



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



Annual Meeting
December 4-5, 2018

National Conservation Training Center
Shepherdstown, WV

Executive Summary

A group of approximately 60 conservation partners gathered together December 4 and 5, 2018 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia for the fourth annual meeting of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP).

The goals of the 2018 meeting were:

- Deepen our understanding of a successful communications and messaging strategy that will advance the work of the ATLP with the goal of *building partner capacity for strategic communications*;
- Learn about the conservation work supported by The Volgenau Foundation in ways that *might be applied elsewhere in the A.T. landscape*;
- Learn from the most recent research and data to promote science-based planning and mapping throughout the A.T. landscape and *develop initial strategic direction on a mapping strategy*;
- Continue to *learn strategies for addressing linear infrastructure challenges*; and
- Learn about various efforts to *identify, promote and conserve cultural and historic resources* with a goal of accelerating our efforts.

The History of the ATLP

Wendy Janssen, Superintendent of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST), opened the meeting by reviewing the history of the ATLP, which was born out of the National Park Service's "Call to Action" Plan (which included an emphasis on landscape conservation through "Scaling Up," now "Connected Conservation"), the ANST's Foundation Document and Business Plan, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) 2015-19 Strategic Plan.

- 2015: The first meeting set the framework for developing a shared vision for the ATLP based on what partners thought a large landscape initiative should look like in 2050. Processes

Looking Ahead to 2019: Action Items

Strategic Communications

- Better communication between the co-conveners and the partners
- Better promotion of the work being done by partners internally and externally
- A "Wild East" working group or toolkit
- Multimedia content that can gain us exposure, perhaps through events like the Wild and Scenic Film Festival
- More discussion about climate change in our communications and messaging
- Overall, framing our work as a quality of life issue and a resource protection issue

Bolder Partnerships

- Pursuit of international partnerships
- Ensuring we are attracting new, urban users to the A.T. landscape
- Embrace the opportunity to learn from network systems theory practitioners to ensure our network dynamics are sound

Continued Funding

- The pursuit of federal funding
- Better statistics on the impact of the Action Fund so we are prepared to leverage dollars

Stronger Science

- Updated internal working maps, weaved into a narrative that is accessible to a broader audience
- A better use of data and science to build the knowledge of resource conditions and values to help us refine our goals and our vision
- Ensuring the 2019 Science and Stewardship Summit has a youth component
- Following up with carbon trading and how that affects the A.T.'s management directly

were initiated to cultivate partnerships, identify focus areas, and establish a communications strategy. A steering committee was formed.

- 2016: Work was done to craft a mission and a vision for the ATLP; a governance framework was established; focus areas were revisited to narrow the list to 10 and were also ranked; and ideas for internal and external communications relating to the ATLP were discussed.
- 2017: The ATLP continued to review governance documents, which included a draft charter and mission and vision statement. A deeper analysis was completed of the 10 focus areas to determine if they were still accurate based on the latest science.
- 2018: Now, in the fourth year, the ATLP annual meeting agenda will focus on enhancing communications and deepening the science behind this initiative. This work is more important than ever before, especially with the recent release of a landmark report from the United Nations' climate change scientific panel and the National Climate Assessment presented by the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

Wendy acknowledged the role Ron Tipton (now retired from the ATC; present at the 2018 meeting) played in the formation of the ATLP and also thanked Suzanne Dixon, ATC's CEO, for her leadership during her first year with ATC.

Suzanne thanked the group for the strong foundation that has been established and encouraged partners to begin thinking forward over the next two days. She also acknowledged The Volgenau Foundation and Maryanna Kieffer and Lisa, Lauren and Jennifer Volgenau, who were present at the meeting. The Volgenau Foundation will continue support of the ATLP over the next two years.

Lighting Updates – Round One

National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Jim Von Haden (NPS, Appalachian National Scenic Trail)

NPS has been documenting historic resources of the ANST over the past six years. Funding has been received for state-by-state documentation to improve the understanding of the Trail's historic significance, provide context for resource management and interpretation, and assess impacts of proposed external actions. The Trail is eligible for the National Register.

Currently, draft documents are completed for Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Vermont. Initial research and field work was completed for Virginia and West Virginia and draft reports will be submitted in the near future. Work on New York and Connecticut was funded for FY2018 and field surveys have begun. Work in Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia will be funded in FY2019 and New Jersey and Maryland will be funded in FY2020.

NPS is also engaging with the 34 federally recognized American Indian tribes who may have a connection to A.T. lands. This is the first time NPS has reached out to this broad group of tribal governments.

Next steps include documenting the remaining states and cleaning up current data. All reports will undergo final review by the 14 State Historic Preservation Officers and the Keeper of the National Register, and final signatures will come from the appropriate federal agencies and the Keeper after one final round of review of draft state listings.

Corbin Hill Land Acquisition, J.T. Horn (Trust for Public Land)

The Corbin Hill land acquisition project was funded in part by the ATLP Action Fund mini-grant program this year. The 219-acre tract was slated for a housing development that included permits for 50 homes. Corbin Hill is in the Cat Rocks viewshed (a popular A.T. scenic vista) and is home to endangered bog turtles. It is also a highly accessible area thanks to the Metro North Commuter Rail, which links the A.T. to New York City.

This project was submitted for funding by ANST and was the number one priority on the NPS's Land and Water Conservation Fund FY2018 funding list for \$2 million. The property was acquired by the Trust for Public Land and transferred to APPA. It was a conservation priority because it is the predominant viewshed from the Cat Rocks Overlook, one of the premiere A.T. vistas in New York State and one of the most accessible to New York City.

The property's appraised value was \$2,413,000; the TPL negotiated price was \$2,350,000 with \$176,000 in project costs (including the survey and appraisal). The acquisition closed in July 2018.

J.T. identified the following keys to success for this project:

- Identification of the property early (more than a decade ago)
- Collaboration between partners, which enabled all involved to take big risks
- Collaborative funding (support for transaction costs through the ATLP Action Fund, the National Park Trust, Oblong Land Conservancy and local fundraising campaign) to leverage NPS LWCF dollars.

Little Meadows Land Acquisition, Allison Brown (New River Land Trust)

Little Meadows, a joint effort between the Virginia Department of Forestry and the New River Land Trust, was another project partially funded by the ATLP Action Fund. The Little Meadows tract is located south of the A.T. and is adjacent to the Little Stony property, which was protected thanks to Forest Legacy Program funding. In total, Little Meadows and Little Stony encompass close to 3,000 acres of unfragmented forest that includes Class II trout streams and other special habitat areas. These tracts are also important to migratory birds.

New River Land Trust is also working with ATC's Andrew Downs (Virginia Regional Director) to identify priority land protection projects within a 1- to 3-mile radius of the A.T. This mapping technology was also partially funded by the ATLP Action Fund.

SCALE UP Initiative, Simon Rucker (Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust)

SCALE UP (Supporting Communities and Appalachian Landscape Economies through Use Programming) is a way for the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust to engage with corporate groups in the Portland, Maine area who want to enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities. Employees are brought into A.T. Communities to support local economies while recreating on the A.T. Opportunities for engagement include learning lunches, guided hikes, service days and more.

This program can serve as a model for other land trusts, especially those in close proximity to A.T. Communities.

Building Conservation Partnerships, Jonathan Milne (LightHawk)

LightHawk provides conservation-centric flights that serve multiple purposes. Every flight has the same goals, however: to engage, inform and inspire. For the ATLP, partners can work with LightHawk on flights that support the conservation of the A.T. landscape, whether that is through donor flights and/or fundraising initiatives; photography or videography; data collection; or flights that promote informed decision making.

A.T. Photo Exhibit on Capitol Hill, Lynn Davis (Appalachian Trail Conservancy)

ATC hosted its “United by the Appalachian Trail” photo exhibit in September in the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda in Washington, DC. The exhibit featured 17 photos, printed at least 40 inches wide. There was great response from congressional members in the A.T.’s 14 states (25 Senators and 18 Representatives signed-up as Honorary Hosts), and an invite-only reception was well attended by many A.T. supporters.

In 2019, it is hoped that the exhibit will hit the road, starting with a showing in Atlanta, Georgia. *Partners were asked to provide Lynn with any suggestions for exhibition space.*

Building Carbon Markets (Josh Parish, The Nature Conservancy)

The Nature Conservancy’s Working Woodlands Program provides landowners (generally those who own properties over 2,000 acres) with the tools necessary to conserve forests and earn new sustainable revenues through access to the developing carbon markets. This is done under flexible terms and conditions for qualifying landowners in order to encourage them to manage their land even better than what is generally accepted, managing for the long-term instead of the short-term (short-term management is characterized by high grading, a lack of resources, or a lack of conservation incentives).

The goals and target outcomes of the Working Woodlands Program is to maintain and increase forest cover (enroll 1 million acres in Working Woodlands by 2030) and to increase carbon sequestration (10 million tons of CO₂e sequestered by 2030).

TNC and the American Forest Foundation are launching a new program targeted at forest landowners of smaller properties. This new model will aggregate multiple properties with the same goals of revenue generation and sustainable forest management that have been available to the large property owners. Many of the forested properties characteristic of the A.T. landscape contain the smaller acreage more suitable for the aggregation model.

Messaging and Communications (Beth Kanter, Liv Kittel and Haley McKey, Spitfire Strategies)

The ATLP joined the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP) this spring to fund messaging and communications work through Spitfire Strategies, a national communications firm based in Washington, DC. Throughout the spring, summer and fall, Spitfire has conducted research via stakeholder interviews, media scans and a review of materials provided to them by the CCP and the ATC in order to assess the state of messaging across the Chesapeake Watershed, which includes a quarter of the A.T.

Spitfire’s general findings include:

- Conservation is personal
- Connection to the A.T. is local and emotional
- Strong messaging focuses on human benefit
- Opposition centers around skepticism or lack of information

During their presentation, the Spitfire team introduced a narrative frame that is the culmination of their research. A narrative frame is important to effective communications because it takes into consideration what is and what is not resonating with audiences. Within partnerships, a narrative is essential because the work and its purpose is positioned under one “umbrella” that can unite the partnership, making the messaging more impactful.

The frame Spitfire has selected for the narrative is specific to quality of life, specifically “Land conservation protects our quality of life.” This frame is flexible, it is personal and persuasive, and there is already buy-in from the partnership because many organizations are already using it to talk about their work. This frame is also flexible enough to tailor the messaging to individual groups who are under the partnership “umbrella.”

Opportunities that would bring the narrative frame to life include conservation-centric legislation, social media, traditional media, events, and more. To tailor messaging under the narrative frame, it is important to consider the audience, the audience’s values, any barriers and what can be done to overcome those barriers, and what is ultimately asked of the audience.

Mapping and Science (Abby Weinberg, Open Space Institute, and Jonathan Doherty, NPS Chesapeake Bay Office)

The A.T. landscape is a critical climate corridor. OSI has continued efforts to further evaluate highest priority climate resilient resources across the entire A.T. landscape to guide mapping strategies for the ATLP moving forward.

Through this “phase two” work, OSI worked to recommend key sites for retaining resilience and develop a protocol for project evaluation. Themes within this work included north/south movement; underrepresented and resilient settings; and lands that connect to nearby large, protected landscapes in order to increase these unfragmented land blocks.

OSI’s maps are attached as an addendum. ATC will also explore ways to make the data available through an ArcGIS map that can be used by partners.

The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership went through a deliberate but fast-paced process to produce the Chesapeake Conservation Atlas, which maps existing resources related to the CCP’s long-term conservation goals (farms, forests, habitat, heritage and human health).

Questions the CCP considered throughout the process:

- What should our mapping goals be in the short term (the next one to two years)?
- What should our mapping goals be for the medium term?
- How can mapping further our collective work?

Possible mapping exercises the ATLP could take on include:

- Scenic resources, supported by a strong methodology
- An infrastructure threat map that communicates a sense of urgency (could be for public consumption)
- Story maps that tell a story about the quality of life we have now and what would happen to that quality of life if protected areas are lost
- Baseline data on dark sky areas, recreation use, etc. (could be beneficial as part of a “portfolio” for donors)
- Socioeconomic maps
- Maps of urban centers and access areas to outdoor recreation sites
- Threatened historic and cultural sites
- A further evaluation of the OSI research to “tweak” the original 10 focus areas and use resilience and biodiversity data to better support the thinking behind those focus areas
- Maps with a local focus—on the parcel level, for example

During the ATLP Steering Committee’s in-person meeting in May, mapping priorities will be finalized and a plan for the work will be put into place.

Mitigation Updates (Laura Belleville, Appalachian Trail Conservancy; Heather Richards, The Conservation Fund; and John Griffin, Chesapeake Conservancy)

Laura provided an update on what is currently happening within the A.T. landscape. Many of the current threats come from pipelines and transmission lines:

- PennEast Pipeline, PA: still in planning phase
- Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipeline, WV/VA: stuck in a court battle due to water quality violations; the Forest Service has rescinded its permit until a new Environmental Impact Statement is issued
- Central Maine Power Transmission Line, Maine: proposed and still in planning phase

Impacts from these projects include lessening water quality, erosion and sedimentation, landscape fragmentation and the destruction of scenic resources.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has decided to take a look at its 1999 pipeline permitting policy and ATC and its Trail Maintaining Clubs have weighed in on the policy. Lynn Davis and Andrew Downs (ATC) have been working with Congress to pass the Pipeline Fairness and Transparency Act, which would provide for greater public input on interstate pipelines while making the process of siting pipelines more fair and transparent.

Heather reported on the millions of dollars that is available in Virginia through pipeline mitigation funds (combined mitigation agreements involving both the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines were established). Grants relating to forest fragmentation, water quality, historic preservation and more will be available. To maximize these funds, organizations should have projects readily identified; not delay in working with agencies; and consider collaborating with partners to leverage mitigation funds.

More frequently, organizations are being asked to defend mitigation dollars. A methodology should be in place when it comes to the “why” behind the acceptance of funding.

John took the conversation further to discuss not just the impacts of linear infrastructure, but the rules behind its development. A recent report from the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) recommends strengthening or creating policies in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia to apply consistent requirements for land conservation at scale with net benefits to the Chesapeake watershed. Overarching recommendations in the ELI report include:

- Using datasets and planning tools to identify priority areas by type and habitat spatially. Defining landscape objectives in advance of applications makes it possible to derive the most benefit from approval processes for infrastructure.
- Changing the conceptual approach to permitting so that there is an expanded identification of important areas for project applicants to avoid, potential impacts are defined on a landscape-wide scale, and project mitigation with respect to these impacts is defined.

Evening Presentation: Connecting the A.T. Landscape Partnership to International Conservation Initiatives (Jim Levitt, Lincoln Land Institute of Policy, and Hernan Mladinic, Woodrow Wilson International Center)

Jim Levitt of the Lincoln Institute of Land Use Policy and founder of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) described a new peer exchange network featuring some of the world's most iconic landscapes, including the A.T. landscape. Practitioners from the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve in California, the A.T. landscape and two iconic landscapes in Chile will be gathering over the course of the next year to share best practices and learning. Jim is promoting the A.T. and the efforts of the A.T. Landscape Partnership as an international model of collaborative landscape conservation.

Hernan shared the story of the Ruta de los Parques (the Route of Parks) in Patagonia, one of the two chosen landscapes in Chile. Patagonia is a natural gem that covers about a third of Chile's total landmass. In September, the public-private initiative "Route of Parks of Patagonia" was launched, which was the result of an unprecedented land donation from Tompkins Conservation. The Route of Parks covers more than 1,700 miles and encompasses 17 national parks and more than 11 million acres.

Chile needs a plan to handle this new initiative. How can the U.S. serve as an example in the management of this protected area?

Ideas discussed include using the U.S. National Park Service as a model and the introduction of public policies that create an improved national park system. There is a lack of institutional framework in Chile, which is a challenge. Funding is crucial to the creation of framework that would support a national park system, and currently, philanthropic contributions in Chile are low.

Overall, the recognition of Chile's natural heritage by its own people is an incredible first step in the creation of something that will be sustained for generations.

Values-Based Messaging: The Wild East Campaign (Lynn Davis and Anne Baker, Appalachian Trail Conservancy)

To broaden the way we talk about landscape protection and appeal to audiences outside the room, ATC is launching a 18-month public awareness campaign called "Wild East," which is a new way to describe the A.T. landscape as the last remaining contiguous open space in the eastern United States.

At the heart of this campaign is a grassroots movement geared toward recognizing the value of the A.T. landscape while also forming, through storytelling, emotional attachment to the values of the landscape. Talking points include:

- Wild East is a collaborative movement geared toward everyone who lives, works and plays within the A.T. landscape
- Alongside a variety of private and public partners—including the National Park Service—the ATC and the Wild East initiative will accelerate the pace of conservation within the A.T. landscape
- For Wild East to succeed, we must broaden the way we think about the A.T.; it isn't just a footpath for hikers
- Anyone who lives, works and plays within the A.T. landscape can contribute to its protection
- Communities within the A.T. landscape who benefit from the Trail economically have an important role to play in its conservation
- There are multiple stories that provide a variety of perspectives about the A.T. and its surrounding lands. There is no single narrative
- Not everyone shares the same motivation for protecting the Trail—so we recognize the importance of different stories and perspectives

ATC is moving into the implementation phase of the campaign, which includes strategically planned messaging that will engage new audiences who appreciate the diverse values of the landscape. These values include migratory birds; healthy forests and communities; history and culture; and night skies. ATC's hope is to collaborate with partners to highlight the work we are doing, together, while supporting the above themes.

A microsite will officially launch the campaign in mid-January. Partners will receive a toolkit and a copy of the Wild East poster.

Protecting Heritage and Scenic Resources (Laura Belleville, Appalachian Trail Conservancy; Jim Von Haden, Appalachian National Scenic Trail; and Martha Raymond, NPS National Heritage Areas)

The National Trails System Act provides for the conservation and enjoyment of significant scenic, historic, natural or cultural areas, but what does this mean over the next 100 years? We know that:

- Growth and development will continue
- More threats will emerge
- Visitation will continue to grow
- Additional acreage and easements may be acquired, but will these protect views?

Unimpaired scenic resources are critical to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. How can we take stock of what we proactively protect? This is a call to action for our communities, supporters, citizen scientists, volunteers, etc.

Scenic resource integrity is a critical success factor for the ATLP. We must be able to clearly describe the visual environment and its value so we can effectively manage and protect scenic resources.

NPS did not, until recently, have a standard, defensible approach to documenting scenic resources. The "Enjoy the View" initiative was born out of the NPS Centennial "Call to Action," and it advances

protection of clean air and scenic views in national parks. Twenty-two national parks participated in a pilot phase, including the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

NPS's Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) is a systematic process for documenting scenic resources within and beyond park boundaries. It includes elements from existing VRI systems, customized to national park environments, and it incorporates historic/cultural elements into the scenic inventory process. It is an approachable system that is designed for implementation by park staff and volunteers.

In early 2019, NPS will host a Visual Resource Management workshop.

Potential uses for VRI include:

- Long-term monitoring of scenic quality
- Enhanced interpretation of trail resources
- View/viewpoint restoration or enhancements
- Inform clean air/energy legislation
- Process to prioritize landscapes for protection
- Coalition building around scenery protection

In addition to areas of scenic value, there are nine National Heritage Areas along the A.T. (there are 49 across the country). They are large landscapes of national importance, designated by Congress. They use community-based conservation to share important stories of our country's heritage; foster sustainable economic development; and advance the mission of NPS.

Opportunities exist to connect with heritage areas through:

- A.T. Communities
- Connecting to tourism bureaus
- Increased access to the A.T. via day use spots
- Volunteer projects
- Installation of interpretive signage
- Events promoting scenic and historic values
- Mini-grants
- Sharing information through social media, email, etc.

Lighting Updates – Round Two

Pathways Forward Report, Emily Bateson (Network for Landscape Conservation)

Pathways Forward: Progress and Priorities in Landscape Conservation is the result of discussions that emerged from the 2017 National Forum on Landscape Conservation. From the report: "An important hallmark of landscape conservation is moving beyond top-down approaches to a more inclusive framework, with informal governance structures built around bringing people and communities together across boundaries to create shared vision and action on these important, interrelated goals" (pg. 3).

The report highlights the following topics:

- The central role of collaboration in landscape conservation
- Reimagining communications and engagement
- Advancing science-based planning for landscape conservation
- Investing in an enduring landscape future
- Aligning policy to support landscape conservation

The full report is available [here](#).

A.T. Communities Economic Impact Assessments, Suzanne Dixon (Appalachian Trail Conservancy)

The A.T. is an important part of the recreation economy in the east. ATC is helping communities connect Trail-related economic data and leverage it to protect the A.T. landscape and develop a sense of place. Through a consultant, ATC is advancing economic assessments and promoting a geotourism agenda in priority communities in the Harlem Valley, NY region; Kittatinny Ridge, PA; Harpers Ferry, WV; and in southwest Virginia. This work is funded in part by the ATLP Action Fund.

New England Bird Conservation Initiative, Bill Labich (Highstead Foundation)

With migratory birds relying so heavily on a protected landscape, it is beneficial for Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs) to know what birding tools are available and what might be of help to RCPs when it comes to birding and the advancement of regional priorities. The draft goals of the New England Bird Conservation Initiative include:

1. Raise consciousness about the importance of birds where RCPs work, and awareness of how bird conservation can help advance regional land conservation priorities
2. Encourage RCPs to adopt eBird as a tool for monitoring, decision making and engagement
3. Improve and conserve habitats that support populations of two or more target species in New England and eastern New York

The initiative will start with RCPs who have priority focus areas. Within those areas, forest patches that have the highest habitat value and greatest threat will be identified. This process will inform conservation decision making while engaging an active community of birders.

Follow the Forest Campaign, Tim Abbott (Housatonic Valley Association)

Follow the Forest spans from Bear Mountain in the lower Hudson Valley through western New England to the Adirondacks and to Canada. The goal is to engage partners across the region at different scales and move toward a shared vision of expanding and securing wildlife habitat linkages and maintaining the large forested areas they connect throughout the region. The Housatonic Valley Association has set a specific goal of protecting at least 50,000 acres of core forest and 50,000 acres of habitat linkages throughout its 1.28-million-acre watershed.

Large forest blocks in the landscape are separated by roads, fields, wetlands, and other developed areas. GIS data suggests certain areas adjacent to the forest blocks may help connect the forests and provide wildlife habitat linkages. Key areas have been identified that would provide the greatest opportunity to link the forests throughout the region. The A.T. runs through the heart of this vast wildlife corridor, and

there are many Regional Conservation Partnerships that share the landscape.

Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance, Don Owen (Land Trust Alliance) and Bill Leahy (Maryland Environmental Trust)

Heart of Maryland, the state's first Regional Conservation Partnership, was officially introduced to the public in November. There has been a demand for a RCP model of collaboration in this area due to the continued expansion and further development of the DC Metro Area. Heart of Maryland fosters collaborative conservation of the region's significant farmlands, forests, water, and historical and recreational resources. The A.T. has been identified as an important natural and community resource.

Moving forward, Heart of Maryland will convene members and promote collaborative conservation efforts; refine governance framework; establish regular meetings; establish data gathering and communications methods; confirm conservation priorities; and identify projects.

Co-Conveners Report and 2019 Workplan (Dennis Shaffer, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Wendy Janssen, Appalachian National Scenic Trail)

Highlighted 2018 accomplishments include:

- Continued NPS (APPA) support for the A.T. Landscape Partnership
- Heritage and cultural resource conservation
- Input into the draft NPS Collaborative Conservation Strategy
- Linear infrastructure engagement, advocacy and mitigation
- Applying science to mapping, planning and stewardship
- NPS-funded resource management projects:
 - National Register of Historic Places Nomination
 - Natural Resource Condition Assessment (NRCA)
 - Geologic Resources Inventory
 - APPA Vegetation Mapping Inventory (VMI) Project
 - A.T. Rare Plant Monitoring Program
 - Visual Resource Inventory/Management Workshop
 - Archaeological Overview and Assessment in Maryland
 - Cultural Resources Site Stewards
- Funding from The Volgenau Foundation
 - Establishment of the Action Fund (12 land protection projects funded for \$500,000, which contributes to the protection of 23,000 acres of conservation lands; nine capacity building projects funded for ~\$150,000)
 - Economic impact studies within A.T. Communities; ATC's Geotourism initiative
- Communications and messaging initiatives
 - Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act
 - Work with Spitfire Strategies on a messaging framework (in cooperation with the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership)

2019 goals for the co-conveners include:

- Build our base of public and private funding; leverage The Volgenau Foundation grant
- Continue the Action Fund with financial support from The Volgenau Foundation
- Generate greater public support and awareness through the Wild East campaign
- Host the 2019 Science and Stewardship Summit
- Expand and diversify participation in within the A.T. Landscape Partnership
- Initiate the Visual Resource Inventory
- Host a gathering of Visual Resource Management experts