



APPALACHIAN TRAIL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP  
*Protecting the Appalachian Outdoors for everyone – today and forever!*



Annual Meeting  
October 3-4, 2017

National Conservation Training Center  
Shepherdstown, WV

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A group of 70 conservation partners gathered together on October 3-4, 2017 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia for the third annual Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership Conference.

The goals of this year's event included:

*Inject science.* Deeper scientific analysis should inform priority focus areas and all work moving forward.

*Review and finalize organizing documents,* including a mission, vision and governance document as well as a draft charter.

*Focus on viewsheds.* Pathbreaking work is underway on viewsheds; conversations will continue about the work and focus moving forward.

*Learn from Focus Areas.* Representatives from a number of these areas joined the meeting to discuss with the group how the A.T. Landscape Partnership can better support their efforts.

## UPDATES FROM FOCUS AREAS

To begin the meeting, representatives from the 10 focus areas provided an overview of on-the-ground efforts and discussed current challenges and needs.

Simon Rucker from the **Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust** shared progress on the High Peaks Region and the Androscoggin Watershed, Maine

- Challenges: Huge, yet long and narrow, landscape; differing definitions of the High Peaks region; two major highways.
- Successes: In 2003, there was no conserved land around the property (12,466 acres) that is managed by the U.S. Navy as a SERE training school. Now, parcels have been acquired for conservation, and it is hoped more will be done in 2018.
- What's ahead: Building a database of parcels and landowners and the digitization of tax parcel maps to incorporate into database. Evaluating trail access areas, viewsheds and historical and cultural sites.
- A deeper look: Of the focus areas, the High Peaks has the highest quality of resilience and a high level of wildlife connectivity. There is a low level of underrepresented geophysical settings.

**In 2018, the A.T. Landscape Partnership seeks to make progress on the following priorities:**

1. Organize internally by finalizing organizational documents
2. Refine our messaging to increase its relevancy and ensure it resonates with those beyond the A.T.
3. Establish a formal presence through a website and other communication pieces
4. Connect our work to a young and diverse audience (example—ALPINE Network)
5. Ensure scientific data and data collection is an integral part of our efforts
6. Pursue federal designation such as a listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or establishment as a World Heritage site (“*Big Hairy Audacious Goal*”)





Next, Brooks Mountcastle from the **Appalachian Trail Conservancy** focused on Kittatinny Ridge and Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

- Challenges: Kittatinny Ridge, which includes 140 miles of the A.T. and is an important area for bird migration, is facing much developmental pressure, including a proposed hotel and waterpark that would be part of Blue Mountain Ski Resort (a cease and desist order has been filed by APPA). Land parcel size, availability and price continue to be a challenge in this region.
- Successes: The Kittatinny Ridge Coalition continues efforts to conserve the resources of the ridge and corridor.
- What's ahead: Municipalities are turning to zoning to protect the A.T. ATC is providing grants to assist in efforts to protect against water, mineral and natural gas extraction. "Landscape-mandering" is being done to avoid conflicts with homeowners and military activities.
- A deeper look: This area features many unprotected and underrepresented settings. South Mountain is the least resilient to climate change.

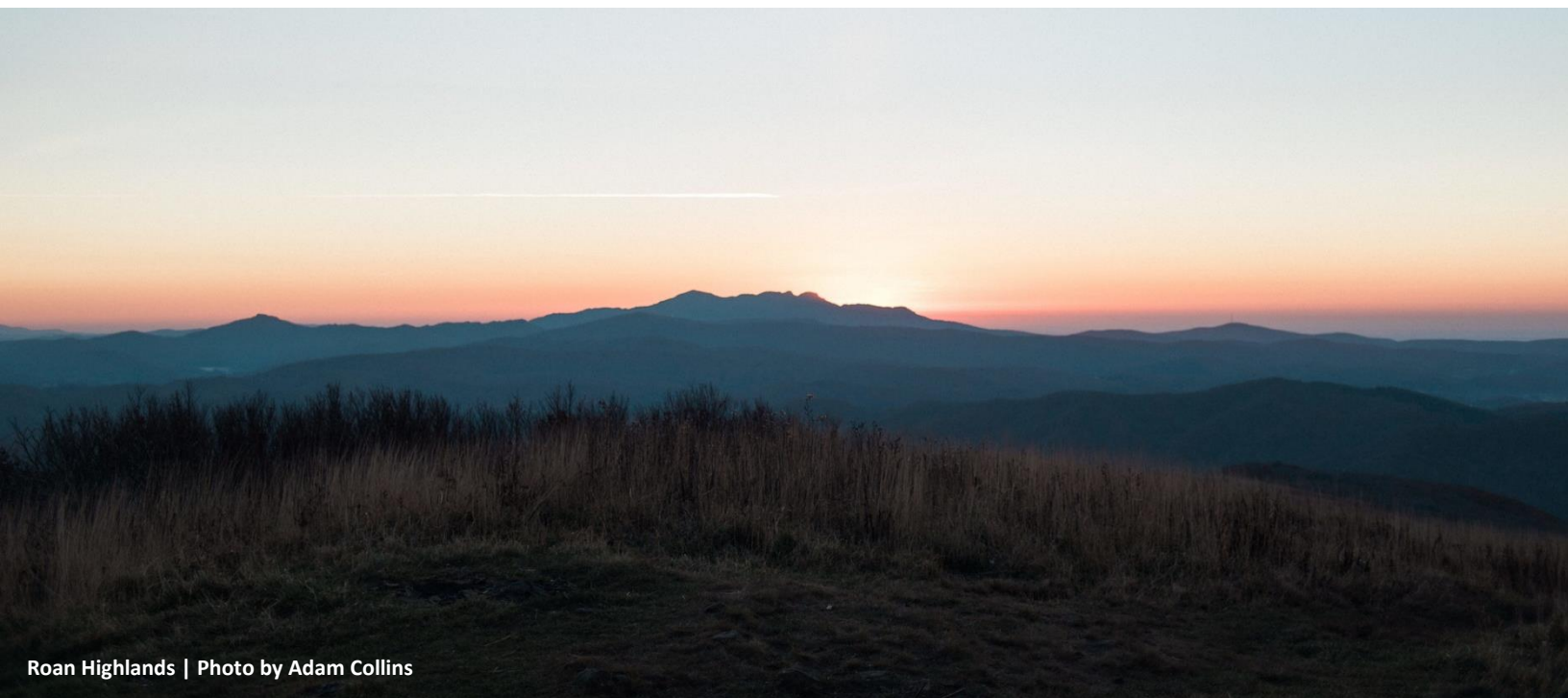
Chris Dematis from the **Land Trust of Virginia** shared progress on the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia:

- Challenges: 40 miles of the Blue Ridge from Harpers Ferry to Shenandoah National Park are vulnerable to development.
- Successes: Mapping of 200,000 acres across 12 counties has been completed. Water sources, flood zones, species richness and the A.T. viewshed have been identified.
- What's ahead: 200 parcels have been identified as focus areas for land conservation via easements. Presentations are being given to landowners. This will be a lengthy process. Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance has taken a lead role in this area.

- A deeper look: Concentrated flow, which contributes to water quality, continues to be a problem for this region.

Dianna Christopulos from the **Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club** talked about the Catawba Valley and the Triple Crown, Virginia

- Challenges: Although the Triple Crown (Dragons Tooth, Tinker Cliffs and McAfee Knob) are all on government land, visitor use continues to climb exponentially. Close to 90,000 people per year visit McAfee Knob alone.
- Successes: Initiatives include a McAfee Task Force with 50 ridgerunners in the area April through November on weekends and the installation of bear boxes at three different locations near Tinker Cliffs. In addition, Triple Crown task force meetings are now taking place thanks to ATC's Andrew Downs, regional director. Local, state and federal representatives along with local nonprofits are involved. A proposal to build a pedestrian bridge over the very busy highway crossing for Macfee Knob was approved to receive transportation funds.
- What's ahead: Continued focus on visitor use management. Lots of news coverage has ensued from visitor use problems, which could be leveraged to inform the public about the importance of collaborative partnerships.
- A deeper look: This area has a high proportion of underrepresented settings.



Roan Highlands | Photo by Adam Collins

Jay Leutze from **Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy** presented on efforts in Roan Highlands, North Carolina and Tennessee

- Challenges: Family ownership of mountain land parcels; the retaining of some large chunks of land by various family members has proven to be difficult to obtain.
- Successes: Despite the protection of a key parcel of land in May 2017, one relative is holding onto parcels for potential development.

- What's ahead: A meeting with a property owner will happen later in the year to talk about adding more of the area to protected park lands.
- A deeper look: Of the focus areas, this region has one of the highest levels of landscape diversity.

Moving forward, the A.T. Landscape Partnership can better support organizations within and beyond focus areas by assisting with capacity building, marketing and communications, fundraising and network development and training opportunities. Support in these areas will allow partner organizations to better connect with local communities, leverage new funding opportunities and advocate for the protection of this landscape in a deeper way. There is also the need to ensure that new partnerships and planning efforts are resulting in continued land acquisition and protection.

## A DEEPER DIVE INTO OUR FOCUS AREAS

We need to continue to inject science into our thinking about our focus areas. OSI's Jennifer Melville shared an analysis that incorporated The Nature Conservancy's terrestrial resilience and corridor science and how to apply that analysis to the A.T. corridor. Takeaways from the session included:

- The A.T. is one of the East Coast's most intact corridors
- The A.T. hosts an important wildlife habitat
- The A.T. connects to large climate refugia
- There is high landscape diversity, meaning there are more options for biodiversity
- There are underrepresented settings in land preservation portfolios
- Sometimes areas that are not valuable in themselves are important to connecting the valuable areas

See the focus area breakdown on pages 1 through 3 for examples of how scientific analysis applies to specific locations along the A.T.

The mapping tool found at [maps.tnc.org/resilientland](https://maps.tnc.org/resilientland) can aid in the evaluation of how resilient a place is. This information can be helpful in identifying what an area has to offer, which can then assist in acquiring project donors.

## Highlighted Efforts

*South Mountain Partnership (Katie Hess):* Moving forward the mission of protecting and promoting landscape resources by talking about them in terms of types (natural, cultural/historical, agricultural, and recreational). Using other terms makes it more relatable and valuable to a broader range of people.

*Blue Ridge Land Conservancy (Dave Perry):* Emphasizing the vastness beyond the A.T.—impacts affecting water, air, sound, smells and light pollution can reach hundreds of miles.

*Wildlands and Woodlands (Bill Labich):* Advancing the pace of conservation through the Regional Conservation Partnership Network, which assists in increasing the capacity of Regional Conservation Partners.

*The Trust for Public Land (J.T. Horn):* Currently investing heavily in land acquisition and protection. Desires to take these partnerships to the next level to see a large-scale, high impact, especially in the mid-Atlantic and Southeast.



How does the Partnership use this data not just for analysis, but to build a narrative? Ideas discussed include:

- Harness community enthusiasm: people want to believe where they live is special—show them why
- Utilize students in collecting data and allow their work to be inserted into the larger narrative
- Ensure messages are tested for success and are geared toward a targeted audience
- Remember that when targeting messages, local perspectives and a Trail-wide perspective are both important (small parcels can have a large impact on a larger hiking experience)
- Use outdoor recreation as a selling point—people go to beautiful places
- Develop collaborative campaigns to leverage funding opportunities

*Characteristics of resilient places:*

*Copes with disturbance*

*Retains biological diversity and ecological functions*

*Maintains the above characteristics over the long term*

The A.T.'s resilience is 57 percent above average.

## PROTECTING AND REFURBISHING VIEWSHEDS

Jim Von Haden introduced a new protocol developed by NPS. Although ATC and its partners have been documenting views for the last 30 years (1,150 viewpoints have been documented), NPS had no system in place to evaluate scenic resources. As part of a campaign called “Enjoy the View,” NPS now has a Visual Resources Inventory (VRI) system in place. This system is useful because it documents views within and beyond park boundaries, it focuses on what a park visitor would experience and it documents the place, what is being seen and the content of the view. Historical and cultural elements are included in the process as well. A scenic rating is given based on the perceived visual attractiveness of the view.

VRI is currently just an inventory tool and is not an Impacts Assessment Tool. Planning is underway to determine how to best utilize VRI in the evaluation of external threats, which Conference participants agreed would be helpful when mitigating external threats (like the Mountain Valley Pipeline, for example). In addition, this tool will be useful in establishing a baseline inventory of conditions and then returning to that data years down the road to see what has changed.

Jeff Allenby, director of Conservation Technology at the Chesapeake Conservancy, presented technological innovations in viewshed modeling and management, specifically the use of high-resolution imagery and LIDAR evaluation data to map land cover at the large landscape scale. Using an example from a real-life scenario near George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Allenby presented the use of LIDAR data as a useful tool in creating interactive models that can provide guidance on developmental impact. Not only can this be a tool that is used by organizations, but it can also be used by those interested in looking *toward* a view, not just *from* the view itself.

## FRAMEWORK BUILDING: CHARTER & GOVERNANCE

Foundation documents reviewed during the Conference included the organizational framework, the charter and the vision/mission. There was a desire to ensure all foundation documents are broad in scope and reflect conversations had during the Conference--participants indicated there is a need to look beyond the Trail and think not just north and south, but east and west. While the charter was received positively, the vision will need work. Comments relating to the vision included:

- Remember to always consider the audience (what messages are we using externally versus internally?)
- Documents could benefit from a review by a younger and more diverse demographic (such as ATC's Next Generation Advisory Council)
- Soundbites are needed to make the concepts easily digestible
- A message around landscape conservation's role in invigorating communities is important

See Appendix B and C for referenced foundation documents.

## LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE, MITIGATION AND CHALLENGES

With a growing demand (and, in some cases, a need) for infrastructure, it is not reasonable to think all projects that impact the Trail and its landscape can be stopped entirely. How does the group go about mitigation in a way that benefits the A.T. landscape and its partner organizations?

Dianna Christopolus (RATC) and Heather Clish (Appalachian Mountain Club) discussed two major projects that would impact the A.T. landscape: the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and the Northern Pass Transmission Line. Key takeaways included:

- New pipelines that do not tap into or follow existing infrastructure present additional challenges due to the requirements of new roads, blast zones, evacuation zones, etc.
- It is most preferable to consolidate a project's impact by tapping into existing infrastructure

### KEYS TO COLLABORATING WITH COMPANIES

**Engage early:** Oppose or collaborate; identify potential impacts; inform and consult with stakeholders

**Determine impacts:** Review permitting process and Environmental Impact Statement; consider any endangered species, habitat, cultural and scenic impacts along with the user experience

**Evaluate:** Determine the course of action (avoid, minimize, mitigate, and/or compensate)

**Implement:** In lieu fee (compensatory/voluntary); credits/banks (company buys credits from existing projects to mitigate); grants, direct purchases, restoration; permittee responsible (project sponsor works with agency to do own mitigation)

- RATC comments about the MVP were guided by ATC’s pipeline policy. However, does ATC policy always apply to the landscape beyond the footpath? In other words, could the group mistakenly endorse a project that might cross the Trail at an “appropriate” place, but in doing so, harm a local community?
- Organizations like ATC and AMC can provide expert advice and testimony when it comes to how potential projects can impact the landscape
- Real metrics and scientific data—not just vague language—is key to proving impact
- When negotiating mitigations, it is necessary to ensure money isn’t left on the table. Invest in staff who has this skillset
- NPS doesn’t have the authority to permit pipelines, and many companies don’t want to go to Congress—this means they can be willing to compromise

## YEARLY REPORT FROM THE CO-CONVENERS

More people are using the A.T.; current figures estimate there are more than 3 million people on the Trail each year. The popularity of the A.T. means conservation initiatives are especially timely.

Ron Tipton, executive director and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, recapped major progress to date:

- The acquiring of Hudson Farm near Hanover, New Hampshire
- The acquiring of Hottle Fahey Lands in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts
- The donation of 600 acres by Robert Leggett to the State of Virginia for the first state park in Loudon County; this land overlooks the A.T. corridor
- The almost-completed closing on the Bruce Trek lands in George Washington Forest in Virginia
- The purchase of Straight Mountain in Smyth County, Virginia

Tipton and Lynn Davis, ATC’s new director of Federal Policy and Legislation, announced the forming of an A.T. Caucus in the House of Representatives. The goal is to attract members who have a portion of the Trail in his or her district (about 56 individuals); this is an opportunity for landscape conservation and initiative-based advocacy work.

Dennis Shaffer, director of Landscape Conservation, reported on efforts to advance the Partnership. The Steering Committee has continued to guide organizational development, and new foundation documents, which include a vision, mission and charter, have been completed. Partnerships and initiatives with the New England Regional Conservation Partnerships (RPCs), Academics for Land Protection in New England (ALPINE), The Trust for Public Land (TPL), Open Space Institute (OSI), LightHawk, NPS River, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) and Wildlands Network have been important in building momentum this year.

Looking ahead, work will be done to implement a communications strategy, which includes the development of a website and an eNewsletter. A large part of communications involves embracing the idea that landscape conservation includes much more than the Trail’s footpath. Education through ATC’s publications like *A.T. Journeys* magazine is important.



Wendy Janssen, Superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (APPA) emphasized the power of the cooperative system that protects the A.T. With a small number of staff—approximately 10—APPA strongly values partnerships and the leveraging of resources. APPA is a large financial supporter of the Partnership, and it funds about half of the annual conference cost.

Janssen provided the following update on APPA’s priorities for the rest of 2017 and beyond:

- Assembling baseline data to complete a Natural Resources Condition Assessment of the A.T., guiding protection efforts
- Finishing a Geologic Resources Inventory and a Vegetation Mapping Inventory (both available for download)
- Mitigating threats from oil and natural gas pipeline development as well as the Susquehanna Roseland Transmission Line in Pennsylvania (ATC provided a priority list of parcels proposed for purchase; four have been purchased so far, including a 1,300-acre property which will be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to administer)
- Advancing NPS’s “Scaling Up” initiative, which emphasizes collaborative approaches to large landscape conservation
- Adding the A.T. to the National Register of Historic Places, which would be an advocacy tool for the Trail’s landscape

## ACTION PLANNING AND NEXT STEPS

The Conference concluded with seven small groups discussing needs and priorities moving forward. Participants discussed the following topics:

- Organizing internally: We need a more formal presence (website, eNews, etc.) A strategic plan might be necessary.
- Refining our messaging: There is a need for specific messaging geared toward specific groups. We need to listen to the groups we want to reach. There could be a need to bring in outside marketing expert to advise on branding and messaging. Marketing and communications could be our theme for next year.
- Broadening our scope: The Trail isn’t just a recreational resource; it is a community resource. Its landscape reflects a broad constituency. How are ATC and APPA organized to work with such a constituency? Think about the A.T. Community Program—how can we leverage that initiative?
- Seeking funding opportunities: Support is especially needed for capacity-building. How can we engage donors, especially foundations, state funds and the outdoor recreation industry?
- Redefining the A.T. landscape to federal land managers: What is an A.T. tract? Without Congressional designation, projects aren’t always seen as a high priority.
- Developing scientific focus: Data-driven actions can yield better results.

For a short summary of 2018 priorities, see the Executive Summary on page 1.

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## CLOSING COMMENTS

*Sandra Marra, chair of the ATC Board, recognized Ron Tipton, who retired as executive director and CEO of the ATC in 2017. The A.T. Landscape Partnership is one of his most significant contributions to ATC, she said. Ron will continue to be involved in the Partnership on a volunteer basis.*

*Wendy Janssen recognized John Donahue, retiring superintendent of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, thanking him for his years of service and partnership.*

*ATC wishes to thank Bill Potapchuk, facilitator; Wendy Janssen and the National Park Service; and all conference attendees.*

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*DRAFT*

### **Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership**

*Protecting The Appalachian Outdoors For Everyone – Today and Forever!*

**Vision:** *An Appalachian Trail and mountain range that connects us north and south and forever safeguards our cherished American heritage.*

**Mission:** *Bring together public and private partners to connect and conserve the natural, ecological, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational, and community values of the exceptional landscape associated with the Appalachian Trail and the Appalachian Mountain Range.*

#### **Organizational Framework**

- The A.T. Landscape Partnership is co-convened by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail of the National Park Service (APPA). The co-conveners shall be members of and co-chair a Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee is a regularly-convened group of coalition partners that provides guidance to the overall A.T. Landscape Partnership.
- There will be workgroups that draw from among all participants in the A.T. Landscape Partnership appointed by the co-conveners. Their work shall directly inform the Steering Committee.
- All entities working on land conservation along and aside the Appalachian Trail and interested in advancing the A.T. Landscape Partnership's vision and mission are invited to participate.
- Participants are engaged through annual meetings, conferences and workshops, through workgroups, through local action around priority landscapes and other modes.
- The A.T. Landscape Partnership shall operate informally, not incorporating. Participants in the Partnership retain their identity and autonomy. All participation is voluntary.

**Coordination and Collaboration.** The work of the A.T. Landscape Partnership is a responsibility -- individually and collectively -- of hundreds of units of federal, state and local government, communities, nonprofit organizations, individual landowners, corporations and other entities. The primary work of the A.T. Landscape Partnership is to catalyze and support the efforts of these entities focused on shared landscape conservation priorities. This work includes communications, coordination, convening, facilitating and providing assistance in ways that fosters collective action toward the conservation priorities.

**Role of the Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee shall provide overall guidance to the work of the A.T. Landscape Partnership. The Steering Committee shall work by consensus. In addition, the Steering Committee shall be responsible for the organizational framework of the A.T. Landscape Partnership including mission and vision statements, governance framework and other related documents. The role of the Steering Committee does not in any way assume the legal responsibilities or organizational autonomy of the ATC and APPA.

**Roles of the ATC and APPA:** ATC and APPA shall be members and co-conveners of the A.T. Landscape Partnership. They shall be responsible for calling meetings of the participants, the steering committee and the working groups. ATC shall



have primary responsibility for communicating timely and relevant information to the Steering Committee and other interested parties participating in the A.T. Landscape Partnership. The ATC shall be responsible for managing the financial affairs of the A.T. Landscape Partnership. ATC shall provide staff, who's work will focus on promoting and advancing the vision and mission of the A.T. Landscape Partnership under the general direction of the Steering Committee. APPA will provide financial and staff support to the A.T. Landscape Partnership.

*DRAFT*

## Charter and Commitment to Action Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

*The development and use of a Charter and Commitment to Action for the A.T. Landscape Partnership was discussed at the January 2017 meeting of the Partnership Steering Committee. A follow-up survey of the committee members identified a set of core elements that a Charter and Commitment to Action should embrace. The list includes:*

- *A Charter and Commitment to Action should demonstrate a commitment to the broad diversity of conservation values and characteristics found throughout the A.T. landscape.*
- *A Charter and Commitment to Action should be a vehicle for coalition partners to demonstrate a “good faith pledge” to the vision/mission and a commitment to advancing the work for the A.T. Landscape Partnership.*
- *The Charter and Commitment to Action should primarily be used for organizational partners, federal, state, and local governments, land trusts, advocacy groups, quasi-public agencies, private sector organizations and similar entities.*
- *The Charter and Commitment to Action should avoid language that can be construed as a legal obligation and other language that would trigger reviews by agency directors, general counsel, and others.*
- *The following elements should these be included in the Charter and Commitment to Action of the A.T. Landscape Partnership:*
  - *Vision – Include the current version of the A.T. Landscape Partnership vision statement*
  - *Mission -- Include the current version of the A.T. Landscape Partnership mission statement*
  - *Landscape – Describe the A.T. landscape that coalition members are devoted to protecting*
  - *Communities – Describe, in very general terms, the “community” of coalition partners*
  - *The Challenge – Describe the urgent need(threats) for advancing A.T. landscape conservation*
  - *Common Values – Develop a list of common values characteristic of the A.T. Landscape*
  - *Shared Principle – Develop a list of shared principles embraced by coalition members*

### Introduction

The Charter and Commitment to Action of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) Landscape Partnership memorializes the commitment of Partnership members to the vision and mission of the A.T. Landscape Partnership to advance the conservation of the broad diversity of values and characteristics found throughout the A. T. Landscape.

The Charter and Commitment to Action is a voluntary and legally non-binding good faith statement of the aspirations of the members of the A.T. Landscape Partnership. It does not supersede any of the important conservation work

individual members are undertaking throughout their respective areas of work. Members of the A.T. Landscape Partnership retain their identity and autonomy.

The Charter and Commitment to Action may be amended or updated from time to time as necessary and appropriate to reflect the development and growth of the A.T. Landscape Partnership initiative and changing circumstances.

The vision of the A.T. Landscape Partnership is:

*An Appalachian Trail and mountain range that connects us north and south and forever safeguards our cherished American heritage.*

Our mission is:

*Bring together public and private partners to connect and conserve the natural, ecological, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational, and community values of the exceptional landscape associated with the Appalachian Trail and the Appalachian Mountain Range.*

## **The A.T. Landscape**

Nearly 100 years ago, the Appalachian Trail was born from a simple idea – that people from all walks of life should have the opportunity to experience a world different from their increasingly noisy, mechanized urban lives. Benton MacKaye, the planner and forester who envisioned the Trail, wanted Americans to see untouched nature in all its beauty, breathe in the quiet, and replenish their spirits.

While unspoiled areas existed in America's west, MacKaye believed it was important for the east, closer to the country's then growing population centers. He proposed a long-distance footpath along the entire spine of the Appalachian Mountains – what he called the "Appalachian Skyline."

Today, that footpath is a reality – and has become one of America's most beloved landmarks and hiking experiences. Following the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from Georgia to Maine, the Appalachian Trail is America's premier long distance hiking trail — and is one of the longest, continuously marked footpaths in the world. Completed nearly 80 years ago, it spans 14 states, a myriad of towns and communities, and a collection of federal, state, local, and privately-owned lands. Part of the National Park System, the A.T. crosses a variety of terrain, including rolling hills and mountains, deep valleys, forests, rivers and streams, open pastures, and much, much more. The Trail is within a day's drive of one-third of the U.S. population. More than 3 million people enjoy the A.T. each year and that number continues to climb.

MacKaye's vision was for a wide conservation greenway that protects a wealth of values characteristic of rural eastern America, not for a narrow corridor squeezing through increasingly developed and degraded regions of the East Coast, crisscrossed with utility lines, dotted with wind towers, and invaded by the smells and sounds of urban life. Instead, Mackaye wrote: "... a realm and not merely a trail marks the full aim of our efforts."

To the millions who visit or live near-by, the Trail and the landscape that surrounds it embody a unique and special place. Some come to hike to reconnect with nature or to escape the stress of city life. Others visit for the physical and mental benefits, to meet new people and deepen friendships or to experience a simpler life. The A.T. and its surrounding lands offer solitude, reflection, and reconnection with America's beauty, history, and culture.



Opportunities exist to connect existing protected areas, conserve and promote historic and cultural features, protect our drinking water, and prevent land-use changes that impact pristine landscapes surrounding the Trail. Identifying and targeting a diverse variety of landscapes, watersheds, and viewsheds has the potential to significantly enhance the natural, emotional, and economic value of a 2,190-mile trail through wild and mostly undeveloped segments of rural America for future generations. That is the work of A.T. Landscape Partnership.

## Threats

Although the A.T. footpath and the surrounding narrow corridor are protected by federal law, many of the pristine views, watersheds and diversity of natural resources along the Trail are vulnerable to external threats which impact the hiking experience and undermine the sense of place so important to visitors and neighboring communities. These include:

- Inappropriately sited commercial and residential development
- Incompatible energy development, including multiple, large-scale, natural-gas pipelines, high-voltage powerlines, wind farms across pristine peaks, and communications towers rising above scenic vistas
- The destruction of diverse wildlife and plant habitats
- The loss of unfragmented forestlands that provides resiliency to the impacts of climate change

There is a critical need to work more proactively to address the trends that threaten major impacts on the Trail's viewsheds, soundscapes, ecological systems, and cultural resources.

## Shared Principles of The A.T. Landscape Partnership

The Appalachian Trail is a groundbreaking American and global conservation model with a proud 100-year history. It is now time to work together to achieve the broader Appalachian vision—for the benefit of all natural and human communities in the years, decades, and next 100 years to follow.

Members of the A. T. Landscape Partnership work in accordance with a set of “shared principles” which guide our work together:

- *Supporting each other and our varied approaches.* Members of the A.T. Landscape Partnership support all forms of land conservation, public and private. We respect the rights of private landowners. Our work is done collaboratively and we endeavor to support each partner's individual priorities. Each partner works to support the collective priorities of all partners. We strive to recognize and celebrate the successes of our partners.
- *Innovation.* We believe that we can advance our conservation work through creative approaches and fostering innovation.
- *Funding for land conservation.* Public monies and resources have been constrained in recent years. We work to maintain current funding sources and expand new public and private resources available to achieve our goals by bringing together the expertise and capacities of organizations, communities, and public agencies along the A.T.
- *Integrity and transparency.* We take our responsibilities seriously and are transparent in our communications, interactions, and intentions. We act in good faith and honor our commitments. We strive to create an environment in which our partners feel heard, safe, respected and supported.
- *Accessible and Inclusive.* We invite all people and communities to participate in our work and experience the benefits of our successes. Our work is enriched by people and communities from a diversity backgrounds and life experiences. We actively seek out and ensure participation by those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to be involved with and/or benefit from our work.

- *Good data and information awareness.* Our work is guided by recognized science and the best practices of large landscape level conservation initiatives. We value the benefits of sharing expertise, data, and tools to facilitate collaboration and communication.
- *Tradition and History.* The A.T. and its surrounding lands have played an important role in the culture and history of the Appalachian Mountains. We embrace and honor the legacy of this history and embrace the change that creates new traditions for future generations.
- *Sustainability.* We believe it is important to recognize the value of our partners by investing in their organizations and work. We seek to create the conditions necessary to contribute to the long-term environmental, economic, and social health of all communities throughout the A.T. Landscape, both for current and future generations.

## Membership

Members of the A.T. Landscape Partnership include units of federal, state and local government, communities, nonprofit organizations, corporations and other entities. Membership in the A.T. Landscape Partnership is open to all organizations and agencies that agree to work in accordance with our principles to promote and advance the vision and mission of the Partnership.

Join the A.T. Landscape Partnership Today

**New members can go to our website at: \_\_\_\_\_ and click on “Join Us” to complete the brief membership form**

## Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

### Membership Form

*(Insert brief description)*

Please join the A.T. Landscape Conservation Partnership. Members pledge to make a “good faith commitment” to the shared common values and principles and the vision/mission of the A.T. Landscape Conservation Partnership.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name and title of primary contact for your organization)

Email Address (Primary Contact): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Primary Contact): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Organization): \_\_\_\_\_

Logo (Please provide your organization’s logo): \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief description of your organization’s interest in the A.T. Landscape:

Please describe any voluntary, good faith commitments your organization is able to make as you become a member of the A.T. Landscape Partnership: