



ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy Minimum-Impact Backcountry Use

Published: November 1998	Reviewed: January 2020
Category: Trail Management	Updated: January 2020

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 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

The intent of this policy is to promote the Leave No Trace (LNT) philosophy as a means of reducing the impact of A.T. visitors on the Trail environment.

Policy

The Conservancy will work with Leave No Trace, Inc., Trail-maintaining clubs, and agency partners to develop programs, brochures, signs, and other materials that convey the LNT message to Appalachian Trail users. Where appropriate, ATC guidebooks, maps, and other publications, will carry a Leave No Trace message. Although ATC believes that communications with hikers should occur primarily through guidebooks and other literature distributed off the Trail, ATC encourages ridge runners, caretakers, and volunteer and professional A.T. managers and maintainers to follow LNT guidelines while on the Trail and to take every opportunity to educate others. ATC in particular supports efforts to develop and disseminate materials that are directed at inexperienced or novice backpackers and hikers, in that the behaviors and actions of those Trail visitors are likely to have a disproportionate impact upon the Trail environment.

Also see policy on Litter and Graffiti.

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.