

Community News:

The Appalachian Trail

By Jon Obst, staff writer

The Appalachian Trail is a vast bastion of early American wildness. It is a place where one can have an adventure and experience the beauty and dangers of land never altered by the logging industry and human development. Streams in many areas of the trail are fresh and the forest is mature, full of trees taller than those found in neighboring areas that had been logged around the turn of the century.

The Appalachian Trail is the brainchild of Benton Mackay who was determined to protect and preserve this rugged beauty so that people throughout future generations could have an oasis of wilderness to find sanctuary and inspiration.

The trail is a continuous footpath, marked by painted blazes on trees, that stretches from Springer Mountain, Georgia to Mt. Kathadin in Maine. The highest elevation found on the trail is 4,400 feet, and it never falls below 2,500 feet. There is also a very large amount of wildlife on the trail throughout all the states it encompasses, which includes rabbits, bears, wolves, fox, and deer. The Appalachian Trail is also known as the A.T.

Several million people hike on the A.T. every year. The vast majority of hikers go out for short excursions. Some hikers reach their goal of hiking the entire trail by hiking it by sections year after year. A small number of people hike the entire trail at once.

Those who hike the trail should approach it with respect and adequate preparation. The philosophy of leave no trace is very important while on the Appalachian Trail and anywhere in nature. Leave no trace means leaving nothing but footprints and taking nothing but pictures and memories. This is a really good way to preserve and protect nature and also keep it attractive for fellow hikers.

For those of you that have not been on the Appalachian Trail and are looking to get away for a few hours or few days it is more than worth your time. It is a tonic for the soul and a trip all should try at least once in their life.