

ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy

Guidance on Corridor Monitoring

Published: 1984	Reviewed:
Category: Resource Mangement	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 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 Trailwide management.

Policy

Special-Care Principles—The special-care principles adopted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy include the following (“ATC” here refers to both Trail club and Appalachian Trail Conservancy managers):

- ATC can and does, by virtue of the delegation agreement, take responsibility for guaranteeing to the National Park Service that NPS-acquired lands are being sensitively and adequately monitored and managed.
- ATC can inform land users of state or federal laws and regulations and can develop cooperative relationships with local law-enforcement authorities.
- ATC can post lands and prepare informational signs and brochures after consultation with local, state, and NPS authorities.
- ATC cannot enforce state or federal laws and regulations.
- ATC can and should inspect and monitor boundaries on NPS lands, consult with adjacent landowners, and request an NPS survey, if needed.
- ATC cannot agree to or negotiate boundaries on NPS lands or reset corner monuments to the corridor
- ATC cannot give away, exchange, or sell public property, such as firewood, water rights, building salvage, or hunting rights.

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Minimum Requirements—Inspection and reporting are the only requirements of club monitoring. Depending on local practices, some clubs will discuss the situation with violators directly, while others do not. The “eyes and ears” inspection and annual reporting functions constitute the basic program.

- **Inspection**—Protecting corridor lands requires vigilance. The monitoring program should be based on priorities, with the most susceptible or endangered lands receiving the most frequent inspections. Endangered areas—primarily from roads, power lines, easements, structures, and adjacent development—constitute high-priority monitoring sites, known simply as “hot spots.” Moderate- and low-priority sites may exist, depending on their remoteness, and are inspected less frequently.
- **Reporting**—Prompt phone reports are necessary for major problems. One annual summary report to ATC is required. [Note: The current reporting deadline is February 15 for the previous year.]

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.