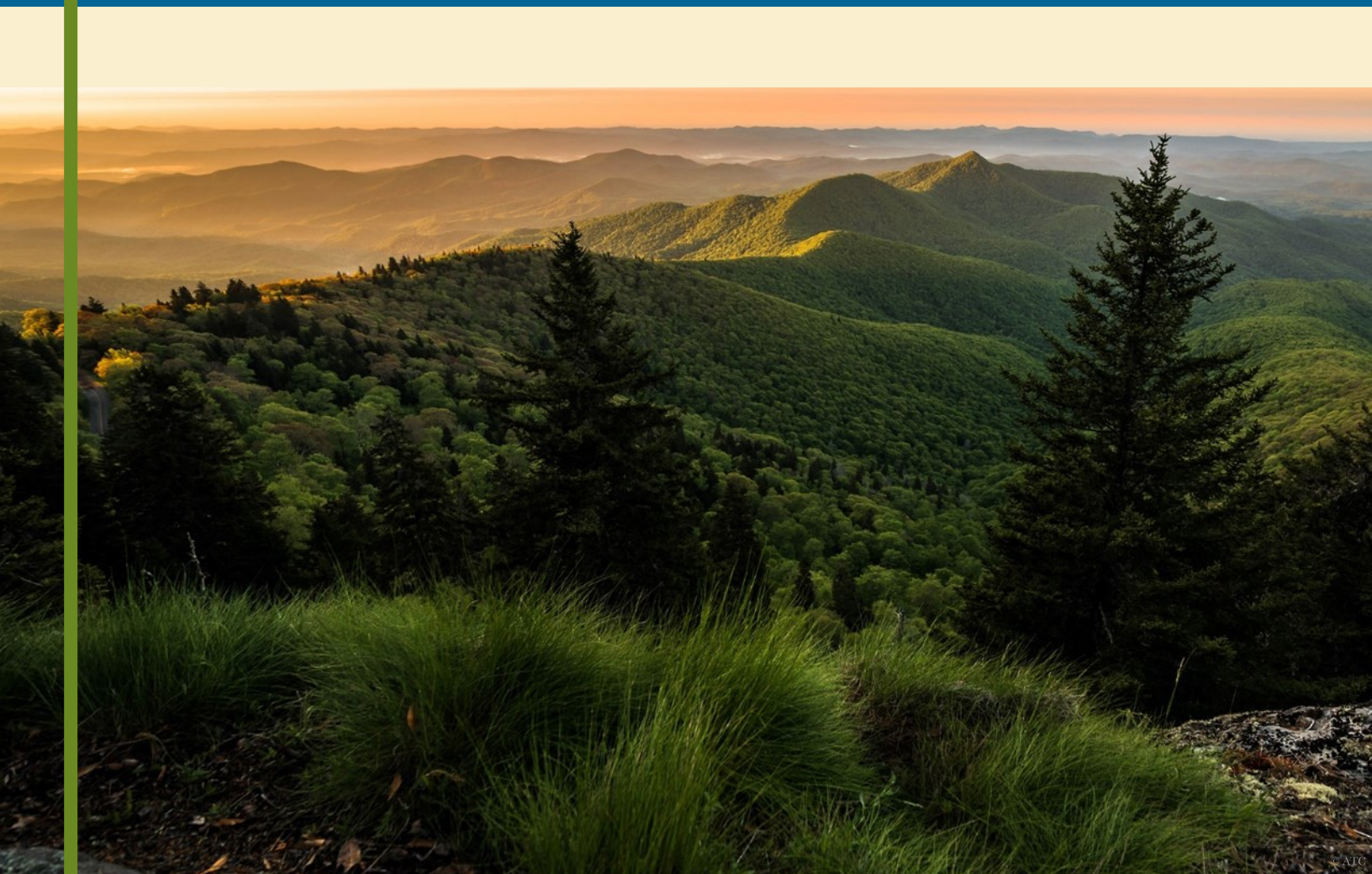


STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2026 - 2028



**Appalachian Trail
Landscape
Partnership**
Connecting People, Nature, and Place



ABOUT THIS PLAN

Since its start in 2015, the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP) has cultivated a network of over 100 conservation partners dedicated to the protection of the greater Appalachian Trail Landscape. The ATLP's Steering Committee recognized the opportunity to build on prior success to focus efforts to sustain and grow the Partnership over the next three years.

The result is a broadly owned strategic roadmap that articulates the mission, vision, and values of the ATLP as well as three strategic goals with corresponding tactics and milestones for measuring the ATLP's progress over the next three years. This strategic plan builds on the established functions of this partnership to drive further collective impact as the largest landscape conservation collaborative on the East Coast.

The ATLP Coordinating Committee wish to thank the invaluable input from the partners of the ATLP in the development of this plan and the leadership of the ATLP Steering Committee.

ATLP Steering Committee (2025)

Ed Clark, National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

Bryan Faehner, National Park Service

Liz Hillard, Wildlands Network

Bill Holman, Appalachian Trail Conservancy Board of Directors

J.T. Horn, Trust for Public Land

Jeffrey Hunter, National Parks Conservation Association

Claire Jantz, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Jay Leutze, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

David E. Lillard, Catoctin Land Trust

Annica McGuirk, National Association of Conservation Districts

Peter McKinley, The Wilderness Society*

Elizabeth Petruska, The Conservation Fund

Olivia Porter, National Parks Conservation Association

Kurt Speers, National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

Bill Rawlyk, Open Space Institute

Casey Reese, National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

David C. Rose, The Sally Blagg Family Foundation / Appalachian Trail Conservancy Board of Directors

Simon Rucker, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust*

Dan Ryan, Appalachian Trail Conservancy*

Peter Spadaro, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Eliza Townsend, Appalachian Mountain Club*

Elizabeth Ward, Land Trust Alliance

**Member of ATLP Coordinating Committee*

Supporting Staff & Contributors

Katie Allen, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Nathan Hilbert, National Park Service

Shyla Miller, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Max H Olsen, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Bill Potapchuk, Community Building Institute





APPALACHIAN TRAIL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T. or Trail) was created, and is now managed and maintained, through partnerships. The Trail's foundation in collaborative land conservation continues to this day. Often recognized as the most iconic long-distance footpath in the world, the A.T. is also the backbone of one of the most significant land conservation efforts in the United States.

The Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP or Partnership) works to accelerate an inclusive vision of a conserved and connected A.T. Landscape as a critically important resource for human and natural communities alike. The value of this landscape is not meant in solely biological terms, but meaningful benefits, like clean water and air, ties to rich cultural heritage and history, abundant recreation opportunities, and contributions to the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of all people and communities from Maine to Georgia.

The A.T. Landscape is as essential to the Trail experience as the footpath itself, inspiring millions each year towards outdoor recreation pursuits with its natural beauty, providing habitats for plants and animals, and creating important buffers to mitigate the effects of climate change and rapid development. Grounded in science and propelled by shared purpose, the ATLP recognizes the critical need to protect something of this magnitude through a participatory approach to coordinated conservation and protection. The work of the ATLP helps ensure that this landscape will remain intact and thriving, providing benefits across communities and habitats for generations to come.

Our Vision: An Appalachian Trail and surrounding landscape that connect people of diverse communities and nature, forever safeguarding the backbone and heart of the Wild East.

Our Mission: To connect the wild, scenic, and cultural wonders of the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape.

Our Core Values:

Conserving the A.T. Landscape—and the essential air, land, and water it provides—protects ecological integrity and enhances quality of life for the people and communities who depend on it. This work is grounded in the A.T. Landscape's essential values:



Climate & Biodiversity



Natural Beauty



Outdoor Recreation & Equitable Public Access



Rural Prosperity



ATLP CORE COMPETENCIES

ATLP's Role in the Next Century of A.T. Landscape Protection

The ATLP fosters collaboration among conservation groups, organizations, and government partners across the Appalachian Trail Landscape, amplifying their collective efforts and impact through effective convening and coordination.

CONVENE

- Support large-scale conservation projects and act as a coordinator to bring awareness to scale and aggregate efforts too big for a single region or entity.
- Help cross-pollinate ideas along the large landscape to replicate and amplify conservation successes of our partners.
- Promote and support experimentation with landscape-wide conservation tools, research, and collective information.
- Scale outward and upward by connecting government partners and initiatives to localized conservation projects.

CULTIVATE

- Use our collective story of the A.T. Landscape to amplify the importance of every parcel protected.
- Engage partners from conservation organizations, landowners, communities, and governmental agencies across the landscape to bring collective action on the ground.
- Apply landscape level tools and research for integration into scalable conservation strategies.
- Create a platform for conservation policy and initiatives built from the ground up that can influence local, state, and federal decision-making.

IMPACT

- Targeted and accelerated land protection in the A.T. Landscape, expanding conservation, stewardship, and access to outdoor recreation.
- Conservation projects and storytelling demonstrate value to communities, decision makers, and funders.
- Strategic actions are implemented to maximize conservation impact, creating a shared vision and mission that grows partnership.
- Access to new funding and knowledge resources for conservation ensures that all partners have the tools they need for success.
- Conservation-driven policy benefiting the landscape and communities help to accelerate the pace and scale of land protection and stewardship.





STRATEGIC PATHWAYS | GOALS | ACTIONS

This strategic plan provides a three-year road map that builds upon conservation successes of the past and looks to a future where continued collaboration and consensus building achieves significant conservation outcomes. The strategic pathways represent the core focus and competencies of the partnership. They remain unchanged across strategic plans. The goals of this plan provide the aspirational vision that will endure. Projects and services present attainable actions to contribute to achieving our goals over the next three years.



Because of our efforts in these pathways, in 3 years, the ATLP will...

Demonstrate ATLP projects, services, and influence provide a platform for sharing models and tools that build the skills and confidence of partners to achieve more conservation successes in the A.T. Landscape.

Be recognized as a highly effective, impactful, and widely understood resource for conservation that amplifies a shared story of the AT Landscape as a global conservation priority. The ATLP provides a platform for ATLP partners to engage and raise their visibility as a benefit of their participation.

Have the financial capacity to be more responsive, creative, and evolve the partnership to succeed. Leaders and members will take initiative within the Partnership structure, continually building and sustaining an active membership base.

STRATEGIC PATHWAY 1:

ACCELERATE THE PACE AND SCALE OF STRATEGIC LAND PROTECTION IN THE A.T. LANDSCAPE

Our Goals – here are the conditions we aim to create:

- ATLP Partners have the tools, skills and confidence to identify, prioritize and achieve conservation successes in the A.T. Landscape, sharing with the ATLP to celebrate and contribute to the ATLP vision.
- The ATLP's efforts and influence to elevate conservation projects in the A.T. Landscape result in increased capacity, resources, and public and private funding for ATLP Partners.
- The ATLP can track ongoing partner projects and identify capacity needs.

Our Projects & Services – here is how we'll meet our goals:

CONSERVATION PROJECT PORTFOLIO

WILD EAST ACTION FUND

STATE AGENCY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

SKILLS BUILDING WEBINAR SERIES

STRATEGIC PATHWAY 2:

AMPLIFY THE POWER OF A PARTNERSHIP THAT REPRESENTS THE DIVERSE VALUES OF THE A.T. LANDSCAPE TO INCREASE CAPACITY FOR CONSERVATION

© Josh Tullock

Our Goals – here are the conditions we aim to create:

- The ATLP is recognized as a highly effective, impactful, and widely understood resource for conservation.
- The amplified story of the AT Landscape as a global conservation priority motivates and activates broader, more diverse partners in aligning shared goals.
- ATLP Partners have a spectrum of opportunities to engage with peers to spur collective and collaborative conservation action.
- ATLP Partners have more visibility, support, and resources as a benefit of their participation in the ATLP.

Our Projects & Services – here is how we'll meet our goals:

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING

E-NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

RIPPLE EFFECT STORYTELLING
SERIES

PARTNERSHIP LISTSERV
COMMUNICATION TOOL

STRATEGIC PATHWAY 3:

CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Our Goals – here are the conditions we aim to create:

- The ATLP has the financial capacity to be more responsive, creative, and see the iterative process of evolving a partnership succeed.
- ATLP Committee leaders and members have a sense of confidence and autonomy to take initiative within the Partnership structure.
- The ATLP is actively building a pipeline of partnership leaders and active membership base.
- The ATLP celebrates success, builds a sense of camaraderie, and retains dedicated leaders to fulfill strategic actions.

Our Projects & Services – here is how we'll meet our goals:

FORMALIZE PARTNER BENEFITS
& RETURN ON INVESTMENT

FORMALIZE PARTNER
MEMBERSHIP

COLLABORATIVE FUNDRAISING
PLAN



Strategic Pathway 1

Accelerate the pace and scale of strategic land protection in the A.T. Landscape.

- TARGET MILESTONES**
 CONSERVATION PROJECT PORTFOLIO
 WILD EAST ACTION FUND
 STATE AGENCY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH
 SKILLS BUILDING WEBINAR SERIES

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3

Strategic Pathway 2

Amplify the power of a partnership that represents the diverse values of the A.T. landscape to increase capacity for conservation.

- TARGET MILESTONES**
 ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING
 E-NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION
 RIPPLE EFFECT STORYTELLING SERIES
 PARTNERSHIP LISTSERV COMMUNICATION TOOL

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3

Strategic Pathway 3

Continue to strengthen the structure and development of the Partnership.

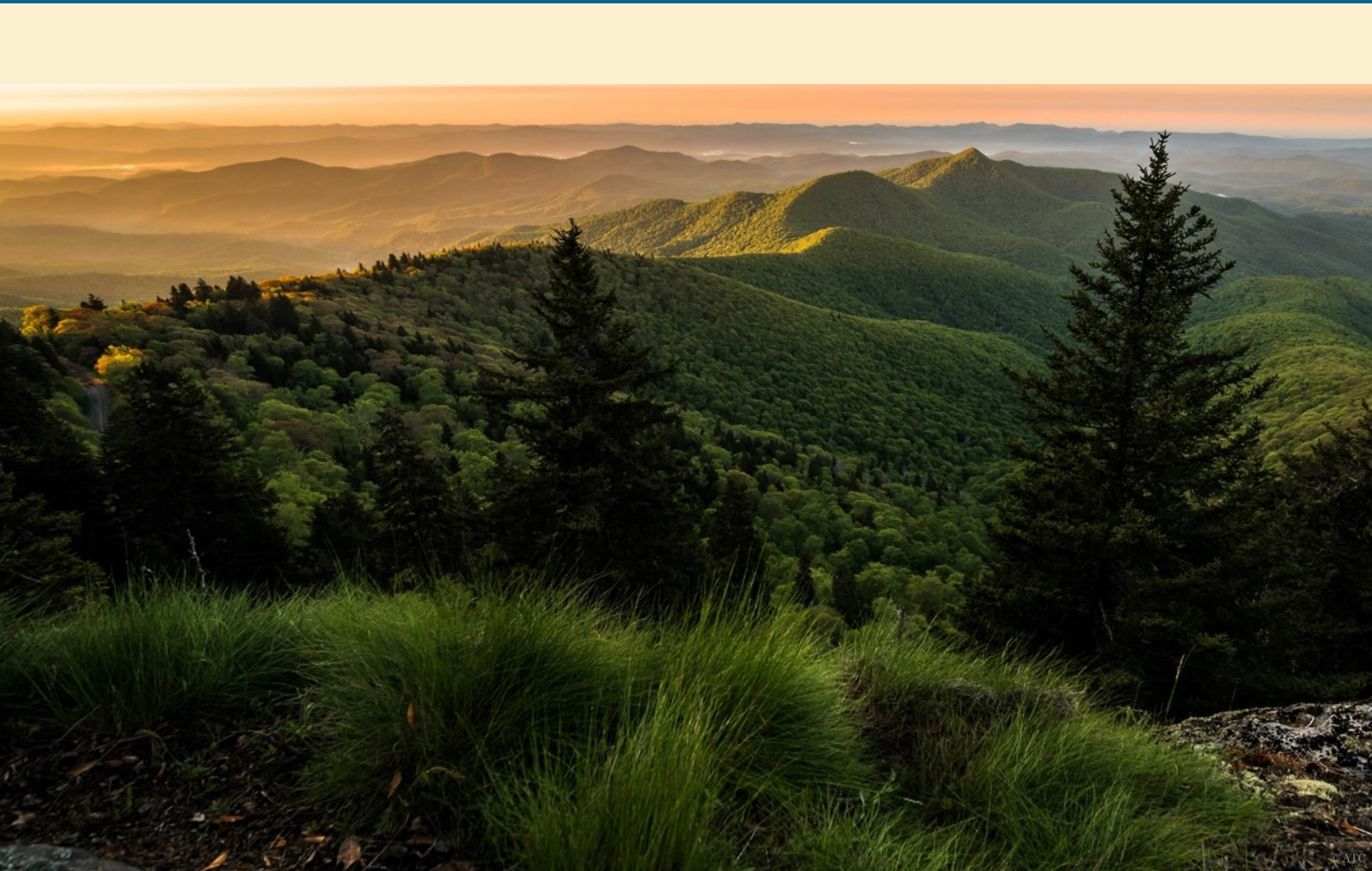
- TARGET MILESTONES**
 FORMALIZE PARTNER BENEFITS & RETURN ON INVESTMENT
 FORMALIZE PARTNER MEMBERSHIP
 COLLABORATIVE FUNDRAISING PLAN

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3

“A realm and not merely a trail marks the full aim of our efforts.”
 - Benton MacKaye

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





**Appalachian Trail
Landscape
Partnership**
Connecting People, Nature, and Place