

## **2008 OC SCENARIO BACKGROUND: For additional info. on the AT visit: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org>**

**The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)** is a volunteer-based, private nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of the 2,175-mile Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a 250,000-acre greenway extending from Maine to Georgia. Our mission is to ensure that future generations will enjoy the clean air and water, scenic vistas, wildlife and opportunities for simple recreation and renewal along the entire Trail corridor.

The idea of a "Trailway" was first embraced in 1937. The "Trailway" referred to an area dedicated to the interests of those on foot, originally a mile on either side. In some cases, that came to mean a "buffer"—a legally protected area around the path that kept the sights and sounds of civilization, logging, and development away from the solitary hiker. In other cases, it meant a great deal more. It evolved into a notion of a "greenway," a broad swath of protected land through which the Trail ran. Crucial to the idea of a greenway was that of the "viewshed," the countryside visible from the Trail's high points. In the years since the A.T. became a national scenic trail, the Conservancy has worked to influence the development of surrounding areas so that the views from the Trail remain scenic, even when those views are of areas well outside the boundaries of the public Trail lands themselves.

Within this "Trailway", no new parallel roads would be built or any other incompatible development allowed. Timber cutting would not be permitted within 200 feet of the Trail. Similar agreements, creating a zone one-quarter-mile in width, were signed with most states through which the Trail passes. Today, 99 percent of the Trail runs across public lands.

The ATC works with the National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office, 30 maintaining clubs and multiple other partners to engage the public in conserving this essential American resource.

### **At a Glance**

#### **The Appalachian Trail, completed in 1937:**

- Is a unit of the National Park Service.
- Is the nation's longest marked footpath, at approximately 2,175 miles.
- Is the first national scenic trail, designated in 1968.
- Houses more than 2,000 occurrences of rare, threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species.
- Crosses six national parks.
- Traverses eight national forests.
- Touches 14 states.
- Crosses numerous state and local forests and parks.
- Is maintained by 30 trail clubs and multiple partnerships.

#### **Impacts which threaten the A.T. and the hiking experience include:**

##### **Non-Recreational Activities**

- Highway construction
- Housing developments
- Windmills & powerlines interrupting viewshed
- Invasive plants
- Declining air quality

##### **Recreational Activities**

- Trail maintenance/repair
- Camping in non-designated areas
- ATVs & snowmobiles\*\*
- Bikers & horseback riders\*\*
- Hiking
- Lesser Impacts (hunting, fishing, pets, cross-country skiing)

NOTE: \*\* No motorized vehicles, bicycles, or horses are allowed on the AT. The AT is strictly a walking/hiking trail for pedestrians only.

### Fun facts about the Appalachian Trail:

- Lowest elevation: 124 feet.
- Highest elevation: 6,625 feet.
- More than 9,000 people have reported hiking the length of the Trail.
- It takes approximately 5 million footsteps to walk the entire length of the Trail.

### PENNSYLVANIA SPECIFICS:

The Appalachian Trail follows ridges of mountains east of the Alleghenies to the Susquehanna River in a long section of Trail notorious for its foot-bruising, boot-destroying rocks. The Trail north of the Susquehanna is characterized by long, flat, rocky ridges broken by fairly strenuous climbs in and out of gaps. About ten miles south of the Susquehanna River, the Trail crosses the Great Valley of the Appalachians to the Blue Ridge. This southern portion of the Trail through Pennsylvania has many sections that are gentle, and grades are easy, making it one of the easiest sections of the Trail.

Pennsylvania can be oppressively hot in summer, and water may be scarce. The Trail crosses many roads, and some shelters are near roads, where scattered crime problems make extra safety awareness a good idea.

ATC has a field office along the Trail in Boiling Springs.

### Pennsylvania at a Glance

<b>A.T. mileage</b>	229 miles
<b>Difficulty rating</b>	2-4 (Scale is 1-10: 1=flat/easy; 10=difficult -requires use of hands, footing precarious)
<b>Elevation</b>	320—2,080 feet

### Scenario Outline / Objective:

The variety of recreational uses on and near the Appalachian Trail negatively impacts habitats, wildlife, forests, water quality, land use, and user experience. Your team is a group of environmental consultants, hired by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Pennsylvania Chapter, to develop and deliver up to a 12 minute presentation on your management plan. Your plan should address 2 critical recreational activities which negatively impact the AT in Pennsylvania and WHY you selected them. It should also include 2 solutions to minimize those critical recreational impacts on the Appalachian Trail and define strategies of how to implement those solutions.

Your plan and presentation must:

- Identify 2 **Critical Recreational Activities** that have an environmental and social impact on the Appalachian Trail and trail users. Discuss why you chose them and what makes them critical.
- Discuss how these activities impact the soil, water quality, forests, wildlife, habitats, and quality of experiences for those using the trail. Impacts may include environmental, social, health, or economic.
- Propose a solution/recommendation for each of the CRAs which will minimize these impacts or provide protection of the trail. Explain how these solutions and/or recommendations can be implemented. Who would be impacted? Who will enforce them? How will these solutions improve conditions relevant to wildlife, forests, soils, habitats, water quality, trail communities, and other users?