



Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership 2025 Year in Review

ATLP Mission & Vision



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

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

From mountaintop ridgelines to trail towns tucked in the valleys below, this year the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP) proved what's possible when we work together, at scale, across boundaries, and by making new connections. This year in review celebrates the collective momentum, collaboration, and shared commitment that continue to shape a resilient, thriving Appalachian Trail Landscape while also highlighting the backbone coordination and partner leadership that make it all possible.

Hitting a Milestone – Celebrating 10 Years of the ATLP!



**Connecting & Protecting the
2.6 Million Acre A.T.
Landscape**

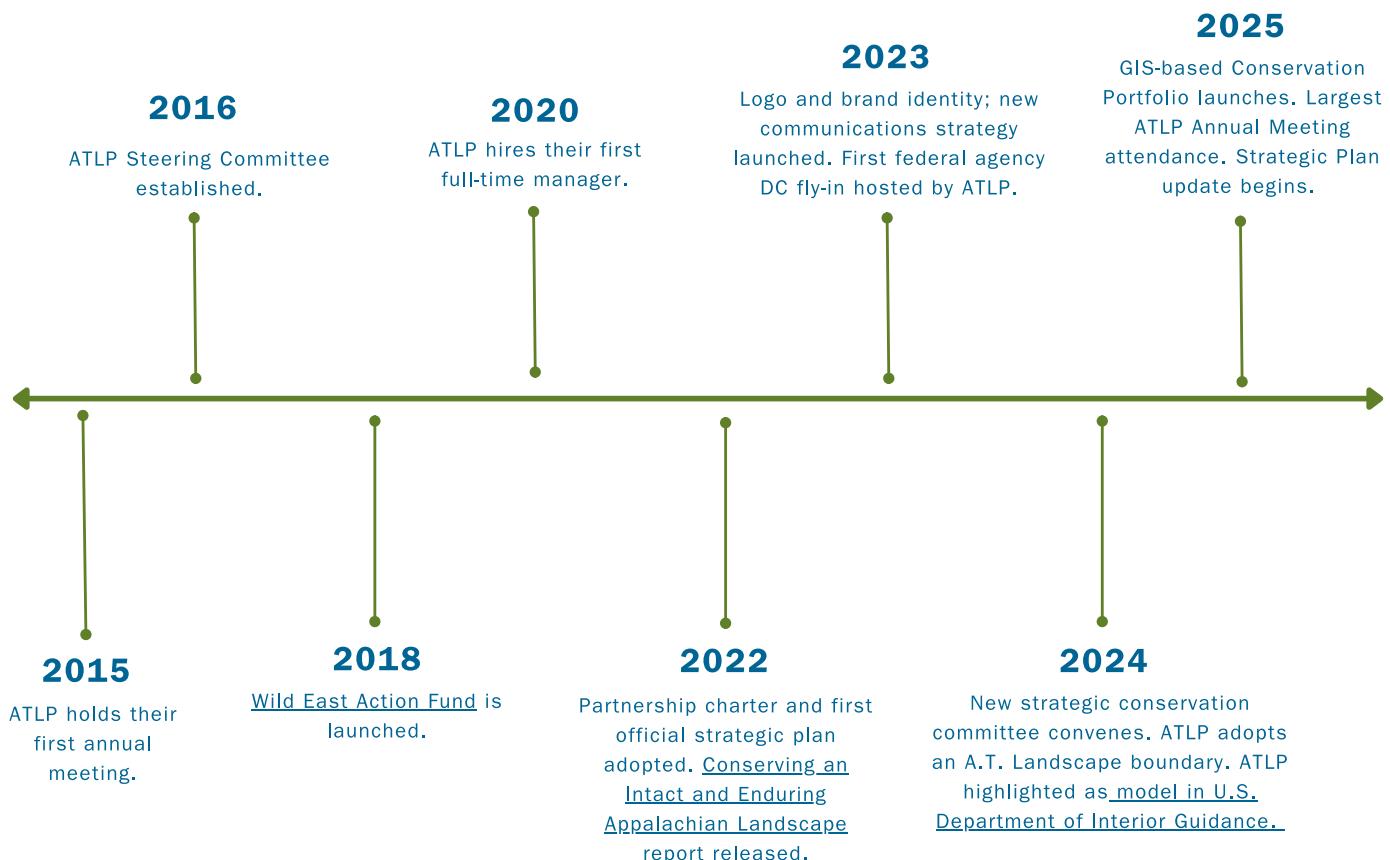


**Average of 30,000 Acres
Conserved Per Year Across
Partner Organizations**



**Over 100 Partner
Organizations**

Over the past decade, the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership has grown into a powerful, landscape-wide network, anchored by the Appalachian Trail. It is a partnership dedicated to supporting collaborative conservation, shared science, and coordinated investment to connect and protect the Appalachian Trail Landscape. Partners have worked on their own and in partnerships to safeguard critical habitats, strengthen local capacity, and advance a landscape-scale vision that extends far beyond the A.T. footpath. Ten years in, the Partnership stands as proof that lasting conservation happens when diverse organizations and communities work together to care for the Appalachian Trail as a living, connected landscape.



Thank you to the ATLP leadership for their dedication and support!

We extend our sincere gratitude to the leadership of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership for their vision, guidance, and steadfast support. Your commitment to collaboration and landscape-scale conservation has helped unite partners across the Appalachian Trail Landscape and turn shared goals into meaningful action. Because of your leadership, the ATLP continues to grow as a strong, connected network dedicated to protecting the Trail's landscapes and supporting the communities that care for them.



2025 ATLP Steering Committee Members

Ben Alexandro, Chesapeake Conservancy

Ed Clark, National Park Service, Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

Bryan Faehner, National Park Service

Liz Hillard, Wildlands Network

Bill Holman

J.T. Horn, Trust for Public Land

Jeff Hunter, National Park Association**

Claire Jantz, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Jay Leutze, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

David E. Lillard, Catoctin Land Trust

Peter McKinley, The Wilderness Society* **

Elizabeth Petruska, The Conservation Fund

Bill Rawlyk, Open Space Institute

David Rose, The Wilderness Society

Dan Ryan, Appalachian Trail Conservancy*

Simon Rucker, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust*

Kyle Shenk, The Conservation Fund

Kurt Speers, National Park Service, Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

Eliza Townsend, Appalachian Mountain Club*

Elizabeth Ward, Land Trust Alliance

Annica McGuirk, National Association of Conservation Districts

Olivia Porter, National Park Conservation Association

Peter Spadaro, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Jim Von Haden, National Park Service, Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

Casey Reese, National Park Service, Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

*Denotes member of the ATLP Coordinating Committee

**Denotes chair of the Strategic Conservation Committee

Comings & Goings

In 2025, Kyle Shenk, Ben Alexandro, and Jim Von Haden moved on from their post on the Steering Committee; Elizabeth Petruska, Kurt Speers, and Casey Reese joined the Committee.

Coordinating Staff:

Katie Allen, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Shyla Miller, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Max Olsen, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Bill Potapchuk, Community Building Institute (facilitator)



2025 Year in Review

Staying Connected: News You Can Use

ATLP eNewsletter

12 ATLP eNewsletters

16 Grant Opportunities Shared

32 Resources Shared
(webinars, reports, news articles)

639 Subscribers
(39.8% increase from Jan to Dec)

30 Conservation Success Stories
(274,050 acres conserved or working towards conservation)

Most Popular: July
(402 partners opened the July ATLP eNews, making it the most popular newsletter of 2025, likely driven by the final call for applications to the Wild East Action Fund!)

ICYMI: The ATLP eNewsletter is distributed throughout the year to ATLP partners as a tool for staying connected and informed. Each newsletter provides an overview of important news from the ATLP, highlights of partner accomplishments and conservation success stories, new research and reports, and relevant funding opportunities. Below are select ATLP eNewsletters distributed in 2025:

- [February 2025](#) - Announcing Annual Partnership Meeting
- [March 2025](#) - Local Grants & Action around the Landscape
- [March 2025](#) – Annual Partnership Meeting Updates
- [April 2025](#) - Partner Input for the A.T. Community Program
- [May 2025](#) - Celebrating Conservation Successes
- [June 2025](#) - Announcing Wild East Action Fund Application Period is Open
- [July 2025](#) - Innovative Partnerships for Conservation Wins
- [September 2025](#) - Policy, Events, & Grants Shaping Conservation
- [November 2025](#) - Legislative Updates & New Reports Supporting the AT Landscape
- [December 2025](#) - Announcing Wild East Action Fund Recipients

**Click Here to Join the ATLP
eNewsletter**

Collaboration through Convening

By the Numbers

- 3 Coordinating Committee Meetings
- 2 Steering Committee Meetings
- 11 Other Committee & Working Group Meetings (Conservation, Look Book, WEAF Review)
- 1 Annual Partnership Meeting

ATLP Annual Partnership Meeting – April 2025

The 2025 ATLP Annual Partnership Meeting brought together 100 conservation partners, practitioners, and community representatives at the historic Hotel Roanoke located in the beautiful Roanoke, Virginia. This meeting centered around a series of keynote and panel discussions to highlight major themes impacting the Appalachian Trail Landscape. This includes discussions around topics like scaling up landscape conservation, deepening community engagement, incorporating climate resilience in our work, and ensuring equitable access to the outdoors.

In addition to the more formal presentations, the meeting offered numerous opportunities for partners to connect, exchange ideas, and strengthen the collaborative network that defines the ATLP. The dedicated networking sessions and breaks between events allowed participants to build relationships across different organizations, geographies, and areas of expertise.



2025 ATLP Annual Partnership Meeting Attendees in Roanoke, VA



McAfee Knob Pedestrian Bridge project partners share more about the project construction and partnership.

At the end of the meeting, those with a desire to get out on the Trail were able to participate in an optional field trip and service project. This field trip took attendees to the newly built McAfee Knob Pedestrian Bridge to hear about its importance for pedestrian safety and access, as well as the collaboration and dedication required for its establishment. After viewing the bridge, attendees participated in invasive species removal to support stewardship efforts to restore the landscape of the A.T.

- [“Appalachian Trail Conservation Summit Convenes in Roanoke”](#), Roanoke Times
- [ATLP Annual Meeting Packet](#)

Driving Conservation Impact Across the Landscape

Launching a Strategic Plan Update with NPS's Recreation, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

In 2025, the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership benefited from technical assistance through the [National Park Service's Recreation, Trails, and Conservation Assistance \(RTCA\) Program](#), helping strengthen the Partnership's foundation and direction. RTCA supported surveys and focus groups with current and potential partners to clarify ATLP's value proposition and better understand where it can have the greatest impact. This work also helped define core competencies and shift the Partnership from planning to action—creating a clearer, more focused path for collaborative conservation across the Appalachian Trail Landscape.

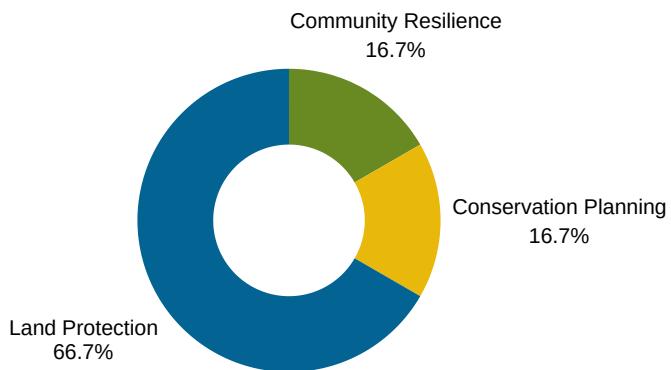
In 2026, be on the lookout for our 2026-2028 Strategic Action Plan, where focused action will enable us to achieve our goals to:

1. Accelerate the pace and scale of strategic land protection in the A.T. Landscape;
2. Amplify the power of a partnership that represents the diverse values of the A.T. landscape to increase capacity for conservation; and
3. Continue to strengthen the structure and development of the Partnership.

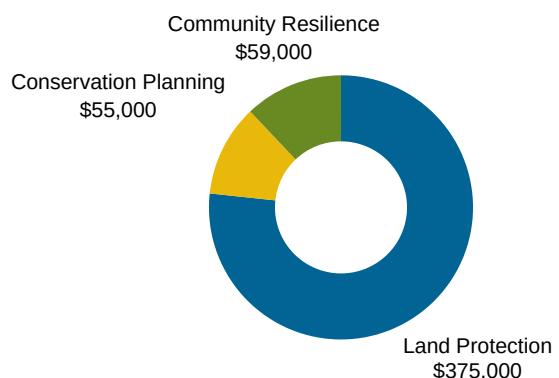
Wild East Action Fund 2025 Cycle

In 2025, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy relaunched the [Wild East Action Fund](#) in service to the shared mission of the ATLP—to connect the wild, scenic, and cultural wonders of the A.T. Landscape. This fund, administered by the ATC, is a competitive grant program that provides private, flexible funding to support partner organizations and collaborative projects that are advancing the protection and conservation of natural, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational, agricultural, and community assets found within the A.T. landscape.

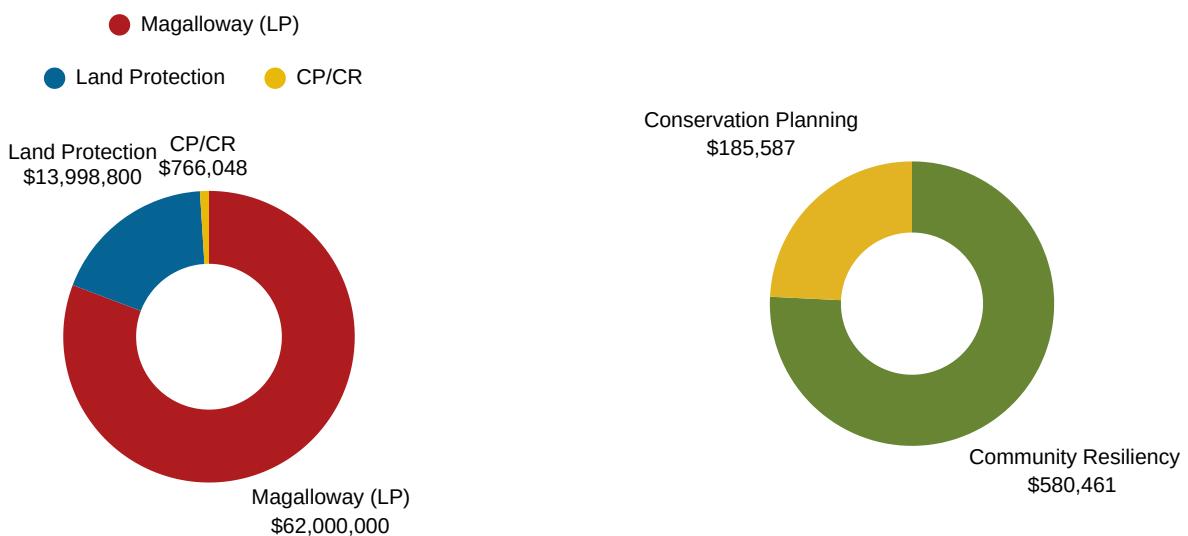
Projects Awarded by Type



Project Award Distribution (\$)



Total Project Value (\$)



This year, the ATC announced \$489,000 in [grants to 17 conservation organizations](#), supporting efforts that will protect over 80,000 acres across the A.T. landscape. Funded projects are strengthening conservation connectivity, expanding recreational access, preserving scenic views, safeguarding climate-resilient lands, and supporting the protection of cultural resources. Grants were also provided to advance conservation planning and community resilience efforts across the Appalachian Trail corridor.

Looking ahead, thanks to a transformational gift from the [Dunleavy Foundation](#), the ATC will begin accepting proposals for the 2026 Wild East Action Fund grants in the spring for land protection support, conservation planning, and community resiliency projects from Georgia to Maine.

- [“Dunleavy Foundation \\$5 Million Gift Accelerates Appalachian Trail Landscape Protection”](#)
- [“Appalachian Trail Conservancy Announces 2025 Wild East Action Fund Grant Recipients”](#)

ATLP Conservation Project Portfolio GIS Tool

A critical need for the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership is the ability to consistently track, visualize, and communicate the conservation work underway across the landscape in a way that clearly demonstrates impact. Without a shared system to document and showcase partner-led projects, it is difficult to fully convey the scale, effectiveness, and urgency of this work—or to attract the level of public and private investment required to sustain it. Strengthening how we measure and tell our collective story is essential to increasing influence and unlocking new funding to protect the Appalachian Trail Landscape.

To meet this need, the ATLP is partnering with the Northern Appalachian Trail Landscape to develop a dynamic, GIS-based tool that will capture ongoing conservation-focused projects aligned with partnership values and translate them into compelling, funder-ready information at multiple scales. This tool will support increased investment by highlighting active land protection efforts, elevating stories of collective impact, and positioning the Appalachian Trail Landscape as a globally significant conservation priority. In 2025, following a competitive RFP process led by the ATLP Strategic Conservation Committee Look Book Working Group and Committee Chairs Jeff Hunter and Pete McKinley, Natalie Robbins of the [Vanderbilt Institute for Spatial Research](#) was selected to develop the platform and is now working with the Partnership to bring this vision to life as a secure, public-facing hub for conservation impact. This project will continue through the spring of 2026.

- [GIS Consultant RFP](#)
- [Learn more about Natalie Robbins](#)

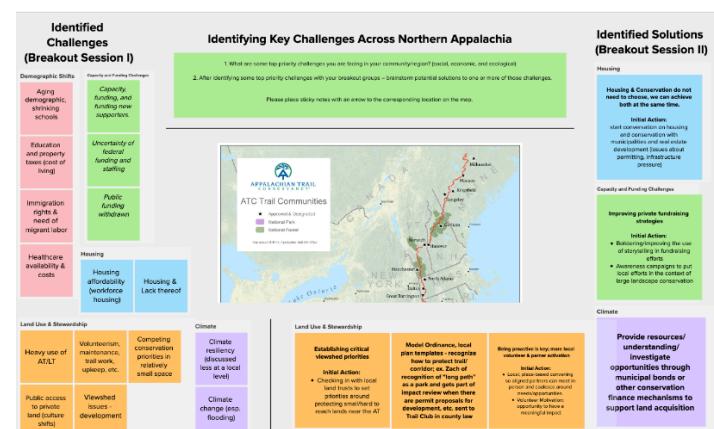
Building a Bridge Between ATLP Partners and Appalachian Trail Communities

ATLP Partners were invited to join virtual listening sessions with designated AT Communities of the ATC's Appalachian Trail Community Program across three regions: North (Maine to New York), Central (New Jersey to Central VA), South (Central VA to Georgia). Collectively, these sessions brought together a diverse mix of regional partners and community leaders, with strong representation from both groups across all regions.

Registration included 80 ATLP Partners and 24 A.T. Community participants, with regional participation as follows:

- North: 31 ATLP Partners and 4 A.T. Community representatives
- Central: 20 ATLP Partners and 14 A.T. Community representatives
- South: 29 ATLP Partners and 6 A.T. Community representatives

These listening sessions were designed to create an intentional space for open dialogue between regional conservation partners and on the ground leaders within A.T. Communities, elevating community perspectives and strengthening connections across the A.T. Landscape. By highlighting local experiences and knowledge, these sessions reinforced ATLP's role as a critical bridge between community-driven action and regional conservation collaboration.



Mural Board depicting discussions between ATLP Partners and A.T. Communities during the virtual Northern Appalachian Regional Forum.

Cultivating Visibility and Influence: Conferences and Key Meetings

Throughout the year, we strengthened the visibility and influence of our work by engaging in conferences and key meetings across the Appalachian Trail Landscape and beyond. These engagements elevated shared priorities, deepened relationships with partners and funders, and positioned the Partnership as a trusted voice in collaborative conservation. Together, they expanded our reach and amplified the impact of the work happening on the ground.

April 2025 – Appalachian Colloquium

Hosted by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Simon Rucker (Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust), Katie Allen (Appalachian Trail Conservancy), and Bill Potapchuk (Community Building Institute) were invited guests representing the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership as one of five case studies of large landscape initiatives in Appalachia. As a small group of conservation practitioners and experts, this peer-learning format offered discussion on potential opportunities, solutions to challenges, and new innovations to connect and enhance collaborative large landscape conservation efforts.

June 2025 – Volgenau Climate Initiative Retreat “Nature & Climate as Economic Pillars for a New Appalachian Economy”

Katie Allen served as a host committee member and attendee of this Appalachia-focused retreat held in Pembroke, Virginia to find innovative and scalable ways to center nature and climate as pillars for a new Appalachian economy. The ATLP serves as a unifying entity around the Appalachian Trail and its greater landscape, and Katie shared how this work could be leveraged in partnership with other initiatives. Attendees from multiple sectors were encouraged to slow down together and exchange ideas in a beautiful natural setting. The workshop concluded on building actions, not only on policy, financial, and management solutions but also on the relationships that underlie transformative collaborations and open new pathways toward the systemic changes.

August 2025 - Resourcing & Developing Collaborative Capacity: A Strategic Workshop

Katie Allen, a long-time Coordinating Committee member of the Network for Landscape Conservation, joined a small convening of landscape conservation practitioners in August in Pine Grove, CA. The intent of this workshop was to explore how we, collectively, can improve the resourcing and developing of collaborative capacity in the landscape conservation and stewardship field. Katie represented the ATLP, the largest landscape conservation collaborative on the East Coast, sharing her experiences coordinating and amplifying this work. This workshop was premised on the recognition that cross-cutting issues and challenges exist around collaborative capacity—and that we can build the field of practice as a whole by attempting to address those issues and challenges collectively.

September 2025 – Outdoor Economy Conference

The 2025 Outdoor Economy Conference took place at the Harrah's Cherokee Hotel and Conference Center in Cherokee, North Carolina within the Qualla Boundary. This conference brought together leaders, industry experts, and enthusiasts from across the nation to explore, learn, and collaborate on fostering a sustainable and thriving outdoor economy.

Attendees were able to choose their own personalized agenda for the conference following four distinct tracks that all center around the broader conference theme of “Investing in the Ecosystem.” Each track highlighted a different pillar essential for a flourishing outdoor economy, focusing on topics related to people, communities, businesses, and the natural world. Shyla Miller attended the conference focusing on the track related to outdoor recreation communities, which helped build a stronger understanding of how best to support community-led outdoor recreation initiatives, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that economic development strategies remain inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

- [Outdoor Economy Conference Agenda](#)

October 2025 – Partnership for the National Trails System Lands Summit and Training



Katie Allen presents at the 2025 PNTS National Trails Lands Summit and Training.

The 2025 National Trails Lands Summit and Training took place October 19-23, 2025, in San Antonio, Texas at the Plaza San Antonio Hotel and Spa, situated along the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. The Lands Summit and Training brought together trail professionals, advocates, and volunteers; Federal employees whose work involved the National Trails System; emerging leaders, students, and young professionals for three days of learning, collaboration, and networking.

Shyla Miller, Landscape Conservation Program Coordinator and Katie Allen, Director of Landscape Conservation for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, represented ATC at the event. They led a session titled “Think Regionally, Act Locally: Building Bridges to Communities through the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership,” highlighting how a strong alignment between the regional ATLP partnership and our designated Appalachian Trail Communities can advance meaningful, locally driven conservation efforts.

- [National Lands Summit and Training Agenda](#)

October 2025 – Appalachian Initiatives Alignment Workshop

In October, the Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture hosted a workshop to connect, align, and amplify the collective impact of large-scale conservation initiatives working towards a thriving Appalachia. Katie Allen attended to highlight the ATLP as a regional collaborative working to scale up its impact to contribute to the connections across Appalachia. This workshop allowed for leaders and stakeholders to find stronger alignment across emerging initiatives, shared learning and data systems that bridge sectors, and discuss how we can work together to develop a compelling, collaborative pitch that attracts new federal and philanthropic partners.

Appalachian People & Places Collaborative

The Appalachian People & Places Collaborative continues, once a Keystone Initiative under the Biden Administration, to build a unified conservation vision for Appalachia that connects communities, policy and investment so people and places can thrive together. In 2025, Katie Allen, along with several other ATLP federal, state, and NGO partners, continued to engage in committee work to generate ongoing research, engagement, and strategic development of conservation planning for Appalachia. Katie engages to ensure that there is cross-initiative collaboration that elevates shared data and shared priorities, especially those of the ATLP.



To learn more about the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, visit www.appalachiantrail.org/atlp.