



Founded in 1925, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is the nonprofit organization that protects, manages, and advocates for the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) and connects management partners, conservation groups, visitors, and volunteers in a united cause.

To ensure the A.T. Treadway, Corridor, and Landscape are maintained and conserved, the ATC operates within the **COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**, which is a public-private partnership between the multiple entities that care for the Trail.

The ATC is the unifying entity between the government agencies that manage the federal and state public lands and resources for the A.T. and the A.T. Clubs and their volunteers, who provide local stewardship and on-the-ground knowledge of every section of the footpath. While different in structure, every National Scenic and Historic Trail has public-private management partnerships.



The A.T. Runs Through...

- ▲ 14 States
- ▲ 8 National Forests
- ▲ 6 National Parks

NO ORGANIZATION CAN MANAGE A NATIONAL TRAIL ON ITS OWN.

The Appalachian Trail Centennial Act will bolster the Cooperative Management System and strengthen the public-private partnerships needed to protect National Trails.



The Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is championing a legislative proposal, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act, to mark the ATC's 100th anniversary. Introduced by U.S. Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) and U.S. Representatives Mike Lawler (R-NY-17) and Don Beyer (D-VA-08) on July 25, 2024, this legislation seeks to secure the Cooperative Management Systems of National Trails and provide a better understanding of how people use National Trails.

The Centennial legislation recognizes what the ATC has known for the last 100 years – no single entity can manage a National Trail on its own. Instead, collaborative and flexible partnerships are necessary to care for these spread-out and heavily used conserved public lands.

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CENTENNIAL ACT WILL:

Authorize Designated Operational Partners for National Trails The legislation will statutorily establish a class of non-governmental (NGO) partners in National Scenic and Historic Trail management to clarify the role and responsibilities of organizations like the ATC. The Designated Operational Partner distinction will enable each NGO more flexibility in providing for the public good, implementing their responsibilities, and expanding the potential for philanthropic support for their work.

Bolster Land Protection The legislation fosters stronger partnerships to address the growing need for land protection within greater Trail landscapes. Because of the scale of National Scenic and Historic Trails, without dedicated attention and local engagement, it is very difficult to build out their conserved Corridors. This legislation will add replicable structure and direction for the agencies to coordinate and advance land and resource conservation to support the National Scenic and Historic Trails as large landscape conservation projects.

Study and Monitor Visitation and Economic Impact The legislation will establish a required process to track visitor levels and usage patterns on National Scenic and Historic Trails, including group use, as well as to measure the local economic benefits of trail visitation. Although this data collection and study is common in the National Park and Forests Systems, the National Trails are not consistently considered. This data will be useful for Trail planning and management, will inform efforts to improve the visitor experience and alleviate pressure on high traffic areas, and for Trail communities and businesses that provide services for recreational users.

Better Coordinate Partners The legislation will increase the length of agreements between each National Scenic and Historic Trail's Designated Operational Partner — like the ATC — and the National Parks Service and U.S. Forest Service to 20 years. It will also streamline funding processes, support volunteer needs, and encourage consultation among government entities, trail administrators, and designated partners to ensure greater stability.

Volunteers are the Backbone of the Trail

- ▲ 30 Maintaining Clubs
- ▲ 4,700 Volunteers
- ▲ 170,000 Hours per Year

As the ATC enters its second century, it continues to set the standard for cooperative management for National Trails throughout the U.S.