



## ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy

### Trail Assignment and Reassignment

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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.

*[Note: The ATC policy on reassignment of club maintenance responsibilities was adopted in 2001, was amended in 2008 to reflect changes in the organization’s governance structure, and revised again in 2011 to account for trail sections that had not been assigned to any club.]*

#### Overview

##### **ATC Policy on Assignment and Reassignment of A.T. Club Maintenance Responsibility**

This policy addresses reassignment of maintenance responsibility of an A.T. section from one Trail-maintaining club to another and assignment of maintenance responsibility of those Trail sections that are maintained by a land-managing agency without club involvement.

#### Policy

##### ***Initial Assignment***

Trail sections that are maintained by a land-managing agency and not by a Trail-maintaining club may be assigned to a club upon request of the land-managing agency. The agency should submit a written request for the new assignment to the regional director of the region in which the Trail section is located. The request should specify the section to be assigned and the

## **ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy**

### **Trail Assignment and Reassignment**

affected mileage. The request should include a letter from the affected club indicating its interest in assuming maintenance responsibility. If the affected club has had no previous Trail maintenance assignment, the request should also contain information to substantiate the club's capabilities to manage the Trail section, including the size of the club's membership; trail construction, maintenance, or management experience; and prior activities on behalf of the Appalachian Trail, if any.

Upon receipt of a request for a Trail maintenance assignment, the regional director shall review the proposal in coordination with the regional partnership committee (RPC). The proposed change is subject to the approval of the regional partnership committee and ATC, in accordance with the ATC Policy for the Review and Approval of Management Plans and Project Proposals. Following the assignment, the regional director will report the changes to the affected clubs, the RPC, agency partners, the Stewardship Council, and Board of Directors.

#### ***Reassignment***

A section of the Appalachian Trail that has been assigned by ATC to a particular maintaining club may be reassigned either with the consent of the affected club(s), or following determination that the club is unable to fulfill its management and maintenance responsibilities as defined in the ATC/club memorandum of understanding. In both instances, if the regional partnership committee chair is a member of the club whose section is being reassigned, that individual will recuse himself or herself from the proceedings to avoid a conflict of interest.

*Change of Trail Assignment with Consent of Maintaining Club(s)*—Any A.T.-maintaining club wishing to change its existing assignment shall submit a written request for that change to the regional director of the region in which the Trail section is located.

1. If the change would affect multiple A.T.-maintaining clubs, the written request shall be signed by the presidents of all affected clubs. The request should state the reasons for the proposed change, the specific location of the section to be reassigned, and the affected mileage.
2. If the request involves assignment of a section of the A.T. to a club that has had no previous Trail-maintenance assignment, the request should also contain information to substantiate the club's capabilities to manage the Trail section, including the size of the club's membership; trail construction, maintenance, or management experience; and

## **ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy**

### **Trail Assignment and Reassignment**

prior activities in behalf of the Appalachian Trail, if any.

Upon receipt of a request for change of Trail assignment by consent, the regional director shall review the proposal in coordination with affected agency partners and the regional partnership committee. The proposed change is subject to the approval of the regional partnership committee and ATC, in accordance with the ATC Policy for the Review and Approval of Management Plans and Project Proposals. Following the reassignment, the regional director will report the changes to the affected clubs, the RPC, agency partners, the Stewardship Council, and Board of Directors.

*Change of Trail Assignment without Consent of Maintaining Club*—If a request for change of Trail assignment is not accompanied by the consent of the maintaining club(s) affected by the requested change, or if the regional partnership committee chair or regional director is made aware of the need for a change of Trail assignment because of complaints from hikers, agency partners, regional field staff, or others, the regional partnership committee chair shall convene the regional partnership committee.

1. The RPC chair shall inform the maintaining club in writing of the request. The maintaining club will be asked if it is willing to relinquish the involved section of the Trail. If not, the maintaining club will be asked to provide the regional partnership committee with information to substantiate the club's capabilities to manage the Trail section, including the size of the club's membership; trail-building or -maintenance experience; and other management activities it has undertaken on behalf of the Appalachian Trail.
2. The regional partnership committee will evaluate the need for a change and will make a recommendation to the ATC Stewardship Council on whether to make the change. The primary considerations of the RPC shall be the condition of the Trail section and the manner in which the maintaining club carries out its management responsibilities as a maintaining club of ATC.
3. If the physical condition of the Trail section is the complaint, the regional partnership committee will conduct a site visit to assess the Trail section. At least one member of the RPC (not a member from the affected club), one representative of the maintaining club, and the ATC regional director shall participate in the site visit. The RPC chair shall notify

## **ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy Trail Assignment and Reassignment**

all parties of the date of the site visit.

4. After completion of its inquiry, the regional partnership committee in consultation with the regional director shall develop a written recommendation to the maintaining club on a course of action to cure the problem(s), an offer of assistance by ATC or other local maintaining clubs, and a schedule for correcting the problem(s).

5. In those rare cases where the RPC or regional director feel that all reasonable efforts to help a club meet its management responsibilities have not borne fruit, one or both may request that the ATC Board of Directors Chair appoint a special committee of volunteers to evaluate the situation and make a recommendation to the Stewardship Council. The Council will review the committee's recommendation, develop its own recommendation, and forward both recommendations and supporting information to the Board of Directors for a decision.

For questions related to this policy please contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://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.