marietta, Georgia (about 20 miles north of Atlanta and 60 miles south of the actual approach trail to the A.T. in Amicalola Falls State Park). Photo by Frank Masi – courtesy of Broad Green Pictures



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 11, Number 3
Summer 2015

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

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Ten Years for a Movie

IN 2005, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) WAS FIRST CONTACTED BY A producer on behalf of Robert Redford about adapting Bill Bryson's book, *A Walk in the Woods*, into a film. Our staff, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service all provided a great deal of advice about many aspects of how to best tell the story of Bryson's journey on the Appalachian Trail beginning at Springer Mountain in March of 1996.

Ten years later, we eagerly await the national release of the movie on September 2. In many ways this is a historic event in the evolution of the Trail, from a primitive wilderness experience that attracted a

limited number of long-distance hikers to what is now the best-known and most popular long-distance trail in the world.

The ATC is well aware that the movie presents huge opportunities and major challenges, both of which are described in this issue. The benefits of the movie are clear: millions of people across the country and around the world are about to be exposed to the wonders and challenges of the A.T. as experienced by a couple of high school buddies who meet again decades later. The frustrations, pain, camaraderie, and joy of this unique experience are presented by world-class actors like Redford, Nick Nolte, Emma Thompson, Mary Steenburgen, and Nick Offerman.

Our Trail can only become more relevant and more popular because of *A Walk in the Woods*. One of the five goals in ATC's Strategic Plan is to expand the relevancy of the Trail to a younger and more diverse audience that appreciates the physical and mental benefits of a short walk or a long hike on the A.T. The image of two older men sharing the challenge of an A.T. thru-hike and reconnecting as life-long friends is both powerful and charming.

At the same time, the ATC, Trail club volunteers, and government partners face a huge challenge; we will have to deal with the effects of a surge in the number of short- and long-distance hikers on the Trail. There is little doubt this will happen right away. When Bryson's book was published it resulted in a 45 percent increase in long-distance Trail users.

The ATC's southern regional director, Morgan Sommerville is leading a task force of staff, club volunteers, and federal agency partners in pulling together strategies for addressing increased overnight use of the Trail next year and in future years. In this issue you will see how we are planning to educate hikers about minimizing their physical impact on the Trail; our voluntary thru-hiker registration system; increasing the availability of overnight campsites, especially in the South; and continuing to provide a quality experience for all types of hikers.

We take this stewardship responsibility seriously, and recognize that this is not an easy task. We will be seeking additional financial support for this effort from major donors, foundations, corporate partners, and our members. You will soon receive a special appeal about this challenge from me with a message from Robert Redford.

We are ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges for the ATC presented by *A Walk in the Woods*. 🏔️

Ronald J. Tipton | Executive Director/CEO

Sandra Marra | Chair

Follow Ron on Twitter at: twitter.com/Ron_Tipton

The benefits of the movie are clear: millions of people across the country and around the world are about to be exposed to the wonders and challenges of the A.T.

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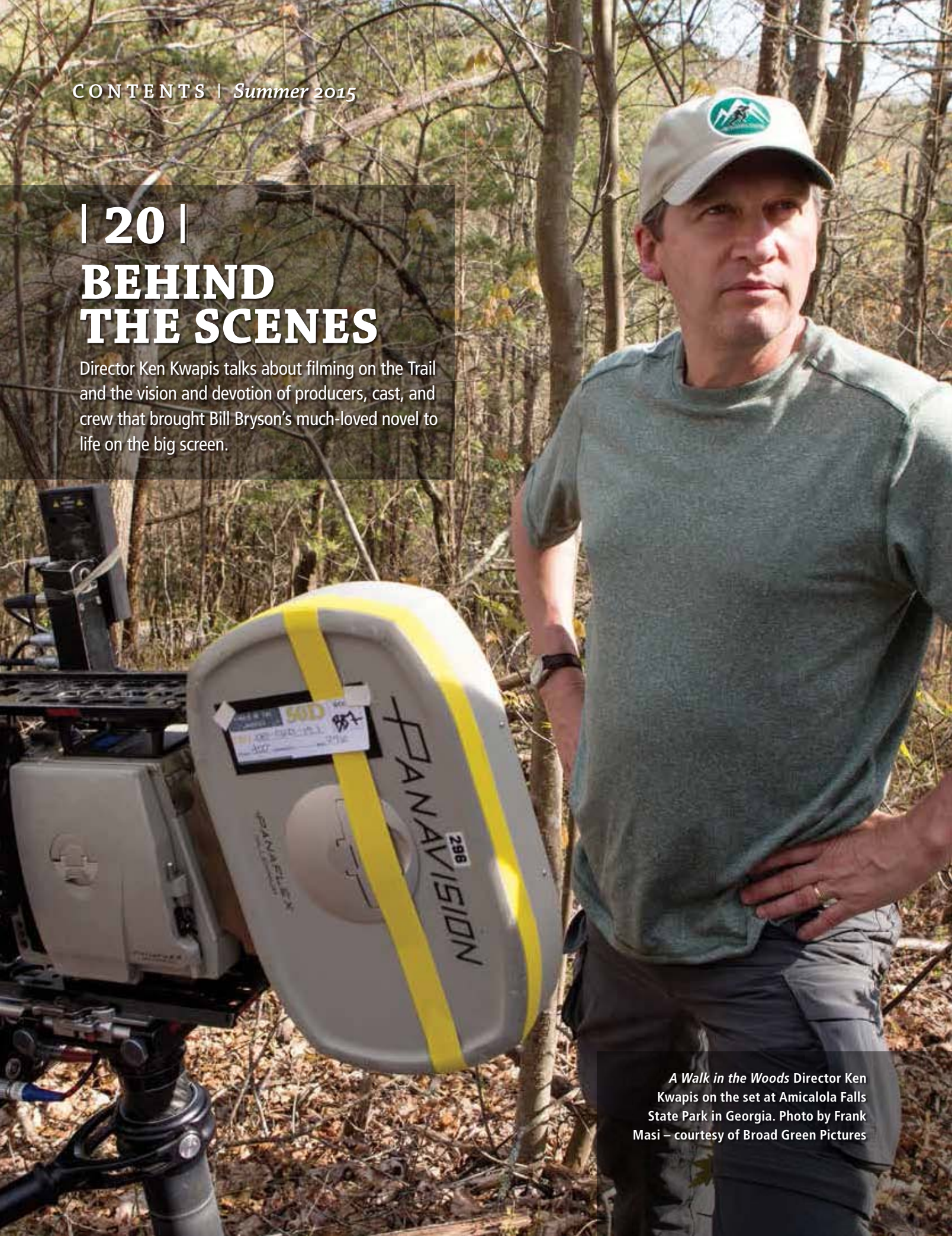
A WALK IN THE WOODS

Based on the Acclaimed Bestseller

BROAD GREEN PICTURES PRESENTS A ROUTE ONE FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH UNION INVESTMENT PARTNERS A WILDWOOD ENTERPRISES PRODUCTION A KEN KWAPIS FILM ROBERT REDFORD NICK NOLTE "A WALK IN THE WOODS" KRISTEN SCHAL NICK OFFERMAN WITH MARY STEENBURGEN AND EMMA THOMPSON PRODUCED BY SUE JACOBS WRITTEN BY NATHAN LARSON DIRECTED BY LORD HURON COSTUME DESIGNER LEIGH LIVERETT EDITOR CAROL LITTLETON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JULIE GARCES PRODUCED BY GABE RUCKLEY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOHN BAILEY, ASC
CASTING BY JEREMIAH SAMUELS MAKE UP BY JAY STERN HAIR BY RUSSELL LEVINE LEE JEA WOO EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ROBERT REDFORD BILL HOLDERMAN CHIP DIGGINS PRODUCED BY BILL BRONSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RACK KERB AND BILL HOLDERMAN DIRECTED BY KEN KWAPIS
R LANGUAGE AND SOME SEXUAL REFERENCES
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Director Ken Kwapis talks about filming on the Trail and the vision and devotion of producers, cast, and crew that brought Bill Bryson's much-loved novel to life on the big screen.



A Walk in the Woods Director Ken Kwapis on the set at Amicalola Falls State Park in Georgia. Photo by Frank Masi – courtesy of Broad Green Pictures



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For a decade, the ATC has considered the effects that a major motion picture would have on the Trail, so when production began last year, becoming involved was essential.

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The impacts that a swell of Hollywood-inspired adventurers may have on the Trail require careful consideration and preemptive action in many directions on the ATC's part.

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A conversation with the author about living near the A.T., the harshness and beauty of his trek — as well as the wonderfully quirky friendship — that inspired the book, and his thoughts about the movie.

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Opportunities to experience the Trail for a day are abundant — many within close proximity to metropolitan areas along the East Coast.

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Marking a new era for a flexible style of thru-hike that minimizes Trail impact and maximizes hiker success.

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Former ATC board chair Margaret Drummond was a hands-on Trail worker, and a mentor to many who held strongly to the principle that the A.T. is a volunteer project.



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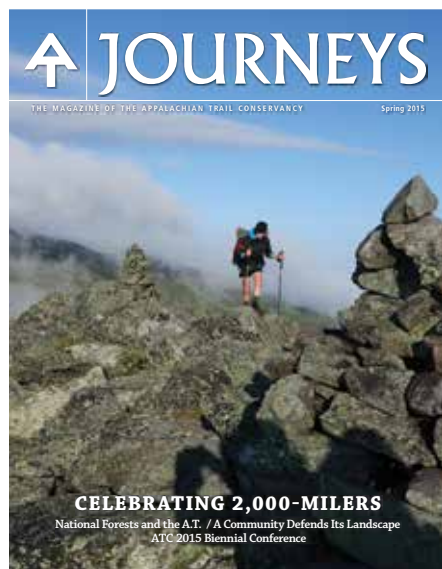
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An excerpt from a 26-year-old Trail journal serves as a reminder of the greatest lessons the A.T. can teach.

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LOVED YOUR SPRING 2015 COVER!

It not only captured the dynamic nature of the Trail, but also the incredible determination required with each and every step by the thru-hiker. And then when I realized “Cliffwalker” was the cover girl (picture by hubby “Stakes”), wow...two of our favorite thru-hikers (along with Chef and Critter). And finally, seeing all four names in the 2,000-miler list — achieving the mightiest of goals, well, I can’t tell you how happy we were! So inspirational; and such wonderful memories created when these four thru-hikers were kind enough to indulge a couple of old but committed section hikers as we enjoyed the Shenandoah Valley together, especially Lewis Mountain Campground. Congrats to you guys and thanks for another great *A.T. Journeys*.

Joseph “Hap” Quinn
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

IN THE EARLY SEPTEMBER OF 1954

my friend and I, who had been in Boy Scouts, went backpacking for a few days on the A.T. in the White Mountains. We did about everything wrong, from carrying too much to carrying a lot of canned goods, to (in my case) not having a poncho. At Garfield Shelter we met a hiker whose hair was done in a ponytail and who, to use his own term, was “streamlined.” He had come down from Katahdin and was headed for Georgia. On his pack, a small homemade affair, he had written “Georgia or bust.” He carried only one

blanket, a poncho, a minimum of cookware, and dried foods, each item in a plastic bag and the whole in a cloth bag. His pack with food weighed about 30 pounds, while ours each weighed 55 to 60 pounds. We talked with him from the late afternoon through the next morning, when he left in a light rain, and I learned more from him in that time than I had learned in two years of Boy Scouts about backpacking. I’m sure he made it to the next shelter, but because we foolishly waited for the rain to stop before getting underway, we did not and ended up sleeping beside the Trail, getting soaked. Hurricane Carol had just passed through New Hampshire, trails and shelters were flooded, trees fallen, and streams swollen. I have often wondered if our hiker friend made it to Mount Oglethorpe (the then-southern Trail terminus). There were very few “end-to-enders” in those days, and he was going to do it in two years. Unfortunately, we never got his name.

Lawrence Howe
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE A.T.

hiker class of 2015! As a member of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers (PATH) responsible for 70 miles of Trail maintenance in southwest Virginia, I want to very sincerely thank the thru and section hikers who have helped us during 2015. This is the first season that our Trail maintenance club has used wood shavings to accelerate the decomposition process in the moldering privies. We discussed the logistics of getting the wood shavings to the privies in a timely and as-needed manner, and finally decided to place large quantities of the wood shavings at the road trailheads. We would then take them from those locations on every Trail maintenance trip to the moldering privies. My specific privy is the Jenkins Shelter privy — 4.5 miles from the southern trailhead wood shavings storage location and five miles from the northern trailhead wood shavings location. To augment the transportation of the shavings to the Jenkins privy, fellow club member Herb MacDonald decided to place plastic grocery bags at each trailhead along with a sign requesting and

encouraging hikers to take a plastic bag of shavings to the privy on their hike. This system was successful beyond our expectations. Thru-hikers as well as section hikers twice emptied our southern barrel of shavings. When I walked the Trail on a weekly basis, I would always see hikers with one or two of the shavings bags. On my maintenance trip in early June, the plastic storage barrel outside the Jenkins privy was full, the metal bin in the privy was full, and there were still many extra plastic bags of shavings nearby the privy. Well done 2015 A.T. hikers — thank you for helping us maintain our section of the A.T.! ♠

Ron “Tarheel” Hudnell
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

Sometimes hiking is not just getting miles in, it is getting into the miles.

Brian Cave

I was 5 years old when I first climbed Katahdin, have done it several times since, including my honeymoon, and hope to do it again in a couple of years when I turn 60.

Clarie Harrington

Age alone isn’t a barrier to living an active, full life. I hope I am still hiking in 30 years!

Shawn Kramer

I’m 63 now and plan to start section hikes with the hope in two years to do a thru-hike. I may not be able to do it, but I sure want a chance to try.

Michael Nason

A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments. The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives. Not all letters received may be published. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Please send them to:
Email: editor@appalachiantrail.org

Letters to the Editor
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807



THE BRYSON EFFECT

BY JACK IGELMAN

AMONG DAVE STARTZELL'S FAVORITE EPISODES IN BILL BRYSON'S BOOK, *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*, is when the author and his pudgy partner Katz try to shake an overbearing hiker on their first night out. "She kept showing up and telling them they were doing it all wrong. I met people like that!" laughs the A.T. thru-hiker and former executive director of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC).

The encounter with a know-it-all is by no means exceptional. The fact that everyone — not just hikers — have confronted the type is what makes the scene, and the entire book, so endearing and such a smash when it hit the shelves in 1998. Not only was it a side splitter, it re-elevated America's most famous trail to the gold standard of foot paths. The beloved book may also be accountable for inspiring many to lace up their boots and show up at Springer Mountain the following spring. In 1999, the number of northbound thru-hiker starts spiked by 45 percent — what some refer to, matter of factly, as the "Bryson effect."

Now, with the release of *A Walk in the Woods* as a major motion picture, the ATC is carefully considering the impact of a swell of Hollywood-inspired adventurers.

The ATC's current executive director, Ron Tipton, is confident the film will be a huge asset to the organization and the Trail. But he's not blind to some of the worries expressed by A.T. advocates about the movie. "There's no question that there will be a surge in hikers. Our challenge is to make sure that the Trail can absorb them without degrading the experience," says Tipton, who saw a screening of the movie earlier this year. "What comes across so well in the film and the book is that being on the Trail is a mind-changing experience. That's what makes the A.T. so special and what we intend to protect."

In 2007, when word spread about a planned film based on the book starring Robert Redford and his late film mate, Paul Newman, people were generally pretty excited, says Startzell. "There was some hope it could not only bring greater attention to the Trail, but also to the role the ATC and our clubs and volunteers play in maintaining the Trail." Still, there was plenty of nail biting about the direct impact of filming at sites on the A.T., and the long-term effects that a rush of more backpackers would have on the thru-hiking experience.

In fact, when the book came out, not everyone within the Trail community was at peace with Bryson's A.T. account. Overall, it's a sweet story of two men coming to love the Trail, but it's slightly irreverent too, which caught a few A.T. supporters by surprise. Morgan Sommerville, the ATC's southern regional director, admits that he wasn't "wildly enthusiastic" about the prospects of a film at first. But he says his aim as a Trail manager is to make sure people have a great A.T. experience and that the Trail stays in excellent shape. Which is why he led a brainstorming session in the spring of 2007 with a cross section of Trail advocates — from volunteers to public land managers



A small crowd gathers around Nick Nolte's double at Clingmans Dome in the Smokies, one of the areas along the A.T. where movie footage was shot. The ATC's executive director Ron Tipton was on-site for this portion of the filming and captured this image.



“I’M EXCITED THAT PEOPLE MIGHT LEARN ABOUT THE TRAIL AND APPRECIATE THAT IT EXISTS. IT’S AN EXTRAORDINARY AMERICAN PROJECT AND EXPERIENCE.”

— to address some of the concerns of a major film highlighting the A.T.

“When I hiked the Trail in 1977, I didn’t see a soul on the first day,” says Sommerville. Back then fewer than 100 hikers completed the A.T. in a year; today that number is approaching 1,000. “That’s the experience I was looking for: ‘a footpath for those that seek fellowship with the wilderness.’ These days the Trail experience has changed and it’s much more challenging to deliver on that promise.”

Startzell says that unease about hyping the Trail isn’t new. When he began work at the ATC in 1978, there was an ongoing debate about how much the Trail should be publicized. Back then, he explains, resources were particularly thin and clubs were stretched to the brink. Over time, says Startzell, “we came to the conclusion that people will come anyway, and the best way to deal with it is to accept it and improve the Trail and its resources.”

An ad hoc task force led by Sommerville generated a long list of protective strategies ranging from improving overnight sites to redesigning trailhead information. But, in 2008, Newman, who was slated

to play Bryson’s sidekick, Katz, passed away and the project was temporarily shelved. It was revived again in early 2014, at which point Sommerville and the task force narrowed their list down to 10 priorities. In addition to potential negative impacts, there may be payoffs too. “I’m excited that people might learn about the Trail and appreciate that it exists. It’s an extraordinary American project and experience,” says Laurie Potteiger, the ATC’s information services manager, whose encounter with Bryson in the ATC’s Harpers Ferry Visitor’s Center is captured in the book. “We recognize the film is here and the healthiest approach is to make the best of the opportunity.”

Few people also realize the Appalachian Trail is a unit of the federal park system, points out former Appalachian National Scenic Trail superintendent Pam Underhill. The movie, she predicts, will give people the incentive to find out more about the Trail and make that connection. “Americans love the national park system; people are proud of it,” says Underhill. “The Trail is a wonderful resource and the more people that know about it the better.”

Liz Bergeron, the CEO and executive director of the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA), says their experience with the movie *Wild*, featuring the A.T.’s sister trail on the West Coast, was first-rate. “We realized the movie was going to happen with or without us and we needed to do everything we could to get our messaging alongside the movie.” Bergeron says the PCTA focused attention on improving their website and harnessing the upswell in media atten-

#PROTECT
YOUR
TRAIL

Redford and Nolte as Bryson and Katz in *A Walk in the Woods* — Photo by Frank Masi — courtesy of Broad Green Pictures. The ATC provided guidance to the movie producers, helping to suggest set locations, authenticating details, and incorporating Leave No Trace principles.

tion to convert as many website visitors to supporters as possible. “From our perspective, it’s been not only a positive experience for the PCT, but for the entire national trail system.”

Tipton explains that the *Walk in the Woods* filmmakers have been sympathetic to the impact of creating the film and finding ways the Trail can benefit from it. He says that special screenings and other events will work to aid the ATC in fundraising, and he’s excited about the bump the film will have on the visibility of the A.T. on a national — and perhaps international — scale.

The ATC was also involved with the production of the film as a technical consultant to aid the film makers in presenting an authentic A.T. experience, from using correct signage to ensuring that the film presents an acceptable stewardship ethic. Both

“THE MOVIE MAY HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT IT’S THEIR TRAIL AND THERE FOR EVERYONE; AND THEY MAY COME AWAY WITH THE SAME SENSE AS BRYSON: THAT THE TRAIL IS A SPECIAL PLACE.”

Sommerville and Tipton were on or near the set for portions of the filming that occurred along the A.T.

Yet, what appears on screen is largely beyond the control of the ATC. Within their grasp, emphasizes Sommerville, is their response to more boots on the Trail. The challenge is figuring how to manage more hikers without negating the experience that Bryson captures so well in the book. While the 2,000-plus-mile Trail can absorb a fair number of additional hikers, it’s the areas where people tend to cluster that are most delicate. Among the high-demand places of concern is the Trail’s southern terminus at Springer Mountain in early spring. This year, the ATC implemented a voluntary registration system to more accurately gauge the number of thru-hikers. Yet, there’s no precedent for the impact of the film, since it’s the first Hollywood flick to feature the Appalachian Trail.

In 2014, an estimated 2,500 thru-hikers began at Springer Mountain and so far figures in 2015 suggest a 5 to 10 percent increase, which follows a trend of increasing hiking starts that began in 2008. Assuming the film is consistent with the “Bryson effect” of 1999, the Trail’s capacity at the southern end in 2016 “would be exceeded on a daily basis in March and April,” says Sommerville. Among the strategies devised by the task force is an emphasis on promoting alternatives to conventional end-to-

end thru-hikes. In particular, “flip flopping” can help disperse Trail use more evenly and can offer advantages to hikers. In May, Tipton and other ATC employees, volunteers, and members of the community sent off more than 30 thru-hikers from Harpers Ferry, West Virginia to help promote itineraries that begin mid-Trail. At the end of June, 185 flip-floppers had started in or passed through Harpers Ferry, a three-fold increase over 2014.

Sommerville says the ATC is also looking at ways to cushion the blow of more thru-hikers by improving facilities, such as overnight sites and bear hanging systems; addressing sanitation issues; and recruiting more ridgerunners and caretakers. Tipton notes that the A.T.’s network of more than 6,000 Trail volunteers shouldn’t be overlooked. “Without them we would not be prepared to manage and limit the human impact of more people on the Trail,” he emphasizes. “If not for them, we couldn’t pull this off.”

Ultimately, Sommerville points to the ATC’s voluntary stewardship ethic as pivotal for the Trail to take on more walkers. “Our biggest concern is that people start a thru-hike with uninformed expectations and not enough experience to have a solid outdoor ethic. This is our toughest nut to crack.” To combat the concern, one approach is to inform 2016 thru-hikers — via the internet and through ATC partners — before they get to the Trail, making sure their expectations jibe with the reality of a thru-hike and that they are prepared to do the best job possible to take care of the A.T. “The best solution is a hiker-based solution, not a Trail manager solution. People need to take responsibility of taking care of the A.T. It can’t exist without their assistance,” says Sommerville.

The ATC’s publisher Brian King agrees. What King admired most about the book was Bryson’s short history of the Trail — a synopsis he considers the best ever written. King and Bryson have developed a professional relationship over the years, and Bryson penned the foreword of King’s own book, *The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating America’s Premier Hiking Trail*. He’s hoping the movie is able to capture a sense of the Trail’s history and rich tradition.

“The Trail belongs to the public,” says King. “I think the movie may help people understand that it’s their Trail and there for everyone; and they may come away with the same sense as Bryson: that the Trail is a special place. What I am hoping, is that when they enjoy it, they treat it well and preserve it for those who come later.”

For more information on how the ATC is protecting the Trail visit: appalachiantrail.org/AWalkintheWoods

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YOUNG BLACK BEAR ON THE TRAIL IN SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK — BY MARK GATEWOOD

I TRAILHEAD I

A.T. NEW YORK – BY MIKE BUFFINGTON



THIS SEPTEMBER 14 – 18, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY WILL BE RUNNING A LEAVE NO TRACE MASTER EDUCATOR COURSE EXCLUSIVELY FOR A.T. CLUBS AND AGENCY PARTNERS.

The course will be based at the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's Blackburn Trail Center, and will include three nights of camping along the A.T. in scenic northern Virginia. Over the course of five days, participants will have the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the "why" behind the seven principles of Leave No Trace, practice effective and engaging methods of teaching the principles, and explore their personal backcountry ethics. All graduates of the course will be trained as Leave No Trace Master Educators, qualified to lead Leave No Trace Trainer Courses and Awareness Workshops.

Trail club and agency partners can enroll for \$400, about half the cost of the average Master Educator course.

For more information regarding this and other Leave No Trace training opportunities with the ATC, please contact Marian Orlousky at: morlousky@appalachiantrail.org.



From left: Attendees enjoy the picnic; Bob Almand (bottom left) accepted the award for Margaret Drummond, Bill O'Brien (top left) for Ned Anderson, Judy Murray for her husband Stan Murray, and Bill Torrey for Raymond Torrey. Photos by Dan Innamorato

2015 A.T. Hall of Fame Awards

THE FIFTH ANNUAL APPALACHIAN TRAIL HALL OF FAME BANQUET AND picnic was held in June at the A.T. Museum in Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Pennsylvania. The banquet is conducted each year by the Appalachian Trail Museum. The highlight of the banquet was the induction of the 2015 class of the Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame. "The 2015 class continues our tradition of honoring pioneers who helped to start the Trail, as well as their successors who preserved and protected it," says Larry Luxenberg, president and founder of the A.T. Museum. The inductees to the 2015 class are: Nestell K. "Ned" Anderson of Sherman, Connecticut; Margaret C. Drummond of Atlanta, Georgia; Stanley A. Murray of Kingsport, Tennessee; and Raymond H. Torrey of New York City, New York. Each honoree received a one-of-a-kind hand carved hiking stick made by John "Bodacious" Beaudet, a two-time A.T. thru-hiker.

During the banquet, Nan Reisinger, who in 2014 became the oldest woman to hike the entire Appalachian Trail in one year, was also honored. The emcee for the evening was Cindy Dunn, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Ron Tipton, executive director and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, also spoke at the event. "All four of these new members of the A.T. Hall of Fame richly deserve that honor," said Tipton. "I am especially proud that former ATC board chairs, Stan Murray and Margaret Drummond were selected, as they represent the strong historic commitment of our organization to both volunteer leadership and long-term protection of the Appalachian Trail."

Four classes were previously elected to the A.T. Hall of Fame. The Charter Class, elected in 2011, was comprised of Myron Avery, Gene Espy, Ed Garvey, Benton MacKaye, Arthur Perkins, and Earl Shaffer. Members of the 2012 class were Emma "Grandma" Gatewood, David A. Richie, J. Frank Schairer, Dr. Jean Stephenson, and Major William Adams Welch. In the 2013 class were Ruth Blackburn, David Field, David Sherman, David Startzell, and Everett Stone. And in the 2014 class: A. Rufus Morgan, Charles R. Rinaldi, Clarence S. Stein, and Pamela Underhill.

To learn more about the A.T. Museum and its Hall of Fame inductees visit: atmuseum.org

ATC Youth Summit a Success

BY TOM SOBOL

THIS PAST MAY, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY HOSTED the Maine Youth Trail Summit, generously funded by the Quimby Family Foundation. Students, faculty, and outdoors professionals gathered to empower youth to increase their engagement in Trail stewardship in Maine. Students from local high schools and colleges attended and contributed significantly. Partner organizations including the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, Appalachian Mountain Club, Baxter State Park, Friends of Baxter State Park, Mahoosuc Pathways, Oxford County Conservation Corps, Maine Conservation Corps, and Maine Winter Sports Center assisted with workshop programming and enriched the weekend with their perspectives on youth engagement in Trail stewardship. These organizations offer a variety of both volunteer and paid opportunities at varying levels of experience for teenagers and young adults.

The summit greatly benefited from the diverse group of participants. Conversations on barriers to youth involvement in Trail stewardship generated many familiar issues, but also ones specific to Maine — the remoteness of the A.T. and its challenging terrain.

The summit spurred the creation of the Maine Youth Trail Stewardship Coalition, a group largely composed of summit attendees. In late May, the group met at Grafton Notch State Park for a Stewardship Day on the A.T. for typical spring Trail work (clearing blowdowns, digging out drainages, and repairing waterbars). Future work includes a fall work weekend in Baxter State Park, currently scheduled for mid-September, which overlaps with the Trail's End Festival in Millinocket — an A.T. Community since 2013, and the nearest town to Baxter State Park.

These workshops provided students with the opportunity to acquire new knowledge on a variety of topics, including trail tools and basic trail maintenance. Students showed an impressive amount of knowledge and quickly identified the majority of the tools, from Pulaskis to loppers. Then students were shown how to take a proper axe swing, how to keep a blade sharp and safe, and how to make physics work for them to move rocks into place using ropes and pulleys.

Other sessions included a Leave No Trace awareness workshop. Students were encouraged to consider the impact of their decisions on the outdoors and focused on sustainable practices. They enjoyed the hands-on exercise of hanging a bear bag from a tree and were reminded of the option to carry a bear-proof food canister, an easier though bulkier way to keep food secure on the Trail. Another popular afternoon session introduced students to rigging, with an explanation on how necessary these methods are to move rock and build trail in the fragile alpine zones in Baxter State Park, especially on Katahdin.

When participants were asked what they enjoyed most about the summit, responses were repeatedly positive. "Communicating and discovering our shared goals was powerful," says Diana Furukawa, a student from Bowdoin College. Noel Potter, a student from Bates College, appreciated "the connections we built... and learning about stewardship opportunities." A diffusion of knowledge will remain a priority as the Maine Youth Trail Stewardship Coalition moves into the future.



Future work includes a fall work weekend in Baxter State Park, currently scheduled for mid-September, which overlaps with the Trail's End Festival in Millinocket.



Students at the summit enjoyed the hands-on exercise of hanging a bear bag from a tree and were shown how to take a proper and safe axe swing, among other necessary skills. Photos by Tom Sobol



Hawk Mountain's south lookout beckons visitors. The mountain straddles the Kittatinny Ridge, a 300-mile-long, prominent ridge that extends from 60 miles north of New York City to 20 miles west of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Photo by Mary Linkevich

For more information visit:
appalachiantrail.org/ATCMinigrantkittatinnyridge.org
hawkmountain.org

Conservation by Design

THIS PAST MARCH, 28 PLANNING PROFESSIONALS GATHERED NEAR THE Appalachian Trail at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary with two nationally-recognized design experts from Natural Lands Trust, Randall Arendt and Ann Hutchinson, to learn how to write conservation design regulations and design a conservation subdivision.

The "Writing Growing Greener Conservation Design Codes" workshop — organized by Alicia Riegel-Kanth of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) environmental planner at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office — also included presentations by Keystone Conservation Trust and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, as well as a guided tour of Hawk Mountain.

Riegel-Kanth helps Pennsylvania municipalities implement PA Act 24 of 2008 with financial assistance from the ATC Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant Program and co-leads the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project with Audubon Pennsylvania. Act 24 requires municipalities to use their zoning powers as deemed necessary to protect natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the Trail.

The Kittatinny Ridge — a globally important bird area — is one of Pennsylvania's largest landscapes and provides vital wildlife habitat for birds migrating through the Americas. The A.T. follows the Kittatinny Corridor for 167 miles from Delaware Water Gap to just north of Mechanicsburg, where it heads south through the South Mountain landscape into Maryland.

As a linear unit of the National Park System, the A.T. remains vulnerable to development pressures throughout its commonwealth journey. The A.T. and Kittatinny Ridge are literally in many people's back yards. Without responsible development with a conservation focus, this treasured landscape eventually will be lost. Conservation design — the focus of the ATC's workshop — is one of the many zoning tools that can protect the ridge and A.T. corridor.

Arendt's "Growing Greener" model sets aside the open space first and then places the same number of homes as in conventional development on half of the remaining buildable land. This approach allows the new neighborhoods to be designed around the special features in a community, such as slopes bordering the A.T., scenic views, and woodlands. By applying conservation design across a community, conserved land is added to a community-wide open space network each time development occurs.

Conservation design affords the opportunity to live in harmony with nature and the treasured resources around us. When used in the most appropriate places, conservation design in residential development can be a powerful tool to maintain habitat connectivity in the Kittatinny Ridge landscape and preserve the A.T. experience for future generations.

Wilderness First

THRU-HIKER THOUGHTFULNESS NEEDED IN BAXTER STATE PARK

BY CLAIRE POLFUS

KATAHDIN BY CHRISTIAN JOBST



TO NORTHBOUND THRU-HIKERS, KATAHDIN IS THE EMOTIONAL END OF an arduous 2,190-mile journey. The summit is intended to be a place for reflection, quiet celebration of a true accomplishment, and reverence for the majestic mountain at the A.T.'s northern terminus — and is a special place for any visitor to Baxter State Park. In recent years, thru-hiker behavior on the summit and in the rest of the park has raised major concerns for park managers. During August and September, when most northbounders are finishing, large and rowdy celebrations around the sign on Baxter Peak alter the wilderness experience for all of Baxter State Park's visitors and can impact the rare and sensitive species in the alpine ecosystem. Champagne spilled in celebration attracts yellow jackets and leaves the summit area smelling like decomposing alcohol. Baxter State Park was deeded to the people of the state of Maine by former governor Percival Baxter with the restriction that it should be managed for wilderness first and recreation second. It is a unique place in our country where the natural world must and will come first in management decisions.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has been working with management partners to address Baxter State Park's concerns about thru-hiker behavior in the park. Most recently, representatives from the ATC's New England region, Information Services department, and Stewardship Council met in Millinocket, Maine with partners including representatives from Baxter State Park, Friends of Baxter State Park, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, and the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association. The meeting focused on ideas for near-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions to the growing concerns about thru-hikers in the park. Solutions focused on encouraging thru-hiker behavior that respects the resources of both Baxter State Park and the Appalachian Trail, and on management strategies that will reduce the impacts of thru-hikers. The meeting was also the launch of a task force that will continue to work together on these issues. To be in compliance with Baxter State Park rules, these three themes were emphasized during the meeting for those completing a northbound thru-hike:

- Save the alcohol for a private location outside of Baxter State Park
- Celebrate quietly on the summit of Katahdin
- Keep your group size under 12

Claire Polfus is the ATC's Maine conservation resources manager

Baxter State Park is not the only place on the Appalachian Trail where disrespectful behavior is threatening Trail resources. Here is what you can do to help us protect the A.T. wherever you are:

■ **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.**

The A.T. is unique in that it crosses 14 state borders, eight different national forests, six national park units, and numerous state park, forest, and game lands. Those lands are all managed for different purposes with different allowable uses, which means the way you enjoy those lands will vary.

■ **REMEMBER RESPECT.**

Respect the Trail, the landowning agency, and other hikers.

■ **HELP OTHERS MAKE THE RIGHT**

DECISION. *With such a large amount of people choosing to visit the A.T., the chances are great that any one of us may inadvertently damage the natural area around the Trail. Brush up on Leave No Trace principles, and remind others when necessary.*

For more information visit:
appalachiantrail.org/news/BaxterStateParkConcerns

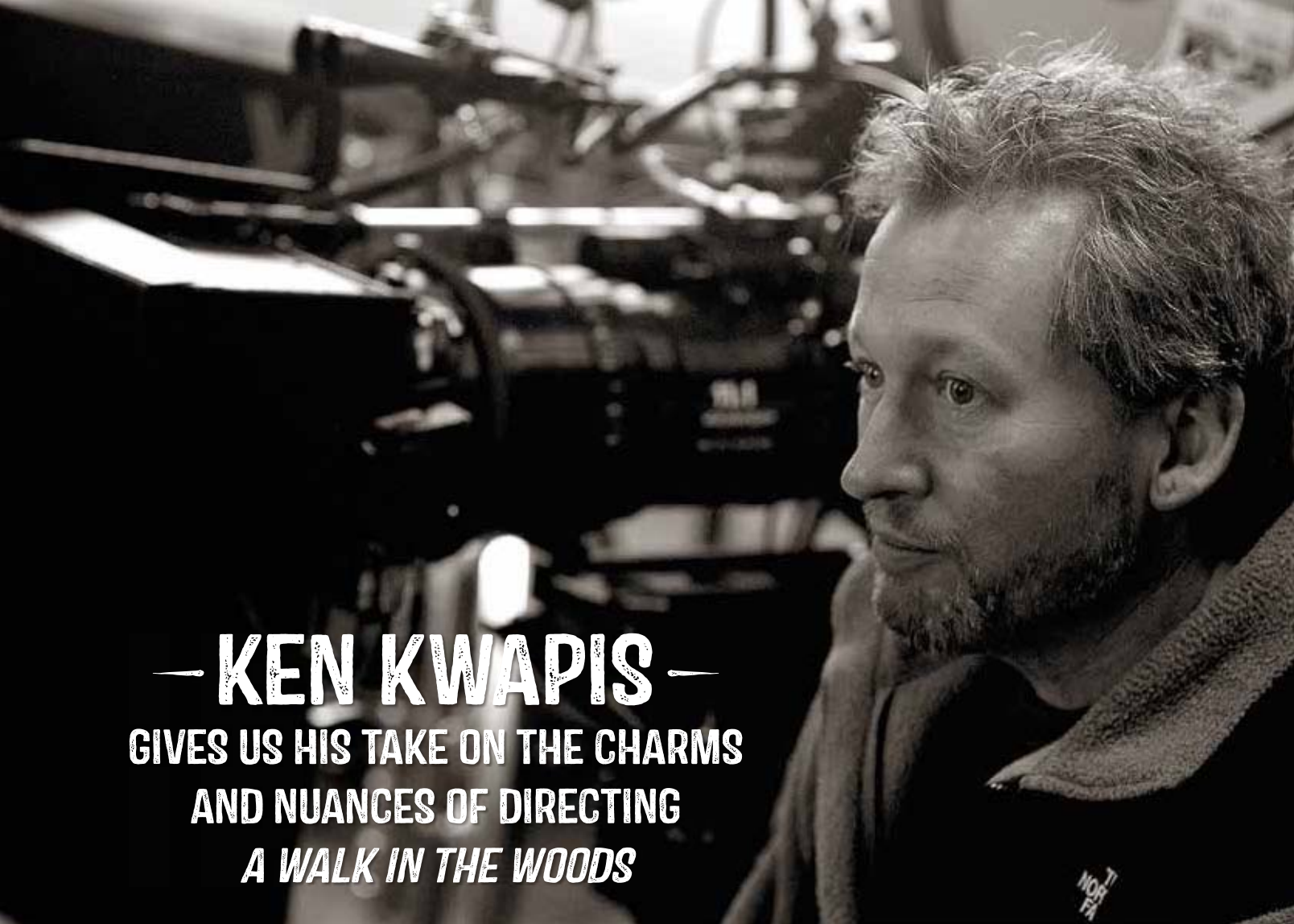


BEHIND THE SCENES

HOW WHITE BLAZES MADE IT TO THE SILVER SCREEN

PHOTOS BY FRANK MASI – COURTESY OF BROAD GREEN PICTURES

Director Ken Kwapis (front left) was able to create many scenes to look like the Trail by filming near and around the Atlanta, Georgia area.



— KEN KWAPIS — GIVES US HIS TAKE ON THE CHARMS AND NUANCES OF DIRECTING *A WALK IN THE WOODS*

CASTING THE A.T. IN A STAR ROLE

It's really a story with three main characters in Bryson, Robert Redford's character, Katz, played by Nick Nolte, and the Appalachian Trail itself. The Trail is really the third major character. I love that in Bryson's book, as much as it was about the re-bonding of these two guys, it was equally about this amazing 2,190-mile phenomenon, the Appalachian Trail.

A lot of it is an interior journey ... it's about two guys questioning the choices they've made in their lives, the roads taken or not taken, and they do this as they're walking this very arduous hike. And every once in a while something else intrudes, and that is the environment itself. Like in the middle of bickering or butting heads about something, suddenly they turn the corner and they see the most magnificent vista that anyone's ever seen. So what happens in this story is that nature, every once in a while steps in, and slaps them in the face and says, "take a look ... see what's outside yourself."

FILMING ON TRAIL AND OFF

[For the scene where] Bryson and Katz begin their walk, we shot at the very spot that most northbound thru-hikers begin, at the Amicalola Lodge in north Georgia. The great thing about shooting

at the actual place where the hike begins is that we met a lot of people, some of them we used as extras, who have done it. I met a young woman, barely 21, who actually makes a brief appearance walking up the Trail. So it was amazing to meet people who have done it, who want to do it, or were about to do it.

A few of the iconic places on the Trail, McAfee Knob, for instance, are completely inaccessible by road. So to get there we needed to put our equipment on our shoulders and hike. The crew hiked quite a long stretch to get those shots of Bryson and Katz on the precipice. And on top of that, the day we shot that, we were hustling because there was an imminent lightning storm, and there's nowhere you want to be less than on a rock ledge in the middle of nowhere in the middle of a lightning storm. So we went out there, and we got those shots, and then got out of there as quickly as possible. But, again, one of the wonderful things about the production was that, at times, it was really roughing it.

[Otherwise], we mainly shot the story in Georgia. We were based in Atlanta, and the great thing about Atlanta is that there is a ton of great hiking near the city, a lot of which really makes you feel like you're out on the Appalachian Trail, so many of our Trail scenes were shot in the vicinity of Atlanta. There were [lots of] people on the crew who had done stretches of the Trail —

two weeks here, maybe even driven up to another point and did another couple weeks. So it's a different kind of hike than you might think. It's nature, and there are stretches where you will not see another person, other than another hiker, for weeks but there are just as many occasions to get on and off the Trail and go into cities.

ABOUT THE SCREENPLAY AND PRODUCTION

Bill Holderman's script is really amazing in many ways. And the first thing is that Bill trusts these characters. There's no big plot here. Two old guys decide to walk from point A to point B. What there is though, are two incredible characters, and what Bill does is that he trusts them to discover each other in due time. There's no rushing, there's no broadcasting the theme of the story. Their adventures are comic, but what you don't realize is that there's emotional content sneaking up on you as a viewer. And by the end of the picture it really kind of overtakes you. I think that's all credit to Holderman, who has sort of laid into this script depth and emotional content that never announces

Producer and screenplay writer Bill Holderman (far left) reviews a scene with cinematographer John Bailey (front) and director Ken Kwapis while filming on the A.T. in Amicalola Falls State Park.

itself, but it kind of sneaks ahead and traps you finally. Another way to put it is there's comedy, but it's intertwined seamlessly with the pathos.

More than anything, it was a testament to how involved people were in the film. The [film and production crew] wanted to get it right, the prop master wanted to make sure that the tents, the packs — the backpacks — looked heavy enough; everybody felt an obligation to the Appalachian Trail, and to the A.T. hikers, to do it the right way. I think it's a testament to how much the crew, both production and postproduction, were invested in the picture.

In postproduction, one of the things we wanted to make sure of is that we got the sounds of the Trail right. And the chief sound editor wanted to make sure that, as we went up the Trail, we were very specific about what birds you would hear. So he did the research and, as our characters move north along the Trail, we have the correct bird [sounds] for each stage in the walk.

GETTING IT RIGHT VISUALLY

We shot the film in both digital and 35 millimeter, so we combined formats — John Bailey was the cinematographer. John and I have worked on, I think, six pictures now; every picture up until this one was in 35 millimeter. In this one we decided to combine formats, and we wanted to shoot in 35 on the Trail itself [because] we wanted the portability of 35



★
“EVERYBODY FELT
AN OBLIGATION
TO THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL,
AND TO THE A.T. HIKERS,
TO DO IT THE RIGHT WAY.”
★

For some A.T. shots the crew needed to put their equipment on their shoulders and hike. Here, they work to get a scene just right in Amicalola Falls State Park.



Clockwise from a above: Redford, Kwapis, and Holderman on the set in Georgia; Redford and Thompson as Bill and Cynthia; Kwapis reviews the “laundromat” scene with Nolte and Susan McPhail

millimeter on the Trail, and we wanted that texture that I feel you can only get with 35 millimeter film. And so this was a case where, for the first time in my career, we combined digital and — I will call it digital and photochemical formats — and the combination works great.

CREATING A TONE FOR THE FILM

I don’t feel the film has a specific agenda, but I do feel that one of the reasons I wanted to direct the film is that, like Bryson in the story, I wanted to go into the woods, both literally and figuratively. I wanted to unplug, I wanted to put the laptop away, I wanted to put the cell phone away, I wanted to have an experience, an unmediated experience of nature, and to the extent that people might be encouraged to do the same I think the film is a success.

The bottom line is it’s a very human story, so if you are a human being you will enjoy it. And if you have a funny bone you’ll enjoy it, and if you are sensitive in any way, and if you think about mortality, and if you realize that it’s your job to keep going and to say, “what’s next, let’s keep living,” you’ll enjoy this film.



One of my favorite scenes in the picture comes late in the story when Bryson and Katz are trapped on a cliff at night. It’s just the two of them kind of ruminating about their place in the cosmos, and it’s a scene that occasionally is funny and occasionally is not, and it’s a very gentle scene — it’s not a quick scene. It takes a while to kind of find itself, and breathes. As a director, what was so exciting about it was that it’s so hard as a



filmmaker these days to be able to work on a scene where you can trust that the audience will stay with you, that there’s no reason to rush, there’s no reason to get to the next event. It’s contemplative, it’s gentle, it’s delicate, it’s quiet, it’s nighttime, it’s two guys simply sort of ruminating about where they’ve been and where they’re going, or whether they’re going anywhere.

WORKING WITH REDFORD

When I met Bob we talked about two things. We talked about humor — he really admired some of the films I directed that struck a good balance between humor and drama like *He’s Just Not That Into You*; and I had just finished directing a film entitled *Big Miracle*, in which the environment played a major character just as the Appalachian Trail does in *A Walk in the Woods*. In *Big Miracle* the environment is northern Alaska in the dead of winter, and I think Bob was very appreciative of the fact that I was attentive to stories with an environmental aspect.

[Another] thing that we talked about a lot was the fact that the picture is ultimately very optimistic. And I think that’s really why I connected with it — it’s essential optimism. I told Bob at one point early in our meetings that I imagined Bryson and Katz were a little bit like [Bob] Hope and [Bing] Crosby, and he thought that was delightful, with Bryson in the Crosby role.

Part of my job as the director with Redford and Nolte was to just find the sweet spot, the balance between these two — they’re two very different energies. I think a lot of people forget how funny Redford is. He has these amazing comedic chops, and I feel very privileged that I got a chance to direct him in a lighter role than he is often used to doing.

He could not be more thoughtful about his acting, and I think people don’t realize what a detailed performance he’s giving because he sort of builds the character up in little incremental steps, and you don’t always see it, it’s not flashy, but by the end of the picture — any Robert Redford performance — you are completely absorbed in his character. But he does it in ways that don’t call attention to themselves; he does it in ways that are subtle. It’s a little magical.

THE CHEMISTRY OF THE CAST

Nolte was born to play Katz. And Redford told me at one point he was even worried when Paul Newman wanted to do it because he felt he could never convince Paul Newman to put on the weight for the role. But Nolte, he’s perfect in the role. And what was amazing for me working with both of them was thinking about how it’s a film about two men in the autumn of their years, and on one level it’s a retrospective film ... it’s impossible to watch the film, it was impossible for me to direct the film, without thinking of their personal trajectories — their filmographies, each of them.

As far as Emma Thompson is concerned, imagine a violinist getting to perform on a rare Stradivarius, an instrument with infinite range — that’s what it felt like directing Thompson. She was comedically crazy brave, and yet there was never a moment where she wasn’t grounded. I’m kind of just knocked out by what she can do. I’m surprised we didn’t run over budget because I just wanted to keep rolling the film because I just wanted to see what she would come up with in the next take. What she brings to the story is so critical because in a funny way the entire film is about Bryson leaving Katherine in order to come back to her. He’s not going on this cockeyed adventure to get away from her. It makes their reunion just all the more powerful.

SETTING THE A.T. TO MUSIC

Lord Huron’s songs, especially the songs from his album *Lonesome Dreams* have this wonderful combination of epic grandeur and intimacy that are perfectly suited to the story of Bryson and Katz. There are maybe four or five Lord Huron songs in the film, including a new song, and then we filled it out with songs by artists who, for lack of a better way to describe them, I’m gonna call alt Americana. Blake Mills, Chatham County Line, Great Lake Swimmers, wonderful bands that all serve to bring Bryson and Katz into a contemporary musical world — but one which is intelligent enough to know where the important roots lie. And that’s what’s great about the score. On top of that, to ice the cake, Nathan Larson, punk rocker turned wonderful film composer, has written this guitar driven score that, again, perfectly supports the journey emotionally and also helps tell the story of how physically difficult it is to [hike the] Trail.

There’s a review I read about *Lonesome Dreams* that described the songs as making you feel like you’re in a national park, and it couldn’t be more appropriate for this film that we have songs like this. What I love about Lord Huron’s music is that it’s a wall of sound, but it’s a wall of natural sound ... it’s like the natural world is singing to you. 🌲

To see a video of the full interview with Kwapis and to find out more about the ATC’s involvement with the film visit: appalachiantrail.org/AWalkintheWoods

Hiking by NUMBERS

TEXT BY TENNY WEBSTER

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIANE ENGEL

If there is any doubt that the film adaptation of *A Walk in the Woods* will land a harder punch with audiences than the novel, then we are not tuned to the frequencies of the millions of Americans who are about to become interested in the A.T.

This means two things: the A.T. will soon pop up on the radar of a great many more people; and some of those people will be inspired to not only learn more about the A.T., but to hike it, possibly all 2,190 miles of it. To the ATC, this is mostly great news. What better way to introduce potentially vast numbers of people to the Appalachian Trail's natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage than an entertaining film that unfolds along it?

But the ATC is also responsible for preserving and managing the A.T. And the likely impacts of *A Walk in the Woods* — what many predict as a dramatic increased use of the A.T., as well as the ATC's resources — requires thoughtful strategies to manage the pressure that is sure to be exerted on the Trail. The calculus that informs these strategies is complex and the consideration due to stakeholders and ecologies of the A.T. are many, including land agencies with which we partner, the partnerships we form with the movie production and distribution companies, A.T. ecosystem health, Trail maintenance, volunteer maintainers, structures on the A.T., popular hiker locales, our budget, and our time. We must also consider the number of current and prospective thru-hikers.

And while straight-up hiker counts are indeed important, the qualitative dimension of that number must figure into the calculus, too. That is, what sort of footprint does a hiker leave? To give you an idea of what that might mean,

I suggest revisiting Bryson's account of Katz on the Approach Trail to Springer after noticing that his pack is less burdened since the last time he saw him. Bryson asks, "What did you get rid of?" and Katz responds, "The pepperoni, the rice, the brown sugar, the Spam, I don't know what all. Lots." This exchange is truly funny, yet could be disturbing considering the implications of this behavior multiplied by others who might invariably shed their pack weight similarly. (Thankfully, the movie interpretation does not include such a scene.)

Some areas of the Trail are already very heavily used by hikers and visitors, causing some concern about further impacts that might be incurred with the increased popularity the film is likely to bring.



In a sense, the ATC has been handed a double-edged sword — a wonderful opportunity to reach millions of potential A.T. users and the specter of a portion of those millions unwittingly abusing the Trail. The “bubbles,” or large groups of hikers who start hiking at the same time, are most pronounced at the southern terminus of the A.T., but persist to some degree, sometimes problematically, to the northern terminus, exacerbating the impact.

THE UNCERTAIN SCIENCE OF COUNTING HIKERS

Estimating the number of hikers that begin a thru-hike in Georgia isn't a matter of idle curiosity on the part of inquisitive employees of the ATC. The hiker density on Springer Mountain and the surrounding area has become somewhat unwieldy, so knowing how many is too many and predicting that number from year to year is important. Imagine, after months of earnest preparation, your first night into your thru-hike is spent searching for a small patch of dirt in overflowing tent sites (the shelters are long before spoken for) and waiting in line to use a privy. Not exactly what comes to mind as a quintessential experience in the wilderness.

ATC ridgerunners and thru-hikers alike have voiced concerns about severely overcrowded conditions on the A.T. Estimates for this year's group of thru-hikers are around 2,700, which is a couple hundred more than last year. This continues the trend of a roughly 10 percent increase we see every year. Over the last few years, thru-hikers beginning in Georgia have felt squeezed over the months of March and April. An incremental 10 percent increase on a yearly basis is manageable. But considering we saw a 45 percent increase in thru-hikers the year after the book *A Walk in the Woods* was released in 1998, we are looking at a potentially unsustainable number of thru-hikers, especially if they all begin in Georgia around the same time.

Counting A.T. hikers is an uncertain science. The most dependable counts are tallied from self-reporting thru-hikers in Georgia and in Maine. Equally dependable are counts performed by ridgerunners, volunteers, and outfitters on and around the Springer Mountain area, but these numbers are more anecdotal than scientific. Ever a popular place for thru-hikers to check in at the psychological halfway point in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the ATC Visitor Center is only able

to count the hikers who make it that far. To be sure, hiker numbers are approximations with a healthy room for error.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Late last year, the ATC formed a task force to help alleviate the problems that tend to surface when high concentrations of hikers begin their hikes in Georgia, including norovirus outbreaks, garbage, and a profound lack of solitude. This group will not only preempt the likely hiker turnout after the movie hits theaters but it addresses the impact of an incremental increase in popularity of northbound thru-hiking over the last decade. Even before the task force, the ATC (especially its Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee Regional Office) was instrumental in providing guidance to the movie makers, from suggesting set locations and offering authenticating details, to building opportunities to incorporate Leave No Trace principles into the film.



This is all part of a large-scale effort to tool hikers with the information, skills, Trail infrastructure, and context to enjoy the A.T. without damaging it. The burden of responsibility lies squarely with individual hikers' scruples first.

And the guiding philosophy of the task force that underlies these strategies is perhaps most eloquently demonstrated through the roll out of the voluntary registration system for thru-hikers this year. The registration system is a tool for prospective thru-hikers to plan the start of their hike. This system allows hikers to avoid beginning their hike on days when the maximum capacity is approached in a particular area by aggregating their start dates and locations.

The first iteration of this system has three main components: a calendar showing availability by the day and location (days become “unavailable” when the concentration of hikers approaches capacity for a particular area), bar charts showing the number of hikers starting per day in four different locations, and a short form where hikers submit the information that is periodically fed into the bar chart. Armed with this information, prospective thru-hikers can plan their itinerary to reduce localized crowding. As of mid July, 1,963 prospective thru-hikers have registered, 1,474 of whom are northbounders. Participants are offered a year-long ATC membership at no cost and a hangtag that sports Leave No Trace principles on one side and a bold A.T. logo on the other.

Another strategy that has reach with prospective thru-hikers is a series of short, engaging videos that teach Leave No Trace principles, essential hiking skills, and backcountry hiking etiquette. These videos will inject some much-needed levity into a normally cautionary subject and will be distributed through the ATC, Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA), Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, and posted on YouTube. The videos rolled out this August thanks to a Tennessee A.T. Tag revenue grant fund.

Partnerships have been formed between the ATC and the movie production and distribution companies. Broad Green Pictures, the film's distribution company, is working to recognize the ATC on promotional materials, including a public service announcement. The ATC has also worked with Broad Green to hold special screenings and teasers at major events that hold the promise of attracting a broader audience including volunteers, members, and donors. And the ATC has enlisted a public relations firm to help communicate the ATC's role in managing and protecting the Trail, identify ways for individuals to volunteer and give back, and to promote Leave No Trace principles.

In addition to the strategies that reach hikers before they hit the A.T., a comprehensive assessment and improvement of campsites and shelters on and around Springer Mountain is underway. Additional ridgerunners and caretakers have been on the A.T. this season; and in 2016, the ATC plans to have more of the same, as well as Trail ambassadors and volunteers, all of whom will work to educate hikers on and off the Trail. Trailhead information will be improved upon and likely expanded to include new information kiosks in information-dry locations. Privies (where creature comfort meets sanitation

management) will be stockpiled with mulch in areas of high concentrations of hikers in the southern region of the A.T. And norovirus awareness will likely improve as updated posters are circulated along the A.T.

MORE THAN ONE WAY TO HIKE

Those who want to thru-hike should know there are plenty of options other than heading from north to south. “Flip-flop” thru hikers, for instance, begin their hike anywhere but at either terminus of the A.T. and flip to cover the ground yet under foot — the



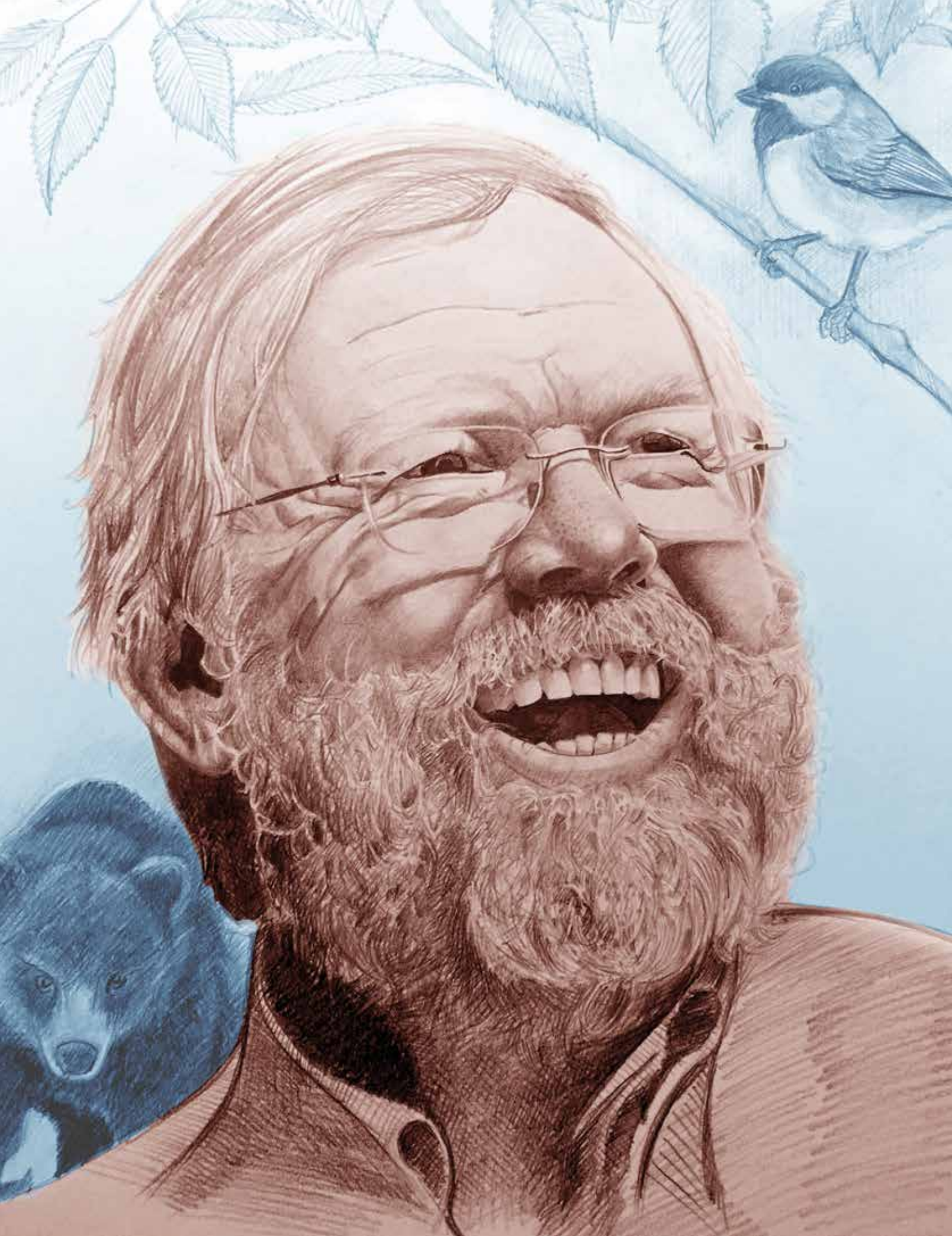
combinations being truly multifold. It's not a new way to thru-hike, but it's enjoying wider popularity and is strongly encouraged by the ATC, as it spreads out thru-hikers along the Trail.

Evenly spread out along the entire A.T., the increasing number of hikers — the day hikers, section hikers, overnights, and the thru-hikers — don't present much of a dilemma to the A.T. experience. But seasonal access, A.T. culture, popular sites, and traditions all conspire to create crowded conditions in the early spring at the southern terminus and also contribute to a multitude of issues plaguing the northern terminus.

While rereading *A Walk in the Woods* recently, I was struck by a passage where Bryson turns to “a perennial favorite [conversation] among hikers — how crowded the Trail had become.” He and Katz were hiking 19 years ago. It is an age-old topic on the Trail. So it is with this perspective that we move forward. In reality, there is not one answer for all of this, there are many. ⚡

Tenny Webster is the ATC's Trail information specialist.

Get more information, view updated charts, and register for a thru-hike at: appalachiantrail.org/thruhikeregistration



BILL BRYSON

Q & A

TODAY, REFERENCES TO A WALK IN THE WOODS ARE TYPICALLY preceded by “hilarious,” “beloved,” “best-selling,” “classic,” or even “comic novel.” It was not universally loved within the Appalachian Trail community when it was first released in North America in hardcover in May 1998, following its publication in the United Kingdom. Some hard-core thru-hikers complained; some Trail managers, especially in the involved federal agencies, were offended, if not outright insulted. Others in both groups could not mention it without breaking out giggling about some close-to-the-bone scene, stuck in the back of their heads — the prevailing reaction today.

The paperback followed a year later. Fewer than four years were required for a million copies to be sold. No other work ever published has brought the Trail into the consciousness of so many people from all walks of life, with the possible exception of a February 1987 article in *National Geographic* magazine, which then had a circulation in excess of 25 million.

In 1996, Bryson was 45 and in the United States for a few years (1995 to 2003). He and the pseudonymous “Katz” hiked enough of the A.T. to generate the material for the book — and, yes, he bought basic books and a few maps from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) at the time. It became his seventh of what is now a portfolio of 21 books (with a new look at *Notes from a Small Island* out this October). Altogether, they reportedly have sold more than 16 million copies and have been translated into 30 languages.

He said recently, “Reading a book is a big investment of time and of money. My job as an author is to do all I can to make people not regret investing that time and money in me, so I try to make my books as informative and entertaining as I can figure out how.” And, Bryson has often said his Trail experience was one of the most profound in his life, not least for his appreciation of the outdoors.

Now 63, he succeeded Peter Ustinov as chancellor for six years of Durham University, in Durham, England, where the library is now named for him. He is an honorary officer of the Order of the British Empire, the first non-

BY BRIAN B. KING

ILLUSTRATION BY CORY SEBRING

Briton named an honorary fellow of the Royal Society, the highest-selling nonfiction author in the U.K. across several categories, and recipient of the James Joyce Award and the Bradford Washburn Award (named for the famed photographer and cartographer of the White Mountains).

He is still given to praising the A.T. and the work of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, unprompted, whenever he speaks publicly about *A Walk in the Woods*. Out of that affection, he wrote the foreword for the award-winning *The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating America's Hiking Trail*.

This past spring, after the showing of *A Walk in the Woods* at the Sundance Film Festival, I had a conversation with Bryson (who was in England) via email from my office in Harpers Ferry.

Soon after the book came out, you told some interviewers the hike wasn't exactly a joyous experience. Nineteen years out now, what are your three best memories of your time of the Trail?

BB: I didn't tell some interviewers that. I told every interviewer that. Trying to hike the Appalachian Trail was the hardest thing I have ever done. I have never been so cold, wet, sore, and generally wretched. It was also the best thing I have ever done. I have never been so healthy, self-reliant, spiritually uplifted, and at one with nature. That is the thing about the Appalachian Trail. It is immensely challenging but also immensely rewarding. You can't have the one without the other. To answer your question specifically, my three best memories are:

1. The joy of reaching a summit and getting a view, especially when you know that the only way to get that view is to hike up to it.
2. The camaraderie of other hikers (especially my companion, Katz) and the kindness often shown by people living near the Trail.
3. The inexpressible satisfaction of seeing an America that most people don't even know exists.

Three worst? Four, actually:

1. Rain.
2. Snow.
3. Day upon day of unrelieved grubbiness.
4. Missing family.

Do you remember any particular hikers from the Trail who weren't funny?

BB: Of course I do. Many of them are in the book. But, it is also true that you run into a lot of eccentrics on the Trail — or at least you did then. Hiking the Trail was still something of a cult activity in those days.

SHOULD
WE
OBVIOUSLY HAVE TRAINED HARDER BEFOREHAND ... BUT THEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE AND A DIFFERENT BOOK. LOOKING BACK, I THINK OUR NAIVETÉ WAS A NECESSARY COMPONENT FOR THE SAKE OF THE STORY, BUT IT ISN'T A SENSIBLE WAY TO TRY TO HIKE 2,200 MILES.

You also told some that it was one of your hardest books to write. Is there anything you would change in it, looking back?

BB: Well, we should obviously have trained harder beforehand, so that we weren't so unfit when we started, but then it would have been a different experience and a different book. Looking back, I think our naiveté was a necessary component for the sake of the story, but it isn't a sensible way to try to hike 2,200 miles. The reason the book was hard to write is that walking, even at its most pleasurable, is a repetitive act, and walking the A.T. is an extremely repetitive act. It's a great experience but not necessarily a great narrative. That's all I meant.

While you were still living in Hanover, New Hampshire, after the book was published, did you run into thru-hikers there? If so, and they recognized you, what did they have to say about your take on the experience?

BB: I always said hi to hikers and offered them lifts and so on. Any northbound hiker who gets to Hanover is something of a rarity, since most people have dropped out by then, so, of course, I chatted and wanted to know how they had found the experience. I remain in awe of people who walk the Trail from end to end, because I know all too well how hard it is. Several of the people we met along the way were section-hiking, and many of them stayed with us when they finally got to Hanover, sometimes years later.

You wrote in the book that it had been a long time before the hike that you had had contact with "Stephen Katz." Has it been just as long a gap since the book first came out in the U.K. to now, or did you catch up during the tour for your *Des Moines* book [in 2006]? How do you think he will react to Nick Nolte's take on him in the movie?

BB: I saw Katz from time to time over the years when I went back to Des Moines on visits, but our lives went in different directions, and he wasn't always living in Des Moines in all those years anyway, so we weren't real close. It wasn't until we went on the Trail that we reestablished [from the 1970s] a particularly close friendship again. That endures now, although I still don't see him often, because I don't get back to Des Moines as much as I would like. I will be seeing him this summer, and I have a very nice note to give him from Nick Nolte. [Nolte] is fantastic in the movie, but a really nice man as well.

Have any of your children been bit by the hiking bug? (Dartmouth does have that required A.T. hike for freshmen.)

BB: We hike quite a lot in Britain. My wife and son and his girlfriend and I just spent two days on the South Downs Way in southern England — a beautiful walk over rolling hills and with the bonus that, at the end of the day, you get a soft bed, a hot shower, and a square meal. I'm afraid that's my kind of hiking now.

Not unlike many fresh-off-the-Trail hikers, you could be harsh in the book about some of the same things: pointless ups-and-downs, shelter mice, maps (all very much changed now). Is it fair to say now that you really love the Trail (something some miss when reading the book because they are laughing so hard)?

BB: You have just more or less described the whole point of the book. Of course we bitched endlessly about the Trail when we were on it. I have never done anything in my life that was hard that I didn't bitch about while I was doing it. But, I think it's pretty clear from the book that we grew to love and admire the Trail, too, even if we never got very good at it.

Any "Trail food" you refuse to eat any more? Preference: Snickers or Little Debbie's?

BB: I haven't thought about those foods in some time. I think I could probably eat a Snickers bar now, but for years I really couldn't bear to look at them. I think, now you mention it, that, if I were doing the Trail again, the one thing I would give a lot more thought to is food. We ate appallingly.

Next-to-last question, the tough one for an author whose work has been reworked for the screen: What did you think of the movie? Introspection is pretty absent from the book, but it seems to be a bigger part of the movie. Do you think the movie kept the tone of the book, if not the narrative? (Want to say anything about how Cynthia feels about being played by Emma Thompson?)

BB: I loved the movie. Robert Redford and Nick Nolte are both brilliant. They are quite different from me and Katz in some ways, but they have captured the spirit of things perfectly and have made the movie much more about the importance of friendship. In that way, I think the movie is emotionally more powerful than the book. Ken Kwapis, the director, also wonderfully captures the beauty of the A.T. To me, that was the most affecting part of the movie — to be reminded just how sumptuous and gorgeous the A.T. can be. And, yes, my wife was delighted by Emma Thompson's portrayal.

Other than walking that New York Times reporter up the hill to Greylock back in 1998 or walking the streets of Hanover, have you been back on the A.T. since the book was published? Do you ever get the urge to go back, fill in some of the missed sections?

BB: The top item on my bucket list is Katahdin, though whether I ever manage to get it off the list is

A footnote on Katz, who is often more the focus than Bryson: The author was quoted in 1997 in *January Magazine* this way: "Katz's name isn't real, but he is real, and he would deny this, but he's really a very likable character... I exaggerate freely with almost everybody in every book, so, in some ways, it isn't exactly him. It's a caricature, but all the incidents are real."

Seize the Day

FORGET THE LONG HAUL
AND SAVOR SOMETHING
SHORT AND SWEET

BY JULIE JUDKINS

Inviting and welcoming all of America to experience and fall in love with the people's path means highlighting adventures other than the legendary Georgia to Maine thru-hike journey. Fortunately, opportunities to experience the Trail are abundant. Here are some favorite "easy access" hikes — shared by Trail enthusiasts for those wanting an introduction to the Trail as a day hike, or those looking for what Benton MacKaye deemed "respite from the urbanization of the east." These hikes are all in close proximity to urban areas, and are located in or near an official A.T. Community.

Front Royal

THE TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL sits only three miles from the Trail's intersection with Route 522, so it's a regular stop for many thru-hikers, especially after exiting or right before entering Shenandoah National Park. To access the A.T., I use trails in the G.R. Thompson Wildlife Management Area. This section of the A.T. is very easy for people from the Washington, D.C. metro area to access, as there are several parking areas only a few miles off of Interstate 66.

My most-traveled and favorite hike begins at the parking area about four miles up State Route 638. The loop hike is a little over two miles, making it perfect for families, beginners, bird-watchers, or botany lovers. This area is well-known for its abundance of spring wildflowers, and, in the fall, people come to see the changing leaves. At nearly 1,900 feet, the trailhead can be 10 degrees cooler than the temperature in the valley below, so come prepared with a warmer layer, even in the summer. Before heading up the mountain stop at the Giving Tree farm stand to pick up a cool drink and some snacks. From the parking lot, walk past the information kiosk onto the Ted Lake Trail and take a left turn onto a short unmarked spur trail. When the trail ends, take a right onto the Verlin Smith Trail (also unmarked). You will soon see the white blazes of the northbound A.T. on your

left. Turn right (southbound) onto the A.T. Follow the white blazes for about a mile, until you see signs for the Manassas Gap Shelter. Take this short side trail to explore the shelter, stop for lunch, or refill your water from the piped spring (using a water filter). Return to the A.T. along the same trail, and head southbound again (left turn). Walk about 100 feet to the marked intersection with the Ted Lake Trail. Turn right (west) to return to the parking lot in about 0.8 miles.

After the hike, head back toward Linden, west on Route 55 (John Marshall Highway), where you can get some great grub at the Apple House. And of course Front Royal offers several restaurants, coffee shops, and gift shops on Main Street.

From left: The "green tunnel" of the A.T. heading south toward Manassas Gap; Hikers take a break at Manassas Gap Shelter near Front Royal. Photos by Alyson Browett



1 hour from
Washington, D.C.

HIKED BY

A.T. Community
Ambassador for Front
Royal/Warren County,
Virginia and Potomac
Appalachian Trail
Club member,
**ALYSON
BROWETT**

2

TOTAL HIKING MILES
VIRGINIA



1 hour from
New York City

HIKED BY

Harlem Valley
A.T. Community
Ambassador and
volunteer Trail
and shelter maintainer with
the New York-New
Jersey Trail Conference,

**DONNA
CHAPMAN**

6.6

TOTAL HIKING MILES

NEW YORK

Harlem Valley

ONE OF MY FAVORITE HIKES

in the area is from New York State Route 22 to Cat Rocks. This hike is easily accessed by either car or the Metro-North Railroad. On weekends and holidays you can take the train directly to the Appalachian Trail — the stop is the only one of its kind. If you come during the week you can disembark in Pawling and take a cab to the A.T. crossing on NY Route 22.

Your hike begins on the board-

walk, which crosses the Great Swamp and the Great Swamp River where you may be treated to a flurry of birdlife, and if you are lucky, a glimpse of one of the many beavers that live in the area. After crossing the bridge you will follow the white blazes as you ascend Corbin Hill (elevation: 760 feet) followed by a lovely field that in the warmer months contains wild flowers and butterflies. Once you begin to descend you will have a view of Cat

Rocks in the distance as you pass the Dover Oak, which is said to be the largest white oak on the entire A.T. with a girth of more than 20 feet. This is followed by a vigorous climb up to Cat Rocks with breathtaking views of the Harlem Valley, surrounding farmlands, and the northbound Appalachian Trail. After enjoying the view and a snack you will retrace your route back to NY Route 22 for a total hike of 6.6 miles.



1 hour from
Roanoke or Lynchburg

HIKED BY

Appalachian Trail
Conservancy's
education and
outreach coordinator

**KATHRYN
HERNDON**

7.6

TOTAL HIKING MILES

VIRGINIA

Glasgow

WHEN PICKING OUT A GREAT day hike, sometimes you have to choose between views and water features. This hike has both: starting at the James River and following the tumbling Rocky Row Run creek before climbing up to spectacular views from Fuller Rocks of the James River Face Wilderness and the A.T. Community of Glasgow.

When you say "James River," most Virginians think of a wide, flat waterway that meanders through Richmond and Williamsburg on its way to the Chesapeake Bay. If that's the only part of the river you know, you've got to see the James as it rushes through a narrow gorge, before passing under the longest foot bridge on the A.T.,

and joins the Maury River. This hike takes you from the river to Fuller Rocks along the A.T. and back the same way. The total distance is 7.6 miles, so be sure to bring plenty of water and snacks.

Park at the A.T. trailhead by the James River Foot Bridge on VA-501 and head north on the A.T., which means carefully crossing highway 501 and looking for the white blazes on the other side. For the first mile you will follow Rocky Row Run, enjoying the sound of its clear, cold water rushing to meet up with the James. Cross Hercules Road (VA-812), then a blue-blazed trail to John's Hollow Shelter at 1.8 miles. The next two miles are strenuous, but rewarding. Get ready

for a series of 21 switchbacks that become increasingly rocky and rugged as you ascend. The forest changes as you gain elevation, from lush hardwoods near the river to hardy table mountain pines clinging to the rock faces near the top. When you emerge at Fuller Rocks, you'll likely be greeted by spectacular views of the James River Face Wilderness. When you're ready, turn back the way you came and head back to the river. Don't forget to stop in Glasgow while you're in the area, where you'll find great pizza at Scottos; and taking a picture with the town's famous foam dinosaur is something of a hiker tradition.

Clockwise from below: View of the James River Face Wilderness from Fuller Rocks; Crossing Rocky Row Run bridge – photos by Kathryn Herndon; The A.T. boardwalk over the great swamp river in New York (accessible by Metro-North Railroad's Harlem Line). Photo by Donna Chapman



TRY OUT THE A.T. IN ONE OF THE 14 STATES IT PASSES THROUGH

GEORGIA MOUNTAIN CROSSINGS AT NEELS GAP

(1.5 hours from Atlanta)

The building, Walasi-Yi Interpretive Center, was created by the CCC, is the only building that the Trail goes right through, and is in the A.T. Community of Union County, Georgia.

NORTH CAROLINA NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER

(1 hour 15 min. from Asheville)

Amp up your outdoor adventures and add in a zipline, a rafting trip, or a ride on horseback (not on the A.T.). Choose your adventure and amenities. There is even a phenology site and a monarch waystation if you want to be a citizen-scientist while you're there.

TENNESSEE/NORTH CAROLINA CLINGMANS DOME

(1.5 hours from Knoxville)

Nestled in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Clingmans Dome is the highest point on the entire A.T., where the Trail reaches an elevation of 6,625 feet near the summit. Need we say more?

VIRGINIA DAMASCUS

(2 hours from Roanoke)

The most famous Trail town of them all, Damascus is the gateway to the Mount Rogers National Recreation area in the Blue Ridge Mountains and offers family fun with easy hikes, camping, biking, and B&Bs. And the Trail runs directly through it.

WEST VIRGINIA HARPERS FERRY

(1 hour 15 min. from Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland)

A beautiful town — and A.T. Community — full of history (including John Brown's raid and the Civil War), great hiking with views of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, and the ATC's Headquarters and Visitor Center.

MARYLAND WASHINGTON MONUMENT STATE PARK

(1 hour 15 min. from Washington, D.C.)

Washington Monument State Park, located on South Mountain, offers the opportunity to see the original monument (about 500 feet off the A.T.) dedicated to George Washington and built by the people of Boonsboro in 1827.

PENNSYLVANIA BOILING SPRINGS

(2 hours from Philadelphia)

The picturesque A.T. Community of Boiling Springs offers something for every season, from hiking the A.T. through lush nearby farmland to fly fishing on Yellow Breeches Creek. Enjoy a stroll around Children's Lake before heading into the ATC Regional Office and Visitors Center to say "happy trails" to staff.

NEW JERSEY HIGH POINT STATE PARK

(1.5 hours from New York City)

The highest point in New Jersey is easy to access and on the A.T. The High Point Monument, at 1,803 feet, can be climbed (only 220 stairs) for views of the Pocono and Catskill Mountains, and three different states.

NEW YORK TRAILSIDE MUSEUMS AND ZOO AT BEAR MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

(1 hour from New York City)

The Trail goes directly through this historic park and zoo with sweeping views of the Hudson River. Learn about local geology, Native American history, and see live reptiles. And don't miss the bear den exhibit, which is also situated on lowest point on the entire length of the A.T.

CONNECTICUT LIONS HEAD

(1.5 hours from Hartford)

Magnificent views are the reward for a hike to the rocky outcropping atop Lions Head. After completing your calorie-burning trek, head over to a bakery or bistro in the charming New England town of Salisbury, less than a mile away.

MASSACHUSETTS MOUNT GREYLOCK STATE RESERVATION

(2.5 hours from Boston)

Another peak to bag is the highpoint in Massachusetts. At 3,491 feet, Mount Greylock offers 360-degree views and a 100-foot-tall lighthouse with an observation deck. After your stroll, head on over to Bascom Lodge for some snacks and chat with some A.T. hikers.

VERMONT KILLINGTON PEAK

(1 hour 40 min. from Burlington)

The second highest peak in Vermont, Killington offers views of three different mountain ranges (Green Mountains, White Mountains, and Adirondack Mountains). A gondola ride will elevate you to the 4,220-foot peak.

NEW HAMPSHIRE MOUNT WASHINGTON STATE PARK

(2.5 hours from Portland, Maine)

At 6,288 feet, this peak takes you to the highest spot in all of New England. Mount Washington is notorious for its horrible weather, receiving hurricane-force wind gusts almost a third of the year, and of course its famous weather station, the Mount Washington Observatory. From the Trail, the Cog Railway will take you right to the top.

MAINE RANGELEY AND THE RANGELEY REGION

(2 hours from Bangor)

The A.T. Community of Rangeley is situated among some of the state's highest peaks and a chain of lakes that connects over a thousand square miles of natural beauty. Just nine miles from the Trail crossing at Route 4, Rangeley is an important stop along the Trail. ↗



September 26, 2015

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy invites families of all ages and hiking abilities to get outside and experience the adventure of being active on the Appalachian Trail.



Held on National Public Lands Day, Family Hiking Day is an opportunity to introduce your children to America's premier footpath, and all of the benefits that come from being active and spending time outdoors.

To plan an A.T. hike for your family visit: appalachiantrail.org/FamilyHike



flipflop KICK OFF

MARKING A NEW ERA FOR A FLEXIBLE THRU-HIKE
BY MIKE JOHNSON

To cheers, applause, smiles, laughter, music, and bright sunlight, about 30 thru-hikers started north in the first days of May — not from Springer Mountain at the southern end, but from Harpers Ferry, very near the middle. “I’ve never made history before,” one of the hikers chuckled. But a weekend-long series of events suggests history was indeed being made — adding, or at least celebrating, a new enthusiasm within the hike-your-own-hike traditions of the Appalachian Trail. This was the first ever Flip Flop Kickoff, designed around a growing Trail ethic of minimizing trail impact while maximizing hiker success.



Clockwise from top: Flip-flopers cross the Potomac River into Maryland, their second A.T. state; Kerry “Treehugger” Iliff poses for her official ATC hiker photo; Local volunteer Tre Shafer applies a temporary tattoo to a festival-goer; Flip-Flopers pose in front of the ATC’s Headquarters; Wildflowers and a flat Trail greet flip-flopers on the first mile of A.T. through Harpers Ferry. Photos by Laurie Potteiger

“What started as an idea for hikers turned into a festival for Harpers Ferry and the whole hiking community,” notes David “Danger” Land, one of the flip-flopers, a group quickly dubbed the Merry Band of Floppers. Five months before the kickoff, Land was promoting the flip-flop strategy to this year’s hikers through WhiteBlaze.net (a website devoted to A.T. hiker communication and information), helping to start a thread — appropriately titled, “Flip Flop Class of 2015 Unite!” — that quickly drew hundreds of favorable comments and built a sense of community among the future hikers and their supporters.

Flip-flop hiking is simple and flexible: start somewhere between Springer in the south and Katahdin in the north,



“WE ARE SUPPORTING A TREND WHERE PEOPLE ARE MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS TO DO THEIR HIKE IN CREATIVE WAYS THAT ARE GOOD FOR THE TRAIL, THE HIKERS, AND TRAIL TOWNS.”

Clockwise from above: Musicians create a festive mood – photo by Dan Innamorato; ATC ridgerunner Lauralee Bliss helps teach Leave No Trace skills; 2015 flip-flopper Will Poe from Harpers Ferry explains the history of the view from Jefferson Rock; Appalachian Readiness and Outdoors helps to promote the benefits of flip-flopping; The thru-hikers give a final cheer before leaving Harpers Ferry – photos by Laurie Potteiger

then hike the 2,190 miles in any direction and order and you have officially completed a thru-hike, defined as hiking the full Trail in 12 months. The kickoff reminded many of an old-fashioned community barn raising, supported by an eclectic group, including the Odd Fellows, who provided food and opened their lawn in downtown Harpers Ferry, exhibitor tents and activities, the Harpers Ferry-Boliver Trail and Town Alliance, who actively promoted the festival idea to visitors and the larger community, and the Camp Hill Methodist Church, which volunteered its meeting hall and kitchen. Other A.T. Communities that host their own festivals sent hard-working volunteers to the event from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, Millinocket, Maine, and Franklin, North Carolina. The weekend was filled with live music, many interactive hiker workshops, family-friendly games, and prize giveaways. There were Leave No Trace workshops, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) executive director Ron Tipton met with hikers. The ATC was the official host of the event.

“This is a win-win idea,” notes Laurie Potteiger, the ATC’s information services manager, who led the new kickoff idea with the support of the Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Trail and Town Alliance. “We are supporting a trend where people are making informed decisions to do their hikes in creative ways that are good for the Trail, the hikers, and Trail towns. And that’s the ATC’s job — the first principle in our strategic plan is effective stewardship.”



A Harpers Ferry National Historical Park ranger recounts stories of famous travelers who passed through the area; A flip-flop hiker displays his official thru-hike registration tag on his pack — registering allows hikers to know in advance when overcrowding will exist, and to adjust their start date to their advantage. Photos by Laurie Potteiger

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The "Merry Band of Flip-floppers" days after the kick off at the ATC's Mid-Atlantic office in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Photo by '09 flip-flop thru-hiker Ryan Seltzer

Tipton adds: "It also helps make progress in our goal of strengthening relationships with A.T. Communities so that future programs are supported. It is bringing greater awareness of the A.T. and the ATC's mission, while bringing an economic boon and positive PR to the community."

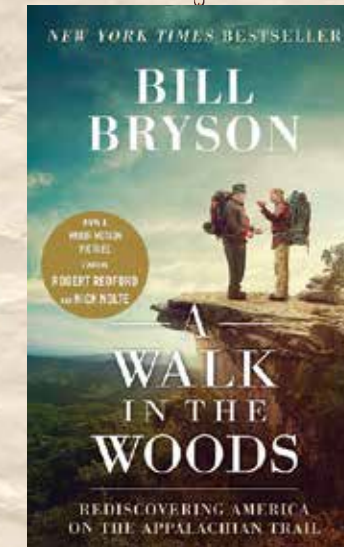
Every year hiking as an activity has been growing, and recently two movies: *Wild*, about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, and *A Walk In the Woods*, set on the A.T. (due in theaters in early September) have fueled an explosion of interest. From coast to coast, trail managers have sought ways to disperse so-called hiker bubbles, which refers to large groups of hikers starting at the same time from the same place. At Mount Rainier, the park service simply cut off reservations, for the John Muir Trail, strict entry and exit permits were established, then the annual kickoff weekend on the Pacific Crest Trail was divided in two sections to accommodate a record number of hikers. The ATC's Flip-Flop Kickoff initiative, which is completely voluntary, enlists the help of the hikers themselves, and is celebrated as a festival, is demonstrative of this new ethic. The self-proclaimed Merry Band of Flip-floppers' "bubble" spread out within hours. Anne Brown, a veteran flip-flopper whose presentation at the kick-off was one of the highlights, wants hikers to "speak for the Trail." "Hikers are also responsible to and for the Trail," she says. "By choosing [a flip-flop hike] we spread out more and lessen our impact on the wilderness that brought us here in the first place."

"The merchants were very happy with the event," says Matt Knott of the Harpers Ferry Merchant Association. "It meant an additional 200-plus people enjoying the whole town." Laurel Drake, who sees hundreds of hikers as the owner of the local Teahorse B&B, adds: "I've heard more and more about flip-flop hiking; this is an idea whose time has come."

In the past there's been a touch of defensiveness in being a flip-flop hiker, notes Ryan "Castanada" Seltzer, who in 2009 flip-flop hiked the A.T. with his dog Baca. Seltzer, who went on to work for the ATC, sees a new openness to alternative hike strategies. "The hikers leaving Harpers Ferry from the kickoff were there because they wanted a hike that was right for them *and* the Trail... they were proud to be flip-floppers." ▲

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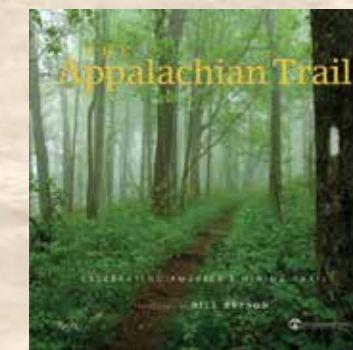
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THROUGH SEPTEMBER



Forget what Bryson had to say?
Never read the book? (Seriously?)
Now is an excellent time to buy!

"We have a sacred duty — that is not putting it too strongly — to see that [the Appalachian Trail] remains healthy and vibrant for all time. We could, after all, be the last generation that gets the chance."

~ Bill Bryson, from the foreword to
*The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating
America's Hiking Trail*



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The Ultimate Volunteer

BY GWEN LOOSE

DAVE SHERMAN'S CLEAR BROWN EYES were leveled at everyone sitting around a conference table in the Ironmaster's Mansion located in Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Pennsylvania, in April of 2014. "Margaret is a remarkable woman," said Dave, a fellow Georgian who held a variety of high-level positions in the National Park Service and the Forest Service. The group was assembled to review nominations for the annual induction into the Appalachian Trail Museum's Hall of Fame. Margaret Drummond was among those being considered. In his soft, southern drawl, Dave presented justification for her nomination.

First, of course, was Margaret's service to the Trail community: 15 years on the Georgia A.T. Club's (GATC) Board of Directors, two years as president of the GATC, and 26 years on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC)

dent she changed the club's tradition of holding one Trail work trip per year to holding one per month, and she strengthened the club's relationship with the ATC by inviting ATC staff to assist with the club's first Trails Skills Workshop. She was also credited with ending a threat to the location of the Georgia portion of the A.T. brought about by a contemplated extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

In 1978, Margaret accepted a position on ATC's Board of Directors, where she became well respected as a consensus builder, an advocate for volunteers, a mentor to many, and a defender of wilderness. In 1980, Margaret organized the first scouting trip for the Benton MacKaye Trail, and she became a founding member of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. In 1988, as she retired from a 30-year career as a teacher, lecturer, and researcher in the field of microbiology at Emory University's School of Medicine, Margaret was elected as the ATC's board chair. She brought to the board a strong belief in partnerships, committee work, and the role of volunteers in the A.T. project.

Dave eloquently completed his presentation of Margaret as a candidate for the A.T. Hall of Fame by stating that she received GATC's Friendship of the Trail Award — the club's highest honor — the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Chief Award, and Honorary Membership with the ATC.

With strong competition from many other A.T. notables, Margaret's induction into the A.T. Museum's Hall of Fame did not occur until 2015. In February, the annual selection process began once more, and her induction was assured. Sadly, she passed away at the age of 92 on April 8, 2015, just prior to the official announcement of the honor about to be bestowed upon her.

When asked to describe Margaret in just three words, Bob Almand (another close associate who followed in her footsteps as a leader within GATC and a board chair of the ATC and graciously accepted her induction into the A.T. Museum's Hall of Fame Class of 2015) characterized her as, "the ultimate volunteer." Above all, she held to the principle that the Appalachian Trail is a volunteer project. We should all pay homage to Margaret Drummond each time we join a committee, take on a project, or step onto the Trail with work tools in hand. We are the volunteers that she so deeply loved. ♡

Board of Directors — six served as board chair. But beyond these numbers, Margaret was indeed remarkable in the leadership qualities she brought to each of these positions.

Self-described as "accidentally" born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Margaret grew up, was educated, and lived her adult life in Atlanta, Georgia. She joined GATC in 1961, not as an avid hiker but rather as a Trail worker. She served as Trail supervisor and became known for her welcoming attitude, often sitting at the front of the bus for club excursions in order to greet new members as they boarded. During her term as presi-

Gwen Loose is the executive director of the York County Rail Trail Authority in Pennsylvania and a member of the A.T. Museum's Board of Directors.




Margaret takes a break during a GATC Trail work trip on Max Patch in North Carolina in the '80s. Photo courtesy the ATC



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

Hikers on the Trail in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia – by Dan Innamorato



We are looking forward to working with a new generation of A.T. enthusiasts who will soon care for and support the Trail as you, our current members, do.

THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES FOR THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL Conservancy (ATC). The film version of Bill Bryson's best-selling book, *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*, starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte is to be released nationwide on September 2, and we welcome the exposure and name recognition that will be generated. We know that the film will bring new interest in long distance hiking on the Appalachian Trail and we are working with all of our partners and volunteers to prepare for the expected increase in new users. We are looking forward to working with a new generation of A.T. enthusiasts who will soon care for and support the Trail as you, our current members, do.

I have the honor of serving another term on the ATC Board of Directors, thanks to you. In my new capacity as both the vice chair of the board and chair of the Membership and Development Committee, I want us to capitalize on the expanding awareness of the ATC's mission and be prepared to welcome and educate a new audience of Trail devotees.

Last year, we developed a Strategic Plan for the ATC, which is guiding us as we meet new opportunities and challenges. The board and the staff are dedicated to seeing the plan fulfilled and even exceeded. I know that the members are likewise committed. I'm counting on the continued dedication of my fellow board members, the ATC staff, and you to ensure all our goals are achieved.

As I write this, we are already seeing increased support and possibilities from all segments of our donors. Leadership Circle donors are increasing and recommitting their support. New foundations are asking us to submit proposals for project funding, and returning and new corporate sponsors, like Expedia and PenFed, are contributing at significant and increased levels. Thank you, and know your contributions are not only appreciated by the ATC but are inspiring other gifts too.

Lastly, at your first opportunity, go and see *A Walk in the Woods*. Enjoy this comic adventure and absorb all the great scenery from our national treasure, the Appalachian Trail. Tell your friends and use the opportunity to share how they can help protect the A.T. by joining the ATC and/or volunteering. 🌱

Thank you again,
Greg Winchester | Vice Chair, ATC Board of Directors
 Chair, ATC Membership and Development Committee

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For Sale

The **large B&B opposite the Appalachian Trail Conservancy headquarters** in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia is now for sale. Built in 1992. Ran as a B&B from 1993-2012. It has six bedrooms and five-and-a-half baths, a two-car attached garage plus a three-car guest parking area. Visit: www.harpersferryguesthouse.com for pricing or call the owners at: (304) 535-2101

The **Teahorse Hostel in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia**, is now for sale. The Teahorse has been open for five years and housed thousands of hikers, bicyclists, and other visitors to Harpers Ferry with more than 10,000 waffles served. It is the only hostel in Harpers Ferry and is a half-mile from the A.T. The Teahorse is arranged with an upstairs with 14 beds and 2 bathrooms and downstairs with a living space with bathroom for the owner. The asking price is \$275,000 but is negotiable. Everything needed to run the hostel is included. Owner-financing will

be considered. Serious inquiries only. Contact: Laurel at teahorse@live.com.

Two **former medical buildings in Troutdale, Virginia** within a short walk of the post office are for sale. Either would be suitable to convert into a hostel. Troutdale is the highest incorporated town in Virginia and is a popular A.T. mail drop. Contact: Joan at United Country, Collins & Associates (276) 773-2522

Building in Caratunk, Maine, one-quarter-mile from the trailhead. Contains the Post Office; two apartments, and a 24'x40' area on the first floor. Asking: \$95,000. House with property bordering the Trail also for sale: 7 1/2 acres, five bedrooms and two baths. Big barn and long, four-bay garage with a black smith shop. Asking: \$150,000. For more information contact: dwbeane45@gmail.com or call (207) 672-3781.

Lost and Found

Found: **tent and stakes** (no poles) found on the A.T. near trailhead at VA623 (Burkes Garden, Virginia) on March 15. Contact: ronhudnell@aol.com for details.

Found: **digital camera** found in late March on the A.T. in southwest Virginia about a mile north of Jenkins shelter between state road 623 and 615, near Bland. Screen is cracked. Memory card shows photos of possible recent graduate, trip to China, and white water rafting. Contact: herbmacdonald999@gmail.com, or call (336) 467-1606.

Lost: small **Canon camera left near the Trail** June 6 in Sages Ravine (Connecticut/Massachusetts). Reward for return of memory card. Contact: Clintonkirk@bellsouth.net or (270) 564-4799.

For Your Information

The **Appalachian Trail Conservancy is recruiting for several internship positions for this fall 2015** including: Graphic Design and New Media, Public Relations, Marketing Assistant, Event Planning, Visitor Services, Development

Database, Development Events, Lands Records Management, and Lands Stewardship Assistant. For position descriptions, more information, and to apply visit: appalachiantrail.org/jobs.

Upcoming ATC Events:

- **Southwest Virginia Outdoor Expo** in Abingdon, Virginia: September 12.
 - **Third Thursdays Music and a Movie** in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania: September 17.
 - **Family Hiking Day** Along the entire A.T.: September 26.
 - **Third Thursdays Phenology & Wildlife Habitat Hike** in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania: October 15.
 - **Roanoke GoFest** in Roanoke, Virginia: October 16 - 17.
 - **Haunted Trail House** in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: Oct 31.
- For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, an A.T. Community partner and the location of our headquarters, suffered a fire this past July that damaged four buildings and eight businesses. This is a huge loss to a town with only 300 residents. **Learn how you can help support the local community** by visiting: harpersferrywv.us/recovery.html.

Volunteers needed at ATC HQ to answer phone inquiries. Email Laurie at: lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org.

Collecting all **past ATN/ATJ editions**. Still missing the following: Sept/Oct 2001, 2005 (all 5) and July/Aug 2006. Will pay postage for any donations. Contact: tobywoodard@msn.com. ♡

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length. Please send them to: editor@appalachiantrail.org
Public Notices
P.O. Box 807
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Big Wilson Stream, 100-Mile Wilderness Maine, October 4, 1989
My stomach churned as fast as the icy water at my feet. The sky yawned, spitting snow picked up by the swirling winds. I took one step then another, gasping at the coldness. The water, browned by tannic acid, obscured the slick rocks under my shoes. Its gurgling laughter and angry growl taunted my fear. The snow slapped my face. Panic rose and was fought down. My left foot searched for a stable place as the panic came again. A calming breath, then the slow journey began once more. The shore seemed miles away. Slippery inch by slippery inch, I moved. Fighting the current, fighting my fear, fighting self pity, I crossed Big Wilson. Yet on the far bank was not exultation or triumph; only misery and frustration. How much more can I take? How much further can I reach down?

I WROTE THOSE WORDS IN A BATTERED NOTEBOOK 26 YEARS ago as I was completing my 1,100-mile A.T. adventure. Two weeks after I graduated from college, I had taken a train to Harpers Ferry, strapped on an unbalanced pack, tied my clunky leather boots tightly, and began my hike to Katahdin.

This was to be my big adventure before entering the “real world.” I had been camping a mere three times before, yet after months of research, felt I knew all I needed for a long distance hike on the Appalachian Trail. Of course, when I emerged at the far end, I had learned the greatest lesson the A.T. teaches: be ready to unlearn what you thought you knew and make the changes that will be best for your hike. I ended with a different pack, different boots, different sleeping bag, and different definitions for “weight” and “necessity.”

Like my fellow hikers then and those currently on that hallowed Trail, I had joyous, fist-pumping moments along with dark, desperate moments. I came back to the real world with small lessons about strength, creativity, and resolve that I tucked away like scraps of paper, and began a new journey into marriage, motherhood, career, and divorce.

Now, when I re-read what my youthful hiker self was feeling on the edge of Big Wilson Stream, I see that I have since had many Big Wilson moments. I have had to cross all kinds of rhetorical streams where I couldn't see my feet and the snow was slapping my face. I have had to fight fear and self-pity. I have wondered how much further I can reach down.

And yet, I also remember that I reached the peak of Katahdin. I did that thing that was hard and crazy, and I celebrated with joy and pride. I see how my life has mirrored my Appalachian Trail time. I have learned lessons. I walked through rain and mud. I have reached peaks and found joy in unexpected “Trail magic.” Re-reading that moment at Big Wilson was a gift because I can now remember that I did move on from that moment of despair and found triumph, just as I have on my subsequent journey, 26 years later. And I am thankful for those first lessons on the Appalachian Trail. ♡



Robin this summer on the Lake Russell Trail in North Georgia. Photo by Stephanie Maley

Robin Dake
LIVES IN TOCCOA, GEORGIA

“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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SUMMIT OF ROUND BALD, TENNESSEE/NORTH CAROLINA – BY TAYLOR PENDERGRASS