

CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN HIGH-IMPACT INITIATIVE

Scenic View Protection

THE VISION

The scenic views that delight, reward, and inspire Appalachian Trail visitors are protected forever.



THE NEED

As a National Scenic Trail, the A.T. provides hikers with thousands of breathtaking vistas along its 2,200-mile expanse. These views range from mountainous to pastoral, from forested to open meadow, and from wilderness to urban. Scenery is one of the most common reasons that people visit the Trail, but protecting these scenic resources is a perpetual challenge.

Increasing demand for housing, commerce, and energy, as well as the spread of non-native invasive species, threatens the A.T.'s visual splendor. A comprehensive analysis and inventory of all 1,000+ views along the Trail is critical to protecting this fundamental aspect of the Trail experience.



THE SOLUTION

In 2021 the ATC began the enormous undertaking of documenting and assessing every view along the Trail. To date, a trained team of staff and volunteers has documented and evaluated over 500 views and completed comprehensive view inventories for seven of the 14 Trail states. They assess both the scenic quality and the view importance through a detailed evaluation process that considers scenic values such as color, texture, form, scale, vibrance, balance, and historic and cultural context.

The ATC is the only organization that can complete this technical and scientifically driven process. As a national leader in the field of visual resource inventory and protection, the ATC's expertise is being sought by other National Scenic Trails and National Parks for guidance and technical assistance with their own inventories.

THE APPROACH

The team conducting the viewshed inventory applies a methodical and objective process to make a value and aesthetic determination. Walking each mile of the A.T., one state at a time, the team visits every A.T. viewpoint to document and assess the view. They conduct photo documentation, identify the type of view (natural, agricultural, rural, etc.), note the elements of the landscape (mountains, lakes, roads, towns, etc.), and use a standardized rubric to assign a score. Most importantly, they assess the level of impact each view has already sustained and the known potential for additional impacts in the future.

The data gathered are entered into a publicly available database that the ATC and its partners use to make decisions about conservation and management priorities. This baseline data will also enable the tracking of viewshed changes over time.

THE INVESTMENT

\$600K

This investment secures funding for the first inventory of views along the A.T.

Outcomes

- A thorough inventory of all **1,000+ views** along the A.T.
- Land management partners across **all 14 states** making informed decisions about land conservation priorities across the greater A.T. landscape.
- Ability to track and report on viewshed changes over time.
- Viewpoint preservation and restoration plans developed.

PRACTICAL USES

As proposals for development arise within the Appalachian Trail landscape, the ATC can quickly respond with detailed information and photos to show how the project may impact the habitat and Trail experience.

"Protecting views is important to visitor enjoyment, public well-being, preservation of our natural and cultural heritage, and oftentimes local economies."

—PAMELA ROY, Visual Resource Inventory Program Manager



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

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