



ATC Conservation and Trail Management Policy on Incidentally Acquired Structures and Dams

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| Published: 1989 | Reviewed: |
| Category: Resource Management | Updated: |

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), a §501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, works closely with Appalachian Trail volunteer maintaining clubs (“Clubs”) and other public and private partners to ensure the protection and stewardship of the natural, cultural, and experiential resources of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (known as ANST, A.T., or “the Trail”). Approximately fifty federal, state, or other public agencies have authority or jurisdiction over lands and resources within the protected A.T. corridor. ATC has a central management role by virtue of its Cooperative Agreement with the USDI National Park Service and its close working partnership with the USDA Forest Service and other agencies.

ATC's Trail management and conservation policies are meant to provide guidance for (a) dissemination to the public; (b) use and implementation by the ATC and the Clubs; and (c) recommendations for land-managing and other agencies. It is the agencies who work within their defined procedures to propose, administer, and enforce public policy. ATC policies are recommendations developed to support appropriate, coordinated Trail-wide management.

Overview

Policy

1. Each structure should be removed, and the A.T. corridor restored as near as possible to a natural condition, unless:
 - a. The structure must be retained for historic reasons. (Evaluations must be conducted on all structures more than 50 years old.)
 - b. The club, working with ATC, identifies a Trail-related need for the structure and is willing to assume responsibility for management and maintenance of the structure.
 - c. The structure is a contributing improvement (such as a bridge).
2. If possible, decisions regarding removal of structures should be made before the structure and land upon which it is situated are acquired by the agency.
3. Any structure proposed for retention on NPS-acquired lands will usually require a safety inspection by the NPS resource protection specialist (or his designee) and a qualified inspector from a local or state agency prior to assignment to ATC and reassignment to the club, to determine to what extent the structure meets the fire, life-safety, and electrical codes and to make recommendations for modifications or improvements to comply with the codes.

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4. Prior to any decision to retain a structure, a financial analysis should be prepared to evaluate the costs necessary to bring the structure up to code. The analysis should include an estimate of the costs associated with long-term maintenance of the structure.
5. Retained structures that are to be used in any way by the public must: a. Have liability insurance in the club and ATC's name, to protect the club and ATC; b. If located on NPS-acquired lands, be periodically inspected by the NPS resource-protection specialist (or his designee); and, c. Have all necessary and appropriate local government approvals.
6. Retained structures on NPS-acquired lands that are intended for use only to support the activities of Trail volunteers need an authorization under the NPS VIP program. Named individual volunteers acting as club caretakers should be under a direct VIP agreement with the NPS.
7. Structures on federal lands intended for removal are the ultimate responsibility of the federal agency partner. If agency budget and contracting constraints preclude agency action in a timely manner, clubs and/or ATC may offer to assist with removal to the extent feasible. Federal agency standards for demolition, removal, and restoration should be followed.

For questions related to this policy please contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at www.appalachiantrail.org, or P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV, 25425-807.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's mission is to protect, manage, and advocate for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.