

# APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2027





PHOTOGRAPH BY  
NATHANIEL SHANK

# APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2027

Funded by the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society and a grant from the Environmental Stewardship Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, and the Appalachian Trail Museum Society

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# Acknowledgements



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
DAN INNAMORATO

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Nathaniel Shank, Museum Manager

### COVER:

The grand opening of  
the Childrens Museum  
drew a crowd to the  
2016 Appalachian Trail  
Hall of Fame Festival, an  
annual event at the A.T.  
Museum. PHOTOGRAPH BY

DAN INNAMORATO

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The grist mill for the Pine Grove Ironworks, shown here c. 1914, was built in the 1780s. It was renovated in the 1920s for use as a summer cottage when Pine Grove Furnace State Park was created, and subsequently served as a park visitors' center. The Appalachian Trail Museum Society leased the mill in 2009 to house the Museum.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CARLISLE, PA.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD

# APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2027

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## Summary

### BUILDING upon SUCCESS

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**T**he Appalachian Trail Museum Society (ATMS) achieved a resounding success by establishing the Appalachian Trail Museum, implementing the chief recommendation of its 2006 Strategic Plan. In fewer than four years, in 2010, the Museum opened its doors at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Gardners, Pennsylvania, a remarkable accomplishment.

That same focus, energy, and exemplary passion still resonate as the ATMS updates its Strategic Plan for the next five to ten years. The 2018 updated plan will enable the group to move into its second phase of success with a fresh and directed course of action.

### OUR VISION

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**T**he Appalachian Trail Museum Society envisions the Appalachian Trail Museum as a world-class museum that tells the story of America's most beloved trail. An unwavering part of the Society's purpose is to reach and inspire the broadest possible community of trail advocates and visitors—locally, nationally, and internationally—through the Museum and its online services.

### OUR MISSION

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**T**he Appalachian Trail Museum Society serves the Appalachian Trail community by telling the stories of the founding, construction, preservation, maintenance, protection, and enjoyment of the trail since its inception. The Museum will collect, preserve, and interpret materials relevant to these sub-



Located at the approximate halfway point of the 2190-mile A.T., the Museum is a short scenic drive from near- by Gettysburg, Carlisle, Shippensburg or Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ED RIGGS





The Museum is open April through October on an almost daily basis. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD

jects in an effort to portray not only the history of the trail but also the essence of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experience of the Appalachian environment and the culture of hiking.

## OUR GOALS

The Museum is first and foremost a repository of artifacts, equipment, and materials related to the Appalachian Trail. Its mission centers on and emanates from the artifacts in its collections and the education of a broad constituency about the trail with all its stories, important historical information, benefits, and position as a major American icon. In pursuit of our vision to operate a world class museum, the Appalachian Trail Museum Society's goals are to:

- Collect, preserve and exhibit artifacts that tell the story of the Appalachian Trail in accordance with standards of excellence in museum management.
- Stimulate appreciation for and advance knowledge about the Appalachian Trail and hiking. This includes an emphasis on education and research.
- Provide public service in a welcoming setting that will captivate people and inspire them to hike, become trail stewards and support both the Museum and the Appalachian Trail.

## OUR ACTION PLAN

We will focus on five key themes to achieve our vision:

- 1. Collection Management:** Develop and implement a Collection Management Plan.
- 2. Physical Infrastructure:** Continue to improve the Museum building, address the need for more space for storage and programs, establish a Capital Improvement Program, and develop a written maintenance management plan.
- 3. Financial Sustainability:** Continue to operate the Museum with a mix of memberships, fundraising, sales, and volunteer support while working to increase support from more diverse sources. We will establish an Endowment Fund to secure long term stability.
- 4. Operational Excellence and Capacity Building:** Operate under the auspices of the ATMS Board of Directors, formalize policies, and expand the docent and volunteer programs.
- 5. Visitor Services and Education:** Emphasize a visitor-centric approach for the Museum.

# APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM

## Strategic Plan 2018–2027

### STRATEGIC PLAN PURPOSE

**T**he purpose of the Appalachian Trail Museum Strategic Plan is to set overall goals for the Museum and to develop an action plan to achieve them. Strategic planning involves stepping back from the Museum's day-to-day operations and exploring where the Appalachian Trail Museum Society (ATMS) is headed and what its priorities should be to get there over the next ten years, with an emphasis on near-term actions.

### BUILDING upon SUCCESS

**I**n 2006, the Appalachian Trail Museum Society completed *A Vision and Plan for an Appalachian Trail Museum*. This *Vision and Plan* recommended securing space for the collections near Harpers Ferry, West Virginia and initiating a campaign to raise \$150,000 to accomplish these steps and undertake further planning and development.

The author of this *Vision and Plan* was most insightful in characterizing



Since it opened in 2010, the Museum has welcomed, on average, 8700 visitors per year from throughout the United States and 18 other countries. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN INNAMORATO





**Volunteers greet visitors entering the Museum, give tours and educational programs, help with building and landscape maintenance, and support operations in numerous other ways.** PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE

HAROLD

the ATMS Board of Directors and Planning Committee as being more focused and motivated than most organizers of start-up museums, having a clear idea of what they wanted with an exemplary passion for the subject matter. The author may well have understated that dedication and passion as ATMS moved ahead with alacrity in establishing the A.T. Museum, opening the doors in under four years, in June of 2010. This is a remarkable achievement. That same focus and energy resound in 2018 with the development of a fresh and directed strategic plan for continued growth and success in the next five to ten years.

## ABOUT the MUSEUM

**T**he Appalachian Trail Museum is dedicated to the most popular hiking trail in America, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.). Located in Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Gardners, Pennsylvania, very close to the midpoint of the Trail, the Museum tells the stories of the A.T.

## The Facilities

Appropriately, the Museum is housed in a 3,900-square foot building that is itself an historical artifact, a structure built more than two hundred years ago as a grist mill. It stands across the road from the Pine Grove Furnace General Store, a site famed in hiker lore. It is here that thru-hikers traditionally stop to tackle the "Half-Gallon Challenge" to celebrate reaching the midpoint of the Trail, by eating—or attempting to eat—a half gallon of ice cream in one sitting.

Owned by the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks, the Old Mill had limited use until 2009 when the ATMS negotiated a lease agreement to use the building for Museum purposes. The Society raised nearly \$300,000 over the following nine years for building improvements necessary to establish the Museum. The ATMS carried out extensive renovations, mostly with volunteer labor. The renovations brought the building up to code with improvements to all four levels. The partnership between the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks and the ATMS has the potential

to maximize the impact of their resources in meaningful ways by providing greater visibility, more visitors, increased financial support, critical acclaim, and richer experiences for the public.

## Exhibits

Exhibits on the first and second floors tell the story of the Trail, while those on the lower level are designed as an interactive discovery area for children and youth. The third floor houses a research library and office space. Trail related merchandise is offered in the gift shop area.

Current exhibits include a trail shelter that was built by legendary hiker Earl Shaffer. The shelter, which had been replaced on Peter Mountain, Pennsylvania, was reassembled in the new museum. In addition, artifacts that belonged to other hiking pioneers such as Grandma Gatewood, Gene Espy, and Ed Garvey are exhibited. Computers display more than 12,000 photos of hikers taken at Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West

Virginia. The Museum offers comfort facilities and has hiker welcoming areas both indoors and outside.

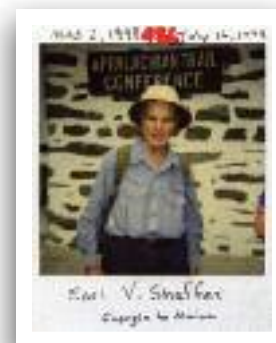
## Visitation and Support

The Museum has had visitors from throughout the United States and 18 other countries since it opened. With a building capacity of about 50 people, the Museum hosts more than 8,700 visitors annually.

In 2017, the Museum Society had 519 members, and approximately 2,712 volunteer hours supported Museum operations and improvements. This is the equivalent of 1.4 full-time equivalent staff. At a value of \$24.14 per volunteer hour (as calculated by Independent Sector, a national membership organization for non-profits, foundations, and corporations), volunteers provided a value of \$65,468 to the Museum in 2017.

## Appalachian Trail Museum Society Mission

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society serves the Appalachian Trail community by telling the stories of the



Over 12,000 photos of past thru-hikers and videos about the trail experience are displayed on monitors in the Museum's hikers' lounge. Pictured above during his 1998 fiftieth anniversary hike is the legendary Earl Shaffer, who in 1948 became the first person to hike the A.T. in one trip.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF  
ATC



Exhibits honor Trail founders and pioneer hikers and display artifacts like trail signs, gear, and an historic shelter built by Earl Shaffer. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD



The Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame was developed by the Museum to honor persons who have made exceptional and positive contributions to the Trail or the A.T. community. Pictured here are the 2018 honorees or their representatives: from left, Libby Kephart Hargrave, representing George Masa; Bill Kemsley; Ron Rosen, representing Elizabeth Levers; Bob Peoples. PHOTOGRAPH BY

DAN INNAMORATO



founding, construction, preservation, maintenance, protection, and enjoyment of the trail since its inception. The Museum will collect, preserve, and interpret materials relevant to these subjects in an effort to portray not only the history of the trail but also the essence of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experience of the Appalachian environment and the culture of hiking.

## ATMS STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES

Interviews with key stakeholders, research into Museum documents, and a work session with ATMS board members found the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

### Strengths

- **Location:** The Museum has been established and is thriving. Its

location is excellent, in an historic building in a state park near the mid-point of the Appalachian Trail. The Museum is an "oasis" type of draw to hikers, whether they are thru-hikers, section hikers or day hikers.

- **Support:** The Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks, and by extension, the Commonwealth, wants the Museum to be located here. The Museum is an important destination and is promoted by the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau.
- **Fundraising:** The ATMS has raised about \$350,000 to date. Fundraising is conducted by Museum volunteers led by a dedicated board member, Robert Croyle.
- **Partners:** The Museum has important partnerships with the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks; the Appalachian Long-Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA), Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC); associated trail



clubs; the South Mountain Partnership; and the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau. These partnerships have strong potential to be more fully developed.

- **Spirit:** A strong positive spirit of common purpose, can-do attitude, and dedication through volunteerism has a spiritual quality that draws people together.
- **Exhibits:** The exhibits are interesting and of professional quality. Many are interactive. The Children's Museum is especially interesting and important in attracting the next generations of trail stewards. Many people want to donate items to the Museum.
- **Operations:** Operating procedures for docents were established before the Museum opened. Policies concerning collections, customer service and the physical plant and grounds have



The Children's Museum, on the lower level, is reached by stairs from the entrance deck. The pavers on the landing were installed as a service project by a Boy Scout troop from Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHANIEL SHANK

been developed in response to needs and as questions have arisen. Volunteer docents are an especially important part of operations as they provide staffing for visitor services and tours.

### Challenges

- **Financial sustainability:** ATMS needs to develop sustainable financial support. This includes fundraising, diversifying sources, and attracting "big league"



Designed to engage kids aged 1 to 101, exhibits include a mini-hike of the A.T. showcasing the 14 Trail states, a mural representing a day on the Trail, and a reading nook. Additional interactive exhibits are in development. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD

donors. To date, fundraising has been focused on establishing the Museum and exhibits. A fundraising strategy needs to be fleshed out with goals, objectives and an action plan for the future now that the Museum has been established and is operational. Specific campaigns for identified purposes must be planned and implemented. Relationships with existing supporters must be cultivated.

- **The collection:** The collection has grown as the donations of equipment and materials related to the trail have been accepted for nearly all offers. A well-written collection management policy is needed to lay the foundation for how the Museum handles situations pertaining to its collection. The policy should articulate the Museum's professional standards regarding the objects left in its care and serve as a guide for the ATMS, staff, partners and volunteers. Since ATMS is often faced with questions about items for

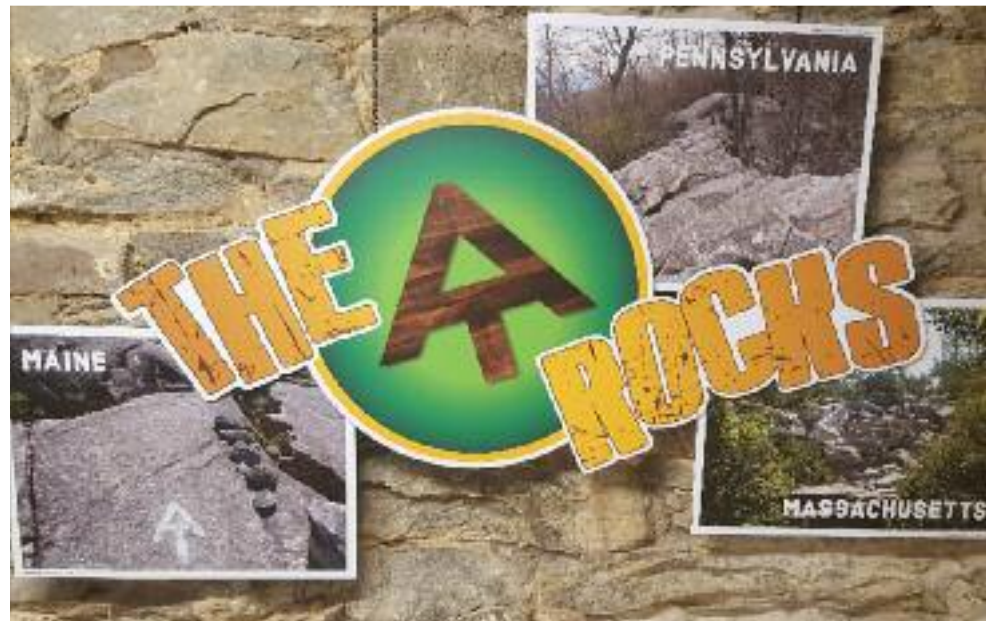
donation, the Society needs to set standards for what it should accept and acquire; for handling, removing or loaning objects in the collection; and for care and preservation of artifacts. This policy is an important document that establishes boundaries to ensure that the Appalachian Trail Museum stays true to its mission while also providing the best care for the collection. Optimally, the collection management plan should be as simple as possible, given that the organization is largely operated by volunteers and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

- **Professional appearance:** The Museum, those representing it with the public, and all materials and equipment associated with the Museum should project a professional appearance at all times. Training is needed for all involved with Museum operations to ensure that these standards can be maintained while ensuring that the Museum continues to reflect



Volunteers have been essential not only to Museum operations, but also to ongoing renovation of the building and development of the Museum's exhibits. PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE

BY CAROL BUNGAY



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD





the relaxed and diverse character of the A.T.

The current variable hours of the Museum, due to seasonal fluctuations in park visitation, can be confusing to visitors. ATMS is planning interpretive exhibits outside to serve visitors when the Museum is closed. There does not appear to be an outcry to open the Museum during the winter months.

- **Physical plant:** The building's relatively small size limits attendance capacity and space is tight for exhibits, organized programs and activities, sales areas, offices and storage. Designated Museum parking is limited but the Bureau of State Parks has been very accommodating in sharing its resources such as the pavilion, parking, roads and so on. ATMS must determine the optimal space needed to accommodate its vision for the collection, exhibits, visitor services, and support facilities. In

the meantime, planning for short-term off-site accommodations or satellite facilities is needed. A grounds master plan and formal written maintenance management plan have not yet been developed.

- **Managing the organization's staffing, volunteers, and board functions:** The Board serves as the primary agent for all operations. Volunteer board members oversee the major functional areas of the Museum. Board members do much of the outreach and fund-raising.

A part-time Museum manager is responsible for all areas of Museum operations including overseeing the collection; recruiting and training docents and other volunteers; planning programs and special events; handling gift shop inventory; managing maintenance of the physical plant; and community outreach. Docents offer tours upon request.

**An ADA accessible entrance ramp leads to the future second-floor main entrance of the Museum. Meticulously crafted by several dedicated volunteers, the ramp features a simulated Trail suspension bridge. A native plant and pollinator garden is being created in the ramp courtyard and interpretive panels will be installed at strategic points along the inclines.** PHOTOGRAPH BY

JEFF SCHMIDT





A volunteer crew continues renovations to the top two floors of the Museum. Exhibits will feature a variety of aspects of the A.T. experience including life on the Trail, Appalachian flora and fauna, and Trail maintenance and governance. PHOTOGRAPHS

BY NATHANIEL SHANK



During the peak season, there are often more visitors at one time than the available docents can handle. Recruiting and training additional volunteers for these peak times would provide better customer service, and is critical for achieving a professional appearance for the Museum. An important and ongoing goal for ATMS is to generate a level of volunteerism for the Museum comparable to that of the A.T.

community's renowned dedication to, and support of, the Trail itself.

Because the Museum operates for about seven months annually, the need for direct services for visitors during the off-season is limited. That off-season time can be used for outreach, increasing public awareness about the Museum and building partnerships and sponsorships. These functions require a presence outside of the Museum. Theoretically, as the Museum expands, a full-time director would expect to spend 70%–80% of his or her time on outreach.

- **Vision:** The ultimate vision for the Museum is the subject of debate ranging from an effort to become "world class" to recognizing the unique nature of the Museum given its purpose, location, and current limited space to house collections and offer visitors services, programs, and events.
- **Program and event planning:** While the Museum has offered public programs and events since its opening season, planning and promoting them has often been a last minute effort. A program management plan should be instituted and programs planned two seasons in advance to allow sufficient time for developing sponsorships, partnerships and advertising.

### Opportunities and Priorities

ATMS has made remarkable achievements in implementing its previous strategic plan. Now that the Museum is established, this Strategic Plan for 2018–2027 represents a major opportunity for the Museum Society to consider its next steps. It will enable



The top floor of the Museum houses a recently established world-class research library of some 1,600 books about the A.T.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHANIEL SHANK

ATMS to re-examine its primary mission of telling the story of America's longest footpath and to think about what is really important to ATMS, the Museum, ATMS's partners, such as ATC, and where to focus over the next five to ten years. Consensus is that the following five themes are top priorities:

- Collection Management
- Museum Infrastructure
- Financial Sustainability
- Operations and Capacity Building
- Visitor Services and Education

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES, VISION, and MISSION

Its guiding principles, vision, and mission will be the foundation for all future actions of ATMS and the operation of the Appalachian Trail Museum.

### Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles will be the basis for all planning, decision-making, and the allocation of resources in imple-

menting the Strategic Plan and operating the Museum. They include the following:

- **Excellence:** Highest standards of integrity and quality in the collection, exhibition, and interpretation of artifacts of the Appalachian Trail.
- **Sustainability:** To ensure the long-term viability of the Museum.
- **Creativity and innovation:** Developing new ideas and approaches for the collection, programming, and visitor experiences.
- **Simplicity:** Should guide all aspects of operations to maximize resources and staff. Making things too complicated will hamper ATMS and Museum operations.
- **Outstanding customer service:** Providing rich visitor experiences so that people will feel welcome, emotionally engaged, and intellectually inspired.
- **Openness and collaboration with integrity:** In all aspects of



Since its inaugural season, the Museum has offered public programs on a wide variety of topics including A.T. history, hiking and trail-building skills, geology and natural history of the Appalachians and more. PHOTOGRAPH BY

NATHANIEL SHANK

Museum planning, management and operation to deepen the range of support necessary for a thriving Museum far into the future.

### Vision

The vision for the Museum is based upon input from ATMS and key stakeholders interviewed for this strategic plan.

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society envisions the Appalachian Trail Museum as a world-class museum that tells the story of America's most beloved trail. An unwavering part of the Society's purpose is to reach and inspire the broadest possible community of trail advocates and visitors—locally, nationally, and internationally—through the Museum and its online services.

### Mission

Through this *Strategic Plan 2018–2027*, the Appalachian Trail Museum Society Board reaffirms this mission statement:

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society serves the Appalachian Trail community by telling the stories of the founding, construction, preservation, maintenance, protection, and enjoyment of the trail since its inception. The Museum will collect,

preserve, and interpret materials relevant to these subjects in an effort to portray not only the history of the Trail but also the essence of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experience of the Appalachian environment and the culture of hiking.

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM GOALS

The Museum is first and foremost a repository of artifacts, equipment and materials related to the Appalachian Trail. Its mission centers on, and emanates from, the artifacts in its collections and the education of a broad constituency about the A.T. with its stories, important historical information, benefits, and position as a major American icon. In pursuit of its vision to be a world class museum, the Appalachian Trail Museum's goals are to:

### I. Collect

- Enhance the Museum's holdings by acquiring objects from all locations along the A.T. and all periods of its history, including the present.

### 2. Preserve

- Preserve artifacts from the Appalachian Trail in accordance with the highest standards of conservation.
- Provide a safe and appropriate environment for the collection, with effective security and environmental control, for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Ensure that preservation standards are maintained for artifacts on loan to the Museum or borrowed from the Museum for display elsewhere.



### 3. Exhibit

- Present exhibits of the Museum's artifacts and those borrowed from other owners.
- Provide additional access to the Museum's collections through study rooms and loans to other institutions.
- Present the artifacts in the most visually appealing and intellectually stimulating manner.

### 4. Stimulate appreciation for and advance knowledge of the Appalachian Trail and hiking

- Support and encourage appreciation and understanding of hiking and the natural resources that are part of trails, especially the Appalachian Trail.
- Conduct educational programs and activities for a variety of audiences to stimulate interest in hiking, support of the Appalachian Trail and to promote familiarity with the A.T. in its historical, cultural, environmental, and social contexts.

- Develop publications and online information for a range of audiences.
- Provide and disseminate information about hiking, the Museum's collection and the Museum's programs employing all appropriate means, which may include the most advanced technologies.

### 5. Public service

- Reach out to the widest possible audience in a spirit of inclusiveness.
- Serve the best interests of the public in every aspect of the Museum's governance, programs, and operations.
- Seek to increase public understanding of the Museum's goals while encouraging support and use of the Appalachian Trail.

### 6. Study

- Support continuing scholarly investigation and research about the Appalachian Trail in order to document, catalog, and publish



The Museum lawn provides a pleasant venue for group programs and picnics. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD

the Museum's collections as well as to contribute to broader discourses about the Trail, its benefits, and how trail use is good for health, the environment, and the economy.

- Maintain a library, databases, and other research facilities.

## STRATEGIC PLAN THEMES

**S**trategies to move forward are organized around the following five themes that will drive the planning, management, and operation of the Appalachian Trail Museum over the next five years to ten years:

### **1. Collection Management:**

Develop and implement a plan to organize, direct, build, display, store, manage, and evaluate the Museum collection.

### **2. Physical Infrastructure:** Continue to improve the Old Mill building and obtain additional space.

### **3. Financial Sustainability:**

Develop and implement a funding strategy for financial sustainability that includes a combination of fundraising, grants, memberships, gifts, donations, partnerships and sponsorships.

### **4. Operational Excellence and Capacity Building:** Continue to provide effective management and increase the capacity of ATMS to administer and support the sound operation of the Appalachian Trail Museum.

### **5. Visitor Services:** Provide excellent visitor services that will engage visitors intellectually and emotionally to the extent that they will become "ambassadors" for the Museum and be inspired to become volunteers.

## Theme 1

### COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

1. Develop the Appalachian Trail Museum Collection Management Plan. The Collection Management Plan will serve as a primary planning document for the Museum. It will identify the assets, methods and parameters of collecting artifacts, opportunities, challenges and provide recommendations to improve the care of the collection.
  - a. Form a sub-committee of ATMS to develop a Collection Management Plan. Use board members with expertise in Museum management to participate in the committee.
  - b. Establish a formal written intellectual framework for the purpose of the collections.
  - c. Include the following topics in the plan:
    - History of the Appalachian Trail, Appalachian Trail Museum and the Museum collection
    - Scope of collection, documentation, including records and information management systems
    - Archival and manuscript collections
    - Alignment of the Museum collection with the standards of a sanctioned organization
    - Security
    - Environment
    - Storage to adequately protect the collection and make it available for display when desired
    - Identification of important stories from the A.T. that merit inclusion in exhibits
    - Routine and cyclic maintenance
    - Access and use
    - Staffing



Special events at the Museum allow visitors to meet and interact with members of Trail clubs, organizations and personalities like Nan "Drag 'N' Fly" Reisinger, the oldest woman to complete a thru-hike.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN  
INNAMORATO

- Space needs, both current and future projections, with recommendations for storage locations and the support needed for storage
  - Planning and funding of the collection
2. Develop policies on loaning the collection and the use of collections on loan from other sources.
  3. Establish a plan for deaccessions.
  4. Create an information management system for the collection so that they can be accessed readily.
  5. Provide training for staff, docents and volunteers about the collection on an ongoing basis.
3. Address the need for off-site locations for collection storage and potential programs, such as a lecture series, that could draw a wider audience than can be accommodated in the Museum.
    - a. Investigate potential locations in the state park.
    - b. Investigate locations and facilities having affordable rates for use in convenient proximity to the Museum, as well as locations elsewhere along the A.T.

## Theme 2

### PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Continue to make improvements to the building in accordance with the building plans.
2. Undertake and implement a master plan for the Museum's grounds. Coordinate this plan with the Pine Grove Furnace park manager. Seek grant funding from PA DCNR for this plan. As part of the master plan, establish a maintenance plan for the grounds.
4. Develop and implement a five to seven-year Capital Improvement Plan. Identify improvements, associated costs and revenue sources for the
  - Building
  - Exhibits
  - Grounds.
5. Develop and implement a formal written Maintenance Manage-





Throughout the year the Museum hosts groups and scout troops hiking the A.T., as well as students from area schools and colleges visiting Pine Grove Furnace State Park for outdoor learning experiences.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL  
BUNGAY

ment Plan for the exhibits, the building, and grounds. The Museum will cost more to maintain long-term than it did to develop. It is much harder to get sufficient funding for maintenance than it is for capital improvements. Having a Maintenance Management Plan in place with ongoing reports of maintenance activities reduces the Museum's liability.

### Theme 3 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

1. Continue to operate the Museum with a mix of fundraising, memberships, and volunteer support.
2. Develop a formal written plan for fundraising:
  - a. Create a committee of at least three people to undertake this effort.
  - b. Establish fundraising goals for three years based on what is needed to keep the Museum afloat and aligned with its vision, mission and guiding principles.

- c. Identify strategies for fundraising and diversifying funding sources that could include:
  - Increasing memberships
  - Corporate giving and partnership development, specifically identifying "big league" corporations which could become supporters/donors
  - Conducting more fundraising campaigns for specific exhibits or programs
  - Developing an aggressive program of naming rights in order to attract major donations
  - Donation box
  - Crowdfunding campaigns
  - Face-to-face solicitations
  - Phone calls
  - Mail campaigns
  - E-mail marketing campaigns
  - Fundraising events
  - Thanking donors without asking for more money
  - Grants and matching gifts
  - Recurring donation campaigns

- d. Schedule fundraising efforts with specific timelines, roles and responsibilities, and the resources needed to support them.
2. When conducting a fundraising campaign, especially for a specific purpose, include funding for operations and maintenance as an actual amount or a percentage of the targeted fundraising purpose. This does not have to be called out separately, but it is a real cost and should be included in the donation amount. For example, a park bench might cost \$800 dollars, but the real cost to the ATMS would also include \$500 to set it in a permanent pad and \$80 per year for maintenance and repair over its 10-year life span for another \$800, plus another \$200 for vandalism over its lifetime for a total cost of \$2,300. Therefore, the donation to cover the cost of a park bench should be set at \$2,300–\$2500, not \$800.
3. Establish an endowment.
  - a. Set a goal for a Museum endowment fund.
  - b. Cultivate donors over time. Start small with any amount of money. Recognize that building an endowment of any size is a long-term project. Because many endowments come from bequests, the Museum should set up a program to encourage these gifts.
  - c. Set up guidelines for the endowment.
  - d. Reach out to the Cumberland County Community Foundation for assistance in starting the endowment.  
<https://www.cumberlandcf.org/>
4. Budget 2–4% of the capital costs annually for cyclic replacement costs. Include this cost in capital

improvement planning and fundraising. Consider the use of the endowment fund for this purpose.

## **Theme 4**

### **OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE and CAPACITY BUILDING**

1. Continue to use the ATMS Board of Directors as the chief organization for overall Museum management, implementation of the Strategic Plan and policy setting. Committees would be responsible for formulating and carrying out policies in their areas after approval by the Board. Staff and volunteers would be responsible for daily tasks and providing feedback to the Board about ideas, concerns, suggestions and opportunities to improve the Museum and its operations.
2. Commit to operational excellence that will help to garner widespread public and private sector support for the Museum.
3. When completed, use the Maintenance Management Plan to guide operations, planning, staffing, decision-making, the allocation of resources, and volunteer support.
4. Expand the docent program. Recruit more docents and support them with training about the Museum and customer service.
5. Expand the existing college internship program.
6. When adding board members, ensure that they are collegial, will attend meetings, and support the Museum. Expertise in areas that would advance museum goals would be a plus.
7. Focus on customer service as an official function. Use a skilled docent to help design and implement a customer service program including training for any contact that a visitor might have with the

Museum. Ensure that greeters are professional and knowledgeable about the Museum, the Trail, Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the area. Add more greeters during peak visitation hours. Consider training videos for new volunteers.

8. Create a short annual work program specifying goals, actions and tasks to undertake, designating responsible parties and resources needed.
9. Develop a formal strategic marketing plan for the Museum.
  - a. Work with the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau to become part of their advertising efforts.
  - b. Work with the Bureau of State Parks in their promotional programs.
10. Determine how outreach will be accomplished for various target audiences. Board members already do outreach from the perspective of Appalachian Trail supporters. However, orchestrated outreach to the local community is limited. Typically, a museum director would perform this function for all target audiences, spending 80 percent of his or her time in outreach and partnership building. Since the Museum has a part-time manager, volunteer outreach efforts are needed.
11. Develop policies and procedures for Museum operations that warrant the time and effort to do so. Policies on gifts, donations, and naming are commonly the most significant functions that warrant policy development. Policies on the collections and exhibits would be covered under collection management. Simplicity in all aspects of designing policies should be a guiding principle.
12. Undertake succession planning.

## **Theme 5**

### **VISITOR SERVICES and EDUCATION**

1. Adopt a visitor-centric approach to Museum operations. Artifacts and the Museum itself exist in large part to educate current and future visitors about the Appalachian Trail, cultivate support for it, and build the next generations of trail users and stewards.
2. Consider adding to services catering to thru-hikers. Determine services and goods that thru-hikers need that are not accessible to them because they are on the Trail.
3. Promote the Museum by implementing a formal strategic marketing program.
  - a. Conduct evaluations with visitors. This can range from simple questions like "How are we doing?" to comment cards, written or online evaluations of programs, focus groups, and member surveys.
  - b. Provide an organized way to capture visitor feedback. Make sure that the input is directed to a central hub for visitor feedback that ATMS can use in planning improvements in services, programs, exhibits and facilities.
4. Promote the Museum to the broadest possible audience. Share information, programs, services, knowledge about the trail, exhibits, and collections through technology and collaboration with other organizations. Use technology to promote the Museum, educate a broad audience about the Appalachian Trail, and encourage people to get out on the A.T. or other trails. Sharing collections responsibly with other enterprises





could help to promote the Museum, increase visitation, and build support.

- a. Focus on a strong web presence. This includes the Museum's website, Facebook page and social media
- b. Review the website frequently to keep it up to date.

- c. Use the exhibits, programs and educational information to promote active healthy living via hiking. Include the benefits of hiking and connecting with nature to visitors both in the Museum and via the internet.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HAROLD

# Implementation Schedule








## Theme 1

### COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

PROJECT KEY ■ Start Project    ■■■➔ Continue Implementation		Responsibility/Cost/Source	2018–2019	2020–2023	2024–2027+
<b>ONGOING</b>					
Continue to manage existing collections in accordance with professional standards	ATMS, staff and volunteers	■■■➔	■■■➔	■■■➔	■■■➔
Continue to provide training about the Museum and its collections to Docents, volunteers and staff. Consider when and how this training needs to be taken to the next level	ATMS volunteers	■■■➔	■■■➔	■■■➔	■■■➔
<b>NEW INITIATIVES</b>					
Develop a Collection Management Plan	Collection Management Committee			■	
Implement the Collection Management Plan including strategic collecting of artifacts along with a sound plan for deaccessioning artifacts	Staff and volunteers				■■■➔
Establish internship program for collection and information management	Staff and volunteers conduct outreach to universities and colleges			■■■➔	■■■➔
Create an Information Management Plan for the collection so that it can be easily accessed and remain secure	Staff and volunteers			■	

## Theme 2








### PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

PROJECT KEY ■ Start Project  Continue Implementation		Responsibility/Cost/Source	2018–2019	2020–2023	2024–2027+
ONGOING					
Continue to make improvements to the Museum building	Building and Grounds Committee with volunteers expert in construction and understanding of preservation of historic structures				
NEW INITIATIVES					
Develop a master plan for the grounds	Building and Grounds Committee				
Evaluate the need for off-site or satellite locations for collection storage and event space such as lecture series and programs in which participation would exceed the capacity of the Museum; Identify potential locations and costs; Secure the spaces for the time and purposes needed	Building and Grounds Committee. Costs of spaces to be used to be determined		■		
Establish a five to seven-year Capital Improvement Campaign	Working group of the Fund-raising and Resource Development, Buildings and Grounds, and Collection Management Committees; Volunteer time to establish the CIP with funding for implementation to be determined in the CIP process				
Develop a formal written Maintenance Management Plan for the building and grounds	Staff with support from the State Park maintenance chief and the Buildings and Grounds Committee during the offseason when the Museum is closed		■		














## Theme 3

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

PROJECT KEY ■ Start Project  Continue Implementation		Responsibility/Cost/Source	2018–2019	2020–2023	2024–2027+
ONGOING					
Continue to operate the Appalachian Trail Museum with a mix of public and private funding and support	Fundraising and Resource Development Committee as lead with full support and involvement of the Board of Directors				
NEW INITIATIVES					
Develop a formal written plan for fundraising	Create a committee of three Board of Directors members to write this plan	■			
Identify target goals for increasing memberships and donations over time. This is key to offsetting operating costs.	Fundraising and Resource Development and Planning Committee representatives	■			
Identify fund-raising campaigns for specific projects or programs	Board of Directors	■			
Establish an Endowment Fund	Board of Directors with leadership by the Fund-raising and Resource Development Committee		■		
Raise funds and budget 2–4% of capital improvement costs for cyclic replacement and emergency repairs	ATMS Board of Directors with the Fundraising and Resource Development Committee as the lead			■	
Develop policies on gifts and donations	ATMS Board of Directors with the Fundraising and Resource Development Committee as the lead with support from committees affected by gifts and donations	■			

## Theme 4

### OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE and CAPACITY BUILDING

PROJECT KEY ■ Start Project  Continue Implementation		Responsibility/Cost/Source	2018–2019	2020–2023	2024–2027+
ONGOING					
Continue to use the ATMS Board of Directors as the primary operating entity; Commit to operational excellence	Fundraising and Resource Development Committee				
Expand the docent and volunteers programs	Planning Committee				
NEW INITIATIVES					
Implement the Maintenance Management Plan	Use present budget and methods as guide				
Develop an orchestrated outreach program with target audiences and specified services areas (local, regional, and beyond)	Board of Directors led by Planning Committee; Strive to get assistance from the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau, State Parks, and/or a college to assist with this	■			
Develop policies and procedures for Museum operations	Museum staff during the offseason	■	■	■	
Undertake succession planning	Board of Directors		■		

## Theme 5

### VISITOR SERVICES and EDUCATION

PROJECT KEY ■ Start Project    ▢▢▢▢➔ Continue Implementation		Responsibility/Cost/Source	2018–2019	2020–2023	2024–2027+
ONGOING					
Continue to serve Museum visitors, adopting a formal visitor-centric approach	Board of Directors supported by all committees, staff, docents and volunteers	■	▢▢▢▢➔	▢▢▢▢➔	
NEW INITIATIVES					
Consider adding services catering to thru-hikers	Visitor Services Committee as lead with support from other committees	■			
Advance the Museum to the broadest possible audience; This includes sharing information, exhibits, artifacts and expertise with other appropriate organizations	Board of Directors with support from the Collection Management and Visitor Services Committees		■	▢▢▢▢➔	
Focus on a strong web presence	Staff and volunteers	■	▢▢▢▢➔	▢▢▢▢➔	
Align the Appalachian Trail through the Museum to help solve one of America’s pressing public health issues by motivating visitors to hike	Visitor Services and Collection Management Committees	■	▢▢▢▢➔	▢▢▢▢➔	





**The Appalachian Trail Museum Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, depends solely on memberships and contributions for operations and expansion of the Museum. PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF SCHMIDT**

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM

### MISSION STATEMENT

**T**he Appalachian Trail Museum Society serves the Appalachian Trail community by telling the stories of the founding, construction, preservation, maintenance, protection, and enjoyment of the trail since its inception. The Museum will collect, preserve, and interpret materials relevant to these subjects in an effort to portray not only the history of the trail but also the essence of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experience of the Appalachian environment and the culture of hiking.

