

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southern
Region

1720 Feachtree Rd, NW
Atlanta, GA 30367

Reply To: 1920/2350

Date: January 14, 1993

Subject: Appalachian Trail Revised LRMP Standards and Guidelines

To: Forest Supervisors, Jefferson NF, George Washington NF, Cherokee NF, NFs
in North Carolina, and Chattahoochee-Oconee NFs

During the last year much time and effort has gone into developing a consistent management approach for the management area containing the Appalachian National Scenic Trail on your forests. Coordination has been extensive between the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), the Forests, and this office. The result is the enclosed document which is a set of standards and guidelines for the management area that should be incorporated into your plans as you revise and amend them.

This level of consistency between forests will improve trail users' experiences and will help managers and volunteers in doing their jobs. However, local conditions affecting the Appalachian Trail may necessitate variations to the enclosed standards and guidelines.

Of special interest to our cooperators and many users is the management of those areas not in the trail management area but adjacent to it and visible from the trail. Activities in the area viewed from the Appalachian Trail can affect the experience of Trail users. We will continue to use the Forest Service Visual Management System when planning the management direction of these adjacent management areas to enhance or mitigate these views. General direction is contained in the Standards and Guidelines to address this concern. In addition, plan revisions and site-specific analyses will consider this and other issues unique to individual forests and areas.

The George Washington National Forest is now completing work on its revision. This guidance is being incorporated in that plan.

For further information on this coordinated management direction for the Appalachian Trail management area, please contact Charlie Kuppuch or Bill Hughes, Recreation (404-347-4278), or Bob Wilhelm, Planning and Environmental Coordination (404-347-7076).

/s/ Marvin C. Meier for

JOHN E. ALCOCK
Regional Forester

Enclosure

cc: Director, Recreation
Director, Planning and Budget
Don Owen, Appalachian Trail Conference
Forest Planners

MANAGEMENT AREA _____ APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

GOALS - What general direction should be accomplished given the Laws, Regulations, and agreements between agencies/groups to produce the trail experience desired. May be several Goals.

OBJECTIVES - What time-limited actions will be taken to carry out the Goals above (add objectives under each Goal - these could come from the Comprehensive Plan and or other sources). May be several Objectives for each Goal.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION - Narrative description of what the management area will look like if the Goals/Objectives/Standards and Guidelines are carried out.

STANDARDS GUIDES FOR THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL
MANAGEMENT AREA IN REGION 8

Description for management Area

The Appalachian Trail, a continuous footpath from Maine to Georgia, was designated as a National Scenic Trail by act of Congress in 1968. The Appalachian Trail (AT) is an internationally renowned foot path that extends 2,150 miles from Haine to Georgia and passes through four state and six National Forests within Region 8. The Trail is primarily located along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. It is administered by the Secretary of Interior in' consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, and managed as a partnership between the Forest Service, local Appalachian Trail Clubs and the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC).

The Appalachian Trail Management Area consists of those lands mapped as the foreground viewing area from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which includes the Trail footpath, and, as designated on a case-by-case basis, associated Trail shelters, viewpoints, water sources and spur trails to these features. The foreground viewing area is determined using the methodology established in the National Forest Service Landscape Management Handbook, Volume 2 chapter 1. This corridor has a minimum width of 100 feet on either side of the Trail footpath for protection from social, aural and other impacts, but this minimum width should be considered only when the foreground zone does not extend beyond 100 feet on either side of the Trail footpath. This management area also includes all National Forest System lands acquired by the National Park Service for the Appalachian Trail and administratively transferred to the USDA, Forest Service by the National Park Service under a Memorandum of Agreement.

The management area encompasses an area of approximately _____ acres. Approximately ____ miles of the Trail and _____ associated shelters lie within the Forest on the _____ Ranger District(s). The Trail is administered in partnership with the Appalachian Trail Conference and _____ (local A.T. maintaining clubs) _____. Management emphasis for the area is in accordance with the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543) and carried out through the Cooperative Management System as defined in the Appalachian Trail Comprehensive Plan. Management practices will protect the trail experience, strengthen the role of the volunteer, provide opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation experiences, and provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural qualities of the land through which the Trail passes. Adjoining lands seen from the Trail will be managed for multiple use under the provisions of this plan, in a manner which will reasonably harmonize with and be complementary to the Trail experience.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

ALL ACTIVITIES

To carry out the National Trails System Act (PL 90-543) be guided by and implement:

-Comprehensive Plan for the Protection, Management, Development, and Use of the Appalachian Trail National Scenic Trail, September 1981.

-FSM 2353, R-8 Supplement No. 42, 9/83

-Be guided by the following documents in making management decisions concerning the Trail:

-Appalachian Trail Conference Stewardship Manual: Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance, 1981.

-Overnight-Use Management Principles, approved by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council ANSTAC, 1977.

-Preserve and strengthen the role of the volunteer in the management of the Trail.

-Maintain an Agreement for Sponsored Voluntary Service between each Ranger District and partner Trail club, to be reviewed and renewed annually.

-The Forest will participate in the established local management planning process described in the ATC Local Management Planning Guide.

-Coordinate work projects for the Trail at the district level with partner Trail clubs based on the ATC Trail assessment process, and conduct a work planning session at least once annually.

-All activities will be planned and carried out in consultation with ATC and the local Trail club.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RECREATION
DEVELOPED

Limit additional development to facilities compatible with the Appalachian Trail. Manage existing Trail-related facilities to meet trail hiker needs.

Facilities will be limited to shelters, privies, stiles, spring boxes, registers, trailheads, and other facilities agreed to by the Conference, clubs and Forest Service.

Designated trail shelters, privies, view points, and water sources and spur trails leading to them will have a mapped foreground zone including them into the management area. An on-the-ground assessment involving ATC, USFS, and local A.T. club representatives will determine which features are designated to be included.

Vehicular access to trail shelters will be limited to access for administrative purposes only. Minimize open roads within 1/2 mile of shelters.

Where feasible, locate new shelters no closer than two miles from open roads and other access points.

Trail shelters and related facilities will be managed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the ATC Overnight Use Principles and responsible A.T. club local management plan.

MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND
GUIDELINES

DISPERSED

Management of the Trail experience will be compatible with the prescribed ROS class. The linear nature of the Trail management area will be recognized in determining ROS class. Emphasize Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized class. Lands currently retaining a sense of the wild will be managed with special concern for these values.

Motorized, horse, packstock, and bicycle use on the Trail is prohibited except where the Trail crosses or is located on Forest system, state or county roads. Actively manage to exclude these uses.

Primitive camping will be encouraged at appropriate sites, but not within 100 feet of the Trail.

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION/
RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruct or relocate existing portions of the trail as needed to enhance the recreation experience and protect trail-related and other resources, and to provide a reasonable level of public safety.

Maintenance and
Operation

Use the Optimal Location Review (OLR) to initiate the decision making process and follow approved relocation procedures described in FSM 2353, R-8 Supplement No. 42.

Exercise care that Trail relocations and improvements do not cause a progressive loss of the primitive quality or simplicity of the footpath.

Ensure that relocations provide a Trail environment that is equal to or better than that of the existing location.

Identify the Appalachian Trail through standard signs and blazes. Provide sufficient signing to inform hikers of significant features and distances to major road crossings.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Construct/reconstruct and maintain trails in accord with the Appalachian Trail Conference Stewardship Manual: Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance, 1981. Design the treadway according to soil, drainage, vegetation, topography, and other constraints. Consider safety in trail design, construction and maintenance, without sacrificing the aspect of the trail which challenges a hiker's skill and stamina.

Signing and blazing will be consistent with the ATC Stewardship Manual Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance and the USFS Sign Handbook FSH (7109.11), except mileage to important features should be shown to the nearest tenth of a mile.

VISUAL

The Visual Management System (VMS) will be used to enhance or mitigate the scenic experience or landscape character seen from the Appalachian Trail and designated shelters, viewpoints, campsites, water sources, and the spur trails linking these features. Management activities needed to preserve or create vistas and desirable open areas will be high priority. VMS inventory mapping will be done during leaf-off season.

The -area mapped foreground from the A.T. footpath and designated viewpoints, shelters, campsites, water sources and spur trails to these features, will have a VQO of retention. Lands outside the management area, are mapped in accordance with the adopted VQO (see USDA Agriculture Handbook, No. 462 - National Forest Landscape Management Volume 2. Chapter 1, page 43, The Visual Management System).

Site-specific projects that may affect the visual resource, and adopted VQO, will be coordinated with ATC and the local trail club, as well as other interested publics.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

See Forest-wide management requirements. Cultural resources will be considered an integral part of what makes up the Appalachian Trail experience.

Where appropriate, interpret cultural sites through maps, guidebooks, sign and other Trail-appropriate means. The Forest Archeologist will inventory cultural and historic resources, and will recommend appropriate protection methods and interpretive opportunities.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

WILDLIFE

Increase opportunities for wildlife viewing as a part of the Trail experience.

Develop habitat improvements that are complementary to the Trail. Such improvements will be carried out within visual management and ROS guidelines, objectives, and standards. The Forest Service will recommend habitat management practices along the Trail that will enhance wildlife viewing opportunities.

TIMBER

The Appalachian Trail management area is unsuitable for timber production.

Vegetation in the Appalachian Trail management area will be managed to enhance the Trail environment. Timber activities will be limited to improving health of the stand, provide scenic vistas, controlling insects and disease, attracting wildlife, or providing public safety or resource protection. Timber volumes are non-chargeable. The ATC and the local trail club will be consulted on any timber management activity that may affect the Trail experience.

MINERALS and
GEOLOGY

See Forest-wide management requirements. Mineral leasing may occur. All new leases will stipulate no surface occupancy in the management area (foreground zone]. When existing leases terminate or expire, new leases will be changed to reflect this standard.

Where outstanding or reserved mineral rights are involved, determination of the need for acquisition for protection of trail values will be made and acted upon (see Lands).

Apply appropriate Secretary's rules and regulations for mineral rights..

Identify unique or important geologic features for potential interpretation to enhance the experience of users of the Appalachian Trail.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

LANDS

Land Acquisition

Acquire sufficient lands or interest in lands to protect the Trail values and provide an unbroken public right-of-way for the Trail consistent with the current policy statement for Appalachian Trail acquisition.

Acquire lands or interest in lands inventoried in the current Appalachian National Scenic Trail Land Acquisition Inventory - Region 8 to meet management objectives.

Reconfirm the inventory's accuracy through the Optimal Trail Location Review.

Special Uses

Issue new special use permits where needed for trail management or only where there is an overriding demonstrated public need or benefit. Permit access to privately owned property through the management area only where required and where proven to be the only prudent and feasible alternative.

Minimize the impacts of utility right-of way clearing within the Appalachian Trail management area.

Apply full mitigating measures such as screening, and feathering to protect the Trail values and environment. Conduct appropriate environmental analysis and NEPA documentation for all proposed special uses.

Prohibit the broadcast application of herbicides for control of vegetation in utility right-of-ways within the Appalachian Trail management area.

Require a landscape management plan screening, feathering and other vegetation management techniques to mitigate the visual and other impacts of new, upgraded or re-authorized utility right-of-ways.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

FACILITIES

Road Construction
Maintenance

Open roads that cross or closely parallel the Appalachian Trail management area are not compatible with trail values. The number of system roads within 1/2 mile of the Appalachian Trail management area will be held to a minimum.

Analyze all proposed or existing roads crossing or paralleling the Trail within one-half mile for their potential undesirable impacts on the Trail experience. Either close or document the decision to leave open as appropriate. Only allow road locations that are the only reasonable and prudent alternative and after all impacts have been mitigated to the maximum extent (See FSM 2353.4-3 (e), R-8 Supplement No. 42, 9/83).

Provide parking facilities to serve Appalachian Trail management needs.

Where feasible, provide parking facilities at locations where the Appalachian Trail can be accessed by a short spur trail rather than at locations where the Trail footpath crosses a road.

SOILS

The Trail treadway and Trail facilities shall be designed, constructed, and maintained to minimize impacts on soils.

Follow construction and maintenance standards found in Appalachian Trail Conference Stewardship Manual: Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance, 1981.

WATER

Protect all sources of drinking water.

Locate all trail shelters, toilets, and primitive camps to minimize the possibility of contamination of drinking water. Educate users on low impact camping, including sanitation practices that minimize the potential for contamination of drinking waters. Educate users on proper treatment of all unprotected water before use.

FIRE

See Forest-wide direction. Prescribed fire may be used when compatible with the objectives of the management area.

Where practical, avoid placing motorized equipment on the Trail.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

WILDERNESS

Wilderness is an integral part of the Appalachian Trail experience.

Manage the A.T. within designated wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, the specific area-designating act, and the area wilderness implementation schedule.

FOREST PEST
MANAGEMENT

.Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices as the strategy in managing pest populations to achieve resource management objectives for the management area.

Place emphasis on evaluating hazard potential and determining if efforts are needed to prevent or control loss of Trail values.

THREATENED AND
ENDANGERED SPECIES

See Forest-wide direction. The Appalachian Trail Management Area will serve to protect and enhance the biological diversity of species that exist within the area.

Conduct and maintain an inventory of proposed, endangered, threatened and sensitive species within the management area in cooperation with ATC and the state natural heritage program.

Identify habitat protection and improvement activities needed to meet recovery objectives for threatened species, and conserve sensitive species. Coordinate with ATC and local Trail club.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

See Forest-wide management requirements. Keep hiker regulations as unrestrictive as possible. Restrict use only to the extent proven necessary to protect the Trail, its environment, the interests of adjacent landowners, and the Trail users. Incompatible activities will be controlled by educational efforts and, failing these, by enforcement of laws and Trail regulations. Foster an atmosphere to encourage self-reliance and respect for Trail values by legitimate users.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES/
ACTIVITIES

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Establish procedures for law enforcement officers to timely respond to and investigate Trail incidents and randomly patrol trailheads and easily accessible facilities, particularly those with a history or pattern of incidents.

Report incidents of criminal behavior to the Appalachian Trail Conference and the Trail-maintaining club.

VEGETATION
MANAGEMENT

Maintain open areas and vistas that enhance the scenic qualities of the Appalachian Trail in cooperation with ATC and local Trail club. Where appropriate, re-establish historic views and open areas.

As appropriate, use timber sales, prescribed burning, hand tools, power tools, herbicides, and grazing to control vegetation.