

# A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY November-December 2010



inside: Smoky Mountain Elk ■ Kent, Connecticut ■ Hiking Research



**On the Cover:** Five-degree temperatures, winds blowing at more than twenty miles per hour, and freshly fallen snow greeted photographer Jeffrey Stoner at Massie Gap in Grayson Highlands State Park in southwestern Virginia last winter. “After hiking one-and-a-half miles through the snow along the Appalachian Trail, I spotted this pony enjoying a tasty nibble,” says Stoner. “The ponies roam the Highlands along the A.T. and are a joy to watch in any season of the year.”

WWW.JEFFREYSTONERPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

*A.T. Journeys* (ISSN 1556-2751) is published bimonthly for \$15 a year by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, 799 Washington Street, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425, (304) 535-6331. Bulk-rate postage paid at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and other offices.

Postmaster: Send change-of-address Form 3575 to *A.T. Journeys*, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

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## THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 6, Number 6

*November–December 2010*

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to the preservation and management of the natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources associated with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in order to provide primitive, outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for Trail visitors.

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*A.T. Journeys* is published on Sterling Matte paper that is manufactured by NewPage Corporation responsibly sourced, using allocated chain-of-custody certified fiber. It is printed with SoySeal certified ink in the U.S.A. by United Litho, Inc., Ashburn, Virginia.



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**E**motional rescue. Last winter I had the good fortune to experience one of the season’s first snow storms while visiting my parents’ house the week before Christmas. The stars had aligned for two days of total escape, as I had just completed an issue of the magazine, and could not go anywhere due to the inclement weather. I spent the weekend bundling up and then trekking for hours through the woods that surround the house with my two blissfully happy dogs — who romped along in tummy-deep snow with a boost of energy that only such a brisk, beautiful, and serene environment could provide. It was total solitude in those silent, snowy acres, and the simplicity of those two long days was pure mental freedom.

Hikers who escape to the wilderness often do so to experience this variety of emotional rescue. As an undergraduate at Western Carolina University, Mark Ellison discovered this himself when he began venturing to the A.T. to “get away.” “Hiking in such beautiful places captured my imagination and has continued to be my escape for the past two decades,” says Ellison. “It is often taken for granted by those of us who venture into the wilderness regularly that we will feel restored after hiking.” Mark found himself asking: “why do I feel this way?” Now a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University, Mark has designed a study that focuses on the restorative benefits of hiking in the backcountry and its relationship to job satisfaction. As part of his research, he asked members of the A.T. hiking community to weigh in (page 16).

If “escape” is the desired effect, then “place” is the trigger. Professional photographer Jeffrey Stoner — who was drawn to the southern highlands along the Trail because of the area’s ever changing natural, wild beauty — describes the inspiration we gain from our favorite outdoor settings as “the essence of place” (page 26). It would appear that the prescription for release and restoration is to seek that place that allows your mind to restore itself, perhaps on the A.T., perhaps in your own backyard, as a remedy to what ails you. You just might find you’ll get what you need. **A**

### **Wendy K. Probst**

MANAGING EDITOR

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

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## Scenic Drive

Kim Williams' article, "Scenic Drive," (*A.T. Journeys* September/October) highlighted an important aspect of Benton MacKaye's original vision of the Appalachian Trail, an aspect that we often forget in our attention to, and admiration of, thru-hikers walking the whole Trail in one season. As Williams says, "this green space would be a collaborative, regional, and national effort in stewarding working farms and forests that supplied the populace with high quality water, timber, food, and fresh air." In addition, Benton saw the Trail as a kind of dam to stop the flow of "motor-slums" outward from the eastern metropolises into the countryside. It was a tool of the regional planner to hold back the spread of the metropolitan wilderness (see MacKaye's *The New Exploration*). Further, the Trail was to be an "infinite footpath" where urban workers who had only a brief annual vacation could come each year and find a new section to hike, and new experiences with nature.

I spent many days with Benton in the early 1960s, both at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. (his winter home) and at the MacKaye Cottage in Shirley Center, Massachusetts. We went through his files and spent hours talking over his ideas. From those conversations it was clear that he was more than an "outdoor recreationist." He was trained as a forester and worked for years as a regional planner, but finally he preferred a new term, "geotechnics," to describe what he did. Thanks to Kim Williams for reminding us of the broader scope of MacKaye's vision.

Paul T. Bryant

ARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

## Suspended Animation



I read with great interest Mark Warner's "Suspended Animation" (*A.T. Journeys* September/October) for two important reasons. It reminded me of flying with my Dad when I was a kid in his Bellanca fixed wing, which could fly slow and low, and of hiking to Max Patch Bald with my husband and little shih tzu Coco. Both my Dad and my dog are gone now, so reminiscing made me smile. I turned the pages of the magazine hoping that the author had found Max Patch Bald and, on page 15, I was rewarded with a beautiful image. Coco was an avid hiker and loved our yearly trips to the mountains of North Carolina where we would take to those trails available to her. On a beautiful May day in 2007, we found Max Patch Bald breathtaking. Once on top, Coco, along with two "Trail angels," greeted hikers for most of the afternoon. Since many hikers have digital cameras tucked in their backpacks, Coco's photo is probably in many albums. I look back on that day with such happiness and always say "that was a good day." I love those portions of the A.T. that I've hiked — and they are short, so I really appreciate being able to support the A.T. for those folks who have longer ways to go. Keep up the good work.

Dana Moser

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Mark Warner lived my dream — to fly the A.T. — however, I want to start at Springer and go all the way! Wish I could meet him in person. Where can I buy his book?

Judith Foster

ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

**Editors Response:** Mark's book, *The Appalachian Trail—An Aerial View* is available at the *Ultimate A.T. Store*: [www.atctrailstore.org](http://www.atctrailstore.org).

## Mountain Lake

Your article on Mountain Lake ("Natural Synergy," *A.T. Journeys* July/August) brought back happy memories for me. I attended my first [ATC] conference there and joined the ATC. I met Nina Forbes from Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) in Asheville, North Carolina, who invited me to join them and hike the North Carolina Mountains — which I did. I spent the next 30-plus years driving to Asheville from Winston-Salem, North Carolina to hike with the CMC and enjoy the many beautiful trails with friendly, interesting people. It was a special period of my life. Thank you for your excellent article.

Nancy Julian

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

## Hole Lot of Love

Had my day all planned, then I sat down for a read of Wendy Probst's "Hole Lot of Love" article (*A.T. Journeys* September/October) and adjusted accordingly. I and a hiking friend had the distinct pleasure of stopping for just a few restful hours at Wood's Hole on May 21, 1996. From the notes taken of that visit, the story told by Tillie of her adventures with Roy emerged anew. She told of how they came to the cabin and in particular she related a memory of the shake roof she and Roy slept under year-round in 1940 to '41. She said it allowed the snow to seep through onto her bedclothes and disturbed more than her sleep. Roy would gently insist that it would stop in a little while. Tillie said, "It never did." Being a dog lover, I spent more than a few minutes rubbing behind the ears of Tillie's dog, Sam, a 16-year-old cocker spaniel, yet [one more example] of the warmth and love she had for everyone and everything. I'm sorry to hear of her passing. She was a true Trail angel.

Edd "Wild Blue" Higbee

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

## Cultural Junction

What a pleasant surprise to read Matthew McLaughlin's article on Thaddeus Stevens ("Cultural Junction," *A.T. Journeys* September/October). Originally from the Danville-Peacham area of Caledonia County, Vermont, Mr. Stevens moved to Pennsylvania after graduating from Dartmouth College. The Town of Peacham still honors him with a beautiful country road named after him.

I am a runner and have logged many happy miles on Thaddeus Stevens Road. I am also a 1994 A.T. thru-hiker and never realized the connection between Caledonia County in Vermont and Caledonia State Park on the Trail!

Sue Johnston

OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

## Kudos

As a new member I am reading the *A.T. Journeys* September/October issue like a kid just discovering Harry Potter. What I found I was missing was an inset map for each article placing the location visually along the A.T. I know I can "Google map" it, but I'd like to place the setting in my mind as I read without jumping up and going to the computer. Keep up the good work.

Dan Rothermel

YORK, MAINE

## CORRECTIONS

The caption on page 13 ("Suspended Animation," *A.T. Journeys* September/October) incorrectly noted that Virginia's James River Bridge is in Pennsylvania. We apologize for this horrible error.



## Great Shot

I wanted to send you this picture of our three-year-old grandson on the A.T. "looking for nature" (in his words). My husband and I live in Blairsville, Georgia, near the Trail and are both 20-plus year members of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. Since retirement, we're working on the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club Outreach Committee to bring both rural and inner city kids outdoors and into the world of hiking. It would be great to have [more articles] on the importance of bringing young people outdoors since they will determine the future of the A.T. and other hiking trails. Thank you for a wonderful magazine! We look forward to each issue. ♡

Martha and Dayton Miller

BLAIRSVILLE, GEORGIA

*A.T. Journeys* welcomes your comments.

The editors are committed to providing

balanced and objective perspectives.

Not all letters received may be published.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Please send them to:

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

Letters to the Editor

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his past April the America's Great Outdoors Initiative was started to develop a conservation and recreation agenda worthy of the 21st century, and to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has been working to connect people with nature since 1925. We were glad to add our comments to America's Great Outdoors Initiative and hope that some of you made comments as well.

The Appalachian Trail is an excellent means for the public, of all ages, to access public lands. Our Trail to Every Classroom program is designed to get youth to get outside, to learn, to grow, and to enjoy the beauty of nature. On their first hike a child can be timid and apprehensive about hiking in the woods but by the second or third hike they are self assured, confident, and ready to lead the way. Adults looking to improve their health and fitness are finding that a hike on the A.T. is a great way to get in shape. Families can find quality time away from the stress of everyday living to reconnect with one another. The Trail provides access to more than 250,000 acres of public lands with hundreds of entry points for people to spend a day, a week, or longer enjoying time outdoors. The number of people day hiking is increasing. The A.T. is within a day's drive for nearly all who live in the eastern third of the United States and is particularly relevant to any initiative that seeks to get Americans outdoors.

Another facet of America's Great Outdoors Initiative is how to best provide stewardship of public lands. Land acquisition starts a process to conserve and protect lands. Stewardship carries that process forward in perpetuity. Forest health, open space management, invasive species control, and vigilant monitoring of natural, cultural, and physical resources require dedicated and consistent support. Our A.T. volunteers have demonstrated that they can provide invaluable support in accomplishing this. Our clubs and Trail crew volunteers put in more than 200,000 stewardship hours in support of the A.T. Without their support, the A.T. experience would be diminished.

If America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to be successful, it must be community driven. The Trail is connected to many communities along its path. Our Appalachian Trail Communities program highlights the A.T.'s value as a recreational, volunteer, educational, and environmental resource. The communities that the A.T. traverses host unique cultural and natural elements that enhance the Trail. We are engaging Trail communities in partnerships that aim to enhance the A.T. experience while protecting local assets that are attractive to the Trail's visitors. Our A.T. Community partners are seeing that conservation can provide economic vitality. Plan to take a hike on the A.T. soon and enjoy one of the treasures of America's Great Outdoors. 

**Bob Almand**, CHAIR

**Dave Startzell**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Deer Leap Mountain,  
Rutland, Vermont.  
By Matt Larson.*



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*Bigelow contains 20 miles of the A.T. with 14 miles of side trails that traverse two 3,000-foot peaks and two 4,000-foot peaks. (This page) Looking south over the tree line back across the A.T.*

## Something to BEHOLD

ON AN OCTOBER MORNING I AWOKE AT THE MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB'S BASE CAMP ON HORNS POND, LOCATED IN THE BIGELOW PRESERVE AT MORE THAN 3,000 FEET IN ELEVATION.

With crusted-vapor ice formed on the outside of my mummy bag, and a thin layer on the inside walls of my tent, I stepped out into the frigid morning air. The temperature had dropped to 20 degrees and my surroundings were blanketed with a fresh seven inches of glistening, white snow. With a need to get my blood flowing and my body heat up, I set out for the summits of South- and North Horn. I knew from the previous days' ridge-run across the range that the fall foliage of Maine was at full peak with every color competing for the eyes attention. The summits would be something to behold.

The half-mile hike up the 3,830-foot crest of the South Horn proved to be a great way to warm my bones and provide me enough heat to stay on the exposed view points in the crisp, cold winter air, and take in the full glorious beauty of the Bigelow Preserve. I stood on the windblown summit among the snow and ice-covered krummholz looking out at a spectrum of fall colors that the hardwoods in the valleys had produced, which now gave way to the frost- and snow-covered bows of soft woods moving up the mountain slope. It was absolutely breathtaking. Feeling the bite of the cold wind stealing my body heat but not wanting to surrender this eye candy of the morning, I set out for the North Horn. After another four tenths of a mile I was standing on the exposed, ice-blown 3,820-foot summit overlooking Flagstaff Lake and the broadside of West Peak. I was in pure awe of the grace and exquisiteness of nature itself. Views like these are just some of the perks of a caretaker/ridge runner — among leaf peeping, watching the moose, bear, and snow shoe hare move about the woods, fishing for trout in Horns Pond, seeing the bald eagles soar, and catching the sunsets from the summits — on this 36,000-acre multi-use preserve. One also gets to see, firsthand, the direct results of their work.

For those who do not know or have never been, Bigelow Mountain is considered by many to be Maine's "second mountain" (second only to Katahdin — the northernmost terminus of the Appalachian Trail). Located in the heart of a vast state managed preserve, Bigelow contains 20 miles of the A.T. with 14 miles of connecting side trails that transverse two 3,000-foot peaks and two 4,000-foot peaks — one of which is named after the Trail's very own Myron H. Avery. Avery Mountain (at 4,088 feet) is

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GEOFF SHADMAN



*Ridgerunner/Caretaker Geoff Shadman (right) and Bigelow preserve manager Steve Swatling use a proactive approach to manage the damage that can be caused by heavy use in this well-loved back country. Below: Hiker looking south over the Horns from the summit of West Peak.*

considered by many hikers to have some of the best views on the entire A.T. From its near half-mile of above-tree-line open ridge, on a clear day, one can see southwest to Mount Washington and beyond into the White Mountains. A look to the north can offer views of Katahdin.

With challenging terrain, remote wilderness, and spectacular views from every summit and vista along the range, it's no wonder that this area is one of Maine's most visited and heavily used natural outdoor recreational destinations. With the outstanding numbers of thru-hikers, section hikers, weekend warriors, day-hikers, college outing groups, Boy Scout troops, and summer camps that visit the preserve each year, it's astounding that this mountain is as intact and "wild" as it is. Taking a proactive approach to try and manage the damage that is caused by heavy use in the back country, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, along with agency partner Bigelow Preserve manager Steve Swatling of the Maine Department of Conservation, have been successful in reducing the impact of so many visitors by more than 60 percent in recent years — a noticeable difference to those who have visited the area in the past. For 20 weeks out of the peak season, caretakers/ridge runners help to monitor campsites along the Trail and educate campers and day-use visitors on how to

lessen their own impacts through Leave No Trace practices such as traveling on durable surfaces, managing waste, leaving what they find, respecting plants and wildlife, controlling their pets, minimizing their campfire impacts, being considerate of others, and planning ahead for their next outing. Also helpful in protection of the area is the co-agency management decision to relocate campsites away from watersheds.

At one point this treasure and its serenity was almost lost to developers who intended to turn it into a ski resort that would rival its neighbor, Sugarloaf USA, to become the "Aspen of the East." After the end of a long legal battle, the Bigelow Preserve, with its rare alpine and sub-alpine plants, wildlife, and 60 species of birds, was created and protected by a state-wide referendum that passed only by a narrow margin of votes. The Bigelow's serenity and that of its surrounding land and mountain peaks must be constantly protected from new plans for development and other man-made threats.

With the ever changing needs of our world, it's important that we still have places to go and get away from the pressures and stresses of our fast-paced and busy lives to submerge ourselves in the wonders and quiet of our natural place. For myself and others, that place is the Bigelow's. [↗](#)



With challenging terrain, remote wilderness, and spectacular views from every summit, it's no wonder that this area is one of Maine's most visited, outdoor recreational destinations.



*Views like these — as well as seeing bald eagles soar, and catching the sunsets from the summits — are just some of the perks to working on this 36,000-acre multi-use preserve. This page: View from the A.T. of the South Horn summit at 3,831 feet.*

## Ready for the Next Fifty

BY ANNE MAIO

**T**his year marks the 50th anniversary of the Mount Rogers A.T. Club (MRATC), which maintains 56 miles from Damascus, Virginia near the Tennessee line, north to the South Fork of the Holston River, near Sugar Grove in Smyth County. Before 1960, it was the Roanoke A.T. Club, which had struggled through the massive Trail relocation in the 1940s and 1950s to move the Trail west into the Jefferson National Forest, onto Iron Mountain and away from the new Blue Ridge Parkway.

On a snowy Washington's birthday weekend in 1960, several members of MRATC traveled to Southwest Virginia to participate in the founding of a new club of interested volunteer Trail maintainers. Celebrating with prospective new volunteers by taking a hike on Whitetop Mountain in several feet of snow, they got back too late in the evening to convene for the organizational meeting, so the Mount Rogers A.T. Club was founded the following weekend, on February 29.

MRATC celebrated its 50th at the end of February 2010 with guest speakers: Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) executive director Dave Startzell, A.T. park manager Pam Underhill, and Beth Merz, area ranger of the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area of the Jefferson National Forest.

The club may have missed working on the massive A.T. relocation completed in the 1950s, but it was certainly active in several relocations in the 1970s to move the Trail off roads, away from private property, and into the scenic mountains and balds of the newly created Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, which hikers love so well. New Trail shelters were needed, and five were added in the 1980s and 1990s. After 2000, another shelter was built as well as several privies. Club members became active in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's



*Mount Rogers A.T. Club members proudly take part in the annual Damascus Trail Days parade each year, which takes place right next to their section of the Trail.*

MEGA-Transect program, monitoring rare and endangered plants and wildlife and controlling invasive non-native plants.

With no major relocations and no new shelter construction planned in the near future, are MRATC volunteers bored? Hardly. In 2010, the club was busy recognizing charter members, sharing stories of past club activities, looking at photo albums, and thinking about where we have been and what we have done. But 2011 will be a new year: the beginning of our next 50 years as Trail lovers and volunteer Trail maintainers working together. Trail and shelter repair and upkeep, and plant monitoring will continue, and Damascus will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Trail Days, and apply for recognition in the A.T. Community Partner program. MRATC will also work with seven teachers in the ATC Trail to Every Classroom program. Both the ATC Biennial Conference and the Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails will take place within a few miles of Damascus and MRATC members will enjoy welcoming other Trail lovers to our beautiful Southwest Virginia. [A](#)

For more information visit:

[www.mratc.org](http://www.mratc.org)

## Nominations Open for 2011–2013 Board of Directors

Nominations are now open for the positions of four officers and 11 directors who would serve as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) governing body until June 2013 after elections by members attending the July 2011 biennial meeting at Emory and Henry College in Emory, Virginia.

A slate of nominees will be selected by a committee chaired by Jim Ditzel, a 23-year-employee of L.L. Bean — who currently is serving his third consecutive term on ATC's board — and an avid hiker who has completed summits of New England's 67 4,000-footers. Also on the committee are Craig Dunn, a retired banker, former ATC board member, and past president of both the Susquehanna A.T. Club and the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy; Elizabeth Crisfield, a PhD candidate at Penn State University studying climate change impacts on forests along the A.T.; Pam Ahlen, a former president of the Green Mountain Club and former ATC board member; Peter Gould, an attorney specializing in matters involving energy and natural resources with Patton Boggs LLP — who, along with the firm, has provided pro bono legal services to ATC on a variety of issues; Rob Hutchinson, an investment manager and devoted hiker with aspirations of a post-retirement thru-hike; and Roger Moore, a 2,000-miler and professor at North Carolina State University who also previously served on ATC's board.

A diverse range of skills and experiences suitable for national nonprofit governance is being sought among nominees, and ATC members are invited to engage in the process. Desirable qualifications include a passion for the A.T. and commitment to its partnership network, as well as various skill sets. The board, representing all ATC members, focuses on strategic directions for ATC, financial stability, and operations in a broad sense. All nominations should include both the nominee's and the nominator's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, with a description of the person's relevant experience, skills, and attributes. Additional materials, such as a résumé, are welcome. The committee's slate will be announced in *A.T. Journeys* in May. [A](#)

For more information about officers and directors visit:

[www.appalachiantrail.org/Leadership](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/Leadership)

[www.appalachiantrail.org/bodnoms2011](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/bodnoms2011)

Nominations should be sent by **December 15 2010** to: Board-recommendations@appalachiantrail.org or by mail to Jim Ditzel, Chair, Nominating Committee, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

# 10 Things to Do at Virginia Journeys 2011 The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference

Hike sections of the A. T. in Southwest Virginia & Northeast Tennessee

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Learn to pack light, use a GPS, or design a campsite at a workshop

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# emotional RESCUE



john Muir eloquently encouraged us to “climb the mountains to get their good tidings...and cares will fall off like autumn leaves.” Many people have heeded his advice and frequently hike the Appalachian Trail to escape from urban living, and the fatigue and stress that accompany it. This is what Benton MacKaye envisioned for the A.T. when it was created in the 1920s. Did he know then how desperately we would need the tranquility of the A.T. in the 21st century?

More than 79 percent of the United States population now lives and works in noisy, distracting, and polluted urban environments. Technological advances such as the internet and digital communications have made it easier to access information and stay connected to work, but this has come with a price: we are bombarded with higher quantities and faster rates of information than can be processed. It has inhibited our ability to concentrate and experience privacy. Attention fatigue is one of the primary symptoms of this onslaught of information and distractions. William James described voluntary (or directed) attention as attention that is active, requiring effort, which can become fatigued. This can cause

BY MARK A. ELLISON

*Left: Hiker Bill Boydston lets his mind wander free on Siler's Bald. Photo by Mark Ellison.*

“Technological advances have made it easier to stay connected to work, but this has come at a price: our ability to experience privacy.”

people to become irritable, more easily distracted, and have an impaired capacity to make and follow plans. Involuntary attention in contrast, is passive, reflexive and requires no effort. One of the primary benefits of wilderness and backcountry settings is the opportunity to control the information that has to be processed, allowing involuntary attention, or soft fascination to be utilized. Environments that encourage soft fascination typically are very natural, and can include waterfalls or streams; opportunities to hear bird songs or leaves rustling in the wind; dramatic mountain vistas; or views of a sunset. These environments are psychologically very relaxing, and allow individuals the cognitive freedom to think and reflect.

### What You Want

I started hiking as an undergraduate at Western Carolina University, often venturing to the Appalachian Trail to get away. Hiking in such beautiful places captured my imagination and has continued to be my escape for the past two decades. It is often taken for granted by those of us who venture into wilderness and backcountry regularly that we will feel restored after hiking. In the last few years I have found myself asking, why do I feel this way? I developed such a fervent curiosity to learn about this, that it became the focus of my research as a doctoral student at North Carolina State University (NCSU). As I became familiar with adult learning and human resource development theories in my doctoral program, I saw distinct connections to what I experienced while hiking in wilderness. So, in addition to my required courses, I also spent the last five years reviewing theories and research on restorative environments and wilderness experience. I was fortunate to find Dr. Roger Moore, an associate professor in the NCSU Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management Department, and former Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) board member, who guided me in the literature of this field. I was surprised to determine that no prior empirical research had been com-

pleted on hiking and its relationship to job satisfaction, or even to the workplace in general. So, I decided to be the first to do this, designing a study that focused on “the restorative benefits of hiking in wilderness solitude and the relationship to job satisfaction.”

This research was conducted in April 2010, with 800 hikers

participating in an online survey during four weeks. The survey was designed to be completed online from home, allowing hikers to reflect on their prior hiking experiences. Laurie Potteiger, information services manager at ATC, emailed information about this research to A.T. long distance hikers, and announced it on the ATC Facebook page, which allowed a number of “friends of the ATC” to participate. The survey consisted of five sections, including: an introduction, the functions of wilderness solitude, the recollected benefits of wilderness solitude, job satisfaction, and demographic information.

One of the primary questions was: Is there a relationship between the restorative benefits of hiking in the wilderness and job satisfaction? For the participants in this research, there was actually a negative relationship between those restorative benefits and job satisfaction. This means that as ratings increased for the benefits of wilderness hiking, ratings for job satisfaction decreased. The findings also revealed that there was a small relationship between those benefits and the recollected benefits that relate to understanding work and values, and improving a sense of control over work life. Though the results indicate that hiking in wilderness did not improve job satisfaction, this type of outdoor activity did serve as an escape from the fatigue and stress of work, providing opportunities to better understand and have a sense of control over work life.

### What You Need

Those of us who spend time in wilderness and backcountry environments have experienced the psychological and physical benefits to our health. Modern society has become

## results

- An analysis of the demographic background of participants in this survey revealed that the average age was 40
- 60 percent of those who responded were male
- 42 percent were college graduates
- 33 percent attended graduate school
- 80 percent lived in an urban or suburban setting
- 25 percent earned more than \$100,000 a year
- The average amount of time spent in wilderness over the past year for participants was 40 days

### The five highest rated functions of wilderness solitude identified by participants were:

- 1 Experiencing a period of personal autonomy
- 2 Personal autonomy and self identity
- 3 Exploring and thinking through work matters and concerns
- 4 Releasing psychological stress
- 5 Recovering from troubled or depressing moments at work

Hikers value opportunities to be autonomous, to explore, and to think through and recover from stressful work situations. Also revealed, was a very small positive relationship between the number of nights spent in wilderness and job satisfaction. This indicates that the amount of time spent in wilderness *did* have a small impact on job satisfaction.



Happy on the A.T. in Maine. Clockwise from top right: “Rocky” and “Playboy”; “Dirt Road Dave”; “Trinket”; “Snow White.” Photos by Ben Benvie.

“Those of us who spend time in wilderness and backcountry environments have experienced the psychological and physical benefits to our health.”

“Environments that encourage soft fascination typically are very natural, and can include waterfalls or streams, opportunities to hear bird songs or leaves rustling in the wind, dramatic mountain vistas, or views of a sunset. These environments are psychologically very relaxing, and allow individuals the cognitive freedom to think and reflect.”



disconnected from nature because of increased urbanization, and a reliance on and addiction to technology. It is imperative that we educate the broader population about the unique benefits that hiking in a backcountry setting offers. One path to achieve this is through empirical research that identifies the benefits for individuals, and demonstrates how these benefits transfer more broadly to impact organizations and society. This research project was an important first step, but more research is needed that is interdisciplinary in its approach, drawing on the expertise of those in parks, recreation and tourism, human resources development, psychology, kinesiology, and other fields. This type of research is also valuable to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, as it would provide further justification for the protection of land in the A.T. corridor. ⬆

*Letting their cares fall away: Opposite page: "Little Brown." Above: "Stambler." Photos by Ben Benvie*

This project was the first of what will be an evolving agenda on this topic. Updates and links to other related research will be available at [www.hikingresearch.com](http://www.hikingresearch.com). Questions or comments may be sent to: [hikingresearch@yahoo.com](mailto:hikingresearch@yahoo.com).



# The BOOTS

Gearing up for a  
planned thru-hike on  
the Appalachian Trail  
in the summer of 1975,  
my friend and Trail

partner Eric proposed that we do a  
preparatory hike over the Christmas  
holidays in the north Georgia mountains.

"You need to see what it is really like," he said. "Living in Florida, you just can't prepare because it's too flat." The hike was probably a good idea since I had never backpacked before. Eric, on the other hand, had been on one multi-day backpacking trip in the past, so by comparison, he was a pro. Then Eric asked me the zinger, "Do you care if you spend Christmas away from your family?" "Nah," I said, pretending not to care. Being seventeen, I didn't want to appear "uncool," and doing most anything with your family at that age was viewed as uncool. Life was all about exerting independence. It would be the first time in my life that I would be away from home for the holidays and the prospect made me a bit unsettled. Christmas had always been a fun family affair, although the season's commercialism was increasingly turning me off. Perhaps I needed a change of venue.

From doing a paper route, I had saved enough money to buy a basic backpack and a down sleeping bag from the local Army-Navy store. Boots were a different matter. The only pair I could afford were artificial leather work boots from Kmart. The material appeared to be a pliable plastic. Eric frowned when he saw them, but agreed that the soles had good tread for gripping slippery rock faces. We set out on our journey north in Eric's pickup truck. Conditions became increasingly wintry around Atlanta, and by the time we pulled into the parking lot at Neel's Gap, our surroundings were a mountain wonderland of snow. From inside the warm truck looking out, it was an inviting sight for two Floridians.

# That SAVED CHRISTMAS



The author - now a more seasoned hiker - on the A.T. in 2010; Inset: the novice breaking in his not-so-sturdy hiking boots in 1974.



Hiking the A.T. in winter 1974.



Doug. A.T. thru-hike. Maine, 1975.



Eric Herminghausen on A.T. in Georgia, winter 1974.

Being seventeen, I didn't want to appear uncool, and doing most anything with your family at that age was viewed as uncool. Life was all about exerting independence.

"Boots were a different matter. The only pair I could afford were artificial leather work boots from Kmart. The material appeared to be a pliable plastic."

We opened the truck doors. Icy wind gripped us. We hurriedly slipped on coats, wool caps and gloves. "My God it's cold," I exclaimed, stating the obvious. From the back of the pick-up, we lifted our frightfully heavy backpacks, filled with enough macaroni, instant oatmeal, gorp, and Spam to feed us for a week. I suppressed a groan as I hoisted my pack onto my shoulders. Did Daniel Boone carry so much gear? We quickly set out on the storied Appalachian Trail with the expectation that vigorous exercise would soon warm us up.

Exhilaration filled me for the first mile as we crunched through newly fallen snow, steadily climbing. During the second mile, I felt I was getting a blister, and by the third mile, I was not only getting one blister, but two. Each mile seemed like another day in the "Twelve Days of Christmas," but the surprise "gifts" were not all pleasant ones. By the fifth mile, we were slipping down our first steep descent in icy conditions. This was followed by a tortuously steep climb up Wildcat Mountain on the other side of a gap. Each series of steps elicited gasps for air. I didn't realize you could sweat so much in freezing temperatures, but rest stops were brief because to halt movement meant to invite in the cold. I was feeling like a pack mule in Antarctica.

After seven-plus miles, I nearly crawled into our first lean-to style shelter and overnight stop. Only the day's spectacular scenery, vistas easily seen through leafless forests, made the effort worth it. The cascading streams were especially noteworthy. They were a series of sparkling multi-layered icicles. We ate macaroni and spam while wrapped in our sleeping bags and I slept that night with my red nose barely poking out of my mummy style bag. I thought Floridians mostly came to the mountains to escape summer heat. It was then that I asked myself: what did this have to do with preparing for our summer trip on the A.T.? We might hit some cold weather near the end of the journey, but by then we should be thoroughly broken in.

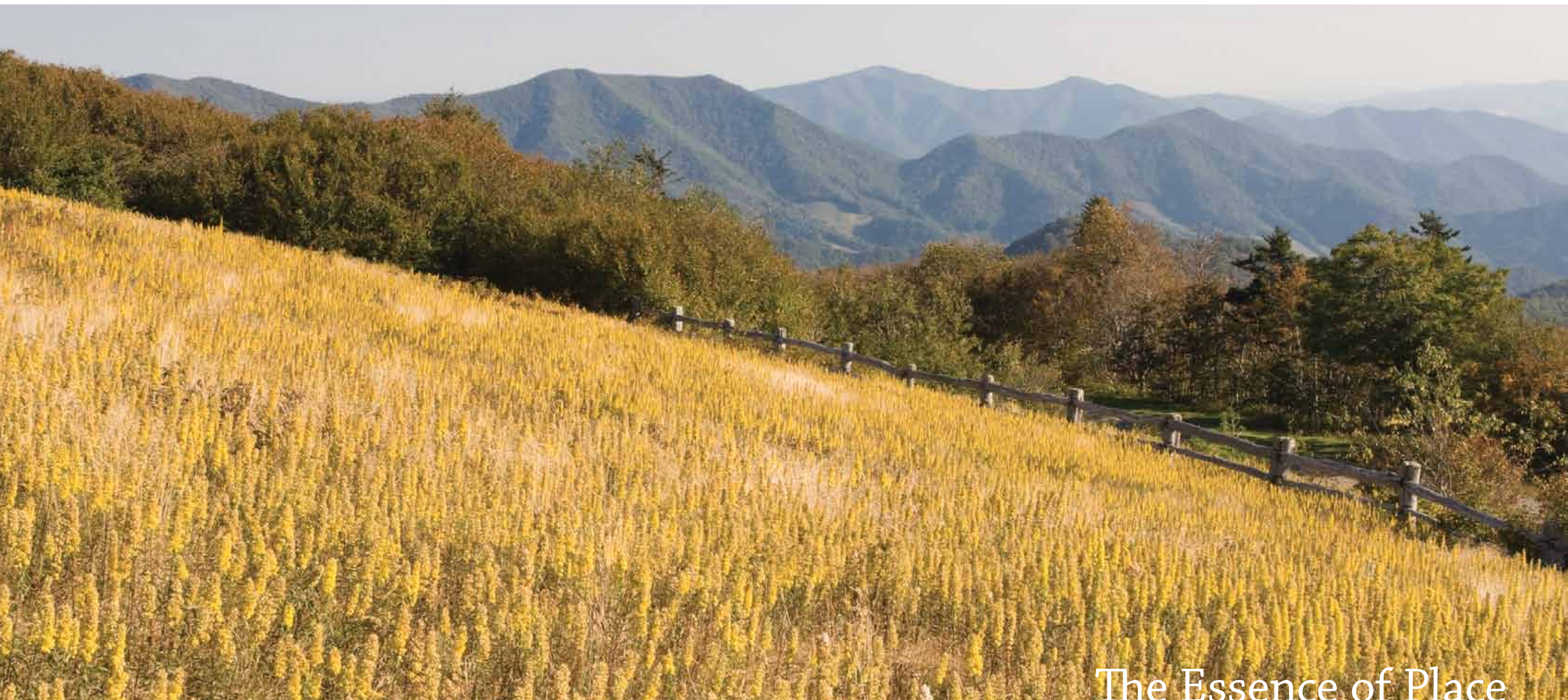
By Day Three, I was becoming painfully aware of muscles I didn't know existed. To top it off, I noticed that a tear had begun to form on the top of my right boot near where the shoelaces began. I put on that miracle of inventions — duct tape. By the next day,

however, the tear had grown to three inches and the duct tape was clearly not working. Cold and moisture from snow was seeping in, soaking my sock. Christmas with my family was looking better with each step — warmth, good food, gifts, laughter, games, warmth, good food. On the morning of the fifth day, Christmas Eve, my right boot completely tore in half. I had to duct tape a plastic bag over my foot to keep it from freezing. It was then that I turned to Eric with an obvious conclusion, "I won't make it over another mountain." I let out an exaggerated sigh. Eric glanced at my foot and frowned. "There's a highway at the next gap," he said begrudgingly. "We can hitch back to the truck from there."

For the next mile or more, we descended a steep slope through ice, snow, and freezing rain. I lost nearly all feeling in my right foot, which was a good thing given the sharp rocks. The paved highway and all that it represented was an early Christmas present. Because it was Christmas Eve, and perhaps due to our pitiful appearance — how many hitchhikers do you see with a plastic bag over their foot — we easily caught rides back to Neel's Gap and Eric's truck. We made it to my house that evening, much to my family's delight. Eric dropped me off and continued on towards his home in central Florida. He suddenly didn't want to miss Christmas with his family either. And we owed it all to my plastic work boots.

That summer, Eric and I flew up to Maine just days after we graduated from high school. There was still snow atop Katahdin, although nowhere near what we had seen the December before. Initially, our biggest challenge was swarms of biting black flies. During the ensuing months, we braved monsoon-like rains, heat waves, blisters, and homesickness. Eric and I separated in Vermont due to my yearning to strike out on my own, but we each completed the Trail soon after the first snows began to fall in north Georgia. I was home by Thanksgiving. 🌲

Doug Alderson is the author of several books:  
[www.dougalderson.net](http://www.dougalderson.net)



## The Essence of Place

Jeffrey Stoner moved to Kingsport, Tennessee to be within a short drive of the highlands of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. “There is breathtaking beauty in every season [here],” says Stoner, who has an affinity for the wild Grayson Highland ponies that roam the area. He has also developed an attachment to the heard of angora goats who inhabit the highlands for four months each year; and, in 2008, began an ongoing series of images that features them. As part of the Baa-tany Goat Project, the goats browse at high elevations along a one-mile corridor of the A.T. to help restore native vegetation. [www.jeffreystonerphotography.com](http://www.jeffreystonerphotography.com)

ROAN MOUNTAIN GOLDENROD IN FALL, ROUND BALD, NORTH CAROLINA/TENNESSEE.



SOULFUL WILD PONIES, GRAYSON HIGHLANDS, VIRGINIA.



EVENING IN GRAYSON HIGHLANDS, SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA; RIGHT: GOATS OF ROAN: NASH (TOP) AND CROSBY; ROAN MOUNTAIN HIGHLANDS, NORTH CAROLINA/TENNESSEE.



# Beyond the Mountain PLACE kent connecticut



## Kent, at first glance to the Appalachian

Trail hiker, might seem like two worlds colliding. The lush, green hills of the Berkshire Mountains, the cool, flowing waters of the Housatonic River, the occasional bear, rattlesnake, or mountain lion sighting versus your choice of two notable chocolate shops, a downtown dotted with art galleries and upscale boutiques, and the occasional celebrity sighting of Kevin Bacon, Henry Kissinger, or Oscar de la Renta. The antithesis may give a moment's pause to those hiking into town, but once the shock wears off, hikers are thrilled to enjoy the benefits of this small Trail town.

TEXT BY ANNE FRANCO MCANDREW  
PHOTOS BY RANDY O'ROURKE

*Opposite page from top: Caleb's Peak on the A.T.; hiking on River Road; Connecticut Antique Machinery Show; Boy Scouts on North Kent Brook. Above: Antique Machinery Fall Festival; view of Kent from Mount Algo.*

*Below: the Housatonic River. Clockwise from top right: frozen Housatonic — the A.T. runs along the River Road on the opposite (west) bank; Backcountry Outfitters; canoeing on Leonard Pond; Kent Falls; the Morrison Gallery.*



Kent wasn't always a getaway for Manhattanites. Situated on the Housatonic River (the river's name comes from the Mohican phrase "usi-a-di-en-uk," translated as "beyond the mountain place"), Kent, founded in 1739, was a small but mighty player in the iron ore business. Both farming and iron ore were important to Kent's economy. But, as years passed, other parts of the country surpassed Kent in iron ore manufacturing, and Kent's furnaces became inactive. Slowly the town demographics began to change and "city folk" found it to be a welcome relief from the fast pace of New York. Farming is still a part of the economic scene, but now the town is home to three private boarding schools and an interesting downtown where the shops are all owner-occupied; and if you take the time to stop and chat, the shopkeepers are full of information.

The village is located nine-tenths of a mile from the A.T. trailhead. The first store you come to is Backcountry Outfitters, not only the area's largest outdoor specialty shop but also the first one on the Trail since the Delaware Water Gap. Inside, Backcountry offers Annie Bananie Ice Cream, and is known to make the best milkshake on the Trail; they also offer free wi-fi. Dave Fairty, co-owner of Backcountry Outfitters, is a Trail angel in his own right, fixing trekking poles, unclogging water filters, and calling companies to go to bat for hikers whose gear has failed them. "We love the thru-hikers and have great respect for the journey they have chosen. They bring a lot to the table: interest, mystique, diversity, and business," says Dave. "The people of Kent embrace the A.T. hikers and love having them as a part of our town. They are an important piece of our identity."

Kent — population 2,858 — is also home to the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation, and Kent Falls, the highest waterfall in New England. The center of town is marked by a large obelisk Civil War monument. And just down the road from that is a war memorial dedicated to those in Kent who died in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The Sloane Stanley Museum, the Connecticut Mining Museum, and the Connecticut

Antique Machinery Association are all located just north of the village center.

Kent is often a key stop for thru-hikers because of its close proximity to the Trail. The town offers a laundromat, the aforementioned outfitters shop, an IGA supermarket, and a post office. Other favorite stops include Kent Coffee and Chocolate, Kent Pasta and Grill, and the Villager Restaurant. The Kent Memorial Library offers computers for public use. Cooper's Creek, a nearby bed and breakfast, has the best rates for thru-hikers, although all the B and Bs welcome them. Peter Starbuck, of the Starbuck Inn, notes that the hikers "are part of the rhythm of Kent. It takes



immense mental and physical discipline to hike the Trail, and we welcome the hikers with open arms." According to many hikers, Connecticut is the most beautiful part of the Appalachian Trail. Some even return to re-hike the 52-mile stretch, because, to them, Kent is a "jewel in the crown" of the Connecticut section. 📍

*Anne Franco McAndrew is an outdoor enthusiast and has been a resident of Kent for 16 years.*

*Randy O'Rourke is a Kent local and professional photographer: [www.rorphotos.com](http://www.rorphotos.com).*






# Smoky Mountain ELK ...

**... once roamed the southern Appalachian Mountains and elsewhere in the eastern United States.** They were eliminated from the region by over-hunting and loss of habitat. The last elk in North Carolina was believed to have been killed in the late 1700s. In Tennessee, the last elk was killed in the mid-1800s. By 1900, the population of elk in North America dropped to the point that hunting groups and other conservation organizations became concerned the species was headed for extinction.

A primary mission of the National Park Service is to preserve native plants and animals on lands it manages. In cases where native species have been eliminated from park lands, the National Park Service may choose to reintroduce them. Successful wildlife reintroductions in Great Smoky Mountains National Park have included the river otter, peregrine falcon, and three species of small fish.

When the first elk were released into Cataloochee Valley — in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park — in 2001, the project was considered an experiment that would last five years, during which time researchers would gather and analyze the data necessary to make long-term projections about the herd's success or failure in the Smoky Mountains. When the data was analyzed at the end of those five years there was an incredible amount of information that was learned about the herd, including home ranges, dietary composition, survival and reproductive rates, what impacts they were having on park resources, and much more. Partners in the project include the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Parks Canada, Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, Friends of the Smokies, the U.S.G.S. Biological Resources Division, and the University of Tennessee.

Adult male elk weigh an average of 600-700 pounds. Cows average 500 pounds. Adults are seven to ten feet long from nose to tail and stand four-and-a-half to five feet tall at the shoulder. Adult males have antlers that may reach a width of five feet. Their main diet consists of grasses, forbs, acorns, bark,

Opposite page: Cows often leave their newborn calves while they go off to feed; Right: tagged cow and calf — 2010 has been the most successful calving season yet in the Smokies; Below: GSMNP's Joe Yarkovich and park supervisory wildlife biologist Kim Delozier — who started the project — check up on a tagged elk.



leaves, and buds from shrubs and trees. Cows usually give birth to only one calf per year, and newborns weigh about 35 pounds. They can stand within minutes of birth, and calf and cow usually rejoin the herd within a couple of weeks. Calves nurse for one to seven months. Females are ready to breed in the second autumn of their lives. Coyotes, bobcats, and black bears may kill young, sick, or injured elk. Gray wolves and mountain lions, both of which have been extirpated from the Great Smoky Mountains, are also successful predators of elk elsewhere. Elk can live as long as 15 years.

Most elk shed their antlers in March. The antlers, which are rich in calcium, are quickly eaten by rodents and other animals. (It is illegal to remove antlers from the national park.) After they have shed their antlers, elk immediately begin growing new ones. In late spring, elk shed their winter coats and start growing sleek, copper-colored, one-layer summer coats.



Most calves are born in early June. Male elk roll in mud wallows to keep cool and avoid insect pests. By August, elk antlers are full grown and have shed their “velvet.” Calves have lost their spots by summer’s end. Male elk make their legendary bugling calls to challenge other bulls and attract cows. Their calls may be heard a mile or more away. Large bulls use their antlers to intimidate and spar with other males. Most encounters are ritualistic and involve little physical contact; only occasionally do conflicts result in serious injuries to one or more combatants. During the “rut” in September and early October, dominant bulls gather and breed with harems of up to 20 cows. Elk wear a two-layer coat during the colder months. Long guard hairs on the top repel water and a soft, wooly under fur keeps them warm. They may move from the high country to valleys to feed, and may travel beyond the boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in search of new territories. Most non-cropland adjacent to the park is designated as elk buffer zone; if elk move onto these lands but do not come into conflict the National Park Service will not remove the animals.

Most of the elk are located in the Cata-

loochee area in the southeastern section of the park. The best times to view elk are usually early morning and late evening. Elk may also be active on cloudy summer days and before or after storms. Park visitors should enjoy elk at a distance, using binoculars or a spotting scope for close-up views — they have an acute sense of smell and excellent eyesight. Approaching wildlife too closely causes them to expend crucial energy unnecessarily and can result in real harm. If you approach an animal so closely that it stops feeding, changes direction of travel, or otherwise alters its behavior, you are too close. Elk are large animals — larger than the park’s black bears — and can be dangerous. Female elk with calves have charged people in defense of their offspring. Males (bulls) may perceive people as challengers to their domain and charge. The best way to avoid these hazards is to keep your distance. Never touch or move elk calves; though they may appear to be orphaned, chances are their mother is nearby. Cows frequently leave their newborn calves while they go off to feed. A calf’s natural defense is to lie down and remain still — the same is true for white-tailed deer fawns. The use of spotlights, elk bugles, and other wildlife calls

are illegal in the national park. Feeding park wildlife is strictly forbidden by law and almost always leads to the animal’s demise; it also increases danger to other park visitors.

An extremely positive sign for the program has been the success of calving season this year. To date, 25 calves are confirmed to have been born. Park personnel are able to track 17 of those calves, and so far all 17 have survived — having that many calves and a survival rate of 100 percent makes 2010 the best year for herd recruitment so far. This is also a very good indication that adult females have learned how to hide and defend their calves better against predators. With all of the previous research and management activities in mind, the park is shifting its focus on the herd from an experimental phase to a long-term management strategy. As part of this planning, the park has prepared a new environmental assessment and management plan that outlines the elk project, as well as presents several alternatives for future elk manage-



ment. One alternative is to continue the intensive research and monitoring that has taken place since the beginning of the project. The second, and the park’s preferred alternative of adaptive management, allows for a more selective and adaptive approach that will be less invasive for the herd and will allow park staff to better

address possible impacts in the future.

If you come to the Smoky Mountains to view elk this fall, please remember a few things to help make your visit a more enjoyable and safe one. Bring binoculars and zoom lenses — this allows for great viewing and photos from a safe distance. Be very mindful of your food scraps and please clean up after yourself — this helps eliminate the chances of an elk becoming conditioned to human food. Stay in or near your vehicle when the elk are out (and please pull off to the side of the road to allow traffic to continue around you). And be patient — this allows everyone to have a better experience in Cataloochee, at a Cataloochee pace. 🏹

For more information visit:

[www.nps.gov/grsm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm)

Information courtesy Joe Yarkovich, wildlife/elk management, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Photos by Marilyn S. Neel of Susie and Chuck Neel Photography, [www.neelsphotography.com](http://www.neelsphotography.com)

## Five million steps to a better guidebook.

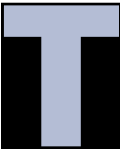
*In 2010, contributors to The A.T. Guide logged GPS tracks and waypoints for every mile of the trail. Carry the most accurate and comprehensive full-trail guidebook: [www.theATguide.com](http://www.theATguide.com)*



elevation profiles • 52 town maps • northbound and southbound editions

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

The A.T. Guide is not affiliated with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.



he holiday season is upon us and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is thankful for the many members who continually support our efforts to protect and maintain the world’s premier hiking trail. As the year comes to a close and you are making decisions about year-end giving, I ask that you once again consider ATC in your plans. The staff of the membership and development department is here to help you if you have questions about gifts of stock, gift annuities, gift memberships, honor memorial gifts, or any other type of gift.

All members should have received, or will be receiving the year-end appeal in the mail. In it we highlight much of the work that has been accomplished this year, the funding challenges we face, and our goals for 2011. You should take pride in the accomplishments your contributions make possible.

Please give as generously as you can this year, and know that ATC is very appreciative of the time, energy, and money you give to our efforts. Regardless of the economic conditions our responsibilities remain to preserve, protect and maintain more than 250,000 acres of greenway from Georgia to Maine. ⬆

**Happy Holidays,**  
**Royce W. Gibson**  
DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT



*Ice Water Spring shelter, North Carolina.  
By ATC member Bob Doyle.*



JULY—AUGUST 2010

BAXTER PEAK CELEBRATION, MAINE; BY ATC MEMBER DAVID ODORISIO

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**\$2,500 to \$4,999**  
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ARTHUR PERKINS SOCIETY  
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In Honor of

**E. Tracy Alton**  
by Aaron & Savannah Alton  
**Sten Anderson**  
by Jennifer & Bjorn Anderson  
**Hoyle & Maria Bingham**  
by Laura Norris  
**Steve Dekich**  
by Dianna McGee  
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**Glenn Martin**  
by Gary & Karen Crawford  
**Bernard Moser**  
by Michele Sheppard  
**David & Laurie Segel-Moss**  
by Barbara Greenburg  
**Sean Williams**  
by Barbara Williams

In Memory of

**David Adams**  
by Brenda Cobb  
**David Baskin**  
by George & Diane Baskin  
**Helen Boyd**  
by Georgia Appalachian Trail Club  
**James Boyd**  
by Juanita Brown,  
Virginia Kaczmarek  
Amy McLaughlin & the  
McLaughlin Family  
**Mark Brown**  
by Pennsylvania Social Services  
Union SEIC # 668  
**Peter Busher**  
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John Stebbins  
**Richard Clark**  
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**Ellen Morgan**  
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Clockwise from far left: the “Three Musketeers” — in 1927 Hilda Kurth, Catherine Robbins, and Katherine Norris were the first women to hike the entire Long Trail; trail clearing on Romance Mountain in the 1910s, photos courtesy University Vermont Special Collections. Ben Rose and daughter Anya on Jay Peak in 2010 — the two completed an end-to-end hike of the Long Trail together; forehead of the Long Trail’s Mount Mansfield looking south, photo by Alden Pellett.

# One Hundred Years Wild

BY JEN MATTEIS

Having just turned 100, Vermont’s Green Mountain Club (GMC) is getting up there in age, but its face — the Long Trail — is as gorgeous as ever. Founded in 1910 by schoolteacher James P. Taylor, the club set a high standard by building the first long-distance hiking trail in the United States and then ensuring its continuity through land acquisition and careful stewardship of fragile alpine areas and high elevation lakeshores. Today, the Long Trail is a continuous, blazed footpath that traverses Vermont from north to south, coinciding with the Appalachian Trail for about a third of its length.

“It’s been a good first 100 years,” says GMC executive director Ben Rose. “Through the land acquisition program we’ve actually protected quite a lot of high elevation land around the trail and the trail has a nice ecological buffer in a lot of places. You can walk the whole [Long Trail] without seeing anything ugly.”

The well being of more species than *Homo sapiens* depends upon the Long Trail. From rare alpine plant communities clustered atop 4,395-foot Mount Mansfield in the northern half of the state, to the elusive Bicknell’s thrush that find a refuge on Stratton Mountain in the south (the site of inspiration for both the Long Trail’s Taylor and the Appalachian Trail’s Benton MacKaye), the wild beauty of this 272-mile trail is testimony to the hard work of its members. “It’s well-loved and maintained by volunteers,” says Rose. “The alpine plant communities on Mansfield, Camel’s Hump, and Mount Abraham have recovered since the advent of the caretaker program in the late 1960s, so ecologically it’s been a success story.” Since the club doesn’t share its name with its trail, those who hike the Long Trail often don’t realize that they’re seeing firsthand the efforts of a dedicated non profit and its hundreds of volunteers. “If it had been called

the Green Mountain Trail or the Long Trail Club it would have been less confusing,” says Rose. “[Hikers] don’t understand there’s a non profit and 800 volunteers [behind the Long Trail].”

Year after year, GMC has put its efforts into preserving one long thread of wilderness from the modern forces of change and development. “I think we’re inherently a conservative organization in the old sense of the word, in that we’re working hard to keep something the same in a changing world,” says Rose. “I think that we want the Long Trail to pretty much stay the way it is.” Rose added that the club celebrated its centennial with a March 11 birthday party, cake, and then a summer relay hike of the Long Trail to mark the occasion. The 9,500-member organization is hoping to attain 10,000 members by the end of the year. “This is the year to give a birthday present to the Long Trail,” emphasizes Rose. Its members are those who rec-

ognize the trail as a bridge between not just the Canadian and Massachusetts borders but between generations of families who share the experience of walking this forested path. “People get involved in the GMC because they love the Long Trail and they want it to be there for their grandkids more or less in the same state,” says Rose. “We want the trail to be wild and free for another 100 years.” ▲

For more information visit:

[www.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.greenmountainclub.org)



BY JULIE JUDKINS

## Call and Response

“Few pursuits are more satisfying to the spirit than discovering the greatness of America’s outdoors,” President Obama stated as he introduced America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, a refreshing new way for citizens to lend their voices to policy changes driving the administration’s new conservation strategy. A series of “listening and learning sessions” provided a platform for all citizens with a passion for the outdoors, men and women, businessmen, farmers, and tribal leaders to celebrate

**We do need to integrate social media and applications in our efforts to increase youth engagement in the outdoors ... Simply put, Smokey the Bear needs to tweet.**

their successes and share challenges in a direct dialog with the Obama Administration. The sessions were held in dozens of cities across the nation — including the city I call home, Asheville, North Carolina.

With more than a million acres of rural landscape being developed each year, protection of our natural resources is vital. To ensure that protection, Americans must be engaged with the outdoors. The aim of the initiative is to reconnect Americans, especially chil-

*The author with her son Silas on the A.T., Firescald Ridge in Tennessee.*

dren, to the country’s rivers, waterways, ranches, farms, forests, coasts and landscapes of national significance — like our Trail. “This is about listening, learning, and finding common-sense ways to support the good work that is happening in communities across the country,” stated Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, a leader of the initiative.

The pace of technological change is astounding and is, unfortunately, eclipsing appreciation for nature in the minds of children, teens, and young adults. I didn’t have an e-mail account ten years ago, much less live, video-capable Web applications. With today’s rapidly changing technology, it is more important than ever to listen to those who are on-line and plugged in — those who will become tomorrow’s leaders. Being a new mother has surely influenced my perception of how vital youth are to guiding our new vision. Many times I’ve felt behind the curve, wishing a 10-year-old was sitting at my side to answer, with ease, questions such as: “How do I embed this video?” or “What the heck is an RSS feed?”

I attended the America’s Great Outdoors listening session in Asheville, a portion of which was dedicated to hearing the voices of youth. I listened in to their break-out groups, and reported their ideas and concerns not only to officials of the Department of Interior but also to the 500-plus adult participants. These 14 to 20-somethings were distressed about the huge discrepancy between being “plugged-in” for eight or more hours a day and experiencing the stark solitude of the wilderness. I heard comments such as: “If there were Xboxes put along the trails, there would be all kinds of kids using them.” A similar sentiment was expressed in Richard Louv’s book, *The Last Child in the Woods*, when he quoted a boy who said: “I like to play indoors better ‘cause that’s where all the electrical outlets are.” While it might be absurd to imagine trails lined with electrical outlets and Xboxes, I realized that we do need to integrate social media and applications in our efforts to increase youth engagement in the outdoors. The youth in the break-out groups were attracted by the prospect of translating the “get outdoors” message to the electronic-social network medium. Simply put, Smokey the Bear needs to tweet.

This Millennial Generation, or Generation-Y, group compared the inaccessibility of our public lands to the ease of getting a snack off the “dollar menu” or a song off of iTunes. They noted that outdoor activities were often geared to young children but neglected teens and

tweens, and that public-service messaging for parents and families was lacking. They suggested programs like “Turn off TV” days. They said they wanted to see celebrities sharing their feelings about why they enjoy being outside. While we shouldn’t expect Lady Gaga to write her next song about her experience with America’s public lands, there is power behind the influence of celebrities on this target demographic.

At the adult sessions, Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) staff and club volunteers were able to share and highlight many A.T. successes, including our special public/private cooperative partnership, our Trail to Every Classroom program, and our use of citizen-scientists for the Appalachian Trail MEGA-Transect. We were also able to share our thoughts about the challenges and obstacles facing public lands and the critical nature of conservation and protection, paying particular attention to the need for full federal support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to protect and complete the A.T. corridor and the rest of the National Trails System. Other topics that ATC raised at the session included the need for dedicated federal funding for forest management of open areas, invasive species, and all natural and cultural resources; the need for a federal policy to support and enhance volunteerism; the need to support green planning in the rural Trailside communities that connect with the A.T.; and the need for a national strategy for passive energy generation and transmission in order to appropriately conserve landscape level conservation assets such as the A.T.

A voice that is heard is an empowered voice, one that promotes engagement and change. A participant at one of the sessions said: “I have not seen anything like this commitment to start a conservation movement since perhaps the first Earth Day. Please keep this going — talking, listening, and inspiring people to bring their ideas to the table. I will never forget this day. Thank you.” Clearly, it is a privilege for our voice to be heard.

All of the listening session notes and the outdoor community’s ideas about what the challenges are for conservation and recreation — including what works in other places to help develop ideas for effective strategies, what role the federal government can take to be a more effective partner, and what tools are out there to be utilized — are available at the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative Web site. We look forward to seeing the report, due this November 15, that will outline the public’s recommendations for a new 21st century conservation strategy. ▲

For more information visit:

[www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors)

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**Saturday, December 4th**  
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with hot cider, homemade cookies,  
and shop for holiday gifts at  
**ATC's Open House.**

**9 am – 5 pm**  
**ATC visitor Center**  
**Harpers Ferry, West Virginia**

Hiking Partners

Male, 73, hiker, runner. **Going A.T. NOBO, March 2011.** Join the planning and the trek? Contact: grayhare61@hotmail.com.

Sixy- year-old **female runner looking for older companion to section hike** the A.T. over 3 years. Plan to start in Georgia in April 2011. Flexible itinerary. Contact: ellen.atsectionhiker@gmail.com.

Going north from Springer to Fontana Dam or Hot Springs, North Carolina. **Female, 68, would like a buddy to hike with** starting March 20-21, 2011. Also looking for a hiking partner for 150+ miles in Maine in August; Caratunk to Katahdin. Contact: Sharon "Soho" (740) 286-1737.

For Sale

**Kelty "Tioga" external frame pack;**16-21; extra patches and daisy chains, never used: \$95 plus shipping and handling. Contact: John (215) 331-1149.

**House and cabin** rental business less than 1/4 mile from the A.T. at Neel's Gap in Georgia.

5,000-square-foot home/office/store and 14 two-bedroom cabins at 3,000 -foot elevation, less than two hours from Atlanta. Contact: George (706) 745-9454 or bloodmtn@windstream.net; www.bloodmountain.com.

**Dancing Bear, Damascus Virginia.** Located downtown just across the street from the A.T. and The Place. Large, two-story house and four adjacent rental units. Most furniture included. Enjoy numerous hiking trails, the Virginia Creeper Bike Trail and trout streams, all within walking distance; \$459,000. Contact: (276) 475-5900; dancingbearrentals.com.

**Perfect home for the outdoor enthusiast.** Have you ever dreamed of living just yards away from the A.T.? You can hike all day and come home to a comfortable, functional, and efficient 1,400-square-foot home, located in the heart of Damascus, Virginia. This three-bedroom 1.5 bath features a newly remodeled kitchen with an open -floor-plan. Well planned remodeling through-

out the home provides ample storage for all your gear. Nicely situated on a .63-acre lot with mature and newly planted trees; spacious yard includes an established garden with fruit trees and a brand new privacy fence. New roof and heat pump ensure that you will have time to explore the beautiful town and trails that surround it. Located across the street from the historic Rock School; a great location for Trail Days; \$178,000. Contact: (276) 492-1400 or search "Damascus Home" on Facebook.

Lost and Found

Found in my car on Saturday, September 25, after giving a ride on the Golden Road in Maine to two people from Pittsburgh hiking north to Katahdin: **a camera filled with pictures** of your entire hike. Contact Erin: (207) 691-8864 or erin.rhoda@gmail.com.

For Your Information

**Hunting Season Awareness on the Trail.** Deer firearms seasons start in the early fall and

early winter and can run into the spring. Hunting is legal in all states the A.T. traverses. About 60 percent of the Trail is open to hunting, including national forests, state forest and game lands, and private lands adjacent to the A.T. While it is a hunter's responsibility to follow regulations, the potential consequences make it important for hikers to be aware and to take steps to minimize the possibility of hunting accidents. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy recommends that hikers wear fluorescent or "blaze" orange (visible on all sides) during hunting seasons to help make their presence known in the woods. For more information visit: [www.appalachiantrail.org/hunting](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/hunting). ⬆

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

Recently we received the following letter from hiker, father, and U.S. Army Officer Steve Owens.

It is always a pleasure to learn of specific instances where members of our staff have demonstrated professionalism and courtesy in their work. Passion for the Trail and dedication to the organization have long been hallmarks of our members and our volunteers. As both an Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) life member and a manager for the organization, I am proud to see these same traits exhibited daily by Andrew and his fellow workers.

Steve Paradis, Chief Operating Officer



I recently returned from Afghanistan where I had the time to plan my section hike with my children. My daughter and I hiked 86 miles of the A.T. when she was nine years old, and have continued a section at a time until our last completion at Fontana Marina. On this trip I introduced my son, who is now nine, into the mix, with a planned hike of 73 miles and completion of the Smoky Mountains.

While hiking with my children, we had the pleasure to meet one of your employees, Andrew Downs, or as we knew him "Digger." We shared Pecks Corner Shelter with him and a couple from Michigan who were somewhat unprepared for their adventure. He spent much time with them, helping them plan the remainder of their trip as well as imparting the enthusiasm and magic that is the A.T. He was a wealth of information, and we had many

conversations about how things get done on the Trail. He was exceptional with the kids, and took time to answer questions and talk about the great efforts to maintain the Trail.

The next day, we again ran into "Digger" at the Tricorner Knob Shelter. He was once again there with the couple from Michigan, and he decided to spend the night. He immediately set to work changing the privy to a new box, and doing general maintenance around the shelter. Additionally, there was a problem bear that was bothering hikers at this shelter. Whether or not he spent the night with the couple because of the bear I do not know, but I know they felt much better having him there. I felt bad that I could not help with the privy, as we were having a 12.9-mile day and had to move on, but he took the time to educate the kids as to how a privy works.

As an ATC member and user of the Trail, I am proud to see that you choose such quality individuals to work full time on this great resource. As you well know, any organization is normally only as good as the face and personality that is portrayed to the public. With Mr. Downs out there on the Trail, you have no worries in that regard.

Sincerely,  
Steve Owens  
FLEMING, OHIO

A note of response from Andrew:

"I am lucky to be surrounded by ATC staff and club members who do some pretty amazing stuff. Folks like Julie Judkins and her ability to manage everything from goats on the Roan to communities on the Trail, the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, with 10 years of challenging shelter reconstruction projects that have been pulled off with the warmth of family and the performance of professionals, and the Rocky Top Crew leaders Andy, Jamison, and Glenn - alongside of our partners at Great Smoky Mountains National Park - who have turned a major bear problem into a safe Trail crew experience for volunteers from around the world. All have contributed to an environment where work is a reason to smile. Lead by ATC's southern regional director Morgan Sommerville, we are constantly surrounded by the positivity of amazing possibilities on the Appalachian Trail. ⬆

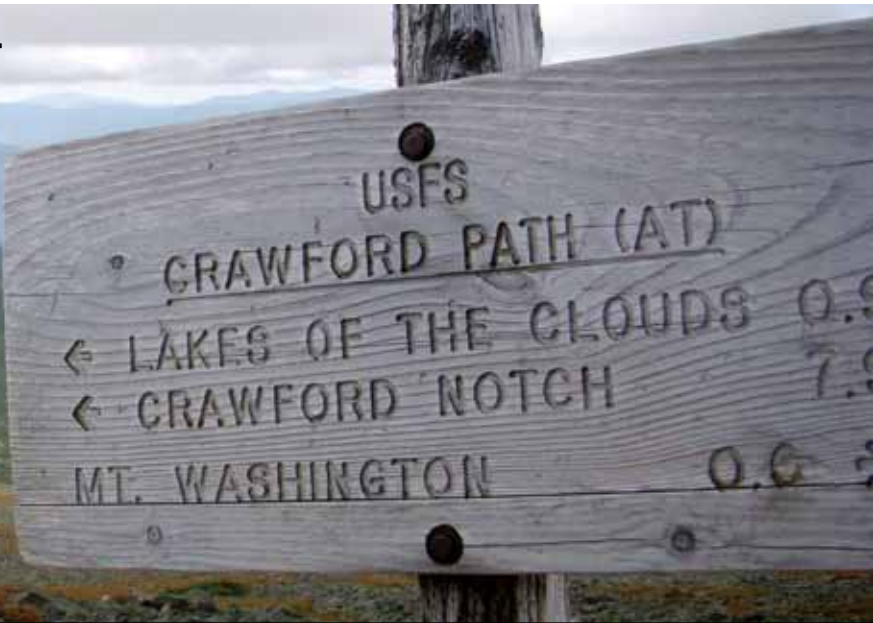
"As I See It" is a monthly column from guest contributors representing the full range of ATC partners, members, and volunteers. To submit a column for consideration, please email [journeys@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:journeys@appalachiantrail.org) or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy,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

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A.T. NEW HAMPSHIRE; BY ATC MEMBER DAVID "KEYSTONE" ODORISIO





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