

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: APPA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

In the year 2016, the world-renowned, 2,175-mile Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) continues to offer superlative opportunities for short and long-distance hiking, personal challenge and interaction with the natural world in the densely populated eastern United States. The Trail is protected by an unbroken thread of 250,000 acres of public land and serves as a beacon for engaging partners, communities and visitors in shared stewardship of the Trail and its wealth of natural resources through the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect program. This well-established environmental monitoring program serves to understand changes in the condition of resources and thus more effectively protect them; fosters public appreciation for nature in general and conservation of the Appalachian Trail in particular; and tells the story of the status of the health of Appalachian Trail lands to visitors, neighbors, and the general public. Neighboring communities and schools are further involved with the A.T. through the Trail to Every Classroom program which helps teachers use the A.T. as a resource both within and outside of their classrooms. Thousands of students from Maine to Georgia are exposed to place-based education and service learning by using the Appalachian Trail to engage in their environmental, historical and cultural surroundings. They discover volunteerism by meeting community needs through service projects tied to their curriculum, and many go on to become Appalachian Trail volunteers. The Trail is treasured by the communities through which it passes. The corps of volunteers connected with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and its affiliated clubs who maintain and manage the Trail is robust, diverse and growing. Membership in ATC has at least doubled, to 90,000, and ATC's budget is balanced with multiple reliable revenue streams. The footpath itself is stable, sustainable and in its optimal location from Maine to Georgia.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Pamela Underhill

Site: APPA

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, more than 1,000 professional scientists, scholars and citizen-science volunteers will actively participate in a collaborative effort called the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect. The A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect program, built upon the success of the 2006 Exploring the Appalachian Trail MEGA-Transect Symposium and follow-up work by more than 70 scientists, will gather and analyze data on air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, forest health, land use, and nine other Vital Signs of the health of the environment of the Appalachian Trail. The program will help managers understand changes in the condition of resources and thus more effectively protect; foster public appreciation for conservation of the Appalachian Trail, and tell the story of the status of the health of Appalachian Trail lands to millions of visitors, neighbors, and members of the general public.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: APPA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

By 2016, the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect will be a well-known, scientifically credible, frequently referenced source of information about the health of the environment along the 2,175-mile length of the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will have a well-developed science-based media program that regularly disseminates information about air quality, water quality, forest health, and other Vital Signs of the Appalachian Trail to a variety of media outlets in the 14 states through which the Trail passes, reaching millions of Americans with stories of the health of the Trail, how it relates to their own back yards, and how they can get involved in protecting the Trail and its environment.

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Site: APPA

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, more than 100 partners, 40 communities, and 1,000 volunteers will regularly participate in environmental monitoring activities along the Appalachian Trail as part of the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect. The NPS, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the USGS, the U.S. Forest Service, universities, other schools and other MEGA-Transect partners will cooperatively design and implement programs for monitoring water quality, air quality, forest health, rare plant species, animals and animal habitat, land use, and other Vital Signs in a manner that emphasizes and provides critical roles for citizen-science volunteers.

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Site: APPA

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

In cooperation with the NY Department of Environmental Conservation, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, reconstruct the badly eroded A.T. footpath on Bear Mountain within Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park to first class, sustainable condition to withstand the exceptionally large numbers of visitors from the New York metropolitan area. This is the first section of the A.T. to ever have been constructed.

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RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Partnerships with neighboring communities and schools are established through the Trail to Every Classroom program which helps teachers use the A.T. as a resource both within and outside of their classrooms. Thousands of students from Maine to Georgia are exposed to place-based education and service learning by using the Appalachian Trail to engage in their environmental, historical and cultural surroundings. They discover volunteerism by meeting community needs through service projects tied to their curriculum. Young people involved in associations such as Girls Scouts and Boy Scouts are involved in environmental monitoring activities along the Appalachian Trail through the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect program.

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EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The NPS A.T. Park Office and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will continue and expand the Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) program. TTEC is a three-season, multi-disciplinary professional development series for educators aimed at providing the inspiration, knowledge and skills to transform classroom teaching into effective and exciting place-based education. Teachers who participate in TTEC develop their own curriculum that increases student literacy skills and fosters student understanding of and appreciation for the public lands and resources connected by the 2,175 miles of the Appalachian Trail. These curricula integrate hands-on study of the natural and cultural resources of communities from Georgia to Maine addressing concepts in ecology, sense of place, recreation, volunteerism and civics. At the heart of TTEC is the belief that students who are immersed in the interdisciplinary study of their own "place" are more eager to be involved in the stewardship of their communities and public lands.

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EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The A.T. Junior Ranger program, which targets teens, will continue to grow and enroll additional young people.

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PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Appalachian Trail was born created in partnership. The Cooperative Management System for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, involving several federal agencies, fourteen states, numerous local governments and thousands of citizen volunteers, continues to be a model for public-private collaboration in the conservation and management of a nationally significant natural, cultural and recreational resource. New programs such as the A.T. Environmental MEGA-Transect and A Trail to Every Classroom encourage and expand partnership activities through outreach to new partners.

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