

# The Register

## The Online Volunteer Newsletter for the Appalachian Trail

*A publication of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Fall 2006*

### Sidehill

*By Hawk Metheny and Robert Proudman*

“**Looking out for the A.T.**” is our theme for this issue of *The Register*.

Former Cumberland Valley A.T. Club president Melanie Wertz shares a negative experience regarding development adjacent to the Trail, and we share some information on responding to Trail threats.

Appalachian Trail Chief Ranger Bob Gray who will retire early next year following a distinguished National Park Service career, contributes to the “looking-out” theme with his own retrospective.

ATC’s Stewardship Council met recently. Its role: to oversee conservation programs, refine policies and support stewardship of the A.T. and its surrounding lands. Issues discussed at that meeting will be brought to the Regional Partnership Committees.

Our Trail crews and other seasonal programs are winding down for the year, even as other activities are gearing up, most notably the Environmental Monitoring Symposium scheduled for November. The massive Bear Mountain project in New York continues apace. Our winter issue will have updates on those programs, as well as on next year’s biennial conference to be held at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey.

In other news, Conservation Director Mari Omland will be leaving ATC later this year. Mari’s contributions in just two short years are extraordinary. She reorganized ATC’s Land Trust program, synchronizing ATC’s standards and practices with new national standards, formed a new Board-level committee and hired new Trust staff. She started work with The Conservation Fund to establish a “community outreach” program (more information to come in a future issue of *The Register*). She worked with all of ATC’s regional offices and programs to upgrade natural- and cultural-resource monitoring work; and, perhaps most significantly, encouraged ATC to become more deliberate and professional in its investments in staff and volunteer development.

Finally, in the article entitled “From Conference to Conservancy,” ATC Chair Brian T. Fitzgerald provides our leadership’s perspective and poses three questions for your consideration. Please reflect on those and speak to them at upcoming Regional Partnership Committee meetings, or contact Brian or Dave Startzell directly at [atcexecs@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:atcexecs@appalachiantrail.org). As always, we look to you for your wisdom and guidance.

**Hawk Metheny**, Stewardship Council Chair

**Robert Proudman**, Director of Conservation Operations

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### News

#### **From Conference to Conservancy**

It has been nearly three years since ATC's Board of Managers endorsed our new strategic direction, and we've made numerous changes to our organization and programs in the last couple of years. Now seems like a good time to take a look at where we are in our transition from a conference to a conservancy and fine tune our plan to change the organization.

The leadership, board and staff of ATC remain committed to the direction we chose back in 2003. That direction can be summarized as expanding our traditional trail- and resource-management and land-conservation programs, implementing new and innovative approaches in those programs, and developing new programs in community engagement, place-based education and other areas that will broaden support for the A.T. And, most importantly, maintaining and enhancing the A.T. tradition of volunteer-based stewardship.

It's probably impossible to make major changes in an organization without encountering some difficulties along the way, but our strategies are beginning to show results. The message of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has begun to resonate—our membership is growing, we're expanding our donor base, and we're forging new partnerships. Nonetheless, securing adequate funding and staffing for our traditional programs while we build relationships with new supporters remains a challenge. We're confident those relationships will benefit ATC, Trail-maintaining clubs and the A.T. in the long-term, but we remind ourselves that we have to be patient. We've also learned that it isn't easy to appeal to new members and supporters and still retain the traditions that are so important to our loyal, long-time members, and we're continually trying to find the right balance.

Over the next few months we're going to be addressing several important questions:

- What programs should we emphasize so that we continue to meet our traditional responsibilities but also achieve some of the broad goals of our strategic direction, such as building a stronger and broader constituency for the A.T.?
- What is the optimal management structure to achieve our goals?
- How can we more effectively use *A.T. Journeys*, *The Register*, our website and other means to communicate with our members and Trail-maintaining clubs?

We welcome your participation in this dialogue. Dave Startzell and I plan to attend several of the fall Regional Partnership Committee meetings where we hope to have constructive discussions about these issues.

**-Brian T. Fitzgerald, ATC Chair**

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### **Ranger Reflections—Where Did the Time Go?**

**By Robert W. Gray**, Chief Ranger, NPS, Appalachian Trail Park Office

This month marks my eleventh year as chief ranger for the Appalachian Trail. It is hard to grasp how quickly the years have passed. I will be retiring in January with thirty years of service to national parks and the American public and have been asked to share some of my experiences in “rangering” on the Trail.

Without a doubt, my years spent with the A.T., and especially its dedicated volunteers and staffers, have been the most fulfilling years of my career.

For nine years, as the only ranger assigned specifically to the Appalachian Trail, we had fun using the pseudonym The Lone Ranger. When Todd Remaley, our first field ranger, was hired, that nickname no longer fit (nor did we want to refer to him as Tonto). My wife then came up with a new title, The Ranger Formerly Known as Lone.

Whatever the law-enforcement rangers assigned to the A.T. are called, the job is unique. Of course, we are not truly “lone” in any sense of the word; we work with thousands of volunteers, dozens of staffers, and hundreds of agencies and organizations up and down the Trail. Much of our time is spent not in traditional “ranger” work, but in fostering relationships between our volunteer base and local emergency service providers to better protect the Trail and its users.

#### People Challenges

My first full year as an A.T. Park Ranger was 1996, the year two women were brutally murdered while hiking in Shenandoah National Park. While not an A.T.-related crime, the murders were linked to the Trail by the news media and reported across the country. Serious crimes have occurred on the Trail, including homicides in Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Incidents like those are not supposed to happen on the Appalachian Trail. It shocks the conscience.

One lasting benefit that came out of the Shenandoah incident was improved collaboration and cooperation among scores of A.T. managing partners and emergency responders. Since 1997, we have conducted one trail-wide and several statewide meetings of trail volunteers, local, state, and federal law-enforcement, and fire and emergency personnel. Those meetings foster improved communications and working relationships among the Trail community, emergency professionals and volunteers. That work will remain one of the most important jobs of future chief rangers.

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### Resource Challenges

I have also worked on numerous civil investigations, some successful, some less so. It is clear that, in addition to the relatively small number of this type of investigation, Appalachian Trail Rangers will become increasingly involved in property or resource problems.

Approximately 2,175 miles long, much of the Trail goes through existing national and state parks and forests and a federal wildlife refuge. Outside of those public lands, the Trail Act amendments of 1978 authorized the government to purchase what I call the connecting links, a relatively narrow corridor of land to protect the footpath. That connecting corridor encompasses more than 85,000 acres, and the resulting boundary is several times that of Yellowstone National Park.

### Management Challenges

The sheer size of the A.T. makes for a lot of protected natural and cultural resources and many neighbors. As the acquisition program winds down, there is a strong sense of responsibility in the Trail community not only for protecting the footpath but also the cultural and natural treasures within the Trail corridor. Frequently, our people-challenges and resource challenges come from adjoining landowners and communities. That is where the genius of cooperative management, and especially volunteer management, of the Trail comes to fruition.

Two park rangers working on a 2,175-mile trail with about three million visitors annually aren't going to get a whole lot done alone. The most important role of the Trail's chief ranger is to help volunteers do their jobs and to know when the heck to get out of their way.

*Ranger Gray and his wife, Susan, who met on a Clemson University Outing Club trip to the A.T. in 1972, have been married for 31 years. Before coming to the Appalachian Trail (his favorite assignment), he worked at several other NPS locations, including Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Bob will be retiring to Tennessee, where he plans to expand his beekeeping hobby.*

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### Recent Staff Changes at ATC

Finance and administration director Rich Hays has left ATC and Development Director Karen Kinney will leave ATC in December to pursue a Masters degree in Christian education at Union Theological Seminary.

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Director of conservation Mari Omland's responsibilities will shift to special projects, with particular emphasis on the upcoming environmental-monitoring symposium in November. She will leave ATC before the end of the year.

Executive director Dave Startzell has recruited former Board of Managers member Steve Paradis to act in an interim capacity as the Conservancy's chief operating officer. Steve resigned his current positions on the Stewardship Council and the Finance Committee and began work with the staff on September 25.

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### Maintainer's Tips

#### Hunting is allowed on or near most of the Appalachian Trail

**Be aware**—Know your local regulations and hunting seasons, particularly big game seasons (fall and early winter) and turkey seasons (fall and spring).

**Be seen**—wear blaze- or fluorescent-orange or other bright colors. Do not wear white during deer season or white, red, or blue during turkey seasons.

**Be heard**—whistle, sing, or talk.

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#### Sawyer Certification

**Check your sawyer certification card**—many certifications expire this year and next. You must have current certification to use a chain saw or crosscut saw on the Appalachian Trail. First-aid/CPR certifications also must be current. Contact your ATC regional office for information on workshops in your area.

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#### Blazing at Roads

“Over the entire length of the trail, I spent more time searching for my way on roads than I did in the woods.” That quote by David Miller (from *AWOL on the Appalachian Trail*, Wingspan Press, 2006, p.29) about his 2003 thru-hike, highlights a complaint often made to ATC about inadequate or absent blazing on roads. This is not only a nuisance for

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hikers, but also is a safety issue: Walking back and forth looking for blazes exposes a hiker to more vehicle traffic and increases the likelihood of drawing unwanted attention.

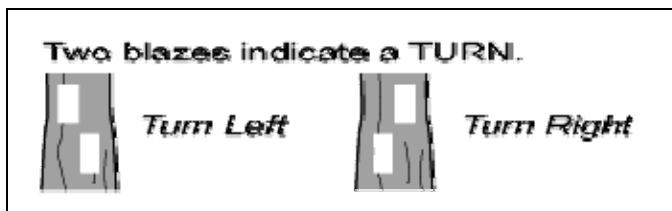
*Appalachian Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance*, ATC's Trail stewardship manual, offers the following guidance:

“Blazing needs to be continuous, even along roads or unmistakable parts of the footway. Immediately beyond any junction or road crossing, paint a blaze even if there is a directional sign. Place a second ‘safety blaze’ 50 to 100 feet beyond. Where club maintenance sections meet, check that blazes extend into the next section.” Normally, no more than one blaze should be in view at a time “except at trail junctions, road crossings, and similar confusing areas.”

Double blazes (one over the other) should be used “just before major turns, junctions, or (other) ambiguous condition requiring hiker alertness.”

If the Trail does not continue directly across the road, there should be a double blaze to let hikers know that they need to turn and another double blaze where they pick it up again. Single blazes should be placed along the road if needed.

Each club should have a policy on using double blazes consistently throughout its Trail section—inline or offset (with the upper one indicating the direction the Trail continues), and Trail workers need to follow their club's direction.



(Examples of offset blazes courtesy of Bruce Trail Association)

Many Trail-club sections end at road crossings and sections assigned to individual maintainers by clubs also may end at roads, making it easy for this problem to be overlooked. Maintainers should look at road walks and crossings (in both directions) as though they were hikers unfamiliar with the location and make an effort to ensure that hikers know where to go.

A.T. maintaining clubs may want to make sure that individual maintainer assignments include road crossings, rather than ending at a road, or even consider creating “road blazer” positions within the club.

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### **Litter or Drug Lab?**

Public lands nationwide are increasingly being used to produce methamphetamine and dump meth lab wastes. Clandestine meth labs are often set up in secluded areas, including recreational areas and private vehicles located on or adjacent to federal lands. A.T. lands are not immune from this problem.

As a Trail volunteer this means that you may encounter an active meth lab or a related dump site. It is important to know what to look for to decide if it is meth-related, or more routine household trash, litter, or illegal dumping.

Methamphetamine, a powerfully addictive stimulant, is America's fastest growing drug threat. Meth (also called crystal meth, crank, speed, ice, glass) comes in many forms and can be smoked, snorted, taken orally or injected. Users feel a short, intense rush, then a period of increased activity, decreased appetite, and a sense of well being for up to 12 hours. It affects the central nervous system, causing increased respiration, elevated body temperature, aggressiveness, insomnia, anxiety, paranoia, and violent behavior. It alters brain chemistry and can cause severe damage to internal organs.

Meth can be manufactured using common household chemicals, with cold and allergy medicines containing pseudoephedrine as the main ingredient. "Cooking meth" is very dangerous—the chemicals used are volatile and the by-products are highly toxic. Cooking one pound of meth creates more than five pounds of toxic waste that is hazardous to people, animals, and natural resources and can be an explosive fire hazard.

Meth labs may produce strong odors that smell like ether, ammonia, acetone, or cat urine. Dump sites may contain large amounts of trash, including antifreeze containers, stained coffee filters, empty boxes and blister packs of allergy tablets, empty containers of drain cleaner, acetone, ammonia, denatured alcohol, toluene, or lantern fuel, as well as battery casings, gas-grill propane tanks, glassware, soda bottles, and plastic tubing.

Unfortunately, some of those materials may be used legitimately by hikers, from fuel for cook stoves to medicine to treat ailments. One key is volume—large amounts of any of these items should raise a warning flag.

Take a closer look before you decide that pile of trash on your trail section is litter or household waste and carry it out. If you see (or smell) the items listed above and suspect that something is out of place, use extreme caution. Don't approach or confront any individuals in the area, and do not smoke or use any open flames. Note where you are,

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leave the area, and report your findings to local law enforcement. The more specific the information you can provide, the better.

### **Sources of information:**

Meth Lab Identification Brochure:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs7/7341/7341p.pdf>

Overview:

[www.methresources.gov/MethOverviewDescription.aspx](http://www.methresources.gov/MethOverviewDescription.aspx) or

<http://pride.org/methamphetamine.htm>

Facts & Figures:

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/methamphetamine/index.html>

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## Trail Clubs

### **Who Looks Out for the Trail?**

**By Melanie Wertz**, Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club

(Adapted with permission from *CVATC News*, March 2006)

Those of you who have hiked the Appalachian Trail north of Route 11, or even driven under the A.T. bridge on Route 11, could not have missed the enormous warehouse on a 100-acre lot directly adjoining the A.T. corridor. Unfortunately, it is highly visible from the Trail, especially when there are no leaves on the trees. It is also unfortunate that this is the narrowest piece of National Park Service corridor in Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley.

The Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club has reviewed development plans, attended meetings, written letters, and provided testimony at hearings since 2000. Yet apparently there was a "discrepancy" in the construction of the building (the northwest corner of the building had been "shifted" and constructed 30 feet closer to the A.T. than the township had approved). The township issued a "Stop Work Order," and the township and the developer negotiated the violation. The township then stated that it was "willing to consider a \$500,000 payment for damages."

This brought about a series of phone calls and letters from CVATC, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service, requesting that NPS or some Trail

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representative be included as a partner to the negotiations. We also provided testimony to the zoning board.

We were very disappointed to learn from the local newspaper that the township had settled with the developer for \$200,000. Furthermore, that money would be used to install a traffic light and road improvements on the “Carlisle Pike near the site.”

CVATC President Frank Bohm and I attended yet another supervisors meeting to ask why we had not been included and specifically asked the township to try to rectify this permanent degradation to the Trail by committing \$10,000, (a mere five percent of the settlement) to plant 125 six-foot-high white pines along the impacted borders. That request was also denied.

The whole ordeal has been a direct hit to the A.T.

We must work with our townships now to incorporate ordinances and protective zoning for the A.T. When we try to get involved in existing situations such as these, it is already too late. Time is of the essence.

*Representing the interests of the Appalachian Trail to local governments along the Trail corridor is of increasing importance. Such contacts can facilitate public safety and ensure input on planning and development matters. As the multiacre warehouse that now sits beside the Trail corridor at Route 11 in the Cumberland Valley demonstrates, the future of the Trail depends on what happens near the corridor as well as within it, and coordination with local authorities will become as important as the maintenance of the footpath. The best representatives of the Trail in contacts with local officials and agencies are members of the Trail community who reside and vote in their jurisdictions.*

*- Frank Bohm, President, Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club*

## **Dealing with Developments That Could Affect the Appalachian Trail**

Perhaps the most significant changes in the Appalachian Trail during the last 50 years are the result of advances in technology and modern society. Natural-gas pipelines, power lines, roads, highways, telecommunications towers, airport hazard beacons, wind farms, and residential, commercial and industrial developments all affect the scenic and recreational environment of the Trail. Proposals for new projects seem to surface every day. If the Trail community isn't vigilant, the Appalachian Trail will look and sound a whole lot different in another 50 years—even with its corridor of protected land.

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Responding to such proposals is one of the most important duties of a local Trail manager. Coordination among Trail-management partners is essential, and an active and well-informed Trail club can make a tremendous difference. Club volunteers need to be familiar with the various agencies that have review authority for various types of projects. They also need to be knowledgeable about governmental review processes and be ready to assess and explain to others the effects that a proposed development could have on the Trail.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is perhaps the most important process to understand: It requires federal agencies to assess and disclose the impacts of a federal action, such as an authorization for a pipeline on federal lands, on the environment. NEPA provides an important opportunity for Trail clubs, as well as the general public, to identify potential impacts of a project on the Appalachian Trail. More detail on NEPA as it pertains to the Trail will be covered in a future issue of the Register.

In some cases, state or local regulatory agencies may evaluate a proposed development to ensure that it is consistent with their regulations. Sometimes, the only tool that may be available is public pressure on the proponent. Often, the outcome is entirely dependent on the Trail club's willingness to roll up its sleeves and get involved.

ATC has a Web-based tool to help Trail clubs and ATC members get informed ([www.appalachiantrail.org/getinformed](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/getinformed)) and get involved ([www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved)) in responding to threats to the Trail.

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## **Bridging the Bog Hole from Hell**

**By Gordon Clarke and Craig Dickstein**

Phil Pepin, Kennebec District overseer for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club ([www.matc.org](http://www.matc.org)), doesn't charge for his bog bridging workshops, but he could. Everything is a "teaching moment," from when he empties the contents of his battered frame pack onto a red space blanket, distributes and discusses a handout, to his "safety admonition."

Phil is given to naming things and places: like the privy on his trail section and his chain saws. This workshop took place near where the A.T. crosses Carrying Place Road in the Kennebec District. Phil named the worksite "The Bog Hole from Hell" and for good reason. The A.T. corridor is about a thousand feet wide here. A local family of beavers, *Castor canadensis* to be precise, has expanded its activities to the extent that their pond and wetland cover the corridor from side to side and the water level is a foot higher than

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it was just a year ago. Some of the old bridging was rotted out and some was just plain missing.

The first session had eight participants (including Phil) whom he paired off as “Millers” (to use his new log splitting/ripping chain rig), “Fellers” (to lay the stately northern white cedars carefully on the ground), “Strippers” (to reveal the slippery beauty of the cedar beneath the bark), and “Installers” (those brutes of the mud who removed the old bridging and installed the new). There was a kind of locker room levity about the appellation “strippers,” as those assigned happened to be ladies. The levity vaporized when the first log was left naked and the strippers stood menacingly with their bark spuds, looking for more work.

It took two work sessions with nine people contributing about 120 work hours to complete the project. For the second and concluding session, Phil introduced coed and mixed doubles stripping which seemed to increase productivity by about 25 percent. Here is what was accomplished: Some 180 feet of rotted puncheon was removed and enough new material was cut, stripped, milled and hauled to make 31 sections of bridging totaling 250 feet. To quote Phil, “It’s official. The Bog Hole from Hell has been spanned and one can walk from one shoreline to another without getting a single tootsie wet. It ain’t pretty but it is functional.”

Finally, having decided that our “bridge to nowhere” should have a northern terminus, there was Phil, wading north on the first “relo” scout, water to his knees, water to his thighs, out of sight, splashing – shouts – back in sight, water and mud to his waist, shouting triumphantly, “We’ll go this way!”

We did and it worked.

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## Monitoring Updates

### Appalachian Trail Environmental Monitoring Symposium

Appalachian Trail maintainers work hard to prevent their Trail sections from eroding underfoot. However, wear and tear caused by hikers and storm damage aren’t the only problems that can negatively impact the Trail. Maintainers alone cannot address the range of threats, such as dangerously high ozone levels or development encroachment that face the Trail.

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In November, ATC, NPS, and the United States Geological Survey will bring together scientists, resource managers, educators, and policy experts at an event entitled *Exploring the Appalachian Trail as a Continental Environmental Monitoring Mega-Transect: A Working Symposium*. By soliciting input from a wide variety of skilled and experienced people, we hope to chart the best possible course as we scale up from the pilot Appalachian Trail Environmental Monitoring Initiative.

This program will ultimately help us to continue to protect the A.T. and provide a more sustainable future. The anticipated goals and benefits of the A.T. Environmental Monitoring Program are numerous.

### Goals

- Determine current status and trends of selected natural resources along the Trail to promote collaboration among Trail managers.
- Provide early warning of undesirable conditions or trends to better protect the resources and minimize management costs.
- Promote data-sharing among agencies, organizations, and academia.

### Anticipated uses of the monitoring results

- Obtain and provide sound, scientific, baseline information about environmental conditions on the Trail and use that information to influence public policy.
- Involve citizens in monitoring programs, and use the Trail's iconic status to convey key findings about the health of its environment to the public.

### Long-term benefits

- For Trail managers and users: increased protection of this national treasure by engaging major universities, the scientific community, and volunteers in long-term collaborative projects.
- For Trail volunteers: a chance to participate in cutting-edge research, engaging school groups, Trailside communities, and many others.
- For scientists, who often work in geographic and topical isolation: the opportunity to carry out research on the stable, high-profile vector of the Appalachian Trail and to collaborate with peers in other regions and disciplines.
- For Americans living in Eastern Temperate Forests: a living barometer of water and air quality, species diversity, global warming trends, and general environmental health.
- For North America and the World: a model for similar mega-transect projects elsewhere.

The Appalachian Trail Environmental Monitoring Symposium will develop a monitoring framework, refine the initial objectives, develop a process to manage and analyze data, establish a governance mechanism for the Appalachian Trail Environmental Monitoring

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Program, identify funding sources, and engage partners in developing a strong, scientifically based education and outreach program.

For more information, please contact Spring Ligi at [sligi@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:sligi@appalachiantrail.org).

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### **Invasive plants in Georgia**

This summer, the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club and the Appalachian Studies Center hosted a nonnative invasive plant workshop led by Julie Judkins of ATC's Southern Regional office and Lindsay Majer with Equinox Environmental. Participants learned to identify twelve invasive plants, then divided into groups and went out on the A.T. from Cooper Gap to Miller Gap to look for them.

One plant, Japanese stilt grass, was found on all sections of the Trail. It prefers shaded forest areas and thrives in moist conditions, and was found in a number of waterbars. Stilt grass multiplies easily, forming thick patches that crowd out other plants. Its seeds remain viable for up to three years and can be picked up on the shoes of hikers and spread to other areas. It is not consumed by native animals.

Four other invasive plants were found: Chinese yam, multiflora rose, privet, and Chinese lespedeza.

The data on invasive plants collected during this workshop will help inform future actions to control them.

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### **Along the Trail**

#### **Appalachian Trail Visitor-Use Study**

On a monthly basis, managers in most National Park areas report the number of visits during the previous month. But for a few complex units, such as the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, attempts to keep track of visitor use have largely been "best guesses."

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Recently the National Park Service contracted with the Southern Research Station (SRS) of the USDA Forest Service, known for its work on recreation-use estimation, to design and test a pilot study of visitor use on long trails. Using aspects of the existing National Visitor Use Monitoring program, SRS scientists in Athens, Georgia, are currently developing a sample design for the study. The design is intended to be applicable to other long distance trails and future surveys.

Two items in the study design will draw upon the knowledge of stakeholders in the A.T. community. The first will involve the identification of use levels at exit sites along the Trail. Individuals familiar with specific sections of the Trail could provide invaluable input.

The second item is to identify individuals willing to count and briefly interview exiting hikers at specific sites, dates, and times along the A.T. from April through October 2007.

We hope for participation from trail enthusiasts, maintainers and volunteers, ridgerunners, local schools, collegiate clubs, community groups, and associated state and federal employees. For more information, contact Matt Owens, the study project manager at [mattowens@warnell.uga.edu](mailto:mattowens@warnell.uga.edu).

**-Matt Owens**

A.T. Visitor Use Project Manager  
USFS Southern Research Station

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### Maintainers Wanted

The **Smoky Mountains Hiking Club** (SMHC), which maintains about 100 miles of the Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, is looking for maintainers. For details, go to: [www.smhclub.org](http://www.smhclub.org) and select the link just under the club logo.

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### Restoration Project

The **New York-New Jersey Trail Conference** (NY-NJTC), in partnership with the National Park Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the New York State Department of Parks, is developing an accessible

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trail segment as part of the Bear Mountain Trails Restoration Project.

(<http://www.nynjtc.org/BearMountainTrails/index.html>)

It will be featured at ATC's biennial conference next July. The Christopher Reeve Foundation provided a grant in support of the project.

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### Hunting Accident Spurs Action

Since the nonfatal shooting of a hiker near the Trail in November 2002, the **Georgia Appalachian Trail Club** has worked with the state department of natural resources to get information about the Trail into hunting regulations and hunter education classes. The club helped develop and post a sign at trailheads in Georgia, with the cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service.

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### New Large ATC Display Created

Geographic Information System specialists **Casey Reese** (NPS-ATPO) and **Matt Robinson** (ATC) unveiled a new ATC display at the recent Environmental Systems Research Institute International GIS Users Conference in San Diego. The display consists of eight large (3- by 6-foot) panels containing photographs and information about the Appalachian Trail and the ATC. The display will be used at future such events attended by ATC and ATPO employees.

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### Make a Gift from Your IRA

If you have an Individual Retirement Account and want to support the Trail, you may be able to make a charitable rollover gift of up to \$100,000 annually to ATC and other charities under the Pension Protection Act of 2006. This newly enacted law allows individuals age 70 ½ and above to make current gifts from their IRA accounts directly to charity from August 3, 2006, through the end of 2007. There will be no tax due on the withdrawal from the IRA and, correspondingly, no charitable deduction. As ATC does not provide tax or legal advice, please check with your own tax advisor. For more information, contact Jan Jennings at [jjennings@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jjennings@appalachiantrail.org) or at (617) 595-8500.

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## Side Trails

### ATC Partners with National Geographic

ATC has signed an agreement with the **National Geographic Society** to provide A.T. data, including the Trail centerline, and information on club sections, shelters, major viewpoints, parking areas, major side trails, and ATC office locations to the “National Geographic World Explorer.” This free, downloadable computer application will enable users to zoom into a virtual globe and explore high-resolution satellite imagery and maps, as well as photographs, video clips, sound files, articles, and interactive resources from National Geographic.

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### New NPS Director Confirmed

**Mary Bomar** has been confirmed as the next director of the **National Park Service**, replacing Fran Mainella (the first woman to serve as director), who is stepping down after six years. Bomar, a career National Park Service employee, most recently served as regional director of Northeast Region, which covers 13 states. Among other positions with the park service, she served as superintendent of Independence National Historical Park and as the first superintendent at the Oklahoma City National Memorial, site of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in 1995.

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### USFS Regulations Finalized

**U.S. Forest Service** regulations regarding accessibility of trails and backcountry facilities have been finalized. ATC and ATPO have been actively engaged with the USFS in this effort. Information, including a “user’s guide” for using the FSTAF and FSORAG guidelines, can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/>.

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# The Register

The Online Volunteer Newsletter for the Appalachian Trail

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## **Grants for Education and Trail Maintenance**

The **Guy Waterman Alpine Stewardship Fund** is accepting applications for grants for educational and Trail maintenance projects on the open summits, exposed ridges and alpine areas of the Northeast. The Fund typically awards grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The application deadline is December 1; grantees will be notified by January 31, 2007. Guidelines and the application form are available at [www.watermanfund.org](http://www.watermanfund.org).