

ATC Regional Partnership Committee

Overview of Regional Partnership Committees

There are four Regional Partnership Committees (RPCs) corresponding to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) four regions, known as Northeast (NERO), Mid-Atlantic (MARO), the Virginias (VARO), and Southern (SORO). Each Trail club selects its own representatives (a primary and an alternate) to serve on the regional RPC. Each RPC elects its Chair, and RPCs may also have vice chairs and secretarial roles defined in their guiding documentation.

The Regional Partnership Committees (RPCs) provide a critical communication link between Trail-maintaining clubs and ATC's Regional Offices, Stewardship Council, agency partners, and community partners. While the RPCs do not create ATC policy, they play an important role in advising on development or refinement of Trail management and conservation policies. They also focus on matters of particular interest to the strength and longevity of A.T. Club partners, particularly as it relates to volunteer engagement and trail operations. They serve as a voice for volunteers and as active advisory groups for the ATC regional director and the ATC Stewardship Council.

The RPC:

- Advises the ATC regional office on items of interest or concern.
- Exchanges information and experience with the other clubs and other management partners in the region.
- Learns of and provides input to the Council on issues of Trailwide concern.
- Raises issues for consideration by the Council and the Board.
- Review and endorse A.T. Community applications, as needed.

Primary and Alternate Representatives

Each Trail-maintaining club will have two representatives on the RPC, a primary and an alternate. However, when a vote is taken, each club is only entitled to one vote made by the primary if attending, otherwise by the alternate. The same job description applies to both the primary and alternate, because the alternate must be able to substitute for the primary representative.

RPC and Stewardship Council Role in Cooperative Management

Each Regional Partnership Committee elects a member to represent the RPC to the ATC Stewardship Council's Partnership Coordinating Committee (PCC). The purpose of the Stewardship Council is to guide conservation and trail management for the length of the Trail through policies and guidance. The policies and guidance developed by the Stewardship Council are a collaborative product of public and private A.T. partners working to define a shared approach for the best interest of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. See the [Policy Development Flowchart](#) for more information on the intersection of RPCs and Stewardship Council pertaining to this work.

Trail Club RPC Primary Representative Position Description

The primary serves as the information conduit of communications and information gathering and sharing between the club and the Regional Partnership Committee of the ATC – representing ATC's interests to the club and the club's interests to ATC.

The Primary Representative responds to ATC inquiries and forwards information from ATC or APPA to club leaders with context and additional information, as necessary. The Primary Representative gains information from their club on matters of discussion at RPC meetings so *that perspectives shared represent club, rather than individual, perspective.*

Duties and Responsibilities of Club Representative to RPC

- Attend two meetings a year: one in the fall and one in the spring.
 - Represent the views of the club at each meeting
 - Contribute to discussions that will inform trail management and policy.
 - Designate an alternate if unable to attend a meeting and prepare the alternate to represent the club
- Serve as the primary liaison between ATC and the club, managing communications (requests, alerts, announcements, and reflections from meetings and meeting materials) primarily by email, passing all along to their own club leaders and members in a timely manner, and ensuring fulfillment of expectations from their club to partners.
- Be alert to agency related updates that may merit sharing with other members of the club who hold direct responsibility and accountability to agency partners.
- Provide updates about relevant club successes, challenges, and updates ATC and RPC on club leadership changes.
- Participate in other virtual or in-person gatherings throughout the year; these may include regional calls monthly or quarterly, or other time-critical business between meetings.
- Respond to requests for feedback on proposed A.T. management policies or issues in a timely manner.

Qualifications

The following are desirable qualifications for the RPC representatives:

- Demonstrable skills and experience in effective A.T. management
- Familiarity with club operations, trail maintenance programs, and volunteer management and outreach.
- Familiarity with or curiosity to learn about the cooperative management system of the Appalachian Trail including guiding documents, Local Management Plans, and Volunteer Service Agreements.
- Team player
- Can-do attitude for challenges big and small.
- Conservation mindset so that the RPC will be able to take a regional view of Trail stewardship.
- Enthusiastic about working on environmental and cultural issues
- Commitment to the ATC, its mission and goals.

Time Commitment

RPC primary and alternate representatives attend both semiannual meetings for their respective RPC, as well as any special meetings that may be called. The term of service is determined by the A.T. Club; ATC recommends the rotation of alternate representative to primary on a three-or-four-year cycle, for healthy organizational resilience.

RPC Alternate Representative Position Description

Alternative Representatives participate in RPC meetings. The alternate fulfills the above duties when the primary is unable to complete their duty. Alternative representatives are responsible for ensuring communications are performed by the primary representative. Clubs may view this role as an understudy.

RPC Chair Position Description

The RPC Chair is elected to the role by the RPC Committee to lead the group's cohesion, agenda planning, and meeting efficacy.

Duties and Responsibilities

- In consultation with the ATC regional director and regional program assistants, plans two semi-annual RPC meetings.
- Notify the region's RPC representative to the Stewardship Council of regional topics of interest that would be appropriate for Trailwide discussion.
- Facilitate discussion among all club representatives regarding management policies, as well as issues and concerns raised by club representatives.
- Read and respond to email regularly.
- Connect with RPC representatives and club leaders related to club participation in committee meetings and club accountability to the A.T. regional partnership.
- Serve as a conduit for updates from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy or the Stewardship Council's Partnership Coordinating Committee to A.T. regional partnership contacts.
- If the RPC does not have a secretary, the chair is responsible for ensuring the preparation and distribution of each meeting's minutes or recruiting someone to do so.
- RPC chair may serve as the RPC Liaison to the Stewardship Council's Partnership Coordinating Committee, unless the RPC otherwise designates another individual to the role of liaison from the RPC to the Council. These liaisons ensure, in addition to policy development and A.T. Partnership Coordination resource development, messages from ATC and APPA are shared to RPC representatives for distribution within A.T. Clubs.

Qualifications

The following are desirable qualifications for the RPC Chair:

- Demonstrable skills in effective A.T. management.
- Familiarity with club operations, trail maintenance programs, and volunteer management and outreach.
- Familiarity with or curiosity to learn about the cooperative management system of the Appalachian Trail including guiding documents, Local Management Plans, and Volunteer Service Agreements.
- Team player with a can-do attitude for challenges big and small.
- Ability to take a regional view of Trail stewardship and conservation.
- Commitment to the ATC, its mission, and goals.

Time Commitment

The chair must be present at both semi-annual meetings for their respective region, as well as any special meetings that may be called. The chair should expect to spend approximately 2-7 hours per month consulting with the regional office and RPC members, and time commitment may increase in the months immediately prior to a semiannual RPC meeting. The term and term limit of the role is defined in each RPC's guidance documentation on organizational structure. ATC recommends the rotation of Vice Chair to Chair on a three-or-four-year cycle, for healthy organizational resilience.

RPC Vice Chair Position Description

The RPC Vice Chair will carry out the duties above if the Chair is unable to complete the duties during a period of time communicated to the Vice Chair and the ATC Regional Office. Vice Chairs may hold other responsibilities, as defined by the RPC's organizational structure.

RPC Secretary Position Description

The Secretary is responsible for providing written minutes of each meeting within four weeks after each meeting. Not every RPC has a Secretary role; see each RPC's organizational structure guidance documentation.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Write minutes for each RPC semi-annual meeting, as well as intermediary gatherings of the group.
- Submit the digital draft of minutes to the chair, vice chair, and ATC staff for approval before circulation to all RPC members.
- Correct minutes and re-distribute them, as needed.
- Secure a substitute from other RPC representatives when unable to participate in meetings and write minutes.

Qualifications

The following are desirable qualifications for the RPC Secretary:

- Able to capture the conversation of meetings in written word.
- Familiarity with A.T. management, club operations, trail maintenance programs, and volunteer management and outreach.
- Familiarity with or curiosity to learn about the cooperative management system of the Appalachian Trail including guiding documents, Local Management Plans, and Volunteer Service Agreements.
- Team player with a can-do attitude for challenges big and small.

Time Commitment

Attend both semiannual meetings for their respective region. The RPC secretary should expect to spend 3-7 hours coordinating revisions and finalizing meeting notes outside of the meeting time. The term and term limit of the role is defined in each RPC's guidance documentation on organizational structure.

RPC Liaison to the Stewardship Council

The RPC Liaison to the Stewardship Council serves on the Partnership Coordinating Committee (PCC) of the Stewardship Council. Council members may be asked to sit on an additional committee of the Council. The PCC supports development of a unified approach for A.T. volunteer engagement, ensures coordination among A.T. partners and stakeholders in pursuit of consistent policies and standards for volunteer operations, trail management, and resource protection.

The Stewardship Council's ("Council") mission is two-fold: (1) To advise the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) staff and Board of Directors (BOD) regarding policy and programs related to conservation and stewardship of the Appalachian Trail and surrounding lands, and (2) To provide a forum for cooperation, coordination and communication among the partners in the Appalachian Trail shared stewardship community.

Activities of the Council related to this mission may include advice and recommendations on policies or programs relating to visitor outreach, interpretation, trail management, natural resource protection, and other areas that affect the overall experience of Appalachian Trail (A.T.) visitors. The Council will advise ATC's professional staff and participate in ATC's general strategic planning process, and will assist ATC as requested in planning and implementing specific programs or policies. The Council will serve as the

primary communication and coordination link among the Regional Partnership Committees, Trail clubs, ATC staff, federal and state agency partners, and the Board of Directors for general Trail stewardship policy discussions. The Council will create internal rules and procedures for its own governance as needed.

All other Stewardship Council members are subject to approval by the ATC Board of Directors, except the liaisons (4) from each of the Regional Partnership Committees

Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend twice-annual Stewardship Council meetings and RPC meetings.
- Active participant in policy development related to the responsibilities of the committee.
- Convey policy work of other Stewardship Council Committees to RPCs as part of their regular meetings.
- Ensure messages from ATC and APPA are shared to trail club RPC representatives for distribution within A.T. Clubs.
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Time Commitment

Attend at least four meetings per year (two RPC meetings and two Stewardship Council meetings). The term of the role is defined in each RPC's guidance documentation on organizational structure. The term limit is bound both by those defined by RPC and Stewardship Council term limits, whichever limit occurs sooner.