

ATC Resolution Regarding Climate Change

Whereas there is widespread international scientific consensus that the continued increase of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide (CO₂), in the atmosphere due to human activities threatens the stability of the global climate system;

Whereas CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere is currently at a significantly higher than the historic background level due primarily to the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation;

Whereas atmospheric concentration of CO₂ is expected to continue to rise but there is great potential to reduce human impacts through constructive changes in technology, behavior, and energy and land-use policies;

Whereas the potential impacts of global climate change, including long-term drought, extreme weather events, increased forest fires, and changes in the timing of the seasons may cause major disruption to the Appalachian Mountain ecosystem and threaten the health and sustainability of the ANST's flora and fauna;

Whereas these impacts likely are, and almost certainly will continue to directly affect the Appalachian Trail footpath itself due to increased treadway erosion and blowdown obstruction from severe storms, increased invasion of exotic species, desiccation of water sources due to drought, and altering and compromising the "Walking With Spring" trail experience due to climatic shifts and timing of the seasons;

Whereas the ATC has, since its inception, advocated for the protection and preservation of diverse forest, bog and other important and diverse ecosystems along the 2,175 mile length of the A.T., has fought to protect thousands of acres of forest lands, and supports the protection of national and state forests and parks and designated wilderness areas;

Whereas ATC is charged "to ensure that future generations will have clean water and air, scenic vistas, a healthy natural environment and opportunities for recreation and renewal along the entire Trail corridor" (from mission statement) and through its agreements with the National Park Service, Department of Interior and other agencies, ATC is obligated to the highest standards of protection of the ANST;

Therefore be it resolved that the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will:

Reduce its own carbon emissions by implementing cost-effective energy technology and behavior changes in its operations;

Support energy conservation and renewable energy technology where consistent with ATC's energy-related policies;

Educate ATC members and Trail visitors on climate change and its wide-ranging effects on the ANST;

Educate ATC members and Trail visitors about the availability of mass transit and other low-carbon transportation alternatives for accessing trailheads;

Promote mass transit accessibility to trailheads;

Monitor climate change indicators and collect climate-relevant data through the MEGA-Transect and other environmental monitoring programs;

Support appropriate state and federal carbon-reducing policies and regulations;

Urge continuing efforts to protect Appalachian forest lands for the increasingly important purpose of carbon sequestration and climate moderation;

Recognize the value of A.T. lands as a corridor to allow wildlife to adapt to climate change, and take this into account in future actions;

Conduct further research and analysis with the Appalachian Trail Park Office to determine if the ANST can meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Park Service's "Climate Friendly Parks" program in concert with the implementation of these efforts;

Partner with other like-minded organizations in carbon reducing efforts and climate change education programs.