

The Register

The Online Stewardship Newsletter for the Appalachian Trail

A publication of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Winter/Spring 2008

Sidehill

By Hawk Metheny and Robert Proudman

New overnight site guidelines and a policy on wind energy were adopted at the Fall 2007 meetings of the Stewardship Council and the Board of Directors.

In November, the Stewardship Council adopted "Guidance for Locating and Designing A.T. Shelters and Formal Campsites" (www.appalachiantrail.org/policies). The guidelines were drafted by recreation ecologist Dr. Jeffrey Marion, reviewed by Regional Partnership Committees, and are now in effect for all new shelters and major campsite developments on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Please contact your regional director with any questions or issues.

Also in November, following the recommendation of the Stewardship Council, based on the work of its new energy subcommittee, the ATC Board of Directors adopted a policy on wind-energy facilities (www.appalachiantrail.org/policies).

The policy arose from the issues surrounding proposed wind-power development on Redington and Black Nubble mountains in western Maine. In early January, Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission rejected the most recent application from Maine Mountain Power for a project on Black Nubble. Read more about the Maine wind power proposals (www.appalachiantrail.org/mainewind).

On a related note, ATC submitted [comments](#) to the Forest Service regarding its proposed Wind Energy Directive.

ATC also has joined a coalition to appeal to the Department of Energy (DOE) regarding its designation of the eastern National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor, or NIETC (www.appalachiantrail.org/getinvolved/nietc). A related article on ATC supporting a lawsuit to challenge DOE through the courts regarding the Eastern NIETC designation is in the News section in this edition of *The Register*.

Other information in this issue includes a primer on the U.S. Forest Service, safety tips for trail work, articles profiling the Allentown Hiking Club, and updates on ATC's Conservation staff. We offer our congratulations to Laura Belleville on her recent appointment as director of conservation. We look forward to working with her on ATC conservation initiatives in 2008 and beyond.

Please refer to the calendar of events in our news room for upcoming Regional Partnership, Stewardship Council, and Board of Directors meetings (www.appalachiantrail.org/calendar).

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News and Features

Conservation Department Staff Changes

Laura Belleville, who has been ATC's regional director for the Central and Southwest Virginia Regional Office since 2005, has taken on the additional role of serving as the director of conservation for the organization. Belleville is an experienced conservation leader who has worked in the field for more than 15 years. Her background ranges from ecological research to program development and management. Prior to joining ATC's staff, she directed conservation staff for the Ohio Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, where she worked for seven years. She has demonstrated experience in effectively managing staff and budgets, and fundraising. She continues to be based at ATC's regional office in Blacksburg.

ATC welcomed **Jack Noll**, education and outreach specialist, to the staff of the Southwest and Central Virginia Regional Office in November. He came to ATC after a career running an independent consulting business related to database analysis and programming, largely for environmental non-profits. He is a graduate of the NOLS Outdoor Educators course, has volunteered as a wilderness ranger, and led youth groups in the backcountry in Utah and citizen-scientists in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Noll is a charter member of the New River Valley master naturalists program in Virginia and was a volunteer on the A.T. wildlife survey with the Smithsonian Institute.

In December, **Jody Carton** (formerly Jody Bickel) became ATC's New England regional director at the Lyme, New Hampshire office. She replaces J.T. Horn, who left last summer for a position with the Trust for Public Land. Carton leads a staff of three and oversees ATC's activities in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Carton worked for ATC as an associate regional representative from 2000 to 2004, based first in the New England office and then in the Blacksburg, Virginia office. In the interim, she obtained a master's degree in public and non-profit management and worked as a program director in the resource development office at Virginia Tech.

ATC supports challenge of NIETC designation

ATC is supporting a lawsuit filed by the Piedmont Environmental Council (www.pecva.org) to challenge the Department of Energy (DOE) through the courts regarding the designation of the eastern National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor. DOE is laying the groundwork for federal condemnation of power-line corridors if states or localities fail to act within one year of a power company's application. At least three major power lines have been proposed to cross the Appalachian Trail. ATC's concerns center on the failure of DOE's and the electric-utility industry to prepare environmental impact studies as required under the National Environmental

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Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, among other federal laws.

Monthly Volunteer Recognition Coming Soon

ATC and its agency partners are always aware of the importance of Trail volunteers. In addition to Trail maintenance, volunteers now serve in wider roles – they’re serving as environmental monitors, removing invasive species, and helping shape policy that will guide ATC in years to come.

National Volunteer Week (<http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/>) provides us with an opportunity to highlight their essential contribution to the Appalachian Trail. ATC and ATPO will be celebrating National Volunteer Week (April 27 – May 3, 2008) this year by launching a “Volunteer of the Month” feature on www.appalachiantrail.org that will better recognize the contributions of our volunteers.

U.S. Forest Service A.T. Primer

Although the National Park Service (NPS) is the lead federal agency for the Appalachian Trail, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is also a major partner in the A.T. cooperative management system. Both the NPS and USFS have been involved in the design, construction, maintenance, and management of the A.T. since the 1920s. In fact, more of the A.T. footpath is on lands managed by the USFS than by NPS or any of the other 65-plus federal and state land-managing agencies involved with the Trail.

The A.T. traverses 19 ranger districts on eight national forests in two USFS regions—the Southern Region (R8) and the Eastern Region (R9). Management policy and direction for the A.T. on USFS lands is found in the 1981 *A.T. Comprehensive Plan*, in a variety of agreements between the USFS and either NPS or ATC, and in the forest plans of each national forest. The A.T. and the lands immediately around it are identified in each forest plan as unique management areas, with relatively consistent management direction and standards. Most A.T.-management decisions are made at the local ranger district level by field personnel working with 15 local Appalachian Trail clubs and three ATC regional field offices. The only USFS employee whose job is focused strictly on the A.T. is the USFS A.T. coordinator. This liaison position, created in 1980, is jointly funded by the two USFS regions and NPS, and is based at the NPS-A.T. Park Office in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, within walking distance of ATC headquarters.

In addition to lands within national forest boundaries in six states, the USFS also manages significant acreages of land acquired by the NPS for the protection of the A.T. outside of national forest boundaries in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Virginia.

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General information about the USFS and links to each National Forest are at www.fs.fed.us. Pete Irvine, the current USFS A.T. Coordinator, can be contacted at 304-535-6737 or pirvine@fs.fed.us.

Approximate A.T. Mileage by National Forest

Region 9

White Mountain National Forest	160 miles
Green Mountain National Forest	150 miles

Region 8

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests	316 miles
Cherokee National Forest	178 miles
National Forests in North Carolina (Pisgah and Nantahala)	135 miles
Chattahoochee National Forest	76 miles

Total: 1,015 miles (47 percent of the A.T.)

Maintainers Tips

Worktrip Safety

Trail work can be dangerous, from using sharp cutting tools or power equipment, such as chain saws and brushcutters, to working on steep terrain or under varying weather conditions. Trail workers need to know their abilities and limitations, have appropriate skills training, use equipment properly, and follow safe work practices.

If you lead a worktrip, promote safety. Do a job-hazard analysis in advance and make sure appropriate safety gear is available and used in the field. ATC has developed a [job-hazard analysis chart](#) (PDF) listing some hazards associated with trail work and recommended and required safety gear.

Contact new participants beforehand to make sure they will be wearing boots and long pants and bring work gloves. Remind them to bring plenty of water with them and dress appropriately for the weather. Ask about allergies to bee stings or medical conditions that may be relevant.

Before leaving home:

- Leave your itinerary with a contact person.
- Have a plan in case of serious injuries—know your location and if there is cell phone coverage.

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- Know where to seek medical help and procedures for reporting injuries. (Under the Volunteers in Parks and Volunteers in Forests programs of the National Park Service and USDA Forest Service, A.T. volunteers are considered to be federal employees for the purpose of medical treatment of injuries that occur while working on the Trail—check with your federal agency partner or ATC regional office for more information.)
- Bring insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Have a well-stocked first-aid kit and first-aid training.

Hold a tailgate safety talk at the trailhead:

- Review the job to be done and any hazards that may be associated with the work.
- Talk about what to do in case of an accident or injury and the location of the nearest medical facility.
- Remind workers to space themselves out and be aware of each others' location.
- Remind workers that hikers may be on the Trail, as well as in and around your worksite.

On the Trail and on the job:

- Carry tools safely—cover sharp edges, grasp the handle of chopping tools just below the tool head with the head facing forward, and carry with the blade pointing down.
- Be sure workers use tools correctly and are wearing appropriate safety gear—shinguards, hard-hats, eye and face protection may be needed. People assisting with a job or working nearby also may need protective gear.
- Pay attention to inexperienced workers. Demonstrate tasks and make sure they are using tools and safety gear correctly.
- Chain-saw or crosscut-sawyers should be certified, wearing personal protective equipment and following all guidelines for their own safety and that of others. Never saw alone.
- Watch for signs of fatigue and remind workers to take frequent rest and water breaks, especially in hot weather. Swap jobs to lessen fatigue and monotony.
- If you see unsafe behavior, speak up.

Custom Chain-Saw Carrier

A.T. sawyers know that one of the toughest parts of using a chain saw for trail maintenance is lugging the saw to the Trail and then to the work site. Carrying the saw in your hand or over your shoulder is tiring and awkward. A commercially made chain-saw backpack is expensive—about \$300 retail. Made from Cordura nylon, it is subject to fabric contamination due to fuel and oil spillage.

Many trail maintainers have fashioned their own “custom” saw carriers over the years. Ed Ritter of the Allentown Hiking Club made one recently to haul the club’s newly purchased saw.

He began with an old external-frame pack purchased at a yard sale for \$1.00. A piece of ½-inch plywood was attached to the pack with nylon cable ties. The saw, with the bar inside its plastic

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scabbard, rides on the pack with the powerhead low and bar pointing up. The bar slides through and is held in place by an old garage door handle fastened to the plywood. The powerhead is held tight by a handle with a PVC spacer that screws into a nut attached to an old chair seat brace. The actual fuel “trigger” of the saw does not touch the screw-handle. An old fire-extinguisher bracket is used to carry an aluminum fuel bottle on the pack. Total cost of the custom saw carrier was minimal, using leftover items from Ritter's basement shop.

The second person on the saw team carries a separate backpack (also acquired at a yard sale) containing saw chaps, files, bar oil, wedges, hatchet, first aid kit, spare chain, helmets, ear protection, and safety eyewear to be worn by the sawyers.

Additional information about the saw carrier is available by contacting Allentown Hiking Club Trails Chairman Ed Ritter at critter3@peoplepc.com.

Clubs

New England RPC Bestows Honors

Steve Smith, of the Appalachian Mountain Club's Berkshire Chapter, was named “Volunteer of the Year” by the New England Regional Partnership Committee (RPC). Cosmo Catalano, AMC-Berkshire A.T. Committee chair and chair of ATC's New England RPC, cited Smith's role as corridor monitor coordinator—under Smith's leadership the chapter reported an impressive 90 percent completion rate for boundary maintenance work along the A.T. corridor throughout Massachusetts. In addition to keeping up with both maintaining and monitoring the boundary, he has been a leader in mitigating encroachments in the Trail corridor and educating Trail neighbors about living next door to a National Park. Smith was a member of ATC's former Board of Managers and currently serves on the Conservancy's Stewardship Council and the finance committee.

Stephen Longley of Rivers and Trails Northeast was recognized as the 2007 “Partner of the Year” by the New England RPC for his service to A.T. hikers for more than 20 years as the Kennebec Ferryman. This is the first time a contractor has received this recognition.

The historic route of the Appalachian Trail across the Kennebec River in Maine was a camp owner's ferry at Caratunk. When that service ended, hikers were faced with a 30-mile road detour or crossing the river downstream of a hydro-electric dam. Releases from the dam can cause the river to rise rapidly and unpredictably, posing a serious danger to hikers. Rivers and Trails Northeast provided the ferry service during the hiking season for all but one year since 1986.

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Longley's company maintained a rigorous schedule of twice-daily canoe crossings for A.T. hikers, with a staff of Maine Guides whose qualifications met or exceeded Maine Warden Service and U.S. Coast Guard standards. The ferry, funded by ATC (which works closely with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club to oversee the service) is provided free to hikers, who must wear personal flotation devices. Packs are not ferried for hikers who are determined to ford despite the danger.

Longley, himself a thru-hiker, cultivated A.T. hikers and promoted ATC and MATC relationships. Rivers and Trails Northeast has decided not to renew its contract. ATC is seeking a new provider for this vital service. For information, including bid packets, contact Matt Stevens at mstevens@appalachiantrail.org.

Spotlight on the Allentown Hiking Club

At its organizational meeting in 1931, an enthusiastic group of hikers voted the Allentown Hiking Club (AHC) of Pennsylvania into existence, elected officers, set the annual dues at \$1.00, appointed a committee to write by-laws, agreed to accept responsibility for maintaining seven and one-half miles of the Appalachian Trail, decided on a plan to hold three hikes and a business meeting each month, and scheduled the first month's hikes.

Today the all-volunteer club, now with 300 active members, continues its mission to “escape the crowded city; to walk, hike, and climb for the enjoyment and exercise with nature-loving companions; to maintain its section of the Appalachian Trail; and to stimulate public interest in every phase of nature and the outdoors through programs and lectures.”

The club maintains 10.3 miles of the A.T. in eastern Pennsylvania on state game commission and NPS-acquired lands from Bake Oven Knob Road to Tri County Corner. Overnight sites include the Allentown Shelter and the G.W. Outerbridge Shelter.

Under the guidance of Trails Chair Ed Ritter, who has served in that appointed position since 1992, individual trail maintainers perform basic trail work, while special projects, such as shelter maintenance and parking lot construction, are tackled during the club's annual maintenance trip/picnic and on periodic club work trips.

The club has an active corridor-boundary monitoring program coordinated by Barb Wiemann, who also represents the club on ATC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) and serves as RPC secretary. In federal fiscal year 2007, AHC reported that 23 club volunteers contributed 1,223 hours to the A.T., which could be valued at nearly \$23,000 using the most recent value of volunteer time from Independent Sector.

AHC has an extensive, easy-to-navigate Web site [www.allentownhikingclub.org] with considerable information on the club, its history, scheduled events (which are open to the public) and more, including an impressive brochure for new members with valuable information on

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hiking and backpacking. Also noteworthy are Web pages on scouting resources, the Regional Partnership Committee, hike-leader requirements and resources, and a form for reporting volunteer hours.

L.L.Bean Grants to Clubs Funds Equipment for AHC

ATC's annual grant program, underwritten by L.L.Bean since the late 1980s, provides financial support to the 30 Appalachian Trail-maintaining clubs for projects related to A.T. maintenance, facility construction and renovation, and other projects such as visitor services and public education. The clubs provide matching contributions of labor, money or in-kind donations. In 2007, nearly \$22,000 was awarded by ATC in 22 grants to 14 Trail clubs.

Allentown Hiking Club received one of those grants, which it used to purchase a Husqvarna chain saw, a Husqvarna weed trimmer with string and steel-toothed heads, sawyer helmet, cut-resistant chaps, fuel containers, extra bar and chains, oils, and other safety equipment. The club will match the grant by volunteer labor working on projects to redefine parking spaces and block all-terrain-vehicle access to the Trail from an old trailhead parking lot.

AHC successfully negotiated a price break from the Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, Ace Hardware store. The tools are club-owned and are used only by sawyers trained and certified in their safe use through the A.T. sawyer-training and certification program.

Awards for 2008 grants will be announced later this winter. The deadline for 2009 grant applications is November 1, 2008. Guidelines and the application form will be distributed this spring to the Trail clubs and posted on the ATC Web site (www.appalachiantrail.org/grantstoclubs).

Monitoring

Jigsaw Puzzle of Protected Public Lands

Managing the Appalachian Trail doesn't stop with the footpath—the lands acquired by the National Park Service for the Trail need protection as well. Clearly marked boundaries and regular monitoring and maintenance of the boundary line are the first line of defense to protect Trail lands from misuse and encroachment.

NPS began acquiring tracts of land and protective easements for the Trail between southwest Virginia and Maine in 1978. Those individual tracts fit together to form a large jigsaw puzzle of ownership, providing a permanent, protective buffer, or corridor, for the A.T. The boundary is the edge of the corridor, where the NPS lands end and adjacent landowners' properties begin.

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The parcels of corridor land are generally along the crest of the Appalachian Mountain range, on rough terrain without easy access. There are some roads that cross or reach corridor lands in the less remote areas, but access generally requires considerable travel by foot to reach the corridor.

Corridor boundary monitors regularly walk the surveyed boundaries, which are marked with monuments, U.S. Boundary signs and yellow paint blazes. They inspect survey monuments, note line conditions, and keep a lookout for encroachments. Prompt reporting of misuse of A.T. lands to the local Trail club and ATC is an essential element of Trail protection. Many of the 21 Trail clubs that do corridor monitoring also opt to take on the maintenance side of the job.

For a close-up look at "life on the edge," check out the boundary blog (www.atcboundary.blogspot.com) or the January-February issue of *Appalachian Trail Journeys*. If you would like to learn more about becoming a corridor monitor, contact your Trail club or ATC's boundary program manager Sally Naser at snaser@appalachiantrail.org.

Water Monitoring on the Appalachian Trail

Last fall hundreds of volunteers - including representatives from twenty-two Trail maintaining clubs, youth groups and students – collected water quality data at over 200 sites along the Appalachian Trail during World Water Monitoring Day. The month long event held annually from September 18 – October 18 builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world. ATC participated in the event to capture the status of A.T. water resources and raise awareness of the significant freshwater resources that occur along the Trail. Stay tuned for more detail on the results. We're be hosting World Water Monitoring Day on the A.T. in 2008, contact jmahoney@appalachiantrail.org for more information.

Along the Trail

A.T. Park Office Moves

The NPS-Appalachian Trail Park Office has a new home. Park Manager Pam Underhill and her staff have moved from the lower town in Harpers Ferry to the NPS Stephen T. Mather Training Center on the historic grounds of Storer College, founded in 1867. The office is located on the Mather side trail, just a few hundred yards from ATC headquarters.

Blue and White Crew Lay Last Step

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's Blue and White Crew (www.blueandwhitecrew.org) installed the last of approximately 125 large, stone steps on the Mather side trail in Harpers Ferry in December. The trail is a short, steep section that links the Trail to ATC headquarters. The

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project involved many partners: PATC volunteers provided manpower; the West Virginia Department of Transportation footed the bill for stone and signs.; REI provided a grant to PATC to buy rock hammers, drills, and other tools; Harpers Ferry National Historical Park moved the stone to the work site and enabled volunteers to work in the architecturally and historically sensitive park; ATC coordinated the paperwork, planning and communications, and provided Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew labor; and NPS-ATPO provided additional support, as well as a place to get out of the cold in the final stage of the project. The crew will return in early spring to complete the project.

Side Trails

Ferrington Retires

Tom Ferrington, recreation planner for the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia retired on January 3. Ferrington's area of responsibility included trails, dispersed recreation, and wilderness. A copy of the coffee-table book *The Appalachian Trail—An Aerial View*, signed by NPS-A.T. Park Manager Pam Underhill and Appalachian Trail Conservancy Executive Director Dave Startzell, was presented to him at a retirement luncheon. He was also toasted by eight Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (www.georgia-atclub.org) members at the event. Ferrington championed the A.T. in the Chattahoochee—doing the necessary behind-the-scenes work to enable the club's volunteers to manage and maintain the Trail in Georgia. He was instrumental in the effort to develop a standardized design for the moldering privies now in use on the Trail throughout Georgia. After the luncheon, Ferrington wrote of the “[Georgia Appalachian Trail] Club members' staunch dedication to Trail stewardship—the staggering yearly volunteer hours are a testament to the tenacity that each GATC member puts forth on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia. What an honor to be with such a highly motivated, energetic group of individuals.”

Former ATC Regional Director Honored by PNTS

Mike Dawson, the Pacific Crest Trail Association's trail operations director since 2004, has been honored by the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) with a lifetime achievement award for his more than 25 years of work for national trails. Dawson began his trails career with ATC as a regional representative coordinating trail and resource management activities along 390 miles of the Trail involving five Forest Service districts, two National Park Service units, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and eight volunteer trail clubs. He left ATC to become director of trail management and protection for the Pacific Northwest Trail Association before moving on to the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Gary Werner, executive director of the PNTS cited Dawson's "many years of patiently fostering cooperative partnerships between citizen volunteers and public agencies to help sustain three of America's premier trails. [His] cheerful empowerment of volunteers and ability to competently forge lasting, beneficial working relationships with public

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trail managers make him a highly respected leader in our National Trails System community.”

Stephen T. Mather Award Presented to Don Campbell

Harpers Ferry Historical Park (www.nps.gov/hafe) Superintendent Don Campbell was honored by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) (www.npca.org) in October with its Stephen T. Mather award for his leadership and dedication as an advocate for the historical park. When developers sought to build a business park on land within the Harpers Ferry park's boundaries, where Union troops unsuccessfully defended their position in the 1862 battle against General Stonewall Jackson, Campbell worked diligently to defend the historic property, attending numerous meetings and making presentations. The town councils of the surrounding communities voted unanimously against the controversial development. For more than 20 years, NPCA has presented this annual award to a National Park Service employee for taking vital action to protect a national park.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (www.nynjtc.org), in partnership with the state of New Jersey, Bergen County, Mahwah Township, and the Morris Land Conservancy, has acquired an old schoolhouse and the surrounding 2.8 acres of land. Plans are to restore and refurbish the building to house the organization's offices and serve as a public resource for trail and environmental education. The Darlington Schoolhouse (www.darlingtonschoolhouse.org) was built in 1891. Although vacant for more than 20 years, most of the building remains intact, with chestnut doors, slate chalkboards and rounded-arch, multi-paned windows. Fundraising for the restoration is underway.