

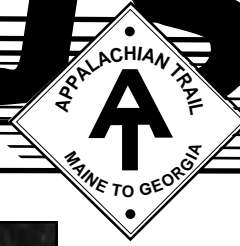
THE REGISTER

Vol. 24, No. 3

A Stewardship Newsletter

for the Appalachian Trail

Fall 2000



A.T. Meets "A.T."

Accessible Trail Section Opens in Falls Village

By Jody L. Bickel

The first section of the Appalachian Trail specifically designed for mobility-impaired users was officially opened July 21 in Falls Village, Connecticut, along the Housatonic River. Several dozen individuals involved in the planning and construction of the landmark trail, along with supporters and Trail visitors, were on hand for ceremonies to cut the ribbon and walk the completed route.

The A.T. route here runs along approximately 3,040 feet (0.57 mile) of a 1.1-mile loop called the Falls Village Accessible Trail, which also incorporates part of an abandoned, turn-of-the-century horse-racing track. The trail also offers a shorter, 0.8-mile inner loop.

Nineteen rest stops are spaced along the trail with rustic benches and good views of the river or other points of interest. Interpretive signs in place along the route detail area history. The trail itself is a three- to four-foot-wide surface of gravel compacted with stone dust for a firm, stable, wheelchair-friendly path. Tree roots and other natural obstructions

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Left to right: ATC Director Dave Startzell, Dick Blake, Ann Sherwood, and U.S. Representative Nancy Johnson cut the ribbon, opening the A.T.'s first official wheelchair-accessible section.

(Photo: Deno Contos)

A Formula for Old-Time Construction

Old Wood + Old Methods (+ ATC Grant) = New Shelter

By Martin Sussman

In the woods and gamelands of southern Pennsylvania, an ancient building technique called timber framing has found new life as an unusual shelter rises along the Appalachian Trail just south of the Susquehanna River. A Mountain Club of Maryland crew, under the tutelage of the Timber Framers Guild, used the technique to build a new shelter to replace the old, dilapidated Thelma Marks Memorial Shelter atop Cove Mountain. An ATC Grants-to-Clubs award in 1999 provided the funding for classes, tools, and instructors.

What is timber framing? According to the guild's literature, "Heavy timbers are locked together with wooden joints (mortises and tenons), which are in turn secured with wooden pegs. Usually, this beautiful structure is visible from inside the completed home, barn, bridge, school, or church."

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It's a frame-up! (Photo: Martin Sussman)

Guest Editorial

Editor's Note: In recent issues, REGISTER editor John Morgan has editorialized about some people "going overboard" as so-called Trail angels. Other members of the ATC Board of Managers likewise expressed their opposition to excessive, planned, and inappropriate assistance being given to long-distance hikers from self-appointed angels, but the board resisted taking action or adopting new policies prohibiting such conduct. Rather than regulations, the board thought it best to ask hikers themselves to discourage this conduct and the so-called angels they run into, using "peer pressure." Below, as a guest editorial, we present one thru-hiker's perspective (originally posted on the Internet and reprinted here by permission of the author) on the true Appalachian Trail experience and the true angels of the A.T.

Trail Angels By Kimber Rodgers

We crossed a stream filled with orange and grape sodas. We have seen several streams with these cans. It is apparently the work of some Trail angel who thinks hikers would like a cold soda. But, it makes me angry. This is wilderness, and dozens and dozens of cans don't belong in a wilderness stream. I can have sodas in town. When I am in the woods, I want to leave all that behind. Worse, it appears that whoever drinks the soda throws the empty cans by the stream. In one place, the empty cans were tossed back in the stream. If you drink it, it becomes your trash. Pack it out! Perhaps the "Trail angel" should come pick up this mess.

I have seen these cans in streams since Virginia. Will I see them all the way to Maine? This is one of the ways that I see that "Trail angeling" has gotten out of hand. While I appreciate acts of selfless kindness, I expected this hike to be hard, and I don't want to be babied and taken care of with cans of soda in a stream.

If you really want to be a Trail angel, maintain the Trail, clean a privy, build a shelter, pack out trash, pick up a hiker hitching into a faraway town on a rainy day. These people are true angels. Please don't bring civilization into the woods, especially in such a large way, with hundreds of sodas in streams in Virginia and Maryland.

Some people treat thru-hikers like celebrities. There's nothing extraordinary about me, and I didn't come out here looking for help. I want to find my own way.

Volunteer Side of Ridgerunning

By John Wright

Hardly a hiker on the Trail has not encountered a ridgerunner. The Conference's ridgerunner program has been around for more than a decade and is an established part of the summer Trail scene. Most are summer employees paid to hike (and re hike) a section of the A.T. who act as the "eyes and ears" of the managing clubs and agencies and offer assistance and advice to hikers and backpackers.

Like most Trail-management efforts, this program would never exist without the hard work of volunteers behind the scenes. The time clock starts in January and runs through April, as ridgerunners are recruited and hired. Many hours are spent reviewing applications and holding phone conversations with applicants. Once the field has been narrowed, volunteers spend more time conducting full interviews. Because most ridgerunners and caretakers are employed directly by the Trail clubs or local Trail-management agencies, time must go into employment paperwork and work agreements.

Once the employee is hired, though, the real fun begins.

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[NOTE: The outline of the masthead box above is the size of the official A.T. blaze, 2" x 6", for your reference.]

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Mid-Atlantic ridgerunner training is a joint effort of ridgerunners and volunteers. Ridgerunners from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, along with volunteers from the mid-Atlantic Trail clubs, come together for five days near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Some volunteers attend in order to develop working relationships with ridgerunners, while others will spend weekends on the Trail as ridgerunners themselves. Both groups learn wilderness first aid, the history and management of the A.T., and approaches for dealing with people and problems on the Trail. They also undergo a weekend of training in the principles of Leave No Trace. All participants take part in exercises to help them deal with difficult scenarios, such as lost hikers, injured hikers, or Trail crimes.

Once “basic training” is complete, volunteer supervisors take over to discuss specific Trail issues and introduce ridgerunners to local land-management agencies. Club volunteers spend occasional weekends in the field with the ridgerunners, providing guidance and companionship. In one case, a club officer’s family hosts a California ridgerunner during days off, providing a necessary support service for a young person far from Mom, apple pie, and a place to do laundry.

Not all ridgerunners in the mid-Atlantic region are paid. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has an established “Trail Patrol” program under which volunteers similar to ridgerunners cover trails. Trail Patrol members have attended ridgerunner training since 1996 and have used it to fulfill requirements for active membership. Two members of the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club from central Pennsylvania, Barry Baskin and Scott Birchman, also attended this year, both to learn ridgerunner skills and to compare notes with volunteers from the Potomac club.

John Wright, an associate regional representative in ATC’s mid-Atlantic office, oversees the Conference’s ridgerunner program.

Comprehensive A.T. Users’ Study Compiled

By Jim Bacon

A comprehensive survey based on the responses of almost 2,000 A.T. hikers and users is being reviewed by the Conference and its Trail-management partners, along with the researchers from the University of Vermont and Penn State University who conducted it.

The study, which is the first Trail-wide comprehensive study of use and users of the Appalachian Trail, was undertaken at the request of the Park Service, Forest Service, and ATC to help the Trail-management agencies and Trail-maintaining clubs better understand the quality of visitors’ experiences and develop future management plans and education initiatives based on the findings.

A survey of randomly selected users along the Appalachian Trail was undertaken in the summer and fall of 1999. Subjects were approached and asked if they would be willing to complete a mail-back questionnaire. A total of 2,847 agreed to participate and were mailed questionnaires. Nearly 2,000 questionnaires were completed and returned.

Preliminary findings include:

- There appear to be a significant number of users traveling in large groups.
- Hiking-related activities predominate, and viewing scenery is the most important activity on the A.T.
- The majority of users does not perceive the A.T. as “wilderness.”
- About one half of the people surveyed didn’t contact an organization for information about the A.T. before starting. Of those who did, the telephone was the most popular method of contact. Most people were very satisfied with the information.
- Users exhibited good knowledge of low-impact principles.
- The vast majority of users felt secure while on the Trail or in parking lots and surrounding communities. Hikers in the mid-Atlantic region reported feeling slightly less secure than those in other regions.
- Over all, the number of security incidents is very low; few hikers report those that do occur.
- There seems to be a sense of reduced security off the Trail, especially among thru-hikers, who often camp together for purposes of security.
- Thru-hikers experience much less solitude than they expected.
- Impacts to soil and vegetation were rated as more of a problem than social impacts, such as crowding.
- In general, high levels of satisfaction were reported by the users of the Trail.
- Total financial expenditures in Trail communities is relatively high, especially among the thru-hiker population.
- Most users of the A.T. are repeat users. Interestingly, however, thirty percent of thru-hikers were first-time users.
- Only a minority of users belong to clubs or Trail-maintenance organizations.
- Day-hikers are less likely to be “involved” with the A.T.
- Respondents exhibited relatively high levels of education and income.

Preliminary findings suggest that use and user characteristics may vary by geographic region of the Trail. Further analysis will be conducted and may illuminate additional differences in other study variables. This information will be provided to Trail managers in order to help them make more informed management decisions concerning the A.T. and its users.

Jim Bacon helped administer the study as a graduate student at the School of Natural Resources at the University of Vermont.

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have been avoided or covered with the trail surface.

In 1997, long-time Trail volunteer Dick Blake realized that a National Park Service tract of land purchased for the A.T. corridor featured suitable terrain for wheelchair access. Blake, the monitor coordinator and overseer of lands for the trails committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Connecticut Chapter, scouted the route in 1999, along with his wife, Alice, in her wheelchair. "Except for lifting the chair over two blowdowns, we had no major problems maneuvering through the terrain," Blake said.

From concept to completion, the accessible trail involved the work of dozens of people, including more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time.

Peter Jensen of Openspace Management, a trail-design and -building firm in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, prepared the design for the proposed trail in February 1999. Jensen's plan notes that the primary challenge was to identify a route that would require the least modification, yet provide the greatest access for all. Currently, accessible trails are designed using a set of guidelines developed by the Recreation Access Advisory Committee in 1994. Jensen, a former Board of Managers member, was ATC's representative to a federal committee developing further guidelines.

The proposal was then reviewed by the Appalachian Trail Conference, the Connecticut Chapter, and the National Park Service. Trail managers said that the extremely flat terrain, combined with the "front-country" setting, made this an ideal place to experiment with accessibility on the A.T. without compromising the Trail's remote and primitive character.

When the plan was approved, members of the Connecticut Chapter went to work raising funds and determining a construction schedule. Fife Landscaping, a Falls Village company, was hired to build the new treadway, with assistance from club members and other volunteers.

The primary materials used for the tread are processed gravel and stone dust. The base material is 1½-inch processed gravel, containing crushed stone, compacted to a firm, stable status. The surfacing is ¾-inch stone dust, derived from basalt-based traprock. The dark color of the surfacing material was selected for durability and aesthetics.

The tread-construction process included the following steps:

1. Raking off leaf litter and stockpiling it along the route for later use.
2. Cutting protruding roots and disposing of cuttings out of sight.
3. Grubbing out protruding stumps.
4. Removing rocks where designated.
5. Constructing fill retainers and installing sidehill cuts and drainages where designed.
6. Compacting treadway with a vibratory roller.
7. Installing a top coat of stone dust.
8. Rolling stone dust to the required density.
9. Raking back leaf litter to cover the tread's edges.
10. Monitoring the tread surface for depressions, filling them as needed, and rolling the surface.

Final costs are expected to be in the vicinity of \$70,000, Blake reports. Funding came from a variety of sources, including Connecticut's Recreational Trails Program, ATC, the Park Service, AMC, the J. Walter Bissell Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

A brochure, entitled "Welcome to an Accessible Section of the Appalachian Trail," was created with the assistance of Chet Stover, a Connecticut Chapter member. It includes directions to the Trail, local history, and information about the creation of this accessible portion of the Appalachian Trail.

For more information about accessible-trail standards, contact your regional ATC office.

Jody L. Bickel is associate regional representative in ATC's New England Regional Office.



Volunteers and staff representing AMC, ATC, the NPS A.T. Park Office, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection enjoyed perfect weather at scenic Rand's View on their hike commemorating the new memorandum of understanding. (Photo: Deno Contos)

Connecticut Memorandum Renewed for Ten Years

As part of the accessible-trail dedication, A.T. officials signed a new "Memorandum of Understanding for Management of the Appalachian Trail in Connecticut" to commit their respective organizations to ten more years of cooperative A.T. management.

Twenty Trail managers who went on a five-mile "partnership hike" prior to the ceremony also had an opportunity to see several of the highlights of the Trail in Connecticut, including the Limestone Springs Shelter, Rand's View, and the summit of Prospect Mountain. The partnership hike, an idea borrowed from the southern national forests where similar hikes have been held, offered participants numerous opportunities to renew old friendships and exchange ideas, information, and news about managing the Trail in Connecticut.

Campsite Design, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation Workshop

By Bill Rogers

The areas around The Priest, Harpers Creek, and Maupin Field shelters in Virginia showed the symptoms clearly—trampled vegetation, bootleg campsites where vegetation either has been trampled or just plain worn away, exposed soil, tree damage, litter, nonuse of the latrine at those sites far away from shelters, and sites cleared too close to shelters.

Those shelters host many overnight visitors, especially groups, and they plainly showed the impact of unrestricted, open camping. That is why, in November 1999, a group of Tidewater A.T. Club and Natural Bridge A.T. Club folks, along with Conference representatives Bob Proudman (Harpers Ferry), Mike Dawson and Teresa Martinez (Central and Southwest Virginia), Morgan Sommerville and Ben Lawhon (Deep South), and Pete Irvine and Pat Egan of the U.S. Forest Service, joined Dr. Jeff Marion to review camping impacts.

The U.S. Geological Survey's Marion, leader of the Virginia Tech Cooperative Park Studies Unit and one of only three recreation ecologists in the nation, has been cooperating through ATC with member clubs and land-management staff members in a series of visits to high-use camping areas up and down the Trail. Marion led evening and on-site discussions, with much give and take, that centered on those high-use impacts and what can be done to unobtrusively reduce or redirect them.

Remember, part of the "Trail Experience," as defined by the ATC Board of Managers, includes the words "unfettered and unimpeded by competing sights and sounds." We know folks are going to camp near shelters and water supplies. We know people are going to be attracted to shelters that are easy to reach or that offer circle-hike possibilities. Some folks will want to gather for social interaction, then separate for more private camping.

We, the Trail managers and maintainers, need to both protect A.T. resources and provide high-quality experiences. To reduce over-all impact at those three particular shelter areas, the group decided that providing a few level tent areas (not platforms) and fire rings would entice campers to pitch their tents only at resistant locations set back from the Trail. That "reduction in freedom" would actually bring about a better camping experience in a more pleasant setting.

Following the shelter visits, Marion prepared case studies that provided background data, described problems and previous management actions, and provided suggestions tailored to each area. In early May, the Conference hosted a workshop at Lake Sherando, combined with hands-on work at the Maupin Field Shelter. We scouted the entire area to identify tenting areas that could be minimally developed as "permanent" campsites and to identify areas where we wanted to discourage camping.

When I first joined the Tidewater club in the late 1970s, the area in front of the shelter had been reduced by overuse to nothing but dirt and mud. Thanks to our "friend," the



Bill Lynn of the Tidewater A.T. Club practices "iceberging" a rock—planting it where it will discourage camping. (Photo: Bill Rogers)

gypsy moth, the forest canopy has opened, and we now have much grass in the shelter area, a durable surface (as suggested by Leave No Trace principles) upon which to camp. Unfortunately, some of this is right in front of the shelter, imposing a social impact.

To prevent close-in camping at the shelter, we "iceberged" large rocks by burying them two-thirds underground. In the grassy area a bit further away, we installed a fire ring to encourage durable-surface camping.

Up in the woods nearby, where there were multiple bootleg campsites and rock fire rings, we identified selected spots to develop into well-separated "desirable" tent sites. In one, we leveled four 12' x12' tent sites and a fire-ring site. Each site was framed on two sides with black locust logs, and a few rocks were used to denote the other two sides to make the sites attractive and readily identifiable to campers. Adjacent areas where tenting had also occurred were "unimproved" by iceberging additional rocks.

In the future, with advice and approval from our agency partner, we may be able to plant native vegetation to provide screening between the camping areas and to speed recovery in this open-forest area.

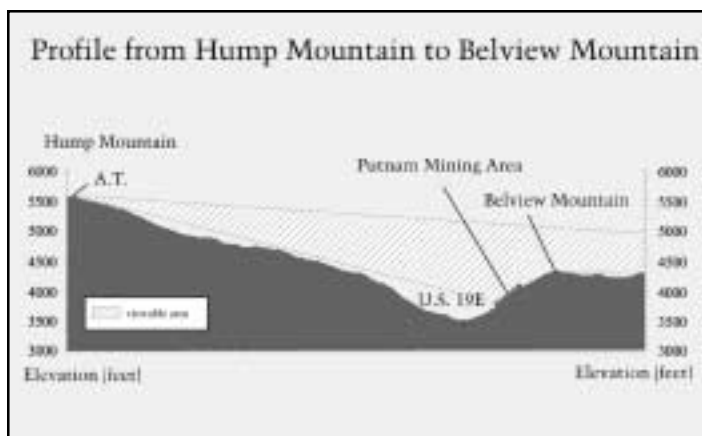
We also will look at minimum signage to point folks in the right direction without a negative visual impact on the area. We also will try to provide small, formal access trails to the sites and to rid the area of unnecessary social trails.

Bill Rogers is a member of the Tidewater A.T. Club. For more background, see "May the Forethought (and Studies) Be with Your Campsite-Protection Planning," The Register, Summer 1999.

Quarry Permit in N.C. Revoked

Following months of complaints from Trail supporters, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) revoked the permit of a new gravel quarry that already has severely marred the remarkable views from the Appalachian Trail on Hump Mountain on the North Carolina-Tennessee border.

Charles H. Gardner, director of DENR's division of land resources, took the administrative action September 6. Quarry operator Clarke Stone Company had thirty days to appeal the decision to the state Mining Commission, but Gardner asked it to cease all operations except to reclaim the land as required by the permit, completing that work within six months. The agency in late August had conducted a "public meeting" on the quarry's mitigation proposals, which it asked for in mid-April after sending Clarke a "notice of intention to revoke permit." The quarry operations continued despite that action.



In late July, the Appalachian Trail Conference joined neighbors of the quarry and the National Parks and Conservation Association in suing DENR and the quarry to try to stop its operations. After a hearing August 21, a Superior Court judge reserved decision on the motions for a preliminary injunction and a finding that the permit was improperly issued. ATC's attorneys were assessing the effect of Gardner's action on the lawsuit. The state in September asked that the suit be dismissed and its own action against Clark be substituted.

The other plaintiffs are the unincorporated Association of Concerned Citizens to Protect Belview Mountain and quarry neighbors Faye Williams and Ollie Cox.

Gardner said the mine violated state law because of its "significantly adverse effect" on the Appalachian Trail. "There remains much credible evidence...that the mine's visibility and audibility from this portion of the Trail would have significant adverse effects, both visual and acoustical, on the purposes of the Trail," he wrote the quarry owners.

The 151-acre quarry, known as the Putnam Mine, also was opposed by the National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office and more than four thousand persons who sent e-mails of protest to the state since March.

OLD-TIME CONSTRUCTION—

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The key to timber framing is large, solid timbers, which are hard to come by these days. Timbers for the new shelter were salvaged from a barn located on A.T. lands in the area. When the National Park Service decided to demolish the barn a couple of years ago, members of the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club volunteered to clean it out, and the mid-Atlantic crew disassembled the timbers under direction of the guild. The timbers were stored at the Scott Farm work center along the Trail in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, until the appropriate use could be found for them. A couple of years later, along came what Karen Lutz, ATC's mid-Atlantic regional representative, called "the perfect project." It was a harmonious convergence. All the elements came together: the need to replace a nearby shelter, the materials (timbers and tools), a club willing to undertake the project, and funds for instructors on how to put it all together.

A More Primitive Experience

Why timber framing? It is, after all, a more difficult and expensive method of construction than using pre-cut sawmill lumber for one of the approved shelter configurations. Lutz explains that a shelter constructed through timber framing contributes to the primitive "Trail experience" for hikers. "Shelters should provide a dry resting place for hikers," she says, "but there is an intangible factor, too. For a structure intended to last for decades, visual characteristics are very important. For example, a timber-frame shelter, with beautifully crafted joinery—and, at least in this case, from tree species that are native and were probably originally harvested from nearby woodlands—has an entirely different feel than a shelter built with 'stick construction' and sided with T-111 or other high-tech materials."

Furthermore, Lutz says, the timbers that became the frame of the shelter are being reused about five miles away from the barn out of which they were salvaged—a way of recycling. It also gives the Trail crews the chance to use what they've learned on other projects, such as making bridges and signboards, and keep those skills and the craft alive.

Let the Frames Begin

And so, on a brilliant, unseasonably hot Saturday early in May, nine instructors from the Timber Framers Guild met about twenty volunteers from the Mountain Club of Maryland and began the process of teaching the old craft over two successive three-day weekends. Timbers were pulled out of storage and laid on sawhorses in the sun, where they were evaluated for usefulness as beams, joists, posts, sills, or connector plates. The instructors demonstrated how to examine, measure, plane, groove, and trench the timbers to determine the usable portion in the appropriate length. It was slow, hot, sometimes-frustrating work. Timbers were warped or worn unevenly and needed squaring off. Each volunteers' markings had to be checked and rechecked on four sides to determine the best surface to use. Unlike sawmill lumber,

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each timber was unique, and the builders only got one shot at shaping it.

While the instructors and volunteers were beginning to make the cuts in the timbers to form the connectors and slots for the tenons and mortises, Donna Williams, a member of the guild's board of directors and one of the chief instructors for the workshop, took a moment to explain about the guild. It was founded in 1984 and has 1,200 members, both professionals and amateurs, across North America. Based near the Trail in Becket, Massachusetts, its mission focuses on education, and its members work with nonprofit and volunteer groups, such as ATC, to teach others the craft and thereby increase membership. Williams said a particular harmony resides in connecting with the Appalachian Trail community, where there is an appreciation for using primitive materials and techniques in building structures for the backcountry. (She is well known at ATC, having previously been a crew leader, ridgerunner, and associate regional representative. Another guild instructor, Bob Smith, is also a former ATC crew leader.)

As the days continued, the crew assembled the frame in sections. When it was ready, it was transported from the work center to a farmer's field at the base of Cove Mountain. The nearest road crossings to the shelter site are 3.5 miles in one direction and 5.1 miles in the other, so the farmer, Warren Watts, graciously agreed to use his heavy-duty tractor and log skidder to haul the frame sections the three-quarters of a mile up the steep mountain along his farm's paths.

The crew had prepared the foundation for the new shelter during several work trips in 1999. Once the frame sections were at the site, the crew began final assembly of the frame. Ted Sanderson, the club's supervisor of shelters, described it this way in the club's newsletter: "Following the reading of a traditional timber-framer poem, stressing the safety of the participants, the final raising began. Entire wall sections called bents were raised from horizontal to vertical by as many as a dozen or more people, with tenons gently settling into mortise slots in the sill beams resting atop the concrete foundations. When the three main walls were in place and tied together, timbers for the next level were hand-lifted to workers stationed above, and the process was repeated. When the last timber was permanently mounted, the timber framers placed the traditional pine bough at the highest point of the structure to formally end the work."

Through the summer and fall of 2000, volunteers have worked to attach the roof, sides, floors, and bunks of the new shelter and demolish the old shelter. Thus, ATC will add another entry to a very short list of timber-frame shelters along the Trail.

Martin Sussman has been a member of the Mountain Club of Maryland since 1992. He has served as a hike leader and edited the club's Hiker Highpoints newsletter for four years. The timber-frame shelter is located at one end of the Trail section he maintains.



Some of the crew and instructors at the work center.



This sawing has Bob Hale's undivided attention.



Donna Williams shows the guys how it's done.



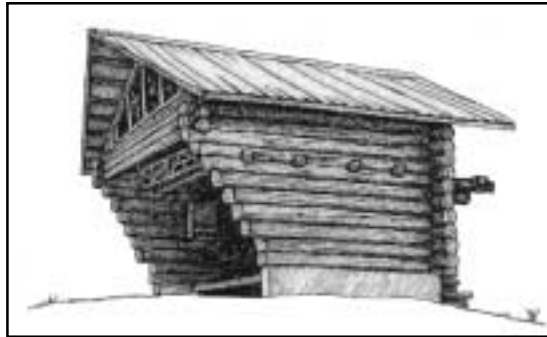
Up it goes. (Photos: Martin Sussman)

The **Appalachian Mountain Club**, Landmark Volunteers, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) completed a Trail relocation in Massachusetts' Beartown State Forest during two weeks in July. Landmark Volunteers, a nonprofit summer-service organization for high school students recruited most of the workers, who ranged in age from fifteen to seventeen and came from around the country. The project relocated a low-lying section of the Trail to a higher, drier location, adding 788 feet of new Trail, 64 steps, 385 feet of crush-and-fill, 75 feet of cribbing, and 150 feet of junk crib and scree.

The **Green Mountain Club** has developed a group-hiking guide for Vermont's Long Trail and Appalachian Trail. It includes recommendations on planning group outings, information about the club and its management partners and advice on obtaining permits and paying fees and contacting the Leave No Trace organization. The brochure was developed with assistance from ATC's Grants-for-Outreach program.

The **Potomac Appalachian Trail Club**, students in Gallaudet University's Model Secondary School Program, and other volunteers are making progress on the Ed Garvey Shelter. The log shelter was initially constructed at a site in Bowie, Mary-

ALONG THE TRAIL



Garvey Shelter (Sketch by Sharon Garvey).

land, then dismantled and taken to the permanent site on the Appalachian Trail near Weverton, Maryland, where it is being reconstructed.

On August 15, three hikers in wheelchairs and two on crutches climbed the 4.6-mile trail to the **Appalachian Mountain Club's** Galehead Hut in New Hampshire. When the hut was rebuilt in 1999 and 2000, the U.S. Forest Service required

that it be made accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Many in the Trail community and elsewhere argued that the climb was too difficult for persons with mobility disabilities to reach the hut, and, therefore, none would ever use the accessible facilities. The opposition to the reconstruction galvanized the disabled hikers to plan the ascent. They received assistance from Northeast Passage, a University of New Hampshire program for people with disabilities, and We Media, an advocacy group for the disabled, as well as other sponsors. The group left about 7:30 a.m. and arrived at the hut about twelve hours later, to the cheers of hut staff and guests. The wheelchairs, which were designed for use on rugged terrain, had bars protruding from their fronts that enabled friends and family members to help maneuver them over obstructions, such as roots and rocks.

According to a **Sierra Club** poll, sixty-three percent of Mainers surveyed favor the creation of a three-million-acre North Woods National Park.

The concept was favored by fifty-five percent of respondents in the Bangor region, encompassing northern and eastern Maine. Abacus Associates in Hatfield, Mass., conducted telephone interviews with five hundred likely voters in late April. Fifty-four percent of all respondents preferred that the government gradually acquire land for a national park where no logging would be allowed, compared to twenty-five percent who favored buying development rights from timber companies but allowing them to continue to harvest timber.

A man bitten by a rattlesnake in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area was fined \$50 by the National Park Service for violating a prohibition against "feeding, touching, teasing, frightening, or intentionally disturbing" wildlife at the park. The man was attending an Appalachian Mountain Club wilderness-awareness school when he picked up the four-foot-long snake, displayed it to others in the group, and was bitten when he released it. He was treated with antivenin but had an allergic reaction that resulted in his spending several days in an intensive-care unit.

SIDE TRAILS

Laura Waterman, along with friends and admirers of the late backcountry writer and advocate of wilderness ethics Guy Waterman, recently announced

formation of the **Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund**. The purpose of the fund is to provide financial resources for educational and trail-maintenance projects in the alpine areas of the northeastern United States, a number of which are crossed by the A.T. In an August letter announcing the fund's formation, Ms. Waterman said that she hopes it will be used to continue the type of work that she and her husband pioneered on New Hampshire's Franconia Ridge. That was a blend of low-impact maintenance, hiker education, and the active involvement of passing hikers, who often paused to help them lift a rock or repair a scree wall. This approach improved the footpath and allowed native alpine plants to recover while reducing perceived impacts to the Trail and increasing the wildness of this beautiful, popular, and wind-swept ridge. The fund will be used to make awards on a matching basis to nonprofit organizations that work on trails that traverse open summits, exposed ridgelines, or areas of fragile alpine vegetation. To learn more, write Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund, P.O. Box 1064, East Corinth, VT 05040.

A.T. Maintainers Praised for National Trails Day Work

By Valerie Shrader

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club and the A.T. Maintainers Committee of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club received national recognition for their June 3, 2000, National Trails Day (NTD) events. The events were singled out among the roughly 3,000 such activities held on the first Saturday in June. Each won the DuPont Cordura "Trails for Tomorrow" Award. Only ten winners nationwide are acknowledged for trail conservation and improvement efforts each year.

The Georgia club won for the second consecutive year. This year's event involved about two hundred people and included several different hikes within Amicalola Falls State Park. Fifteen miles of the Trail received maintenance, and one mile was constructed. (The Konnarock crew also worked on the relocation on the Georgia club's section on NTD.) Further, the club invited youth groups, such as the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts, to participate in activities to fulfill the day's theme, "Trail Stewardship: It's a Kid's Thing." Children hiked park trails, learned about outdoor ethics, and competed to receive prizes for collecting trash. Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), was the club's major partner for the event.

The Smoky Mountain Club's event continued a successful tradition of award-winning programs on National Trails Day; events sponsored by the club as a whole won national recognition in 1997 and 1998. This year, some 235 people participated along the A.T. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, rehabilitating the Pecks Corner Shelter and working along thirteen miles of the Trail from Double Springs Gap to the Boulevard Trail, installing and cleaning water bars, trimming vegetation, building steps, and recrowning turnpike. Cosponsors included ATC, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Friends of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Like the Georgia club's event, many local businesses and organizations also supported the day's activities.

Both groups of maintainers received \$500 from DuPont, as well as approximately \$2,000 in gear. One representative from each winning organization was flown to Salt Lake City to receive the award on the eve of the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market trade show. The American Hiking Society organizes National Trails Day each June to celebrate America's trails. Other national sponsors include Altrec.com, *Backpacker* magazine, DuPont Cordura nylon, Thorlo socks, Vasque Outdoor Footwear, Eastern Mountain Sports, Galyan's, and REI.

Many other ATC-affiliated organizations participated this year. The Green Mountain Club was the statewide organizer in Vermont and coordinated nine events, four of which involved the A.T. A hike was planned from Norwich to West Hartford; work was conducted on a relocation on the Long Trail-Appalachian Trail at Deer Leap, near Sherburne Pass; a new outhouse was built for the Tucker Johnson Shelter; and a high-elevation maintenance trip from the Governor Clement Shelter to U.S. 4 in Mendon was sponsored.

The Appalachian Mountain Club Berkshire Chapter held both work trips and guided hikes from its Mt. Greylock Visitor Center, several of which were along the A.T. Trained crew

leaders led all the maintenance and construction parties. AMC also set up booths in front of Bascom Lodge for public information purposes, staffed by representatives of ATC and the Massachusetts Division of Forests and Parks.

The AMC Connecticut Chapter sponsored a couple of hikes along various sections of the A.T., and volunteers also installed rock steps and worked on erosion control along the Mohawk Trail, the old A.T. route that is now a loop trail.

Volunteers from the Batona Hiking Club conducted a maintenance trip, as did the Philadelphia Trail Club, during which many briar patches were removed. The Allentown Hiking Club celebrated with two events, one a maintenance trip on the Trail with Boy Scouts focused on removing annual growth. Members of the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club conducted general trail-clearing, removing trash and fire rings, and the York Hiking Club put new shingles on the Clark's Ferry Shelter.

Volunteers from ATC's national office, the National Park Service's A.T. Park Office, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and a local Eastern Mountain Sports store tackled maintenance on the A.T. and the blue-blazed Loudoun Heights Trail. The group divided into two work parties and clipped and lopped to meet midway through the section. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club hosted numerous events in local parks and on area trails, including two work trips on the A.T., one in Maryland and one in Pennsylvania.

In North Carolina, the Nantahala Hiking Club combined its celebration of the ATC's 75th anniversary and National Trails Day with a ranger-led hike focusing on ecology and recreation. The club also sponsored four additional hikes, each with its own theme, as part of its anniversary series.

A number of other ATC-member clubs also observed National Trails Day with local events that did not involve the Appalachian Trail.

N.C. Grants \$45,200 for Smokies Work

By Valerie Shrader

The Conference, through its southern regional office, was recently awarded a 2000 Recreational Trails Program grant from the state of North Carolina. The \$45,200 grant will be used to relocate and rehabilitate the A.T. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and includes funds to purchase tools and a van for ATC's Rocky Top volunteer crew.

The van was sought since the park was unable to supply a vehicle to transport the crew to and from the work sites, and ATC owns no suitable vehicle. In mid-August, the van was purchased and made available to this year's Rocky Top crew. The cache of new tools also was acquired in August.

Grant funds also will allow for the formation of a volunteer equestrian crew, which will most likely operate in 2001. The sections of the Trail to be rehabilitated, along with the new Trail to be built, are located on highly eroded sections of

—Continued on page 12

Trail Maintenance Quiz

The answers to the questions presented here are not necessarily definitive but represent the generally accepted practices as outlined in ATC's other publications, particularly Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance. If you disagree with any of the answers offered, or have additional advice to add on one of these topics, or even ideas for future questions, please let me know.

—J. T. Horn, Regional Representative, New England

1. The most useful device for measuring grade or slope is the:
 - a. Compass and ruler
 - b. Slopotometer
 - c. Clinometer
 - d. Tachometer
2. Sidehill trail should have an:
 - a. Outslope of five percent.
 - b. Outslope of ten percent to facilitate drainage.
 - c. Inslope of five percent.
 - d. Inslope of ten percent to facilitate tread stability.
3. The final step in any reconstruction or sidehill project should be to:
 - a. Check the rocks to see if they are still "set."
 - b. Spread humus and leaf litter to "naturalize" the work site.
 - c. Line the trail with rocks and logs.
 - d. Use a chisel to sign your name in any log construction.

(Answers are on page 12)

Seasonal Positions

Trail Crew Volunteers Wanted

Build the Appalachian Trail for the next millennium as a volunteer for 2001 seasonal Trail crews. No experience is required; professional crew leaders instruct participants in Trail-building techniques. Five different crews operate along the A.T. during the summer and fall months and are sponsored jointly by A.T. maintaining clubs, agency partners, and ATC. Special women-only and over-50 crews will continue to be offered next season. To learn more about the crew program and request an application, send a postcard with your name and address to: Crews, ATC, TR-01A/C, P.O. Box 10, Newport, VA 24128; call 540-544-7388; or e-mail <crews@appalachiantrail.org>.

Caretakers Needed in Smokies

Volunteer caretakers are needed in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2001. Highly experienced, outgoing, personable, hardworking hikers desired; must be 18 or older. Two-week minimum commitment required. Two different positions to be filled:

- From March 1 to June 1 near Fontana Dam, prefer former thru-hiker, Leave No Trace Master, *etc.*, to advise Class of '01 thru-hikers on proper Leave No Trace practices before they enter the park.
- From Memorial Day to Labor Day, caretakers needed to work around the Icewater Spring Shelter. Trail-maintenance and Leave No Trace experience is desirable.

Small stipend provided if desired. Specify which position, send for application, and return it ASAP. Caretaker, ATC, P.O. Box 2750, TR-01A/CT, Asheville, NC 28802; also inquire by e-mail, <atc-gntro@appalachiantrail.org>.

Ridgerunners or Caretakers Wanted

Promote Leave No Trace principles to your fellow hikers as a paid A.T. ridgerunner or caretaker. Several positions are available along the Appalachian Trail, with varying responsibilities. All positions are seasonal, with some offering employment up to eight months. Applicants must be eighteen or older, experienced backpackers, personable, and self-reliant; also need strong communications skills and familiarity with the Appalachian Trail. Trail-maintenance experience and first-aid certification would be helpful. Salaries vary accordingly to position. Return application by Dec. 31 for the best opportunities. Send inquiry to: Ridgerunner, ATC, P.O. Box 625, TR-01A/RR, Boiling Springs, PA 17007. Also inquire by e-mail at <ridgerunner@appalachiantrail.org>.

Crew Leaders Wanted

Trail-crew leaders and camp coordinators needed for volunteer crews on the Appalachian Trail. Trail-building, outdoor supervisory experience required for crew leaders; group-cooking and logistics experience for camp coordinators. Positions are physically demanding and require camping in the field. Pay: \$300 per week and up, plus room and board. Crew-leader trainee positions are also available, with a stipend. Send for application, and return by January 31: Crew Leaders, ATC, TR-01A/LC, P.O. Box 10, Newport, VA 24128. Inquire by e-mail at <crews@appalachiantrail.org>.

Caretaker Wanted for Blackburn Trail Center

Owned and operated by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, the Blackburn Trail Center is located on the A.T. in Virginia twelve miles south of Harpers Ferry. Blackburn is a premier stop for A.T. thru-hikers and day-hikers alike. The caretaker's duties include maintaining the trail center, hiker hostel, and campground. Should have experience in offering comfort and company to weary A.T. hikers. Prefer couple with knowledge of the Trail and hikers' needs. Very modest stipend offered, along with a fabulous summer experience. Dates run from mid-March through October. Send a letter of application to Chris Brunton, 9000 Piney Grove Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031, or e-mail <trlboss@dellnet.com>. Call (703) 560-8070 if you have questions.

Helpful Hints from the Field

By Tom Bradbury

(Condensed and reprinted with permission from *The MAINEtainer*, newsletter of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club)

During twelve years working on trails and other conservation-related projects throughout Maine, I have learned a number of strategies and techniques, which I will call “helpful hints,” for making things go smoother and safer out in the field.

Some I learned from the “school of hard knocks” (I once spent more than two hours chopping a pinched saw out of a blowdown), and some I learned listening to and observing various Trail folks I have had the good fortune to work with.

Unpinching a Saw

When doing chainsaw work, especially clearing blowdowns, your chainsaw may become “pinched” (trapped in a tree) due to unforeseen compression forces.

Send along an extra bar and chain. If the saw becomes inextricably pinched, remove the power head from the stuck bar and chain, attach the extra one, and you’re back in business. Just don’t get it stuck, too, before you free the first one!

Pack in Small Fuel Bottles

Use backpackers’ fuel bottles (such as those made by MSR) to carry chainsaw gas and oil into the backcountry. They are easily packable and help distribute the weight between crew members.

Collar that Sledge

Sledgehammer handles are notorious for breaking, especially when used by inexperienced folks. (But, how else are we going to get experience?) We have tried commercial rubber guards, but found that they still allow the handle to be chewed up where it meets the head. Instead, we have welded two-inch collars made from iron pipe onto the heads. I have seen people drive a ten-inch spike entirely by hitting the collar. We also squeeze the collars into an oval shape in a vise before attaching, to fit the handles better.

Instant Level

A half-full hiker’s water bottle (such as the model made by Nalgene) laid on its side, can become a crude level if you need one in a pinch.

Crucial Equipment

Duct tape—need I say more?

Tom Bradbury is a member of the Maine A.T. Club’s caretaker-ridgerunner education committee.

Vibram Volunteers

This year, three Appalachian Trail volunteers were selected Vibram Volunteers of the Year from the nominations received by the sponsoring company.

The president of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC), Eddi Minche, was selected from that state. Minche has been a tireless Trail volunteer, serving the club not only as president, but also as trails supervisor, information and education director, and club activities chair. She has helped organize many GATC events, including National Trails Day, and is a section overseer and Trail maintainer. If that’s not enough, Minche recently has taken responsibility for monitoring a natural-heritage site along the A.T. in Georgia.

Another Trail volunteer with boundless energy—Phyllis Henry of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club (SMHC)—was selected from Tennessee. Henry has organized all the National Trails Day celebrations for the club, including three national award-winning events, and serves as the vice chair of administration for the A.T. Maintainers Committee of the SMHC. Henry has organized the non-SMHC Trail volunteers in the Smokies and served as an important liaison with A.T. maintainers in the horse-riding community. Henry is also a Trail maintainer in the heavily visited Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The late Bill Foot, Vibram Volunteer of the Year for Virginia, left a legacy of Trail advocacy. He was an A.T. thru-hiker and a member of the ATC Board of Managers who also served the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club in a number of capacities, including president. In addition to participating in major Trail-building projects, Foot was the driving force behind the construction of a pedestrian bridge for the Trail crossing of the James River, securing the funding for the \$1.5-million project through a series of state/federal grants. He also was involved with the American Discovery Trail; he and his wife, Laurie, were the first to traverse that route on foot and on bicycle. Foot’s widow accepted his award. (Bill Foot’s obituary, along with a story about the James River bridge, appeared in the summer issue of *The Register*.)

In addition to the three individuals above, the winner from Pennsylvania, Ed Beck, served two terms as president of the Keystone Trails Association. More than a dozen Trail-maintaining organizations belong to that federation, an ATC supporting organization.

To nominate a volunteer for a Volunteer of the Year award in 2001, visit Vibram’s Website at <www.vibram.com>. Nomination forms are normally due in early May.

ATC CALENDAR

2000

- October 14 Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club 70th Anniversary and Dedication of James River Bridge
- October 19–22 National Land Trust Rally, Portland, Ore.
- October 21 Mid-Atlantic Regional Management Committee Meeting; Boiling Springs High School, Boiling Springs, Pa.
- October 28–29 New England Regional Management Committee Meeting; Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee, Vt.
- November 17–19 ATC Board of Managers Meeting, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

2001

- January 1 Copy Deadline, Spring Issue of *The Register*
- March 23–25 Southern Regional Management Committee Meeting, Camp Cheerio, Elkin, N.C.
- April 1 Copy Deadline, Summer Issue of *The Register*
- April 27–29 ATC Board of Managers Meeting, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.
- June 1 National Trails Day
- July 1 Copy Deadline, Fall Issue of *The Register*
- July 13–20 ATC Biennial Conference, Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, Pa.

GRANT—

Continued from page 9

the A.T. open to horse use in the park, between Spence Field and Mollies Ridge shelters. Improvements also will be made to the Trail around the Pecks Corner Shelter, and renovations to the shelter's facilities.

"We are extremely pleased that the state of North Carolina awarded us this grant," said Morgan Sommerville, regional representative for Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. "The Rocky Top crew work is making significant improvements to the quality of the A.T. experience in the Smokies. Without this funding, crew operation for 2000 was in question."

Answers to Trail-Maintenance Quiz

(From page 10)

1. c. The clinometer is a useful device that allows you to sight a fixed object and read off of a scale that will tell you slope in either degrees or percent slope.

2. a. An outslope of five percent is ideal to allow for water to drain off of the tread while still providing a stable and comfortable walking surface. A five percent slope is the equivalent of a one-inch drop in eighteen inches.

3. b. By spreading humus and leaf litter, a Trail worker can "naturalize" the site, disguising the area impacted by the construction. This also stimulates revegetation and minimizes erosion of the bare, disturbed soil.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONFERENCE
799 Washington Street
P.O. Box 807
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425-0807

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