

## *Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Seasonal Programs Evaluation: Summary of Recommendations*

### **All Programs**

After meeting to discuss the many recommendations generated by the Seasonal Program Evaluation, some overall themes have been discovered. Three prominent issues that have come to light include:

- ATC must retain, develop and support our seasonal staff as professionals,
- ATC must develop standardized, organized and efficient management procedures
- ATC must effectively promote our seasonal programs as they serve as a core function of ATC's very nature

### **Trail Crew Programs**

In order to maximize our efficiency and effectiveness in managing and promoting our trail crew programs, the following immediate recommendations are proposed, in order of priority.

1. Find the most efficient way to keep an accurate, user friendly database of our volunteers, program-wide.
2. Follow the advice of human resources consultant John White and explore alternatives to ATC's current hourly pay structure for Crew Staff (and Ridgerunners).
3. Implement the "energy" recruitment plan for our volunteers, following assignments, costs and timeframes as outlined within.
4. Develop a standardized evaluation process for our crew programs trailwide.
5. Develop a Trail Crew Staff Handbook for our leaders.
6. Set up and promote at least two Konnarock crew sessions to accommodate weekend walk-on volunteers.

### **Ridgerunner/Caretaker Programs**

In order to maximize our efficiency and effectiveness in managing and promoting our Ridgerunner/Caretaker programs, the following immediate recommendations are proposed, in order of priority.

1. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (program evaluation included) for improved and efficient program management.
2. Develop a sample Ridgerunner/Caretaker field manual/handbook for improved seasonal staff performance and for program standardization.
3. Host a Ridgerunner/Caretaker Program Manager Conference for idea sharing, program improvement and program collaboration.
4. Develop small membership application cards/handouts for Ridgerunners to distribute to interested hikers (see GMC membership cards).
5. Research possibilities of corporate sponsorship of Ridgerunner Program with Karen Kinney development team.

### **Training Programs**

In order to maximize our efficiency and effectiveness in managing and promoting our training programs, the following immediate recommendations are proposed, in order of priority.

1. ATC will utilize Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) that outline the best administrative practices for managing all of our all training programs (trail skills, sawyer training, natural heritage, corridor boundary monitoring, environmental monitoring, etc.).
2. The ATC will implement a marketing and communications plan for the training program.
3. The ATC will offer an expanded range of training opportunities available to its clubs through a pilot Club Development training series.
4. Each ATC member club is encouraged to develop an education/training coordinator position to help coordinate member/volunteer training with their local ATC office.
5. The ATC will locate workshops as close to our target audience as possible.
6. The ATC will utilize a system for efficiently sharing training resources across the regions using electronic means.

Over the next two years, our long-term goals include:

### **Trail Crew Program**

1. Ensuring we maintain connections to crew alumni through an email list serve, shared web space, blog and end-of-season reunion.
2. Continue to expand our recruitment into urban areas
3. Consider and promote additional skill training (forest ecology, naturalist hike, backcountry living) as optional activities for participants to pursue during their Crew sessions. Collaborate with agency partners.

### **Training Program**

4. ATC will develop additional curricula materials based upon feedback from the pilot trainings (see Goal #3).
5. ATC will develop a Train-the-Trainer program which will certify "A.T. Trainers" to teach trail skills to others on a voluntary basis.
6. ATC will provide funding for scholarships for club volunteers to attend trail-related conferences.