



Resilient by Nature: Navigating Change & Delivering Conservation in the Appalachian Trail Landscape

2026 PARTNERSHIP MEETING AGENDA & MEETING DETAILS



Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

November 16-19, 2026



THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 PARTNERSHIP MEETING SPONSORS!

We extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors for their generous support and continued commitment to our shared work.

HOSTING SPONSORS



ATLP LEADERS



ATLP SUPPORTERS



ATLP ALLIES



PACKET CONTENTS

- Meeting overview & registration details
- Lodging & travel information
- Event highlights
- Agenda & Speaker Highlights

** All event updates and details will be posted to the ATLP Partnership Meeting website:

[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) Annual Partner Meeting - Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)

MEETING OVERVIEW & REGISTRATION DETAILS

The [Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership](#) (ATLP) will hold its 11th Partnership Meeting from November 16–19 at [The Crowne Plaza](#) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This year's theme — *Resilient by Nature: Navigating Change & Delivering Conservation in the Appalachian Trail Landscape* — will explore how partners across the region are responding to emerging challenges while advancing lasting conservation outcomes for communities, public lands, and the Appalachian Trail.

Each year, ATLP's Partnership Meeting brings together national, regional, and local conservation organizations; local, state, tribal and federal public agencies; and economic, public health, and community development organizations interested in connecting people, place and nature across the A.T. Landscape.

The [2026 Partnership Meeting](#) will kick off the evening of November 16 with a welcome reception and conclude the afternoon of November 18 at 4:30 p.m. An optional service project and field trip in the Appalachian Trail Landscape will be held on November 19.

Registration Now Open!

Registration is now open, follow the registration link to reserve your spot!

Deadline to register is Friday, October 9th! **Registration cost:** \$150 + processing fee.

[Register Here!](#)

The registration fee helps support venue costs and includes breakfast and coffee each morning of the event, lunch on Tuesday (11/17) and Wednesday (11/18), dinner on Tuesday (11/17), with additional refreshments throughout the meeting.

LODGING & TRAVEL INFORMATION

BOOKING YOUR LODGING AT THE CROWNE PLAZA

The ATLP is pleased to offer a special discounted room rate of \$124 per night for attendees at the Crowne Plaza. To receive the discounted rate, **reservations must be made by Friday, October 9, 2026.**

Click below to make your room reservation at the Crown Plaza.

[BOOK LODGING HERE](#)

GETTING TO THE CROWNE PLAZA HARRISBURG-HERSHEY

We are excited to welcome you to The Crowne Plaza Harrisburg-Hershey on November 16th! All meeting sessions and events (aside for the Welcome Reception & Field Trip/Service Project) will take place on site at the hotel.

Crowne Plaza Harrisburg–Hershey

23 S 2nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

For those arriving by air, Harrisburg International Airport (MDT) is the most convenient option. Transportation to the hotel is available via taxi, Uber, or Lyft, with an approximate travel time of 15–20 minutes. Other nearby airport recommendations include Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) and Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), both are a 90 minute drive to the venue.

Overnight self-parking is available at the hotel for a daily fee, and additional public parking options are located nearby.

The hotel is centrally located in downtown Harrisburg, with easy access to local attractions and the surrounding Hershey area.

SPECIAL NETWORKING EVENTS



Monday, November 16: Welcoming Happy Hour Reception (5-7pm)

Arrive early to meet up with fellow ATLP partners for a pre-meeting reception happy hour from 5-7pm at The Crowne Plaza. More details will be provided upon registration.

Tuesday, November 17: Share Fair Reception, Networking Social & Dinner

All participants are invited to host a table for their organization (pre-registration required)! Bring materials to share as folks network during a Networking Social before Dinner. Dinner will be provided for all participants on the evening of November 17th.

Thursday, November 19: Optional Field Trip & Service Project (9am-2pm)

Join for a day exploring the Appalachian Trail Landscape which will include a visit to a designated Appalachian Trail Community and invasive species removal on a section of the Appalachian Trail! Lunch, snacks and transportation options provided. There is no cost to participate, pre-registration is required. More details provided at event registration.



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Tuesday, November 17th



Hillary Rosner, Author of *Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World*

We are pleased to welcome **Hillary Rosner**, award-winning science journalist, editor, and author, as our keynote speaker!

Rosner's work explores biodiversity, conservation, and the critical connections between people and the natural world. Her writing has appeared in *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Wired*, *High Country News*, *Scientific American*, *Audubon*, and many other leading publications.

She is the author of ***Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World*** (Patagonia Books, 2025), a compelling exploration of how restoring wildlife and ecosystems can help repair our increasingly fractured relationship with the natural world. She is also the author of the forthcoming *Lichens: Worlds in Miniature* (Timber Press, 2027), part of the *Studies in Nature* series.

Rosner currently serves as publications editor for Ground Shift, a project focused on envisioning the future of America's public lands. She lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Join us for an inspiring keynote on conservation, connection, and the possibilities for repairing our shared world.



Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

Partnership Meeting

November 16 – 19, 2026

Harrisburg, PA

Navigating Change: Advancing a Resilient Appalachian Trail Landscape

Conservation•Community•Climate•Well-being

DRAFT AGENDA

Monday, November 16

5:00 - 7:00 PM: Welcome Reception

All participants are invited to join a welcome reception upon arrival. Refreshments will be provided. Location and additional details to be shared with registrants. RSVP when registering for the event.

Tuesday, November 17: Navigating Change Together

9:00 AM Welcome & Grounding

Meeting hosts and ATLP leadership will open the convening by setting shared intentions for two days of learning, connection, and action.

Featured Speaker:

Secretary Cindy Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

9:40 AM Keynote Presentation: Hillary Rosner on the Race to Repair our Fractured World

Award-winning science journalist Hilary Rosner will share her compelling journey to document one of the most overlooked challenges facing our planet: the fragmentation of the natural world. Drawing from her acclaimed new book, *Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair of Fractured World*, she'll explore connectivity and how to rethink humanity's relationship with nature.

10:30 AM The Kittatinny Ridge as a Model for What's Possible

Stretching across Pennsylvania, the Kittatinny Ridge is a powerful example of conservation at-scale. Through storytelling and partner perspectives, we'll celebrate the people, partnerships, and persistence behind its protection and role in accelerating conservation across the Appalachian Trail Landscape.

Featured Speakers:

Katie Hess, Conservation Landscapes Director, PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Nicole Wooten, Associate Director of Land Protection, The Nature Conservancy

Tanya Dierolf, Coordinator, Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape

Sean Grace, President, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Michael Shenk, Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape Assistant Director, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

11:30 AM Navigating Change: Policy & Funding at All Scales

The policy and funding landscape is shifting rapidly. This session unpacks what's changing—from climate investments to infrastructure funding—and what it means for conservation practitioners.

Featured Speakers:

Erin Sito, US Public Policy Director, Wildlands Network

Rex Linville, Eastern Division Director of Field Programs, Land Trust Alliance

Nicie Panetta, Vice President of Advancement, Northeast Wilderness Trust



12:30 PM Lunch provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

1:30 PM Stories from the Ground: Adapting Conservation in the Face of Development Pressures

Real decisions, real tradeoffs, real impact in the face of infrastructure, energy, and housing development across the A.T. Landscape. Experts will share real-world stories from communities responding to development pressure, climate impacts, and evolving needs.

Featured Speakers:

Greg Costello, U.S. Connectivity Program Director, Center for Large Landscape Conservation

Chris Miller, Executive Director, Piedmont Environmental Council

Pamela Roy, Visual Resource Manager, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

TBD, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy

TBD, Conservation Finance Network

2:45 PM Special Topic Learning Labs

Small group discussion led by experts to provide models, guidance, and lessons learned on special topics and trends from across the A.T. Landscape. Special topics include: Conservation Decision Support Tools, State Agency Leadership, Wildlife Corridors & Crossings

4:00 PM Day 1 Reflections & Close

5:00 PM Share Fair Social Hour

All meeting participants are invited to host a table for your organization and share more about your work to connect & protect the Appalachian Trail Landscape. There is no cost to host a share fair table for your organization. Prior registration is required, space is limited. More details provided at event registration.

6:00 PM Dinner: Dinner provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

Wednesday, November 18: Getting it Done: Where Conservation is Delivering

9:00 AM Welcome Back & Blazing Trail with the ATLP

Framing remarks from the leadership of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; reflecting on progress across the Appalachian Trail Landscape and the importance of partnership and announcements of new efforts from the ATLP.

Featured Speakers:

TBD, National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Cinda Waldbuesser, President & CEO, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Jeff Hunter, Southern Appalachian Director, National Parks Conservation Association & Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership Steering Committee Member

10:15 AM All the Small Things: Charismatic Microfauna & Hidden Biodiversity of the AT Landscape

This session highlights the importance of often-overlooked species in maintaining ecosystem health and resilience; connecting biodiversity to climate adaptation strategies. Stories from across the AT Landscape where conservation, stewardship and restoration are making a positive impact.

Featured Speakers:

Jay Leutze, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy & Appalachia Rising

Pete McKinley, Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society

Marian Orlousky, Director of Science & Stewardship, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Jeff Reardon, Habitat Restoration Project Manager, Atlantic Salmon Federation

11:30 AM Healthy Lands, Healthy People

Explore the connections between conserved landscapes and physical, mental, and community well-being, with examples of cross-sector partnerships improving health outcomes.

Featured Speakers:

Katie Tiger, Program Director, Center for Native Health

Noel Purdy, Executive Director, WellSpan / Healthy Franklin County

Amy Scott, Program Manager, Northern Forest Center

12:30 PM Lunch: Lunch provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

1:30 PM Breakout Discussions II: Implementing the ATLP Strategic Plan

3:15 PM The Future of Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation

Panel discussion of long-standing partnership success, emerging new models, non-traditional approaches, and conversation on what the future of Appalachian Trail Landscape conservation holds.

Featured Speakers:

Dr. Claire Jantz, Deputy Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Chuck Loring, Director of Natural Resources, Penobscot Nation

Dr. Toni Lynn Morelli, USGS Research Ecologist, Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center

Elizabeth Petruska, The Conservation Fund

TBD, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

4:15 PM Closing: Where We Go From Here, Together

4:45 PM Partnership Meeting Close



Thursday, November 19th: Field Trip & Trail Work

9:00 AM – 2:00PM

Field Trip to an A.T. Community & Trail Work on the Appalachian Trail

All meeting participants are invited to spend the day exploring the Appalachian Trail Landscape which will include a visit to a designated Appalachian Trail Community and invasive species removal on a section of the Appalachian Trail! Lunch, snacks, and transportation options provided. There is no cost to participate; pre-registration is required. More details are provided at event registration.

For more information, agenda updates & to register, please visit:

<https://appalachiantrail.org/protect/conservation/at-landscape-partnership/annual-meeting/>



FEATURED SESSION SPEAKERS



Cindy Dunn

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Email: cindydunn@pa.gov

Secretary Dunn has served in multiple leadership roles at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) under three governors over the past three decades. Throughout her career, she has helped position Pennsylvania as a leader in land conservation, outdoor recreation, sustainable practices, and public land management.

During her tenure, DCNR has expanded opportunities for youth and young adults through the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, advanced water quality and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, strengthened climate change mitigation and adaptation practices, managed record visitation at state parks and forests, and secured historic levels of funding to meet the Commonwealth's growing conservation and recreation needs.



Tanya Dierolf

Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape Coordinator

Email: tanya@legacyworksgroup.com

Tanya Dierolf coordinates the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape, where she brings together federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit partners to support military readiness, natural resource protection, working agricultural and forest lands, and community development opportunities. Her work is grounded in curiosity and collaboration, with a focus on building partnerships that advance shared social, environmental, and economic goals. She enjoys discovering synergies among partners and aiding in the transformation of ideas into action.

Tanya brings nearly 20 years of experience across government and private organizations, with a record of leading projects and advancing strategic planning and implementation. She was instrumental in the permanent protection of the 8,000-acre DeHart Watershed Property in central Pennsylvania. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Juniata College and an M.S. in Environmental Science from Antioch University New England and is proudly Pennsylvanian.



Sean Grace

President, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Email: grace@hawkmountain.org

Sean Grace is passionate about wildlife and conservation and draws upon a balance of business management and nonprofit leadership experience, connecting communities with conservation through education. He aligns programmatic delivery with fiscal responsibility to advance the Hawk Mountains conservation mission and has consistently exceeded budgetary goals, more than doubled the endowments, and raised \$10 million for a capital campaign since arriving in 2018.

Sean ran mountaineering stores as a district manager before moving into conservation

in 2000 and brings marketing, branding, exceptional member service, team building and recognition, and partnership development to strengthen the organization. We added fundraisers, launched member-only events, the President's Circle, and developed a new comprehensive education platform that increased earned income and giving. Sean developed programming for and ran Wildlife Expeditions in Jackson Hole, and sanctuaries for New Jersey Audubon, National Audubon, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association. In his free time, he explores natural history and hikes, bikes, and skis with his sons.



Dr. Claire Jantz

*Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services,
Pennsylvania DCNR*

Email: cjantz@pa.gov

Dr. Claire Jantz joined the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation as Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services in December 2023. She oversees the bureaus of Conservation and Recreation and Geological Survey and DCNR's Conservation Landscape Program. Prior to joining DCNR, Claire was a Geography professor at Shippensburg University and directed the Center for Land Use and Sustainability.

Claire works in several statewide roles, including serving as co-chair on the Chesapeake Bay Program's Healthy Watersheds goal team and as a steering committee member for the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership and the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership. She represents DCNR at the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers and Pennsylvania's Rural Development Council.

A native of east Tennessee, Claire earned an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree in botany and anthropology from the University of Tennessee and a master's and PhD in Geography from the University of Maryland.



Pete McKinley, Ph.D.

Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society

Email: pmckinley@tw.s.org

Pete McKinley, Ph.D. is a Senior Conservation Biologist based out of our Hallowell, Maine office. He is engaged in landscape level conservation planning and collaborative conservation projects across the eastern forest with a focus in Maine and North Carolina and projects in the desert southwest and Alaska as well. His ongoing research into the conservation needs of birds in forest ecosystems informs and inspires land trust partnerships and LWCF funded acquisitions he has helped found to enlarge and defend public lands. He enjoys the intersection of applied science and collaborative conservation especially within the High Peaks Initiative of western Maine and the 14-state Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, both founded on creating and defending large scale networks of ecologically meaningful and protected lands. He holds a B.A. in Biology from Colby College, Maine, an M.S. in Applied Ecology from Indiana University, and a Ph.D. in Biology from University of New Brunswick, Canada.



Marian Orlousky

Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society

Email: morlousky@appalachiantrail.org

Marian Orlousky is the Director of Science & Stewardship for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). She leads a team of staff focused on stewarding and protecting natural resources and biodiversity across the Appalachian Trail Landscape. Working with a team from Georgia to Maine, Marian is focused on identifying areas of the A.T. corridor that serve as critical habitat for rare species and crucial movement corridors for landscape connectivity, and leading efforts to maintain and restore the ecological function and resiliency of these places. Her work includes elements of invasive species management, forest restoration, grassland management, visual resource protection, and visitor use management. Marian received her B.S. in Biology from Juniata College and

her Masters in Ecology from SUNY-Environmental Science and Forestry. She was born and raised in Central Pennsylvanian and has been with the ATC for fourteen years.



Nicie Panetta

V.P. of Advancement, Northeast Wilderness Trust

Email: nicie@newildernesstrust.org

Wandering alone amid the birches in New Hampshire woods and sleeping beneath the stars in a California forest with her big sisters are some of the childhood experiences that seeded Nicie's love for, and sense of home in, wild nature. In her role as Northeast Wilderness Trust's V.P. of Advancement, Nicie brings together her experience in finance, communications and non-profit leadership to lead our fundraising and communications teams and to help build the Wilderness Trust for the future.



Noel Purdy

Executive Director, Healthy Franklin County

Email: npurdy@wellspan.org

A 1995 graduate of Chambersburg Area Senior High School, Noel Purdy earned a bachelor of arts degree in communication studies at the University of Missouri. She has worked in the community development space for over 20 years. Before returning to Chambersburg in 2008, Purdy spent five years in Alaska, managing economic development and outreach programs for a regional community development corporation and was a planning director for a rural fishing community in Bristol Bay.

She returned to Chambersburg in 2008 to work for the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce. During her tenure at the Chamber, Purdy led several of its affiliate non-profit organizations, working in leadership and workforce development and downtown revitalization. In 2015, she was promoted to head up the Chamber as its first woman president, providing strategic leadership to the area's largest business organization.

Purdy resigned from the Chamber in 2017 and founded a non-profit that same year, the Franklin County Coalition for Progress, which focuses on social justice and equality issues. She is currently the Executive Director of Healthy Franklin County, a health improvement coalition that works to improve the health and well-being of Franklin County residents.



Amy Scott

Program Director, Northern Forest Center

Email: ascott@northernforest.org

As a member of the Center's Community Investment team, Amy works primarily in Western Maine, where she leads the Maine West initiative, supports housing development projects, and partners with community organizations to help build more equitable and vibrant futures for rural places. She also supports school and community partnerships and career pathway development in several rural communities through Extended Learning Opportunities and other collaborative efforts.

Amy has been developing her facilitation skills since her time as a student at College of the Atlantic. She brings more than 20 years of experience working with nonprofits, including College of the Atlantic and the Northern Forest Center earlier in her career. She also served as an associate with Good Group Decisions, a consulting firm that provides facilitation and process management services to nonprofit and corporate clients across Maine and the Northeast. As a resident of Greenwood, Maine, and mother of three, Amy lives firsthand both the joys and the challenges of working and raising a family in a rural place.



Erin Sito

U.S. Public Policy Director, Wildlands Network

Email: e.sito@wildlandsnetwork.org

Erin researches, develops, and promotes laws and policies that support habitat connectivity and wildlife conservation at all levels of government. She cut her conservation policy teeth as a Legal Intern with Wildlands Network in 2018, when she drafted model state wildlife coordinator action plan legislation that was subsequently adopted in three states, kicking off almost a decade-long trend of state legislative action on habitat connectivity and wildlife crossings. Prior to Wildlands Network, she was a private practice attorney, specializing in renewable energy transactions and regulatory law and litigation. Erin earned her JD from Oregon Law with a concentration in Environmental & Natural Resources Law. While in school, she clerked with the Bonneville Power Administration, the Regional Solicitor's Office for the Department of the Interior, and the University of Oregon's Office of General Counsel. Erin lives in Southeastern Connecticut, where she enjoys hiking with her two labs, gardening, and learning how to restore historic homes.



Cinda Waldbuesser

President & CEO, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Email: cwaldbuesser@appalachiantrail.org

Cinda Merrill Waldbuesser is an accomplished conservation and public-sector executive with more than two decades of leadership experience spanning the National Park Service (NPS) and the nonprofit sector.

Prior to joining ATC in November of 2025, Cinda most recently served as Deputy Regional Director for the National Park Service's Northeast Region, providing executive leadership for national park units across 1.5 million acres from Maine to Virginia. In that role, she supported 22 park superintendents with park operations and strategic communication.

She also held the roles of Superintendent of Canaveral National Seashore in Florida and First State National Historical Park in Delaware and Pennsylvania at the National Park Service, where she guided complex park operations that combined conservation, historic preservation, and visitor engagement.

Before joining NPS, Cinda led the Pennsylvania and Delaware Program for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting and enhancing America's national parks. During her time with NPCA, she opened the organization's first Pennsylvania and Delaware field office and directed advocacy, policy, and public engagement strategies that built broad coalitions of partners, secured legislative and philanthropic support, and strengthened long-term protection for park resources.

A Philadelphia native and graduate of Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies, Cinda lives in Philadelphia with her husband, three children, and their dogs and cats. Outside of work, she enjoys family adventures, traveling, and spending time outdoors.



Nicole Wooten

U.S. Public Policy Director, Wildlands Network

Email: nicole.wooten@tnc.org

Nicole Wooten (she/her) is Associate Director of Land Protection at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) PA/DE, where she conserves key parts of the Appalachians, a TNC global focal landscape. In addition to direct acquisitions, she supports regional planning efforts with the Kittatinny Ridge Land Protection Partnership to protect critical climate resilient lands. Previously, she served as Director of Natural Resources at the Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Corridor Stewardship Coordinator at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), and in Environmental Education in the Peace Corps - El Salvador. Her work has included coordination of the NY Highlands Network; policy planning; volunteer engagement; easement stewardship; and preserve management.

Nicole holds an MEM from Yale and BAs in Environmental Studies and English from UNC-Chapel Hill. She is currently an ATC board director and part of a First Light cohort. She enjoys volunteering with her local Tree Tenders group in Philadelphia.