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Where is the Appalachian Trail in Dutchess County?

The Appalachian Trail (AT) follows a green belt of natural scenery through Dutchess County, from the north end of Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park to the Connecticut line. The Trail passes through the townships of East Fishkill, Beekman, Pawling, and Dover. Parking is available where the Trail crosses Hortontown Road, Interstate 84, Depot Hill Road, Route 55, Route 22, and Deuel Hollow Road. The Trail is a public recreational resource, for hiking only, and for overnight use only at designated campsites as follows: RPH Cabin on Hortontown Road, Bailey Spring on Hosner Mountain, Morgan Stewart shelter on Depot Hill West, Telephone Pioneers Shelter on West Mountain, and Wiley Shelter near Deuel Hollow Road.

What is the Appalachian Trail?

The Appalachian Trail is the longest continuously marked walking path in the world. It winds more than 2000 miles from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine, spanning fourteen states. It offers leisure-time outdoor enjoyment to people living in an otherwise heavily congested and motorized Atlantic Seaboard region.

The AT was begun in 1921 and developed through the volunteer efforts of trail clubs and other interested hikers. The first section to be completed was built in 1923 in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks, by members of the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference. Shortly thereafter the Trail was opened in Dutchess County. The route is marked, chiefly on trees, with white paint blazes, two inches by six inches; a double blaze indicates a turn in the Trail, with the upper blaze offset in the direction of the turn. At state road crossings, hiker crossing symbols and triangular AT signs indicate the location of the Trail.

How will the Appalachian Trail be protected?

To preserve the Trail as a recreational resource, the National Park Service (NPS), under the provisions of the National Trail Systems Act, has purchased primarily undeveloped land through appropriations by Congress from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This has made it possible to move the Trail from the surfaced roads to which it had been relegated by

spreading population and other development pressures to the ridges, woods, and fields of Dutchess County, more appropriate to the Trail's purpose.

This NPS-acquired land offers more than a narrow strip necessary for the footpath; it provides a buffer zone or greenway, ideal for the quiet recreation that is hiking. The boundaries of NPS-acquired lands have been surveyed and are marked with diamond-shaped red paint blazes where the trail "corridor" abuts private land.

Until recently, the Trail existed on private property or roadways and depended upon state and local agencies to provide law enforcement support. Hikers and volunteer trail managers are fortunate that this protection continues, since these local agencies have both the right and the responsibility to enforce state and local laws on federal land. There is no plan for development of NPS law enforcement capability along the Appalachian Trail outside of established units of the National Park system.

The Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR) for National Park Service units does apply to the Appalachian Trail and may be used when a specific state or local law does not protect the environmental resources along the Trail. Within this Code, two special regulations pertain *only* to the Appalachian Trail lands. These regulations prohibit: (1) the use of bicycles, motorcycles, snowmobiles and other motor vehicles and (2) the use of horses or pack animals, as these uses are particularly damaging to the treadway and the hiking experience.

Through the local management planning process, the Dutchess County Local Management Plan has been developed. This plan provides additional specific guidelines for use and management of the AT within the county. A copy of the Dutchess County Plan is available for reference at the office of the Assistant Regional Forester, Department of Environmental Conservation, Stony Kill Farm, Route 9D, Beacon, NY.

Who will take care of the Appalachian Trail?

The trail work is carried on by volunteers in each of the fourteen states the Trail crosses. Local volunteer maintainers and monitors are members of the more than 60 hiking and outdoor clubs which are affiliated in the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference. Similar organizations maintain the Trail in the other states, and the entire effort is coordinated by the Appalachian Trail Conference, with headquarters in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Volunteers have built and maintain over 700 miles of hiking trails in New York and New Jersey, including 160 miles of the AT. In each county in New York, their work on the AT is coordinated by a County Management Committee under a local management plan. The volunteer workers provide a presence on the Trail: the maintainers care for the footpath, while the monitors watch over the surrounding corridor. Your cooperation with maintainers and monitors will be appreciated. The Dutchess County Management Committee also works with local sources of law enforcement, fire suppression, and search and rescue, for the benefit of the public and the preservation of the Trail.

How may landowners and other neighbors of the Trail learn to use and enjoy the Appalachian Trail?

Our goal is to encourage safe and appropriate use of the Trail in a manner that will promote goodwill and cooperation between hikers and local landowners.

We hope that you will enjoy walking on the Trail, and as you become acquainted with it, help to take care of it by watching for misuse such as timber cutting, dumping, fires, use of motorized vehicles, etc. Please report such problems to the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference, at 232 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, telephone (212) 685-9699.

Survey and trail maps of the Appalachian Trail are on file at the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference office. Trail maps and guides for the AT are available for sale there. In addition to enjoying the AT, local residents may wish to become acquainted with other trails on both sides of the Hudson River, for which maps and guide books are also available.