

# The Register

*A publication of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Fall 2007*

## Sidehill

*By Hawk Metheny and Robert Proudman*

Autumn is well underway, and at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, we're as busy as ever. ATC staff members are looking ahead to next year by setting work plans and developing the organizational budget for 2008. Trail-crew and ridgerunner programs are winding down and preparation for next year is underway. It is prime time for corridor boundary monitoring—staff and volunteers are inspecting and marking boundary lines that buffer the footpath. Chain-saw certification and other workshops continue to be held Trailwide. Conferences and workshops are keeping us busy, too—the Land Trust Alliance rally, the Partnership for the National Trails System conference, Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere, and Trails to Every Classroom, to name a few. In the past few weeks, ATC has submitted formal comments on accessibility guidelines to the Federal Access Board ([www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved/accessibility](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved/accessibility)) and to the USDA Forest Service on forest planning rules.

And, we have been preparing for and holding fall meetings of ATC's governing bodies—the Board of Directors, the Stewardship Council and the four Regional Partnership Committees (RPCs). We will have updates from these meetings in our next issue.

In this issue, we want to introduce (or reintroduce) you to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and update you on what's been happening with our land trust. We also have an interview with Philadelphia Trail Club volunteer Mary Gall and information on a new program that rewards A.T. volunteers with a free annual national-park pass and some basic trail-maintenance advice.

We'd like to end this column with a safety reminder: It is hunting season—please wear blaze orange and be careful out there.

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## News

### **Appalachian Trail Conservancy Land Trust**

*Caroline Dufour, Lands and Resources Coordinator*

As part of ATC's restructuring in 2005, the organization commissioned a review of its land-trust program. The final analysis made by the group in early 2006 was that ATC was not up to current Land Trust Alliance Standards.

Recommendations made by the group for improving ATC's process and standards for acquiring land placed emphasis on adequate documentation and due diligence before any acquisition, the wording of conservation easements, and the stewardship of ATC property interests.

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ATC staff has worked to implement those recommendations, including completing baseline reports for properties under easement, creating a system to track and manage relationships with property owners and volunteers, and creating new training materials for ATC Land Trust monitors. Much of this work is ongoing.

In addition, ATC's Board has endorsed the Land Trust Alliance's standards and practices. The endorsement means adopting policies on appraising and enforcing conservation easements and making amendments to those easements. The executive director has approved a stewardship records policy, and the staff has reviewed the program's conservation criteria and easement standards.

Although much of our time and energy has gone towards meeting our stewardship and due-diligence obligations, ATC has not gone out of the land-protection business: This year, ATC supported a total of \$9.32 million in federal appropriations towards five projects, totaling approximately 10,500 acres, with an estimated value of more than \$42 million. We approved the expenditure of \$32,500 from dedicated funds for preacquisition work. In addition to the public funds being sought, a large portion of the costs will have to be covered by private donations, which ATC staff and partners are working hard to raise. Staff members also are working on several potential fee and easement donations in the Mid-Atlantic region and have supported partners' appropriation requests in New England.

Our volunteers continue to play a crucial role—serving as our eyes and ears on the ground to notify us of opportunities and act as our “early warning system” regarding threats to the Trail's landscape; assisting in finding funding prospects; helping to maintain relationships with local communities, Trail clubs and other organizations; and enabling us to steward our property interests.

With the increasing complexity and degree of rigor involved in land-protection transactions, as well as the escalation in land costs Trail-wide, we need to place greater reliance on professionals with specialized skills, including conservation law, financing, appraisal and title work. Therefore, we have not reactivated our prior network of land-trust coordinators, but seek to build on and strengthen our network of partner organizations and our staff capacity to address those challenging needs.

We are working towards developing and better supporting these essential functions, and we hope to be able to count on your support.

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## **What is ATC?**

In 1921, forester and regional planner Benton Mackaye published an article advocating a volunteer-oriented long-distance hiking trail along the mountains of the Atlantic seaboard. His vision became the Appalachian Trail, which follows the Appalachian

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mountains for 2,175 miles, from Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. The Trail is complete, but the work continues.

There are many partners in that work for and on the Trail, and the role of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy may be hard to grasp. We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce (or reintroduce) you to ATC.

ATC is a private, nonprofit, volunteer-based organization dedicated to the preservation and management of the natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources associated with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

ATC has more than 40,000 individual members. With a central office in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and four regional offices, ATC has about 40 full- and part-time employees (excluding seasonal staff) who carry out programs for Trail stewardship and management, land protection, information and education, membership services, development, and administration of the organization and its offices and other facilities.

ATC is the central clearinghouse for official information on the Trail, responding to over 8,500 inquiries a year by telephone, e-mail, and surface mail. Last year, more than 10,500 people stopped by our Harpers Ferry visitors' center, and 1,800 people visited or contacted our mid-Atlantic regional office in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania.

ATC publishes Appalachian Trail maps, guidebooks, and other hiking publications, which we sell along with other items focusing on the A.T. and hiking in general. Over the past 12 months, ATC shipped more than 13,500 orders, weighing a total of about 25 tons!

ATC also is a federation of hiking and outdoor clubs—the members of which construct and maintain the Trail and its facilities, manage the surrounding lands, compile and update guidebook and map information, work with Trail communities, and recruit and train new maintainers and other volunteers, adding up to nearly 200,000 hours devoted to the Trail each year.

ATC guarantees to Congress and the U.S. Department of the Interior that the Trail community is meeting the protection and maintenance responsibilities that it has accepted. It serves as an umbrella organization to coordinate those efforts daily across the entire length of the A.T. It also acts as a liaison among the numerous federal and state agencies, clubs, towns and municipalities, landowners, and other conservation organizations that are involved in the 14 Trail states.

ATC provides workshops and hands-on training to A.T. clubs in treadway construction, chain-saw certification, corridor monitoring and boundary maintenance, resource management, recruiting volunteers and more. We recruit and sponsor seasonal trail crews to assist the maintaining clubs on major work in each region.

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ATC cares for a trail founded by visionaries and built and maintained by volunteers. If you are not already a member of this unique organization, we invite you to "Join the Journey" ([www.appalachiantrail.org/join](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/join)).

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## Maintainers Tips

### Hunting Season Requires Caution

Hunting is a traditional and permitted use on most of the lands through which the Appalachian Trail passes, including national forests, some state lands, and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. While hunting is not permitted in national parks or on NPS-Appalachian Trail Park Office lands, private property adjacent to the Trail is often open to hunting, and the protected Trail corridor may be narrow. Hunters may not be aware of the existence of the Trail, and some of them may disregard hunting prohibitions.

**Know local hunting seasons before venturing onto the Trail**—Links to state regulations can be found at [www.appalachiantrail.org/huntingseasoninfo](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/huntingseasoninfo). Opening day of rifle season is generally a heavy hunting day—probably best to avoid worktrips on that day. If your state does not allow hunting on Sundays, that might be the best time to get out on your Trail section.

**Wear blaze orange**—Vests, hats, and pack covers are available at ATC ([www.atctrailstore.org](http://www.atctrailstore.org)) and other outdoor retailers. Do not wear white or brown during big game seasons, and avoid wearing red or blue during fall and spring turkey seasons.

Five years ago, two A.T. hikers were shot by hunters, one in northern Georgia in November 2002 and one less than six weeks later on New Year's Day 2003 in southwest Virginia. Both were seriously injured, but recovered following extended hospital stays. This hazard is real. Make your presence known—Wear *BLAZE ORANGE*, and whistle, talk or sing.

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### Trail Maintenance 101—Cleaning Drainage Channels

As a trail maintainer, you are the Trail's most important advocate and protector. Performing the simple, recurring maintenance and repairs necessary to keep the Trail and its shelters, campsites, overlooks, signs and parking lots in good repair is crucial. Among the most important tasks is cleaning drainage channels twice each year.

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Removing accumulated soil, leaves, and debris from waterbars, drainage dips, and ditches, not only prevents erosion, but eases the wear and tear on sidehills, steps, cribbing, and the plants and soils along the Trail.

Fall cleaning, after leaves have dropped, will limit footpath erosion during spring runoff and snowmelt. Spring cleaning will ready the footway for summer rains, particularly gully-washing thunderstorms.

Avoid the temptation to clean superficially. For waterbars, restore the ditch to half the depth of the bar. (Don't dig all the way to the bottom of the bar; water may undermine it). Grade the apron (the uphill side of the channel) to restore a shallow, smooth slope.

For dips and ditches, reestablish a channel 12- to 18-inches wide and up to a foot deep. Cut all roots flush with the channel and clear any debris that could initiate clogging. If the sides have collapsed, restore the trench-like profile by digging out the edges and packing the soil into a berm. Pull all soil and debris downhill and pack it on the footpath below the waterbar, dip, or ditch, where it builds up the treadway, bulks up the berm that diverts water, and prevents the undermining of waterbars.

Pay attention to the outwash ditch. Too often, the ditch doesn't let water flow freely for its entire length. Sticks, stones, and leaves collect in the channel, and water floods onto the trail. Shape the ditch to let water flow freely and well clear of the footpath. Keep ditches straight, since curves slow water flow and trigger siltation. Extend most ditches at least 10 feet beyond the edge of the trail, possibly farther on flat terrain. (In highly erodible soils, check with local land managers first.) And remember to rake or drag leaves and sticks back from the ditch's edge.

*Adapted from Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance, Second Edition, by William Birchard, Jr., and Bob Proudman. Available from the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store ([www.atctrailstore.org](http://www.atctrailstore.org)).*

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### Monitoring

#### Appalachian Trail MEGA-Transect

ATC has expanded its coverage of the MEGA-Transect program on its Web site. The program's focus is to use the Trail as a barometer of environmental conditions for much of the Eastern seaboard. Because of the magnitude of this project, volunteer engagement is vital. Citizen scientists will play an active role in monitoring air and water quality and the health and vigor of plants and animals along the Trail. Some opportunities for volunteers to track and report these indicators are already in place; others are being developed for Trailwide use.

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## Volunteers Answer Call to Sample A.T. Water

This year, ATC partnered with World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD)—held annually between September 18 and October 18—for its first Trail-wide water quality sampling event. Data collected by volunteers will provide A.T. managers with snapshot of the status of A.T. water resources and raise awareness of the significant freshwater resources that occur along the Trail. Representatives from 21 Trail-maintaining clubs and 26 youth groups were among the participants. ATC will have a report of the results after the data recording period closes on December 18.

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### Trail Clubs

## New Annual Pass Recognizes Volunteer Support

Beginning this year, the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior are authorized to issue an annual pass free of charge to individuals who accrue 500 volunteer hours beginning on or after January 1, 2007. It provides access to Federal recreation sites that charge an entrance or standard amenity fee for one year, beginning from the date the pass is issued. The pass admits the pass holder and passengers in one noncommercial vehicle (at areas where fees are charged per vehicle) or the pass holder and up to three other adults at per-person fee areas. Children under 16 are admitted free.

Please note that the pass is only for entrance to federal lands such as national parks and forests. It is not valid for access to state lands. Participating agencies include the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation.

There is no specific time frame in which the volunteer hours must be accrued. Once the 500-hour requirement is reached and a pass is issued, the volunteer's "pass hours" are reset to zero and the count begins again, however, only one pass may be earned per year.

The NPS-Appalachian Trail Park Office is now set up to issue annual passes to qualifying volunteers as part of the volunteer-recognition program that offers pins, patches, caps, vests and plaques based on hours and years of service. This program is available to all Appalachian Trail volunteers from Georgia to Maine.

*Please note that NPS-ATPO has asked that Trail-club leaders track the volunteer hours of individuals and submit requests for the club, rather than individuals submitting requests. Requests should be sent to Angela Walters at [angela\\_walters@nps.gov](mailto:angela_walters@nps.gov) or by calling 304-535-6278.*

More information, including answers to frequently asked questions, can be found at <http://www.store.usgs.gov/pass/volunteer.html>.

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## Silver Service Awards

At each ATC biennial conference, 50-year and 25-year volunteers are recognized by the A.T. Park Office of the National Park Service. Nominations are requested in advance from Trail clubs and others. Plaques are presented at the conference or mailed to awardees not in attendance. Since 2001, 233 Silver Service volunteers have received honors, including 46 (not 29 as previously reported) at the conference held in July at Ramapo, New Jersey.

### The 2007 honorees are:

JoAnne Amberson	PATC	Thomas R. Johnson	PATC
John Amberson	PATC	Bobby Lowery	PATC
Tockie Baker	ATC	Patty Lowe	GATC
Ruth Ball	NBATC	Ken Lutters	NY-NJ Trail Conf.
Chris Bracknell	PATH	Mike McCormack	NBATC
Ted Brenig	NBATC	Earl McWhorter	AMC-Berkshire
Allen Britton	BHC	Marion McLean	GATC
Lore Britton	BHC	Mel Merritt	PATC
Chris Brunton	PATC	George Muller	NY-NJ Trail Conf.
Jerry Carnes	GATC	Pete Newskyj	NBATC
Doug Christie	AMC-Connecticut	Bob Peckman	RATC
Dick Clark	RATC	Kris Peckman	RATC
Walt Daniels	NY-NJ Trail Conf.	Carole Perry	GATC
Nannette Dooley	GATC	Bascom Pratt	MRATC
Jim Dow	MATC	Michael Rea	NY-NJ Trail Conf.
Henry Edmonds	AMC-Connecticut	Jack Reeder	PATC
Sandra Elder	NBATC	Edward Ritter	AHC
Bernard Frick	YHC	Helmut Schneider	NY-NJ Trail Conf.
Fred Gerty	NY-NJ Trail Conf.	Manfred Schneider	NY-NJ Trail Conf.
John Hicks	AMC-Connecticut	Tena Stanfield	GATC
Jim Hutchings	RATC	Maryann Wagner	AHC
Linda Hutchings	RATC	Rick Wagner	AMC-Berkshire
Leonard Johnson	NBATC	Nick Williams	PATC

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## Voices of the Trail

In 2006, graduate student Debra Smith from Penn State University conducted interviews with 22 elder statesmen and stateswomen of the Appalachian Trail clubs in Pennsylvania. These excerpts are from an interview with Mary Gall of the Philadelphia Trail Club.

*Debra Smith: What is it about the Trail that keeps people coming back? There are lots of other trails in the world, but the Appalachian Trail is special.*

Mary Gall: I think that part of the reason is that it was the first really inspired one. I think that Benton MacKaye and some of the others—I think their inspiration has sort of

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saturated the footpath. I really don't know why—it's the spirit of the Trail. The fact that it is really out of the way and down country roads, and most of the time you are really out of civilization. The wilderness was an attraction for many people...

*Smith: The Trail is more than a path through the woods: it is all the people who work on it. It is the trail maintainers, it is the clubs who volunteer their time and make sure it gets maintained, and it is the ATC, and it is this whole complex structure that makes sure that the Trail continues. Most of the people who walk on that Trail have no clue about that.*

Gall: No clue at all. But there are a few hikers... If you meet someone who is more than just a day hiker they always seem to appreciate the work that is done and thank you for keeping the Trail open. There is some real acknowledgment, by shall we say, a select few. You have to keep the volunteer part going, and I can't say anything better than you just have to keep it going, because you can't have a government trail. You can't have part done by the Game Commission and part done by so and so.

I think there are some sections that you will have to have the government come in and say, "This is the way that you do it," but most of the time I think it should be done by amateurs. So, each part of the Trail is probably maintained differently, not drastically differently, but somewhat differently...

I think the thing that kept [my husband John and I] going is the thought of being a part of the Appalachian Trail. It just really gives you a feeling... well, you know, I am part of this, although we never did any more than ten and a half miles. We often said with a certain amount of bravado that we'd hiked the Appalachian Trail. We did hike in New Hampshire, a little bit in Massachusetts, a little bit in Connecticut, a little bit down in Harpers Ferry, and of course in Pennsylvania. I think we also managed Springer Mountain in Georgia. We could claim a small part of the Trail. And we hiked that ten and a half miles repeatedly, four times a year or more.

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### Along the Trail

#### Thundering Falls Relocation

The last major relocation of the Appalachian Trail away from roads in New England was opened in September. The National Park Service had purchased the falls near Killington, Vermont, in 1987, but difficult terrain and the need to cross a flood plain to connect to the Trail caused delays. Consensus was finally reached by ATC, the Green Mountain Club (GMC), and the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) on a route that involved building rock staircases on the upper portion and a boardwalk accessible to persons with disabilities across the floodplain. Crews from GMC's Volunteer Long Trail Patrol and the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps provided the sweat equity. Funding came primarily from the National Park Service, with additional contributions from ATC, GMC, and GMNF.

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## Chattahoochee National Forest Changes

The Chattahoochee National Forest ([www.fs.fed.us/conf](http://www.fs.fed.us/conf)) in northern Georgia has undergone a major reorganization over the past few years, reducing its ranger districts from seven to three. The largest district, encompassing more than 300,000 acres, is the newly named Blue Ridge Ranger District, based in Blairsville. A map showing the redistricting can be found on the Forest's Web site.

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## Road to Nowhere

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Superintendent Dale Dittmanson released the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the North Shore Road, selecting the monetary settlement to Swain County, N.C., as the preferred alternative. This is the alternative the ATC has been seeking for at least 25 years, in partnership with Swain County and many other conservation organizations. ATC has sent a short letter to the NPS agreeing with and thanking them for this decision.

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### Side Trails

## Grafton Loop Trail

This summer, the western half of a hiking route encircling Grafton Notch in Maine was completed and opened. The project took 13 years and thousands of hours of trail building. The loop includes eight miles of the Appalachian Trail and 30 miles of new trail along the Maine-New Hampshire border. The eastern half of the trail opened in 2003. The western part was completed in 2006, but the project was held up until the federal Forest Legacy Program provided needed funds to the State of Maine to complete the purchase, which—at this writing—is still in progress. A trail description and map can be found on the Appalachian Mountain Club's web site ([www.outdoors.org/grafton](http://www.outdoors.org/grafton)).

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## Mahoosuc Initiative

A coalition of conservation groups, including the Appalachian Mountain Club and ATC, is working to conserve 150,000 acres in the Mahoosuc region, including 60,000 acres adjacent to and near the Appalachian Trail. The Betterment Fund will provide a multi-year, multi-organizational grant to help conservation groups and local communities develop this initiative. The goal is to work toward certified sustainable forests and a healthy forest-products industry that supports local jobs and businesses, and broader protection of the narrow corridor in this range spanning the N.H.-Maine state boundary.

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## Jeff Marion Honored

An Eagle Scout with longtime involvement in scouting, Dr. Jeffrey L. Marion has been selected by the Boy Scouts of America's national conservation committee to receive its William T. Hornaday gold medal for distinguished and unusual service to natural-resource conservation and environmental improvement. The Hornaday award recognizes his accomplishments, both in scouting and as a recreation ecologist with the U. S. Geological Survey, to improve management practices to minimize the negative environmental impacts associated with recreational activities. His efforts led to the adoption of Leave No Trace principles as an integral part of the national scouting program. In addition to his involvement in scouting, Marion has served on the Board of Directors for *Leave No Trace, Inc.*, and the American Hiking Society. He currently serves on ATC's Stewardship Council.

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## Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail

One-hundred-fifty years ago Henry David Thoreau made his third and final trip to Maine's North Woods. This July, the nonprofit organization Maine Woods Forever held a three-day festival in Greenville, Maine, commemorating that anniversary and unveiling a map of the Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail. The map details the route of each of Thoreau's trips by canoe and on foot, including his hike in 1846 on the mountain he knew as "Ktaadn." An informational kiosk has been installed in Greenville, and more are planned for other locations along the route. A traveling exhibit of the map and photographs taken along the trail is being displayed at various locations in Maine and will also travel to Boston and New York. The map and a book of the photographs, along with Thoreau quotes and essays by Maine wilderness artists and conservationists can be purchased. See [www.thoreauwabanakitrail.org/](http://www.thoreauwabanakitrail.org/) for more information.

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## The Approach Trail from Amicalola State Park

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC) completed a short, but significant, relocation at the beginning of the A.T. Approach Trail in Amicalola Falls State Park in August. Though this relocation has not changed the length of the trail, it resolves the maintenance challenges associated with the original location, which had significant elevation change over a short distance. Discussions among the club and its partners resulted in the decision to move the Approach Trail to the existing red-blazed Spring Trail. The new route starts at the Amicalola Falls State Park visitor center, follows the 604 steps up to the falls, and allows for some spectacular views of the Park's namesake. Red blazes were removed and were replaced with blue ones.