

The Register

The Online Volunteer Newsletter for the Appalachian Trail

A publication of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Summer 2006

Sidehill

By Hawk Metheny and Robert Proudman

June is National Safety Month, and safety is the theme of this summer issue. You will find articles on the most dangerous activity Trail workers perform, preventing heat-related illness, safety advice from *A.T. Design, Construction, and Maintenance* (ATDCM), and a cautionary article on a lightning storm. Special thanks to Pete Irvine, ATPO-Forest Service liaison to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, for his ardent emphasis, and that of his agency, on safety.

There's so much happening at ATC, we don't quite know where to start. Here's a sampling of a few of the exciting but less widely known activities the Conservancy will be involved in over the next few months.

In July, more than a dozen elementary school teachers have been selected to attend a place-based-education pilot program called "A Trail to Every Classroom" to draw attention to the Appalachian Trail as an asset for young people and local communities.

In September, in cooperation with The Conservation Fund, community forums will be held in two Trail towns to highlight the A.T. and its resources, engage community leaders and residents in dialogue about current challenges jointly faced by the A.T. and local communities, and encourage trailside communities to be more aware and supportive of conserving the Trail and its corridor, while realizing local benefits such as open-space conservation, sustainable development, tourism, outdoor recreation, and the health and fitness of residents.

And, in November, more than 70 scientists, natural-resource managers, educators, and policy experts will attend the inaugural A.T. Environmental Monitoring Symposium to develop an ambitious monitoring framework for research and applied environmental science to take place along the "Appalachian Trail Mega-Transsect."

Many of you expressed appreciation for the first electronic issue of *The Register*, resurrected this spring. Thank you! As you can see, there's a lot going on. To tell these stories and more, we need your help.

Volunteer editors have shaped *The Register* since its inauguration by Thurston Griggs in 1978. They have been Trail club presidents and newsletter editors, Trail maintainers and historians. They have hailed from Maine and Georgia and places in between. Some have been ATC Board or committee members. They shared a passion for the Trail, a willingness to write and seek contributions from others, and a volunteer viewpoint. We are looking for people to provide that perspective, either by contributing a guest editorial or occasional article, or on a regular basis. If this appeals to you, or you know of someone who might be a good candidate, please send an e-

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mail describing qualifications and interest in this important post to TheRegister@appalachiantrail.org. We're waiting to hear from you.

Hawk Metheny, Stewardship Council Chair

Robert Proudman, Director of Conservation Operations

Past Editors of The Register

Thurston Griggs	April 1978–September 1981
Maurice Forrester	November 1981–December 1984
Nancy Shofner	January 1985–July 1988
Ed Kohinke	November 1988–March 1989
Reese Lukei	August 1989–December 1994
John Morgan	February 1995–Summer 2003

News/Features

Regional Partners Awards

In conjunction with ATC's Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) meetings, Agency and Volunteer Partners of the Year were honored in New England last fall and at the Virginia and Deep South regional meetings this spring. The Mid-Atlantic RPC will present awards at its meeting in November.

At the New England RPC meeting in Fairlee, Vermont, last October, ATC honored a long-time US Forest Service trails specialist and two volunteer corridor-monitor coordinators.

Roger Collins of the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire was recognized as the New England Agency Partner of the Year for his longtime support of ATC, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Dartmouth Outing Club and other recreation groups in the Whites. Roger was instrumental in planning the new A.T. bridge across Cascade Brook, a cooperative project by the Pemigewasset Ranger District of the USFS, AMC, ATC and NPS-ATPO.

Dick Blake of the AMC-Connecticut Chapter and Don Whitney of the Green Mountain Club shared honors as New England Volunteer Partners of the Year. Dick has done an outstanding job of coordinating A.T. corridor-monitoring efforts in Connecticut since that program's inception in the 1980s; and also led the effort to design, plan, and construct the first designated and fully accessible A.T. segment along the Housatonic River in Falls Village. Don, who "doesn't do meetings" and was on a trail work trip instead, is a stalwart volunteer of the GMC's

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Ottauquechee Section and, like Dick, has been coordinating corridor-monitoring efforts since the program began. Don is also a master privy builder who has designed and built pit, composting, and moldering privies.

ATC's Central and Southwest Virginia RPC honored agency and volunteer partners in April at the combined Southern Partnership Meeting at Mountain Lake, Virginia. New River Valley and New Castle District Ranger Cindy Schiffer, of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, was named Agency Partner of the Year. During her five-year tenure, Cindy has worked successfully with ATC and local clubs to mitigate the impacts from the AEP 765kV powerline construction, rebuild relationships with local communities, negotiate a new permanent route for the A.T. north of the New River, and arrange for the ATC Virginia Regional Office to be housed with the USFS office in Blacksburg.

The "Pulaskiteer," Bill Rogers, of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club, was recognized as the Volunteer Partner of the Year. Bill has been with the club for nearly 30 years, serving at various times as president, trails chair, and education chair, and continues to be an active trail maintainer, newsletter contributor, and teacher of trail maintenance and Leave No Trace workshops. He served three terms on the ATC Board of Managers, and now serves on the Konnarock Steering Committee.

The Southern Region Partnership Committee, encompassing Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, also presented awards at the Southern Partnership Meeting. Dennis Helton, chainsaw and crosscut saw safety coordinator for the Forest Service, was recognized as Agency Partner of the Year. Dennis is the safety specialist for the USFS for all of the eastern and southern U.S. He has a strong commitment to the A.T., having led multiple chain-saw and crosscut-saw safety training and certification courses for A.T. volunteers, overseeing other USFS instructors in their efforts, and coordinating with ATC lead contract instructor Peter Jensen. ATC staffer Matt Davis read several glowing quotes from Helton's volunteer students, such as "During my long life and career, I have attended many, many technical schools...I am pleased to say that Dennis Helton is by far the best instructor I have ever met!"

Clark Wright, an ATC life member since 2002, was named SORO's Volunteer Partner of the Year. Before joining ATC, Wright took a leave-of-absence from his legal practice to walk the A.T. from Springer all the way to Pennsylvania with a friend. In 2003, a lobbyist friend and former thru-hiker directed Clark to N.C. State Senator Joe Sam Queen. The two of them began a successful drive to secure approval of a special "Friends of the Appalachian Trail" state license plate. Twenty dollars per plate goes to ATC, and the funds are dedicated to A.T. management and protection in North Carolina through the Southern Regional Office. Thanks to Wright's leadership, ATC has, since last fall, received more than \$40,000 from the license plates.

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Land Trust update

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has been working towards protecting A.T. buffer lands outside the federally protected corridor since 1982, acquiring and holding conservation easements and properties as well as facilitating transactions for partners. Over the years, the ATC land-trust program has directly protected 16,141 acres and assisted partners in protecting another 137,308 acres within the A.T. countryside.

The land-trust program now faces an important transition, driven both by important changes in the land-trust movement and the urgent need to scale up our conservation efforts to preserve the A.T. countryside before it is lost to development. Prompted by abuses of land-protection systems and incentives, the Internal Revenue Service and the Senate Finance Committee are investigating land trusts' operations as well as tax benefits claimed by conservation-easement donors. In response, the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA) strengthened its standards and practices in 2004 and crafted a national accreditation program in 2005, which it will start testing this year.

Keeping abreast of the movement, ATC's Board of Directors adopted the LTA standards and practices at its meeting in May, and enacted several new operational policies as a result. All land-trust records and operations have been audited, and ATC is taking steps to correct any existing gaps and bring the program up to best standards. In parallel, the land trust has identified its next priority sites, and is intending to strategically reach out to partners to achieve the greatest protection in the shortest time possible.

ATC's strength has always been its volunteers, the wide-spread but close-knit community that manages and protects the trail, its lands and resources at the local level with the support and guidance of ATC and ATPO staff. Similarly, ATC's land trust will continue to build on the expertise and strengths of local partners to better protect the Trail experience, so that future generations may "travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains" and claim their heritage.

Universal Design Assessments

If you're out on the Trail this season and notice a thru-hiker measuring a shelter or a privy – he's not measuring for new curtains, he's working on an important project! ATC and NPS-ATPO have begun a comprehensive inventory of each shelter and privy on the Trail. The detailed measurements being taken will be used to better inform future management decisions on designing facilities to improve access for all visitors, where appropriate. In recognition that hikers come in all shapes, sizes, and ability levels, the concept of "Universal Design" seeks to make shelters, privies, and other features safe, accessible, and useable to current and future hikers.

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The project is being conducted by Tipton (“Tip”) Ray, who began his northbound thru-hike in March. Tip has 30 years of experience in the outdoor-recreation field, a graduate degree in therapeutic recreation, and has traveled widely to present information concerning recreation and people with disabilities—including at ATC’s 2005 Biennial Conference.

A message on accessibility was sent recently to A.T.-maintaining club managers. For more information, contact Teresa Martinez, tmartinez@appalachiantrail.org.

Appalachian Trail Vegetation Mapping Project

In 2001, the National Park Service designated the A.T. as a “natural resource park” and provided more funding to help inventory natural resources and to implement operational monitoring of critical resources along the Trail. To assist with vegetation inventories, the NPS has employed the help of NatureServe [www.natureserve.org], a nonprofit conservation organization considered a global leader in this domain. The A.T. is next in line on its list of parks to map.

The goal of the vegetation-mapping project, anticipated to begin next year, is to produce a classification and map that details the vegetation types of the A.T. corridor, using the framework of the U.S. National Vegetation Classification. It is expected to be a uniquely complicated project, given the sheer scale of the project and the fact it involves a much larger than average team spanning many state and federal agencies and jurisdictions. It will be a multiyear project, with final products expected to be completed around 2011. Team members will include personnel from NatureServe, the National Park Service, state natural-heritage programs, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, interested Trail Clubs, and other state, federal or private land-management agencies along the Trail, as well as private contractors and possibly some universities.

This is a very exciting project, in which ATC will likely play a significant role in coordinating and communicating information, and there will be several opportunities for trail club and volunteer involvement. It is also a great opportunity for collaboration among state natural-heritage programs, agency partners and others along the Trail.

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Maintainer's Tips

Safety

From Chapter 2 of Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance by William Birchard, Jr., and Robert Proudman. A work-hazard analysis, listing trail-work tasks, potential hazards, and recommended safety gear can be found on pages 12–13, and additional safety tips are found throughout book and in the Appalachian Trail Fieldbook. Both items are available at special rates for A.T. maintainers by calling 1-888-AT STORE (1-888-288-8673).

A core tradition of the A.T. volunteer community is safety—for yourself, your coworkers and the trail's users and neighbors. The Appalachian Trail partners have an enviable safety record, accumulated from a sustained focus on safe work practices, training, providing and enforcing the use of safety equipment, and emphasizing a safe work environment. As a volunteer, you should make learning safe working practices an integral part of any new skill you acquire.

Trail work safety often demands an emphasis you probably won't find elsewhere in modern life because your assignment may take you far from professional medical or emergency help and miles from a car. If you get badly hurt, evacuation may take many hours or even more than a day.

You are personally responsible for assessing your own fitness and preparedness. Equip yourself with gear appropriate for the location, duration, weather, and difficulty of the work project. We recommend that all trail workers carry a first-aid kit and know how to use it; and that you avoid working alone. Learn about special hazards in your area and be mindful of seasonal differences. Hold a "tailgate safety meeting" before starting work to review the job at hand, the associated hazards, and the tools and safety gear you will need.

Getting There – Safely

What's the most hazardous part of your work trip? Uneven footing, which could mean a twisted ankle or knee? That first steep uphill pull that tests your lungs and your legs? Late afternoon lightning on an open ridgeline? That widowmaker tree? Snakes? Ticks? Poison ivy?

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Most of us would not name driving as the most hazardous part of our work on the A.T., but it is. Operating motor vehicles is the most dangerous thing most of us do, and we do it every day. A few pointers:

Before You Drive

- Observe the “Circle Of Safety” rule – walk around the vehicle and check it for problems (cracked or dirty windshield, fluid leaks, worn tires) and the area around it for hazards.
- Adjust your seat and mirrors.
- Think through the route ahead with respect to weather, road and traffic conditions.

While You Drive

- Always wear your seat belt and insist that your passengers do.
- Keep your eyes moving, looking at the road ahead, to the sides and to the rear.
- Drive slowly and use transmission gearing and engine compression to control vehicle speed.
- Drive as far to the right as possible without driving on the road shoulder.
- Keep windows, mirrors and lights clean and clear.
- Follow the “Three-Second Rule” – keep at least three seconds behind the car in front of you to provide a safe stopping distance.
- Drive defensively: Make concessions to other drivers who are thoughtless, unskilled or ignorant of the hazards they create. Yield the right-of-way even when by all the “rules of the road” it is yours. Stay attentive – don’t eat, drink, read maps, or talk on a cell phone while you drive. Drive with your headlights on, even in daylight. This makes you more visible to oncoming traffic.
- Be alert—on long trips, take a rest stop at least every few hours. Switch drivers if possible. Use a passenger as copilot and navigator.
- Many accidents occur when backing a vehicle – use a spotter or walk around the vehicle before backing, back the rear of your vehicle towards the cut bank and away from the drop-off, always face the danger, and do your backing maneuver when you first park rather than when you return to your vehicle.

Additional Notes

- ABS brakes—most vehicles are now equipped with antilock braking systems (ABS) and the old rule of pumping your brakes to slow down is not valid on these vehicles; firm continuous foot pressure is best.
- 15-Passenger Vans—these are the largest vehicles that do not require specialized licensing, and they handle differently from most other vehicles. They are longer, with a higher center of gravity. Proper vehicle loading and tire inflation are especially important in this type of vehicle.

When planning your next A.T. work trip, remember that getting there and getting home safely are as vital as working safely in the woods.

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There are many sources of additional information, including:

www.nsc.org/library/facts/defdriv.htm

www.nsc.org/library/facts/abs.htm

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/problems/studies/15PassVans/15PassCustomerAdvisory.htm>

Avoid Heat-Related Illness

(Adapted from National Interagency Fire Center “Six Minutes for Safety – Hydration”)

Trail maintenance, corridor monitoring, environmental monitoring and other A.T. volunteer efforts often take place in summer heat and humidity and may require amounts of physical exertion beyond your everyday routine. Heat-related illnesses are a result of the body’s inability to cope with heat, and can be a minor nuisance (heat cramps), a serious condition (heat exhaustion) or a life-threatening situation (heat stroke). While recognizing and treating heat-related injuries are important, preventing them is the key.

Physical fitness is an important protection against heat illness – the well-developed circulatory system and increased blood volume of a fit worker help to regulate body temperature and permit faster adaptation to heat conditions.

Other precautions are keeping hydrated and taking rest breaks while working in the heat.

In high heat conditions, your body naturally maintains a healthy temperature by sweating, and maintaining body fluids (hydration) is essential for sweating. What’s “high heat?” Studies have defined it as a temperature as low as 80 degrees with humidity of 65 percent or higher.

You should hydrate before, during, and after your physical work trips by drinking lots of fluids. Water is your greatest need. You can include citrus or tomato juices or carbohydrate/electrolyte sport beverages. Avoid caffeine from coffee or cola drinks, as it hastens fluid loss in your urine. Avoid alcoholic drinks, because, like caffeine, alcohol causes dehydration.

Before work, drink extra fluids. While working, drink ½ to 1 quart of fluid per hour. After work, continue drinking to replace fluid losses. Thirst lags behind your fluid needs, so drink more than you think you need. Rehydration is enhanced when fluids contain some sodium and potassium, or when foods with those electrolytes (like bananas and citrus fruits) are consumed.

Drinking ½ to one quart of water per hour of work sounds like a lot. However, it has a sound basis in studies of wildland firefighters, who work in high heat conditions in mountainous country doing lots of walking, digging and brush cutting—sound similar to trail work?

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How do you know if you are drinking enough? You can assess your hydration level by observing the volume, color and concentration of your urine. Low volumes of dark, concentrated urine, or painful urination indicate a serious need for rehydration. Other signs of dehydration include a rapid heart rate, general weakness, excessive fatigue, and dizziness.

Work safe, and have fun!

More information can be found on the following Web sites.

Hydration: www.nifc.gov/sixminutes/dsp_discussion.php?id=68

Heat disorders: www.nifc.gov/sixminutes/dsp_discussion.php?id=67

Symptoms and treatment of heat-related illnesses:

National Safety Council: <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/hot.htm>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):

<http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/heatstress/>

Lightning can strike with deadly consequences and little warning. If you can't seek shelter in an enclosed building or vehicle, take steps to protect yourself as these volunteers did: Get out of the open as quickly as possible; do not take refuge under a tree; have nothing in contact with the ground except your feet, squat to reduce your height. Two more tips—keep at least 20 feet away from others to reduce the chance of multiple casualties from a single strike and cover your ears with your hands to help protect your ear drums. The National Lightning Safety Institute has a wealth of information. www.lightningsafety.com

The Imperfect Storm

By Rosalie Russo, Appalachian Trail Conference Volunteer Natural Heritage Monitor

What a perfect day it was. Daniel and I just finished a session of rare-plant monitoring from Yellow Mountain Gap across the open balds and Little Hump Mountain down to Bradley Gap. The time was almost 2:00 p.m. We finished our snack and packed our away our pens and notebooks. A cool, soft breeze greeted us as we started up Little Hump Mountain on our return.

The A.T. wound its way under trees heavy with leaves providing ample shade. We came upon two deer running erratically at full speed downhill, paying no attention to us.

Daniel and I came out of the wooded area just below Little Hump Mountain. The sun was in our faces again. As we arrived at the summit, we saw a black cloud coming our way. Behind us another black cloud was rapidly moving toward us. We started down the side of the mountain. Maybe we could race across the balds before the storm. No such luck.

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A snap and loud clap of thunder with a lightening streak came from behind us right over our heads to the cloud in front of us. The electricity in the air made the hair on the back of the neck stand on end. We ran to the side of the mountain to an area populated by small bushes. The hillside was sloping at nearly a 45-degree angle. I wrapped my poncho around me and got down. Daniel tried to get his poncho on. Standing up, arms flailing in all directions, rain pouring down, he finally just covered himself the best he could and got down. The pouring-down rain formed rivulets of water that pushed leaves and soft forest floor dirt on and around us. The lightning and thunder were occurring at almost the same time, an ominous sign. Even though it was 2:30 in the afternoon, it was dark enough to be night.

Daniel let out a sharp yell! Lightening had struck nearby boulders, traveled through the ground, and gave his leg a good jolt. The dark cloud continued to engulf the mountain.

After more than thirty minutes, the storm was over. We put on our dirty, wet ponchos and continued down the A.T. We realized the deer we had seen earlier probably sensed the coming storm and wanted off the mountain.

We had one more unexpected encounter. On the return to Yellow Mountain Gap, we stopped to rest on a large flat rock in an area under the trees. The place is wide with little vegetation. As we started to leave, a coyote came into the clearing. He stopped, as we did. Coyotes have an acute sense of smell. He was less than ten feet away and stood perfectly still. The only thing moving on him were his nostrils. We were wet and dirty from debris. I am sure he took only a few seconds to decide to turn tail and run! We, however, stood there transfixed by the beauty of this wild animal. We followed his tracks until he left the Trail.

When we got home, we learned that a small church somewhere down the valley had been moved off its foundation, the result of flooding from the storm. Also, a farmer who grazes cattle near Yellow Mountain lost five cows from the deadly lightening.

Can't wait until our next monitoring adventure!

Trail Clubs

Ground Work Underway on Bear Mountain Project

After three years of field exploration and another two years of formal planning, the Bear Mountain Trails Project is underway. Managed by the **New York-New Jersey Trail Conference**, in cooperation with ATC, NPS, the New York State Office of Parks, and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, it is expected that the rehabilitation project will take five years to complete.

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While the project encompasses all trails in Bear Mountain State Park, the focus will be on the A.T., the first section of which was opened here in 1923. High use and consequent erosion created the need for this major overhaul.

Highlights of the plan include a “novice-friendly” trail from the Bear Mountain Inn to the summit, an accessible-trail section, and a relocation of the Trail on the western side of the mountain, eliminating a road walk.

The project will be accomplished primarily by volunteers on the ground, with volunteer support behind the scenes as well. To meet the need for those workers, recruitment and training efforts are underway.

A “Trail University” has been developed to provide training in the rehabilitation and building techniques that will be needed. Classes for everyone from beginners to experts will be

conducted by top Trail builders. Information on the workshops is available at

www.nynjtc.org/BearMountainTrails and on the ATC training Web page.

http://www.appalachiantrail.org/site/c.jkLXJ8MQKtH/b.851189/k.5FE9/Training_and_Resources.htm

Crews are working every Saturday and Sunday and on some weekdays for the next few months. Interested volunteers should contact the Bear Mountain Project volunteer coordinator: eddiewalsh@nynjtc.org.

*An alternative source of volunteers for Trail projects is profiled in the following article. The Alternative Break Connection [www.alternativebreaks.org] and the Corporation for National Service [www.nationalservice.org] are two sources of information. This article is excerpted with permission from the May 2006 issue of The Georgia Mountaineer, newsletter of the **Georgia Appalachian Trail Club** [www.georgia-atclub.org].*

University of New Hampshire Alternate Spring Break

By Gary Monk

Nine University of New Hampshire students came to Georgia March 11–18 in conjunction with the university’s Alternative Spring Break program. After a 24-hour drive, they arrived in Dahlonega on Saturday, where they were met and escorted to the cabin at Lake Winfield Scott, home base for the week. Sunday was spent food shopping, visiting Amicolola Falls State Park and swimming (that’s right, four of them took the plunge in the Lake.)

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Monday and Tuesday, were spent building waterbars, dips, and turnpikes on the Trail between Stover Creek Shelter and Three Forks, where they enjoyed meeting numerous hikers, including many commencing thru-hikes.

On their day off, Wednesday, they climbed Blood Mountain and toured Dahlongega.

District 4, South of Hogpen Gap, was their work site on Thursday, where they got a sample of rock-step building. That evening, Club members Olin and Beverly Batchelor hosted the crew in their home for a delicious meal and hot showers.

To round out their week, the students spent Friday working on what they all agreed was their favorite job—the Stover Creek relocation—building steps and digging sidehill.

We have had young people from UNH down for several years, and as usual they were a great bunch. They work hard and are great fun to be around. At least three GATC members worked alongside the students every day of their visit.

LL Bean Grants

The LL Bean Grants to A.T. Clubs program, primarily underwritten by the outdoor retailer for more than 20 years, provides financial support to ATC's affiliated Trail clubs and their volunteers for projects related to Trail and facility construction, Trail maintenance, visitor services, and public education.

A total of \$21,460 in grants to 14 Trail clubs is being awarded this year for a number of projects, including several to improve sanitation at overnight sites, and to purchase tools and safety equipment.

The deadline for 2007 applications is October 2, 2006. Guidelines and an application form are available on the Web at www.appalachiantrail.org/grantstoclubs

In 2006, the following grants were awarded:

Club Project

Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Griphest equipment and materials to build tent platforms and a tool shed for the Maine Trail Crew.

Dartmouth Outing Club

Purchasing a wheeled litter for a local volunteer fire department to assist with medical evacuations from the Trail and elsewhere.

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Appalachian Mountain Club

Purchasing two stainless-steel composting bins for backcountry privies and contributing toward a study to determine the effectiveness of composting waste at backcountry sites.

Green Mountain Club

Converting an existing privy to a “Beyond the Bin” composting design and contributing toward a study to determine the effectiveness of composting waste at backcountry sites.

AMC-Connecticut Chapter

Converting a pit privy to a moldering privy at a shelter site and repairing a broken well shaft at another overnight site.

Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club

Repairing a fire-damaged privy and purchasing brushcutters and chain saws.

Wilmington Trail Club

Materials to rebuild a shelter.

York Hiking Club

Purchasing a power trimmer and harness.

Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club

Funds to design a brochure attracting new members and purchase a copier to save on printing costs.

Mountain Club of Maryland

Treadway repairs to eliminate a muddy section and resulting “braided trails” and planting native plants and shrubs in an area with a history of encroachments.

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

Funds to develop and print corridor-monitoring pamphlets to distribute to Trail neighbors.

Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club

Purchase shin guards.

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club

Purchase parts for mower.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

Purchase maintenance tools and safety equipment.

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Monitoring Updates

Nibbling at the A.T. Corridor

Do your club's boundary markers look like this? If so, ATC and your club's monitor coordinator need to know.

ATC's boundary-maintenance efforts in the spring and fall seasons are spent in the areas where we're getting good club feedback. We also concentrate where the threat of encroaching development is the highest. Therefore, ATC needs to know where we're most vulnerable.

Annual corridor-monitoring summary reports are due to ATC by March 31. Of the 22 clubs between Virginia and Maine that monitor NPS boundaries, only 12 have submitted reports in the past two years. A standardized report form is being developed and will be distributed to Trail clubs later this year.

Club reports should include segments and tracts monitored, portions of the boundary line that were maintained (repainted/brushed out/signs replaced), an inventory of missing and/or damaged monuments, and a current list of your boundary monitors. Include what sections (if any) have not been monitored, as well as whether or not your club is maintaining the painted line. Digital pictures of damaged monuments and discovered encroachments are extremely helpful as well.

The Appalachian Trail has more professionally surveyed boundary than any other unit of the National Park system—literally thousands of miles—so consistent monitoring and maintenance are imperative.

An unmaintained boundary not only invites encroachment, but can hinder Park Service law-enforcement efforts if the boundary is unclear due to fading paint and missing boundary signs. Corridor monitors are the first line of defense in protecting and preserving the Trail and its lands for generations to come. Please contact me if I can help, and thank you all for your hard work and dedication to your club's corridor monitoring program.

—Sally Naser, ATC Boundary Program Manager

Contact information: snaser@appalachiantrail.org, (717) 258-5771 Ext. 208

Natural Heritage Workshops

By Julie Judkins, Resource Program Manager, ATC Southern Regional Office

The Southern Regional Office coordinated two successful Natural Heritage workshops this spring. Twenty-three volunteers came to a presentation by botanist Jamey Donaldson held in Hot Springs, N.C., on April 8. Volunteers Rosalie and Dan Russo were recognized for their monitoring efforts. The veterans have 11 years of monitoring service under their belts. After

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Donaldson's presentation with slide picture of plants and information on their habitats and characteristics, he led the group on a hike up to Lovers Leap on the A.T. Despite a chilly rain, the group was excited and determined to find and identify rare and common plants. More than 30 different species were seen in bloom on the three-mile loop hike.

In Blairsville, Georgia on May 6, **Georgia Appalachian Trail Club** volunteers enjoyed botanical presentations by Kent Schwarzkopf of the Appalachian Trail Park Office and Tom Patrick of the Georgia Natural Heritage Program. Ginny Smith, the lead volunteer coordinator, who was recognized for her efforts in monitoring, coordinating and leading the GATC program, then led the group on a hike up to Blood Mountain. The group was able to identify and see several different types of trillium and yellow ladyslippers, as well as many other flowers, trees and herbs on their hike.

Along the Trail

The **American Hiking Society** (AHS) [www.americanhiking.org] has selected Mal Fordham of the **Potomac Appalachian Trail Club** [www.patc.net] as its 2006 National Volunteer of the year. His effectiveness in recruiting and leading volunteer trail crews and his dedication to promoting environmental awareness to school-age children were cited as reasons for his selection. In addition, Fordham volunteers with PATC's Trail Patrol in Shenandoah National Park, is a member of numerous recreation and conservation groups, and participates in the AHS Volunteer Vacation program. AHS solicits nominations annually and honors nine top volunteers from different regions based on their efforts to promote healthy recreation, stewardship, and conservation of public lands and hiking trails. One of them is selected as Volunteer of the Year. For more information, visit the AHS web site.

About a thousand people visited the ATC booth during Trail Days in Damascus, Va., in May. About 450 people took an A.T. quiz and ATC put on its first "A.T. Jeopardy" game here, which included questions about trail maintenance, Leave No Trace, and flora and fauna along the Trail. ATC shared its space with ALDHA, the A.T. Museum Society and the **Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club** [www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Geyser/2539], and coordinated sign-up for the sixth annual "Hard Core Crew." That two-day trail crew organized by Bob Peoples was a huge success, with 2,000 volunteer hours going into the project. Materials for a new shelter were hauled into the site and the new shelter, except for the roof, was essentially completed overnight. A side trail to the spring and gray water pit also were completed. More than 2,000 feet of trail were put in on a reroute on the north side of Unaka. 143 of the crew participants were hikers from Trail Days and the remaining 27 were **Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club** [www.tehcc.org] members.

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The **Wilmington Trail Club** [www.wilmingtontrailclub.org] completed construction of a new shelter on Sunday, April 2. Planning for the Kirkridge Shelter, near the Delaware Water Gap began in the spring of 2005. Construction took place over three consecutive weekends beginning in March of this year. Financial assistance was provided by the LLBean Grants to A.T. Clubs program.

Correction

The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year as reported in the Spring issue, but it did not host Trailfest in April. Trailfest is hosted annually by the town of Hot Springs, N.C.

Side Trails

Labor Day Gathering

The **Nantahala Hiking Club** [www.maconcommunity.org/nhc/] will host this year's annual Southern Regional Multi-Club campout over Labor Day weekend (September 1–4) at the Appletree Group Campground in the Nantahala National Forest, North Carolina. There is a \$10/per family fee for registration and camping. Information and registration forms may be found on the club's Web site.

Land Conservation Rally

October 12–15 are the dates for the National Land Conservation Rally to be held in Nashville, Tennessee. More than 100 workshops and seminars will be held, including a series devoted to training volunteers and professionals on Land Trust Standards and Practices. Registration and program information is available from the Land Trust Alliance [<http://www.lta.org/training/rally.htm>].

National Trails Symposium

The National Trails Symposium is scheduled for October 19–22 in Davenport, Iowa. The symposium is held in alternate years and is sponsored by American Trails [www.americantrails.org] a nonprofit organization working to create and protect America's trails. The theme of the conference is "Trails for America: Every Where, Every Way, Every Day," and it will provide opportunities for education and communication among greenway and trail advocates, managers, planners, and users as well as outdoor equipment providers, private landowners, and tourism and business interests. Information is on the American Trails Web site.

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Foresters Convention Slated

The 86th Annual **Society of American Foresters** National Convention will be held October 25–29 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Highlights include:

Practical field applications of forest science, case studies and success stories, and on-the-ground workshops. The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot (first chief of the USDA Forest Service), the SAF seeks to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry and to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.