

ATC Policy on Side and Connecting Trails

Adopted by the ATC Board of Managers in 1988, amended by the ATC Board of Managers in 1995, and amended by the ATC Board of Directors in 2008.

- A. *Procedure for Recommending Approval of New Hiking Trails Entering The Appalachian Trail Corridor*—All new hiking trails entering the Appalachian Trail corridor should be approved by the local Trail club, the landowning agency, the appropriate ATC regional partnership committee and ATC in accordance with the ATC Policy for Review and Approval of Management Plans and Project Proposals Approval by the regional partnership committee and ATC will be based on the criteria set forth below in part C and any additional criteria provided in the local management plan(s) for the area.
- B. *Procedure for Recommending Action by the Secretary of the Interior or Agriculture for Formal Federal Designation of a Side or Connecting Trail*—Formal designation of side or connecting and coaligned trails requires action by the secretaries of the interior or agriculture or their designee(s). Any proposal for formal designation shall be reviewed by the regional partnership committee, which will forward its recommendation to the Stewardship Council. The Council will review the recommendation and, with input from the ATC regional director, develop a final recommendation for the appropriate secretary. In addition, review and recommendation processes may occur within the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and/or state agencies as appropriate. ATC review and recommendations shall be based on the criteria set forth below in part C and any additional criteria identified in the local management plan(s) for the area.
- C. *Criteria for (1) Recommending Approval of New Hiking Trails Entering The Appalachian Trail Corridor, or (2) Recommending Action by the Secretary of the Interior or Agriculture for Formal Designation of A Side or Connecting Trail*—
1. The trail will only enhance or improve the Appalachian Trail.
 2. The Appalachian Trail is preeminent over the new or designated trail.
 3. The trail will allow only foot traffic.
 4. The trail will provide significant access to the Appalachian Trail or between the Trail and significant scenic, natural, or cultural resources and/or Trail facilities.
 5. The Appalachian Trail will take precedence on trail signing and marking.
 6. Dual marking will be avoided on any new coaligned trail; however, other trails may be identified on A.T. signs. ATC also will work to establish this standard for existing coaligned trails.
 7. A.T. managers will cooperate in developing standards for construction, design, and maintenance of trails that intersect the Appalachian Trail. ATC will encourage adoption of standards that protect resource values and prevent environmental damage in a manner consistent with resource protection on the Appalachian Trail.