

TOWN NAME GATEWAY TO THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Draft Program Proposal

The following program goals, benefits and criteria were all gathered through the two pilot programs that took place in Hot Springs, NC and Boiling Springs, PA. The suggested program would choose one town per year trail-wide and nominations would be sent to RPC's and the Stewardship Council for acceptance.

Program Goals:

- Build and enhance positive relationships and establish consistent communication with local municipalities and neighboring communities about the Trail, its resources and the challenges they face.
- Engage citizens as Trail users and stewards.
- Influence local and regional green infrastructure planning efforts to protect the A.T.
- Recognize trail communities who value the A.T. as a community asset and actively work to protect and enhance the A.T. corridor for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Benefits to Towns:

- National Designation and acknowledgement of their efforts
- Recognition and visibility through signage, press releases, ATC website and AT Journeys magazine, plaque in town hall, etc...
- Local library donations
- Cultural and natural heritage visibility
- Partnerships and social capital built through new connections within the town
- Contributes to community, pride and quality of life
- Increases economic benefits for local businesses

Benefits to ATC and A.T. Community:

- Land use decisions that protect and enhance the A.T. and its corridor
- Increased volunteers and community engagement in protecting and maintaining the A.T. and its corridor
- Encourages early notification for issues that might affect the A.T.
- Build and enhance partnerships to protect public assets, lands and natural resources.
- Improves likelihood that the A.T. and ATC are considered assets to the community

Criteria needed for nomination:

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will accept nominations from towns through which the A.T. directly traverses, or that have the A.T. within 2 miles of town limits. Towns will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with ATC once designated and will have a suggested review date every 10 years or as needed.

Towns must also provide 3 out of the following:

- Community Support as evidenced by creation of an advisory committee
- Annual A.T. related project or event
- School board endorsed place-base/service learning educational component in community school(s)
- Show that A.T. support in land use plans, planning tools, ordinances or guidelines are in place; or show that there is support to amend, change or add such plans

Capacity Needed from ATC or AT lead volunteer:

- Approximately 200 hours per year/town

Budget

An estimated \$10,000 per /town for signage, initial community forum and program support.