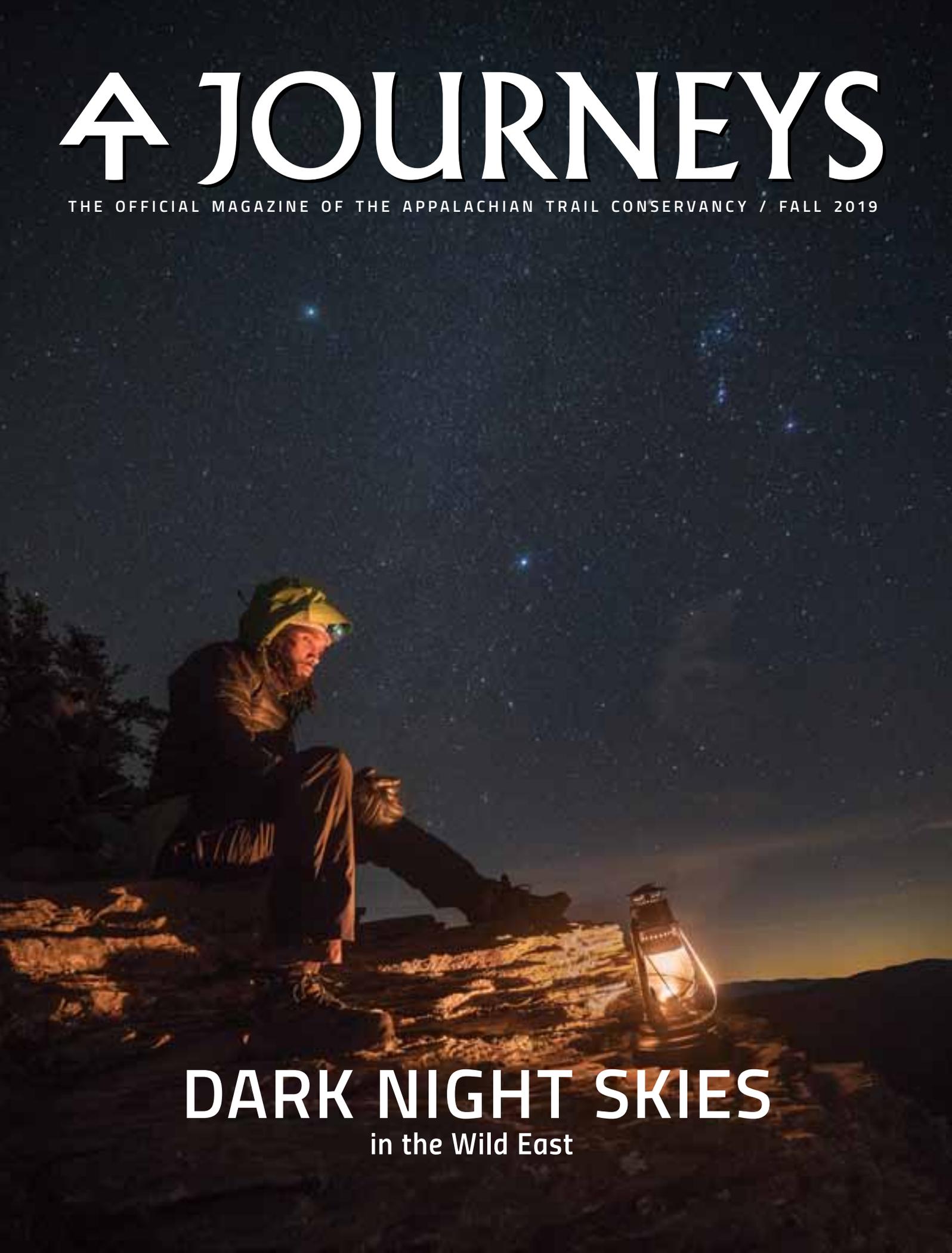


# A JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / FALL 2019

A hiker wearing a yellow hooded jacket and dark pants is sitting on a rocky outcrop at night. The hiker is looking down and to the right. A lantern is lit on the ground to the right of the hiker, casting a warm glow. The background is a dark night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric.

**DARK NIGHT SKIES**  
in the Wild East



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# A JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / FALL 2019

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jordan Bowman** / Communications Manager

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“THOSE VISIONS OF STARS, THE MILKY WAY, AND EVEN THE NORTHERN LIGHTS, ARE BECOMING HARDER TO SEE EVERY YEAR.”

Dr. Tyler Nordgren



**Mark Ellison**  
Mark Ellison lives in Cullowhee, North Carolina, which is a perfect base camp for exploring the southern Appalachian Mountains. Fascinated by the beauty of the region since he was a student at Western Carolina University, he frequently hikes the A.T. and trails in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. His doctoral research at NC State was on the restorative benefits of hiking in wilderness solitude and he continues to help others learn about the health benefits of nature as a forest therapy guide and hiking instructor. “My concern about the diminishing opportunities to experience dark night skies and the implications it has for many species inspired me to write about it in the hope to reach others who feel passionately or just want to learn more about protecting our dark night skies,” he says.



**Luz Lituma**  
Luz Lituma is an outdoor enthusiast from Atlanta, Georgia with a newfound passion for backpacking, hiking, and all-around adventuring. Unable to explore the outdoors in her younger years, she is now taking every opportunity to discover the natural treasures near her home. She is a co-founder of Latinxhikers, a community dedicated to bringing diversity and inclusivity to the outdoors. Luz recently assisted in the *Go Dark – a Wild East Story* film project created by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Horizonline Pictures and invited some of her closest friends to join her on a three-day backpacking trip on the A.T. “Living in Atlanta, stargazing is not an opportunity we engage in often,” she says. “Two of my friends had never backpacked before, so sharing this moment with them was invaluable. Now that society is starting to see the value in bringing more diversity to the outdoors and giving us a spotlight, it makes me feel like necessary change is coming.”



**Dr. Tyler Nordgren**  
Dr. Tyler Nordgren is a professional astronomer, artist, and author. He holds a Ph.D. in Astronomy from Cornell University where he did work on dark matter. His popular science book *Stars Above, Earth Below: A Guide to Astronomy in the National Parks*, reveals what visitors to America’s national parks can observe in their dark night skies. The color illustrations in this book include both his night sky photography as well as vintage-style “travel posters” he designed to help the public learn about and see the astronomical wonders in the sky. It was in that format that he was commissioned to create for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Wild East poster art. He also leads astronomically-themed tours and hikes including a recent stargazing hike on the A.T. for an upcoming ATC /Horizonline Pictures film: *Go Dark – a Wild East Story*. “Sleeping under the stars, I can escape the modern world,” he says. “But as light pollution increases, that sense of escape becomes more difficult at night.”



**Corey Sebring**  
A resident of Nazareth, Pennsylvania, Corey Sebring graduated from Northampton Community College, where he received his degree in communication design. He is currently a freelance illustrator, graphic designer, and animator. He also works as a motion graphics designer for Service Electric Cable TV and Communications. Over the past four years, he has created several feature illustrations for *A.T. Journeys*. “Creating an illustration for Wild East Night Skies was something that really appealed to me,” he says. “There’s always something mystical, and surreal about illustrating a night scene. It seems to conjure the feeling of making the impossible possible.”

IT’S LATE, AND I AM ALLOWED TO STAY UP BECAUSE MY SISTER AND I are lying on a blanket in our front yard and staring at the sky on a Saturday night with the low embers of a fire pit near our feet and our dogs lounging nearby. There is very little to say, unless we ask our parents a question about the sparkling stars and planets above us. We had no idea how fortunate we were at the time, but looking back, I think that part of my childhood shaped how I feel about night skies. I love the ambient glow of a bright moon and the sound of one owl calling to another. I can’t think of a better place to be but outside in the dark with nothing but natural light from the sky. These places are harder to find as the darkness of night slowly glows brighter with artificial light — from outdoor floodlights in rural areas to the inescapable sea of bright lights in urban areas. Thankfully, there are some remaining spaces where the landscape, and the wildlife that relies on it, still thrive on a rhythm of natural night darkness. Much of the A.T. and the surrounding Wild East stretching along the eastern U.S. are a special part of that. And as long as we keep that sacred space protected, there will continue to be a path to serene nocturnal escape under the vast dark universe.

Wendy K. Probst / Editor in Chief

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## STAYING TRUE TO COURSE

IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT this first letter I write to you as president and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is in an issue of *A.T. Journeys* that celebrates the night sky and guiding stars of our universe.

I have spent the past 35 years of my life volunteering and working, in multiple capacities, to protect and support the Appalachian Trail and the organizations responsible for its care. I have earned my stripes, so to speak, learning and working at the club level and eventually taking on leadership roles with the ATC. That focus — to work for this iconic and powerful place we call the A.T. — has been a beacon and guiding star for most of my adult life. Both the personal and the professional me has matured within and benefited from the experiences I've had on and around the Trail. And, it is with gratitude and humility that I take on this new role for the ATC and the A.T.

My focus will be threefold: First, I look to bring stability and support to our incredible staff. Ushering in sudden change can be disruptive and disconcerting. I will look to provide a structure in which staff are empowered to perform at their best and ensure they have the resources and tools necessary to do their work. Second, I am focused on providing transparent and thorough communication, both internally and externally. This complex Trail is no stranger to disagreements, but by working through challenges, a unified vision has been and will continue to be achieved. Open communication does not mean an end to divergent views. However, I know we are all at the table working toward the singular goal of what is best for the Appalachian Trail.

My final area of focus will be looking forward to all the work we have yet to do. There are ongoing battles to maintain the integrity of the A.T. viewshed and environments we refer to as the Wild East. Poorly planned energy infrastructure projects,



*Milky Way from the A.T. Roan Highlands – By Daniel Burlison*

like the Mountain Valley Pipeline proposed to run from northwestern to southern Virginia, threaten to carve long-lasting scars into the A.T. landscape rather than work to find more sustainable locations. Despite some political victories, invaluable conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund continue to struggle to find funding. A series of misguided policy decisions threaten the effectiveness of bedrock legislation like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. On the positive side, with the Restore Our Parks Act working its way through Congress, the Trail may finally receive much-needed funding to address the growing number of deferred maintenance projects. However, we need to keep up our pressure to make this a reality.

I also am firmly committed to ensuring that we provide opportunities for the next generation of Trail builders and conservationists. We will continue to make sure the Trail and our organization's programs are welcoming to individuals from all backgrounds and experiences. Even more importantly, I will work both at the staff and board levels to ensure all voices are actively at the table leading our organization forward.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is uniquely experienced, uniquely positioned, and uniquely capable of managing and protecting the Appalachian Trail. In my new role, I will look to build on our strengths, stabilize our foundation, and ensure that the cooperative management structure remains strong and effective. Together, we will navigate along this remarkable path into a bright future.

Sandra Marra / President & CEO

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Camping above Montezuma Basin on the Continental Divide Trail, Colorado. Noah Wetzel



AS A BACKPACKER AND conservationist, the Wild East is so inspiring! Thank you for everything you do to protect these beautiful Appalachian corridors!

Erin Tate  
St. Louis, Missouri

YOUR SUMMER ISSUE ABOUT the historical points on the A.T. was masterful. However, there is one point of history of which few are aware. Cowart Gap is traversed by the A.T. 1.8 miles north of Dick's Creek Gap at Georgia Highway 76. The great Cherokee Trading Path from the Carolina Low Country crossed the Chattooga River at Sandy Ford (Georgia/South Carolina line). Today, a forest road crosses the A.T. at Cowart Gap. It climbs up from the Plumb Orchard Valley to the east. It's a peaceful place. The siege and surrender of Fort Loudon in 1760 is accurately depicted in the movie, *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Mike Maffett  
Lake Burton, Georgia

WHILE DESCRIBING THE Veterans War Memorial Tower in Massachusetts, the Summer 2019 edition of *A.T. Journeys* (Trailhead, page 18) states the "The 93-foot-high tower...was constructed in 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps." I suspect this

statement may be incorrect. First, the CCC consisted of young men, ages 18 — 25, who did mostly manual labor. Although these young men did significant work on Mount Greylock, the construction of a tower of this magnitude would be beyond their abilities. Second, these words appear on the tower, "Erected by Massachusetts in grateful recognition of the loyalty and sacrifice of her sons and daughters in war." The CCC was a federal program.

Van "Yonder" Adams  
Greencastle, Pennsylvania

#### EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

Thank you for your correction. To clarify: the Commonwealth of Massachusetts built a War Memorial on the summit in 1930, and between 1933 and 1936, the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed a number of additional

structures on the summit, including the rustic Bascom Lodge, built of native stone and timber. They also built roads, trails, and a campground on the Greylock reservation.

*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  
P.O. Box 807  
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**f** "Wild East Time Travel" (*A.T. Journeys*, Summer) is a Beautiful article! The writing is lyrical. ~ Jeanine Heiser Schaeffer

**@** @public.lands.coffee  
No better day with the family than one out on Trail!

**f** My daughter met her future husband while hiking the A.T. They stopped their hike in VT, got married and now have two beautiful children... and a very unique love story to share with them. ~ Linda Slanika

**f** Happy 82nd birthday, A.T.! Thanks for the grueling hills and beautiful vistas. ~ Joe Vernon

**@** @bettyjobiscuits  
From now on I'm just going to carry my bear canister on my backpacking trips. It's worth the extra weight for all the peace of mind, both for myself and the wildlife.

**@** @rehyycle  
Me and my group do our best to help clean our trails one hike at a time.

**@** @sunrunsun  
15 years ago I was finishing my GA-ME thru hike. Thank you to the ATC and volunteers for the important work you do to protect and preserve the Trail for us all!

**@** @therealclaystewart  
The spruce forests you find in the Roan

Highlands are beautiful and enchanting. When you crest the mountain and find yourself amidst these beautiful trees it is one of the A.T.'s most memorable experiences.

**f** The ATC has great people, and great resources for backpacking. We met some folks who were volunteering up by Mollies Ridge Shelter in the GSMNP portion of the A.T. doing rather significant work on the Trail. God bless them! Nice people doing amazing, hard work to keep the Trail enjoyable for all! Thank you! ~ Kevin Kapala

**THRU-HIKER REGISTRATION**  
Aspiring A.T. thru-hikers can now register their hikes online. Registrants will be able to see the numbers of hikers registered to start on each day, then plan accordingly to start on an uncrowded day or location to limit their ecological and social impacts on the Trail.

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· wild east ·

## DARK NIGHT SKIES

The white blazes marking the Appalachian Trail serve much the same navigational purpose as stars have to explorers for thousands of years. During the day, the blazes encourage us on, but as the

sun sets, the green tunnel of the Appalachian Trail turns black, offering above it some of the darkest skies remaining in the eastern United States. Instead of watching wildflowers bloom, at night we gaze up into a vast maze of stars and planets we may have never known existed in an urban environment.

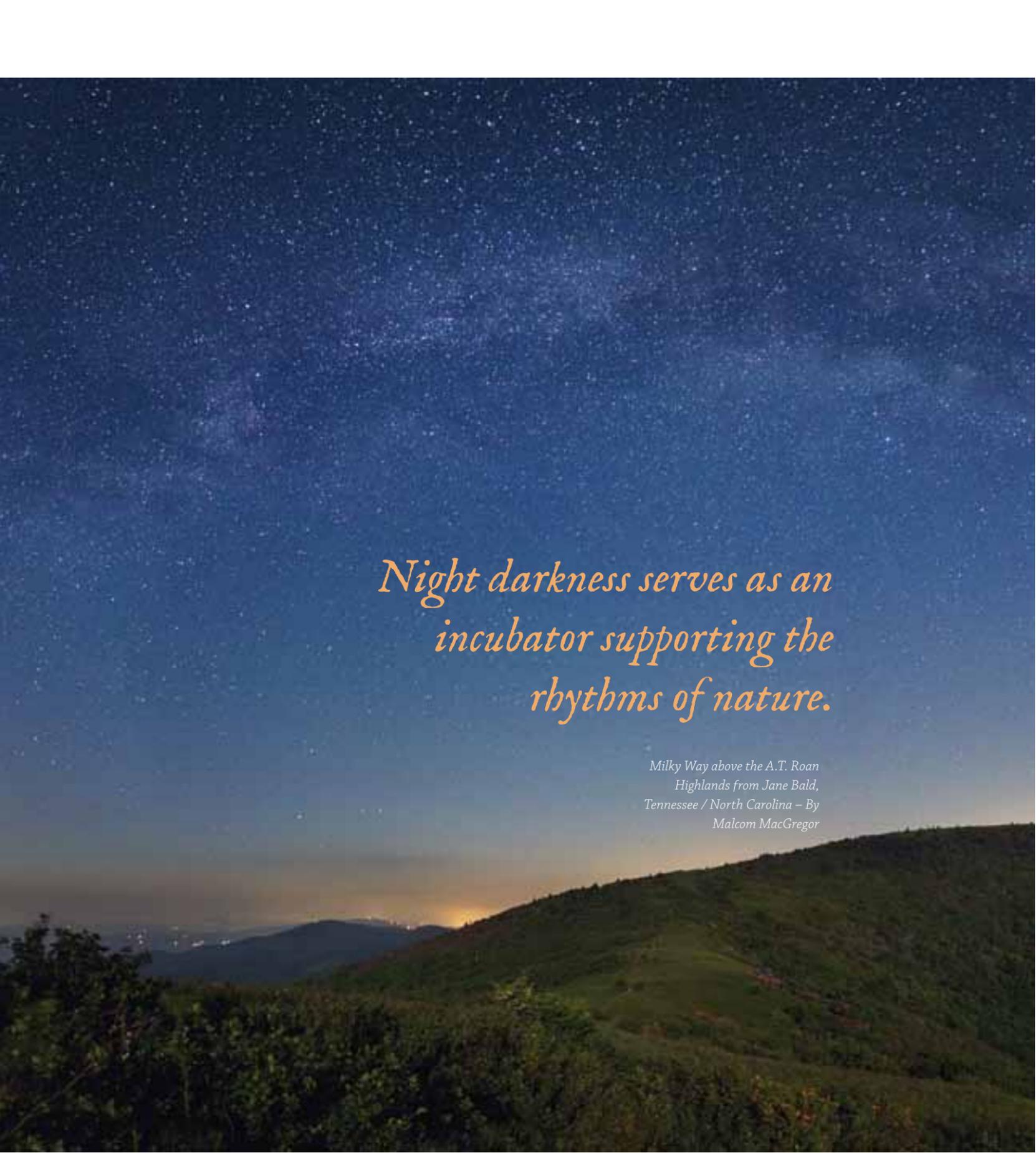
Darkness has always cradled mystery and the unknown. It magnifies sounds and intensifies imagination primarily because it limits what we can see. Darkness, like quiet and solitude, is a gift if we are open to embracing it. Just as we are in awe of vibrant sunsets, bucolic mountain vistas, and cascading waterfalls, the impenetrable depth of a dark sky nurtures a sense of peace and wonder.

Unfortunately, human-created light is invading more and more of the view shed corridors of the A.T., reducing the darkness of the night sky. The eastern U.S. has the worst light pollution in North America with visibility of only a few stars in places like Atlanta and Washington, D.C. The A.T. serves as a cocoon from the unrelenting glare of modern life that disrupts sleep, causes stress and hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Dark night skies are woven into our health as well as the ecosystems of the forest.

Natural darkness provides a refuge not only for weary humans, but also for wildlife. Light pollution impacts migratory routes, animal foraging areas, and breeding cycles. Bats, barn owls, red foxes, Luna moths and many other animals are nocturnal and have evolved to adapt to darkness. Enhanced hearing, vision, and smell help them move around at night. Numerous bird species including warblers, thrushes, and buntings navigate at night by the stars. Plants are impacted as well, with prolonged exposure to artificial light preventing many trees from adjusting to seasonal changes. Night darkness serves as an incubator supporting the rhythms of nature.

[ BY MARK ELLISON ]

[ ILLUSTRATION BY COREY SEBRING ]



*Night darkness serves as an  
incubator supporting the  
rhythms of nature.*

*Milky Way above the A.T. Roan  
Highlands from Jane Bald,  
Tennessee / North Carolina – By  
Malcom MacGregor*



The swath of a dark sky is considered a defining characteristic of wilderness along with opportunities for solitude, quiet, and access to land that is untrammelled. Distance light penetrating the night sky degrades the wilderness experience as does noise pollution and development. The value of a dark sky can be measured in the genius it has cultivated, including that of Einstein, Galileo, and Newton — all inspired by gazing up at the stars.

I vividly remember an A.T. section hike on a crisp spring day — and arriving at Beauty Spot in the Unaka Mountains of Tennessee to enjoy the sunset. The hues of the sky transitioned from shades of blue, to orange, and then black, offering a sensory explosion. The marvelous thing about a sunset is it's only part one of the show. The subtle way colors melt to complete darkness while stars and planets emerge is fascinating. Marveling at how the Milky Way drapes the sky while connecting the dots between the Big Dipper and Orion was “astrotourism” at its finest. In this setting, we are liberated from the sensory overload of modern life. Free from light enticing us from smart phones and televisions, our imaginations can run wild exploring the universe while embracing the stillness and awe that beckons us from above.

The Appalachian Mountains have faced many challenges. When Thomas Edison's light bulbs first illuminated New York City in 1878, little did we know how far light could reach into the deepest corners of the forest. Just as the Industrial Revolution brought various changes to the mountains, so did electricity, and the coal mining operations that soon followed to fuel the demand.

With the night sky brightening up to 10 percent each year, we might be one of the last generations to be able to experience truly dark night skies. We are inspired to protect what we value and know exists. Our urban lives are immersed in light, noise, and people. So, retreating from these places to darkness, quiet, and solitude — and looking up to get a view of pieces of the celestial puzzle that can light up the sky at night — can be truly life changing.

I remember when I first basked under a truly dark sky. I was 20 and up high in the Appalachians. I felt the cool air, the breeze, and had a sense that I was a small part of something colossal and amazing. Preserving the dark night ensures that future generations understand there is a vast universe daring us to explore and dream. Safeguarding continued opportunities to experience dark night skies in the Wild East and the spark of enlightenment it fosters is the one light we truly cannot turn off.

# TRAILHEAD

ATC DIRT / HIGHLIGHTS / EVENTS / UPDATES



Luz Lituma – cofounder and leader of the LatinXhikers group in Atlanta, Georgia is joined by close friend Paola Rodriguez and astronomer Tyler Nordgren to seek out starry night skies on the A.T. in north Georgia.  
– Photo by Chris Gallaway courtesy Horizonline Pictures



## FRIENDLY NIGHT SKY LIGHTING AT ATC HEADQUARTERS

This spring, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) discovered that motion-sensor floodlights installed at its headquarters in Harpers Ferry to keep employees safe as they exited the building after hours were far brighter than necessary. Jarring light escaped into the skies as well as quiet streets and paths where residents took evening strolls, and research showed that overly bright security lights can be counterproductive. By installing LED lights and adding shields endorsed by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), reducing the lumens, and changing the color and angle of the lights, ATC became a better neighbor, reduced our electricity consumption, and helped preserve dark skies in our own community.



### "GO DARK – A WILD EAST STORY"

For many people around the world, light pollution prevents us from seeing the true beauty of the night sky. In the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's latest short film, *Go Dark – A Wild East Story*, take a journey with the Atlanta-based LatinXhikers group and astronomer Dr. Tyler Nordgren as they experience the splendor of a starry sky, preserved by surrounding Wild East lands and the Appalachian Mountain landscape of the A.T. in Georgia. Through gorgeous cinematography and from the hikers' point of view, you will be able to observe the Trail like never before and learn how places like the A.T. protect not only the landscapes around them, but also the skies above.

#### Interested in doing your part to reduce light pollution:

- Start with the light switch, turning things off.
- Consider replacing outdoor lights with intelligently designed, low-glare fixtures. Did you know there is a certification body for sky-friendly outdoor lighting? The International Dark-Sky Association evaluates fixtures for low glare and efficiency. Look for the IDA seal of approval on locally sourced fixtures, or seek out a company such as Starry Night Lights, which specializes in low-pollution lighting.
- Place motion sensors on essential outdoor lamps. Lighting on demand trumps a manual switch or timer.
- Replace conventional high-energy bulbs with efficient outdoor CFLs and LED floodlights.

Find out more about outdoor lighting, light pollution, and more from the International Dark-Sky Association at: [darksky.org](https://darksky.org)



## Congressional Update

### The Land and Water Conservation Fund and the A.T.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has advocated for dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) since 1972. Through our advocacy efforts and partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and multiple state agencies, more than \$180 million dollars has been appropriated to secure a land base for the A.T. and to protect landscapes near the Trail. The LWCF is a key tool for state and federal land management agencies to protect important plant and animal habitat, enact land exchanges (such as trading out privately owned properties located within protected lands), and preserving the viewshed from the Trail. ¶ With the enactment on March 12, 2019 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Recreation, and Management Act of 2019, LWCF was permanently reauthorized and will never again expire. The ATC is grateful to the hard work of everyone who contributed to making this important land management program available for future generations. The next step is to fully fund LWCF so this critical tool will be available to more state lands, national forests, and national parks (including the A.T.).

For more information on the ATC's position regarding LWCF visit: [appalachiantrail.org/lwcf](http://appalachiantrail.org/lwcf)

## SUSTAINABLE CAMP MANAGEMENT STUDY AWARDED



Jeff Marion on the A.T.

Dr. Jeff Marion has built a career around a lifelong passion for the outdoors, and that effort has culminated in his being selected as the co-recipient of the George Wright Society's Natural Resources Achievement Award for 2019. The award seeks to recognize excellence in research, management, and education related to parks and protected areas. ¶ Marion, a recreational ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and an adjunct professor in Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and the Environment, is a founding contributor to the field of recreation ecology, which develops and applies ecological knowledge to examine and limit the environmental impacts caused by recreational use of park and forest lands. "The land management agencies have a dual mandate that directs them to both protect natural resource conditions and processes, and to accommodate appropriate recreational activities in protected areas," Marion explains. "By understanding and modeling the effects of that use, recreation ecologists can work with land managers to direct activities and interventions that will maintain the sustainability of that use." ¶ Marion has been involved in the nonprofit organization Leave No Trace since its founding, and he authored the organization's 2014 book, *Leave No Trace in the Outdoors*. Since 1989, Marion has led the Virginia Tech Field Station of the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. His expertise in recreation ecology has led to him collaborating with leading scientists in China to develop management and preservation policies for forest ecosystems across the world. ¶ Marion and his colleague Dr. Jeremy Wimpey are currently completing a study to characterize and reduce the impacts of hikers on the Appalachian Trail, and have initiated a similar multi-year study of camping impacts on the Pacific Crest Trail. "The A.T. management community is very fortunate to have Jeff working so closely with us," says the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's director of conservation Laura Belleville. "He has helped us think through and understand important management issues and his research is invaluable." Jeff will be presenting his A.T. research study and 17 years of measurements of recovery on closed Annapolis Rocks campsites and changes on new side-hill campsites — where he recently completed the final measurements for his long-term A.T. study — this November in

Vienna, Virginia. His full journal paper on the results is forthcoming. ¶ For Marion, the George Wright Society Natural Resources Achievement Award honors a career that hasn't ever felt like work. "Outdoor activities are my passion, and I followed that passion," he says. "I was fortunate to find a way to combine my outdoor interests with my academic and professional ambitions, and it's never felt like I work for a living. I really enjoy what I do, and I can't believe that I get paid to do what I love."



## Hunting Season Safety

Hunting regulations vary widely along the Appalachian Trail. Although the A.T. is a unit of the National Park System, it traverses a patchwork quilt of public lands managed for many different purposes. Hunting is permitted within close proximity of some parts of the A.T. in every Trail state. Many segments of the A.T. in Pennsylvania north of the Cumberland Valley and a few miles of the A.T. through the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management area in northern Virginia are game lands managed primarily for hunting. Both hikers and hunters are advised to "know before you go."

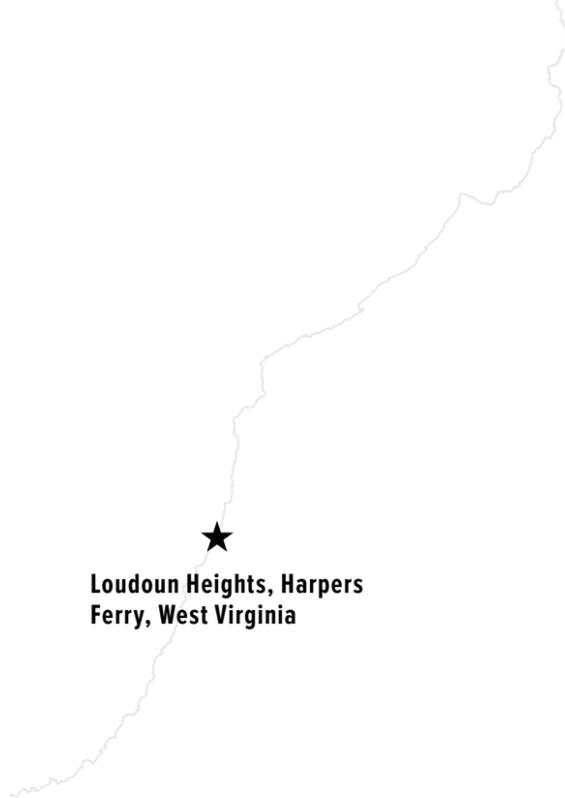
For more information and to see ATC's "2019-2020 Hunting Season Guide by State" visit: [appalachiantrail.org/hunting](http://appalachiantrail.org/hunting)

## II TRAILHEAD

### A Dedicated Trail Relocation

By Stephanie Bouchard

On a sunny fall day in the Tribute Garden of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Harpers Ferry headquarters, the family and friends of Michael Alexander Cooker joined with the members of the ATC family to celebrate his life and the role the Appalachian Trail played in it. ¶ Cooker's life ended tragically in April of 2018 when he was 30 years old. Wanting to celebrate that life, his family and friends raised funds and made a donation to the ATC, which were used to complete one phase of an ongoing Trail relocation project at Loudoun Heights. On September 29, on what would have been his 32nd birthday, Cooker's family, friends and members of the ATC gathered to dedicate a plaque in his memory — which is now on display in ATC's Harpers Ferry Visitor Center — and to commemorate the new section of Trail supported by their donation. ¶ "I think every day on the Trail was a great adventure for Michael," said his mother, Ann Cooper, during the dedication. "We are grateful to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for making this vision of a living memorial to Michael's joyful days a reality." The donation from Michael's friends and family made possible the completion of what was planned as the second phase of the two-phase relocation on Loudoun Heights, explains Chris Brunton, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's (PATC) northern Virginia district manager (and husband of the ATC's president/CEO, Sandra Marra). ¶ "We're really thankful to Ann and her family for what she did for us to get that phase two [done]," Brunton says. "That was a surprise we did not expect at all." The relocation project, under the direction of one of the ATC's Mid-Atlantic regional managers, Bob Sickley, has been a work in progress for a number of years, Brunton says. The ATC, the PATC, whose volunteers maintain that section of Trail, and the National Park Service staff at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, recognized that the A.T. on Loudoun Heights was problematic and a relocation was a good solution. ¶ The section of Trail being replaced is too steep, eroded, and impossible to maintain, Brunton says, and all the human traffic was endangering nearby historic and culturally sensitive Civil War sites. Phase one of the relocation has been underway for about two-and-a-half years and is scheduled to be completed next year. The now-completed phase two does not change the length of the A.T. significantly, but reaches the ridgetop and Virginia border almost half a mile farther south, and no longer connects directly with the Loudoun Heights Trail, where the upper portion has been closed. (The Split Rock vista can still be accessed via the Orange Trail.) ¶ To mark the completion of this new A.T. section, Michael's mother and his brother, Stephen, and Stephen's fiancée, painted the final A.T. blazes on what they call "Michael's trail."



★  
Loudoun Heights, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

To see a detailed map of the relocation visit: [appalachiantrail.org/updates](http://appalachiantrail.org/updates)

*From left: An Appalachian Conservation Corps team member defines tread on the relocation; Ann Cooper and her son Stephen paint a white blaze on the new section of Trail*



# REGISTER FOR A.T. CAMPSITES TO REDUCE CROWDING

**A.T.CAMP PLAN AHEAD**

A.T. Camp was designed to help groups plan their hikes while avoiding overcrowding and related natural and social impacts at camping areas. Register your hiking group and receive immediate notifications

[ATCAMP.ORG](http://ATCAMP.ORG)

# A.T. HIKING CLASSES

**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3  
11 AM — 12:30 PM**

Intro to Hiking the Appalachian Trail Workshop  
ATC Headquarters, Harpers Ferry, WV

Learn the essential basics of planning and preparing for a section- or thru-hike and best practices for hiking sustainably. This class will cover what to pack, where permits or fees are required, and tips such as how to store food safely from animals.  
**The class is free.**  
**Advance registration is required.**

For more information and dates visit: [appalachiantrail.org/events](http://appalachiantrail.org/events)

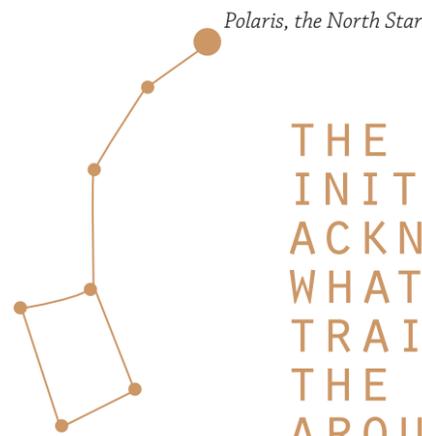


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*The Milky Way in a dark night sky above Rangeley Lake (seen here from Hunter Cove) is a common scene in the A.T. Community of Rangeley, Maine – By Tom McMahon / photo courtesy of the Rangeley Chamber of Commerce*



The Little Dipper is an asterism in the larger constellation of Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. Polaris, the North Star is the brightest star in the constellation known as the Little Dipper.

## THE WILD EAST INITIATIVE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT WHAT MAKES THE TRAIL SPECIAL IS THE LANDSCAPE AROUND IT, AN INTERCONNECTED TAPESTRY OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, WATERWAYS, GEOGRAPHY, AND SKY.

I don't know why you get out on the Appalachian Trail, but for me it's always been an escape. Going for a hike powered by my own two feet and sleeping under the stars, I can escape the modern world. For huge stretches of Trail, I lose sight of the 21st Century and walk through a world of trees, streams, waterfalls, and mountains. As light pollution increases though, that sense of escape becomes more difficult at night.

Just the phrase, "sleeping under the stars" evokes an image of childhood for me. I was a Boy Scout in Oregon and then Alaska as my father moved from one job to another. As a kid, I first saw the Milky Way from the Pacific Crest Trail near Mount Hood in Oregon and still remember what it was like seeing a sky splashed full of stars reflected in the lake beside which we camped. It was our universe: an infinite expanse even greater than the distant ridgeline of trees or the more distant mountains of the Cascades to north and south. I felt I could get lost in that starry sky and who knows what wonders there might be out there among those stars? In Alaska, I fell in love with the aurora borealis during the long dark winter months and still remember what it was like to have them light up the snow around me on the frozen lake where our troop had set up our tents. No wonder I eventually became an astronomer.

But even as I gained access to some of the world's largest telescopes and wrote papers on dark matter and pulsating stars, I never forgot where my love of the sky started. I once spent a year traveling the country working with National Park Service rangers and writing a book on all the ways visitors could experience astronomy in the parks. I led tours to see the aurora in Alaska and have trained river rafting guides in the Grand Canyon how to answer the question, "what star is that?" and "why are there so many more stars here than at home?" Because

those visions of stars, the Milky Way, and even the northern lights, are becoming harder to see every year.

Eighty percent of Americans and Europeans can no longer see the Milky Way from their homes. When I first started paying attention to this issue back in 2005, that number was 66 percent, so getting to experience a dark sky is becoming more elusive and requires greater travel every year. Yet, even when I am able to finally reach a place where I can see the Milky Way overhead, often it is just a pale imitation of what it could be. Artificial light knows no regional boundary and distant cities and towns (or coal mines and oil wells) create "light domes" that illuminate the clouds, cast shadows on the ground, and reduce the light of our galaxy — the light of over 400 billion stars — into a faint smear across the sky. The world around me that I have come to see in all of its beauty is being rendered pale and muted at night. We have allowed a fog of light to blow in on our natural landscape and render the universe beyond our own atmosphere a little more invisible every year, and it has happened so slowly that few have even noticed.

I'm an astronomer, but I've also traveled all over the world to observe the sky both professionally and as a tourist (and now tour leader). I've seen the heart of our galaxy from the Outback in Australia and high in the Chilean Andes after a solar eclipse. I once stargazed my way across the Atlantic on a four-masted sailing ship and I've seen a star-filled sky while hiking the Continental Divide. I care about the darkness because I know what I am missing due to light pollution. But why should anyone else?

The Wild East initiative acknowledges that what makes the Trail special is more than just the dirt of the path. It's the landscape around it, an interconnected tapestry of plants,



Fireflies in the Wild East near Dover, New York — By Julian Diamond.

## DARK NIGHT SKIES VARY ALONG THE TRAIL

and are often dependent on the amount of protected lands that surround the footpath and its proximity to urban areas. Just as the landscapes surrounding states the Trail runs through can be fragmented, some areas along the Trail are more prone to light pollution. These two issues go hand in hand. In general, as the corridor of protected land around the Trail decreases, the light pollution increases.

In general, Maine and the northern New England states are the best places along the Trail to enjoy dark night skies. In Maine, the area surrounding Rangeley — a community that is the gateway to the Bigelow Mountain Range — is a great spot to view night skies as well as along the A.T. in the Green Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Areas in the south around Mount Rogers in Virginia and Clingmans Dome in the Smokies in North Carolina and Tennessee are also some of the better places for experiencing dark night skies. These areas are farthest from high density populations and have the added benefit of elevation. Some states have “dark sky” designated parks, communities, or areas. The International Dark Sky Places conservation program recognizes excellent stewardship of the night sky. Designations are based on stringent outdoor lighting standards and innovative community outreach.

## OTHER NOTABLE DARK NIGHT SKY VIEWING ALONG THE A.T.

/ Chestnut Ridge looking down onto Burkes Garden near Bland and Burkes Garden, **Virginia**

/ Nantahala National Forest near Franklin, **North Carolina** (e.g. Wesser Bald)

/ Little Hump Mountain and Big Hump Mountain in **North Carolina**

/ Doll Flats in **Tennessee**

/ Chattahoochee National Forest — Gooch Gap and Hickory Flats in **Georgia**

# THE A.T. HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

*Starry sky at sunset from the A.T. at the summit of Blood Mountain in Georgia — By Adam Stephenson*

animals, waterways, geography, and sky. Sacrifice any one of these threads and the cloth unravels. The sky is an integral part of that whole. Think about the nocturnal animals that hunt, feed, mate, and survive under the darkness of night. Under most skies in the eastern United States, true darkness no longer falls. In more urban areas along the Trail, the sky can be almost as bright as moonlight, every night, especially on nights where clouds reflect our urban lighting back down to us. Yet hikers can still find pockets of darkness in some of those areas, shielded by the mountains in the Wild East landscape (near Pawling New York for instance).

Astronomers are not the only species that depend on darkness to thrive. Take fireflies for instance. I'd never seen a firefly before moving to the East Coast. Even today after 25 years I think they are still an utterly magical sight blinking and flashing in a wooded darkness. Recent research shows female fireflies exposed to increasing ambient light do not flash back to males as much as those under natural darkness and thus decrease their chances of finding a mate. How much would we lose to live in a world without fireflies?

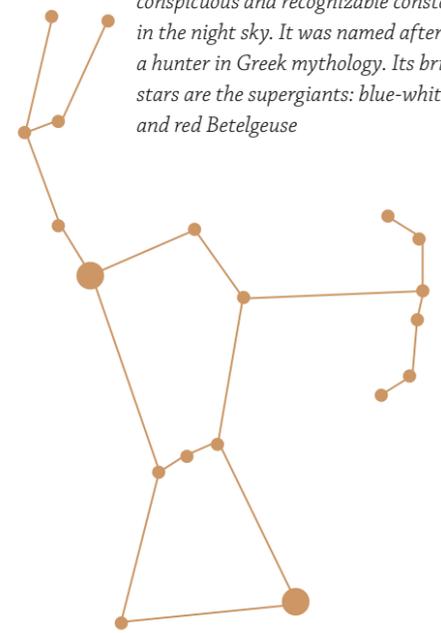
Birds navigate by the stars. Their seasonal migrations spanning multiple continents put even the most avid A.T. thru-hiker to shame. Yet the constellation of city lights that grows ever brighter — and increasingly blue-white like the stars overhead thanks to the advent of LED streetlights — appears to throw that navigation into disarray. Who among us could imagine any place claiming to be “wild” that didn't have birds?

This change to our nocturnal landscape has been slow, but is picking up speed, especially as communities all across the country change their street lighting to the less yellow and more white LED lighting. Unless you have actively looked for it at night, you probably haven't noticed the change. But the number of people who tell me they remember there being so many more stars when they were kids grows every year.

One way to gauge how much light has affected your view of the sky and how non-pristine your sky may be, is by consulting the Bortle Scale. A Bortle class of 9 is an inner-city sky so bright that only a handful of the brightest stars are visible, none making up even a full constellation beyond maybe the Big Dipper. Under a Bortle class 9 night, the Milky Way is completely invisible and city lights illuminate the clouds overhead and your eyes never fully adapt to the darkness. At the other end is a Bortle class 1 sky that is utterly pristine, with no light domes even faintly visible on the horizon and a sky so dark that clouds (and even your hand in front of your face) are just a dark hole on the sky. The Milky Way from these locations is visible all the way to the horizon and looks so bright that the dark clouds of interstellar gas and dust that span the light years throughout our galaxy, render the Milky Way overhead richly veined as if it was carved from celestial marble.

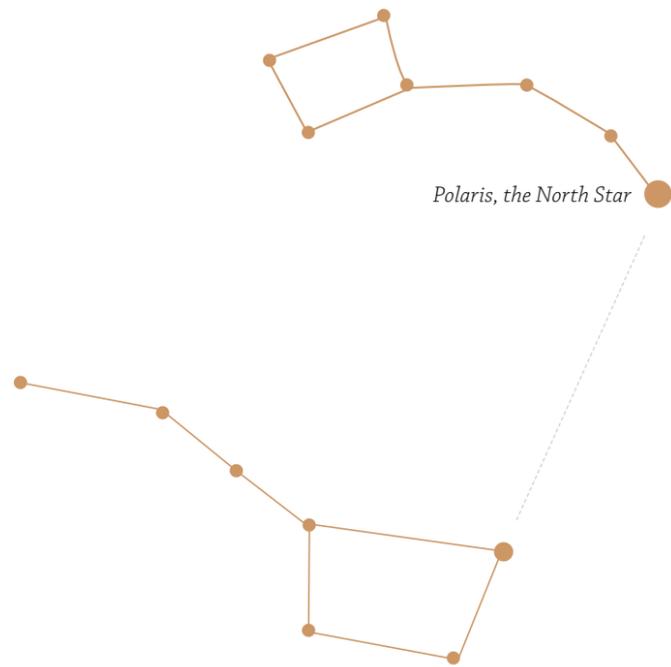
Believe it or not, while the sky above nearly every major population center is classified on a Bortle Class 8 or 9, there are literally fewer than a dozen regions in the continental U.S. that are still Bortle class 1. While most of these pristine skies are in the Western U.S. along the Continental Divide and Pacific Crest Trails, one is in the East and it is in the area around

*Orion is a prominent constellation located on the celestial equator and visible throughout the world. It is one of the most conspicuous and recognizable constellations in the night sky. It was named after Orion, a hunter in Greek mythology. Its brightest stars are the supergiants: blue-white Rigel and red Betelgeuse*



## ARTIFICIAL LIGHT KNOWS NO REGIONAL BOUNDARY AND DISTANT CITIES AND TOWNS CREATE “LIGHT DOMES” THAT ILLUMINATE THE CLOUDS, CAST SHADOWS ON THE GROUND, AND REDUCE THE LIGHT OF OUR GALAXY — THE LIGHT OF OVER 400 BILLION STARS — INTO A FAINT SMEAR ACROSS THE SKY.

The Big Dipper is an asterism in the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear. It's seven stars are one of the most familiar shapes in the northern sky. It is a useful navigation tool. The Big Dipper's outer edge of its "bowl" will always lead you to the North Star.



THE NICE THING ABOUT LIGHT POLLUTION IS THAT, UNLIKE NEARLY ALL OTHER FORMS OF POLLUTION, THE MINUTE YOU STOP PRODUCING IT, YOU'VE RESTORED THE DARKNESS OF THE SKY AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT.

Katahdin at the northern end of the Appalachian Trail in Maine. There are many maps you can find online that will show you light pollution and Bortle scale maps for the country, and I've even published a small field guide that shows you the Milky Way at different times of year and how to estimate the Bortle brightness for wherever you happen to be. Think about that the next time you go out for a hike or just outside your front door at night. Think how much the lights of our civilization have already altered our wild places, even areas hundreds of miles away from major cities.

The nice thing about light pollution is that, unlike nearly all other forms of pollution, the minute you stop producing it, you've restored the darkness of the sky at the speed of light. The way to be more night-sky friendly at home and in your community is to behave like you would on the Trail. A hiker whose headlamp shines right in my eyes produces glare that ruins my night vision and makes it harder to see what's around me. Same thing at home: street lights and house lights that shine directly in your eyes don't make you safer at night, in fact, they make it harder to see what's around. Similarly, don't put a flood light in your camp that shines on all your neighbors; this is called light trespass. If you have to have a light outside at night, put a shade on top that restricts light to only shining downward. In camp, use only as much light as is needed and

don't leave it on all night, same thing at home. Red head lamps on the Trail don't ruin your night vision, and yellowish lamps (not the blue-white ones that seem to be everywhere now) don't attract as many insects. Now, if only communities would do the same and swap out those new blue-white street lights or at least cover them with yellower filters, we'd all be a lot more night sky friendly and see more stars without sacrificing safety.

I once had a lighting engineer take issue with my desire to see the stars. He asked me, "isn't that what the Hubble Space Telescope is for?" A year later, I was in Bryce Canyon National Park talking to one of the NASA astronauts who worked on Hubble about what he thought of that question. He looked out over the hoodoos and buttes to the distant horizon and wryly said, "Why do we need national parks? Isn't that what pictures on the internet are for?" Our parks, our forests, and our trails are the single best ways we can touch, breathe, hear and see the natural world on which we live. As our ideas of conservation have expanded to include not just the rock at our feet, but the water that flows through it, the plants and wildlife that make it their home, and the clear air that allows us to breathe and enjoy it, the night sky above is the latest addition. We wouldn't settle for a world made invisible by smog, so why should we accept the same situation at night?



MAINE

## MEASURING NIGHT SKY POLLUTION

GEORGIA

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) provides some informative apps that can be used to measure light pollution including:

- The Dark Sky Meter App
- Loss of Night App

Find out more at: [darksky.org](https://www.darksky.org)

When using any apps, the IDA advises to: "respect other people and surrounding natural areas in dark sky destinations by dimming the glow of smart devices while in the company of others."

This zoomed-in shot of the NASA Blue Marble Navigator map shows the light pollution over the eastern United States.

# ED-VENTURES / IN THE WILD EAST



/ SUPPORTING FUTURE

CONSERVATION LEADERS /



// THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL FAMOUSLY PROVIDES MORE THAN 2,000 MILES OF AWE AND ADVENTURE FOR EVERY VISITOR WHO WISHES TO PARTAKE OF WHAT WE CALL THE WILD EAST. THANKS TO THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY'S (ATC) EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS, HOWEVER, THE TRAIL ALSO OFFERS ENTHUSIASTS OF EVERY AGE A SPRINGBOARD FOR STUDENT EXPLORATION AND ACHIEVEMENT, AS WELL AS CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

At the ATC, we recognize that our mission to preserve and protect the Trail outlives our own contributions to the effort. That's why we are developing an Emerging Leader's Network to invite young adults to the stewardship and recreational experiences the Trail has to offer. For young people, these experiences can increase occupational awareness, self-efficacy, personal relevance, connection to identity, and civic and community responsibility for a lifetime. A critical part of our work is identifying and recruiting the next generation of Trail enthusiasts and conservation leaders. To cultivate greater strength and resilience both within the ATC and among emerging ecological leadership outside of the organization, we believe that the next generation of leaders must be as diverse as the population of the United States itself.

The Trail does not exist in a vacuum. Communities of all sizes and demographic profiles exist along its length. Rural, urban, and suburban communities interact with the Trail every day, many depending on the economic, social, and environmental benefits of coexisting with a large wilderness area. As these communities grow and change, it is of critical importance that they have a voice in the stewardship of the Trail. The ATC is actively seeking to identify and eliminate the barriers that could keep people from enjoying the Trail and taking part in its stewardship.

## EDUCATION SUMMITS

As part of this effort, the ATC hosts Wild East Summits for formal and informal educators in Trail-adjacent communities. These two- or three-day "train the trainer" workshops raise awareness of the economic impact of the Trail and the critical need for a new generation of leaders and stewards.

Since 2005, the ATC has served as a backbone organization for partner organizations and regional educational coalitions, engaging with close to 500 educators from 200 schools across our 14-state footprint. In 2018, the ATC surveyed more than 300 alumni of its previous educator workshops, finding that a majority (65 percent) of responding teachers working in communities near the Trail used service-learning and/or Appalachian Trail materials in their curriculum.

Wild East Summits stress the value of public lands, from pocket parks to the Trail, as teaching resources within the community. Participants develop Place-Based Service-Learning curriculum units and work with community partners to engage students in authentic community-based learning. Summits connect new partner organizations and participants with meaningful Trail skills through hands-

*Participants in the Everybody's Environment Emerging Leader's (E3) Summit in western North Carolina were brought together to connect, inspire, and learn about public lands.*

/ BY DAVID SMITH AND JULIE JUDKINS /

“

**MY GOAL IS TO INSPIRE THE UPCOMING GENERATION TO DEVELOP A LOVE FOR NATURE NOW SO THEY CAN HELP PROTECT AND RESTORE THESE FORESTS WHEN THEY ARE OLDER.**

”

on stewardship activities, build an understanding of public lands and the Trail’s unique Cooperative Management System, and create pathways for future career opportunities.

Summits encourage educators to become facilitators of partnerships and engagement, while building collaboration among staff, community partners, and teachers to support students in place-based learning focused on stewardship. “ATC Education workshops have made me a more dynamic, confident teacher,” says Rebekah Lang of Emmaus, Pennsylvania. “They have empowered me to teach not only about the Trail, but about the related topics of environmental education, conservation, and native species. They have reminded me of how rewarding teaching can be and how beneficial it is for all students to spend time outdoors, hiking, exploring nature, and connecting with themselves, each other and our beautiful world.”

## NEXTGEN SUMMITS

This year, the ATC, along with regional coalitions of youth-serving organizations and land managing partners, co-hosted NextGen Summits for young people and emerging leaders in Maine, Massachusetts, Georgia, and western North Carolina. NextGen Summits strengthen the community connection to the landscape and create conservation networks to expand stewardship opportunities for ecologically-minded youth. These summits build the community’s capacity to refresh the traditional image of an environmental steward, create experience-based opportunities for sharing authentic stories, and connect participants to conservation careers and ecological employment opportunities across the region.

NextGen Summits are planned, led, and evaluated by a coalition of participating agencies, creating strong regional networks with the capacity to provide significant resources to help emerging leaders become conservation stewards and establish themselves in the environmental field. Participants leave with a call to action for shared stewardship, and are advocating for more outdoor time at school, inviting family and friends to participate in volunteer work days, and creatively communicating their experiences through social media, blog posts, and podcasts. “I value the time I get to reflect on myself, and how I fit into the world,” says Georgia summit participant Jolee Northup. “My goal is to inspire the upcoming generation to develop a love for nature now so they can help protect and restore these forests when they are older. I am a proud NextGen forest ambassador.”

## NEXTGEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Finally, the ATC sponsors the NextGen Advisory Council as a unique ladder for engagement opportunities and professional development experiences. The council brings together

16 diverse, young leaders to advocate for the stewardship of the Trail and help forge new partnerships with youth and multicultural organizations and also help the ATC and affiliated organizations build a comprehensive, inclusive strategy to attract young and diverse audiences to the Trail.

By supporting projects, events, and practices that further the ATC’s organizational principles of equity and inclusion, the council works to connect the ATC community to a broader network of people, ideas, and resources. The NextGen Council has a voice in every aspect of the organization, from communications, to administration, to programming. This group is a model for partner club organizations and public land groups around the country.

The Appalachian Trail is a delicate ribbon running along the eastern seaboard from Georgia to Maine. By working with communities to identify and remove barriers to service, inspiring future environmental leaders to address the challenges of disconnection from natural world, and actively building equity in outdoor educational enrichment opportunities, we make of it a living backbone, the active nerve center of the Wild East.

## STUDENTS DEEP DIVE INTO ACF RIVER BASIN

/ BY SARAH BUCKLEITNER AND JASMINE FORDE /

**HEALTHY WATERSHEDS** begin with healthy forests — and healthy forests require cooperation and empowerment to maintain. For the five million people in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida who rely on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin for drinking water, recreation, energy production and agriculture, healthy watersheds are imperative. That’s why for this year’s Maymester course: Field Program in Environmental Problem Solving, University of Georgia Odum School of Ecology students started their two-week

journey in Helen, Georgia, in the heart of the Chattahoochee National Forest. ¶ The course, which centered around water-use conflicts and sustainability issues in the ACF River Basin, brought students into contact with nearly 25 organizations throughout the ACF, including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Flint Riverkeeper, Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Southern Environmental Law Center,

Joseph Farley Nuclear plant, and numerous environmental leaders affiliated with the ACF Stakeholders group. ¶ It also gave students an opportunity to immerse themselves in the natural systems they were learning about: they spent their day at Dick’s Creek Gap helping to maintain trails, remove invasive species, and break down campsites in undesignated areas, all activities that protect the forest and the many headwater streams within it. ¶ Julie Judkins, the ATC’s director of education and outreach, led the student teams together with Trail Education Specialist, Chloe De Camara. “Volunteerism is a learned behavior and not an inherent act,” said Judkins. ¶ For some students, this exposure inspired new passion. “After talking to the ATC, I realized that my passion lies with conserving the land that has not been developed into more urbanized area,” said Lucas Lambert. “We take our land for granted; we don’t always appreciate the beauty that is right in our backyards. I want to conserve nature while at the same time increasing its beauty, because these parts of the world are valuable.” ¶ These natural resources — from the Chattahoochee National Forest to the portion of the Flint that disappears beneath the Atlanta airport — and the stakeholders who rely on them combine to form a complex social-ecological system. Due to the intense demand for water from multiple sources — including thousands of native species that rely on freely flowing freshwater in the ACF to survive — conflict has escalated to the point of



several lawsuits between the three states. ¶ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages flows through dams located across the ACF River Basin. Lake Lanier’s Buford Dam, which was initially constructed to provide flood control and hydropower, now serves primarily as Atlanta’s source of drinking water. However, Alabama and Florida argue that Georgia withdraws too much water from the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, causing ecological and economic damage to their states. ¶ “As we met with stakeholders along the ACF River Basin, I was truly able to realize just how reliant society is on the environment,” student Maggie Smith reflected. “Every single person along the rivers is deeply dependent on the availability of water and the ecosystem services the rivers provide. Therefore, they have a strong interest in making sure that the water supply is significant enough to support themselves as well as the environment.” ¶ The students also felt that the cooperative

*Students from the University of Georgia’s Odum School of Ecology on a service day on the Trail in Helen, Georgia. The ATC and the Georgia A.T. Club partnered to lead this service day to highlight the important work of Trail clubs and A.T. Communities.*

network that maintains the Appalachian Trail serves as an example for how the ACF might solve some of their own conflicts: “When asked about the challenges of using a cooperative management system, we were told that it is vital to understand who’s not at the table. This idea should be applied to any problem solving/conflict resolution effort because including people who were otherwise excluded can increase the knowledge of the situation and potential impacts. By doing so, there is a shared understanding of the issue and a solution with minimal negative impact,” wrote students Cydney Abel, Mary Hunt, Sam Lopez in

one of their reflections. ¶ Jasmine Forde, lecturer in the Odum School of Ecology designed the course to engage new stakeholders and give students an opportunity to think through a focal sustainability problem, with all of its complexity. Amanda Rugenski, a lecturer who co-taught the course with Forde said: “We wanted our students to think about the concept of resilience through different lenses — social, ecological, and economic.” Mostly, Forde and Rugenski hope that the students now understand how the health of an entire system — from the species that live in the currents of a river to the communities who rely on it for drinking water — starts in the same place where many Appalachian Trail thru-hikers also begin their journey, the Chattahoochee National Forest.

# HARMFUL HABITS

By David McDowell Schafer

CAMPERSITE 113 IS THE FIRST OVERNIGHT SITE THAT northbound A.T. thru-hikers reach when they enter the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. As a ridgerunner in the Smokies, part of my duty is the maintenance of sites like 113. For many hikers, it serves as a spot for a short lunch break, or one of countless overnight stays on their long journey north. Humans, however, are not the only frequenters of the site. During my three-month season, I encountered the same mother bear and her cub at campsite 113 no less than ten times. They became a feature, a constant. I would yell and throw rocks until they ran away, but without fail they would be there the next time I visited the site.

It was obvious these bears were habituated to humans. A wild bear, or other wild animals, will run away at the first sight of a hiker. But this mother bear and her cub couldn't care less when I came along, until I yelled at them. It was likely that the mother had received some sort of food reward from the area. Maybe food scraps leftover from a messy meal, or errant overnight storage that yielded a bounty of calorie-rich treats. She was teaching her cub the same behavior: come to this site and you might find something delicious. Behavior like this reminds us why proper food storage is a key skill for backpackers on the A.T. Each hiker you meet will likely have a different strategy than the next. Not all methods, however, are equal. With that in mind, what storage methods are best and help protect wildlife and keep it healthy and behaving naturally?

## The Methods

The bear hang is probably the most well-known and the most commonly used (but most unreliable) form of food storage among hikers. Put simply, a bear hang is the use of rope, a carabiner, and a stuff

SAFE FOOD STORAGE GOES FAR BEYOND PROTECTING YOU AND YOUR SUSTENANCE





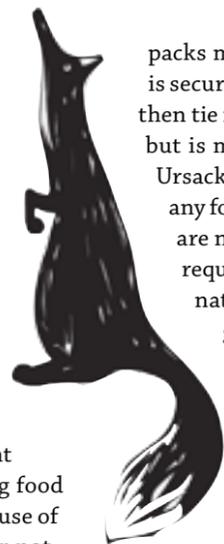
IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER WE USE THESE METHODS NOT JUST TO PROTECT OUR FOOD AND OURSELVES, BUT TO PROTECT THE ANIMALS THAT INHABIT THE A.T. WILD EAST.

A bear canister is one of the most foolproof methods of food storage – By Morgan Somerville

sack to hang your food in a tree, away from the reach of bears and other critters. However, a poorly made bear hang serves as an easy meal for local wildlife. Many campsites lack the proper trees, and the typically poor execution of a bear hang by hikers makes this a problematic form of storage. Bears in particular are smart and adaptive, so eventually even the best hang will likely be defeated. Because of the bear hang's frequent failures along the A.T., the Appalachian Trail Conservancy highly recommends that hikers use bear canisters as their form of food storage.

A bear canister is one of the most foolproof methods of food storage. There are many varieties of canisters, but their designs are generally the same: a hard-sided, cylindrical container with a locking mechanism to prevent critters from accessing your delicious snacks. They are easy to operate, can be left on the ground overnight, and require none of the same fuss that a bear hang does. Many hikers appreciate bear canisters for their ease of use and greater security over bear hangs. However, they are heavier than a bear hang kit and bulky, making them a hard sell to hikers who are focused on lightweight gear and a small pack. Land management supervisors in North Carolina are close to ratifying food storage regulations for the A.T. that will require the use of hard-sided canisters. Whether hikers like them or not, canisters may soon become the de facto storage method for the A.T. in most of the southeast, as well as in Vermont's Green Mountains.

The Ursack is a product that tries to allay the disadvantages of a bear canister while providing a similar level of ease



of use. An Ursack is a soft-sided container made of Spectra, or Spectra and Kevlar, depending on the model. This fabric is resistant to punctures from bears, is lighter than a canister, and packs more easily due to its collapsible nature. An Ursack is secured using a series of knots to seal the sack closed and then tie it to a tree. It typically is less fuss than a bear hang, but is more work than a canister. A disadvantage of the Ursack is that its contents may be crushed by a bear and any food may become inedible. Most importantly, Ursacks are not a replacement for canisters in jurisdictions that require them. The regulations that may soon pass in the national forests in North Carolina do not include language that allows for an Ursack. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, while partially in North Carolina, will not be affected by the U.S. Forest Service regulations. Agency-installed bear cables are still the required system of food storage in the Smokies.

It is important to note that some overnight sites on the A.T. have infrastructure for food storage already in place, similar to the Smokies. Bear cables, boxes, and poles are the most common permanent fixtures used at shelters. These are suitable options for hikers who make use of the shelters and they increase the safety and appeal of the sites themselves. Campers should not expect

one of these at every site, however. Only about 40 percent of A.T. overnight sites have food storage devices installed. Because of their infrequency, permanent food storage fixtures should not be relied upon, and campers should still carry their own form of food storage at all times.

Lastly, some campers will sleep with their food, although not many are willing to admit it. This is an irresponsible and dangerous method for the A.T. Sleeping with one's food habituates animals to shelters and tents and greatly increases the likelihood of a mutually negative encounter with wildlife. It is one of the reasons that mice are a problematic and universal experience in the shelters along the Trail. A hiker that slept with their food at a shelter or campsite on a previous night trains nearby critters to investigate that area in the future. When animals become habituated, it is possible you may have a late-night visitor looking for an easy reward, even if you do not have food in your sleep space. Additionally, the habituation of mice to shelters can attract other unwanted visitors. Snakes — both venomous and non-venomous — will eat the mice that live in the shelters, thus creating more unnecessary and dangerous encounters with humans. Hikers are always on the move, sometimes at the expense of the places they leave behind. Shelters, campsites, and the animals that live nearby are static. One site could have the same wildlife visitor many times over, just like the bears I saw at Campsite 113.

The Reasons

In the sometimes long-winded discussions around backcountry food storage, it is important to remember we use these methods not just to protect our food and ourselves, but to protect the animals that inhabit the A.T. Wild East. Black bears are typically crepuscular, meaning they are most active during dawn and dusk. Mice are nocturnal, which is why hikers always hear them scurry around the shelter as soon as the last headlamp goes out. Less frequently encountered critters such as raccoons, skunks, and porcupines are also nocturnal and can be just as negatively affected by poor food storage. These creatures, among many others that are active at night, make up an often unseen and unheard ecosystem. They come out when we humans are the least active: sound asleep, still groggy before our morning coffee, or exhausted after a long day of hiking.

Taking the time to protect our food when we're in our most dormant states helps nocturnal creatures thrive when they are the most active. When given the choice of foraging for food, or taking an easy meal due to human error, an animal will always go for the easy meal. Habituation helps animals overcome their natural wariness of people, which can lead to aggressive and destructive behavior. When humans and animals come in conflict, animals ultimately lose. Proper food storage is not just for yourself, it's for the hiker behind you, and it's especially for the wildlife that lives nearby. We are, after all, only visiting.

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And consider giving back to the Trail by becoming an ATC member: appalachiantrail.org/ways-to-give

## MOUNTAIN HIGH STARGAZING

PHOTOGRAPHER **AARON IBEY**

“WHEN WE ARRIVED AT ROAN KNOB Shelter in the middle of the night, it was dark as could be, and we could only see as far as our head lamps could shine. This is the highest shelter hikers can stay at on the Appalachian Trail, sitting a little higher than 6,270 feet above sea level. When we finally reached the old two-floor cabin within a dense alpine forest, nestled upon the summit of Roan Mountain in North Carolina, within the blink of an eye the Trail transitioned from robust rhododendron forest to sparse silhouettes of pines that greeted us to winds that stung our faces. We crept up each switchback going up the south side of the mountain, trudging through the fresh snow pack. The moon was completely gone that night — we had planned this out methodically so we could stargaze at the summit. As I was setting up my camera to shoot the night sky, “Puma,” my hiking partner, wandered out to get a glimpse of the sky I was obsessing over. The long exposure tracked his beam from his headlamp as he plodded around the cabin. This scene reminded me of a fairy tale describing an old witch’s house, with the boarded-up windows, dirt floor, and eerie attic. Yet, this was our home for the night, our shelter, keeping us out of the harsh elements of a 10-degree January night.”

~ Aaron Ibey





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## ★ RANGELEY / *Maine* ★

WITH ITS RICHNESS OF NATURAL RESOURCES, YOU ARE GUARANTEED AN AMAZING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE YEAR-ROUND IN RANGELEY, MAINE.

*By Linda Dexter*

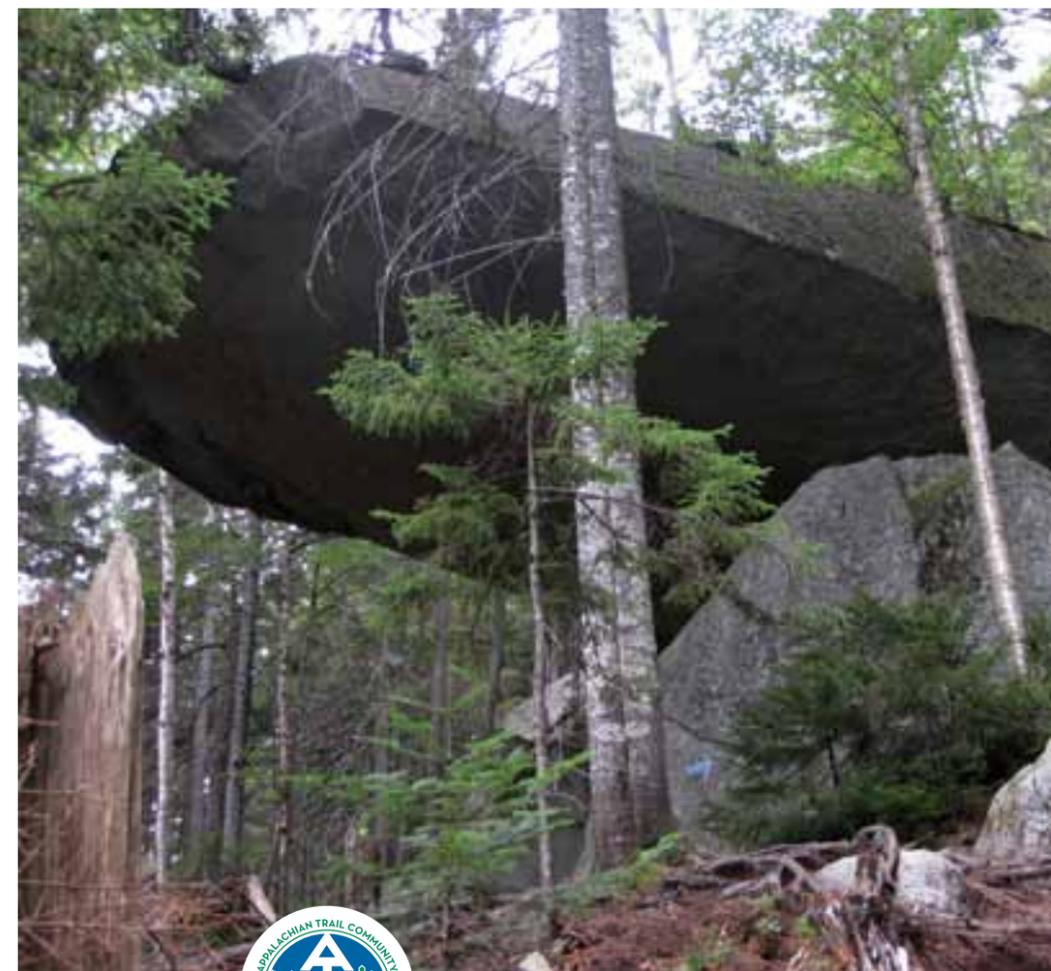


RANGELEY IS THE PERFECT place to hear the loons calling across open waters on warm summer evenings or to snuggle up in a cabin during snowy winters. Situated on the shores of Rangeley Lake and nestled in the heart of the vast Rangeley Lakes region, Rangeley is full of New England charm and natural beauty. Ten of the fourteen 4,000-footers in Maine are located in the Rangeley area known as the High Peaks Region. In addition to high peaks, a chain of lakes connects over a thousand square miles of non-stop scenic beauty. Nine miles from the A.T. crossing, Rangeley is an important stop along the Appalachian Trail.

Noted for its outdoor recreation opportunities, Rangeley hosts thousands of visitors a year. Hiking, paddling, camping, and fishing are the traditional summer activities. And an abundance of snow in winter provides opportunities for skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. In the middle of town on frozen Haley Pond, ice-skating, pond hockey, curling, and ice fishing are enjoyed by people of all ages. Fat biking, birding, and stargazing are also growing in popularity year-round because of the vast natural resources of the area. If you're looking for dark skies, this is the place. In fact, Rangeley is currently in the process of getting an official "dark night sky" designation from the International Dark-Sky Association.

Local organizations, such as the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, High Peaks Alliance, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, and Maine A.T. Land Trust work continuously to protect land and create trails for public use in the area. More than 10,000 acres have been protected over the years to ensure that the Rangeley region maintains its unique character.

Seven miles from downtown Rangeley is the quaint village of Oquossoc in between Rangeley and the Mooselookmeguntic Lake. Not far from Oquossoc is an iconic Maine



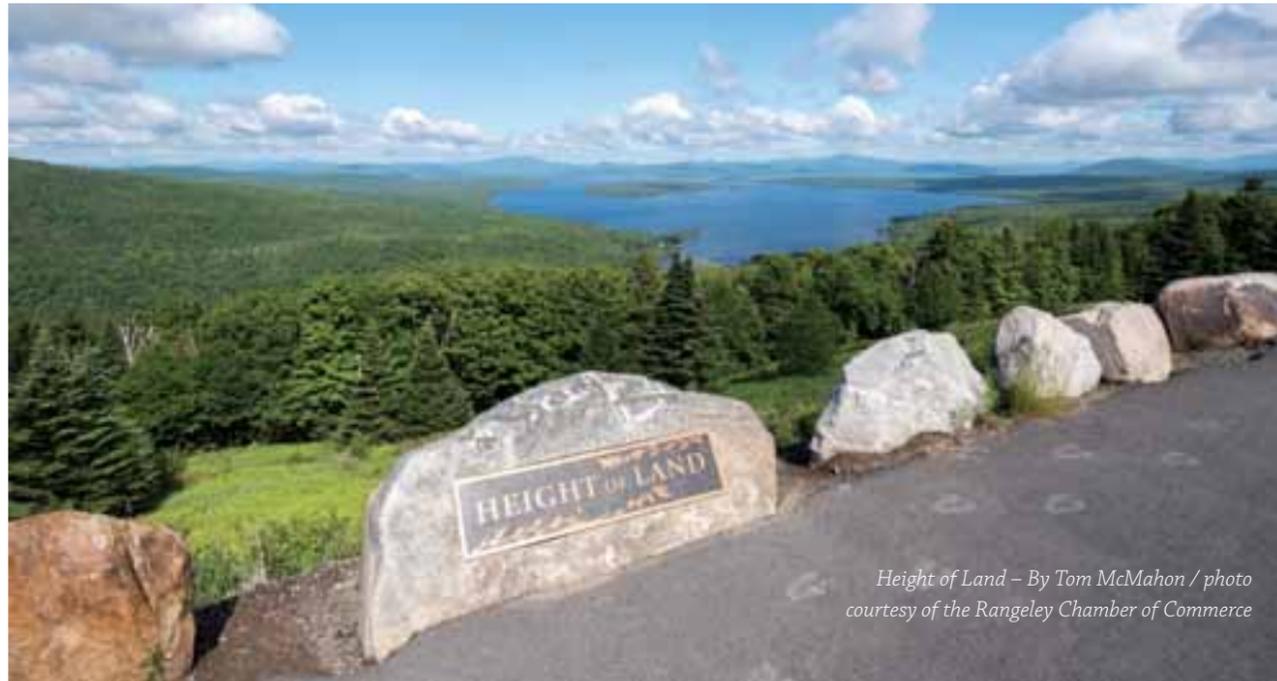
*From left: Milky Way over blooming lupines in the Saddleback Ski Area – By Kyle Haley; Piazza Rock – By Laurri Dienier/ photos courtesy of the Rangeley Chamber of Commerce*

overlook — Height of Land — where the A.T. crosses again in this incredibly scenic stretch of the Trail. No matter what your taste, Rangeley is a beautiful recreation destination that will keep you active and entertained for your entire visit.

### WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN AND AROUND RANGELEY

#### HIKE THE TRAIL

Take a vigorous (but not difficult) hike along the 13-mile stretch of the A.T. between trailheads on Routes 17 and 4. Or, if you're not up for an all-day hike, follow the Trail from the Route 4 trailhead, north to **Piazza Rock**. This popular, moderate hike is a nice introduction to the outdoors



*Height of Land – By Tom McMahon / photo courtesy of the Rangeley Chamber of Commerce*

and a good all-day outing for families and children. Everyone will be awed by the Piazza (covered porch) Rock — a giant slab of granite perched to provide shelter and be scrambled upon. Further exploring brings you to a series of caving trails that may cool you down with their summer ice storage. The Trailhead is located south on Route 4 approximately nine miles from downtown Rangeley. This section of the Appalachian Trail is 1.8 miles one way. There are a few steep ascents and descents aided by rock or wooden steps.

### TAKE IN THE TOWN

Visit the library in a historic stone building or take in any one of the four museums displaying our diverse history of trout fishing, logging, and science. **Moose Alley Rock, Roll and Bowl** provides great live music, a bowling, arcade and table games. And the **Lakeside Theater** hosts first-run movies and live performances.

Rangeley recently celebrated its **Eighth Annual Trail Town Festival**, held on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Exhibits displaying information about the A.T. and the lands surrounding it are manned by people who are happy to educate you and maybe teach you a trick or two if you get lost in the woods, like using a bottle cap or an acorn for a whistle. Several games with an A.T. theme can be enjoyed by everyone. This year's event featured a corn hole game with Katahdin and Springer as the goal. Live music, food, vendors selling hand-crafted items, and our popular ice-cream eating contest all make for a day of fun for everyone.

Other festivals include: the annual **Logging Parade and Festival** in July where a live outdoor concert is hosted by the Rangeley Region Health and Wellness Center (past performers include Foreigner, Clint Black, The Steve Miller Band, The Beach Boys, and Credence Clearwater Revisited), **Art in the Park** — with local artists and craftsman — and the **Maine Outdoor Film Festival** in August. And the Range-

ley **Friends of the Arts** have a full calendar of summer events including live performances, movies, concerts, art shows, and the annual street dance.

### SATIATE YOUR HIGH PEAKS HUNGER

With 22 restaurants to choose from, including fine dining, a sports pub, pizza joint, and bistro, Rangeley offers a variety of food styles that will satisfy all tastes and budgets. New to the area's epicurean scene are the **Portage Tap House** on the Carry Road in Oquossoc, which offers several craft brews from Maine and oven fired pizza, and **Parkside and Main**, where you can enjoy your meal on their outside deck with a lake view. And the **Loon Lodge**, an old inn and restaurant with a beautiful stone fireplace and pub, offers fine dining with a view of Rangeley Lake.

### STAY A WHILE

An overnight stay in Rangeley is easily accommodated by the many rentals available with private cabins, motels, and a beautiful, newly renovated historic downtown hotel. Relax in comfort at the historic **Rangeley Inn and Tavern** or stay lakeside at the **Loon Lodge on Rangeley Lake**. Or, if you prefer to sleep outdoors, try out **Bald Mountain Camps on Mooselookmeguntic Lake**. Whether you are looking for myriad choices for outdoor adventure or just peace and serenity, once you visit this "jewel of the western Maine mountains," you'll want to come back for more.

Find out more and plan your trip at: [WildEast.org/Rangeley](http://WildEast.org/Rangeley) and [rangeleymaine.com](http://rangeleymaine.com)

Learn more about all 48 A.T. Communities at: [appalachiantrail.org/ATcommunities](http://appalachiantrail.org/ATcommunities)



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A.T. CONNECTICUT — PHOTO BY ALLISON DIVERDE



# Give and Take

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH NATURE BY SHOWING UP

By Nicole Ager

COMING MOST RECENTLY FROM just outside of Boston, I knew next to nothing of the Appalachian Trail. I had no idea how far it was, just how many states it covered, or where it started and ended. But then I moved to Rabun County, Georgia, the very northern point of north Georgia, and the Appalachian Trail is now 11.5 miles from my back door. On Labor Day weekend last year, my husband and I hiked up to Siler Bald. It was a beautiful crisp morning — a perfectly magical day to set foot on the Trail for the first time. We made our

way through the woods and the mist, following our first white blazes higher up the mountain. Greeted with spectacular views from the bald, I fell in love with the idea of seeing more of these blazes and views. As if he was placed there for a reason, when we were heading back to our car, we met a 63-year-old thru-hiker who was 11 days away from finishing his hike. I remember thinking to myself, “What an amazing thing to accomplish... but I don’t think I could ever do it.”

Fast forward to this past school year

at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, where I work as a chemistry teacher. We had the honor of hearing from Jennifer Pharr Davis, hiker, author, speaker, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, and founder and owner of Blue Ridge Hiking Company, who spoke to our students, faculty, and staff about how she found the Trail right out of college, and from that, a purpose in life. At that moment, I realized that this amazing trail didn’t have to be foreign to me; it didn’t have to be done in one hike, nor was there a “right” way to hike it. I finally decided that I would spend the next part of my life section hiking the A.T., however long that would take.

I also realized, though, that I can’t just hike the Trail and enjoy everything about it without giving back to it — the world does not work that way. You have to give so that you can take away meaningful and beautiful experiences. When I was searching for ways to volunteer to help the Trail, I found a Wild East Women’s Work Day on the local REI events page, with a description that read: “This event is suitable for women of all ages with the ability to hike two miles carrying 15 pounds. All training and tools will be provided.” Hike a few miles, learn about taking care of the Trail, while in the company of local women who also love the Trail? Yes, please!

On yet another beautiful, crisp morning, I set foot on the A.T. again. Among those who met in the parking lot that morning were some of the lovely women of the Nantahala Hiking Club, who work on their section of the Trail every Wednesday: Katie Currier, from Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS); Julie Judkins, from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC); and Janae Scott from REI. Boy, did I luck out and learn so much from this group of women. Just in the first 100 feet on the Trail, I learned the purpose of water bars and how to take care of them, the basics of how to protect the A.T., and so much more.

One of the jobs we completed was protecting part of the Trail. We cleared away some of the earth on the upside of the path so that we could move the Trail back to its correct spot, and then put

Enjoying a lunch break during the Wild East Women’s Work Day (author is standing at right)



## ATC Holiday Celebration Sat. DEC. 7, 2019 / 9 am — 5 pm

Join us for warm drinks, snacks, and a special book signing by thru-hiker and author of the recently released memoir, *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker*, Derick Lugo



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### SAVE THE DATE! PLANS ARE UNDERWAY FOR THE FIRST A.T. VISTA TO BE HELD AUGUST 6 - 9, 2021

If you enjoyed previous ATC Biennial programs, the new A.T. Vista will continue to provide an opportunity for people who cherish the Appalachian Trail to hike, attend workshops on topics of common interest, and connect with other kindred spirits.

A.T. Vista 2021 will be a 4-day weekend event hosted by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference with engagement and participation from local A.T. communities and other nearby partners. The A.T. Vista is THE recognized program forum for activity on and near the A.T.

VISIT: [ATVISTA.ORG](http://ATVISTA.ORG) AND [ATVISTA2021.ORG](http://ATVISTA2021.ORG) FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO GET INVOLVED AS THE A.T. VISTA PROGRAM UNFOLDS. OR EMAIL: [ATVISTAINFO@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ATVISTAINFO@GMAIL.COM)

I realized that this amazing trail didn't have to be foreign to me; it didn't have to be done in one hike, nor was there a "right" way to hike it.

many ways someone could mix their passion for the outdoors with a communications, business, or education degree, among others.

On a day I was supposed to be there as a volunteer and steward to give back, I ended up still receiving so much by just showing up and being willing to participate. I learned what goes into the protection and preservation the Trail, the resources and workshops the ATC and REI provide, and even received some delicious snacks and cool swag from REI. I acquired a new appreciation for the Trail and nature from women of all ages and backgrounds as I worked alongside them and ate lunch with them.

Looking to the future, in just a few short weeks, I will be taking to the Trail again with a group of high school students in tow. Under the trees, we will get to build a relationship with one another and with nature, and hopefully I can spread my appreciation of trails with them. I also hope that they will get a sense of belonging in the vast world around them, and in the long-term, understand the importance of giving back in some way to allow for others in years to come to receive the same gifts.

sticks where we didn't want people to continue to walk. While doing this, I had to take a moment to laugh inside because I never would have thought that was what the sticks were there for, and I probably would have thought myself a good person for picking them up so dogs wouldn't hurt their paws on them. I knew about Leave No Trace, and I do have common sense, but I grew up away from hiking and away from having to

think deeply about how to protect and build trails.

Between cleaning out the water bars, cutting down trees across the Trail, and cutting back some brush, all of us got to talk, laugh, and bond. I learned about the amazing variety of jobs the women around me had related to the A.T. — from director of outreach and education to outdoor programs and outreach market coordinator — and the



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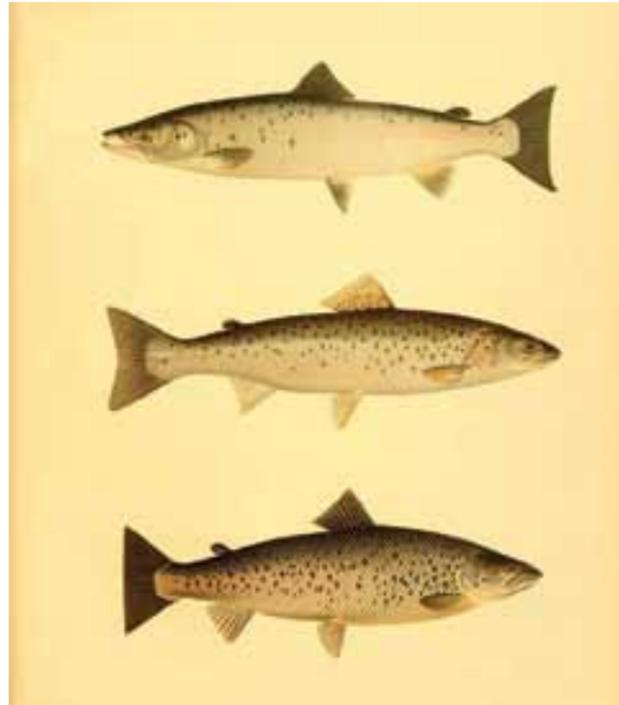


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Photo by Steven Yocom

# INDIGENOUS

## HABITAT / ECOSYSTEM / CONSERVATION



Atlantic salmon was historically reduced to extremely low levels primarily by overfishing and dam construction

Exposure to artificial lighting interferes with the light/dark cycles to which many species have evolved, and can disrupt or alter aspects of migration, navigation, matting, feeding, and predation for a wide variety of wildlife.

### ATLANTIC SALMON *SALMO SALAR*

By Marian Orlousky

MAINE IS HOME TO THE only remaining populations of wild and naturally reproducing Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in the United States. Referred to as the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic Salmon, this species has been listed as federally endangered across much of the state since 2000.

The Atlantic salmon is an anadromous fish species. Young are reared from eggs laid by their

parents in fresh water streams and rivers. The young grow through the stages of alevins, fry, parr and smolt, at which point they make their way to the ocean where they will mature into adults. After several years spent at sea, the cycle continues with adults returning to spawn in the native freshwaters of their origin.

The Atlantic salmon was historically reduced to extremely low levels primarily by overfishing

and dam construction. Recovery of populations is now most heavily influenced by the availability of high-quality habitat. Suitable habitat is dependent on cool, clean, and well-oxygenated water; a diversity of stream substrates offering adequate forage and protection during different life stages; and a lack of physical barriers — such as dams and raised culverts — that prevent adult migration to critical upstream habitat.

Light pollution is an additional factor influencing Atlantic salmon and the health of fisheries in general. Exposure to artificial lighting interferes with the light/dark cycles to which many species have evolved, and can disrupt or alter aspects of migration, navigation, mating, feeding, and predation for a wide variety of wildlife. Rates of predation of

young and juvenile fish have been demonstrated to increase under artificial light conditions. Aquatic macroinvertebrates, one of the most important food sources for fish and aquatic vertebrates, shift their feeding behavior and decrease their movement in the water column when exposed to artificial light. These submerged larvae behave as they would

while crossing one of these streams, the odds are improving. Work has been ongoing over the last twenty years to restore Atlantic salmon to the Kennebec and Penobscot river systems, tributaries intersected by the A.T. at the Sandy, Carrabassett, Piscataquis, and Pleasant rivers. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy just recently embarked on a

In helping to protect dark skies and forested habitats, the Appalachian Trail is also helping to safeguard high-quality aquatic systems.

during a full moon, staying put in order to avoid predators. This altered behavior leads to less turn-over of nutrients in aquatic systems, fewer emerging adult insects and lower availability of food for aquatic vertebrates. In helping to protect dark skies and forested habitats, the Appalachian Trail is also helping to safeguard high-quality aquatic systems.

The Appalachian Trail crosses about 1,700 streams and 100 rivers from Georgia to Maine. Though today's visitors to the A.T. are still unlikely to encounter Atlantic salmon

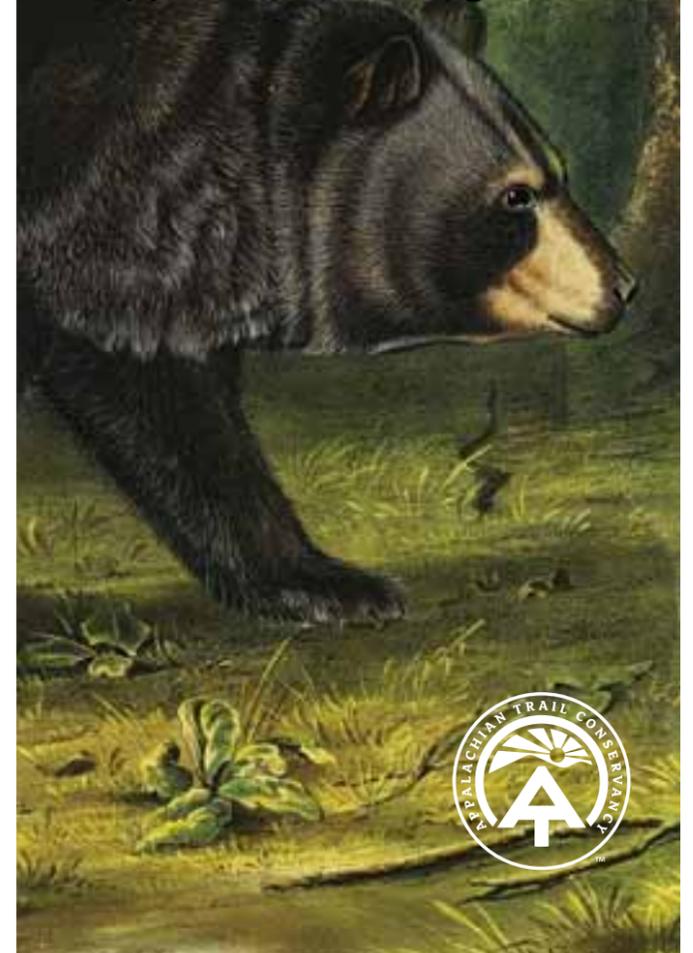
new partner project to remove barriers to fish passage along the Henderson Brook in the venerable 100-Mile Wilderness. With the removal of a final hanging culvert in the A.T. corridor, 3.4 miles of the brook already restored by the Appalachian Mountain Club will be re-opened, offering viable habitat that has the capacity to support nearly 1,000 juvenile salmon. Like a thru-hike, the path to salmon recovery in Maine will be long and arduous, but with each step we are a bit closer to realizing that goal.

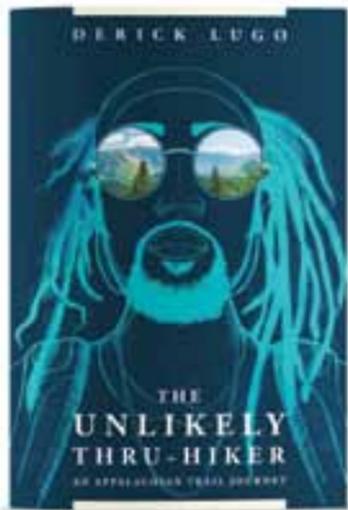


### BEAR CANISTERS AND BLACK BEAR AWARENESS

Due to an increasing number of serious human/bear interactions at many locations along the A.T., the Appalachian Trail Conservancy continues to strongly recommend use of a bear canister by everyone staying overnight on the A.T.

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





## Fresh Impressions

TWO A.T. THRU-HIKERS TAKE THEIR INSPIRATION FROM THE TRAIL TO THE NEXT LEVEL THROUGH WRITING AND ART.

In his newly-released debut memoir, *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker*, Derick Lugo, provides a refreshing new perspective to taking on a long trek on the Appalachian Trail. He tells the story of a young, black New Yorker who, when becoming temporarily jobless, grasped what was possibly a “this can only happen now” opportunity to use some free time to experience something that beckoned him intriguingly beyond his comfort zone. So the Brooklyn-born urbanite took a train, then a cab to the Springer Mountain in Georgia and began to put one foot in front of the other. “At first, I was still trying to figure the Trail out and making mistakes that a seasoned hiker would never make. Everything was a wonder to me, from the grandest views to the privies at shelters,” he says. His good humor and ability to accentuate the positive, not to mention his need to stay well-groomed, carried him through (and led to his adopted Trail name: “Mr. Fabulous”).

While he fully admits he did not technically or properly prepare, Derick wants people to know that anyone can follow their curiosity,

not to thru-hike, but to experience a new and inspiring adventure outdoors. “I was just telling my story. I would have to say that the little Derick playing kick ball in the streets of NYC, or Philadelphia, or any urban kid that has never heard of the A.T. before, should try to experience the wonders of the outdoors,” he says. “When I think back at little Derick and his curiosity, I know he would have loved to hike and camp and just take in nature. It saddens me that he missed that, yet I now have the voice to help spread the word of this amazing Trail and maybe help lessen the number of unlikely hikers out there.”

His story seems to also appeal universally. “I get messages from people who have read the book and some reveal that they were not sure if they were going to relate to a hiking book because they are not hikers or outdoorsy people, but after reading it, they were inspired and enjoyed the stories,” he says. “The A.T. is the stage in this act, readers will obviously get that and hopefully want to experience it’s wonders as well, but I mainly want people to see that *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker* is more than just a hiking story; it’s a story of relationships, of stepping out of your comfort zone and of achieving what may seem unachievable by yourself and others.”

He does have some advice though for ambitious dreamers who may want to tackle the entire Trail. “I would say to be smart. Don’t start your first ever hike as a thru-hiker. Luckily, I learned that I actually loved hiking on my thru-hike,” he says. “Not ideal; and it could have backfired. Start with way smaller hikes, learn the way of hiking and camping. It can be more enjoyable if you gradually work up your miles.” And as far as advice and his overall take on his experience, he explains, “I’ve always been a people person, but now I am much more open, patient and giving with others and with strangers.”

“Since my thru-hike, I discovered that I live only 45 minutes to an hour away from the Appalachian Trail (Bear Mountain / Harri-man State Park) and I’m out there as much as possible,” he says. “My NYC friends, who have never or rarely hiked and thought I was bonkers for attempting a thru-hike, now join me on my hikes.”

## ART ON THE MOVE

Rebecca Harnish set out on her thru-hike with the lofty plan to document her hike by packing watercolor paints and paper to fit in her backpack’s shoulder pocket. The result is her whimsical postcards depicting some personal highlights – and iconic mile-markers — of her hike. “While planning my mini art kit — debating over the colors for my palette, deciding on tools, cutting watercolor paper to fit in my backpack’s shoulder pocket

— I daydreamed about plucking it out whenever a mountainous view or interesting plant struck me with inspiration,” she says. “While I found out that most of my hike was not ideal for creating art,

all of it was perfect in the context of the Trail. For all of its natural splendor, it tests every kind of endurance; it’s dirty, sweaty, painful, full of imperfect moments of despair, but also full of wonderful people to laugh about them with. As an anxious perfectionist, both my hike and attempt to paint along the whole Trail was a lesson in embracing the imperfect.” Her postcards capture it all: The beautiful, the ugly, the fun, and silliness of Trail culture. The result is a series of artwork she created in postcard format. “After all,” she says, “sending someone a postcard about sink laundry says a lot about your life on the Trail.”

Both of these new items are available at the Ultimate A.T. Store: [atctrailstore.org/new](http://atctrailstore.org/new)



## IN HONOR OF

Jackie Barrett by Woman’s Club of Manassas  
Mary Bedford by Mary Owens  
Richard Bennett by Duane Sonneborn  
David Beuning by Cassandra Koskela  
Diana Body & Bill Gibson by Sara Morris-Marano  
Kai Carlin by Joseph Carlin  
Mike Carlin by Krista Carlin  
Steve “Mustard Seed” Claxton by Mike Claxton  
Dead Letter Officers! By Mike Emery  
Edward Dettenmayer by Bonnie Riehl  
David Dorsch by Susan Dorsch  
Martin Fay by Mary Wood  
Jonathan Ferrell by Tena Ellis  
Doug & Donna Fish by Kenneth Fish  
Beth Friend by Laura Winholt  
Harrison Gill by Sally Hunt  
John Gray by Madison Akins  
Jeffrey Hardy by Joseph Hardy  
John Hopwood by Sara Feldman  
Fred Hulls by Amanda York  
Jim Hunsberger by Elizabeth Thompson  
Nancy & Bill Jacobs by Kerri McCarthy  
James Jenko by Judith Petrush  
Terry Kammer by Steven Tonkinson  
Hunter Lupton by Edward & Camille Krolikowski  
John Moore by Cindy Stokes  
Scott & Jenna Neubauer by Anne Hubbard  
Patrice “Storm” Nora by Carlin Guarneri  
Russell Page by Elizabeth Page  
Virginia Pendleton & Scott Labott by Elisabeth Larson  
Jim Preston by Martha Preston  
Gray Pruitt by Brude Stoever  
Jessica Pu & Baker Bokorney by Michelle Ameen, Michael Conway, Ann Fern  
Emma Rosenfield by Barbara Rosenfield  
Lucy Sabian by Gabrielle Fastman  
Emily & Colin Sechler by Alanna Higgins  
Paul & Ricki Selva by Joe & Karen Coan, Rick & Sarah Entsminger  
Beth Sersig by Anna Brandt  
Stuart Smith by Rosemary Smith  
Tara Spear by Kayleigh Archbold  
Lew Summers by Rachel Simon  
Bill Swofford by Jenny McNeese  
Elizabeth “Betsy” Thompson by Sarah Best  
Joan Tomlinson by Ann McMahon  
Blake & Holly Whitson by Kevin Baumann, Tiffany Cummings, Ross Kucsera, Joshua Wall, Leslie Wall

## IN MEMORY OF

Kevin Austin by Mona Czupak  
Elna Bachman by Vance Bachman  
George Batten by Jeanette Young  
Ian Bell by Danielle Tracey  
Arthur Burke by Linda Garr  
James Byrd by Juliette Apkarian  
Jack Carlic by Elizabeth Look  
Drew Chapman by Jeffery Smith  
Winston Chapman by Sara Eades  
Richard Clark by Ruth Clark  
Corrent, Sister by Lillian Buchanan  
Kathie Day by Kathleen Peeples Ballou, Bellmere Garden Club, Eric Ensor,



Sandy Evans, Georgia Iris Society, Joan Goodhew, David & Joanna Kenney, Robin Lawhorn, Jeff & Karen Lewis, Deanna & Don McFarlan, Carson Pease, Laura Rigney, Teri Rogers, Andee Skinner, Carloyn Stout, Leigh Anne Strawn, Allison Tyler, Beth Wielage, Joy & Jim Zaidan  
Tobias “Toby” Engel by Moira McCloskey  
Thomas Foulkes by Sky Foulkes  
Bradley Frietas by Daniel & Quaye Frietas  
Daniel “Danimal” Gerstner by Thomas & Catherine Becker, Cindy Bendroth, Catherine Roden, Heidi Satz, Leslie & Kayla Siegel  
Gen Granderson by Vincent & Deneen Carson, Alan & Dana Gruber  
Michael Greevy, Ph.D. by Roger Barrick, Horace Brown, James & Ann Butler, Nicole Greevy, Peggy Guthrie, Scott Ishman, Allyn Mancuso, Forrest Mark, Stephen Shelley, Terry Shoemaker, John & Ann Shumaker, Anna Marie Sossong, Donald & Julieanne Steinbacher, The Law Office of Sillicker &

Reinhold, C. Roy & Susan Weidner, Lennie & Michael Zug  
Robert Hanson by Dwight Lee  
Joey Hopkins by Robin Hangartner  
Fredic Hulls by Arun Abraham, Sergio Llopis  
Carl Jackson by Jenny Negin  
James “Jim” Jenko by Wes & Sandra Carnahan, Linda Couvillion, Angela Eagle, Herb Gearhard, Elizabeth Healy, Betsy Linhart, Howard Weigold  
Wes Kanoy by John Hunnicutt  
Kenneth Kerr by Rebecca Doyle  
Al “Kato” Kisarewich by Peter Hirst  
Milton Larsen by Thomas & Gayle Delzer  
Kenneth Lefkowitz by Judith Kuria  
Carlette Lewis by Carl Morrison  
Jonathon “Jocko” Magro by William & Ann Chatfield  
Christopher Mariotti by Elettra Mariotti  
Paula Meissner by Lillian Buchanan  
Stephen Milewski by Crofton Middle School  
John “Butch” O’Meara by Beverly O’Meara  
Jane Quagliarello by Jeff Humphry  
Meredith Cushman Ransohoff by

*A.T. Sunset and moonrise – By John Cammerota*

Jane Johnston  
Charles “Branches” Rozier by Andrea Allison, Earl Atkins, David & Jennifer Barnett, Elizabeth & Lovell Barnett, Marjorie & Gregory Cundiff, William & Dorothy Dooley, Mimi Eanes, The Galloways & Amstutz, Clifton & Lynne Harris, Wayne & Annette Hickman, Marian & Daniel Hudson, Dale & Angela Israel, Dawn Moses, Marilyn Perdue, Thomas & Fay Poulin, Larry & Gene Sherwood, Donald & Marcella Shirley, Doris Short, Thomas & Marian Stone, Ginger Vail, Donna Wilson  
Ronald “Stronghold” Sachez by Kathy Coleman, Jeffrey Loomis, Keara Watson  
Allan Teot by Evelyn Teot  
K. Martin Water IV by Foundation for the Carolinas  
Jonathan Watkins by Rebecca Hooper  
C. Roy Woodruff by Luth & Judy Mauney



AS I LAY ON THE COOL, SMOOTH ROCK AT THE peak of one of Georgia's highest mountains on the Appalachian Trail, I was mesmerized by the clear night sky and abundance of shooting stars. It was hiker's midnight and my crew and I were stargazing, learning about the galaxy extending above us. I felt incredible comfort and appreciation knowing that I could access this natural gift just a few hours away from my home in the city.

I spent three days backpacking with an astronomer, a filmmaker, and a group of my closest friends on the Appalachian Trail in north Georgia. Since working with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), I have been provided so many unique opportunities like this one. My friends and I all live in Atlanta, so stargazing is not an opportunity we engage in often. Two of my friends have never even backpacked before, so sharing this moment and experience with them was invaluable.

When I first began hiking, seeing someone who looked like me on the trails was rare. This is why I, along with Adriana Garcia, started an inclusive community called LatinXhikers. The goal of LatinXhikers is to encourage and welcome those who look like us to feel like they too belong in outdoor spaces. We also wanted our forum to be a safe space for the representation of different body types, different skin tones, and different lifestyles that are not seen on marketing campaigns from mainstream outdoor retailers. Additionally, LatinXhikers was started to make others aware that they can have access to outdoor recreation, no matter where they live.

As a first-generation American and the daughter of Ecuadorian immigrants, the way I was raised is completely different than how my family was raised. My family viewed the outdoors as livelihood; it was survival, it was work, it was everything. Being born in New York

*From left: Luz with friends Liz Maldonado and Paola Rodriguez at Blood Mountain shelter — where they prepped for a chilly stargazing night — after a day of hiking along the north Georgia mountains. By Chris Gallaway/Horizonline Pictures*

City meant that I led a sheltered early life with minimal green space. I was raised indoors, unable to enjoy a backyard with trees, waterfalls, or opportunities for stargazing. It wasn't until my college years that I started to enjoy the outdoors. I moved to Georgia and I learned about the Appalachian Mountains but I didn't know until I grew older that there was also a trail that spanned from Georgia to Maine. In my position at ATC, as Latinx partnership coordinator, I get inspired every day by the stories I hear of the culture, wonderful people others have met, and invaluable experiences hikers have had on the Trail. These stories give me hope that community culture is possible and can flourish in our individualistic society. My dream for the future is for all people to feel like they are welcomed in spaces like the A.T. without hesitation and begin to feel part of the community that already exists.

We host hiking meetups around the metro-Atlanta area and have recently ventured into hosting opportunities in other states as well. Many people who join our meetups express how they are uncomfortable exploring the outdoors alone or feel deterred because of their lack of knowledge of opportunities. We are finding that hosting events and creating a community that provides these opportunities is something that so many hikers are seeking — beginners and novices alike. Ultimately, we want to inspire. If we can inspire a single person to go to their local trail or hike up a mountain just once, our purpose is served.

*By Luz Lituma*

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