

# A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

May – June 2013

## Technology and the Trail

INSIDE: High Peaks Atlantic Salmon | Northern Cricket Frog



# A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 9, Number 3  
*May – June 2013*

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FROM THE EDITOR |


## WONDROUS WATER. AT EVERY ANGLE I AM A PUSHOVER FOR WATER. NOT

only do I love to swim, kayak, raft, and hop onto any boat with a motor or sail, I am totally enamored with aquatic creatures. I love all manner of waterfowl and wading birds — especially ducks, loons, cormorants, and great blue herons. I name the toads that live around my house, marvel at freshwater fish and ocean-dwelling fish and mammals, and have a genuine fondness for prehistoric reptiles like turtles and alligators; I even like water snakes. Though you may not find me swimming *purposefully* with some of the larger predators, I definitely swam and kayaked in places where they could easily have been quietly (thankfully) sharing their watery territory. This does not negate my equal love for land. I grew up playing in the woods and still do, but part of that play time included happily splashing around in a creek with my sister and our dogs — and listening at night for frog choruses always soothed me.

The Trail itself may be a solid earth, dirt path, surrounded by thousands of acres of protected land, but within that land the headwaters of more than 170 watersheds begin. These waterways are interconnected with public water supplies and run all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Along the A.T. in the High Peaks of Maine are “innumerable clear and cold springs that collect to form brooks, streams, and rivers ... for the Sandy River watershed, this is the extraordinary story of Atlantic salmon restoration,” explains the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) GIS specialist, Paul Mitchell (page 10). “An [A.T. hike] of the High Peaks includes the crossing of several significant tributaries of the Sandy River. Since the early – to mid 1800s, the once-native Atlantic salmon population had disappeared from these Appalachian waters. But in 2002, a determined marine scientist would begin to work tirelessly at “bringing a species of fish back, essentially from scratch, with the most minimal of resources.” And his unique hatchery would be a wild river.

Those very waters eventually flow into the Kennebec River, where, for more than 20 years, one man devoted his working life to safely transporting A.T. hikers across a stretch of that river — which is otherwise chancy, at best, and perilous, at worse, to cross (page 38). “To me, he was the king of the Kennebec crossing,” says Steve Longley’s friend Jack Tarlin. “He knew that stretch of the river better than anyone alive. He knew its beauty and its risks. He fully recognized how dangerous a place this could be to hikers, and took his job as the Ferryman with the utmost seriousness.”

Just south of the unrestrained grandeur of Maine’s high peaks and the Kennebec River are the more tranquil waters of the lakes and ponds along the Trail’s corridor in New England — one of many watery habitats in the eastern U.S. where the diminutive northern cricket frog sings his unusual refrain (page 42). “The best description that can be rendered as to what they sound like has been described as two pebbles being clicked together, in a manner that is similar to an insect chorus,” explains Michael Adamovic, who says that, in New York especially, the tiny amphibian is, somewhat mysteriously, vanishing. But biologists in the state are working diligently to find out the cause and protect the cricket frog’s habitat. “The Appalachian Trail weaves together amazing conservation stories and conservation successes along its 2,186-mile expanse across the Appalachian Mountain range,” says the ATC’s director of conservation, Laura Belleville. “So many partners contribute to the health and vitality of the ecosystems and species that populate these ancient mountains.”

When one considers the waterways that flow through, around, and then beyond the A.T., it no longer is a single, isolated path along the eastern U.S. but one that interconnects earth to sea in an ancient cycle, creating a dynamic and indispensable channel of life that travels the vast lands and waters of this wonderful, wet world. 

**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).

East Carry Pond, Appalachian Trail, Maine — by Jimmie “Walk and Eat” Jackson

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## On the Cover:

A hiker traverses the boardwalk across the Pochuck Swamp on the A.T. in New Jersey. Photo by Bryant Baker

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# BORN TO RUN

Just downstream from the Trail in the High Peaks of Maine is the extraordinary story of Atlantic salmon restoration.

Inset: Adult Atlantic salmon swim in the Sandy River – photo by William Hanson, Brookfield Renewable Energy Partners. Outset: The A.T. on Saddleback Mountain in the High Peaks of Maine – photo by Buddy Johnson

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## Technology and the Trail

In the discussion over social media, technology, and the Trail, hikers must take into account the pros and cons — and know how to use a compass and a map.

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During a seven-year section hike, a grandfather strengthened an already solid family bond — and proudly watched his grandson grow into an adult.

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## A Pivotal Role

As we celebrate National Trails Day, the African American History Hike is a great way to understand the historical significance of a small section of the A.T. in West Virginia.

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Appalachian Trail Conservancy member, and recent thru-hiker, Daniel Johnson, recently donated some serene photos that caught our eye.



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Steve Paradis is one of the A.T.’s unsung heroes, who taught us that leadership doesn’t come from the title beside your name.

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I LETTERS

**OUR FAMILY HAS BEEN A MEMBER** of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for quite a while now. I wanted to thank you for the quality of photos and stories you continue to publish in *A.T. Journeys*. Our subscription was very useful in a recent project our son did for social studies. He made a diorama using photos from your publication. We plan on being lifetime supporters of the Trail and hope to pass on our passion and love for it to our son.

Katie Caldwell  
HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

**ATTENTION GRANDPARENTS!** I'm so looking forward to having my grandkids (and their mom) join me at The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's 2013 Biennial Conference in Cullowhee, North Carolina this July. We attended the ATC conference together two summers ago — sometimes doing the same daily schedule together and sometimes going our separate ways. The point is, hanging out for a week together where kids are welcome and planned for and where there are all sorts of outdoor activities — with great leaders — makes for a delightful intergenerational experience.

Penny Pitts  
EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

**I APPLAUD THE WORK BEING** done to reduce bear conflicts on the A.T. especially between Jarrad Gap and Neels Gap ("Bear-resistant Cannisters," *A.T. Journeys* March/April). Unfortunately, carrying the extra two pounds of weight for a bear canister does not make much sense for a five-mile stretch of the Trail. It makes even less sense especially if one is on a long distance hike. I would recommend building metal bear boxes that could be used to store "smellables." They are just as bear proof as canisters and much more convenient considering the short distance that a canister is required. I have used metal bear boxes at Glacier National Park and they work wonderfully well. If they are good enough for Grizzly country, they should be good enough with black bears.

John Myers  
MARION, IOWA



Daniel and Keith Spangler during their recent spring break hike.

**▲ MY SON, WHO IS GRADUATING** from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy this May, asked me to spend spring break with him on the A.T. and, I have to tell you, it was well worth it. "Expedition — Rocky Ridge" consisted of three nights and four days on Pennsylvania Sections 13, 12, 11, and 10. The hike started on top of South Mountain Ridge "Big Flat" on Sunday, March 13 and ended on the valley floor of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, near Scotts Farm ... what a blast! Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time and energy to maintain the A.T.; you do a great job!

Keith Spangler  
MECHANICSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR** printing Micah Goldfuss's story "Success Revisited" (*Trail Stories*, *A.T. Journeys*, January/February), it was just what I needed to read. It was so nice to hear from "the 90 percent." There are so many of us out here. My story is similar in spirit. I hiked 1,350 miles before illness sent me home. I completed my hike the following year but still didn't feel satisfied. I re-hiked Maine and then had the great idea to hike from Katahdin back to my home (in Maine) and I am in the process of doing that now. And I finally got the idea of savoring the hike instead of pushing through it, so I am staying at all my favorite campsites, doing shorter days and more gazing, and have regained the joy.

Sara Donovan  
EMBDEN, MAINE

**AS A MINOR IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN** studies in college, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia was a very special place for me to visit. The [staff and volunteers at] the Appalachian Trail Conservancy headquarters made it even more so. Thanks for all you do for the A.T. and hikers. Your volunteers are the best.

Matt "Pretzel" Mason

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

**WITH MY GRANDSONS, WE HAVE** hiked 500 miles of the A.T. over several summers. Hiked part of A.T. in every state, with wonderful, unforgettable memories.

Paul L. Stump

*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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**IN 1948, EARL SHAFFER STARTED AN EPIC JOURNEY TO THRU-HIKE** the Appalachian Trail in order to “walk off the war.” Sixty-five years later, other war veterans are starting the same journey. On March 17, 13 veterans made their way to the Appalachian Trail to begin a six-month thru-hike of the Trail as part of the Warrior Hike’s “Walk off the War” program. The Walk off the War program is designed to support wounded veterans transitioning from military service by hiking the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, in partnership with Warrior

Hike, Operation Military Embrace, the Military Family Lifestyle Charitable Foundation, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association, is supporting this hike. The hike will provide 13 military veterans the opportunity to reconnect with the United States in a uniquely physical and psychological way — a fully funded scholarship to hike the Appalachian Trail.

The purpose of the hike is to provide these veterans a self-directed, self-paced journey along the estimated 2,180 miles of the A.T. There is not a requirement or a goal to complete the entire length of the Trail. The goal for these hikers is to experience the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits of the Appalachian Trail. The true objective is the opportunity to eliminate the negative effects of the war, through walking in nature, engaging with other hikers, and experiencing the hospitality of the Trail towns along the A.T.

Trail maintaining clubs along the A.T. and veterans’ groups in various “Trail towns” will provide the veterans, who may travel alone or in small groups, with ancillary support services. This may include hosting a hiker or arranging transportation. Many American

Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts are teaming up with local Trail clubs to welcome the hikers.

Two of the driving forces behind this initiative are Captains Sean Gobin and Mark Silvers, two Marines who, upon returning from Afghanistan in 2012, hiked the A.T. to help purchase adapted vehicles for seriously wounded veterans. They are also the co-founders of Warrior Hike, a non-profit organization geared to raise funds for wounded veterans.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is proud to partner with Warrior Hike to offer this incredible experience to our military veterans. Our best wishes for a successful hike. 🏔️

**J. Robert Almand** | Chair

**Mark J. Wenger** | Executive Director/CEO



The 13 veterans, and service dog, Cooper, at Amicalola Falls State Park in Georgia before beginning their hike on the A.T. Photo by Heather “Gypsy Sole” Stobie



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# Born to Run



*The headwaters for more than 170 watersheds begin on Appalachian National Scenic Trail lands, and many of these are part of public water supply areas or help protect endangered species, such as the Atlantic salmon.*

BY PAUL MITCHELL

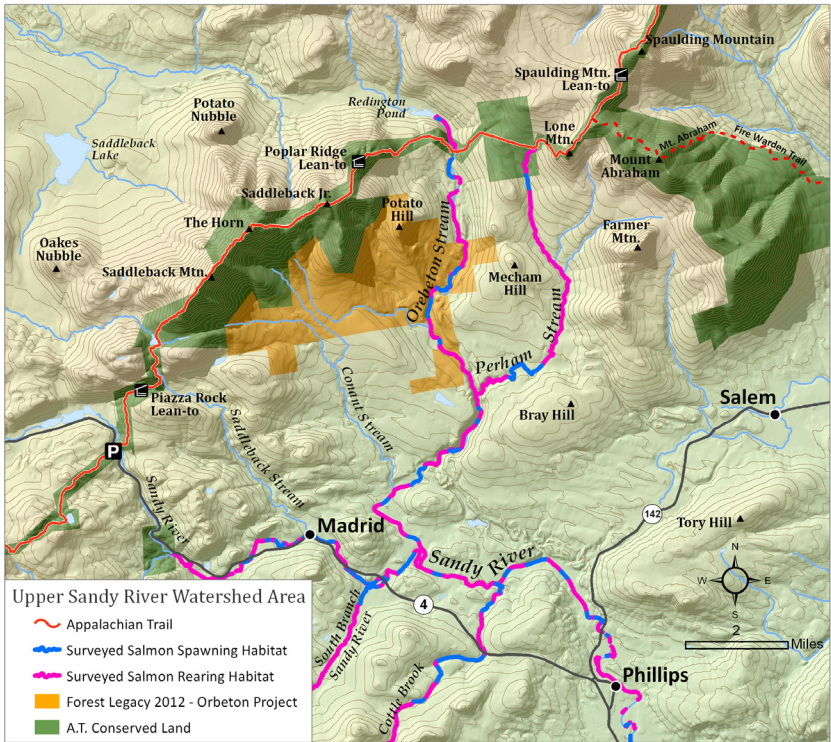
**THE HIGH PEAKS OF WESTERN MAINE ARE, FOR MANY, THE MOST ALLURING** section of the Appalachian Trail. This area is one of several places in the northeastern states containing a significant concentration of 4,000-foot peaks. Saddleback, the Horn, Saddleback Jr., Mount Abraham, Spaulding, Sugarloaf, and the Crocker Mountains rise and fall in a south to north order over 33 miles of the A.T. here. They offer classic New England climbs to alpine summits that reward with superlative views of surrounding peaks, expansive lakes, and endlessly wooded lesser hills and vales. If the lush, green-hued vegetation were not clue enough, any hiker who has scrambled the High Peaks' damp rocks and treaded its bog bridging for a few days would be hard pressed not to come to the correct conclusion that this is an extremely wet environment. It is one of the wettest of the entire Trail. As such, the High Peaks, in hand with their northern latitude and local relief, support innumerable clear and cold springs that collect to form brooks, streams, and rivers with quick flows. These are ideal conditions for cold-water fish like trout and salmon.

While we observe Trail-side streams for their beauty and thirst to drink their clear, cool water, as with many places along the A.T., we hikers come and go often unaware of the stunning stories occurring just downhill, or in this case downstream, from the Trail. For the Sandy River watershed, this is the extraordinary story of Atlantic salmon restoration. A traverse of the High Peaks includes the crossing of several significant tributaries of the Sandy River.

When hiking south to north, these include the main branch of the Sandy River, the Orbeton Stream, and Perham Stream. The Sandy River is crossed on a short, prefabricated, metal bridge atop an old abutment, just a few hundred yards from the A.T.'s Route 4 parking area. By the time one has climbed over Saddleback, the Horn, Saddleback Jr., and

In winter, Maine DMR biologists load eggs into their hydraulic planter on the Orbeton Stream. Photo courtesy of Maine Department of Marine Resources





[THE] HATCHERY WOULD BE A WILD RIVER INSTEAD OF A MAN-MADE CONCRETE STRUCTURE AS MOST HATCHERIES ARE ... IDEALLY, THE SALMON WOULD “EMERGE IN SYNC WITH THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.” THROUGH A METHOD OF EGG PLANTING, THEY COULD EVEN BE BORN WILD.

descended from Poplar Ridge to the Orbeton Stream ford, the Sandy may seem a distant memory. But the Orbeton is in fact one of the largest tributaries in the upper Sandy River watershed and joins the main branch of the Sandy 10 miles downstream from the A.T.’s crossing. A couple more Trail miles north, when climbing Lone Mountain, one encounters several bog bridges that cross the beautifully clear-watered and braided tributaries of Perham Stream — the most significant tributary of the Orbeton.

These waters, which drain down the eastern slopes of the Saddleback ridge and Mount Abraham’s southern side, eventually flow into the Kennebec River. At Merrymeeting Bay, the Kennebec River is joined by the Androscoggin River and shortly thereafter the Kennebec empties into the Gulf of Maine and the greater Atlantic Ocean. Atlantic salmon were last present in the Sandy River, Orbeton Stream, and Perham Stream in the late 1830s. Their disappearance was primarily due to a single factor: the construction of the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in 1837. Built near the head of tide on the Kennebec, the dam immediately prevented passage of fish and changed flows altering the temperature, nutrients, and needed mixing of fresh and salt water in estuarine-rearing habitat further down-

stream. For some fish, such as brook trout, which spend their entire lives in freshwater habitats, the building of Edwards Dam was less consequential. The effect upon Atlantic salmon, however, was catastrophic.

Atlantic salmon are anadromous fish. They begin their lives in freshwater river systems, live in the sea as adults, and return to their places of birth to reproduce (also called spawning). The cycle then starts anew with the next generation. As juveniles, Atlantic salmon spend two years in freshwater before going to sea. Most will then spend two adult years in the open ocean before returning to spawn, thus completing the typical four-year life cycle. On occasion, some fish may return a year early and some may spawn more than once. The distinct spawning population of a river is referred to as a run. In the case of the Sandy River’s salmon run, it was quickly decimated as adult fish were blocked from returning to the river when the Edwards Dam was built.

Not until the middle of the 20th century did it appear, with the establishment of the Atlantic Salmon Commission, that Maine’s salmon might be saved from extinction. By this time, remaining populations were verging on collapse across many river systems in the state. In the second half of the 20th century, the commission focused its restoration efforts

on a process of supplementation. This practice is explained by fishery biologists as a means of maintaining an existing fish population through the addition of hatchery-raised fish. These hatchery fish were raised from the roe of the remaining wild salmon.

Lacking any means of fish passage around Edwards Dam or an existing population to supplement, all upstream waters of the Kennebec, including the Sandy River, Orbeton and Perham Streams, remained without Atlantic salmon. Then, unexpectedly, as the last century came to a close, so did the Edwards Dam’s longevity. In 1997 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission set a precedent and did not renew the dam’s license as its benefits no longer were considered greater than the environmental consequences it caused. It was removed in 1999, freeing an additional and critically needed 17 freshwater miles of the Kennebec River. The removal of the dam became a pivotal moment for the potential return of Atlantic salmon and other fish to the Kennebec River system.

Paul Christman, a marine scientist working for the Maine Department of Marine Resources out of the Hallowell office, has managed marine fisheries in the Kennebec River since 2000. With the removal of the dam, he recognized the opportunity of a lifetime was now before him, but he also acknowledged the significant hurdles that would be faced trying to bring Atlantic salmon back to the Kennebec. With a staff of three, including himself, Christman lacked both the financial and personnel resources to return a long lost fish to Maine’s second largest river.

By 1999, Atlantic salmon had not been present in the Kennebec River above Edwards Dam and thus the Sandy River, Orbeton, and Perham Streams, for at least 150 years. If they were successful, Christman and his staff would be bringing a species of fish back essentially from scratch with the most minimal of resources. A difficult task amplified by the fact that Atlantic salmon face the additional stress of marine survival. Marine survival is the fishery term for the challenges of surviving adult life in the open ocean, an environment of uncontrollable variables. In order for success, not only must the fish survive their juvenile freshwater years, but also an adult life in the sea, and in large enough numbers to spawn.

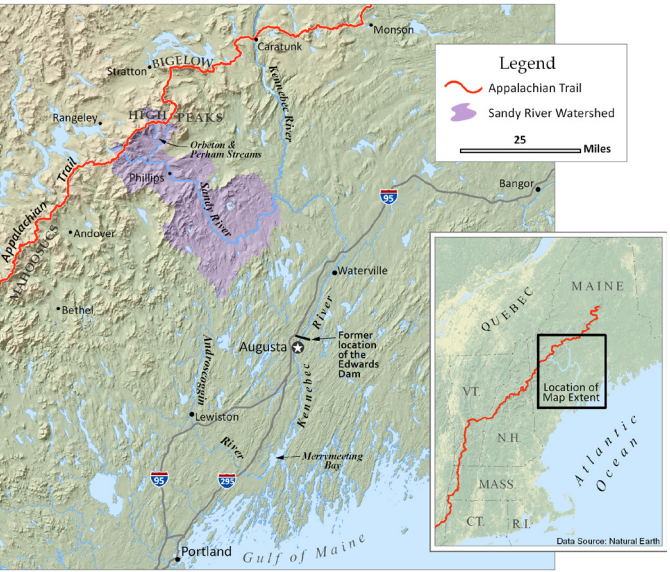
In the world of fishery management, it is commonly accepted that wild fish are more likely to survive than their hatchery-raised cousins. Because of this, hatchery fish used in the supplementation practices of common fishery restorations are understood to effectively maintain a low-level population but incapable of increasing a population. In any case, Christman had no reliable source of hatchery fish at his disposal; existing hatchery products were reserved for other rivers and other programs. Out of adversity, he was therefore free to experiment with what he describes as a “conservation approach” in which he would lead an effort to “jump start a population of wild fish.” His hatchery would be a wild river instead of a man-made concrete

structure as most hatcheries are. His experimental project has, at its foundation, the philosophy that a wild fish population would have lower mortality and greater resiliency. This would require juvenile fish being released into the wild as early in their development as possible. Ideally, they would “emerge in sync with their natural environment.” Through a method of egg planting, they could even be born wild.

But before Christman and his staff could begin their project, they would need to identify the place to carry out their work. The fish would require an intact, undammed, and high quality habitat with dependable water quality. In the Sandy River watershed, they found these characteristics. Among the upper tributaries of the Orbeton, Perham, and others, they discovered “alluvial streams with shallow, fast-moving water” driven by high quality springs and groundwater seeps. The alluvial nature of the streams offered ideal conditions for salmon spawning and rearing, including

coarse sediments required for laying eggs and the early stages of fish development. The Orbeton and Perham Streams offer particularly good habitat due to the elevated nutrient levels they carry from Redington Pond and source bogs. Coincidentally, the Sandy River watershed is the first major tributary of the Kennebec River above the former location of Edwards Dam, making it more proximate than other rivers that are upstream of an additional handful of currently operating dams.

Following their survey of the watershed in 2000 and 2001, Christman began exploring different in-river methods for raising fish in the Sandy River watershed. In addition, he was aware that the installation of a new “fish lift” at the Lockwood Dam in Waterville would enable any spawning adult salmon to be trapped and then released into the Sandy River to continue their homeward journey. At this point,



From top: Spawning adult Sandy River Atlantic salmon being transferred from the fish lift in Waterville to the Sandy River; A Juvenile salmon is measured during a fishery survey. Photos courtesy of Maine Department of Marine Resources. Maps by Paul Mitchell





Christman decided it was time for the “fish to meet the river, and the local communities to meet the fish,” and in 2002, he and his staff began installing streamside incubators in which salmon fry developed. The fry stage is the first after the fish have hatched and already consumed their yolk sacs — it is at this point they begin to find food on their own. Separately, Christman also began, as he says, “tinkering with eggs.” Following egg planting ideas used by fishery biologists in Alaska, he began planting eggs directly into the gravels of the streams as adult fish would do.

From 2002 through 2008, Christman estimates that 145,900 fry were raised in the Sandy River and its tributaries from their work with the streamside incubators and egg planting. As it would happen, in 2006, the first four adult spawning Atlantic salmon that had been raised in the Sandy River arrived at the fish lift in Waterville. Spawning Atlantic salmon have an average weight of 9 to 10 pounds and measure around 28 inches in length. These four fish were moved from the fish lift and taken to the Sandy River where they finished spawning in their home rivers and streams for the first time in more than 150 years. Providing the record of success continues in 2013, it will be the eighth consecutive year that fish raised in the Sandy River, Orbeton, and Perhams streams have returned to spawn. In 2011, the best year to date, 43 fish returned.

Though stunning enough in occurrence to have salmon return after such a long absence, their modest numbers may be just the opening notes of an exponentially more impressive restoration of the fish in these three streams in Maine. In the late 2000s, what began as Christman’s “tinkering” became innovation as he and his staff invented a hydraulic planter that sends eggs through a long metal cylinder into the coarse sedi-

ments preferred by the fish. This innovation enabled Christman to plant vastly more amounts of eggs into the streams than their previous methods. Beginning in 2010, they started a five-year egg planting regimen. That first year 600,000 eggs were planted. In 2011, 860,000 eggs and in 2012, 920,000 eggs were planted. In 2013, he anticipates a similar number. He’s also estimated that 35 percent of these eggs survived to the first fall, and that 10,000 to 30,000 should leave the watershed as smolts. Smolts represent the developmental stage that sees the fish transition from freshwater to salt water.

As their success with planting eggs increased, the use of streamside incubators was discontinued. Christman believes that 2012 was the last year any fish raised through streamside incubation would have returned. This means that in 2013 and the years hereafter, any spawning Atlantic salmon would have



Clockwise from above: Maine DMR biologists work to plant eggs in the lower Orbeton Stream — one of their “wild hatchery” sites — photo courtesy Maine DMR; Adult Atlantic salmon swim in the Sandy River — photo courtesy William Hanson, Brookfield Renewable Energy Partners; Orbeton stream offers a particularly good habitat due to the elevated nutrient levels it carries; Maine’s High Peaks offer superlative views — photos by Bill Plouffe and Maine A.T. Land Trust.

been born and will live its entire life in a natural environment. The fish spawning this year would either have been planted as eggs or spawned naturally by those that began returning in 2006. When asked if the salmon spawning in 2013’s summer run (June through October) might share the same segment of the Orbeton Stream that hikers ford on the A.T., Christman replied that he, “couldn’t ever rule it out.” But the closest they have observed a spawning salmon so far has been around two miles downstream of the Trail crossing, below a small gorge of cascading falls. Though it might be the rarest

of miraculous encounters to cross paths with an Atlantic salmon while fording the Orbeton Stream, we may still enjoy more the experience of the High Peaks environment and the views from our alpine perches knowing that far below, there is an incredible story of restoration and new life occurring.



THOUGH IT MIGHT BE THE RAREST OF MIRACULOUS ENCOUNTERS TO CROSS PATHS WITH AN ATLANTIC SALMON WHILE FORDING THE ORBETON STREAM, HIKERS MAY STILL ENJOY MORE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HIGH PEAKS ENVIRONMENT AND THE VIEWS FROM OUR ALPINE PERCHES KNOWING THAT FAR BELOW, THERE IS AN INCREDIBLE STORY OF RESTORATION AND NEW LIFE OCCURRING.

In the success of restoring Atlantic salmon to the Sandy River and its tributaries, Christman’s team has found their ingenuity in demand. His hydraulic planter technique is now being used on other rivers in the state and distant fishery management professionals are eager to try it as well. But the Sandy River’s salmon teeter on the edge. Their population is not large enough to succeed on its own yet and after next year’s egg planting, no source of funding for additional egg plantings has been secured. In order to continue building upon their success, Christman will have to find the funding that insures this experiment has not been all for naught.

The role of the A.T.’s lands should not be overlooked in this story. By protecting the headwaters of the Sandy River, Orbeton, and Perham Streams, the A.T.’s corridor helps to insure land uses that benefit the water quality of Atlantic salmon habitat. In 2012, the United States Forest Service, provided \$1.73 million for a Forest Legacy project that would purchase 5,808 acres of timberland that buffer the Orbeton Stream and connects with existing conserved land on Saddleback Mountain. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy

(ATC) has partnered with the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, the High Peaks Alliance, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, and The Trust for Public Land to move this project forward. “The Appalachian Trail weaves together amazing conservation stories and conservation successes along its 2,000-plus-mile expanse across the Appalachian Mountain range. So many partners contribute to the health and vitality of the ecosystems and species that populate these ancient mountains,” says the ATC’s director of conservation, Laura Belleville. “It is stories like this one that give us hope for the future. Mr. Christman’s vision and ingenuity are an inspiration. It’s an honor to share his story with those who hike these mountains, and those who dream of hiking — giving all the opportunity to learn about the seemingly impossible restoration of salmon.” While recent success in High Peaks conservation is worthy of celebrating, there is still more to do. “Ultimately we all need to support efforts to protect and maintain the Trail as well as the efforts of our partners that enrich our outdoor experiences,” continues Belleville, “There is no way that conservation can happen without the generous support of our members.” ♡

Paul Mitchel is the ATC’s GIS specialist. Paul would like to thank Paul Christman, Lloyd Griscom (High Peaks Alliance and Sandy River Land Trust), and Carole Haas (Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust) for their contributions to this article.

To learn more about how to support Mr. Christman’s work and land conservation in the High Peaks area of western Maine, visit: Maine Department of Marine Resources: [maine.gov/dmr/index.htm](http://maine.gov/dmr/index.htm), High Peaks Alliance: [highpeaksalliance.org](http://highpeaksalliance.org), Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust: [matlt.org](http://matlt.org), Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust: [rlht.org](http://rlht.org), Sandy River Land Trust: [sandyriverlandtrust.org](http://sandyriverlandtrust.org), The Trust for Public Land: [tpl.org](http://tpl.org)



# I TRAILHEAD I

FERNS ALONG TRAIL IN NEW YORK – BY MIKE BUFFINGTON

## Honorary Membership Nominations

Nominations are now in order for honorary membership in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) — an award intended to recognize long-term, extraordinary service to the Trail and the ATC. More than 30 men and women have been accorded that status since the board established it as the organization's highest honor in the late 1960s. The nomination should state the type of contribution made, the years of service on behalf of the Trail, and any other information that might be of interest to the selection committee, which will pass its recommendations on to the board's executive committee. Among other criteria for the honor is a bylaws requirement that "the service performed shall have had an inspirational or exemplary effect because of its special quality/character or innovative aspects, rather than be service of conventional nature but performed in a superior manner ... if the nominee's service has been mainly within a particular club that must have had either regional implications or must bear upon the Trail as a whole, or upon the club's relationship to the ATC."

Nominations can be emailed to [mwegner@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:mwegner@appalachiantrail.org) with "Honorary Member" in the subject line, or mailed, before June 15, 2013, to Betsy Thompson, Chair, Honorary Membership Committee, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.



## Smoky Mountain Hiking Club Receives Award

**THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN HIKING CLUB (SMHC) BACKCOUNTRY SHELTER** Crew has been selected as the Southeast Regional winner of the George B. Hartzog, Jr. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service for their group's extraordinary service to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Hartzog Volunteer Group Award is intended to recognize a group that goes above and beyond the normal call of duty. Nominations are reviewed based on the magnitude of work, meeting the mission of the National Park Service, rising above challenges, and developing partnerships.

Since 1998, this extraordinary group of committed volunteers completely rehabilitated each of the park's 15 backcountry shelters — a project that required hundreds of hours of extensive preplanning, securing grants to fund the project, staging of materials, backpacking in tools to the sites, not to mention the hours involved in the actual shelter construction. It is estimated that during the course of this project, the crew obtained more than \$750,000 of donated construction materials, moved more than 120 tons of dirt and materials, and donated more than 20,000 hours of time, at a value of nearly half-a-million dollars, to the park. The Friends of the Smokies also provided funds of more than \$120,000, which were made possible through the generous support of the Richard Haiman National Parks Foundation.

The crew brought their individual talents to bear to successfully complete all aspects of the project, and their strong camaraderie saw them through some grueling weather conditions in the backcountry. This complex project involved everything from helicopter operations to construction activities, and all the work was done over the last 15 years without any accident or injury. The old shelters were unsightly and uninviting, which encouraged illegal camping and resource damage while the new design is more open, inviting, and sustainable. Those who are familiar with the old and new designs describe the transformation as "night and day." The shelters are now not only used but also praised by backcountry users and the result is a significant decrease in resource damage and bear/human interactions. The work of the SMHC Backcountry Shelter Crew demonstrates that volunteers can, and will, organize and complete complex projects that are of high value to both the National Park Service and park visitors.



## COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR announcements

**LAST YEAR, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) PROVIDED** support to its growing A.T. Community network by coordinating 11 volunteers who provided more than 3,000 hours of outreach and recruited more than 1,000 volunteers for Trail stewardship activities. This year, the ATC selected 17 new volunteer A.T. ambassadors, serving 15 different communities along the Trail. "The ATC is excited about building its volunteer base by providing A.T. ambassadors to designated A.T. Communities to help increase local stewardship of public lands and support healthy lifestyles for community citizens," said the ATC's community program manager, Julie Judkins. **The 2013 ambassadors are:**

**Marsha Conner** — *Dahlongega, Georgia:* Marsha started a hiking club with her church, and plans recreational hikes, camping events, and outdoor adventures.

**Daniel Windham** — *Helen/White County, Georgia:* Daniel is a world renowned climber and guide. He's excited about "giving back to the wilderness, a little of what it has given me".

**Grady and Harrison Garner** — *Blairsville/Union County, Georgia:* The brothers from Blairsville thru-hiked last year, and are looking for ways to bring the culture of the A.T. and its volunteers into the lives of Union County residents.

**Mary Bennett** — *Franklin, North Carolina:* Mary is an educator, artist, horticulturalist and hiker. As her second year as ambassador, she works with students at local schools and organizations, and leads nature-oriented activities for families.

**Anne Baker** — *Hot Springs, North Carolina:* Growing up 10 miles from Hot Springs, Anne has seen the value of the Trail to the community. She is passionate

about sharing her skills and background in journalism and photography as an ambassador. **Janet Hensley** — *Unicoi County, Tennessee:* Better known as Miss Janet to hikers along the Trail, Janet is serving her second term of ambassador for Erwin and Unicoi County.

**Rob Martin** — *Unicoi County, Tennessee:* Joining Janet in Unicoi, Rob is an avid outdoorsman frequently hiking the A.T. and kayaking the Nolichucky River.

**J.D. Hibbitts** — *Damascus, Virginia:* A teacher and writer, J.D. is a thru-hiker, an intermediate climber and a journeyman kayaker.

**Diana Billips** — *Bland County, Virginia:* Diana is a board member and maintainer for the Piedmont A.T. Hikers, and has started a series of successful Family Fun Hikes. This is her second year serving as ambassador.

**Tim Miller** — *Troutville, Virginia:* Tim is a middle school teacher and an alumnus of the ATC's Trail to Every Classroom program. He is an Eagle Scout, lifelong hiker, and backpacker.

**Jennifer Keck** — *Luray/Page County, Virginia:* President of

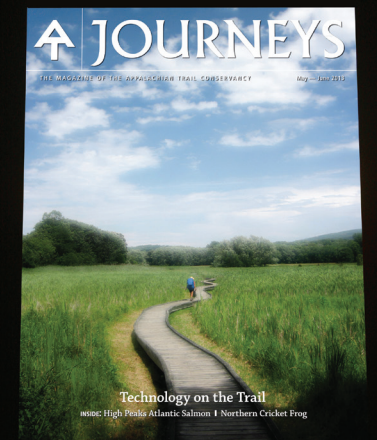
the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Association, Jennifer is the former director of tourism for Front Royal and a trained Master Naturalist. **Alyson Browett** — *Front Royal/Warren County, Virginia:* An avid hiker, Alyson is a public health professional, trainer and chef. **Wendy Hershey** — *Harpers Ferry/Bolivar, West Virginia:* A section hiker, Wendy loves quotes, adores jokes and loves to laugh.

**Paul Smith** — *Duncannon, Pennsylvania:* Paul worked intimately with the community's designation event and has coordinated a Trail themed mural in town. This is his second term as ambassador.

**Cassandra Kessman** — *Harlem Valley, New York:* Cassandra is serving the newly approved community of Dover and Pawling, New York. She has a love for gardening and native plants.

**Patty Harding** — *Monson, Maine:* Patty is a Trail maintainer on Barren Mountain and a corridor monitor in the Hundred Mile Wilderness with the Maine A.T. Club.

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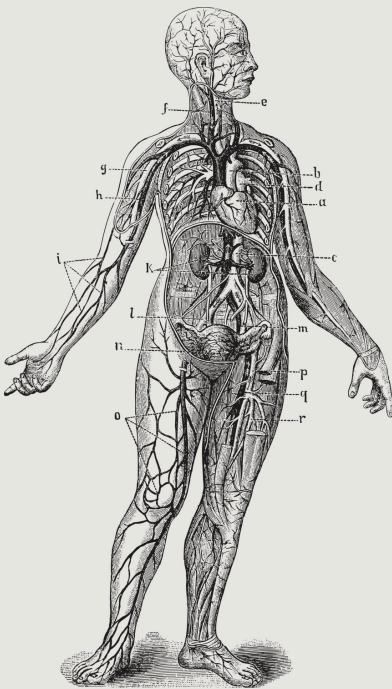


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# Ticks, Norovirus, and Giardia Safety

A hike on the Appalachian Trail is one of the most invigorating ways to spend a summer afternoon, or several months if you are a thru-hiker. However, there are microscopic threats lurking along the Trail that could ruin your hike and compromise your health.



Information courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information on these and other diseases, visit: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

**TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES** are arguably the most dangerous threat to A.T. hikers. Most humans are infected by nymphs, which are about the size of a poppy seed and difficult to see.

**Prevention:**

- Use insect repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin
- Treat clothing with permethrin (kills ticks on contact) / wear light-colored clothing
- Perform daily tick checks; removing an embedded tick within 24 hours reduces risk of illness

**Removing embedded ticks:**

- Use tweezers to grasp tick as close to skin as possible — pull away in an upward motion
- Disinfect site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide

## Tick-borne illnesses within states the A.T. traverses

Disease/Carrier(s)	Range on the A.T.	Symptoms
Lyme disease/Black-legged deer ticks	Georgia to Maine, highest risk from MD north to MA	Flu-like symptoms, bulls-eye rash, appears 3 to 30 days after being bitten. The rash does not always develop and can migrate to different parts of the body.
Babesiosis (microscopic parasites that infect red blood cells)/ Blacklegged deer ticks	Georgia to Maine, highest risk in NY and NJ	Asymptomatic to life threatening. Diagnosed by examining blood smear for Babesia parasites inside red blood cells
Ehrlichiosis/ Lone star tick	Georgia to Maine	Flu-like symptoms, confusion, red eyes
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever/American dog and Brown dog ticks	Georgia to Maine, highest risk in NC and TN	Flu-like symptoms, red eyes, confusion, rash appears 2–5 days after fever, small, flat, pink, non-itchy spots on the wrists, forearms, and ankles
STARI (Southern Tick-Associated Rash)/ Lone star tick	Georgia to Maine	Flu-like symptoms, circular bulls-eye rash within 7 days, smaller than Lyme disease rash.
Anaplasmosis/Black-legged deer ticks	Georgia to Maine, highest risk in NY, CT, NJ	Flu-like symptoms, confusion, rash (rare)

**NOROVIRUS** is a highly contagious virus that causes your stomach and/or intestines to become inflamed, which leads to stomach pain, nausea, and diarrhea. In 2012, presumed outbreaks of norovirus among A.T. hikers were investigated by health departments in Tennessee, New Hampshire, and Maine. It is transmitted by contact with an infected person, contaminated food or water, or contaminated surfaces. The virus has a 12 to 48-hour incubation period and lasts 24 to 60 hours. Infected hikers may be contagious for three days to two weeks after recovery. Outbreaks occur more often where people share facilities for sleeping, dining, showering, and toileting; the virus can spread rapidly in crowded shelters and hostels; sanitation is key for avoiding and spreading norovirus.

**Prevention:**

- Do not share food or utensils, or drink from other hikers’ water bottles
- Wash your hands with biodegradable soap (200’ from water sources) before eating or preparing food and after toileting
- Be aware that alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be ineffective against norovirus
- Treat all water. To learn how best to treat your water, visit: [www.cdc.gov/healthywater](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater)
- Follow Leave No Trace guidelines for disposing of human waste. For best practices, visit: [www.appalachiantrail.org/lnt](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/lnt)

**GIARDIA** is a diarrheal disease caused by a microscopic parasite.

**Prevention:**

- Treat your water! The primary cause of giardia on the A.T. is contaminated drinking water. To learn how to best treat your water, visit: [www.cdc.gov/healthywater](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater)
- Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer regularly



**ANDREW DOWNS**  
*New ATC Regional Director*

**THIS APRIL, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY’S (ATC) ANDREW** Downs will begin work in his new position as the ATC’s southwest and central Virginia regional director. Andrew has worked since 2007 with the ATC’s Deep South office as the regional Trail resources manager and brings a diversity of experience to the regional director position. “Most significantly he has extensive experience working with agency partners and volunteers,” says the ATC’s director of conservation, Laura Belleville.

After graduating from Appalachian State University with a degree in Archeology, and thru-hiking the A.T. in 2002, Andrew worked as an archeologist around the southeastern U.S. Returning to school to study under A.T. researcher Roger Moore, Andrew earned a Master’s of Science in Natural Resource Management from North Carolina State while working on North Carolina’s Haw River and Mountains-to-Sea Trail. He has also been very successful at marketing the ATC’s Smokies Wilderness Elite A.T. Crew (SWEAT) program to young people and has earned a Primitive Skills Award for his work establishing the Wilderness Skills Institute. After working under the ATC’s long-time Deep South regional director, Morgan Sommerville, for six years, Andrew is dedicated to the traditions of A.T. management, takes a volunteers-first approach when working to protect the Trail and the A.T. experience, and is committed to the effective management of the A.T. and the ATC.

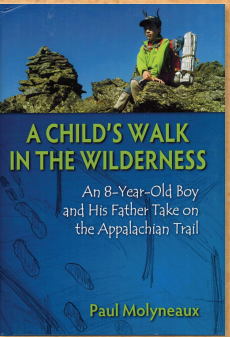
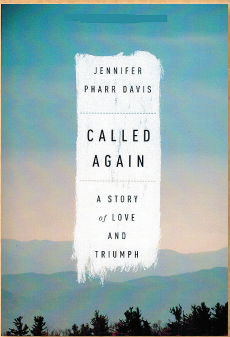
## Candidates for 2013-2015 ATC Board of Directors

**THE SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR THE NEXT TWO-YEAR TERM OF THE** Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board of Directors, beginning in July 2013, includes six new board members as well as nine returning board members. All positions will be voted upon July 20 during the ATC business meeting at the biennial membership meeting in Cullowhee, North Carolina.

A nominating committee chaired by board member Clark Wright is proposing the following individuals for the ATC officer positions: Chair, Sandra Marra of Alexandria, Virginia; Vice-Chair, Clark Wright of New Bern, North Carolina; Secretary, Elizabeth P. Thompson of Ridgefield, Connecticut; and Treasurer, Arthur P. Foley of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Nominated for their first terms on the board in director positions are: Edward Guyot of Keene, New Hampshire; Nathaniel Stoddard of Eagle, Colorado; Carrie Rodriguez-Tweeten of Raleigh, North Carolina; Samuel Sarofeen of Auburn, New York; Greg Winchester of Atlanta, Georgia; and Beth Critton, of West Hartford, Connecticut. Nominated for reelection as directors are: Leonard Bernstein of Asheville, North Carolina; Richard Daileader of Charlotte, North Carolina; Marcia Fairweather of Silver Spring, Maryland; Mary Higley of Naples, Florida and Plymouth, Massachusetts; and Terry Lierman of Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Leaving the Board at the end of this term are J. Robert Almand (Chair) of Suwanee, Georgia; William Plouffe (Vice-Chair) of Freeport, Maine; Kara Ball (Secretary) of Vienna, Virginia; Charles Maynard of Jonesborough, Tennessee; Brian Fitzgerald of South Duxbury, Vermont. Alternate candidates for officer and director positions can be nominated through petitions signed by at least 50 ATC members and sent before June 20 to the executive director, Mark Wenger, at the ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Votes by members must be cast in person at the 2013 Cullowhee Biennial Conference and Membership Meeting. ⬆



## Hiking Memoirs

Two new hard-cover hiking memoirs this spring are joining the more than 30 already available at the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store.

*A Child’s Walk in the Wilderness: An 8-Year-Old Boy and His Father Take on the Appalachian Trail* is the funny and poignant account of Paul Molyneux’s three-stage hike with his son, Asher. In stock now; item #219; \$17.95 to ATC members.

*Called Again: Love and Triumph on the Appalachian Trail* is the inside story of Jennifer Pharr Davis’ 46-day, sometimes-brutal hike of the Trail in 2011 ... but also a story about her love for the Trail and for her husband, Brew, support-team chief. Available in June; item #220; \$22.45 to members.

Other new memoirs will be joining the list this spring. Check in periodically and search for “new!”



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# TECHNOLOGY *and the Trail*

BY JESSICA LINNELL PRICE

With nightfall approaching in the White Mountains, two lost hikers desperately tried to reach a recognizable trail, a road, or another hiker to guide them back home. Their only means of finding their way or reaching help was dead — the screen was blacker than the sky above them offering no hope. A routine day hike had turned into the stuff nightmares are made of. The couple's only safety line was an iPhone, first rendered useless by the lack of cell signal before completely running out of battery power.

On June 25, 2012, *The Boston Globe* published an article about this couple lost in the woods. By accident, luck, or both, the hikers were found by a rescue party looking for someone else lost in the mountains. More than half of Americans own smartphones, and it isn't surprising that this couple had one with them. But what is surprising — even a little disturbing — is that a smartphone was the *only* survival “tool” the couple had with them.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) warns against such a scenario. During an interview with the ATC's information services manager, Laurie Potteiger described the dichotomy, “Taking a mobile device can be a two-edged sword. Certainly there are situations where a cell phone or a SPOT device can give you an additional measure of safety. If you get into trouble, you can call 911 or you can use your SPOT device to let people back home know that you're okay. On the other hand, there's concern that people may not plan sufficiently knowing they have a device where they can just call for help.” As in the instance of that couple in the White Mountains, the hikers' lack of planning for contingency situations is a real concern.

*A hiker traverses the A.T. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Photo by Douglas Wiles*





From top: Don Judy (shown atop Springer Mountain at the end of his thru-hike), says that though he loves technology, leaving it mostly behind, “enriches the experience.” Zach Davis hiked the A.T. to escape endless hours of screen time at work, but still used his iPhone to stay connected to his family and friends; though most of his updates were done while in town rather than on the Trail itself.

confidence” that a cell phone can give. HikeSafe.com, a website endorsed by the White Mountain National Forest and New Hampshire Fish and Game, states the following about GPS and other personal location devices on the Trail: “Never rely solely on technology. Know how to navigate without it, and how to reorient yourself if you become lost. A GPS works like a compass: best with a map.” Though instances have been reported of hikers being saved because they had a cell phone, smartphone, GPS or SPOT device, those devices are not a fool-proof safety net. Even with cell signals becoming more available in some wilderness areas, signals are not everywhere.

The ATC and American Hiking Society are not anti-social media, anti-smartphone, or even anti-technology by any means. Both organizations use social media to communicate with the public and to have conversations with people interested in their organizations. The ATC has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Google +, YouTube, Pinterest, and several other venues. Potteiger often responds to threads on whiteblaze.net or refers people with questions to check out

Numerous organizations are worried about the impacts that smartphones and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices are having on the Trail. Gregory Miller, president of American Hiking Society, explains, “We still believe every hiker should know how to use a compass and a map.” Miller believes in the power of technology to enhance a hiker’s experience, but he also warns against the “false sense of

## ALTHOUGH TECHNOLOGY IS AVAILABLE TO MORE PEOPLE AND IN MORE AREAS, SOME WHO SET OUT ON THE WHITE-BLAZED TRAIL ARE LOOKING TO COMPLETELY ESCAPE IT.

sites like trailjournal.com (especially for gear recommendations). With roughly 57,000 followers on Facebook, the ATC has found that social media is a great way to spread the word about the Trail, educate the public about new policies, and hear feedback from hikers on what they love about the A.T. Javier Folgar, director of marketing and communications at the ATC, calls social media a great asset to the organization: “We’re able to disseminate information instantaneously; it’s just a great tool and a great opportunity,” he explains.

The prepared and responsible hiker who carries a flashlight, a map, a compass, and matches, can still find use for having a smartphone on the Trail, but one should not replace the others. As Miller describes it, “Technology in the outdoors serves four purposes: connectivity, navigation, safety, and knowledge.” Through social media, texting, emailing, and calling, hikers can stay connected to their network even while in remote locations. Zach Davis hiked the A.T. in March 2011 to escape the 80-plus hours a week of screen time he was logging in, but he didn’t abandon technology entirely during his five-month thru-hike. Instead, he used social media to maintain connectivity to his family, friends, and even the world while he was on the Trail. Using his iPhone, Davis updated his blog two to three times a month and used Facebook and Twitter to stay connected during his hike, though he states that most of his updates were done while in town rather than on the Trail itself — something the ATC heavily encourages. Other hikers have used social media while hiking the A.T. to promote any number of causes or raise awareness for issues. Web sites and forums like whiteblaze.net offer A.T. hikers a way to connect with each other on and off the Trail. Some members post only before or after they hike, but with smartphones and more cell signal access, posting to such forums on the Trail is becoming a reality.

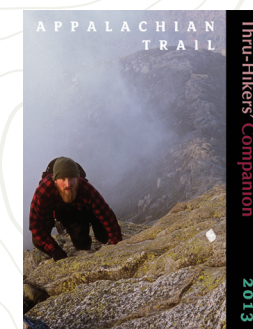
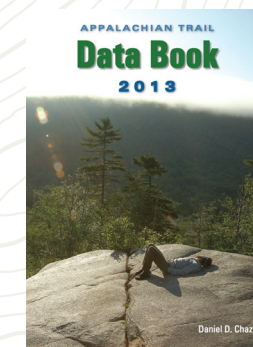
Of course, the Trail does have its own way of passing information along. Shelter journals and word of mouth have long worked wonders to let hikers know if there’s bad weather coming, a tree down, or a bear in the area without the use of batteries or cell signals. Lance Hansard, a southbound (SoBo) A.T. thru-hiker (who completed the A.T. in 1994) recalls reading the journeys of the northbound hikers backwards — like

watching a flashback in a movie. Hansard argues social media has existed on the A.T. for years — before the Internet or cell phones were such a ubiquitous presence in our society: “Back then, they had their own form of social media anyway. It was just journals in a coffee can in the shelter.”

But journals and word of mouth do have limitations. Neither can tell hikers the exact distance to water or the next shelter, nor can they track progress with real-time navigation. Smartphones can. Apps like MapMyHike, ViewRanger, and AllTrails allow a gamut of services: trail maps, geotagging of photos, and distance, speed and altitude tracking. Some apps, like ViewRanger, even offer features that are available without a cell signal. Once a trail map is downloaded via ViewRanger to a smartphone, it can be accessed without an active signal. Real-time tracking features let hikers view their progress on a digital map making smartphones equal in services to GPS devices and leading many hikers to abandon several devices and use their smartphone as their only form of technology. The social media aspect also offers the connectivity mentioned earlier. By linking to Facebook or emailing their trip to friends, hikers can not only track their own experience but can allow others to track it and even follow in their footsteps later on.

Some apps feature safety measures, like the Buddy Beacon on ViewRanger. Margie Cohen, longtime outdoor lover and advisor with ViewRanger, describes this feature, “With Buddy Beacon, hikers hitting the Trail at the same time can track their friends while still on the Trail.” That means no more worrying about different hiking speeds or getting separated. The security encrypted system allows others to track hikers from their Web site as well (if the hiker has given them the information and permission to do so). This feature has aided many search and rescue groups, where one person in central command at a home base

uses the Web site to track all the people out in the field. Of course, the safety features only work if the hiker has a signal, if their phone has battery life, and if the hiker can pinpoint their location (either through GPS coordinates or a map and compass in case a rescue is needed). There is another concern when using smartphones, social media, and location devices while on the Trail: it is one of susceptibility. The ATC



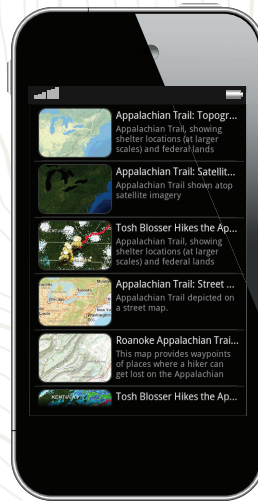
Guidebooks, such as the *Appalachian Trail Data Book* and *Thru-Hikers' Companion*, are very helpful, highly recommended, and do not require batteries or a signal.



## THE PREPARED AND RESPONSIBLE HIKER WHO CARRIES A FLASHLIGHT, A MAP, A COMPASS, AND MATCHES, CAN STILL FIND USE FOR HAVING A SMARTPHONE ON THE TRAIL, BUT ONE SHOULD NOT REPLACE THE OTHERS.

does not recommend posting your schedule or current location to publicly accessible sites. Rather, Potteiger says, “ATC advises people to use password protected sites or delay posting their location so that people don’t know exactly where you are.” She emphasizes that just because the technology exists to let people know your exact location all the time doesn’t mean you should do it, warning that it “makes people potentially vulnerable.” So, even though safety can be enhanced by smartphones and location devices, it can also be compromised if not used appropriately.

The same hand-held device that can provide connectivity, navigation, and safety also offers knowledge-enhancing programs through various apps. Apps now allow hikers to take pictures of a leaf and identify the plant species,



Applications from companies like Esri (Environmental Sciences Research Institute — in this case using Arc GIS) can be useful in finding shelters, giving weather reports, and providing topographical and other styles of maps with myriad helpful real-time Trail-related information — still they should not take the place of up-to-date A.T. maps and guidebooks.

listen to a bird call and identify the bird, or look into the night sky and find constellations through sky maps. Wilderness areas are jumping onto the smartphone application trend too. The Smokies Visitor Guide is a free app for guests of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The National Park Service (NPS) also has free cell phone audio tours available to give visitors the feel of a ranger-led tour. According to the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) press release in January 2013, the NPS plans to increase cell and WiFi access within park limits — expanding service to more locations and creating more apps specific to individual parks. While these uses of phones, giving historical information or teaching about the environment, can benefit visitors, there is debate as to the ramifications of increasing cellular and internet access in nature and wilderness areas. Smartphones do feature some amazing applications offering

replacement of one’s navigation system, field guide, camera, camcorder, recorder, flashlight, and music player. Yet, despite the vast array of these devices, many people are choosing to leave them at home.

Although technology is available to more people and in more areas, some who set out on the white-blazed trail are looking to completely escape it. Hansard says, “To me, the technology would take the whole point in going out of it, because when I went, I wanted to be in nature, I wanted to be in the woods, and I wanted to be by myself.” Even though cell phones and social media weren’t available when Hansard hiked the Trail, he says if he did it over today, he still wouldn’t want to have a cell phone with him or to blog about his experience on the A.T. Dan Judy, SoBo thru-hiker (who completed the A.T. in 2000) echoes Hansard’s sentiments: “As much as I love my email and love Facebook, I think I would say goodbye to that stuff for a while. I think it enriches the experience — to have an experience different from my day-to-day life.” Dan’s strong ties to the A.T. are undeniable. Not only did his father and sister also SoBo thru-hike the A.T., but he proposed to his fiancée on the Trail. Richard, Dan’s father, first thru-hiked the Trail after graduating from the University of Georgia in 1973. At that time, voicemail didn’t exist on home phones, and if Richard called home during his 140 days on the A.T. and no one answered, he might not get a chance to call again for weeks. He quips, “My high technology was a pocket knife.”

Even those hikers who leave their phones at home can be affected by technology on the Trail. In fact, the ATC has an official policy regarding cell phone usage on the A.T. (though, admittedly the policy was written before smart phones existed). Adopted from Leave No Trace, Inc., the ATC states, “Use cell phones out of sight and sound of other visitors.”

This policy speaks to another important aspect of smartphone, cell phone, and technology use in wilderness areas. Hikers that use technology can indeed impact other people, animals, and the environment around them. Talking loudly on a cell phone, listening to music, or even constantly checking for text or email messages can distract other hikers from their own nature experience. Potteiger describes, “Sending



a text or typing and posting online is a little bit less intrusive [than talking on the phone] but it’s still bringing technology into the backcountry and can detract from the experience of others.” Balance was key for Davis — enjoying and experiencing nature in the moment and updating family in friends through social media with discretion. Davis says, “Although I used social media (sparingly) while on the Trail, I made a point to enjoy a good portion of each day free of all technology.” Striking that balance might be the most important, yet trickiest, part.

With so many facets to the discussion over social media and technology on the Trail, hikers must take into account the pros and cons and make an informed, conscientious, and personal decision. Miller cautions, “I think we’re too quick to demonize people for technology — especially kids and young people.” He favors advocating the best use of technology and educating people on what they might miss being plugged in all the time. Miller hopes to see groups of hikers making a pact to either abandon or limit their technology use on the Trail. Of his personal feelings, he says, “I believe that cell phones on the Trail should only be used for real emergencies.” The ATC’s Folgar adds this ever-important question to the debate, “How much are you willing to let this device interrupt what’s around you?” Conversations with other hikers, the breeze rustling the leaves in the trees, or

Richard Judy (shown above during a more recent hike on the A.T. in Lehigh Gap, Pennsylvania) first thru-hiked the Trail in 1973, when voicemail didn’t exist on home phones and, “high technology was a pocket knife.”

the calling of a warbler could all be missed by the person glued to their phone. “The A.T. is a place to unplug, and we welcome that,” the ATC’s Potteiger says. “It’s just a personal decision how people want to approach the Trail and how their decisions will impact others — communicating back home and being discrete.”

Davis offers this perspective: “I don’t advocate that people binge on technology while on the Trail, but I also don’t condemn those who want to send a picture message of a beautiful landscape to their mom, boyfriend, or wife. All that matters is that people hike their own hike.” For Hansard, hiking his own hike meant cherishing the Trail as a personal journey. For Richard and Dan Judy, it meant experiencing the isolation of the Trail. And for Davis, it meant sharing his personal metamorphosis with family, friends, and fans of his blog. Perhaps Richard Judy said it best: “Learn to superimpose a level of courtesy and rational behavior with all these electronic devices. We can make them our servants instead of being servants to them.”



# A Lot Like YOU

On June 25 2003, a seven-year-old boy started hiking the Appalachian Trail with his 65- year-old grandfather. They hiked from Rockfish Gap through the Shenandoah National Park and on to Harpers Ferry (more than 160 miles) in about three-and-a-half weeks. They didn't know it when they started, but this journey would end on Katahdin on August 14, 2010 after having hiked the entire Trail. In the process, they would build a unique hiking partnership and a very special relationship. Their names are Noah and Jim Huff — their Trail names: "Appy" and "Pappy."

BY JUDY MCGUIRE

## from the time they

were little, Noah and his younger sister Ella spent a great deal of time with their grandfather. With him, they grew to love the outdoors and became comfortable spending long periods away from home. Naturally, when Jim started a thru-hike in April 2003, they and their father accompanied him to Springer. "If he had asked me to go along, I would have," says Noah, but there was that small matter of school to consider. Instead, Jim promised Noah they would hike together during the summer. Finally, the time arrived in late June.

They decided to start from Waynesboro, Virginia, famous along the A.T. for its "Trail angels." They were touched by a Trail angel before even setting foot on the Trail. The night before

their intended start date, Pappy contracted a stomach bug and had to delay their departure. A Trail angel named Sherry helped them find a cheap room, moved their stuff there from the YMCA lawn, and, two days later, she gave them a ride up to Rockfish Gap. That was a harbinger of the kind of treatment Appy and Pappy would receive all along the A.T.

The first day hiking up from Rockfish Gap was a hard one for Noah. When Jim, walking in front, looked back after a couple of miles he saw tears streaming down his grandson's face. They immediately took a break and Jim found that Noah's pack was hurting him. Jim, who was already carrying all the food and gear, stopped and looked inside the pack. Noah's father had added extra food, unbeknownst to either hiker. So Jim took the extra food into his own pack and Noah hoisted his lighter pack on his back and hiked on happily. That was the first and last time on the Trail that Noah complained.

In the Shenandoahs they were treated like royalty at all the campgrounds and national park facilities. "He was a celebrity. They'd know we were coming," says Jim. Campground hosts and other families invited them to share meals and Noah got to play with lots of other children. They also attended ranger programs, which Noah loved. And that was just the beginning of their hike. When they reached Front Royal, Trail angel Sherry picked them up, drove them back to Waynesboro for an "old time" Fourth of July celebration, and returned them to Front Royal late that night. By the time they arrived in Harpers Ferry on July 19, Jim had made a momentous decision. "Noah had done so well and enjoyed it so much I told him we would finish the Trail together as a section hike," explains Jim. And so they did.

Jim grew up in Gatlinburg, Tennessee where "the A.T. is part of your heritage," he says. His uncle built Mount LeConte Lodge and Jim himself owned it for a number of years. "I spent half my life on the mountain," he says. Noah, who lives in greater Nashville but visits Gatlinburg regularly, loves "being away from everything," exploring outdoors, and meeting people. He is fascinated by wildlife, loves swimming in ponds and streams, and has no problem getting dirty.

Because of Jim's work, Appy and Pappy did not resume their trek until 2005 when they hiked the 72-mile section from Fontana Dam to Davenport Gap with seven-year-old Ella (Trail name: "Happy"). Jim carried all of Ella's food that year but Noah carried his own. Ella and Noah had a great time with the wildlife. Ella would lie down and Noah would place a few salamanders on her and she would giggle as they crawled all over her.

In 2006, Noah and Jim returned to Harpers Ferry to hike to Fort Montgomery, New York, 380 miles away. Even after a day of backpacking Noah still had excess energy to burn, which he expended exploring around the shelters and chatting with other hikers. "When I saw a shelter I'd run to it!" he said. The Peters Mountain Shelter, just north of Duncannon, Pennsylvania is well-known for the exhausting 300-step descent to the water source. When Noah arrived, he not only happily filled his and Jim's water bottles, but also those of the other hikers at the shelter, eight trips in all.

In 2007, the pair hiked 345 miles from Fort Montgomery, New York to Hanover, New Hampshire in just under a month. They made some changes that year (converting to hammocks, a Jetboil stove, commercial freeze-dried dinners, and cold breakfasts) that reduced pack weight and saved them time. Appy had the time of his life at Upper Goose Pond where they cooled their heels for two nights while waiting for a mail-drop. He swam and canoed and beat all the thru-hikers at

From left: Appy and Pappy in 2006 at the New York-New Jersey state line; the duo at the completion of their hike in 2010.







The team takes a break at a shelter during their final 2010 section hike.

pancake-eating. The hiking duo even hauled in food from a nearby town to provide lunch for other hikers.

Because they wanted Katahdin to be their final point, Noah and Jim then spent the next two years hiking the southern portions of the Trail Noah had missed. In 2008, Pappy, Appy, Happy, and their aunt Susan (Trail name: "Zappy") hiked from Davenport Gap into Hot Springs, North Carolina. Ella managed to soldier through some serious blisters (Jim dubbed her "Blisterella") and Susan struggled until she reached Max Patch which, according to Jim, "solves everybody's problems." The ladies departed in Hot Springs while Appy and Pappy continued on to Sugar Grove, Virginia completing 289 miles in 33 days.

As the years passed, they got faster and shared the weight more equally. The first year Noah carried 15 pounds while Jim carried 45, with the latter carrying all the food, tent, stove, and other common items. After that, Noah carried his fair share of the food. In the second and third years Noah carried 25 pounds and Jim carried 35. The next two years they carried equal weight (about 30 pounds each) and in the last two years Noah carried 35 while Jim carried 25 pounds. In 2009 Noah and Jim hiked from Springer Mountain to Fontana Dam (163 miles in 16 days) and from Sugar Grove to Waynesboro, Virginia (315 miles in 30 days). Noah was able to celebrate his thirteenth birthday in Helen, Georgia that year, complete with a birthday dinner at a local restaurant of hamburger, fries, and complimentary dessert and a "Happy Birthday" serenade from the staff. In that section, Noah also enjoyed getting to know Rusty Nesbitt while staying at the Hard Times Hollow hostel near Buena Vista, Vir-

ginia. Noah and Rusty spent hours talking together and built a strong bond. (Rusty keeps a list of hikers to whom he says he will bequeath the hostel and he told Noah he'd be at the top of the list.) When Noah reached the summit of Katahdin he was wearing a Hard Times Hollow T-shirt.

By the time 2010 rolled around they had their system perfected and they were ready for the last 440 miles. Noah, 14 that year, was stronger and taller than ever, which was good because, unbeknownst to them, Jim was having heart valve problems. To reduce pack weight, they decided to rely on huts and shelters, where they were often, once again, treated like heroes. The two also faced their share of challenges, like when going over Mount

Madison in the Presidential Range the wind was so high it picked up Noah and flipped him over, forcing them to creep down to treeline with one hand on the ground.

A final piece of Trail magic capped their journey. When they were breakfasting at Shaw's in Monson, Maine, Jim mentioned he had lost his cell phone and another hiker informed him that a phone had been found at Harrison's Pierce Pond Camp. The proprietor, Tim, agreed to send it forward with the next thru-hiker, who caught up to Pappy at Whitehouse Landing in the Hundred Mile Wilderness and returned the phone; and after climbing Katahdin with that same thru-hiker, his parents offered Appy and Pappy a ride back to Millinocket. Though Jim and Noah enjoyed the hike up Katahdin, Jim says, "we weren't overjoyed our trek had ended ... then we realized our journey hadn't ended but indeed had just begun."

There are many noteworthy aspects of this "grand-grand" journey over and above Noah's youth and their relationship (this is only the second documented grandparent/grandchild A.T. completion; the other pair were 21 and 70 years old). "The best thing about hiking the A.T. together was watching a lad grow into a man on the Trail," says Jim. "Of course, what grandfather would not enjoy spending seven years on the A.T. with his grandson...It was an overwhelming experience because we both enjoyed it equally. It was the highlight of our lives for seven years." Because of his A.T. hikes, Jim is now active in the Smoky Mountain Hiking Club, which includes maintaining 1.9 miles of the A.T. and participating in special events and projects; he is also an Appalachian Trail Conservancy member. Noah helps him out with Trail maintenance whenever he can. ⬆

Judith McGuire is a life member of the ATC, a PATC member and A.T. Trail maintainer, a regular volunteer at the ATC's Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, a member of the ATC's Stewardship Council, and a 2007 thru-hiker during which time she met Pappy and Appy at the Greymoor Monastery in New York.



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# A Pivotal Role

*The African American History Hike offers a glimpse into some pivotal history along the A.T.*

BY MARCIA FAIRWEATHER

As part of the activities being sponsored around the country to celebrate the American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) in partnership with the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park will be hosting its second annual African American History Hike in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, this year on Saturday, June 1.

The first program, conducted during the 2012 National Trails Day, attracted more than 75 participants from the local Harpers Ferry, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland metropolitan areas, and as far away as Massachusetts. Outreach for the event through the ATC, Outdoor Afro, Fresco Adventures, and various meetup.com sites made for an exciting day with visits to many historic and scenic sites led by Kweli Kitwana, 2012 A.T. Community ambassador to Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, members of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HFNHP), and the ATC Board. The moderate one-mile guided hike passed through numerous scenic sites and historic structures, with interpretive presentations about each of the locations' significance.

The guided walk started at the ATC Visitor Center with the first stop at the Curtis Freewill Baptist Church where participants were led through a historical interpretation provided by HFNHP's Guinevere Roper. The Curtis Freewill Baptist Church served as both a religious building for students of Storer College and as its own congregational church for African American residents of Harpers Ferry and nearby Bolivar. Constructed in 1894, the brick church was named for Silas Curtis, a prominent member of the

Freewill Baptist denomination in New England whose family donated money in his memory to complete the building. The building is remarkably intact and still conveys its historic past as a religious structure. Ms. Roper shared stories of some of the famous visitors to the church, the students of Storer College, and the roles that Baptist theology played in the education and religious practices of African American students. The church played a key role in the spiritual life of Storer College and represents the wider role of northern philanthropists who supported schools for other minority students.

Storer College was initially established as the Freewill Baptist primary school after the Civil War, teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic to the children of former slaves. Through a generous contribution from philanthropist John Storer of Sanford, Maine, Storer Normal School was opened in October, 1867. The first building to open its doors to students was the Lockwood House, formerly the U.S. Armory Paymaster's quarters. This school was part of a larger national effort by northern philanthropic organizations and the government's Freedmen's Bureau to educate the millions of African Americans freed by the 13th Amendment.

Storer College was open to all, regardless of sex, race or religion. In 1869, the federal government formally conveyed the Lockwood House and three other former Armory residences on Camp Hill to the school's trustees. As one of the nation's first institutions of higher learning in the old South open to African Americans, Storer began as a teaching college to train the many that were needed to help teach others in their community to read and write and to develop marketable skills. It was estimated that 20,000 teachers were needed to meet the needs of the freed people. For nearly 100 years, students left Storer with the education, the training, and the sense of worth needed to make their way in society and to fulfill their dreams of freedom.

As a rare opportunity, the participants were able to view the inside of the Lockwood House where the college's first classes took place. HFNHP park ranger and historian, David Fox, shared stories of the history and use of the converted old mansion. The building was used as a dormitory and rented out for summer tourists as a boarding house. Through the descriptive images by Mr. Fox, visitors were able to envision the activities of former students as they passed through the antique wood-laden halls, the ten-foot-high ceilinged rooms, and long stairways and passage ways. After its closing in 1955, the Storer College buildings are now used as training and administrative facilities for the National Park Service. Today, one of the Storer College buildings continues the college's educational mission as a training facility for National Park Service staff.

From the Lockwood House, the walk proceeded through the Harper Cemetery, which used to be the front yard of the building. Named after the founder of the town, Robert Harper was a Pennsylvania architect contracted to build a Quaker church in the Shenandoah Valley. Harper was so impressed by the beauty of the area and the water-power potential of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers that he settled here and had set aside a four-acre property that is now the cemetery. The next stop was the Harper House, which is the oldest building in the town. The house was built by and for Robert Harper the owner, but unfortunately he never lived in the building as he died the year it was completed. Harper House became a tavern where notables such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington stayed.

As the group ventured past the Harper Cemetery and Harper House, the scenic landscape of the rivers came into view and the first steps of the walk along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail were taken. West Virginia is the shortest state along the A.T., at just four miles, and the group walked the State's trail for a one-half-mile journey. Although short in distance, the essence of the 14 states can be felt in just a few steps with fabulous views, varied terrain, peaceful sounds, and the famous white blaze.

One of the most scenic places in Harpers Ferry is located along the A.T. at Jefferson Rock, a formation that consists of several large masses of shale rock, piled one upon the other that overlooks the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers. The name of this landmark is derived from Thomas Jefferson, who stood there on October 25, 1783. He found the view from the rock impressive and wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia* that "this scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic and is one of the most stupendous scenes in nature."

The final stop was at the HFNHP's John Brown Museum in historic Lower Town Harpers Ferry where a presentation on the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and the Appalachian Trail was provided in the Allies for Freedom room. The second floor of the museum hosts of number of photos of the African Americans who risked their lives for freedom with John Brown. The ATC's board member, Marcia Fairweather, answered ques-



Left: Attendees of the 2012 African American History Hike pose in front of the ATC's Visitor Center; Enjoying a portion of the hike along the streets of Harpers Ferry. Photos by Laurie Potteiger

tions about hiking the Trail as she talked about her 15-year section-hike of the A.T. that was completed in 2008 and shared a short video of her experience. She invited the participants to join her in the mission to hike a few miles in each of the 14 states along the Trail as part of her Appalachian Trail in Every State program.

For many of the participants, this was their first venture out onto the Trail and into the town of Harpers Ferry. Hopefully the experience has encouraged them to learn more about the Trail and celebrate National Trails Day as an annual event, as well as to understand the historical significance of landmarks along this

section of the A.T. that played a pivotal role in our nation's history. As many outdoor enthusiasts nationwide celebrate National Trails Day this year to show support for their local and National Trails System, this unique walk is expected to become an annual event of the ATC and the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park as a great way to connect with the local community and show its support for trails. 🌱

Join us Saturday, June 1 for the African American History Hike. This free event includes a guided hike, lunch, and a presentation by Clark Dixon, retired NPS superintendent. Kweli Kitwana, founder of the event, will once again kick off the hike. RSVP required; limited space is available. For more information, visit [appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events).

For more information about National Trails Day visit: [americanhiking.org/national-trails-day](http://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day)





## *Serene Simplicity*

Daniel “ICEMAN” Johnson is a 22 year-old Appalachian Trail Conservancy member from Gray, Kentucky who started his A.T. hike on January 17, 2012 from Amicalola Falls State Park with his good friend Benjamin “Viking” Callahan and finished on June 20, 2012. Though not a professional photographer, Johnson kindly donated his serene A.T. images, which caught our eye. “Thru-hiking the A.T. became a dream of mine from the time my uncle, Benny Johnson, told me about the Trail when I was a kid,” explains Daniel. “It was a great journey full of great experiences, I met a lot of nice people and made some good friends that I’ll never forget — and yes, I would do it again.”

*Summit of Bromley Mountain, Vermont*

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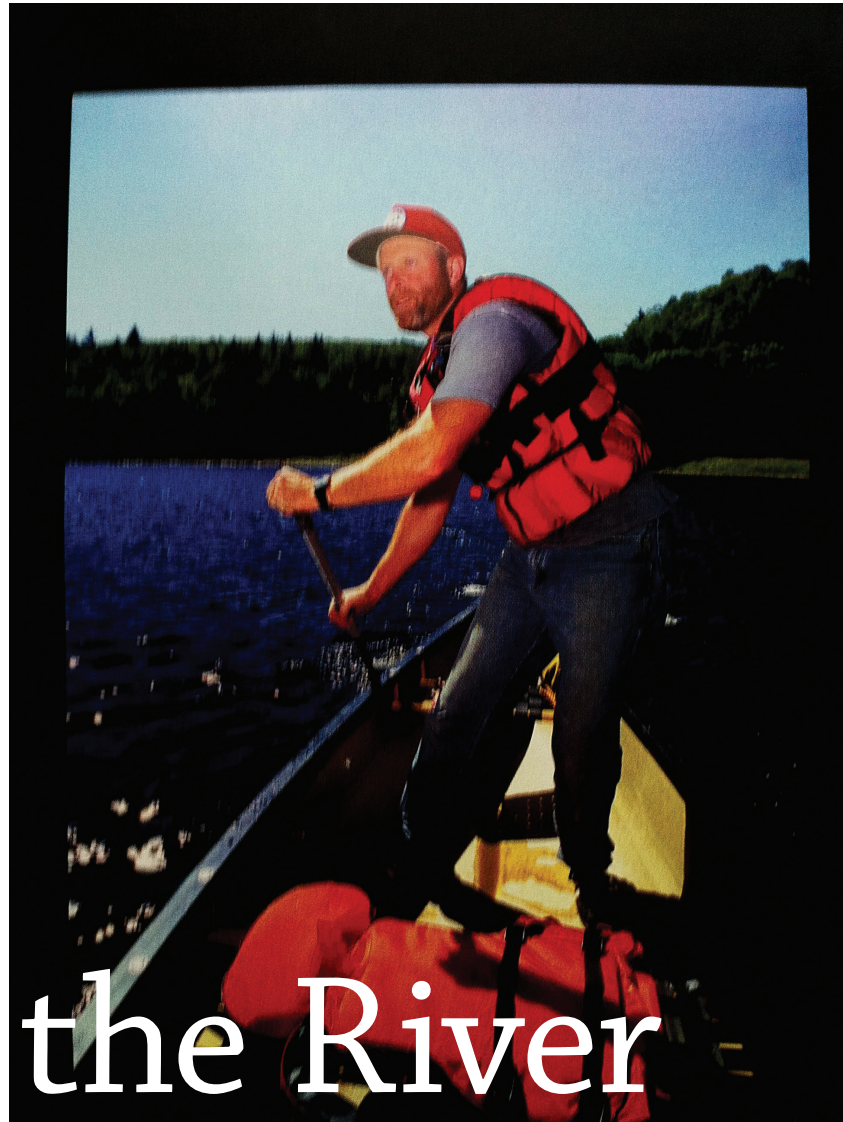


*Lonesome Lake, New Hampshire*









# Crossing the River

**THERE'S AN OLD SAYING AMONG LONG-**distance Appalachian Trail hikers, which is somewhat surprising as most of these folks like to think of themselves as rugged, independent, self-sustaining individualists. The saying acknowledges this simple truth: nobody hikes alone, and nobody spends any real amount of time on the Trail without the help and support of all sorts of other people. In some cases, this support hails from other hikers. In other cases, it comes from friends and family members back home. And in yet others, it comes from people we meet on the journey, from folks who one encounters by chance or circumstance, who for reasons both unexplainable and extraordinary, go out of their way to provide services, kindness, and gifts beyond measure — all for complete strangers.

My friend Stephen Longley was one of these people, and it could probably be argued that for the better part of 20 years, it would be more than

a little difficult to find someone who was a better friend to the Trail and those who hike it. Known universally as Steve to all his friends (and this essentially describes anyone who met Steve), Mr. Longley was also known to countless hikers as “the Ferryman.” For some 20 years Steve ran the canoe ferry across the Kennebec River in Maine. In the process, he probably met 20,000 A.T. hikers. He met them, befriended them, and fed and housed countless numbers of them. Principally, though, he made sure they got across the Kennebec safely, which means he undoubtedly saved a good many people's lives. The idea of a boat ferry across the treacherous Kennebec goes back to the 1930s, although it wasn't until the tragic death of a thru-hiker while fording the river, which prompted the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Maine A.T. Club to re-institute the idea of a canoe ferry.

This was Steve Longley's job, his life, and his

passion. I first met Steve in 1996, and then saw him every September for many years thereafter, as I was fortunate to hike through the state of Maine for several consecutive years. We eventually became close, though in truth, he was always the better friend. He'd greet me each year as though we'd last talked just days before; we'd resume conversation; we'd talk about people we knew; one would never think we only saw each other once a year.

Anyone who knew Steve would tell you that they always remember him smiling. His grin would light up a dark sky. In truth, I can't recall him ever angry, ever raising his voice, ever expressing an unkind word about anyone. He had established his place in the world, and seemed perfectly content with it. To me, he was the king of the Kennebec crossing. He knew that stretch of the river better than anyone alive. He knew its beauty and its risks. He fully recognized how dangerous a place this could be to hikers, and took his job as the Ferryman with the utmost seriousness. I doubt he missed half-a-dozen days of work in twenty years; he was that devoted to his job.

One quick story, I forget the year. When I arrived at Caratunk, Steve was upset. He'd received some very bad personal news, and was expected at a funeral in Portland. He had little time to find a reliable replacement to cover his shift on the river. Up until a few short hours before the memorial service where he was expected to appear, Steve told me he wouldn't be leaving the crossing. I told him to go, that hikers would simply have to wait for him on the far bank, and that it was really important that he attend the service. “No,” he said. “If I'm not here, some folks might try and cross by themselves and if anything happened to them because I was away I could never live with it.” As it turned out, he found a last-minute replacement, but this says everything about Steve: he was the Ferryman; this was his post; this was his crossing, and he would not desert it.

A remarkable thing about Steve (and there were many) is that he could have been pretty much anything in life he wished to be. His late father, who taught him to love the woods and rivers of Maine, served as the state's Governor. His siblings and other family members, all wonderful folks, are professional people, including attorneys, and elected officials. The Longleys have long been a family who have served others. Yet Steve was happy as a self-professed “river rat.” He too, chose to serve, though, he elected to serve people he'd never met. He devoted the best years of life to helping complete strangers, and in the process, enriched

and enhanced the lives of thousands of people. He once famously said that while he knew he wasn't fated to be a governor or a senator, he would devote himself to being the best possible ferryman he could be, and this is exactly what he did.

Steve died, peacefully, in his sleep this past March — he was 56. We were all astounded, especially because he always seemed to be the healthiest person around. He was also the strongest. Years of daily canoeing played a part, of course, and it occurred to me more than once that Steve Longley was perhaps the last person one would want to seriously anger. But this was a foolish worry. Steve never angered. He never criticized; he never complained. He seemed completely happy with the life he made for himself, despite the fact that he would never be wealthy in the way the world counts success.



The truth of course, is that Steve was wealthy in a way that very few of us will ever emulate. He had a wonderful, loving family, friends beyond count, a job that he looked forward to every morning, and the satisfaction at day's end that he had spent his time doing something that mattered. We should all be so lucky. I do not know when I will see the Kennebec again, but I hope to someday. And when I get there, I will see my friend Steve. He'll grin, and tell me that I'm lazy and late, that he'd expected me days before. We'll row across the river, and he'll praise my boating skills, as he annually did, though we both knew they're non-existent. We'll cook a simple dinner and tell stories of the Trail and folks we know. And I'll go on early the next morning, making my slow way north, while Steve will stay forever at the crossing, always young, always smiling, the best ferryman he could be. ♡

From far left: Steve navigates the Kennebec River with ease in his canoe; Steve takes his family for an enjoyable trek along the Kennebec. Photos courtesy of the Longley family.



# A little Help

*Like the mythical bird of old, the newly-restored Rausch Gap Shelter rises from the dust of its predecessor...with a little help from many friends.*

BY DAVE COSBY



**WHEN THE ORIGINAL RAUSCH GAP SHELTER** was built by the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club (BMECC) in the early 1970's, its designer created a rustic shelter that looked like it had been there for decades. An old foundation from the area's coal-mining days was found and re-purposed; weathered utility poles became the "logs"; even the front purlin was fashioned from a tree with a bent trunk (to give the shelter a "time-worn" look). Details gave rise to the shelter's nickname: "the Halfway Hilton."

But the seeds of demise were sown in this rustic look: unprotected log-ends weathered prematurely, and by 2010, it was obvious that drastic measures were needed to save this way-station in Pennsylvania. BMECC's shelters chairman planned to remove the damage and re-roof the shelter. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) awarded the club a grant through the L.L. Bean Grants to Clubs program, and in June 2011, a small crew began cutting away the decay. But it soon became apparent that there was too much damage. A new plan was needed.

It's here that the story becomes one of "the larger community" coming together to turn an improbable vision into reality. The original plan — for BMECC, the ATC, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to prolong the life of an aging shelter — morphed into a community-based restoration project that would take more than 100 volunteers (from more than a dozen different groups and agencies) almost 16 months to complete.

We knew that we could re-use the existing foundation, floor, and steps. After reassuring our agency partners that we were only "restoring" the shelter,

we proceeded to draw new plans. BMECC's archives contained only one set of "original sketches," but this was enough for the club's shelters chairman to create a new set of drawings that maintained the old size and shape. Only the roof would change: the formerly-exposed log ends would now be covered by a wider roof with a four-foot side-overhang.

But where would we find the logs? An email to a friend in a neighboring conservation district eventually put us in contact with the Weiser State Forest's district forester, who decided that "in the spirit of cooperation" with the Appalachian Trail, he would make available to us 25 Japanese Larch trees at a nominal cost; but the club would have to harvest the trees. Us? Loggers? Yes. Over the next few weeks, we used our National Park Service-certified chainsaw skills (and experience from other felling jobs) to safely bring down all 25 trees. Getting the trees out to the road was easy — we skidded them out atop some junk-log sections using a rope (attached to a vehicle) and a re-direct pulley (so that we could pull the logs out perpendicular to the road). Once the trees were at roadside, they were loaded on a truck and moved to the club's property in Bernville.

Now, we had to de-bark our "life-sized Lincoln Logs" by hand. The larger community — represented by Boy Scout troop 422 and the Mu Eta chapter of the Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity — came to the club's aid and helped the club peel the logs before November. During this time, we also built a level sill-plate (to receive the log work) and a temporary floor (as a safe work platform).

We planned to use the Scandinavian Scribe

method of log construction; this was how we built the Eagle's Nest Shelter in 1988. Most of our current club members had no experience with this technique, so we scheduled a training session. As the club's shelters chairman since 1986, I led this session in late November and began creating a new log-building crew.

The new crew continued working through the winter, and in February, Todd Gladfelter joined the team. Todd and his wife, Cindy Ross, were the club's "log-building teachers" at the start of the Eagle's Nest Shelter project, and Todd was able to quickly teach the finer points of log-building. A core crew of eight people developed, and as the walls climbed higher and purlins spanned the walls, we started to tweak the design to address specific construction problems. Extra courses of logs were added at regular intervals to replace height lost through the scribing process. Shoulder braces were added for roof support and lateral stability. We also placed several through-bolts to unify the outer ends of the rear wall and the doubled-front purlin. (These through-bolts — the bolts that hold the shoulder braces in place — are the only metal fasteners in the walls. The rest of the logs were fastened with wooden dowels.)

By the end of May 2012, the pre-fabrication work was complete, and the club began razing the old shelter. This took only two weekends in June, but for the next month, the site was strewn with old log sections, salvageable plywood, lumber, and incoming materials. Bob Sickley (the ATC's Mid-Atlantic regional office Trail resources manager) made a few visits to the site with a motorized wheelbarrow, bringing in cement and shingles from the staging area and taking debris back out. The foundation was then repaired and leveled.

We needed to move the shelter to the site by mid-August in order to be finished and out of the woods before hunters began using the gamelands, but "Plan A" (a Bureau of Forestry truck) and "Plan B" (a military helicopter) both fell apart. Once again, the larger community stepped up and a truck and trailer was provided by a club member's relative. The pre-fab parts were numbered, disassembled, and loaded onto the truck and trailer. But that Friday, during the second trip from Bernville to the staging area, the driver was in a serious accident that put him in the hospital and wrecked the truck and trailer. Miraculously, the logs were unharmed.

The following day, a friend of the ATC's Mid-Atlan-



tic regional director, Karen Lutz, showed up with another truck and trailer to move those logs the last few miles to the gamelands. Once the logs were at the staging area, local Boy Scout troop 652 began moving the logs, rafters, and plywood up to the shelter site. Using a tractor, an ATV, and a log dolly, all of the logs and supplies were on-site by day's end.

On Sunday, a crew of BMECC members and Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club (SATC) volunteers began re-assembling the shelter and rebuilding the fire pit. By evening, the logs were doweled in place, and by weeks' end, the rafters and plywood were attached, and the rear half of the roof was covered by tarpaper. By the end of August, the entire shelter was under roof. We invited the online community at WhiteBlaze to join us, and several people came out to help with the roofing. They also helped move demolition debris to the dumpster that the Pennsylvania Game Commission had allowed us to place nearby.

In September, we replaced the 40-year-old spring pipe, and installed new drainage in front of the shelter. Some of this work was done by a high school senior from the Allentown, Pennsylvania area, as his community-service requirement for graduation. BMECC held the site's re-dedication in October, but the shelter's christening came later, during Hurricane Sandy. At least one southbound hiker rode out the storm in the safety of this newly-risen shelter — and isn't that why we build shelters? 🌲



The story of the Rauch Gap Shelter's restoration is one of "the larger community" coming together — taking more than 100 volunteers almost 16 months to complete — and turning an improbable vision into reality.

The ATC would like to recognize Dave Cosby for his exemplary stewardship of BMECC's overnight sites during his 27-year term as shelters chair. Aside from the Rausch Gap Shelter rebuild, the construction of the Eagles Nest and William Penn Shelters, and numerous other shelter improvement projects, he was instrumental in the construction and operation of sanitary facilities at BMECC shelters, including several batch-bin systems. Dave stepped down as shelters chairman for the club at the end of 2012.





## northern CRICKET FROG

*Rarely exceeding one inch in length, this petite frog is one of the smallest and probably least-known amphibians in the eastern U.S.*

TEXT BY MICHAEL ADAMOVIC PHOTO BY WILL COOK

many will possess vibrant stripes of red or green dorsally. During the mating season, males will also frequently be found with yellow patches on the throat. In short, they are the hidden gems of shallow, watery environs.

Northern cricket frogs can be found in relatively stable numbers in the southern states, but in an ironic twist, they are actually becoming quite rare in the northern portion of their range and, in many states, have been placed on the threatened or endangered species list. The causes for this are many, but in some cases it is still a bit of a mystery as to their rapid decline, as no noticeable physical problems or habitat change can be seen in certain locations. Most cricket frogs are very short-lived and have an average life expectancy of approximately four to eight months. Having such a short lifespan can be problematic as even a short term disturbance to their habitat can wipe them out from an area permanently. Pollution, habitat destruction/alteration, and parasites are the most well known causes for dropping numbers. They are highly susceptible to even minor environmental changes and are known as indicator species because of their lack of tolerance to disturbance and can therefore indicate when a habitat is first starting to cross the threshold to becoming polluted or being degraded by other means.

In New York, their numbers are plummeting, and the few populations that still exist here are in danger of being extirpated from the state within a

**BEGINNING IN MID-MAY AND LASTING UP** until the end of July, anyone hiking the Trail near streams or lakes from Georgia to the southern boundary of New England may be rewarded with hearing one of the smallest and probably least known amphibians in the eastern portion of the country — the Northern Cricket Frog (*Acris crepitans*). Although, most individuals who have the unique call fall upon their ears probably misidentify it as the first part of its namesake. Cricket frogs really do not sound like frogs at all. Their calls more resemble a low pitched cricket in both sound and duration. The best description that can be rendered as to what they sound like has been described as two pebbles being clicked together, in a manner that is similar to an insect chorus. Furthermore, their diminutive size lends itself to the aptness of the name. This species will rarely exceed one inch in length. Their appearance is also highly variable — two individuals found in the same location may superficially resemble separate species. Body coloration ranges from almost completely black to light brown or green, and

Northern cricket frogs widely vary in coloration and can be found in relatively stable numbers in the southern states, but are becoming quite rare in the northern portion of their range. Photo by Will Cook, carolinanature.com

short period of time. Researchers do not believe the frogs are under fire from the chytrid fungus, which is infecting some individuals in the Southeast and is responsible for killing off droves of other amphibian species worldwide and even leading to extinctions. Habitat destruction plays a small role at best, as most of the lakes these frogs reside at are on protected land. Pollution may be a large factor, but is most likely not the primary cause, as other frog species at these locales are thriving. Whatever the cause, biologists are rapidly seeking solutions to improve conditions for the frogs until hopefully a concrete identification can be rendered for the reason behind the die offs. It's sad to note that within the last century, 20 of the most significant sites within the state have been lost. Most losses have occurred within the past few decades.

However, in Sterling Forest, the A.T. passes along the northwest bank of one of the only lakes that still has a large reproducing population in the state. Over the previous summer, the Envi-

ronmental Bureau of New York State Parks teamed up with volunteers to aid in a habitat restoration project at this particular lake. The cricket frog does well in water bodies that are relatively shallow and contain numerous aquatic weeds along the periphery. Previous to the work completed, the banks of the lake were very steep and rocky. The main priority was to extend the banks slightly into the water and give them a more gradual slope so the frogs would have no difficulty coming ashore. Peat moss was also thrown down to fill in the gaps created by large rocks near the shoreline and render the area more hospitable to plant life. As these creatures hibernate during the winter months, the added peat will also serve a dual purpose by providing much needed insulation. Cricket frogs, unlike some other species, are freeze intolerant and are highly susceptible to the cold and must burrow into the earth to avoid it. Invasive plants, such as purple loosestrife, a species that is choking off native plants, was also removed. Offi-

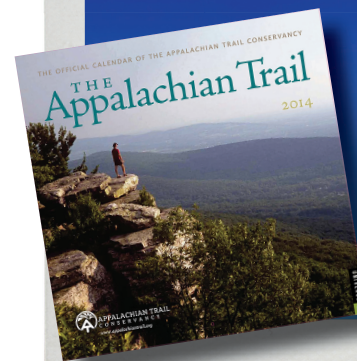
cials are hopeful that these improvements can at least marginally stabilize the cricket frog numbers and ensure the state does not completely lose the species in the near future.

Despite the dreary outlook for the cricket frogs, there still is cause for hope. Solutions are being actively sought after by researchers to save this species in the North, and volunteer interest is helping to drive both habitat protection and bring increased awareness to this largely unknown matter. It is delightful to hear a northern cricket frog chirp on a warm summer day after completing a long hike. To a hiker, the calls can be even more pleasant than even the sweetest bird song — it would be a shame to lose them forever and have to sit on a bank to hear only silence. ▲

Michael Adamovic is currently serving as the head coordinator of the Mile-a-Minute Project of the Hudson Valley, an organization that is researching ways to limit the distribution of invasive plants in southern New York State. He holds a Bachelor's degree of Environmental Studies from Manhattanville College.

### Do you have that perfect photograph of the Appalachian Trail?

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is seeking high-resolution digital images or slides of scenes on the Trail for its 2015 calendar. Each selected image is worth \$200. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2013.



For guidelines visit: [appalachiantrail.org/2015calendar](http://appalachiantrail.org/2015calendar) or send an e-mail with "2015 Guidelines" as the subject line to: [publisher@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:publisher@appalachiantrail.org)

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Morningstar “Skinny Rambo” Jones on the A.T. in the farm fields of Pennsylvania – by Jimmie “Walk and Eat” Jackson

We have plans for a “members only” section of the Web site where special maps and features are being developed.

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL Conservancy has forestalled an increase in membership dues in the face of ever increasing costs. We last increased the membership rate in April 2007 and now, for the first time in more than six years, membership rates are set to increase as of June

1. Basic membership will be \$40 with a \$5 discount for seniors, students, and Trail maintaining club members.

Please understand that this modest increase is just to offset the cost we have incurred in postage, paper, and services over the last few years. The last time membership dues increased the cost of a postage stamp was 39 cents and today it is 46 cents. The cost of paper for our magazine has increased by more than 20 percent in the last three years and, of course, the cost of production has increased too.

Thankfully, most of our members join or renew above the basic rate and I hope you will continue to do so. The dues you pay above and beyond the basic membership support the work of maintaining the Appalachian Trail and stewarding the 250,000-plus acres entrusted to our care.

We are constantly striving to provide our members with added benefits to membership and will continue to do so. We have plans for a “members only” section of the Web site where special maps and features are being developed. As before, you will continue to receive special discounts at our online store: [appalachiantrailstore.com](http://appalachiantrailstore.com) and at our visitor’s center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Many members have taken advantage of our monthly donor program to fulfill their annual giving pledge. Whether you want to be a general member or contribute at one of our

Annual Fund levels, this is a convenient way to fulfill your philanthropic goal. To learn more visit: [appalachiantrail.org/monthly](http://appalachiantrail.org/monthly) or call us at (304) 535-6331 x120.

The 39th meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy membership is upon us. Registration opened on April 15 and the details of the meeting were published in the March/April issue of *A.T. Journeys* — they can also be found at: [appalachiantrail.org/2013biennial](http://appalachiantrail.org/2013biennial). As of this writing, 375 people have registered and we are expecting a record attendance; I hope to see you there. During the meeting we will host receptions for both our Life Members and Annual Fund donors. Separate invitations were mailed out for these events. If you haven’t already replied, please R.S.V.P. your intentions as soon as you can.

Finally, please share your love of the Appalachian Trail and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy with your friends. Tell them about your support and encourage them to support us too. Your enthusiasm for the Trail and our work will do more than any letter, e-mail or phone call from us. For less than \$1 per week your friends can be a part of the maintenance and stewardship of the greatest conservation project east of the Grand Canyon. ⬆

All the best,  
Royce W. Gibson | Director of Membership & Development

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Membership dues and additional donations are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution. The ATC is a Section 501(c)(3) educational organization. To make a contribution or renew your membership, call (304) 535-6331 ext 119, or visit: [appalachiantrail.org/donate](http://appalachiantrail.org/donate)



Hiking Partners

Thru-hiker would like to **hike for four-to-six weeks in Virginia** sometime in May. Looking for a partner for some of, or the entire hike. Contact Fran: (732) 331-4954.

Looking for goal-oriented single, healthy male for thru-hike on A.T. from Springer to Katahdin. **Serious thru-hiker only** — willing to train 12 to 24 months. Involves pre-planned logistics. Pace: easy-to-difficult March-to-October (7-months). Contact: jeanthompson2005@yahoo.com.

Looking for **A.T. section-hiking partners**. Connecticut and north sections. Very flexible with hike times. Been doing four 80 to 100-mile hikes a season. Contact: Kevin "Rockstar" at kzz1@aol.com.

For Sale

Slightly used **men's ASOLO hiking boots**, size 10 1/2; asking \$125.00. Contact: GJones7051@aol.com.

EMS Ascent 4200 **women's backpack** for sale. Excellent condition, 4200 cu in., lots of pockets. \$85. Also, **Wilderness Systems Sealution fiberglass sea kayak**, with two hatches, built

in compass, rudder, including accessories. Excellent condition. Contact: wilddclimbr@yahoo.com.

WarmLite **two-person tent** (2R). This tent has seen little use and is very clean. We've owned many tents over the years and this one is the best — big enough for two people and their gear yet only weighs 3 lb 6 oz (this includes the carry sack and the Tyvek that has already been taped to the floor) — also includes the optional side windows and the large door. Full details can be found at warmlite.com/warmlite-two-person-tent. Price: \$350. Photos available. Contact Tom at: mailham@bellsouth.net or (615) 585 3883.

**Log Home for Sale** 300 yards east of the A.T. at Allen Gap (15 miles north of Hot Springs, North Carolina). Go to whiteblaze.net and search "Allen Gap" or "Fal and Hercules" for most current price.

Half-acre **lot in Hot Springs** on the Appalachian Trail. Perfect for tiny house and big garden. Southern exposure and creek. Contact: pepintm@gmail.com.

Lost & Found

**Ring found** near Sam's Gap (I-26) area on the A.T. March 10. Had initials inside and a very distinct design. If the owner can describe the ring and the initials I will send it to them. Contact: nmartin@chasebrass.com.

For Your Information

Did you hike in 2003?

We would love to see you at Trail Days this year for our 10 year anniversary. For more information please view the TD schedule at www.traildays.us or contact: Karma at karmaonthetrail@gmail.com.

The Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame now has 11 members, including the first class of Benton McKaye, Myron Avery, Arthur Perkins, Earl Shaffer, Ed Garvey, and Gene Espy. Another class of members will be inducted on Friday, June 7, 2013, at the **Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Banquet** at the Allenberry Resort in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Visit: atmbanquet2013.eventbrite.com for ticket information. The 1983 **A.T. Hiker 30th Anniversary Reunion** will take place Saturday June 8, 2013. All alumni (2,000-miler or not) are welcome. Location: A. T. Museum in Pine Grove Furnace State Park,

Pennsylvania. For information, contact:gonzo@2000milehike.com. **A grand opening of the special exhibit** featuring 1983 hikers will also open at the museum in June. .

Jennifer Pharr Davis Book

**Signing Event**, July 14 at the ATC Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Come join Jennifer as she releases her new book entitled *Called Again!* Meet the author and get a personal signed copy of her newest book. In 2008, Jennifer was named Blue Ridge Outdoors Person of the Year, and in 2011 she appeared on national television and radio shows such as CNN Headline News, the CBS Early Show, and NPR's Talk of the Nation. She was also named a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year and voted *Ultrarunning Magazine's* top female performance of 2011. Jennifer has authored four other books, including her hiking memoir: *Becoming Odyssa*. For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events

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**COMMON AMONG MANY GOOD STORIES IS** the unsung hero — the character who keeps the protagonist focused on the mission, the one who offers hope. For the last six-and-a-half years, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has been fortunate to have its own such hero. Steve Paradis would never mention that he received two degrees from MIT, and one from Stanford, but he would tell you that his devotion for the A.T. began just after he received his Master's in Business and was looking for a way to refresh and renew himself after so many years of study. This need brought him to thru-hike the Trail in 1992. Little did he realize then the impact he would have on this very organization in the years to come.

In the fall of 2006, Steve was hired as the chief operating officer for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). The general public and many of the ATC's members rarely have an opportunity to glimpse at the behind-the-scenes operations at our non-profit. These scenes are filled with managing budgets, grant proposals, management issues, meetings, phone calls, repairing servers, computer issues, and various operational challenges. Achieving smooth operations and solving challenges requires a savvy business mind bundled with a passion for the ATC, our values, and of course the Trail. It's truly rare to find the balance of all three in one person — Steve fit the bill perfectly.

Steve was an important mentor and friend to many staff members. He blended clear manage-

ment direction with a genuine interest in helping staff succeed. Always in tune to program sustainability, and in many cases the important bottom-line, he routinely asked hard questions, but also

helped to find answers. The staff at ATC are among the most dedicated and passionate group either of us have ever worked with. This includes everyone from the accounting department to the field of-

Steve Paradis in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Photo by Stacey J. Marshall

fices. While this dedication comes in part from the sheer pleasure of having the opportunity to help protect the iconic Appalachian National Scenic Trail, it also comes from working with a leader who has strived to help us all succeed and who has always had the best interest of our organization and its staff in his heart and mind.

We were able to accomplish important work at a time when many non-profits were re-trenching and trying to keep the lights on. We could only do this with someone like Steve helping all staff, promoting our work as a team. He was able to teach all of us that leadership doesn't come from the title beside your name; it comes from giving and earning the respect of your employees. Steve's example of leadership reminds us of what the father of Taoism, Lao Tzu, meant when he said "A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves."

So you see, Steve is our unsung hero — talented, educated, and able to work wherever he wanted — he chose the ATC. We want to thank him whole-heartedly for his devotion, his passion, and his leadership over the years. His service to the A.T. and the ATC has not gone unnoticed. And if any of you see him on the Trail, please remember to extend a warm "thank you" as well.

Co-authored by Stacey Marshall — the ATC's Director of Finance and Administration and Laura Belleville — the ATC's Director of Conservation.

"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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ERIC SNAG NORTH BY LAUREN MACFARLAND

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EVA "FOREVA" DONNELLY ON THE A.T. NEAR GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS – BY MICHAEL CREW