APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

PENNSYLVANIA SECTION: A MUNICIPAL GUIDE





The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) is the world's longest hiking-only trail, stretching for 2,191 miles from Georgia to Maine. It is enjoyed by millions of hikers annually – some wishing to hike the entire A.T. (thru-hikers), others hiking sections of the Trail, and many who want to get outdoors on the Trail for a few hours. The A.T., which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, passes in Pennsylvania through 11 counties and 58 municipalities, many of which take advantage of the millions of visitors that stimulate the local economy. The Trail in Pennsylvania comprises 229 miles and stretches for more than 138 miles from Duncannon to the Delaware

HOW A RACETRACK THREATENED THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL AND ULTIMATELY LED TO GREATER TRAIL PROTECTION:

In June 2008, the Pa. Appalachian Trail Act was amended by Act 24, requiring the 58 Pa. municipalities along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) to take action to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the Trail and to conserve and maintain it as a public natural resource. The legislation was prompted by a Commonwealth Court case related to a proposal to construct a country club and race track for sports-car enthusiasts, which threatened a portion of the A.T. in Monroe County, Pennsylvania. The racetrack was going to be located less than a half-mile from the A.T. Noise and fumes from the racetrack would have impaired the values of the A.T.



River National Recreation Area, riding the top of the Kittatinny Ridge (also known as Blue Mountain), an iconic 500-square-mile landscape of state parks and forests, Game Commission lands, federal, other public, and private lands. The Trail crosses the lowlands of the Cumberland Valley, then ascends the northern terminus of the Blue Ridge Summit, following it through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' designated South Mountain Conservation Landscape. The entire length of the A.T. is on public land. The patchwork of lands encompasses a Global Important Bird Area (IBA) that is critical for tens of thousands of migrating songbirds and raptors such as hawks, falcons, and eagles.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY

The mission of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail. The mission is carried out by a unique partnership with the National Park Service, state and federal agencies and the 31 hard-working and dedicated volunteer trail clubs who steward and maintain the Trail by contributing hundreds of thousands of hours annually. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of ATC in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania, helps townships implement Act 24 of 2008, an amendment to the 1978 Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act.



TRAIL HISTORY

In October 1921, a 42-year-old forester and regional planner named Benton MacKaye (pronounced mak-KYE) published an article in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, entitled "An Appalachian Trail - A Project in Regional Planning." His vision was for "a long trail over the full length of the Appalachian skyline," connecting the ridges and valleys of the Appalachian Province.

In 1922, work began on constructing the Trail that would connect trail segments already existing at that time. In 1932, the Trail was completed in Pennsylvania. In 1945, Congressman Daniel Hoch (Berks County) introduced federal legislation to create a national system of foot trails, which did not pass. Senator Gaylord Nelson (Wisconsin) took up the cause and the National Trails System Act was passed in October 1968. The Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail were the first scenic national trails created by the act. Today, the national trails system includes 11 national scenic trails, 19 national historic trails, and more than 1,000 national recreation trails.



THE TRAIL TODAY

Today, the Appalachian Trail extends from Maine to Georgia within a protected 250,000-acre greenway. In Pennsylvania, except for a few short sections along highways, the Trail's 229-mile route is within a corridor of varying dimensions, consisting of lands owned largely by the National Park Service and Pennsylvania state agencies, including the Game Commission and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks.

A.T. FAST FACTS:

- A Enjoyed by an estimated 4 million people
- Yithin a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population
- White markings ("blazes"), a 2-inch-by-6-inch vertical rectangle, painted on trees,rocks, and sign posts by volunteers and trail maintainers, show hikers where to continue on the Trail.



Act 24 of 2008 (amendments to the 1978 Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act) requires Pennsylvania municipalities along the Trail to "take such action consistent with applicable law, as at least an interim measure, to preserve the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the Trail and to conserve and maintain it as a public natural resource. Such action shall include the adoption, implementation and enforcement of zoning ordinances as the governing body deems necessary to preserve those values." The act provides a planning opportunity for the 58 municipalities and other communities surrounding the Trail to protect this national and local asset.

..To preserve the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the Trail and to conserve and maintain it as a public natural resource...

[Section 4. Pa. Appalachian Trail Act]



An interagency task force was established to design a program to implement the intent of the act. It identified a need for resource materials to assist municipalities in developing zoning and other conservation strategies most appropriate to their circumstances. This brochure summarizes its findings and recommendations. For further information, go to www.appalachiantrail.org/pa_apptrail_act.

PROTECTING THE TRAIL

NO SINGLE PROTECTION SOLUTION WILL WORK

The multiple issues impacting the Trail suggest that no single solution is likely to protect the quality of the Trail experience for present and future generations. Assessments of local conditions and developing workable strategies appropriate to specific circumstances will be the strongest strategy for the Trail's long-term protection.

MUNICIPAL MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conservation Assistance Municipal Mini-Grant Program is a competitive funding stream intended to stimulate sound local land-use planning and conservation-related municipal actions that align with the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act of 1978, as amended by Act 24 of 2008. The municipal mini-grant program is available to any municipality through which the Appalachian Trail passes. The current program totals \$40,000 annually. Each grant request should not exceed \$17,500 and a 20% cash or in-kind match is required. **The grant cannot be used for land-acquisition**, but ATC can help engage our partners to assist with land-acquisition projects that protect the A.T. experience.



The goal of the program is to assist municipalities by taking proactive steps to protect the Trail's natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources. Some examples of recent grant awards include enacting zoning to address cellular-telephone tower siting, wind turbines, solar facilities, light pollution, pipelines, and water and mineral extraction. Creating or updating official maps and creating Environmental Advisory Councils (EACs) are other appropriate uses of the grant.

Municipalities shall have the power and duty to take such action, as least an interim measure, which shall include the adoption of zoning ordinances as the governing body deems necessary....

[Abstracted from Section 4. Pa. Appalachian Trail Act]



HOW MUNICIPALITIES CAN HELP PROTECT THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL:

- 1. Adopt zoning that addresses noise, light pollution, and potentially high-impact uses such as wind energy turbines, cellular towers, major truck terminals, distribution centers, extractive industries, ski areas, and commercial and residential development.
- Perform viewshed analysis. Work with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and local Appalachian Trail maintaining clubs to identify key vistas on the Appalachian Trail, enter them on a resource map maintained by the municipality, and adopt zoning that protects viewsheds.
- 3. Identify key parcels near the Appalachian Trail that are not protected by state or federal lands and develop a conservation strategy to protect the lands through acquisition, conservation easement, or zoning amendments.



- 4. Adopt conservation design strategy that optimizes open space and natural corridor protections.
- Adopt zoning regulations to contain performance standards to protect specific resource features such as woodlands, steep slopes, vistas, wetlands, vernal pools, natural vegetation, and, where appropriate, such features be designed as overlay districts.
- Adopt standards for building sizes, setbacks, building design, materials and colors (i.e. non-reflective roofing), and visual buffers near the Appalachian Trail.
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the Trail and its related landscapes.

SECTION V THE TRAIL EXPERIENCE

TRAIL EXPERIENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPES

Although the Appalachian Trail's path is now largely protected within a corridor of public lands, the Trail experience through "wild areas" and rural countryside is vulnerable to irreversible changes associated with incompatible land uses adjacent to the corridor. They include but are not limited to development projects-large and small-as well as other activities, such as intensive timber harvesting without appropriate forest-management plans. Conserving the unique types of landscapes and scenic vistas encountered along the Trail is also an important element to maintaining the Trail experience. Three of these spectacular landscapes in Pennsylvania are the Kittatinny Ridge, the Cumberland Valley, and the South Mountain. Protecting those landscapes, which include some of the most significant natural areas in Pennsylvania, will benefit the Appalachian Trail experience, as well as significant wildlife habitats and water resources. Protection strategies will require ongoing collaborative efforts among local communities, adjacent landowners, trail users, non-profit organizations, and public agencies.







SECTION VI



The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is maintained by 31 volunteer trail maintaining clubs, 11 of which are actively involved in maintaining the Trail in Pennsylvania under the coordination of ATC. Along its entire length from Maine to Georgia, more than 6,000 people have contributed nearly 200,000 hours annually, keeping the Trail open, safe and in good condition.





1. WILMINGTON TRAIL CLUB

www.wilmingtontrailclub.org Delaware River at the N.J./Pa. border to Fox Gap at Pa. 191

2. BATONA HIKING CLUB http://www.batona.wildapricot. org/ Fox Gap at Pa. 191 to Wind Gap at Pa. 33

3. APPALACHIAN MTN. CLUB - DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER

www.amcdv.org From Wind Gap at Pa. 33 to Little Gap near Danielsville, Pa.

4. KEYSTONE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

www.kta-hike.org Little Gap to Lehigh Furnace Gap (Ashfield Road)

5. BLUE MOUNTAIN EAGLE CLIMBING CLUB

Lehigh Furnace Gap to Bake Oven Knob Road, and Tri-County Corner to Rausch Gap Side Trail

6. ALLENTOWN HIKING CLUB

www.allentownhikingclub.org Bake Oven Knob Road to Tri-County Corner

7. SUSQUEHANNA APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

10

www.satc-hike.org Rausch Gap Side Trail to Pa. 225 north of Harrisburg

30 MILES

8. YORK HIKING CLUB www.yorkhikingclub.com

www.yorkhikingclub.com Pa. 225 to Susquehanna River

9. CUMBERLAND VALLEY APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

http://www.cvatclub.org Darlington Trail on Blue Mountain to Center Point Knob

10. MOUNTAIN CLUB OF MARYLAND

www.mcomd.org Susquehanna River to Darlington/Tuscarora trail and Center Point Knob to Pine Grove Furnace State Park (Pa. 233)

11. POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

http://www.patc.net/Patc/ 233 South of Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Pa. to Rockfish Gap in Va.



A.T. COMMUNITIES

The Appalachian Trail Community[™] program is designed to recognize communities that promote and protect the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Towns, counties, and communities along the A.T.'s corridor are considered assets by all that use the A.T., and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the Trail. The program serves to assist communities with sustainable economic development through tourism and outdoor recreation while preserving and protecting the A.T.

Do you want your community to be an A.T. Community? Contact the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at 717-258-5771 or by email: atc-maro@appalachiantrail.org

Find out more: www.appalachiantrail.org/pa_apptrail_act

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