



***Local Management Plan
for the
Appalachian Trail***

**From
Pine Grove Furnace, Pennsylvania
To
Center Point Knob**

And

**Blue Mountain-Tuscarora Trail Junction
To
Juniata River, Duncannon, Pa.**

May 2016

Last Revised 10/22/2020

**Mountain Club of Maryland
Baltimore, MD**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

~~This revised plan is an update of~~ The original Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) Local Management Plan (LMP) prepared in 2005 was updated in 2016 and submitted to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for review and approval. In the absence of ATC approval. MCM has continued to make updates to the LMP as Trail conditions and policies change. MCM wishes to thank the authors of the original plan as well as this new revision, the Club members who provided input into the preparation of this revised document, and our partners in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy who have provided review and guidance.

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Change Control

Changes to this 2016 Plan require approval by the MCM Council and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee of Appalachian Trail clubs. If in doubt, MCM will consult with the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

When changes to this 2016 are made in the future a new Table of Contents, list of effective pages, and the revised pages will be issued as a replace-and-insert package.

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PART 1

A.T. PLANNING AND THE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

SECTION 1(A)

Purpose of the Mountain Club of Maryland Local Management Plan

This Local Management Plan (LMP) has been prepared to provide information for the cooperating agencies about the **Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM)** and its intentions with respect to the management of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) sections for which MCM has been delegated responsibility: Pa. Route 233 (Pine Grove Furnace State Park) to Center Point Knob, and from the top of Blue Mountain at the intersection with the Tuscarora Trail to the east end of the bridge over the Juniata River. This is the second LMP prepared by MCM; its first plan was published in 2005. This new plan updates the original document to reflect current policies related to the A.T. and the present status of the sections maintained by our Club. The latest version of the formal delegation agreement between MCM and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy was signed in 1997 and is attached as Appendix A. This plan will serve as a working document for the Club, and as such will be reviewed and updated periodically.

MCM also works in cooperation with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) to maintain a nominal ten-mile section of the A.T. in Maryland, heading south from the Pennsylvania border. This section is officially delegated to PATC, but PATC sub-delegated treadway maintenance to MCM in the 1980's and references this in their current LMP. Since the PATC LMP is the controlling document for all MCM Maryland maintenance activities, this MCM Plan will deal only with the "official" MCM A.T. segments in Pennsylvania. MCM does however appreciate the opportunity to work with PATC, the ATC, the Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO), and cognizant agency partners on both the general maintenance of this Maryland segment as well as on any relocations which may be required.

Introduction to the Local Management Plan

The purpose of this section is to provide some general information on the history, goals, and organization of the **Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) Local Management Plan**. The **A.T. Comprehensive Plan** developed and signed by the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service in 1981, envisioned a series of "local management plans" prepared by Trail clubs in concert with their agency partners. The ATC's *Local Management Planning Guide* provides a framework for preparation of those local management plans. The ATC produced the first **Local Management Planning Guide** in 1988 (revised several times since then—most recently in 2009) and the **Pennsylvania Local Management Planning Guide** in 2010. The ATC requested that each maintaining club produce its own LMP. In response to this request, MCM prepared its first LMP which was published in January 2005. Ten years later, MCM has reviewed its original plan and prepared this updated version to reflect current A.T. policies and conditions.

In developing its local management plan, a Trail club needs to consult with its agency partners, ATC, local officials, and other organizations concerned with Trail issues. The club also should provide opportunities for public input into the plan. That can be done formally, through a public meeting cosponsored with an agency partner, or informally, through public notice of a club meeting focusing on planning issues. The club also must assume responsibility for writing the plan and amending it, as necessary, to reflect new club policies and goals. ATC, particularly through its regional staff, is available to assist in this process. LMPs must be approved by ATC.

In general, the MCM Plan follows the layout of the **Local Management Planning Guide** and the **Pennsylvania A.T. Management Plan**. (In this new Plan, we have reorganized and reordered some topic sections to more closely match that Plan.) The individual topic sections include an overview of each issue and the policies of existing agency partners that pertain to our section, and then indicate MCM's own policies and action plans.

Goals of the Local Management Plan

The policies and action plans have been reviewed by the MCM Council members, agency partners, interested club members and the ATC Board of Managers. The policies and actions described in this plan are intended to guide the officers and volunteers of the Mountain Club of Maryland in fulfilling the responsibilities which have been delegated to them for the management of the Trail. All policies and actions contained in this plan are subject to state and federal agency regulations.

The goals of the MCM Local Management Plan are

- To provide a source of reference for monitors, maintainers, committees, and other interested parties.
- To provide consistency in maintenance of the Trail without constricting individual ideas and preferences.
- To enhance communication with maintainers and monitors in the field.
- To provide appropriate references if additional assistance is needed.

SECTION 1(B)

Cooperative Management System

“The Appalachian Trail works the way
the rest of the world ought to.”

Tavi Umhey, County Legislator, July 1987

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open
road, healthy, free, the world before me

.Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman

Overview

The best managed sections of the Appalachian Trail demonstrate time and again that cooperation among the primary partners—the club, ATC, and representatives of the landowning agencies whose land is crossed ---leads to the best results in management of the club’s A.T. section and in preparation of useful management plans. Each partner should do what it does best among the on-going, tasks to be done by all, and these roles should be carefully negotiated through on-going cooperative working relationships. The role of the primary partners should be described in the local management plan (LMP) and in cooperative agreements. In this manner, cooperative problem-solving will prevail. The club, supported by its management partner(s), will adequately design, construct, and maintain the A.T. and effectively monitor and manage associated A.T. corridor lands.

Four Primary Partners - On any given section, the Appalachian Trail is managed under agreements between and among four primary partners:

- The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (formerly the Appalachian Trail Conference)
- The A.T.-maintaining club(s)
- The State
- One or both federal partners, the National Park Service and/or Forest Service

Many secondary partners, such as law-enforcement agencies, provide support and should be recognized in the local management plan. However, these four primary partners must, at a minimum be included in the cooperative management structure in order to manage the A.T. at the local level. Their major roles and contributions to management are summarized below.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)

ATC's Basic Role

The ATC is responsible for ensuring adequate management of the Appalachian Trail and its corridor lands through oversight and support of its member organizations, the A.T.-maintaining clubs. The ATC assigns sections of the A.T. to local Trail clubs and serves in a back-up capacity for the clubs if and when needed to guarantee adequate management.

The Conference's approach to clubs is supportive and respectful of their own volunteer traditions. ATC has numerous programs to enhance volunteer management, including grants, workshops, and organized volunteer Trail crews. ATC also works closely with the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and each of the 14 states through which the Trail passes.

The Trail Maintaining Clubs

The Trail Club's Role

The Trail clubs are responsible for keeping the Appalachian Trail “forever open, obvious and narrowly passable for hiking.” Effective, active local Trail clubs—approximately 30 of which maintain adjacent Trail sections from Maine to Georgia—are the key grass-roots leaders in the managing partnerships.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when ATC and club representatives sought greater federal efforts to protect the A.T., Congress was assured that the maintenance and management of the Trail would essentially remain Conference and club responsibilities, saving the government millions of dollars. Further, the possibility of direct involvement in the day-to-day management of the A.T. by NPS, USFS, and states concerned the ATC Board and clubs. For those reasons, ATC worked diligently to guarantee the continuing role of volunteers in the management of the Trail. These efforts were successful, and the Trail-maintaining clubs continue to fulfill and expand their responsibilities for local management and maintenance of the A.T. as it has grown from a privately maintained footpath into a national scenic trail—in effect, a linear national park. While the traditional Trail-maintenance responsibilities remain the club's most important A.T. duty, club roles have grown to include new responsibilities for cooperative management and planning.

ATC and each Trail club have a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) that defines those responsibilities and formalizes the relationship between ATC and the club. The MOUs apply only to those activities of the clubs that are related to the management of the Appalachian Trail and its corridor, and outline basic Trail club responsibilities as follows:

1. *Trail construction and maintenance* (relocation and side-trail design and construction; footpath protection and hardening with water diversion structures, puncheon, and rockwork; pathway obstruction removal; route marking with blazes, signs, and cairns).
2. *Facilities construction and maintenance* (shelter, privy, and bridge construction; trash and illegal fire-ring removal).
3. *Trail- and corridor-lands management* (regular revision of the local management plan, Trail assessment, corridor monitoring, regular cooperation and communication with ATC and agency partners).
4. *Information and education* (publication, or assistance in publication, of Trail guides, provision of information about the Trail to ATC, agencies, and the public, and hiker education).

Through the MOUs, the Trail clubs also agree to assist to the extent possible ATC's land trust in land protection, management and monitoring efforts, as well as ATC's responses to “external threats” such as highways or development expansions that threaten the Trail.

The Partners

The National Park Service (NPS)

The National Park Service retains the primary authority and responsibility for the acquisition, development, and administration of the Appalachian Trail, including law enforcement and environmental compliance. Under the National Trails System Act, the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for administration of the entire Appalachian Trail, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture. The National Park Service, an agency of the Department of Interior (USDI), oversees the Trail and works in close consultation with the United States Forest Service, an agency of the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's role is defined by its bylaws and policies. Historically, ATC has been responsible for ensuring adequate maintenance and management of the Appalachian Trail and its corridor lands through oversight and support of its member organizations, the A.T.-maintaining clubs. If and when needed, ATC has served in a back-up capacity to the clubs, to guarantee adequate maintenance and management. ATC has numerous programs to enhance volunteer management, including

grants, workshops, and organized volunteer Trail crews. ATC also works closely with the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and each of the 14 states through which the Trail passes.

The affairs of ATC are overseen by a 15-member Board of Directors that meets at least twice a year and reviews any documents, decisions or processes set forth for its approval. The Board is supported in its duties by the Stewardship Council, with 15 members who provide expertise and field experience in the many disciplines required for the Conservancy's conservation programs. The Council also meets twice a year to discuss and recommend policies for management of the Trail and other programs, which are summarized in its *Planning Guide*. In addition, the Stewardship Council may help craft guidance and standards for program activities consistent with the Conservancy's mission to protect and manage the A.T.

Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO)

The senior official in charge of National Park Service responsibilities for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail is the Park Manager of the Appalachian Trail Park Office, headquartered in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The A.T. Park Manager carries out the duties and authorities of the secretary in administration of the A.T., outside of established federal units and management decisions on NPS-acquired lands.

The Park Manager and his/her staff are bound by the same regulations that are in effect for all national park system lands, as enumerated in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, "Parks, Forests and Public Property." Even though management responsibility for NPS-acquired land has been delegated to ATC and the local A.T.-maintaining clubs, the Park Manager is the responsible official retaining authority for law enforcement, land acquisition, and compliance with the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The State Agencies

On-the-ground management of state lands is usually carried out by the state park, forest, or fish-and-game local office. These managers administer state lands under different authorities, and the degree of emphasis given to Appalachian Trail matters varies from agency to agency. Because of this wide variation in agency charters, a need has been identified for "A.T. management zones" or "corridors" on state-owned lands in order to establish consistent policies and regulations for lands within the A.T. corridor. ATC has initiated a series of cooperative agreements with affected state agencies to establish those zones and articulate the roles of the state primary and secondary agencies, the Trail clubs, ATC and the federal agency partners. The *Pennsylvania Local Management Planning Guide* lists the following state agencies as among ATC's primary partners for managing some aspects of the Trail:

Penn. Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Penn. Bureau of State Parks (within DCNR)
Penn. Bureau of Forestry (within DCNR)
Penn. Game Commission
Penn. Dept. of Public Welfare—So. Mountain Restoration Center
Penn. State Police
Penn. Emergency Management Agency
Penn. Dept. of Transportation
Penn. Turnpike Commission

Partner Agencies for Managing MCM-Maintained Trail Sections

The Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) Trail in Pennsylvania crosses land managed by several government agencies and jurisdictions:

1. **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)**
 - Bureau of Forestry-Manages lands of The Michaux State Forest
 - Bureau of Parks-Manages land of Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

2. **Pennsylvania Game Commission-** Manages most of state-owned land through which the MCM portion of the Trail passes, notably Game Land units #170 and #305, administered by the South Central Regional Office in Huntingdon, PA. PGC is responsible for administration of the State's game and non-game wildlife laws and regulations.
3. **The Borough of Duncannon-** The Trail passes through several parcels of land owned by the Borough of Duncannon, from which The National Park Service has acquired easements for the Trail.
4. **National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office**

All of the agencies and jurisdictions have delegated trail maintenance, development, operations, and corridor monitoring to ATC and the Trail Clubs. All agencies cooperate with ATC and the Clubs in managing The Trail in accordance with provisions of the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 as amended in 1978.

The MCM portion of The Trail does not cross land administered by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission or the U.S. Forest Service.

Secondary partners include state and local agencies whose responsibilities or activities may affect the Trail in some way (e.g., departments of transportation, law-enforcement agencies, search-and-rescue agencies, fire-control agencies, fish-and-wildlife agencies, and historic-preservation agencies).

MCM Trail Sections - Maps

MCM Trail segments are shown on PATC Appalachian Trail Map 2-3, PA Route 94 to US Route 30 (beginning at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Pole Steeple Area, then easterly) and on PATC Map 1, Susquehanna River to PA Route 94 (picking up around Sheet Iron Roof Road, to Center Point Knob, then from the A.T. – Tuscarora/Darlington trail junction through Duncannon to the east end of the Juniata River bridge). Maps showing the MCM trail segments are included as attachments to this LMP. I suggest we delete these sentences and insert a map as an appendix. Ownership of adjacent lands—State, ATPO, private—is not generally shown and may change without notice, so if it is necessary to work with land owners on an A.T. management issue (e.g., corridor monitoring) the best recommendation is to contact the ATC Mid-Atlantic Office (see Appendix B) and discuss the problem. MCM does not intend to compile and maintain a separate repository of Trail maps or landownership information, as others are already doing this and, in any case, “local knowledge” from PA residents (ATC staff, others) normally will be needed to work any issues.

SECTION 1(C)

Mountain Club of Maryland

History

The Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) was founded by several members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) who tired of traveling down to Washington to hike. Preliminary meetings were held in the summer of 1934, with the first hike from Crampton Gap (Gathland) to Weverton in October. A formal organizational meeting was held in December, and MCM became an affiliate of PATC. This arrangement lasted only a short time. Incorporation came some years later on July 3, 1940 as a non-profit organization with an IRS classification of 501(c)(3). The original hike has been repeated during 5-year anniversary celebrations during anniversary celebrations ever since, beginning with its fifth year.

Shortly after MCM's founding, PATC relinquished its responsibility for maintaining 45 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania, from Pine Grove Furnace State Park to the bridge over Juniata River, to MCM. MCM subsequently relinquished responsibility for maintaining the 17 miles of trail from Center Point Knob to the ridge of Blue Mountain across the Cumberland Valley to the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club. As noted in Section 1A, MCM also maintains 8 to 10 miles of the A.T. in Maryland for the PATC.

Immediately after its founding, MCM began regular publication of both an excursions schedule and a "Bulletin" now known as "Hiker High Points." Both the hiking schedule and Hiker High Points are now published three times a year to provide notices of upcoming events and news to members.

The Club has historically sought conservation-oriented activities dedicated to preserving, building, and promoting hiking trails. It has built and maintains trails in several State and County Parks and other public lands. In the 1970's MCM built and maintained 30 miles of the Tuscarora Trail from Hancock Md. to PA. Route 16. Maintenance of that trail was relinquished to PATC (North Chapter) after that organization assumed responsibility for other Tuscarora portions north of the Potomac River.

MCM 's excursion schedule has almost from its beginning listed hikes on both Saturday and Sunday all year around. In October 1973 a group known as The Mid-week Leisure Hikers scheduled less rigorous local hikes on Wednesdays. In March of 1979 a second group known as the Mid-week Trekkers scheduled more far-ranging rigorous hikes on Wednesdays. These groups have evolved into three Wednesday hiking groups, although the names have sometimes changed based on the consensus of their current leaders and the MCM Council. Canoe trips are a regular feature during appropriate months. The Baltimore Bike Club and Ski Club are early spin-offs by members of MCM.

The Club conducts workshops on hike leadership, first aid, backpacking, orienteering (for corridor monitoring), trail-land border monitoring and other trail related subjects. MCM has an active A.T. corridor boundary monitoring program, described later in Section 4(A).

MCM has built/rebuilt four shelters (described later) and relocated about 16 miles of the A.T. in Pennsylvania.

Organization

MCM is governed by a Council, which consists of the following:

- President – two-year term, and cannot be reelected for two years; serves on the Council as past president for one year after end of term.
- Vice-President(s)-- two-year term concurrent with the President. (The Club began with a single Vice-President position, later expanded to two, and reverted to a single Vice-President beginning in 2016.)
- Recording Secretary-- two year term.
- Corresponding Secretary-- two year term.
- Treasurer-- two-year term.
- Three Councilors (representing the club membership at large)-- one-year terms.

All except the President may be reelected. The Corresponding Secretary is elected in the mid-term year of the President's term. In addition, the various appointed committee heads serve as voting Council members. Appointed positions include the Supervisors of Trails, Shelters, Membership, Publicity, and

Excursions. In recent years, a number of these appointed positions have been held by former Club Officers, e.g., past presidents or vice-presidents, but in any case tend to be held by dedicated individuals for several years, thereby providing a good reservoir of “corporate knowledge” for new Council members.

Bylaws (published separately and included here by reference only) define the Council’s operations. Council meetings are held every other month. In addition, each December there is a social meeting for all members, weather permitting). A General Meeting for all members is held each June to elect officers.

Membership

Membership in MCM is open to all individuals who share the interests of the Club. Annual dues cover all day-to-day expenses, along with the cost of routine trail work and shelter maintenance. Occasional grants from ATC have helped defray costs of major projects. MCM owns no property but trail tools, it has no employees, and volunteers fulfill its functions. The participants share excursion costs. Newsletters, hiking schedules, e-mail list serve and a website meet the Club’s communication needs. Guests are welcomed on excursions and until recently were charged a guest nominal fee to encourage them to become members. Total annual membership has risen gradually, and usually averages between 800 and 900 members.

Relations with other Groups

MCM is a trail maintaining member club of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. It is a member of The Keystone Trails Association (KTA). It sends representatives to the meetings of the Maryland Appalachian Trail Management Committee, working with officials of the state, the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. We also send representatives to the meetings of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee, which is comprised of AT clubs from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York.

PART 2

THE PHYSICAL TRAIL

SECTION (2A)

Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance

Overview

From the beginning, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has considered its main responsibility to be ensuring that the Appalachian Trail is well-maintained and well-marked for hiker use. ATC has viewed Trail design, construction, and maintenance as the primary job of the Trail-maintaining clubs, and a well-maintained and well-marked section of Trail as the basic measure of a club's success.

In 1981 (revised in 2000) ATC produced *Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance* to serve as a guide to volunteers who were involved in designing, constructing, or maintaining portions of the Appalachian Trail. Shortly thereafter, ATC published an abbreviated version of the guide, called the *Appalachian Trail Fieldbook*, to provide Trailworkers with a handy field manual.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In 1979, ATC's Board of Managers formally affirmed the primary mission of the Trail community:

"The Appalachian Trail in its entirety shall be kept forever open, obvious, and narrowly passable for hiking. The treadway shall pass lightly over the land to provide for the least disturbance to the natural setting. The Trail shall be marked and cleared to offer passage that may be both enjoyable for the reasonably prepared and in harmony with the natural environment...so that a hiker unfamiliar with the area can discern the direction of the route and the location of water sources and facilities."

Also in 1979, ATC adopted more detailed standards for clearing, marking, and treadway maintenance. These standards encourage use of native materials and minimum tools and techniques, to retain the simple, primitive character of the Trail. The standards are stated in general terms, which permits continued local discretion, resourcefulness, and artistry in Trail stewardship. They are found in ATC's "stewardship handbook, *Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance*, and ATC's hip-pocket summary version, *The Appalachian Trail Fieldbook*.

Local Adaptations of Standards - In 1983, ATC passed a resolution regarding review and approval of local adaptations of standards, such as the use of offset blazes or plastic markers: "Clubs **must** consult with the ATC **before** initiating changes. If the adaptation is endorsed and the agency partner concurs, the club's standards should be stated clearly in its local management and steps should be taken to inform the public through guidebooks, signs, or other means. Failure to follow this simple procedure could lead to confusion on the part of Trail users."

Double Blazing Standards - The standard two-by-six-inch paint blaze has marked the AT footpath since the 1930's. In accordance with this standard, ATC has advocated the use of the double blaze to indicate turns or other places where hikers should be warned to be alert. In July 1995, ATC's Board of Managers adopted the following amendment in response to the increasing variation in blazing standards: "Individual clubs may elect to choose one of the two alternatives for double paint blazes, the in-line double paint blaze or the standard off-set double paint blaze, *but no other variations*. Painted arrows or single blazes that are slanted or at an angle are *nonstandard* and should be removed and replaced by standard blazes. Only one of the two variations for double paint blazing at turns may be chosen, and it must be chosen for application to the club's entire Trail section. In areas where clubs choose the offset blaze, an in-line blaze may be desirable at locations other than turns, where a double-blaze warning is necessary."

ATC policies state that if a club intends to change its blazing style, it should consult with its agency partner(s) before implementation, and it should incorporate these changes into its local management plan prior to implementing the change. Individual maintainers should not effect a change to the offset blaze on the basis of their personal preferences.

Both the in-line and the offset double blazes should be used sparingly, since they become meaningless with frequent use. Double blazes are used to indicate abrupt changes in the direction of the AT or at other points where hikers should be especially alert. Use two standard (2 inch-by-6 inch) blazes, one above the other and 2 inches apart; if using the off-set, the upper blaze should be clearly off-set approximately 2 inches in the direction of the turn.”

Federal Policy—The National Park Service and other federal agencies have generally accepted ATC standards for constructing and maintaining the A.T. on its lands.

State Policy

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

MCM trail segments in The Michaux State Forest are managed by the Bureau of Forestry, while the Bureau of State Parks administers land in the Pine Grove Furnace State Park. The bureaus of Forestry and State Parks have delegated Trail-maintenance responsibilities to ATC and the Trail clubs. Both bureaus will assist clubs, when possible, in the planning and design of Trail improvements. The bureaus of Forestry and State Parks have indicated a willingness to provide materials and support services for Trail maintenance, when available.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission has delegated Trail-maintenance responsibilities to ATC and the clubs and accepts ATC standards for trail maintenance.

Other Partners

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the South Mountain Restoration Center, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and PennDOT are each landowning agencies with property crossed by the Trail. All have delegated Trail-maintenance responsibilities on these lands to ATC and the clubs. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission owns rights-of-way along state roads and highways. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and PENNDOT have delegated Trail-maintenance responsibilities on these lands to ATC and the clubs. Generally, maintenance work on the Trail does not conflict with roadway and right-of-way maintenance. PennDOT retains the responsibility to maintain roadway and right-of-way lands unless it is specifically delegated to a club or ATC.

MCM Policy

In order to fulfill its delegated responsibility, MCM schedules regular work trips throughout the year to inspect and maintain the Trail and its facilities. MCM carries out these responsibilities in conformity with the Trail standards established by ATC’s stewardship manual *Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance* (edition current at the time of the activity).

MCM has chosen to use the standard stacked-vertical blazing for the section of the Trail that it maintains. Maintainers responsible for Trail blazing shall be instructed about proper blazing style, including not to over-blaze, and about drip cleanup. No painted directional arrows, worded messages, or other symbols will be allowed. Old Trail blazes no longer maintained, or excessive blazes, shall be scraped off and/or discreetly painted over in a natural tone. Trail blazes shall not be painted on rocks if suitable trees are present for blazing.

Inspection of the Trail and related facilities is undertaken on a regular basis by maintainers and by

the Supervisor of Trails. Maintainers are expected to inspect and report the condition of the Trail to the Supervisor of Trails. Interim patrol and inspections are performed by the Supervisor of Trails or designated individuals. Scheduled inspections are supplemented by reports from trail corridor monitors and by Trail, shelter, and other users.

Routine maintenance of the Trail and associated structures is performed by maintainers and club volunteers on regularly scheduled monthly (generally March through October) Club maintenance trips. Major construction and/or trail relocation projects must be recommended and approved by the MCM Council, ATC, and the agency partner. Projects, such as trail relocations or shelter construction, are undertaken by scheduled work parties. MCM may utilize the ATC and agency partners for trail crew assistance, tools, financial assistance, and direction on tackling major trail design, construction, and maintenance problems.

Emergency work may be done by specially organized work parties coordinated by the Supervisor of Trails. Maintenance tasks will be prioritized by the Supervisor of Trails. Highest priority will be given to the correction of potential safety hazards, followed by maintenance needed to prevent resource damage and maintenance or construction to provide for a minimum level of hiker's comfort.

SECTION 2(B)

Accessibility

Overview

Accessibility is a permanent part of the list of design considerations for trails and facilities. Awareness of access issues in the Trail community has increased in recent years, fostered by legislation and societal realities. As the population ages and as interest in nature, wildlife, and physical exercise continues to be strong, public demand for accessible opportunities along the Appalachian Trail continues to grow.

There is a desire among Trail partners to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to use the Appalachian Trail where appropriate and feasible. However, a pedestrian trail that meets accessibility guidelines is a highly designed path, generally with imported surfacing and a gentle slope. It avoids both man-made and natural obstacles. Accessible trails require more involved construction and maintenance techniques and resources. The outdoor community has wrestled with the challenge of increasing recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities on public lands while at the same time ensuring that such opportunities do not alter the settings of these recreational experiences.

Existing Policy

Federal Policy

Federal laws relating to accessibility include the Architectural Barriers Act (1968) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). National policy guidance on integrating accessibility with outdoor recreation management on public lands, including the Appalachian Trail, resides with the U.S. Access Board. In the 1990s, the board convened a group of outdoor recreation stakeholders, including ATC, to develop new guidelines for accessibility on trails and outdoor facilities. While the work of that group has been completed, the resulting guidelines have not yet been adopted.

ATC Policy

The following resolution was adopted by ATC in November 1995:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy supports the concept of accessibility in outdoor environments, provided that modifications are not made that would detract from the primitive recreational environment or experience. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and its federal land-managing agency partners consider wheelchairs, prostheses, and other devices needed by individuals whose disabilities may require such devices for the purposes of mobility, as part of those persons and not as mechanized or motorized vehicles or means of transpoRoute Sections of the Appalachian Trail that are accessible to varying degrees for people with disabilities, such as those sections that coincide with the Virginia Creeper Trail and C&O Canal Towpath, may provide opportunities for full access and should be examined for such purposes on a case-by-case basis. However, the Appalachian Trail should not be altered, and construction of facilities out of character with the primitive recreational purpose of the Trail should be prohibited, unless such alterations can be made without changing the fundamental character of the backcountry recreational experience provided by the Trail.

ATC policy will change as federal guidelines and requirements are adopted. In the interim, ATC acknowledges that use of Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) and Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) are required on all national forest system lands crossed by the Trail, and urges the use of FSTAG and FSORAG or equivalent universal designs for project-planning on all jurisdictions. ATC has developed drawings and guidelines for constructing accessible shelters, tent platforms, and privies that meet FSORAG

requirements. ATC, with NPS funds, has prepared a manual entitled *Increasing Opportunities for Access on the Appalachian Trail: A Design Guide* to aid Trail clubs and agencies with universal access issues.

Federal Policy

NPS Policy—All reasonable efforts will be undertaken to make NPS facilities, programs, and services accessible to and usable by all people, including those with disabilities. Specific guidance for implementing the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Section 507 of the Americans with Disabilities Act is found in the secretary of interior's regulations at 43 CFR Part 17 (section 8.2.4 of the 2006 NPS *Management Policies*).

Although the U.S. Access Board guidelines are not yet final, NPS follows those draft guidelines as the best available standard. U.S. Forest Service guidelines (see below) can be used, as they closely mirror the draft U.S. Access Board standards.

USFS Policy—In 2006, the Forest Service adopted Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG), which address hiking trails, and Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG), which apply to all new or altered camping facilities (including shelters), picnic areas, access routes and other constructed features, including pit toilets. These guidelines are required to be used on all national-forest system lands, however, site-specific conditions and impacts may allow exceptions to the requirements and technical specifications.

FSTAG applies only to trails in the national forest system that are designed for use by hikers/pedestrians, are new or altered, and connect directly to a currently accessible trail or a trailhead. It contains exceptions to prevent accessibility from being applied in a piecemeal fashion along a trail when access between trail segments is not possible. FSTAG also contains requirements to provide accessibility to special features where possible.

FSORAG has six sections of technical provisions that apply to new or altered constructed features in outdoor recreation areas and also enumerates four conditions for departure that provide for deviation from specific technical provisions. While there may be circumstances where designers and managers may not be able to achieve accessibility, they are always encouraged to provide access to the greatest extent possible.

Pennsylvania Policy

No Pennsylvania agencies have any specific policies related to disability access to the Appalachian Trail. Regardless, any A.T. section or facilities constructed in whole or in part with federal funds or on federal lands must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). In addition, guidelines have been developed by the Department of Justice's Access Board for Outdoor Developed Areas. For details, refer to the ADA website (www.ada.gov), or use the following links:

Design Standards -- <http://www.ada.gov/stdspdf.htm>

Outdoor Developed Areas -- <http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/draft-final.htm>

MCM Policy

Accessible trail segments are most feasible and practicable where:

- Road and trailhead access with accessible parking are nearby;
- Topography is level to moderate;
- Physical and natural barriers are limited;
- Soil depths are adequate or can be mitigated with construction, such as boardwalks;
- On sloping terrain, the land base is sufficient to permit switchbacks and imported surface soils.

Accessible trail segments generally are not practicable or appropriate where:

- The prevailing trail surface is too rugged, rocky, steep or wet;
- The area is designated wilderness, or on other remote sections without access;
- Road access is limited to nonexistent;
- Topographic variations and barriers are common;

In consideration of the above criteria, MCM recognizes that accessibility on existing sections of the Trail that are not connected to existing accessible segments or accessible trailhead parking areas is not required under federal law, except for the requirement that all public structures (shelters and privies) be made accessible.

Action Plan—Most accessible trail and shelter projects require familiarization with emerging federal direction. Working with the land-managing agency and ATC regional office, MCM will begin any new trail or shelter projects by identifying any possible candidate sections and facilities where universal access may be improved over the long-term. Accessibility on existing sections of the Trail that are not connected to existing accessible segments or accessible trailhead parking areas is not required, except for the requirement that all public structures (shelters and privies) be made accessible. The specifications for these structures are presented in the ATC's Local Management Planning Guide Appendix I. There are no requirements to make outdoor recreational access routes (the trails connecting AT campsite features) accessible. Any new shelters, tent pads, and privies constructed by MCM will comply with accessibility standards as required by federal law.

SECTION 2(C)

Relocations

Overview

Where the Appalachian Trail is located on roads, or its location is undesirable because of resource damage or irreconcilable conflicts with incompatible uses, relocations may be made to provide a more desirable environment for the hiker or to protect the resource. Since the Trail was first completed as a continuous footpath in 1937, many relocations have been necessary to keep the Trail from being severed by subdivisions and road development. Those development threats were the main reason for the federal land-protection program. As federal and state agencies have acquired corridor land, Trail clubs have been involved in major relocations to place the Trail in the newly acquired A.T. corridor.

Relocations are undertaken to provide a more desirable hiking experience for Trail users and to reduce the impact on heavily eroded or poorly designed Trail sections. Relocations are often complicated and time-consuming, because they sometimes involve locating and acquiring new pieces of land. To be beneficial, proposed relocations must provide a Trail environment that is at least equal to the one being abandoned, while meeting all other standards for sound Trail design. Relocation procedures have been adopted by the clubs, ATC, and federal and state agency partners that require consultation among partners and describe a process to ensure that relocations are beneficial to the Trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC ensures that all partners—the Trail clubs, land-managing agencies, and landowners—are involved and consulted, with proposals and plans shared and reviewed *before* relocations are constructed in the field. ATC also provides oversight to assure that the primitive quality of the Appalachian Trail is maintained or enhanced in the relocation process. ATC cooperates with federal agencies in completing the environmental assessments required by NEPA. ATC amends the guidebook series and the annually published *Appalachian Trail Data Book* as necessary and posts descriptions of major relocations on its Web site.

Although ATC does not have a formal policy on relocations, ATC ensures that relocations are conducted in a procedurally correct manner, with proposals and plans shared and reviewed before relocations are constructed in the field.

- ATC ensures that all partners—the Trail clubs, land-managing agencies, and landowners—are involved and consulted, with proposals and plans shared and reviewed before relocations are constructed in the field.
- ATC supports the clubs' work and ensures that the clubs implement all relocation field activities, including planning, design, construction, and opening.
- ATC serves as guarantor that the primitive quality of the Appalachian Trail is maintained or enhanced in the relocation process.
- It expresses the interests of the clubs and hikers in discussions with agency partners on possible relocations.
- Finally, ATC reports relocations to the hiking public if they call and amends the guidebook series, including the annually published A.T. Data Book, as necessary.

Federal Policy

The National Park Service retains authority for relocation of the Trail corridor. In 1971, the National Park Service published a written description and maps of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail

right-of-way in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 36, No. 39 ATC LMPG; PA November 2010 2 (C) 197, October 9, 1971). That right-of-way defines the geographic scope of the federal government's authority to implement relocations. Relocations outside of that right-of-way require publication of amended right-of-way descriptions in the *Federal Register*. The NPS land-acquisition program was expanded significantly with the adoption of Public Law 95-248, a 1978 amendment to the National Trails System Act. The process required many minor and major relocations, as defined by the 1976 procedures, and a major effort to evaluate all relocations under NEPA.

1976 Relocation Procedures - ATC, the Park Service, Forest Service, and state representatives on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Committee (ANSTAC) approved relocation procedures in 1976 that require consultation among clubs, ATC, and the landowning agencies or private landowners, and spell out a process to ensure that a relocation benefits the Trail.

Proposed relocations, described in "relocation approval requests," are classified as:

- "trivial" - (less than 1,000' long and 75' laterally)
- "minor" - (more than 1,000' long and 75' laterally but not affecting the verbal description or maps published in the Federal Register), or
- "major" - (requiring an amendment published in the Federal Register).

The National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office oversees this process and maintains the official record of the route of the Appalachian Trail, including all amendments to the *Federal Register*, all relocation-approval requests and appropriate NEPA documentation.

U.S. Forest Service Policy—NEPA review and approval is required in advance of all proposed relocations of the footpath of the Appalachian Trail on Forest Service lands.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

In keeping with the relocation procedures approved by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council, the Trail-maintaining clubs consult with the Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks prior to undertaking a relocation of the Trail. Though the club takes the initiative for planning and construction of a Trail relocation, the responsible bureau must approve a relocation prior to construction. MCM works with the Bureau of Parks as related to activities in Pine Grove Furnace State Park, and with the Bureau of Forestry on Mischeaux State Forest lands.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Relocations on state game lands must be approved by the Commission's A.T. coordinator and its regional office. The Trail-maintaining club is responsible for planning and development phases of a relocation project, which may include mapping, marking, and PNDI searches.

Other Partners

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the South Mountain Restoration Center, PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission each rely on ATC and the Trail-maintaining clubs to plan and construct relocations of the footpath. In each case, relocations must be approved in the very early planning phases by the respective agency; and, where roadways or right-of-ways are concerned, must use the most current PennDOT design criteria.

PennDOT relies on ATC and the Trail-maintaining clubs to plan and construct relocations of the footpath. In each case, relocations must be approved at the planning and construction phases by the respective agency.

PENNDOT approval is required when relocations raise safety concerns or when a roadway access permit is anticipated. PENNDOT will help clubs select roadway crossings so that safety concerns are adequately addressed.

MCM Policy

MCM will strive to locate the A.T. in the optimal location based on continuing club and agency partners' review and will relocate only after consultation with the ATC and agency partners. A ridgeline route is generally favored for scenic vistas and the quality of the hiking experience it affords.

Relocations should emphasize simplicity of the footpath to avoid heavy construction and expensive maintenance requirements. It should reflect concern for hiker safety, without sacrificing challenges to hikers' skills and stamina, and should also consider both environmental impact and Trail protection.

Action Plan

- MCM will prioritize any proposed relocations based on need and available resources. We will allow lead time for agency partners to conduct an environmental assessment or other review of the project. Detailed descriptions of major relocations will be provided to ATC's conservation department to ensure inclusion in publications and on ATC's Web site.
- Proposed relocations are reviewed and approved by the MCM Supervisor of Trails, MCM Council, ATC, and agency partners, to include compliance with National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
- Appropriate signs will be placed at the new relocation until the relocation is published in the guide and data books. The signs will include mileage of the new relocation.
- Extra care will be taken to provide clear blazing of the new relocation.
- The retired Trail section will be made obscure and the old blazes will be removed by scraping and/or over-painting in natural tones.
- Proper notification to hikers of the relocation will be communicated through the A.T. Guidebook and Data Book.
- MCM will notify the membership in the Hiker High Points and if appropriate add the information to its website to notify the general public.

SECTION 2(D)

Stream Crossings and Bridges

Overview

Although ATC has not adopted standards for river and stream crossings along the A.T., hikers commonly expect that such crossings should at least be safe. A simple, well-designed ford or a few stepstones suffice for most stream crossings during all or most of the year, except after heavy rains or during spring runoff. Other rivers and streams cannot be safely crossed without bridging. However, bridges are expensive and need frequent maintenance. They are also usually artificial intrusions into a natural environment and occasionally can be the object of graffiti or other vandalism.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

Purpose: The goal of this policy is to address public safety issues at stream crossings while maintaining the traditional creative impulses of club volunteers to locate river crossings and design and construct bridges.

Bridge Locations: The footpath of the Appalachian Trail should be located to minimize the need for stream crossings and bridges. However, in some areas, the best route for the Trail may require stream crossings. Fords, stepstones, or bridges should be located and installed to improve safety, minimize impacts to natural resources, or enhance the hiking experience.

Because bridges may detract from the natural, remote and wild character of the Trail, ATC encourages the use of the simplest means available that will assist in providing a safe passage for Trail visitors. A simple well-designed ford or a few stepstones may be used for most stream crossings. Unbridged stream crossings may be impassable shortly after a storm or during late winter and spring runoff; others may provide a certain measure of challenge even in low-water conditions. These primitive conditions are essential to the Appalachian Trail experience and deserve protection.

A bridge should be constructed or replaced only if:

1. It is essential to hiker safety during the snow-free hiking season, recognizing that a stream may be unfordable when seasonal or regular flooding occurs; or
2. It is absolutely necessary to protect sensitive resources, such as soils and plant life along a river bank.

Large bridges should be inventoried by ATC and the Trail clubs and periodically inspected by the landowning agency partner, ATC or their designees. Small bridges will not be monitored by ATC. However, clubs and agency partners are urged to establish and follow appropriate inspection and maintenance procedures, as they do now for any structure that bears people.

NPS Policy

Trail bridges may be used for crossing swift waters areas prone to flash flooding, and other places that present potential safety hazards. Less obtrusive alternatives to bridges (such as fords) and trail relocation will be considered before a decision is made to build a bridge. A bridge may be the preferred alternative when necessary to prevent stream bank erosion or protect wetlands or fisheries. If a bridge is determined to be appropriate, it will be kept to the minimum size needed to serve trail users, and it will be designed to harmonize with the surrounding natural. On National Park Service lands, an environmental assessment is required prior to construction of a bridge more than 35 feet in length or in any situation where bridge construction would require significant excavation.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR and Game Commission

Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks and Game Commission - All three agencies have delegated the planning and construction of bridges and stream crossings to local clubs. Clubs must obtain approvals from the separate agencies for specific crossings projects. Each agency has agreed to assist clubs in obtaining necessary Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) waterway permits, since the agency will have to submit the application in the clubs' behalf.

Other Partners

PENNDOT has no specific policies regarding bridges and stream crossings by trails.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

MCM has several bridges on its delegated portion of the Trail: a short ~~boardwalk bridge~~ across a wetlands just north of PA route 850 and ~~a larger bridge~~ another 1.4 miles further north, ~~a bridge~~ across Tagg Run .3 miles south of Hunters Run Road, and two north of Sheet Iron Roof Road at .5 and .8 miles. ~~Part of the~~ Another wetlands north of PA route 850 is also crossed by wooden walkway sections (puncheons). The bridge 1.4 miles north of PA-850 was replaced in 2019, and the footbridge .5 miles north of Sheet Iron Roof Road was replaced in 2021.

Our policy is to use natural elements as feasible (e.g., turnpiking) to elevate the Trail to facilitate proper drainage as an alternative to bridges. If safety concerns arise relating to any existing stream crossings, MCM will evaluate what steps are necessary to provide a minimum standard of safety. Difficulties encountered in wetlands areas, and proposed solutions, will be discussed with the ATC Regional Representative.

SECTION 2(E)

Trailheads and Parking

Overview

Careful planning of trailheads is important for two main reasons: (1) The location of a trailhead is a powerful tool for controlling where and how much use the Trail receives; and (2) Trailheads are the most visible manifestation of the Trail for the general public and provide the first impression of the Trail to its visitors. Planning, design, and monitoring of trailheads can determine whether hikers and Trail neighbors find a clean, safe, well-marked scene or are confronted by a littered area that is hazardous to traffic leaving, entering, or passing by.

If parking lots need to be developed, special planning considerations are required. Parking areas must use or cross highway rights-of-way, and permits will probably be needed to create new access from a public road. Concerns for public safety, particularly on roads that handle a significant amount of traffic or less-traveled winding roads with minimal sight distances, must be addressed.

Vandalism is also a problem when parking areas are not visible from the roadway, and adequate provisions must be made for keeping the area free of litter. If a trailhead cannot be maintained by the club, agency partner, or someone else on a regular basis, then the Trail may be better off without a trailhead at that location.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In general, ATC encourages development of small, simply designed trailhead facilities in areas where use patterns clearly indicate a need. The following guidelines are presented in Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance:

- **Study existing hiking patterns**—Document use levels along 5- to 15-mile sections of trail by counting parked cars on average and peak weekends. Look at the whole trail system. Remember, trailhead development is not required at all road crossings. Several key road crossings may be all that need development.
- **Check with local residents**—Local police, municipal or county officials, the state transportation officials, and local residents can help you avoid or correct potential problem spots. Your concern will be appreciated.
- **Look for good spots**—Inquire or field-check locations that might accommodate parking without additional construction. Wide-shouldered roads, picnic areas, state waysides, sections of old roadbed, and old gravel pits often provide ample space for parking.
- **Evaluate motor access safety**—Seek advice from highway safety engineers and local residents to evaluate the safety of access to the roadway, pedestrian crossings, and the local impact of any proposed lot.
- **Adhere to standards**—Use the standards followed by most highway departments for parking access. On blind hills and curves, parking is unacceptable. On all roadways, clear

- lines of sight must extend down the roadway, usually 200 to 500 feet, depending on the speed limit.
- **Avoid overused areas**—Plan to keep parking space to a minimum if an area is fragile or threatened by overuse.
- **Consider landforms**—Choose well-drained sites above the 100-year floodplain, without steep banks, on slopes of less than five percent grades; otherwise, the sites may be costly, impractical, or require excavation to develop.
- **Let highway planners or designers handle parking lot design**—Urge them to keep lots small and simple, usually for four to six cars. Lot capacities should never exceed the needs for existing use, unless safety requires that all cars be parked off the roadway, even on peak weekends. To retain a simple road crossing for the trail, consider locating parking lots a short distance down the road, with a short side trail connecting to the Appalachian Trail
- **Acquire necessary permits**—A driveway permit may be needed to access public roads.
- **Discourage vandals**—where necessary, make policing for vandalism easy by locating parking lots where they are clearly visible from the main road.

Federal Policy

The A.T. Park Office needs to be involved in development of any trailhead and parking facilities on A.T. Park Office lands. A categorical exclusion or environmental assessment is required on lands administered by the Appalachian Trail Park Office if the facility is intended to provide parking for more than 10 cars.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Both bureaus of Forestry and State Parks will continue to plan, construct and maintain trailhead and parking facilities on DCNR lands for the A.T. Activities that affect new facilities or existing facilities providing access to the Trail will be coordinated with ATC and Trail clubs. Trail clubs can initiate plans for facilities by contacting bureau A.T. coordinators. The design of trailheads and parking facilities may vary between bureaus.

Parking in the Pine Grove Furnace State park is in areas designated and maintained by the Bureau of Parks.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission will continue to plan, construct, and maintain parking facilities on game lands for all authorized users. Proposals for new facilities along the Trail should be made to the Commission's A.T. coordinator and PGC regional office staff. Any facility work proposed near the Trail by the Commission will first be coordinated with ATC and local clubs. The PGC requests that any vehicles parked overnight in the game lands parking lots be identified as belong to hikers.

Other Partners

The Fish and Boat Commission will continue to plan, construct, and maintain trailhead and parking facilities on Commission lands. The Commission will work with Trail clubs on new and existing facilities that affect the Trail.

PENNDOT approval may be required for certain kinds of facilities. Access to private parking areas from state roads requires a highway-occupancy or driveway-access permit from the agency. In cases where new access is proposed, PENNDOT's district engineer or A.T. coordinator should be contacted.

MCM Policy

MCM maintains several trailhead parking lots along its A.T. sections. There is a kiosk at each area. Trash receptacles are not provided.

- At PA-850 where the Trail crosses the road, between Blue Mountain and Cove Mountain. This lot

holds approximately 8 vehicles. The lot is frequently used, especially on weekends; if the growing number of A.T. hikers leads to overcrowding in the future, MCM will explore with ATC and MCM whether it would be advisable to expand the lot into the adjacent meadow (which is owned by NPS).

- On Kuhn Road, south of Boiling Springs, at the trailhead of the the White Rocks Trail. Because of the picturesque aspects of this trail, it is heavily visited. This lot was designed to hold 10 cars, but often trail users squeeze up to 20 cars into the space. On weekends, dozens of additional cars often park along Kuhn Road. Due to neighborhood concerns about safety and the effects on traffic, in 2020 the local township posted No Parking signs along the road. In recognition of the high level of interest in this trail, MCM has had discussions with ATC about whether the parking lot could / should be expanded, but no consensus has been reached.
- MCM more recently built a new parking lot near Duncannon; initial work was performed in the spring of 2017, and final improvements were made in the fall of 2018. The new lot is located on Inn Road where the trail enters the woods and accommodates 8 cars. The lot is surfaced with crushed stone and lined with barrier rails to prevent expansion.

Action Plan

- MCM will continue maintenance of the existing trailhead parking lots at Route 850, Kuhn Road, and Duncannon.
- Trash and illegal dumping will be discouraged and cleaned up in a timely manner.
- Use of the lot at Route 850 and Kuhn Road will be monitored to assess possible future needs for expansion.

SECTION 2(F)

Connecting & Side Trails

Overview

Many significant trails intersect the Appalachian Trail, including the Tuscarora Trail (Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the Potomac Heritage Trail (Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia) are all long-distance trails in their own right. Hundreds of other trails that intersect the A.T. are also important, although not as lengthy as the statewide or multi-state trails listed above. The National Trails System Act makes specific reference to the designation of connecting and side trails as components of the National Trail System. Formal designation is the responsibility of the Secretary of Agriculture (if that trail is located within National Forest proclamation boundaries) or the Secretary of Interior (on all other lands). The following definitions of designated side and connecting trails are consistent with the legislation:

Designated side trail - “Any trail formally designated as such by action of the Secretary of Agriculture or Secretary of Interior that intersects the Appalachian Trail and provides additional access to the Appalachian Trail from outside the Appalachian Trail corridor.”

Designated connecting trail - “Any trail formally designated as such by action of the Secretary of Agriculture or Secretary of Interior that connects the Appalachian Trail and another national scenic, historic, or recreation trail.”

Designation of a side or connecting trail does not provide the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior with any authority to acquire lands or interests in lands. If a trail proposed for designation crosses non-federal lands, the responsible Secretary must first obtain the consent of the landowner or land-managing agency prior to designation.

Other trails may intersect the Trail without being formally designated.

Spur trails intersect the Appalachian Trail and provide passage to points of interest (such as natural, cultural, or scenic features) or Trail facilities (such as overnight sites or water sources) within the Trail corridor.

Access trails are trails within the Trail corridor that provide approaches to the Appalachian Trail from parking areas, road crossings, and nearby towns.

Co-aligned trails refer to segments of trails which use the footpath of the Appalachian Trail.

Lastly, many **undesigned side trails** exist, particularly within large blocks of federal or state lands. These types of trails do not require formal designation, but they can create serious management problems. They can be the cause of unrestricted ORV or horse access to the Trail, inconsistencies in blazing and Trail maintenance standards, and can result in use patterns that affect sensitive resource values (such as increased littering and graffiti at a particularly scenic vista).

The construction of a new trail can have significant short-term and long-term effects.

- Construction of a new trail can affect sensitive resource values, such as a cultural resource site or a specific habitat for an endangered species.
- A new trail may increase the accessibility and use of the Appalachian Trail by horses, bicycles, and off-road vehicles as well as hikers, particularly if the new trail is not afforded the same level of protection as the Appalachian Trail.
- Lastly, a new trail can open up a new area to increased use by the hiking public, which can change the remote character of an area.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC Policy—In 1988, ATC’s Board of Managers adopted a policy on side and connecting trails to provide ATC, Trail clubs, and agency partners with procedures for (1) evaluating and recommending approval of proposals for the development of new foot trails intersecting the A.T.; and (2) recommending

action by the secretary of the interior or agriculture for formal designation of side or connecting trails to the Trail. In November 1995, the Board adopted several minor wording changes to clarify the original policy. The policy was updated in 2005 to reflect changes in ATC's governance structure and amended by the ATC Board of Directors in 2008. The policy now reads as follows:

- A. Procedure for Recommending Approval of New Hiking Trails Entering The Appalachian Trail Corridor—All new hiking trails entering the Appalachian Trail corridor should be approved by the local Trail club, the landowning agency, the appropriate ATC regional partnership committee and ATC in accordance with the ATC Policy for Review and Approval of Management Plans and Project Proposals [see Chapter 1 (E)]. Approval by the regional partnership committee and ATC will be based on the criteria set forth below in part C and any additional criteria provided in the local management plan(s) for the area.
- B. Procedure for Recommending Action by the Secretary of the Interior or Agriculture for Formal Federal Designation of a Side or Connecting Trail—Formal designation of side or connecting and coaligned trails requires action by the secretaries of the interior or agriculture or their designee(s). Any proposal for formal designation shall be reviewed by the regional partnership committee, which will forward its recommendation to the Stewardship Council. The Council will review the recommendation and, with input from the ATC regional director, develop a final recommendation for the appropriate secretary. In addition, review and recommendation processes may occur within the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and/or state agencies as appropriate. ATC review and recommendations shall be based on the criteria set forth below in part C and any additional criteria identified in the local management plan(s) for the area.
- C. Criteria for (1) Recommending Approval of New Hiking Trails Entering The Appalachian Trail Corridor, or (2) Recommending Action by the Secretary of the Interior or Agriculture for Formal Designation of A Side or Connecting Trail—
 1. The trail will only enhance or improve the Appalachian Trail.
 2. The Appalachian Trail is preeminent over the new or designated trail.
 3. The trail will allow only foot traffic.
 4. The trail will provide significant access to the Appalachian Trail or between the Trail and significant scenic, natural, or cultural resources and/or Trail facilities.
 5. The Appalachian Trail will take precedence on trail signing and marking.
 6. Dual marking will be avoided on any new co-aligned trail; however, other trails may be identified on A.T. signs. ATC also will work to establish this standard for existing co-aligned trails.
 7. A.T. managers will cooperate in developing standards for construction, design, and maintenance of trails that intersect the Appalachian Trail. ATC will encourage adoption of standards that protect resource values and prevent environmental damage in a manner consistent with resource protection on the Appalachian Trail.

In November, 1988, the ATC Board of Managers adopted a procedure for evaluating and recommending approval for development of new trails and designation of side, connecting, and co-aligned trails.

Criteria for Recommending Approval of Development of a New Trail or Designation of a Side, Connecting, or Co-aligned Trail:

- The trail will only enhance or improve the Appalachian Trail.
- The Appalachian Trail is preeminent over the new or designated trail.
- The trail will allow only foot traffic.
- The trail will provide significant access to the Appalachian Trail, or between the Trail and significant scenic, natural, or cultural resources and/or Trail facilities.
- The Appalachian Trail will take precedence on trail signing and marking.
- Dual marking will be avoided on any new co-aligned trail; however, other trails may be identified on A.T. signs. ATC will also work to establish this standard for existing co-aligned trails.

- A.T. managers will cooperate in developing standards for construction, design, and maintenance of trails that intersect the Appalachian Trail. ATC will encourage adoption of standards that protect resource values and prevent environmental damage in a manner consistent with resource protection on the Appalachian Trail.

NPS Policy

Appalachian Trail Park Office - The Appalachian Trail Park Manager, as the National Park Service's principal representative for management of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, must be involved in decisions regarding the official designation of connecting and side trails under the National Trails Systems Act on all NPS and state-owned land.

The Park Manager will evaluate proposals for official designation according to the following criteria:

- It has undergone review according to ATC's prescribed process.
- It provides the potential for promoting greater public enjoyment of the Appalachian Trail.
- It has received the concurrence of the landowner(s).

Formal action will be taken by the Park Manager following this evaluation.

The Park Manager is also the approving official in decisions regarding the development of new trails that enter the corridor of National Park Service-acquired land. Again, proposals will be considered only after having undergone the review and approval process identified in ATC policy. Following that, completion of an environmental analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act must occur. It is only after this point that construction can commence.

The Trail club may recommend abandoning or closing an existing side trail because of problems of overuse or inappropriate use resulting in resource damage or reduced quality of experience by the hiker. The club should consult with ATC and the NPS A.T. Park Office before closing an approved side trail.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Forestry and State Parks, in cooperation with the Keystone Trails Association, will continue overall management responsibilities on connecting and side trails that are not marked with the A.T. white blazes. The Bureau of Parks has jurisdiction over Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Connecting and side trails that are proposed by ATC or local clubs must be planned, approved, and constructed in cooperation with the Commission's A.T. coordinator and its regional office staff. Such trails, once complete, are maintained by ATC and local clubs. PGC policies adopted pursuant to the MOU do not apply to connecting and side trails unless those trails are specifically identified as part of the A.T. system. While camping is allowed along the A.T. on game lands, it is specifically prohibited on connecting and side trails under Commission regulations.

Other Partners

Connecting- and side-trail management on Fish and Boat Commission Lands are the responsibility of ATC and local clubs.

MCM Policy

MCM does not maintain the A.T. section with the Pine Grove Furnace Park, but historically has maintained and improved the public Pole Steeple Trail (currently with the assistance of local supporters), including its spur link to the A.T. on the back side of the ridge. Pole Steeple and the spur link are within the Michaux State Forest.

MCM will maintain all spur trails on the inventory below. All side trails (those to a shelter or spring) will be built and maintained according to the same standards as the A.T. except that the blazes will be blue instead of white. No new side trails are proposed at the time of this writing. MCM notes that there are several other blue-blazed trails along this section that are not recognized A.T. side trails and are not

maintained by MCM. One leads from Rocky Ridge to Old Town Road. There are also two of these trails at Cove Mountain—one starts close to the Duncannon, Pa. recycle site dumpsters and is likely used by those desiring a shortcut to the A.T. and the locally popular Hawk Rock (see also section 4(C), Litter and Graffiti). The second intersects the A.T. north of the pipeline and south of the Cove Mountain shelter; it begins somewhere on the Duncannon Water Authority's local access road. These trails are maintained, if at all, by locals seeking shortcuts to these elevations.

Inventory

Significant spur trails on the MCM include the Pole Steeple trail just north of Pine Grove Furnace State Park. MCM has maintained the 'front side' of this trail to the overlook from a public parking lot at Laurel for many years. The Club also maintains the "official" spur trail from the A.T. that curves back to the southwest from the A.T. to the back side of the Pole Steeple overlook. Both the "front" and 'official' sections of the trail are maintained and blue-blazed in accordance with ATC standards.

MCM also maintains a spur trail from Kuhn Road to Center Point Knob (the White Rocks Trail) along with side trails from the A.T. to the Cove Mountain, Darlington, James Fry shelter at Tagg Run, and Alec Kennedy Shelters.

There is a blue-blazed trail located on the north side of the A.T. approximately halfway between Hawk Rock and Route 850 (south of the Cove Mountain shelter). The trail leads down the mountain and ends at a dirt road. This trail appears on PATC maps, but there is no official maintenance or recognition for this trail. Local residents use it for a loop hike. There also is a unofficial trail, locally referred to as the Susquehanna Overlook Trail, that leaves the AT near the north end of Cove Mountain, enters Duncannon municipal watershed property and then the Game Lands, and then rejoins the AT atop the mountain. MCM does not recognize these paths as part of the A.T. system, and bears no responsibility for them.

Action Plan

MCM is planning a trail relocation at the north end of Cove Mountain as the A.T. approaches Duncannon. As of October 2020, MCM is awaiting approval by the APPO.

Review of any other proposals for side trail relocations, or new spur trails will be carried out in close coordination with MCM management partners and private landowners, as appropriate. No construction will take place until approval is received.

SECTION 2(G)

Overnight Use

Overview

Managing overnight-use areas constitutes an important part of Trail club efforts. Numerous factors must be considered in locating and designing overnight-use areas, including proximity to the A.T., soils, vegetation, topography, expected visitor use, proximity to water, distances to roads, and other overnight sites, and use of adjoining lands. Ideally, shelters and campsites should be spaced a modest day's hike apart, and they should be designed to contain the environmental and social impacts of overnight visitors within a confined area. Provisions should also be made for dependable water supplies and sanitation at each site. Finally, the use of campfires must be assessed and regulated based on patterns of use, environmental impacts and local rules.

Options for overnight use exist in many areas along the Trail. In addition to shelters, some clubs and agency jurisdictions permit dispersed camping without formal designation of specific sites. Several clubs have designated campsites, often with tent platforms and sanitary facilities. And, though not traditionally viewed as substitutes for shelters and campsites on the Trail, hostels, community centers, bed-and-breakfast inns, and motels cater to long-distance hikers in many towns along the Trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

Since 1925, ATC policy has supported “a connected series of primitive lean-tos and camps” as an integral part of the Trail experience. ATC policy is to perpetuate and improve the shelter and campsite system with well-located, -designed, -constructed, and -maintained facilities. Proposed facilities should comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and state and local building and health codes and environmental laws. If Trail clubs plan to charge fees, permits first must be obtained from the land-managing agencies.

In response to a trend toward larger shelters with more amenities for hikers that serve no resource-protection function and detract from the Trail experience, the Stewardship Council endorsed detailed guidance for locating and designing A.T. shelters and campsites in 2007. The full text, which is too lengthy to incorporate here, includes background and planning information. Proposals for new or replacement overnight facilities shall be reviewed and approved in accordance with the ATC policy for review and approval of management plans and project proposals. When designing a shelter or formal campsite, Trail clubs should consult with ATC and their land-management partners to determine within which type of area (frontcountry, backcountry, or wilderness) the proposed development falls, and then consider the ATC guidance. Adherence to this more explicit guidance can help promote more consistent decision-making for each type of area along the A.T.

NPS Policy

Although the development of facilities to serve visitors will generally be avoided, campsites may be designated when essential for resource protection and preservation or to meet other specific wilderness management objectives. In keeping with the terms of the park's wilderness management plan, campsite facilities may include a site marker, fire rings, tent sites, food storage devices, and toilets if these are determined by the superintendent to be the minimum facilities necessary for the health and safety of wilderness users or for the preservation of wilderness resources and values.

The following policies have been developed specifically for lands acquired for the Appalachian Trail:

Designated or Dispersed Camping - In July 1986, the NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office adopted the following rule under its regulatory authority in 36 CFR 2.10: *“On NPS-acquired Trail lands, camping will remain dispersed except where camping is limited to specific camping and/or shelter sites by*

ATC member Trail clubs in their local management plans and these plans are endorsed by ATC.” Camping policy on NPS corridor lands should be consistent, to the extent feasible, with the policies on adjacent lands to minimize confusion and enhance understanding and coordination between jurisdictions.

Environmental Compliance - On NPS corridor lands, new shelters and large campsites with more than one pit privy must be evaluated by the NPS in an environmental assessment prior to any clearing, excavation, or construction by the club. Improvements to existing shelters and installation of new campsites with one pit privy do not normally require an environmental assessment; they are “categorically excluded” from compliance with NEPA (Federal Register, Vol. 49, No. 194, October 4, 1984).

Food Storage - In 2016, ATC issued a policy recommending that Trail clubs consider the use of animal-deterrent storage systems at overnight sites, stating that “experience indicates that successful storage is most successful when overnight sites are equipped with mechanisms or devices that assist visitors in this effort.”

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Forestry’s policies are closely aligned with those of ATC and local Trail clubs on this issue. The bureau desires primitive camping experiences that are spread out along the Trail corridor so as not to be visually apparent to other hikers. The Bureau of State Parks allows camping and overnight use of its lands but in designated camping areas only.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Ordinarily, the Pennsylvania Game Commission does not allow overnight use of its lands. The Commission has made special provisions for overnight use of the Appalachian Trail to accommodate long-distance hikers, however.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission discourages the development of shelters and other facilities on its lands. Shelters proposed by local Trail clubs must be planned, approved, and constructed in cooperation with the Commission’s A.T. coordinator and its regional office staff.

Section 135.42 of the Commission’s regulations pertains to the Appalachian Trail. Under that section, “overnight camping along the Trail shall be lawful” within 200 feet of the designated trail. Camping at a distance greater than 200 feet is unlawful, as is camping “more than one night at the same location”, and “within 500 feet of a spring, stream, or public access area.”

Open fires on game lands are permitted under section 135.41 of the Commission's regulations “except when the fire index rating used by the Bureau of Forestry . . . is high, very high, or extreme.”

Other Partners

To the best of our knowledge, no other state agency partners allow overnight use of their lands.

MCM Policy

MCM will work with the Bureau of Parks on any issues relating to Pine Grove Furnace State Park, and with the Bureau of Forestry in the Mischeaux State Forest.

MCM currently maintains four shelters on its sections of the Trail (south to north): The James Fry at Tagg Run, Alec Kennedy, Darlington, and Cove Mountain (formerly Thelma Marks). Overflow camping is available near each shelter in adjacent areas. The Frye shelter is 20 X 15 feet, clerestory roof design, double bunks at each end, accommodating up to 10. Kennedy is 8 X 16 feet with a single bunk at each end, maximum capacity of nine persons. The Darlington shelter is a smaller version of the Frye shelter, 20 X 10 feet with a clerestory roof design and double bunks at each end. Cove Mountain is a 12 X 16 foot, timber-framed, clerestory roof design with double bunks at each end, capacity 10.

Composting privies are installed at three of the four shelter locations. The Tagg Run (James Fry) shelter was built in 1998 and the privy was completed in 1999, and the Darlington shelter and privy were constructed in 2004-2005. The Cove Mountain shelter and a pit privy were built in 2000; the pit privy was replaced by a compost privy in 2010.

The Kennedy shelter and a compost privy were built in approximately 1991. In 2017, the Kennedy compost privy was replaced with a new moldering privy. The old privy was closed to permit the waste

material to compost; in the future the old privy will be emptied and dismantled. Because they are the newest, only the Cove Mountain privy and the Kennedy privy are constructed in compliance with accessibility requirements.

There are near-by local springs at each of these shelters, marked with appropriate signage on short blue-blazed side trails. MCM recommends that all naturally occurring water be properly treated before use, and cannot be held responsible for ensuring that any untreated water is fit for consumption. At the Frye shelter water can also be obtained (most years) from nearby Tagg Run, but as noted must be filtered. The Kennedy shelter spring tends to dry up in late season, but feeds into Little Dogwood Run just south of the shelter. The spring at Darlington is down a steep hill and typically is the earliest of the four shelter springs to go dry each year. Northbound hikers intending to stop at Darlington are thus advised to take water at a marked spring just before ascending North Mountain; southbound hikers should look for the various springs cross the trail coming off Cove Mountain. The spring at Cove Mountain is two hundred feet down a steep trail, but usually runs all summer.

All four shelters have picnic tables. The Cove Mountain shelter also has a combination cooking table/bench (with protective metal plates) under the front overhang.

There are no designated tent pads or platforms at the four shelter for hikers who prefer tents to the shelters (or for occasions when a shelter may be full. However, tenting is common at flat areas adjacent to the Darlington and Fry shelters, and hikers sometimes erect tents at a rocky locale near the Kennedy shelter. MCM plans to improve the tenting facilities at our shelters in the future. In 2018, a project request was submitted to NPS for approval to build up to six tents as in the future. MCM has developed a plan to replace the existing “unofficial tenting common area” at the Fry shelter with individual tent pads; this plan is pending trail crew support in the capital budget. In each of these cases, MCM will follow ATC recommendations to employ side-hill campsite designs and create gently-sloped tent pads. MCM continues to have discussions with ATC about adding tent pads or platforms at the Cove Mountain shelter, where, ~~(because of the rocky terrain, tent platforms~~ are a possible alternative to tent pads).

Several unapproved, dry campsites have appeared along the trail as a consequence of increased trail use in recent years. This is particularly true near Hawk Rock above Duncannon, near Whiskey Springs (south of the Kennedy shelter) and near the Tagg Run shelter. MCM considers such camping unwise, but difficult to control. Efforts to eliminate these sites by removing the fire rings and covering the area with debris such as fallen limbs to discourage future campers have met with limited success but will continue as “targets of opportunity” when maintainers or work trip parties are in the area. In addition, MCM hopes that the future addition of improved tenting facilities at several of its shelters will lessen the use of unapproved campsites.

Since 2012, MCM has experienced problems with porcupines gnawing the wood on the outside of our shelters and privies, and sometimes entering the shelters at night and bothering hikers, at the Darlington and Cove Mountain shelters. Efforts to deter these animals at Darlington (painting the outside of the shelter with repellant and placing animal fencing around the privy walls) have mostly successfully discouraged their return to that site. The porcupine(s) at Cove Mountain have been more persistent, constantly seeking new means of access to both the shelter and privy, causing damage, and bothering hikers. MCM has proactively taken steps to prevent their access, including removing steps and lining the buildings’ sides with aluminum. We will continue to test new protective methods, as needed, to preserve the structures.

MCM’s shelters are in compliance with ATC policy regarding animal-deterrent food storage systems. In 2016, MCM placed bear boxes (metal storage chests) at all four shelters for overnight hikers to safely store their food. These boxes recognize the growing presence of bears along the A.T. corridor and, hopefully, will prevent unpleasant encounters at the shelters. MCM has also removed food hangers from inside the shelters to discourage hikers from keeping their food inside the structures.

Action Plan

- MCM will continue to maintain the four shelters described above, along with their access trails, privies, and associated springs.
- As facilities are replaced in the future, they will be constructed in compliance with ATC accessibility requirements.
- MCM will continue to discourage overnight use on our section of the Trail at other than the four

shelters sites. Fire rings will be dismantled and scattered, sites will be returned to a natural state as much as possible, and litter will be removed. MCM will continue planning and/or approval requests to construct or improve tenting facilities at its shelters.

- ATC guidebooks will contain information regarding the sites on our section of the Trail which are allowed for overnight use.
- Information regarding overnight Trail use will appear on the bulletin boards at appropriate MCM-maintained kiosks.

SECTION 2(H)

Drinking Water Supplies

Overview

Water resources on the Appalachian Trail provide the vital water supplies needed by hikers, both along the Trail and at shelter sites. Hikers have a reasonable expectation that water will be available at reasonable intervals, that water sources will be adequately marked, and that identified water sources will be clean and potable after treatment. Hikers in recent years have become accustomed to treating water taken from backcountry sources by boiling, filtering, or chemically treating it before use.

Trail land managers must monitor activities that could significantly degrade quality of water supplies, whether they occur on or off the Trail corridor, and take common-sense steps to prevent and control contamination.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

For many years ATC's policy has required identification of water supplies for hikers and promoted non-contamination of existing water supplies by careful location and design of trails and sanitation facilities. ATC policy states that ATC does not and cannot guarantee water quality from any source along the Trail, that all sources should be considered unprotected and potable only after treatment. All ATC guides carry this advice on the first page of text. In 1993, the ATC Board of Managers supplemented this direction by adopting revised policy guidelines that affirm the importance of identifying sources of water for hikers and encourage Trail clubs to post signs informing hikers of the need to treat water from backcountry water sources prior to use.

Water sources located at or near overnight use areas along the Appalachian Trail provide water vitally needed by hikers. Hikers on the Trail have a legitimate expectation that water will be available at reasonable intervals and that water sources will be adequately marked.

The ATC policy statement identifies two sources of water along the Trail:

- **natural or backcountry water sources**, which are naturally occurring surface water sources (including springs and seeps) that are undeveloped or minimally improved. Minimal improvements include construction of small catchment basins or other primitive collection devices that clearly do not indicate to the user that water is being provided from a developed, protected water system.
- **water systems**, which typically are engineered systems that transport, store, or deliver water for human consumption. Improvements, such as wells, service connections, pumps, hand pumps, holding tanks, faucets or spigots usually indicate that water is being provided through a water system.

ATC's guidelines for natural or backcountry water sources are, as follows:

1. Trail brochures and guides should emphasize the need to treat water before drinking by including statements such as, "The purity of water from natural sources found along the Trail cannot be guaranteed. All water should be treated before use."
2. While ATC recognizes the risks inherent in identifying water sources along the A.T., it also recognizes the need to inform hikers as to where water can be found. Clubs are encouraged to assist hikers in locating water at appropriate intervals along the Trail.
3. In order to inform hikers of potential hazards incident to the use of identified water sources, clubs should make efforts to erect signs at Trailheads and shelters advising of the need to treat water from all sources before drinking. These signs should state that identification and maintenance of a water source does not imply water purity.
4. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will make signs available to Trail clubs that can be posted at Trailheads or other appropriate locations along the Appalachian Trail

with prior approval of agency partners. These signs will contain a message that advises the public that water from unprotected natural sources should be boiled, filtered, or chemically treated before use.

5. Natural water sources should not be modified or developed in a manner that would lead the user to believe that the source is protected or that water from the sources is safe to use without treatment. Minor modifications to improve water collection, such as small catchment basins, springboxes, short lengths of pipe, or other devices, should not include faucets, spigots or cisterns, or otherwise appear to indicate that water is being provided from a developed, protected water source.
6. Natural water sources located in an area where the potential for chemical contamination is known to exist should not be identified to the public. Subject to availability of funds, ATC will assist Trail clubs in testing natural water sources suspected of chemical contamination. Where testing indicates that chemical contaminants are present, appropriate action should be taken to deter public use.

Federal Policies

National Park Service guidance states that all backcountry water supplies, particularly surface sources, should be suspected of being contaminated and should be treated as such. NPS guidelines for management of backcountry water sources state that they must be maintained in an undeveloped condition. Minor modifications that are made to improve water collection, such as catch basins, short lengths of pipe, or springboxes, cannot indicate or lead users to believe that the water is protected or safe. Any information that is provided to the public about these water sources needs to include an advisory or warning statement that says, in effect, that the water is unprotected and must be properly treated before use. The National Park Service generally relies on state and local public-health standards to establish safe standards for improved water sources.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Bureau of Forestry provides limited public drinking-water supplies (none are close to the A.T.). Springs and other water sources generally are not indicated on maps prepared by the bureau.

The Bureau of State Parks' drinking-water supplies are well marked and maintained on park lands. The bureau actively monitors and tests its water supplies to ensure they meet public-health standards. Water supplies are well marked throughout state recreation areas.

Game Commission—The Game Commission provides no drinking-water facilities on any of its lands nor does it designate springs or other water sources on any of its maps. The Commission does not have the capability to monitor and maintain drinking-water supplies on its lands.

Other Partners—Establishment of a new water source or improving an existing water source along the Trail generally does not require approval by local government or state water quality officials.

MCM Policy

MCM cannot and will not be responsible for the purity of water along the sections of the AT which it maintains. Hikers must be responsible for treating water. There are numerous sometimes-seasonal sources of water on or near the MCM sections of Trail, including the springs near the four shelters. Elsewhere there are both springs and small streams, a number of which are also seasonal (dry late summer and in the early fall), and which tend to be somewhat unpredictable unless it has been a very wet year.

Action Plan

- All water source locations identified for public use will be marked with blue blazes and/or directional signs, thus assuring a water source will be provided to hikers at reasonable intervals along the Trail.

- Signs advising that water should be boiled, filtered, and/or chemically treated before use will be located in the trailhead bulletin board at Route 850, and in all four shelters.
- Incidental springs and streams along the Trail will not be marked by MCM, although there may be other local signage or obvious improvements (e.g., plastic pipe at Whiskey Springs).

SECTION 2(I)

Sanitation

Overview

Maintaining basic cleanliness and acceptable sanitary conditions at A.T. shelters and campsites is a constant concern and duty of ATC, the Trail-clubs, and land-managing agencies.

The primary purpose of any sanitation strategy is to provide a barrier between feces-borne pathogens and backcountry water supplies. To assure a “sanitation barrier”, human waste must be contained in a well-sited sanitation system. The most common type of sanitation facility on the A.T. is the pit toilet or “pit privy,” a small structure over a hole in the ground. Where the structure and pit are poorly located, designed, vented, and maintained, or when the pit is full, these facilities need to be repaired, removed, or replaced. Conversely, well-designed and well-ventilated pit privies built on suitable soils are an asset at most campsites and shelters.

The Backcountry Sanitation Manual produced in 2002 by the Green Mountain Club in collaboration with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, offers advice and information on backcountry waste-management options, with emphasis on moldering privies. Regardless of whether an established privy or dispersed disposal area is used to accommodate human waste, the area of each site should be monitored to ensure that sanitary conditions do not create environmental or health problems.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

Sanitation facilities should be provided at high-use shelters and popular campsites. In April 1989, ATC adopted the following resolution regarding sanitation:

1. ATC, the clubs and land-managing agencies declare that the public interest is to promote safe and healthful conditions, free from unnecessary, preventable pollution at shelters, designated campsites and water supplies, particularly at areas of repeated, overnight use by the hiking public and along Trail sections where pollution from outside A.T. boundaries may be a threat; and,
2. ATC, the clubs and land-managing agencies should visually evaluate and endeavor to ascertain where existing sanitary conditions may not be acceptable and, to the extent practicable, initiate actions to eliminate or mitigate preventable sanitary problems; and,
3. ATC, the clubs and land-managing agencies should install privies or toilets, located and designed to meet local conditions, where other options to maintain sanitary conditions are not effective; and,
4. ATC, the clubs and land-managing agencies should conduct education programs for the hiking public about proper sanitary techniques and the challenges of maintaining and improving sanitary conditions; and,
5. ATC will work with the clubs and land-managing agencies to collect management information on successful, efficient techniques and methodologies for managing sanitation and overnight use, will encourage the development of new techniques and methodologies, and will share this information among the management partners that cooperatively manage the Appalachian Trail.”

NPS Policy

Policy—NPS defines wastewater as any liquid or waterborne solid that, if improperly controlled or inadequately treated, can cause human illness and/or pollution of the environment. Wastewater management systems will be constructed only if a determination has first been made that

reasonable conservation measures will not be sufficient to cover park needs. In the selection of an appropriate method of wastewater treatment, factors such as all-season reliability, regulatory and public health issues, cost-effectiveness, and minimum adverse impact on the environment will all be considered. In the event of an alternative wastewater treatment facility, such as a composting toilet, there should be interpretation for visitors regarding the importance of recycling organic waste. Wastewater will be treated in such a way that when it returns to water courses or has been recycled it meets or exceeds applicable state and federal water-quality standards. NPS approved backcountry wastewater systems, all of which must meet public health standards, include low-water or waterless toilets, chemical toilets, vault and composting toilets, and pit privies (section 9.1.5.2 of 2006 NPS *Management Policies*).

In designated wilderness areas, sanitation facilities will be placed only in locations where their presence and use will resolve serious health and sanitation problems or prevent serious resource impact.

Pennsylvania Policy

None of the partner landowning agencies have policies specifically related to sanitation; however, the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the regulatory agency for waste, and local Sewage Enforcement Officers work under DEP's authority for permitting on-lot waste disposal. Note that pit privies are no longer permitted in Pennsylvania, and A.T. toilet facilities have required special exceptions from DEP (referred to as "experimental system" permits). The A.T. Mid-Atlantic regional Office will provide guidance on how to proceed if a new toilet facility is needed, or requires major maintenance.

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Parks is responsible for Pine Grove Furnace State Park, and the Bureau of Forestry is responsible for Mischeau State Forest.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission discourages designated toilet facilities on game lands.

MCM Policy

MCM maintains composting privies at three of its A.T. shelters. The Frye, Darlington and Cove Mountain utilize a two-bin design. In this design there are two adjacent, independent composting bin assemblies bolted together so that one overarching "privy house" provides ADA-compliant access to both privy seats. Each bin has its own vent stack, integral ventilation system, and external cleanout access hatches. Inside the "house," each privy seat is fitted with a sealing, lockable cover. One cover is kept locked until the first bin has been filled—usually about three years. The first seat is then locked and its bin left to compost until the second bin is nearly full. Finished compost from the first bin is then spread in the woods and the cycle restarted.

Until 2017, the Kennedy privy used a single bin composting privy. In 2017, the Kennedy privy was replaced with a new two-bin ADA-compliant moldering privy. The old privy was closed to permit the waste material to compost; in the future the old privy will be emptied and dismantled. As with the composting privies, one bin cover is kept locked until the first bin is full. The first hole will then be locked and its bin left to compost until the second bin is nearly full.

A storage box for compost-helper materials (typically wood shavings or shredded wood mulch) is wall-mounted adjacent to the seats at each privy, with signage indicating proper dosage after each privy use. The compost help provides bulk that helps air penetrate the waste materials and kill microbes. There are additional internal and/or external storage containers at each privy which can be used by either a MCM maintainer or a Ridgerunner to replenish the internal storage. All privies are an acceptable /approved distance from water sources.

Action Plan

- MCM will continue to maintain the privies at our four shelters.

- Periodic surveys will be made of the effectiveness of the composting privies and they will be emptied of composted organic matter on an as-needed basis. In general, the privy condition is checked at least quarterly by the designated A.T. section maintainer or MCM Supervisor of Shelters.
- Local storage bins for compost-helping materials are maintained at each privy; local Ridgerunners are asked to check on the bin supply level periodically to supplement the regular MCM maintainer inspections and resupply trips.
- Information regarding proper use of the composting privies is posted in the privy. Additional use instructions have been posted as appropriate in each privy, both for users and the Ridgerunners who assist with the maintenance.
- When appropriate, MCM leaders will educate hikers on scheduled hikes about proper backcountry sanitary procedures.

Section 2(J)

Managing the Trail for a Primitive Experience

Overview

The Appalachian Trail has evolved over the course of the last 75 years, but its purpose has long been as “a way, continuous from Mount Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia, for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains.” ATC bylaws state as the purpose of the organization: “The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to the preservation and management of the natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in order to provide primitive outdoor-recreation and educational opportunities for Trail visitors.”

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In April 1995, ATC’s Board of Managers adopted the following policy on managing the Appalachian Trail for a primitive experience:

“The Appalachian Trail Conservancy should take into account the effects of Trail management programs and policies on the primitive and natural qualities of the Appalachian Trail and the primitive recreational experience the Trail is intended to provide. Although these guidelines are intended to apply primarily to the effects of actions or programs on predominantly natural, wild, and remote environments along the Trail, they apply to certain pastoral, cultural, and rural landscapes as well. Even in sections of the Trail that do not pass through remote or primitive landscapes, care should be taken not to inadvertently overdevelop or improve the Trail tread or facilities in these environments.”

“Trail improvements, including shelters, privies, bridges, and other facilities, should be constructed only when appropriate to protect the resource or provide a minimum level of public safety. Design and construction of these facilities should reflect an awareness of, and harmony with, the Trail’s primitive qualities. Materials and design features should emphasize simplicity and not detract from the predominate sense of a natural, primitive environment. The trail treadway, when constructed, reconstructed, or relocated, should wear lightly on the land and be built primarily to provide greater protection for the Trail footpath or Trail resource values. Trail management publications should include appropriate references to the potential effects of Trail-management activities on the primitive qualities of the Trail.”

“In developing programs to maintain open areas, improve water sources, provide sanitation, remove structures, and construct bridges, signs, trailheads, and other facilities, Trail managers should consider whether a proposed action or program will have an adverse effect on the primitive qualities of the Trail, and, if such effects are identified, whether the action or program is appropriate.”

Federal Policy

NPS Policy—Visitor carrying capacity is the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and visitor experience conditions in a park unit. Superintendents should identify visitor carrying capacities for managing public use, and identify ways to monitor and address unacceptable impacts on park resources and visitor experiences.

The AT Comprehensive Plan states:

“Care must be taken, as the Trail is relocated or reconstructed, that its primitive quality is not lost. What are seen as Trail improvements may sometimes be steps in a progressive loss in simplicity of the footpath. Lands retaining a sense of the wild and primeval will be maintained with a special concern for these values.”

“Trail design, construction, and maintenance should reflect a concern for safety without detracting

from the opportunity for hikers to experience the wild and scenic lands by their own unaided efforts, and without sacrificing aspects of the Trail that challenge their skill and stamina. Attempts to provide protection for the unprepared lead to a progressive diminution of the experience available to others.”

MCM Policy

MCM will manage Trail environment to optimize the scenic values, primitive qualities, and feelings of remoteness experienced by hikers. We will emphasize simplicity and self-reliance in design and construction of the Trail footpath and Trail facilities. Each project that the club undertakes will be reviewed with respect to its impact on the primitive character of the Trail. “Club construction projects and maintenance procedures will be periodically evaluated as to their effect on the Trail’s scenic and primitive character. Implementation of the policies and action plans from other chapters in this plan will affect the Trail in some way, either positively or negatively. It is recognized that not all negative intrusions to the Trail experience can be eliminated, but MCM will attempt to maximize positive qualities, and mitigate negative intrusions, so that an illusion of remoteness remains as strong as possible. The implementation of this Chapter is a subjective topic, since “primitive” and “scenic” are relative terms that could be defined differently by every hiker, based upon one’s personal preferences and past experiences, and there has been ongoing debate within the Trail community as well.

For MCM Trail sections, the following are existing desirable qualities as perceived from the footpath:

- Lengths of sinuous, narrow and unimproved footpath that impel the hiker to see what is around the next bend in the trail.
- A quiet feeling of ridgeline remoteness without sight or sound of human civilization.
- Ridgeline winter views through the deciduous forest, of an expansive patchwork of farm, fields, and wooded ridges.
- Several year-round natural vistas from rock outcrops, such as Whiskey Springs and Hawk Rock. Natural vistas are more appealing than obviously man-made ones such as powerlines and logging areas.
- A few brief enclosures by evergreen vegetation of hemlocks and mountain laurel, which is a contrast to the otherwise prevalent open deciduous forest.
- A few brief lengths contain rocky ledges or boulders that challenge the balance and ability of hikers. The remainder of the Trail treadway, while sometimes rocky, is not especially challenging to the able hiker.

Significant negative Trail qualities in this Trail section relative to scenic and primitive character are as follows:

- Powerline swaths—between Pa Route 94 and Sheet Iron Roof Road.
- Prior commercial/industrial use along Routes 34 and 94.
- Heavily impacted party sites at several locations, with resultant trash and campfire residue.
- Graffiti and trash at Hawk Rock (above Duncannon); cleaning the rock has been frustrating as it seems a magnet for spray-painted graffiti.
- Trash dumps at trailheads road intersections.
- Noise from motorized racing at the speedway near Whiskey Springs.

Less significant negative intrusions include the following:

- Invasive exotic vegetation such as Tree of Heaven, Multiflora Rose, and Garlic Mustard.
- Occasional noise from Deer Run campground.

Action Plan

The following general considerations shall be used when evaluating any proposed trail club

project:

- Could this action, either by itself or in concert with other actions, result in a diminution of the positive quality of the Trail experience?
- Could this proposed project be altered, redesigned, or relocated to enhance the Trail experience either by eliminating any negative quality, or by adding a positive feature?
- Could this project be done in a less obtrusive manner?
- Are the physical materials used for construction compatible with their setting? Are they simple and unobtrusive?
- Does the action sacrifice aspects of the Trail that challenge a hiker's skill and stamina?
- Any potential relocations should consider whether there are opportunities within the Trail corridor that would create a more scenic or remote feeling, or incorporate special features or spatial enclosures (such as a dark hemlock grove or a cleft in a rock formation).

SECTION 2(K)

Trail Crew Safety and Skills Training

Overview

Since 1982, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has sponsored seasonal Trail crews to educate volunteers in proper methods and techniques of trail work and to assist Trail clubs in reducing the backlog of major construction and reconstruction projects along the Appalachian Trail. Worker safety has been a key component of this volunteer training.

Volunteers working on the Appalachian Trail are protected under federal Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) and Volunteers-in-Forests (VIF) programs, which require that volunteers work within the scope of their volunteer agreement, are properly equipped and trained for the tasks they are doing and the tools they are using, and that they are listed as members of the Trail club on whose section they are working or listed on a roster for a specific work trip. ATC's worker-safety policy addresses issues and practices among employees and volunteers engaged in construction and maintenance activities by ATC sponsored or supported Trail-crew programs. For example, hardhats are now issued and worn by all workers, unless the appropriate supervisor rules otherwise. Gloves, shin guards, and eye and ear protection also are provided and used, when appropriate. Tools and fuels are carried either outside of passenger areas in crew vans or trucks or stored in separate compartments. Crew supervisors are strongly encouraged to provide regular safety instruction and monitoring, including "tailgate sessions," informal workshops, and on-the-job demonstrations.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC's worker safety policy addresses issues and practices among employees and volunteers engaged in construction and maintenance activities sponsored or supported by ATC's Trail-crew programs. All such workers or employees are required to follow applicable procedures and practices described in this policy. While this policy is not binding on other volunteers on the Appalachian Trail, ATC strongly encourages such volunteers and Trail-maintaining organizations to adopt similar standards and practices to further enhance volunteer worker-safety along the Trail. In addition, certain provisions of this policy may be required by Federal management partners if paid or volunteer workers seek full coverage under agency-sponsored Volunteer-in-Parks (VIP) and Volunteer-in-Forests (VIF) programs.

In 1996, ATC's Board of Managers adopted the following policy regarding Trail crew safety and skills training:

Personal Responsibility. ATC recognizes the strong tradition of volunteer involvement in maintenance and construction activities along the AT. Although ATC or other club or agency sponsors of AT seasonal Trail-crew programs assume responsibility for providing certain safety training and equipment to crew participants as further described in this policy, each volunteer engaged in crew-sponsored maintenance and construction activities must assume personal responsibility for assessing his or her own physical condition and preparedness for engaging in the proposed Trail-work activities and for equipping themselves with the clothing appropriate to the location, duration, weather conditions, and degree of difficulty associated with the proposed work project.

Leadership. Each work party associated with an ATC-sponsored or -supported Trail-crew program must have a designated leader. Normally, the leader will be a Trail-crew or ATC employee or his or her designee. The leader, in cooperation with appropriate ATC staff, will have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that a "job-hazards analysis" and "project-needs assessment" have been prepared in advance of the proposed work project and are documented on a "project logistics" form.
- To explain to members of the work party the nature of, and related potential hazards associated with, the proposed work.

- To ensure that all work-party participants do not exceed their physical capabilities and are equipped properly for the expected work conditions.
- To ensure that appropriate tools, equipment, and safety gear are available to each member of the work party consistent with the proposed activities and hazards of the work project.
- To provide basic safety instruction to the work party in advance of engaging in the work project and to periodically monitor during the project the safety practices of, and use of appropriate safety equipment by, each member of the work party.
- To explain the requirements of any applicable federal program, such as VIP or VIF.
- To ensure that required medical-history, personal, and emergency-contact information is obtained from each member of the work party.
- To provide basic first-aid and other emergency-management assistance and to follow the prescribed “accident-response procedure” in the event of any injury of a work-party member.

Training, Education, and Supervision. Safety training and education must be a fundamental component of work-skills training in every aspect of Trail-crew operations. ATC-sponsored or -supported Trail-crew members must be properly trained in any task they are likely to be asked to perform in the context of a Trail-crew work project.

Each Trail-crew supervisor is responsible for training crew members under his or her supervision. The Trail-crew supervisor may request assistance from the appropriate ATC regional representative or other appropriate staff member, from the sponsoring maintaining club supervisor or coordinator, and/or from the cooperating federal or state agency, if the supervisor does not feel qualified to properly train the crew members in some aspect of the proposed work. However, the Trail-crew supervisor has field-level responsibility for ensuring that crew members are properly trained, equipped, and supervised for the work they will be asked to perform.

ATC and/or other program sponsors will provide opportunities for seasonal Trail-crew supervisors to obtain additional knowledge and safety training in all phases of trail work, including certification, where appropriate, for certain specialized equipment and/or power tools. In addition, ATC and other program sponsors will require all Trail-crew supervisors to successfully complete a government-approved defensive driving course and an American Red Cross, or equivalent, basic first-aid and CPR course. Trail-crew supervisors will receive full salary, housing, and travel-expense reimbursement during such training.

All crew members must receive basic training in trail maintenance and construction practices, including proper use of tools and equipment; appropriate safety practices and gear; any potential hazards or risks associated with the specific work project or site; and precautions associated with the transportation of passengers, equipment, and fuels to or from the work site. Normally, such training will be provided at the outset of the work project, by the Trail-crew supervisor, during a worker-orientation session either at the crew base camp or at the work site. In addition, at the beginning of each day of the work project, or whenever a new project is initiated, the Trail-crew supervisor should provide crew workers with a review of safety practices and an assessment of any new hazards or risks that may arise as a result of changing conditions at the work site. The Trail-crew supervisor also should monitor the work and safety practices of each crew member periodically during the course of the work project.

Training in specialized skills, such as operation of chainsaws or other power equipment, winches and associated rigging equipment, and rock drills, will be provided by ATC, the sponsoring club, and/or the cooperating public agency to each Trail-crew supervisor at the beginning of each crew season. Opportunities for refresher training will be provided periodically throughout the season. These sessions will be open to volunteer members of the Trail crew(s). Any operator of power equipment or winches must be properly trained in the use of that equipment or work under the direct supervision of a properly trained leader with the required skills. Specifically, chainsaw operators must be certified by an approved chainsaw-certification program. Explosives may be handled and detonated only by state- or federally licensed operators.

In addition to on-the-job and orientation training for Trail-crew supervisors and volunteers, ATC and/or the sponsoring club or agency will provide Trail-crew workers with information materials describing trail-maintenance and -construction practices and standards, safety precautions and equipment, and applicable requirements for VIP or VIF coverage by agency cooperators.

Project Analysis and Other Documentation. Each proposed Trail-crew project should be analyzed in advance of commencement of work. This evaluation should include both a “project-needs

assessment” and a “job-hazards analysis” and will be documented on a “project logistics” form. The purpose of the “projects-needs assessment” is to determine the objectives and scope of the work; the number of workers and estimated work hours required for the project; the tools, equipment, and materials necessary to complete the project; and the amount and type of safety equipment appropriate to the project.

The purpose of the “job-hazards analysis” is to assess potential risks associated with the proposed work project, given the type of work and tools and equipment involved in the project, physical and environmental conditions at the work site, and the degree of difficulty and technical knowledge associated with the work.

Normally, these analyses will be developed by the Trail-crew supervisor in consultation with the appropriate ATC field representative, the sponsoring-club coordinator, or a designated cooperating-agency representative. ATC will develop appropriate forms and instructional materials to assist those responsible for preparing these analyses.

Trail-crew supervisors are responsible for sharing information from the “project-needs assessment” and the “job-hazards analysis” during orientation and other training sessions with all volunteer Trail-crew workers and for maintaining and updating this information as the work project evolves or the work environment changes.

Trail-crew supervisors also will be responsible for ensuring that all crew workers have completed required personal and medical-history forms and any appropriate VIP or VIF forms in advance of the commencement of work. This information must be easily accessible to the Trail-crew supervisor in the event of a medical or other emergency. Federal-agency partners will be responsible for providing ATC and/or the sponsoring club with appropriate VIP or VIF forms and a summary of requirements for coverage.

In addition, Trail-crew supervisors will be required to follow an “accident-response procedure” in the event of any accident or medical difficulty arising in connection with a work project or during a worker’s stay at a base-camp facility. The intent of the “accident-response procedure” is to ensure prompt response to any medical incident or emergency; to ensure proper notification to responsible officials in ATC, the sponsoring club, and the cooperating agency; and to assist in analyzing the causes of such incidents and developing recommendations for corrective or preventive actions in the future. ATC will provide Trail-crew supervisors with the appropriate forms and description of the procedure process. ATC will also be responsible for maintaining a data base of accident-report information to assist in evaluating crew operations and safety practices.

Federal Policy

Both the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service have detailed policy guidelines regarding worker safety, which require proper training, safety equipment, and supervision. Federal VIP and VIF programs strongly encourage safety training and the use of appropriate safety equipment.

MCM Policy

MCM is committed to following ATC and other agency requirements for all club-authorized work and work trips. Club volunteer worker safety will be of primary concern during Club work trips and projects on the trail and with maintainers working on the Trail. Volunteer workers and maintainers should be properly clothed for weather conditions and the work; assume personal responsibility for judging their own ability to perform Trail work tasks; use proper safety gear along with safe tools and techniques; and educate themselves or be properly trained by the Club for safe Trail work.

Chainsaws and other power tools can be particularly dangerous. Chainsaw operators should be trained and certified through an agency-approved chainsaw-certification program, usually sponsored by ATC. Use of MCM power equipment should be approved by the Supervisor of Trails, after safe operating ability has been demonstrated. Appropriate safety equipment must be used at all times. Maintainers are encouraged to use the “buddy system” when performing hazardous trail work. All Trail maintainers are encouraged to inform someone knowledgeable about the Trail section where the work will be done and the expected time of return.

Action Plan

MCM will endeavor to provide safety training and instruct participants in Club work trips about proper trail maintenance and trail construction skills. Trail maintainers will be encouraged to participate in Club work trips and comply with current Club trail maintenance standards (i.e., the A.T. Design, Construction, and Maintenance manual).

Maintainers will also be encouraged to attend ATC-sponsored safety certification training, and abide by currently-published ATC/ATPO guidelines. MCM recognizes that such certification may be a burden, especially when the guidelines change as a result of Federal agency pass-down legislation, but believes that it is a primary factor in maintaining worker safety.

MCM will announce in emails, meetings and our newsletter upcoming workshops and training opportunities regarding trail safety and skills sponsored by our Trail managing partners.

Part 3

PUBLIC USE, PUBLIC INFORMATION, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

SECTION 3(A)

Emergency Planning and Coordination

Overview

Law-enforcement, fire-control, and search-and-rescue emergencies bring out the best - and the worst - characteristics of the cooperative management system, the partnership of public and private organizations that care for the Appalachian Trail and its users and neighbors. At best, emergencies are tackled promptly and efficiently, with all partners understanding their roles; at worst, disarray may prevail, such that emergency workers are confused about the location of the A.T. or unclear about carrying out the diverse responsibilities.

Emergency management and coordination can be divided logically into three categories as it relates to the Appalachian Trail—search-and-rescue, wildlife control, and law enforcement. In all cases, PEMA recommends dialing 911 to secure the most immediate emergency response. All counties crossed by the Trail have 911 emergency telephone capabilities.

A key element of an appropriate emergency response is *jurisdiction*. Jurisdiction is the power or right to exercise authority over or administer the law in an area. In general, state and local jurisdictions retain their authorities and responsibilities for response to emergencies on the Appalachian Trail. Responses to law-enforcement, fire-control, and search-and-rescue emergencies are fundamentally the responsibility of local, state, and federal public agencies. As private, volunteer organizations, ATC and the maintaining clubs have no legal responsibility to respond to emergencies. However, ATC and the clubs play a critical role in educating hikers, agency partners, and the public about the Trail and in managing the A.T. so as to reduce problems of this kind.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

The following policies and guidelines have been approved by the ATC Board of Managers:

- General Direction: Managers will foster an unregimented atmosphere and otherwise encourage self-reliance and respect for Trail values by users. Hiker regulations will be kept as unrestrictive as possible, and should be developed only to the extent they are proven necessary to protect the physical Trail, its environment, and the interests of adjacent landowners. (A.T. Comprehensive Plan, 1981)
- Contingency Planning for Emergencies: Law-enforcement, fire-control, and search-and-rescue jurisdictions must be contacted during preparation of local management plans by the clubs and periodically thereafter. ATC and the clubs must establish basic familiarity with the Trail among all jurisdictions crossed by NPS corridor lands, so that there is less confusion and ambivalence when emergencies occur. Specific tasks consist of informing local authorities about the Trail's location by providing current maps and sharing phone contact lists for emergencies. Frequently meetings are needed to explain the A.T. to local jurisdictions so that contingency plans are prepared with local authorities and each partner's responsibilities are clear. (ATC Board, April 1987)
- Responsibilities and Disclaimers: Authorized law-enforcement agencies have the primary responsibility for responding to and prosecuting crimes which occur on the A.T. or directly affect its hikers. ATC and its member clubs will cooperate in facilitating responses, if requested, but assume no legal responsibility. ATC and its clubs do not assume any duty to warn any hiker of any specific criminal risk on the Trail." (ATC Board, April 1984)

- Incident Reporting: ATC will act as central repository for reports of incidents to hikers' security, law enforcement violations, fires, and search and rescue. ATC has developed an incident report form and guidelines that clubs are encouraged to use.
- Check-in/Checkout Plan: In 2020, ATC issued a policy directing that each Trail club shall develop a "Check-in/Checkout" Plan which will ensure a timely emergency response if a volunteer does not return or call their Point of Contact (POC) by an agreed time. The plan must include the basic information needed about the volunteer and their whereabouts, and guidelines of what the POC's actions should be if emergency response is required.
- Emergency Response Plan: In 2020, in the new Volunteer Service Agreement with Trail clubs, ATC required that clubs establish an emergency response plan for use by volunteers in case of an emergency.

NPS Policy

The objectives of the NPS law-enforcement program are the prevention of criminal activities through resource education, public-safety efforts, and deterrence, the detection and investigation of criminal activity, and the apprehension and prosecution of violators. This function is not delegated to ATC and the Trail clubs; only federal, state, or local law-enforcement officials may carry out enforcement. NPS Appalachian Trail lands are administered under proprietary jurisdiction. Insofar as practical, the NPS seeks to acquire concurrent legislative jurisdiction for all NPS lands, which would allow NPS law-enforcement officers to enforce federal criminal statutes and assimilate state law when no federal law or regulation exists. The following policies have been developed to guide emergency response actions on lands acquired by the National Park Service for the Appalachian Trail:

- In the A.T. Partner Agreement, all parties agree to notify the National Park Service within 24 hours of any major emergency or controversial event occurring on Trail corridor lands, regardless of land ownership. To the degree NPS has a duty to meet law-enforcement responsibilities along the Trail, this is not transferable to the ATC. The ATC cannot be authorized to enforce Federal regulations nor to serve in a law enforcement capacity. (Solicitor's Opinion, USDI, March, 1983 from NPS Associate Director to ATC, September 1985)
- The Solicitor, USDI, in a memorandum dated September 1, 1983, determined that both the ATC and local trail clubs are authorized to seek local law enforcement assistance to protect Appalachian Trail lands and to register complaints for violations on these federal lands. Local law enforcement authorities must recognize their responsibilities to enforce local and state laws on NPS property and understand the relationship of volunteer managers to these lands. (Letter from NPS Associate Director to ATC, September 1985)
- All incidents resulting in injury to persons, or damage to property in excess of \$300.00 must be reported by persons involved to the superintendent (ATPO Park Manager or his/her designated representative) as soon as possible. (36 CFR 2.33)
- There is no plan for development of NPS law enforcement capability along the A.T. outside of established units of the National Park System through which the Trail passes. Reliance has been and should continue to be on state and local jurisdictions to provide law enforcement support when necessary.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania, to some extent, has simplified the process by creating a central planning and coordinating agency—the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). PEMA is not a response agency, but serves as a centralized emergency coordinating and planning body that interfaces between county, state, and federal agencies.

Search-and-Rescue

Search-and-rescue operations on private lands and NPS lands are the primary function of local and county emergency management-coordination service. These can be activated in any area along the Trail in Pennsylvania by dialing 911. Local and county governments will play the lead role in all areas

except those described below. When two or more municipalities are involved, the county emergency service will coordinate the search-and-rescue operations. When more than one county is involved, PEMA will coordinate the operation. PEMA will coordinate search-and-rescue response when aerial operations are required on private lands.

Pennsylvania DCNR

Search-and-rescue operations on public lands are carried out by DCNR. DCNR maintains a statewide network of search-and-rescue managers in both its Bureau of Forestry and its Bureau of State Parks. Search-and-rescue operations can be triggered by contacting DCNR emergency services or by dialing 911.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Search-and-rescue operations on Pennsylvania Game Commission lands are handled by local agencies and DCNR.

Other Partners

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission will assist with search-and-rescue efforts on waterways throughout the state. Not applicable for the MCM A.T. sections.

Wildfire Control

Wildfire control throughout Pennsylvania is handled by DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, regardless of the ownership of land. The Bureau administers the following services in its role as the State's fire-control agency:

- Maintains statewide and individual forest district fire-control plans;
- Maintains a system of fire towers and fire wardens to detect and suppress forest and wildfires;
- Develops rural fire-fighting capabilities through purchase and renovation of surplus federal property for rural fire companies;
- Maintains trained field staff and fire-fighting equipment, including heavy equipment and aircraft support to fight fires;
- Maintains statewide radio communications network.

Law Enforcement

Each state agency is empowered to enforce state conservation laws on its lands and, in certain cases, on other lands throughout Pennsylvania. In addition, state conservation agencies can sometimes enforce the state's crimes code and vehicle code while off agency-owned conservation lands. Finally, state and municipal law-enforcement agencies are empowered to enforce general laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on all lands that the Trail crosses.

General Responses to Criminal Actions

All responses to criminal actions are handled by either state police or by a local law-enforcement agency. Where a full-time local law-enforcement agency is available, that agency will serve as the primary law-enforcement agency and the state police will function as backup. Where a part-time law-enforcement agency exists, that agency will serve as the primary law-enforcement agency during its business hours; state police will fill in during off hours. Where no local agency is available, the state police will provide necessary police service on a full-time basis.

DCNR rangers assigned to the Bureau of State Parks will handle all primary response to criminal actions in Pine Grove Furnace State Park. DCNR rangers assigned to the Bureau of Forestry will handle all primary responses to criminal actions in the Michaux State Forest. State Police and local police will be called when DCNR Rangers are not available or are not handling other incidents.

Emergency law-enforcement reactions for A.T. lands within Pennsylvania are triggered by dialing 911. For purposes of this plan, it is not necessary to know which local jurisdictions have full- or part-time law-enforcement capabilities and which depend entirely on the state police. State police jurisdictions can be

contacted to obtain this information.

MCM Policy

MCM will maintain a current list of emergency contacts that includes addresses and phone numbers of federal, state, and local officials responsible for dealing with emergencies.

Any search-and-rescue or emergency operation will be conducted by local agencies. However, realizing the knowledge of the trail maintainers and monitors of the land and access points, MCM will assist upon request when possible. MCM will provide the ATC Regional Representative the names and phone numbers of these key people.

Action Plan

- In 2020, as required by NPS, MCM established a Check-In / Check-Out Policy for Trail volunteers. This policy directs our volunteers to notify a Point of Contact (POC) when they leave home to perform volunteer work, and to notify the POC when he/she returns home. The policy includes phone numbers for the POC to call if the volunteer does not return home timely.
- In 2020, MCM established an Emergency Response Plan that includes a list of actions to be taken in the event a volunteer is injured while performing Trail work, including phone numbers to be used for notifying ATC and NPS of the incident.
- Maintain a list of emergency contacts of federal, state and local officials responsible for dealing with emergencies. (Note that this list is now included in MCM's Emergency Response Plan.)
- Notify (via ATC or direct contacts) all local agencies pertaining to search-and-rescue, law enforcement, and emergency health situations of MCM availability to assist as requested.
- Maintain a list of key people who have the knowledge to assist, along with their phone numbers. This list will be updated every two years, or when necessary.
- Report immediately to ATC any violation or emergency situation.
- Assist in notifying hikers of potential dangers, under the direction of ATC, NPS, and state agencies.
- Upon request by agencies, a copy of updated maps will be provided.
- Post 911 emergency numbers at shelters and trailheads.

SECTION 3(B)

Special Events and Large Group Use

Overview

Use of the Trail by large groups, commercial outfitters, sponsored spectator events, races, or endurance competitions generates impacts that are generally inconsistent with the concept of a simple footpath. Large groups can cause serious damage to soils along the margins of the footpath and trample vegetation over wide areas when they congregate at views and lunch spots. An encounter with a large group of people on the Trail also can have a detrimental effect on the experience of a hiker seeking solitude or a small group of hikers seeking to “get away from it all.”

Additionally, ATC, Trail-clubs, and agency partners receive frequent complaints of groups monopolizing shelter space, leaving no space available for others. The individuals registering these complaints invariably make reference to the Trail community’s emphasis on providing a Trail environment where individuals can seek solitude and personal accomplishment.

Policies on large-group use and commercial activities along the A.T. depend partially on the direction set by the land-managing agency. Restrictions on group size and purpose are most strict within established national parks and designated wilderness areas. Trail clubs need to work closely with public landowning agencies to promote clear direction at the local level on special events and large-group use.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

The ATC Board of Managers adopted the following policy in November 1987. In November 1993, the policy was amended slightly to clarify the wording, which now reads as follows:

- Local clubs should consider how to best accommodate groups by reducing group size or by other means that would allow use to take place while protecting Trail values.
- Groups spending one or more nights on the Trail should not exceed 10 members at any one overnight-use area and day-use groups should not exceed 25 members in any one location, unless clubs designate otherwise in their local management plans.
- ATC and its member clubs should encourage organizations that simultaneously deploy multiple groups on the Trail (such as summer clubs and college-outing clubs) to consider their impact on the Trail and other users of the Trail. Where practical; ATC, Trail clubs, and agencies should assist these organizations in developing their organizational goals while preserving the Trail experience for other users.
- Clubs and agencies should develop education and outreach programs to inform users of this policy and to encourage peer pressure and voluntary compliance.
- All ATC guidebooks and other publications will be revised as appropriate to be consistent with this management principle.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service strictly limits special events, assemblies, military maneuvers, and commercial activities in national park units and often must do an environmental assessment before issuing a permit for such activities. The “special events” are prohibited unless “there is a meaningful association between the park area and the event, the observance contributes to visitor appreciation or understanding of the park, and a permit has been issued by the superintendent.”

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

The bureaus of Forestry and State Parks require authorization for organized group and special-

event uses that can be obtained from either the district forester or respective park manager. If a large-group or special-event activity is proposed along the Trail, both bureaus will request the applicant to get written approval for the use from ATC or Trail-maintaining club before issuing its permit. MCM coordinates with DCNR Bureaus in regard to Trail management at Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the Micheaux State forest.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission discourages large-group and special-event uses on game lands. The exception to this rule is a provision made for the military to conduct training sessions in land navigation, and pre-approved special events. The Commission will not allow such uses on or near the Appalachian Trail.

MCM Policy

Consistent with the ATC policy on special events and group use, it is MCM policy that large groups are in most cases incompatible with the purposes of the A.T. Both public and A.T. club hiking groups spending one or more nights out on the trail should not exceed 10 persons, and day-use groups should in general not exceed 25. Further, the Trail should not be used for commercial events or group activities (publicized spectator events, commercial or competitive activities, fund-raisers) that degrade its natural and cultural resources or social values. MCM recognizes that this policy is often difficult to monitor and enforce.

Action Plan

- MCM will encourage leaders of scheduled day hikes on the A.T. with more than 25 participants to implement alternatives. These may include cross hiking, breaking the group up into separate hikes with one part hiking on the A.T. and the other part hiking elsewhere, breaking the group into smaller subgroups and staggering departure times, or similar variations.
- MCM will continue to support ATC's "Ridgerunner" program which educates the public about large group abuse.
- One of the MCM "signature events" is a day-long biennial hike across Maryland on the A.T.—an event begun in 1947 and continuing in odd-numbered years to this day. Hikers begin at Pen Mar, Pa and continue south to Harper's Ferry National Park, checking in periodically with various safety monitors along the way. Apart from the length (40 miles, hence the safety and water-resupply checkpoints) and timeframe (one day) the event is run and funded (a donation for checkpoint food expenses) in exactly the same way as any other Club hike. While never advertised to the public, participation in this event has slowly grown to considerably exceed 25 hikers, largely due to an increasing number of 'repeat hikers.' The event is carefully planned and monitored by MCM volunteers to assure responsible use of the Trail. MCM will continue to monitor hiker participation, and will consider whether to cap registration in some fashion if there is evident Trail impact, but generally intends continue to conduct this particular day hike as long as other events which use portions of the A.T. remain "grandfathered" by the ATPO.

SECTION 3(C)

Public Information, Education and Outreach Programs

Overview

In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas of the Nation, trails should be established....within scenic areas which are remotely located.

-Section 2(a), National Trails System Act, 1968

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a public foot trail - built and maintained privately at first, but always intended for use by the broad spectrum of the American public and foreign visitors and now located almost entirely on lands owned by the public.

As stewards of the Trail for the public at large, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the maintaining clubs, and agency partners seek to make others aware of the Trail and its possible attractions for them, promote access to the A.T. for all citizens, and motivate those users to treat the Trail, its resources, and other users properly for the greater enjoyment of all. At the same time, greater awareness and use of the Trail increases the number of potential members of clubs (including a new generation of maintainers and managers) and ATC. Good community relations are an asset in corridor monitoring, as well as a means of strengthening the local organization with new talents for managing the diversity of activities now associated with the Trail project. Public information, or public relations, always supports some other purpose of the organization.

Trail users obviously want and need information about the attractions and requirements of the Trail. The news media (and commercial publishers of travel and recreation related books and other materials) are also interested. Regular contact is an organization's best insurance against irresponsible reporting in times of crisis, minor or major.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has an obligation as a non-profit organization and as a cooperative management partner to provide full, factual, and unbiased information about the Trail as a national public resource. In fulfilling this obligation, ATC and three clubs publish a series of 11 official guides to the A.T., supplemented by an annual summary of mileage between important points (the A.T. Data Book); periodicals for members and Trail maintainers; technical manuals for maintainers; promotional and educational brochures for the Trail user; and other books, posters, maps, and related merchandise. These materials, obviously, are intended for direct communication with users, potential users, and supporters. ATC also engages in and encourages indirect communication through the news and educational media, the commercial publishing industry, and the entertainment business. In its day-to-day promotional activities, ATC seeks to leave a positive impression of both itself and the maintaining clubs and encourages media contact with them. In emergencies affecting the Trail and its reputation, ATC serves as the media liaison for the A.T. community.

ATC is reaching out beyond its traditional audiences to engage new volunteers in environmental monitoring through the A.T. MEGA-Transect and other programs, and to encourage future Trail users, volunteers, and supporters through a place-based educational program known as a Trail to Every Classroom, as well as through community partnerships being nurtured along the Trail. ATC's volunteer clearinghouse provides an online opportunity for Trail clubs to reach out to potential volunteers by posting work trips and other projects.

Clubs are free to call on the ATC public affairs staff for assistance in establishing public relations programs or designing club brochures.

Federal Policy

The public-information activities of the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service are aimed primarily at ensuring that those activities are objective, useful, and informative and that they avoid self-

promotion and lobbying of any kind. In practice, the NPS A.T. Park Office routinely makes itself available to the news media as the spokesperson for the federal interest in the Trail and, like the Forest Service, underwrites a limited number of publications (brochures and maps) of interest to the recreation-minded public at large. Those publications are distributed by ATC, its member clubs, and units of the national park and forest systems. In addition, the NPS A.T. Park Office takes part in and provides a large portion of the funding for the NPS Junior Ranger program, which develops educational activities for youth, and the Trail to Every Classroom program that helps teachers use the A.T. as a resource both within and outside of their classrooms.

Pennsylvania Policy

State agency land-holding partners have information and education programs to promote their missions and to provide the public with needed information. Except for providing location information on state trail maps and sportsman recreation maps, no agency currently promotes or provides special information about the Trail. Several agencies have expressed interest in working with ATC and Trail clubs to jointly provide such programs.

DCNR Bureau of Forestry— Bureau foresters and biologists are available for speaking engagements on forestry issues, habitat management, hiking, public lands, endangered species and other environmental issues on request. The bureau frequently develops exhibitions on forest practices and problems and will assist ATC and local Trail clubs in developing information and education programs for the Trail. A “Trail Use Etiquette” brochure is available for public distribution.

DCNR Bureau of State Parks— Staff frequently run environmental interpretive programs on park lands throughout the summer season. Programs generally cover nature, natural history and ecology for children and adults. Park staff can conduct programs in other areas on request and, if manpower is available, will help ATC and Trail-maintaining clubs develop interpretive programs about the Trail.

The Game Commission publishes a monthly magazine containing information and articles about wildlife and hunting, and other recreational features. Public-interest articles contained in the publication are usually written by outside sources. Articles on the Trail are welcome. Game Commission staff are available for public presentations.

Fish and Boat Commission’s Bureau of Information and Education publishes news releases and a quarterly and monthly magazine. Its staff are available on a limited basis for exhibits, seminars and field interpretive programs.

Other Partners— **PennDOT** promotes and provides information about the location of the Appalachian Trail to passing motorists by signing Trail crossings. The Trail is also indicated on Pennsylvania’s state tourist map, which is printed and distributed by PennDOT..

MCM Policy

MCM is well aware of the need for cooperative and effective relationships within the local area. MCM is fortunate to have an extensive hiking program with hikes being conducted during the week and on weekends. Our program includes regular A.T. maintenance trips. Club activities, including hiking and backpacking trips and a few other outdoor activities (e.g., canoe/kayak trips), are publicized on our website and in various publications throughout the area. People of all ages participate in our activities.

- The MCM newsletter, “Hiker High Points”, is distributed to all members.
- MCM publishes Trip Schedules, that provide details regarding all planned club activities for a four-month period, three times each year. The Trip Schedules are provided to all members. Our activity schedule is also published on the Club website.
- Selected hikes are advertised in local newspapers.
- A hiking leadership program has been conducted periodically to train members to lead hikes safely and enjoyably on the A.T. and local trails.
- MCM club maintainers can provide information and education to Trail users through direct communication during encounters on the trail. Club business cards are distributed to hike leaders and club officers, who are encouraged to hand them out to interested members of the public.
- MCM informs hikers and the local public concerning the use of the Trail with information posted on its bulletin boards at trailhead kiosks and in the four shelters maintained by the Club.

- MCM participates in various “Club Days” events sponsored by local outdoor equipment retailers, sometimes by staffing an information table and in other cases via informative brochures. We also distribute similar information at events organized by local community organizations and employers.
- MCM provide information and education to Trail users and local residents at the annual Duncannon trail community celebration in Duncannon, Pennsylvania.
- MCM supports the ATC “Ridgerunner” program during the late spring and summer months to educate hikers on the best use of the Trail and the environment.

Action Plan

The designated MCM spokesperson for the media is the ~~Outreach~~**Publicity** Chairperson, in conjunction with the other officers and the Council members. As appropriate, the President will consult with the Council and also ATC in the event the media contacts the Club for information.

The ~~Outreach~~**Publicity** Chairperson prepares informational displays for use at public events, as well as brochures for distribution to interested members of the public. The Publicity Chairperson also sends schedule information to local newspapers and magazines concerning our hiking, maintenance, and social activities. All events are open to all of our members and the general public, although the Club has reserved the right to limit participation in some events, such as the Hike Across Maryland, and for such events will not publish information to the general public.

SECTION 3(D)

Caretaker and Ridgerunner Programs

Overview

In recent years, ATC has actively supported a number of ridgerunner/caretaker programs as cost effective, educational, and “prevention-based” approaches to the protection of the Trail, its resources, and its users. In addition, many clubs use caretaker and ridgerunner programs as part of their regular Trail maintenance and management efforts. They can range from a few volunteers, who provide basic information to hikers along the Trail, to summer-long or full-time, paid individuals, who monitor and manage every aspect of a high-use site or Trail section.

Most often, ridgerunners and caretakers are paid employees who are hired in a cooperative effort by the local Trail club, a state or federal agency, and/or ATC. Each ridgerunner program operates differently, but all share the same basic objective - to educate Trail visitors and hikers.

“Ridgerunners” spend most of their time out on the Trail performing a variety of tasks, the most important of which is providing hiker information. Ridgerunners provide the club with a “presence” on their Trail section, helping to heighten hiker awareness of local programs and policies and acting as a deterrent to vandalism and resource abuse.

“Caretakers” generally manage overnight sites. Their duties can include: collecting overnight-use fees, dispensing information, doing small trail work projects, discouraging destructive or disruptive uses, minimizing resource damage, operating composting toilets, and providing search-and rescue support. In some cases, they can “rove” or move between two or more sites on a regular basis.

The primary mission of the ridgerunner (mobile) and caretakers (stationary at campsites and shelters) is to educate hikers; to help them practice “leave no trace” minimum impact camping techniques and understand and adhere to local regulations; and to ensure that problems are solved before they become critical. They enhance the experience of novice hikers while reducing the potential for problems.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has supported the ridgerunners since 1991 and has provided funding through the NPS challenge cost share program.

Federal and State Policies

There are no formal state or federal policies regarding the use of caretakers and ridgerunners. However, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and a number of state-agency partners (Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Maryland) provide funds or support services for ridgerunner programs. Any proposal to utilize a ridgerunner program should be closely coordinated with the land-managing agency partner(s) and ATC.

MCM Policy

MCM has participated in (and helped fund) a “ridgerunner” program in cooperation with several other clubs on the A.T. Education about Leave-No-Trace camping and the use of the A.T. is provided by ridgerunners. Ridgerunners are on the Trail from late spring to early fall, monitoring the Trail and providing an on-site presence to provide hikers with information and education about appropriate Trail use. Ridgerunners also act as a deterrent to inappropriate use of the Trail. Ridgerunners can be identified by uniforms and are provided with backpacking equipment, first-aid supplies, and communication devices (cellular phones). Each year ATC provided a Ridgerunner whose assigned territory includes the Trail sections maintained by MCM. The MCM Supervisor of Trails and Supervisor of Shelters receive copies of the Ridgerunner reports to ATC so that they are aware of any problems or incidents observed by the Ridgerunner.

Action Plan

MCM will continue to support the ridgerunner program. In general, this means communicating with the selected ridgerunner (e.g., during ATC training sessions, visits to the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, emails etc.) to discuss local MCM and trail issues, assist in resolving problems, and otherwise attempting to maintain a good dialogue during his or her tenure. We have found that strong interest and involvement on the part of MCM is usually reciprocated, thus making for a meaningful and worthwhile working relationship.

SECTION 3(E)

Trail Signs

Overview

Traditionally, ATC has encouraged the use of simple directional signs, in addition to blazing, to help hikers find their way and locate side trails, shelters, and drinking water supplies. With new corridor-management responsibilities, clubs and ATC now must use informational and regulatory signs to inform hikers, Trail neighbors, and potential trespassers about restrictions that apply on the Trail and corridor lands. Good planning can ensure that a sign system conveys the necessary information in a pleasing, unobtrusive manner.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC provides guidance on planning and establishing a sign system for the footpath in *Appalachian Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance*. ATC also has a booklet entitled *Planning and Building an Appalachian Trailhead Bulletin Board*, which provides detailed guidance and plans for designing and constructing a Trailhead bulletin board. The NPS delegation of management responsibility for A.T. corridor lands has necessitated regulatory signs to advise hikers, Trail neighbors and others about permitted and prohibited uses. Standard signs bearing basic user information and restrictions to aid Trail clubs in protecting corridor lands are available from ATC and may be ordered at no charge to the Trail-maintaining clubs from ATC's *Appalachian Trail Corridor Management Signs* catalog. Many of the signs are suitable for use on other lands as well, provided the local Trail-maintaining club and agency partner agree that the signs are appropriate.

The following guidelines for developing or posting signs on Appalachian Trail lands were endorsed by ATC's Trail and Land Management Committee in March 1995:

1. Identify the club's needs for signs as part of the Trail-assessment or local management-planning process. It is important to consider alternative methods for conveying information, such as brochures, registers, or personal contacts.
2. Be certain that signs containing the National Park Service's official arrowhead symbol are placed only on National Park Service lands.
3. Comply with state and local legal requirements for posting property.
4. Locate signs conspicuously, but not too conspicuously. Signs directed at Trail users will be less prone to vandalism if placed on the Trail, but just out of sight of roads. Signs that convey messages to others will be most effective if posted along roads and at other potential points of entry.
5. Avoid "sign pollution" by using only the minimum needed to do the job. If you need to convey more than one or two messages, consider using a Trailhead signboard or small "birdhouse" to post signs on.
6. Monitor signs regularly for damage, disappearance, and effectiveness. It helps to have a master sign list and inventory, so that signs can be replaced when needed.
7. If you need to develop additional signs, consider the following:
 - a) Your greeting should be friendly but authoritative.
 - b) Identify the Trail club and land-managing agency where appropriate.
 - c) State prohibitions or restrictions in a positive way.
 - d) Include names and phone numbers of emergency contacts where appropriate.
 - e) Use international symbols where appropriate.
 - f) The wording of regulatory signs or the use of the symbol of any land-managing agency needs to be approved by the land-managing agency.
 - g) Posting of specific prohibitions, such as NO HUNTING or NO HORSES, requires a reference to the pertinent regulation to be properly enforced.

NPS Policy

The AT Park Office should be consulted about major signs at road intersections and Trailheads that identify the Appalachian National Scenic Trail to the general public. The office has approved the wording of the signs listed in the ATC's *Appalachian Trail Corridor Management Signs* catalogue.

The NPS has developed extensive sign standards that are usually applied within existing national parks. However, they also have endorsed the use of club directional signs along some sections of the Trail. Trail-maintaining clubs who maintain sections of the Trail within park units need to work with park managers to ensure a high-quality system within park boundaries that adequately serves AT users.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Both bureaus of Forestry and State Parks will allow Trail clubs to develop a sign system for the Trail but must approve any designs that are other than standard. Sign development should be coordinated with the Bureau of Forestry's recreation Section or State Park managers. Both bureaus can provide technical support and, in some cases, help with sign construction. Signs are to be maintained by the Trail clubs. MCM works with DCNR bureaus in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the Mischeau State forest. Signage in those areas will be coordinated with the appropriate Bureau.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission will allow Trail clubs to develop a sign system for the Trail. Maintenance and construction costs are the club's responsibility. Signing must be approved by the Commission's AT coordinator and its regional office.

Other Partners

PENNDOT will install and maintain signs identifying the Appalachian Trail where it crosses state roads and highways. The department will also install and maintain safety signs for advance-warning pedestrian crossings at AT intersections where safety concerns are evident.

MCM Policy

MCM will erect and maintain signs at various Trail points where needed. The need for signs at springs, side-trails, trailheads, shelters and campsites, vistas, and the like will be determined by the Supervisor of Trails in conjunction with discussion with Council members, periodic Trail assessments (walk-throughs), and in consultation with the appropriate managing partners. Signs will be kept to a minimum and preferably displayed collectively at trailheads and parking areas. Permanent signs, visible from the footpath, will be constructed of natural materials where possible.

Action Plan

- The Supervisor of Trails, in conjunction with the Council, will coordinate what signs are needed, along with their design and placement.
- Emergency information will be posted at trailhead bulletin boards and in the four MCM-maintained shelters.
- All signs will be inspected and inventoried periodically for damage or need to be repainted.
- The trailhead bulletin boards, located at the PA Route 850, Kuhn Road, and Duncannon parking areas, will be maintained and posted with current information including regulations and educational material about the Trail and the Trail managing partners.
- MCM will locate signs so as to be conspicuous primarily to those whom they address. As appropriate, signs will be located so as to discourage horses, bicycles, and ATVs.

SECTION 3(F)

Leave No Trace and Minimum Impact Programs

Overview

The Appalachian Trail is a popular place to visit, with millions of visitors to the Trail each year. Most of this is day use or short term, but the sheer volume of users creates many management challenges. Impacts on the Trail environment are often evident along high use sections of the A.T. Litter, refuse, unsanitary conditions, trampling, bootleg campsites, fire rings, damaged trees, and short-cutting at switchbacks are resource impacts frequently reported by ridgerunners and Trail maintainers. Hikers also affect each other's backcountry experience - as the number of people seeking a primitive backcountry experience increases, the potential for solitude decreases. Managers of backcountry and wilderness areas across the United States increasingly rely on visitor education to reduce the impact of visitors on backcountry and wilderness resources.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In 1998, the ATC Board adopted the following policy on minimum-impact backcountry use: The Appalachian Trail Conservancy actively supports the Leave No Trace (LNT) philosophy as a means of reducing the impact of A.T. visitors on the Trail environment. The Conservancy will work with [the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics], Trail-maintaining clubs, and agency partners to develop programs, brochures, signs, and other materials that convey the LNT message to Appalachian Trail users. Where appropriate, ATC guidebooks, maps, and other publications, will carry a Leave No Trace message.

Although ATC believes that communications with hikers should occur primarily through guidebooks and other literature distributed off the Trail, ATC encourages ridgerunners, caretakers, and volunteer and professional A.T. managers and maintainers to follow LNT guidelines while on the Trail and to take every opportunity to educate others.

ATC in particular supports efforts to develop and disseminate materials that are directed at inexperienced or novice backpackers and hikers, in that the behaviors and actions of those Trail visitors are likely to have a disproportionate impact upon the Trail environment.

. ATC has basic Leave-No-Trace information on its Web site and in its visitor centers, and includes LNT materials at outreach events and activities whenever possible. ATC's booklet, Step by Step—An Introduction to Hiking the Appalachian Trail, lists the LNT principles and integrates minimum-impact considerations throughout the text. The booklet can be downloaded from the ATC Web site or will be mailed on request. Trailhead signs with A.T.-specific LNT guidance are available to Trail clubs upon request and LNT practices for shelters are provided in ATC's guidance for locating and designing overnight sites. ATC also has suggestions for providing Trail Magic that incorporate Leave-No-Trace principles.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service is an official partner of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. The National Park Service requires all visitors to designated wilderness areas to apply Leave-No-Trace principles. Backcountry areas not officially designated as wilderness do not require the same standard, although NPS pledges to identify acceptable limits of impacts, monitor backcountry use levels and resource conditions, and take prompt corrective action when unacceptable impacts occur.

Pennsylvania Policy

None of the partner agencies have policies related to minimum impact backcountry use; though the Bureau of Forestry encourages "Leave No Trace" trail practices in its *Trail Use Etiquette* brochure.

MCM Policy

MCM incorporates Leave-No-Trace principles and practices on the Route 850 Trailhead and shelter postings and in the MCM Club newsletter, “Hiker High Points”. Hike leaders may instruct hikers during lunch and other breaks on the MCM practices of Leave-No-Trace ethics. MCM provides funding support for the ATC “ridgerunner” program on our trail sections during the late spring and summer months. The “ridgerunner” educates hikers on Leave-No-Trace ethics.

Action Plan

MCM will continue to incorporate Leave-No-Trace principles and practices on its bulletin board, in shelter postings, and in its newsletter and website. Hike leaders, club members, and board members will continue to spread the word about Leave-No-Trace ethics through education and example. As feasible, notice of leave-no-trace training will be publicized in Hiker High Points or on the Club website.

PART 4

CONFLICTING USES, COMPETING USES, AND CORRIDOR MONITORING

SECTION 4(A)

Corridor Monitoring

Overview

Outside of existing national and state parks and forests, much of the Appalachian Trail footpath lies upon a narrow corridor of public land that threads its way between privately owned lands. In some cases, the federal or state agency may have acquired only an easement. In other cases, the landowner was allowed to retain certain rights to lands that were conveyed to the government. Even within existing national and state parks and forests, the Trail is usually protected only by a narrow “management area” or protection zone.

The Appalachian Trail corridor is extremely vulnerable to encroachments and abuse, such as dumping of trash, off-road vehicle use and damage, timber theft, or illegal building of structures on A.T. lands. An active corridor-monitoring program is essential for detecting encroachments and easement violations and helps discourage many of these problems. Corridor monitoring refers to the act of visiting a selected section of A.T. corridor in the field and reporting on its condition. It includes walking the boundaries using survey maps and compass, inspecting survey monuments, noting the condition of the boundary blazes and signs, keeping a lookout for encroachments, and reporting all of this information. It is the primary line of defense in protecting the both the land base and the surveyed boundary line. Volunteer corridor monitors provide an essential role not only as watchful “eyes and ears,” but also as a valuable source of education to inform neighboring landowners and local communities of the purpose of the A.T. corridor and the values that these lands protect.

Protecting the Trail corridor involves three steps: monitoring, maintenance, and mitigation. Although only corridor monitoring has been delegated to the Trail clubs, many of the clubs with that responsibility have chosen to take on boundary maintenance—finding survey monuments, trimming vegetation and repainting blazes along the boundary line, and posting U.S. boundary and other trail-management signs as needed. A well-marked and maintained boundary, along with consistent documentation of problems over time, is essential to deterring and resolving problems. Trail clubs also can be invaluable in helping mitigate encroachments, working cooperatively with ATC and partner agencies to address problems.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC began developing a corridor-monitoring program in 1979 after the first NPS A.T. lands were acquired. Monitoring became Board policy with ATC's adoption of the Comprehensive Plan (June 1981). In November 1983, the ATC delegation agreement was authorized by the Board. This agreement made ATC the “guarantor” of the adequacy of club monitoring and management efforts. Club monitoring is facilitated by a system of ATC/NPS-supplied maps and deed information or “tract files.” Clubs with Trail sections encompassing NPS-acquired A.T. lands are responsible for inspection, record-keeping, and an annual report to ATC.

1. Special-Care Principles - The special-care principles adopted by the ATC Board of Managers in 1984 include the following (“ATC” here refers to both club and ATC managers):

- ATC can and does, by virtue of the delegation agreement, take responsibility for guaranteeing to the National Park Service that NPS-acquired lands are being sensitively and adequately monitored and managed.

- ATC can inform land users of state or federal laws and regulations and can develop cooperative relationships with local law-enforcement authorities.
- ATC can post lands and prepare informational signs and brochures after consultation with local, state, and NPS authorities.
- ATC cannot enforce state or federal laws and regulations.
- ATC can and should inspect and monitor boundaries on NPS lands, consult with adjacent landowners, and request an NPS survey, if needed.
- ATC cannot agree to or negotiate boundaries on NPS lands or reset corner monuments to the corridor.
- ATC cannot give away, exchange, or sell public property, such as firewood, water rights, building salvage, or hunting rights.

2. Minimum Requirements - Inspection and reporting are the only requirements of club monitoring. Depending on local practices, some clubs will confront violators directly, while others should not or will not. The “eyes and ears” inspection and annual reporting functions constitute the basic program.

- **Inspection** - protecting corridor lands requires vigilance. The monitoring program should be based on priorities, with the most susceptible or endangered lands receiving the most frequent inspections. Endangered areas — primarily from roads, powerlines, easements, structures, and adjacent development — constitute high-priority monitoring sites, known simply as “hot spots.” Moderate- and low-priority sites may exist, depending on their remoteness, and are inspected less frequently.
- **Reporting** - Prompt email reports (or phone reports in urgent situations) are necessary for major problems. One annual summary report to ATC, due March 31 for the previous federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30), is required.

NPS Policy

The NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office retains the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that A.T. corridor lands are managed and maintained adequately. The responsibility for monitoring these lands for abuse and illegal use has been delegated to ATC and the Trail clubs. However, the NPS is responsible for law enforcement and for other active measures to curtail illegal actions. The NPS actively supports the ATC boundary maintenance program, which seeks to ensure that NPS boundaries are properly blazed, painted, and monumented.

State Policy

On state-owned lands, agency conservation officers from each land-holding agency may regularly patrol roads and, to a lesser extent, trails. The trails themselves are monitored by local Trail clubs. The exchange of information between the clubs and agency partners, and among all of the appropriate partners to the MOU, is critical.

On state-owned lands, ATC and the Trail clubs have been delegated the principal role of monitoring the Trail and informing appropriate partners of activities that may require certain actions.

On lands that are not owned by state agencies (NPS-acquired lands) the clubs' roles are even more critical, because no other monitoring is taking place.

MCM Policy

MCM will take the responsibility of being the “eyes and ears” of the corridor lands in our assigned sections and has appointed a Trail Corridor Monitoring Coordinator who reports to the Council. Volunteer Monitors walk the boundary, and report to the Monitor Coordinator on its condition, and on that of the lands within. The Monitor Coordinator communicates with appropriate managing partners when conflicting uses (encroachments, litter, graffiti, illegal activities) are discovered.

To the extent that volunteer resources allow, MCM will also be an active participant in the management of the corridor. As needed and authorized, MCM will refresh existing boundary and witness tree paint blazes. Where necessary, signs can be posted to discourage conflicting uses.

Each of our trail segments has been assigned an individual monitor. However, most of them live 1 to 2 hours away from their segments. This means some segments generally get monitored only once yearly (with a few low risk areas monitored less frequently).”

MCM will not take the position of being law enforcers. However, MCM will when possible collect data and evidence of violations and report these to the appropriate agencies. To the extent that MCM monitors are comfortable, they will work to educate users and corridor neighbors.

Action Plan

1. Areas will be monitored according to one of three priority designations:
 - High priority areas will be inspected as frequently as practical. . These “hot spot” sites generally require assistance from other management partners (e.g., NPS, ATC Regional Representatives, Ridgerunners, and MCM work crews.) As of June 2015, the White Rocks area is the only hot spot.
 - Moderate priority areas will generally be monitored once a year. This comprises the bulk of the corridor lands MCM is responsible for between Tagg Run and Center Point Knob, as well as the areas near Route 850 and Duncannon.
 - Low priority areas may need monitoring as little as once every 3 years. These areas have little visible evidence of pressing management issues such as encroachments. The ridge of Cove Mountain, for example, is so steep and rugged that the main task is repainting boundary blazes and digging out monuments / markers buried under the shifting slope.
2. Violations of laws, and excessive abuse, shall be reported to the appropriate agencies, such as the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Boiling Springs, the Game Commission, the State Police, NPS - ATPO, etc. As appropriate, MCM will work with ATC and other partners to identify solutions.
3. NPS boundary blazes shall be repainted as necessary according to ATC standards so the corridor boundary is evident.

SECTION 4(B)

Motorized and Mechanized Uses: ORV'S - ATV'S - 4WD'S - Bicycles - Snowmobiles

Overview

The illegal use of off-road vehicles (ORV) or all-terrain vehicles (ATV) on the A.T.—particularly three- and four-wheel ATV's—and the increasing popularity of the mountain bicycle have been major concerns of ATC, the clubs, and federal and state agency officials at all levels. Despite clear prohibitions in federal and state laws and regulations, some areas are particularly vulnerable to these illegal uses, which affect both the physical resources of the A.T. and the primitive experiences available on the Appalachian Trail as a hiker's sanctuary.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC fully endorses federal and state prohibitions against motorized and mechanized vehicles on the Appalachian Trail.

Federal Policy

Federal laws and regulations prohibit motor vehicle, snowmobile, and bicycle use on Appalachian Trail lands, except for administrative and emergency access by the landowning agency partner and access by adjoining landowners when reserved in the conveyance of the land.

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Parks is responsible for Pine Grove Furnace State Park, and the Bureau of Forestry is responsible for Micoheau State Forest. Within Pine Grove Furnace State Park, all Park roads and service roads are open to bicycles (only) unless otherwise posted. Within the Park, the A.T. runs on approximately 500 feet of Hunters Run Road, then on another 1000 feet of Benderville Lane until it reaches the overnight A.T. parking area. This 1500 feet or so of the A.T. is the only portion in the Park open to bicycle traffic; hikers should remain alert as the area is popular and small children moving erratically on 'mini bikes' may be plentiful.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission regulates motorized-vehicle use on game lands. Licensed motorized vehicles are allowed on game land public roads or other roads open to such travel, but prohibited on all trails and gated roads, with snowmobiles being the only exception. Snowmobiles are allowed on designated trails only.

Bicycles can be regulated by the posting of a "foot travel only" restricted area under the authority of the Executive Director. Section 135.41(b)(2) of Title 58, states that the Director has the authority to close State game lands or portions thereof, to recreational or other uses, when the specified uses may be or have become detrimental to those lands or the flora or fauna thereon, or where the uses conflict with legal hunting, fur taking, or fishing activities or the Commission's management or administration of State game lands. The closure may be seasonal or year-round and shall remain in effect until the Director removes the restrictions. Section 135.41(b)(3) of Title 58, states that it is unlawful to violate restrictions or closure placed on these lands by the Director. The A.T. is not designated for snowmobiles, and use by snowmobiles is prohibited. The A.T. also is off limits to all other motorized uses.

Riding of non-motorized vehicles, conveyances or animals is permitted on roads normally open to public travel, or designated routes as posted, or while lawfully engaged in hunting, trapping, or fishing.

Other Partners

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulates motorized-vehicle use on Commission

lands and waterways. Generally, motorized uses are prohibited unless licensed and operated in designated areas. The A.T. is not an area designated by the Commission.

MCM Policy

Both motorized and non-motorized trail bikes and other off-road vehicles are incompatible with every trail purpose and shall be denied access to the Trail. All use of motorized vehicles along the Trail, except for emergency or limited special-use purposes, is prohibited by federal legislation. The Club will work with agency partners to manage the motorized/mechanical use problems where possible and using the following methods:

- Trail Maintainers and Corridor Monitors will post signs when and where needed.
- Information and education programs conducted by designated Club members will be available to appropriate organizations and groups as needed.
- Road closures and barricades will be installed as needed by monitors and maintainers as authorized by the Supervisor of Trails, in coordination with agency partners.
- Law enforcement action will be requested by club officers, if needed.

Action Plan

- Motor vehicles within the Trail corridor degrade the primitive hiking experience. Some of the corridor MCM manages is an open woodland, with some portions (e.g., near Sheet Iron Roof Road and Whiskey Springs) having existing woods roads. In such areas ATV encroachments are particularly difficult to eliminate, especially if there is a pre-existing or historical pattern of use.
- Motorized and mechanized trail users will be advised of MCM policy through signs and publications. If signs noting the prohibition against vehicular use are posted where snowmobile, ORV, or ATV trails meet the AT, the signs should not be visible from the Appalachian Trail.
- MCM will, as feasible, seek to develop a cooperative relationship with local motorized and mechanized clubs to enlist them in the effort to control independent and group use of vehicles and bicycles. In the event that “soft” solutions (signs, publications, direct contact) do not succeed, MCM will work with management partners to install gates and permanent closures at strategic locations to block access to the AT corridor and/or enlist the support of appropriate agency partners and local law enforcement authorities to prevent illegal use of and access to the AT and corridor lands.

SECTION 4(C)

Litter and Graffiti

Overview

Litter along any portion of the A.T. detracts seriously from the enjoyment of the Trail. The problem is most evident at road crossings, campsites, and popular destinations. Likewise, the intrusion of graffiti on the Trail environment detracts from the aesthetic experience of hikers. Both often occur at the most beautiful viewpoints or picturesque rock formations. Graffiti is not limited to vandals. Sometimes maintainers' efforts to be helpful or clever with blazing, arrows, and painted messages inadvertently encourage graffiti.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In November 1984, the ATC Board of Managers adopted a policy to provide direction in dealing with these problems:

“The Appalachian Trail and the lands it traverses should remain completely free of litter, refuse, and graffiti along its entire length, and ATC and member clubs will make every effort to publicize a carry-in, carry-out litter policy to hikers and neighbors to the Trail.”

“Special efforts should be made with clubs and agency partners to remove accumulated litter and dumps at trailheads and within the A.T. corridor, including taking steps such as educational signs, closure of dirt roads, and club ridgerunners and/or cooperative law enforcement to prevent future accumulation.”

“The Trail and Land Corridor Committee is directed to search out chemical and mechanical techniques for effective removal of painted graffiti in the Trail corridor, so that damaged sections can be restored to a near-pristine condition.”

As noted above, nonstandard blazing such as arrows, other directional indicators, painted A.T. symbols or messages, should not be used to mark the A.T. Though well-intentioned, they often confuse hikers and deface the Trail environment.

NPS Policy

Littering and graffiti are illegal on National Park lands. However, such offenses are difficult to enforce because perpetrators must be caught in the act. If the offender is caught, he or she may receive a citation.

Pennsylvania Policy

State Agencies

All agency land-holding partners have the authority to cite violators for littering and defacing property. The Pennsylvania State Police and local law-enforcement agencies can also cite people for littering and defacing public property.

MCM Policy

MCM espouses the carry-in, carry-out philosophy regarding litter. Dumping or disposal of refuse of any type is unacceptable and every effort will be made to discover the guilty party or parties and request that they remove what they have dumped. If necessary, this request will be made via cognizant local authorities.

Litter will be picked up by maintainers and monitors and all club members on an on-going basis. Education of trail users and others will be conducted as needed through individual contacts, “Leave No Trace” brochures, and Club publications.

In coordination with ATC and local volunteers, MCM works to remove graffiti near our sections

of the Trail. A notable example was the clean-up of a major graffiti occurrence at Hawk Rock above Duncannon.

Action Plan

- Club members will be encouraged to pick up scattered small litter items when hiking the Trail during their private leisure outings. A Ridgerunner, if assigned, will be instructed to monitor for litter.
- Large group clean-up projects, where a need is identified, will be addressed in the Club work schedule.
- Graffiti removal will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Club Supervisor of Trails, as soon as possible after discovery. In many cases the most effective way to manage litter is to manage vehicle encroachment, but in other cases/locations, such as Hawk Rock, significant coordination with local community officials (including high schools) may be required in order to change long-standing local youth “traditions” in some small percentage of the population. Graffiti and vandalism of the Route 850 bulletin board has also occurred). In that case, the Club will report the issue to the ATC Regional Representative and work jointly towards a long-term solution.

SECTION 4(D)

Hunting

Overview

Hunting along most sections of the Appalachian Trail has been a traditional use of the land. It is a use that may pose a concern for the safety of hikers on the Trail and, as such, has been an issue that is the focus of continuing discussion.

The Trail passes through many different state and federal jurisdictions, most of which allow hunting. Hunting is permitted along more than 1,000 miles of the Trail across national forest lands. Approximately 150 miles of the A.T. are located on state game lands that are specifically administered for game species and hunting. Hunting also is permitted on more than 100 miles of state lands administered by state forests. Hunting is a well-established use on many privately owned lands adjoining the Trail.

In Pennsylvania, hunting has been a traditional use of state lands for many years. Hunting and hiking have coexisted along the Trail, on most lands, since its beginning. While the safety of hikers is a potential consideration, land managers have generally felt that the two activities can exist in relative harmony.

With the A.T. running through many miles of Pennsylvania State Game Lands, MCM can not prevent the use of this land for hunting. State game lands are purchased using revenues received primarily through the sale of hunting and trapping licenses.

Hikers should recognize the fact that hunters may be on or near the Trail and it is best to assume that they are always somewhere nearby. Hikers should also recognize that the hunting season for some animals exists all year long, as well as the designated seasons for protected animals.

All this means that it is up to the hiker at all times to take proper precautions when hiking during any hunting season. In Pennsylvania, state law requires you to wear 250 square inches of fluorescent orange when on state game lands from November 15 to December 15, except Sundays. A summary of hunting regulations and season information can be found on the ATC website, http://www.appalachiantrail.org/hike/hike_info/hunting.html.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has determined that education of both hikers and hunters is perhaps the only feasible way to address public-safety concerns. Advice on hunting and the A.T. and links to in the 14 Appalachian Trail states are available on ATC's Web site. ATC encourages Trail-maintaining clubs to post signs at A.T. Trailheads and other points of access advising hikers to wear "blaze orange" clothing during hunting season. In addition, the National Park Service A.T. Park Office issues periodic press releases advising the general public that National Park Service lands are closed to hunting.

In 1985, the ATC formally recognized hunting as a traditional use in many areas and recognized previous commitments that hunting activities would be allowed to continue where possible to do so. In November 1992, ATC's Board of Managers adopted the following policy on hiker safety during hunting seasons:

- ATC encourages Trail clubs and agency partners to inform hikers on the Appalachian Trail when they are in an area where hunting may occur, and to caution hikers on the AT to wear blaze orange during all hunting seasons, in particular during big-game hunting seasons.
- ATC (or the local Trail club) annually will collect information on hunting seasons in each state and distribute this information to Trail clubs for their use in club newsletters, community contacts, press releases, brochures and maps.
- ATC (or the local Trail club) will provide game-management agencies in each state through which the AT passes with maps of the AT in that state and request that these agencies inform hunters (through game-management publications and maps) that hikers on the Appalachian Trail and other recreational trails may not be cognizant of hunting seasons and may not be

wearing blaze orange.

- Appalachian Trail Conservancy publications designed to inform the general public about the Trail, including guidebooks, will include a statement advising hikers to wear blaze orange vests and hats and brightly colored packs or pack covers during hunting seasons.
- In some areas, particularly high-use areas that are open to hunting, Trail-maintaining clubs and their agency partners may deem it desirable to include information on signs at Trailheads and other points of access to the AT promoting hiker safety during hunting season. ATC recommends the use of Trailhead information signs informing hikers to “WEAR BLAZE ORANGE”.

NPS Policy

Hunting, trapping, or any other method of harvesting wildlife by the public will be allowed only in parks where it is specifically authorized by federal law. Where such an activity is authorized on a discretionary basis under federal law, it may take place only after the National Park Service has determined that the activity will not compromise public safety and that the proposed use is consistent with sound resource-management principles. With the exception of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, no National Park Service lands along the A.T. have regulations in effect that allow hunting.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Bureau of Forestry regulations permit hunting and trapping in accordance with Pennsylvania game laws on all state forest lands unless otherwise posted. Hunting and trapping are allowed on the A.T. Bureau of State Parks regulations permit hunting and trapping in “designated hunting areas” in accordance with the Pennsylvania game laws. Trapping may be permitted in areas not designated for hunting with a special permit. Hunting is allowed on some portions of the A.T. MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux State Forest. In the Pine Grove Furnace Park area, over 75 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey, rabbit, pheasant and squirrel. Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Dog training is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Hunting and trapping are allowed on all Game Commission lands if conducted pursuant to the Pennsylvania Game Commission Game and Wildlife Code and its regulations. State game lands are purchased using revenues received primarily through the sale of hunting and trapping licenses.

Other Partners

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission permits hunting and trapping in accordance with section 53.5 of its regulations and Pennsylvania game laws, unless otherwise posted.

MCM Policy

With the A.T. running through many miles of Pennsylvania State Game Lands, MCM can not prevent the use of this land for hunting. MCM recognizes the potential danger of hunting within the A.T. corridor and will work to educate and inform both hikers and hunters of one another’s presence. Club volunteers will make every effort through personal contacts, signs, and organizational meetings to inform the public that hunting is prohibited in the NPS-owned A.T. corridor through the MCM sections of the AT. MCM will try within the limits of our ability to educate and inform both hikers and hunters about the shared nature of the A.T. through State Game Lands. To the limit of its influence, the Club discourages the use of Trailside shelters by hunters, either for overnight or longer visits, or as a site for dressing game. MCM assumes no responsibility for the safety of a hiker in the event of a hunting accident.

Except where the Appalachian Trail lies in designated hunting areas (such as the Michaux State Forest in Pennsylvania) or where former owners have reserved hunting rights, the carrying of firearms along the Trail is generally prohibited. For the safety of hikers, the Trail is normally clearly marked where

it enters areas where hunting is legal. Conversely, No Hunting zones along the Appalachian Trail corridor are normally posted at access points. In some areas, it may be appropriate for land managers to designate the Trail and a narrow band of territory on either side as a “safety zone.” MCM will coordinate such measures with the appropriate land managers and agency partners.

Action Plan

- A schedule of the hunting seasons will be posted at trailhead bulletin boards, along with a sign strongly urging hikers to **WEAR BLAZE ORANGE** (at least 250 square inches) visible 360°, particularly during big game hunting season. Where the A.T. is located on Game Commission land, (such as MCM’s Darlington and Cove Mountain shelters), the Game Commission may post such information where appropriate.
- During development of our hike schedules during hunting seasons, hike leaders are provided with information including links to the appropriate state "hunting" agencies for hunting schedule information in Maryland and adjoining states.
- Hike leaders will remind participants about the hunting season and blaze orange requirements if hikes are held in affected areas during hunting seasons.
- MCM will also provide reminders to members through our newsletter and/or email broadcasts.

SECTION 4(E)

Horses and Pack Animals

Overview

Use of horses, llamas, donkeys, and other saddle or pack stock is incompatible with the Appalachian Trail, which is designed, built, and maintained by hikers for foot travel. Horses may seriously damage the treadway, discourage volunteer maintenance efforts, and have serious adverse effects on the hiker's experience. Additionally, all hoofed mammals may spread the seeds of invasive and exotic plant species through their manure, which underscores the need to prohibit domestic livestock from the Trail. Use of horses is prohibited on virtually all of the MCM section of the Appalachian Trail. Horse trails may cross the A.T., so long as signs and management efforts by the club and agency partner can control trespass by saddle and pack stock.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In April 1985, ATC's Board of Managers passed a resolution reaffirming its support of prohibition of horses and pack animals on the A.T., other than in sections of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

NPS Policy

The *A.T. Comprehensive Plan* considers horse use a special concern that may result in damage to the Trail and may have an adverse effect on hikers' enjoyment. Riding is limited to those sections of the Trail which traditionally accommodated horse use. On other sections, managers should work with equestrian groups to seek alternative trails for horses. Except for the aforementioned sections in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the C&O Canal Historical Park towpath, the NPS prohibits horses and pack stock on the Appalachian Trail on NPS. The A.T. Park Office has not designated any other locations along the A.T. as open for use of horses or pack animals.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

The DCNR Bureau of Forestry has no regulation specific to horses and pack animals on its lands. The bureau can invoke its closure clause under section 21.4 of its regulations to restrict horse and pack animal use on certain lands. To be enforced, the bureau would have to post signs restricting use by horses. The Bureau of State Parks permits horses on the right side of state park roads open to motor vehicles and designated horseback riding trails and areas. MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Michaux State Forest. Horses are prohibited from the A.T. on DCNR-administered lands.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission prohibits the riding of "animals on fields, except during sanctioned field trials and then only in accordance with a permit" under Section 135.2(18) of Title 58. The Commission interprets this to mean that horses can be ridden on trails, including the A.T. It has no specific policy regarding pack animals.

MCM Policy

The club recognizes that animals with hoofed feet act as a destructive force to the Trail treadway. They also cause destruction to the water supplies (e.g., breaking down stream banks) and often create a nuisance to other hikers by leaving various organic "deposits" on the Trail. MCM therefore encourages its agency partners to prohibit the use of these animals on the Trail.

Action Plan

- MCM will use signs where needed to spell out local legal restrictions and indicate the penalty as it pertains to any violations. If MCM finds evidence of horse crossings, we will monitor them closely and consider the use of signs or barriers to control horse use. The Route 850 trailhead parking lot is the only potential trailer unloading point on the MCM sections, and so far to Club knowledge it has not been so used and no warning signs have been posted.
- If deemed necessary, MCM will place deterrents, such as the use of fallen trees, at strategic locations. Such barriers may, however, be of limited effectiveness.

SECTION 4(F)

Roads

Overview

Remoteness, isolation, and separation from the works and influence of man are significant factors in the recreational and therapeutic values of the Appalachian Trail. Road construction and use on adjacent private lands, on state and municipal public lands, and on reserved rights-of-way that cross the NPS-acquired corridor have a significant, long-term, cumulative impact on these Trail values. Roads that parallel or intersect the Trail in remote areas may lead to intrusions by off-road vehicles, increased vandalism, and other inappropriate or illegal uses on Trail corridor lands.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC's Forest Roads Task Force convened in 1983 to address road-building impacts on the southern national forests. Their work, which is applicable to all road proposals adjacent to the A.T., is summarized below:

1. **Mission** - The [ATC] and maintaining clubs will seek to respond to all road-building proposals that may cross or closely parallel the A.T. (within one-half mile) and that threaten to depreciate the remoteness and primitive quality of the Trail through long-term cumulative impacts. When called for by the situation, ATC and the clubs should convey grave concern over road-building proposals to the appropriate governmental officials and the public.
2. **Only feasible and prudent alternative** - ATC and the maintaining clubs should oppose construction on any road that impacts the A.T., unless the road is the “only feasible and prudent alternative” and all other alternatives for location of the road have been proven infeasible.
3. **Mitigation of impacts** - ATC and club response will depend on policies and procedures of the landowning or administering jurisdiction. Regarding new or expanded road proposals, ATC and the clubs should:
 - Call attention to the potential increase in development adjacent to the A.T. corridor on private land, and recommend steps to reduce or mitigate the impacts of this development.
 - Call attention to the unavoidable increase of ORV, ATV, and vehicular traffic on or near the A.T. resulting from new road construction or expansion of existing roads.
 - Ensure that there is provision for adequate regulation and law enforcement regarding motor vehicle use.
 - Seek to clarify the intent and strengthen the commitment of landowning agencies for keeping road classifications as primitive as possible.
 - Maintain administrative and/or seasonal closures of roads.
 - Recommend, develop, and test mitigating measures that reduce or eliminate the impacts of roads.
4. **Inventory** - ATC and the clubs should seek out methods to inventory all roads impacting the Appalachian Trail, with special emphasis on measuring cumulative impacts of roads over time.
5. **Road Closure Policy** - In those areas where the ATC is responsible for land management or owns land or interests in land, roads will be closed and rehabilitated. ATC's preference is that old roads, dirt roads, and temporary roads be permanently closed and rehabilitated. Where access must be maintained for owners of deeded rights-of-way, durable, heavy steel gates will be installed and maintained in cooperation with affected landowners and the landowning agency partner.

Federal Policy

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 obligates road-sponsoring public agencies who receive federal aid for highway construction to evaluate road-building proposals that impact public parks and to use park lands only when the proposed road is “the only feasible and prudent alternative.” This language has become a cornerstone of administrative and environmental law. It obligates the sponsoring agency to a standard of conduct that is greater than customarily applied to more routine administrative decisions regarding the location and design of major roadways.

NPS Policy (Appalachian Trail Park Office)

The NPS will not permit public or private construction of new roads for access to inholdings unless specifically authorized by law. In rare instances the NPS has allowed a reserved right-of-way for an existing road or for a landowner to access lands that would be “land-locked” by the Trail corridor. A reserved right-of-way is approved only for the minimum standard road needed to meet a given situation. Standards are in place specifically describing width, type of surfacing, season of use, and other criteria for several road levels. Those standards are agreed to during the acquisition process, and a reserved right-of-way is granted only when the right-of-way has been determined to have no significant adverse effect on the Trail’s natural and cultural resources or on visitor use of the Trail.

The NPS is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to solicit and receive public input and analyze the potential impacts of constructing any road on NPS lands, and to disclose them to the public in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS). Those laws, and the regulations and policies that implement them, ensure that federal agencies will carefully consider impacts to the Appalachian Trail associated with road improvements. If those impacts are significant and cannot be mitigated, the agency may deny a request to construct or improve a road crossing of the A.T.

Most potential problems regarding crossings of the Trail are resolved by the NPS and landowner during the land-acquisition phase. Deed reservations that allow for crossing of corridor lands are considered on a case-by-case basis and approved only when there are no other viable alternatives.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR and Game Commission

The Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks and the Pennsylvania Game Commission manage and maintain roads on state lands. Both bureaus have agreed to consult with ATC and local Trail clubs before undertaking road design, construction or major repair work, if that work could affect the Trail.

Other Partners

The major road-building agencies, PENNDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, have agreed to consult ATC and Trail clubs before undertaking projects that might adversely affect the Trail. They must also consult with the federal land manager (NPS) on any highway project utilizing federal funds that would have an effect on the A.T., as required by Section 4(f) of the National Transportation Act. Both agencies also have agreed to minimize adverse impacts to the Trail by exploring reasonable alternatives and mitigating unavoidable consequences.

MCM Policy

MCM authority does not include approval of new highway construction, or Game Commission service or logging road construction along or across the Trail corridor. MCM will, however, attempt to review and comment on any proposal to construct a road on, or adjacent to, its sections of the Trail.

Inventory

The southern MCM Trail section is crossed by Pa Routes 34, 94, and Green Mountain Road. There are also several notable Township roads, including Old Town Mountain Road and Whiskey Springs Road. Both of these are used by hunters, ORV/ATV users, and mountain bikers as points of access to public land. The Whiskey Springs A.T. trailhead has a shoulder area suitable for 4 – 5 cars.

The northern MCM A.T. section is crossed by Pa Route 850.

Action Plan

- MCM will work with PennDOT and the ATC as appropriate to improve the safety of their section road crossings. We will contact agency partners regarding any potential road construction plans near the AT and advocate to minimize to the Trail and corridor during construction.
- In the event a road project is authorized in the future, MCM will coordinate with ATC in monitoring construction activities to ensure that the company builds the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of its right-of-way permit or other authorization, and follows through on any agreed mitigation measures.

SECTION 4(G)

Road Closures and Access Control

Overview

Appalachian Trail lands are often susceptible to encroachment due to the narrow, linear shape of the corridor. Encroachments usually are associated with some form of vehicular access. Careful planning and design of road closures and other means of access control can minimize improper uses, such as motorized recreation, timber theft, and dumping.

Access problems are often complex, requiring detailed site studies and planning. Access points must be located, valid rights must be recognized, and illegal and unauthorized access must be controlled without obstructing legitimate access. Land ownership and legal-access rights are key factors in any situation where a road closure is being considered.

If no legal rights for access exist, and the land-managing agency has no current use for a road, a permanent closure may be possible.

If a private party retains a legal right-of-way for access within the A.T. corridor, or if a land-managing partner uses an access road for a purpose not in conflict with the A.T., gates are the most effective means of “selective” access control, although signs may discourage many potential vehicle operators.

Problems also may arise where there is unrestricted access onto A.T. corridor lands from public highways and roads that are maintained by state highway departments or local road and bridge departments. The state highway department official or county road supervisor will usually be willing to look at an access control problem but may not be in a position to take corrective action alone.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has not adopted a formal policy regarding road closures. However, ATC consistently has advocated closure of roads on A.T. lands whenever and where possible. Existing legal rights of access must be recognized, and close coordination with a land-managing agency partner is usually a prerequisite to any action. Counties, boroughs, and towns often have jurisdiction over roads and a formal decision under the appropriate authority may be required before a road may be closed by ATC and the Trail club.

ATC opposes the use of any kind of cable closing.

Federal Policy

The National Park Service has regulations in force that prohibit the use of motorized vehicles on the Appalachian Trail. In general, the National Park Service is supportive of all road closures, provided valid existing rights are recognized.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Forestry permits construction of haul roads for timber sales if access cannot be gained by existing logging roads. After the sale is complete, the road cut is graded and seeded and the road is gated. Gates are an ongoing problem for the agency since they are often vandalized or removed. The Bureau of State Parks policy is that roads that are not available and designated for public vehicular traffic are gated with heavy materials for security purposes. MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux state Forest.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Most roads on game lands are closed to vehicular traffic. The Game Commission permits the construction of haul roads for timber management. Presently, there is only a game lands roads (Dean's

Gap) on the MCM sections of the A.T. corridor and another gated road extending up Cove Mountain that ends near the AT shelter there.

Other Partners

PENNDOT manages high-volume highways and road systems. They do not anticipate road closure and access problems unless a parallel road is built to replace an existing road.

County governments in Pennsylvania usually do not own or administer road systems. Road closures fall under the jurisdiction of either the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the local municipality, depending on who owns and maintains the road. A petition for road closure or abandonment must be made to the appropriate state or local municipality authority, by one or more of the landowners who own property adjoining the road.

MCM Policy

Access roads to corridor land will be monitored on a regular basis, especially for unauthorized vehicular access. MCM will give high priority to assessment reports on conditions along access woods roads in the corridor. When serious problems occur, MCM will promptly notify NPS and, if appropriate, the land managing agency.

Action Plan

When an area is identified as an access-control problem, the MCM A.T. Land Corridor Monitoring Coordinator will analyze means to solve the problem. Guidelines will include the following steps:

- Does the land-managing partner have an active, ongoing need for the access road?
- Are there any existing legal rights of access held by private parties or any existing or past designations of the road as a public road by a local government?
- What is the best method, and where is the best location for constructing an access barrier?
- Is the closure going to be permanent or only designed to restrict access by the general public?
- If use of an access road will be restricted by a gate, who will be given keys?
- Are signs, information programs, or any other measures also warranted?
- Have local law-enforcement and emergency-response personnel been notified?
- Will an agency partner contribute financial assistance, manpower, equipment, and/or materials for a road closure?

Continued monitoring of the closures will be done as part of the routine inspection of the area by the assigned monitor. Cables may not be used for road closures or access control.

SECTION 4(H)

Special Uses

Overview

Appalachian Trail lands have numerous other potential uses, several of which are historical uses that “created” the present setting for the Appalachian Trail. Farming and livestock grazing, in particular, can enhance the Trail's environment by providing a pastoral, open landscape.

Special-use permits are used by the National Park Service to allow for and control temporary uses on NPS-acquired lands. Although these permits also benefit the permittee, they are issued primarily to serve a particular management purpose, such as maintenance of a view or protection of a structure. On NPS-acquired lands (outside of existing national park boundaries), the decision to issue a special-use permit is reserved to the NPS Appalachian Trail Park Manager, but it is usually based on the recommendation of the Trail-maintaining clubs and ATC.

The National Park Service A.T. Park Office administers special-use permits that authorize use of corridor lands along the Appalachian Trail. The majority of them permit agricultural uses, including grazing, haying, and crop production. Most permits exist to maintain natural open areas or historical pastoral scenes for the benefit of Trail users. Some permits have been issued to accommodate preexisting uses, including maple sugaring and a hang-gliding site. Other permits may be issued for temporary uses, such as a weekend horseback event that requires a short crossing of the Trail corridor.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

General guidelines for issuing permits on NPS-acquired lands were developed jointly between the NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office and ATC in 1983. These guidelines were endorsed by a committee of the ATC Board. In general, these guidelines provided direction on the following aspects of review and approval of special-use permit:

- **Decision-Making Process:** Coordination of initial issuance and renewals rests with the local managers, according to principles outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and local management plans. These local managers usually include, but are not limited to, the local Trail club (lead role), local management committee, agency partner, local municipality, and the ATC field representative. Any unreviewed requests for permits received by the NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO) will be referred back to this local group for consideration. When a permit is contemplated, consultation occurs among partners, and permit language is drafted on this level. If all parties are in agreement with the permit, the final permit is signed by the Park Manager and issued from the ATPO. If there is major policy implication or controversy regarding the issuance or renewal of a permit, the local managers should establish a committee, to the extent that one does not already exist, to address the problem on a local level. In addition, if unique situations arise that are not covered by the guidelines, this committee approach should be used to seek a local solution.
- **Standard Provisions:** All permits must be considered temporary in nature and revocable at the discretion of the permitter (the NPS Park Manager). Permits are not transferable. They may be issued for any period of time up to five years. All permits must have a specific description of the property involved, intended use, expiration date, and statement of liability.
- **Appropriate Uses:** Permits should be issued only to accomplish management purposes or to continue existing uses until specifically addressed in the local management planning process.
- **Selection of Permittee:** If apparent qualifications among interested parties are comparable, land-use permits could be issued first to the former landowner, then to the adjacent landowner, then to local residents. Permits for occupancy of structures may more appropriately be based on interviewing of potential tenants. Renewals of permits may be

offered first to the previous permittee, all conditions having been met.

- **Fees:** Generally, fees are charged for any use of public lands and documentation of fee determination kept on file. Managers should determine local fair market value for comparable rentals and apply standard deductions as appropriate. This function is handled by the NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office in coordination with ATC.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service has developed an official set of guidelines for special-use permits entitled, Guidelines on Special Park Use (NPS-53). The guidelines specify documentation of the following:

- The permitted use may not derogate the values or purposes of the A.T.
- A permit is temporary in nature and may not be issued for a period greater than five (5) years.
- Permit is not transferable to another party.
- All permits are revocable at the discretion of the NPS.
- The need for the permit must be described.
- The value of the permitted use must be established.
- The proposed use cannot be reasonably accommodated on lands outside the park.

Although the authority to issue a special-use permit for use of NPS-acquired lands rests with the A.T. park manager, the NPS park manager normally will refer any request for a special-use permit to the local Trail club for consideration.

Pennsylvania Policy

“Special uses” of the A.T. include uses that, without control, are generally incompatible with primitive hiking and camping. All state land-owning agency partners have policies that allow them to control special uses through the issuance of a signed permit or a “Special Use Agreement,” depending on the activity or agency.

MCM Policy

Hiking will always be the primary use of the Trail and its surrounding corridor. However, some special uses can enhance the Trail environment. At present the agricultural area (currently hay and corn fields) in the Route 850 area falls into this category. If a situation for another special-use permit surfaces, MCM will contact the ATC field representative to make recommendations, who will in turn coordinate with the NPS Park Office. MCM will assist by monitoring the area for violations and conducting face-to-face contact with the permittee as appropriate/requested by ATC.

Action Plan

MCM, in coordination with other Trail clubs, is available to assist NPS in developing recommendations and conditions of a special-use permit. In recommending approvals or continuation of special-use permits, the club must ask:

- What is the purpose of issuing the permit? Will issuing the permit help meet pre-established objectives for the tract?
- Is there a demonstrated benefit to the A.T. and what is the benefit?
- Is the use temporary in nature?
- Is there more than one potential permittee or interested party?
- Exactly where is the special use to take place, and how many acres of Trails land are involved?
- What conditions should be required of the permittee in order to control the use?
- How will the club monitor the permittee?
- For what period of time should the permit be issued?

Monitors of the area involving a special-use permit will be supplied with data detailing the conditions of the permit. Monitors will inspect the area along with their routine monitoring visits. Periodic face-to-face contacts should be conducted as appropriate and feasible. Any violations of a special-use permit agreement will be reported immediately to the MCM A.T. Corridor Land Monitoring Coordinator.

SECTION 4(I)

Utilities and Communication Facilities

Overview

Natural-gas pipelines, electric transmission lines, telephone trunk lines, and many smaller distribution lines of all types already cross the Appalachian Trail in many locations. There are also communications towers, dishes, antennas, and buildings that dot the landscape. Frequently, the most desirable location for these communications facilities is on the highest available terrain—often in direct conflict with the route of the Appalachian Trail.

Utility lines and communication sites are, by nature, intensive, high-profile land uses. The visual and, in some cases, audible presence of these facilities detracts from the primitive recreational experience of hiking on the Appalachian Trail. Other adverse impacts include lights, access roads, cleared swaths of land, off-road vehicle access on utility rights-of-way, guy wires, chain-link fences, use of chemical treatments for preventing growth of vegetation, and many others. Those ancillary impacts may be more intrusive than the utility lines or towers themselves. The cumulative impacts of the development of utility and communications facilities upon the A.T. environment are substantial.

Existing utility rights-of-way and communications sites usually are owned by quasi-public utility companies. A public service is provided by these companies: the electric power, natural-gas, cable TV, and telephone systems provide what are considered essential needs for modern living. As these needs continue to grow, more proposals will be advanced for utilities to cross the Appalachian Trail corridor and for mountaintop communications sites on lands adjoining the Appalachian Trail corridor.

Early involvement by the Trail community in public hearings and review processes can often eliminate conflict between the Trail and a proposed utility line or communication site. Relocation alternatives are often available that are more inconvenient for the utility company but have less impact on the Trail.

National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC)—In 2008, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced its designation of National Interest Electric Transmission (NIET) corridors. That designation, allowed under a 2005 act of Congress, paves the way for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to issue permits for new transmission facilities within a NIET corridor if a proposed new transmission project does not receive site approval from a state within a year. The corridors will be subject to the use of federal eminent domain without regard for previously protected places such as parkland, historic areas or conservation easements. The states' previous authority to deny a transmission project was overridden by the statute that required DOE to craft corridors.

Wireless telecommunication sites—In 1999, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and other organizations involved with national scenic trails signed a resolution agreement in 1999 with the wireless telecommunication industry's umbrella organizations, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association and the Personal Communications Industry Association, which lays out voluntary guidelines to facilitate notice and cooperation when wireless communication sites are proposed near national scenic trails. This resolution focuses on early notification, cooperative review and consideration of alternatives for any proposed facilities within one mile of a national scenic trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In November 1988, the ATC Board of Managers adopted a policy statement on utilities and communications facilities. That policy was first amended in 1992 to address utility-line maintenance practices, amended again in April 1994 to include criteria for proposed utility-line crossings of the A.T., and a third time in April 1996 to address the more specific impacts of communications sites, airport beacons, wind-generation towers, and other mountaintop facilities. In 2000, the Board adopted a policy on roads and utility developments that replaces both previous policies, but retains many of the previous

provisions. In 2007, the ATC Board adopted a specific policy on wind-energy that is summarized in Chapter 4 (G).

The current policy on roads and utility developments reads as follows:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy seeks to preserve and protect the scenic, cultural, and natural resources of the Appalachian Trail and the Appalachian Trail experience, as defined by the National Trails System Act and ATC policy. To this end, ATC seeks to avoid, minimize, or eliminate the visual, aural, and experiential impacts of roads and utility developments upon those resources and will support any and all measures that do so. Developments that are considered incompatible with the purposes and scenic values of the Appalachian Trail include public and administrative roads; power lines; pipelines; communications lines, towers, and buildings; wind-energy facilities; aircraft beacons; and roads and utilities serving these facilities.

It is the policy of ATC to oppose construction of any facilities of those types on Appalachian Trail corridor lands or those facilities on adjacent lands that could have an adverse impact on the viewshed of the Trail, unless they meet all of the following criteria:

1. The proposed development represents the only prudent and feasible alternative to meet an over-riding public need, as demonstrated in a thorough and detailed analysis of alternatives.
2. Any new impacts associated with the proposed development shall coincide with existing major impacts to the Trail experience.
3. Any proposed development of linear facilities shall be limited to a single crossing of the Appalachian Trail corridor.
4. Any adverse impacts of a proposed development shall be sufficiently mitigated so as to result in no net loss of recreational values or the quality of the recreation experience provided by the Appalachian Trail. To the extent practicable, mitigation shall occur on site.
5. The proposed development shall avoid, at a minimum: (a) wilderness or wilderness study areas; (b) National Park Service natural areas; (c) Forest Service semi-primitive non-motorized or designated backcountry areas; (d) natural-heritage sites; (e) cultural-resource sites; (f) Trail-related facilities, such as shelters and campsites; and (g) alpine zones, balds, and wetlands.

ATC will work with agency partners to incorporate those criteria into agency plans and regulations and encourages its member clubs to do likewise.

During the planning and regulatory-review processes, ATC, Trail-maintaining clubs, and agencies should make every effort to avoid impacts that would impair the natural, scenic, social, or cultural values and resources of the Appalachian Trail.

The following areas may be considered for developments under this policy, provided no other reasonable alternatives exist and mitigation sufficient to achieve a “no-net-loss” condition has been incorporated into the proposal:

- Areas where the A.T. crosses an existing state or federal highway;
- Areas crossed by the A.T. that are already developed;
- Sites with an existing facility;
- Areas where Trail values, such as a sense of remoteness, would not be compromised.

ATC will participate, and encourage A.T.-maintaining clubs and agency partners to participate, in public-review processes for all road-and-utility development proposals located within the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail.

Following construction, impacted areas will be restored to the extent feasible. Restoration measures include installation of permanent erosion control and planting of native vegetation. Measures to avoid additional impacts, such as use of access routes by motorized vehicles, will be taken as necessary.

The developments covered by this policy are divided into two categories: linear (roads and all utility corridors) and site (communications towers and structures, wind-energy facilities, and aircraft beacons). In addition to the general policy direction provided above, more specific direction for the two types of development follows:

Linear Developments—A “no-net-loss” approach should be established as the minimum threshold for approval of any linear facilities that cross the Appalachian Trail. In other words, if it is determined that it is in the public interest for a project to cross the Appalachian Trail, then sufficient mitigation must be incorporated into the proposed project so that there is no net loss of Trail values or quality of Trail experience. Any analysis of the impacts of such a proposal must analyze the cumulative impact of similar linear facilities upon Trail resources and Trail values, including the sense of remoteness and connection to the primeval environment of the Appalachian Mountains that the Trail presently provides.

At points where utility corridors intersect Appalachian Trail lands, ATC advocates the use of utility right-of-way maintenance techniques that reduce the impacts of said maintenance on the aesthetic values of the Appalachian Trail. Such techniques include hand-clearing of vegetation, “feathering” of vegetation along the edges of the right-of-way, leaving low-growing vegetation, and avoiding the use of herbicides. ATC encourages A.T. maintaining clubs and agency partners to contact utility companies to advise them of concerns associated with clearing right-of-way corridors that intersect the Appalachian Trail corridor.

ATC also supports efforts to establish procedures for utility companies and public agencies to provide notice to Trail clubs at least 30 days in advance of maintenance operations by agency, company, or contract crews, in order that on-site concerns may be addressed.

Signs should be placed on the exterior boundary of Appalachian Trail lands indicating that the responsible utility company and the local Trail club/ATC should be contacted for further information prior to clearing the utility right-of-way behind the signs. A generic ATC sign to this effect should be developed and offered to Trail clubs responsible for sections of the Trail that cross public lands acquired for the Trail. ATC also should collect and disseminate information to Trail-maintaining clubs and agency partners regarding utility corridor maintenance practices that protect Trail resource values.

Site Developments—The Appalachian Trail Conservancy opposes facility development on mountaintops, ridgelines, and other visible areas in the foreground and middle-ground distance zones as seen from the Appalachian Trail, unless the visual, aural and experiential impacts to the Appalachian Trail can be satisfactorily mitigated on-site. (Foreground and middle ground will be determined using the U.S. Forest Service Scenery Management System, as described in *Landscape Aesthetics*, Agriculture Handbook Number 701).

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will recommend that governmental agencies take steps to encourage shared use of existing communications facilities, development of multi-user facilities, and removal of structures that are no longer needed, as solutions to the problem of proliferating communications towers and other structures dotting the landscape.

For proposed facilities within one mile of the Trail, ATC will request local, state, or federal regulatory bodies to include in any authorization a condition prohibiting development of new facilities, or any changes to existing facilities, without prior notification of and consultation with the organizations and agencies responsible for management of the Appalachian Trail.

NPS Policy

Utility corridors and communications facilities may be found on NPS-acquired lands that were acquired subject to existing rights for these facilities. The NPS also has limited discretionary authority to

grant rights-of-way for new public utilities and communications facilities, including power lines, telephone and telegraph lines, water lines, and communications sites, but specifically excluding oil or gas pipelines (new oil or gas pipelines crossing NPS lands can only be provided for by exchange of lands or by legislative action). The NPS must evaluate any proposal for a right-of-way to ensure that the proposed crossing would be in the public interest and that it would not be inconsistent with the purposes for which the Appalachian Trail was established. The NPS also requires a thorough environmental analysis to assess the impacts of any right-of-way proposal.

If a right-of-way is approved, detailed mitigating measures would be required to protect or restore Trail values and resources to the greatest extent possible. In large part because of the cumulative effects of hundreds of powerlines, pipelines, and access roads that cross the Trail, the Appalachian Trail park manager has determined that if it is determined to be in the public interest, a proposed pipeline or powerline may cross the Appalachian National Scenic Trail once, and only once, in a location where (a) it is co-located with other similar types of facilities; and, (b) where impacts to the scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resources can largely be mitigated on-site. Further, any residual impacts to these resources should be offset by on-site or off-site mitigation to the extent that there is “no net loss” of the Trail’s resource values.

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR, PGC, Fish and Boat Commission, PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission have all agreed to consult with the ATC and local trail clubs before undertaking any projects involving roads, utility right-of-ways, or communication tower-leasing that could threaten the A.T. corridor or viewshed. MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux state Forest.

MCM Policy

MCM recognizes that public utilities are necessary for modern living. However, the Club also recognizes the impact of the utilities on the primitive experience of the A.T. and will work in cooperation with ATC, our agency partners, and utility companies to mitigate such impact and minimize the development of such facilities near the trail. Cell towers, for example, are now available in “tree camouflage” forms. Alternatively, antennas could be added to existing power utility towers as cell size/location permits, in lieu of building separate towers, and in other regions of Pennsylvania have been incorporated into a variety of existing structure (such as church bell towers) where visual impact has been a concern for the communities served. Such alternatives should be explored, especially if any existing facilities within the viewshed are scheduled for replacement or refurbishment. MCM encourages the removal of any facilities which are no longer needed.

MCM policy on utility right-of-ways is to require hand or mechanical clearing of vegetation when visible from the footpath. Chemical application for vegetation management in these areas is unacceptable to the Club. It is also recognized that enforcement of this desire may be difficult and/or impractical, especially if the utility or pipeline company uses aircraft for application of vegetation control chemicals.

Action Plan

- MCM will maintain an inventory of all utilities located within the A.T. corridor.
- MCM will notify ATC and the NPS of any proposed utility construction and violation of any right-of-way or easement for a utility line when it becomes aware of such activity.
- MCM will work in cooperation with the ATC, NPS, utility company, and its agency partners to evaluate the impact of any proposed utility or telecommunications facility company within the A.T. corridor. If a utility or road project is authorized, MCM will assist in monitoring construction activities to ensure that the company builds the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of its right-of-way permit or other authorization, and follows through on agreed mitigation measures.

SECTION 4(J)

Wind Facilities

Overview

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy seeks to preserve and protect the scenic, cultural, and natural resources of the Appalachian Trail and the Appalachian Trail experience, as defined by the National Trails System Act and ATC policy. To that end, ATC seeks to avoid, minimize, or eliminate the visual, noise, and experiential impacts of all utilities, including wind-energy facilities.

ATC supports the need for increased renewable energy generation, energy conservation, and end-user efficiencies. The Conservancy recognizes that generating electricity from wind holds promise to mitigate or slow the negative impacts of air pollution and climate change on the Appalachian Trail environment and hiker health. However, like all forms of electric generation, wind-energy facilities can have impacts on the environment and on human values, including the scenic, auditory, ecological and recreational values associated with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Careful siting of wind-energy developments is crucial to the protection of the Appalachian Trail experience.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—ATC's experience in several wind-farm proposals near the Trail in recent years led the ATC Board of Directors to adopt a policy in November 2007. The policy includes criteria to assist in evaluating proposals for wind-energy facilities that may affect the Trail. ATC's policy on wind-energy facilities reads as follows:

ATC will participate, and encourage A.T.-maintaining clubs and agency partners to participate, in public-review processes for all wind-energy development proposals located within the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail.

Under the wind-energy facility policy, ATC may decide to oppose, to not oppose, or to endorse any proposed project. Decisions will be made using the following evaluation criteria:

1. Appalachian Trail Lands: Wind-energy facilities are not appropriate on any of the lands that are part of the Appalachian Trail corridor.
2. Visual Impacts: The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is managed to preserve scenic integrity. The Conservancy has developed a body of policies designed to maximize natural or natural-appearing landscapes. Because of the size of modern wind turbines and the necessity of locating them on mountaintops, these facilities are visually prominent and can be serious intrusions on the desired natural character of the A.T. viewshed. ATC will use the USFS Scenery Management System to evaluate impacts of proposed wind turbines or wind farms on the Appalachian Trail viewshed. In general, ATC opposes new wind-energy facilities in the foreground and middleground viewsheds (up to four miles). In the case of projects in the background viewshed (four miles to the horizon) visual impacts will be weighed based on the following factors:
 - Height and size of the turbines: The height of the turbine will have a great deal to do with its visual prominence.
 - Presence or absence of FAA Hazard Lighting: Currently, structures more than 200-feet tall are required to have FAA hazard beacons to protect against aviation collisions. Hazard lighting has a significant impact on visual integrity of a landscape, even at great distances. Lighting also may negatively impact or kill birds and bats. In some settings, turbines less than 200 feet that are not lighted may be acceptable where larger towers with aircraft hazard beacons may not.
 - Scope of the project: The number of turbines and the length of ridgeline that is developed will affect the visual prominence and the number of Trail viewpoints from

which the project will be visible. The siting of the associated infrastructure can also have a significant effect on the A.T. viewshed. Locations and construction of power lines and roads should be analyzed as part of any visual assessment.

- Landscape setting: Undeveloped landscapes are less acceptable for development than settings with other permanent signs of development such as cities and towns, roads, mountaintop developments such as telecom towers or ski areas, or permanent landscape alterations such as a mine or quarry. Temporary landscape modifications such as timber harvesting should not be used as a factor in deciding whether a landscape setting is suitable for wind-energy development.

An additional factor is the viewer's location on the Appalachian Trail. Viewing locations that offer sweeping long-distance vistas to A.T. hikers such as balds, open areas, alpine areas, cliffs or fire towers are considered more sensitive. Also, viewing locations that are in designated wilderness, wilderness study areas, National Recreation Areas, NPS Natural Areas and remote areas more than two miles from a trailhead or road crossing are considered more sensitive. The number of Trail locations from which a project is visible also will be a factor. If a project is visible from a single location it may be more acceptable than if it is visible from several prominent vistas over a longer section of the Trail.

3. Noise Impacts: Turbines make noise as they spin, particularly in high wind conditions. Turbines should not be heard from the Appalachian Trail footpath and its facilities on an ongoing basis.
4. Project Setting: The setting for a wind farm is crucial in determining the degree of impact on surrounding lands including A.T. lands.

The following settings are better suited to the development of wind-energy facilities:

- Ridges with existing high-standard roads, and/or with slopes suitable to road and turbine construction
- Ridges with existing developments such as telecom towers, ski areas, microwave relay towers, power lines and similar development
- Ridges in proximity to developed landscapes such as cities and towns
- Ridges with permanent landscape alterations such as mines or quarries, highway cuts, recovering areas, *etc.*

The following settings are not suited to wind-energy facilities:

- Wilderness areas and study areas
- National Recreation Areas
- Semi-primitive non-motorized areas (USFS lands) and roadless areas
- Old-growth forests and habitat for rare species or exemplary natural communities
- Cultural-resource sites or historic landmarks
- Important bird or bat habitats and migration routes
- Unique or important ecological or recreation sites identified by state, regional or township land-use plans.
- Ridge tops with very steep slopes or soils ill-suited to road building and turbine construction.

5. Public vs. Private Lands: Wind-energy facilities are being considered on both public and private lands. ATC believes that wind-energy facilities are best suited to private lands. If a project is being considered on public lands, there should be no net loss of A.T. values as a result of the development. Mitigation, on or off-site, may be applied to achieve the no-net-loss of Trail values standard.
6. Mitigation and Off-sets: Is there adequate mitigation or off-sets for any significant loss of Trail values? In cases where a mountain-top wind farm is proposed, achieving on-site mitigation may prove to be impossible. In those cases, off-site mitigation or off-sets may be considered. Examples of off-site mitigation or off-sets include additional conservation-land acquisition, removal of other developments, and designation of lands as off-limits to future development

- through conservation easements, among other techniques. The trade-offs of mitigation or off-sets require careful consideration for unintended consequences, *e.g.*, visual vs. wildlife.
7. Also, because there are both societal benefits to renewable energy and significant adverse impacts associated with the installation of wind farms, the benefits of any individual project must be weighed in relation to the costs. Some of these factors include:
 - Source of power that is likely to be displaced by the wind farm: Will the wind displace fossil-fuel plants or other renewable sources? (This is a remarkably complex question, but in some circumstances it seems likely that wind will not displace fossil fuels, but rather will lead to closure of biomass generation or increased peaking of hydroelectric dams.)
 - Power production in relation to the severity of impacts: Will the amount of power produced be in proportion to the severity of the impacts?

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR – The Bureau of Forestry has developed an environmental review process and monitoring protocols for industrial wind development on state forest lands. In addition, a list of inappropriate sites has been developed that includes natural and wild areas, state parks and their major viewscapes, and “unique scenic vistas and educational/recreational/ cultural resources.”

PGC – Any companies wishing to erect a wind farm on state game lands must follow the procedures outlined in the PGC document “Wind Energy Review Guidelines for State Game Lands,” providing the land was not purchased with federal aid funding. If that is the case, additional federal reviews will be required.

Other Partners – None of the other partners have policies specific to the siting of industrial wind energy facilities.

MCM Action Plan

- Using GIS technology, ATC has inventoried sites with high potential for wind-energy facilities. This information is available to be shared with the Trail clubs that request it. MCM will determine if any sites lie within the Trail corridor maintained by the Club.
- If wind-energy proposals affecting the section of the Trail maintained by MCM arise, the Club will participate in public-review processes for all wind-energy development proposals located within the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail.
- If issues arise, MCM will utilize the ATC policy and criteria.

SECTION 4(K)

Structures and Dams

Overview

The National Park Service and, to a lesser extent, the U.S. Forest Service and several state agencies have purchased a number of man-made structures during the process of acquiring lands to protect the Appalachian Trail. These “incidentally acquired” structures range from relatively new residences and out-buildings to various dilapidated farm structures, old camps, billboards, concrete pads, fences, and small utility buildings. In some cases, the National Park Service has acquired a fee interest in a dam or bridge. Once these structures have been acquired, decisions must be made as to their fate. The great majority of the structures were acquired because development at that location was perceived to be incompatible with Trail values.

When such a structure is acquired, a decision is made regarding its fate. The great majority of them have been determined to be incompatible with Trail values, and they have been removed. When a decision has been made to remove a structure, the ATC regional representative usually coordinates the removal with the local Trail club and the land-managing agency. Interim management of structures may be necessary while decisions are being made.

Occasionally, an acquired structure has the potential to serve a Trail-related purpose. In such cases, costs of maintaining a structure need to be evaluated carefully. These costs are often prohibitive, particularly when the structure doesn't meet national life and safety codes at the time it is acquired. A decision to retain a structure should take into account the costs of long-term upkeep and repairs, which are often significant. Structures on federal lands must meet national fire, life-safety, and electrical codes and must be evaluated for their historical significance. Liability is also an important concern. Perhaps the most important consideration is whether or not the structure is compatible with the purpose and values of the Appalachian Trail.

Where a previous landowner has reserved the right to use the structure for a specific number of years or for his lifetime (called a “life estate”), some basic planning decisions can be made in the meantime. Periodic contact by the club with the occupants is appropriate to ensure that the previous owner's use meets the conditions of the deed reservation.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In November 1989, the ATC Board of Managers adopted the following policy statement:

1. Each structure should be removed, and the A.T. corridor restored as near as possible to a natural condition, unless:
 - The structure must be retained for historic reasons. (Evaluations must be conducted on all structures over 50 years old.)
 - The club, working with ATC, identifies a Trail-related need for the structure and is willing to assume responsibility for management and maintenance of the structure.
 - The structure is a contributing improvement (such as a bridge).
2. If possible, decisions regarding removal of structures should be made before the structure and land upon which it is situated are acquired by the agency.
3. Any structure proposed for retention on NPS-acquired lands will usually require a safety inspection by the NPS resource protection specialist (or his designated representative) and a qualified inspector from a local or state agency prior to assignment to ATC and reassignment to the club, to determine to what extent the structure meets the Life Safety Code and to make recommendations for modifications or improvements to comply with the code.
4. Prior to any decision to retain a structure, a financial analysis should be prepared to evaluate the costs necessary to bring the structure up to code. The analysis should include an estimate

- of the costs associated with long-term maintenance of the structure.
5. Retained structures that are to be used in any way by the public must:
 - have liability insurance in the club and ATC's name, to protect the club and ATC;
 - if located on NPS-acquired lands, be periodically inspected by the NPS resource protection specialist (or his designated representative)
 - have all necessary and appropriate local government approvals.
 6. Retained structures on NPS-acquired lands that are intended for use only to support the activities of Trail volunteers need an authorization under the NPS "Quarters-Assignment" program. Named individual volunteers acting as club caretakers should be under a direct VIP agreement with the NPS.
 7. Structures on federal lands intended for removal are the ultimate responsibility of the federal agency partner. If agency budget and contracting constraints preclude agency action in a timely manner, clubs and/or ATC may offer to assist with removal to the extent feasible. Federal agency standards for demolition, removal, and restoration should be followed.

NPS Policy

Several NPS requirements pertain to management of structures:

1. By law, any structure recommended for removal must be evaluated for its potential for historical significance.
2. If a recommendation is made to locate an occupant for a structure, an NPS special-use permit or other authorization would be utilized to document arrangements with the tenant.
3. Clubs may utilize a structure for Trail-management purposes without issuance of a permit, but the structure needs to be assigned by the agency to ATC and the club. The club's plans and the consent of the land-managing agency should be documented.
4. A club cannot charge a fee for use of the structure and keep the proceeds, but voluntary donations are acceptable.
5. The NPS maintains records of all property acquired by the NPS. When demolition is considered, an internal NPS report ("Report of Survey") is required to secure approval prior to removal.
6. All occupied structures on NPS corridor lands must meet the requirements of the "Life Safety Code", a national fire and safety code, and other applicable state and local building codes.

If a decision is made to retain a dam on NPS-acquired lands, the Appalachian Trail Park Manager must follow specific procedures to ensure the structural soundness and safety of a dam. If possible, a dam should be "deactivated" by removing it or breaching it to a level where no maintenance is necessary. If a dam cannot be deactivated, the NPS has an obligation to maintain the dam to specific standards for public safety.

Pennsylvania Policies

Existing structures and dams within the A.T. corridor may be protected by state laws. Structures that have historic significance may be protected by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission under the state's history code. The code requires agencies to consider the significance of historic structures and archaeological sites when undertaking projects.

Existing and proposed dams are regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Waterways Engineering and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Permits may be required from both agencies when any work on dams is proposed.

Pennsylvania DCNR and Game Commission

While each of the land-holding agencies manages and maintains structures and dams on its lands, neither agency anticipates building new structures or removing additional existing structures within the A.T. corridor. In the event that such work is anticipated, ATC and local Trail clubs will be consulted.

Structures and dams that might be proposed by ATC or Trail clubs must be approved by agency land-holding partners and by regulatory agencies. Agency partners will assist ATC and clubs in planning necessary projects.

Other Partners

PENNDOT and the Turnpike Commission manage and maintain many structures throughout the state and must also comply with regulatory standards described above when proposing projects that impact dams and historic structures.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

There currently are no dams on our sections of the A.T. There are also no known acquired structures on MCM Trail sections are listed by the Mid Atlantic office of ATC for future demolition. MCM will work with the ATC and/or ATCPO in accordance with the policies above should additional such structures be acquired in our Trail sections. In that event, MCM will decide in consultation with ATC and its management partners, whether to retain or dispose of each structure.

SECTION 4(L)

Military Maneuvers

Overview

The armed forces have carried out or proposed military training maneuvers on Appalachian Trail lands with some frequency over the years. In the past, hikers have reported face-to-face encounters with infantrymen dressed in full battle gear, trip-wires attached to small explosive devices stretched across the Trail footpath, and bunkers and foxholes dug immediately adjacent to the Trail footpath. Low-level training flights by military aircraft also can impact the Trail experience.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In November 1989, the ATC Board of Managers adopted the following policy statement:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy recognizes and endorses the valuable assistance provided by units of the armed forces during search-and-rescue missions along the Appalachian Trail, the use of military aircraft to airlift materials for shelter construction projects in remote areas, and other actions undertaken by military personnel at the request of a club or agency partner for the benefit of management of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. This statement of policy is not intended to discourage these mutually beneficial cooperative activities, which have significantly enhanced the management capabilities of the Appalachian Trail management partners.

The physical impacts of military training exercises, including ground disturbances created by infantry training exercises and the noise disturbances created by both ground and aerial training exercises, can significantly detract from the experience of hiking the Appalachian Trail and may also create safety hazards for hikers. It is the policy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy that military maneuvers should not be permitted on, or in the low-altitude air space above, Appalachian Trail corridor lands, except in unusual circumstances.

Low-level over-flights, particularly repeated over-flights, intrude on the quiet and solitude that have always been considered essential to the A.T. experience. Consistent with Federal Aviation Administration recommendations for flights over national park units, a minimum floor of 2,000 feet above ground level should be required for all aircraft, including military aircraft, for the entire length of the Appalachian Trail.

ATC, the Trail-maintaining clubs, and the AT park Office should be consulted during any formal or informal consideration of a proposal for military training exercises on A.T. lands. ATC will assist agencies to the extent possible in identifying alternative locations for conducting military training exercises. If an authorization is under consideration for military training use of the A.T. or A.T. lands, ATC would urge its land-managing partners to issue authorizations only when a determination has been made by the appropriate agency officials that the training exercises are essential for national defense and that it is not feasible to conduct the exercises at any other location. If a permit is issued by a land-managing agency for any military training exercise on the A.T. or A.T. lands, the permit should at a minimum state that:

- No ground disturbance (including construction of bunkers, foxholes, tent platforms, etc.) and no mechanized or motorized use should be permitted;
- Activities authorized under the permit must not interfere with hikers on the Trail;
- All reasonable efforts will be made to notify hikers and other users of Trail corridor lands that such activities are occurring;
- No weapons should be used or be visible to observers;
- No activities may be conducted which put any hikers or other civilians at risk or in

- fear of their safety;
- No activities may be conducted which would exceed the limits for group use set forth in the ATC Group Use Policy: (“Groups spending one or more nights on the Trail should not exceed ten in the same organization and day-use groups should not exceed 25 in the same organization unless clubs otherwise designate in their local management plans.”);
- No explosive materials will be permitted;
- No activities should be permitted near shelters or other Trail facilities; and
- The Trail club and ATC should be notified by the land-managing agency at least 48 hours in advance of any pending activity.

Though the policy has no effect in and of itself in law or regulation, it is intended to encourage agency partners to look carefully at the inherent conflicts between military maneuvers and the backcountry recreational experiences provided on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

NPS Policy

In general, military activities are discouraged in parks, except for study of military history at related NPS sites. Periodically, an armed services unit may request the use of park areas for noncombat exercises such as search-and-rescue and outdoor survival. Determining when and where military units may conduct such activities is a discretionary decision of the superintendent. If a permit is issued, military operations must be conducted in a manner that complies with all park rules and regulations, does not interfere with normal visitor use, and does not exceed visitor use levels (where established). Weapons cannot be carried, displayed, or used except for ceremonial purposes and no live ammunition may ever be used. National security and law enforcement agencies, such as the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security, and state police, may wish to conduct similar exercises. These requests should be evaluated in the same way as military special use requests (section 8.6.9 of the 2006 NPS *Management Policies*).

The NPS will work cooperatively with the Department of Defense to address congressionally mandated missions of all agencies. The NPS will prevent or strive to mitigate any unacceptable impacts associated with military training or operational low-level overflights. The NPS park manager is responsible for communicating with base commanders and developing formal agreements that mitigate identified impacts (section 8.4.5 of the 2006 NPS *Management Policies*).

Pennsylvania Policy

None of the partner agencies have policies related to military maneuvers on their lands. DCNR would handle this via a Special Activity Agreement.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

MCM concurs with and will adopt the ATC policy as stated above and work with its agency partners as required should a special use permit be issued for military maneuvers along with our Trail sections.

SECTION 4(M)

Bicycles

Overview

Bicycles can cause extensive damage to Trail treadway by creating ruts, displacing soils, and destroying water bars and other erosion-control structures. In areas with wet or poor soils, extensive reconstruction or relocation of the Trail treadway may be necessary to repair the damage caused by wheeled vehicles. Such projects are often beyond the capabilities of the local Trail clubs. In addition, hikers complain of safety hazards associated with meeting individuals riding mountain bikes on the Trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—ATC adopted the following policy on bicycle use in November 1991:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy believes it is necessary to state clearly that the Appalachian Trail was conceived, designed, constructed, and intended for use as a footpath. This intent is an overriding emphasis of virtually every aspect of the Trail, which is managed to provide an opportunity for “travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains.” Recognizing that certain sections of the Trail coincide for limited distances with multiple-use trails, the Conservancy supports broad federal-agency regulations and administrative prohibitions against use of the Trail by bicycles in all but the most unusual circumstances. ATC further encourages all agency partners to adopt and enforce similar prohibitions against bicycles on the Appalachian Trail.

In short, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s position is that the Trail footpath should be closed to bicycle use except where open by specific administrative decision of the land-managing agency, with such a decision being made only after consultation with the affected Trail club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the National Park Service A.T. Park Office. ATC believes that each of the following conditions (in addition to any site-specific criteria) must be met for ATC to endorse bicycle use on the Trail as an exception to this policy:

1. Bicycle use of the Appalachian Trail would only take place upon a short (generally less than one-mile) section of the Trail that is located on an existing surfaced or hardened roadbed, railbed, or other hardened surface previously used and designed for use by wheeled vehicles, and where bicycle use clearly would not result in resource damage, displacement of soils or vegetation, or impact to the Trail tread, water-diversion structures, or other Trail facilities.
2. Bicycle use would only take place upon a segment of the Trail that coincides with or intersects a segment of an existing, established multiple-use trail.
3. Bicycle use on the segment of Trail can be physically restricted to that segment of Trail by signs and physical barriers, without the need to actively control bicycle use on adjoining segments of the Trail.
4. Bicycle use of the segment of Trail would not adversely affect the recreational experience of hikers on that section of the Appalachian Trail or conflict with efforts of the local management partners to create a primitive recreational experience for that section of Trail.

In those isolated circumstances, bicycle use should be authorized only by temporary, revocable special-use permit. In circumstances where bicycle use has been authorized but such use is contributing to resource damage, adverse impact to the recreational experience of the Trail for hikers, or illegal use of adjoining segments of the Trail, such authorization should be revoked by the land-managing agency on its own initiative or at the request of the Trail club, the Conservancy, or the National Park Service.

The Conservancy recognizes the use of bicycles (including mountain bikes) as a legitimate recreational use of appropriate public lands and encourages its affiliated Trail clubs and agency partners to foster a cooperative relationship with bicycle user groups, to educate bicycle users about existing prohibitions against use of bicycles on the Trail, and to support bicycle users in their efforts to identify other areas, including rail trails and woods roads, that are better suited to bicycle use.

This policy statement is not intended to apply to those portions of the Trail that are located along open public roads or where specific rights of vehicular access have been reserved by prior landowners.

NPS Policy

Bicycles are prohibited on National Park Service Appalachian Trail corridor lands by regulation, except on park roads, in parking areas, and on routes designated for bicycle use. Routes may only be designated for bicycle use based upon a written determination that such use is consistent with the protection of a park area's natural, scenic, and aesthetic values, safety considerations, and management objectives, and will not disturb wildlife or park resources.

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR Bureau of Forestry—Bicycles are allowed on state forest roads and trails unless otherwise posted. Trails are posted as closed on three National Scenic Trails, 18 State Forest hiking trails, and other areas through closure postings.

DCNR Bureau of State Parks—Bicycles are allowed on designated trails.

Game Commission—PGC allows the use of bicycles on designated and signed open routes.

Neither the **PA Fish and Boat Commission** nor the **South Mountain Restoration Center** has explicit policies regarding bicycle use on the Trail.

MCM Policy

Bicycles are not permitted on the A.T., which is designed to accommodate foot travel only. MCM will monitor trail use for signs of trespassing by bikers and, if necessary, consider the use of signs or other means to prevent such use. Where patterns of trespassing are identified, MCM will work with ATC, NPS and local community officials as appropriate to attempt to halt the incursions.

SECTION 4(N)

Hang Gliding

Overview

Hang gliding is defined by the U.S. Hang Gliding Association as ‘low speed, light weight, non-powered, human flight in devices which are capable of being foot launched and are capable of gliding and soaring flight.’”

Hang gliding may be appropriate in parks and forests that were established to provide a wide variety of recreational activities, such as the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, but in most circumstances it is inappropriate in a park unit established for hiking and backpacking, such as the A.T. Concerns include the potential for congregation of large groups of people at launch sites (which usually coincide with A.T. overlooks), conflicts with hikers seeking solitude, and vehicular access. However, hang gliding is a usually low impact, individual form of recreation and under the right circumstances these potential impacts can be fully mitigated.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In April 1996, ATC’s Board of Managers adopted the following policy on hang gliding:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy believes that hang gliding (including paragliding), being a non-motorized and non-mechanized pursuit, may be suitable in certain locations along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The remote recreational experience of the Trail and the resources that enhance that experience should be carefully considered and protected. Launch and landing sites must be managed in a manner that is consistent with the over-all management direction for the A.T. corridor, and in such a way that it does not harm the resource or experience of A.T. hikers. In order to meet this objective, all of the following criteria must be met:

- The hang gliding site must be administered and maintained by a hang gliding organization recognized by the U.S. Hang Gliding Association and be covered by a permit or cooperative agreement between that organization and the land managing agency. The Trail maintaining club and the land managing agency must endorse the use of the site.
- In cooperation with, and under the guidance of, the Trail maintaining club and land-managing agency, the hang gliding organization will be responsible for maintenance of the site and management of hang gliding use at the site. New sites should not be cleared and vegetation at existing sites should not be removed without explicit written permission from the land-managing agency. Permission for clearing of vegetation should not be granted unless such action clearly enhances Trail values and does not degrade any natural resources that may be present. The Appalachian Trail footpath should not be modified in any way to accommodate use by hang gliders.
- Use of site and improvements to the site should not adversely affect the natural and cultural resources present at the site and should be consistent with the conference’s policy on managing the Appalachian Trail as a primitive resource.
- The hang gliding organization will be responsible for preventing resource abuse and conflicts with hikers, and the site may be closed if any abuse cannot be rectified or any conflicts cannot be resolved.
- The hang gliding site should be physically separate from Trail shelters and other overnight facilities, and no activities associated with use of the site should be permitted that would affect any shelters or overnight facilities.
- Hang gliding sites will not be used for any motorized use and will not promote such use. Access to any hang gliding site must be on foot, unless vehicular use is available via an existing public road.

- Sites will not be used for commercial or competitive events. Specific conditions, such as limitations on group size, noise, and equipment, should be included in any authorization for a hang gliding site, to ensure that hikers are not adversely affected.
- Hang gliding should not be permitted in designated wilderness areas or other areas where it is prohibited by law, regulation, or managing agency policy.

The frequency of hang gliding sites, level of use, availability of alternate sites, and cumulative impacts on the primitive recreational experience and remote character of the Trail will be significant factors in determining whether new hang gliding sites should or should not be authorized.

NPS Policy

In 1996, the Appalachian Trail Park Office secured a special regulation that gave the A.T. Park Manager the authority to permit hang gliding as a special use on lands administered by that office. The special regulation reads as follows:

The use of devices designed to carry persons through the air in powerless flight is allowed at times and locations designated by the Park Manager, pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit. (36 Code of Federal Regulations 7.100(c))

The terms and conditions of a special-use permit for hang gliding will prohibit in all cases stunt flying, commercialization, advertising, publicity, contests, meets, demonstrations, and motor-vehicle access on non-public roads. In addition, the A.T. Park Manager may require as a standard condition of the permit that all hang gliders using the designated site be licensed by the U.S. Hang Gliding Association. The frequency of launch sites, level of use, cumulative impacts on the remote recreational experience and character of the Appalachian Trail will be significant factors in determining whether new launch or landing sites will be designated.

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR regulates hang gliding through Special Activity Agreements.

Game Commission— PGC requires prior special use permit approval for most non-hunting/trapping/fishing/hiking related recreational activities, including this one. No commercial activities are permitted.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

MCM has not identified any site on its sections of the A.T. which are appropriate for hang gliding and presently there is no known hang gliding use on these sections. The only area with any possible potential (altitude) is Hawk Rock above Duncannon, and then only if seasonal winds were exceptional strong.. MCM does not anticipate that the ATPO will issue any permits for hang gliding at this location, but should new technology allow use of the site in the future, MCM will work with the ATPO to ensure that appropriate site-specific use restrictions (as above) are incorporated in any special use permit.

PART 5

NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

SECTION 5(A)

Resource Management

Overview

The Appalachian Trail contains many outstanding natural, cultural, and scenic features that need to be preserved and protected. There are many species of flora and fauna, some of which are threatened, or endangered, and a multitude of cultural and historic features characteristic of the Appalachian landscape.

Those natural, cultural, and scenic resources can be dramatically affected by human actions and natural processes. Damage may be caused by overuse, misuse, or poor design and maintenance of the footpath or its associated overnight facilities. External activities also may adversely affect the Trail by infringing on ecosystem, scenic and other resource values. Resource values also can be enhanced by human actions, such as the maintenance or restoration of an open area or establishment of a vista.

Effective resource management can involve a set of actions, guided by an overall policy, taken to maintain or achieve a desired natural, cultural, or scenic condition. Resource management may involve active on-the-ground measures, or it may simply mean leaving an area alone and protecting it from external influences in order to allow natural processes to take their course. Although the federal and state land-managing agencies have primary responsibilities for managing natural and cultural resources on their lands, ATC and the Trail clubs play an important role in how these resources are managed along the Trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—In November 1988, the ATC Board of Managers adopted the following policy for resources management:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy seeks to manage the natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the Appalachian Trail in a manner that preserves and protects these resources, while meeting its responsibilities for promoting the use and enjoyment of the footpath, its related facilities, and its surrounding corridor lands.

This policy is based on the following principles:

1. The Appalachian Trail footpath is itself a resource of greater significance than component parts of the corridor. Preserving the continuity and integrity of the footpath and its environs is an essential consideration in management of individual natural, cultural, and scenic resources. This consideration should not cause other resource values to be overshadowed, however. The use and enjoyment of the footpath and surrounding corridor lands and the protection of individual resource values should serve as goals that complement and enhance each other. In the vast majority of cases, traditional Trail-management practices have served and will continue to serve to maintain and enhance the natural, cultural, and scenic qualities of the Trail environment.
2. Management decisions should reflect a conscious awareness that activities and use levels on and adjacent to corridor lands affect Trail resources. In those rare instances where unique or key natural or cultural features are jeopardized by the footpath's presence, adjustments in location or use will be made to protect resource values.
3. Trail lands shall be managed to promote their primitive, natural character. Exceptions may be made to manage the land for other special or distinctive resource values (*e.g.*, open areas, vistas, farmland, historic sites, sensitive species sites, *etc.*). In areas that have been adversely

- affected by human-caused disturbance (*e.g.*, a gravel pit, dump, *etc.*), management activities to restore an area to its original condition are encouraged.
4. The diverse character of Appalachian Trail lands is fundamental to the Trail experience. Preserving and promoting the broad range of traditional landscapes that the footpath passes through is essential. Resource management planning choices will consider the long-term diversity of the landscape (*e.g.*, open areas vs. forest) as well as the diversity (or richness) of plant and animal species.
 5. Some activities are inappropriate on Appalachian Trail lands because of their adverse effect on resources and hikers. In order to preserve the quality of the Trail experience, measures will be taken to protect the footpath and surrounding corridor lands from improper uses. Minimum responsible land stewardship entails protecting the corridor from encroachments and uses that degrade Trail values (*e.g.*, dumping, timber theft, unauthorized roads, vehicle usage, *etc.*). Use of corridor lands for interpretation and other non-consumptive uses, including scientific use, will be encouraged when it is in keeping with primitive Trail values and consistent with club local management plans.
 6. The cooperative management system provides the framework for volunteers, ATC staff and public land-management agency professionals, acting as partners, to manage natural, cultural, and scenic resources as integral components of the Appalachian Trail. Local clubs develop statements of resource management policy in their local management plans and, where appropriate, identify actions for the protection and enhancement of natural, cultural, and scenic resources within their Trail sections. The capacity of volunteers and partners to undertake management may vary. This requires balancing the physical possibilities with the limitations of people and budgets. ATC will continue to serve as a guarantor to public-agency landowners to ensure that minimum stewardship standards are met.

ATC's Board also stated that detailed, specific policies should be developed for the following resource values: threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, wilderness, wildlife, vegetation management, and management of unique geologic features and biotic communities.

In 2007, ATC launched the A.T. MEGA-Transect program, a Trail-wide environmental monitoring initiative aiming to:

- 1) Monitor key indicators of environmental health along the Trail;
- 2) Understand the meaning of available data by analyzing, synthesizing and modeling; and,
- 3) Share this knowledge to inform and engage others in the management and protection of the A.T. environment.

NPS Policy

The natural-resource policies of the National Park Service are aimed at maintaining, rehabilitating, and perpetuating the integrity of the natural-resource values inherent in the parks, and providing the American people with the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from natural environments that have evolved through natural processes minimally influenced by human actions. These resource values include plants, animals, water, air, soils, topographic features, geologic features, paleontological resources, and aesthetic values, such as scenic vistas, natural sounds, and clear night skies. NPS will strive to understand, maintain, restore, and protect the inherent integrity of the natural resources, processes, systems, and values of the parks while providing meaningful and appropriate opportunities to enjoy them. The NPS recognizes that natural processes and species are evolving, and will allow this evolution to continue—minimally influenced by human actions.

The National Park Service also manages cultural resources to preserve and foster visitors' appreciation of archaeological and historical-resource values. Natural and cultural resources along the Appalachian Trail are protected and managed in accordance with the 1916 National Park Service Organic Act, National Trails System Act, and a host of environmental and other laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Wilderness Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

Specific information on natural and cultural resources for the A.T. is found in the NPS Appalachian Trail Resource Management Plan, September 2008.

MCM Policy

As noted in Section 5(H) there are assorted charcoal hearths near the Tagg Run shelter and Pine Grove Furnace State Park. At Center Point Knob, north of the Kennedy shelter and where the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club picks up maintenance responsibilities, Pennsylvania State apparently has identified evidence of extensive former mining activities. This is documented in the 1999 study “Cultural Resource Overview an Assessment of the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania.” Overall, MCM has no knowledge that any of the sites mentioned are actually in the MCM area of responsibility. MCM resource management volunteers, when identified, will work with ATC and NPS as appropriate to evaluate the sites.

Action Plan

MCM will develop individual management policies on specific resource values as necessary for effective management of identified resources (discussed further in the following sections of this plan) on MCM-maintained sections of the A.T.

SECTION 5(B)

Climate Change

Overview

Climate changes as a result of natural factors. However, human activities, primarily emissions of carbon dioxide as the result of the use of fossil fuels and changes in land use, and other greenhouse gases (methane, nitrous oxide, *etc.*) also are impacting the climate system. Human-induced climate change and the mitigation measures proposed to respond to it pose both short- and long-term concerns for management of the Appalachian Trail. Short-term concerns focus on the impacts of proposed mitigation measures, including the location of wind-energy projects and electric utility lines, and our own “carbon footprint.” Longer-term, climate change could significantly alter the ecosystems through which the Trail passes, dramatically changing habitat values and the recreational experience it offers.

The energy and climate change subcommittee of the Stewardship Council—formed in 2006 to address wind power and the increasing numbers of proposals for energy developments such as powerlines and pipeline-crossings being proposed along the Appalachian Trail—began to address climate change following the Board’s adoption of a policy on wind-energy facilities in 2007.

Climate effects are particularly noticeable in national parks like the Appalachian Trail because of their predominantly natural condition. ATC, its maintaining clubs, longstanding maintainers and staff have already noticed the incremental, but inexorable, effects of climate change. Ten of the hottest years recorded since 1850 have occurred in the last 15 years, with obvious, if anecdotal, impacts on our favorite places, plants, animals and pastimes. ATC has concluded that the potential impacts of global climate change, including long-term drought, extreme weather events, increased forest fires, and changes in the timing of the seasons may cause major disruption to the Appalachian Mountain ecosystem and threaten the health and sustainability of the Trail’s flora and fauna. Furthermore, those impacts likely already are directly affecting and almost certainly will continue to affect the Trail footpath itself, due to increased treadway erosion and blowdown obstruction from severe storms, increased invasion of exotic species, and loss of water sources due to drought. Ultimately, climatic shifts and changes in the timing of seasonal events could alter and compromise the Trail experience.

Since its inception, ATC has advocated for the protection and preservation of diverse forest, bog, and other important and diverse ecosystems along the length of the A.T. It has fought to protect thousands of acres of forest lands and supports the protection of national and state forests and parks and designated wilderness areas. It will continue to work through its agreements with the National Park Service and other partners to achieve the highest standards of protection of the Trail and its corridor greenway.

In 2013 ATC also began the A.T. Seasons Project to monitor Phenology from Georgia To Maine. Partnering with other organizations (USA National Phenology Network & Appalachian Mountain Club) and National Parks (Great Smoky Mountains National Park), the ATC has begun engaging citizen scientists monitoring at sites on and near the A.T. Club volunteers, A.T. Communities and local schools are encouraged to become involved in the project. A.T. Seasons is both an educational effort regarding changing climates along the A.T. and a means of documenting long term climate trends. Data will be used to highlight priority areas along the A.T. for management and potential wildlife refugia.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—Recognizing that the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has an obligation, as do all individuals and organizations, to help control greenhouse gas emissions, the ATC Board of Directors in November 2008 adopted a resolution regarding climate change that was recommended by the Stewardship Council. The resolution commits ATC to:

- Reduce its carbon emissions by implementing cost-effective energy technology and behavioral changes in its own operations.
- Educate ATC members and Trail visitors on climate and its wide-ranging effects on the A.T., and on the availability of mass-transit and other low carbon transportation alternatives for travel to trailheads.
- Monitor climate-change indicators and collect climate-relevant data through the A.T. project and other environmental monitoring programs. MEGA-Transect
- Recognize the value of A.T. forest lands for carbon sequestration, climate modification, and as a corridor to allow wildlife to adapt to climate change.
- Support policies of energy conservation and renewable energy technology where consistent with ATC's other policies.
- Work with like-minded organizations to promote carbon-reducing efforts and climate change education programs.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service teamed up with the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Climate Change to develop its "Climate Friendly Parks" initiative in 2004–05. To date, ten parks are participating and have introduced shuttles, increases in bicycle use and walking, and training of both employees and the visiting public.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania's conservation leaders are taking climate change very seriously and working in a variety of ways to better understand the impact that this will have on our natural resources. In addition to taking steps to reduce its impact, ecologists are examining options for how species will adapt (or not adapt) to the climatic changes that are already evident.

From The Nature Conservancy: "As an initial effort to inform the statewide [climate change] adaptation planning process, a small group of staff from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and The Nature Conservancy interviewed stakeholders from state and federal natural resource management agencies, research institutions, and environmental non-profit organizations. Those interviewed believed adaptation efforts should also focus on existing stresses, such as loss of riparian cover, habitat fragmentation, and invasive species and pathogens, which will be exacerbated by climate change. An emphasis on reducing these stressors makes sense even if we are uncertain about the degree of coming climate change impacts."

The findings from the interviews are presented in a report: *Weathering Climate Change: Framing Strategies to Minimize Impacts on Pennsylvania Ecosystems and Wildlife.* The full report can be downloaded from TNC's website: www.nature.org – click to Pennsylvania, then look for "Weathering Climate Change."

Actions that can be taken by Trail clubs include all the same kinds of work currently performed to keep the Trail Corridor healthy ecologically; and, as research illuminates sensitive species at risk and how we can assist those species, future Trail management activities can incorporate appropriate actions recommended by ecologists.

MCM Policy

Driving personal vehicles to reach the A.T. for Trail work and for recreation constitutes the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from club operations and the visiting public. While much driving is unavoidable, MCM promotes carpooling wherever possible in conjunction with club work trips, organized hikes and other club activities where carpooling is practical. For example, our hike leaders routinely arrange carpooling to hikes that are outside the Baltimore metropolitan area.

SECTION 5(C)

Open Areas and Vistas

Overview

From the AT's beginning, the scenic opportunities provided by open areas in the forest cover have been considered one of the most important features of the Trail experience. Over the years, many of these opportunities have been lost through reforestation and abandonment to natural succession from former agricultural uses. Presently, trees and shrubs are rapidly growing in many areas along the Trail that were once open fields and meadows. Concern has been expressed in the Trail community that, unless active measures are taken to maintain these open areas, the landscape's diversity will be diminished and, with it, the Trail experience.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

By Board of Managers resolution, ATC adopted the following policy in 1995:

1. ATC and the A.T. maintaining clubs shall give the management of balds, fields, and vistas a high priority and address it through the local management planning process.
2. ATC shall develop, as quickly as possible, management guidelines to assist the clubs, seeking out the knowledge and expertise of the NPS, USFS, and other sources.
3. As a first step, ATC, in consultation with clubs and management partners, will undertake an inventory of the open areas, including balds, fields, meadows, pastures, and vistas. This inventory should include historic balds and fields which might be reestablished and open areas, including viewpoints, which may not be on the Trail but would be easily accessible with signs and side trails.
4. Management considerations should include hiker experience, resource protection, agency policies, ecological sensitivity, and historic and current use patterns. Some sites may require working with the Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO) on an environmental assessment.
5. Management actions should be specifically tailored to each site according to its unique blend of historic, biological, geographic, aesthetic and other qualities and limitations. Methods, including mowing, grazing, burning, hand cutting, or the use of herbicides, should be determined considering the above site characteristics as well as potential environmental impacts, accessibility, cost, and long-term feasibility.
6. ATC, the clubs, and other partners will work together to mobilize resources needed for maintaining these areas, including local expertise, financial support, volunteer labor, and local farmers or others who will mow, graze, or otherwise continue former agricultural uses under special-use permits or contracts.
7. Management activities should be monitored and evaluated periodically and adapted to meet changing conditions or to reflect new knowledge and technology.
8. Records, including photographs, should be kept to document management activities.

NPS Policy

The Comprehensive Plan for the Appalachian Trail notes the significance of open areas and recommends that active measures be undertaken to preserve their open character, so long as other Trail values are protected.

Pennsylvania DCNR

DCNR has a set of guidelines for vistas and overlooks that details numerous management issues, including placement of the vista, preservation of the viewshed, vegetation management, size and safety.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission actively manages open areas and vistas for habitat-enhancement purposes. However, the Commission does not actively manage open areas and vistas along the A.T.. This role has been delegated to ATC and the Trail clubs. Local game land managers and the Game Commission's A.T. coordinator will be contacted before any major vegetation management action is undertaken on game lands.

Other Partners—Other agency partners maintain scenic vistas and open areas on their lands; however, these practices usually would not affect the Trail. **PennDOT** and the **Pa. Turnpike Commission** very actively manage and maintain rights-of-way along roads and highways. The Fish and Boat Commission maintains waterway access areas on its lands. The South Mountain Restoration Center has no known open-area and vista-management program.

MCM Policy

MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux state Forest. The Poles Steeple vista in Pine Grove Furnace State park has been managed by the Bureau of Parks. MCM has historically limited its activities to treadway maintenance of the side trail from the parking lot and the spur trail leading from the A.T. on the back side of the ridge.

MCM endorses keeping vistas open by active means, but will consult with the ATC Regional Office and/or cognizant agency partners before proposing or undertaking any such work. In some cases such clearing could require professional assistance, and that would need to be obtained via the ATC.

Inventory

Current all-year vistas are the following, listed in a south to north order.

- Pole Steeple overlook— not maintained by MCM, although its public access trail is maintained by MCM for historical reasons (the A.T. segment maintainer blazed it more than 20 years ago)
- White Rocks side trail near Center Point Knob—view of Cumberland Valley
- Rocky Ridge, just south of Whiskey Spring; several views to northeast
- Gas pipeline, Cove Mountain—first view of the Susquehanna River for north-bound hikers
- Hawk Rock above Duncannon; views to north, east, and slightly south over the Susquehanna River

Open area (managed under a special use permit)

- Hay fields on either side of the Trail on both sides of PA 850 trailhead.

Action Plan

- The choice of new vistas shall be decided case-by-case, based on such factors as the value of the openness, cost of clearing, ecological sensitivity, and use patterns, both historical and projected.
- MCM will consult with the A.T. Park Office to determine environmental impacts of vegetation clearing on ATPO land.
- Vistas to be managed by active means and the methods of management shall be a coordinated effort between the Supervisor of Trails, Trail maintainers, and management partners.
- Maintenance of scenic vistas shall be addressed in the Club's work plan as appropriate.
- If a proposed vista is located on Game Lands, the Club shall obtain approval by the Game Commission before proceeding with any work.

Methods to keep a vista open can include:

- Cutting of encroaching brush and small trees at ground level.
- Selective choice of larger trees to be felled, to open or expand a vista.
- Any vegetation removal shall be done in a way that maintains a naturally occurring open appearance, and removed vegetation shall be placed out of sight from the vista or Trail.

Maintenance of an existing open area can be carried out by Trail club volunteers, work crews, or local farmers under special-use permits. These activities, if deemed appropriate, will be noted in MCM's annual work plan. Reestablishment of a grown-over area that was once open, or an area that is only partially open, requires a significant amount of advance planning. Since vegetation management by cutting, burning, or grazing involves active intervention, surveys for cultural and biological resources often are required before any on-the-ground work. Often a year or more is needed to coordinate with all of the parties involved in a large-scale, open-area restoration project. MCM would need to assess our capabilities for undertaking a project, as well as the need for scientific and technical assistance, as well as money, equipment, and crew support from ATC and other partners.

SECTION 5(D)

Timber Management

Overview

With few exceptions, the Appalachian Trail travels through eastern hardwood forests in its 2100-mile traverse of the Appalachian Mountains. Prior to the Trail-protection effort, many of these lands were managed primarily for such timber products as lumber, pulp, and firewood. In some areas along the Trail, timber management remains the predominant use of adjoining private and public land.

A well-planned timber harvest near the Appalachian Trail can have little or no discernible impact upon the Trail. If poorly planned or carried out, however, a timber harvest can have dramatic, long-term effects on water, soils, and visual-resource values. The removal of vegetation and the soil disturbance associated with careless construction of roads and skid trails can cause a substantial increase in water run-off and erosion. The removal of part or all of the vegetative overstory in an area that can be seen from the Trail also can have a significant effect on the scenic environment of the Trail. Timber access roads can create visual scars or allow access to the Trail for all-terrain vehicles, horses, and other incompatible activities.

Most of the Trail is located on National Park Service or national forest lands that are managed specifically to protect and provide a premier backcountry recreational experience. The National Park Service does not allow consumptive utilization of park resources, including timber resources, on any lands within the National Park system. The U.S. Forest Service classifies lands within the A.T. management or prescription area as unsuitable for commercial timber production. The intent of both agencies is that the lands in the Trail corridor are to be managed for their recreational values, not their timber values.

Agency partners and responsible timber companies usually employ forest-management practices designed to minimize negative impacts to soils and water resources. On publicly owned forest lands, agency partners usually are sensitive to the visual impacts of proposed timber harvests and their accompanying roads upon the scenic environment of the Trail. Selective cutting techniques, erosion-control measures, and reclamation and reseedling measures can be used, and harvest-area boundaries can be modified to reduce visual impacts.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC encourages Trail clubs and local ATC representatives to work with agencies to review, comment on, and modify area-specific plans for management of individual timber stands adjacent to or visible from the Trail.

In November 1982, the ATC Board of Managers adopted the following guidelines for timber harvesting on NPS corridor lands:

1. Forest-resource management to enhance the Trail corridor (i.e., noncommercial vegetation manipulation for vistas, balds, etc.) is an integral part of corridor land management.
2. Management of forest resources to protect and enhance the A.T. corridor shall be considered as part of local management planning to ensure that such activities are compatible with the goals of the ATC and take into consideration other noncommercial forest resource-management activities.
3. Local clubs should consult periodically with the ATC and the NPS on forest resource-management activities, practices, and plans to ensure that they continue to be consistent with over-all A.T. corridor planning and management.
4. Forest resource management for timber (i.e., commercial harvest of firewood, saw timber, or pulpwood) will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and only when local clubs can show that such activity is consistent with the goals of the ATC.
5. Before local clubs can undertake activities to manage the forest for timber, a complete plan must be developed by the club, in consultation with the local management partner, and be approved by the ATC Regional Management Committee, ATC Board, the National Park Service, and other public landowners (if such lands are affected).

6. Before any club can undertake forest-resource management for timber (i.e., commercial timber harvesting), the ATC and the NPS must finally resolve the questions of who may collect and use the proceeds from any commercial activity.
7. This policy shall apply specifically to corridor lands owned in fee by the National Park Service.

These guidelines are subject to NPS rules and regulations regarding such management.

ATC will support recommendations that protect and enhance the visual quality of the Trail.

National Park Service Policy

As a general policy, NPS does not allow *consumptive* utilization of nonrenewable or renewable park resources, including timber resources. This policy does *not* prohibit vista clearing, management of open areas and meadows, removal of exotic species, restoration of natural plant communities, or removal of trees to protect the safety of Trail users.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Bureau of Forestry - The bureau has taken the 400-foot A.T. corridor out of its “active” timber management inventory and will only allow timber harvesting within the corridor for human safety. The A.T. corridor is currently listed as a “preservation zone” by the bureau. The bureau will attempt to minimize the visual impacts of timber-harvesting operations that are within the area identified as visually sensitive by ATC and Trail clubs when this status has been accepted by the bureau.

Bureau of State Parks - Timber harvesting is currently done for safety or salvage purposes or to improve wildlife habitat. Any future sales that would affect the ATC or its corridor would be coordinated with ATC and local clubs.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Within the A.T. corridor, the Game Commission manages timber for safety and habitat-management purposes only. The Commission will do no even-aged timber management except to mitigate the results of natural disasters, such as a gypsy-moth infestation. ATC and local Trail clubs will be contacted if uneven-aged timber management is expected to affect the Trail.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

- MCM will seek to limit timber harvesting activity both inside and outside the corridor that would adversely affect the Trail.
- MCM opposes all timber harvesting inside the Trail corridor. The Club will as possible seek to limit timber harvesting outside the Trail corridor that will adversely affect the Trail viewshed, generally in cooperation with ATC or ATPO activities.
- All timber activities within the Trail corridor must be approved by NPS.
- MCM will notify the A.T. Park Office of any timber harvesting of which it becomes aware within the A.T. corridor.

SECTION 5(E)

Pest Management

Overview

Attempts to control pest outbreaks present one of the most controversial aspects of management of Trail lands. Many types of native and introduced pest species are present on Appalachian Trail lands and lands adjoining the Trail. Forest pests are the cause of some of the most dramatic, naturally caused impacts to the Trail environment. Defoliators such as the spruce budworm and gypsy moth continue to go through cyclic outbreaks or spread to new geographic regions. Diseases such as Dutch elm disease progress in much the same fashion as did chestnut blight sixty years ago, resulting in the disappearance of tree species from their natural range. Besides the obvious negative visual effects that insect and disease outbreaks can have on the Trail environment, significant economic impacts to surrounding areas occur as timber inventories drop. Nearby residential owners are frequently outspoken in their demands that control measures be undertaken.

Pest management in agricultural areas, such as the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, is also a significant concern for local Trail managers. Pesticides are an important component of many ongoing farming operations, including many adjacent to or on Appalachian Trail lands with reserved rights or special-use permits. Use of pesticides has the potential for serious conflict with the recreational use of the Trail.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has no formal policy on pest management. In past statements on specific pest-management controversies, ATC has represented the general interests of hikers by seeking to ensure that precautions are taken before aerial spraying of pesticides. ATC has supported active measures to protect Trail users, including posting temporary signs during aerial spraying and protection measures for open water supplies. ATC also has advocated the use of biodegradable pesticides, manual, site-specific application of pesticides, and other approaches that minimize adverse environmental impacts.

NPS Policy

Pests are living organisms that interfere with the purposes or management objectives of a specific site within a park or that jeopardize human health or safety. Decisions concerning whether or not to manage a pest or pest population will be influenced by whether the pest is an exotic or a native species. Native pests will be allowed to function unimpeded, except as noted below.

The NPS may control native pests to: (1) conserve threatened or endangered species, or unique specimens or communities; (2) preserve, maintain, or restore the historical integrity of cultural resources; (3) conserve and protect plants, animals, and facilities in developed areas; (4) prevent outbreaks of a pest from invading uninfested areas outside the park; (5) manage a human health hazard when advised to do so by the U.S. Public Health Service (which includes the Centers for Disease Control and the NPS public health program); and (6) to otherwise protect against a significant threat to human safety (2006 NPS *Management Policies*, 4.4.5.1).

The National Park Service conducts an integrated pest management (IPM) program to reduce risks to the public, park resources, and the environment from pests and pest-related management strategies. Integrated pest management is a decision-making process that coordinates knowledge of pest biology, the environment, and available technology to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by cost-effective means while posing the least possible risk to people, resources, and the environment.

In control of gypsy-moth populations, NPS has supported the use of Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*),

a biological-control agent, where its use will be effective. Generally, Bt is considered most effective when treating isolated outbreaks or areas with lower gypsy-moth population levels. Chemical use for control of gypsy moth has been discouraged, although there have been instances when chemicals have been used on NPS-acquired Trail lands.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Bureau of Forestry - The Bureau is responsible for conducting a cooperative gypsy moth control program on private and residential lands and on all State Forest and State Park lands. The Bureau also cooperates with other state agencies, federal agencies, and forest stewardship landowners to suppress gypsy moth populations on forest lands managed by them. The Bureau employs an integrated pest management approach to gypsy moth management and is committed to the use of biological insecticides whenever possible in order to lessen the impact on non-target species. The A.T. would be treated where it passes through State Forest or State Park lands if those were being treated for some other qualifying reason. Trails, in and of themselves, are not qualifying areas. Shelters associated with a trail including the A.T. do qualify for treatment. Treatment of a portion of the A.T. would be considered as a cooperative venture if requested by the A.T. managers and if cost sharing funds were available.

Regarding other insect pests, there are about a dozen species which sometimes reach outbreak numbers and cause a lot of damage to forest trees. These can also be a nuisance for people who live, work or recreate in the forest. The following are a few of the more troublesome and potentially devastating non-native invasive insect species to Pennsylvania's forest resources that are of primary focus by the bureau: hemlock woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, and siren woodwasp.

Bureau of State Parks - Each state recreation area does its own preliminary analysis of the potential gypsy-moth problem. Results are sent to the Bureau of Forestry's Division of Forest Pest Management for review. Further analysis by the Bureau of Forestry, if warranted, guides the selection of an appropriate control program.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

. PGC carries out gypsy moth pest-management work on its lands in cooperation with DCNR's Bureau of Forestry.

Other Partners—Pest Management is not a significant issue for most other Trail partners. The Pennsylvania Fish Commission, the only exception, controls nuisance algae blooms by waterway draw-downs and, to some extent, by the application of herbicides.

MCM Policy

MCM policy is that there should be no spraying of toxic agents over water sources and overnight use areas. MCM strongly encourages their agency partners to notify MCM and the public of any spraying activities by posting notices at trailhead sign boards and affected shelters. If we received notice of planning spraying, we will work with the partner agencies to ensure that such notices are posted.

Action Plan

- Any unusual infestation of an area will be reported to ATC.
- When applicable, we will coordinate with partner agencies to assure that notices of any planned spraying are posted at trailhead sign boards and affected shelters.

SECTION 5(F)

Threatened and Endangered Species

Overview

The terms “threatened” and “endangered” pertain to the specific legal status of a plant or animal species as designated by the Secretary of the Interior, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, following a recommendation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Endangered Species Act prescribes specific procedures for determining the eligibility of a species for threatened or endangered status. The process is a long one, requiring publication of a notice in the Federal Register, consultation with governors of affected states, and other safeguards. Other terms are used to describe the relative population of a species, including “rare,” “relict,” and “sensitive” species. These latter terms do not give a species any legal protection under the Endangered Species Act. They do, however, provide a general indication of the size of a local population.

An “endangered” species is one that is close to extinction throughout all or a significant part of its range. A “threatened” species is one likely to become endangered in the near future.

“Threatened” and “endangered” species are provided expansive protection from federal action under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, which states in part:

“All federal departments and agencies shall, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary (of Interior), utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species...and by taking such action as is necessary to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence of such endangered species and threatened species or result in the destruction or modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary, after consultation as appropriate with the affected states, to be critical.”

This provision imposes significant constraints on federal activities, including actions that take place on federal lands and actions that might require federal permits, licenses, or funds.

Between 1989 and 2001, ATC, ATPO, and the U.S. Forest Service administered comprehensive natural-heritage inventories (often prepared by state natural-heritage offices under ATC contract) along the Trail. More than 2,100 populations of rare, threatened, and endangered species (plants and animals) and rare or exemplary natural communities have been identified at approximately 520 sites along the Trail. Monitoring programs, primarily for rare, threatened, and endangered plants, have been established in each of the 14 A.T. states, and more than 200 A.T. volunteers have been trained to monitor and report on those populations.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy adopted the following policy statement in April 1989:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy recognizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing the continued existence of threatened and endangered species and the obligations imposed by federal statute upon federal agencies (and by state law upon state agencies) for protection of threatened or endangered species. It is the policy of ATC to support and endorse efforts to ensure and promote the existence of federally listed, stated listed, locally listed, and candidate threatened or endangered species. ATC also believes that its principal mission, which is to protect and promote the Appalachian Trail, can aid efforts to maintain and enhance the existence of threatened and endangered species. As a matter of policy, ATC is confident that the Trail can coexist with occurrences of threatened or endangered species without adverse impact to the species. Should conflicts arise, ATC will resolve matters on a case-by-case basis through

consultation with its management partners and other concerned parties.

ATC will seek to ensure that its actions and the actions of Trail-maintaining clubs do not destroy, modify, or adversely affect threatened or endangered species or their habitat. ATC will support and cooperate in efforts by federal agencies, state agencies, and other concerned parties to inventory occurrences of threatened or endangered species on Trail corridor lands. Except in unusual circumstances, ATC will not publicize, or make available to the general public, information regarding the existence or location of any population of threatened or endangered species. ATC will further emphasize cooperation with agency procedures for review of proposed surface-disturbing activities (such as relocations or shelter-construction projects) and ensure that Trail planning and design take into account any potential for impact to threatened or endangered species prior to surface disturbance.

NPS Policy

The NPS will survey for, protect, and strive to recover all species native to national park system units that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. The NPS will fully meet its obligations under the NPS Organic Act and the Endangered Species Act to both proactively conserve listed species and prevent detrimental effects on these species. NPS cooperates with both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] Fisheries to ensure that NPS actions comply with both the written requirements and the spirit of the Endangered Species Act. This cooperation should include the full range of activities associated with the Endangered Species Act, including consultation, conferencing, informal discussions, and securing all necessary scientific and/or recovery permits.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

Bureau of Forestry - The Bureau can protect endangered plants and other plants on forest lands pursuant to its regulations, which read, in part at section 21.115, "The following activities are permitted:

(1) Gathering edible wild plants or plant parts for an individual's personal or family consumption, unless the plant is listed in Chapter 45 (relating to conservation of Pennsylvania native wild plants) as threatened, endangered, rare or vulnerable."

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission has regulatory jurisdiction over endangered and threatened birds and mammals, pursuant to state game laws. Section 2167 of the Game and Wildlife Code states it is "unlawful for any person... to bring into or remove... or to possess, transport, capture or kill... any wild bird or wild animal... which are endangered or threatened species."

Other Partners

PENNDOT and the Turnpike Commission must attempt to avoid impacts to endangered and threatened species when developing projects.

MCM Policy

Rare and Pennsylvania Threatened plant species are known to occur in the CVATC corridor. Their locations are not published or accessible to the general public. Generally the maintainer knows their locations. (Additional information may be obtained from the ATC MARO staff.) MCM will monitor the condition of the colonies of rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) plants. In the event that there is any change in the condition or any existing or potential impacts due to trail use or trail-related projects to the colonies, ATC will be notified.

Action Plan

- MCM will make sure the maintainers for the relevant trail sections are aware of RTE plant locations for monitoring purposes. The Club will coordinate with ATC to find new RTE monitors if needed in the future.
- MCM will consult with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office for the latest natural heritage information related to our section of the A.T.
- MCM will continue to participate in ATC and/or ATPO monitoring programs, using designated individuals for the monitoring activity.
- MCM will consult with the ATPO (via the ATC Regional Office) when development actions beyond routine trail maintenance are proposed on the MCM sections of the Trail.
- MCM will consult with the ATPO (via the ATC Regional Office) when it proposes Trail relocation, shelter construction or demolition, or other actions which would potentially disturb plant and animal life. The ATPO will then determine if any threatened or endangered species have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed action. If any of these species are found at the site of the proposed action, MCM will modify its action to avoid these species.

SECTION 5(G)

Wildlife Management

Overview

The natural habitats along the Appalachian Trail support a great variety of wildlife. In most cases, the narrowness of the Trail corridor precludes management practices that will significantly enhance habitat to a point of improving a species' over-all health, distribution, or range. However, in areas where there is increasing pressure from development, the corridor may provide an important source of forage and cover that sustains populations of small mammals and birds. The corridor can provide critical nest and den sites for species such as eagles, hawks, falcons, and waterfowl.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC does not have a formal policy regarding wildlife management. In general, ATC is supportive of agency programs and practices for maintaining and improving wildlife habitat, provided these activities do not conflict with primary Trail purposes. ATC provides information on sites along the Appalachian Trail where exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities exist to the authors of state wildlife viewing guides. The A.T. MEGA-Transect program includes wildlife monitoring.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service policy is to perpetuate native species (those that occur due to natural processes and not species that have been moved into the area). Native animal life in the NPS system shall be given protection against harvest, removal, destruction, harassment, or harm through human action, except where:

- hunting or trapping are permitted by law;
- fishing is permitted by law for either sport or commercial use or is not specifically prohibited;
- control of specific populations of wildlife as required for the maintenance of a healthy park ecosystem; or
- removal or control of animals is necessary to safeguard human health and safety.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania DCNR

MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux State Forest. The Bureau of Forestry manages its lands for wildlife diversity and production primarily through the use of timber management actions. The bureau staffs a wildlife biologist, who also helps review impacts on wildlife from proposed development projects on forest and adjacent lands

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission administers all State programs pertaining to wildlife through laws and regulations. In addition to endangered species protection, Commission codes prohibit the destruction of all wildlife species without a permit. The Commission actively manages its lands for game and non-game wildlife diversity and production.

DCNR Bureau of State Parks

The bureau considers wildlife-habitat management in all of its plans and actively manages habitat to increase diversity on its lands.

MCM Policy

We recognize the Pennsylvania DCNR, Game Commission, Fish and Boat Commission, and NPS to be the primary agencies responsible for wildlife management. We will cooperate with these agencies to protect and preserve the wildlife in the corridor.

Action Plan

- MCM will cooperate with the primary agencies responsible for wildlife management and notify the appropriate agency as to any misuse of lands which could affect wildlife in the MCM areas.
- MCM will notify the appropriate agency of any suspected violation of regulations regarding wildlife.
- MCM will make Club members aware of state hunting seasons and regulations.

SECTION 5(H)

Vegetation Management and Reclamation

Overview

The management of vegetation is an area very familiar to experienced Trail builders and maintainers. The removal, control of, or in some cases the promotion of plant species plays a large role in Trail construction and maintenance. Vegetation management involves the manipulation of plant species or habitat in order to meet some desired goal. The goal may range from simply keeping the footpath passable to that of maintaining an open landscape. In other instances, it may call for encouraging the conditions necessary for a desired species to thrive, such as a particular flowering plant or rare species or the control or removal of exotic or unwanted plants (garlic mustard, poison ivy or nettles) on the footpath or around a shelter.

Restoration or reclamation of disturbed sites is a less well-known area of land management. Here the goal is to return disturbed, eroded, or otherwise damaged areas to as near their previous appearance as possible. Reclamation projects on the Trail may range from mowing open areas to reseeding overused campsites, cleaning silted springs and polluted streams, repairing erosion caused by poor Trail design, and returning abandoned farm fields to woodland or meadow.

Trail managers may employ a variety of vegetation-management methods and tools, including manual methods (scythes and brush cutters), mechanical methods (mowing, brush-hogging), chemical methods (application of herbicide), prescribed fire, and biological methods (livestock grazing). In areas heavily impacted by overnight use, camping may be prohibited or restricted to designated areas to give damaged vegetation an opportunity to recover.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC encourages the use of vegetation management practices that will protect, enhance, or restore an environment surrounding the Trail that is compatible with trail values. The following policy statement was adopted by the Board of Managers in April 1989:

- The most common vegetation management practice on Appalachian Trail lands will be to take no action, other than routine actions necessary to keep the footpath open.
- Landscapes and plants will be modified only when necessary to meet approved objectives as identified in Local Management Plan for the area. Active vegetation management practices may be necessary to maintain, protect, or restore significant cultural landscapes, scenic resources, or plant and animal habitat. Examples include agricultural lands, open areas, vistas, and sensitive species habitat.
- Vegetation management practices should minimize long-term negative impacts to the aesthetic qualities of the Trail. At the same time, the selection of the most appropriate practice must minimize the negative effects to natural resources, such as soil and water.
- Selection of vegetative management practices must recognize the limitation of volunteer personnel and funding levels.
- When active vegetation management methods (beyond routine maintenance actions) are to be employed, a site-specific plan that takes into account local physical, biological, and social conditions will be developed.
- In areas that have been adversely affected by prior human activity, active measures may be employed to restore an area to a natural condition. These sites may include dumps, structures, gravel pits, roadbeds. Native plants will be used in the restoration process, except in extraordinary circumstances where management objectives dictate the use of nonnative species.

- In general, measures will not be undertaken to repair damage caused by landslides, floods, hurricanes, or fires, unless required for hiker safety, for reconstruction of the footpath or a related facility, or for protection of soil and water resources.
- Active measures may be used to control the invasion of non-active (exotic) species, particularly when they are a threat to a significant natural resource, scenic resource, or cultural landscape.
- Native vegetation may be planted or cultured to screen the Trail from negative visual influences and noise caused by nearby residences, roads, commercial centers, and utility structures.
- Herbicides should not be used for routine maintenance. Herbicides may be used in exceptional circumstances, for site-specific purposes only, where other methods are deemed ineffective for achieving a desired condition. Herbicide use shall require consultation and approval by the local Trail club, ATC, and the agency partner. Herbicides shall be used only in a manner and under circumstances specifically approved by the land-managing agency.
- Hikers should be notified of any major vegetation management activities (balds and open area clearing projects, prescribed burns, etc.) by use of temporary signs, ridgerunners, and other public notification procedures as appropriate.
- Activities will be coordinated among the local Trail club, ATC and the local agency partners.

NPS Policy

NPS policy describes the sorts of vegetation management and reclamation activities that can be carried out on NPS lands, including:

- encouragement of certain types of plants for aesthetic, wildlife, or vegetation management purposes;
- maintenance of certain types of vegetation for desired agricultural or livestock purposes;
- vegetation management to increase the ability of heavily used areas to withstand recreational use;
- retention or development of open areas, meadows, and vistas;
- removal of man-made features, repair of natural slopes, and replanting of native plants; and
- repair of areas damaged by fire-fighting activities.

In addition, reclamation may be undertaken to remove invasive/exotic species, contaminants, and non-historic structures or facilities, restore abandoned mineral lands, abandoned or unauthorized roads, areas overgrazed by domestic animals, or disrupted natural waterways, and reclaim areas disturbed by management activities (such as hazard-tree removal, construction, or sand and gravel extraction) or public use.

Pennsylvania Policy

Pennsylvania land-holding agencies are, for the most part, not actively involved in vegetation management and reclamation. However, agencies do manage natural vegetation on a limited basis for either habitat improvement or to maintain scenic vistas and openings.

Pennsylvania DCNR

The Bureau of Forestry actively manages reforestation projects on forest lands. The Bureau of State Parks no longer undertakes reforestation projects on its lands. The Bureau manages vegetation to increase species diversity by creating woodland openings and brush piles, carries out controlled burns, revegetates disturbed areas with native plants, and reconstructs riparian buffers.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission actively manages vegetation to increase wildlife diversity and productivity. Common practices include controlled burns, mowing, applications of lime and fertilizer, timber harvesting, spraying, reforestation, and replanting grasses, legumes, and shrubs.

MCM Policy

Restoration that may be required because of overuse, poor treadway or facility design, or even natural calamity will be done in close consultation with the other management partners. Identification of sites needing work, such as heavily eroded Trail sections, overused and trampled campsites, landslides, or eroding stream banks, will be identified through the Trail-assessment process. Trail maintainers, through their routine worktrips, will continue to minimize the impact on any vegetation, thus helping to maintain the natural appearance of the area. Trail clearing will in general be kept to the minimum A.T. specification, although in patches of briars and similar rapidly-growing invasive vegetation a somewhat wider patch may be cleared in the spring or fall to ensure that the Trail remains passable until the next maintenance trip. A possible exception is vista management (refer to “Open Areas and Vistas” section).

Chemical applications are not acceptable for vegetative management.

Action Plan

- MCM Trail maintainers will be educated to minimize any damage to the area, except for aggressive and invasive species.
- MCM will not use chemical applications for vegetative management.
- Any areas of restoration will be handled by MCM and agency partners. This will include site-specific plans and action. The plans will emphasize long-term solutions, reduction of soil erosion and the use of native plants.
- Agency partners, including the ATPO, will be consulted regarding any vegetation restorations that are proposed by MCM.

SECTION 5(I)

Cultural Resources

Overview

The lands crossed by the Appalachian Trail have a rich history. The land has been used and occupied for various reasons over the centuries. These sites, and the objects and other physical evidence left behind by these travelers and settlers, are an important part of our cultural heritage.

Cultural resources can range from individual artifacts—arrowheads, tools, bullets, housewares, and other items for human use—to structures and large areas of land. Campsites, farms, battlefields, and other broad areas of human occupation or use are also important to the historian or archaeologist.

Though cultural resource sites are vulnerable to gradual destruction from exposure to the elements, the most significant impacts usually result from man's activity. Cultural sites can be affected by surface-disturbing activities, such as treadway construction on a relocation, or by construction of a new shelter. They also can be affected simply by opening a new area to public use.

The most dramatic impacts result from vandalism. Vandalism can take many forms—graffiti, removal of artifacts, or destruction of unoccupied buildings and other structures. As a result, professional archaeologists are often cautious about releasing information on the location and importance of known cultural sites.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

The ATC Board of Managers adopted a policy statement regarding protection of cultural resources at its April 1989 meeting. The statement reads as follows:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) seeks to preserve and protect cultural resource sites, including those that are nominated, eligible, or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. To this end, ATC will seek to ensure that its actions, in concert with the actions of Trail-maintaining clubs and agency partners, do not adversely affect any cultural resource site eligible or potentially eligible for such designation.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy recognizes cultural resources as an integral part of the Trail environment and the obligations that are imposed by federal statute upon federal agencies (and by state law upon state agencies) for protection of cultural resources. It is the policy of ATC to support and endorse efforts to protect and enhance cultural resources located on or adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. ATC also believes that its principal mission, which is to protect and promote the Appalachian Trail, can aid efforts to protect cultural resources. As a matter of policy, ATC is confident that the Trail can coexist with and provide protection for cultural resource sites. Should conflicts arise, ATC will resolve matters through consultation with its management partners. If a situation arises where protection or use of the Trail has the potential to affect a cultural resource site, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will enter into formal consultation procedures with the involved agency partner(s), Trail-maintaining club(s), and the State Historic Preservation Office prior to undertaking any action which could adversely affect a significant or potentially significant cultural resource.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will further cooperate with the Trail-maintaining clubs and agency partners in efforts to promote and interpret important cultural resource sites, where appropriate, and efforts to prevent vandalism, damage or destruction of identified sites and artifacts.

Federal Policy

The Antiquities Act of 1906, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979, and several other laws provide legal protection for cultural resources on

federally owned lands.

Prior to any undertaking on federal lands that involves surface-disturbing activity, such as construction of a Trail relocation or shelter, a qualified archaeologist must determine if cultural resources are present and if they will be impacted. This is normally done as part of the overall evaluation of a proposal in an environmental assessment prepared by the federal agency.

The National Park Service has further internal policy direction. The National Park Service *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* (NPS-28) require each park manager to take affirmative actions to locate, identify, evaluate, preserve, manage, and interpret cultural resources so that they may be passed on to future generations in unimpaired condition.

Pennsylvania Policy

Department of Environment Protection (DEP) and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PMHC)—Significant historic and archaeological resources can be protected under the state's history code when development projects come under DEP regulatory review or, on federal land, review by National Park Service. The history code is administered by PMHC. Commission review is triggered when a DEP permit is required to complete a development project, or NEPA review of development proposals affects NPS lands protecting the A.T.

Pennsylvania DCNR

MCM works with the Bureau of Parks in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and with the Bureau of Forestry in Mischeaux State Forest. The iron furnace and associated artifacts in Pine Grove Furnace State Park are managed by the Bureau of Parks. The Bureau of Forestry is dedicated to protecting cultural resources on its lands. It maintains an inventory of significant cultural features and uses the inventory in guiding forest-management practices.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission preserves cultural resources on its lands in cooperation with the PHMC.

MCM Policy

The Trail will be managed in a way that will ensure the preservation of the historic and natural features. The club recognizes the need for a cultural-resource survey of any structure more than 50 years old, or prior to surface-disturbing activities. MCM is not presently aware of any historic or archeological resources on its section of the A.T apart from numerous charcoal hearths in the vicinity of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and several near the Tagg Run shelter. Early mining efforts at Center Point Knob may (or may not) fall within the purview of the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club; see the earlier discussion in Section 5(A). However, because other undiscovered resources may exist, MCM will consult with its agency partners regarding the potential presence of such resources at the time that a development action or ground disturbance is proposed. A cultural-resource survey by a qualified archaeologist may be required prior to surface-disturbing activities. (A cultural-resource survey does not necessarily require on-the-ground review).

Action Plan

- MCM will contact the ATPO (via the ATC Regional office) regarding any proposed trail relocation, shelter construction, or other ground disturbing actions to determine if historic or archeological resources may be present at the site. The ATPO will make a determination of the potential presence of cultural resources and will secure a cultural resource survey if one is deemed necessary.

SECTION 5(J)

Wilderness

Overview

In the Wilderness Act, Congress directed the secretaries of interior and agriculture to study and evaluate all lands under their jurisdictions for their wilderness potential and to recommend areas suitable for wilderness designation to the president. The president, in turn, must advise Congress of his recommendations with respect to designation of wilderness areas, and his recommendations become effective only if endorsed by Congress. In recent years, Congress also has introduced wilderness bills on its own. Congress has designated wilderness areas that encompass or are adjacent to the A.T., usually with explicit language regarding administration of the A.T. Today, more than 100 miles of the Trail pass through or are immediately proximate to designated wilderness, mostly in national forests. Several other areas, including a large portion of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, have been recommended for formal wilderness designation and are currently being managed as wilderness.

Within a wilderness area or area being managed as wilderness, the following activities are prohibited by law, unless provided for by special exception: roads, commercial enterprises, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, motorboats, landing of aircraft, and any other form of mechanical transport, structures, and installations.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—ATC has generally supported initiatives to designate wilderness areas next to or encompassing sections of the Appalachian Trail. Where the A.T. passes through or along the boundaries of designated wilderness areas, ATC and the maintaining clubs maintain the A.T. in accordance with the Wilderness Act, and individual area wilderness-management plans. Mechanized or motorized tools will not be used for maintenance, except as expressly allowed by the land-managing agency. ATC also has encouraged federal agencies to deal with specific shelter and Trail-marking issues on a case-by-case basis in wilderness-area management plans.

NPS Policy—Most of the lands within the boundaries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, including the land traversed by the Appalachian Trail, are managed by the National Park Service as wilderness, even though no formal designation has been approved by Congress. The preservation of wilderness character for these lands is the primary management objective, and activities that are inconsistent with that objective are prohibited. The Trail skirts the edges of several wilderness areas in Shenandoah National Park, and, in several cases, the footpath enters the wilderness areas for short distances. Those areas are managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act. Chapter 6 of the 2006 NPS Management Policies provides extensive guidance on management of wilderness areas within NPS-administered units.

Pennsylvania Policy

There are no designated wilderness areas, as defined by the Wilderness Act, along the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania.

MCM Policy

No action plan is necessary, but when appropriate MCM will participate with Trail partners in the agency planning process for individual wilderness-management plans.

SECTION 5(K)

Special and Unique Areas

Overview

A number of sites along the Appalachian Trail are special or unique because of their biotic, geologic, cultural, and/or scenic values. Areas that might be identified as special or unique areas include stands of old-growth, sites of historic events, unusual geologic formations and landforms, areas where unusual flora or fauna exist, and particularly scenic areas.

The preservation of these features is essential to the quality of the Trail experience, and steps should be taken to ensure that the resource values are protected.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has no official policy concerning the identification and management of special or unique areas, other than to encourage individual Trail clubs to recognize the importance of such areas and to include them in the local management plans.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service recognizes four management zones on its lands: natural, historic, park development, and special-use zones. Of these, the natural and historic zones are most applicable to the Appalachian Trail and are identified in the individual resource-management plans for each of the existing national park units.

NPS recognizes that special designations apply to parts or all of some parks to highlight the additional management considerations that those designated areas warrant. The NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office will consider proposals for special designations of areas on a case-by-case basis.

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR—The Bureau of Forestry has identified and actively protects special and unique areas. Two such areas found near the Appalachian Trail: (1) *Carbaugh Run*— Located in the Michaux State Forest, Carbaugh Run is a 780-acre white pine-hemlock, stream-bottom forest that was once heavily used for charcoal production. The site is approximately 1 1/2 miles east of the point where the Trail crosses Pa. 30 and 233. (2) *Meeting of the Pines*— Also located in the Michaux Forest, Meeting of the Pines is a 611-acre pitch, short-leaf, white and Virginia pine mixed forest. The site is located on Table Mountain approximately one mile west of the entrance to the South Mountain Restoration Center. The Bureau of Forestry also maintains a file of the state's largest trees.

Bureau of State Parks—Each state recreation area within the bureau maintains an inventory of special and unique areas. These sites are incorporated in resource-management plans being developed for each park. In addition, the bureau maintains a database of large trees on park lands.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The Game Commission maintains an inventory of special and unique areas on game lands. The inventory is also distributed to Pennsylvania Ecological Inventory Office (EIO) for incorporation into Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI). Information contained in the inventory is used by the Commission to determine protection and management strategies, but is usually not made available to the public.

Other Partners

The Fish and Boat Commission can protect all amphibians and reptiles within DCNR-designated natural areas. This is not applicable in the MCM A.T. sections.

MCM Policy

Wherever possible, the A.T. should be routed to include access to areas and features found in the region that are unique to the A.T. experience. Should problems arise which threaten these areas, appropriate action will be taken, under the guidance of ATC, NPS, and agency partners. No Special and Unique Areas have been identified on the MCM sections of the Trail.

Action Plan

- MCM will participate with Trail partners in any discussions related to designation of unique areas.

SECTION 5(L)

Agricultural Use

Overview

“Agricultural use that preserves pastoral scenery along the Trail is not only compatible but desirable, and cooperation with organizations dedicated to agricultural land preservation will be sought.”

—A.T. Comprehensive Plan, 1981

The Appalachian Trail’s history and purpose are laced with references to the bucolic settings provided by agricultural uses along the Trail. From the rolling hillside pastures and sugarbushes of the Vermont and New Hampshire countryside to the southern Appalachian farm scenes of Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee, agricultural uses provide an important component of the Trail environment. The definition of the Trail itself contains specific reference to the farmland scene as a fundamental component of the Trail: “The Appalachian Trail is a way, continuous from Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia, for travel on foot through the wild, scenic, wooded, pastoral, and culturally significant lands of the Appalachian Mountains.” The Comprehensive Plan for the Appalachian Trail goes on to state: “Open areas and vistas are a particularly pleasing element of the A.T. Management activities that preserve these characteristics are encouraged, so long as they reflect a sensitivity to other Trail values.”

Still, not all agricultural activities are compatible with the Trail environment—for example, feedlots, broad-spectrum applications of herbicides, hydroponics, and other high-intensity agricultural practices. And, even low-intensity agricultural uses can have an adverse effect on the Trail environment or Trail visitors.

In the late 1980s, the National Park Service began purchasing lands to protect the Appalachian Trail across the Cumberland Valley. During a highly contentious and controversial public review process, representatives from local Trail clubs, ATC, and the National Park Service gave assurances to local communities and farmers that the Appalachian Trail and agricultural use were fundamentally compatible activities, and that the Trail community would do everything possible to protect the farmland scene and be responsive to the concerns of the agricultural community.

In 1992, the Cumberland Valley Appalachian Trail Club the assignment of the Appalachian Trail section through the Cumberland Valley. The club established a farm committee specifically to deal with agricultural issues and worked closely with the farming community, ATC regional staff, and the National Park Service to develop and implement a strategy for managing agricultural uses within the Trail corridor. The club and ATC worked with special-use permittees and the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resource Conservation Service) to develop “farm conservation plans” for each of the farmland tracts that had been acquired. Site-specific recommendations for soil testing, liming, fertilizing, and contour-stripping were carried out; Integrated Pest Management procedures were implemented; and ATC and the National Park Service amended their cooperative agreement to fund erosion control measures and ATC’s monitoring of pest-control and other farm-management activities.

Many of the lessons learned in the Cumberland Valley are potentially applicable in other locations along the Trail where agricultural use is present within the Trail corridor.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

In April 1996, ATC's Board of Managers adopted the following policy statement to guide ATC programs with respect to agricultural use on Appalachian Trail corridor lands:

Recognizing the great diversity in agricultural practices and pastoral environments along the Trail corridor, it is the policy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to support and promote agriculture within the Trail corridor in locations where such use has been long-established and provides a desirable and appropriate setting for the Trail. Agriculture can serve as an excellent management tool for maintenance of open areas. When properly conducted, it can provide visual diversity, a pleasing recreational environment that complements and is compatible with the surrounding community, a beneficial resource use, and good community relations with a minimal burden on volunteer time and energy. Feedlots, hydroponics, pisciculture, greenhouses, and other high-intensity farming practices are normally considered incompatible with the Trail experience and will be discouraged. However, under most circumstances, pastures, hayfields, and croplands can provide a pastoral scene and a desirable measure of diversity in the Trail landscape while maintaining consistency with the purposes for which the Trail is managed. ATC will work with local Trail clubs and agency partners to preserve agricultural uses within the Trail corridor, where such uses enhance the Trail experience.

Croplands: Agricultural fields should be designed so that they can be farmed profitably using agricultural best-management practices, provided that such practices do not detract from the Trail experience or other Trail values. Pest control measures should comply with integrated pest-management recommendations for the use of pesticides and herbicides as set forth by the land-managing agency (or its designee).

Pasturelands: Pastures should be managed so that overgrazing, erosion, or other resource damage does not occur. In the event of resource damage, permit conditions should be amended or permits suspended until a desirable forage cover is reestablished. Bulls and other potentially aggressive livestock should not be permitted in pastures crossed by the footpath of the Trail. Riparian areas should be protected.

The Trail footpath should be located in its optimal location through croplands, pasturelands, and hay meadows, but, as long as the recreational experience and resource values for which the Trail is managed can be maintained, some adjustments may be considered if needed to maintain a viable agricultural operation. Solutions to on-the-ground issues should be worked out among all interested parties, including the local Trail club, ATC, the land-managing agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the permittee or prospective permittee(s). Farm-management plans, soil-conservation plans, crop rotations, agricultural conversions, livestock densities, and duration of grazing should follow Natural Resources Conservation Service or managing-agency recommendations.

ATC supports terms of five years or more for permits for agricultural activities, in order to encourage long-term relationships and allow permittees a reasonable rate of return on any investments in Trail-corridor lands. Permits should not be considered as rights: They may be revoked for noncompliance, and they should be reviewed every five years to ensure that the agricultural operations provide a net benefit to the Appalachian Trail. While permit fees should be based on fair market value, ATC encourages adjustments in permit fees to provide funds for assessment, monitoring, and site improvements and to recognize benefits that may accrue to the Trail from cropland or pastureland management.

NPS Policy

The National Park Service may issue leases or special-use permits [see Chapter 4 (I)] to individuals or organizations to conduct agricultural activities that are allowed on park lands. To date, the National Park Service A.T. Park Office has issued numerous special-use permits that allow for grazing,

farming, haying, and maple sugaring on Trail corridor lands. Many of these permits were issued shortly after the lands were acquired, usually so that an existing use could be continued. In most cases, these uses have enhanced the Trail experience by providing a landscape in keeping with the rural and pastoral setting that is part of the Trail.

Staff of the ATC Mid-Atlantic Regional Office regularly conducts meetings with a number of farmers and coordinate renewal of agricultural permits for park lands under cultivation in Cumberland Valley, a uniquely rich agricultural area along the whole Appalachian Trail. MARO staff also administer a contract for agronomic pest scouting services and prepare and submit annual pesticide proposals and use logs,

Pennsylvania Policy

DCNR—The State Parks Operations and Maintenance Division handles agricultural lease renewals, with a review by the Resources Management Section.

Game Commission--PGC conducts agricultural related activities on SGL's to benefit wildlife and permits sharecropping on SGL's by formal agreement with local farmers when it is beneficial to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

The fields on both sides of the Pa Route 850 road crossing are designated agricultural permit use areas. MCM will continue to work with the ATC Regional Office to maintain awareness of the purpose, conditions and status of the permits and -to ensure that the Trail markers, Trail location, and treadway condition remain in accordance with permit terms and conditions. Perceived problems will be reported to the ATC Regional Office.

SECTION 5(M)

National Environmental Policy Act

Overview

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the potential impacts of a proposed action or policy upon the environment before implementing the action or policy. “NEPA compliance” is the term used to describe the process of evaluating and documenting the potential impacts of an action upon the environment. Fortunately, normal Trail maintenance and most other actions undertaken by ATC and the clubs do not have the potential for significant environmental impact. For undertakings like a relocation of the footpath or construction of a new shelter, however, NEPA compliance must be done before construction starts.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy

ATC has no formal policy regarding compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; however, in practice, ATC supports federal and state agency activities to comply with NEPA. ATC frequently participates in review and comment upon environmental assessments and environmental-impact statements for projects that might affect the Trail, and encourages Trail clubs to do the same.

NPS Policy

The NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office requires preparation of an environmental assessment for:

- construction of a new shelter
- construction of a major bridge (more than 35 feet long or requiring significant excavation)
- construction of a parking lot with the capacity for more than 10 vehicles
- major and minor relocations of the footpath
- “open areas” rehabilitation projects
- any other action that includes a significant amount of soils disturbance or removal of vegetation.

The NPS Appalachian Trail Park Office prepares an environmental assessment that describes the proposed action, any alternatives that are being considered, and the known environmental consequences of each course of action. The ATPO a “finding of no significant impact” (FONSI) if there are none, or issues a statement that a formal environmental-impact statement is necessary because there *is* the potential for significant environmental impact. If a FONSI is issued, work on a project can begin. Certain conditions, or “mitigating measures,” may be identified in the process to reduce identified impacts to the environment, and these measures need to be included in the project.

Pennsylvania Policy

All state agencies must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when they receive federal funds to carry out specific projects or actions on either public or private lands. The granting of federal funds triggers NEPA compliance at the state level. Most state agency programs, however, are carried out without federal involvement and do not require the agency to comply with NEPA.

MCM Policy

MCM recognizes its responsibilities for compliance with NEPA and will maintain awareness of what activities have the potential for significant impacts to the environment and when an agency partner normally is required to prepare an environmental assessment. We will also be alert for activities that might occur on adjacent federal lands, such as timber harvests, road-construction projects, and utility-line projects, that the club would like to comment on during the agency’s NEPA review process.

Action Plan

- MCM will ensure that any proposal for a Trail relocation or development or removal of a facility is evaluated by the NPS for compliance with NEPA. In general, all relocations are coordinated via the ATC Regional Office, and assistance with NEPA compliance requirements will be requested from that office as necessary. Actions known to require NEPA documentation include construction of overnight-use sites or parking areas (more than ten-car capacity) and major relocations of the Trail footpath.
- Any proposed Trail club activity that will require preparation of an environmental assessment should be noted as such in a club's annual work plan, and lead time should be allocated for the agency to conduct an environmental assessment.

SECTION 5(N)

Exotic Species

Overview

Invasive exotic species have been taking hold in the Appalachians for decades, even centuries before the A.T. was built, but they have only more recently been recognized as a threat to the Trail experience. Probably the most widespread identification of invasive exotic species along the Appalachian Trail began in 1989, with the undertaking of the Appalachian Trail natural-heritage inventories. Those state-by-state reports identified invasive exotic plant and animal species because they frequently represented a threat to populations of rare and indigenous plants and animals found along the Trail. In recent years, more extensive identification of exotic species by ATC staff has occurred in many regions of the A.T.

Much remains to be learned about the presence and extent of invasive exotic species along the A.T. However, it is becoming increasingly evident within the scientific community that invasive exotic species represent one of the most significant threats to biodiversity worldwide. This threat is recognized by the federal government, which has formed an interagency task force to address the problem. The Trail environment is no exception. From Georgia to Maine, invasive exotic species are threatening to displace native species—and, in some cases, rare species—from their habitats.

Eradication of invasive exotic species can be very challenging. In many areas, invasives are firmly established as part of the ecosystem. Control can be difficult, especially in an area as lengthy and exposed as the Appalachian Trail. In the face of such a challenge, establishing criteria for when and where to devote funds as well as volunteer and staff time for control of invasive exotic species is an adaptive strategy that ensures the most return for the resources spent. In addition, partnerships with other groups interested in protecting native species and limiting the impact of invasive exotic species on the environment can often increase the capacity and efficiency of control efforts.

Existing Policy

ATC Policy—In 2002, the ATC Board of Managers adopted the following policy on exotic species:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and its member clubs recognize the potentially adverse impacts of invasive exotic plant and animal species upon the ecosystems through which the Trail passes. Proliferation of these species may significantly alter the natural communities along the Trail and threaten biodiversity.

- Exotic species are defined as species, either plant or animal, that occur in a given place outside of their native ranges as a result of human actions. Exotic species that pose a threat to the native species of the area they occupy are considered invasive.
- The Conservancy will work to manage invasive exotics in cooperation with its agency partners, Trail maintaining clubs, and other interested groups. This effort will include the following elements:
 - Education—ATC will incorporate information on invasive exotic species and the threats they present into its public-information efforts. As part of this effort, the Conservancy will seek to raise the collective awareness of its members, volunteers, and staff regarding the potential harm caused by invasive exotic species, their rate of expansion, and methods that can be employed to control them effectively.
 - Monitoring—The occurrence and spread of invasive exotic species will be monitored as resources permit. Priority will be given to those areas where threatened and endangered species are at risk and in natural communities that are most vulnerable to invasion.

- Control—To the extent feasible, invasive exotic species will be controlled with priority given to those areas (1) where invasive exotic species have the potential to do the greatest harm; and (2) where actions to control invasive exotic species will do the greatest good and have the highest likelihood of success. Control methods will utilize the best scientific management practices available and will not be implemented until approvals have been obtained from appropriate land management and regulatory agencies. Control methods that have adverse impacts on nontarget species will only be used where there is a clear, long-term benefit to the natural community or its component species.

NPS Policy—The National Park Service recognizes the introduction of exotic species as a form of human disturbance, one that sometimes has far ranging and very destructive impacts on natural systems. As it seeks to reestablish natural systems and processes on park lands whenever possible, the NPS has resolved to control the spread of exotic species using the best technologies within available resources, and help reestablish native plant and animal populations in disturbed landscapes. Among other cases, the NPS has determined that management action is necessary when, as a result of human influences, a population occurs in an unnaturally high or low concentration (a typical effect of invasive exotic species) and when it is necessary to protect threatened or endangered species.

For more information, see 2006 NPS Management Policies, section 4.4.4. All exotic plant and animal species that are not maintained to meet an identified park purpose will be managed—up to and including eradication—if control is prudent and feasible, and the exotic species:

- interferes with natural processes and the perpetuation of natural features, native species or natural habitats;
- disrupts the genetic integrity of native species;
- disrupts the accurate presentation of a cultural landscape;
- damages cultural resources;
- significantly hampers the management of park or adjacent lands;
- poses a public health hazard as advised by the U.S. Public Health Service (which includes the Centers for Disease Control and the NPS public health program); or
- creates a hazard to public safety.

MCM Policy and Action Plan

- MCM has been scheduling annual work trips, in coordination with ATC, to remove invasive species, particularly garlic mustard, on assigned Trail sections.
- MCM will continue to coordinate with ATC and NPS to focus on volunteer invasive removal work targeting Early Detection and Rapid Response Species. These are often in areas prioritized for their unique natural resources, rare species, low invasive numbers or newly discovered invasive species.

APPENDIX A

Memorandum of Understanding, ATC and MCM

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
for the
APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL
between the
MOUNTAIN CLUB OF MARYLAND
and the
APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONFERENCE

Purpose. This memorandum provides a concise statement of specific understandings and working relationships between the Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) and the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC). It applies only to those activities of the MCM that relate to the management of the Appalachian Trail (AT) and Trail corridor lands.

Background. From its inception in 1925, the ATC worked with existing trail clubs, and fostered the development of new clubs, to create the Appalachian Trail. This partnership evolved into a federation of maintaining clubs, coordinated by the ATC towards the common goal of perpetuating and protecting the Trail. In 1968, the National Trail System Act gave overall responsibility for the Appalachian Trail to the Secretary of the Interior. The Trail is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), in consultation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS), and in cooperation with state agencies over whose lands the AT passes. This memorandum acknowledges the ultimate responsibility and authority for federal and state agencies to administer lands under their jurisdictions in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Delegation. The Appalachian Trail crosses federal lands in national parks and national forests and lands ("ATPO Lands"), outside of the proclaimed or designated boundaries of existing national forests and national parks, that were acquired by the NPS specifically for the protection of the Trail. A 1980 USFS/ATC Memorandum of Agreement provides guidelines for the cooperative management of the AT on national forest lands. National forest plans designate Appalachian Trail "Management Area" (ATMA) or "Prescription Area" (ATPA) lands along the Trail. In 1984 and 1993, certain ATPO lands ("Transfer Lands") were administratively transferred to the Forest Service. In 1984, the Forest Service signed an agreement with the ATC that delegated "operations, development, and maintenance responsibilities" for these lands to the ATC, with authority to subdelegate to member clubs. Also in 1984, the National Park Service amended a 1970 NPS/ATC Memorandum of Agreement for cooperation in the administration of the Trail by delegating to the ATC the responsibility to serve as the guarantor that the AT volunteer community will adequately manage and protect the AT and ATPO corridor lands. Under these authorities, the ATC's Board of Managers, in consultation with Trail maintaining organizations and agency partners, sets policies regarding the protection, management, and use of the Trail. The ATC hereby confirms and the MCM hereby acknowledges the MCM's authority and responsibility for the maintenance of the Appalachian Trail and related facilities and the management of ATPO lands between Darlington Trail and the Susquehanna River, and between Pine Grove Furnace State Park and Center Point Knob, all in Pennsylvania. This memorandum formalizes the MCM's responsibility for the Trail that the Club assumed in 1935.

ATC Support. The ATC agrees to regularly provide the MCM with information on laws, regulations, and agency policies with which the Club must comply. The ATC will regularly communicate ATC policies, Trail standards, and local management planning procedures, and provide backup support for the Club's operational responsibilities. To the extent authorized by the Board of Managers, the ATC will provide technical and financial assistance to the Club for the management of the Trail, monitoring of ATPO lands, and provision of public information and education.

Memorandum of Understanding, ATC and MCM – page 2

MCM Responsibilities. The MCM agrees to maintain the Trail for which it is responsible to ATC's standards for marking, clearing, and treadway care, as specified in such A TC publications as *Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*. The MCM will manage the Trail, Trail-related facilities, and ATPO lands in accordance with policies presented in the A TC's *Local Management Planning Guide*, as detailed in the Club's *Local Management Plan* (LMP). Specific MCM authorities and responsibilities include, but are not limited to 1) Trail construction and maintenance (relocation and side trail design and construction; footpath protection and hardening with water diversion structures, puncheon, and rockwork; pathway obstruction removal; route marking with blazes, signs, and cairns), 2) facilities construction and maintenance (shelter, privy, and bridge construction; trash and illegal fire ring removal), 3) Trail and corridor lands management (regular revision of the LMP, Trail assessment, monitoring, regular cooperation and communication with the ATC and agency partners), and 4) information and education (contribution to revisions of the *Appalachian Trail Guide to Pennsylvania*, hiker education, and provision of information about the Trail in the Club's section to the ATC, agencies, and the public). To the extent feasible, the MCM agrees to assist with the Trail protection, management, and monitoring efforts of the Trust for Appalachian Trail Lands.

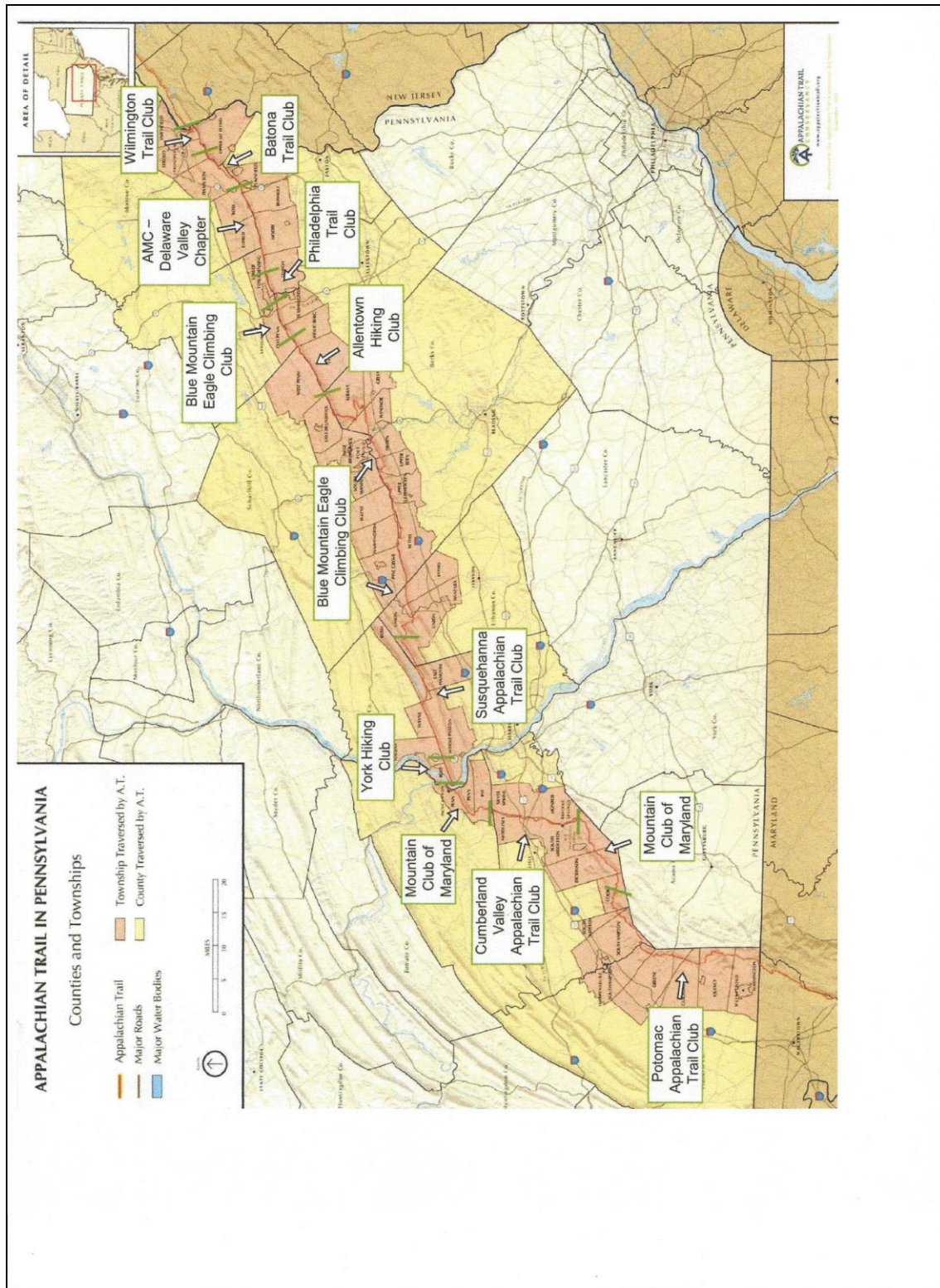
Cooperative Management. The AT cooperative management system is based on a commitment to cooperation, consultation, and collaboration by all partners. Disagreements that arise should be resolved as close to the source as possible. The MCM has sole authority for dealing with issues among its volunteer members. MCM's President or designee will represent the Club in resolving differences between the Club and Pennsylvania agencies, federal agencies and the ATC. ATC's Vice Chair for the Mid-Atlantic Region, aided by A TC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative, will represent the Conference in local and regional issues that involve the Club. Questions of Club territorial jurisdiction, acceptance of ATC policies, or Club status within the Conference, and matters that cannot be resolved locally or regionally, are the responsibility of the ATC's Board of Managers, aided by ATC's Executive Director and staff.

Signed _____/s/
David B. Field, Chair
Appalachian Trail Conference
Date [24 April 1997]

Signed _____/s/
Patty Williams President
Mountain Club of Maryland
Date [5/30/97]

APPENDIX B

Pennsylvania AT Trail Map



Appendix C

KEY PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)	911
Harrisburg State Police	(717) 671-7500
PA State Police Newport Barracks	(717) 567-3110
Cumberland County Emergency Management	(717) 240-6100
Perry County Emergency Management	(717) 582-4311
ATC Mid-Atlantic Office (Boiling Springs, PA)	(717) 258-5771
ATPO Harpers Ferry	(304) 535-6631
Pine Grove Furnace State Park	(717) 486-7174
Michaux State Forest	(717) 352-2211
PA Game Commission (Southcentral Regional Office)	———— (814) 643-1831
Key Members of the Mountain Club of Maryland:	
William Saunders (President)	(443) 805-5408
Jerry Wright (Supervisor of Trails)	(443) 803-5416
William Saunders (Shelters Supervisor)	(443) 805-5408
John Barrett (Corridor Monitor Coordinator)	(443) 878-7852