

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) is a 2,175-mile footpath from Maine to Georgia.

The footpath is protected by a 270,000-acre corridor.

It links more than 75 parks and forests in 14 states, including 8 units of the national forest system and 6 other units of the national park system.

Some portion of the Trail is within a day's drive for almost two-thirds of the U.S. population.

3 to 4 million visitors hike on some portion of the trail each year.

The trail corridor also serves as a greenway, a flyway, and a "mega-transect" by which to monitor environmental health.



History

- 1921 - Idea for the A.T. conceived by Benton MacKaye and summarized in his article "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning".
- 1925 - MacKaye formed the Appalachian Trail Conference (now called the Appalachian Trail Conservancy), a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and management of the Trail.
- 1937 - Trail officially complete, thanks to Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC) and the efforts of countless volunteers.
- 1968 - Congress passes the National Trails System Act. The A.T. was the first trail to be recognized.
- 1978 - National Park Service (NPS) launches a land acquisition program to protect lands within a 1,000-foot wide corridor.
- 1984 - Department of the Interior formally delegates management responsibilities for the trail to ATC.
- 2003 - NPS and ATC complete a strategic plan that sets a bold new vision for the trail.
- 2006 - NPS and ATC complete resource management plan and launch place-based education and community outreach programs.

Management

- The A.T. is unique in that it's managed mostly by volunteers.
- Management is carried out through a cooperative system involving ATC, NPS, other public and private partners, and 30 volunteer trail clubs.
- The NPS and the agencies provide funding, support, and oversee federal and state compliance.
- Management responsibilities have been formally delegated to ATC by NPS
- ATC provides coordination between the agencies and support for the volunteers
- And the Volunteers build, maintain, patrol, and monitor the footpath and its surrounding lands.

