CELEBRATING 2,000-MILERS

INSIDE: The Great Girl Scout Hike  Hanover, New Hampshire
Mission
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail — ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

On the Cover: Among the 2,000-miles being celebrated this year is Deborah “Pickle” Lucy, who thru-hiked the A.T. in 2011. “After 350 miles with my dog Guinness, my husband, Brian, and I met at Woods Hole Hostel, outside of Pearisburg, Virginia for a quick visit and ‘puppy shuttle service’ [to transport Guinness] back home,” says Deborah. “It was one of the highlights of my trip, and I met a whole slew of fellow hikers who I would leap frog with for the next 1,500 miles! Here we are sharing chocolate and tea that we bought on the porch while giving ourselves permission to sit out the rainy rain moving in.”

From left: Deborah “Pickle” Lucy, Kristen “Gingersnap” Gregory, Woods Hole proprietors: Neville Harris and her husband, Michael Lasecki (far back), “Dogman,” “Sailor,” “Spesh.” Photo by Brian Lucy

COMMON GROUND. AS COMMON DENOMINATORS GO, THE A.T. IS AN obvious one among those who love nature and hiking. What makes this so, is not just the tangible footpath, but the diverse and broad reaching community that is as much a part of the Trail as the natural world it contains within its protected borders. That community consists of a multifaceted array of people, places, and educational experiences. Hikers meet new friends, and reconnect with others at hospitable A.T. hostels, rustic Trail shelters, and in Trail towns — like the designated A.T. Community of Hanover, New Hampshire, where even a lamp post on Main Street bears a white blaze, and A.T. adventurers are presented with everything from a clean shower and hiker-friendly businesses, to Ivy League museums and libraries (page 36). Highlighting the connection between Hanover’s community and the Trail is a group of volunteers called Friends of the Trail. “[They have] worked hard to reach out to the hikers that come through Hanover,” says Hanover town manager Julia Griffin. “By doing so, many of us have had some wonderful connections ... and our lives are all the richer for those connections.”

Another unifying force of the Trail community is education. Back-woods loving people from all backgrounds and regions of the U.S. are getting a hands-on “wild education” about proper wilderness maintenance at the Wilderness Stewardship Institute in the Smokies (page 24). “I think it’s wonderful that we can bring together different people who are attracted to wilderness. Perhaps people with different views can come together like this ... and form a bond,” says Anna Wlodarczak, who attended the institute in 2011. The Smokies are also home to a more scientific educational community, due to the area’s huge diversity of species — both flora and fauna — much of which is not visible to the human eye. The All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory is a group effort — by college students, faculty, volunteers, and the local scientific community — to count and study thousands of microscopic creatures — including the otherworldly “water bear.” (page 32)

Many of those who celebrate their official 2,000-miler status (page 46) express their gratitude for supportive husbands, wives, parents, and other hikers who have not completed the Trail, but whose presence and support, both on and off Trail, was implicit to their experience. And while some recent 2,000-milers accomplished their hike all at once, others, like Trail Story author Tim Meadows — who took 35 years, hiking with family and friends (page 40), and ATC’s new executive director, Mark Wenger — whose eight-year section hike only deepened his already fervent love of nature (page 15) — approached that lofty goal by taking it on one section at a time.

On the A.T., community is the adhesive that bonds an incredibly diverse group of people — from across the U.S. and around the world. So when you see the quintessential photo of the joyous hiker displaying their adoration toward the iconic sign atop Katahdin, you can be assured that the emotion emitted is that of pure love — not only for the Appalachian Trail, but for the community of special friendships forged and the important lessons the Trail inevitably imbues on those who tread its path. 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.
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George Sandul tells of his chance meeting, and friendship with a fellow hiker, whose zest for living and positive attitude embraced the spirit of the Appalachian Trail.
WE READ WITH INTEREST THE Volunteer Profile of Thurston Griggs in the January/February edition of A.T. Journeys. During our annual section hike in October 2005, we were staying at the original Rocky Run shelter in Maryland. After dinner we saw a gentlemen approaching from the hollow below. He wasn’t on a trail and was attired in cardigan and loafers. That gentlemen turned out to be Thurston Griggs. Claiming to be 90 years old at the time, he spent about 30 minutes chatting with us about his role as a Maryland Ridge Runner, and told the story of Walter “Pogo” Rheinheimer of Pogo campsite fame, and several other anecdotes. At the time, we were not aware of Mr. Griggs contributions to the Trail. After our chance meeting he departed whence he came, disappearing into the woods. We thought we’d seen a spirit hanging out in his old surroundings. As you can tell from the photo, this was not the case … a Trail day we’ll never forget.

Steve “Hiking Viking” and Tim “Big Walker” Farrell — a.k.a. The Brother’s Farrell
BEAVERCREEK, OHIO

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

Kerry Snow

A NOTE ABOUT THE ATC CALENDAR design. A number of members have commented about the relatively smaller size of the monthly grids on the 2012 ATC calendar. This will be corrected in the 2014 edition. We regret any inconvenience and disappointment this caused. The photographs — all by A.T. hikers — in the 2013 calendar, which will be available this August, are as stunning as always. For 2014, we will return to larger spaces in which to write notes and to more prominent day numbers for easier viewing.

Brian B. King, Publisher

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

Please send them to:
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I WAS FIRST DRAWN TO THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL AT THE 2001 national Boy Scout jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, in Virginia, where there was a display in the conservation area. Various organizations such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) had booths. I realized then that the ATC was literally in my backyard. I had hiked small sections of the Trail, and here was the organization that was tasked to maintain it — so I joined the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club and the ATC. I found out that the ATC is the catalyst for working with thousands of volunteers who help to manage and maintain the Trail, as well as an official source of detailed information about the Trail, and how to hike it.

In 2003, I started section hiking the Trail, which, soon after, kindled my desire to complete the entire foot path. Last year, like my fellow recent 2,000-milers (Page 16), I completed that ambitious goal. So many aspects from those eight years of hiking linger prominently in my mind. I remember my first one-week hike from Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, during the fall of 2003. I was just leaving Boiling Springs heading south. In that pastoral section, I hiked through gentle rolling mountains, crossing a number of small streams, and the vibrant color of the leaves amazed me. Think of this: it was the height of fall in southern Pennsylvania; the air was cool, and the colors were brilliant in the sun, which was reflecting on the oranges, reds, and browns. I had these glorious fall colors just for myself, and I marveled at the light reflecting off of the water in those streams. Looking back on it, I think: here is one of so many, vastly varied seasons and experiences that the Trail offers. There are sections, like Maine, with its huge lakes and its rugged rocks, and then there is southern Pennsylvania, with pastoral terrain, rolling mountains, and deciduous forests. Both of them gave me that same kind of wonderful feeling of peace — and I could only have experienced this by walking in these places. In both cases, I tried to take pictures, and when I look at those pictures, they still don’t quite capture it. Actually, as I neared the end of my multi-year section hike, I stopped taking pictures of those kinds of moments, because I realized that the only way to really understand the moment is just to experience it — to take it in, and keep it as a memory.

As the ATC’s executive director I plan to channel my passion for the outdoors, and the Appalachian Trail particularly, into every aspect of my work. We will continue to focus on volunteers, clubs, and agency partners. We will work on engaging the wider “community” aspect of the A.T. Highlighting this aspect of our work is a direct result of my own volunteer work for the Trail. I think the most appealing aspect of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is the volunteer nature of the organization, especially in terms of how we are set up and how we function. The Trail was envisioned by volunteers, built by volunteers, and, through the cooperative agreement of our agency partners, is maintained, enhanced, preserved, and protected by volunteers. So, as we celebrate the newest group of 2,000-milers, the ATC would like to salute the more than 5,000 volunteers, our 42,000-plus members, our generous corporate partners, and our agency partners in 14 states who make the A.T. journey possible.

Mark J. Wenger | Executive Director
The year 2012 is the Girl Scouts of the USA’s centennial birthday. And what a better way to celebrate our 100th anniversary then with a hike of great proportions. We’re marking the occasion by hiking the Appalachian Trail. So far more than 100 Girl Scout troops and groups have signed up to hike a portion of the A.T. Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, teen Girl Scouts, and Girl Scout alumnae are taking up the call to hike the entire length of the Trail by section-hiking it — or like Girl Scout Leader Mary “Mama Boots” Sands likes to say: in “bits and pieces.” We even have our very own Girl Scout thru-hikers: “the Eaglet Express.” Our goal is to have each foot of the 2,100-plus-mile Appalachian Trail hiked upon by a Girl Scout this year. Our “kick-your-hiking-boots-on” date is March 12, 2012.

One-hundred-years ago, on March 12, 1912, Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low made her historic telephone call to a friend, saying, “I’ve got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!” That night, Daisy gathered 18 girls to register the first troop of American Girl Guides. The following year, the name of the organization was changed to Girl Scouts. In developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States, Daisy brought girls of all backgrounds into the outdoors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. She believed that all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually. With the goal of bringing girls out of isolated home environments and into community service and the open air, Girl Scouts hiked, played basketball, went on camping trips, learned how to tell time by the stars, and studied first aid.

That’s right — the first Girl Scouts hiked that very first year. They were forewarned by local townsmen that a female hiking or camping overnight in the wild could result in their illness or possible death due to a “girl’s constitutional make-up.” The idea of girls surviving...
outside the home in the woods on their own was not consid-

erable plausible nor acceptable behavior for that day and age. 

Daisy knew that was silly nonsense and went about putting

together trips for girls to hike and go camping. Those first
Girl Scouts hiked with their parents and teachers and lived to tell about it. In doing so, they inspired generations of girls to get out-
side — to hike, to camp, to backpack, to enjoy the world of

the great outdoors that was waiting for them. More than 50 years later, Mary Sands was inspired to begin a new Girl Scout chapter of adventure. As a Girl Scout Leader from Louisville, Kentucky, she got swept up into hik-

ing with her daughter’s troop. Then one day, while family

camping near the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, she

discovered the Appalachian Trail, and a spark lit-up inside

her. She had never been backpacking before and thought that

could be an exciting new adventure for her Girl Scout

troop. As soon as she returned home from vacation, she

gathered a group of teen Girl Scouts and they planned their

very first backpacking trip for the Appalachian Trail through

the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina. Sometime during that first trip, one of the girls bestowed upon her the trail name of “Mama Boots.”

One backpacking trip after another was planned and then

hiked with Mama Boots’ Girl Scouts. After the Smokies came

Center Point Knob, then Springer Mountain, and then Katah-

the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina.

Back in 1912, Juliette “Daisy” Low called Girl Scouting a “Movement” and not an organization. She believed that the

Girl Scouts would change and progress as the girls and

women of America changed and progressed. Daisy under-

stood progression and said: “I realize that each year it has

changed and grown [and] I know that a decade from now

what I might say of it would seem like an echo of what has been,

instead of what it is.” By 1920, within eight years from her

humble beginning with an 18-girl member troop, there were

nearly 70,000 Girl Scouts nationwide, including the territory of Hawaii. Today our “movement” is one of actual

motion. We are motivated to move — to get kids off the couch

and out from behind the numerous glowing screens. It goes

by many names — the Green Hour, Let’s Move!, Get Outside,

Children and Nature, No Child Left Behind — but in the Girl

Scouts, we just call it having fun.

By having fun, girls build self-confidence and are empow-

ered to take the lead. The 100th anniversary Great Girl Scout

Hike embraces this fun. Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Coun-

cil — who worked 50 years ago — wanted Girl Scouts across the East Coast to join together in continuing the great American Girl Scout tradition of getting outside, by hiking. With the com-

bined educational efforts of the Appalachian Trail Conser-

vancy and the Appalachian Trail clubs, the Girl Scouts are able

to share advice on family and youth-friendly sections of the

A.T. for our youngest members. We have also worked togeth-

er on safety policies and tips for family packing and camping in the backcountry for our teen girls. A

strong collaboration has developed through the organization of the Great Girl Scout Hike over the past year.

And the inspiration continues. Our West Coast sister Girl Scout, enthusiastic about our A.T. hike, started their very

own Great Girl Scout Hike on the Pacific Crest Trail. And there are talks underway for the Continental Divide Na-

tional Scenic Trail to be part of the Great Girl Scout Hike too.

In addition, a small band of Girl Scout adult volunteers and alumnae, led by Sam “the Captain” Loftus, have formed the “Eaglet Express” to hike the entire trail starting on March 12, 2012 at Springer Mountain, Georgia. As experienced thru-hikers, this group wishes to let the rest of the world in

on its secret. “Girl Scouting is about belonging, and doing things bigger than ourselves,” explains the captain. And to

hike the Appalachian Trail is one of those great things that

is bigger than any one person. It’s an experience of a lifetime

just like Girl Scouting.

From those original 18 girls of the first Girl Scout troop in

1912 to today in 2012, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.7 million

members nationwide. The Girl Scouts are the largest educa-

tional organization for girls in the world. In fact, more than

50 million women in the U.S. today are Girl Scout alumnae.

For 100 years, young women have been motivated to

make the world a better place. Girl Scout program-

ming continues to value the experiential outdoors
classroom. Girl Scout leaders provide training and a

safe, supportive environment for girls to learn decision-making, develop self-reliance, engage in teamwork,

and a safe, supportive environment for girls to

empower girls to reach even higher expectations

than ever thought imaginable. Instead of ignoring

the great influence of technology in kids’ lives

today, we are interconnecting it with their out-

doors experiences. With our great willingness to

share this experience with the next genera-

tion of women leaders, may the Great Girl Scout

Hike be the start of bringing happy trails to

even more girls over the next 100 years.
A.T. Post Offices Will Stay Open Through May

In December, the U.S. Postal Service, in response to a request made by multiple U.S. Senators, agreed to delay the closing of any post office until May 15, 2012. This is good news for this year’s northbound thru-hikers. It means all but the latest thru-hikers starting from Springer can count on the Fontana Dam, North Carolina post office being open. But, because both northbound and southbound thru-hikers will reach Glenciff, New Hampshire and Carterun, Maine post offices after the date of temporary reprieve, they should check the status of these post offices before sending a package.

How to Handle BLOWDOWNS

ONE OF THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A TRAIL MAINTAINER IS FINDING the best, safest, and often most expedient solutions to problems encountered on the Trail. Such was the case when the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club (NBATC) found a 42-inch oak across the A.T. just south of the James River Foot Bridge in the James River Face Wilderness. The tree had uprooted just above the Trail and, though dead, was still very solid. NBATC determined that removing such a large blowdown with a crosscut saw would have presented several difficult safety related issues. The large oak tree was well above shoulder level and situated on a steep sidehill. Although only slightly bigger than the largest tree the club had previously tackled with a crosscut saw, it presented the problem of being suspended about two feet off the ground by a major safe branch, meaning that it could have rolled either direction when cut. In addition, the crown of the tree was resting in the James River where its strong current could have caused movement at any time.

Using a hand cable winch was considered, but would have required felling numerous nearby large trees. Since hikers were already making an unsafe detour up and down a steep embankment, the club decided that the most sensible and prudent approach would be to construct a short trail relocation around the obstacle. Once the decision was made to construct the relocation, NBATC maintainers completed the task in less than a day. Safety is always a major concern of maintainers, but is just one of several factors addressed when dealing with Trail problems. Areas designated as wilderness have limitations as to the types of equipment that can be used and the size of work crews. Proposed Trail relocations are evaluated by their potential environmental impacts rather than their proposed lengths and thus agency partners need to have the opportunity to address possible NEPA and other issues. Trail maintainers usually have a wide range of factors to be considered before successfully completing most of their projects.

Trudy Phillips is the president of the NBATC

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?
St. Francisville, Louisiana.

WHAT KEEPS YOU INVOLVED IN SO MANY TYPES OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES?
I have a real passion for the outdoors. I grew up in a rural area, and was able to enjoy the Nils, and farmlands and the many woods and beautiful places along the Mississippi — all of the activities that outdoor life presents. I have always had that passion, which is why I became a Boy Scout, because I was able to benefit from camping, and outdoor activities. I have always just enjoyed being able to be outdoors, which can be as simple as a walk in a city park or a more involved back-packing trek.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO HIKE THE ENTIRE TRAIL AND WHY?
I started section hiking on May first of 2003, and my goal was to try to hike all of Virginia, because Virginia is such a huge section of the Trail. I thought that would be a fantastic goal, because I had only done a limited amount of backpacking and mostly car camping up until then. I got out on my first couple of sections, and they were beautiful and inspiring. I could just hike all day and enjoy the variety of terrain and the change of vistas along the Blue Ridge. By the beginning of 2004, I had completed Maryland, part of southern Pennsylvania, and started into North Carolina — I realized then that I wanted to do the whole Trail as a section hiker.

WHAT IS NEXT ON YOUR "PERSONAL GOAL" LIST?
To be a successful executive director of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy — that means to make sure that the organization is focussed on its agency partners, clubs, members, and especially its many volunteers. I want it to continue to be a thriving organization for years to come. As far as my next outdoor goal: I want to resist many sections of the A.T., but this time with agency partners and Trail club volunteers — to experience again the magic of the Trail.
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy now has more than 12,626 reports of hikes of the entire A.T. posted to its register of 2,000 miles. This includes 684 reports, which were received since last year’s listing. Of those, 500 thru-hikers and 120 section-hikers completed the Trail in 2011.

We would like to express our appreciation for those 2,000-milers who have chosen to support the Appalachian Trail as Appalachian Trail Conservancy members.
In 2011, there had been the highest number of hikers of any foreign country. Inspired by a recent German-language two-part report about the A.T., dozens of Germans headed for Springer Mountain last March and April. Ten completed the entire Trail; dozens of Germans headed for Springer Mountain last March and April. Ten completed the entire Trail;
t the Parksville Lake Campground in the Ocoee Ranger District of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In 2011, SWAT teams and crew leaders led eight consecutive weeks of trail assessment, maintenance, repair and reconstruction. After passing through the Pisgah National Forest, we arrived at the trail head, hiked to our first work location, and discussed trail history, trail assessment, maintenance, repair and reconstruction. We then continued our Leave-No-Trace discussion while hiking through the Pisgah National Forest. Participants who come from all over the country to maintain the Appalachian Trail corridor. Certifications and skill sets acquired here will play key roles in the summer's Leave-No-Trace maintenance. Class training starts with the vital component of trip planning and preparation. "Our work is very physically demanding, perhaps some of the hardest labor you will ever perform," explains Andrew Downes, the ATC Trail resource manager for Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. "Being in good physical shape will certainly help you maintain a good attitude. You also need social skills that will enable you to get along with fellow volunteers in often trying times." Driving to the trail head is a fun road trip in the ATC passenger van — driven in 2011 by Jameson Demiglio, an A.T. thru-hiker and 2011 SWAT crew leader. After passing through the Pisgah National Forest, we arrived at the trail head, hiked to our first work location, and discussed trail assessment, maintenance, repair and reconstruction. We then continued our Leave-No-Trace discussion while completing some basic trail work tasks. "You know what, it all happened so fast that I didn’t have a lot of time to think about it," said Andy Attree Sanford. “I had never been to the Appalachian Mountains and I expected [an] adventure, and it’s definitely been that. The best thing is the people here are one of the highlights.” He continues: “I’ve used a cross-cut saw a lot and this gives me a chance to actually get it written down on a piece of paper that I’m certified to use these skills. They are actually going to mean something to somebody.”

The primary purpose of the Red Cross Wilderness and Remote First Aid course is to provide individuals a foundation of first aid knowledge and skills to be able to respond to emergencies and give care in areas that do not have immediate emergency medical services (EMS) response, such as wilderness and remote environments. In this course, participants will also develop leadership skills and learn how to prevent, plan for, and respond to emergencies. "Wilderness volunteers are unique in that they work from any type of medical assistance," instructor Jim Holland explains. "Cell phone access is seldom available, nor are radios at times, so it’s important that they become self-sufficient. Wilderness First Aid teaches them about the natural hazards, about using tools safely, and that prevention is one of the most important things you can do." Holland is a National Registry First Responder, a Wilderness First Responder, a National Association of Search and Rescue SARTECH II, and teaches CPR, AED and Wilderness First Aid for the American Red Cross.

After Wilderness First Aid class, base campers wind down around the ATC passenger van — driven in 2011 by Jameson Demiglio, an A.T. thru-hiker and 2011 SWAT crew leader. After passing through the Pisgah National Forest, we arrived at the trail head, hiked to our first work location, and discussed trail assessment, maintenance, repair and reconstruction. We then continued our Leave-No-Trace discussion while completing some basic trail work tasks. “You know what, it all happened so fast that I didn’t have a lot of time to think about it,” said Andy Attree Sanford. “I had never been to the Appalachian Mountains and I expected [an] adventure, and it’s definitely been that. The best thing is the people here are one of the highlights.” He continues: “I’ve used a cross-cut saw a lot and this gives me a chance to actually get it written down on a piece of paper that I’m certified to use these skills. They are actually going to mean something to somebody.”

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Thru a Hiker’s Eyes

Vince “BLAZE” Mier took more than 4,000 pictures during his 2011 thru-hike. He also gives back to the A.T. via the Roanoke A.T. Club. “I maintain about five miles of the A.T. south of Daleville, Virginia — including Hay Rock,” he explains. “After painting blazes on my section, I painted one on my backpack, which is where I took my trail name ‘BLAZE.’” His wife, Lori, joined him during various sections of his hike — as did his parents and his best friend, David. “I am forever grateful to my wife for helping me realize this dream, and occasionally I wonder if it was not, in fact, all a dream,” he says. Vince and Lori live in Roanoke, Virginia.

www.etsy.com/shop/blazega2me

Inset: Vince completes his thru-hike; Vince hiking just north of Atkins, Virginia — photo by fellow thru-hiker Jonathan “Shepherd” Terry (from Bournemouth, England)
1. Fiddlehead fern / south of Chestnut Knob Shelter, Virginia
2. Red eft / near the Knife Edge, Pennsylvania
3. Toad / north of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
4. Beetle / south of the Keffler Oak in Virginia
5. Snail shell / near Chestnut Knob Shelter, Virginia
6. Tortoise / north of High Point State Park, New Jersey
7. “Happy frog” / south of Palisades Interstate Parkway, New York
8. Caterpillar / near Lehigh Gap just north of Palmerton, Pennsylvania

Tadpoles found in a cement structure just north of the Scott Farm near Carlisle, Pennsylvania
If spiders and other tiny crawlers unnerved you, take heed: experts have accounted for more than 500 varieties of spiders, and more than 100 types of millipedes and centipedes in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSmNP). Add to that 300 species of flies, 4,500 kinds of beetles, and hundreds of other strange beings and you get a sense of just how expansive the web of life is inside one of the most diverse ecosystems in North America. In fact, the exact number and scope of living species in the park is not so easy to peg. Not just because of the sheer number, which is estimated to be in excess of 100,000 species of living organisms, but because so many of them — such as the 460 types of bacteria — are invisible to the naked eye. And, of course, the fact that many of them have yet to be discovered.

Despite the evident challenges, scientists, the National Park Service, and amateur naturalists are hoping to count them anyway. One slug, one slime mold, and one stonefly at a time. Their effort to catalog all that lives in the park is known as the All taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI). Launched on Earth Day in 1998, the ATBI is a co-project of the GSmNP and Discover Life in America (DLIA), a non-profit, based at the park’s Gatlinburg, Tennessee headquarters, that is dedicated to the project’s management.

While this may seem as ludicrous as counting blades of grass in your front yard, experts say it’s well worth it. From their vantage point, tallying the number of obscure beings may have implications — such as revealing methods to safeguard threatened habitats to managing the Appalachian Trail to protecting endangered species in the nation’s most visited national park. Aside from the question of its significance is a more practical one: how to do it. “That’s a question I hear pretty often,” admits DLIA executive director Todd Witcher. To answer this, the DLIA is relying on people such as Laura Meiss, a student at Warren Wilson College (WWC) in Asheville, North Carolina. Her undergraduate research project is to collect and catalog bear species in the park. To find them, she’ll climb trees, gather lichen, and examine them under a microscope. Of course, these bears aren’t the noble and furry ones that are the signature of the park. These are the specimens you’ve probably never heard of — microscopic and other worldly. She’s looking for tardigrades — minute water dwelling animals — which are affectionately known as “water bears.” Magnified to the eye, the tiny, yet practically indestructible animals eerily resemble a larger mammal shrunk and trapped in a tiny universe. With four pairs of stubby legs and a rounded back, their lumbering locomotion and ability to move their head independent from their bodies makes them look like, well, bears. And though they may not be so cute and cuddly, Meiss adores them.

Laura Meiss, a student at Warren Wilson College, climbs trees in the Smokies to gather lichen that can contain tardigrades — minute water dwelling animals, affectionately known as “water bears.”
engaging more citizen scientists like meiss in the Himalayan task. So in June 2010, the DLIA— they could use a bit of help. While a few dozen years is just a wee fraction of the life by zeroing in on lichen in single species of an American beech tree stand. And not only is her collaboration with Bartels a biotic learning experience, producing useful science, but it’s serving as a model approach to help accomplish one of the most comprehensive biological inventories ever attempted.

Thus far, the ATBI has cataloged more than 17,000 species—from the mega flora and fauna of the park such as tulp poplars and elk on down to the tiny and obscure such as tardigrades and other micro-organisms. In all, the DLIA has identified more than 7,000 species that were unknown to the park and more than 900 organisms that are new to science. That leaves roughly 80,000 species yet to be counted. Considering that Bartels and his students have spent countless hours and funds to gather enough tardigrades to fit in a drop of water, at the current pace, it would take decades to count the rest. Which is why it’s important to catalog what lives in the trees should they follow the same fate as other trees in the Southern Appalachians, such as the American chestnut. The goal is to see if there is anything specific to the beech,” explains Nichols. “We want to know if there’s something we need to watch out for.” Hence, the Tree Team. To get a handle on how it works, think: helen wearing a full bio-suit and her sci-fi collection methods, gather an array of creatures that live in the beech canopy. In 2012 the DLIA has planned four collection dates in the park and Nichols helps track of the species. Each month, a sorting gathering is held at locations in Asheville and Gatlinburg where volunteers sort through and identify the tiny creatures underneath a microscope. While sorting them takes time and is no simple task, the next step is to pass the known samples on to researchers or find someone who can actually put a name to the species. Although, taxonomists that can do the science are in short supply.

Bartels is one of those rare experts. When Bartels heard about the ATBI more than a decade ago he approached the park and asked how he and his students could contribute to the project. Trained as a zoologist, Bartels admits he has always been fascinated by odd and unusual creatures, not necessarily the warm and fuzzy ones. So water bears — additionally known as “moss piglets” — are right up his alley. “Tardigrades get mentioned, but they’re seldom investigated. It’s usually creatures, not necessarily the warm and fuzzy ones. So water bears — addi-

THE TREES ARE STIRRING WITH LIFE; A FABULOUS HABITAT FOR ALL SortS OF ORGANISMS. MITES AND SPIDERS IN THE FISSURES OF THE BARK, WOOD BORING BEETLES, LEAF FEEDERS, AND “WATER BEARS” IN THE LICHEN.

While a few dozen years is just a wee fraction of the time it took to establish the species themselves, there is now a sense of urgency as plants and animals are vanishing at a rate that is perhaps faster than scientists can count them.

And with a combined staff of just three at the DLIA — they could use a bit of help. The answer, in part, believes Witcher, is to engage more citizen scientists like Meiss in the Himalayan task. So in June 2010, the DLIA piloted a program known as the “Tree Team” to count what lives in threatened forest types. While the DLIA hopes to expand the program to a variety of trees and habitats, they’ve initially focused on high elevation American Beech stands — the same trees Meiss has explored found along numerous sections of the A.T. throughout the park. While the tree is common in the Northeast, the American beech is an anomaly in the South and isolated to its extreme elevations. During the last

As it turns out, the park had already connected with Diane Nelson, a tardigrade expert at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in Johnson City. While she understood the taxonomy and collection techniques, Nelson and the ATBI needed to collect the tardigrades. “It was a match made in heaven,” says Bartels who now considers Nelson a mentor. The two have co-authored several papers together and continue to share knowledge about water bears. The only previous research on tardigrades in the park was a single published study that had identified three species. At the time, Nelson reckoned there may be up to 70 species of water bears in the Smokies — as of July he has identified 115 species. “We know all about big species; we pay attention to them. Microorganisms are a group we know very little about,” explains Bartels. “It is really a wide open field. Every species is another entity to learn about.”

In addition to training a new generation of scientists, the success of Bartels and his students has been a great leap forward in grasping how to execute the pioneering project. “I consider the work of Paul and his students on the ATBI to be a model. One that we would really like to mimic,” says Witcher. “They’ve really accomplished some great science and answered an unknown about how to do this.” He envisions that other schools will follow their lead to help inventory some of the more obscure groups of organisms identified as high priority research targets — for instance, odonates (dragon and damselflies), which may not yet be on the radar of researchers to study in the park. Matching an expert, such as ETSU’s Nelson, with an enthusiastic faculty and high achieving students may be the ticket to overcome the challenge of collecting and cataloging species in one of the most diverse places on Earth. Bartels points out that his decade-long work on tardigrades may not have a direct human benefit, that is, his research won’t likely yield a life saving drug. Rather, the output of his research has added to the basic understanding of the ecology of the park and provided a more thorough grasp on the abundance and distribution patterns of living things at the microscopic level. That knowledge may shed light on various threats to the park — invasive species, habitat loss, human impact, poll.ution — and help managers develop more effective stewardship efforts, education programs, and ultimately help preserve and protect the most visited national park in the nation from present and future threats.

The ATBI may be a novel way to engage the public and help channel the support and resources experts like Nichols need to do their jobs. While bears, elk, and salamanders have been the poster species for promoting the protection of the park, creatures like water bears may have a promotional role too. After all, it’s hard to protect things you don’t know about. “If people are engaged in something they put a higher value on,” explains Witcher. “And, if nothing else,” he says, “we’ve taught people to look at the small things.”

Warren Wilson College student Sheree Fertil searches for water bears in a lichen sample.

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Hanover, New Hampshire, which celebrated its 250th birthday in 2011, lies at the intersection of two historic transportation routes – the 2,000-plus-mile Appalachian Trail and New England’s longest river, the Connecticut. The trail runs down the bustling hub of the Upper Valley, a section of the Connecticut River that is nestled between the rolling Green Mountains of Vermont and the soaring White Mountains of New Hampshire. Hiking, cycling, and boating opportunities abound in the area, as do all manner of winter recreational activities.

Hanover is the home of Dartmouth College, an Ivy League university founded in 1769 with a grant from the royal governor to educate both colonists and Native Americans. Dartmouth’s distinctive year-round calendar creates a rich program of cultural activities that are centered in its theater complex and museum — music, theater, films, art exhibits, lectures — that run year round. All events are open to the public. One of America’s most important murals, painted in the 1930s by the Mexican artist José Clemente Orozco, is in the main library.

In 2009, the Appalachian Trail incorporated trails and cabins created by the 20-year-old Dartmouth Outing Club (some of the faded black and orange blazes that guided skiers over these trails can still be seen along the trail). Each fall a group of Dartmouth students undertakes a non-stop hike on the A.T. from campus to Mount Moosilauke, 50 miles to the north. (In a spring tradition, another group paddles from Dartmouth to the sea on the Connecticut in the wake of the colonial explorer, John Ledyard, who paddled down the river to his grandfather’s farm after dropping out of Dartmouth in 1773.) The D.O.C. maintains this historical chain of cabins, which connect Hanover to Moosilauke, and the college provides free parking for A.T. section hikers. The Howe Library, which is open seven days a week, welcomes A.T. hikers with information brochures, a hiker log, and 15 free computers. Visitors to town should check out the 13-foot map of the A.T. above one bank of computers, to which postcards from hikers are pasted. In honor of the library are affixed. Most nights of the week there are free lectures, films, and club meetings that are open to the public.

In 2009, a “Friends of the A.T.” group formed to assure that Hanover provides a warm welcome to hikers and provides for their needs. The group also seeks to educate residents and visitors about the A.T. One of the first initiatives of the group was the creation of a shower and laundry facilities at the Richard Black Community Center, which is located right on the Trail. (When Hurricane Irene shut down the White Mountain National Forest, the community center hosted 20–35 hikers for three days.) Other Friends’ initiatives include a brochure produced by the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce that lists services for hikers and a kiosk in front of town hall that provides both information for hikers and information about the history and nature of the A.T. “An energetic group of volunteers has worked hard over the past two years to come up with lots of ways to reach out to the 400 or so hikers that come through Hanover each summer and fall and, by doing so, many of us have had some wonderful connections with our hiker visitors,” says Hanover town manager Julia Griffin. “Our lives are all the richer for those connections.”

Hikers can reprovision at the Hanover Food Coop, which is also located right on the Trail. The Coop is the second oldest food cooperative in the nation, and with four stores, the second largest. The Coop has created a store guide specifically oriented to the needs of hikers and a member number for hikers to use; the patronage refund from purchases credited to this member number goes to support A.T. Friends initiatives. More than 20 restaurants are located within a block of the trail — ranging from pizza places and pubs to gourmet establishments. In addition to American fare, dining options include Thai, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, and Indian. There are two hotels in the center of town and several motels a short drive away (two of which offer shuttle service to hikers). A wide variety of shops along Main Street and adjacent streets offer a wide variety of goods. Two outfitters and a hardware store in town meet the equipment needs of hikers. There are always at least four movies playing at either the Nugget Theater (owned by the Hanover Improvement Society, the profits of which are dedicated exclusively to town improvement initiatives, both recreational and aesthetic) and at Dartmouth. The largest regional hospital in upper New England moved from Hanover in 1991 to a hilltop location just south of town. It can be reached via a free week-day bus system that connects Hanover with Lebanon, New Hampshire, and White River Junction (with train and bus stations) and Norwich, Vermont.

Visitors to Hanover in the summer enjoy the weekly Farmers’ Market on the Green in the center of town, the fourth of July parade, and other public events. In the fall, Dartmouth’s homecoming celebration includes a massive bonfire on the Green. With a short drive from Hanover are numerous rewarding places to visit including the Montshire Museum of Science, the home of Augustus St. Gaudens — the sculptor (a national park in Cornish); the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller House (a national park in Woodstock, Vermont); the American Precision Museum in Windsor, Vermont; the Fells near New London; the homes of Justin Morrill (The Morrill Act) and Joseph Smith (the Mormon prophet), and the Quechee Gorge in Vermont.

Hanover is a terrific place to spend a few days, to start or end a section hike, or to pass through on a thru-hike. It is a quintessential New England town that offers a distinctive combination of shops — including an exceptional general store — cultural opportunities, and a warm welcome to visitors.
The High Peaks region of western Maine. The funding comes from the Forest Legacy Program, a USDA Forest Service program that is for the protection of working forestland. The 11,798-acre Crocker Mountain Project was ranked number three in the nation and the 5,808-acre Orbeton Stream project was ranked 12th in the nation on the final Forest Legacy list. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and TPL’s local partner, the Maine A.T. Land Trust, supported the projects in the congressional appropriation process and at the hike the Hill lobbying week sponsored by the American Hiking Society. Representatives of the Trust for Public Land indicated that they need an additional $800,000 to be able to complete the projects.

The larger grant — $ 7 million of an estimated $8.8 million project — is for the Crocker Mountain Project, which will conserve 11,798 acres in Carrabassett Valley and Mount Abram Townships via a fee purchase by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL). This property completely surrounds the A.T. corridor as it traverses a 10-mile segment of trail across Crocker Cirque, North Crocker and South Crocker. Under state management there will be a 4,000-acre ecological reserve created in the upper elevations of the parcel and the rest will stay open to sustainable timber harvesting. The ecological reserve will protect a number of rare plants and exemplary natural communities found in the subalpine forest and rocky outcrops of the higher elevations. Maine BPL and the Town of Carrabassett Valley are also interested in creating new hiking and mountain biking trails on the property to help draw more tourism to the western mountains outside of the busy winter ski season (Carrabassett Valley is home to Sugarloaf Ski Area). Existing snowmobile trails and ATV trails will be maintained under state ownership.

“We are really excited to have the $7 million commitment from Forest Legacy and are now ramping up our fundraising to secure the remaining funds needed to purchase the property and to conduct the due diligence process,” said J.T. Horn, TPL’s project manager for the Crocker Mountain project. Horn, a former New England regional director for ATC, said, “In addition to the great natural resource and wildlife values of this parcel, it is really exciting to be able to increase the protection for such a significant section of the A.T. in Maine.”

The Crocker Mountain property shares a common boundary with the National Park Service (NPS) for more than 15 miles, which makes it one of the most significant acquisitions of Appalachian Trail buffer lands in recent history. Horn also added a personal note: “It’s also been fun to be back working closely with ATC, NPS, the Maine A.T. Club, and the Maine A.T. Land Trust on designing the project and developing a funding strategy. TPL would not have been able to secure the Forest Legacy funds without the strong support from the A.T. community.”

The Orbeton Stream Project received a $1.73 million commitment from the Forest Legacy program. This project will secure a conservation easement on approximately 5,900 acres of land on the southeast side of the A.T. corridor near Saddleback Mountain. This property is owned by Linkletter Timber Company, a family owned business that owns a mill that makes wood pellets for home heating, and a significant amount of timberland to feed the mill. In addition, the property contains an important section of the Orbeton Stream, a cold-water fishery that supports a spawning area for the federally endangered Atlantic salmon. The conservation easement will be held by the state of Maine and will prevent development of houses or subdivision of the property, while allowing for continued timber harvest on a sustainable basis and with appropriate buffers for the stream corridors. The easement will also guarantee a permanent location for a snowmobile trail that crosses the A.T. near Eddy Pond. This easement is part of a long term strategy that helps align motorized trails with the existing NPS-sanctioned crossings of the A.T. corridor in the High Peaks.

“We’ve been pushing for more conservation in the High Peaks for more than 15 years — ever since ATC helped facilitate the protection of Mount Abraham — as this region has one of the most spectacular sections of the Appalachian Trail,” said Laura Bellville, director of conservation for ATC. “We are really excited to learn about the Trust for Public Land’s success in getting Forest Legacy funds for the Crocker Mountain and Orbeton Stream projects.”

Horn emphasized that while the Forest Legacy grants are critical first steps, the Trust for Public Land and the Maine A.T. Land Trust still has to raise $800,000 to match the federal funds for the two acquisitions as well as conduct a thorough real estate due diligence process. If the fundraising is successful, the project could close in the summer of 2012.
On July 29, 2011, I completed a 35-year section hike of the Appalachian Trail, a journey that began at age 17 in 1976 at Dicks Creek Gap, Georgia. But I want to start with where it really began. In 1969, at age 10, at my home in Auburn, Alabama, I read a book by Jean George entitled *My Side of the Mountain*. It’s a story about a fictional 12-year-old boy who runs away from his New York City home to live alone in the forests of New York’s Catskill Mountains. At the time, I was an eager explorer of neighborhood wood patches. I had recently built — along with two friends — a crude tree house. This book affirmed my interests in nature and outdoor adventure, and this imaginary boy, Sam Gribley, suddenly became one of my heroes.

Seven years later, in June, 1976, my father, one of my “tree house friends” and I were at Dicks Creek Gap, the northern-most road crossing of the Appalachian Trail in Georgia. We had planned to hike north for three days to Rock Gap, in the Nantahala Mountains of North Carolina. It was our first backpacking trip, and we were prepared, with our brand new backpacks, tube tents, sleeping bags, and not-yet-broken-in hiking boots. In my mind, as I took my first steps into the forest, I was Sam Gribley, stepping into the Catskills. Unlike Sam, who lived for several months in the forest as he had planned, we ended our hike early at Deep Gap the next day due to painful blisters. But the adventure enchanted me, and I knew I would return to the Trail.

Later that summer, my father and I indeed returned to complete the hike to Rock Gap. During the next few summers, we hiked the Trail together in Georgia and in parts of North Carolina and Tennessee. After college graduation, I lived for three years during the 1980s in the Trail town of Hot Springs, North Carolina, due to employment there as a forester with Pisgah National Forest. During these years and through 1993, I completed the Trail in North Carolina and Tennessee up to Fox Creek, Virginia (just north of Mount Rogers) as well as from Gorham, New Hampshire to Katahdin. Since 2001, I’ve hiked the Trail in sections from Fox Creek to Gorham. This past summer of 2011, at age 52, I hiked my last and longest section, from New York’s Hudson River 490 miles north to Gorham, finishing on July 29.

As a child, I never ran away to the Catskills as did the fictional Sam Gribley. Instead, the Appalachian Trail has provided for me, over the past 35 years, what Sam found in the Catskills — an ever-present opportunity for exploration and adventure, a connection with the natural world, self-reliance, humility, perseverance, self-confidence, and a place for reflection on life and its priorities. For Sam, one of those priorities became his family, to whom he returned. For me, a similar priority is reflected in what I remember most from my hikes: cherished times with my father, sister, son, cousin and friends with whom I shared the Trail, as well as the many hikers and Trail angels whom I met along the way.
All the best,
Tor. Mark is eager to get out and meet as many of our members as possible. We finish up the series in April of 2013. 2012 will begin getting the new cards and decals until the end of the year. Life members also have a new decal. Members will begin receiving those in the mail very soon. I hope you enjoy the changes.

Finally, we welcome Mark Wenger as ATC’s executive director. To begin, we have redesigned our renewal cards and membership forms. We hope you will want to have an electronic version. If you would like to make the switch to the “paperless” version of the magazine, many of our members have requested this. Please visit: appalachiantrail.org/paperless.

Go Paperless To receive the same great magazine in electronic format visit: appalachiantrail.org/paperless.

I'd like to start by saying “Thank You” to all of our members, club partners, corporate sponsors, and foundation donors. Thanks to your generosity the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) ended the 2011 year much better than expected. At this point (prior to finishing our audit) we expect to have a final budget in the black for 2011.

We ended 2011 with more than 42,000 members and our goal for 2012 is to exceed 50,000 members. Please share our enthusiasm for the Trail and ATC with your friends and neighbors, and encourage them to join you in supporting the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Congratulations to all the members who became 2000-milers in 2011 and good luck to those of you heading out to start, get a few more miles in, or complete your hike in 2012.

Spring is a time of renewal and renewal, and to begin the season we have a few new things for our members this spring. I hope you enjoy the changes.

To begin, we have redesigned our membership cards and members will begin receiving those in the mail very soon. And when you renew your membership we have a new member decal to send along with your acknowledgment letter. Members also have a new decal. Members whose memberships expire starting with May 2012 will begin getting the new cards and decals until the end of the year.

Next, you might be receiving this magazine for the first time in an electronic format instead of the traditional paper version. While we are very proud of the print edition of this magazine, many of our members have requested to have an electronic version. If you would like to make the switch to the “paperless” version of the magazine, you may do so by visiting: appalachiantrail.org/paperless.

Finally, we welcome Mark Wenger as ATC’s executive director. Mark is eager to get out and meet as many of our members and partners as he can. I hope we are able to see and hear from you this year. A
these people and talk to them all at once and see, as a whole, how it all comes together?"

David Cohen, a recent University of Georgia graduate says, “I’ve gained a lot of insight into the issues at hand and definitely a lot of tools to explain those issues and get people to better understand them and to hopefully encourage stewardship in the average person that might not have considered those issues beforehand. It feels really good to know that you’re not only the only person that feels a certain way about the world and our place in it and what we should be doing to protect it.” So, why do we volunteer our time for these wilderness projects? Is it for a good time? Is it to keep the trails open to hikers? Is it for the friendships that are established? Is it for the skill sets and certifications? Wilderness First Aid instructor Jim Holland explains, “I feel that it’s important that everyone give something back to their community, to their state, to their country, to the environment that [they] live in. If you enjoy doing something, you should give something back to it. I have always tried to do that most of my life.”

Re-branded for 2012 as the “Wilderness Stewardship Institute,” this ATC, USFS and Wilderness Society partnership is growing in scope for volunteers and agency partners interested in protecting wilderness. Like the 2011 opportunity, the 2012 WSI will offer Cross-cut, Wilderness First Aid CPR, and Trail Construction. It will also include a week-long advanced course in Cross-cut for Instructors, as well as instruction concerning the technical aspects of managing a federally designated wilderness area.

For more information, contact Andrew Downs at: adowns@appalachiantrail.org. Online registration will be available early spring 2012 at www.trailcrows.org

**TRAIL GIVING CONTINUED**

Cynthia Anne Clarke by Duncan & Ann Clarke
Bill Connor by Nancy Levin
Alan Cunningham by Denise Budboy
Chris Deffter by Margaret & Edwin Deffter
Roger “StauBfanT” Dixon by Charles & Jill Dixon
John Evans by Charles Hughes & Virginia James, Philip & Coralin Rawlin, The Clouse Company
Thomas Finoc by Russell & Nancy Carrick
Bill Foote by Laurie Foote
Martin Fossett by Janelle Wong, C.J. & Linda Lefler, Joseph & Shoba Sequana, Richard & Margaret Strelitz, Guy Strohek, Jana Zappeg
John George by Glenda George
Thurston Griggs by Charles Clarke, Virginia Muser, Dick & Laurie Portege, Roxie Sull, Barbara Valentine
Larry Kight by Allen & Donna Law
Sterling Kreider by Connie Guthrie, K.M. & Mrs. Iot
Fred Leshring by Gerald Adams
Frank Madalinos by Ruben & Frank Demar
George Matthews by Shirley Bange, Bill & Susan Daxa, Jennifer Holman, Robert & Susan Lackert, Phyllis
Robert Monte by buo Diddle & Glenn Wasser, Wells Fargo Bank
Robert Mountford by Douglas Durlap
John O’Mara by Wency O’Mara
Michael Norton by James & Ruby Norton
Joanne Phillips by Guyon Phillips
Michael Ripley by Prudence Shopping Corp.
Louis F. Ragone by Kathryn Bortogame
Laura Susan Ramsay by Douglas Durlap
Robert Schuster by Lari Terry
Franklin Sledd by Tonia Sledd
Chris Sutcliffe by Thomas & Luca Nimis, Debra Tubbs, Judiya Thompson & Family, Bill Wingert
Mary Terry by Lari Terry
John Townsends by Jonathan Freeman
Franklin Way by Dick & Jean Frohes
Malcolm White by Lenna & Bill Vranest
Barbara Wickers by Franklin Woolcock
Paul Wuerzner by Marty Johnson, Michael & Laura Walden
Robert Wuerz by Doug Diddle & Robert Young by Robert & Lisa Smith

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**FEbruary 8, 2012 Marked the first anniversary of the passing of mr. Fred Morgan Kirby, president of the F.M. Kirby Foundation. The foundation has funded the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) through general operating support for more than a decade. According to the foundation, “Mr. Kirby carried forth the conservative values of his grandfather and father in both his personal life and through his philanthropic mission of the F.M. Kirby Foundation.” It is also well known that F.M. Kirby was at the forefront of providing “winners” with consistent operating support over the long term. Some called it operating support over the long term. Some called it an “investment.” Mr. Kirby’s spirit will continue to exist all along the Appalachian Trail.**

Membership dues and additional donations are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution. ATC is a Section 501(c)(3) educational organization.

To make a contribution or renew your membership, call (304) 535-6351 ext 119, or visit: www.appalachiantrail.org

Show your love for the A.T. with a gift membership.

appalachiantrail.org/giftmembership

**PHOTO BY VINCE MIER**
For Your Information
Franklin’s April Fools Trail Days and Hiker Bash. Franklin, North Carolina, a designated Appalachian Trail Community since March 2010, will host its fourth annual April Fools Trail Days to include the eighth Annual Hiker Bash—Friday and Saturday March 30 & 31. The events will include food, music, and entertainment. For more information visit: www.aprilfoolstraildays.com.

Trail Days, Damascus, Virginia, May 18–20. Don’t miss the fun, including the annual hiker parade, music, reunions, talent show, and great food! Visit the Appalachian Trail Conservancy booth to show your ATC pride and take part in quizzes, get your temporary ATC membership card, and enter to win prizes. For more information visit: www.traildays.us.

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Quizzes, get your temporary ATC membership card, and enter to win prizes. For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

Annual Hiker Bash Friday and Saturday March 30 & 31. The events include the annual hiker parade, music, reunions, talent show, and great food! Visit the Appalachian Trail Conservancy booth to show your ATC pride and take part in quizzes, get your temporary ATC membership card, and enter to win prizes. For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

Help Wanted
Job Opportunities and Internships with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Full Time:
Northern Resource Management Coordinator
Office Manager
Seasonal: Resource Management Technician
Ridgerunner/Caretaker
Crew Staff

Other upcoming ATC events at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia:

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length. Please send them to: editor@appalachiantrail.org

For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/jobs.

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Robert “Buffalo Bobby” Yerike in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, during his 2011 thru-hike. He was exactly the kind of person that one hoped to hook up with; somebody with a zest for living who was always full of positive energy—his was a world of always seeing the glass half-full.

I MET “BUFFALO BOBBY” on Fontana Dam on April 18, 2003. My journal for that day contains this note — “Buffalo Bobby (nice man from New Jersey)” By that evening we had made it to Russell Field Shelter where we pitched our tents next to each other. We had become life-long friends; not that unusual on a typical day on the Appalachian Trail. But, Buffalo Bobby (known “off-trail” as Robert Yerike) was anything but typical. And, as I grew accustomed to his name, I almost expected to see Clarabelle and Mr. Green Jeans joining us on this hike. Bobby in Delaware Water Gap for the last time. We had become life-long friends; not that unusual on a typical day on the Appalachian Trail. But, Buffalo Bobby (known “off-trail” as Robert Yerike) was anything but typical. And, as I grew accustomed to his name, I almost expected to see Clarabelle and Mr. Green Jeans joining us on this hike. Bobby in Delaware Water Gap.

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Robert “Buffalo Bobby” Yerike in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, during his 2011 thru-hike.

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I was exactly the kind of person that one hoped to hook up with; somebody with a zest for living who was always full of positive energy—his was a world of always seeing the glass half-full.

Other upcoming ATC events at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia:

American history hike — August 11—12. For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

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About the Column
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 or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.
Help to preserve and protect the A.T.

Become a part of the A.T. community. Volunteer with a Trail Club or Trail Crew. Encourage your family and friends to get involved by giving them a gift membership.