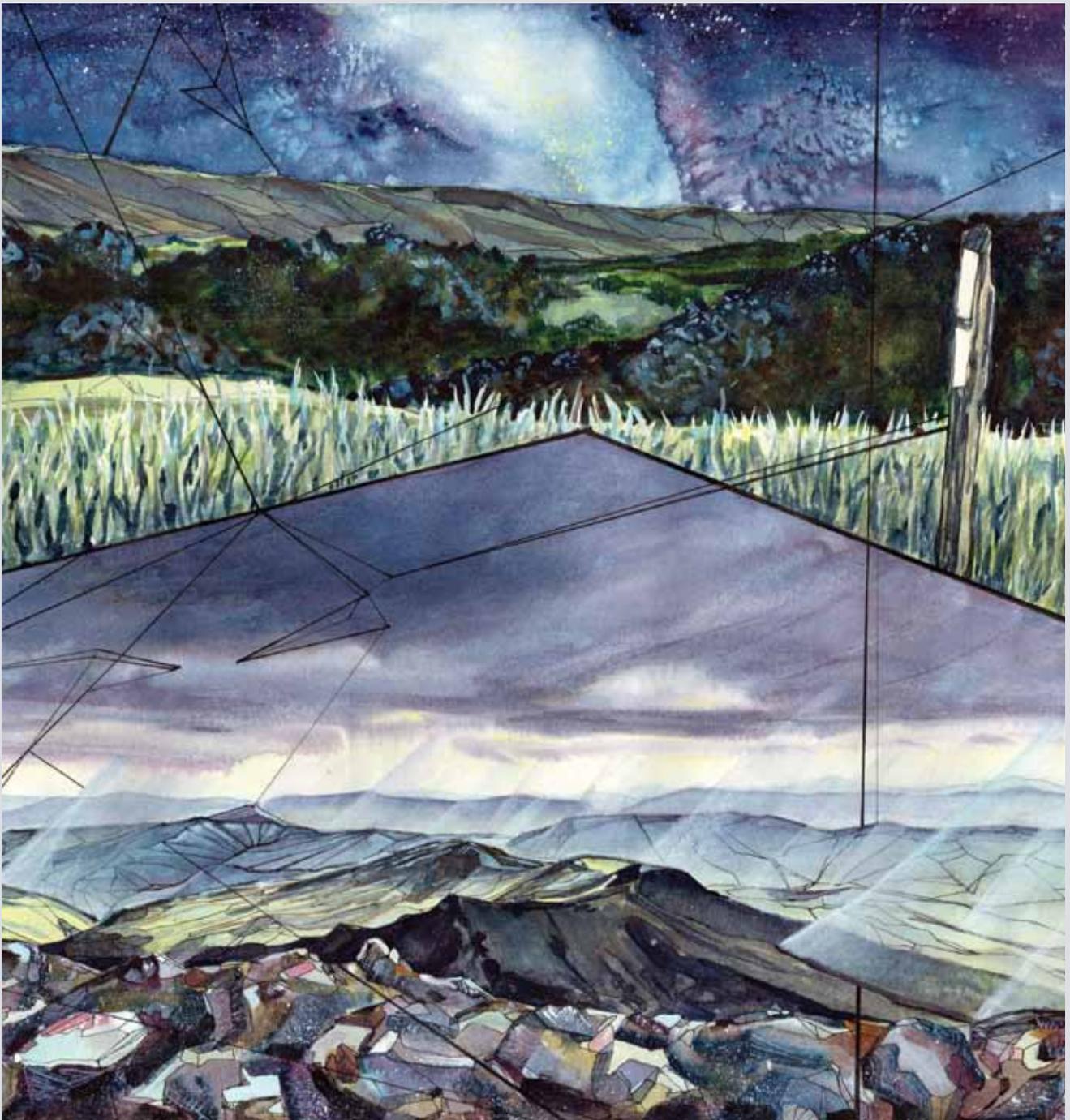
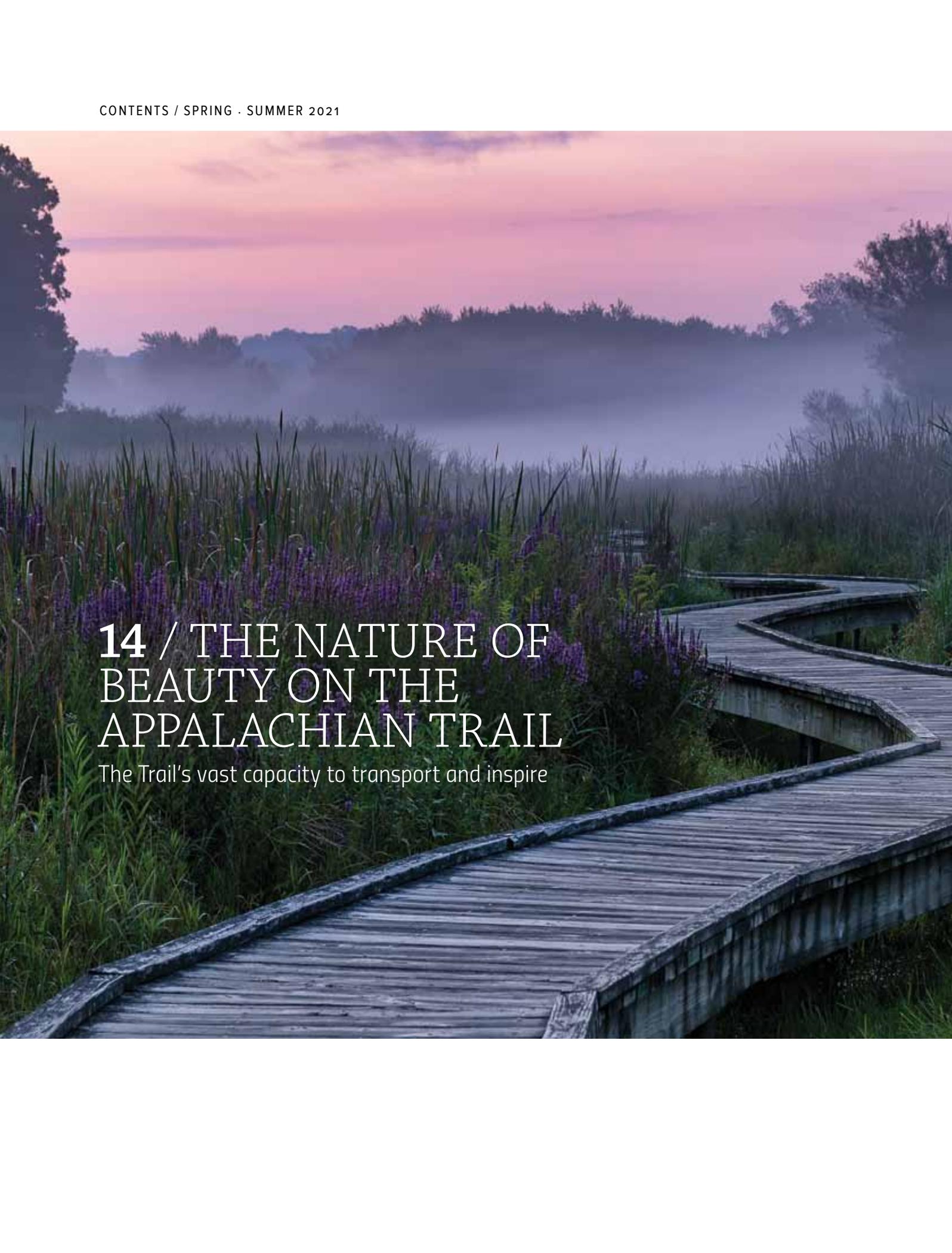


A JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / SPRING · SUMMER 2021

— TRAIL AS MUSE —





14 / THE NATURE OF BEAUTY ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

The Trail's vast capacity to transport and inspire



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The inspired work of twelve contemporary artists

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By Jacob Bryant

ON THE COVER

"Time and Space" – By Nika Meyers
A dance through fields and across rocks.
Inspired by the wild weather along the ridgelines
in the White Mountains of New Hampshire
combined with the deep peace of walking
under the night sky in southern Virginia.
– Watercolor, Gouache, and Ink on Paper

A JOURNEYS

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Home is Where Your Boots Are

There's no better place to savor this summer
than on the trail, together.

#BeanOutsider



Sarah Jones Decker

Sarah Jones Decker lives on her family farm outside of Hot Springs, North Carolina and is a trail maintainer for the Carolina Mountain Club. She thru-hiked the A.T. in 2008 and again in sections in 2018-2019, for her book *The Appalachian Trail: Backcountry Shelters, Lean-tos and Huts*, documenting every shelter on the Trail. Her new book, coming out this summer, *The Ridges of Madison County*, explores local trails and one of her favorite sections of the A.T. that runs the border of her county – Max Patch to Big Bald. The Trail has influenced her creative work for over twenty years, starting back in high school when she would hike up to Bears Den to watch the sunset and practice photography after class. “As an artist, and hiker living near the Trail, it is an honor to enjoy the places that George Masa (page 24) and so many before him, helped to preserve for us and future generations,” she says. “Thankfully, my camera and tripod only weigh a few extra pounds on day hikes.”



Nika Meyers

Wild and rugged landscapes have become more of a home than any space with four walls to Bridgewater, Vermont native and artist Nika “Early Bird” Meyers. “Moving at a three-mile-an-hour pace is where I find the most peace,” she says. “To walk among the wild things, to take time to really see and not just look, and to create pieces that celebrate raw beauty are part of who I am. Imagination, curiosity, migrations, physical and mental challenge, wild places, trails, and the interconnectedness of this world inspire me to dream big.”

Nika currently lives in Colorado, where, in addition to creating paintings, she is an environmental educator and Nordic ski coach. “When I think of the Trail experience, one of the first things I think about are the tracks that are made in sand, mud, or snow,” she says. “They are representative of friends and other hikers ahead – our human animal tracks. The little triangles that my walking shoes leave behind are embedded in my Trail memories. They find their way into my paintings.” (page 38)



Marina Richie

Nature writer Marina Richie is happiest on trails leading away from the noise of cars and into the symphonies of bird song. She says that to write about the nature of beauty on the Appalachian Trail (page 14) felt like an “invitation to delve more deeply into joy.” “On every trail near my home, I strived to be as sensory as possible, asking myself: What glimmers? What draws me in? I began to notice a rhythm that would become the theme for the essay,” she says. To apply the question to the A.T., she turned to her journals and quizzed former A.T. thru-hikers Renee Patrick and Liz Thomas. Residing in Bend, Oregon, Marina’s ties to the Trail run deep as the daughter of Dave Richie (the first A.T. project manager for the National Park Service). She is a frequent feature contributor to *A.T. Journeys* and recently published the article “Big Bald Banding Station Releases Hope into the World” for *BirdWatching*.



Jenny Siegfried

From the very first footprint she made on the Appalachian Trail, Jenny Siegfried knew her life had profoundly shifted. “I was a total city girl, and yet there I was, hiking along the A.T. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as a new member of the ATC’s Rocky Top Trail Crew,” she says. “Looking out on the mountain peaks at sunrise and gazing at the Milky Way every night was deeply transformative; I was growing into myself more fully with every deep breath of mountain air.” Since that trip, the trails and mountains have become her favorite place to find a moment of calm and inspiration. “Painting and sketching on the Trail forces me to slow down and pause, to watch the light shift and the colors change,” she says. (page 60)

Jenny is a visual arts teacher in New York City for students diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Her favorite small artists fill every day with creativity and joy. “When the school day is over, I love to run in Prospect Park or hike in the Hudson Valley,” she says. “Always with my mini-paint set and sketchbook in my pocket.”

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ATC 2,000-MILER RECOGNITION

At the beginning of 2020, none of us knew how much would soon be taken from us. To date, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken more than three million lives worldwide – over half a million in the United States alone. Consulting with the Trail's land management partners, clubs, communities, and hikers, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) made the difficult call to aspiring thru-hikers to postpone thru-hikes until conditions improve. The unique nature of thru-hiking the A.T. – traveling through dozens of towns, shuttling to and from resupply points, and the "bubble" of hundreds of northbound hikers – fell under categories the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlighted as risks for spreading COVID-19.

To avoid incentivizing long-distance A.T. hikes during the pandemic, we paused our 2,000-miler recognition program.

Thankfully, things have improved over the first half of 2021. Widespread vaccine availability is now a reality throughout the United States. The CDC announced that activities like long-distance hiking are now a lower risk of spreading the virus. In light of these successes, the ATC reinstated its 2,000-miler recognition program on May 11, 2021.

The past year required significant sacrifices both within and outside the Trail community of volunteers, supporters, and hikers. Some delayed lifelong plans and aspirations – including A.T. thru-hike attempts – to better ensure they were at a lower risk of spreading COVID-19. We thank everyone who took, and continues to take, steps to help combat this pandemic. We look forward to once again celebrating A.T. 2,000-milers in the future.



For more information on current ATC guidance and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Trail visit: appalachiantrail.org/covid-19



“Walking the Range” – White Mountains, New Hampshire – By Rebecca M. Fullerton

THE ART OF THE TRAIL

I AM NOT AN ARTIST. AT LEAST not in the sense of the artists we are presenting in this incredibly beautiful issue. I have always wished I had the skill, talent, and gift to put pen or paint to paper and render a visual record of what I see before me.

This is not to say that I do not artistically express myself. My cooking has been described as artful; and I have at least a modicum of talent in stringing words together so that they sometimes go beyond sharing information to eliciting an emotional reaction from the reader. But possessing true artistic talent, such as Rebecca Harnish, Mike Wurman, and George Rue who create art through paint, pen, and photography, is a skill that will not be mentioned in my epitaph.

And yet, as I have worked and walked along the Appalachian Trail, I have sometimes felt I have not only observed, but contributed, to the art of the Trail. I was particularly struck by this idea recently as I was doing boundary work along the section of Trail that my husband Chris and I maintain. Boundary work is so very different from hiking. There is no clear path and the jumbles of fallen trees and briar bushes require you to slow down, observe, and evaluate before taking each step. The light from the sun is different in these untraveled woods. With boundary

work, it is through this wilder piece of the Trail that we come through, not to clear down to tread, but to cut away distractions and blockages from the sight line we are following. Pink ribbons and yellow slashes of paint interrupt nature to show the protective edge to the resource for which we are responsible.

I see the art of this place — both in its natural state and through the impact I have on it with my work. This is a form of art that almost all hikers will never see; but I know it is there and it is part of what makes the Appalachian Trail.

I also like to think that our very presence in a place is a part of the art of the place. The artist is always a part of the image they have rendered — just behind our shoulder as we look at the landscape in front of us. We talk about the Trail as being the muse to the art presented here. The work that we do to protect and preserve the Trail is our artform. It is also necessary to ensure that the inspiration for art that the Trail provides will be there well after our brush strokes have faded away.

Sandra Marra / *President & CEO*



A.T. VISTA INAUGURAL 2021 HIKES IN 14 STATES – BE A PART OF THE HISTORY! AUGUST 7–8, 2021

The planning for the 2021 and 2022 A.T. Vista program is underway.

The 2021 Virtual Program, A.T. Vista – Celebrating 100 Years

As we continue to honor the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," the 2021 A.T. Vista program will be conducted virtually with dispersed local hiking opportunities along the Appalachian Trail and other nearby trails.

A target of at least 100 hikes is in the process of being planned across the 14 states of the Appalachian Trail for Saturday, August 7 and Sunday, August 8, 2021.

The 2021 virtual program will be a 2-day event.

A general schedule is below (details are still in process):

■ Saturday, August 7 and Sunday, August 8 from 8AM to 5PM:

Local hikes to be conducted along the Appalachian Trail (and other trails).

Online workshops may be available for viewing.

■ Sunday, August 8 Evening (check the A.T. Vista website for the posted time)

Pictures and videos from these hikes will be uploaded and shared through social media so that others can experience them virtually.

2022 A.T. Vista – State University New York (SUNY) New Paltz, New York – August 5–8

In 2022, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference will host the in-person program offering hiking, learning, and excursion opportunities to explore the areas nearby as we have traditionally done in the former Biennial programs.

We want the inaugural A.T. Vista to be memorable. This alternative two-year program will allow us to maintain the momentum so that we can continue to share in the great camaraderie of the kindred spirits who cherish the Appalachian Trail.

We are seeking hiking leaders from clubs and organizations from every state along and near the Appalachian Trail. Workshops for 2021 will be pre-recorded and conducted online and will be in-person for 2022. So continue to submit your proposals with your topics to share.

If you are interested in making this a memorable and ongoing future event visit:

ATvista.org for general information or:

ATvista2021.org and **ATvista2022.org** for more details.

You'll be able to sign up online for the monthly A.T. newsletter, volunteer, or submit information for a hike or workshop. You can also email us at:

atvistainfo@gmail.com with any questions you may have.

ATVISTA.ORG

THE WINTER ISSUE OF *A.T. Journeys* arrived, and I greatly appreciate the continued emphasis on hooking young people and on increasing diversity among those who use the Trail. My three grandsons are bi-racial, and my extended family is from a diverse background as well. My grandsons are the most important people in the world to me, so everything we can do to make the world better for them matters to me.

Tom McKone
Montpelier, Vermont

THANK YOU FOR THE BEST issue ever! Usually a pleasant skim, mostly for the photographs, *A.T. Journeys* sits on my iPad until an unoccupied half hour comes my way. But the Winter issue was very different. Every article was interesting and thought-provoking. Articles that needed to be written and read. I was two hours into this issue and went back and re-read Shilletha Curtis' moving article ("Preparing for the Trail"). I hope we hear from her again, further into her hike.

Linton Holsenbeck
Hardwick, Georgia

I ENJOY READING YOUR magazine, but I do not appreciate the social engineering that has invaded your publication (Winter 2021). Thanks for listening; kind regards.

Randy Cline
Harrisonburg, Virginia

I'M AN ATC MONTHLY DONOR, thru-hiker ('05) and director of advancement at Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) in North Carolina. I absolutely loved the "Looking Forward by Looking Back" Winter 2021 issue. It is an incredibly important and timely issue that places JEDI work where it should be — right up front. Thank you!

Christine Wilson
Cary, North Carolina



THE WINTER ISSUE JUST showed up today and I can't put it down. I've been a lifetime member of the ATC for over 40 years (thanks Dad!), and this is easily the most important and timely issue I've ever read. Thank you for tackling so many challenging and thoughtful topics all at once. Let's keep talking about the difficult past so that we can build a present where the Trail feels welcoming to everyone.

Richard Thomason
Berkeley, California

IT HURT TO LEARN ABOUT Shalin Desai's experience with racism in the town where I live ("Acknowledgement" Winter 2021). While it happens everywhere, I'm so sorry it happened here. As a member of Franklin's A. T. Community Council — a group that works hard to welcome all people that the A.T. leads to us — I know there's more to do. We need to talk with our friends, family, and colleagues who don't welcome people from other places with different histories. It's hard work and it might be easier to place blame and responsibility on others and say we're already doing our best, but my hope is that this article motivates us to work a little harder to make sure everyone is welcome.

Kristina Lynn Moe,
Franklin, North Carolina

I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE the Winter issue, with articles about Native Americans and People of Color relating to the Trail. However, there is one error in the article on the American Chestnut, to "Indigenous people and European-Americans." African Americans should have been included there.

Nancy Moore
Madison, Wisconsin

GLAD TO SEE THE WOMEN recognized who helped to move the organization forward, along with the men ("We Were There, Too" Winter 2021). I started section-hiking the Trail in 1973, finishing in '85. I'm 91 now, but I remember each of those women...and still enjoy a hike, if not more than five or six miles.

Earl High
Cary, North Carolina

THE WINTER MAGAZINE, *Looking Forward by Looking Back*, was truly a wonderful read and I want to thank you, the staff, and leadership for relating the ATC to important discussions about racism that have to happen in our nation. From the President's Letter to the end, I found the issue deeply engaging. As Mills Kelly writes, "If hikers, Trail clubs, and the ATC take ownership of the entire history of the Trail's past, rather than a partial understanding...then the possibility of change becomes real." The Native Land Territories Along the A.T. map made a particularly strong impression on me as a visual guide to Indigenous territories.

Leslie Mullin
San Francisco, California

2021

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR POSITIONS ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 11, 2021

If you, or someone you know, are interested in serving on the ATC Board of Directors, we welcome your nomination. Candidates who bring professional and/or experiential knowledge in key areas, such as land trust operations, conservation and/or climate change policy advocacy and cooperative management systems, are encouraged.

For nomination details, visit:

appalachiantrail.org/board2021



Elections and certifications for open director positions will take place during the 2021 annual membership meeting, which is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to noon EDT on August 28, 2021.

Elected Board members serve staggered three-year terms, with one-third of the 17 board positions becoming open each year. A slate of nominees will be selected by our nominating committee, which is within our governance committee. This slate will then be approved by the full board and ultimately voted upon by the ATC membership.

If you, or someone you know, are interested in serving on the ATC Board of Directors, we welcome your nomination. We look at many criteria as we review all nominations for the board. A current and strategic focus is to expand board skills in the area of conservation.

Candidates who bring professional and/or experiential knowledge in key areas, such as land trust operations, conservation and/or climate change policy advocacy and cooperative management systems, are encouraged. The ATC is a complex, national non-profit and it is important that you or your nominee can demonstrate fiduciary oversight capabilities and experience of a similar scope in the non-profit or for-profit world. Strong candidates will have a passion for the Appalachian Trail and be able to articulate that passion for the A.T. and the ATC's mission. We are committed to having our leadership reflect the Trail's users and advocates,

with a broad diversity of life experiences and thoughts.

Serving on the ATC's volunteer board requires a substantial commitment of time throughout the year, including four multi-day board meetings and multiple committee assignments, which often meet monthly. Board members must be ATC members in good standing.

All nominations, including self-nominations, should include the nominee's and the nominator's name, address, telephone number, and email address, with a description of the person's relevant experience, skills and attributes with emphasis on the criteria noted above. Please submit a C.V. or resume, if available. We seriously consider every nomination and appreciate the time you invest into the nomination process. Please note that a background check will be performed on candidates prior to confirmation of the slate. The committee's slate will be announced publicly, including on the ATC website, by July 30, 2021.

Nominations are to be sent no later than June 11, 2021, using one of the following methods:

Email: boardrecommendations@appalachiantrail.org

Mail: Rubén Rosales, Chair, Nominating Committee, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425



THANK YOU FOR THE WINTER issue's focus on BIPOC hikers. I "met" Shilletha Curtis ("Preparing for the Trail"), who shared her experiences with your readers, on Facebook near the inception of her enthusiasm for hiking and her desire to hike the A.T. I told her not to worry; that most hikers, especially thru-hikers, were cool and that the only encounters with racists or homophobes would be in town ... because that was my experience. But as Shalin Desai pointed out in his excellent article ("Acknowledgement") not everyone will have the same experience when they hike. Because I (a white cisgender hetero male) didn't notice any racism or homophobia on the Trail, doesn't mean it isn't there. We like to imagine people we interact with in a positive way think similarly to us, and that they would never say the presumptuous and downright rude things that people like Shalin and Shilletha experienced — and that is a product of our privilege. We assume that allies exist everywhere when they do not. As a yearly section hiker chipping away at 100 miles of the A.T. at a time, I hope during the decades I spend hiking I will notice a profound change in not only the people who feel comfortable and welcome hiking on the Trail, but also in the attitudes and decency of those they encounter.

Daniel "Beercan" Brooks
Lithia, Florida

I CONGRATULATE ATC ON ITS work at recognizing its past (Winter 2021), which was not inviting to non-white groups and even women. Without looking at this past, the ATC can't go forward very authentically. I am so glad that the ATC is developing programs to get more people from more backgrounds out on the Trail and into nature. The more human beings love nature, the more of us will work to foster a world that preserves it. We are facing such danger from climate change. Nature needs every human's support.

Lisa Sammet
Craftsbury, Vermont

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.



Letters to the Editor
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Trail Talk

I am happy to see the ATC's latest issue of *A.T. Journeys* includes some really great writing on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) issues on the A.T.

– **Jacob Wildfire**

My daughter and I love the Ed-Venture series!

– **Charissa Beeler Hipp**

@Leekamentsky

The last issue of *A.T. Journeys* was fantastic. I know issues of racism and diversity are hard to talk about, but it's so important to start the conversation. I'm really happy you guys have the courage to make this a priority.

ATC is always there for the communities near the A.T. Local people are the best advocates.

– **John J. Donahue**

@tylerswilliamson

Volunteers MAKE the A.T. what it is. If you hike you should also try volunteering on a local trail. Thank You Volunteers!

Some of my best times have been on the A.T. It's such a treasure. Get out and enjoy!

– **Marty Fletcher**

@bargerm1

I am reading *A.T. Journeys* cover to cover currently (Winter 2021). Typically, after reading, I then clip a few articles and dispose of the rest. This morning I decided I was keeping this issue intact! Nice job!

Don't like bear canisters? Neither do bears! Use them to store your food!



Do your part by using a **bear canister** on your next backpacking trip anywhere on the A.T.



*The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service believe bear canisters are the best food storage method for all A.T. campers.

For more information visit:
appalachiantrail.org/bears





■ BY MARINA RICHIE

Step Away – Step In

The Nature of Beauty on the Appalachian Trail

Placing my hand upon a furrowed trunk, I tap the familiar white blaze signaling the wend and wind of the narrow Appalachian Trail ahead. I begin the journey of stepping away to step into beauty. Above, sunlight frisks through emerald layers. Each illuminated leaf reveals a singular pattern and a defining tree name—tulip poplar, basswood, sugar maple, horse chestnut, cherry, or ash.

Within this North Carolina June fecundity, I breathe in the exhalation of oxygen from the photosynthesizing forests. I thank the great trees for sweeping our excess carbon from the air. I hold up my hands, spread my fingers like leaves, gather the sun's energy, and take the first step. I am contemplative, reflective. A newt, as radiant as the rising sun slips beneath a decaying log that yields new life. Every visible root on the Trail snakes downward into the soil, where trees are conversing and aiding one another through an interlacing network of soil fungi.

Here in the Cherokee National Forest, hardwoods brim with song and wings. Listening to a sharp “Choo-ink” call, I track the



BEAUTY SPOT, CHEROKEE
NATIONAL FOREST,
TENNESSEE/NORTH CAROLINA

By Jerry Greer





CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: NORTHERN RED-BELLIED COOTER TURTLES AND GREAT BLUE HERON – POTOMAC RIVER, MARYLAND; A.T. VIEW IN NEW HAMPSHIRE
Photos by Raymond Salani III

■

BEAUTY MAY UNFURL LIKE A FERN
OR POUNCE LIKE KNOCK-YOUR-SOCKS-OFF JOY
UPON A BOULDERED SUMMIT.

■



origin through ferns and grasses. A male eastern towhee, natty in a feathery suit of black, white, and orange tenderly stuffs an insect into the open beak of his fledgling. With each footfall, I'm one step farther away from pavement, to-do lists and worry. I'm one step closer to the nature of the longest hiking-only footpath in the world. I hope to engage an open heart and a curious mind.

No matter where you hike, run, skip or saunter on the A.T., each lift and fall of your foot is a step away and a step in. Find your mantra at any pace, season, or place within this intricate tapestry cloaking the ancient north-south mountain range. Step away from wrapped food on shelves, from tap water, a roof and four walls, and skies dimmed by streetlights. Step into the ways of foraging animals. Feel hunger pangs when the pantry is only what your pack holds or a berry bush offers. Filter water from streams. Feel this stripping away of all that stands between you and the essence of life. Come into your animal self. Take off your shoes and walk barefoot, if only for a few minutes. Kneel to trace a line of tiny white mushrooms twining their way up a trunk. Step with care to avoid a snail that carries a shell, spiraling like a galaxy.

What scents waft toward you? Perhaps you catch a whiff of licorice or the nose-wrinkling musk of a skunk's passage. Breathe in balsam fir after a rainstorm in New England or the orange honey of black locust blossoms fringing a May morning in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. Everything is home, yet everything is unfamiliar. Beauty may unfurl like a fern or pounce like knock-your-socks-off joy upon a bouldered summit. There is delight in the hard-earned vista and the long green tunnel alike.

Where the mountaintop is sky-touching, the forest is enfolding intimacy by design. At the core of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's principles is a call for the Trail to be "narrowly passable" and one that "shall pass lightly over the land." To preserve this delicate balance between a well-marked and maintained trail and one in "harmony with the natural environment" starts with appreciation.

The Maine journals I kept from a Monson-to-Katahdin backpack trip with my father spill over with accounts of the downward view. Because the footpath is narrow, wild gardens come close—pitcher plant bogs, red bunchberries glistening on moss, and wild blueberries. Such is the power of the pause. Sometimes, when a quick and steady pace feels right, the woodlands, meadows, streams, cliffs, ascents, and descents form a flowing stream of colors and textures. And then? A great blue heron lumbers from a marsh into elemental flight. Pause then. Coming to a river sparkled in sunshine, the currents reflect molten silver. Pause here, too.

Whether moving, resting, or camping, be attuned to all that glimmers. Waking at night to unzip the tent, your headlamp may shine upon spiders unspooling silk, their webs shimmering silver. Dozing at dawn, the "dee-dee-dees" of a chickadee signal your awakening.

To step away and into beauty also requires a few practicalities. Prepare and practice for adversity. Test raingear, heft of pack, or new hiking shoes. Misery is a poor companion. In my Maine journal, I wrote this entry about Nesuntabunt Mountain when a growling beast of a lightning storm overtook us: "Downpour. The new sensation was exciting at first, but soon became soddening and slimy." And yet, I also scrawled these words: "Still, we could not resist





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
SNAIL – HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA;
RED EFT SALAMANDER IN HARRIMAN/BEAR
STATE PARK, NEW YORK

Photos by Raymond Salani III;

FIDDLEHEAD FERN – NEW HAMPSHIRE

Photo by Mike Adamovic



FROM LEFT: TREE FUNGI - DELAWARE
WATER GAP, NEW JERSEY; LOBSTER
MUSHROOM - NEW YORK
Photos by Raymond Salani III

■

WHERE THE MOUNTAINTOP IS SKY-TOUCHING, THE FOREST IS ENFOLDING INTIMACY BY DESIGN.

■

the beauty. Rainbow Stream rushed down smooth clefts of granite, funneled into raging chutes, then swirled into pools. Always the moss, the frogs, the forest.”

Do not resist beauty. Let it seep within like cleansing rain. Let hardships heighten the spectacle of a rainbow. Let the full experience be like friendship that deepens by exploring shadows and light. Step away from acquaintance and into a relationship with nature. When dazzled by bear track, hawk glide, dragonfly zip, kingfisher dive, squirrel leap, or wood thrush serenade, feel that desire to exclaim. Or turn to another to witness your delight reflected in their eyes. The A.T. is storied in shared astonishments and comradesies. When alone, why not express exuberance in a twirl, tree hug, or coyote yip?

Upon your return home, let your gritudes tumble like the pure headwater springs. Tingling senses sharpen to moon phases, dawn chorus, a bee buzz, or light spangling through leaves. Feel a tenderness for this greater home, even as you dream of the next time. Keep memories close in photos, journals, sketches, and other art. Investigate maps and plan for the side trails, too. To know and to name, you might study trees, flowers, wildlife, geology, and history, beginning with the Indigenous tribes who have long held a culture of reciprocity within the Appalachian Mountains. Step up to preserve the Trail’s wild natural beauty, for as Henry David Thoreau so presciently penned, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” Let the A.T. be our collective love story.



FUTURE VIEWS

How will we protect views along the A.T. corridor?

BY PAMELA ROY





A LITTLE MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, A HANDFUL BOTH fledgling and experienced artists trekked to the mountain peaks of New Hampshire's White Mountains with their paints and canvas to capture some of the most stunning views in New England. The result is a collection of work that was inspired by the landscape and served to inspire others to protect it. In many cases, that natural scenery looks substantially different today. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Visual Resource Inventory tries to capture that change and, in some cases, protect the views that have become iconic along the A.T. Many understand scenery as something we connect to on a visceral level, and that this connection is so instinctual that it precludes quantification and categorization. What we know (and landscape architects around the world would agree) is that there is a certain science to appealing scenery. We can capture it in words, and art, and in some regards, quantify it too. For the first time, the ATC is putting significant resources behind an effort called the Visual Resource Inventory. Through this process, we frame visual resources as one of the many natural resources of the A.T.

So many of us are inspired by what we consider "pristine" landscapes. However, not all views derive their worth from being unspoiled by human change and development. Using categories developed by the National Park Service in their "Enjoy the View" process, each view should be taken within the context of its specific setting. While many of us cherish those entirely natural views, we can also acknowledge that there are a host of other beautiful scenes along the A.T., including rolling farmland in Pennsylvania and quaint townscapes in New England.

The Enjoy the View (ETV) process is a two-part system. First, field teams travel along the Trail to describe the landscape and assess its scenic quality. Second, multi-disciplinary teams describe the designations of that landscape and assess its relative importance. These two pieces together create a Scenic Inventory Value, which rates views on a scale from "very high" to "very low." The process is designed to be objective and replicable; and while team composition for each piece will vary over time, following consistent guidelines and using a rubric keeps things sound. The ETV process also engages a wide variety of stakeholders.

When looking at a view, we do not see the invisible boundary lines between land parcels. Therefore, much of what we see when looking out from the Trail is beyond the protected corridor. A forested view we have now may not remain that way if the forest is privately held land with no conservation protections. Increased residential and energy development in the congested Appalachian corridor threaten some of the views visitors most cherish. To evaluate and potentially mitigate these threats, a robust dataset documenting the resource — in this case scenery — will be needed. The ETV process is how we are building this baseline dataset.

The effort to document all Trail views is beginning this year. The project is currently funded through 2022 and will capture all views in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. While each view along the Trail may differ in scope and composition, all of them are important to preserving the irreplaceable A.T. experience, and all of them inspire us for a wide variety of reasons.

▼
CRAWFORD NOTCH, WHITE MOUNTAINS, NEW HAMPSHIRE
— BY FREDERIC MARLETT BELL-SMITH
19TH CENTURY WATERCOLOR
Courtesy of the White Mountain Art & Artists

PAMELA ROY IS THE ATC'S VISUAL RESOURCE INVENTORY PROJECT MANAGER



THE VIEW FROM CHARLIES BUNION (FORMERLY CALLED FODDERSTACK) ON THE A.T. — SMOKIES. WHILE CATALOGING PEAKS, AND THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM, MASA WAS CAREFUL TO USE THE NAMES GIVEN TO THEM BY THE LOCAL SETTLERS AND THE LOCAL CHEROKEE TRIBES.

Courtesy of the Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina

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COMING INTO FOCUS

George Masa's Legacy

Often referred to as the “Ansel Adams of the Smokies,” photographer George Masa was known for spending long days high up on exposed ridges, waiting for the right clouds to roll in — holding out for the perfect light to capture his shot. He would lug his bulky large-format cameras, heavy wooden tripod, and coated 8x10 glass plates up and over North Carolina and Tennessee mountain tops. Unlike Adams, Masa was a Japanese-born immigrant and was not allowed to become a U.S. citizen—but his photography was an integral part of establishing two of America’s most-visited natural spaces, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the Appalachian Trail.

Much of Masa’s life is unknown, with his complicated and intriguing story pieced together by his surviving photographs, scattered interviews with friends, and handwritten letters spread through different archives and collections; but it is still not a complete picture. He was, by all accounts, a gentle and kind person who was incredibly enthusiastic and loved by his Trail club — the Carolina Mountain Club — and had a way of bemusing and befriending almost everyone he came in contact with.

George Masa was born Masahara Iizuka in Osaka, Japan, and came to America in 1901 to study mining. Little is known about his life in Japan or his life before he came East, eventually settling in Asheville,

BY SARAH JONES DECKER



■

MASA DEDICATED THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS
OF HIS LIFE TO TURNING HIS PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
INTO A LEGACY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION.

■

North Carolina, in 1915. He arrived with no friends or family for support and found a job at the Grove Park Inn as a bellhop and valet. Masa quickly became very well-liked by guests of the inn. What started as taking and developing images of those guests turned into a passion for photography and eventually his own studio and a newly adopted name — George Masa.

With little to no compensation, he dedicated the last eighteen years of his life to turning his passion for photography into a legacy of environmental conservation. Yet while he strove to preserve the mountains he adored, few of his photographs have survived. Only about one thousand of his images are accounted for, including perhaps four dozen in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) archives, and an estimated 2,500 negatives are lost — with his essential work of the Smokies assumed to be among the missing work. The bulk of his negatives were purchased after his death by another Asheville photographer, Elliot Lyman Fisher, but those vanished when Fisher died in 1968. Yet, while the photographs were lost, the legacy of his work persists today.

Masa's images, along with the words of his close friend and frequent hiking companion Horace Kephart, author of the acclaimed *Our Southern Highlanders*, were instrumental in the early stages of the Smokies' formation. That was only part of their contribution to the Trail. Masa worked closely with legendary ATC chairman Myron Avery (a founding force whose intense dedication and hard work put the vision of the A.T. truly on the ground) helping chart the route of the Trail in western North Carolina, and collaborating with Avery to found the Carolina Appalachian Trail Club, which later merged with the Carolina Mountain Club.

In addition to his camera, Masa hiked with a measuring wheel not unlike Avery's and sent him meticulous notes, map notations, and prints of ranges with the peaks written in—all in the process of selecting the best route for the fledging A.T. through North Carolina, into Tennessee, and even to Mount Oglethorpe, which was not yet selected as the southern terminus. Those heated routing discussions (more accurately, arguments) went on for years among three or four factions, and Masa and Kephart were keys to their resolution. Kephart had a seat on the ATC's board from 1929 until he died, and then Masa briefly had that seat until he died (the only person of color on the board in its first 80 years). Both men are now in the A.T. Museum Hall of Fame.

Creating a park spanning two states was no small task. It was a complicated process with no financial support from the federal government. The almost half-million acres were eventually bought and then donated by North Carolina and Tennessee. Industrialist John D. Rockefeller, an occasional guest at the Grove Park Inn, donated \$5 million to



FROM TOP: MASA AND HORACE KEPHART ON GRAYBEARD MOUNTAIN; MASA'S HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON HIS PHOTO OF THE ROAN HIGHLANDS; MYRON AVERY AND MASA DURING ONE OF AVERY'S TRIPS TO MEET WITH NORTH CAROLINA/TENNESSEE HIKING GROUPS.
Photos courtesy of the ATC Archives

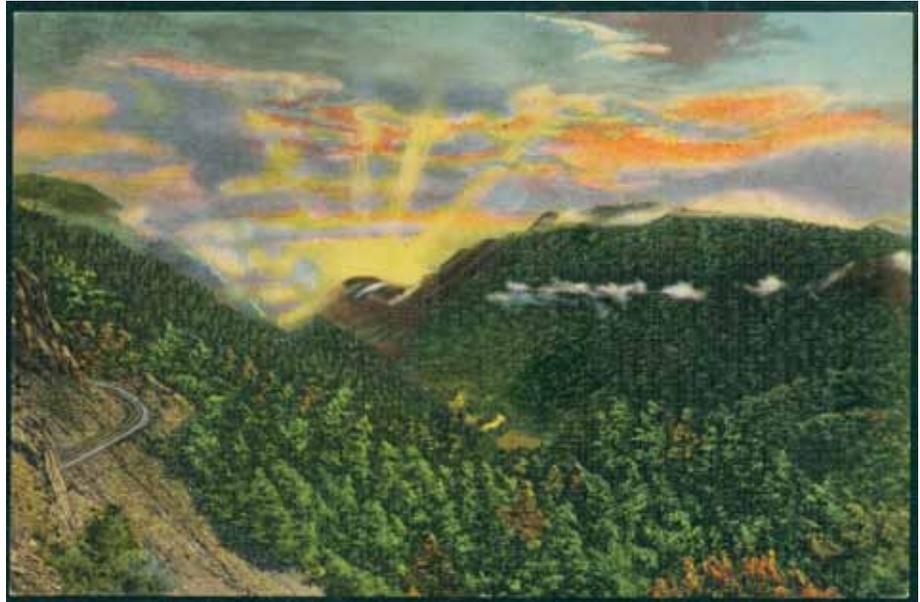






CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: NANTAHALA GORGE AT SUNRISE; A POSTCARD CREATED FROM MASA'S NANTAHALA GORGE IMAGE; MASA WITH HIS FELLOW CAROLINA MOUNTAIN CLUB MEMBERS

Photos Courtesy of the Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina



■

MASA'S LEGACY LIVES ON IN THE PARK HE HELPED CREATE.
HIS IMAGES AND STUDIES HELPED TO BEAUTIFULLY PRESENT THIS
SPECIAL PLACE TO THE EYES OF MANY WHO HAD NOT SEEN IT
FOR THEMSELVES AND BRING THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS
PROTECTION TO THE FOREFRONT.

■

preserve the park after seeing Masa's images, the story goes. The sustained efforts of many people in both states led to the establishment in 1934 of the first national park in the eastern United States. Several of those on a federal committee making that decision also were involved in the creation of the A.T. and the ATC, including its first chair, Major William A. Welch.

Masa's legacy lives on in the park he helped create. His images and studies helped to beautifully present this special place to the eyes of many who had not seen it for themselves and bring the importance of its protection to the forefront. In addition to his photography, Masa would carry his measuring wheel (a homemade bicycle wheel odometer) and take meticulous notes on everything he saw along the way for those who officially named landmarks. For example, he and Kephart are credited with naming Charlies Bunion, a friendly jab at another hiking companion. The range through the park today is known for its plant and animal diversity and its importance goes far beyond its ridgetops. It supports a large number of endemic species, including 100 native species of trees and 1,500 types of flowering plants (more flowers than any other national park), making it one of the most important natural areas east of the Mississippi River.

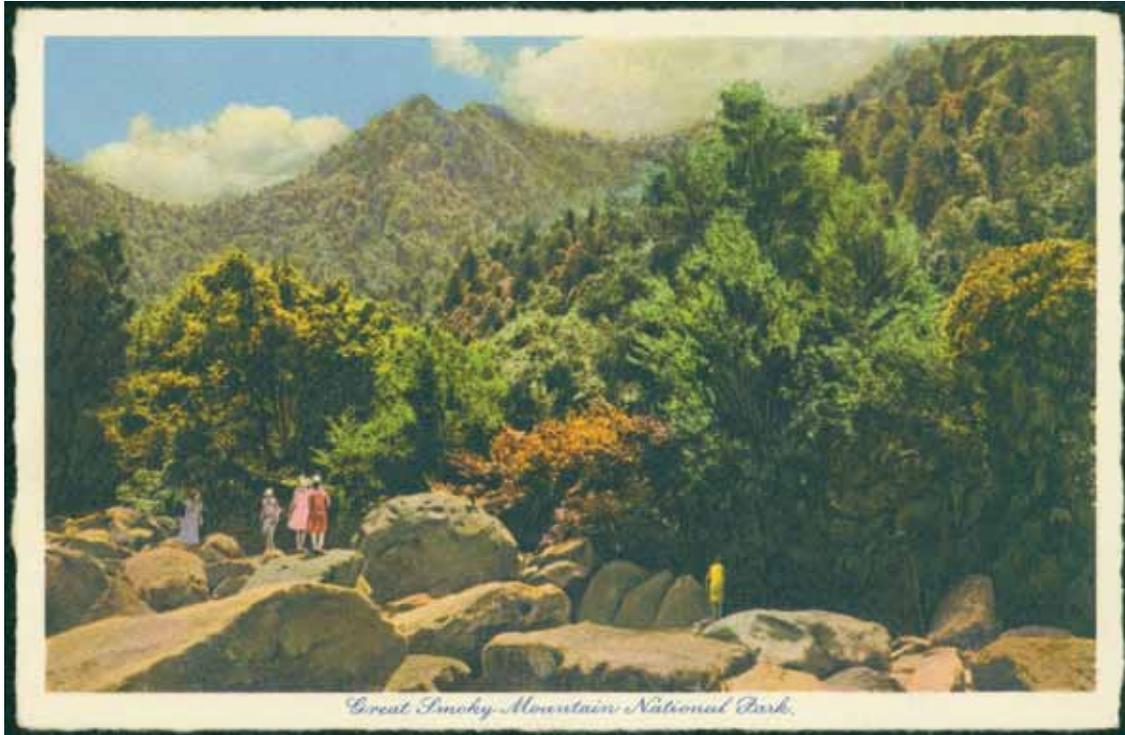
Sadly, neither Masa nor Kephart would be alive to know the outcome of all their hard work and the park's establishment. Kephart died in a car crash in 1931, and Masa followed two years later at age 54 after becoming ill on a planned memorial hike for Kephart. He died destitute in a sanitorium from influenza without the means to be buried next to the friend he admired.

In 1961, a 5,685-foot peak in the park was named Masa Knob in his honor and is appropriately located on the shoulder of the 6,217-foot peak that bears the name Mount Kephart. The naming of Masa Knob was made possible by the continued efforts of the Carolina Mountain Club almost 30 years after his death — and 30 years after a peak was named for Kephart. That slight was not the first. Masa was the coauthor of the first *Guide*

of the Smokies, but his name was removed from the credits only two years after the book was in print. And while Kephart recently had a biography published, he alone of the pair appeared in Paul Bonesteel's documentary, *The Mystery of George Masa* — the source for much that is known about Masa today.

A single photograph — a permanent capture of a moment in time — has the power to transport and inspire the viewer. It also has the immense power to bring physical change. In Masa's case, his legacy lives on in his photographs and the tangible places he helped protect. His images take us back to those ridges, waiting for the clouds to move so the mountains he loved could make their grand entrance. Hopefully over time, more of his vision will come to light.





A POSTCARD (TOP) FEATURING MASA'S IMAGE OF VISITORS TO THE AREA, BEFORE IT BECAME THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, WAS USED TO PROMOTE THE PARK AFTER MASA'S DEATH.
Photos Courtesy of the Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina



SOLDIERS FROM THE U.S. ARMY'S 5TH RANGER TRAINING BATTALION AT CAMP FRANK D. MERRILL ASSIST IN VOLUNTEER TRAIL WORK — HAWK MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA — THE PHOTO WAS PART OF THE "UNITED BY THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL" EXHIBIT

By Rebecca Bruce Vaughters

UNITED

BY THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

BY REBECCA BRUCE VAUGHTERS

The Trail not only inspires endlessly, it also unites us in ways unimagined. Aptly titled “United by the Appalachian Trail,” the photographic exhibition that made its way to the Capitol Rotunda in 2018 imparted a sense of the Trail as not only a place to find beauty and inspiration, but where we all come together, united by this remarkable project we call the Appalachian Trail.

“ON A COLD AND SNOWY FEBRUARY day in 2016 atop Hawk Mountain, Georgia, ten members of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC) and a group of 32 soldiers from the U.S. Army’s 5th Ranger Training Battalion at Camp Frank D. Merrill collaborated to build a new privy and additional campsites. They carried over 100 pieces of lumber and ten sheets of plywood for the installation of a new moldering privy and much-needed new sustainable campsites. When I arrived around 9 a.m., the GATC volunteers and Army Rangers were gathering and divvying up supplies and loading lumber upon their shoulders, carrying large supply boxes, ladders, and tools to make the trek into the designated privy location below Hawk Mountain. As an assignment to

get some photographs for this collaborative effort, I thought it would be a challenge to do this on a dreary wintry day with low light and dense fog. I took advantage of the gloomy day to look for the artistic element into photographing this effort. While trying to stay warm, I kept moving around to different vantage points along the path as the Army Rangers disappeared into the forest making trek after trek hauling heavy lumber and building supplies. This image demonstrated to me the dedication of the GATC volunteers and Army Rangers to accomplish the task at hand on a particularly wintry day. Having my photography — and this piece in particular — featured in the United by the A.T. exhibit was a wonderful surprise. And to have it exhibited on a national level by a great organization such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy was truly an unbelievable experience.”

REBECCA BRUCE VAUGHTERS IS A ZONE ARCHEOLOGIST FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE IN THE BLUE RIDGE RANGER DISTRICT.

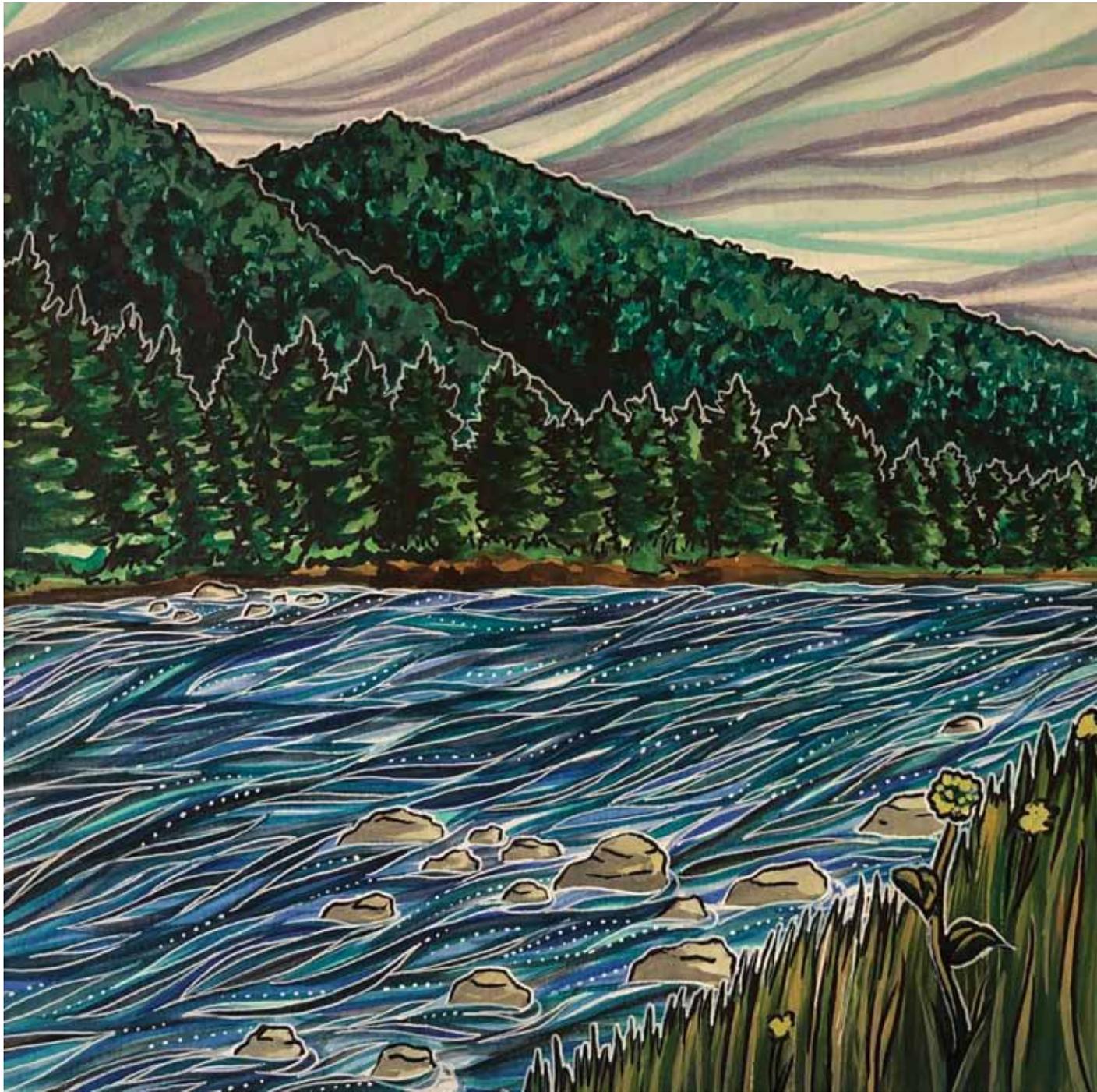




TRAIL AS MUSE

The relationship between the Appalachian Trail and creativity has always been mutually influential. The Trail has inspired countless artists, authors, and other creatives for generations — all who view the Trail as their muse. And it continues to inspire today. This relationship between Trail and art is reflected in the current work of twelve talented artists through varying mediums of paint, ink, pencil, and photography. This work encapsulates the Trail’s natural scenic beauty — from the rugged mountaintops to the magnificent flora and fauna we find along the “green tunnel.”

The Beauty Spot, Tennessee
Oil on Canvas
By Heather Friedli





HEIDI NISBETT

Kennebec River, Maine
Medium: Watercolor

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sketchingsummits.com

For me, hiking serves as a form of meditation and mental relief. On the Trail, I am removed from all distractions and completely submerged in the serenity of nature. As a result, I find myself noticing more details in the forest around me, and studying the patterns and colors found in nature. As an artist, I can't help but paint images in my mind as I hike along, and then do my best to bring those images to life on paper.

I grew up in South Carolina and received a BFA in Painting from Winthrop University. I currently reside in Charlotte, North Carolina, where I work for Blue Blaze Brewing, a small craft brewery that is themed around the A.T. and outdoor recreation. After a thru-hike on the Appalachian Trail in 2018, I fell in love with long-distance hiking. I earned my Trail name "Picasso" by carrying watercolors and painting in my sketchbook as I hiked the A.T. Since then, I have hiked Minnesota's Superior Hiking Trail, South Carolina's Foothills Trail twice, and am working on completing North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail in sections. At home, I am the proud dog mom to an energetic mutt named Junie B. Jones; and during my free time you can find me somewhere in Charlotte's extensive local trail network with her and my partner, Raphael.





NIKA MEYERS

*Ridgeline Work, New England
Medium: Watercolor, Ink, and Gouache*

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Even before I was introduced to the hiking community, I was inspired to create art that channeled my curiosity for understanding landscapes in terms of systems. Trails connect communities, landscapes, and ecosystems that don't always seem connected. They put into perspective the macro and micro things in life. Painting and drawing give me more freedom to continue to explore experiences and transport me to places and moments that are full of magic, change, wild silliness, raw emotion, and demanding challenge. There is no way to fully re-create a sunrise dancing across a high ridge, the emotion that comes from being present for a miracle, or the gratitude for having an unforgettable conversation, but I strive to bring parts of that energy into my work.

"Ridgeline Work" was inspired by the ridgelines of New England and the tools that are used to help maintain the trails. The triangles are representative of the little tracks my shoes used to leave behind. Dirt, mud, and sand get thrown into the air as a small fracturing of the surface I am treading on.

On the Trail I am known as "Early Bird," a mountain fairy darting among the trees and rocks, doing long days, and letting my wild spirit fly free. I grew up in the hills of Bridgewater, Vermont, nestled among fresh produce and hardwoods. Fascinated by spending time outside and combining passions, I completed a degree in Studio Art and Environmental Studies from Mount Holyoke College, and I am now creating a home in the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado. In 2018, I thru-hiked the A.T. to complete my Triple Crown and I returned to the Trail in 2019 to hike 100 miles in the New England section.

REBECCA HARNISH

Rhododendron, North Carolina / Tennessee
Medium: Watercolor

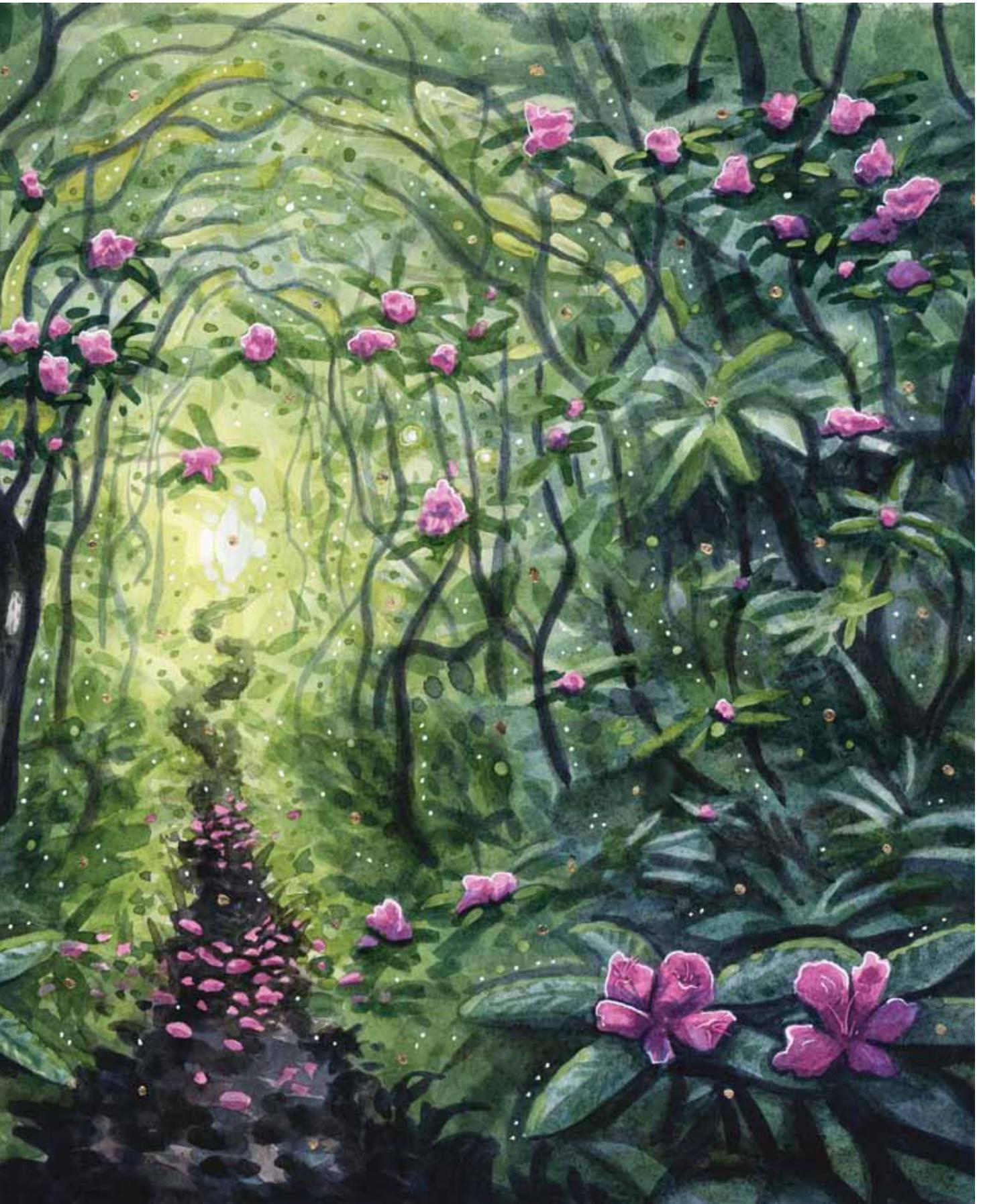
@rebecca.harnish
[etsy.com/shop/firnmirror](https://www.etsy.com/shop/firnmirror)

I have wanted to combine art and hiking since the very start of my first long-distance hike on the Pacific Crest Trail in 2016. But it was not until my 2018 thru-hike of the A.T. that I successfully carried a tiny watercolor palette, some pens, and a stack of small papers that miraculously survived five-and-a-half months of record-breaking rain and a canoe trip down the Shenandoah River.

For all its natural splendor, the A.T. tests every kind of endurance. As an anxious perfectionist, both my hike and attempt to paint along the entire Trail was a lesson in embracing the imperfect. My motivation stemmed from disappointment in the photos I took of places that overwhelmed me with beauty and emotion. Painting, then and now, allows me to express what I experienced more fully. Watching the first shoots of spring greenery sneaking over the mountains, undulating layers of mountains receding into the distance, vibrant sunsets, so much wildlife, and the vast range of different cultures and communities along the way.

Art, for me, is a means of more perfectly capturing the beautiful scenery and memories of life on the Trail. Through painting, I'm able to distill the feeling of a moment. Being in nature for days on end also lets you shed who you think you have to be, your past, your future, your baggage, and feel a sense of peace and magic of the present that can get lost or forgotten in our constructed world. This is what truly inspires me to create, and it's my hope that these precious qualities show through my work and help people stay connected to the magic of nature and community wherever we are.









KOTY SAPP

*Pierce Pond Stream, Maine
Medium: Photography*

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kotysapp.com*

The Appalachian Trail was my first photographic project. I wanted to combine my love for creativity with my newly found passion for long-distance backpacking in the great outdoors. About eight months before I set out on my hike, I purchased my first camera, a Nikon D5500 kit camera with 18-105mm F3.5-5.6G lens. Most people are amazed to find out that I captured my A.T. images on an entry-level crop sensor camera. To me, this only reinforces that it is the photographer, not the camera that makes a photograph. Since my A.T. hike, I have traveled as far away as Iceland and the Faroe Islands to explore the outdoors and the beautiful landscapes that inspire me. And while I currently use professional-level Sony Alpha cameras and lenses, I never forget where I started and how true passion can influence one's photographic work. My hope is to inspire others to live freely and enjoy the natural world as we were meant to.

I am a creative adventurer, and self-taught photographer. In 2017, after attaining a B.S. in Ecology, I chose to leave "society" to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail and immerse myself in the vast wilderness that encompasses it. This journey ignited an intense desire within me to document the most compelling aspects of my travels.



GEORGE RUE

Appalachian Travelogue
Medium: Mixed Media

georgerue.com

I am an artist and educator based in Nashville, Tennessee. I took my first steps on the Trail when I was a teenager. Since then, I developed a close relationship to the A.T., which led to numerous section hikes, a 2014 thru-hike, and working a season as a ridgerunner. With every hike, I make room in my backpack for a sketchbook and art supplies. Inspired by quiet moments at camp, quirky characters, beautiful overlooks, and the grittiness of hiking, my journals are “visual diaries” of life on the Trail.

To tell the story of my thru-hike, I created an installation titled “Appalachian Travelogue” — combining maps, sketches, photos, camping gear, and other items in a kind of “love letter” to the Trail. My work is alternately fictional, autobiographical, or some combination of



REBECCA FULLERTON

Mount Lafayette, New Hampshire
Medium: Watercolor on Ink Paper

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rmfullerton.com

I specialize in landscape painting in the realist and impressionist traditions and have been painting in oils and watercolors for over twenty years. I am always trying to capture the atmosphere unique to the White Mountains with its changeable weather, steep trails, and limitless views as a way to promote the fragile beauty of places that deserve conservation.

The Trail is a very tricky but irresistible source of inspiration. You have to work hard to make it to some of the more remote parts of it in the White Mountains. It's never going to be easy to reach these incredibly beautiful places. In painting them, I'm trying to capture something very elusive about the light, the way the air feels, the hardscrabble roughness of the terrain, the weather, or just the indescribable grandness of the mountains in all their moods and seasons. Accomplishing that is as difficult as the hike itself. You're always chasing just the right color or line that says everything you felt about being out there. I don't think there will ever be one painting that captures it all, but I don't mind at all that I will never run out of subject matter to paint.

When I'm not painting New England's wild scenery, I am probably hiking, running on a trail, or out on a lake or river in a kayak. The grandeur of alpine summits, the intricacy of intertwining limbs in the deep woods, and sparkle of rushing water through a gorge inspire and inform my painting process. My home is in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, on the edge of the White Mountain National Forest. I hold a BA in Studio Art and Art History from Hartwick College, as well as a MA in Museum Studies from the Harvard Extension School.



ABBY DIAMOND

Eastern Box Turtle, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
Medium: Pencil Sketch, Watercolor

@finchfight

I come from the rocky, moss-covered southwest corner of Pennsylvania, where I spend time outside and on trails as much as I can. In 2019, I hiked southbound on the Trail from Maine to Virginia with a watercolor sketchbook, a travel tin of paints, and a ballpoint pen. It turned into an experience that affected my life and artwork deeply. All of my drawings are inspired by our natural world and spending four months on the A.T. was a privilege that allowed me to concentrate on “seeing” — to be present and observe all kinds of wildlife and landscapes that I’d never seen before.

My paintings and drawings are mostly anchored by their sketches; I try to get down the “bones” of the picture in the moment, and then keep building on top of it. I start a composition in pencil, going over it a couple times to get the drawing right, and then I make it permanent by redrawing in ink, and eventually adding color in the last stage. I really like to draw in pencil and pen because so much of the sketch can be retained. Watercolor paints are great to have on the Trail because they are minimal, low-maintenance, and the medium is very forgiving. I find profound freedom in creating art, and in my non-hiking life I work as a freelance illustrator and printmaker. I can’t wait to return to the Trail in the future and continue learning on the hike.





MIKE WURMAN

The Mid-Atlantic Blaze
Medium: Pencil Drawings / Shadowbox

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preservationthroughart.org

When I began my hike at Amicalola Falls, I had no idea where the A.T. would take me besides north, hopefully, all the way to Katahdin. My initial reason to hike was to find myself as an artist and to overcome self-doubt. What I discovered was a passion that propelled me to new levels. To achieve the wow factor of the beauty surrounding the Trail, I realized that I would have to go beyond the black and white pencil drawings that come so naturally to me. So, I pushed myself to learn a new medium, pastels. A completely different world where the possibilities were limitless was open to me, the world of color.

The Trail continued to inspire and push me to experiment even further. I began painstakingly cutting and separating sections of my nature-inspired pencil drawings and layering them on top of one another to give a 3D effect framed inside of a shadowbox. This process allows me to highlight the environment of the Trail in a visually exciting way.

But my creative wanderings didn't stop there; I soon became involved in an organization called Preserving A Picturesque America (PAPA). One-hundred-fifty years ago, a two-volume book called *A Picturesque America* was published that showcased artwork and stories of our country's natural and historical sites. It was the beginning of the conservation movement as it posed the question: what will happen to these beautiful sites in the future? Today, while some areas are within the boundaries and under the National Park System's protection, some sadly no longer exist. Others are on the brink of being lost forever. PAPA and its members understand the importance of conserving these sites and are actively sending artists out to rediscover the original places and create artwork to be showcased in a new book. Some of the original sites are on the Appalachian Trail, and hikers pass by daily unaware of their significance. Conserving these sites has become of the utmost importance as I attempt to give back to the Trail that has given me such a great deal.

JAIME BARKS

Sunset in the Smokies

Medium: Acrylic on Wood Panels

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jaimebarks.com

I grew up roaming the foothills of the Smoky Mountains and spent my entire adulthood daydreaming about the Appalachian Trail. A hike on the Trail in 2020 was a life-changing experience and has ignited a deep love of the A.T. and backpacking. Having the privilege to walk for miles and miles in nature is such a gift. You get a chance to see and experience something so few people get the opportunity to. It gives me time to clear my head and immerse myself in my surroundings. Every section hike provides endless opportunities for inspiration. While hiking, I create small watercolor sketches. Later these sketches and the hundreds of photos I have taken influence my work in the studio.

My hope is that my paintings can capture not only the landscape but the emotion of being on trails. And to bring my passion for the natural world to people by reminding them to stop and experience their surroundings. For me, backpacking is filled with joy, pain, beauty, perseverance, and a healthy dose of self-reflection. I hope my Trail series captures the feeling of Trail life. And I can't wait to knock out more miles in 2021.









SARAH KAIZAR

Spaulding Mountain Lean-to, Maine
Medium: Pen and Ink over Acrylic Wash

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sarahkaizar.com

In my book, *Hiker Trash: Notes, Sketches + Other Detritus from the Appalachian Trail*, I feature illustrations of my fellow A.T. hikers and the many Trail shelters where we established “home” for the night. *Hiker Trash* is a collage of long-distance backpacking culture. The Trail shelters are extra special to me as these were the spots where I made my most meaningful connections and found my Trail family.

The Trail is a profound teacher. From my experience, I learned to surrender myself to the many things I can’t control — weather, wildlife, and the quite literal ups and downs of the path. The A.T. taught me new lessons in self-sufficiency and the experience of thru-hiking was an empowering reminder of my own strength. But most meaningfully, it helped me to genuinely connect to other people at a time when I felt most disconnected from the world.

The most common question I get with this project is about its title. My best shorthand response is that “hiker trash” is something akin to a beach rat or a ski bum; it’s an affectionate wink paired with a hippies-use-the-back-door flavor. After completing my thru-hike in 2015, I proudly embraced the hiker trash title, and I was eager to interpret my experiences with this awesome community through my favorite language — art. My work is about the process of healing and the ways we seek and find shelter.

I am an illustrator and designer based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My work has been displayed in regional galleries and museums, including the Woodmere Art Museum, Delaware Contemporary, and the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education. I was recently named a 2021 Wind Fellow by InLiquid and the Dina Wind Foundation and am the 2021 Artist in Residence at the Cedar Point Biological Station, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.





HEATHER FRIEDLI

Bly Gap Oak Tree, North Carolina
Medium: Oil on Canvas

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Hiking the Appalachian Trail has been a core part of my re-evolution into the art world. Before hiking the A.T., I had put aside my paints and brushes for many years. But while on my thru-hike, I had an awakening of my creativity. I could feel the paint under my brush strokes as I walked and could smell the faintest hint of oil paint in the air. I knew I was being called to create paintings once again and I realized it was time to follow my dream of becoming a painter.

I use bold brush strokes and brilliant colors to light up scenes of cloudscapes, water, and native flora — often represented in large scale works. My pieces are created in context with my wilderness adventures, and I often bring my paints outdoors to create work that shares with the viewer an immersion in the landscape. I seek the spiritual world through the lens of culture and lived intimacy of place.

I paint with a passion for the land, looking around and internalizing the colors and expressing them onto canvas. Working large scale is not only an expression of what I see but becomes a physical dance with my paintings. The movement and rhythms in these works are my own unique vision of the land around me.

NICHOLAS REICHARD

Deep Inside the 100 Mile Wilderness, Maine
Medium: Hasselblad 500C / Pentax K1000

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Weeks before I set off on my northbound thru-hike on the A.T. in 2015, I made a decision that would forever change my life. I had committed to this upcoming adventure but wasn't sure how I wanted to capture it. I never dreamed of thru-hiking the Trail and honestly didn't think I was physically or mentally prepared for what it would take to walk the 2,000 miles from Georgia to Maine. I was the heaviest I ever weighed in my life but desperately needed a place where I could pursue my photography while also focusing on my health.

My inspiration came from the thru-hikers who set out on this epic adventure before me. Ultimately, it was the courage of my fellow hikers who became my muse and turned out to be the greatest inspirations for my work. The grit, sweat, smiles, and blisters were all part of away of life I never wanted to forget. That is when the lightbulb went off: What better way to capture this off-beat culture than to shoot my adventure on some old analog cameras? I had never used film before but thought the grainy nature of the medium would help me capture the gritty nuance of the experience.

By the time I made my way to Springer Mountain, I had already been given a Trail name. I was now "Click." The name instantly helped me feel grounded. My film cameras — a Hasselblad and Pentax — taught me as much about patience as did the white blazes I was now following. They both helped me to slow down and live life in the moment, one step at a time.

I faced a lot of my own fears and it was my cameras that kept me going especially during the hardest moments. But it was also the community and hikers I met who inspired me to push on and define my work as a photographer. Today I am a photographer, author, husband, and father. I might be less of a dirtbag than I once was, but who knows who I would be today if I hadn't chosen that 2,000 mile path.







A.T. along the North Carolina / Tennessee ridgeline in the Smokies

Natural Beauty

Text and artwork by Jenny Siegfried

COMING FROM A SOARING METROPOLIS LIKE New York City, I thought I understood beauty in the majestic: light sparkling off windows a thousand feet high, the space between skyscrapers the commas in an architectural narrative, verticality as grace. I was wrong. In late August of 2016, flushed with nerves and excitement, I took my first steps into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I had eagerly scrawled my signature at the bottom of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) Rocky Top Trail Crew volunteer contract, not knowing, really, anything. Our first day passed quickly, hiking up to Inadu Knob and setting up camp. The dirt already jammed deep under my fingernails would remain there for the next eight days, a muddy blur as I quickly sketched as much as my tiny notebook could hold. After dusk, our crew ventured to a small overlook tucked on the opposite side of the Trail and sat shoulder to shoulder. Darkness came, deepened to a pitch black, and beyond logic, fell even darker still. Then, the stars appeared.

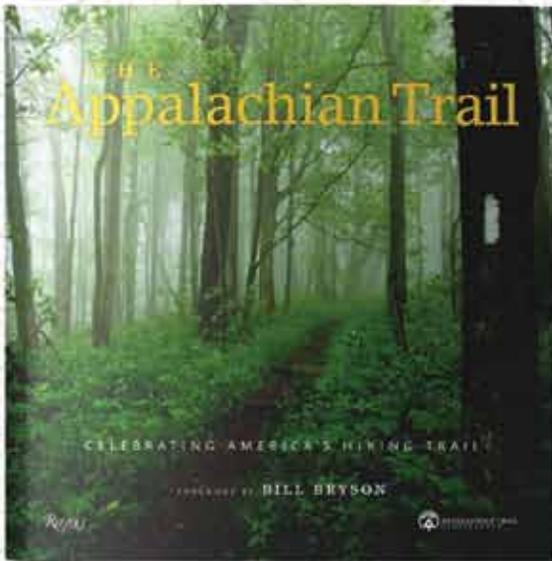
The night sky unfolded before us. Orion raised his bow, the little dipper poured into the big. Our crew leader nudged my shoulder; I shifted my gaze in his direction and it was suddenly, incomprehensibly flooded with the incandescent light

of the Milky Way. My prior understanding of monumentality, of the endless scope of nature, expanded beyond my wildest imagination. I needed to see more, as much as humanly possible. For the next eight days, each morning started on the overlook as the sun rose over the scaffolded ridges; every night ended with an explosion of stars.

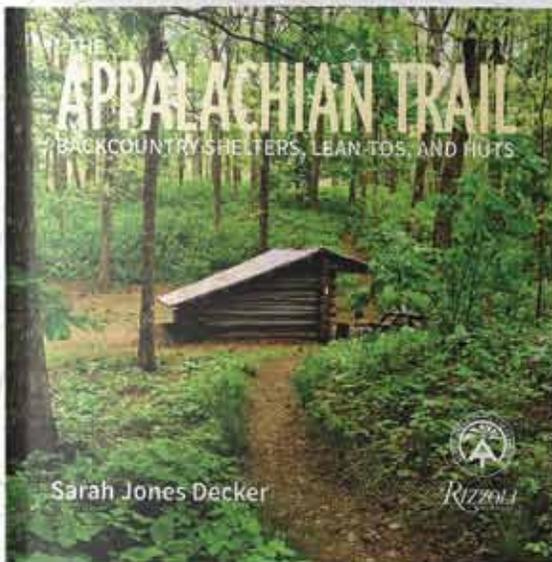
In 2017, I returned to the Smokies, as a member of the ATC's S.W.E.A.T. Crew. The hiking was more strenuous, the work harder, each day bookended with summits of both Rocky Top and Thunderhead mountains. In the evening, we sat exhausted, sharing dinner and Trail conditions, unpausing conversation with the rotating roster of hikers staying alongside our camp at Spence Field Shelter. There was a pair of 20-something hairdressers traversing the entire park, a father and his two preteen daughters, and a large, overwhelmingly boisterous family who completely filled the shelter. None of them like us, and none of us like each other. There was less stargazing, more storytelling, the passing on of experiences, and a collective sense of how time on these grounds turns those disparate into a community.

After my first visit, I walked away holding the magnitude of these mountains, these trails, inside for myself. I was in awe and

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Sketch and view from the A.T. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

filled with a terrific sense of gratitude and personal responsibility towards this park. After the second visit, I left with a profound determination to share this experience with as many people as possible, to continue to grow this mountain community, to prompt others to follow the white blazes of the Appalachian Trail, or any of the 900 miles of trail in the Smokies, to chase the glow of the sunset, to sit in the shadows of the trees. I remained still in awe, now coupled with a determination to foster interest in and a collective ownership of our natural lands, specifically the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP).

As an Artist in Residence in the Smokies, I have created a two-part project: a collection of illustrations and prints based on the interweaving narratives of the park itself, bound into a handmade book, and the execution of participatory, hands-on art-making workshops and exploratory public walks providing visitors with the tools, methods, and inspiration to document and share their collective GSMNP journeys.

Although I am formally trained as a draftsman, sitting through hundreds of hours in life drawing courses and studio sessions, in the past few years, my work has been heavily influenced by the concept of deconstructing and depicting narratives through a nontraditional lens. Through a combination of watercolor, ink, and linoleum block print illustrations layered within the construct of a handmade book, traditional narratives can be seen in a new light, while unconventional stories feel familiar and accessible. The inclusion of botanical illustration grounds these narratives in the natural world and provides an element of human connection, depicting the normally shielded structure of parallel internal systems: skin covers muscle as bark encases the heartwood of a birch tree.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was the ideal setting to expand my visual vocabulary to the more than 10,000 species of flora and fauna present in a such a lush, vibrant, deciduous forest, as well as learn the narratives of the park itself. Living, and making work, within the boundaries of these thriving natural lands has provided a constant source of inspiration,

solitude, and sanctuary. Using a combination of photography, sketchbooks, and journals, I have documented the multitude of species and biologic interactions on daily hikes and overnight trips, pioneering across as much trail in the park as possible.

These sketches and photographs are the basis for a bound book documenting life and change in the mountains, specifically how each species interacts symbiotically or parasitically with another, sparking newness and growth, telling the story of life under the canopy of the forest. Consciously or not, every visitor who steps into the park observes this biological narrative, profoundly influencing the way they themselves subsequently tell the story of the trails, the mountains, this park. My residency has provided the ideal opportunity to speak to park visitors, volunteers, and staff — to hear their own stories and observations, allowing me to weave together the natural narratives with the human one. The completed book consists of unique oversized illustrations and prints that together read as a cohesive text but can also be removed from the binding to stand alone as individual prints.

Through my residency, I hope I brought a preternatural love for these mountains and this breathtaking park to others. Handmade books and journals can take a wide variety of forms; no special paper is needed. A sketchbook can be made from anything that will accept ink or pencil. If used while hiking or camping in the park, they can foster a sense of visitor reflection and encourage visitors to pause, to consider the shapes of leaves, the light coming through the trees, to trace the curves of Clingmans Dome, to note a deer silently observing near Derrick Knob Shelter. For those who have not ventured out, they are an invite to discovery. There's a power in artistic documentation — a sense of responsibility over its source and for its care. It can promote ownership of our natural lands and empower others to find meaning, to grow, learn, and tell their own stories.

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"Clicking the Green Tunnel" – A.T. Virginia
By Nicholas Reichard