



ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy Hunting

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Category: Non-hiking Recreational Use	Updated:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), a §501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, works closely with Appalachian Trail volunteer maintaining clubs (“Clubs”) and other public and private partners to ensure the protection and stewardship of the natural, cultural, and experiential resources of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (known as ANST, A.T., or “the Trail”). Approximately fifty federal, state, or other public agencies have authority or jurisdiction over lands and resources within the protected A.T. corridor. ATC has a central management role by virtue of its Cooperative Agreement with the USDI National Park Service and its close working partnership with the USDA Forest Service and other agencies. ATC’s 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.”

ATC's Trail management and conservation policies are meant to provide guidance for (a) dissemination to the public; (b) use and implementation by the ATC and the Clubs; and (c) recommendations for land-managing and other agencies. It is the agencies who work within their defined procedures to propose, administer, and enforce public policy. ATC policies are recommendations developed to support appropriate, coordinated Trail-wide management.

Overview

In 1985, ATC recognized hunting as a traditional use in many areas and recognized previous commitments that hunting activities would be allowed to continue where possible to do so. In November 1992, ATC adopted the following policy on hiker safety during hunting seasons.

Policy

ATC encourages Trail clubs and agency partners to inform hikers on the Appalachian Trail when they are in an area where hunting may occur, and to caution hikers on the Appalachian Trail to wear blaze orange during all hunting seasons, in particular during big-game hunting season.

- ATC (or the local Trail club) annually will collect information on hunting seasons in each state and provide this information for use in club newsletters, community contacts, press releases, brochures, and maps.



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Hunting

- ATC (or the local Trail club) also will provide game-management agencies in each state through which the Appalachian Trail passes with maps of the Appalachian Trail in that state and request that these agencies inform hunters (through game-management publications and maps) that hikers on the Appalachian Trail and other recreational trails may not be cognizant of hunting seasons and may not be wearing blaze orange.
- ATC publications designed to inform the general public about the Trail, including guidebooks, will include a statement advising hikers to wear blaze-orange vests and hats and brightly colored packs or pack covers during hunting seasons.

In some areas, particularly high-use areas that are open to hunting, Trail-maintaining clubs and their agency partners may deem it desirable to include information on signs at Trailheads and other points of access to the Appalachian Trail promoting hiker safety during hunting season. ATC recommends the use of the “Wear Blaze Orange” Trailhead information sign.

For questions related to this policy please contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at www.appalachiantrail.org, or P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV, 25425-807.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s mission is to protect, manage, and advocate for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.