



Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

The A.T. Landscape as an East Coast Climate Corridor: Operationalizing the Idea

Part 1 of the 2021 ATLP Annual Event

March 4, 2021

Online – Zoom+Covision

Facilitated by:



Definition

From Mark Anderson's presentation ...

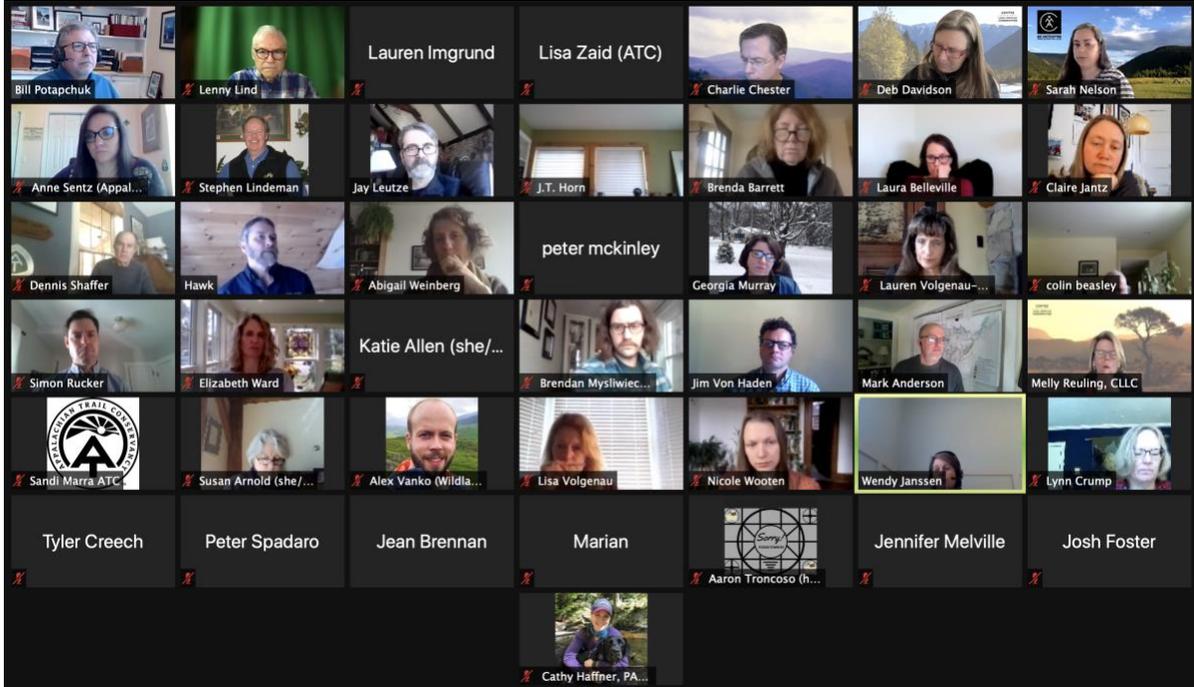
Solution: a Climate Corridor

A connected area of climatically diverse land that facilitates the movement and rearrangement of nature

A map of the Great Lakes region in North America, showing the five Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario) and the surrounding land. The map is color-coded to represent different climatic zones or corridors. A prominent blue and green corridor runs from the western shore of Lake Superior, through the western shore of Lake Michigan, across the western shore of Lake Huron, and then through the western shore of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. This corridor is highlighted with a thick blue line. Other areas are colored in shades of orange, yellow, and green. Labels on the map include 'Sudbury', 'North Bay', 'Ottawa', 'Montreal', 'Toronto', 'Buffalo', 'Cleveland', 'Columbus', 'Detroit', 'Ann Arbor', 'Chicago', 'Indianapolis', 'Cincinnati', 'Columbus', 'Philadelphia', and 'New York City'. The map also shows major rivers like the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes drainage basin.

Screenshots

Taken at 11:32a 3/4/21



Breakout Groups: 41 Participants

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room 1 6 Brenda Barrett Move To Charlie Chester Move To Gary Tabor Move To Lauren Volgenau-Knapp Move To Mark Anderson Move To Melly Reuling, CLLC Move To Room 2 4 Abigail Weinberg Move To Alex Vanko (Wildlands Network) Move To Cathy Haffner, PA Game Commission Move To Laura Belleville Move To Room 3 5 Aaron Troncoso (he/him) Move To Deb Davidson Move To Jay Leutze Move To Josh Foster Move To peter mckinley Move To 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room 4 4 Dennis Shaffer Move To Elizabeth Ward Move To Georgia Murray Move To Jennifer Melville Move To Room 5 5 Claire Jantz Move To colin beasley Move To J.T. Horn Move To Marian Move To Peter Spadaro Move To Room 6 3 Anne Sentz (Appalachian Trail Cons... Move To Sarah Nelson Move To Stephen Lindeman Move To Room 7 5 Brendan Mysliwiec (Appalachian Tra... Move To Hawk Move To Jim Von Haden Move To Nicole Wooten Move To Simon Rucker Move To 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room 8 5 Jean Brennan Move To Katie Allen (she/her) Move To Lauren Imgrund (not joined) Move To Lisa Volgenau Move To Sandi Marra ATC Move To Room 9 4 Lynn Crump Move To Susan Arnold (she/her) Move To Tyler Creech Move To Wendy Janssen Move To
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Understanding Climate Corridors

1) What might the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership and all of its partners do to operationalize the concept of the A.T. as a climate corridor for the eastern United States?

PARTICIPANT INPUT

- 001 Increase the rate of land protection, targeted for climate resiliency and migration utility and determine what extant managerial authorities may be employed as well as which authorities may be necessary.
- 002 Mobilize the recreational community
- 003 Set the agenda for use of resources
- 004 Get this message to the general public since they will get behind this as a recreation community will advance this.
- 005 Support Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- 006 Ensure the new Recover America Wildlife is mobilized for this purpose to support State Wildlife action plans (which include climate). 2025 SWAP updates to align that as well could advance this greatly.
- 007 make this EVERYONEs corridor. To make sure it is a safe and welcoming place for black, brown and indigenous people.
- 008 Federally designated climate corridor
- 009 Take advantage of the 'stars aligning' on a policy side. (and don't forget 30x30 is about climate JUSTICE.
- 010 Figure out how we fund management of these lands and ensure wildlife crossings. After the land is protected.
- 011 How do we take the network and prioritize the top 20 road crossings across the northeast, for example.
- 012 Communities along the Trail need to be involved. Communication is very important. Conservation is going to be local - action needs to be local. Role of regional planning commissions - institutionalizing into their planning - public engagement. How do we connect to water-Air-Jobs - a safeguard to healthy wellbeing. Offer more of these conversations drawing in local and regional audiences. Inclusive visioning - Landscape Partnership has great opportunity to engage new champions - connect beyond the science. Word of mouth - share the information beyond our usual audiences. Business/real estate/tourism and economic economy. Private land owners need to be drawn into this conversation through workshops. Shift the dialogue to shift funds to Sustainability
- 013 Conversations with social vulnerability/justice communities to understand what they need/want.

- 014 Coordinated understanding of management for carbon
- 015 Public education about what this means
Outreach to every AT state to align large landscape-scale planning (14)
Idea: bring land and natural resource agency leads in all 14 states together in sessions (regional groupings?) like this one to share the science/importance of the AT.
- 016 How do you expand reach and dollars of publics/private partnerships?
Opportunities for funding and buy-in if we can officially designate this as a protected climate corridor. A.T. is unique due to concentration of communities - network learning. Religious groups - stewardship of natural lands. Recreational aspect - transform it from hiking trail to segmenting by community
- 017 Build public awareness to drive political and public support. LTA did market study and found: people that were ready to act thought Climate change is a reason to do land conservation, and securing habitat for biodiversity. Distill the message for a consistent package (message and even legislative effort) that we bring to Congressional members. Need to have agreed policy platform around an East Coast initiative? Pieces are more aligned than it has been in the past. This is a solution that can make a difference, use the good news story aspects.
- 018 -Protect more land
-Highlight multi-benefits of conserving land
-More emphasis on Gap 2 lands
-Identify specific areas/parcels for resiliency and connectivity: align with OSI's studies
-Funding advocacy: can EO 14008 lead to funding for Appalachian climate connectivity opportunities?
-Invest in national scenic trails which undeniably line up with climate corridors across the US
- 019 (1) As far as operationalizing goes, we need to clearly identify the goals and set those goals up so they can be supported by monitoring efforts so we can know how to move forward and adjust as necessary. Bottom line: Be sure to determine how we are measuring success.
(2) Communications will also be key. How do we make Mark's work and all the amazing visual resources out there resonate with additional audiences, especially those who might be hesitant to embrace the concept of climate change?
(3) There needs to be increased connection of all the partners who are working on this topic, and better understanding of how private land protection and federal land management efforts work together to meet our goals of climate mitigation.
(4) Don't forget to take advantage of the momentum around 30x30; how do we harness that momentum here on the East Coast and demonstrate the A.T.'s potential as a climate corridor?
- 020 Use the amazing guidance out there on how to manage for carbon. We know what to do! Here's one resource. <https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/research/meeting-the-challenge-of-climate-change>

- 021
- Transboundary, interstate work. Can't look at this individually. Example: VT has done amazing work on wildlife mitigation, but in isolation. Federal and transboundary partners need to happen.
 - Top-down master planning doesn't work. Grassroots must share their priorities but with an eye-in-the-sky view.
 - AT caucus on Capitol Hill—great subscription from members of Congress. Not super active but would be great to help them convene more regularly (once or twice a year). ATC has an educational/advocacy role. Similarly with Schools to the Trail program. Mark's gotten great at this over the years. Mapping + explanations + data are getting better and more concise. Communication tools for folks in the AT region so they can perceive themselves as being in a climate corridor. Creating digestible comms materials.
 - Providing a toolbox for local land trusts and county commissioners. Open space bonds, different kinds of zoning. Federal + state funding. USFS (Elsa Hubball [sp?]) and the LCC. Is there a way to reframe this as an AT LCC?
 - Each state should know what the next state is working on and what challenges each faces. Monthly updates. Collaborative Landscape Initiatives—haven't been that active.
 - Layers of collaboratives now. RPCs, etc. A map/overlay of collaborative partnerships.
 - Connect the trail to proximate resilient landscapes like Pisgah NF and ADK park, trail networks.
 - Promoting the trail's benefit to community safety—mitigating the effects of climate-related disasters.
 - Bottom up: bring energy, passion, local knowledge. Top-down: bring funding, coordination, etc.
 - Tribal representation: not represented in the partnership. Should be more conversations.
- 022
- Translating the science into policy has two issues: one is the mechanics (the practice of getting policy structured informed by the science); the other is the politics of it (how can we communicate it in a way that can be understood by non-scientists). We focused mostly on the first issue. Some ideas: incorporate the climate science into state plans, like state wildlife action plans; orient funding towards climate resilience - make it an explicit criteria in a funding application - in both public and private grant making.
- 023
- The ATLP needs to expand its constituency in order to endure over time. Build unity through focusing on the diversity of people found along the AT.
- Need to build on local groups' knowledge, and use that to build a communications strategy.
- Need to focus on bridge building, language, and "keep the politics out of it."
- Incorporate work of key state agencies as highly credible local partners, including work on climate change effects.
- Bring leadership in the region together through meetings and excursions in nature—including on the AT.

2) What tools, guidance, or data do we need to better understand the idea of a climate corridor and bring this concept to life?

PARTICIPANT INPUT

- 001 NONE!?
- 002 No new data, but we need to ground truth and identify parcels that identify the places
- 003 REALLY IMPORTANT: We need advice/guidance from black, brown and indigenous peoples to know how to make this their corridor.
- 004 Policy expertise helping to implement the science.
- 005 How do we take the network and prioritize the top 20 road crossings across the northeast, for example.
- 006 A bit more on geology and soils to verify the broad data that we have
- 007 Looking at the whole Trail come up to a preliminary analysis of where you will deploy the strategies - most vulnerable - weakest links - is private land. Prioritize strategic engagement. Engagement must lead to commitment - Action is the protection - Sustainability - creating a partnership including funding to lead to institutionalizing the effort. Even protected areas will be transformed - part of Sustainability is an active stewardship and management as climate impacts the resources. Role of government should be to bring science to self-sustaining partnerships that steward the lands.
- 008 Identify 'environmental justice' communities along the corridors. Understand WHO benefits.
- 009 Community science projects (like AMC's I-naturalist AT phenology project) to engage people, expand data, bring concept to life.
- Common blueprint/map across AT region of connectivity/corridors
- Animal movement maps, bird migration maps
- Gap analysis to id priorities needing protection--who needs to know and use this information at all levels (fed, state, land trusts, communities, etc.)
- How to use AT Trail Community designation to further this science/work
- Economic benefit of protecting these resources to AT communities/region
- 010 Better spatial climate and biodiversity data, especially in mountains.
- Community science as a way to engage and build stewardship and advocates towards conservation.
- Once we have the policy platform defined bringing awesome visuals (flow map) to public/communicating science/campaign
- Identify who else needs to be participating in this effort, who is underrepresented? Equity question. We need tools and guidance from those underrepresented. groups.
- How do we do conservation in places where people live at the narrow pinch points? Ask LTA about presenting visuals to public (tested).

- 011 -Who else is having this conversation in this context? We are not yet coordinated. Time to ramp up.
-How much funded is needed? Study at the local and regional level then scale up for the ask
-We have the science, expertise and skills to implement the concept of the climate corridor across the Appalachians: Need to communicate this in an understandable way to the public, policy makers, legislators, and funders
-Inspire supporters to contribute to a continental scale opportunity
- 012 To better our communications efforts, focus on key species that people associate with the A.T. and the A.T. landscape and demonstrate how our efforts are impacting the abundance of those species levels.

The "Umbrella" model that Y2Y did is a great example of a communications method that resonated. Think top down in terms of species conservation.
- 013 Need to balance communication - climate corridor vs this is still our community in which we live and work
- 014 We already have a lot of the data, we need to make easily accessible tools to make the data available and understandable. Policies and funding need to be structured in such a way to bring the data into the conversation at the onset - and during post-conservation management and monitoring (which also needs funding support). Identify success stories as models to replicate successes and avoid failures, formalize this in our conversations. Endorsement of great local projects by NPS or ATC to elevate and connect these local projects to the landscape scale. Identify success stories as models to replicate successes and fully address management challenges/achieve the full potential for each site, formalize this in our conversations. Endorsement of great local projects by NPS or ATC to elevate and connect these local projects to the landscape scale efforts.
- 015 We are still thinking about this from a "snapshot" perspective; we need to develop more dynamic ways of understanding the landscape—including the emotional component through the arts.

Identify places where we can validate the corridor connections with local groups, thereby giving ownership to local actors.
- 016 Strong partnership and co-planning across other climate corridor National Trails

02 Insights for the Partnership

What insights from this meeting can you pass along to the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership for this effort?

PARTICIPANT INPUT

- 001 Making the AT everyone's corridor. Love the idea of making the corridor a place that celebrates the diversity of cultures and perspectives across the landscape.
- 002 Need to expand who is at the table. Greater local and state representation - land trusts, communities, local and state government.
Build sustainability and long-term stewardship into the conversations.
- 003 Don't forget traditional wildlife/ecosystem connectivity! Preserving and restoring connectivity on this landscape would be critical even with no climate change. This may be a helpful argument or focus for those who rebel at the word "climate."
- 004 Creation of a collective vision is key. Lots of good players at the table- but some missing- tribal, federal land managers, AFWA, state agencies. Communications tools are needed. The science is here- now prioritizing is also needed.
This is just the start- moving into the next step is exciting. And making sure that Federal opportunities are taken advantage of ASAP.
- 005 It appears that there were several similar themes in the comments generated during the breakout sessions. Can these be consolidated and synthesized into a set of notes we can review to identify opportunities, priorities and next steps for the final session of the ATLP annual meeting?
- 006 We have lots of the science now - we need to find ways to use the science to communicate the need. It was great to hear that everybody is on the same page with this.
We should also find a way to standardize use of climate science as the underpinning of all of the conservation efforts along the A.T. Yes there are other factors, but this should be the fundamental. It will make things easier.
- 007 Get new perspectives in the room and LISTEN to them.
- 008 Not to forget about the justice part of 30x30
- 009 I think there's a potential benefit from regular communication at boundaries such as states and adjacent land trusts or federal agencies so conservation efforts physically coordinate at points of potential disconnect.
- 010 I think the singular focus on one topic works well, as does the virtual format which should continue after COVID. Was struck with lack of diversity in those participating though--we really need to work on that!
- 011 We need to coalesce on a platform for action under 30x30

Saved Chat Text:

(Only relevant chats saved; time coding is in U.S. Eastern time)

- 10:34:44 Georgia Murray: what is the scale, grid size, of the climatic gradients?
- 10:38:28 Lynn Crump: Where can we get a copy of the corridor/connection map(s)?
- 10:38:52 Jessie Levine: <http://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>
- 10:38:57 Cathy Haffner, PA Game Commission: These layers are incorporated into the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Area Tool: <https://wildlifeactionmap.pa.gov>
- 10:39:51 Claire Jantz: You can explore and download the whole thing here:
<https://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>
- 11:20:24 Gary Tabor: isn't at the bottom
- 11:24:00 Gary Tabor: stay with AT
- 11:42:53 Georgia Murray: does it include soil carbon?
- 11:44:32 Lauren Imgrund: Will we be able to get a copy of all these slides?
- 11:49:31 Abigail Weinberg: I have a question for Mark, if there is time. Mark talked about coordinating our land protection work. I'm wondering if Mark feels we have protected the right places in the past. Does 'random' conservation work? what are the lost opportunities if we don't?
- 11:54:58 Jean Brennan: Going forward, I see the need to frame the issue past getting partners engaged, to how with the ATLP make sure to deliver the technical support to facilitate on-going actions under changing climate conditions.
- 11:58:20 Lauren Volgenau-Knapp: Have to jump to another call. Thanks for this great presentation and discussion!
- 11:59:02 Anne Sentz (Appalachian Trail Conservancy): Thanks so much, Lauren!
- 11:59:06 Stephen Lindeman: Amen sister!
- 12:00:34 Claire Jantz: Folks thanks so much, I have a 12:00 meeting that I need to go to!
- 12:01:29 Mark Anderson: Amazing group and discussion! Thank you for inviting me. Let's work together to conserve it!
- 12:01:42 Aaron Troncoso (he/him): Thank you all