

The Register

A publication of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Summer 2007

Sidehill

By Hawk Metheny and Robert Proudman

Always a Step Ahead

Congratulations to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for the success of ATC's 36th biennial meeting, held at Ramapo College in New Jersey. The meeting, under the leadership of Conference Chair Jane Daniels, was rich in camaraderie, workshops, awards, and hikes—fulfilling the conference theme, “always a step ahead.” Among our collective accomplishments from the first-ever biennial in New Jersey:

- ATC’s new Board of Directors was elected unanimously and will be led by Bob Almand of Atlanta, Georgia, who has served on the board since 1999.
- The Stewardship Council for the 2007-09 term was appointed (www.appalachiantrail.org/stewardshipcouncil). The council has a full plate of issues that are detailed below which will be consider at the November meeting. The four Regional Partnership Committees also will meet this fall to discuss Trail issues.
- ATC awarded its 51st Honorary Membership, and awards were presented to longtime Trail volunteers. *Along the Trail* details the honors and awards presented at Ramapo.

Looking a step ahead, here is an update on current issues and events:

Accessibility—The U.S. Access Board is seeking public comment for proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Area (<http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/nprm/>). A public hearing will be held in Washington, D.C., on September 6. The deadline for comments is October 18. We encourage you to get informed and get involved in the process by visiting <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved/accessibility>

Power Lines—ATC filed comments with the Department of Energy in early July (see <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved/powerlines>) regarding the proposed designation of an immense National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor affecting eight eastern states and Washington, D.C. At least three major power lines may be proposed across the A.T. between Delaware Water Gap and Shenandoah National Park.

Structure Creep—About 40 biennial conferees attended a workshop presented by Stewardship Council member Dr. Jeff Marion and Hal Wright of the Allentown Hiking Club. ATC will prepare a compendium of comments received from articles on A.T. shelters published in the March-April and November-December 2006 issues of *Appalachian Trail Journeys* and other extensive discussions. We anticipate final review

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and a vote on the Structure Creep policy by the Stewardship Council in November, following discussions and recommendations by the four Regional Partnership Committees (RPCs).

Geocaches— This issue paper was discussed at the spring Mid-Atlantic RPC and Stewardship Council meetings. As geocaches are increasingly appearing, both along the Trail and in reports from corridor monitors, further RPC discussion this fall is anticipated.

Wind towers—In an unusual development, Maine’s Land Use Regulation Commission reopened its hearing record after a 6-1 vote against Maine Mountain Power’s proposed wind-farm development on the Redington Pond Range in western Maine. The new proposal affects Black Nubble only, another summit near the A.T. ATC and the Maine A.T. Club are working with other statewide groups to oppose the resubmission. The Stewardship Council will consider a wind-power policy in November, as well as proposed direction on global climate change.

We enjoyed meeting and talking with many of you at the biennial conference this summer and look forward to the 37th meeting, “Forever Green”, (www.vermont2009.org/) being hosted by the Green Mountain Club in July 2009. See you there!

Regional Partnership Committee & Stewardship Council Meeting Schedule

October 6	Deep South Regional Partnership Committee meeting, Asheville, North Carolina
October 13	Virginia Regional Partnership Committee meeting, location TBD
October 27–28	New England Regional Partnership Committee meeting, Fairlee, Vermont
November 2-3	ATC Stewardship Council meeting, Shepherdstown, West Virginia
November 10–11	Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee meeting, Round Hill, Virginia

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News

Volunteer Needs-Assessment

As a first step in developing a Trail-wide clearinghouse for A.T. volunteers and volunteer managers, ATC conducted a needs-assessment. This survey was intended to build on the results of earlier surveys by ATC to determine what volunteers, staff and potential volunteers need most from such a clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities and volunteer resources. We also wanted to gauge participants' knowledge of existing Trail-related volunteer opportunities, whether they already volunteer and why they do (or do not).

We wanted to reach as wide an audience as possible—from users of the Trail to those who are active in its maintenance. The online survey was completed by 767 people. They were divided into four distinct groups: 41.2 percent were active volunteers, mostly affiliated with A.T. clubs; 16.3 percent were club members who did not volunteer; 8.1 percent were ATC or agency-partner staff; and 34.4 percent were members of the general public.

The results indicate that all of the groups are interested in more and better information about projects and volunteer opportunities on the Trail. They all wanted to be better informed of Trail-wide projects and would like ATC to provide a calendar of Trail-wide events. All groups (except staff) wanted to know more about alternative volunteer opportunities. Active volunteers and staff also wanted assistance publicizing and recruiting for volunteer opportunities. Most survey respondents, including staff, felt only “somewhat informed” of current projects and how to get involved.

Active volunteers reported that they began volunteering to “give back” to the A.T. and continue to volunteer because they love what they're doing and want to see the Trail preserved. Many have formed friendships with their fellow volunteers, and those relationships draw them back.

Both the general public and inactive club members gave similar reasons for not volunteering. Many live too far from the Trail or don't have time in their schedules. Some haven't volunteered because they have not been asked or because they didn't know they could.

The results of the survey make it clear that all groups need an efficient way to tap into all of the volunteer opportunities associated with the Appalachian Trail.

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A.T. Water Monitoring

As part of the Appalachian Trail MEGA-Transect Initiative, (www.appalachiantrail.org/megatransect) ATC has partnered with the Water Environment Federation (WEF) to host the first annual A.T. water resources monitoring event this fall. Analysis of long-term water-quality trends will provide valuable information to land managers and decision makers to help improve and sustain the water resources of the Trail.

ATC is recruiting volunteers to collect water samples between September 18 and October 18 in conjunction with WEF's World Water Monitoring Day. The A.T. water-resources sampling event will continue annually every fall and will help us identify areas that may need sampling on a monthly schedule.

Volunteers can spend less than a day on this project, and no special training is required. Anyone who can arrange a hike on the Appalachian Trail between September 18 and October 18, 2007, can participate—adults, families, and youth, school groups, clubs, and scouts are welcome. Water sampling kits can be obtained from WEF.

More information about signing up for ATC water monitoring in conjunction with World Water Monitoring Day is found at www.appalachiantrail.org/wwmd.

CCC Shelter being Reborn

By Ed Talone

(Reprinted from the Winter 2006 issue of *American Hiking*)

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 to provide work for thousands of young men left unemployed by the onset of the Great Depression. One of the major activities of the Corps was to build park facilities and trails around the country. Between 1933 and 1942, more than 100 shelters were built along the length of the Appalachian Trail.

While a handful of them were built of native stone, most featured large chestnut logs and a shake roof. They were built low to the ground to block the weather and featured a fireplace in front for cooking. Some of the best remaining examples of these shelters are the Old Job Shelter in Vermont, Antietam Creek Shelter in Pennsylvania, and Rocky Run Shelter in Maryland. However, even these have decks and roofing using modern materials. Now, thanks to a special grant and lots of donated labor, Rocky Run Shelter is being restored to its original glory.

Originally completed in 1941, the shelter sits just off the Trail down an old road whose name is lost to time. Volunteers from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and a historic preservation team from the National Park Service are using original CCC drawings that date to 1939 to restore the structure.

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Work began with the roof, where the original purlins and rafters were found intact when the modern roof was removed. The shelter has been reroofed using cedar shingles in the original style.

Testing showed that the logs used in the shelter were indeed chestnut, and were still intact, except where they came in contact with soil. The structure was deliberately built into the hillside, but this caused moisture damage both along the lower back of the shelter and on the sides where ends of the logs touched soil. The solution is to jack up the structure and replace the base log, then remove the damaged ends of the logs and notch them together with replacements made of white oak. The pieces will then be pinned together and stained with linseed oil to match in color.

All repairs are expected to be completed by spring 2008.

Monitoring

Corridor Monitoring

Much of the Appalachian Trail lies upon a narrow corridor of public land that threads its way between privately owned lands. Corridor monitors walk the surveyed boundaries of land acquired for the Trail by the National Park Service, inspecting survey monuments, noting line conditions, and keeping a lookout for encroachments. Learn how you can get involved by contacting your club's corridor monitor coordinator or ATC's Boundary Program Manager Sally Naser at snaser@appalachiantrail.org. Two corridor monitoring experiences are profiled below.

Indian Guides

Gini Maus, a corridor monitor for the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club, is always looking for new volunteers to help on the Trail. She is also interested in attracting younger people to the club. Recently she accomplished both those goals by recruiting a group of Indian Guides—from a YMCA program for fathers and sons—to serve as corridor monitors.

Dan Hooven, a group leader and longtime A.T. hiker, said that the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, group has “been connected to the Appalachian Trail” since the group was founded. They regularly hike on the Trail, and the boys can earn an award by completing a two-mile hike. When they needed a project to fulfill their service requirement, the Trail was an obvious choice.

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Sally Naser, ATC's boundary program manager, suggested that the group adopt a section of the Trail to monitor. Working with Maus, she prepared an orientation for the group, giving them an overview of the corridor-monitoring program, as well as tips for hiking safety and Leave No Trace principles. After the orientation, the two women accompanied the group on their first monitoring session. Dads worked with Naser to cut back the invasive Multiflora rose that obscured the monuments that mark the boundaries of the protected Trail corridor, while the boys and Maus searched for the monuments.

The Indian Guides have gained a sense of ownership and pride for "their" section of the A.T. The boys "love looking for the monuments," said Dan. "It is like a treasure hunt." It has also been a positive experience for the adults—they wanted to support the Trail and were glad to find an opportunity that they could fit into their schedules.

For Maus, working with the Guides has been a good learning experience. It was her first time working with youth volunteers, and she found that the ratio of roughly one adult for every two children was just right for these 6- to 10-year-olds whose dads were experienced with the outdoors. A different group might need a different approach. Overall, the experience was positive—she has formed a new partnership and, at the same time, lowered the average age of the club's volunteers from 75 to 40!

How to Become a Trail Volunteer

By Milt Gross

Excerpted with permission from the Magic City Morning Star.

Hike over a slanted piece of Appalachian Trail on the steep sideslope of a mountain and stop to shove a couple of old logs into place to hold the dirt in place. At least that's how I was "volunteered."

I don't recall all the details, but I'm pretty sure there were some. I must have been a member of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club at the time, because somebody in that group somehow found out I'd made that little repair. That somebody asked me if I would like to be the "maintainer" of that section of A.T. on Moody Mountain.

I must have said "yes," or not said "no" fast enough.

Later, I was offered my present volunteer assignment as a corridor monitor (CMer) of a section of A.T. that runs up Wyman Mountain. I've been monitoring that section for about 15 years. My wife goes with me, and I've had other help too, from the moose.

As a CMer, I follow the supposedly four-foot-wide survey lines that border both sides of the Appalachian Trail's protective corridor—those lines usually being down the mountainside from the trail itself. I follow yellow survey markers, when they haven't disappeared due to the trees on which they're located having blown down and hiding the

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markers, and look for permanent metal survey markers, watch for signs of activities that are illegal in the corridor such as hunting, trapping, building of condos, etc.

Now my CMer moose aren't dumb, they just look that way. They like to follow that four-foot-wide opening through yonder woods, because it is easier than plowing through the puckerbrush as they usually do. They help me by keeping the ground churned up into mud, so I know I'm on the survey line on those occasions when the markers disappear.

One sunny afternoon, as I wandered happily up one of the boundary lines, a very big black bull with antlers around 12 feet wide (approximately, I didn't measure them) stepped out onto the boundary line about 30 feet in front of me. Being a wise old bull who obviously had read the books on how moose behave, he turned away from me and trotted nobly up the survey line ahead of me with head up and antlers down against his neck to make sliding through branches easier, showing me the way I should go.

In another 15 minutes or so, I noticed a movement off to my left. Out from behind a big pine stump ambled a somewhat smaller bull. He was brownish-gray in color so I knew he was younger than Blackie. But unlike Blackie, he apparently had not read the moose-behavior books, because instead of trotting away, he walked straight toward me.

To read the rest of the story and find out what happens with this moose encounter visit [http://www.magic-city-news.com/Down the Road/index.shtml](http://www.magic-city-news.com/Down_the_Road/index.shtml). There, you will also find other stories by Milt Gross in his column "Down the Road Apiece".

Maintainer's Corner

Dehydration and Heat-Related Illness

Our bodies regulate heat by producing sweat, which cools us as it evaporates. Hot, humid air makes that mechanism less efficient. Add the exertion of Trail work, and the potential for dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke goes up.

Other factors that increase the likelihood of heat-related illness include certain medical conditions (such as heart disease), being overweight, poor physical conditioning, taking certain medications (including diuretics), and being over 65.

Severe dehydration and heat stroke (when the body is unable to regulate its temperature and core temperature rises rapidly) are deadly conditions requiring immediate medical attention, including IV fluids—not an option on most work trips.

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Plan and Prepare

Plan trail work to avoid the hottest times of day and drink additional liquids before, during, and after a work trip. Carry plenty of water—you may need as much as 32 ounces of liquid an hour working in hot weather.

Rest and rehydrate

Take frequent rest-breaks in the shade. Avoid dehydration by drinking small amounts of fluids frequently, before you feel thirsty. Thirst is an indication of dehydration. Avoid coffee, tea, caffeinated sodas and alcohol, which increase fluid loss.

Replenish electrolytes

While water is the main thing our bodies need, electrolytes—salts such as sodium and potassium that are critical for nerve and muscle function—also are lost when we sweat. Drinking copious amounts of water alone may cause a serious and potentially fatal electrolyte imbalance.

Orange juice, tomato juice and sports drinks help replenish fluids and electrolytes. Bananas and oranges are good sources of potassium.

Be aware of signs of dehydration or heat exhaustion in yourself and others.

Signs of dehydration

- thirst
- dark-colored urine (should be nearly clear or pale yellow)
- dizziness or weakness
- muscle cramps
- headache

Signs of heat exhaustion

- dizziness, weakness, cramps, and headache
- heavy sweating (skin may be cool and moist)
- fast, weak pulse
- fast, shallow breathing
- paleness
- nausea or vomiting
- fainting

If these symptoms develop, move into the shade, recline, and rehydrate. Sponge head and body with water. Untreated heat exhaustion may progress to heat stroke, with body temperature rising to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Death may result without immediate emergency treatment.

Signs of heat stroke

- extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)

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- rapid, strong pulse
- throbbing headache
- confusion
- unconsciousness

If signs of heat stroke are observed, if possible, have someone call for medical assistance and stay on the line for advice while others cool the victim any way they can—move victim into the shade and immerse in cool water if available; otherwise spray or sponge with water and fan vigorously.

What's in Your Pack?

Pete Irvine (a.k.a. “Stumpie”) maintains a section of the A.T. in the “rollercoaster” section of northern Virginia as a volunteer overseer with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. On every trip he carries the pack pictured here, stocked with items ranging from emergency food to duct tape.

Besides the tools you take for a specific work trip, we'd like to know what's in your pack. Send contributions to theregister@appalachiantrail.org.

A.T. by the Numbers Quiz

How well do you know the Trail?

Adapted from a high-school social-studies fair project by Becca Irvine of Martinsburg, W.Va. Her project placed first in the American History category at school and county levels and second at the state competition.

(Answers below)

- 1) How many national forests does the Appalachian Trail pass through?
 - a. 5
 - b. 6
 - c. 7
 - d. 8
 - e. 9

- 2) What is the lowest elevation (in round numbers) on the A.T.? (Bonus: Where is it located?)
 - a. 75 feet
 - b. 125 feet
 - c. 175 feet
 - d. 225 feet
 - e. 275 feet

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- 3) How many states does the A.T. pass through?
- a. 15
 - b. 14
 - c. 13
 - d. 12
 - e. 11

Answers to A.T. Numbers Quiz

1) d. From south to north, they are the Chattahoochee, Ga., Nantahala, N.C., Pisgah, N.C., Cherokee, Tenn., Jefferson, Va., George Washington, Va., Green Mountain, Vt., and White Mountain, N.H. National Forests are lands managed by the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. *(Administratively, the two North Carolina forests are managed by one Forest Supervisor, as are the two Virginia forests. So, if you chose “b”, give yourself credit for a correct response.)*

2) b. The lowest point on the A.T. is 124 feet above sea level, at the Bear Mountain Trailside Museum and Zoo, just south of the Hudson River crossing in New York. *(The A.T. climbs to 700 feet at Anthony’s Nose, 1.3 miles north and 1,305 feet on Bear Mountain, 2.5 miles south.)*

3) b. The Trail passes through 14 states: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Clubs

Sawyer Recertification

As three-year chain-saw certifications for A.T. club volunteers have begun to expire, it has been asked whether sawyers need to retake a full certification workshop or if a shorter recertification course would be sufficient. NPS-Appalachian Trail Park Manager Pam Underhill addressed this issue in May in a letter to the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. The letter stresses that the full certification course is required and expresses gratitude to the dedicated volunteers making this commitment. Clubs interested in scheduling certification courses should contact their regional ATC office.

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A Privy, is a Privy, is a Privy—Or is It?

A Backcountry Sanitation Primer for the Appalachian Trail

By Pete Antos-Ketcham

Human-waste management on the A.T. has changed much from the days of the simple pit privy. Today's systems are designed to better protect the environment, but each type requires different steps to make them work properly. Hikers may be confused about the varying types of privies, so Trail managers should post signs in each privy explaining proper use and provide bark mulch or wood chips for hikers to use as needed.

Pit Privy—Campsites with minimal day and overnight use are generally still equipped with the basic pit privy. To make them work as well as possible, hikers are asked to urinate in the woods and drop in a handful of leaves when finished to reduce the familiar unpleasant odor.

Moldering Privy—The newest system to be used on the Trail, the moldering privy was introduced at Little Rock Pond Shelter in 1997 by Green Mountain Club volunteer shelter maintainer Dick Andrews. A moldering privy has a distinct appearance that lets the user know that it is clearly a different type of toilet. A ramp or set of stairs leads up to the door, and the privy sits atop a three-foot tall, screen-covered wooden box called a crib. Waste falls into the crib to rest on the forest floor, where it decomposes. Because of abundant exposure to wind, this is the one exception to the request to keep urine out of a privy; in fact, it helps the pile stay moist and degrade. After use, users “flush” with the wood shavings provided.

Batch Bin/Beyond the Bin (BTB) Composting Privies—In high-use areas like the Smokies, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England, hikers may find batch-bin or "beyond the bin" composting privies. This technology has been used in northern New England since the hiking boom of the 1970s. These systems are distinct because the privy site has steel or plastic bins and wooden drying racks for finished compost. Hikers are asked not to urinate in these privies as it creates unpleasant odors and hampers the composting process by making it too wet. Bark mulch is provided to absorb moisture and reduce odors. Some BTB systems may become too dry, so this practice may vary.

To learn more about backcountry sanitation on the A.T., check out the Green Mountain Club and ATC's *Backcountry Sanitation Manual* on ATC's Training and Resources Web page www.appalachiantrail.org/trainingandresources.

Pete Antos-Ketcham is education coordinator and facilities manager for the Green Mountain Club and a member of ATC's Stewardship Council. Along with Dick Andrews, he is editor and author of the Backcountry Sanitation Manual.

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Along the Trail

Volunteer Awards Presented at the Biennial

ATC Director and L.L. Bean Vice President Jim Ditzel presented ATC's 51st honorary membership to legendary Maine trail builder Lester Kenway. Noting that this highest ATC award "is a celebration of all that is best within our Appalachian Trail community," Ditzel closed a glowing tribute with a quote regarding Lester's trail-building career, "There's the right way to do it, the wrong way, and the Kenway!"

National Park Service Manager Pam Underhill recognized two volunteers for 50 years of service to the Appalachian Trail. Laura Bliss of the Natural Bridge A.T. Club began Trail work in the mid-1940s when many men were called away during WWII; she later became club president. She continued to volunteer during her career as a college professor, and, at 91, still helps with the club's telephone tree. Recipient Gannon Coffey of the Georgia A.T. Club led the club's successful campaign against the extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway into Georgia, which would have had disastrous effects on the Trail in the state.

Twenty-nine other volunteers were recognized by the National Park Service for 25 years of service. And, long-time Connecticut AMC trail workers Dick Blake, Doug Christie and Norm Sills were recognized for their service by receiving American flags flown over the U.S. Capitol.

ATC-Kellogg Conservation Center Dedication

ATC hosted an open house June 30–July 1 at its Kellogg Conservation Center in South Egremont, Massachusetts, to showcase the property and welcome local donors and community land-protection partners to the facility. Guests toured the historic portion of the house and grounds. Executive Director Dave Startzell and Board of Directors Chair Brian T. Fitzgerald were on hand to outline the intended vision for the Center as a conservation and education center and to recognize Ted and Eileen Vining, longtime caretakers of the property, for their dedication and efforts toward making the Kellogg Conservation Center a success. For now, the center serves as office space for Adam Brown, ATC's trails resource manager for New England, and Sara Sheehy, AMC's Berkshire region trails coordinator. Brown can be reached at 413-528-8002 or via email at abrown@appalachiantrail.org.

National Trails Day

June 2 marked the 15th anniversary of National Trails Day, founded by the American Hiking Society (AHS) (www.americanhiking.org). AHS posts events by state on its Web site and provides information to organizations interested in planning activities. Many

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A.T. clubs hosted hikes and work trips, both on and off the Trail, and participated in community events.

Some highlights: The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, in partnership with Shenandoah National Park, led hikes and staffed an informational display; Nantahala Hiking Club volunteers joined the Konnarock Crew for a trail rehabilitation project; and the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club participated in community events featuring hikes, exhibits, workshops and demonstrations at Stone Mountain Park and Vogel State Park.

In Boiling Springs, Pa., home of ATC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, NTD coincides with Foundry Day—a local celebration that was attended this year by about 10,000 people. ATC staff set up information tables, sponsored a hike, and provided children's activities, including a coloring booth, visits by Smokey the Bear, and a tug-o-war. Trail clubs also participated; the Cumberland Valley A.T. Club provided an information table and led a hike up nearby White Rock Trail, and the Mountain Club of Maryland staffed an information table.

Also on National Trails Day, ATC headquarters was the site of the dedication of the Appalachian Trail Museum Society's (<http://www.atmuseum.org>) first exhibit on the most important figures in the creation of the Appalachian Trail: Benton MacKaye and Myron Avery. The exhibit includes MacKaye's typewriter and the wheel used by Avery to measure the Trail.

In addition to participating in the dedication, staff and volunteers from the Appalachian Trail Museum Society, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, ATC and NPS-ATPO provided an information table in Harpers Ferry Historical Park, led hikes, and worked on the Trail.

GATC Trail Supervisor Recognized by AHS

Congratulations to Gary Monk, chosen as the American Hiking Society's South Region volunteer of the year. Monk led the club's effort to build moldering privies at all A.T. shelters in the Georgia. Among his accomplishments was coordinating an airlift of 43,000 pounds of materials to five privy and shelter sites over two days. He recruited volunteers to move the materials from the drop sites to the building sites and supervised the construction and renovation of the structures.

In nominating Monk, GATC President Frank Wright said, "Great volunteers lead by example. Gary logged 950 hours of trail maintenance on 92 separate trips. This astounding total was augmented by 928 hours of administrative tasks away from the physical trail. His donated time is the equivalent of one full time employee for a year." In conjunction with National Trails Day, AHS honors volunteers from eight regions nationwide, one of whom is named national volunteer of the year.

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Alcohol Banned at Partnership Shelter

An alcohol ban has been instituted at the A.T. Partnership Shelter in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area by order of the Forest Supervisor, due to continuing incidents involving intoxicated individuals, partying in the shelter, and related clean-up and trash removal having to be undertaken by Forest Service employees. The shelter is located just a couple of hundred yards from the recreation area headquarters. Easy access to a major highway and nearby towns have resulted in it becoming a party spot for some hikers and local residents.

Side Trails

The National Park Service Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) has selected Fred Dieffenbach from more than 100 applicants for the position of Appalachian Trail Vital Signs Coordinator. The goal of the program is to monitor the health of park ecosystems by observing “vital signs”—selected physical, chemical, and biological elements and processes of park ecosystems that represent the overall health or condition of the park. The Appalachian Trail Vital Signs report can be downloaded from the National Park Service (<http://www.nature.nps.gov>). Prior to this appointment, Dieffenbach served as NETN Data Manager and has provided leadership and expertise to the A.T. MEGA-Transect and other Appalachian Trail inventory and monitoring projects.

The 11th Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails will be held September 7–11 in Duluth, Minnesota, hosted by the North Country Trail Association. The theme of "healthy trail partnerships—healthy trail resources" will explore ways to engage new constituencies and new partners to sustain national scenic and historic trails. The Partnership for the National Trails System (http://www.nationaltrailpartnership.org/07_conf.asp) has program and registration information.

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) (www.aldha.org) will hold its 26th annual gathering Columbus Day weekend, October 5–7, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. ALDHA is a nonprofit group formed to represent and promote the welfare of the Appalachian long-distance hiking community.