



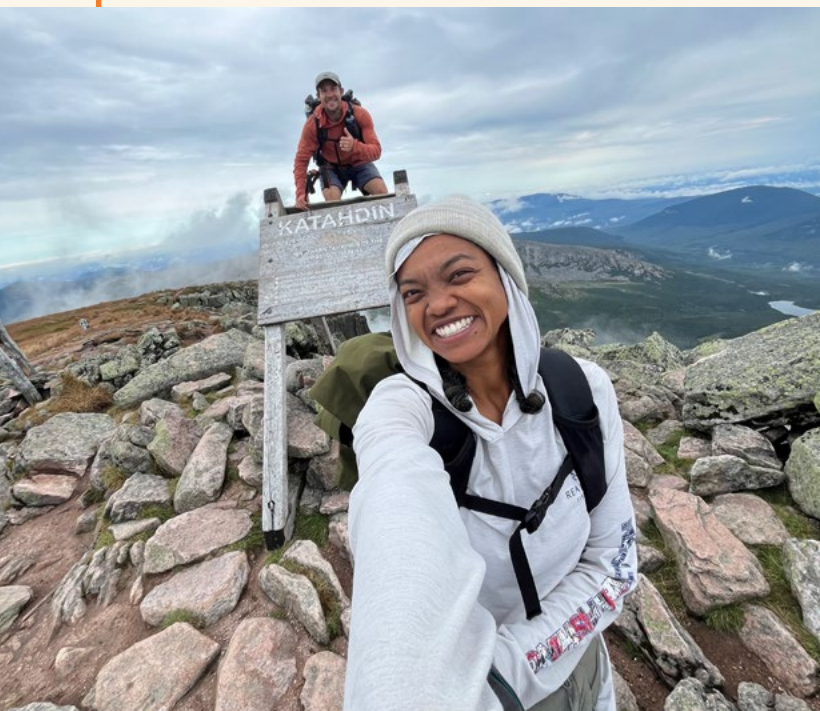
Appalachian Trail
Conservancy

CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN HIGH-IMPACT INITIATIVE

Visitor Education & Engagement Program

THE VISION

People who spend time on the A.T. are inspired to care for it through responsible recreation, volunteering, and giving back in other ways.



THE NEED

Record numbers of people with varying degrees of hiking and outdoor experience are visiting the Appalachian Trail year-round. Technological advances have increased the amount of information visitors have at their fingertips, but the sheer amount of information available about the A.T. can be confusing and overwhelming, especially to newcomers.

A.T. visitors deserve coordinated, consistent, and useful Trail information that meets their level of knowledge and reaches them via their preferred communications method, whether that is in person, over the phone, online, or a combination.

THE SOLUTION

The ATC is uniquely positioned as the one-stop resource for people seeking a safe, enjoyable, and responsible experience on the Appalachian Trail. The ATC benefits from more than a century of educating hikers through publications, on-trail education, appalachiantrail.org, and other channels. These planning tools are designed to reach people before they set foot on the Trail.

An expanded education and engagement program will ensure more visitors are prepared to maximize their Trail experience and make the least impact on the footpath and surrounding landscape.

"I met folks during the ATCs Flip Flop Kickoff in Harpers Ferry who I hiked with off and on during the entire trip. I summited Mt Katahdin with 3 of them, then hiked the entire southern half with 1 of them. I've made friends for life on the AT!" —BARBARA "BIRD SONG" WISMER, Flip-Flop Thru-Hiker

THE APPROACH

- **Optimized Visitor Centers:** The ATC currently owns and/or operates three visitor centers along the A.T., which provide critical and educational information and programming to 35,000 visitors per year. Staffing will be expanded to meet public demand year-round, seven days a week, and exhibits will be refreshed to align with current interpretive standards.
- **Digital Trailhead Kiosks:** Digital kiosks provide access to Trail-specific and regional information via hyperlocal wifi. Visitors can download information from the kiosks onto their smartphones to refer to when on sections of the Trail without cell service. The number of kiosks will be expanded exponentially at trailheads in all 14 states.
- **Interactive Online Resources:** The ATC's website and online registration system for long-distance hikers (ATCamp.org) will be improved to provide frictionless experiences for users and expanded to serve more audiences. Added functionality will provide access to customized trip-planning recommendations and resources that are suitable for the visitor's desired Trail adventure.
- **Expanded Information Services:** The ATC typically receives more than 2,300 distinct inquiries annually via phone, email, or website contact form. The most common questions pertain to trip planning and making a financial contribution to the ATC. Increased capacity will enable more prompt and personalized responses, contributing to inquirers' sense of belonging and community and positive perception of the ATC.



THE INVESTMENT

\$4.8 Million

This funding will enable the ATC to meet the current and anticipated needs of Trail visitors, including increased numbers of underprepared hikers. It will also foster the development of a lifelong, positive relationship between visitors and the ATC.

Outcomes

- An increase in A.T. visitors that are responsible recreators and ATC supporters.
- Reduced visitor use management issues on the Appalachian Trail.
- Refreshed educational exhibits at Appalachian Trail visitor centers.
- Digital kiosk information in all 14 A.T. states.

"Staff friendliness, knowledge, and just an overall great environment. One of my favorite places to visit in Damascus."

—DAMASCUS TRAIL CENTER VISITOR



To learn more about how your investment can help the ATC achieve its vision for an enhanced visitor education and engagement program, contact philanthropy@appalachiantrail.org or 304.535.6331.

appalachiantrail.org