

Volunteer Impact Report

End-of-Year 2024



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has been working to amplify volunteerism among a new generation of trail stewards. Through the [ATC's Volunteer Engagement Platform](#), 220 events were publicly available and promoted by ATC to new audiences. More than 700 registrations were made – connecting new volunteer interest with organizations coordinating the work of A.T. volunteers across 14 states.

The following summaries of accomplishments only represent a fraction of the impact of volunteers throughout the 2024 federal fiscal year.

Trail Skills & Leadership Development

ATC supported clubs and volunteers by leading over 40 in-person and online trainings throughout the 2024 federal fiscal year. Nearly 300 volunteers gained knowledge and skills in topics ranging from trail work basics, natural resources, project planning, safe saw operations, and advanced trail maintenance techniques, such as water mitigation and rock work. These trainings ensure the quality and sustainability of the Trail for future generations.

Trail & Facilities

After several months of planning and preparation, the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club (NBATC) replaced the Priest Shelter privy in the Priest Wilderness Area.

NBATC volunteers, USFS staff, including 20 members of the Matts Creek Fire Crew,

ATC staff, and Americorps volunteers built an access trail, hauled materials to the site, and completed the privy in December 2023.



Volunteers haul materials for the Priest Shelter privy

The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club partnered with the Outdoor Recreation Consortium in March to hike and work on Trail projects with university students from six different schools, many of whom had never visited the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Club members taught the students about maintenance techniques, the cooperative management system, and backcountry waste management, and also led a work project to clear waterbars on the A.T.

Additionally, the club helped hikers stay on track by repainting every blaze on their 102-mile section of the Trail.

The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club hosted the first Women's Trail Summit, as well as the A.T. Gateways program (formerly the A.T. Kick-Off) in collaboration with Amicalola Falls State Park. The club also established a formal training program for trail maintenance and leadership, continued the Trail Skills Workshop, and began work on the Byron Reese Trail relocation, in collaboration with ATC and the Konnarock Trail Crew.



GATC volunteers work on the Byron Reese Trail relocation

In response to several reports of human-bear interactions, the Allentown Hiking Club partnered with the Keystone Trails Association, ATC, NPS, and the PA Outdoor Corps to install a bear box near the George W. Outerbridge Shelter in May to encourage hikers to store food safely.

In June, the Carolina Mountain Club completed a renovation project on a National Forest trailhead kiosk located on the A.T. south of Hot Springs.

The project included pushing back overgrowth to restore the parking lot to its original size, adding gravel to the parking area, constructing a new platform in front of the kiosk, installing a larger display panel, replacing rotted wood, and replacing the 40-year-old shingles on the roof. This comprehensive renovation has significantly improved the functionality and appearance of the trailhead, making it more welcoming and providing vital information for hikers.

The Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club rerouted a short section of Trail and built a temporary bridge to replace an unstable bridge in July. With the temporary reroute and bridge in place, the club will be able to begin work on the new permanent bridge.

Wildlife and hikers are both safer in southeastern Pennsylvania, thanks to a new bear canister lending program started by the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club (BMECC) in partnership with Berks County Parks and Recreation. BMECC owns the canisters and Berks County handles the lending process on behalf of the club.

A few years ago, a bear box at the Darlington Shelter in Pennsylvania was damaged when a tree fell on it. Club volunteers from the Mountain Club of Maryland hauled the new bear box, supplied by ATC, to the shelter and installed it in September 2024.

The Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) had another successful privy building season this past summer.

Volunteers built new privies at Cloud Pond, Chairback Gap, and Moxie Bald as part of the multi-year effort to shift all pit privies in the care's management area to moldering privies.



MATC volunteers at the Chairback Gap privy

Throughout the summer, the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, in partnership with ATC, rehabilitated the Hunting Camp Creek and Lynn Creek bridges. ATC supplied native black locust decking and handrails through funding from the Virginia License Plate Fund.

Thanks to the help of volunteers from the Deerfoot Creek Lodge Camp, the Nantahala Hiking Club finished hauling out materials from the old Wesser Bald privy, which was replaced in June 2023.

A historic storm dropped 10 inches of rain on Bear Mountain in Bear Mountain State Park in July 2023, causing such signature damage that the park was forced to close the Trail for ten months.

The New York–New Jersey Trail Conference imported and placed 300 tons of surfacing across 900 feet of trail and added 12 new steps to improve existing stone staircases, allowing the Trail to reopen for the summer season over Memorial Day 2024.

Resource Management

This past spring, the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club cleared invasive species along a section of the A.T. to improve prime habitat for native Virginia Bluebell flowers, allowing for a spectacular carpet-like display of the popular wildflower.

The Maine Appalachian Trail Club [worked with ATC and other partners](#) to protect the fragile environment on the summit of Saddleback Mountain, which was in the path of totality during the eclipse and had hundreds of visitors on a single day.

Throughout the summer, volunteers from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club, and the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club each coordinated with ATC's Visual Resource Inventory team to help inventory and [assess views](#) on their sections of the Trail.

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club volunteers spent more than 100 days identifying, mapping, and managing wavyleaf basket grass and other non-native species along the Trail in Virginia and Maryland.

Visitor Information

In federal fiscal year 2024, volunteers working at the three Appalachian Trail Conservancy-managed visitor centers ensured operations were possible seven days a week and engaged with 31,100 visitors.

Additionally, volunteers working through Appalachian Trail Clubs engaged visitors at four high use trail sections or parking areas to provide additional information on Leave No Trace and responsible recreation. On trail visitor education by these volunteer ridgerunners and trail ambassadors accounted for 3,664 hours of volunteer time this fiscal year and provided contact with thousands of A.T. visitors.



The ATC Turns 100 in 2025

Volunteers and Trail Maintaining Clubs are the heart and soul of the A.T. As the Appalachian Trail Conservancy celebrates 100 years of this incredible partnership, we are inspired by the collective impact of our community. Together, we look forward to continuing this vital work with our partners to protect and care for the Appalachian Trail for generations to come.

