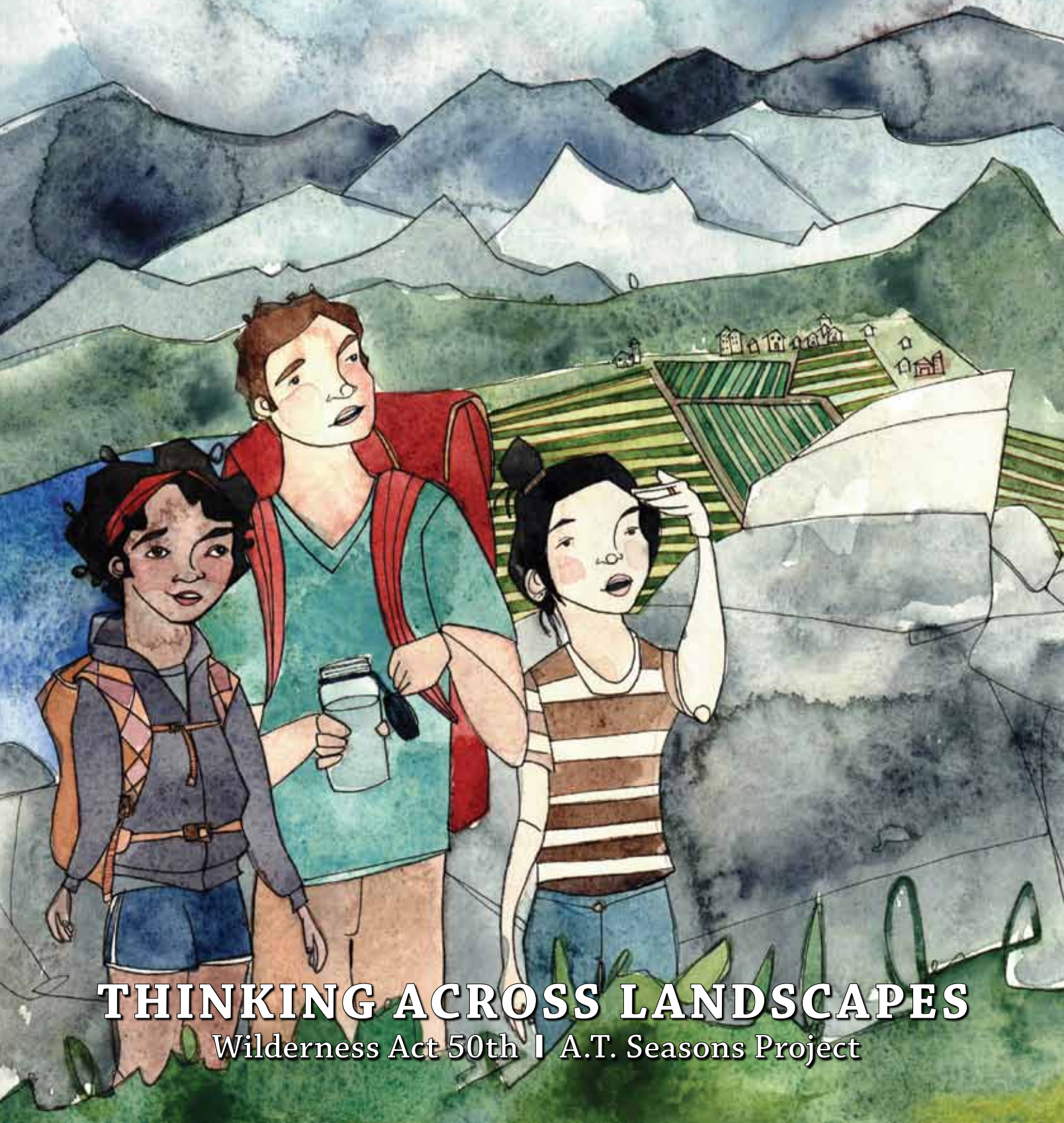


A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

May – June 2014



THINKING ACROSS LANDSCAPES

Wilderness Act 50th | A.T. Seasons Project



On the Cover: Thinking Across Landscapes

“The Appalachian Trail, as it enters Pennsylvania from the south, bisects the South Mountain landscape in a 60-odd mile jaunt from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border to the Cumberland Valley north of Boiling Springs,” writes the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) Jonathan Peterson (“More than a Footpath” page 22). “The South Mountain landscape is defined by folds of forested uplands and the surrounding fertile valleys and communities. . . it’s clear that what MacKaye envisioned in the early twentieth century, and spent his entire life thinking about, is increasingly reemerging in the field of landscape-scale conservation.”

Hikers explore the Trail in the South Mountain region — illustration by Katie Eberts

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A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volume 10, Number 3
May – June 2014

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

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |

THIS ISSUE OF A.T. JOURNEYS FEATURES ARTICLES ABOUT CELEBRATING the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Wilderness Act and the initiative to protect the South Mountain landscape that encompasses the Appalachian Trail in southern Pennsylvania. They are two very different approaches to preserving natural and cultural resources along the A.T.; and both are important to the current and future protection and enjoyment of the Trail.

The 1964 Wilderness Act has resulted in having more than 110 million acres of federal public land set aside by Congress in a permanently protected status. Along the A.T. these lands are managed either by the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service. More than 150 miles of the Trail are within 24 wilderness areas in the Chattahoochee, Nantahala/Pisgah, George Washington/Jefferson, Green Mountain, and White Mountain national forests.

Almost all of the 72 miles of Trail corridor in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is also managed as wilderness, as well as a portion of the 100-plus miles in Shenandoah National Park. Baxter State Park in Maine was created to preserve the wild character of the forests and mountains of northern Maine, and the renowned 100-mile stretch of the A.T. south of Baxter features an extraordinary hiking experience through unbroken forests and around a series of magnificent lakes and ponds. The idea of wilderness as a place largely protected from the impact of human activities to allow us to enjoy the solitude of nature for our physical and mental well-being is alive and well. This year the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) will help celebrate the wilderness experience that has enriched the Trail.

The ATC is in the final stages of completing a new Strategic Plan that will set the direction for our organization for the next five years. We are looking at using a large landscape approach as an overall conservation strategy for expanding the protection of the Trail corridor and for addressing the ongoing threats to the integrity of the A.T. These threats include but are not limited to new energy development, highway expansion, new transmission lines, and intensive land development near the Trail. We will be working with our government partners, conservation organizations, and Trail maintaining clubs to identify specific landscapes where we can collaborate in an ongoing effort to maintain and enhance the scenic beauty, the viewsheds, and the unique ecological values of the Appalachian Trail.

With all of this in mind, it is also important to recognize that much of the A.T. is not in wilderness or within a national park, national forest, or a large conservation area. Many sections of Trail are located close to major population centers, are easily accessible, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities for people with limited experience. These are places like the approach to McAfee Knob near Roanoke, Virginia, the section of the A.T. from Harpers Ferry along the C&O Canal up to Weverton Cliffs in Maryland, the New Jersey side of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and portions of the Trail along the Housatonic River in Connecticut.

Whether you want to be in the wilderness or enjoy a walk in the woods, along a river or to a prominent overlook, the Appalachian Trail has plenty of opportunities for you to have all of those experiences! ⬆

Ronald J. Tipton | *Executive Director/CEO*



Rayana "Acorn" Adra enjoys a break on McAfee Knob — by Sarah "Patchouli" Binger

10 Show and Tell

Phenology plays a large role in the pattern of visitation to the A.T.; and monitoring it is well suited for students, teachers, hikers, volunteers, and other members of the A.T. community.

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Following some basic precautions can keep ticks from spoiling a hike on the A.T.

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Delicate bloodroot blooms on the A.T. near the Great Swamp in Pawling, New York. By Mike Adamovic



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Bill Irwin never thought he couldn't do exactly what he wanted to do in life — so he did exactly what his heart desired, which included a successful thru-hike with his guide dog, Orient.

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I LETTERS

THE MARCH/APRIL MAGAZINE WAS the best issue ever. Superb job. Thanks. More like this needed.

Tom "Uncle Tom" Jamrog
LINCOLNVILLE, MAINE

I'M SELDOM IMPRESSED BY HOW far someone hiked or how fast they went or where they traveled, but I was beyond impressed by Ian Fitzmorris' quest to remove trash from the Bigelows ("Resolved Refuse Removal" March/April). These were just about my favorite peaks on the A.T., and trash in a beautiful place is always depressing. I admire Ian greatly, and all those who helped him. Kudos.

Bonnie Seifried
MARSHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

[AS A NOTE ABOUT THE RECENT passing of Bill Irwin — the first blind person to thru-hike the A.T. with the assistance of his guide dog, Orient], I met Bill (and Orient) shortly after his book, *Blind Courage*, was published. He came to give a book-tour talk to my chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and agreed to join us the following weekend, at a club-wide gathering we were hosting, to chat with our A.T. thru- and section-hikers. I remember gales of laughter from the room next door to my rather boring committee meeting, and wishing I could go join them. His thru-hike was a truly remarkable accomplishment. Every time I'm struggling on the A.T. (I am a maintainer) through a maze of blowdown, trying to avoid sticks in the eye, thorns, poison ivy, slippery rocks, and such, I think, "how on earth did Bill manage this?"

Jill Arbuckle
LITTLE FALLS, NEW JERSEY

TO THE LIST OF ALTERNATIVE thru-hikes on the ATC's website and discussed in the March-April *A.T. Journeys*, ("Alternative Thru-Hikes") I would like to add what I would call a "winter break NOBO" where you start at Springer in the fall, take a break in the cold months, and then continue to Katahdin in the spring. It has the advantages of the other alternatives while retaining many advantages of

the traditional NOBO. To those who contend that a thru-hike must begin and end in the same calendar year, I say: Hike your own hike according to your own calendar."

Larry Doyle
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

FACEBOOK COMMENTS

I've dreamt of hiking it since I was a little girl and (even if I never get the opportunity to even try) just thinking about the A.T. makes me smile.

Sheryl Proehl Vasquez

[The Trail makes me feel] like I have found myself, and no matter what is going on in my "life" off the Trail, it is all washed away as soon as my boots touch it.

Frobes Johnson

Ten years ago today I started my thru-hike on the A.T. Nothing has been the same since, and I am forever thankful. I'm thankful for the clarity, silence, reflection, adventure, simplicity, and for finding my wife Laurie.

Adam Segel-Moss

This Trail changed my life forever. I never thought it could or would; but 18 years later I am convinced and have been since about a year after my thru-hike in '94.

James Row

My experience on the A.T. continues to shape who I am, and my hike was more than 10 years ago! The Trail is magical ... pure magic ... if you're open to it.

Gibson SanGan

A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments.

The editors are committed to providing

balanced and objective perspectives.

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Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Please send them to:

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Letters to the Editor

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AS THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY, PROTECTION AND conservation are central to our purpose. A great example is our effort in large landscape protection we are working on with our South Mountain Partnership in Pennsylvania (“More than a Footpath” page 22).

While conserving land is a tangible measure of our organization’s success, we also promote the notion of conserving and protecting the essence of the Trail. How we determine our performance in this area is one of the challenges facing us today.

Many of us are all familiar with the Myron Avery quote about the A.T.: “Remote for detachment, narrow for chosen company, winding for leisure, lonely for contemplation, it beckons not merely north and south but upward to the body, mind, and soul of man.” As the board and Stewardship Council look to finalize a new strategic plan and tackle some outstanding policy issues, we often are reminded of this concept of the A.T. Key words, such as remote and lonely, are held up as ideals that we need to continue to protect. But we must also balance that with the real needs of our society if the Trail is to remain relevant for future generations.

Children of “my generation” were most often sent off to recreate on their own. My mother would put my sister and me outside on a summer morning and lock the screen door with instructions to not return until lunchtime. Today’s youth are much more likely to only experience play in an organized group setting. And many think playing in the woods on your own is dangerous. As we examine policies that help us manage larger group activities on the Trail, we need to realize that giving young people the opportunity to experience the Trail in their own way, whether through Scouts or school or other youth programs, is

one of our responsibilities. We need to determine how best to offer the opportunity while still protecting the resource and the quality of the hiking experience.

Another area we are working toward is building diversity in our membership and Trail use. Future programs that the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) may sponsor in urban and inner-city communities could look very different from current programs we offer to Trailside towns. But we believe both should have a place within the organization and both are necessary to broaden the future constituency for using and maintaining the A.T.

Finally, with approximately 2,180 miles of Trail, we must also be able to continue to provide remoteness and true wilderness experiences for those who crave that time alone.

While the Trail cannot be absolutely all things to all people, it can and should continue to provide peace and solace to “the body, mind, and soul of man” for a large part of our population. It is the role of the ATC’s leadership as well as our Trail maintaining clubs and partners to diligently work toward conserving that essence in a changing and unforeseeable future. Together we can be successful. ⚡

Sandra Marra | Chair



Brandon and Courtney Hess on the A.T. in Pennsylvania – by Joe Hess



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A.T. Journeys is the official magazine of the A.T. and the membership magazine of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy — a national not-for-profit corporation with more than 43,000 members from all 50 U.S. states and more than 15 other countries. Our readers are adventurous, eco-friendly outdoor enthusiasts who understand the value in the protection and maintenance of the Trail and its surrounding communities.

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

A.T. on Tinker Mountain just before McAfee Knob – by Shaun “Eco” Willison



SHOW ~AND TELL

MONITORING PHENOLOGY
FROM GEORGIA TO MAINE

*A new Appalachian Trail project helps
inform natural resource managers and
connect people to science and nature.*

BY MARIAN ORLOUSKY

Tussock cottongrass flourishing in July on Moxie
Bald, Maine – by Marian Orlousky

The A.T. Seasons project encourages monitors to expand their understanding and appreciation for the natural world through observation and exploration. Volunteers are critical to the success of nearly every aspect of managing the Trail, and the A.T. Seasons project is no exception.

IT WASN'T JUST YOUR IMAGINATION; SPRING DID make a delayed entrance in 2013. Many of those who visited the Appalachian Trail in the early months of 2013, noticed that spring seemed to arrive considerably late compared to the spring of 2012. Had they been monitoring phenology, their suspicions would have been confirmed by the timing of the first leaf-out (also known as green-up) of the trees across the Appalachian Mountains. According to a study published by a team of scientists at the USA National Phenology Network, spring indices averaged across the U.S. indicated that 2012 was the earliest spring recorded since 1900. Data showed that spring leaf-out in 2012 was nearly three weeks ahead of the long-term average, while in 2013 leaf-out occurred about two weeks late.

Phenology is the term given to the study of the timing of plant and animal life cycle stages, and how they relate to

weather and climate. The name is derived from the Greek word *phainō*, meaning “to show or appear.” Flowering, leaf-break, insect emergence, and migrations are all examples of phenological events. These events are some of the most sensitive biological responses to environmental changes, making phenology one of the key indicators of climate change. Scientists are using phenological data to make management related decisions, track climate and weather, and predict how species populations will behave in the future. The start of a thru-hike, the management of invasive weeds, the peak of allergy season, and the timing of hunting seasons are all influenced by phenology.

Most northbound thru-hikers are prepared for inclement weather during the start of their hike, but the 2013 north-bounders were greeted by an uncharacteristically cold and brutal spring. Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) seasonal New England resource management technician, Shawn Garred, recalls his experience. “After seeing the success of the

Bunchberry blooms along the A.T. in Maine; Students from a Mechanicsburg area high school in Pennsylvania look for the first signs of spring during early season monitoring on the A.T. Photos by Marian Orlousky and by Ben Shea



2012 northbound hikers who hit the Trail in the early spring, many prospective 2013 thru-hikers set out from Springer Mountain early, expecting to encounter favorable conditions similar to that of the previous year,” he says. “This however, was far from what they received. Three late winter storms made their way through the southern mountains over the course of March and early April, making an already difficult undertaking nearly impossible. Numerous bouts of freezing rain and abundant snowfall led many hikers to retreat to nearby Trail towns with the intent of returning to the Trail once it became more manageable.” Starting a thru-hike in early March, or even late February, is a gamble that occasionally can favor the hardy, well-prepared hiker. However in 2013, those who started their hike a little later in the season were able to avoid some of the worst weather and follow the “green wave” of leaf-out northward. Phenology plays a large role in the timing of the thru-hiker season, and in the overall pattern of visitation to the A.T.

Phenology is also a critical component to the invasive plant management efforts that take place along the Trail. Warming seasonal temperatures in recent decades have allowed many invasive species to expand their ranges northward, creeping into new and previously un-invaded areas. Tracking phenology can help us predict where new invasions are likely to occur and the optimal time for invasive management. If you cut Japanese stilt grass too early in the season, it will have time to regrow and produce seed before the first frost; if you wait until too late in the season, the plants will have already dropped their seeds. Every species has an optimal window for management; and by paying attention to the seasonal progression of these species, we can better predict when these windows will occur.

Though it may be difficult for some of us to believe, it turns out that there may have been an upside to the frigid temperatures that we dealt with this past winter. Some invasive organisms are not well adapted to withstand prolonged periods of extreme cold; and the hemlock woolly adelgid is one such species. Since its accidental introduction to the eastern United States in the early 1950s, this non-native insect has devastated Eastern hemlock populations throughout the Appalachian Mountains. Scientists are optimistic that the extended periods of cold we experienced in 2013 and into 2014 will be bad news for the tiny aphid-like insect and good news for the native hemlock. Biologists at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park reported finding 50 to 100 percent adelgid mortality on hemlock trees throughout the park this past winter. Though nothing will get rid of the adelgid all together, a cold winter could significantly reduce population sizes and assist land managers in their battle against the pest.

With a corridor of land stretching more than 2,180 miles, the Appalachian Trail is the perfect setting for a large scale study on climate change impacts. In an effort to better understand phenology along the A.T., the ATC and the

National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail staff joined forces with others who have been actively monitoring phenology. The group of partners, including the Appalachian Mountain Club, the USA National Phenology Network and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, created a project called “A.T. Seasons: Monitoring Phenology from Georgia to Maine.” By coordinating existing programs and aligning goals and protocols, these organizations will be able to better share and utilize data. The project is focused on monitoring focal plant



An imperial moth larva is found on a red maple during a monitoring session. Flowering, leaf-break, insect emergence, and migrations are all examples of phenological events.

and animal species in order to help inform natural resource management along the A.T. The focal species, like the red maple and the northern red oak, were chosen for their wide range of inhabitance across the eastern U.S.

The A.T. Seasons project is also intended to engage a diverse public audience, and promote scientific literacy through hands-on citizen-science opportunities. The program encourages monitors to expand their understanding and appreciation for the natural world through observation and exploration. At this time, partners are working to set up monitoring sites along the Trail and recruit and train volunteer monitors. Monitors visit these sites on a regular basis and record information about the various phenophases, or life stages, that they see. Volunteers are critical to the success of nearly every aspect of managing the Trail, and the A.T. Seasons project is no exception. Fortunately, the project is well suited for students, teachers, hikers, volunteers, naturalist, and members of the A.T. community. Working together, volunteers can gather significantly more data than the ATC and the National Park Service would ever be able to collect on their own. ⬆

For more information about the A.T. Seasons project visit: usanpn.org/appalachian or appalachiantrail.org/phenology. Volunteers who are interested in monitoring can contact their ATC regional office to learn more about training opportunities and monitoring site locations.

| TRAILHEAD |



CAMP OFF THE A.T. NEAR THOMAS KNOB SHELTER IN VIRGINIA – BY MARINA SINYARD

National Trails Day

American Hiking Society's National Trails Day (NTD) is a celebration of America's magnificent Trail System, occurring annually on the first Saturday in June. NTD features a series of outdoor activities, designed to promote and celebrate the importance of trails in the United States. Individuals, clubs, and organizations from around the country host National Trails Day events to share their love of trails with friends, family, and their communities. NTD introduces thousands of Americans to a wide array of trail activities: hiking, biking, paddling, horseback riding, trail running, bird watching, and more. For public and private land managers alike, National Trails Day is a great time to showcase beautiful landscapes and special or threatened locales as thousands of people will be outside looking to participate in NTD events.

National Trails Day evolved during the late '80s and '90s from a popular ethos among trail advocates, outdoor industry leaders, and political bodies who wanted to unlock the vast potential in America's National Trails System, transforming it from a collection of local paths into a true network of interconnected trails and vested trail organizations. This collective mindset hatched the idea of a singular day where the greater trail community could band together behind the NTD moniker to show their pride and dedication to the National Trails System.



African American History Hike

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 Harpers Ferry National Historical Park will be hosting its third annual African American History Hike in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, this year on Saturday, June 7.

Celebrate National Trails Day by going on a guided hike to learn about the rich African American history of Harpers Ferry. The moderate one-mile guided hike will pass through numerous scenic sites and historic structures, with interpretive presentations about each of the location's significance.

The experience should encourage attendees 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 hike is a great way to connect with the local community and show support for the Appalachian Trail.

Space is limited for this event, and pre-registration is required. For more information and to register visit: appalachiantrail.org/events. For more information about National Trail Days visit: americanhiking.org/national-trails-day

A.T. PERMANENTLY PROTECTED IN GILES COUNTY VIRGINIA

AFTER NEARLY 30 YEARS, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL IN GILES County, Virginia near the New River will be on permanently protected lands through the collaborative efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), Columbia Gas of Virginia, Columbia Gas Transmission, Celanese Corporation, the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, the Outdoor Club at Virginia Tech, and local governments. With this action there are only a few short segments of the 2,180-mile Trail corridor not in public ownership.

The final alignment of the A.T. in Giles County had remained unresolved due to challenges with Trail design, land ownership, and hiker safety issues. The current footpath location is on private property owned by Celanese and is open only at the discretion of the landowner. The current route parallels US 460, passes by Celanese's manufacturing plant, provides minimal recreational or scenic values, is difficult to maintain and poses a barrier to certain land uses.

Through the collaborative efforts of the U.S. Forest Service and the ATC, in negotiation with the managers of Celanese and the local community and government, a new alternative route was identified on the Celanese property that provides a scenic and safe route from the New River to the summit of Peters Mountain. The new route alleviates impacts to adjacent private landowners, and minimizes the impact from nearby manufacturing operations. This is receiving broad public support. Celanese has generously donated an easement across 2.5 Trail miles for the new route.

The completed Trail will provide the local community with a much improved recreational experience. The proposed new A.T. route crosses the New River and U.S. 460 and immediately enters the woods. The new Trail will follow the New River for approximately one mile, offering scenic vistas of the river below before ascending a ridgeline onto Hemlock Ridge through terrain that provides a more remote experience and minimizes conflicts with Celanese's operations. As it ascends Peters Mountain, it affords spectacular vistas of the surrounding terrain.

"The acquisition of this route is a landmark achievement for everyone who cares about the Appalachian Trail," says Ron Tipton, executive director/CEO of the ATC. "With this action more than 99 percent of the entire Appalachian Trail corridor is now in public ownership and permanently protected. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy salutes all of the parties to this agreement, and especially the U.S. Forest Service and Celanese."

This Trail project dovetails with the southwest Virginia regional interest in enhancing local economies through outdoor recreation with a new initiative called "Appalachian Spring." The A.T. provides numerous recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, picnicking, hunting, observing wildlife, photography, and backpacking, to numerous populations along the length of the Trail. In western Virginia alone, the proposed new Trail section lies within a short distance of several of the largest population areas, including Blacksburg, Roanoke, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville.

A \$40,000 grant from Columbia Gas of Virginia and Columbia Gas Transmission will allow the ATC to complete this capstone Trail project. The ATC plans to build the 2.5 miles of new Trail during the spring of 2014 and open this final section as quickly as possible, providing access to visitors from the local community, across the U.S., and around the world.

This final protected section of footpath represents a monumental milestone as the A.T. management partnership can now fully apply its resources toward the protection of critical viewsheds, improvements to Trail sustainability and expanding the corridor of A.T. lands. A full feature about this landmark acquisition will be published in the upcoming July/August issue of *A.T. Journeys*.

A.T. Museum Society Building Fund Campaign

The A.T. Museum has launched a new, three-year campaign to raise the funds to finish the renovation work on the Old Mill building, and to cover the cost of the new exhibits. This "Building Fund Campaign" will run through 2016 and expects to reach a goal of \$150,000. So far, the campaign has raised \$71,000 including a \$30,000 anonymous gift. All donors of \$50 or more will be listed on a special "Building Fund Donors" (2013 – 2016) plaque, which will permanently hang in the museum. The total of a donor's donations over the entire period will determine the donor's listing level on this new plaque. Every donation over \$20 receives a 2014 membership in the A. T. Museum, an I.R.S. receipt, an acknowledgement note detailing the donor's present plaque listing level, and a membership card.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has contributed to this campaign and has supported the idea of an A.T. Museum since its beginning in 1998. The museum houses a rich collection of permanent and temporary exhibits that tell the story of the completion and protection of the Trail, as well as its expanded use. The museum society initiated an Appalachian Trail "Hall of Fame" in 2011 to honor individuals who have made an exceptional and positive contribution to the A.T. ⬆

For more information visit:
www.atmuseum.org



CELEBRATING
- 50 YEARS OF -

PROTECTING WILDERNESS

- Across the Nation and Along the Appalachian Trail -

BY ED ZAHNISER

TRACING THE ROOTS OF THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS MOVEMENT BACK THROUGH 150 YEARS OF U.S. HISTORY.

PASSAGE OF THE 1964 WILDERNESS ACT IS COMMONLY TAKEN TO BE AN EIGHT-YEAR LEGISLATIVE STRUGGLE.

The first Wilderness Bills were introduced in Congress in the summer of 1956 — in the House of Representatives by John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania and in the Senate by Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law on September 3, 1964. Howard Zahniser drafted the first legislation in early 1956 but died in May 1964 as the legislation was about to become law. His widow, Alice Zahniser, represented him at the White House for the signing in the Rose Garden.

Seeds of a wilderness law were sown with the formation of the Wilderness Society in the mid-1930s, spearheaded by millionaire bureaucrat Robert Marshall. In his travels to wild areas in Alaska and the Lower 48 states, he sought out advocates for preserving such areas. Marshall and his recruits were the organizers and charter members of the Wilderness Society.

In 1947 the Wilderness Society's governing council voted to seek some form of permanent protection for areas of wilderness. Marshall and others had succeeded in getting federal agencies that managed roadless wild areas — chiefly the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USFS) — to protect a few areas administratively. But administrative protection was not permanent protection. Future administrators could sign away such protection with the stroke of a pen. After World War II ended in 1945, the USFS indeed began "reclassifying" such areas or shrinking their boundaries. The post-war economic boom and its pent-up demand for housing required lumber. Large tracts of roadless forest on federal public lands rapidly shrank — or disappeared — as roads were driven into them.

That was the situation of wilderness in the mid-1900s, but the 1964 Wilderness Act has a history deeper than its eight-year struggle. A few touchstones will illuminate the roots of the American wilderness imagination. Wilderness advocates were and are projected onto the land by the wild imagination of a great cloud of witnesses. The thrust of the 1964 Wilderness

Act would be to take decision making regarding wilderness out of the hands of federal agencies and to put the decision in the hands of Congress and its elected officials.

The history of the realization of a Wilderness Act can be seen as a 100-year struggle, from 1864 to 1964. Two events in 1864 launched this history. First, President Abraham Lincoln took time from prosecuting the Civil War to sign an act that ceded federal public domain lands of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees — Giant Sequoias — to the state of California for public parklands. Second, George Perkins Marsh published *Man and Nature*. Historian Lewis Mumford, in the mid-1900s, deemed Marsh's book "the fountainhead" of the American conservation movement. Marsh would subtitle his book "The Earth as Modified by Human Action." That the verb form of *modified* — to modify — appears in the opening of the Wilderness Act is no coincidence.

Vermont-born Marsh's book achieved a remarkable historical synthesis of global assaults on forests by humankind and is still in print today. Marsh wrote the book in Italy, where President Lincoln had posted him as a diplomat. Marsh had witnessed the destruction of Vermont's forests in his own lifetime. However, Marsh's travels in the Mediterranean Basin enabled him, gradually, to see potential disaster in America's wanton destruction of our forests. In 1856, Marsh and his wife had traveled in North Africa, on the southern side of the Mediterranean Basin. Jefferson Davis, then U.S. Secretary of

War, sent Marsh to North Africa to study the camel. The U.S. Army thought it might be useful in fighting Native American Indians in the Southwest. In North Africa, Marsh realized that many desert areas that he and his wife traversed were former sites of great civilizations. They were founded on great forests that had harbored elephants not camels.

The significance of that forest destruction did not immediately sound Marsh’s inner alarm. In fact, Marsh’s 1856 book *The Camel* opens with the prevailing notion of that time, which was that humans were not capable of significant impacts on God’s creation. When President Lincoln posted Marsh to Italy, however, travels there convinced him that the formerly great civilizations of the *northern* Mediterranean Basin, like Greece, had also declined when their forests were cut down. This was what Marsh had witnessed in his home state of

Vermont. The subtitle of *Man and Nature*, “The Earth as Modified by Human Action,” marked — actually and metaphorically — a watershed event for Marsh’s thinking. Forests were the keepers of healthy watersheds.

The text of the Wilderness Act begins: “An Act / To establish a National Wilderness Preservation System for the permanent good of the whole people, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.”

The text then moves to the statement of policy, Section 2 (a) “In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural

IT IS INTRIGUING THAT THOREAU DOES NOT SAY THAT WE PRESERVE WILDNESS. HE INSTEAD SAYS WILDNESS PRESERVES THE WORLD.

condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

The work of George Perkins Marsh in 1864 shows that the idea to preserve wild forests was not a new one in the 1950s. Wildlands, as a future for some federal public lands, had been around for a long time.

Directly across Lake Champlain from Marsh’s Vermont home, the Adirondack Mountains region of New York State also testifies to Americans’ long-standing concern for wildlands. In 1872, the people of New York State began to move to create an Adirondack State Park. Their motivation was simple: in 1871, New Yorkers suddenly found themselves net importers of wood fiber for the first time ever. The next year, heeding Marsh’s warnings in *Man and Nature*, New Yorkers moved to protect their remaining forests that helped supply water for the Erie Canal.

In 1885 New Yorkers created, on state-owned lands in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains state parks, the State Forest Preserve lands. In 1894 New Yorkers inserted into their state constitution the so-called “forever wild” clause. The clause says that those forest preserve lands will be kept “forever as wild forest lands.” Louis Marshall was a voting member of New York’s 1894 Constitutional Convention. Marshall was a lawyer and great champion of Jewish civil liberties, immigrant rights, and the rights of all minorities. At the 1915 New York State Constitutional Convention Marshall led the floor fight that stopped an attempt to gut the “forever wild” clause. Louis Marshall was the father of Robert Marshall, who was to labor within the U.S. Forest Service to protect roadless wild forests. Robert Marshall, who organized the Wilderness Society, was a second-generation wilderness advocate. Wilderness preservation was not new when President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act in 1964.

The Adirondacks and Catskills and their “forever wild” state forest preserve lands embody the American people’s desire to protect wildlands. Forest reserves had been created on federal public domain lands in 1891. These were true reserves — logging, mining, grazing, and homesteading were prohibited. But in 1905 they were re-designated as national forests, under the then-new U.S. Forest Service, and opened to logging, mining, and grazing. In a sense, New Yorkers made stick, in their own backyard, the wildlands preservation impulse that failed on federal public lands. In an address to members of the



From top: Howard Zahniser was the principal architect of the Wilderness Act; President Johnson gave Alice Zahniser the pen he used to sign the Wilderness Act — she was there to represent her late husband. Photos courtesy Wilderness.net



New York State legislature in the 1950s, Howard Zahniser described the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserve as “Where Wilderness Preservation Began.” The U.S. Congress stated: The Wilderness Act is “for the permanent good of the whole people.” The final House of Representatives vote on the Wilderness Act was 373 to 1. A freshman member of Congress from Texas cast the lone dissenting vote. Texas had come into the nation as a former republic and therefore had no public domain lands. In 1964 the state still had no federal public lands. The member likely had little idea what a vote on the legislation might mean.

Man and Nature came out in 1864, two years after Henry David Thoreau, author of *Walden*, died of tuberculosis. Transcendentalist reformers Margaret Sarah Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Thoreau were re-valuing nature and wildness as early as the 1830s. With the onset of railroads and industrialization, despoliation of lands, including wildlands, went into high gear. Wilderness advocate Howard Zahniser

THE WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964

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| » Defined wilderness | » Directed the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to examine the federal lands they manage for | additional areas suitable for possible future wilderness designation | and protect wilderness character |
| » Established the National Wilderness Preservation System | | » Directed the federal agencies to manage (steward) wilderness, | » Became law on September 3, 1964. 2014 marks the 50th Anniversary of Wilderness. |
| » Designated the first federal wilderness areas | | | |

Early in the act, Congress eloquently addressed the “why” question: “In order to ensure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

By establishing a system, the Wilderness Act laid the foundation for additional wilderness designation in future laws.

The act designated the first 54 wilderness areas, totaling 9.1 million acres in 13 states. Since then, the National Wilderness Preservation System has grown to 757 designated wilderness areas, with a total of nearly 110 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico. Even so, today only about five percent of the land in the United States is designated wilderness including only 2.7 percent of the land in the “lower 48 states,” outside of Alaska.

All of the “original” 54 wilderness areas were managed by the U.S. Forest Service and had been previously classified administratively by the agency as wilderness or wild areas. The Wilderness Act codified this administrative designation as a legal designation.

The Wilderness Act states, “A wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

The act further defined Wilderness as an area

- » of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence
- » without permanent improvements or human habitation
- » that is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions
- » that generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable
- » that has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
- » that is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition
- » that may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

The four federal agencies that manage wilderness cooperate to host a single website for the National Wilderness Preservation System. It provides comprehensive wilderness information general to specific at: www.wilderness.net.

Information about activities, projects, and events commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Wilderness in 2014 is available at www.wilderness50th.org.

WILDERNESS AND WILDNESS ARE NOT AT THE PERIPHERY OF A TRULY GREAT SOCIETY, THEY ARE AT ITS CORE.

was a lifelong student of Emerson and Thoreau. Zahniser served a one-year honorary term as president of the Thoreau Society from 1956 to 1957. One of his public school teachers had her students memorize an Emerson quotation every week. Zahniser's interest later shifted more to Thoreau, who has since perhaps eclipsed his friend and mentor Emerson in the popular imagination.

Thoreau's essay on "Walking," published the year of his death, included the rallying cry of conservation that "...in Wildness is the preservation of the World." The essay was drawn from two lyceum lectures Thoreau gave in 1851, titled "Walking" and "The Wild." It is intriguing that Thoreau does not say that *we* preserve wildness. He instead says *wildness* preserves the world. For Thoreau, who read French, German, Latin, and Greek, the word "world" is the Greek word *kosmos* — as he says in the text. *Kosmos* means not only world but also beauty, pattern, and order. "...in Wildness is the preservation of the World, Beauty, Pattern, and Order."

Until the more recent resurgence in women's studies, Margaret Sarah Fuller was far less known than Emerson and Thoreau. But many now credit Fuller as the greatest Transcendentalist thinker. Many consider Fuller's book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* the best statement on the subject. She edited the Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial*. She was the first female book reviewer for a New York newspaper. She was a thoroughgoing reformer. She even went to Europe to take part in the Italian revolution. She died in a shipwreck just off the U.S. East Coast on her way back to America. Emerson asked Thoreau to go search for her body and personal effects, including a book manuscript. Nothing was found.

Margaret Fuller figures in Wilderness Act history because her reformist agenda in the 1840s has an uncanny correspondence to the legislative agenda of Hubert H. Humphrey in the 1950s. Fuller advocated for Native American Indian rights, ending



slavery, women's suffrage, women's rights, education reform, rehabilitation of women prisoners, and more. Her Transcendentalist reform agenda and Senator Humphrey's legislative agenda, of which the Wilderness Act was one important element, show that wilderness is not at the periphery of society. Wilderness is a core concern of a truly whole society, holistically seen.

The similarity of reform agendas of Fuller in the 1800s and Humphrey in the 1900s rounds out the truth of Thoreau's rallying cry. The Wilderness Act was part of a large legislative package backed by Senator Humphrey that included the National Defense Education Loan Act, Voting Rights Act, and the landmark Civil Rights Act. Wilderness and wildness are not at the periphery of a truly great society, they are at its core. Congress declared the 1964 Wilderness Act to be "for the permanent good of the whole people." That was 50 years ago.

Immediately on its passage, the act protected some nine million acres of federal public lands as wilderness. Citizen advocates and citizens group have seen that grow to the present 110 million acres, including 24 wilderness areas along the Appalachian Trail, in six states, totaling approximately 150 miles (or about seven percent of the A.T.'s length). The Trail is very close to several other wilderness areas whose boundaries are defined by a specific distance offset from the A.T. The A.T.'s wilderness areas are maintained by a dozen Trail maintaining clubs.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has strongly advocated for Congressional designations of new wilderness areas. The dates of wilderness designations along the A.T. range from 1964 to 2009, with future action by Congress potentially adding additional mileage. The USFS manages 23 of these 24 wilderness areas — 18 in the Southern Region and five in the Eastern Region — and the National Park Service manages one in Shenandoah National Park. Wilderness is a legacy we celebrate this year and forever. ⚡

Adapted from the author's January 2014 *WV Observer* article "The Wilderness Act Across the Nation and in West Virginia." Ed Zahniser is a frequent speaker about The Wilderness Act and the American wilderness imagination. He is one of four children of Alice and Howard Zahniser. Ed recently retired as senior writer and editor for the National Park Service Publications Group in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

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More Than a Footpath: THINKING ACROSS LANDSCAPES

BY JONATHAN PETERSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE EBERTS

In south central Pennsylvania, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is pioneering a collaborative conservation project that reflects the visionary thinking of the “father of the A.T.” and explores the emerging trend of landscape-scale conservation.

TO THE FOLLOWERS OF THE WHITE BLAZE, BENTON MACKAYE IS archdruid, or perhaps high priest. The Appalachian Trail’s origin story is well-known: in 1921, MacKaye pens an essay in the pages of the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, envisioning a trail spanning the “Appalachian skyline” from New England to the Deep South. Skip ahead ninety-three years and you and I can hike — if our legs and our spirit hold out — 2,185.3 miles of clearly marked, well-maintained Trail between Springer Mountain, Georgia, and Katahdin, Maine.

MacKaye’s thinking though was never constrained to an 18-inch-wide footpath, no matter its length. The Appalachian Trail is simply the most tangible manifestation of a somewhat esoteric regional planning philosophy that was MacKaye’s “larger work.” While regional planning never truly became a prevailing discipline within land planning circles, in the last two decades an emerging landscape-scale trend within the conservation movement is revisiting many of the principles that undergirded MacKaye’s thinking. And the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) itself is leading a landscape-scale conservation project in south central Pennsylvania that is proving once again the prescience of the iconoclastic father of the A.T.

The Appalachian Trail, as MacKaye made increasingly clear in the years that followed the publication of his 1921 essay, was conceived as an experiment of wilderness. Rather

than as a corridor of movement between destinations, an Appalachian Trail would hold utility only to the extent that it allowed a physical, psychological experience of wilderness: MacKaye's Trail was a pathway to a "somewhere" not found fixed on any map.

To a hiker, this notion of a dislocated destination may (or may not) be disconcerting, but remember, MacKaye, along with the likes of Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold, was a founding member of the Wilderness Society. This cadre of early conservationists viewed wilderness not as a passing fancy but as a fundamental need, a redoubt from an invading modernity that was everywhere encroaching on "primeval" environments and the human spirit.

Perhaps more so than his fellow conservationists in the 1930s, MacKaye's wilderness ethic was a tenet embedded in a larger conceptual framework. MacKaye saw wilderness as inextricably linked to all that happens elsewhere in our human landscapes of communities and cities. Recognizing these linkages suggested a broader perspective, and pushed MacKaye to train his attention on a geographically regional scale that brought three "elemental environments" into focus: the primeval, the rural, and the urban. The manner in which these three fundamental strands weave together to form a landscape defines the nature of the human experience within the physical world.

And therein we find MacKaye's core philosophy: that comprehensive regional analysis considerate of the three elemental environments — and the manner in which human activity (communities, commodity flows, employment, and leisure) manifest within and shape these environments — empowers communities to create a world and human experience in which our "psychologic needs" are realized. In finding a proper balance of the dynamically integrated environments within our native landscape, mere existence gives way to a more fundamental living.

LANDSCAPE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY CONVERGE

The Appalachian Trail then arose from a deeper core philosophy: what drove MacKaye from an intellectual standpoint was the relationship of humanity to the physical world upon which we depend. A regional planner's work was to find the balance across the elemental environments of our physical landscape as a means of enabling meaningful, dignified human experiences. MacKaye, the regional planner, saw the Appalachian Mountains as a native dam to stem an invading modernity threatening to homogenize the three elemental environments into a single sea of the urban. An Appalachian Trail would serve to break the invasion, preserve primeval environments, and provide human access into the

wilderness so central to our psychological nourishment.

The Appalachian Trail, as it enters Pennsylvania from the south, bisects the South Mountain landscape in a 60-odd mile jaunt from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border to the Cumberland Valley north of Boiling Springs. Those who have read Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods* may assume the A.T. assiduously avoids any areas of real beauty within Pennsylvania: neither memorable vistas nor reliable water, but rather fierce rattlesnakes and a ceaseless sea of rocks. Those who have hiked — and especially those who lift an occasional eye from the Trail tread — may recall a different landscape, and know that Mr. Bryson, in this particular case, is not quite accurate.

The South Mountain landscape, a half-million or so acres in size, is defined by folds of forested uplands and the surrounding fertile valleys and communities. The uplands, some 2,000 feet in elevation and four to six miles in width, constitute the northern terminus of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a main geologic province of the Appalachian Mountains that the A.T. has followed from Georgia up through Virginia. Located within the Pennsylvania counties of Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York, the South Mountain landscape offers a unique convergence of natural and cultural elements.

The forested South Mountain, including the 85,000-acre Michaux State Forest, is perhaps the largest intact forest between Harrisburg and Washington, D.C., offering important wildlife habitat and innumerable ecosystem services, not the least of which is a seemingly limitless supply of clean water. By some accounts, nearly 80 percent of the region's residents drink water filtered and

stored by the forests and underlying geology. From valley to ridgeline, everywhere is evident a deep human legacy: Native American quarry sites, Civil War battlegrounds, and a secret World War II P.O.W. camp. More subtle but no less important is the story of the iron industry, fueled by an ostensibly boundless forest — and the story of South Mountain as a nationally important cradle of forestry and conservation when the nineteenth century iron tycoons proved the limits of these woodlands. The valleys too carry a rich agricultural legacy. The Cumberland Valley boasts some of Pennsylvania's most productive agricultural soil, and topography and geology converge in a 20,000-acre nationally significant "Fruit Belt" along the eastern toe slope of the mountains. And while one need not look beyond the A.T. to witness the region's continued recreational value, the story here is much larger as well. Its proximity to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. has made the South Mountain landscape and its public lands an outdoor playground.



MacKaye's Trail was a pathway to a "somewhere" not found fixed on any map.

No particular aspect of this landscape can singularly define it ... from valley to ridgeline, everywhere is evident a deep human legacy.

So while no particular aspect of this landscape can singularly define it, the dynamic convergence of such diverse resources in a geographically distinct region of Pennsylvania make this one of the state's more unique, special landscapes. Out of this landscape, the South Mountain Partnership has coalesced as a collaborative effort to conserve a distinctive rural landscape.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the ATC are collaborating to manage the partnership as a public-private endeavor. The ATC is working to adapt DCNR's visionary "Conservation Landscape" model, designed to consider environmental protection and economic and community development within special landscapes across Pennsylvania, to the specific context and elements of the South Mountain landscape. In doing so, the ATC is explicitly exploring the principles of landscape-scale conservation.

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

As landscape-scale conservation has emerged as a prevailing trend within conservation circles over the last two decades, a clearer understanding of this concept is taking shape as well. Three overarching landscape-scale conservation principles are governing the partnership's approach.

The first principle is a shift in geographic scale. Consider the word "landscape." According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a landscape is "the landforms of a region in aggregate." Implicit in this definition is the regional geographic frame of reference that MacKaye embraced. From a conservation perspective, decades of scientific research has built an emerging systems-level understanding of the natural world and has underscored the importance of habitat connectivity across scales for wildlife population dynamics. To sustain biodiversity and ecological function, conservation must transcend arbitrary boundaries and move well beyond a site-specific, parcel-by-parcel approach. In south-central Pennsylvania, the partnership is bringing these emerging conservation themes to bear across a near half-million acre landscape.

A second principle is rooted in a shift in perspective. Much conservation narrowly considers natural resources or conserved parcels in isolation, but recall here MacKaye's primeval, rural, and urban elemental environments: wilderness and conserved lands, farm fields and working forests, communities, and industrial lands are all part of a fully integrated entity, a landscape, and do not exist independent of one another. If a geographically expanded scale is adopted, perspective too must expand to consider these elements in an integrated manner. Here too, in a region defined not by any single resource but by the

unique combination of natural, cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources, the partnership is comprehensively considering how to sustain the dynamically interrelated elements of the landscape.

The third and final principle is rooted in a shifted understanding of process. At the smaller scale of a distinct parcel of land, conservation can rely on clear-cut direction from a single manager. But the very essence of a landscape — the expanded geographic scale and the shift in perspective to encompass the interrelated elements therein — extends the management discussion well beyond the purview of any single organization. Truly embracing landscape-scale principles removes any clear decision-making hierarchy and introduces a diversity of stakeholders and participants. A landscape-scale approach then, demands an inclusive, participatory process.

The South Mountain Partnership's origins trace to an 850-acre land acquisition that had been years in the works before finally closing in 2011. The White Rocks Acquisition, which preserved land along the northernmost ridge of the South Mountain in Cumberland County, brought together a core group of conservation partners and initiated a broader conversation about the protection of the region's landscape in the face of a burgeoning land-use conversion and development threat. The partnership arose not out of a void of activity but rather organically out of on-going dialogue and collaboration.

From this origin six years ago, the partnership has continued to prioritize collaboration; an inclusive participatory process has expanded the partnership into a collaborative network ranging across diverse perspectives, from traditional conservation organizations and Trail groups to historical organizations; from agricultural professionals and food systems advocates to health organizations; from educators and academics to tourism promoters, economic development and community organizations, and businesses.

Indeed, in large part because of the strength of these engaged and active partners, process has been a paramount focus of the partnership's work; the South Mountain Partnership does not acquire or hold land, nor is it implementing Trail construction projects or historical preservation efforts on the ground. Rather, it focuses on a strategic landscape role within the community of collaborators. It serves as a convening vehicle to provide regular, consistent space for individuals and partners to engage in dialogue across different perspectives in the interest of identifying common ground to improve the future of the landscape. Further, through programs like an annual "Speakers Series" of lectures on various aspects of the landscape's defining and unique resources, the partnership engages the broader public in the dialogue to



The A.T., threading through fourteen states, and joining a vast span of the Appalachian Mountains, has stood as a landscape-scale project for nearly a century.

reinforce the common sense of place and underscore the landscape’s significance. Finally, the partnership endeavors to translate the conversation into action on the ground by supporting partner activities through a flexible mini-grant program funded by DCNR’s continued investment.


Collectively, these particular activities and programs define a strategic and specific niche for the partnership. As a facilitator, integrator, interpreter, and catalyst, it strives to bring people together across political and sectorial boundaries to highlight the importance of the landscape and take action to secure its future.

Rooted in the deep philosophical connections between Benton MacKaye’s regional planning philosophy and the emerging principles of landscape-scale conservation, the South Mountain Partnership offers the ATC a vehicle to explicitly explore landscape-scale conservation and the three fundamental shifts in scale — geography, perspective, and process. And, really, who better than the ATC to be spearheading a landscape-scale conservation project? The A.T., threading through fourteen states and joining a vast span of the Appalachian Mountains, has stood as a landscape-scale project for nearly a century. But the lessons that are emerging from the South Mountain Partnership suggest that landscape-scale conservation is about much more than an enlarged geographic focus — and, perhaps, even that the shift in perspective to recognize the interrelated reality of the world and the shift in process to build a participatory dialogue are actually the key elements of landscape-scale conservation.

To me, what the partnership — and hence landscape-scale conservation — is then is a collective conversation through which residents and communities may envision the future condition of our human relationship with the native landscape upon which

we live. In shaping our interactions with the landscape, what values are we seeking? How do we want the South Mountain landscape to look in a century, and what is our hope for our communities herein?

Conservation at the landscape scale offers a means of empowering communities to conserve the interwoven fabric of resources that are so critical to our sense of place and quality of life. Despite the ever-deepening technological mask that strives to obscure this truth, our human lives are dependent upon the land on which we live. A comprehensive approach to considering physical land at a landscape scale — and the natural and cultural elements that are interwoven therein — is critical to sustaining this ecological foundation and promoting the meaningful, fulfilling experiences that transcend merely existing to reach the more fundamental living that MacKaye sought.

Benton MacKaye employed a fanciful literary conceit in his 1921 essay: a “giant” stepped along the spine of the Appalachian Mountains in a few short paragraphs to sketch out the value of this repository of wilderness. MacKaye’s giant encapsulates the regional perspective so central to his philosophy, giving him the vantage point from which to observe the interplay of the elemental environments of our landscapes. As we reflect on the work of emerging initiatives such as the South Mountain Partnership, it’s clear that what MacKaye envisioned in the early twentieth century, and spent his entire life thinking about, is increasingly reemerging in the field of landscape-scale conservation. How do we — as individuals, communities, and societies — interact with the physical world to achieve meaningful, dignified lives in sustaining (and sustainable) landscapes? There are no easy answers or solutions here, but work in this vein follows in the footprints of an intellectual giant. 

Jonathan Peterson is an environmental planner in the ATC’s Mid-Atlantic regional office, where he directs the South Mountain Partnership.

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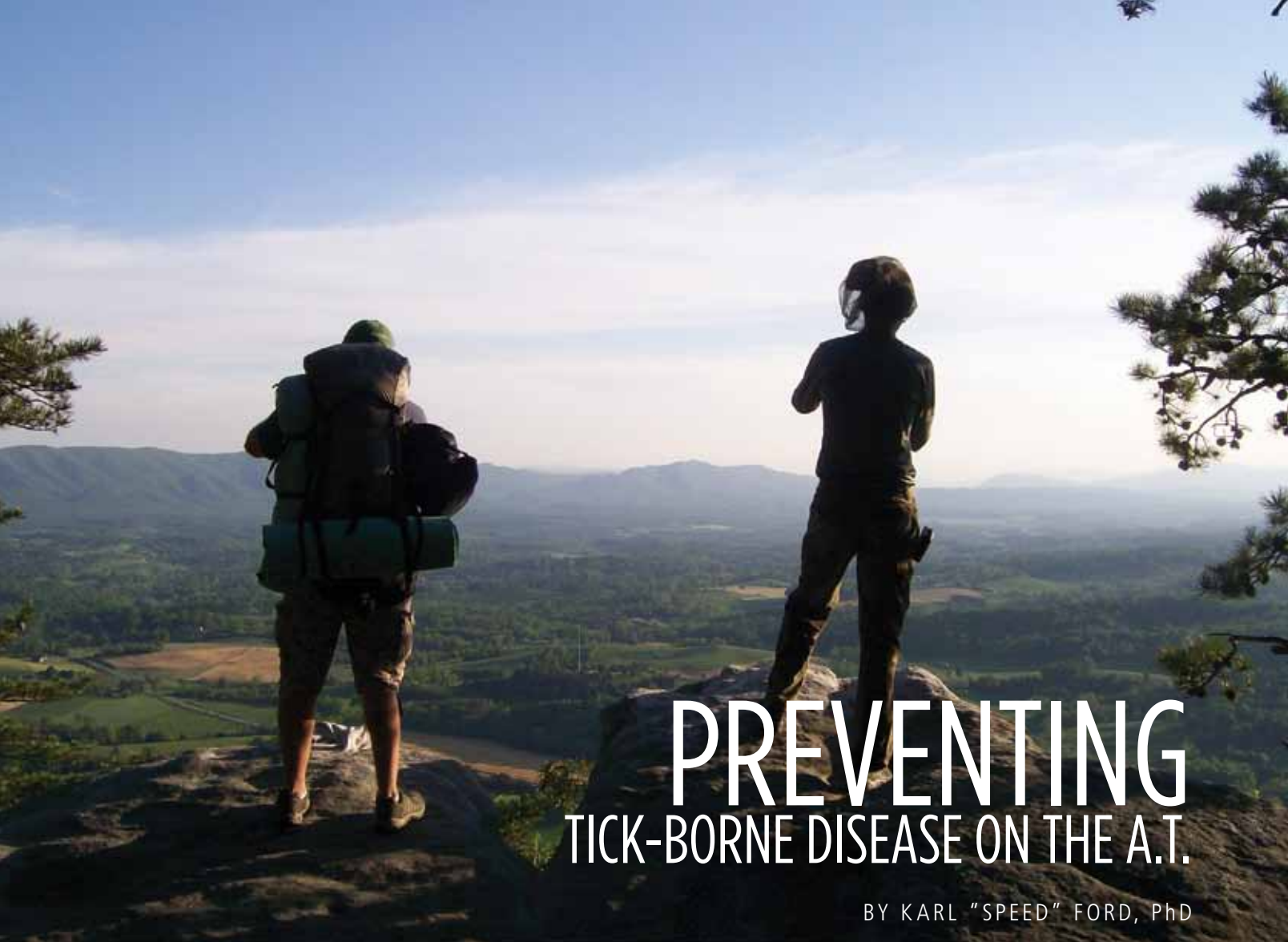
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Christi Holmes on the Trail north of Mount Washington
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PREVENTING TICK-BORNE DISEASE ON THE A.T.

BY KARL "SPEED" FORD, PhD

WANT TO HIKE THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL, BUT DON'T

want to get Lyme disease? That was a central question I had as I prepared for my 2013 thru-hike of the A.T. Each year, more than two to three million people hike portions of the A.T. where they risk contact with infected ticks. One of the biggest hazards of hiking the A.T. is exposure to tick-borne disease. These concerns eventually led me to conduct a tick surveillance project of the Trail and to raise tick awareness among my fellow hikers while doing my thru-hike.

Lyme disease is serious and all-too-common. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains on its website that Lyme disease not only causes a flu-like illness, but can cause debilitating, chronic Lyme disease syndrome in 10 to 20 percent of treated cases. Sixty percent of untreated cases can result in significant joint swelling and arthritis with a smaller percentage resulting in neurological problems. Over the course of their hike, many hikers I met found ticks on or attached to their bodies or clothing. Some hikers were treated for Lyme disease or quit the Trail because they did not follow these precautions and got sick. In my hiking "bubble," I encountered at least ten A.T. hikers who had been treated for Lyme disease. This does not have to happen.

Various diseases are transmitted by ticks present on the

A.T., especially Lyme disease. Lyme disease is transmitted via the deer tick, which occurs in deciduous forests and lowlands of the Appalachians. The adult deer tick as well as the juvenile "nymph" transmit most of the Lyme disease bacteria. The CDC estimates that 300,000 cases of Lyme disease occur each year in the U.S., with high incidence on the East Coast from northern Virginia through southern Maine. The majority of these cases are likely to be from ticks inhabiting lower elevations.

Season, landscape, and elevation determine exposure to ticks. Ticks generally live at low elevations in wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Researchers have found few deer ticks above 1,650 feet in the mid-Atlantic states. Except for alpine areas, agricultural lands, and balds, the Trail is nearly all forested and average elevation is 2,500 feet. Ticks are found in the lower elevations of all 14 states the A.T. crosses from May through September (and even year-round at the very lowest elevations in southern areas). The highest exposure months along the A.T. are mid-May through July and the greatest risk is in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New

Hikers — one wearing a protective headnet — take in the overlook on Tinker Ridge just south of Daleville, Virginia — by Shaun "Eco" Willison

Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, where Lyme disease is endemic and Trail elevation is low.

I started my northbound thru-hike at Springer Mountain, Georgia in mid-April, doing tick surveys as I hiked. These surveys entailed collecting tick specimens with a tick flag. No ticks were found until central Virginia in May. Lone star ticks and American dog ticks became common as I hiked from central Virginia to Massachusetts through mid-July. Lone star and American dog ticks are more prevalent in the southern A.T. states and tend to be found more in grassy fields. Deer ticks are found in forests from northern Virginia through Massachusetts. I found ticks more abundant at the lower elevations (less than 2,500 feet) and in deciduous forests and fields of Virginia. The A.T. in these states is generally less than 2,000 feet in elevation. I collected no ticks in Vermont, New Hampshire, or Maine. The higher elevation of the Trail combined with the more northern latitudes may explain why. I collected nearly all tick specimens from the Trail and almost none from shelters or tenting areas.

Besides knowing when and where to be alert for deer ticks, the most important preventative is to wear factory-treated permethrin clothing and spraying permethrin on shoes, pack, and outer tent floor. Permethrin, which is highly repellant of ticks, spiders, and insects, binds tightly to clothing and is considered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) safe for humans. I wore permethrin-treated bug-net pants, a treated long-sleeved shirt and hat, and a headnet when flying insects were a nuisance. Unlike other hikers, I had no ticks on my body at any time during the 140-day hike. I recommend the treated hat for everyone but especially for hikers with long hair. For hands and face, one can use 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin, although I used it sparingly because I did not want to ingest it. EPA considers DEET to be safe if used properly but warns against long-term exposure.

Ticks "quest" for hosts by hanging on brush and leaves and seeking with their forelegs. When a host brushes by, ticks hook on with the tiny barbs on their legs. Where vegetation is overgrown, it blocks the path and brushes the body, potentially depositing questing ticks. Because dense underbrush (up to a

meter high) may harbor ticks, you should hike the center of the Trail and avoid hiking off-Trail. Other ways of reducing tick exposure include not sitting down or placing your pack on the ground or logs, and pitching your tent on bare ground (in accordance with Leave No Trace principles). I treated a closed cell sit pad with permethrin for rest breaks on the Trail. Shelters and picnic tables are fairly safe places to sit.

On the management side, tick exposure can be reduced by frequent trimming of vegetation on the Trail as well as in fields, power line cuts, and shelter areas. Appalachian Trail maintaining club volunteers do this maintenance work that is so essential

for safe hiking. We hikers are indebted to them and to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) members for their support. So, volunteering to help out a local Trail club is one way to help.

Hiking with dogs multiplies your exposure to ticks. Dog owners I met on the Trail were constantly removing ticks from their dogs. For both humans and dogs, it is essential to make time for a daily tick check. Look for adult or juvenile (nymphal) ticks, which are the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Nymphal life stages cause a large proportion of Lyme disease cases and are so small that even when attached, they are often not noticed except by careful skin checks. Enlist a hiking buddy to check your back. I performed a partial check of my body and clothing whenever I stopped for a break, and did a more complete check at the end of the day.

Hikers should be able to identify deer ticks and recognize the symptoms of Lyme disease including flu-like symptoms with or without a "bull's eye" rash. Immediately remove any attached tick with tweezers using a slow, steady pull and wash the bite area carefully with

soap and water and/or sanitizer. Seek medical treatment *immediately* if any flu-like symptoms of Lyme disease appear. Lyme disease is only one of the many diseases transferred by ticks.

Thru-hiking is an incredible, epic journey and millions of people also enjoy shorter hikes on the Trail. Don't let ticks spoil the hike for you and your companions. Hikers who are more aware of ticks and tick-borne disease, more vigilant of ticks, and wear protective clothing during their hike are less likely to get Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. Make your hike a safe and enjoyable one by following the proper precautions. ⬆



Adult female deer tick — by Graham Hickling, University of Tennessee

THE TICKS:

Deer or blacklegged tick (*Ixodes Scapularis*)
Lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)
American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)

THE DISEASES:

Lyme disease
Babesiosis
Anaplasmosis
Ehrlichiosis
Rickettsia (*spotted fever*)

THE ACUTE SYMPTOMS:

headache, fever, chills, flu-like symptoms, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, malaise, bull's eye rash (*sometimes*).

Acknowledgements: The project was supported by the National Park Service and the Lyme Disease Association. Laboratory analysis for tick and pathogen identification was provided by the U.S. Army Public Health Command's Ellen Stromdahl and Robyn Nadolny. Dr. Graham Hickling, University of Tennessee provided technical support.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/lyme and www.lymediseaseassociation.org



Flora Unearthed

Mike Adamovic credits the Appalachian Trail for fostering his passion for photography. He explains, "The A.T. is where I take most of my pictures. In many cases, the Trail has been purposely routed to pass through an unusually high degree of different habitats in little time. This lets you see a diverse set of wildlife that fragmented chunks of parkland usually just don't offer." His favorite subjects to capture are the smaller, and more secreted, plants and animals of the Appalachians that pose a challenge to find or persist for only a brief duration. "The wildflowers of April and May are what I usually focus on during the spring. The fact that they're so fragile, so fleeting, makes them a rare sight to most, and many people see a new species for the first time through my images." He further adds that sharing nature with others is what keeps him going. "I may lack the ability to draw or paint something beautiful, but I find it just as satisfying to be able to preserve it."

Fiddlehead fern



Bluets



Dutchman's breeches



Wild geranium



White baneberry (also known as doll's eye)



Starflower



Marsh marigold (surrounded by skunk cabbage)

BRINGING THE TRAIL TO A BROADER COMMUNITY



Clark during the final portion of his A.T. hike in Maine

MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, CLARK WRIGHT Jr. was returning to his home in North Carolina following a hike along the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire’s White Mountains when he noticed a vehicle with a green and blue license plate. The plate was promoting the Friends of the Smokies, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting and maintaining

the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Wright, a lover of the A.T. and a staunch supporter of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), was struck by the innovative way to raise funds through a specialized tag. “I thought, if they can do that, why can’t we?” he says.

Wright’s years of legal expertise aided in the

creation of what would become the first A.T. Specialty License Plate. He was instrumental in drafting the legislation, obtaining the political support necessary for the law’s passage, and then finding the required 300 backers of the license plate. It was hard work, but it also paid off — to date, more than \$820,000 has been raised for the ATC thanks to North Carolina A.T. license plate holders. And, under the guidance of the ATC’s regional directors and other key players, Wright’s vision of the specialty tag has expanded to Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, and, most recently, Pennsylvania. “It’s been a wonderful source of new income in a difficult time,” Wright says. “The timing couldn’t have been better.”

Wright’s dedication to the implementation of an A.T. Specialty License Plate in North Carolina caught the attention of two ATC employees: Brian King, publisher, and Morgan Sommerville, deep south regional director. After seeing Wright’s efforts to bring the tag to fruition, King and Sommerville recommended that Wright, a life member of the ATC, become part of the Board of Directors. He was elected to the Board in 2007 during the Biennial Conference in Mahwah, New Jersey, and has been a crucial part of the ATC’s leadership ever since. Now, Wright serves as vice chair. “Clark is one of the most enthusiastic advocates for the A.T. I have ever worked with,” says ATC’s executive director/CEO Ron Tipton. “He brings to our board impressive legal and advocacy skills along with a genuine interest in increasing the capacity of the ATC.”

As a partner at Davis Hartman Wright in New Bern, North Carolina, Wright is good at what he does. He has practiced law for more than 30 years and has been listed in *Best Lawyers in America* for more than a decade. In addition, his strong background in environmental law led his firm to be recognized last year by *U.S. News Best Law Firms* as one of three “Top Tier Environmental Law Firms” in the Wilmington, North Carolina market and as one of two “Top Tier Environmental Law Firms” in the New Bern, North Carolina market. Wright’s experience and dedication to not only environmental law but also agricultural and forestry issues and zoning and land use are an asset to the ATC as it works to manage tracts across 14 different states from Georgia to Maine. “The land itself and the opportunity to manage it really rings true with me,” he says.

Wright’s investment in land protection stems from more than his titles of lawyer and ATC Board member, however. As a hiker, too, he is privy to the magic that is the A.T., and he looks back at his time on the Trail as some of the best years of his life. It is only natural, then, that Wright devotes so much of his life to preserving the iconic footpath.

Wright was first exposed to the A.T. when he

participated in experience-based outdoor leadership programs as a young teenager. As he grew up, he tossed around the idea of a thru-hike. Yet it wasn’t until late 2000 when he saw a copy of Bill Bryson’s *A Walk in the Woods* on a law partner’s desk at his former firm that he really felt the calling. “[Reading that book] reawakened my desire,” he says. “At the time, I was an extremely successful but extremely burned-out lawyer. So I went to my senior partners and asked for six months off to do a thru-hike. I expected them to say, ‘Have a nice day,’ but they gave me a leave of absence.”

Wright began his trek at Amicalola Falls, Georgia in March of 2001 and made it more than 1,200 miles into Pennsylvania before returning home for family reasons. In the midst of his work with the A.T. Specialty License Plate program, the desire to finish his hike was still there. He completed the rest of the A.T. in sections, arriving in Maine and summitting

“CLARK IS ONE OF THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADVOCATES FOR THE A.T. I HAVE EVER WORKED WITH. HE BRINGS TO OUR BOARD IMPRESSIVE LEGAL AND ADVOCACY SKILLS ALONG WITH A GENUINE INTEREST IN INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF THE ATC.”



As a hiker, Clark is privy to the magic that is the A.T. It is only natural, then, that he devotes so much of his life to preserving the iconic footpath. Here he proudly displays the completed design of the North Carolina A.T. Specialty Plates.

Katahdin in 2009, this time as an ATC Board member. “I made incredible friendships on the Trail,” he says. “I met people who are hiking partners for life, and we still keep up.”

Wright’s experience hiking the A.T. and interacting with the Trail community allow him to thrive as a leader within the ATC, especially as the organization looks ahead this year to a new strategic plan that will strive to broaden the Trail’s relevancy to minorities and a younger age group. “We have to tap into those demographics,” he said. “We have to bring that same magic and experience to a broader community — and the Trail will do the rest.” 🌱



FLORAL fireworks

Spring Ephemeral Wildflowers of New York's Great Swamp

LIKE MOST AREAS, SPRING IN NEW YORK'S Hudson Valley is one of the most anticipated seasons of the year. Needless to say, residents are grateful to see the last of the winter snow fade away and see a spike in temperature, but for those who are fortunate enough to reside in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, the arrival of spring more importantly means the awakening of the 6,000-acre "Great Swamp." What fireworks are to the sky on the Fourth of July, wildflowers are to the Swamp's forest floors in March, April, and early May. The rich soil and muck, in addition to plentiful moisture coming from the many braided streams and rivulets of the lowlands, ensure the most fertile of conditions for the area's unusually high biodiversity.

One of the best spots to view the wildflowers, or spring ephemerals, is along a section of the Appalachian Trail as it passes through the Great Swamp in Pawling, New York. At this location it's possible to cross without becoming wet or inconvenienced, as a lengthy boardwalk spans the route. While several species can be found growing within the dampest sections, a majority of the ephemerals are located along the periphery of the swamp.

The first flower to bloom in the spring is the eastern skunk cabbage. It's difficult to spot the flowers as they are surrounded by a structure that resembles an in-

verted red cone, which is called a spadix. This feature hides the true petal-less flowers within, so a glimpse is rarely seen. Undoubtedly, this is by far the most common and abundant ephemeral. Thousands can often be seen popping from the mud at the start of March. On occasion they may even sprout in the dead of winter — I've seen several patches growing in mid-February during a warm spell.

A trait extremely rare to plants, skunk cabbages exhibit thermogenesis, meaning that they produce their own heat. This unique trait comes in handy when they have to melt their way through standing snow that may still persist at the very beginning of the growing season.

After the last of the winter snow slowly melts and drains away, leaving the ground soggy and the Trail a mess, the graceful hepatica emerges from the tawny detritus and dabs the first splash of color to the heretofore bleak landscape. Look for them starting in early to mid-April. The small pink to purple flowers tend to grow on higher land that is well-drained and can be found in small clumps that are dotted over a wide area of the forest floor. There are two species of hepatica: blunt-lobed and sharp-lobed. The former is the variety usually seen near the Great Swamp. Hepatica receives its name from the shape of its leaves that superficially

resemble the lobes of the liver. They used to be collected in prodigious amounts to be used to cure ailments of its namesake. Current research has shown that they have little to no medicinal value, however.

One of the next plants to follow is the aptly named Dutchman's breeches, which closely resemble an upturned pair of outdated pantaloons. Each plant can have more than half a dozen flowers attached to a single stem that bends similarly to a candy cane. It's also vaguely reminiscent of a clothesline with each flower a pair of pants hanging out to dry. The bright white flowers, with small yellow patches on the bottom, greatly stand out in the dark forest environs — at twilight they certainly look like eyes or miniature ghosts peering out on whoever or whatever passes by.

Around the same time Dutchman's breeches are in bloom, so too can be found in proud abundance the yellow trout lily. Often situated directly adjacent to streams, rivers, and other riparian zones, this species is normally present in the dozens or hundreds. Leaves appear beginning in March, but will usually not flower until April. It has been surmised that the plant gets its name from each leaf's resemblance to the mottling found on the trout that inhabit the waters this plant grows near.

In mid-April, at the onset of some mildly warm weather, the forest explodes with color and multiple species can often be found intermixed with each other, blooming simultaneously, forming vibrant tapestries on the hills and knolls above the swampy plain. Immediately after crossing the boardwalk along the Appalachian Trail heading south from Route 22 in Pawling, the show begins. Red trillium, a large and showy, though rancid smelling flower, thrives with the trout lilies and the unrolling and sculpture-like fiddlehead ferns that gracefully rise from the beds of moss.

Sometimes growing on the very borders of the Trail is the pale white, rue anemone, a diminutive and delicate plant that even the slightest breeze caused by you passing by may result in a few petals carried away. This usually sprouts near the ubiquitous violets that at this location are minted in myriad sizes and colors, the most common being purple and white. There are hundreds of violet species in the country, and with many being nearly identical to one another it's difficult to tell precisely how many exist here, but it's probably at least half a dozen.

Bloodroot, a true gem of the woods, is as beautiful as it is fleeting. It's a relatively large flower consisting of 8 to 12 white petals and will usually only grow adjacent to streams or floodplains. This elusive plant is difficult to detect due to its short duration, which is extremely brief even for a spring ephemeral, with flowers only lasting a day or two before

wind or rain disseminates the petals and it is lost until next spring. It receives its unusual name from the bright red liquid that exudes from the stem and root if broken. Native Americans and colonists used it as a dye. It stains readily.

South-borders will notice as the Trail starts to exit the Great Swamp that it slowly begins winding up a small rise known as Corbin Hill, a low peak in the center of the Harlem Valley that from the top provides exquisite views of the higher Taconic Mountains that surround to the east and west. The most frequently encountered sights are the farms that have collected over the years in the sheltered valleys and on some of the fertile hills. The Trail skirts a cow pasture atop Corbin Hill. Along a fence in scattered clusters are the bluets. This dainty, blue and yellow flower thrives under the rolling clouds that hang statically overhead



on a typical spring day. It's a scene resembling that of one found in Montana, Big Sky Country. Bluets love the sun, but can occasionally also be found deep in the forest where ample light makes it to the understory. Each plant is about the size of a fist and contains more than a dozen flowers on thin, wiry stalks.

In the woods, before making it to the open summit the cheery shadbushes are in full bloom with their long, flowing white flowers. The flowering of these modestly-sized trees is an indicator of when the estuarine shad begin making their yearly spawning run up the Hudson. They are in full bloom from late April until the first weeks of May.

The willow with its golden, pollen-laced catkins can be seen growing along the streams that flow through the swamp. Many are rooted only feet from the boardwalk, affording excellent close-up views of the catkins, which bring to mind a bushy squirrel's tail. Willows are diecious, meaning they're either male



From top: Blunt-lobed hepatica; Flowering shadbush; Trout lily

Bright and ubiquitous violets grow along the borders of the Trail as it crosses the Great Swamp.

or female, unlike most plants, which contain both genders' reproductive organs. Only the males will put on a show with their pollen. Female catkins are more mundane and don't easily stand out, being nearly completely green. A few large willows, several feet in diameter, just to the south of the boardwalk have been girdled round by beavers. The beavers' dam runs parallel to the boardwalk, at times almost close enough to touch; a mound-shaped lodge resides just beyond in the shallow pond they have created. On a bright, clear day when the sun is directly overhead the water in this portion of the swamp becomes perfectly transparent, allowing you to peer down to the bottom of the numerous pools and get a glimpse of the Great Swamp's aquatic environs, spotting sunfish and minnows darting away from your shadow along the mud and grass-lined bottom. The thick mud substrate has

a clay-like consistency perfect for preserving footprints, which enables one to easily track the beavers' movements in the shallower areas.

As one travels the Trail on the western edge of the swamp it's hard to miss the stone wall bordering a slight bank that descends to a patch of skunk cabbages. This crumbling and moss-covered ruin serves as a reminder that even this wild and biologically diverse segment of land was once inhabited by man on a level much greater than the humble footpath that now traverses it. If you veer off the Trail 20 or 30 feet and take a closer look at the wall it will be undoubtedly apparent that you're standing in an abandoned dirt road that is slowly, yet steadily succumbing to the forces of nature, evinced by its subsidence that has loosened the compacted soil enough to be repopulated by plant life. This old woods road has numerous trees — both saplings and adolescents — that are popping up haphazardly in all quadrants; and apart from a shaky levelness bordered by the cut banks that it passes through in various portions, it would be difficult to establish its existence. It is here in the muck, just below the road and stone wall, that the swamp marigolds thrive and brighten up the gloomy surroundings.

Growing beneath the large, sheet-like leaves of the innumerable skunk cabbages, swamp marigolds openly revel, bringing mirth to an otherwise reserved landscape. It's no wonder why this impressive species was bestowed with the title of *mari-gold* — it's as if someone tossed handfuls of gold coins here and there onto the cold mud. When even the most minor of sunlight strikes these flowers they light up and shine like the stars in the sky. I know of no other spring

ephemeral in the swamp itself that can catch the eye as this one does.

Just beyond the marsh marigolds, 10 to 20 feet deeper in the swamp, in a select few locations, hundreds of miniscule violets, so small they could be called dwarfs, burst out from the soggy and rotting logs that are half-buried in the water and muck. The only neighbors these plants have on their slowly sinking islands are the beds of moss that they grow from, parts of which reach nearly the height the violets stand at. The light purple mixed with the lime-green mats make you feel as if you're in a tropical oasis, buried in the deepest portion of some remote Amazonian jungle. Not until you look round at the various northern birches and hemlocks do you return to your senses.

Another plant that may be found hovering around the confines of the swamp is the elegant and diecious jack-in-the-pulpit. Resembling an old-fashioned preacher's pulpit, this species is somewhat similar to the skunk cabbages in that the flowers are hidden from sight. They reside within a long, cylindrical structure known as a spadix, or the "jack" that is sheltered under a curled overhanging leaf. This leaf is quite beautiful — decorated with numerous vertical bands, green and white as the plant first blooms, keeping the green, but often the white transitioning into a deep purple as the spring progresses. As previously stated, plants are either male or female — males usually having a single leaf stalk, females two. Jack-in-the-pulpits also have the unique ability to change gender from one year to another depending on environmental conditions and the availability of resources.

As early spring advances towards mid-season, the flat uplands are populated with minor dashes of dwarf ginseng and starflower, two white ephemerals slowly being buried beneath the rapidly expanding vegetation of the understory. By May the air is already noticeably sweetened with the aroma of the hay-scented fern, which grows in grand profusion on the many undulating knolls that comprise the steeper land within the A.T.'s buffer zone. As these glades become filled with ferns and morph into distinct monocultures the first wave of the spring ephemerals has subsided and a second, lesser round begins, filling the continually darkening woods with red columbine, forget-me-not that matches the sky, the graceful pink lady's-slippers, white carpets of Canada mayflower, and the topaz-like flowers of the wild Indian strawberry, among many others. Not until July commences will the last of the ephemerals have blossomed, giving way to the green blush of summer. [▲](#)

Mike Adamovic is an avid A.T. hiker who is currently helping to preserve watersheds within New York State as part of the Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program.

Growing beneath innumerable skunk cabbages, swamp marigolds bring mirth to an otherwise reserved landscape.



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I AM ALWAYS DOING THINGS I CAN'T DO. THAT'S HOW I GET TO DO THEM..."

-Pablo Picasso

without exemption

WE WERE FINISHING UP WORK ON OUR handmade Scandinavian scribed fit log home back in 1990, when we brought blind hiker Bill Irwin over for some R&R off the Appalachian Trail. Bill went up to check out the top floor but the balcony had no railing yet. He went right to the edge and hung his size 14 feet over and I looked up at him and freaked. But he knew the edge was there, just like he knew so many things, more things than a sighted person knows.

"I want to build my own Scandinavian scribed fit log home someday," he said. Right, I thought — running a chainsaw, blind, now there's a recipe for disaster. Building our log home from scratch was a feat my husband Todd and I ranked way harder than any thru-hike, and we could see.

I'm sure Bill Irwin was told over and over by people that he couldn't hike the entire Appalachian Trail solo, in a single end-to-end hike, blind. But Bill never listened to them. Never knew he couldn't do exactly what he wanted to do in life. And so he did exactly what his heart desired. And that included a spectacularly successful thru-hike with his guide

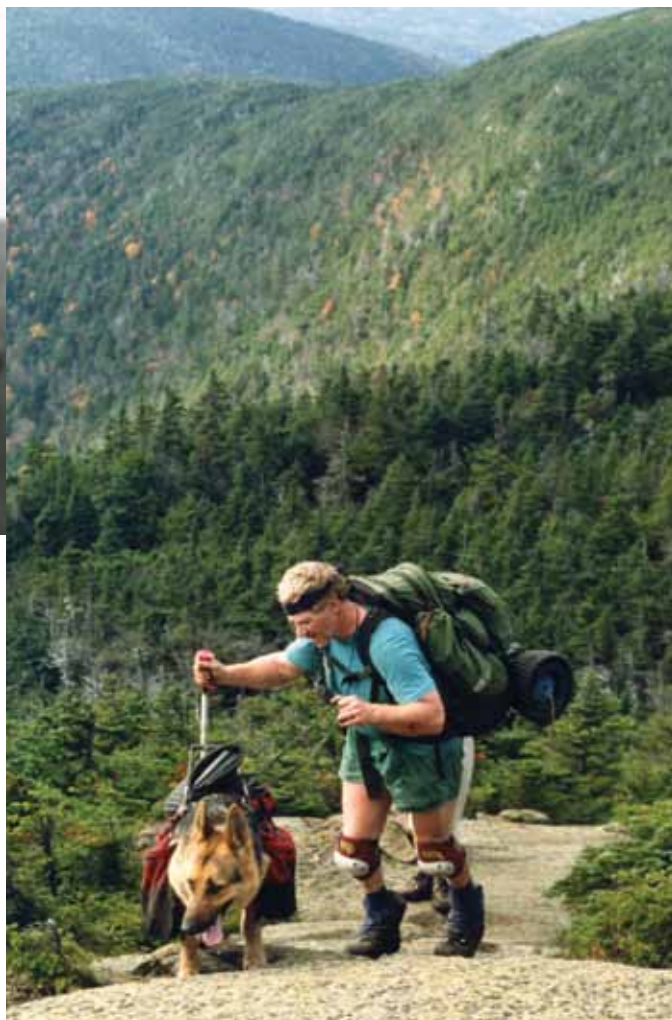
dog, Orient, a published book entitled, *Blind Courage*, thousands of motivational speaking engagements, and as a result, impacting tens of thousands of lives for the better.

I, like many, lost touch with Bill Irwin over the years, and was incredibly saddened to hear of his recent passing. So I phoned his wife of nineteen years, Debra, to bring me up to date on what Bill had been up to since his epic thru-hike.

Post Hike

The couple enjoyed an active outdoor life of tandem cycling, canoeing, and kayaking (Bill followed Debra's voice), snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, and of course, hiking. They cycled across Tennessee a few times and traveled long distance in Florida multiple times. Up until three months before Bill's death from cancer, he was cycling forty miles a day in the Bahamas.

Orient lived until 1997, then Bill had three more dogs after him, all successfully leading Bill along various hiking trails, picking it up right away as if



they had always been doing it. The threesome hiked about half (200 miles) of the Finger Lakes Trail in New York state. They traveled all over the United States, and had friends everywhere, not surprisingly — everyone loved Bill Irwin. He was a motivational speaker all his life, but ramped it up after his A.T. thru-hike. He had six ministries going, from marriage counseling to wellness to life coaching.

The couple bought 72 acres in Maine, 45 minutes from Millinocket. But they had no idea what their view was like from the hilltop on the property until one day, five months later, they walked to the summit with Ranger Buzz Caverly from Baxter State Park. Debra looked out over the wide expanse and marveled at the mountain in the distance. "What mountain is that?" she asked Buzz. "The mountain, Debra. Katahdin," Buzz said. They were thrilled. The next dream was to build a Scandinavian scribed fit log home on the top so Bill could sit there at the glass picture window with his cup of tea and "feel" the mountain in the distance. "And so we did!" explained Debra.

"You built a log home like Bill always wanted?" I asked in disbelief and Debra explained how. Instead of going to a hands-on log building school like my husband and I did, Bill and Debra bought and watched six VHS tapes — Debra explained as Bill listened. They bought logs locally, hand peeled and scribed them, and began their log home. Debra cut the notches and the grooves with the chainsaw; Bill fine-tuned the logs with hand tools. Debra never grasped reading rulers in school and so when Bill asked her for a measurement, she would say, "six inches and two lines." Bill would reply, "That is a quarter inch, Debra." "Whatever," she would say, and he would convert it. They built the whole house like that, right up to the roof. It took eight years.

"Then the logs rotted and we had to tear it down," Debra said. I was in shock. But the Irwins just rolled with it just like every other obstacle in life. Next, they began to build a timber frame home, which remained unfinished when Bill was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2011. Bill tried to cure his cancer the natural way and had an alternative holistic doctor to help him. He gave himself vitamin C, etc. intravenously at the suggestion of his doctor. Bill was a chemist and biologist by trade so he possessed an extensive background in medicine. But their insurance policy did not cover such unconventional therapy and it drained the couple's savings.

All those years, they lived in a tiny hunting cabin that was fixed up and added onto as a temporary

home until the log home, and then the timber frame home, was finished. That was 17 years ago. "He never had that dream come true," Debra sighed, and I felt badly too.

The Future

Debra is feeling quite daunted with Bill's death to say the least. And he did so much around the property — cutting firewood, maintaining the land, shoveling snow, and snow blowing, despite his lack of sight. "Bill used to say there were two things he couldn't do," Debra remarks, "drive a car and read; but his Kindle had software that converted the text to audio, and one time I came home and he had moved my car in the driveway, 'only 12 feet,' he said."

I asked Debra what it was like for her — all those years — to be the one who had to run the chainsaw and so on. "I was always strong-willed, independent, and liked a challenge," she said. "It didn't bother me until the end. Then I got worn down. There was so much to do. I don't know how he did everything. I guess I will have to learn," she said.

I have no doubt that Debra will be fine in life, buoyed by a tremendous support system, her faith, like Bill, and Bill as her reference point. We all have a different reference point since Bill Irwin touched our lives and we are all the better for it. [⬆](#)

From far left: In 1990, Bill becomes the first blind person to complete a thru-hike; Bill and his guide dog, Orient, hike up Goose Eye Mountain; Debra and Bill enjoyed many outdoor activities together, including kayaking.



Bill Irwin was 73 years young when he passed away on March 1, 2014. To learn more about Bill, his mission and legacy, and to purchase his book *Blind Courage* visit: www.billirwin.com. To read Cindy Ross's extended tribute to Bill visit: cindyrosstraveler.com.



The ATC is reaching out to new partners in priority areas near the Trail such as South Mountain in Pennsylvania, the Maine woods, the Southern Appalachians, and elsewhere to protect landscapes beyond the Trail corridor.

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, AND SOME OF YOU GENEROUSLY supported, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) was very heavily focused on land acquisition to permanently locate the Trail corridor 25 years ago. Our hard work, then and through the following years with our partner agencies, resulted in one of the most successful land-conservation efforts in the nation’s history with the acquisition of more than 193,000 acres in 3,378 parcels across fourteen states. The Trail corridor is now almost complete as we celebrate the closing of one of the last remaining tracts for the A.T. tread near the New River in southwest Virginia. Nearly the entire A.T. is now forever on dedicated lands without the threat of being moved due to landowner conflicts.

Time to sit back and bask in our success, right? Well, yes and no. National scenic trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, designated under the 1968 National Trails System Act are “extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.” Congressional emphasis on “nationally significant” scenic and natural values distinguishes national scenic trails from the other types of trails created by the Trails Act. This charge is at the heart of the ATC’s mission and drives our conservation action every day.

Our perspective, perhaps more than ever, is that, even faced with national needs for more energy, more telecommunications towers, and more new housing, the nation still needs to preserve places that offer to every extent possible unobscured views of the American landscape for both recreation and appreciation of our cultural and natural heritage.

It is to this end that the ATC is reaching out to new partners in priority areas near the Trail such as South Mountain in Pennsylvania, the Maine woods, the Southern Appalachians, and elsewhere

to protect landscapes beyond the Trail corridor. This challenge is particularly acute in areas where the corridor is very narrow and development is approaching rapidly.

Protecting this national resource also means that we work to preserve ecosystems the Trail traverses through. We strive to do this by understanding the impacts from invasive species to the most difficult threat of all, climate change, so that we can work with partners to effectively manage natural resources.

Our future success will require increased capacity and increased support to guarantee the investments made two decades ago, protecting what has now become an American icon — one that is accessible for all to enjoy. Your continued support and willingness to help us expand our capacity and circle of partners to protect Trail landscapes is critical. ⬆

Laura Belleville | *Director of Conservation*



JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2014

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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**

Hiking Partners

Experienced female 63-year-old section hiker is **looking for hiking partners for parts of New England and Tennessee/North Carolina** this year. Prefer slacking with pace of 10 to 16 miles per day, depending on terrain. If interested, please contact me at: ellen.atsectionhiker@gmail.com.

For Sale

House for sale: 1/4 mile from the A.T. at PA 501; open 1st floor LR, DR, Kitchen, Office spaces; 2nd floor four bedrooms, bath. Custom design passive solar, wood heat, electric back-up; full basement, deck, porch, two-car garage; 30-mile south view. Contact: (717) 933-8802 or davedeek@gmail.com.

For Your Information

Join the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at the **third annual Troutville Trail Days** the weekend of Friday, June 6 to Sunday, June 8. Presented by Outdoor

Trails, Troutville Trail Days will celebrate the A.T. and other outdoor opportunities found in the area. It will feature activities for the public and A.T. thru-hikers. With free hiker camping, showers, and laundry, Troutville Park remains the “heart and soul” of the event. Retail and craft vendors, informational booths, food, thru-hiker gear repair, clinics, and music will be located at Daleville Town Center on Saturday and Sunday. For more information visit: www.troutvilletraildays.com.

Four new members will be inducted into the **2014 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame** on Friday, June 6, at the fourth annual Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame Banquet at the Allenberry Resort in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Ron Tipton, executive director and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will speak and A.T. thru-hiker and author Richard Judy will be present to sign *THRU: an Appalachian Trail Love Story*.

Complete information on the Hall of Fame Banquet is available at: atmbanquet2014.eventbrite.com.

Wildlife on the A.T. July 26: The 50th **Virginia-based Blue Ridge Wildlife Center will give a live demonstration of animals that might be seen along the Appalachian Trail**. Children will have a chance to view and interact with wildlife. This event is free and open to the public, and children must be accompanied by an adult supervisor. For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/events.

A **Multi-year Thru-hiker Reunion and Anniversary Celebration** is to be held at the A.T. Museum in Pine Grove Furnace State Park on June 7 and 8 for those who hiked the A.T. in '74, '79, '84, and '89. Participants are encouraged to bring a potluck dish for Saturday's dinner and photos of their hike (paper or digital) for later inclusion in the museum archive. Suggested

donation: \$10. For more info visit: www.atmuseum.org and for details on overnight accommodations, please contact: Alan Strackeljahn at gonzo@2000milehike.com (787) 895-0302 or Karl Hartzell at karlerun@yahoo.com (541) 758-2275.

Third Thursdays **Boiling Springs History Hike**. Join the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) for a moderate five-mile hike at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 19, in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Register for the hike by calling (717) 258-5771 or online at: atctthirdthursdays.eventbrite.com. To find out about other Third Thursday events visit: appalachiantrail.org/events. ⬆

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Public Notices
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THERE'S A SOUND MANY HIKERS HEAR LONG BEFORE THEY ENCOUNTER ME ON THE TRAIL.

It's a metallic ringing, singing melody that on a calm day will resonate along the ridgeline in Shenandoah National Park. As I pull my crosscut saw through another blowdown, each tooth vibrates, tuning-fork-like, just a tiny bit differently than its neighbor; and the sound of 40-plus teeth ringing all at once is a song from a bygone era.

Chainsaws have largely replaced crosscut saws and axes as the go-to Trail tool for cutting blowdowns, especially after a hurricane or ice storm, but outside of those events, fallen trees are occasional encounters. The time spent hiking in from the trailhead to reach a blowdown is far longer than that spent cutting most fallen trees. It was this realization that led me to prefer using traditional tools over power tools — that, and a passion for the sound, feel, and history of an era when hand tools were in regular use.

As I have gotten older, there is also the convenience of weight. My typical kit contains a crosscut saw, an axe, and a couple wedges. Divided between two people, it's not much more than the weight of our water bottles. Such



light gear makes for a more pleasurable hike, and I often cover ten or more miles on a given log-out. Working with an experienced partner, each blowdown encountered is rapidly sized up, a cutting plan is discussed, and the obstruction cleared — usually in just a few minutes. All that remains on the Trail are the little piles of short spaghetti-like curls peeled out of the kerf where the saw passed through.

Hikers will often stop to watch, ask questions (“why don't you use a chainsaw?”), and then be amazed by how quickly a sharp crosscut saw slices through a log. I was once approached by two hikers — a father and son — just as I was about to clear a fallen tree. I asked if they wanted to help, and got a big smile from the son. The dad, thinking this was going to take awhile and perhaps delay their hike, hesitated. The son

removed his pack in a flash, and we started sawing while his dad turned away to fumble with his own pack straps. By the time the dad had removed his pack and turned back toward us, the son and I were finished with the cut and were moving the butt end of the log off the Trail. Of the many miles they hiked on that trip, I'm pretty sure the son will always recall his encounter with the sawyer.

Like any tool, sharp is good and dull is misery. Most crosscut saws I first encounter are poorly filed or were never filed properly at the factory. This has led to a misconception that such tools are best left hanging in an antique store. Until recently, information on saw filing was limited, and practitioners of the art were few and far between. That is changing as more Trail maintainers who are exposed to traditional tools volunteer their time in wilderness areas where crosscut saws and axes are the only cutting tools allowed, and bring that experience home.

The A.T. class of 2014 is now passing through Shenandoah on their long journey. If they listen, they might hear a sawyer's song along the way. ⬆

Dan Dueweke is a Trail maintainer, saw instructor, and crosscut filer for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. Every spring he teaches a workshop on traditional tools in Shenandoah National Park.

“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 (700 words or under) for consideration, please email journeys@appalachiantrail.org or write to Editor/As I See It, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

Volunteer on an Appalachian Trail Crew this season!

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HIKERS ON THE A.T. IN MAY — JUST NORTHWEST OF THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT
LAFAYETTE ON THE FRANCONIA RIDGE TRAIL — BY JOHN HANSEN.