

## **NC Appalachian Trail License Plate Grant Program Guidelines and Instructions**

### **Grant Goals**

This unique grant program helps ATC fulfill its mission for the portions of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) located within the state of North Carolina. ATC's mission is multi-faceted and broad in scope: to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail, ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come. A wide range of grant proposals can be considered, but it is imperative that all applicants show how implementing the proposal will benefit the portions of the Trail within North Carolina. All grant funds must be spent within North Carolina, unless specific supplies, services and equipment are not available in state.

### **Grant Background**

Funding for this grant program is provided through the sale and renewal of North Carolina Appalachian Trail specialty license plates. Revenue generated through this program is used to benefit the A.T. and its environs in North Carolina. ATC will award up to \$30,000 in grants for each cycle.

### **Grant Guidelines**

A separate application with supporting documents is required for each grant project request. Please submit your grant project requests electronically by using the ATC online portal.

**Grant requests may not exceed \$5,000, although special requests may be made.** Applications will be reviewed in February, and applicants will be notified of the status of their applications around mid-March.

Grant funds must be spent in North Carolina.

Projects eligible for grants must document that implementing the project will enhance, educate, conserve, protect, and/or maintain the portions of the Appalachian Trail located within North Carolina.

**All grant projects must relate to the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina.** Examples of types of projects that would be considered include:

1. Physical projects
  - Shelter or privy construction, relocation or repair work
  - Materials for appropriate signs
  - Major tool purchases, to be used in NC
  - Trailway bridge construction
  - Trail construction
  - Trail maintenance
2. Start-up funds for major public-service projects
  - Initial development of Trail, community, or club brochure
  - Development of materials for new educational programs (i.e., slide shows, written materials, specialized training) incorporating the Trail's resources

- Costs of contract staff on a short-term basis to assist Trail or club programs
  - Training for Trail work, publications, club organizations, volunteer motivation and development, etc.
3. Major one-time financial needs
    - Assistance to complete construction of major Trailway relocations including capital improvements (e.g., bridges, parking areas)
    - Assistance in developing a fund-raising or membership drive for the Trail
    - Repair or replacement of damaged Trail or Trail-related facilities due to unanticipated event(s)
  4. Projects to enhance long-term A.T. management abilities
    - Strategic planning
    - Leadership development
    - Development of view shed and/or watershed conservation plans and projects (especially involving local communities, see #7)
  5. Natural heritage and environmental monitoring projects
    - Monitoring tools for volunteers
    - Invasive plant, wildlife, water or air quality monitoring, workshops or mitigation
    - Rare species protection
  6. Education and outreach
    - School service-learning initiatives
    - Workshops and educational lectures
    - Outreach initiatives to diversify Trail stewardship
    - Interpretive exhibits
    - Trail-related safety or emergency preparedness initiatives
  7. A.T. Community partnerships
    - Trailhead enhancements
    - Maps
    - Interpretive signs
    - Joint planning efforts
    - Development of physical facility for public information/education center for the Trail

### **Matching requirement**

Applicants are expected to provide matching contributions with labor, money, or in-kind goods. The match should be at least half the value of the amount of grant funds requested (e.g., a request of \$2,000 should have a match of at least \$1,000). Volunteer time for projects may vary based on the [Independent Sector](#) research. A higher level of matching funds is a positive grant evaluation factor.

### **Publicity**

To increase the visibility of the A.T. License Plate program, the A.T. cooperative management system, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the Appalachian Trail, ATC requires that grant recipients meet public relations requirements, such as local news releases or appropriate signage documenting that the project was funded in part through this program. Documentation of this publicity will be required in the final grant

report. Assistance with publicity efforts is encouraged and can be attained by contacting ATC at (828)-348-1911. ATC reserves the perpetual right to use any photos or written materials submitted by the grantee, including the final report.

### **Project Endorsement**

Applicants must submit the **Agency Endorsement Form** to the appropriate Federal land managing agency for the area where project work will occur and submit the **Club Endorsement Form** to the local A.T. maintaining club. Applicants are encouraged to seek endorsements *at least* four weeks prior to the application deadline. No projects along the A.T. will be funded without agency endorsement. Agency and Club Endorsement Forms should be submitted when submitting the final application.

### **Adherence to Guidelines and Policies**

ATC's Southern Regional Office is available to assist in identifying and following appropriate guidelines and policies for grant-funded projects. While ATC staff is always glad to help, ultimate responsibility for all aspects of proposed projects remains that of the applicant.

- All volunteers participating in A.T. license plate funded projects on federal property must be enrolled in the volunteers in Forests (VIF) and/or Volunteers in Parks (VIP) programs and must adhere to certification and safety procedures of those agencies. Go to [Volunteer Protection Program](#) on the ATC website for instructions and support materials that deal with volunteer safety.
- Projects may also require a Special Use Permit (SUP) from the USDA Forest Service or National Park Service. Contact the appropriate agency to learn requirements. The federal SUP process can take up to 60 days to complete. In order for this proposal to be considered, all required SUPs must be approved or pending approval at the time of application.

Call the ATC Regional Office for assistance in signing up volunteers for the VIF or VIP programs for work on the A.T., for contact information in obtaining a Special Use Permit, or A.T. club contact information.

- No volunteers may operate a chainsaw or crosscut saw along the Appalachian Trail or in national forests or parks unless they are certified for use of those tools by the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service, or ATC. Refer to [Chain-saw and Crosscut Saw Training and Certification Policy](#).

All grant recipients should follow Leave No Trace backcountry guidelines and be aware of [group-use and primitive-ethics](#) policies. See the [Local Management Planning Guide](#) on ATC's website for reference. Section 2(J) details managing the Trail for a primitive experience. Section 3(B) provides information on special events and large group use. Section 3(F) provides information on Leave-No-Trace and minimum-impact programs. Additional information on Trail crew safety and skills training can be found in Section 2(K).

If your project involves new facility construction, please coordinate the project with the ATC Southern Regional Office and the appropriate agency. If you would like assistance with preparing your proposal, please contact us at (828) 348 1911 or [soro@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:soro@appalachiantrail.org).