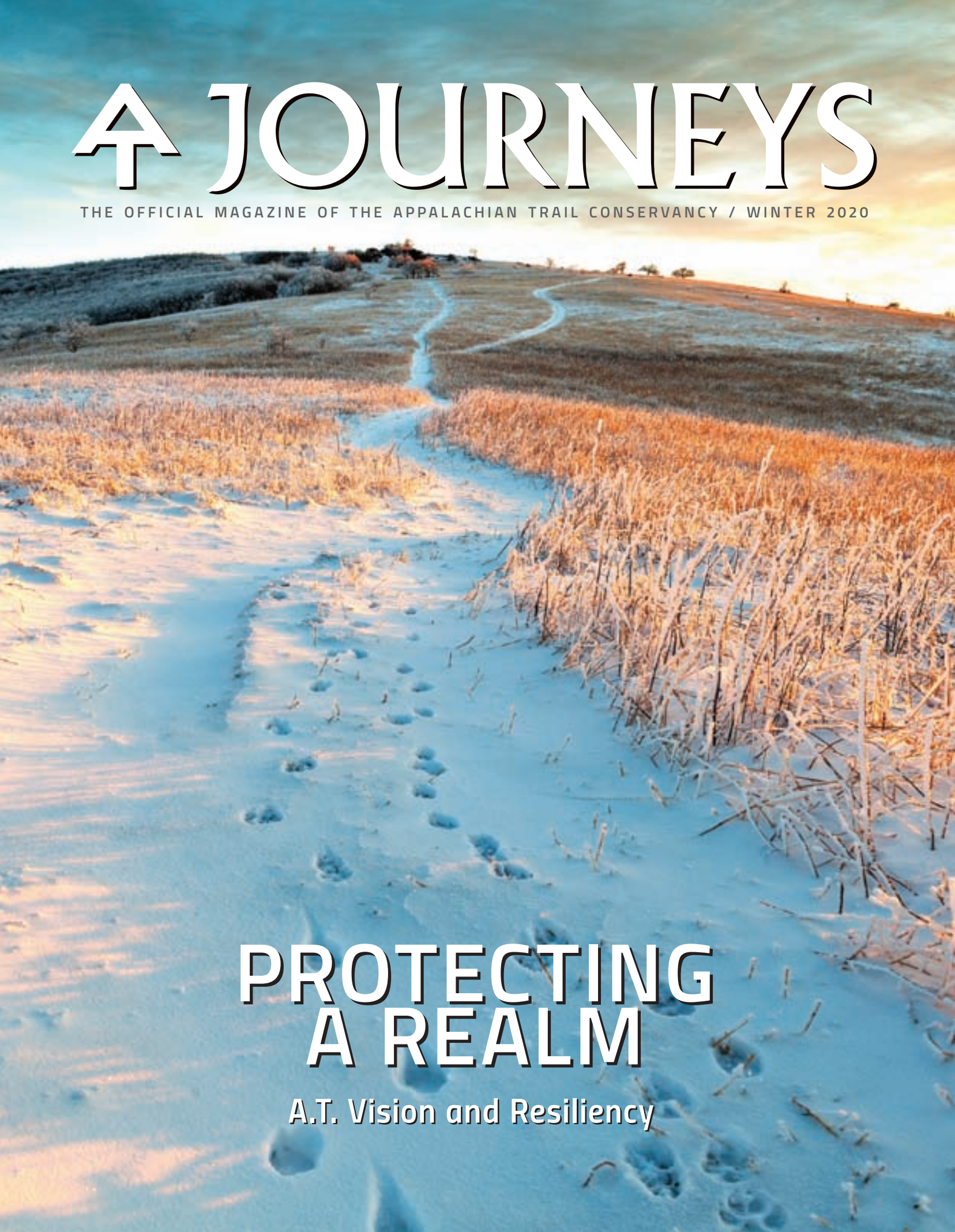
A JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / WINTER 2020



PROTECTING A REALM

A.T. Vision and Resiliency

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A.T. near Roan Mountain late January from Round Bald looking back into Carvers Gap – By Dale Mayberry

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A.T. JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / WINTER 2020

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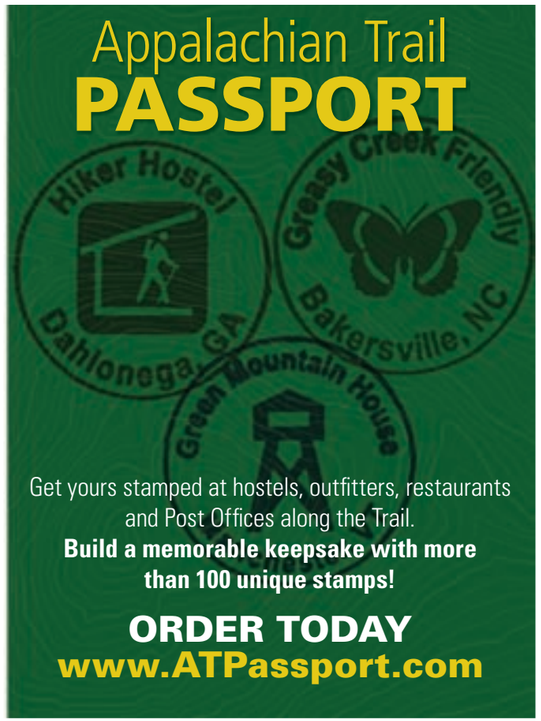

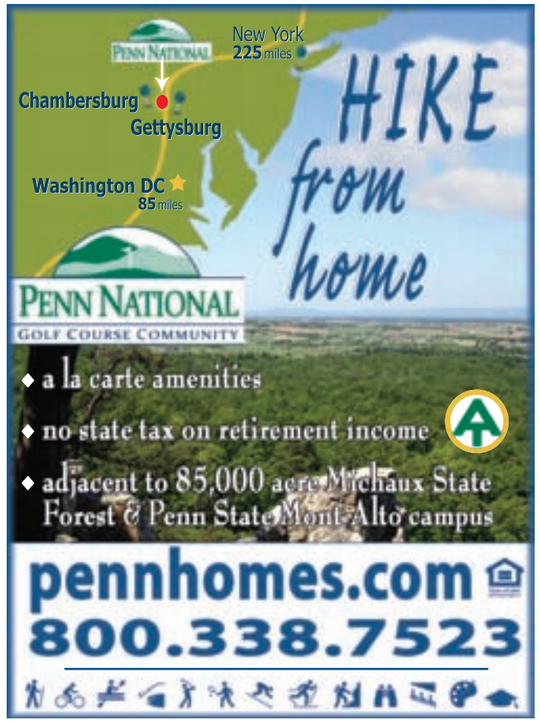

> THE TRAIL IS NOT JUST AN ISOLATED FOOTPATH IN THE WOODS. WE HAVE TO THINK ACROSS BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS AS WE COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE
>
> *Anne Sentz*

FINDING AND SHARING SIGNIFICANT WORDS AND QUOTES IS, FOR ME, a perk of being an editor. I seek out words that strike me as inspirational, thought evoking, and sometimes amusing. I often feel an immediate need to scribble them down on the nearest notepad when I find them. "Optimism as oxygen," are the words that immediately caught my attention and imagination as I read Benton MacKaye's 1921 article: *An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning.* "Are we getting all the oxygen we might for the big tasks before us?" he asks. In this issue, we present themes of vision, resilience, and what it means to protect a "realm." We are motivated by MacKaye's optimism, as metaphorical oxygen, and by the real need to consider the importance of the Trail's air quality, among other things, and the health of what we refer to as the Wild East landscape that surrounds it. Of course, it takes more than just words to make a vision come to life and thrive for almost a century as the A.T. has. MacKaye's words in 1921 are prophetic: "The oxygen in the mountain air along the Appalachian skyline is a natural resource (and national resource) that radiates to the heavens its enormous health-giving powers with only a fraction of a percent utilized for human rehabilitation. Here is a resource that could save thousands of lives." When words spark imagination, the path is open to anything.

Wendy K. Probst / Editor in Chief

Anne Sentz

A resident of Martinsburg, West Virginia, Anne Sentz works out of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's headquarters in Harpers Ferry. Her job as landscape partnership manager allows her to combine her passion for the Appalachian Trail with her commitment to landscape-scale conservation, and she feels lucky to have found a career path that allows her to work to protect an American treasure like the A.T. "I fell in love with the Appalachian Trail while hiking, but that love grows exponentially when I consider what the Trail means to not just humans, but native plants and animals, clean water, night skies, and our climate," she says. "The Trail is not just an isolated footpath in the woods. We have to think across boundaries and borders as we combat climate change."

Derick Lugo

Derick Lugo is the author of the travel memoir, *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker.* He thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2012 with zero hiking or camping experience. "I didn't even know if I liked hiking," he says of his unlikely journey. He currently travels the country sharing his story: one of friendships, stepping out of your comfort zone, and accomplishing the unthinkable. "I'm thrilled to be able to share an excerpt of my book — a story of my childhood curiosity (that was left out of the published book). I'm glad to finally bring that story to readers." Currently, Derick splits his time between his home town of New York City and telling his travel-adventure stories of vision and determination at special events along the eastern U.S.

Kim O'Connell

Kim O'Connell is a writer based in Arlington, Virginia and a regular feature contributor to A.T. Journeys. Her work has appeared in *The Washington Post, The New York Times, Huffington Post, Atlas Obscura, National Parks Traveler,* and other national and regional publications. She has served as an artist-in-residence at Shenandoah and Acadia national parks and teaches science writing for Johns Hopkins University. "Every time I am privileged enough to hike a portion of the A.T. — usually in my 'home park' of Shenandoah — I think about the incredible ambition and commitment that the Trail represents," she says. "It was inspiring to write about Benton MacKaye's vision for the Appalachian Traili and how it's being carried forward by a new generation of committed hikers and advocates."

Lila Shokr

As a student from Northampton Community College, Lila Shokr is currently studying communication design, and has also studied at the Paris College of Art in France. She is presently living in Northampton, Pennsylvania, and plans to further her artistic education as she completes her degree and moves into the professional world of illustration and design. "Being able to illustrate for such an important story [Protecting a Realm] was a privilege," she says. "There is a need for more environmental awareness among us, and yet there is hope in future generations, I wanted to call upon these notions in my illustrations."

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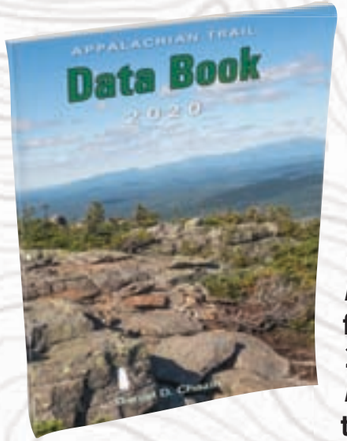

The new official length of the A.T. is 2,193 miles

An updated mileage heralds the arrival of the 42nd edition of the *Appalachian Trail Data Book*, presenting the steps between landmarks from Maine to Georgia. At the same time, the 27th edition of the *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion* presents them from Georgia to Maine, along with town-services information, town maps, and all sorts of other details important to A.T. hikers.

For 35 years, the *Data Book* (item #141-20) — still $6.26 for ATC members — has been edited by New Jersey volunteer Daniel D. Chazin, drawing on updates from other guidebook editors, other volunteers in the 31 Trail-maintaining clubs, and staff members in ATC offices. The *Companion* (item #202-20, still $13.46) likewise draws on more than three dozen Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association volunteers, led since 2010 by Robert "Sly" Sylvester, and ATC field experts.

2020 UPDATES HERE

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BEYOND THE TREADWAY

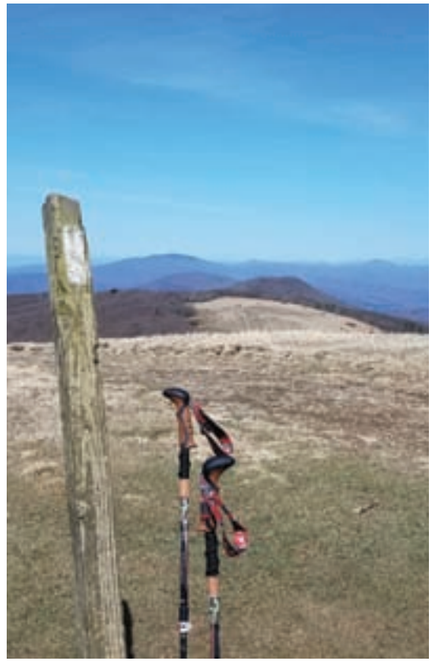

Photo by Eric Wilcox

WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), my top priority was to ensure the foundation and structure of this organization was strong and sound. I am happy to report we have strong bones to support and sustain our core mission.

Our volunteers are skilled and empowered to manage and maintain the Trail itself. We have committed and effective partnerships that enhance our efforts from the treadway to the broader landscape. Through our education and outreach work, we continue to ensure the Trail is relevant to younger and more diverse audiences. And, the leadership of ATC is updating the organization's strategic plan to help guide staff and volunteers through the next three years of project work.

Having taken these steps forward in 2019, 2020 is the year we not only ensure our foundation remains strong, but also the time for us to contemplate what is the next step in the evolution of the Trail and, by extension, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

We have two significant upcoming anniversary dates for the A.T. and the ATC. The year 2021 will be the 100th anniversary of the publication of Benton MacKaye's article, *An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*. And, in 2025, ATC will celebrate its own 100th birthday. Together, these two anniversaries celebrate a century of building the foundation on which the next 100-year vision for the Trail and our organization will be built. The work for developing this next vision will require that we look both forward and back.

When Benton MacKaye penned his seminal paper, he felt that the world was — in his own words — "...considerably complicated of late in various ways — by war, by questions of personal liberty, and by 'menaces' of one kind or another. There have been created bitter antagonisms." For me, at least, these observations still resonate. The world we live in is extremely complicated and fraught with both real and imagined challenges and dangers. We all struggle to find common ground from which to build relationships and find moments of peace.

To define the next 100 years of the Trail, I firmly believe we need to look back to MacKaye's original vision. He saw the Trail as representing "possibilities in [a] new approach to the problem of living." At its core is the Trail itself, which the ATC has spent the last 100 years building, protecting, and ensuring its preservation. But MacKaye's vision went beyond the treadway — his paper laid out a plan for an overarching conservation effort that would unite wilderness with rural communities and allow for both recreational enjoyment and economic stability. It is creating, expanding, and protecting this realm that includes and surrounds the Trail that, I believe, will be an integral part of our future work.

Therefore, our work in 2020 will be twofold. ATC's staff and volunteers, agencies, clubs, and partners need to continue our work to manage and protect the Appalachian Trail. We also need to begin conversations around developing a vision for our next 100 years. MacKaye saw the Appalachian Trail as having the potential of being a place in which "cooperation replaces antagonism, trust replaces suspicion, emulation replaces competition." Together, just as we have built the Trail itself, we can create and protect this great realm and refuge.

Sandra Marra / President & CEO

HOW TIMELY IS YOUR CALL FOR restoring our vanishing nighttime dark skies (*A.T. Journeys* Fall). Ironically so, as I lay in bed reading the issue at five in the morning, unable to sleep for the light washing across the bedroom ceiling from a neighbor's illuminated garage. And thank you for reminding me of the full-sky display of the Milky Way above our apartment in suburban Philadelphia in the 1950s. An experience which I could possibly only now replicate on a serious backpacking trip. Is a moonless night in northern Tennessee still adequate to force turning in at the edge of an unfollowable A.T. and then awaking at 2 a.m. knee deep in an unsuspected stream? I hope so! Kudos too to Ron Griswell and Luz Lituma for making this an amazing issue from cover to cover!

Richard Strehlau
Liberty Lake, Washington

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE AT the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for managing the Trail and making it the safe, scenic, and seamless experience that it is. We appreciate what you do, and your work shows every step of the way.

Madeline "Photon" Newel
Santa Cruz, California

THANK YOU ALL FOR PROVIDING a space where we can escape and walk in wilderness. The trails have helped me immensely transition out of the military and helped me re-prioritize my life. I know it couldn't have happened without the dedication of so many people working toward one goal.

Brian "Cool Runnings" Steadman
Austin, Texax

HONESTLY, I'M JUST SO THANKFUl for all the work you guys do. I had an incredible experience with so many great people [during my hike]. The effort and time you put in as volunteers and as an organization is fantastic.

Jonathan "Honeybuns" Manley
Cambridgeshire, United Kingdom

CORRECTION:

In our information on page 26 of the Fall issue ("The A.T. Thru-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy") — we incorrectly noted that the Green Mountain National Forest was located in New Hampshire and not Vermont. This was an editorial error.

A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments. The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives. Not all letters received may be published. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807

Trail Talk

@itsme.ruthie
Finally got my feet on the AT and it was just as amazing as I'd imagined.

@runthecohuttas
If you love your trails, own them. Work them. No matter where your trails are. And then you will truly love them.

A Ridgerunner was one of the first people I met on the A.T. True help was what was offered and needed.
~ L.H. Lodge

@barefoothiker
My heart is so warm seeing the white blaze. How the memories of the AT fuel my life goals.

@cheerful_mamabear3
That feeling you get when you get to take someone on a trail they have never been on!! #joy

@djeddygonzalez
2019 was the start of my journey on the AT and 2020 will be the continuation of that journey...May can't come soon enough!

@patricktri95
Quite the Christmas gift arrived from ATC! Can't wait to attach the [2,000-Miler] patch and rocker to my bag #at2019 #appalachiantrail

A PANORAMIC PURPOSE

BROADENING THE VISION OF THE A.T.

Summiting a mountain is a culmination. You've hiked and climbed, up and up, until there is nowhere else to go but down. It is a satisfying conclusion — a coming to fruition. But summiting a mountain can also feel like a beginning: With a panoramic view of everything around you, you've expanded the boundaries of what you thought was possible. You've created the promise of a new goal, perhaps a chance to climb even higher next time. You've offered yourself a new perspective. So it was with Benton MacKaye.

In July 1900, MacKaye had hiked the top of Stratton Mountain in Vermont, which afforded him a sweeping 360-degree view of the surrounding Green Mountains. From that vantage point (on a tree limb), he could see into four states at once, but in fact, his mind carried him much farther. It was here that he envisioned a long-distance trail on the spine of the Appalachians, a green ribbon from Maine to Georgia. But for MacKaye, his vision was even broader than that. His idea was not just for a narrow path but a long, wide swath of wilderness that encompassed cultural resources from communities that would become beneficiaries of the Trail — and eventually — beyond that vision – stewards.

Just like a mountain summit, the Trail would not be the culmination of his vision, but the beginning: "The

BY KIM O'CONNELL

The A.T. centerline along the eastern U.S.
Image courtesy Visible Earth/NASA

trail itself is merely a means of access," MacKaye once said. "When this is done the real job can commence: indeed it need not wait on this — it can begin with the building of the trail. The real job is to develop a particular environment in each particular Wilderness Area penetrated by the Trail." The "particular environment," according to MacKaye, was one where people held a view of nature that was broad and deep, that understood its importance to the health of our communities, our ways of life, and our bodies and minds. And that it had this greater purpose, too, for all the wildlife that depended on it.

Understandably, especially for those who fought for its creation, advocates have often focused on the A.T. simply as a footpath, and it certainly is that — more than 2,100 miles of exhilarating recreational opportunities and access to some of the Eastern Seaboard's most beautiful vistas. But nearly 100 years after the Trail was envisioned, we have come to have a greater appreciation for the Trail as the centerpiece of a mosaic of landscapes, communities, and people. It is a repository of sorts, too — an embodiment of the thousands of untold hours people have spent clearing and protecting this path, telling its stories, and keeping its many traditions. Working from this new perspective has brought the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and its allies much closer to realizing MacKaye's sweeping vision, and even going far beyond the scope of what he foresaw from the summit of Stratton Mountain.

The "particular environment," according to MacKaye, was one where people held a view of nature that was broad and deep, that understood its importance to the health of our communities, our ways of life, and our bodies and minds. And that it had this greater purpose, too, for all the wildlife that depended on it.

As we pivot deeper into the 21st century, the A.T.'s role as the heart of the Wild East landscape has become even more essential. As a long-distance natural corridor, it provides crucial, contiguous habitat for animals, including migratory birds; it allows for the preservation of natural darkness, which contributes to the health of many animals (including humans); and it is the connective tissue for a diverse set of communities that both benefit from it and contribute to its care. The ATC's wide-ranging landscape conservation program, for example, works closely with more than 100 nonprofit partners and state and federal agencies, through outright land purchases or conservation easements, to protect areas outside the Trail corridor from damaging or detracting development. This, too, builds on MacKaye's vision of the Trail as a counterpoint to urban sprawl. "We do not propose to tear down the metropolitan environment," he said, "...the proposal is to build up the indigenous environment." To make the mountains match the metropolises — at least in terms of their relative importance in our lives.

Today, these mountain areas are more important than ever. We hear a lot about the concept of resilience these days with respect to climate change. Resilience, in this capacity, is the ability of a place to absorb external stresses and remain functional in the face of the potentially devastating effects of climate change, including flooding, rising temperatures, and more damaging storms. Much effort has been rightly directed towards renovating urban buildings and infrastructure to withstand those kinds of threats. But the A.T. corridor is like a backbone: It provides strength. It helps the Eastern Seaboard to be resilient. Through its diverse landscape — which includes rolling hills, grasslands, mountains, valleys, and particularly forests — the A.T. sequesters carbon dioxide, helps to keep ecosystems in balance, and protects against erosion and stormwater runoff. More than a recreational resource, the Trail and its myriad natural values are especially relevant due to its proximity to so many populated urban environments along the eastern U.S.

It's not enough, however, for our cities and our natural areas to be resilient. We must be resilient too. We must be able to meet the challenges of our lives, to breathe deep and restore ourselves, and to put one foot in front of the other until we gain a new perspective. That's what climbing Stratton Mountain did for Benton MacKaye. That's what visting the A.T. — and protecting its surrounding landscapes and communities — does for all of us.

View of The A.T. from the summit of Killington Peak in Vermont (Including the ridgelines of Bromley, Stratton, and Glastenbury Mountain) – By Raymond Salani III

TRAILHEAD

ATC DIRT / HIGHLIGHTS / EVENTS / UPDATES

Susan Engles and Serelee Hefler achieve their goal of completing the 14 State Challenge in September, 2019 at Daicey Pond with Katahdin in the background — what they call "an amazing finish to their journey" that they started in the summer of 2015.

TAKE THE 14 STATE CHALLENGE

The 14-state challenge allows you to visit some of the A.T.'s most iconic places in bite-sized pieces. It can be done on family vacations, when you're traveling on business, or whenever wanderlust strikes.

A.T. – New Hampshire – By Anne Sentz

How it works

Visit a location in each of the Appalachian Trail's 14 states. Make your goal one blaze, one mile, or even 10 miles in each state. It's up to you! We've selected notable destinations (that you can drive right to, or within a 1/4 mile of the road) and hikes that are some of the shortest, best, and most accessible that each state has to offer.

Make the Challenge Special

The A.T. has an unofficial passport with more than 100 stamps you can collect. Find them at locations ranging from restaurants to A.T. visitor centers and in many official / all 48 A.T. Communities along the Trail.

Get the Patch

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's 14 State Challenge patch was designed to inspire you to start your journey and stay dedicated to your goal. Don't wait to complete the challenge before showing it off.

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appalachiantrail.org/ATstatepatches

Congressional Update

Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) vision for a resilient future includes the understanding that the A.T. Landscape is a major wildlife migration corridor. The A.T. is one of the most biologically diverse units of the National Park System. Spanning 11 degrees of latitude and over 6,500 feet of elevation, it serves as an "emerald necklace" tying together species, habitats, and critical natural resources. The ATC works with a wide variety of partners to accelerate landscape conservation and restoration in order to protect rare species, exemplary natural communities, and important ecosystem services. These efforts help to protect a resilient corridor that serves as a critical migratory route in the eastern U.S. Legislation such as House A.T. Caucus Co-Chair Don Beyer's H.R. 2795, the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019, would help preserve the A.T. Landscape and its role as critical wildlife migration corridor.

Find out more at: **appalachiantrail.org/advocacy**

A.T. – Pennsylvania – Photo by Raymond Salani III

ATC Board of Directors By-law Changes

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Board of Directors intends on reviewing its by-laws periodically to insure they adequately outline its obligations and governance processes. Over the last year, the board conducted a detailed review and has made changes that broadly fall into three categories: governance, policy, and language clarification. Both the by-laws in their current form, as well as an explanation of those changes can be found at: appalachiantrail.org/bylaws and: appalachiantrail.org/bylaws2019changes. The explanation of changes will be posted for a month and the by-laws will remain on the website going forward.

For more information visit:
appalachiantrail.org/bylaws
appalachiantrail.org/bylaws2019changes

Essential A.T. Campsite Maintenance

Use of the A.T. for camping has been steadily increasing in recent years. In some areas, this has resulted in more campers than campsites.

By Morgan Sommerville

Recreation ecologists Drs. Jeff Marion and Jeremy Wimpey, in preparation of their study: "Sustainable Camping–Best Management Practices," have documented the increase in campsite numbers and size along the A.T. in Georgia and North Carolina, due mainly to increasing numbers of northbound (NOBO) thru-hikers.

Keep Impact Low

A.T. maintainers want A.T. campers to help eliminate camping impact by using existing campsites (and thus reducing maintenance). The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and our A.T. management partners are working hard to educate A.T. campers about how to identify a good campsite, but two of the most important factors to assure use of an established or designated campsite are that it be well designed, and most importantly, well maintained for tenting by A.T. volunteer maintainers.

Like all A.T. work, campsite maintenance parameters need to be determined in collaboration with our agency partners. The scope of routine campsite maintenance activities that can be done at any time without additional prior approval should be agreed to, as should the types of campsite work that will need additional agency approval. An example of work that needs further approval is digging in rocks in areas where camping is undesirable.

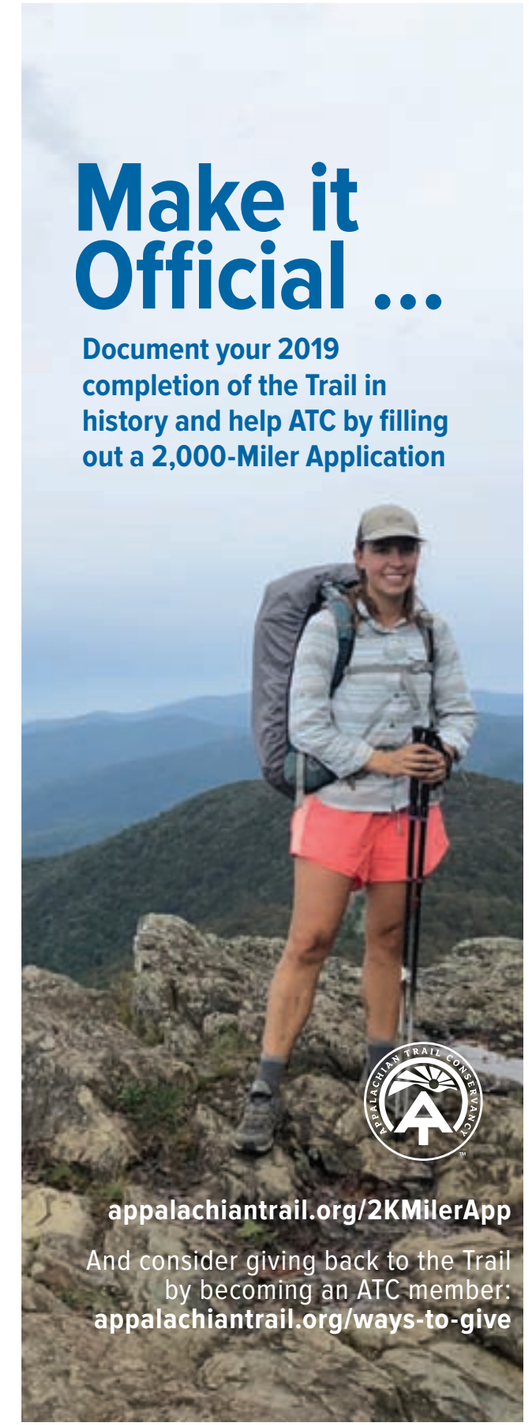
A "Good" Campsite

Maintainers can attract campers by providing "good" tent sites that are smooth, well drained, and are well delineated so campers can find them. If a campsite contains "bad" previously-used tent sites that are undesirable or unnecessary for camping from a management perspective (e.g. too close to water or the A.T.), then, conversely, the "bad" tent sites should not be appealing to hikers. A good tent site should be at least 12 by 16 feet, 70 or more paces away from water and, ideally, out of sight of the A.T. To quote the A.T. Field Book: "Sites should be readily accessible from the Trail, but be sufficiently distant…to completely separate campers from A.T. hikers not interested in stopping."

Tips for Maintainers

Before camping season begins, maintainers are encouraged to provide a smooth tent pad by raking and removing small stones, sticks or roots, then recovering with leaf litter. Well-drained sites should be on gently sloping terrain; if grading is required to achieve good drainage or a flat site this should be planned in cooperation with an agency partner. Delineation can be achieved by bordering the tent site with fallen logs or loose rocks, which can also be useful amenities for campers (e.g. a log big enough for sitting, or a flat rock big enough for cooking). Maintainers can get rid of "bad" tent sites by disguising them with fallen logs and brush so they blend into their surroundings and the "good" tent sites stand out. It is also recommended to brush in access trails to "bad" tent sites. Just like Trail maintenance, campsite maintenance is essential to providing an excellent A.T. experience.

The Appalachian Trail Field Book is available to purchase at: **appalachiantrail.org/Fieldbook**



Protecting a Realm

ENSURING A RESILIENT WILD EAST LANDSCAPE

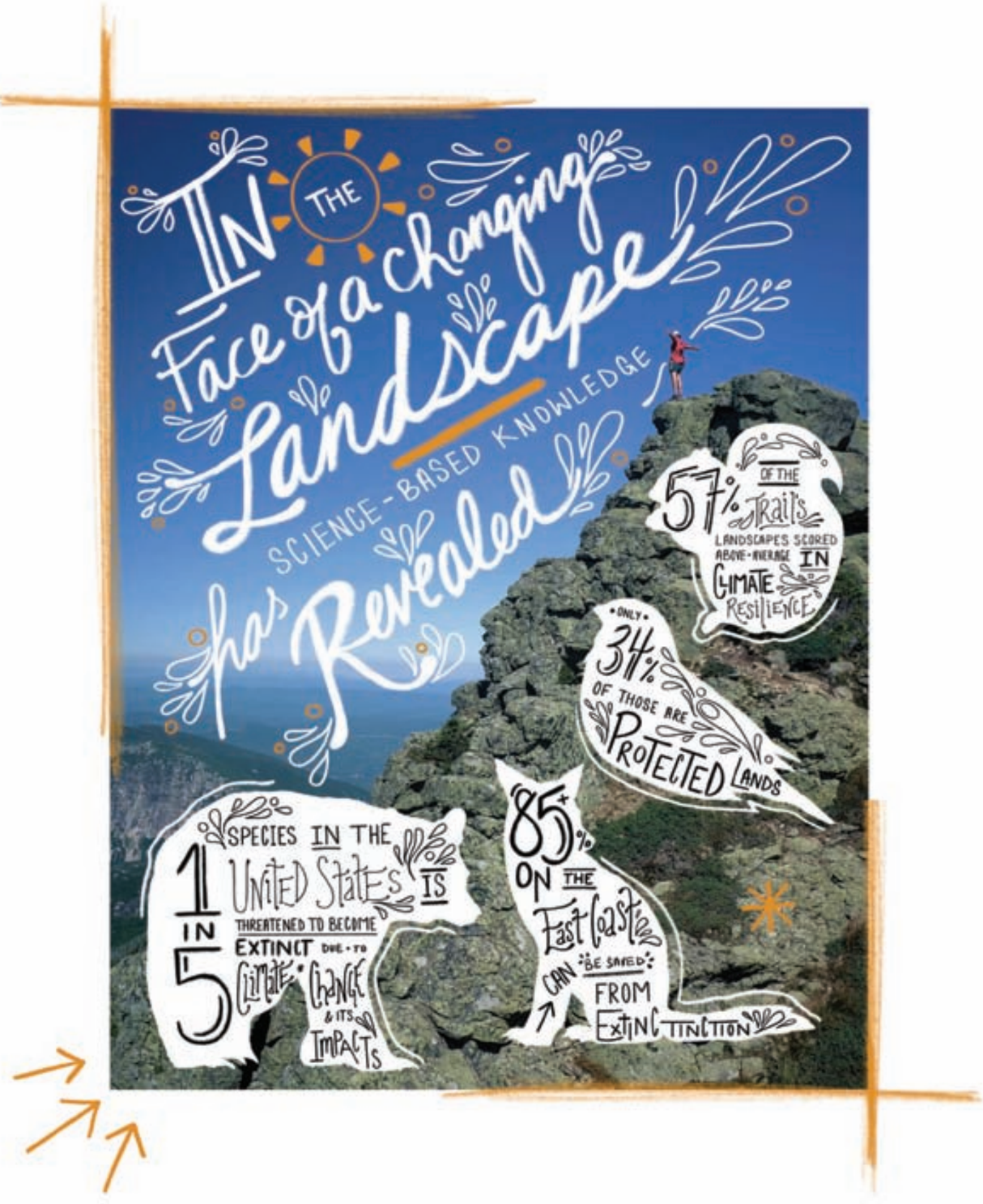
I'M SCROLLING THROUGH PHOTOS OF MY TIME ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL in 2017 when I come across the picture I'm looking for: me, standing in a fire tower on Stratton Mountain. It's a selfie, and I'm striking this awkward pose, but I have a huge smile on my face. I remember taking the picture to document my excitement over seeing the Green Mountains in all their — well — green glory, but I also recall I was very happy to be standing on something that wasn't oozing mud. More than anything, though, that moment on Stratton Mountain made me acutely aware of (and thankful for) Benton MacKaye, the visionary behind the A.T. Many people say Stratton Mountain was the place where MacKaye first imagined a long-distance trail that would link the Appalachian Mountains. I certainly believe it — when I was there, I felt a sense of magic on that special peak.

The year I took that picture, I was migrating, moving through the A.T. landscape at the modest pace of 15 to 17 miles per day. My dad was my hiking partner. We were tiny dots on the map as we walked, seeking Katahdin, Maine's greatest mountain and the northern terminus of the Trail.

I've never felt as connected to the Trail as I did that year. I often think about how amazing it is that we have something on the Eastern Seaboard that makes it possible for people to walk from Maine to Georgia, or Georgia to Maine, or some variation of south-north, north-south. And for those who want to hop on the A.T. for an hour, a

BY ANNE SENTZ

ILLUSTRATION/COLLAGE BY LILA SHOKR



day, or a weekend — taking time away from a busy urban surrounding to breath the mountain air — it's just as amazing that there are hundreds of access points. Regardless of how much time a person spends on the A.T., that feeling of connectivity is a powerful one, and is something that should not be taken for granted.

Two years after my time on the A.T., I'm still grappling with the fact that the Trail is not just a contiguous footpath and a thread that links 14 states, but that it is also something that drives landscape conservation across the eastern United States. As hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, we embrace the recreational values that the A.T. provides while sometimes failing to understand its more complicated side. "The Trail is a simple footpath," I've heard. Well, yes — but it's also much more.

> "We have to acknowledge, and protect, those places that will sustain plants, animals, and all natural life in the face of a changing landscape."

Embracing Connectivity

A few weeks ago, I left my office and took a back road home. It's common to see deer hanging out in the shadows, with the brazen ones even attempting to cross in front of headlights, so I'm very careful when I choose to take this alternate route. Sure enough, about five miles away from home, a young doe ran out in front of my car. Thankfully, I stopped quickly, and she navigated the road crossing safely. Then she came to a standstill. There was a tall fence, and she erratically moved her head up and down, like she wasn't sure how to get around it. I watched her, entranced, as she backed up, pawed the ground a time or two, and took what looked like a test jump before she bounded toward the obstacle and cleared it easily. Then she walked up an incline to a field, joining two other does. It was dinner time, and she almost died for it. Even now, I can't get that image out of my mind.

Most of us have likely witnessed things like this before: a wild animal figuring out where to go when something foreign is in its path. It tugs at our heartstrings a bit, reminding us of those times when we've felt trapped, boxed in, and the opposite of free. It's a type of empathy that can drive us to act, because we realize life isn't just about us — instead, we come to understand we are part of a system, and the prosperity of that system depends on individual actions that do have an impact overall. For example, we wouldn't necessarily label a single fence or road inherently "bad," but when that fence or road blocks the natural travel of an animal, it gives society an opportunity to consider the impacts.

Landscape conservation embraces the idea of connectivity. On the surface, an effort to successfully protect a large swath of diverse landscape might look like the connection of different wild spaces that native animals need to survive. What it takes to get to that success story, however, is full of twists and turns as people work together to embrace a type of cross-border work that is quite multifaceted. As the Network for Landscape Conservation — a practitioner's network that seeks to advance and implement the practice of conservation at the landscape scale — says, "In a hyper-polarized world, the landscape conservation approach leverages literal common ground — our landscapes — to promote dialogue and exchange across perspectives and values to find figurative common ground."

When you consider the A.T. as the backbone of a large landscape conservation effort along the Eastern Seaboard, it is a natural fit. Along its 14 states, the Trail connects farms, forests, rolling hills, deep valleys, open pastures and more; managing that landscape diversity requires thoughtful consideration of how these regional differences fit like puzzle pieces into a larger 2,190-mile footpath. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has been promoting a type of landscape conservation since its beginnings in 1925, but as we enter a new decade, one with accelerating challenges due to habitat loss, forest fragmentation, and climate change, we must demand more from everyone who lives, works, and plays within this landscape, and especially from those who love the A.T.

Conservationists recognize the impacts of these challenges on the way our public lands are managed. Johnathan Jarvis (former director of the National Park Service) and Gary Machlis (former science advisor to the director of the National Park Service) write in their book: *The Future of Conservation in America: A Chart for Rough Water*, "The paradigm of protection and restoration that has guided management of parks and public [lands] for the last fifty years is no longer fully viable in an era of climate change." This begs the question, "What's next?"

The Wildands Network Eastern Wildway map presents a vision for reconnecting and restoring habitat across the East Coast with the A.T. as a centerline – Map courtesy of the Wildlands Network

Understanding Resilience

The A.T. is a unit of the National Park System, and the superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, alongside the ATC's past and present leadership, have worked together on a large-landscape conservation effort for more than five years. This effort is embodied through the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, or ATLP. The ATLP exists today as a network of more than 70 organizations that work within the Trail's landscape, and it is often lauded as the most complex land protection effort undertaken by the National Park Service. (The National Park Service as a whole supports what they call "connected conservation" because our country's natural and cultural resources do not simply stop at park boundaries. We certainly see this with the A.T.)

Lately, the ATLP has made a concerted effort to inject more scientific analysis into A.T. landscape — or as we lovingly call it, Wild East protection, and to do that, the group joined forces with the Open Space Institute (OSI), a New York-based organization that supports conservation on a permanent, landscape scale. Late last year, a small team from OSI, led by Abby Weinberg, director of conservation research, worked to identify where land protection efforts could make the biggest difference in conserving resilient forests and wildlife movement corridors. These two things are hallmarks of large-landscape conservation: forested land connects habitats and facilitates species migration, which is becoming more and more important as species adjust to climate change and human impacts to their landscape. In the United States, scientists have observed the migration of native species is shifting, amounting to an average of 11 miles northward and 36 feet upslope per decade. To avoid the continued loss of species, plants and animals must have a connected landscape on which to depend, and it is imperative that this landscape has options for movement (meaning forestland is paramount).

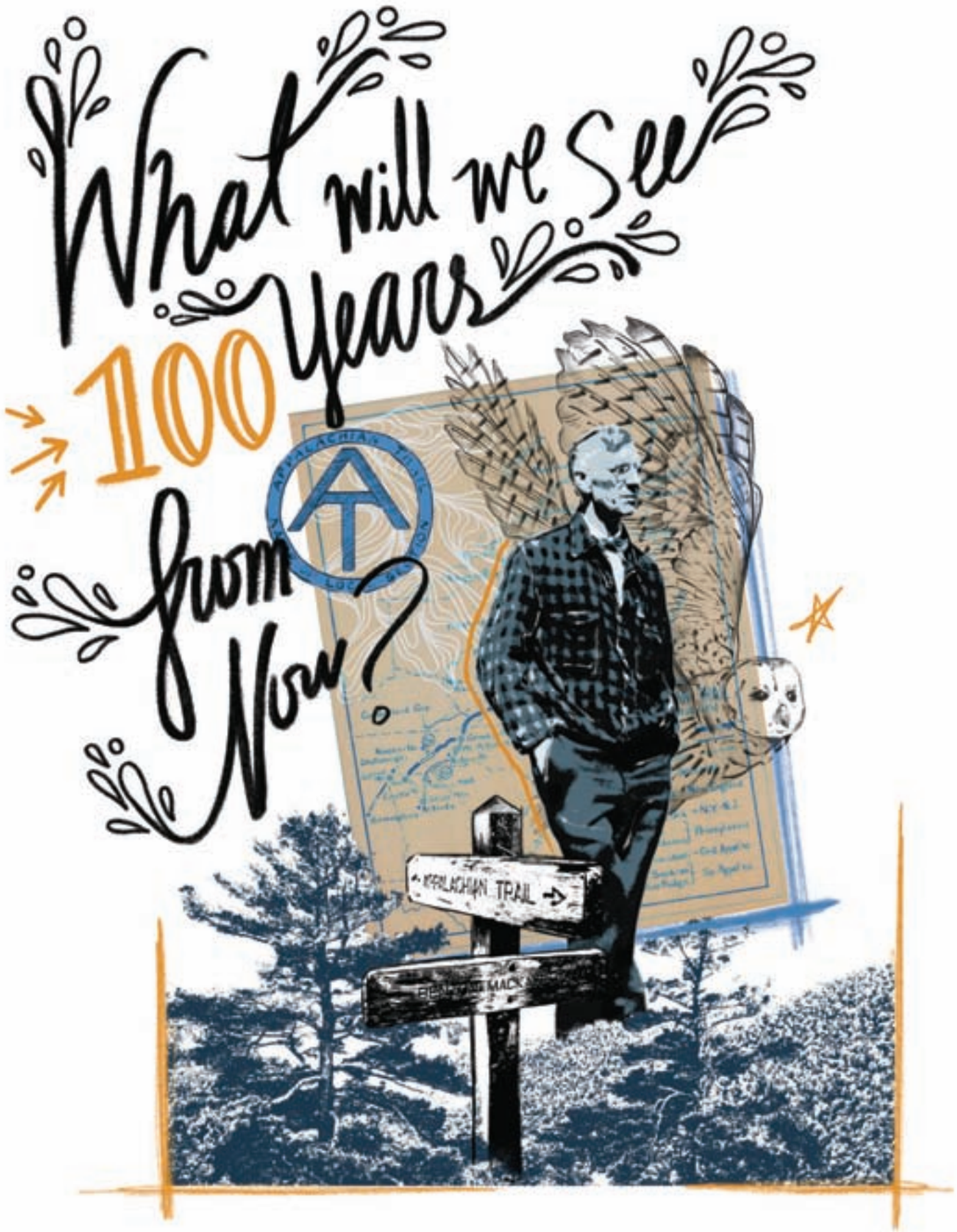
"The amazing thing about the Appalachian Trail is that it's the only way to get through the eastern [U.S.] landscape with any consistency and long-range connectivity. There aren't many dead ends," says Weinberg. "When movement is needed, those species can move northward and upslope."

To frame the importance of an intact landscape another way, consider the human species' own quality of life. The Wild East landscape includes protected national parks like the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah along with national forests like George Washington and Jefferson and the White Mountains. (Think of blocks of green connected by a thin line that is the Trail.) But in addition to all that protected land, there are many thousands of acres of unprotected forested land that is highly vulnerable. Some of that land will be lost to development in one way or another, and we need to admit that when this happens, the recreational value of the A.T. — something that is enjoyed by millions of people each year — will be impacted. More importantly though, because the landscape supports carbon sequestration and the filtration of air and water, the continued loss of our forests will have an impact on our ability to breathe clean air and drink pure water.

OSI's analysis used data provided by the Nature Conservancy (TNC), an organization that is leading efforts around the world to tackle climate change. Mark Anderson, director of conservation science at TNC, addresses tough questions about the impacts of a changing climate on our landscape — and humans — in the report: "Resilient and Connected Landscapes for Terrestrial Conservation." TNC defines climate resilience as the capacity of a site to maintain its biological diversity, productivity, and ecological function, even as the climate changes. It might sound a bit hard to digest, but what it means to us is this: we have to acknowledge, and protect, those places that will sustain plants, animals, and all natural life in the face of a changing landscape.

> "Consider the A.T. as the backbone of a large landscape conservation effort along the Eastern Seaboard."

When it comes to the A.T., OSI's work revealed that 57 percent of the Trail's landscape scored above average for climate resilience, but only 34 percent of those lands are actually protected. This is important information that the ATC and NPS can take back to the organizations within the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership to assist in prioritizing land protection efforts. "While it would be ideal to protect all resilient resources, limited funding, capacity, and time make prioritizing important," Weinberg writes in OSI's report to ATC.



A "Rewilding"

Recently, the nonprofit group the Wildlands Network released its Eastern Wildway map, which presents a vision for reconnecting and restoring habitat across the East Coast. It is the first map of its kind, and it represents a collaborative approach in land protection by local, regional, and national conservation organizations. When you look at the artistic rendering of the map, you can see two different shades of green, many of which surround the Appalachian Trail, which serves as a centerline. The greens represent large areas of natural habitat (called cores) and areas that link the cores (called corridors). An important takeaway from this map is that the Trail is a backbone to this work.

"We're proud of the way we've used the best available science to map out a robust vision for saving 85 percent or more of the biodiversity of the East Coast from extinction," says Ron Sutherland, Wildlands Network chief scientist. "If protected, the Eastern Wildway habitat network would allow almost all native species to survive the ravages of rapid climate change and habitat destruction."

ATC is a partner to the Wildlands Network, and both organizations seek to ensure the A.T. landscape remains contiguous and intact so native species can thrive. Both organizations also strongly support legislation like the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019, which was introduced by House A.T. Caucus founder and Co-Chair Rep. Don Beyer. This legislation would allow for the designation of wildlife corridors on federal public lands, and it would also support collaboration between the federal government, state agencies, and private landowners to preserve wildlife corridors.

Protecting biodiversity is dominating the conversation when it comes to landscape conservation, and for good reason: one in five species in the U.S. is threatened to become extinct because of climate change and its impacts. For the Wildlands Network to realize its vision of an Eastern Wildway, the continued protection (and expansion) of our intact landscapes is necessary.

> "The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has been promoting a type of landscape conservation since its beginnings in 1925, but as we enter a new decade, one with accelerating challenges due to habitat loss, forest fragmentation, and yes, climate change, we must demand more from everyone who lives, works, and plays within this landscape, and especially from those who love the A.T."

The Finish Line

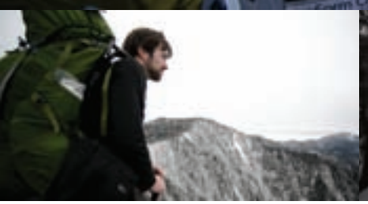
What does a protected Wild East look like? There is no easy answer to that question. Last year, the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership embraced the vision of "an Appalachian Trail and surrounding landscape that connect people, communities, and nature, forever safeguarding the backbone and heart of the Wild East," but because more than 70 organizations are represented in the partnership, it makes sense that not all organizations interpret that vision the same way.

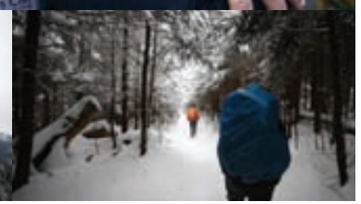
As a relative newcomer to the world of landscape conservation, I often look toward more experienced conservationists and land managers, hoping to see the answer to the complex process of landscape conservation tied up with a neat bow. But maybe the answer will never be simple, and perhaps it can be found in the details of how we align our collaborative work. We must trust science; we must actively listen to the needs and desires of our communities; we need to communicate how recreationists can become conservationists; and, overall, we need to embrace a sense of place that does not set up the false dichotomy of "people versus nature."

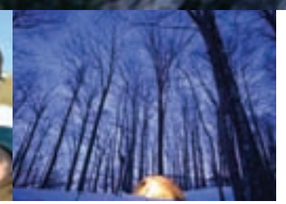
From the Stratton Mountain fire tower, you can see rows and rows of green. More than two years ago, when I stood on the platform, I felt a deep sense of responsibility for the landscape that had changed my life. I also felt apprehension, because I had no idea what was to come. I know what's possible — you do, too — if we are able to work together to sustain our communities and important natural and cultural values.

In his essay *An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*, MacKaye wrote, "Let us assume the existence of a giant standing high on the skyline along those mountain ridges, his head just scraping the floating clouds. What would he see from this skyline as he strode along its length from north to south?"

What will we see 100 years from now?







CHRIS GALLAWAY / *Horizonline Pictures*

From top: Chris on a shake-down hike in the Smokies while preparing for his thru-hike; Scenes from The Long Start to the Journey

Truth Through Adventure

CHRIS GALLAWAY IS AN A.T. THRU-HIKER AND INDEPENDENT FILM PRODUCER whose soulful connection to the Trail led him to creating 19 visually enticing and thought invoking short films for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) in the past five years. His most recent film: *Go Dark – A Wild East Story*, takes us along with a literally star-struck group of hikers for an overnight trek to appreciate the pristine night skies that can be found in areas along the protected Wild East corridor of the Trail. We took a deeper dive into the nuances behind his A.T films and his production company Horizonline Pictures.

What path led you to becoming a short film producer?

I think I've always been drawn to storytelling. I went to an arts highschool for theater and majored in creative writing through college. After college graduation, I made a documentary film called *The Green Race Movie*, which followed a class five kayak race near Asheville, North Carolina. That was my entryway into independent film production, and I've been working at it ever since.

What does your motto: "Seeking the Truth Through Adventure" mean to you as you create each new film?

There is value and growth in going outside of our comfort zone to do something that is scary or challenging, and long-distance hiking and backpacking certainly provide that. Every time I go out on a hike with someone to make a new film, I get to see what that person uniquely gets from the Trail. It enriches my life and my experience of the Trail to share it with new people and to see what they are getting from it themselves. I find that a lot of people (myself included) feel that they are their most-authentic selves on the A.T. when the trappings and distractions of society are stripped away. That is a wonderful opportunity and a challenge, and I'm thankful that I get to have this experience in the course of my work.

In 2013, you thru-hiked the A.T. and then made your documentary film* The Long Start to the Journey *with your wife Sunshine. Since making that first film about the Trail, what have you learned along the way?"

The lesson that I am always learning and re-learning in filmmaking is to stay alert and awake to what the story will reveal to you. It's a risk to go into a project with too strong an idea of the story you want to capture. That can easily get in the way of the details of the people you are trying to follow and document. The real story of someone's experience is always richer and better than the ideas or vision you developed in pre-

From left: A nighttime scene from the Roan Highlands during the filming of Standing Tall *with conservationist Jay Leutze – Photo by Adam Collins/ WACphotography; Chris sets up an interview with thru-hiker Tilghman Moyer while documenting Emory & Henry's Semester-a-Trail program – Photo by Aliese Harrison*

production; so even though it's important to plan and prepare for a project, you have to hold your plans lightly so that you can tune into the real story as it unfolds.

What inspires you to work with organizations like ATC to create films?

Since my thru-hike, I have deeply believed that the Appalachian Trail offers essential value and meaning to people in the modern world. The A.T. is counter-cultural because the culture on the Trail is not preoccupied with so many of the things that grab our attention and generate anxiety in mainstream life today. The A.T. is refreshing for anyone who takes the time to step out of the rat race and spend even a moment in the natural environment that it provides. And I believe that no group or organization is doing more to care for and protect the Appalachian Trail than the ATC. The ATC coordinates with and facilitates many other groups, large and small, who are doing important work for the Trail, but as a central hub and vision for ensuring the future viability of the A.T., the ATC is essential. I believe in the mission and focus of the ATC, and so I feel fortunate to get to be a part of supporting their work.

How did you come to collaborate with ATC to create films?

It's a bit of a long story: During my 2013 thru-hike I met a hiker named Ruben Rosales (Trail name "Chapinlara" or Chapin for short). We went through some tough sections on the Trail together (hip-deep snow drifts in the Smokies...40 mph cross winds and disorienting fog on top of Franconia Ridge), and as often happens on the Trail, we quickly developed a lasting friendship. After the A.T., Rubén wanted to give back, and he joined the board of the ATC as a way to do that. At the same time, he and his wife Valerie supported our work making *The Long Start to the Journey* film. His reward for donating to our fund-raising campaign was video-production services, and he forwarded this reward to the ATC so that I would make a film for them. This became the first project I worked on for the ATC: a short promotional video featuring a family with young kids hiking in the Grayson Highlands. Following that project, Rubén continued to believe in the benefit that I could bring to the ATC through my video production work, and he has looked for ways to facilitate that. The myATstory series of videos emerged from his vision, and he and Valerie were executive producers on all 10 of the videos in that series. No one is more to credit for the lasting collaboration that I have had with the ATC than Chapin.

Can you describe what goes into the unique style and voice of your film production?

Over the years, I have strived to cultivate an approach that comes across as truthful and authentic. I am intentional about not getting too fancy on the video production side (stylistically with effects or heavy, dramatic music). I find so much drama and interest in people's stories that I try to take a straightforward and understated approach to each film's style. In filmmaking, I aspire to the storytelling aesthetic of NPR or certain public television documentaries. It's certainly not your Red Bull, high-adrenaline-drama storytelling approach.

How long does it take to produce a film and what are some of the more inspiring and complex nuances that go into that process?

A lot of projects are developed months in advance as we plan the story and look for the right pieces to come together for filming. The process of finding the subject(s) for a film, then deciding on a location on the Trail to film, as well as dates that work best for everyone and securing the necessary permits, etc. — all of that can take six months or more to sort through. Once we actually have our filming dates and can capture the raw footage, then it is usually about a two-month turnaround before we have a finished project that is ready to share. During filming, I have a lot of autonomy to capture the story as my creative sensibility leads me, but once we get into editing and post-production it is a collaborative process of generating rough edits and then incorporating feedback from the various branches of the ATC to refine the story. The really satisfying and exciting part of the process is when a story idea (like the *Go Dark* film) comes together and becomes a fleshed out, real experience that is richer and more-rewarding than anything we could have planned or envisioned. Without fail, the Trail provides experiences and relationships that are deep and true, and I have come away from many of these projects with lasting friendships.

What have been some of the most outstanding moments in the past five years of this work?

Some of my stand-out memories are: hiking from New York City to the A.T. via the Long Path with Derick "Mr. Fabulous" Lugo and his brother Carlos... spending three days in the Smokies with "All-the-Way," a Vietnam vet who started thru-hiking long trails in his 60s...enjoying peak fall colors in Shenandoah National Park with Kathi and Steve Kramer, whose son had hiked the Trail... and camping in the Roan Highlands and listening to the inspiring and captivating stories of Jay Leutze who played a pivotal role in a legal fight to conserve that breathtaking landscape.

Your films relay a very intimate quality while maintaining a very clean and professional style overall — how do you create that balance?

I want to tell authentic stories, and in service of that goal I try to keep my approach to filmmaking simple. I intentionally do not accumulate a lot of extra gear or support staff that might distract from or encumber the filmmaking process. I keep the process stripped down and simple. Often the people I work with feel intimidated as we get ready to film together, but once we are out in the field shooting the footage, they relax and are able to be themselves, which is essential for the style of filmmaking that I want to do.

Tell us a bit about the vision and collaboration that went into your latest A.T. film, Go Dark — A Wild East Story?

Last winter, I began working with the ATC team to imagine stories that would capture the ethos and vision of the Wild East initiative, and one of the first ideas we came up with was to do something about the beautiful starry nights that the A.T. provides. Right away, we had an obvious person to collaborate with in Tyler Nordgren. Tyler is a renowned astrono-

Still image from Go Dark - A Wild East Story (the group takes in an A.T. sunset in Georgia)

mer and authority on dark skies; so we reached out and asked if he would be our lead on this subject. Once Tyler was on board, we started looking for a group of folks who could come along for the journey and benefit from Tyler's expertise. We were lucky to connect with Luz Lituma from Atlanta Georgia and her organization LatinXhikers. Luz invited three of her friends from Atlanta along, and at the end of August we all met on the Trail in north Georgia to do a two-night hike together, enjoying each other's company and the brilliant stars in the sky above.

What stands out about this particular film to you?

This project was a perfect example of what a powerful place the Trail is for building community and friendships. All of us came from such different backgrounds to meet on the A.T. It was wonderful to me how quickly we all got on and began to laugh, talk, and share with each other so easily. There were such good conversations and so much laughter as we hiked. And because we came from such different backgrounds, we had that much more to share with each other. As so often before, I found myself with a group of people on the Trail who I probably would not interact with in the normal course of my life, and I left the Trail having gained a group of friends. I hope that we will reconnect in the future to hike together again.

What message do you want this film to convey most strongly?

Growth and development is progressing so quickly along the East Coast, and the Appalachian Mountains are so attractive to developers for obvious reasons. We still have an amazing resource of wild lands that are focused along the length of the Appalachian Trail, but I think that many people do not realize how vulnerable many of these lands are to development that would adversely impact the A.T. experience. The Wild East vision to protect and conserve broad landscapes up and down the Appalachian Trail can seem massive and daunting as a project to undertake, but certainly no more so than the original vision to build this Trail that would stretch more than 2,000 miles along the East Coast. The original A.T. planners imagined this huge, overwhelming project that took their lifetimes and more to complete. Now we have the Trail in place, and there is an opportunity for our generation to begin the essential work of conserving and protecting larger landscapes along the Trail so that the purity of the wilderness experience is preserved for those who come after us. I hope that the film communicates the importance of protecting the Wild East corridor. The Wild East initiative is an urgent rallying cry to this generation to preserve and protect the wilderness that we currently enjoy.

Favorite moment from filming with Tyler, Luz, and others?

I was watching the sunset while interviewing Adam Stephenson, a gifted muralist who was part of the LatinX group. Adam is an insightful and empathic person, and he began to talk about how surprising it is that we can access this awe-inspiring wilderness experience in under two hours' drive outside of the rush and mayhem of Atlanta — a place where (in his words) you could have "your breath taken and your life changed a little bit."

Watch Go Dark – A Wild East Story at: **appalachiantrail.org**

A.T. CONNECTICUT — PHOTO BY ALLISON DIVERDE

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APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY®

CAMPING ON THE A.T.

BY STEPHEN EREN

EVERY YEAR, ITS ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN three million people hike on the Appalachian Trail. The good and the bad news is that number will likely grow. It's good news in that more people are going outside and enjoying the wealth of benefits from their public lands. It's bad when those visits negatively impact the lands that people love so much, and that make this country great. Everything we do outside has an associated impact to the local ecology. The problem is when that impact exceeds a sustainable level for the ecosystem.

One example of these impacts is with camping. As a former thru-hiker, and now the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) southern regional Trail facility manager, I have seen the full spectrum of good to bad campsites along the A.T. and have seen firsthand that camping has the potential to do a lot of ecological damage to our public lands. As a person who loves to camp, and wants others to enjoy a great camp experience along the A.T. — it is important to me that everyone understands how to respect the complexity along with the beauty of an overnight stay in the Wild East.

THE HITCHES

When use exceeds capacity, new user-created campsites materialize, sometimes impacting sensitive areas. Each new campsite may lead to vegetation loss, erosion of organic material, and soil compaction making it difficult for the forest to regenerate. New fire rings at these sites can sterilize the soil below the fire, making it unable to grow anything for some time. Campfires can also feed into a cycle of tree damage that is very common. Look around your favorite campsite. Most wooded sites have trees with haphazard hatched marks, saplings cut down to burn, and most anything burnable torched. Every time someone cuts into a living tree, it opens them up for potential infection and mortality. Trees of Appalachia already have a full plate of adelgid, blights, borers, and other insects and diseases; they do not need more harm from hikers.

As campsites get used weekend after weekend, if hikers aren't responsible with their food and trash, animals will be attracted. Popular campsites can be spots bears frequent because its where they often find food. A bears' sense of smell is dramatically better than a humans', so food you throw in the fire has a smell that will still attract bears long after it burns. When bears get too accustomed to feeding on hiker food, they may become aggressive and could potentially be euthanized.

Camping is amazing, and, as a frequent camper myself, I do not plan on stopping anytime soon. The good news is that everyone can continue to enjoy the experience of camping if we do our part to respect the wild and mitigate our impacts.

From left: Campsites along the A.T. – By Tom Bieber and Jocelyn Songer

TIPS FOR LOW-IMPACT CAMPING

CAMP IN ESTABLISHED AREAS. Good campsites are found and not made. Check agency and ATC info for sustainable campsite locations.

Always camp more than **200 FEET AWAY FROM WATER** to help protect the water source and local ecology.

BURN WOOD THAT IS DEAD, down, dinky, and distant from your campsite. Do not cut anything down or break branches for your fire. Or, skip the fire entirely and skip the impact.

If you do dispersed camping, re-naturalize in the morning by **SCATTERING ANY CAMPFIRE** (wet and cold remains) and brushing over your site.

USE A BEAR CANISTER for peace-of-mind food protection. Using a bear canister is about doing your part to protect bears and the campers that follow you.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS. If you know you are going to camp with a group of your friends that might be a bit boisterous, use a group campsite or camp far away from the Trail and other people — check your map for old road or railroad grades leading off the A.T. If you are around other folks, share a fire ring, respect other's space, and reduce your impact when you can.

With the right **EDUCATION**, we can drastically limit our impact in the Wild East. Together, we can prevent a lot of resource degradation from camping so the A.T. does not lose any of its amazing character.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF CAMPSITES

DESIGNATED CAMPSITES are the only areas where camping is allowed — and are required to be used in some areas. You will find designated overnight sites in popular backcountry or front country areas that are frequently at capacity. Staying in a designated campsite is a way to concentrate impact to protect areas with sensitive ecology. On the A.T., designated camping is rare but occurs in popular parks like Baxter State Park or the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These are listed in agency and A.T. info.

ESTABLISHED CAMP SITES are created by the manager and maintainer of certain areas but staying at these sites is not required. Established campsites let the maintainer and manager select camping areas without sensitive animals or vegetation, or archeological sites, and add capacity in a sustainable way. These are listed in A.T. info.

DISPERSED CAMPSITES, also referred to as ninja or stealth campsites, are user-selected and not listed in A.T. info. This is a backcountry option that gives visitors the ability to maximize their wilderness experience. Dispersed camp sites should be more than 200 feet away from trails and water to help preserve other visitors' opportunities for isolation, to protect sensitive water or riparian zones, and should be completely undetectable once the camper has left – requiring the highest level of user responsibility and experience. Dispersed camping is available in most areas of the national forests along the A.T. Following Leave No Trace ethics, especially while camping in dispersed sites, is extremely important.

Hikers can find info about designated campsites in official ATC guidebooks and maps. Regulations regarding camping and campfires can be found at: **appalachiantrail.org/camping**

PEAK CONDITIONS

PHOTOGRAPHER ***DANIEL BURLESON***

MACRAE MEADOWS SITS AT THE FOOT OF Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina and is the home to the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. With astounding views of Grandfather Mountain this special location has been home to the games since established in 1956 and is held annually every summer. The meadow has become a favorite among games attendees for its striking resemblance to the Highlands of Scotland. From the top of Grandfather Mountain, you can see many prominent peaks along the A.T. including Roan High Knob, Round Bald, Little Hump, and Big Hump. The mountain is one of the most prominent and easily recognizable views from the Blue Ridge Parkway and dominates the horizon on the Appalachian Trail at Roan Mountain. The morning I took this photo, I was returning from shooting a winter sunrise image from Beacon Heights, a short hike off the Blue Ridge Parkway. I hadn't planned to take any more photos that morning after finishing up my sunrise shoot but as I drove past the frozen MacRae Meadows I was instantly drawn to this scene. I really liked the contrast of how the warmer light was highlighting the frosty foreground with the dark mountain just peaking out of the clouds. I've always enjoyed being outdoors in the snow and ice, making me feel like a kid again. The winter weather always brings a new look to often photographed locations and I'm glad I was able to capture MacRae Meadows in these conditions. *~Daniel Burleson*

★ WARWICK / *New York* ★

TUCKED INTO THE FOOTHILLS OF SOUTHERN NEW YORK — ONLY 50 MILES FROM MANHATTAN'S SKYLINE — THE TOWN OF WARWICK OFFERS STUNNING VISTAS, BEAUTIFUL WATERFALLS, AND ENDLESS OPTIONS FOR FUN AND RELAXATION.

By Jessica Schottanes

From far left: Fitzgerald Falls; Shops in the Village of Warwick; Hudson Valley Jazz Fest on Warwick's Railroad Green; A day hiker on the A.T. north of Route 17A – Photos by John DeSanto

THE RURAL TOWN OF WARWICK, ESTABLISHED in 1789, was named in honor of the historic "Warwick" farm that extensively covered the early landscape. The very large town emerged as an agricultural destination with an abundance of open space. Following the development of the Warwick Valley Railroad, the King's Highway, and the Appalachian Trail, the well-known town with three villages of Warwick, Greenwood Lake, and Florida became an ecotourist attraction for passing travelers. The Hamlets of Sterling Forest, Amity, Pine Island, Bellvale, and Edenville also dot the landscape. In 2012, Warwick became an official A.T. Community.

DISCOVERING WARWICK … DAY HIKING

Warwick

The first section of the A.T., located in Warwick, was open to the public in 1931, and emerges as a moderate hiking path that is approximately 4.8 miles long. On this historic section route, dogs are allowed on a leash and families can enjoy a short, lovely day hike.

Fitzgerald Falls

This is just off Lakes Road between Greenwood Lake and Monroe, a quarter-mile north of Greenwood Lake Middle School. This is a short, quarter-mile-out-and-back trek to the spectacular twin waterfalls right on the A.T. with a slight hill climb about halfway.

Route 17A to Eastern Pinnacles

A great first hike for families, though the rocky Eastern Pinnacles can be slippery when wet. Start at any of the gravel parking lots where Route 17A crests Bellvale Mountain and locate the A.T. trailhead. (It's near the very last parking lot on the right, if you are coming from Warwick.) Cross Rt. 17A carefully and proceed north. Or, start across from Bellvale Farms Creamery and follow the blue-blazed trail to the white blazes of the A.T., where you turn left. The hike is just over two miles out and back.

A.T. South from Bellvale Farms Creamery

Park at the gravel lot across Route 17A from Bellvale Farms Creamery. Locate the kiosk and follow the trail immediately behind the kiosk — it's blue-blazed — and in five minutes it will lead you to the white-blazed A.T. Turn right and follow the white blazes southbound about two miles to scenic views overlooking Greenwood Lake. This is a nice four-mile hike out and back.

From left: Rowing on Greenwood Lake; Wawayanda creek on Bayards Lane in downtown Warwick – Photos by John DeSanto; A.T. – Pennsylvania – Photo by Linda Norman

INDULGE YOUR APPETITE

A short trek from the Appalachian Trail atop Mount Peter, visitors can enjoy a top-notch ice cream cone at **Bellvale Farms Creamery** — nationally recognized for its homemade ice cream. **Eddie's Roadhouse**, a local tavern nestled right in the heart of the Warwick Village center and historic district, is known for its craft beer and cuisine. Not only is the dining atmosphere cozy, but the owner and his friendly staff are always excited to connect with A.T. hikers and listen to their adventures.

Buy fresh veggies at the **Warwick Farmers Market**. Open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday from Mother's Day until late November or the **Village of Florida Farmers Market**, which is open on Tuesday's from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. beginning in June. Both markets feature regional farms and farm kitchens.

Enjoy a pint where George Washington once drank grog in 1783 at **Baird's Tavern** on Main Street in the heart of the village of Warwick. The recently-renovated tavern features three rooms including a game room where guests can take games off the wall and take part in friendly competition.

TAKE IN LOCAL CULTURE

Listen to a free concert on Railroad Green in Warwick or in Greenwood Lake at **Thomas P. Morahan Lakefront Park**. The concerts offer an eclectic mix of performers from rock to jazz to country and everything in between. Shop in our three villages. Warwick, Florida, and Greenwood Lake each offer specialty shops, salons, lodging, museums, art festivals and dining to suit every taste. Special events are held throughout the year including the world-famous **Applefest** in October.

Peruse some literature at the **Albert Wisner Public Library** – the recipient of the *Library Journal's* "Best Small Library in America" award in 2016 for its innovative architectural design, artistic landscape with sculptures and birdhouses, and sustainability initiatives. The River Birch Patio nearby the library's interpretative walking path is the recommended spot to enjoy a book in natural surroundings.

In the summer season, you are sure to find many thru-hikers setting up camp not far from A.T. trailhead at the **Warwick Drive-In Theater**. As movie-goers patiently wait in line, a band of smiling individuals with their backpacking gear can often be found near the entrance. Imagine viewing a movie tent-side and beneath the stars in the night sky.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Get out and enjoy the land as the town and three villages have set aside thousands of acres of parkland for residents and visitors to explore. You can paddle on Glenmere, Greenwood, or Wickham lakes, play basketball or skateboard at the local parks, or play golf at **Warwick County Park**. Go boating, swimming, jet or water skiing, fishing, ice-skating, ice-fishing, and snow sledding on **Greenwood Lake** year-round.

STAY A WHILE

The **Warwick Valley Bed and Breakfast** is located within Warwick Village and is just a few steps away from the restaurants, cafes, and local businesses in the historic district. This B&B is known for its farm-to-table breakfasts and 1900s charm. Or try out the **Inn at Stony Creek**, built in 1840 — a revitalized farmhouse that is situated on a nine-acre countryside landscape in Warwick. Each distinctive guestroom, completed with antiques, is named in honor of a significant event, publication, landscape, or person from the 1840s decade. This B&B not only delivers a delicious breakfast, but also serves as a special occasion destination spot for weddings, elopements, vow renewals, and romantic getaways.

Jessica Schottanes, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is pursuing a dual Master's Degree in Geography and Regional Planning and aspires to design and plan for America's national parks, monuments, and historically and culturally significant landscapes and resources.

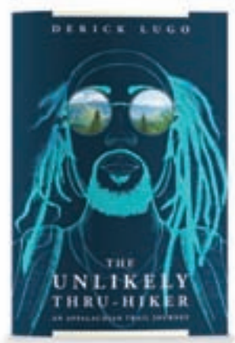
Find out more and plan your trip at: **Wildeast.org/warwick** and **townofwarwick.org**

Learn more about all 48 A.T. Communities at: **appalachiantrail.org/ATcommunities**

ACHIEVING AN ORIGINAL VISION

MACKAYE'S GRANDER WILDERNESS CIVILIZATION BLUEPRINT

IN 1921, BENTON MACKAYE, A PIONEER OF REGIONAL planning, proposed his vision for an extensive trailway system — with an underlying purpose to foster a cooperative spirit between recreational users and anticipated permanent trailside community members and farmers — known as the Appalachian Trail. As MacKaye became more fixated on his concept for a regional community connected by a footpath hidden in the Appalachian Mountains, the external design of the surrounding landscape was transforming as highways and national parks system units emerged. As the demand to complete the Trail's development for the public's immediate use and enjoyment increased, MacKaye's vision returned to its original form as a proposal on paper. Myron Avery then worked to bring the Trail into physical existence in 1937. Over time, the A.T. surfaced into a spiritual and challenging trek in which many are eager to attempt to thru-hike, section-hike, and day-hike. While in many ways the A.T. venture today encourages a community of wanderers traveling across the landscape, one aspect that fits into MacKaye's original vision is the culture and communities that surround the Trail today. ¶ When the Appalachian Trail Conservancy launched the A.T. Community Program in 2010, a formal network of Trail-side communities and a regional support system was established. Designated communities interact with one another through summits and workshops, and the business climate in these municipalities seem to improve with recognition through social media and signage. Much about these towns and communities that surround the Trail and are part of the A.T. Community Program fits nicely into MacKaye's grander wilderness civilization blueprint.



Follow Thru

By Derick Lugo

"LISTEN, PRETTY BOY, I KNOW YOU. You are the most well-groomed, metro-sexual black man in New York City. You, in the woods, without your mirror, your beauty products, and your designer clothes for more than a few days. Please!"

This was one of the reactions I got from friends and family members when I told them that I was going to hike the entire 2,190-miles of the Appalachian Trail. My friend's case against such an ambitious feat was strong. I had never hiked a day in my life, I had never camped out or pitched a tent, heck, when I finally started my thru-hike at Amicalola Falls State Park in Georgia, I didn't even know how to use the gear I was carrying. The water filter, the mini stove, and tent were necessities, but useless in my hands. My rationale was weak against the people who cared for me and knew better than I did that I was not prepared for such a journey into the unknown.

However, it was too late; the idea was embedded into my brain. Changing my mind was not going to happen; inspired thoughts invoked a challenge in me that refused to go away. It's a simple way of thinking, yet at times, not so simple to follow through on.

This is characteristic of who I have been from a young age. For example, when I was eight years old, I thought it would be a novel idea if I jumped off the roof of our two-story apartment building, wearing a homemade parachute, put together with cotton twine that I would tie at each corner of a white bed sheet. I made parachutes for my toy soldiers before and they worked perfectly, so of

From top: Derick's book: The Unlikely Thru-Hiker; *Derick during his 2012 thru-hike*

"Vision, determination, and the fate of the right circumstances will take you as far as your dreams."

> "I took a step toward the unknown, toward something that could change my way of living and my relationship with the great outdoors."

course I thought I could easily construct one for myself. With a few design adjustments, it would work like a charm.

The only problem I thought I had was lack of access to the roof from our apartment, unless…I made a ladder that would somehow hook to the edge of the roof placed just over our open living room window. In need of tools, I went through my mother's so-called toolbox. The box contained a small hammer, rusty nails, a dull wood chisel, a miniature precision screwdriver kit, tatting needles, a pocket knife, thread, a roll of stainless-steel wire, tattered cloth, pieces of small wood, and various other items that were useless to everyone except my mother and that puppet maker Geppetto.

I grabbed the hammer and the chisel, and then ran outside in search of wood pallets that would help me up onto the top of our apartment building, so I could turn around and jump right off the roof. This was my fail-safe plan…well, until my mother walked in during my ladder construction.

"¡Ah, Dios mío! ¿Derick, qué estás haciendo?" is something I've heard her say throughout my childhood. It was Saturday. She was working overtime and so was I because I lost track of time and was busted. Normally Mom's supportive of my creativity (or at least able to tolerate most of my zany ideas), but not when it covers her living room floor with nails and broken pieces of wood. I explained my grand plan to my mother as she looked down at me with her hands on her hips. I thought she would find my ingenuity endearing and ask if she could watch. I was sorely mistaken.

For years, the thought of soaring through the air with a parachute I was sure to make never left my mind. Except for my better understanding of weight and the drag principle of a parachute, not much has changed. If it seems like a good idea to me, it will not go away unless I do something about it or a better idea replaces it.

When I decided to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail, I was not concerned that I had never hiked before. I wasn't concerned that I didn't know if I liked hiking. It was a challenge. It was extreme enough that it dared me; I was convinced it was something I had to do. Just the same, a part of me wondered, like that eight-year-old Derick, was I leaping into danger?

They say ignorance is bliss, well that may have been the case for me. I think back at not only my lack of experience, but my lack of knowledge. How I thought I could do an extreme activity like hiking the A.T. without the correct preparation, still baffles me. While I would not recommend anyone starting the way I did, if there's a strong passion and a vision that takes you there, then anyone has the ability to follow it to the end. Vision, determination, and the fate of the right circumstances will take you as far as your dreams.

Don't hold your ambitions back. I did an unlikely activity by disregarding any doubts I (or my friends) had about a city dweller with zero experience and with an appearance that did not match the average Appalachian Trail hiker. I stepped out of my comfort zone, into a place with no street signs, no bodegas, and nowhere to swipe my metro card. I wasn't in NYC anymore, so what was I to do? Well, I did the only thing I could do, I took a step toward the unknown, toward something that could change my way of living and my relationship with the great outdoors. My unlikely adventure took me through the Appalachian Trail, and it has continued to carry me farther into parts untraveled by this New Yorker.

May your vision and determination carry you through your greatest journey.

To learn more about Derick's stories and speaking engagements visit: **dericklugo.com**

Derick's recently released memoir, *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker* is available at the Ultimate A.T. Store: **atctrailstore.org** and other major booksellers.

Learn more and watch a short video at: **dericklugo.com**

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APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Gift an Appalachian Trail Conservancy membership to protect the footpath, support the work of A.T. volunteers, enhance our understanding of conservation science, provide free and critical information to ever-growing audiences, and expand our landscape protection efforts to protect the Trail's awe-inspiring vistas and vital wildlife migration corridors.

INDIGENOUS

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NATIVE WARM-SEASON GRASSLANDS

By Marian Orlousky

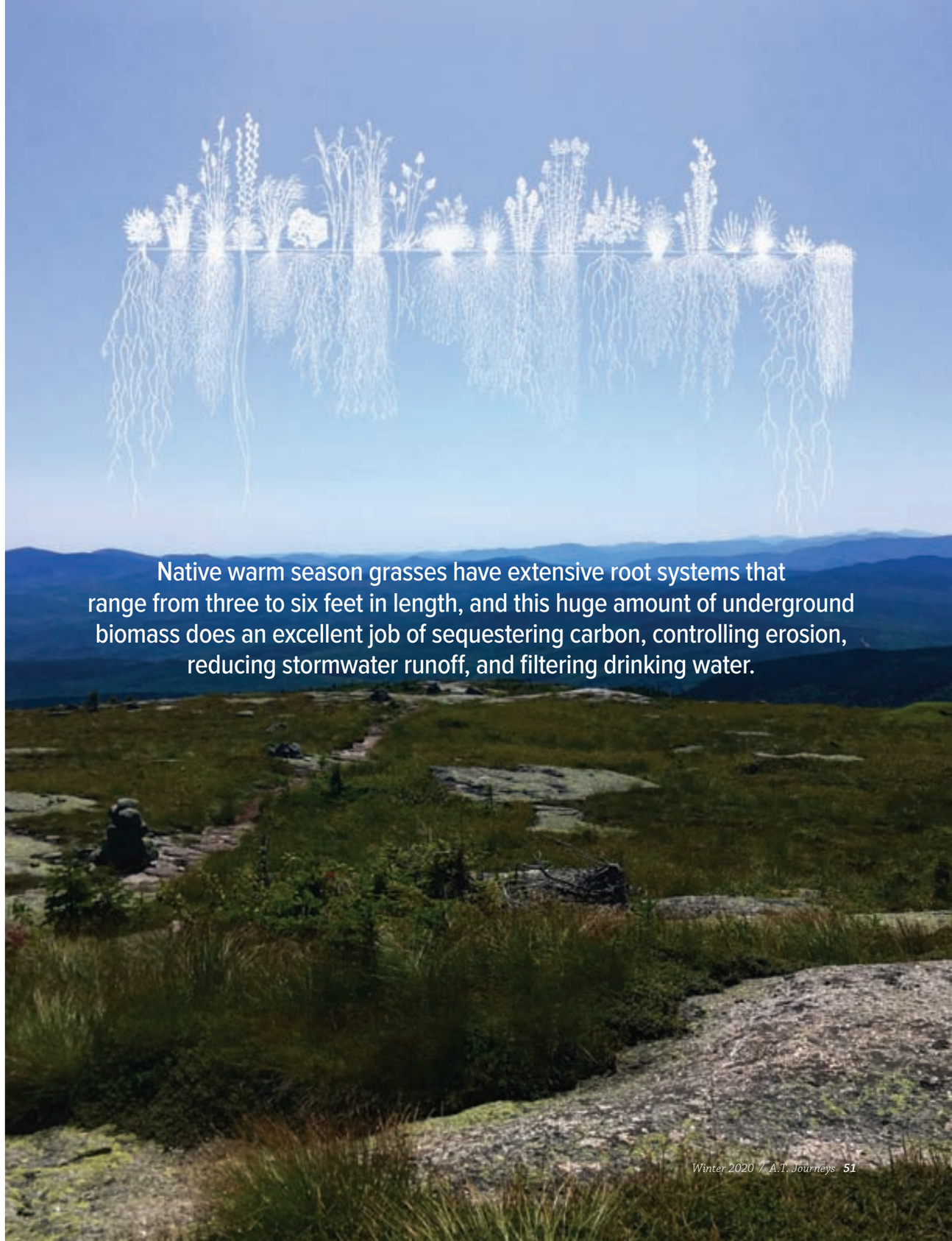
WHEN YOU HEAR THE term "grassland," images of the vast prairies of the Northern Great Plains, or the iconic African savannas, might come to mind. The word may not immediately inspire thoughts of the eastern United States, and yet native grasslands are an important feature of the Wild East landscape.

Grasslands are complex, early successional ecosystems found on every continent but Antarctica. Their commonality is the dominance of grasses, but regional and local differences in climate, weather, soil, and disturbance lead to their great diversity in size and composition. Herbaceous forbs, woody shrubs, some trees, and an array of wildlife are common features. In the eastern U.S., where rainfall is consistent, native grasslands are dominated by warm-season bunch grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, indiangrass and switchgrass, and they tend to have a high presence of flowering forbs like milkweed, goldenrod, wild bergamot, and black-eyed Susan. Oftentimes we refer to these areas as meadows.

Along the Appalachian Trail, native "grasslands" may take the form of high elevation balds, rich wildflower meadows, shrubby oak or pine barrens, and alpine tundra. For a hiker, they are typically a welcomed change of pace from the "green tunnel," affording a glimpse of the surrounding landscape and some historical context for the area. These habitats generally exist based on some history of disturbance. The grassy balds of the southern Appalachians are thought to have been grazed by giant prehistoric herbivores like the Mastodon, while many of the bucolic meadows found along the A.T. in New England are remnants of small-scale farming operations dating back to the mid-eighteenth century. Much of the area through which the A.T. travels historically experienced understory fires every one to 35 years and mixed severity fires every 35 to 200 years. Before fire suppression became a regular practice, grasslands contributed to a dynamic mosaic of habitat in the eastern U.S.; as one grassland succeeded towards forest, another would emerge.

The loss of natural environmental processes, coupled with invasive species, fragmentation, and cropland conversions, are why only approximately five percent of America's native grasslands persist. Recent research published in the journal *Science* demonstrates a loss of nearly three billion North American birds since 1970, with grassland birds suffering the greatest declines at a 53 percent population loss. Some of America's most iconic birds, like the bobolink, eastern meadowlark, and American woodcock have been the heaviest hit, but many species of insect pollinators and small mammals have also declined with grassland losses.

Perhaps fortuitously, these sometimes under-appreciated areas are increasingly being recognized for their valuable ecosystem services. Grasslands are a productive way to reclaim areas previously timbered, surfaced mined, or otherwise degraded; and they are an ideal means of optimizing wildlife habitat while maintaining rights-of-way under powerlines and along pipelines. Native warm season grasses have extensive root systems that range from three to six feet in length, and this huge amount of underground biomass does an excellent job of sequestering carbon, controlling erosion, reducing stormwater runoff, and filtering drinking water. Because they are less susceptible to drought and disease than forests, and require minimal long-term investment to maintain, grasslands are being seriously considered for their climate change mitigation potential. As the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and our partners work to protect quality resources and experiences along the A.T., the conservation and restoration of grassland habitats is one way we are working to sustain a healthy, resilient, and biodiverse Wild East under an uncertain climatic future.



Native warm season grasses have extensive root systems that range from three to six feet in length, and this huge amount of underground biomass does an excellent job of sequestering carbon, controlling erosion, reducing stormwater runoff, and filtering drinking water.

Fragile alpine meadow in the Saddleback Range along the Appalachian Trail in Maine – By Marian Orlousky

FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATIONS

AT ITS CORE, THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL IS THE RESULT OF A MELTING POT OF VISION, action, leadership, philosophy, environmental passion, and an appreciation for wilderness. Get ready to pan out and dig deep with some essential and fascinating reads that capture the voices, experiences, and the foundations of the Trail.

Benton MacKaye: Conservationist, Planner and Creator of the Appalachian Trail

By Larry Anderson (Johns Hopkins University Press)

Visionary and planner of the Appalachian Trail and a cofounder of the Wilderness Society, Benton MacKaye (1879-1975) was a pioneer in linking the concepts of preservation, recreation, and regional planning. Anderson's pathbreaking biography draws on hundreds of sources to craft a portrait never before fully drawn of this significant and unique figure in American environmental, intellectual, and cultural history.

Tangled Roots: The Appalachian Trail and American Environmental Politics

By Sarah Mittlefehldt (University of Washington Press)

Now a university professor (and folksinger with her husband), Mittlefehldt combined her honeymoon thru-hike with extensive research in federal and Appalachian Trail Conservancy archives and interviews with key actors to produce an acclaimed look at how federal and grassroots efforts behind the A.T. blurred the lines of public/private, local/regional, and amateur/expert to generate unprecedented success in land protection.

On Trails: An Exploration,

By Robert Moor (Simon & Schuster)

In 2009, while thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, award-winning magazine writer Robert Moor began to wonder about the paths that lie beneath our feet — specifically footpaths. Over the course of the next seven years, Moor traveled the globe exploring trails of all kinds, from the miniscule to the massive, learning the tricks of master trailbuilders, hunting down long-lost Cherokee trails, and tracing the origins of our road networks and the Internet. He interweaves his adventures with findings from science, history, philosophy, and nature writing. The result is a book that will make you see the world around you in a whole new light.

The Appalachian Trail: A Time to be Bold

By Charles H.W. Foster 1987, former chair of ANSTAC (self-published)

A long-time chairman of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council, Charles H.W. Foster, tells the "the inside story" of the Trail project and protection of the footpath. Foster explains how the Trail represents an experiment in bioregionalism, but also a great experiment in governmental protection coupled with volunteer management. The story follows the progression from early sporadic and visionary efforts by individual citizens, Trail clubs and states, to the formal efforts to establish, protect, and manage the Trail that began with the authorization of a National Scenic Trail Act in 1968 and culminated in a complex process of land acquisition and major cooperative management agreement signed in 1984.

The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning

By Benton MacKaye, introduction by Lewis Mumford, foreword by David Startzell (Appalachian Trail Conservancy)

This reprint of the A.T. founder's landmark 1928 work — termed as a long-lost classic by *The New Yorker* contains many illustrations of the Trail as an example of his philosophy in action (plus maps by MacKaye). Today's small regional-planning projects — attempts to manage growth in ways that restore sense and order to mankind's relationships with the natural environment — are only resuming work on principles that MacKaye describes in his original work.

The Appalachian Trail: Celebrating America's Hiking Trail

By Brian B. King, foreword by Bill Bryson (Appalachian Trail Conservancy/Rizzoli)

This hard-cover Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) coffee table book explores the legendary footpath in detail and is filled with more than 300 spectacular contemporary images, as well as unpublished historical photos, documents, and maps from ATC archives. With fascinating essays on topics ranging from the Trail's history to the day-by-day hiking experience, this book is perfect for anyone interested in conservation, outdoor recreation, or American history, and for all those who have hiked all or any part of the A.T. A pocket inside the back cover contains a full-sized copy of the official National Park Service map of the entire Appalachian Trail.

Available at the Ultimate A.T. Store:
atctrailstore.org

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Wes Kannoy by Kathy & Nicholas Grosman
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Barbara Kinnane by Ralph Kinnane
John Gholson Kittredge by Fletcher Kittredge
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A.T. – North Carolina – By Daniel Burleson

AS THE FIRST APPALACHIAN TRAIL PROJECT manager for the National Park Service, from 1976 to 1987, Dave Richie led a pivotal era of partnership building and land acquisition — he was also my father. His leadership and vision inspired a collaborative approach, which energized participation from the grassroots to the highest levels of federal and state government. He engaged the right people in the right place at the right time to protect a very threatened Trail.

My father had a knack for hiring extraordinary people. He was strategic, creative, and willing to look beyond the written resume for untapped talent. Then, he'd set the course, turn over the reins, and let that person shine. He championed volunteers and Trail clubs. When he arrived on the scene in 1974 as National Park Service deputy director of the northeast region, the A.T. was one responsibility of many. The Trail resembled nothing of the protected public corridor of today, with hundreds of miles on roads and private lands. The 1968 National Trails System Act established the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, but funds were sparse.

The challenge was on. Dave convinced the park service to create a fulltime position of A.T. project manager, a role he took on in 1976, and soon moved the office from Boston to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. An anti-bureaucrat, he put forward his vision for cooperative management with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) playing a prominent role. When Jimmy Carter was elected President, Dave was instrumental in securing a $90 million authorization for land purchases and easements in 1977. (Over the next 30 years, those would total some $220 million).

Despite his unassuming demeanor, my father was competitive, as I knew well from running long distances with him. He ran the Boston Marathon twice at a fast clip. Losing the race to save the Trail was not an option. A naturalist and avid hiker, he also believed in firsthand experience — covering the entire Trail in sections, from 1979 to 1986. I joined him on his final backpack from Monson to Katahdin. On that first memorable day, we met Dave Field (still active in the Maine A.T. Club) and bushwhacked a flagged relocation, covering a grueling 20 miles. While I fought exhaustion, the two Daves exulted in the promise of a new route.

My father never stopped learning and believed in new ideas. If he were alive today, he would be thrilled with the Wild East vision of an expanded wildlife corridor, climate resilient stronghold, and lively Trail communities. After pouring through writings from his colleagues, I made a list of qualities they saw in him. *Shun authoritarianism. Share responsibility. Choose principles over detailed prescriptions. Keep meetings brief. Listen well. Credit generously. Be kind. Greet adversaries with respect. Take flexible approaches to problem solving. Negotiate without compromising Trail values.* The list goes on to form a theme, one that David Startzell (ATC executive director from 1986-2012) articulated well: "He helped me and many others to look beyond the thick haze of the challenges of the moment toward the bright light of the possible and to have the courage and faith to embrace a bold vision." As my father's daughter, I know he found his greatest joy in the success of others, and is there in spirit cheering us on to stay strong as we trek toward the next peak.

By Marina Richie

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Every year, 6,000 volunteers dedicate more than 200,000 hours of sweat and hard work to preserve one of the greatest public lands projects in American history.

Our volunteers are the glue that holds the Appalachian Trail together. But volunteerism is not cost free, and every year brings new challenges to overcome.

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A.T. MAX PATCH – NORTH CAROLINA – PHOTO BY WILLIE JOHNSON