



# JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / SUMMER 2017

## Avery and Baxter: Of Men and Mountains

Partnership at Play  
Practical Trail Magic







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# JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / SUMMER 2017

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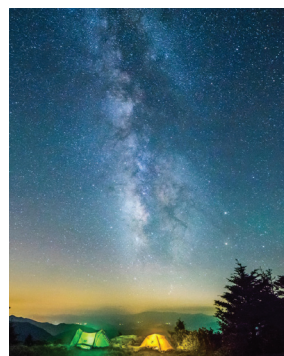
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Milky Way over A.T.  
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by Steven Yocom  
(page 36, Achieving  
a Vision)

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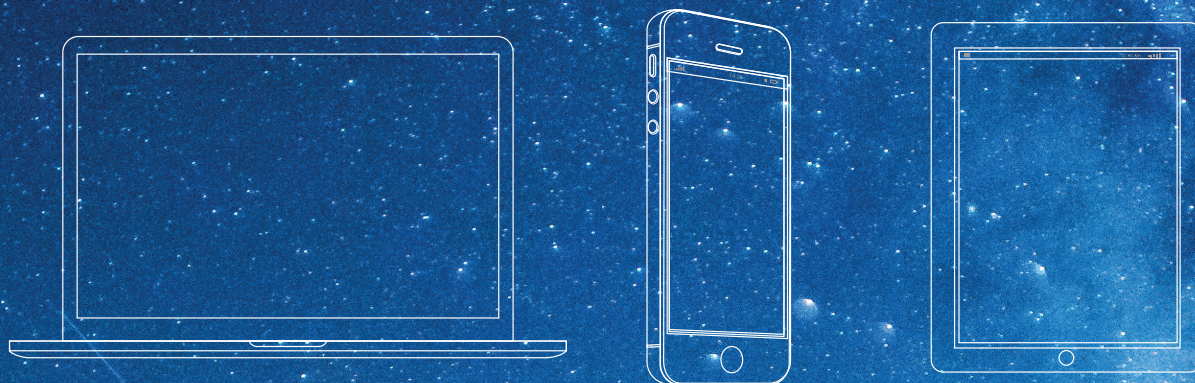
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Photo by Steven Yocom



# Why Fight the Pipeline?

## THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

(ATC) is very committed to protecting the natural and cultural features along the A.T. and especially the scenic values that attract an estimated three-million hikers annually. The ATC has a long history of challenging a number of proposed developments along the Trail, including residential subdivisions, auto racetracks, casino resorts, wind turbines, and communication towers.

The last issue of *A.T. Journeys* included a feature article about the proposed Mountain Valley natural gas pipeline (“Cutting to the Core”) that would extend 300 miles from West Virginia in order to transport natural gas extracted from the Marcellus Shale across the Appalachian Mountains to connect with the Transco Pipeline in eastern Virginia. The MVP project (as it is commonly called) is one of four proposed gas pipelines now awaiting approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that would cross the A.T. in Virginia or Pennsylvania.

The ATC has closely examined all four of these routes and has concerns about the potential impact on the Trail experience from each proposal. Yet we have only come out in opposition to the MVP route. Why is that the case? It is a legitimate question that has been raised by some of our members.

I want to explain the process that led to the decision to oppose the MVP. When we first heard such a pipeline was in the planning stages, we reached out to the consortium of energy companies supporting Mountain Valley to obtain the information we needed to evaluate its likely impact on the Trail. At the same time, we began a series of discussions about the project with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, both of which have key roles in the approval process. The result was that the Mountain Valley proponents essentially ignored our concerns, while both the Forest Service and the Park Service raised many of the same issues we did.

To be frank, we are very disappointed

that the MVP consortium would not engage in discussions or provide the data that could lead to a better route with much less impact on the A.T. We paid for an independent visual impact analysis of how a pipeline corridor up to 500 feet wide would affect the Trail experience from Pearisburg north to the Roanoke area. It is clear from this analysis that the scenic values from vistas such as Angel’s Rest, Kelly’s Knob, McAfee Knob, and numerous others would be degraded.

Based on this information and the unwillingness of the MVP consortium to have a productive dialogue with us, we are strongly advocating the proposed MVP route be rejected by FERC. We took this position consistent with a policy position for considering petroleum pipeline development approved by the ATC’s Stewardship Council and Board of Directors. That policy statement says: “The ATC seeks to avoid, minimize, or eliminate the visual and experiential impacts of all utilities — including oil, gas, and petroleum-product pipelines, on the Trail and its surrounding landscapes.”

It is my view that the ATC should be very careful and selective in deciding that a specific development proposal is unacceptable. We have a long track record of working with government agencies, local communities, and the private sector to assure the Appalachian Trail experience is protected for the enjoyment of future generations. This requires us to be a strong voice for conserving the A.T. landscape and the many great vistas along the Trail consistent with environmentally acceptable development that benefits our country.

The proposed Mountain Valley pipeline route is not consistent with that vision.▲

**Ronald J. Tipton** / President & CEO

For more information about the proposed MVP project visit: [appalachiantrail.org/MVP](http://appalachiantrail.org/MVP)

Ron with his wife  
Rita Molyneux



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Volunteers from the Maine A.T. Club repair a cairn at the summit of Katahdin in 1939  
 Photo by Mark Taylor

# 22 OF MEN AND MOUNTAINS

While Myron Avery and Percival Baxter had vastly differing backgrounds and opinions, both shared a passion for Katahdin and a fierce desire to protect it.

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Over the years, the term "Trail magic" has expanded in the hiker community to encompass many forms of kindness, some of which are doing more harm than good to the Trail and its environment.

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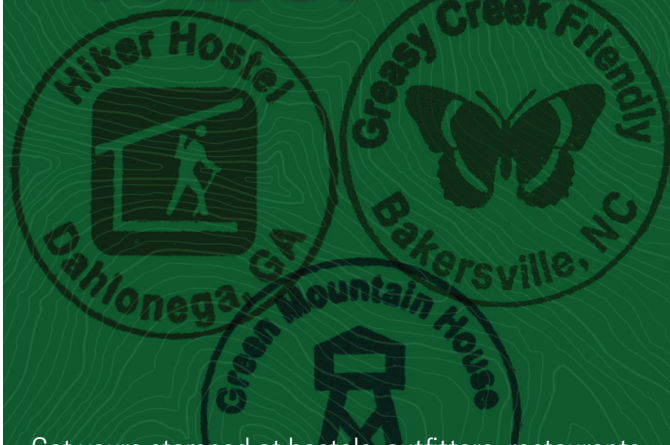
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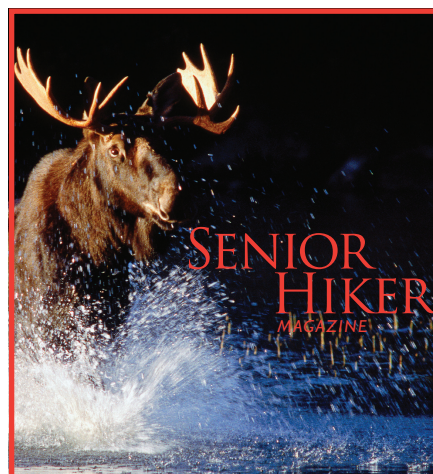


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## LIVING IN OREGON, I RECENTLY

received proof that the effort to encourage “flip-flopping” by prospective A.T. thru-hikers is gaining acceptance, even out here. Case in point: In Oregon, I have run into several hikers who have backpacked all or part of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and now wish to take on the A.T. I recently met a young male employee at Trader Joes here in Corvallis who noticed my A.T. logo hat, which served to initiate a conversation on a favorite shared subject. He expressed his intention to hike the A.T. next year after completing a preparation hike of the Oregon portion of the PCT this summer. In asking him where he planned to begin his A.T. hike, he immediately invoked Harpers Ferry. “Great idea!” I intoned, followed by, “Do you realize such a plan is called flip-flopping?” He said he had and that the idea was appealing to him. We can hope that more potential thru-hikers, no matter where their home base, will similarly embrace a flip-flop hiking plan.

Karl Hartzell  
CORVALLIS, OREGON

## TO A FORMER HIKER WHO LEFT A

note with food and drink for fellow hikers: Thank you for your efforts to welcome thru-hikers to Massachusetts this spring. I’m sure they valued your support, and appreciated the food and drink you left by Rt 41. Unfortunately, the maintainer caring for this section of the Trail encountered the empty bottles and remnants of food that were left behind with his brush cutter and spend an unpleasant 15 minutes gathering up the scattered smelly and decaying bits and pieces, then putting them into his truck and carrying them home for disposal. While I’m sure a few hikers appreciated your gesture (although there is ample water in this section, and access to resupply is relatively easy), the “magic” of your effort was definitely lost on the maintainer, who refers to it — perhaps more accurately — as litter.

Cosmo Catalano  
WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

## THIS PAST SPRING, I HIKED THE BEAR

Mountain, New York to Salisbury, Connecticut section and was pleased to find that a couple of shelters in Connecticut had



their own little libraries. Here’s the one at the Wiley Shelter, officially labeled the “Dover Plains Little Free Library.” Nice selection, far different from the moldy, mouse-chewed, best-used-as-fire-starter

type books you sometimes find in shelters. Since hiking the A.T. in 1982, I’ve always enjoyed carrying a lightweight paperback book on the Trail. I never switched to e-books as many folks now do, the tiny screens lighting up their faces in shelters after hiker midnight. It was often difficult to find my next cheap used book to read unless I went into town and the public library had a book sale going on. I’ve hiked with folks who mail dropped their books, so I sometimes I lucked into interesting reading material via their castoffs. Some hostels might have a few left behind books or even their own library, though usually not for borrowing. Best in terms of finding a book to hike onward with was the Church of the Mountain at Delaware Water Gap. According to the Dover Plains Library, this little library has been there since 2014: “Little Free Libraries (LFLs)

are the “take a book, leave a book” gathering place where people share their favorite reads. The Pawling Library put up a LFL at the Telephone Pioneers Shelter, and the Dover Plains Library put one up near the Wiley Shelter. The LFLs provide reading material for all hikers passing through the shelters who want a book to keep them company on the rest of their journeys.”

Jim Montgomery  
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

**CORRECTION:** In the Spring issue of *A.T. Journeys* — the “Welcome” column (page 4 “The Dream of Katahdin”) was co-authored by the ATC’s president and CEO Ron Tipton and chair of the ATC Board, Sandra Marra — we apologize for this omission.

*A.T. Journeys* welcomes your comments.

The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives. Not all letters received may be published. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.



editor@appalachiantrail.org

Letters to the Editor

Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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**f** Training is important; it keeps the day or long trip much more enjoyable with the beauty of the scenery the focus. — Ron Cox

**f** I hiked the A.T. in sections and I found that all the states that I went through had something that none of the others had. It is better to enjoy what you are seeing and collect what you can from each state. — Ronald St. Pierre

**@** @heididdly

We took our kids on their first backpacking trip to the Roan Highlands. They loved it! The views are amazing!

**f** Several years ago I had [the] privilege of hiking sections of the Trail taking a small section each year. To this day, I can close my eyes and hear the rhythm of steps and if I’m lucky I can see the Trail in my mind’s eye.” — Petie McLean

**f** If we don’t take the necessary steps, the wilderness we all love will be one of the many victims of the damage being done to our environment. — James Scott

**f** Big hugs and big thanks to all of the wonderful men and women that keep our trails maintained! — Pj Semo

**f** This past week on the A.T. in VT and MA we saw hard-working crews carrying lumber etc. in the pouring rain to a campsite to build a new privy and another group creating switchbacks on a steep climb just north of Mt. Greylock. We appreciate all the hard work and care that goes into making the A.T. a beautiful place to be. — Anne Fischer

**@** @moxie\_sobolife  
I learned the only difference between a catastrophe and an adventure is the attitude. Sometimes you have to hike in the rain. It’s a lot more fun with a smile on your face! 🌱







Civilizations (like glaciers) come and go, but the mountain and its forest continue the course of creation's destiny. And in this we mere humans can take part — by fitting our civilization to the mountain."

**T**HE PROBLEM OF LIVING IS, AT bottom, an economic one. And this alone is bad enough, even in a period of so-called 'normalcy.' But living has been considerably complicated of late in various ways — by war, by questions of personal liberty, and by 'menaces' of one kind or another."

Benton MacKaye wrote this in 1921 — when the world seemed extremely complicated and uncertain. I don't think I'm alone in feeling we are now again struggling with much of the same fears and uncertainties. We seem to be at a pivotal point for our country and our planet. So, what can we do within the tiny space in which we have some control and certainty?

For MacKaye it was simple: "There are three things: To walk, to see, and to see what you see." Living as we do now, in

around how soon they should head off for food and political discussions are limited to the fact that they still can't set up tents in the town proper.

Beyond the hikers, there is the community. My morning constitutional will take me past Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail park offices, where dedicated and talented public servants are busy meeting and greeting visitors from around the world. The ATC Visitor Center volunteers work seven days a week to share the story of the Appalachian Trail to one and all passing through their door.

With just a few more steps you can follow the white blazes through town and back onto the Trail. Heading north, you walk along the C&O Canal to where the A.T. veers left up Weverton cliffs and beyond to Katahdin. The southern trek takes you across the Shenandoah River and a climb up Loudoun Heights from where Springer Mountain lies just a little over 1,000 miles.

It is a beautiful town and a gateway to the even more spectacular refuge that is the Appalachian Trail. Yet, in all honesty, and with all this literally out my back door, I too often find myself engrossed in news reports and on-line chatter. I succeed only in raising my blood pressure and reducing my spirit. In reading MacKaye, I realize that this, unfortunately, is the default human condition. He wrote: "For we need this thing wilderness far more than it needs us. Civilizations (like glaciers) come and go, but the mountain and its forest continue the course of creation's destiny. And in this we mere humans can take part-by fitting our civilization to the mountain." Ninety-six years later, this still rings true. I'm lucky to live in a town that has fit its civilization into the mountain. I just need to walk out my back door more often. Here's hoping you too can take that walk, to see, and to see what you see. 🌲

Harpers Ferry, my husband, Chris and I need only to walk out our back door to see what we see.

There are a multitude of hikers passing through town. You can find them waiting in line for boxes at the post office, lounging in front of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) headquarters, enjoying Pizza at Mena's, our local Italian eatery, and checking-in back home with WIFI and coffee at the Guide Shack — a local, hiker-friendly coffee shop. And they visit Laura at the Harpers Ferry Outfitters for fuel and new boots. The hikers come in all shapes, sizes, ages, colors, and genders. The accents are different — from Deep South drawls to northern flat A's — and the international contingent can often have you guessing. Conflicts revolve

Sandra Marra / Chair



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Cory Selinger



# PRACTICAL *Magic*

BY JESSICA PORTER

chian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) definition, Trail magic is a serendipitous experience on the Appalachian Trail. Mostly, it's unplanned acts of kindness by strangers, though a liberal interpretation might include a mesmerizing sunset after days of soaking rain, or a wildlife sighting so thrilling it makes your heart pound.

I experienced this concept first hand during my 2014 thru-hike. In Hanover, New Hampshire, a nearby couple overheard my partner and me struggling to find a place to rest our aches and pains. They invited us to their home, where they fed and entertained us for two days. It was the first time they had helped hikers, and that random act of kindness will always shine through as a top memory of our journey.

In the last few years, the term Trail magic has expanded in the hiker community to encompass many other forms of kindness on the Trail, including hiker feeds, leaving a cooler full of treats by the Trail, setting up tables of food and snacks, and cooking ornate meals at shelters. No one disputes these efforts go above-and-beyond in the kindness department, but they are technically not considered Trail magic, and may do more harm than good.

"By definition, any pre-planned event wouldn't be Trail magic because it's contrived. It doesn't make something planned any less of a kind gesture, but it's not Trail magic," says the ATC's Trail information specialist Tenny Webster. "It's not value laden, this definition; it just honors the random, dumb chance — the serendipity — of an experience for everyone involved. This may sound restrictive to some folks, but shouldn't something magical require a high bar, anyway?"

These types of acts are increasing dramatically, most likely for two reasons: There are more hikers on the Trail, and social media is a growing hiking component. "The number of hikers has been increasing at 20 percent per year for several years," says Cosmo Catalano, Jr., current chair of the ATC's Trail and Camping Committee. "Numbers are going up, and current hiker feeds are getting larger because there are more people." Add social media connectivity to the mix, and news spreads much more quickly than ever before about hiker feeds and other events. Nearly all thru-hikers

Trail magic is a term that is often misconstrued. By the Appala-

share their journeys on social media, spreading knowledge about components like Trail magic to a much broader audience. "One person setting up a barbecue at a Trailhead in Maryland isn't really an issue. But it's not one person — it's multiple people doing it at multiple Trailheads," Webster says. "The frequency is bewildering — it's happening more than it used to. Collectively, it's overwhelming."

It's not the worst problem to have, because it ultimately comes down to the fact that more and more people want to help thru-hikers, or any type of A.T. hikers, on their journeys — whether they are a former thru-hiker, section hiker, members of a nearby community, or family and friends of hikers. The problem lies in the fact that these acts aren't true Trail magic, because they are planned and come with issues many "Trail magic" providers are unlikely to take into account.

## *Impacts on Experience*

Particularly in the South, hiker feeds have become a common event many thru-hikers look forward to, which is understandable considering they are a great time to load on up calories and catch up with Trail friends. However, these events create an influx of hikers in one particular area, whether it be a shelter, road crossing, hostel, or generous homeowner along the Trail. These bubbles of hikers create increases in populations along the Trail that many other hikers may be trying to avoid. "Plenty of people are heading out on the A.T. as a respite from the human trappings that accompany things like hiker feeds," Webster says. "Providing a place for that basic level of discovery is still very important to the ATC and most A.T. hikers. We're conservationists after all. We're protecting a noodle of a National Park for anyone to enjoy the Appalachians in all its scenic wild-ness, including the opportunities for solitude, respite from the trappings of civilization, and self-sufficiency and reliance. We try to provide this for anyone willing to try it."

More people in one place also means an increase in illnesses such as norovirus or other stomach bugs, which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. These viruses can be spread from person to person, so that means via water sources, shelter surfaces, and direct contact with other hikers.



## Impacts on Ecosystems

There are few things that make a thru-hiker more excited than seeing a cooler during a tough day, but there are consequences to those coolers. They attract animals. This almost certainly means a big mess of trash will be left around the cooler, but it also makes animals used to seeing humans — a growing A.T. problem. It's not uncommon to see shelters with warning signs about wildlife, or even shelters shut down due to black bear activity. The ATC is making an effort to spread out thru-hikers to prevent mass amounts of people at shelters and cut down on bears' association of hikers with food. These coolers and unattended food just add to the problem. In addition, leaving coolers on the side of the Trail is actually illegal in many areas. On public land, it is considered "abandonment of property" by state and federal land managing agencies.

Most people also don't take the environment around their planned event into consideration. Often, events are held in wilderness areas that are home to rare plants, insects, and animals. By increasing the amount of people in these areas, those ecosystems are threatened. Since most people who plan these events love the Trail, damaging the area is likely an unintended consequence — but one the ATC deals with on a regular basis.

A recent example occurred in Virginia. The ATC learned about a multi-day party planned for thru-hikers near Mount Rogers. "This set off all sorts of alarm bells with the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club because it's a very sensitive area with lots of rare plants and salamanders," says Kathryn Herndon-Powell, the ATC's education and outreach coordinator. "The ridgerunner and the club have been trying for years to get rid of several large campsites right near the parking area that are surrounded by rare plants." The ATC

stepped into action and contacted the party organizers on social media. The organizers were extremely receptive to the ATC's concerns, and decided to move the party to a less-sensitive area. In fact, the ATC learned the organizers were 2016 thru-hikers who wanted to give back and immerse themselves in Trail culture again — a common sentiment from former thru-hikers.

## Better Ways to Give Back

There are plenty of ways to give back to the Trail community and brighten a hiker's day that do not negatively impact the Trail.

### Put on a Backpack

First and foremost, get back to hiking on the A.T. Immersing yourself in the culture by participating in its most basic defining activity is important. Bring along a young family member or friend to introduce them to the Trail. Maybe pay for a hiker's meal at a restaurant. And hike with a keen eye to spot (and collect) litter and the kindness to start a nice conversation with a lonesome hiker. Who knows where that will lead? Maybe it will prime a little Trail magic. At the very least, you will emerge with a small baggie of litter that is no longer mucking up one of our most awesome national treasures. It will make you feel good and it's immediate.

### Join a Trail Club or Becoming a Trail Maintainer

Thirty-one ATC volunteer Trail clubs maintain the A.T. Find the one closest to you, and see what work they have that appeals to you. Most have day-long maintenance trips anyone can join on a weekend. With just a little bit of experience and training you may be able to adopt a section of the A.T. that will be "yours" to take

## ATC'S STANCE ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL EXPERIENCE

**Encouraging the community to take Trail magic back to its roots is one way the ATC is working on preserving the Trail amid extreme increases in use. Here is the ATC's official policy on the A.T. experience and non-hiking recreational uses of Trail lands, which serves as a good reminder about how we can all help protect the Trail:**

The Appalachian Trail is, first and foremost, a footpath open to any and all who travel on foot. Its sole purpose as a recreational resource is to provide an opportunity for "travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian mountains." Except in isolated instances where historically recognized

nonconforming uses are allowed by legislative authority, the footpath of the Trail should not be used for any other purpose. This policy is intended to provide a framework within which other recreational uses will be evaluated. The ATC may develop additional policy direction for specific uses as needed.

The lands acquired and managed for the Appalachian Trail, and lands designated within the A.T. management zone, not only protect the footpath itself, but provide primary protection of the Trail experience. The Trail experience, as used in this context, is intended to represent the sum of opportunities that are available for those walking the A.T. to interact with the wild, scenic, pastoral,

cultural, and natural elements of the Trail environment, unfettered and unimpeded by competing sights or sounds and in as direct and intimate a manner as possible. Integral to this Trail experience are:

- Opportunities for observation, contemplation, enjoyment, and exploration of the natural world
- A sense of remoteness and detachment from civilization
- Opportunities to experience solitude, freedom, personal accomplishment, self-reliance, and self-discovery
- A sense of being on the height of the land
- Opportunities to experience the historic and pastoral elements of the surrounding countryside

- A feeling of being part of the natural environment
- Opportunities for travel on foot, including opportunities for long-distance hiking

Other recreational uses of these lands should be considered compatible if they do not require any modification of design and construction standards for the Trail footpath or Trail facilities; cause damage to the treadway or Trail facilities; require an engine or motor; or adversely impact the Trail experience or the cultural, natural, or scenic resources of the Trail.

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ATC Policy on the A.T. Experience and Non-Hiking Recreational Uses of Trail Lands



care of. Clubs also need volunteers who can write newsletter articles and maintain social media accounts, lead hikes, take photos, monitor rare plants, remove invasive species, and plan events. Winter is prime time in most areas for off-Trail boundary work for those who enjoy getting away from the crowds. Find more info at: [appalachiantrail.org/volunteer](http://appalachiantrail.org/volunteer)

### Want a really intense vacation?

Trail crews offer the chance to make a big impact in a short amount of time. The ATC and some of the larger clubs offer Trail crews that typically run for five days and offer the chance to build a piece of Trail with your own hands. It's hard work, but incredibly gratifying, and you'll build close bonds with your fellow volunteers. And, once a year, Trail-legend Bob Peoples joins forces with the ATC and the local Trail club to hold the two-day Hardcore Trail Crew after the Trail Days festival in Damascus, Virginia. The crew consists of dozens of current and former thru-hikers and local maintainers who come together for some heavy-duty Trail work. Find more info at: [appalachiantrail.org/crews](http://appalachiantrail.org/crews) and: [www.traildays.us](http://www.traildays.us)

### Support an Appalachian Trail Community

If you live near the Trail, help a designated A.T. Community with their Trail events, or help them learn how to become more hiker-friendly. Or, if your closest town hasn't yet received the designation, help them go through the process. Find more info at: [appalachiantrail.org/atcommunity](http://appalachiantrail.org/atcommunity)

### Join the ATC

Giving monetary donations may not be as fun as going out and interacting with hikers, but it's a necessary and extremely important component to the Trail. By becoming an ATC member, you can help support all the hard work that goes into keeping the A.T. maintained and functioning for years to come.

### Choose a Responsible Location

If you have your heart set on setting up a table full of food, set it up within a Trail community that hikers patronize or an established picnic area in a town park. Don't set up near Trailheads, in parking areas, or pack your supplies into the wilderness, where your actions are more likely to have unintended negative consequences.

The social element is a valuable part of hiking the Trail for many hikers, but conducting true Trail magic and reducing the number of large events is a key component to ensuring the Trail is as beautiful for future generations as it is today. "The A.T. will always have a social element to it — and it will still be well present without things like hiker feeds," Webster says. "The bonds between hikers, the magic that happens between hikers and A.T. communities will always be present. It doesn't need to be contrived." 📍

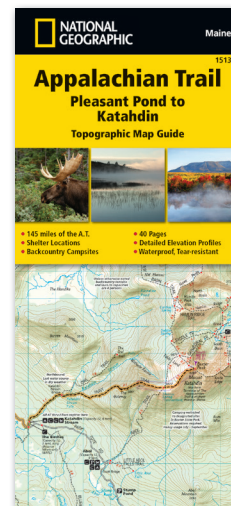
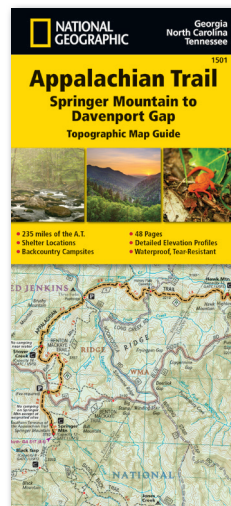
To learn more about this and other Conservation and Trail Management policies visit: [appalachiantrail.org/managementpolicies](http://appalachiantrail.org/managementpolicies)

Jessica Porter is a freelance writer and editor who thru-hiked the A.T. in 2014. For more information visit: [JessicaLynnePorter.com](http://JessicaLynnePorter.com)



Whether you're a day hiker or in for the long haul, you can't go wrong with National Geographic's 13 Appalachian Trail Topographic Map Guides. Light and durable, these guides will keep up with you no matter where you go.

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# TRAILHEAD

★ ATC DIRT ★



Rosalie was captured on Hawk Mountain near the A.T. in June 2016. She is shown here after capture while scientists affix a small 9.5 gram transmitter (which weighs less than three percent of her body weight) using a backpack harness.

📷 Photo by Zach Bordner





## « ROSALIE THE HAWK FINDS HER WAY BACK TO THE A.T.

On February 1, Rosalie, an adult female broad-winged hawk tagged in summer 2016 at Hawk Mountain and sponsored by the Kittatinny Coalition, moved slightly north of her southern Peru wintering site and lingered for 10 days. By mid-February, she started moving in earnest, heading north toward Colombia. She then flew south in the fall and, in late March, she arrived in Panama and continued on to Mexico. Soon after, she flew past the Veracruz River of Raptors site along the Gulf of Mexico and continued into Texas in early April. Following the Appalachians foothills north, she crossed Virginia on April 22, passing just west of Washington, D.C. and arrived just southwest of Hawk Mountain in Gamelands 106 on April 25th where she spent the evening. Her final hop over the mountain into her territory in the lower River of Rocks occurred on April 26th when her transmitter signaled from near the Appalachian Trail corridor — “home sweet home” — after 85 days of travel from southern Peru to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary on the Kittatinny Ridge in eastern Pennsylvania. The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary field team is ready to find out if she will reunite with her mate from last year and build a new nest. ¶ Rosalie was named for Rosalie Edge, the founder of Hawk Mountain and a passionate conservationist. Edge founded Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in 1934 to stop the shooting of birds of prey and worked tirelessly to achieve legal protection for raptors throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Hawk Mountain has grown into a world-renown raptor conservation organization with full-time programs in conservation science and education. Hawk Mountain manages a 2,500-acre sanctuary adjacent to the Appalachian Trail in Kempton, Pennsylvania, with eight miles of trails open to visitors daily. It works closely with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and others to conserve the Kittatinny Ridge corridor for migrating raptors.

To learn more about Hawk Mountain Sanctuary visit:  
[hawkmountain.org](http://hawkmountain.org)

To track Rosalie's current location — available in August after nesting season ends — and track other raptors' journeys visit:  
[hawkmountain.org/birdtracker](http://hawkmountain.org/birdtracker)

## PASSING THE TORCH

### ATC's President Plans for Retirement



Ron stops at the ATC Visitor Center in '06 during a hike

Sandra Marra, chair of the Board of Directors, has announced that the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) president and CEO Ron Tipton will be retiring at the end of 2017. Ron was hired as executive director/CEO by the ATC Board of Directors in the summer of 2013; his title was changed to president by the board early this year. Under his leadership, the organization has advanced in a number of significant ways, including:

- A five-year Strategic Plan was approved by the board in 2014 and has provided a critical framework for managing and protecting the Appalachian Trail, fundraising, budget priorities, and staffing decisions
- The annual ATC operating budget has increased from \$6.4 million in 2013 to \$9.6 million for the current year, and the number of full-time staff has grown from 48 to 58. The ATC has experienced very significant growth in fundraising, especially through major gifts, corporate partnerships, and bequests
- The ATC has significantly expanded its role in managing the Trail to address the growing number of long-distance, weekend, and day hikers in order to protect the A.T. hiker experience
- New initiatives are moving forward to protect high-priority large landscapes along the Trail and to broaden the relevancy of the A.T. to attract young and diverse populations

“Finding a new President and CEO to lead this organization into the future is of the utmost importance to the Board of Directors,” says Marra. “Through Ron's leadership and guidance, we have both a strong and stable foundation as well as the potential for significant growth and response to future challenges for the ATC's Trail management and protection. We are confident that the ATC will successfully complete this next transition and will continue this strong and positive trajectory to the future.”

The ATC Board has hired an executive search firm, ThinkingAhead Executive Search, which specializes in nonprofit leadership recruitment to help identify and hire Tipton's successor. The search process began in late May and is moving forward.





From left: Hikers in front of the Boiling Springs Visitor Center; Patty Harding welcomes visitors at the Monson A.T. Visitor Center  
 📷 Photos by Justin Matherne and Laurie Potteiger

## Come visit us on the Trail

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) currently has three visitor centers along the Trail that provide a destination for hikers and visitors of all types. Our information and visitor centers are found in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania, and Monson, Maine, with a fourth center expected to open in Damascus, Virginia in 2018. Whether you are a hiker or just love the Trail, each of our centers provides a unique experience that will leave you wanting to get out hiking.

**Harpers Ferry:** Located in the heart of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and just 0.2 miles from the A.T., the Harpers Ferry Visitor Center — also the site of ATC Headquarters — acts as a half-way milestone for long-distance hikers and is open year-round. Notable attractions here include a one-of-a-kind raised relief map of the entire A.T., photo albums of prospective 2,000-milers dating back to 1979, maps, guides, books, merchandise, and exceptional volunteers who make the visitor center experience possible.

**Boiling Springs:** Right on the Trail at the ATC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and located next to beautiful Children's Lake, the Boiling Springs Visitor Center is the perfect place to learn about the A.T., ATC, and the surrounding area. Also open year-round, the center hosts free events for the local community and hikers passing through. This has helped to make the Trail beloved to the locals and build an impressive A.T. Community group. The center welcomes more than 11,000 people a year and is the only

information and visitor center on the Trail with conservation staff in house. This offers the hikers an immense opportunity to talk with the people who work to preserve and protect the Trail.

**Monson:** Welcome to everyone from tourists to thru-hikers and open from June 7 to October 15 — the Monson A.T. Visitor Center, located on Main Street, is an essential stop for information about the famed 100 Mile Wilderness, the greater Moosehead Lake region, and the northern terminus of the A.T., Katahdin. Long-distance hikers can learn about the current Baxter State Park hiker permit regulations and plan their park experience. Staff is also available to help plan logistics for the 100 Mile Wilderness and recommend itineraries for day hikes and backpacking trips. Trail conditions are posted daily and community and day hike information is always available.

**Damascus (Coming in 2018):** A new visitor center is being planned for the Trail Community that hosts the largest annual gathering of A.T. hikers — Trail Days. The proposal has the visitor center adjacent to the A.T. and near the Town Park, which will be a great resource to hikers and town visitors alike. Plans are to break ground on the new facility in late 2017 with a plan to open sometime in 2018. The ATC strives for our centers to make the A.T. an exciting and relevant experience to a broad variety of people while providing quality Trail information. Some of the things we hope our visitors will learn when visiting us include hiking and backpacking guidance, Trail etiquette, safety, essential Trail updates, and the robust history of the Trail. We hope to have you visit us soon.

For more information and visitor center hours visit:  
[appalachiantrail.org/visitorcenters](http://appalachiantrail.org/visitorcenters)



## PROUD MAN/WOMAN AWARD

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Proud Man/Woman award – ATC's highest recognition for outstanding performance by a staff member – was established in 2015 to recognize the profound and enduring contributions of Bob Proudman who served the A.T. for 50 years in a variety of roles, including 35 years of employment with the ATC. The award criteria is based on demonstrated excellence in each of the ATC's five core values: cooperation, integrity, inclusion, dedication, and empowerment. The recipient is chosen by fellow ATC employees through a nomination and voting process.

This year, Laurie Potteiger, the ATC's information services manager, was chosen for myriad reasons — all of which demonstrate her dedication to the ATC and the Appalachian Trail and her devotion, professionalism, compassion, introspection, and grace. Some of the many highlights of her service to the ATC and the A.T. include: her cooperative spirit, which extends beyond staff to her consistent support and advisement to Trail maintaining clubs, A.T. Community volunteers, visitors, every type of hiker, and Trail management partners as both a sincere listener and trusted voice.

As for integrity, her communication, in all forms, is always well thought out and is consistent and clear about Trail standards. She challenges any system that she sees as falling outside of the highest of professional or ethical behavior, and is honest and fair in all her communication. Her steady demeanor challenges the rest of the ATC staff to meet this standard even half-way as she is the consummate leader by example.

"Dedication is her most significant asset to the ATC. Outside of work hours, she is volunteering on the Trail, responding to e-mail and social media requests and comments, and always there to chat at night if a colleague is also working late," says Julie Judkins, the ATC's education and outreach director. "Her heart and soul are absolutely dedicated to the Appalachian Trail, and all who have hiked the Trail or interacted with her have experienced this first hand. With passion and authenticity, she genuinely cares for all aspects of the Trail, our organization, and the community of people the Trail has caring for it and enjoying it."

She is known as the trusted face and voice of the ATC to all Trail visitors and our link to connecting ATC to the broader A.T. community. "What makes this trusted link genuine and effective is that it is often unscripted and it is sustained by a deep understanding of the human spirit, the beauty of nature, and the insistence that all members within the broader Appalachian Trail community have an important role in protecting (and enjoying) the A.T.," says Judkins. "I love that."

For more information about Laurie and other ATC staff members visit:  
[appalachiantrail.org/ourteam](http://appalachiantrail.org/ourteam)



Laurie takes a break after a long (and muddy) day hiking in the Mahoosucs in Maine.

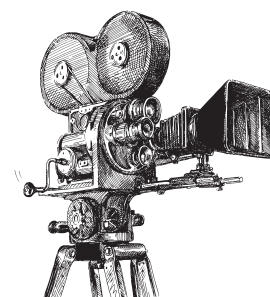
Photo by Dick Potteiger

## NEW ATC BYLAWS ADOPTED

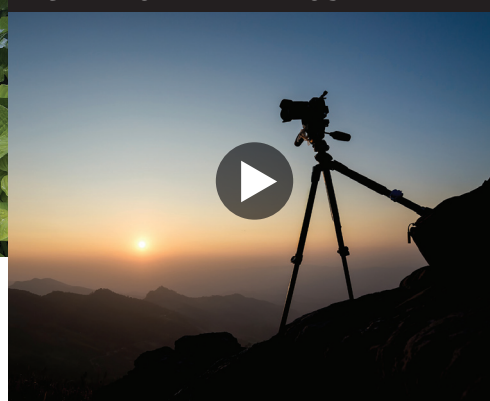
The bylaws amendments (summarized in the Winter issue of *A.T. Journeys*) were adopted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board of Directors at its May 12 meeting at Amicalola Falls State Park in Georgia. Most of the changes were driven by a new nonprofits law in the District of Columbia, where the ATC is incorporated, including a requirement for annual membership meetings. Another major change was to have staggered terms for board members.

The revised bylaws can be found at:  
[appalachiantrail.org/home/about](http://appalachiantrail.org/home/about)





## CALL FOR A.T. VIDEOS



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is pleased to announce that it will be developing a Tribute Garden at its headquarters in historic Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

The garden will be a permanent public memorial honoring those who have walked on, helped protect, or been inspired by the A.T. For hikers and guests alike, it will be a lovely and tranquil space to savor the morning sun or evening breeze while taking in the views of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains. It will also be a space where loved ones, volunteers, members, hikers and staff can be celebrated and remembered. And it will serve as a beautiful and fitting place to commemorate the generosity of donors who support the ATC's legacy and future. Brick sales will begin in summer 2017 in preparation for the garden's groundbreaking in fall 2017.

For more information or to order an engraved brick to be placed in the garden for yourself or a loved one visit: [appalachiantrail.org/TributeGarden](http://appalachiantrail.org/TributeGarden)

If you are interested in additional engraving opportunities such as benches, picnic tables, boulders, or a fountain, please contact us at: [TributeGarden@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:TributeGarden@appalachiantrail.org)

### Did you — or are you planning on capturing your Trail experience with a great video?

*A.T. Journeys* is looking for short video clips of your hiking experience on the Trail to highlight in our new dynamic digital edition of the magazine. Videos must be no longer than five minutes and must be sent via a linked/embedded format (e.g.; YouTube, Vimeo) or MP4 via file sharing.

For more information and to send videos contact: [editor@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:editor@appalachiantrail.org)



# Beauty is NOT in the Eye of the Beholder

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is a phrase often tossed out by people seeking to develop the natural landscape along the A.T. corridor (by the way, this is not a quote from Shakespeare, but from a 19th Century novel). There is an intrinsic beauty in certain landscapes along the A.T. that is not enhanced by mountaintop buildings, pipeline corridors, and wind turbines — despite the claims of developers. Rather, the intrinsic beauty can be degraded and marred by certain development. This natural aesthetic beauty deserves protection.

This year, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club introduced legislation to better balance our need for renewable energy and the visual impact of ever-larger wind turbines (the largest wind turbines in the Western Hemisphere were erected in Maine last fall) from viewpoints along the A.T. (the bill failed). Pipeline projects like Northern Pass in New Hampshire and Mountain Valley in Virginia will forever alter the natural aesthetic of mountain views enjoyed by Trail users. The value of jobs and economic return is often not measured against the loss in the value of the natural aesthetic.

Those supporting the development proposal often assert that natural beauty is subjective and without quantifiable standards while those seeking to modify the development struggle to define natural beauty and to articulate its values.

The Art & Land Conservation Symposium — sponsored by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) — will discuss whether and how the aesthetic

values (that were captured by artists in the past and used to support historic land conservation efforts) should be protected in a 21st Century that sees increased pressure to develop the American landscape — our mountain ridges, prairies, coast lines, and open spaces — with modern-day infrastructure.

Emerging from the "Enjoy the View" initiative, the National Park Service has developed a methodology for describing and evaluating scenic resources. During the ATC Maine 2017 Conference, there will be a series of workshops on the new Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) protocol. VRI will provide objective and standardized measures to help articulate aesthetic values. The workshops will be followed by a full-day field trip to conduct field assessments putting the VRI protocol to use. 🌲



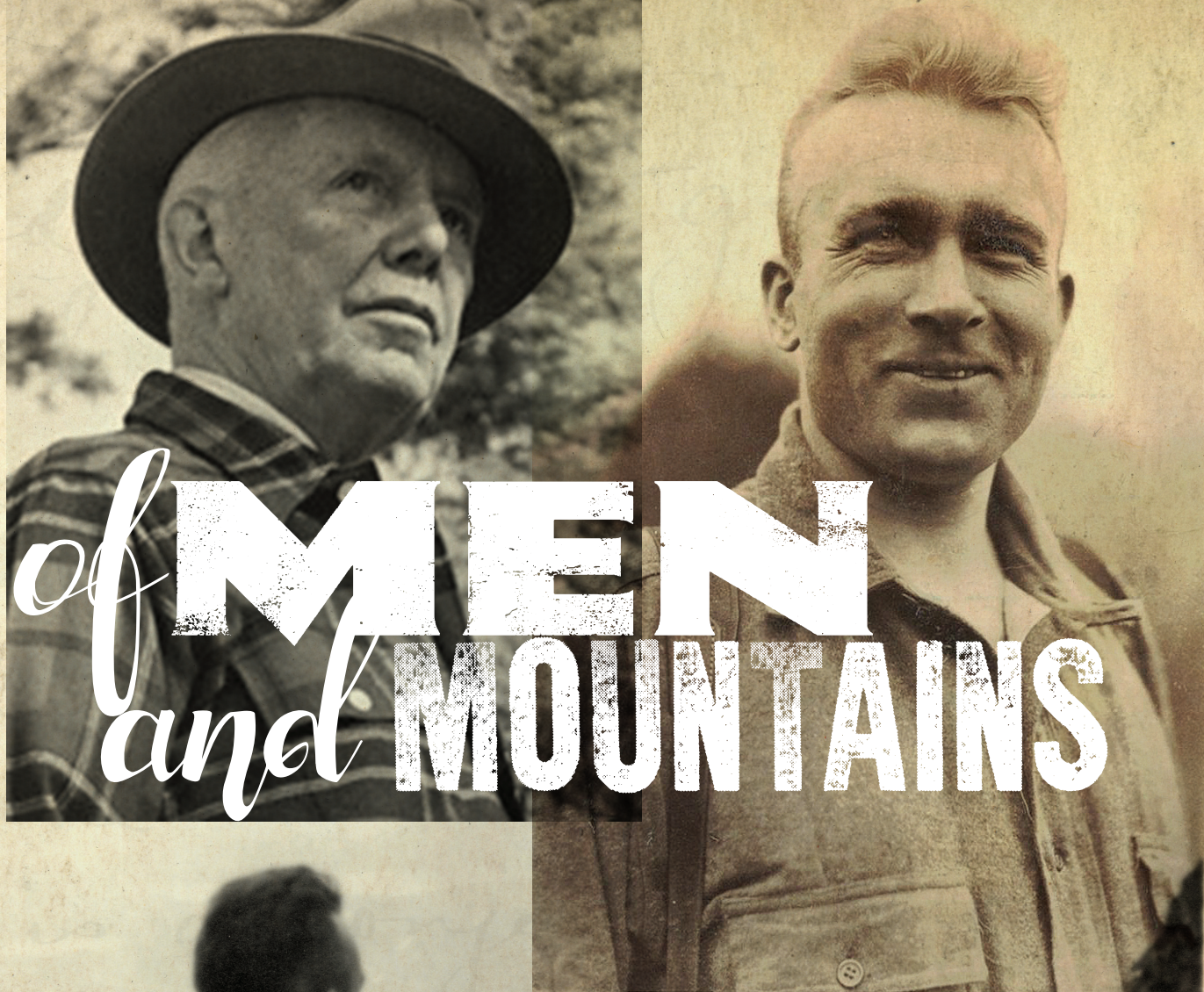
The Art & Land Conservation Symposium (August 3-4) and the ATC Maine 2017 Conference (August 4-11) will be held in Waterville, Maine. You can register for both events at:

[www.atc2017.org](http://www.atc2017.org)

📍 Katahdin from Millinocket Camp, 1895, oil on canvas by Frederic Edwin Church







*by Brian B. King*



Clockwise from top left: Percival Baxter; Myron Avery; Monument Peak in 1931, before it was named Baxter Peak; Avery with measuring wheel on the Knife Edge in 1933 — on his way to set his first summit sign  
📷 courtesy Maine State Library



*Before a single acre was purchased and donated to the people of Maine for Baxter State Park, the modern Appalachian Trail had been laid out across that private land and signed from Katahdin's summit to what became the park's southern boundary. The leaders of the two efforts on the crown jewel of the state shared the same protective values for almost eight years, before a bitter split over the best means to the same end, with long-term implications for management for those 14 A.T. miles.*

Those leaders were both graduates of Bowdoin College and Harvard Law School, basically a generation apart. Both were passionate about, if not obsessed with, the “greatest mountain” as central to their present times and most certainly to their legacies. One could pursue their story as a sort of a love triangle gone sour: jousting knights — Percival P. Baxter and Myron H. Avery — in a quest for the role of Katahdin's steward.

Or perhaps it's a tale of class rivalry. Baxter's politician father made his fortune in the canning industry along Maine's coast, the inherited portion of which his son used to buy the 200,000 acres now comprising Baxter State Park. Two hundred miles up that coast from Baxter's Portland, Avery's father managed sardine-canning operations for a local owner. It was the town's economy. Myron was never interested, his own siren being the mountains 150 miles to the northwest and its heart: a mile-high, glacially scarred, granite monolith rising above the evergreens. The history of the relationships between Baxter — the man and the park — and the multilayered creation and management of the Appalachian Trail is neither that simple nor straightforward, however.

It is historically quaint, even ironic, that the first known path given the name “Appalachian Trail” was cleared in 1886 across the northern basins below Katahdin and identified as such for 40 years. Percy Baxter was 10 years old in 1886. Myron Avery would not be born for another 13 years, the year after Baxter graduated from Bowdoin. Benton MacKaye was seven.

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) commissioned that first Appalachian Trail between camps, accord-

ing to *Katahdin: An Historic Journey* by John W. Neff, former Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) board member, former Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) president, and two-decade maintainer of the A.T. up Katahdin until 2004.

The son of one of those 1886 trail-blazers, 14 years later, would clear the Hunt Trail from the family farm and camps at Kidney Pond in the southwest quadrant of the Katahdin core up to the summit. It was subsumed by the modern A.T. in the 1920s and 1930s. Large parts of the basins were and are remote and unspoiled, but much of the land below Katahdin was spotted with farms, sporting camps, primitive trails between, and serious lumbering and timbering operations on all sides — hardly “unspoiled by man” or completely wild.

Records of the relationships involved are somewhat scattered and clearly incomplete. The ATC archives have some documents, including one of Avery's personal scrapbooks that includes part of his life-long collection of Katahdin images. He was a prodigious correspondent and record-keeper. The Maine State Library has at least an equal number, much of it liberated from the ATC's archives and since digitized by David B. Field, an A.T. volunteer for more than half a century, former MATC president, former ATC chair, and still a preeminent expert on all things Maine A.T. According to Howard Whitcomb, a Neff coauthor at

Friends of Baxter State Park, extensive Baxter State Park records, on the other hand, were lost in a January 1967 fire at the home/office of then-Superintendent Helon Taylor, a key figure in the 1930s scouting of the A.T. elsewhere in Maine.







Throughout his school-year summers, Avery was drawn to Maine's mountains, with photographic evidence of treks on the water and up the rocks into his Harvard years — although more of that evidence is of trips north and east of Katahdin than on the mountain itself. Avery left many images of logs and loggers on the Penobscot River, then the gateway (by bateau) to the south side of Katahdin, with Katahdin in the clouds as background.

A staple of A.T./ATC folklore — much of it established by Avery himself — is that Benton MacKaye proposed in 1921 that the northern terminus of his proposed Appalachian Trail be Mount Washington (true) but that, when Avery took control of the project in 1930, the passionate Mainer alone insisted that it be “moved” to Katahdin (not entirely true).

“Maine to Georgia” became the project's official motto by 1923. In 1924, a year before the ATC was formed, Arthur C. Comey, head of the New England Trail Conference (NETC), issued a progress report on the A.T. project that clearly showed a proposed trail from Katahdin to Georgia, with 13 miles completed in Maine. The proposed A.T. project, as far as New England went, was completely in the hands of NETC and AMC at the time.

It was Comey who brought together MacKaye and Major William A. Welch — progenitor of that motto and the A.T. diamond logo, and the ATC's first chair — and later Judge Arthur Perkins, the ATC's first truly active chair. Perkins was another leader who first became enamored of trail-building while on Katahdin's slopes, where he in 1927 mounted its first A.T. signs, just below treeline. Comey would serve on the ATC's board from the beginning in 1925 until 1935 — the year Avery and MacKaye acrimoniously parted ways over the purpose of the A.T., with AMC leaders also essentially on the side of A.T. progenitor MacKaye.

Beginning in 1927 — just as Avery, an AMC member since 1926,

came to the Trail project and contacted Perkins — letters between Avery and Comey were beyond caustic, beginning that November with a fight over names on Katahdin maps. Those tensions, among others, would come into play soon enough in determining the future of then-unconsummated Baxter State Park. (Acquiring Katahdin for the public was hardly unheard-of. Before the agency was even three years old, the National Park Service was exploring — with little local support — the idea of making it a national park. Such even was advocated in 1916 in a speech on the U.S. House floor, weeks before the NPS officially existed.)

The existing correspondence does imply that, by no later than August 1929, the project leaders — documented in a Comey letter to Perkins — were leaning toward pulling back to Mount Washington, because it was too difficult to build a trail through remote and dense western Maine and local interest was lacking. Comey had just scouted from Old Blue to Indian Pond after a 1925 such trip from Grafton Notch to Old Blue. He noted, “There are many interests in Maine against such a trail, notably the wildland owners, who dictate much of the state's policy.” An additional factor was that, in those early days, most of the A.T. was blazed across private lands with the tacit agreement of the landowners, a verbal handshake, and the extensive timbering operations there would have restrained a hiking path.

But, Katahdin was still special. “[W]ith local leadership (politically) some outsiders would doubtless be glad to work on the actual trail, as we have done at Katahdin,” Comey wrote, before 1929.

Avery, who became involved in 1927 and was hard-charging from the start, did push back by 1930 as the ATC's acting chair-







man. Following on the initiatives of Walter Greene, who had blazed the Trail from Katahdin to Monson, Avery began a 77-mile scouting Trip with his trailblazing crew from the Potomac A.T. Club (PATC), by placing a summit marker atop Katahdin on August 19, 1933. Existing letters show that Percival Baxter blessed that effort in a letter three months later after personally inspecting the route to the summit that fall.

Two years later, with a larger expedition and back-up from the state and federal forest services and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which officially adopted the Maine section of the A.T. that year, he installed another sign and measured and nearly completely opened and blazed the remaining new A.T. throughout Maine. Those PATC members during this trip also formed the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC), with Avery, after Greene's death, the head until his death (as he was for many years the head of ATC and PATC, too). The ATC/Avery immediately assigned maintenance of the A.T. from Grafton Notch to Katahdin to MATC, but that wasn't quite accepted on the ground for years.

Notes and measuring wheel in hand in that fall of 1933, Avery was soon in more pitched battles with both NETC and AMC over who would write and produce the official guides and maps for the Katahdin section of the A.T., which meant dual publications for a period before and after. The inland-fisheries commissioner wrote Avery that game wardens in 1926 or 1927 had created an unmapped trail from Katahdin to within five or six miles of the Kennebec River. AMC published its first Katahdin guide in 1917, with contour maps in 1925. The ATC began publishing trail maps for Katahdin in 1927, before Baxter had bought his first acre.

Avery nailed wooden markers in 1928 from the summit to Ripogenus Gorge, along what became the park's southern boundary (Golden Road), according to a February 1930 Avery article in *Mountain Magazine*. In 1928 and 1929, Avery was churning out what the Maine Library Bulletin called "Katahdiniana" for the AMC's magazine; *In the Maine Woods*, the *Bangor and Aroostock Railroad's* premier magazine of the day; and numerous small journals.

Avery's copy of the rival 1933 NETC Maine guide, full of margin notes for other states, still stated, however, that the A.T. ended at Grafton Notch, "the end of the Appalachian Mountain Club trail system." The introduction mentioned Greene's leadership and the Maine Forest Service and Avery's writings elsewhere, but not the ATC or Baxter himself. Avery wrote chapter six, which was more optimistic about progress in Maine. Then, he produced his own typescript guide. That August of 1933, six days before he did it, Comey wrote Avery: "I assumed the northern end of the A.T. was the summit of Katahdin. If so, suggest you get very official permission to place your sign there, as I understand that Baxter has removed the monument and might have his own ideas." (Baxter Peak had been named Monument Peak before the state accepted the first parcel from the former governor in 1930.)

In November, Baxter wrote an AMC intermediary of Avery, "I am pleased to learn that the Appalachian Trail has been marked right through to Katahdin, and of course I have no objection to having your trail signs placed on the land that I have conveyed to the State. In fact, I am pleased that this has been done."

While Avery was in college and then Harvard Law, Baxter, who had first gone fishing below Katahdin in 1903, was in politics. The summer of 1920, as Avery had left Bowdoin, Baxter made his first ascent of Katahdin — partly a campaign photo-op of the day but also a pitch for Baxter's decade-old drive to create a state park there, a pitch that failed in the legislature year after year while he was in office. A long-time state legislator, he was poised to become the president of the state senate — next in the line of succession to the governorship the following winter, when the incoming governor died and Baxter became Maine's chief executive.

Baxter did not stand for election in 1924 but vociferously opposed R. Owen Brewster, who would succeed him in Augusta and in 1926 sabotaged his bid for a U.S. Senate seat he thought then would be the source of his legacy. (Two years later, Baxter returned the disfavor.) By 1924, Avery was finished at Harvard and en route to Washington, D.C. for a job as a Navy admiralty lawyer — his lifelong day job, but with at least annual trips to Katahdin.

A 1925 bill in Congress to make the Katahdin region a national park went nowhere. By 1930 — after previous corporate leaders had rebuffed him and after the 1929 stock-market crash — Baxter convinced executives of the Great Northern Paper Company to start selling him pieces of its land on and around Katahdin. At first, it was the summit and a narrow corridor comprising 5,960 acres and "none of the existing approaches" to the top, Avery later noted.

In 1929, a disabled Judge Perkins was beginning to cede ATC leadership to Avery. The A.T. was already established and marked on Katahdin, on and outside the original Baxter conveyance, surviving records show. The first and succeeding deeds from Baxter to the state are significant in their implications for the position of the Appalachian and other trails at the time. After a primary requirement that the state hold the lands in trust forever, Baxter's second condition was "that it shall be used for public parks, forests and recreation." The third condition was to keep it "in its natural wild state."

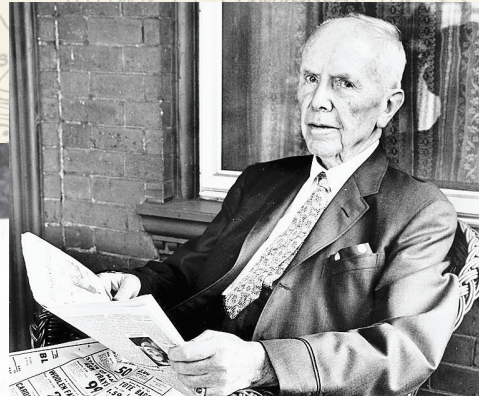
Almost from the beginning of the park, Avery was complaining about overuse, resource degradation, and hiker misbehavior on and around Katahdin and calling for greater levels of protection. It would



Clockwise from above:  
Avery (center) at the 1939  
conference with longtime ATC  
secretary Marion Park at the  
Daicey Pond Campground ■  
By Mark Taylor; Walter Greene  
blazed the Trail from Katahdin  
to Monson; Judge Arthur  
Perkins mounts the first A.T.  
signs on Katahdin in 1927 ■  
Photos courtesy ATC Archives



*Research shows that both Avery and Baxter sought for years, in principle, to reduce the level of abuse of the park from unregulated recreation.*



» Clockwise from right: Baxter and Maine warden supervisor David Priest with Katahdin in background; George L. Collins, acting assistant chief of NPS Land Planning Division, Everett F. Greaton, executive secretary of the Maine Development Commission, and Avery at the 1939 conference; Photo courtesy Maine State Library; A photo of Baxter published by the *Portland Press Herald* in 1969; Baxter and Brewer at the Maine state capitol during Brewer's inauguration in 1925; PATC trails supervisor J. Frank Schairer and Avery at Basin Ponds the day before they went up to erect the first sign and then go south 77 miles to blaze a new A.T.



be easy to infer in hindsight those were shots at Baxter, who legally had no management responsibility, but it should be noted that the Avery-written guides invariably included out-of-context lines about the lack (or insufficient level) of state appropriations.

Although some was through an AMC intermediary, Avery and Baxter did correspond all those years, implying that the Trail and its shelters had a fixed status in “his” park from the earliest days. Baxter’s support was occasionally explicit, although any specific written agreement for the Trail between the two men at the time of Baxter’s purchases has never surfaced. Avery would send Baxter new or older ATC publications, including his bibliography of works featuring Katahdin, of which Baxter replied he had no idea so much had been written. Baxter would ask for particular uses of his name in future guides and maps, and a line about his generosity; and Avery complied.

In 1934, a series of letters — with Baxter copied — between Avery and a U.S. Interior Department landscape architect, guiding the CCC crews in the Katahdin area, showed them working together on routes (a Hunt Trail relocation) and signs and other Trail matters. The official noted that, if the state would fund a larger park, no national park would be needed to protect Katahdin, an idea bandied about for more than 15 years.

All Avery’s 1934 “excellent” suggestions for Trail work in the park were approved by Baxter and forwarded by him to the CCC and the park commissioners, according to a letter to AMC. An AMC news release from September 1934 notes that Baxter joined a “120-mile tramp over the newly constructed Appalachian Trail in Maine” for part of the journey. That month, Baxter and the landscape architect, after spending a night with Trail workers, “invited the A.M.C. to build a hut anywhere at K. and under any conditions,” according to a letter to Avery from his intermediary. In March 1935, Baxter wrote Avery directly that he and AMC “have rendered a very distinct service to the State of Maine.” He might have meant “ATC.”

Nineteen-thirty-four was the same year former Governor Brewster, Baxter’s rival, finally won a seat in the U.S. House. In March 1937 — with Avery saying in his correspondence that it was his idea and others saying it was a NPS initiative — Brewster introduced legislation to acquire Baxter State Park for the national park system.

As de facto decider-in-chief, Baxter continued to take advantage of CCC federal labor but was virulently opposed to the federal government’s taking the park from the people of Maine. Brewster inserted into the Congressional Record an argument of more than a page from Avery, stating in turn that national-park status was necessary to undo almost a decade of state neglect of Katahdin’s resources. He took a veiled shot at AMC in the process. Avery had the backing of an ATC resolution from its 1937 general meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The *Portland Sunday Telegram* gave Avery almost two pages to make his argument.

Five weeks before the Appalachian Trail was officially continuous from Maine to Georgia, with a two-mile Maine gap closed by the CCC, Avery speculated in a July 10, 1937, letter to MATC that he had “administer[ed] the coup de grace [to the opposition] ... At least, we have stirred up old man Baxter so that he went to the mountain to see what can be done.” AMC supported Baxter. As did, unsurprisingly, the Wilderness Society — founded two years earlier by Benton MacKaye and seven of his friends, four of whom also were being steamrolled by Avery out of ATC affairs at the time. The organization’s magazine in October trashed both Katahdin the mountain

been marked right through to Katahdin, and of course I have no objections to having your trail signs placed on the land that I conveyed to the State. In fact, I am pleased that this has been done.”

I should say that gives the official blessing to the titanium oxide! Long may it adhere!

I fully intend and expect to do the Maine link, but just when is a conjecture. Perhaps ways and means may develop sooner than expected. My great trouble is to get the required time to do a thing of this sort.

Did you name it “El Capitan” in your 1928 story? Haven’t had time to look it up, but somehow, in the back


of my mind, is done I should have had the same

I have notice about to be put in Topography. I enclose co

We have showing the of Haverly Rd and its eas scrubby. As ments, it wa

Baxter next year. Depot Camp will be com progress will ing up the that point upon wheth camps are c I sent



A letter from Baxter to Avery  courtesy ATC Archives

and the park proposal (“the climax of absurdity”). Avery, no doubt, was apoplectic. The Brewster bill was never acted on by the full House.

Dave Field’s research shows that both Avery and Baxter sought for years, in principle, to reduce the level of abuse of the park from unregulated recreation. They complained in writing to each other in 1934 about conditions at Chimney Pond (northeast of the summit), and Baxter added, “I can see that we are in accord on all of these matters, and I wish to do everything I can to help the proper development of the park area.”

After he lost the House battle in 1938, Avery complained to a reporter of “the total failure of the State to make any appropriation and the chaotic and unfortunate situation which results ... Mr. Baxter is an ardent states’ rights individual. Granting his sincerity and interest, he would rather see the region wrecked than in the hands of the Federal Government.” Before and after the congressional battle and tugs of war among organizations, both complained of attacks on them and pointed to each other as the source. “One positive result of the battle...,” however, Neff writes in *Katahdin*, “was the recognition by the state of Maine that it could no longer neglect its responsibility to better manage the land Baxter was steadily acquiring.”

Avery remeasured the A.T. in Baxter in 1938 and published new Trail data, noting, “With the exception of the Appalachian Trail, there has been, since 1934, no maintenance work or renewal of marking of any trails in the Katahdin Region.” A year later, in 1939,



implicitly at Baxter's behind-the-scenes insistence, Maine became the only one of the fourteen Trail states to refuse to sign an "Appalachian Trailway" protection agreement initiated by Avery and his federal-agency Trail partners. (A few months later, the ATC started charging Baxter for publications it had been sending this wealthy scion gratis for almost a decade...and even noted his perceived chicanery while responding to his requests.)

Baxter State Park had no rangers until 1939 — the same year the ATC held its ninth membership meeting (of 125) at a sporting camp on Daicey Pond. Three A.T. shelters existed in the park. As that meeting proceeded, Baxter, who had tripled his purchases that year, signed in at the register at Chimney Pond on the other side of the mountain, notes Katahdin Outdoors.com, but apparently did not stay to join the ATC meeting when it ended with a special trek to Chimney Pond. Federal employees continued to work in the park.

Finally in 1939, the five-year-old Baxter State Park Commission was abolished in favor of a still-empowered Baxter Park Authority: the state attorney general, director of the Bureau of Forestry, and commissioner of inland fisheries and game. Before and after that switch, correspondence shows, the latter two commissioners regularly worked with Avery on trail-management issues. Over the next few years, shared responsibilities for Baxter park trail maintenance were defined explicitly between the state and AMC alone.

The third of three September 1944 essays on the park in *The Living Wilderness*, the Wilderness Society's magazine, notes in the penultimate paragraph: "Before Mr. Baxter gave the mountain to the state, little supervision was exercised. Trails grew up as required and a few badly needed shelters were built by one organization or another...Both the Appalachian Mountain Club [under a 1941 agreement with the park authorities] and the Appalachian Trail Conference have taken over the maintenance of specified trails which together make up most of the paths on the mountain. Signs are placed at intersections and the trails are well marked."

AMC's maintenance role at Baxter waned following World War II. In 1981, MATC assumed a secondary role in Trail work under the spare terms of five-year cooperative agreements with the park, which sets the standards and "retains all authority for the administration of the Appalachian Trail within the boundaries of Baxter State Park." Clearly, however, none of that Appalachian Trail activity could have happened between 1929



From above: Attendees of the 1939 conference spent the second part of their meeting at Chimney Pond. Photo by Frederick F. Schuetz/ ATC Archives; A plaque that Baxter had installed below Katahdin a few years after he started buying land to create the park. Photo courtesy Baxter State Park

and 1939 without the concurrence of both Baxter and the Baxter State Park Authority and its predecessor agency.

Two Bowdoin and Harvard boys of different eras and up-bringsings, who rarely brooked any real or perceived opposition in their public lives, each saw themselves as Katahdin's most favored suitor. One stepped into a political battle and ultimately forfeited the potential to continuing sharing with Baxter joint oversight of the Katahdin trail he so meticulously

measured. Following a funeral at the family's seaside home, after a massive heart attack in 1952, Myron Halliburton Avery was buried in a modestly marked grave back home in Lubec, his coffin covered in spruce boughs. Percival Proctor Baxter lived for another 17 years. His ashes were scattered in his namesake park, a year after Congress created the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a unit of the national park system. ▲

## MOUNT KATAHDIN

MAN IS BORN TO DIE. HIS WORKS ARE SHORT LIVED.  
BUILDINGS CRUMBLE, MONUMENTS DECAY, WEALTH VANISHES  
BUT KATAHDIN IN ALL ITS GLORY FOREVER SHALL REMAIN  
THE MOUNTAIN OF THE PEOPLE OF MAINE. P.P.B.



Since the infancy  
of the outdoor movement,  
We've been doing what we do  
for the dreamers,  
the outcasts,  
and the dirtbags.

We do it because  
we believe in it.  
We believe in the weirdos,  
the thrill seekers,  
and the wanderers that call  
every inch of this earth home.

We do it to  
keep the dreamer alive.

# Keep The Dreamer Alive!



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When dreamers  
find a hot spring...

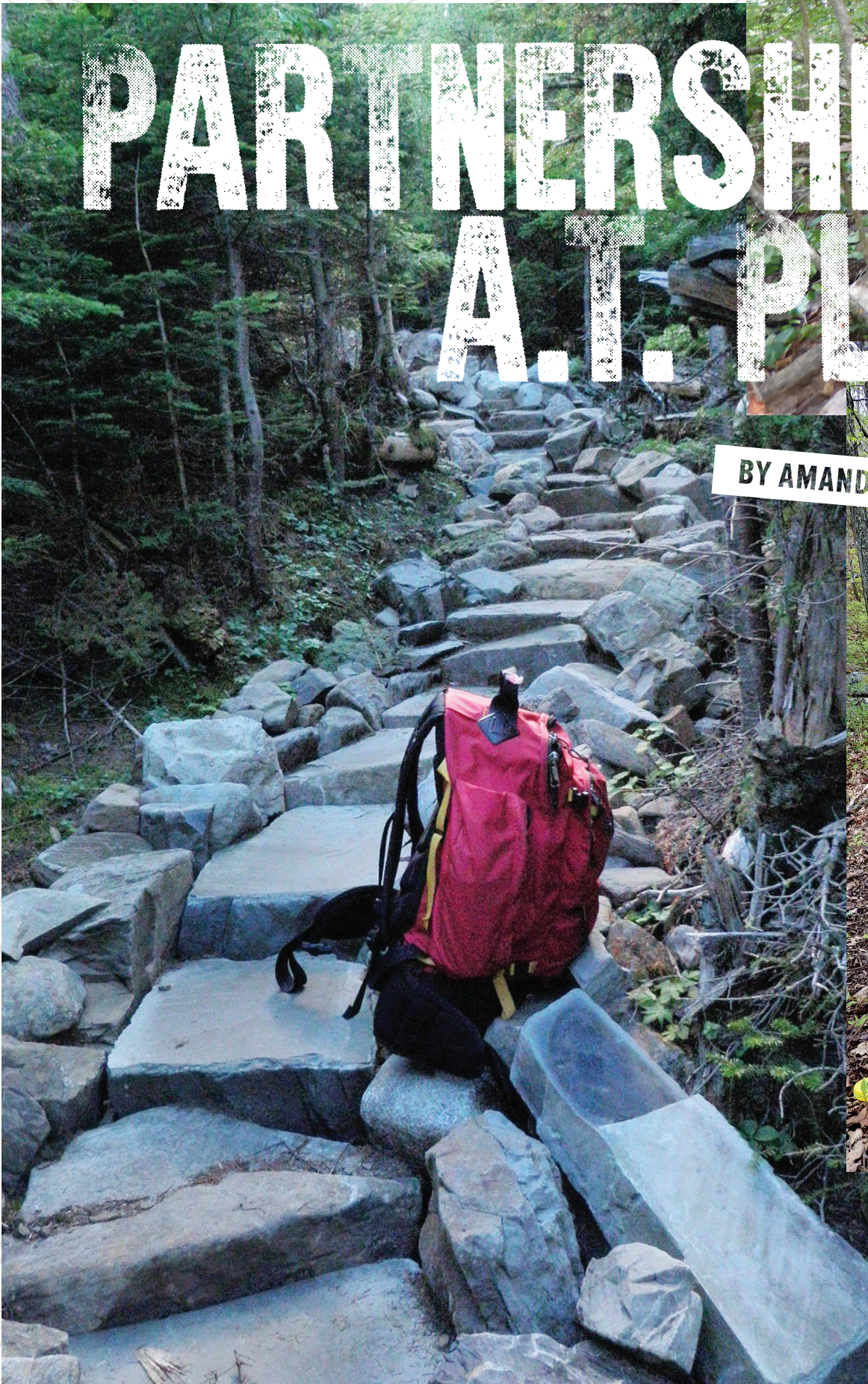
But forget  
the swimsuits...

They  
improvise.



# PARTNERSHIP A.T. PLAY

BY AMANDA WHEELLOCK







Clockwise from above:  
Dr. Jeff Marion's graduate assistants collect data on the A.T. in Virginia near Blacksburg that will give Trail managers more insights into which sections of A.T. are sustainably designed and maintained; Volunteers from the Maine Appalachian Trail Crew spent years working to stabilize the A.T. on the north slope of White Cap Mountain; Konnarock Trail Crew members assist the Roanoke A.T. Club with relocation work on Sinking Creek Mountain in Virginia

**The first time I ever set foot on the Appalachian Trail, it was as a Trail maintainer.** I was just about to begin my freshman year of college at Dartmouth, and was partaking in the long tradition of “First-Year Trips,” a rite of passage organized by the Dartmouth Outing Club, or the DOC. These five-day trips, just before the start of orientation, are a way for new students to meet one another and connect with the land that they will call home for the next four years. Trips run the gamut from rock climbing to nature photography, from “extreme hiking” to cabin camping. Many of them take place along the Appalachian Trail. That summer, I had chosen trail work as one of the trip options that I was interested in, and there I found myself, getting dropped off with my “trippees” along Route 25A at the base of Mount Cube. We hiked south along the A.T. to Smarts Mountain. In an effort to keep hikers from falling and twisting their ankles, we spent the next two days crushing rocks and piling them under the steps of a wooden staircase that the DOC’s summer trail crew had built just a few weeks prior.

Earlier that summer, when I indicated that I would be interested in doing a trail work trip, I’m not sure that I actually knew what trail work entailed. I had participated in a couple of trail cleanups with my high school outdoor club, so I think I had a vague idea that trails needed to be “maintained,” but I don’t think I knew what that actually meant.

Nor do I think that my ignorance was particularly rare. Many hikers have no idea that trails need consistent care and maintenance. Those of us who had the privilege of growing up with woods in our backyards, for example, created our own trails just by walking the same paths over and over again. My backyard trails didn’t need to be kept up or looked after — they remained clear and walkable from my frequent use of them. So why wouldn’t the Appalachian Trail be the same way?

Of course, those of us who have learned a bit more about trails, who volunteer or work to keep them sustainable, know the answer to that question. Factors like rain and overuse are constant threats to trails, and can cause negative impacts ranging from gullying and soil compaction to trail widening and vegetation loss. Then, there are more urgent threats, like big storms causing scores of trees to fall or a bridge washing out in a flood.

The Appalachian Trail does not escape any of these problems, and is in constant need of care. This care can take the form of work as simple as clipping brush that grows into the railway, or something as complicated as relocating multiple miles of the entire Trail. Maintaining almost 2,200 miles of trail is no small feat, and in the case of the Appalachian Trail, relies on a complex but cooperative network of partners.

### *Clubs and Crews*

Most important to the management of the A.T. are the more than 6,000 individuals each year who dedicate their time and passion to the Trail as volunteers. Almost all of those individuals volunteer through one of 31 A.T. maintaining clubs, groups that have committed to overseeing the maintenance of a specific section of the Trail. These 31 clubs, in conjunction with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and government agency partners such as the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Forest Service, and many state and county agencies, work together as partners to manage and maintain the Appalachian Trail.

Each partner plays a unique and vital role to the Trail’s upkeep. Volunteers of the 31 A.T. maintaining clubs perform much of the “routine” maintenance of the Trail, such as keeping it clear of obstacles like downed trees and overhanging vegetation, ensuring proper drainage, and maintaining shelters. It is when the Trail has more extensive needs — projects requiring significant humanpower, training, and tools — that the partnership really comes into play.



*Each partner plays a unique and vital role to the Trail's upkeep. Trail maintaining clubs, the ATC, and agency partners rely not only on each other to maintain the Trail, but on the vast network of members of the ATC, partner organizations, and individuals around the world who value the Appalachian Trail.*



One perfect example can be found in southern Virginia, just north of the A.T. Community of Pearisburg, Virginia. Until 2014, the section of Trail north of the New River was the last big piece of the A.T. situated on private land. Almost four decades of negotiations, eight years of work from volunteers of Konnarock Trail Crew, and several local A.T. clubs, and significant funding and support from NPS and the U.S. Forest Service resulted in the eventual relocation of 6.5 miles of Trail, protecting it from future development. “That relocation is a testament to the partnership,” says Josh Kloehn, resource manager for the ATC’s Central & Southwest Virginia region.

Volunteer Trail crews often assist A.T. clubs with these more extensive projects; this summer, for example, volunteers from Konnarock Trail Crew and the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club are continuing work on a multi-year relocation of the Trail on Sinking Creek Mountain in Virginia. Their work will remove an unsustainably-designed section of Trail that runs straight up the mountain, which has caused significant erosion as well as unsafe conditions for hikers.

Unsurprisingly, projects like these involve significant investments of money. Because it is a unit of the NPS, the Appalachian Trail is eligible for Park Service funding for some of its maintenance needs. Like many federal agencies, the NPS is stretched thin, and our national parks suffer a backlog of “deferred maintenance” — needs that NPS staff are aware of, but do not have the funding to address. As such, the NPS must prioritize the available funding for only the most pressing system-wide needs, which means that the A.T., in a sense, competes against other national park units for that funding. “The ATC works closely with individual A.T. clubs to determine which projects are submitted for NPS funding. This funding is essential to support seasonal Trail crews that assist clubs with the more physically demanding or technical Trail projects,” says Laura Bel-



From top: A section of the A.T. in the White Mountains (approaching Mount Washington) shows a sustainable subalpine tread lined with scree wall to contain traffic; A thank you dinner for volunteers after Sinking Creek Mountain relocation work in 2016

leville, ATC’s vice president of Conservation and Trail Management Programs.

Many A.T. club volunteers know their Trail sections better than most of us know our own neighborhoods, and already know which sections of the Trail need some serious TLC. But A.T. partners, including club volunteers, ATC staff, and staff of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (the NPS office that helps manage the A.T.), have used several different processes to determine which sections of the Trail are in greatest need. These processes don’t necessarily inform partners of maintenance needs they weren’t previously aware of; rather, they provide a way of comparing needs up and down the length of the A.T., and, importantly for competing for NPS funding, quantifying those needs.

One tool that A.T. managers have used to prioritize projects is a Trail assessment. From 2004 to 2014, volunteers and ATC staff walked the entire length of the Trail, twice, recording data along the way that would help identify all of its deficiencies. The Trail assessment allowed A.T. partners to see the scope of the Trail’s deferred maintenance — those known needs that manag-



ers haven't had the resources to take care of yet — from Maine to Georgia.

Another Trail assessment is currently being conducted by Dr. Jeff Marion, a U.S. Geological Survey scientist and adjunct professor at Virginia Tech, and Dr. Jeremy Wimpey of Applied Trails Research. For each of the past two summers, Dr. Marion's graduate assistants have taken measurements at 3,150 points along the A.T., an 11 percent random sample of the Trail. Dr. Marion's comprehensive data collection will give Trail managers more complete insights into which sections of A.T. are sustainably designed and maintained, as well as what factors affect the sustainability of the Trail and visitor use sites. This study will aid Trail managers in redesigning or replacing Trail segments and sites to avoid or minimize future recreation impacts, decrease the amount of maintenance required, and craft improved Leave No Trace practices. The team is sampling the last third of the A.T. in the Mid-Atlantic region this summer, and will begin their data analysis this fall.

Also since 2015, A.T. partners have been working to complete the "Trail Asset Inventory" — a process by which dedicated volunteers have collected data to assign a dollar value to each feature, such as rock steps and waterbars, along the A.T. This dollar value quantifies what it would cost, including the value of volunteer labor, to replace each of these features were they destroyed or left to deteriorate. Appalachian National Scenic Trail staff can then use these values to demonstrate to the NPS the true cost of various maintenance projects along the Trail, making those projects more likely to receive federal funding. As Keith Stegall, facilities manager for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, points out, "this funding is critically needed to protect our boundary corridor, maintain open areas, manage hazard trees, repair and improve the Trail tread, replace privies, and improve and maintain campgrounds, bridges, shelters, parking areas, roads, buildings, water systems, and even a high hazard dam."

As these processes are completed, efforts moving forward "can be focused on only those sites along the Trail in most need of attention, which the ATC and clubs are in the best position to identify," says Stegall. One of those areas is northern New England, where more than 60 percent of the maintenance needs identified through the Trail assessment are located. Claire Polfus, the ATC's Maine program manager, reports that funding from NPS has been critical to chipping away at the long list of maintenance needs. Each summer, two Trail crews, both of which have historically been funded in large part by NPS, work on projects to make the A.T. in Maine more sustainable. For instance, volunteers from the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) recruit Trail crew leaders and volunteers for the Maine Trail Crew to work on myriad projects spanning vastly in work and time. "I think that one of the notable projects completed by the Maine Trail Crew was stabilizing the A.T. on the north slope of White Cap Mountain," says MATC president Lester Kenway. The project began in 1993 and was completed in 2014 — 857 stone steps and numerous stone waterbars were installed on 3/4 mile of Trail. "This work took 21 years to accomplish," says Kenway. "This year the crew is beginning work to relocate a portion of the Hunt Trail on Katahdin. A steep section of the Trail two miles from Katahdin Stream is being relocated from 35 percent grade to 12 percent grade by taking a serpentine route instead of going straight up the mountain. Stone steps are being installed in each

turn." The crew continues to work along Rainbow Lake, where deep peat soils have created a very wet Trail. Step stones are being placed to harden the Trail; and more work is going on along the South Slope of Barren Mountain where stone steps will be placed in several eroded sections.

### *Money Money Money*

Yet despite the close partnership of those working to manage the A.T., no one can anticipate the unexpected. Weather emergencies happen frequently on the A.T., and can lead to complex and urgent maintenance needs. The federal government is not known for being nimble, and NPS funding generally needs to be applied for three to five years in advance.

This is when A.T. managers rely on private funding and important networks of partners beyond the usual cooperative management arrangement. In July of 2016, a severe windstorm in Tennessee caused almost 100 trees to fall along just a few miles off the A.T. within the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness in Tennessee. The local A.T. club, Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club, called upon the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS), an important A.T. partner in the southeast, for help to address the damage. Within just two weeks of the storm, SAWS was able to re-direct two of its seasonal trail crews to the area to quickly clear the blowdowns, keeping hikers from further damaging the Trail by creating new paths over and around the trees.

Just a few months later, severe wildfires swept through the southeast in one of the worst fire seasons in memory. At one point last fall, these fires caused the closure of more than 200 miles of the A.T. in North Carolina and Tennessee. The hard work of volunteers from the Nantahala Hiking Club was critical in quickly reopening the Trail once the fires were out, and hundreds of donors responded to an appeal from the ATC to help fund efforts to repair the damage. Thanks to their generosity, Konnarock Trail Crew is spending three sessions this summer rehabilitating the most damaged part of the Trail, a section in southwestern North Carolina near Wesser Bald. Because there was no emergency funding available through the A.T.'s federal agency partners, this is work that Konnarock would be unable to accomplish without those private donations.

It takes a lot of resources — time, money, and sweat, to name a few, to keep a trail that runs for almost 2,200 miles in good shape. This is important for the safety of those who hike it, but also the health of the ecosystems surrounding it. Dr. Jeff Marion notes that, "As the A.T. continues to experience increasing visitor use over time, the A.T. community can and should increase its efforts to improve the sustainability of the Trail ... to minimize associated resource impacts and improve the quality of recreation experiences." Trail maintaining clubs, the ATC, and agency partners rely not only on each other to maintain the Trail, but on the vast network of members of the ATC and A.T. clubs, partner organizations, and individuals around the world who value the Appalachian Trail. If you fancy yourself a member of that A.T. community, there are myriad ways to help keep the A.T. sustainable. Volunteer for your local Trail-maintaining club or, if you live farther from the Trail, an ATC trail crew. Practice Leave No Trace when you visit the A.T., and encourage others to do so as well. And continue to support ATC's work as a member. 🍄





# *majestic maintenance*

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MARIAN ORLOUSKY







## IT WAS A TRANQUIL MORNING WHEN I PARKED MY

car on the side of West Dover Road near the Appalachian Trail, just a few miles north of the town of Pawling, New York. A number of people were moving around the area with brisk and purposeful strides. As I stepped out of the car and walked toward the others, I was struck by a tangible energy in the air. It was a feeling of exhilaration and excitement that would set the tone for the remainder of the day. As additional vehicles began to arrive, I watched their passengers eagerly going to greet each other with the type of enthusiastic hug or handshake reserved for a good friend you haven't seen in some time.

It was a white oak tree (*Quercus alba*) that had brought this group of people together on this particular National Arbor Day, but it wasn't just any white oak, and the visitors certainly weren't your typical A.T. visitors. The group was comprised of some of the very best International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborists and Champion Climbers from the states of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. They had all met here in Pawling to provide a day of service to one of the largest white oak trees in the state of New York, the Dover Oak. Standing at 85 feet in height and 81 inches in diameter, the Dover Oak is a splendor to behold. Its limbs, many of which are outstanding in their own right, stretch in all directions, first aiming skyward and then arching back down toward the ground. It is estimated that the tree is around 250 years old, but its age has long been disputed, and some suspect it is considerably older. We can only speculate as to how and why it came to be that this tree was spared when the area was heavily deforested in the mid to late 1800s.

This strikingly majestic tree is a quintessential photo opportunity for those hiking the A.T.; and as one might imagine, notoriety and age can present a unique set of challenges to such a Trail celebrity. Years of visitors walking and parking over its roots, recent hot and dry summers, and repeated winters accompanied by road salt treatments have all contributed to its decline. In 2016, the Harlem Valley A.T. Community (HVATC) proposed a service project to better protect the tree, a suggestion that set in motion an even greater story of preservation.

Now a team of eight arborists, under the leadership of Tom Ingersoll, were preparing to ascend on the tree in the first stage of this effort. Tom is an old friend of the A.T., contracting with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) on habitat restoration

projects and often volunteering at the ATC Kellogg Conservation Center in South Egremont, Massachusetts. In this case, he had been our recent advisor on how to better care for the ailing tree, and he had organized this talented group of professionals from across the three states. Now, after months of planning and anticipation, they were all finally here. Their aim for the day would be to trim and remove dead, dying, weakened, and abrading limbs that were needlessly taxing the tree, utilizing limited resources, and providing ideal habitat for harmful pests and pathogens.

As the group assembled near the base of the tree, a semi-truck flew past pushing 60 miles per hour. Though it wasn't the first truck that had passed us that morning on the narrow and busy county road, it was to be the last. David Kelly, the supervisor of the Town of Pawling and a chair of the HVATC, had arranged for an official road closure through the state, thus alleviating one major challenge of the project.

Tom began to address the group, covering the same check list that had been running through my head all morning. First, he provided a tailgate safety talk, then an emergency evacuation plan followed by a work plan and a climbing plan, finishing up with the designation of responsibilities for the day. After a lengthy walk around the tree that included detailed deliberation around exactly which limbs should be trimmed and by how much, the arborists spilt and began to assemble their safety gear and climbing harnesses. Soon the climbers began throwing ropes, trying to snag the perfect location for a single line or double line rigging. As the tossing of lines proceeded, Tom gathered up everyone's saws and wiped down each one with hydrogen peroxide. Arborists do this before each work trip to help prevent the spread of diseases and pathogens between trees.

As each climber determined that their lines were securely situated to their satisfaction, I began to perceive a tiny amount of eagerness coming from the group. The Dover Oak is by no

*continued on page 54*



Opposite page: ISA Certified Arborists and Champion Climbers (left to right) Melissa LeVangie, Tom Ingersoll, Luke Soule, Brian Carpenter, Daniel Weise, Jason Bresson, and Russell Plumb; Above: Melissa LeVangie and Brian Carpenter make their tricky work look effortless





Steven with his "assistant"  
Asia on the A.T. along the  
Wilburn Ridge area of  
Grayson Highlands



## ACHIEVING A VISION

"There is no trail more powerful to capture images on than the A.T.," says photographer Steven Yocom. "At any given day on the Trail, I can be inspired beyond belief by a total stranger, be humbled by their stories, and walk away with lifelong friends who share the same passions and seek the same answers as I do." Born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Yocom has now lived in Western North Carolina for five years. His two dogs, Sage and Cain come just about everywhere with him – as does his girlfriend Brindley, when she can get off work.

"I am grateful to have some of the most beautiful stretches of the Trail in my back yard. I'd say Grayson Highlands and the Roan Highlands are by far my favorites," says Yocom. "Studying maps, direction of the light at that specific time of day, what is blooming, and even what time the moon will rise and set has all become very important for me to taking things further and achieving a vision I may have. They say there's nothing greater in life than to follow your dreams and do what you love. I have found something I am more passionate about than ever and I am actively chasing that dream."

[steveyocomphotography.com](http://steveyocomphotography.com)



See Steven at work on the Trail at:  
[steveyocomphotography.com/atcinterview](http://steveyocomphotography.com/atcinterview)













Harmon Den – just  
southeast of Max Patch







## KONNAROCK TRAIL CREW



# Labor of LOVE

*By Clay Bonnyman Evans*

### I WAS THUMPING DOWN A LONG

series of human-made stone steps to Vermont Route 9, one of the steepest half-mile sections on the Appalachian Trail, in a torrential downpour when it really struck me how much work it takes to keep the Trail healthy, sustainable, and free of obstruction. How in the world do they get these massive boulders into place? I wondered, grateful to the anonymous rock-haulers who had eased my descent.

Nine months later, strapped like a mule to a six-hundred-pound chunk of granite near the crest of Yellow Mountain on the Georgia-North Carolina border, I have my answer: inch-by-inch, via teamwork, with

plenty of thick, mud-grimed yellow webbing, sheer muscle, and lots of grunts and groans. “One ... two ... three!” barks Justin Farrell, crew leader with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) storied Konnarock Trail Crew. Five guys hoist the rock a few inches off the ground and I drive my legs hard, tugging it forward a couple of feet. A dozen such efforts and we’re ready to maneuver the boulder into position for a single French drain on this one small section of the 2,189-mile Trail. “Working on the crew really makes you realize how hard it is to keep the Trail maintained,” observes volunteer Haley Holiman, a 20-year-old wildlife sciences student at Mississippi State University.

If not for the efforts of thousands of volunteers each year, the A.T. simply wouldn’t exist. Thirty-one Trail maintaining clubs, each responsible for a section of the Trail, proudly and effectively perform routine maintenance year-round — but some projects are beyond the scope of the



Konnarock Crew members work with the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club to relocate a very steep section of the Trail at Backbone Rock in Tennessee





busy clubs. From May to October, the ATC — with funding from the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service and support from the Trail clubs — puts six volunteer crews into the field for intensive Trail rehabilitation and rerouting projects. Volunteers contribute some 270,000 hours to the A.T. every year, making it one of the largest volunteer-driven projects in the world.

And it all began with the Konnarock Crew thirty-five years ago, when the purchase of a large tract of private land made it possible to relocate the Trail from a rutted dirt road to the gorgeous Wolf Rocks overlook in Pennsylvania. With a paid ATC crew leader and a handful of volunteers, that successful effort paved the way for the first full-scale summer program, funded by the ATC Board and the Forest Service, and soon named after its base camp at a former girls' school in Konnarock, Virginia.

Today, Konnarock headquarters is a Forest Service camp in Sugar Grove, Virginia, and the crew works on projects from central Virginia to Georgia. The success of Konnarock soon spawned five more ATC

crews — the Maine Crew, Vermont Long Trail Patrol, Mid-Atlantic Crew, SWEAT (Smokies Wilderness Elite A.T.) Crew, and Rocky Top Crew. In 2016, the ATC also began overseeing the annual Hard Core Crew that recruits long-distance hikers at Trail Days in Damascus, Virginia, for an intensive project.

Last year, 192 Konnarock volunteers from 30 states and three foreign countries gave 8,565 hours on eleven projects, including completion of the eight-year New River relocation project and four-year effort to carve a bench out of a rocky cliff, both near Pearisburg, Virginia, and a major relocation in Tennessee's Rocky Fork State Park. "It's pretty amazing to have had that same support for the past 35 years, the buy-in from the Forest Service, the park service, and the 12 clubs we work with," says Josh Kloehn, resource manager for the ATC's Central and South Virginia Regional Office, who oversees the Konnarock program.

Beyond sweat equity, Trail crews also play a key role in helping the ATC meet the goals of its five-year Strategic Plan, adopted in 2014. Working closely with



Clockwise from above: "Cool Breeze" and a fellow crew member at work this past spring near the crest of Yellow Mountain on the Georgia-North Carolina border; 2016 Trail relocation work on Sinking Creek Mountain in Virginia; The crew worked with the Natural Bridge A.T. Club on the Highcock Knob Relocation in the James River Face Wilderness, Virginia

local clubs to identify, approve, fund, and complete projects, for example, supports the goal of creating "Engaged Partners." And Trail crews contribute to "Broader Relevancy" by bringing together volunteers of diverse backgrounds, age, and Trail experience.

Marching more than a mile toward the crown of 5,127-foot Yellow Mountain each morning, our crew of nine volunteers and two crew leaders included a retired corrections officer from Michigan, two thirty-something Army veterans from Connecticut, a British Mississippi State statistics





professor, and a genuine Trail legend, Joe “Cool Breeze” Fennelly, 69, who finished his first thru-hike in 1978. Three of us had hiked the entire A.T., while two took their first steps when we went to work that first morning. “Some of these volunteers have never seen a hand tool, never seen a pick mattock, never held a shovel,” Kloehn says. “They just put in their chips and make whatever experience they want out of it.”

Each week’s crews gather at base camp for an excellent home-cooked dinner — prepared this season by long-time camp boss Janet Gibbons and Rachel Esrig — followed by a brief orientation and distribution of safety gear. The following morning, crews shuttle to work sites, where they make camp.

On the job, crew leaders roam the Trail, assisting as needed and instructing volunteers. Our crew did everything from clearing brush to building sidehill trail to installing rock steps and using a sledgehammer to crush many cubic yards of rock, for use in stabilizing a wall or lining a drain. “I used to think they brought the gravel in,” says Megan Eiser-Nolan, a 36-year-old nurse and former Army officer on her second stint with Konnarock, with a laugh. “But no, we actually have to break our own rocks!”

I signed up for Konnarock because I wanted to give back to and reconnect with the Trail. I never imagined it would be a sort of crystallized version of my 2016 thru-hike: hard work, overcoming adversity, stunning beauty, and, best of all, camaraderie between strangers who have come together for a common purpose. “It’s just a great experience. You meet great people who want to be there not because it’s their job, but because they want to give back to

the Trail,” says “Cool Breeze” Fennelly, who has worked on a dozen Konnarock crews since 1986. “Everyone who hikes the A.T. does some damage, and if we love the Trail, and want it to be there for the next generation, we have to do something to make it better.”

The desire to pitch in has inspired countless hikers to join Konnarock or another crew. But as Haley Holiman discovered during her two weeks on Yellow Mountain, it sometimes works the other way around. She’d never even seen the Trail before arriving at Deep Gap. Her first few days left her tired, sore, and sometimes cold; she admits she was startled by the chorus of coyotes that struck up a tune just up the hill from her tent one night. But she soon got used to marching up the mountain each morning and began to revel in every aspect in Trail life. Now, she not only hopes to rejoin to Konnarock, but also is pondering her own A.T. hike. “The first thing I did when I got home was start researching what you need and how much it costs,” she says. “I loved it and I’d really like to experience it for myself.” ▲

Clay Bonnyman Evans, (a.k.a. “Pony”) thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2016. He is a writer living in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Boulder, Colorado.

For more information about ATC Trail Crews visit:

[appalachiantrail.org/TrailCrews](http://appalachiantrail.org/TrailCrews)

Find more stories, photos, and follow the Konnarock Crew at: [konnarockcrew.blogspot.com](http://konnarockcrew.blogspot.com)



Above: Last July, Konnarock crew members worked with the Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech to complete the Peters Mountain portion of the New River Relocation project, above the town Pearisburg, Virginia, after nine seasons of hard work from countless volunteers along the way; Map: Volunteer Trail Crews are active from May through October each year, working on projects from Maine to Georgia





# - Family - Hiking Day

## September 30, 2017

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



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



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To plan an A.T. hike for your family visit: [appalachiantrail.org/FamilyHike](http://appalachiantrail.org/FamilyHike)



Early sunrise in  
Maine 📷 Photo  
by Devon "O.R.B."  
Snedeker



**AFTER TWO DECADES OF PROVIDING** therapy to Navy Sailors, SEALs, and Marines returning from war, I thought I knew about grief. When my son was killed in a motorcycle accident, I knew nothing until I picked up my pack and started to walk.

"If you aren't at Katahdin, you ain't nothing," a hiker told me. But I found that it's not about the destination, it's the journey. It was the 2,198.2-mile journey

# When SUNDAY Smiled

*By Andrew Davidson*

from Georgia to Maine that took me to up the tops of mountains and down to deep despair. Tears of happiness during the day and tears of loss flooded my heart at night knowing that Aaron wasn't here to walk with me.

I dealt with the void left from the death of my son the year before by filling it with hope that I found along the Trail. With the lightest gear I could afford, one pair of shorts, two shirts, and a floppy hat, I took to the Trail after an eleven-hour bus ride.

My gray beard grew as my clothes got baggier. I looked like something that climbed out from under a Grimm's fairytale bridge. The Trail gave me the space to have a talk with the one I was most angry with — God. God's world opened up when everything I owned was on my back and my only concern was the next white blaze.

My thru-hike was a struggle with the weight of my pack matched with the weight of grief. I thought about quitting every day, but every day I picked up my pack and I walked. On July 27, 2014, the one-year anniversary of Aaron's death, the weight was unbearable. The sweat poured and my heart pounded as we hiked up Mount Killington in Vermont. My knees ached and my quads quivered. It wasn't just the roots or the rocks that were getting in my way; discouragement and anger flooded my footprints. A fellow hiker, "Tiger Bob" and I took a spur trail to the Killington Ski Resort. Aaron had been a lift mechanic at a ski resort, so as I watched



the gondola making its turns, I felt his presence. Unafraid to hide my tears, I ate a gourmet burger in the late hours of the morning, between drying my eyes and wiping my mouth.

Tiger Bob and I left this sanctuary, hiked down the mountain, and up our last climb for the day. Tiger was five yards behind me the entire way when we dropped our packs at the powerline clearing in full view of the A.T. In the distance were Mount Killington's special ski runs. I only wanted to shut my eyes to erase this day from memory — until I bent down to get my tent poles. After 1,800 miles, my pole bag somehow fell out of an eight-inch-deep pocket. It was past five-thirty. Somewhere between me and Mount Killington lay my poles; and I needed them.

Armed with only my cell phone, I ran into the woods. Twenty yards in, I saw something that stopped me in my tracks and took my breath away. Shoulder-high on a nub of a sapling hung my tent poles. I held them close then I lifted them to the sky. "Oh God, oh Aaron, thank you, thank you," I said.

The coldness in my heart broke that day. Grabbing my poles and raising them up, I repeated, "Thank you, thank you." Then I said more. For the first time in a year I said, "Thank you, God, for taking care of my son." After walking back to our site, I saw "Sonic," a young female hiker. Her eyes were closed and her face was pointed to the heavens; she looked angelic. Music played from her iPod. "Sonic, Sonic," I exclaimed, "let me tell you what just happened," repeating my story. "Well, let me tell you this," she replied. "I stopped here to pray because I felt the presence of angels." I fell backward.

Armed with the knowledge that Aaron and I were cared for, I set my sights on Katahdin in Maine, the terminus of the Trail. Whenever I thought about quitting, I pictured the sign on top of Katahdin, so I picked up my tent poles and walked across the White Mountains and into the 100 Mile Wilderness in Maine. New Hampshire has the White Mountains but Maine has the wilderness. And Maine has Katahdin.

We had few fires on the Trail, but on my last night in Baxter State Park, I built my first fire. I needed the warmth of the fire and the people who sat around it.

Everyone wanted to be up early. I couldn't sleep — it felt like the night before Christmas.

In the morning, after checking in with the Park Ranger, the first mile-and-a-half was a gradual climb to one last waterfall. As I walked around the rocks and over the roots, the Trail turned upward and tough. I used to think about quitting; now I thought about finishing. Adrenaline filled my muscles but peace filled my soul. After getting to the top of the boulders, I paused to look back but could only see the low-hanging fog hovering over the countryside. The fog was a familiar site that I now welcomed as a friend.

The Trail leveled off with two miles to go and the ground was marked "fragile." Tufts of grass grew between the rocks and an impromptu spring ran down them. One last time, I tried as best as I could to keep my feet dry as I straddled the puddles and brushed against the roped-off Trail. And there it was — Katahdin — painted on an understated wooden A-frame sign atop Maine's tallest peak. For a second time in more than 2,000 miles, I was stopped in my tracks. Like seeing your tree decorated on Christmas morning — you know what it looks like, you may have seen it for weeks, but on this day, it's different. On this day, it's Christmas.

I choked up. I went to one knee and thanked God. I clutched my wooden cross and Aaron's Keystone lift maintenance hat. I wept. It was Sunday, August 30, 2015, Aaron's birthday. He would have turned thirty-two. Instead of hiking part of the Trail with me, Aaron was there the whole way. He was there in the thunder at Tray Gap in Georgia and in the Hiker's Parade at Trail Days in Damascus, Virginia. He was there with me at the James River, and when I downed a half-gallon of Neapolitan ice cream at Pine Grove Furnace. He was there on the streets of Duncannon where he grew up and on the top of Killington Ski Mountain. And he is still in the wind at Katahdin. 📍

"When Sunday Smiled" was chosen as the Grand Prize winner of the ATC's myATstory contest this past spring. These stories highlight the community that makes hiking the A.T. one of the most inspiring and unique experiences in the world. To read other contest finalist's stories and to watch myATstory videos now visit: [appalachiantrail.org/myATstory](http://appalachiantrail.org/myATstory)

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### THIS SUMMER, MEMBERSHIP AND

Development is doing its own version of a NOBO (north-bound hike) — as we hosted and will host events in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Pawling, New York and, of course, the Kathadin of all gatherings, the ATC Maine 2017 Conference in Waterville. It has been wonderful to see so many of you, old and new friends, come together to celebrate our beloved Trail and all the people who work hard to protect it. As interim director of Membership and Development, the conversations I've had have inspired me anew to listen, engage, and respond to our members and donors as well as to the needs of the Trail and its surrounding communities.

There have also been exciting happenings coming from our Harpers Ferry headquarters. As a result of conversations with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Next Generation Advisory Council, we've launched the Next Generation Membership program: a "pay your age" fee structure for members ages 18 to 30. Many young hikers and friends we met at Trail Days in Damascus, Virginia told us how much they liked it and were quick to join the ATC under the new fee structure.

Also, in response to many requests from members and friends looking for a meaningful way to honor a hike, a hiker, a volunteer, or memorialize a loved one, we are planning to break ground on a Memorial Garden adjacent to the Harpers Ferry Visitor Center. Plans include a "named brick" path with benches, shade trees, and native plants and flowers that will provide a peaceful stopping place for visitors as well as a living testament to the



Trail's meaning for so many who have walked its path. Please see page 20 for more about the garden.

We are thrilled that the ATC has been invited to participate in the National Scouting Jamboree in West Virginia. Over ten days in July, ATC staff and volunteers will be sharing information about the Trail, hiking and camping, conservation and resource management, Leave No Trace ethics, and short and long-term volunteer opportunities with an estimated 50,000 Jamboree attendees. The ATC is also developing an agreement with Girl Scouts of the Nation's Capital to promote and encourage involvement of Girl Scouts as stewards, hikers, and members.

We are, as ever, grateful to all the donors, members, partners, and volunteers who support the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in our mission to protect and manage the Trail. 🌱

**Marie E. Uehling** / Interim Director,  
Membership and Development



Marie Uehling and the ATC's President & CEO Ron Tipton sit in the area that will become the ATC's Tribute Garden



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## MAJESTIC MAINTENANCE

account an average tree, and the opportunity to scale a gentle giant of this magnitude is sometimes a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Melissa LeVangie, an award winning champion climber from Massachusetts, compared it to the likes of climbing a giant sequoia. I watched from below as Russell Plumb was the first climber to ascend his line. He zipped quickly up the tree with a mid-air stepping motion that was made look to effortless. Luke Soule, Melissa, and Dan Weise all flew up their own lines, and just like that there were four nimble climbers adorning the giant limbs of the tree. They moved about the canopy with an ease and a grace that must come from many years of experience, and those of us on the ground were absolutely beaming at the site of them.

For the next six hours, with chainsaws hanging from their hip belts and hand saws strapped to their calves, the arborists climbed throughout the tree dropping dead limbs as they went. Each climber had a counterpart on the ground watching, advising, and assisting as needed. The group operated like a colony of insects, with each member understanding their particular responsibility and how it would support and impact the others. Though each of their movements were undoubtedly made with careful calculation, the climbers worked with a confidence that made it appear as if they were able to act without thinking at all. Watching this group of arborist (who rarely had the opportunity to work together) cooperate so well was an inspiring testament to their skill and expertise.

As the hiking season progresses, work will continue on the oak. Sawing High Climbers will be aerating and mulching the ground around it in order to decompact the soil and provide the tree with much needed nutrients. McEnroe Organic Farm, one of New York's oldest organic family farms and compost suppliers, has worked with soil ecologists at Cornell University to determine the best soil mixture for the tree. McEnroe also generously offered to donate 20 cubic yards of compost, thus making the project possible in 2017 without further funding delay. Looking into 2018, the partners on this project aim to replenish the native understory beneath the oak and create more intentional foot path and parking placement that will reduce visitor impacts. It is our hope that all of this work will help protect and preserve the Dover Oak for the enjoyment of many generations to come. 🌱

Marian Orlousky is the ATC's northern resource management coordinator. The ATC would like to extend their most sincere appreciation to the team of arborists and champion climbers from New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut who volunteered their time and resources to this project. The team included Tom Ingersoll of Ingersoll Land Care, Melissa LeVangie from Shelter Tree Inc., Russell Plumb of Sawing High Climbers, Brian Carpenter from Southbury, Sebastian Slizowski with Green Point Tree and Crane Service, Luke Soule of Soule Tree and Property Management, Jason Bresson from Applewood Tree Care, and Daniel Weise of Weise Choice Tree Services. We would also like to give a special thanks to the town of Pawling and town supervisor, David Kelly, for the instrumental support provided on this project and to the volunteers of the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference — and the Harlem Valley A.T. Community for their unyielding support and sweat on this and many other A.T. projects.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### FOR SALE

**Cabin for sale:** Hike 15 minutes to Burnett Field Mountain on the Georgia section of the A.T. from your own mountainside, totally furnished 3 BR, 2 BA cabin. Ideal location for a Hiker Hostel, a full time home, or summer home. Asking: \$169,900. Call: (706) 747-3735 or visit the Virtual Tour: suchesgarealestate.com MLS #269242

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The last **ATC Biennial Conference** will be held in Waterville, **Maine August 4-11**. This week-long gathering, held every two years since 1975, will be discontinued as the ATC transitions to annual business meetings (in 2018) and the new event, ATC Vista, the long-weekend hiking/activity program (in 2020). Also, it is coincidental that the last biennial is being held in Maine, where the last mile of the A.T. was completed in August, 1937. Volunteers from the Maine Appalachian Trail Club and the Maine Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club have planned a wonderful conference that will showcase the central section of the A.T. in Maine as well as the mid-coast section of the state. Come join us to mark the last biennial and the 80th Anniversary of the A.T. this summer. Pre-register by July 15 so we can better prepare or if later, register on site. Find more information at: [www.atc2017.org](http://www.atc2017.org).

**New Campsite Pass in White Mountains Offers Substantial Discounts.** A new pilot program introduced by the Appalachian Mountain Club allows any A.T. thru-hiker or section-hiker who pays for one night at a fee campsite to get a 50 percent discount at all other A.T. fee campsites through the White Mountains of New Hampshire. More info can be found at: [appalachiantrail.org/updates](http://appalachiantrail.org/updates).

**African American History Hike – October 1** at 11:00 a.m. in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia — is being offered in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Storer College. On this one-mile ranger-led hike, learn the fascinating stories of how Harpers Ferry became the site of an influential institution of higher learning open to all regardless of sex, race, or religion. Register for this free event by contacting: [lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:lpotteiger@appalachiantrail.org).

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is recruiting for several **internship positions for the fall of 2017** including: Public Relations, Social Media, Development Database, Development Events, and Lands Steward. Interns work on a wide variety of projects and tasks including everything from membership and development to conservation. An internship at the ATC is an excellent way to gain a hands-on, work-learn experience in a specific area of interest or field of study. For more information and to apply visit: [appalachiantrail.org/internships](http://appalachiantrail.org/internships).

The **Appalachian Long Distance Hiking Association's 36th annual "GATHERING"** will be held on October 6-8, 2017, Columbus Day Weekend, at a new venue — the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia. ALL are welcome. See you there! More information is available at: [www.aloha.org](http://www.aloha.org). 🏠

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length.



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### IT WAS LATE SUMMER ABOUT

two years ago that I decided to take my oldest daughter to hike the A.T. with me. It was to be a bonding moment for she was to be leaving for a new job out of the city where we lived and I realized it would be a long time before she would return.

As a long-time hiker, Damascus, Virginia has always been a favorite town stop for me — easy to access, with multiple parking areas close to the Trail. I decided to do a quick overnighter north of town, driving to Elk Garden at Va 600 to park and hike in about 4.5 miles. It would be a fairly easy hike to the Thomas Knob Shelter and then set up camp surrounded by picturesque mountains and panoramic views.

I wanted this to be a special time that she would remember. I also wanted her to realize why I enjoyed hiking the A.T., what makes the Trail so special, and its importance. I wanted



her to enjoy being out and being with me but more importantly I wanted her to get it, to connect to the Trail.

The hike was complimented by warm sunny weather and blue skies. Along the way, she took pictures of the wild ponies, the special fauna growing along the Trail, and the beautiful landscape surrounding us.

Later in the day, after we had chosen our campsite, just below Rhododendron Gap, we prepared dinner. We were sitting there finishing our food and looking out across the vast countryside among the treetops when, lost in my own thoughts, I felt her grab my forearm with a tight grip, that startled me. I turned to her as she said, “listen, do you hear that?” I paused, wondered what she had heard, and slightly turned my head to listen. A beat later, I turned back toward her and looking right at her said, “what?” She replied, with a slight smile on her face, “nothing.” At that moment, there was a connection and I knew she got it.



From above: Richard and his daughter Allison pause for a selfie during their hike; Allison enjoys the moment on the Trail

In the vast outdoors, where a father and daughter were dwarfed by sweeping scenery at an elevation of more than 5,400-feet, there was complete silence. At that particular instant, there was no wind to rustle the leaves on a tree, no airplanes overhead or traffic below, no other hikers close by in conversation, no birds chirping or squirrels scampering. There was just the presence of two people, a father and his daughter, having that special moment never to forget. ⬆

*Richard Diehl*  
LIVES IN ALEXANDRIA, KENTUCKY

“As I See It” is a column from guest contributors representing the full range of ATC partners, members, and volunteers. To submit a column (700 words or under) for consideration:



[journeys@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:journeys@appalachiantrail.org)  
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