



Harpers Ferry, West Virginia



Appalachian Trail Community™

A Designation Program of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail – ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.



APPALACHIAN TRAIL
CONSERVANCY®



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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The ATC traces its roots to the vision of Benton MacKaye, a regional planner who convened an Appalachian Trail



Trail “conference” in 1925 in Washington, D.C. This initial gathering of hikers, foresters, and public officials laid the groundwork not only for the creation of the Trail, but also for an organization to build, manage, and protect it. Today, through the efforts of volunteers, clubs, and agency partners, the A.T. extends more than 2,180 miles from Maine to Georgia

within a protected 250,000 acre greenway. ATC was instrumental in the passage of federal legislation that designated the A.T. as America’s first national scenic trail in 1968.

In order to coordinate the efforts of 31 member clubs and their volunteers, numerous federal and state agencies, and over 40,000 members, ATC employs approximately 55 regular staff and numerous seasonal program employees. With a main office and official Trail visitor center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, ATC remains singularly focused on the A.T. with regional offices in North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Program Background

From the beginning, Benton MacKaye’s vision of an Appalachian Trail proposed to develop opportunities for recreation, recuperation and employment. “The project is one for a series of recreational communities throughout the Appalachian chain... to be connected by a walking trail,” he stated in his 1921 article “The Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning.” MacKaye was among the first of his time to propose land preservation for recreation and conservation purposes, understanding that the “secluded forests, pastoral lands and water courses” are “playgrounds of the people.”

Towns, counties, and communities along the Appalachian Trail’s corridor are considered an asset by A.T. hikers and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the Trail. With millions of visitors coming to the Trail every year, it is no wonder that outfitters, restaurants, and businesses catering to outdoor recreation call A.T. communities home.

Designation as an Appalachian Trail Community™



and participation in the program is designed to act as a catalyst for enhancing economic development, engaging community citizens as Trail visitors and stewards, aiding local municipalities and regional areas with conservation planning and helping local community members see the Trail as a resource and

asset. The program also serves to highlight and recognize those communities who are taking steps to ensure the ongoing protection of their natural, cultural, and recreational resources, including the A.T. Preserving and enhancing a charming, memorable community destination will contribute to the long-term economic health of A.T. towns and make an A.T. hike even more desirable.



Benefits for Communities and Towns

Overlooking the James River, Virginia

SHORT TERM BENEFITS	LONG TERM BENEFITS
National designation network and communication	Increased community viability and economic health
Recognition and visibility through signage, media, the ATC's website and publications	Increased community environmental stewardship
Enhanced partnerships with public land agencies and volunteers	Increased sense of place and cultural sustainability
Teacher eligibility for ATC place-based education and service-learning programs	Trail-friendly promotion through ATC-assisted marketing techniques



Details of Community Benefits

WEB DEVELOPMENT

Community webpage that reflects what the community has brought to the program, including listing of local events

Local articles and press releases highlighted in the ATC's newsroom

Subscription to e-news providing highlights of community successes and network to designated communities in the program

Social networking outreach with the ATC's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram followers

MEMBERSHIP

Complimentary library subscription to *A.T. Journeys*, the magazine of the Appalachian Trail

MEDIA SUPPORT

Press releases, access to Appalachian Trail media list, Public Service Announcements, proclamation, etc.

Recognition in publications such as *A.T. Journeys* magazine, the A.T. Databook and Thru-Hikers' Companion

LOGO USAGE

Access to Appalachian Trail Community™ under signed licensing and usage agreement

Incorporating national network brand to community

SIGNAGE

Two 18" by 24" full color metal aluminum street entrance signs; two 6" window decals (suggested placement in town hall or chamber).

PROGRAM TOOLKIT

Toolkit providing detailed information and resources for planning your designation celebration

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Teachers interested in ATC education and service-learning programs from designated communities receive priority over other applicants

Local businesses that support the A.T. are eligible to apply for recognition as A.T. Community Supporters

Appalachian Trail Community™ Application

Manchester, Vermont

The application page is to be filled out by a town official (mayor, manager, etc.), and lead volunteer liaison/A.T. maintaining club affiliate.

Any town in close proximity of the A.T. corridor may apply for A.T. Community designation and must commit to meet at least two of the criteria below, with creation of an advisory committee being required. A letter of support from the local maintaining A.T. Club is also a requirement for selection.

These criteria provide structure for the program and provide an awareness and appreciation among the community of the Appalachian Trail and its special resources.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

1) Community support is evidenced by creation of an advisory committee

Suggested candidates for this committee would be representatives of the county or community (elected officials, etc.), representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, tourism development association, business association or equivalent, local hiking and A.T. maintaining club, etc.

2) Hosting an annual A.T. volunteer project, event or celebration

The ATC regional offices can provide ideas and suggestions

3) A.T. related educational or service learning program or project

Teacher participation in ATC education programs qualifies.

4) Language for the protection of the A.T. is included in land-use plans, planning tools, ordinances, or guidelines;

or there is demonstrated support to amend, change, or add such plans.

Before beginning the process of applying for designation, please contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at (828) 254-3708 or email atcommunity@appalachiantrail.org.

1) Town, City, Community Name:

2) Contact information of town representative:

Name:

Title:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Email Address:

3) Contact information of lead volunteer:

Name:

Title:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Email Address:

4) Criteria for consideration. Please select at least two criteria and add descriptions as requested.

A. **Advisory committee:** Please list members, members' emails and affiliation.

B. **Annual project or celebration:** Describe event and list the lead volunteer liaison with email and contact information.

C. **A.T. educational or service-learning project:** Describe the event and list lead volunteer liaison with email and contact information.

D. **Language for the protection of the A.T. is included in land-use plans, planning tools, ordinances or guidelines; or there is demonstrated support to amend, change or add such plans.** Attach any necessary documents, state the support for these tools, and list who is the lead contact for this initiative.

Appalachian Trail Community™ Application

CRITERIA (two of the four criteria should be met)

1) Advisory committee

Please list committee members, along with their contact info (email preferred), and who they represent from the community. Briefly describe the committee's structure.

2) Annual project or celebration

Projects or events may include promoting or sponsoring a volunteer workshop/workday, assuring information about the Appalachian Trail and the ATC is available at ongoing community events, etc. Describe the event and list the lead volunteer liaison with contact information.

An aerial photograph of a river valley with a bridge and surrounding greenery.

Appalachian Trail Community™ Application

CRITERIA (two of the four criteria should be met)

3) A.T. educational or service learning project

Describe the event and list the lead volunteer liaison with contact information.

4) Language for the protection of the A.T. is included in land-use plans, planning tools, ordinances or guidelines; or there is demonstrated support to amend, change, or add such plans.

Attach any necessary documents, state the support for these tools, and list who is the lead contact for this initiative.



Appalachian Trail Community™ Application

PROCESS FOR SELECTION

Once the application has been received by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, its local Regional Partnership Committee will evaluate the request. The committees meet every spring and fall, so approval will be recognized in April or November.

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Email or mail completed applications to your regional ATC office no later than September 1 or March 1.
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New England Regional Office
158 Sweetwater Drive
White River Junction, VT 05001
802-281-5890
E-mail: atc-nero@appalachiantrail.org

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
4 East First Street
Boiling Springs, PA 17007
717-258-5771 Fax: 717-258-1442
E-mail: atc-mar0@appalachiantrail.org

Central & SW Virginia Regional Office
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019
540-904-4393 Fax: 540-904-4368
E-mail: atc-varo@appalachiantrail.org

Southern Regional Office
160 Zillicoa St
Asheville, NC 28801
828-254-3708 Fax: 828-254-3754
E-mail: atc-soro@appalachiantrail.org

- 5) Describe why your town should be selected as an Appalachian Trail Community™. What can this program do for your community? What can your town do for the Appalachian Trail?

- 6) What does your community hope to gain from the A.T. Community program?

You may choose more than one answer.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being a part of the national designation network | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased environmental stewardship among community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased recognition & visibility through signage, media, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced partnerships with public land agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased cultural sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased sense of place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased community viability and economic health | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased connections between our community and the A.T. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting more teachers involved in place-based service learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of community as a recreation destination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced partnerships with volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased visitation to our community |

Appalachian Trail Community™ Application

7) What can your town do for the Appalachian Trail?

You may choose more than one answer.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase knowledge of A.T. as a community asset | <input type="checkbox"/> Build membership for local A.T. club and ATC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protect resources within the Trail corridor through planning: zoning regulations, smart growth, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase availability of information regarding the A.T. and its relationship to the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase proper use of the A.T. and community familiarity with Leave No Trace practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Include A.T. in community marketing info – brochures, websites, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community awareness of the local A.T. sections and access points | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase partnerships and dialogue among land managers, volunteers, and town leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support teachers who bring the A.T. to their students | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

8) What is your community's stage of action for each of the following?

Please check one answer for each row.

	<i>Not interested, not sure, N/A</i>	<i>Thinking about it</i>	<i>Definitely getting ready to do this</i>	<i>Started taking specific actions</i>	<i>Already doing this – just refining</i>
We have strong partnerships with public land agencies (local or federal)					
We offer clear communication about the A.T. to wider audiences via our website, signage, newsletters, etc.					
We have committed volunteer leadership for the A.T. in our community					
New A.T. volunteers have recently stepped up to lead community efforts					
Info about the A.T. is included in our community brochures					
Info about the A.T. can be easily found on our community website(s)					
Community events have a clear focus on trails and outdoor recreation					
We offer community-led hikes on the A.T.					
We have regular programs or events for protection of the A.T.					
We regularly partner with the ATC on programs or events					
We regularly donate to the ATC					



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9) Please describe your partnerships with public land agencies and with volunteers.

10) What cultural and/or historical information is available about your community?

11) What recreation opportunities, major ongoing festivals, and events does your community offer?

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12) How available are the following hiker services in your community?

Please check one answer for each row.

	<i>Not Available</i>	<i>Limited Availability</i>	<i>Available</i>	<i>Widely Available</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Lodging					
Camping					
Outfitter					
ATMs					
Restaurant					
Laundry					
Grocery/re-supply					
Farmers market					
Shuttle from A.T. to town					
Shuttle to points north and south along the A.T.					
Showers					
Pharmacy/medical service					
Library/computer/internet					
Visitor or welcome center					
Post Office					
Public Restroom					
Discounts for hikers					
Storage for hikers					
Public transportation or shuttle to the airport					
Car rental or taxi services					
A.T. Souvenirs					
Signage about the A.T.					
Kiosks about the A.T.					
Info about the role of the A.T. in your community					



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- 13) Please describe any of the hiker services mentioned above. Include the types of signage, kiosks, and information locally available regarding the A.T. and any other relevant information. You are also encouraged to send in pictures if possible with your additional information.

- 14) Please describe the locations AND state of the access points of the A.T. Where are the closest trailheads, and what improvements might be needed?

- 15) ATC frequently hosts workshops and conferences. Please list facilities in your community that can host a group of 40 people or more. Also include information about any community centers.



You're almost finished! Please attach any further letters of support and documentation to augment your application. A letter of support is required from the local A.T.-maintaining club. If your town has a comprehensive planning and zoning ordinance, a downtown beautification plan, or a strategic marketing plan, please attach those as well.

If you have any questions about this application or the designation process, please contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at (828) 254-3708 or by email at ATcommunity@appalachiantrail.org.

What's Next?

The Process After You Have Been Selected

Once your town has been selected as an A.T. Community™, there will be an event celebrating the official designation. The ATC will work with appropriate A.T. Advisory Committee representatives to coordinate the event. Approximately 3 or more months are needed for planning the event.

Upon designation, two signs will be provided to the town by the ATC. It is recommended that these signs be placed in highly visible locations, such as at the entrances to town, for hikers and town visitors alike. Additional signs will be available for purchase by the community.

The ATC will also coordinate with the lead volunteer on developing the ATC webpage for your community that will highlight the community's relationship to the A.T., other attractions in the area, and local businesses that provide services to hikers.

Local businesses will be eligible and encouraged to become official A.T. Community Supporters. These businesses and organizations help support the A.T., the local maintaining club, the ATC and/or your A.T. Community by providing hiker services, offering discounts, participating in community events, and more. Learn more and download the Community Supporter application [here](#).