

Natural Resource Stewardship

THE VISION

A healthy, thriving, and resilient natural environment will continue to support and enrich all who live, work, and recreate in the Appalachian Trail landscape.



“Planting red spruce in the Southern Appalachians is a unique opportunity to conserve a quickly disappearing habitat. The trees we plant will live for decades, supporting a network of rare plants and animals. I look forward to bringing my kids here when they are my age to see the work we accomplished.”

CONNER MCBANE
Senior Natural Resource Manager

THE NEED

The A.T. traverses countless peaks, ridges, valleys, streams, and rivers, stretching over 2,000 miles from Maine to Georgia. This topographically varied landscape, with its many microclimates, makes the Appalachian Mountains the most biodiverse region in eastern North America. It also makes the experience of hiking the A.T. so rewarding.

Yet, the beauty and integrity of the Trail's environment face constant threats from factors such as encroaching development, invasive species, extreme weather, and climate change. Protecting the A.T. experience requires that we care for both the footpath and the natural and biological resources around it.

THE SOLUTION

Natural resource stewardship is a long-term adaptive approach that includes active management, monitoring, research, evaluation, and revision.

On this landscape, and at this scale, the ATC is the only entity that can comprehensively identify, coordinate, and carry out this critical work across the 14 contiguous states. Over the last decade, the ATC has built a skilled team who manage thousands of acres of habitat and protect hundreds of rare species populations. We seek to accelerate the pace and scale of natural resource stewardship to keep up with the changing environment and external pressures.

THE APPROACH

The ATC's natural resource stewardship work has four primary areas of focus:

1 Forest Health and Resiliency

Healthy forests provide superior habitat for wildlife, sequester and hold carbon for decades, and are less vulnerable to pests, disease, and natural disasters. The ATC seeks to maintain healthy forests along the A.T. by restoring those that are threatened or in decline.

2 Ecological Connectivity

The ATC maintains and restores a wide variety of habitats to support plant and animal species moving throughout the landscape. We also work to foster new connectivity in areas affected by development and landscape fragmentation.

3 Native Biodiversity

The A.T. corridor protects nearly 2,000 unique populations of rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species. Conserving biodiversity helps ecosystems remain resilient and provides food and water resources for us all.

4 Invasive Species Management

Invasive non-native species can spread rapidly and degrade complex ecological communities. This affects wildlife habitats, the aesthetic quality of the A.T., and sometimes the health and safety of visitors.



INVESTMENT

\$6 Million

This would double our capacity to restore habitat and control invasive species at a landscape scale over the next five years.

Outcomes

- **800 acres** of A.T. corridor land managed and restored annually
- **200+ acres** of invasive species work per year
- **1378 ash trees** with continued protection from invasive emerald ash borer
- **25 populations of rare, threatened, and endangered species** actively monitored annually
- Habitat restoration activities of **10 rare communities** per year
- Over two years, **expand life-saving treatments to 500 trees** in priority Eastern hemlock stands; 50 trees treated to date
- **Five to six trainings** for invasive species identification and management and rare species monitoring and management offered annually



CASE STUDY

Saving Ash Trees from an Invasive Beetle

Ash trees in North America have been decimated by the spread of the non-native emerald ash borer. The ATC has worked with partners to save more than 1,300 ash trees along the A.T. by injecting them with a pesticide that protects them from infestation. The trees must be proactively treated while still healthy and require re-treatment every few years for lasting protection.



To learn more about how your gift can help the ATC achieve its vision for natural resource stewardship, contact philanthropy@appalachiantrail.org or 304.535.6331.

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