

APPALACHIAN TRAIL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

NOVEMBER 1-2, 2022 | NATIONAL CONSERVATION TRAINING CENTER, WEST VIRGINIA



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Executive Summary

Over 60 conservation leaders gathered at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia on November 1 and 2 for the Annual Meeting of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP). The ATLP includes representatives from federal and state agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, and local land trusts who are dedicated to ensuring an intact and enduring Appalachian Landscape. This was the seventh annual meeting hosted by ATLP and the first time gathering in-person since 2019.

ATLP's Vision & Mission

Our Vision

- The vision of the ATLP is of an Appalachian Trail and surrounding landscape that connect people of diverse communities and nature, forever safeguarding the backbone and heart of the Wild East.

Our Mission

- The mission of the ATLP is to connect the wild, scenic, and cultural wonders of the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape.

Meeting Purpose & Goals

The purpose of the meeting was to provide support and connection to regional partners through inspirational case stories, networking, and action planning to catalyze local action for landscape-scale conservation impacts.

Meeting Goals:

- Connect partners to rebuild the relationships necessary for Partnership success.
- Provide meaningful content and opportunities to engage that will move us toward implementation of the [ATLP Strategic Plan](#).
- Identify actions for partners to help ATLP implement the Strategic Plan and for ATLP to help our partners implement on-the-ground conservation.

2022 Successes

- Successfully hosting the first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019
- Receiving more proposals for ATC's [Wild East Action Fund](#) than ever before
- Releasing the [Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership Charter](#)
- Hosting 2 virtual learning sessions
 - [Thinking Locally](#): Regional Perspectives on Community-Driven Conservation in the Appalachian Landscape
 - [Thinking Globally](#): Science & Policy Drivers for Large Landscape Conservation in the Appalachian Landscape
- Release of the Climate Advisory Group's report, [Conserving an Intact and Enduring Appalachian Landscape: Designing a Corridor in Response to Climate Change](#)
- Click [HERE](#) to learn about the many conservation successes ATLP's partners experienced across the Appalachian Landscape in 2022

2023 Goals

- Develop a brand identity by August 2023.

- Coordinating, Communications, and Strategic Conservation committees are convened, active, and functioning by the end of the year
 - We'll release a call for committee members for our Communications Committee and Strategic Conservation Committee through our [eNews](#)
- Host the 2023 Annual Meeting
- The Steering Committee is fully built out with new members and diverse representation
 - Initial steps completed to building a strategic engagement strategy to diversify the representation of the ATLP as related to the ATLP Strategic Plan
- Host virtual learning sessions to promote shared-learning and amplify partners' conservation work
- Goal for further exploration and focused discussion: How can the ATLP help our partners better understand and access all of the Federal funding for conservation that's currently available?

Conservation Session 1: Strategic Conservation Planning – Conservation Decision-Making Tool Roundtable

During this session, we investigated the methodologies and approaches of conservation decision-making tools being developed across the AT Landscape. We discussed the values in the methodologies and success/progress/challenges using the tools to date. We also considered why we prioritize conservation projects and discussed opportunities to leverage prioritizations to build capacity.

Session Speakers

Simon Rucker – Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

Simon is the Executive Director for the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust in Portland, Maine. He's served on the ATLP Steering Committee since 2017. In 2020, MATLT received funding from ATC's Wild East Action Fund to support development of a regional conservation prioritization. The Maine Appalachian Trail Geospatial Information for Conservation tool assembles datasets that reflect the range of social and ecological values provided by and relevant to the Appalachian Trail Landscape in Maine.

By incorporating climate science into strategic land protection and stewardship efforts, MATLT will conserve land that has the natural ability to capture and store carbon. The tool was developed as a model that could be used across the Appalachian Landscape. Therefore, the data parameters draw directly from National Park Service guidance on priority categories for protection of the entire Appalachian Trail.

Speaker Resources:

- MATLT's Website: <https://matlt.org>
- MATGIC Tool Report: <https://matlt.org/matltwordpress/wp-content/uploads/Maine-Appalachian-Trail-2020-FINAL.pdf>
- Proceedings of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Science & Stewardship Symposium (page 23): <https://appalachiantrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ATC-Science-and-Stewardship-Symposium-2022.pdf>

Emmie Cornell – Mainspring Conservation Trust

Emmie Cornell is the Land Conservation Manager for Mainspring Conservation Trust in Franklin, North Carolina. The organization received funding through ATC's Wild East Action Fund in 2021 to expand Mainspring's Conservation Planning Tool to protect the A.T. Landscape in Western North Carolina. The funding also increases Mainspring's capacity to work with partners to implement the tool and protect the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains and resources along the Trail.

Mainspring's Conservation Planning Tool provides essential decision-support for identifying new projects by clearly delineating focal areas. These focal areas are then overlaid with the A.T. viewshed for targeted conservation to protect the characteristics of the trail that attract so many visitors to the area. Additionally, Mainspring leverages their tool to identify mutual priorities with agency partners to further collaboration between the land trust and state/federal land managers.

Speaker Resource:

- Mainspring's Website: <https://www.mainspringconserves.org>

Evin Carter – Southern Appalachian Man & The Biosphere

Evin Carter is a Staff Scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and serves as the Executive Director of the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB) program. SAMAB is a member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the administrative body of the UNESCO-recognized Southern Appalachian Biosphere Region. SAMAB’s mission is to promote the natural world and the health and well-being of those individuals and communities that live, depend, and/or recreate on it; and to foster and support integrated environmental research, education, and training—especially in relationship to national and global changes and their effects upon the region.

SAMAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves promote economic development as a driver for conservation. To support their efforts, they developed the Southern Appalachian Vitality Index (SAVI). SAVI categorizes the interwoven nature of humans and their natural, social, built, and economic environments. This approach to natural resource protection is designed to assist local governments, interest groups, and the public in identifying sustainable approaches to economic growth, healthy communities, and protected landscapes in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

Speaker Resources:

- Southern Appalachian Biosphere Region: <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/eu>
- SAMAB’s Website: <https://www.samab.org>
- Southern Appalachian Vitality Index: <http://southernappalachianvitalityindex.org>

Group Discussion Prompt and Responses

What should your colleagues know about the benefits and challenges of using conservation prioritizations?
<p>Outcomes & Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating environmental values and achieving consensus among multiple groups• Improved integration of landscape features such as canopy cover and floodplains• Increased awareness of the connection between the landscape and public health issues• Clear boundaries that allow you to say no to projects that don’t align with your priorities or focal areas• Prioritizations can be leveraged to acquire funding by justifying a proposal• Identify where organizational, local, regional, and agency priorities overlap• Outcomes of prioritizations need to be ground-truthed. Especially if the data is not very recent.
<p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It’s important to analyze whether or not you have the staff and funding capacity to use the tool that is developed.• There is limited knowledge of how to integrate social science into prioritizations and there’s a lack of capacity to do so.• There’s a severe learning curve in learning how to use GIS tools. If a consultant cannot be contracted, substantial time should be given to learn the program.
<p>Data & Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We don’t effectively incorporate threat analysis into prioritizations. We can improve our prioritizations to make them predictive of where land cover change is expected to occur, so our conservation efforts are more strategic and targeted.

- The publicly available National Register of Historic Places data is often of poor quality and difficult to access.
- The National Land Cover Database is only updated periodically so prioritization outputs can be out of date before the project even begins.
- Data differs across large landscapes making it difficult to scale an analysis to a large geographic area, especially across multiple states.
- Too much data can lead to outputs that are too restricted to be useful.
- Beware of analysis paralysis.

Communication

- It is essential to include meaningful interest group participation when developing a conservation prioritization tool. Mapping brings people together to assess and discuss mitigation options.
- GIS can be a strong tool for storytelling
- Don't wait for all the answers to act. It can be challenging to turn data into action and implementation. So, take advantage of opportunities as they arise.
- There is a disconnect between the information produced and the public's ability to understand/use it. This limits how we create/support policy decisions. And landowners find it alarming to see their parcel on someone's priority map.
- It is difficult to align differing priorities. Ecological priorities may differ from conservation priorities. Agricultural priorities can conflict with ecological restoration and conservation.
- Communication should be built into the project scope from the beginning. Scientists need to create communication plans that include community training, facilitation of conversations to share/tell the story of the data, and how the community can use the data. Communication needs to be focused to result in action.

Conservation Session 2: AT Landscape Values Aligned in Community Driven Conservation

This session provided three inspirational case stories at various scales that demonstrate how communities are supporting AT Landscape Values expressed in the ATLP Strategic Plan through community-driven conservation.

Session Speakers

Nicole Hersch – New River Valley Regional Commission

Nicole is a Regional Planner and Community Designer with the New River Valley Regional Commission. The Regional Commission has implemented multiple projects to connect citizens to nature, catalyze economic development and elevate community priorities. The New River Valley Livability Initiative is a multi-county effort grounded in livability through natural resources, community, and economic planning that supports the recreational, scenic, and historic values of the AT Landscape.

The Natural Resource Working Group collected citizen feedback to elevate community priorities in natural resources. The top three priorities were 1) The New River and water quality protection and improvement 2) Outdoor recreation and tourism and 3) Natural environment protection and preservation. As a result of this work, the community held a dialogue on race convened by the Community Group, a partnership was developed between the VT Invasive Species Working Group and the Town of Blacksburg, the region developed a plan for New River Water Trail Expansion, and a mountain bike park and pollinator garden were built.

Speaker Resources:

- Plant Southwest Virginia Website: <https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/plantswvanatives>
- New River Water Trail Website: <https://www.newriverwatertrail.com/NRWT/>
- New River Watershed Roundtable Website: <https://www.newriverwatershed.org/>
- New River Valley Regional Commission Website: <https://nrvc.org/>

Mike Waddell – Town of Gorham, New Hampshire

Mike Waddell arrived in Gorham, NH off the Appalachian Trail in August 1974. In 2022, Mike is the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, chair of the Town Conservation Committee and chair of the 6,000-acre Town Forest and Committee. Over the last 48 years, Gorham has struggled through the loss of pulp and paper mills and the closure of a local shoe manufacturing facility. Today, Gorham has overcome those challenges by leveraging recreational opportunities for economic development.

Recently designated as an AT Community, the Town is developing its blue blaze trail connections to the AT. And in 2019, Gorham received EPA funding through the Recreation Economies for Rural Communities program to plan new, environmentally friendly uses along the Androscoggin River to better connect downtown Gorham with the river and its assets. Ultimately the Town hopes that by preserving the existing landscape and improving recreational opportunities they will encourage new businesses and residents to visit, invest, and live in the community.

Speaker Resources:

- Rural Tourism Academy Summary Report: <https://northernforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NFRTA-Gorham-Summary-Report-R6.pdf>

- Press Release: <https://northernforest.org/gorham-nh-moves-ahead-with-sustainable-tourism-approach/>

Pastor Michael Martin – Stillmeadow Community Fellowship

Pastor Michael serves in the Christian community as a pastor, counselor, and mentor to pastors. He shared an inspiring story of individuals working together for the common good, building the PeacePark. In 2019, Stillmeadow Community Fellowship brought together worshippers, environmentalists, neighbors, and students on a collaborative project with the USFS to restore 10 acres of un-managed forest adjacent to the church. In addition to beautifying the community, the PeacePark implemented necessary improvements to mediate pervasive flooding.

Today, this neglected urban forest is an oasis with trails, meditation stations, an amphitheater and vegetable gardens. This greenspace is also an introduction to nature for many community members who do not have adequate access to outdoor recreation opportunities. Building the park brought together a diverse group of individuals from the community and created strong and lasting partnerships with organizations like the University of Delaware, Baltimore Green Space and the National Wildlife Federation.

Speaker Resources:

- PeacePark Webpage: <https://stillmeadow.community/peaceparkproject>
- Baltimore Sun Article: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/features/bs-fe-stillmeadow-church-environment-20210315-zx3gj4bkjzcr5lat2dpqlcxnfa-story.html>

Conservation Session 3: Unlocking Conservation Funding & Financing in the A.T. Landscape

This session looked at efforts to bring private, public, and non-traditional funding and financing sources to conservation projects in the A.T. Landscape. Case stories discussed how to access funding and financing mechanisms, highlighted impacts and transferable lessons learned, and shared opportunities that are ripe for the ATLP to support.

Session Speakers

Jay Leutze – Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

Jay Leutze lives in the southern Appalachian Mountains on the North Carolina-Tennessee border. He is a leading voice for state and federal conservation funding for investment in public lands. He is a national spokesman for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Coalition and is also the Acquisition Specialist and senior board advisor for Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. He is the author of *Stand Up that Mountain: The Battle to Save One Small Community in the Wilderness Along the Appalachian Trail* (Simon & Schuster, 2012).

Jay discussed the current federal and state funding outlook for conservation and how to best prepare for funding projects in the A.T. Landscape. There is a historical amount of LWCF funding available in the Appalachian Landscape. The Inflation Reduction Act dedicated \$700 million for the Forest Legacy Program to support projects that protect climate resilient working forestland and that increase carbon sequestration.

Speaker Resources:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition: <https://lwcfcoalition.org>
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Website: <https://appalachian.org>

Seth Brown – Quantified Ventures

Quantified Ventures works to catalyze impact for the greater good by leveraging data, finance, innovation, partnerships, and policy. Seth leads Quantified Venture's Forestry and Land Use practice. His work enables land managers, private landowners, conservationists, and governments to take on ambitious projects to better protect and share their resources.

Their Forestry and Land Use area of expertise employs project outcomes to accelerate conservation, develop outdoor recreation assets, preserve watersheds, promote forest health, and create jobs. They address community needs by leveraging ecosystem services, aligning stakeholders, and driving change. Projects they've successfully implemented include addressing over visitation and climate resilient amenities in Inyo National Forest (CA), building the Velomont Trail and Huts system to connect rural communities (VT), and developing Baileys Trail System as a recreation destination to drive local economic development (OH).

Speaker Resources:

- Forestry & Land Use Practice Webpage: <https://www.quantifiedventures.com/forestry-and-land-use>

J.T. Horn – The Trust for Public Land

J.T. is the Director of the National Trails Initiative at the Trust for Public Land. His experience in land conservation includes creating new municipally managed community forests, conserving large

timberland parcels, preserving farmland, protecting trails, and building citizen coalitions in support of conservation projects. J.T. discussed the current conservation climate: increased federal funding for conservation, increased adoption of ecosystem services funding models, a lack of realty professionals and smaller parcels.

He explained that these trends increase the complexity of land transactions and extend timelines. To solve these issues, we need new strategies to provide equitable access to public funding and increased outreach and facilitation to capture community perspectives. Bridge funding with low interest rates is needed, as is more philanthropy to support staff time. As an example, J.T. described the funding engineering and amount of time it is taking to conserve the Dundee Community Forest in New Hampshire.

Speaker Resources:

- Trust for Public Land’s Website: <https://www.tpl.org>
- Dundee Community Forest Project: <https://www.usvlt.org/dundee-community-forest-project>

Group Discussion Prompt and Responses

What questions do you have? Where can we dive deeper?
<p>Federal Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Chesapeake region we observed some states did not have sufficient capacity to even apply for American the Beautiful funding. Are others seeing that challenge too? Ideas for building capacity? • What doesn’t LWCF fund (transactional costs, match, interim land hold costs)? Can the ATLP be innovative to cover the gaps given the long timeline for LWCF grants? • Could we make an advocacy push to simplify federal applications and requirements to address a root of the problem?
<p>Funding Local Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What funding opportunities exist for nature-based infrastructure planning at the local level? How can states assist at the local scale? What role do conservation organizations play? • Where can we unlock funding for convening/facilitating community conservation conversations? • How do we get landowners to be proactive in preparing for land transitions and transactions? • What’s the carrying burden of local land trusts to drive local campaigns (tapping residents for support) and/or taking on long-term ownership roles? Is this sustainable? • How do we harness more private investments in land conservation. How do we ensure they understand the due diligence needs and timelines?
<p>Lack of Realty Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the strategy for the bottleneck issue created by the lack of realty professionals? Do we need an appraiser’s academy? • What would it take to support/fund certification of more appraisers that meet Yellow Book standards?

- Why are we losing surveyors and appraisers who no longer want to be involved in conservation transactions? Liability? Bureaucracy? Age? Better money with fewer hassles in development projects?
- Could there be liability insurance for appraisers, the way that doctors and lawyers have for malpractice, that would help defend them when a client is audited and sues because their deduction is challenged by the IRS?

Communications

- How can we prepare to be strategically ready to respond to opportunities that suddenly appear and not be caught flat footed?
- NEED: Consistent messaging that partners can use to educate donors on the need for general operating funds, support for qualified staff, and long-term stewardship funding.

Breakout Working Session: Implementing the Strategic Plan

The purpose of the breakout session was to define near-term action recommendations for ATLP and its partners to accomplish which implement the ATLP Strategic Plan. Meeting attendees selected one of three topics they would like to discuss: Community conservation, conservation planning, and project implementation. This feedback will be further refined by the ATLP Steering Committee to inform future action planning.

Community Driven Conservation & A.T. Landscape Values

How can ATLP leverage and support our individual, organizational, and collective role to better benefit communities?

Communications & Outreach

- Create a community engagement toolkit. Engagement with communities has been focused on what the community can do for the A.T. That needs to be flipped. We need to ask the communities what they need to accomplish their goals.
- Engage new communities by communicating the value of the landscape in terms of their priorities. Some communities are physically close to the trail, but it is invisible in the community.
- Connect county/regional plans and our work. Work with communities to leverage the community engagement they've already done to support their plans.
- Develop education tools to inform and empower community leaders and champions.
- Create marketing for rural areas/communities on the trail that are not facing overuse and could accommodate more hikers.
- We need a better understanding of what issues our partners are facing that intersect with the community needs (water quality has been a historic intersection).
- Create a white paper or article on why A.T. Communities are great places to live.
- Understand existing roles of ATLP partner organizations and communicate and coordinate them in a community outreach strategy.
- Community outreach is planned but frequently falls out of priorities for action.

Capacity

- Economic development is not ATLP's expertise, we should build relationships with those that can guide us in that arena to better support communities.
- Increased ATC staffing at the regional level for community engagement.
- Assist communities with grant applications.
- Assistance and training for communities on avoiding over tourism and recreational crowding. Plugging them into regional recreational alternatives for visitors to disperse from crowded locations.
- Local and regional ATLP partners provide support for community projects.
- Connect local land trusts and communities.
- Create an NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program position focused on A.T. Communities to support planning.

Improved Access & Economic Development

- How do we help bridge the transportation gap for people who do not have access to the trail?
- Communities that can embrace the trail are challenged because they would most likely want to embrace the other recreational uses that could come with embracing an outdoor economy (motorized/mtn bikes) that are typically not embraced around the trail.
- Elevate economic revitalization – small towns need the next economic driver for their community.

Funding

- ATLP should advocate for federal and state policies and funding to support community planning and project implementation.
- EPA administers the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities for planning assistance.

How can the Climate Advisory Group's report, *Conserving an Intact and Enduring Appalachian Landscape: Designing a Corridor in Response to Climate Change*, be used in our work and to benefit communities?

Communications

- What are the ways that ATLP/ATC/NPS are already messaging on the climate benefits of the trail. Flip the script – what is important to the community and how does that connect back to the “defined benefits” from ATLP.
- The CAG report is a resource for communities to integrate climate resiliency into community planning and communicate outcomes to residents. The report title may be off-putting for communities broadly.
- Support community assistance to underserved or disadvantaged people in an outreach strategy to provide outdoor experiences.

Empowering Communities

- How do we get the communities around the trail to feel a sense of ownership for the trail/natural resources? (RARE international model?) Localize climate issues so they resonate and focus on solutions that people can do in their personal lives.
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle and connections to the outdoors is a huge (challenging) financial opportunity for conservation. Strengthen the connections between health and the outdoors to drive funding.
- Clubs could lead hikes for local officials, community organizations, faith leaders, Rotary and Lions Club. Include subject matter experts skilled in communicating climate change, watershed protection, etc.

Data & Funding

- Communities should be aware of funding opportunities (IRA) for water, wildlife, and restoration. Add an addendum to the report outlining funding opportunities for communities.
- Integrate data and information on demographics and human communities into decision-making support tools (like GIS prioritizations)
- Socioecological climate vulnerability assessments that measure impacts on ecosystem services to communities.

- Elevate the CAG Report and our climate resilience efforts to help partners and communities access USFS’s Forest Legacy Program and Community Forest Program.

What are the communication and messaging needs for our work on community-driven conservation?

Specific Messages

- Create messaging on the healing powers of nature (physical/mental/community).
- Reframe how we think about “support for the trail” (i.e. voting). The end-goal is not always boots on the trail.

Communication Materials

- Private lands management guidance – Create a “Good Neighbors” handbook.
 - See Doug Tallamy’s [Homegrown National Park](#)
- Create a local level communication and outreach strategy for ATLP that leverages and coordinates existing programs and clubs.
- Provide communication products and outreach program templates for ATLP members and A.T. Communities.

Partnership

- ATC/ATLP cannot do this alone. We need the right (new/unconventional) partners in the room when we engage with communities and hear their needs. The energy that comes from this engagement may not always be focused on the trail and that needs to be okay.
- There needs to be collaborative engagement with the right partners in the room (ATC/planning/health/community groups).
- Are ATC/NPS ready to stretch their mission/mandate to foster this type of collaboration? What about ATLP’s other partner organizations?
- Partner with Cooperative Extensions and state tourism offices.

Elevating Community Priorities and Stories

- Learn about the community – more than just their needs. Be authentic and be prepared to hear things that you might not want to hear.
- Work with and respect the influencers/champions in the communities.
- Meet people where they are. What angle is most important to communities? Water? Recreation? Forests?
- Share community success stories authentically through community member voices.

Terms to define:

- What is a “project”? Definition and criteria? Outcomes? Goals? Acquisition? Easement? Conservation? Restoration? Community engagement and capacity-building? Human dimension and ecological dimension? Shovel ready?
 - Find another term for “shovel-ready?”
- What is a minimally viable protected area? How can we get there and prioritize that level of conservation → what does success look like?

Strategic Conservation Planning

Is it feasible and appropriate to have a trail-wide decision-support tool?

Yes, And...

- It is appropriate, but the expectations need to be realistic. This can't or won't be a black and white answer or score per parcel, but it can be a strong guidance tool.
- Map the geographic areas of the partners who are participating and the actions that they're taking (restoration, land acquisition, etc.).
- Incorporate trail centric criteria to evaluate local connectivity as well as landscape scale connectivity in more rural areas to consistently evaluate projects trail wide.
- We need to be able to measure and track progress, to see the contributions that ATLP members are making toward the strategic vision.
- Local differences need to be incorporated, including different regional strengths and challenges.
- It could be a multi-scalar tool – both broad and specific. The datasets that are considered at each scale would have to be strategic.

Benefits

- Connect properties that add to connectivity.
- Leverage funds other than trail funds (Battlefields in VA/PA, etc.).
- Facilitate a conversation about shared values among the partners in the ATLP.
- Identify “targeted parcels” to catalyze the strategic conservation goal of the Strategic Plan.
- Decision support at larger scales for broad wildlife movement pinch points and transportation planning, and at smaller scales for parcel prioritizations and targeted funder and landowner outreach.

Challenges

- What data is appropriate to be included at the trail-wide scale? Is it possible to have trail data as well as landscape data in the same tool? The data that's available varies in spatial scale and spatial extent. The bigger you go, the more general it will be.
- Weighting the data instead of letting it speak for itself might muddy the priorities that are shown. For example, a parcel might be very important in one category but not compared to a parcel that is a lesser priority in several categories in a weighted model.
- What is the decision that is being targeted? Land acquisition or a broader suite of actions?

How might the strategic conservation committee elevate our organization and collective work using decision support tools?

Data & Opportunity Sharing

- Provide data to partners so that they can leverage it for funding and present it to funders in an understandable manner.
- Justify new projects using data and science. Highlight new areas identified by the tool that aren't currently focus areas.

- Help with the projects that aren't "fancy" – the small connector pieces that contribute to the contiguity of the corridor.

Increase Collective Impact

- This could both ways: ATC identifies parcels for local groups and local groups bring projects to ATC to help identify additional resources to close on projects.
- Tool match partner organizations to connect them with mutually beneficial resources and to co-create new resources.
- Keep track of funding opportunities.
- Identify potential areas for trail relocations and communicate it to the Partnership so the clubs and partners can work together to conserve those spaces.

Improve Communications

- Rally people around what a vision of success looks like on the landscape and for ATLP.
- Pair this with a communication strategy to reach all potential partners doing work in the ATLP geography. Ensure the right people are at the table (equitable participation).

Questions

- Where is the capacity going to come from to support the strategic conservation exercise outlined in the strategic plan? ATC?

Project Implementation

Thinking about our upcoming funding conversation, how can ATLP create a project pipeline to better connect partners and elevate shovel ready projects?

Actions

- Create a network of emerging projects across the A.T. Landscape that exemplify the landscape conservation goals, elevate the significance of the landscape as a climate corridor, and tell the story of Appalachia.
- Pool projects across communities or within a region into one proposal that meets multiple criteria.
- Broaden the 100,000 acres we need to conserve, look at the HUC12 shell.
- Learn about the culture of conservation in each region – some places will focus on donations, whereas in other areas payment is expected.
- Put together a fund to pay soft costs to help move projects towards completion.
- Develop a menu of actions that different actors can undertake – e.g. state agencies, land trusts, local government, interest groups.
- Identify *all* parcels that are critical to connectivity, regardless of size. Small parcels are often excluded in favor of larger parcels. This can be reinforced by traditional funder expectations.
- Connect with the new East Coast Indigenous Landscape Partnership to explore opportunities to build partnerships

Professional Development & Capacity Building

- Attend Quantified Ventures [SRF Academy](#) and work with their coaches for ATLP specific recommendations.
- Provide or identify those that provide technical assistance to help partners and communities identify funding sources and assist with grant writing.
- Provide training and guidance to ATLP partners to improve community engagement.

Leverage Funding

- Leverage non-traditional models for conservation, like flood resilience and source water protection, to access IRA funds.
- Convene a group of funders, including state agencies, to inform them on all the current funding opportunities, share partner projects, and identify sources of match.
- Continue creating a narrative around a climate corridor and leverage the bigger story to tap into funding from non-local sources.
- The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is collecting projects through America the Beautiful and TNC has identified the Appalachians as a global priority. How can we build on this?

Build Federal & State Agency Partnerships

- Secure a NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance conservation/congressional fellow to focus on the A.T. Landscape.
- Investigate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Delaware River Basin Restoration Program to determine if it is a model that would work for ATLP.
- Facilitate relationships between communities and state and federal agencies.
- Look at administrative changes needed for federal lands transactions to be more efficient
- Determine how to provide technical assistance in states that have very limited staffing and/or can't get money out the door even if it's there.