

Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club Local Management Plan 2020 revision

Purpose of the Local Management Plan

This document was prepared to set forth policies and concerns of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club (MRATC) on issues affecting the club, its members and activities, and the designated section of the Appalachian Trail that the club manages and maintains as one of the trail clubs affiliated with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

It is hoped that this LMP will help club members to understand how the club functions and understand the relationships between our club and its partner organizations: The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area of the Jefferson National Forest (USFS), and Grayson Highlands State Park (VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation).

The LMP is to be approved by the Board and should be reviewed by the Board for possible changes about every two years.

For further information on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, including new policies, training workshops, privy design, camping impact management, and other topics of interest to the club, visit www.appalachiantrail.org. Check under Policies and Planning and Training Opportunities. Also check the Reference Materials in the Trail Maintainers Library in the Toolkit for Trail Clubs.

Editor: Anne Maio

Other editors and reviewers: the MRATC Steering Committee and Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1:	Background, club history, responsibilities and partnerships	4
PART 2:	Club organization	4
PART 3:	The physical trail and trail maintenance	5
	A. Guidelines	
	B. Blazes, trail signs, information kiosks	
	C. Trees, Vegetation and rare plants in trail maintenance:	
	D. Accessibility	
	E. Relocations	
	F. Stream crossings and bridges	
	G. Trailheads and parking:	
	H. Side and connecting trails, Multipurpose trails	
	I. Overnight Use Areas	
	J. Drinking water sources:	
	K. Sanitation and privies	
	L. Trail crew safety and training	
PART 4:	Public use, public Information, and emergency response	9
	A. Public information, education, and outreach	
	B. Advertising	
	C. Visitor and group use, large scale recreational use, and commercial use of the AT	
	D. Emergency response	
	E. Ridgerunner	
PART 5:	Conflicting Uses, Competing Uses, and Monitoring	11
	A. AT boundary corridor monitoring	
	B. Motorized vehicles, bicycles, pack animals, hunting	
	C. Geocaching and trail magic	
	D. Utility and wind energy structures, pipelines	
PART 6:	Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources	11
	A. Rare, threatened and endangered species	
	B. Wilderness areas	
	C. Vistas, open spaces, vegetation management	

- D. Unique areas, special natural, historical or cultural resources
- E. Invasive, non-native plant species
- F. Insect pest and wildlife management
- G. National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

PART 7: Club concerns for action; resources and future planning 14

APPENDIX 1: Check-out/check-in procedures and emergency contacts 17

APPENDIX 2: Abbreviations 20

APPENDIX 3: New Club Leadership Model 21

APPENDIX 4: MRATC Bylaws, 2020 revision 24

APPENDIX 5: Volunteer Services Agreement form 26

APPENDIX 6: MRATC Section Monitor Guidelines 29

APPENDIX 7: TABLES30

- Table 1: Bridges
- Table 2: Trailheads
- Table 3: Overnight sites: shelters
- Table 4: Side Trails
- Table 5: Multipurpose Trails
- Table 6: Open areas, vistas, unique or historical/cultural areas

PART 1: Background, club history, responsibilities and partnerships

The purpose of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club's Local Management Plan is to guide the club in fulfilling its responsibility for the maintenance and management of the 59.4 miles of the Appalachian Trail currently assigned to the club by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Currently, our trail section extends from the TN/VA state line south of Damascus north to Teas Rd., Rte. 670 in Smyth County. The club was established on February 29th, 1960.

The club will fulfill its trail responsibilities under the authority of the National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543, as amended), the 1981 A.T. Comprehensive Plan, and under agreements with the ATC, the U.S. Forest Service, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the National Park Service and other agencies.

In order to aid in fulfilling trail maintenance and management responsibilities, the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club conducts planning at quarterly meetings, including an annual meeting with its agency partners. The fall and spring meetings are key in reviewing and updating the club's plans for trail maintenance and management activities. The club's Steering Committee Coordinators oversee the planning process, with input from other club officers and directors (Board members) and from the membership. Plans for large projects (e.g. new privies, bridges) are discussed and planned with the Virginia Regional Office of the ATC and the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (USFS), and if on Grayson Highlands St. Park property, with that agency.

PART 2: Club organization

The Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club welcomes people of all ages to come out and work on the trail with us or participate in our recreational hikes. Non-club members need to fill out a Volunteer Services Agreement form if they are joining us for trail work. (Copy of form in Appendix.) Persons under 18 must have a parent with them or a parent's signature on the form. The club maintains a close relationship with the ATC - Virginia Regional Office, and the USFS - Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, and Grayson Highlands State Park.

The club is registered with the Commonwealth of Virginia. Until 2018, MRATC was administered under a typical organizational structure for volunteer organizations: a Board consisting of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer and several Board members, called "directors," all elected by the membership at two-year intervals. In addition, there were a number of committees or assignments, such as membership, trail supervisor, youth, hikes, outreach, AT Communities, newsletter, website, and the club's representative to the ATC's Regional Partnership Committee. The club president oversaw all club functions and coordination between the club and the ATC, the Forest Service and Grayson Highlands State Park.

During 2017, the club became interested in facilitating leadership participation by redistributing club responsibilities and leveling workloads. We agreed to try a new leadership model in 2018. We then voted to continue the trial for 2019, after which that model was reviewed and a decision made by the Board and by the membership at the 2020 Annual Meeting to continue it and revise our bylaws and this Local Management Plan accordingly.

The new model divides club responsibilities under several Steering Committee Coordinators (Trails, Outreach, Natural Resources, Club Recreational Activities) and adds the club's RPC representative as a voting Board member with added responsibilities for communication between the club and the ATC. See the Appendix for an outline of responsibilities under this leadership model.

Under the Steering Committee Coordinators, other club members have responsibilities for various functions. In addition, Task Coordinators (for responsibilities such as website, newsletter, membership, timekeeping, youth groups) are appointed annually by the Board.

Club meetings are quarterly and all members are encouraged to attend and discuss. Voting is by the Board members (directors), and including Steering Committee Coordinators, the Secretary and the Treasurer. There is a Partnership meeting with our partners: the ATC Virginia Regional Office, the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (USFS), and Grayson Highlands State Park each November. There is also an annual membership meeting, traditionally at the end of February, when all members vote on new club secretaries and treasurers, directors and Steering Committee Coordinators, any changes to the club's by-laws, and any other issues the Board determines need a membership vote.

Trail section monitors are club members who have taken on responsibility for light maintenance on particular sub-sections of the AT maintained by the club. They should be familiar with the guidelines in this document and be observant of work needs on their sections that need addressing by a group. See the Appendix for a list of section monitor responsibilities. They report to the club's Trails Coordinator or designee. The Trails Committee is responsible for planning trail projects and coordinating these with the Forest Service and ATC as appropriate.

For the past few years, the club has made it a communication practice to send out emails to members and other interested individuals to announce club meetings, work hikes, recreational hikes, and provide other information on Trail issues and club outreach activities.

PART 3: The Physical Trail and trail maintenance

The section of the Appalachian Trail MRATC maintains lies within the Jefferson National Forest, except for a short section of about three miles within Grayson Highlands State Park and a mile-long section within the Town of Damascus, VA. The club's maintenance section includes the highest peak in Virginia, Mt. Rogers (5,729 ft.), three federally designated wilderness areas (Lewis Fork, Little Wilson Creek, and Raccoon Branch), and currently contains seven trail shelters and eight privies. For a statement on trail maintenance in Wilderness areas, see Wilderness in Part 6, Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resources.

The club follows the practices outlined here in performing trail maintenance:

A. Guidelines:

Helpful techniques can be found in the ATC's *Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance* manual and a summary version. These are available for purchase from the ATC. The club has two reference copies which members can borrow from the club's Trails Committee.

AT maintaining clubs need to consult with the ATC and agency partners before initiating changes in the Trail and structures that go beyond repairs and erosion control. An approval form is submitted by the club's Trails Coordinator and signed by the ATC and our Agency Partners.

Managing the Trail for a primitive experience: Trail club members should bear in mind the appropriateness of actions to maintain the Trail, with attention to preserving natural resources and not over-improving. Trail work should promote hiker safety and be sustainable. The ATC is concerned with the impacts on the AT of increasing use (e.g. erosion, vegetation damage, poor sanitation, campfire impacts and large hiking groups). Club members should pay attention to these possible impacts and

discuss concerns with the club's Trails Coordinator and Agency Partners in order to plan for mitigation and hiker education.

B. Blazes, trail signs, information kiosks:

1. Blazes: Two by six inch white blazes are used to mark the AT. Double blazes are used to indicate turns or places where hikers should be alert for changes in direction. In our region, the in-line double blaze is preferred to the offset double blaze. Members of the club who are section maintainers should monitor blaze condition and the need to add blazes in confusing areas. Blazing may be done by section maintainers or by a club trail crew during a work session.

2. Trail signs and information kiosks

Information kiosks are maintained near trailheads and in parking areas by the Forest Service and Grayson Highlands State Park. The club participates in planning with these Agency Partners and the ATC on the content for these kiosks in order to communicate safety, regulations, and area-specific information.

Trail signs along the AT and at road crossings in our area are planned and erected cooperatively by the club and the Forest Service, which has guidelines for signs and lettering. Regulatory signs, such as those that warn the AT is for foot use only, are obtained from the Forest Service and can be put up in areas where intrusions have been noticed, such as near horse trails. Club members and section maintainers should pay attention to sign condition and signage needs and report problems to the club's Trails Coordinator. The VA Dept. of Transportation is planning to erect hiker warning signs for road traffic on roads the AT crosses in our area.

C. Trees, vegetation and rare plants in trail maintenance:

The club's trail maintenance responsibilities include removing trees and limbs which have fallen across the Trail and cutting back encroaching bushes and other vegetation. Fallen trees and limbs shin-high or above, as well as tripping hazards, should be cut and removed. Section maintainers can cut small ones with a hand saw. Larger fallen trees, or leaning hazard trees should be reported to the club's Trails Coordinator so that club members certified to cut these with a chainsaw or crosscut saw can be sent in. Sawyer certification requires attendance at a Forest Service class, as well as First Aid/CPR.

Brush, such as rhododendron, should be cut back to a limb joint if overhanging or sticking out into the Trail. Section maintainers will spend quite a bit of time lopping on their sections during the year. In lopping, or if a club work crew uses swing blades or weed eaters, care must be taken not to cut rare plants. Section maintainers who need information about the plants on their sections should check with the club's Trails or Natural Resources coordinator.

D. Accessibility:

The club works with the ATC and our Agency Partners in planning new construction or major alterations in the trail, shelters and privies. The Forest Service has guidelines (FSTAG: the Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines and FSORAG: Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines.) To the extent feasible, MRATC will make trail shelters and privies accessible and will consider accessibility in new facility construction to facilitate access by persons with disabilities. In trail building, the club will also consider and discuss with our agency partners the consideration that the use

of accessibility equipment by persons with disabilities should not impact the character of the AT as a primitive footpath.

E. Relocations:

In recent years, MRATC has seldom done trail relocations. Several large ones were done in the 1990s and the 1970s to set the AT where it is today. In 2017, a short (1/10 mile) relocation was done to connect the new Straight Branch Bridge to the AT.

Also in 2017, the potential for two short (under 1/10 mile) relocations, both in areas north of Wise Shelter, which had been discussed in the past, was reviewed by the MRNRA, ATC VARO and several club members and plans were made to start the environmental review process. One is the zig-zag junction where the AT crosses the Scales Trail. The reason for the relocation would be to eliminate hiker confusion. The other is a boggy area in the Little Wilson Creek Wilderness south of Stone Mountain. Relocating the Trail there would lessen the impact on soil and vegetation caused by hikers getting off the Trail to circumvent the bog.

For any relocation the club thinks is needed, we work with agency partners and the ATC to determine the best route, evaluating the potential improved quality of hiking experience, safety, environmental impact, and trail protection. NEPA review and approval by the ATC and land managing agency is required in advance of all proposed relocations.

F. Stream crossings and bridges - See Appendix, Table 1:

The club is responsible for monitoring the condition of trail bridges and stream crossings. Section maintainers and others who notice potential problems, such as rotting wood, loose railings, poor stepstone crossings, should report these to the club's Trails Coordinator so they can be addressed and any major problems discussed with the ATC and our Agency Partners. Bridges are constructed for hiker safety and favor a rustic appearance in keeping with the primitive nature of the Trail.

G. Trailheads and parking – See Appendix, Table 2:

The club monitors trailheads for signage needs, vandalism and trash. Problems or deficiencies are discussed with our Agency Partners. Section maintainers observing signage needs or parking problems should report these to the club's Trails Coordinator. Vandalism should be reported to the club's Trails Coordinator and the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area Headquarters and an incident report filed with the ATC (incident@appalachiantrail.org). Section maintainers should remove trash from trailheads on their sections.

H. Side and connecting trails, Multipurpose trails – See Appendix, Tables 3 and 4:

The club maintains side trails (Table 3), usually blue-blazed, which lead to shelters and springs. We may assist the Forest Service (Mt. Rogers NRA) in maintaining other side trails as our time permits.

The club does not maintain multipurpose trails (Table 4) that cross the AT in our area which are used by bicycle and horse riders, such as the VA Creeper Trail, Iron Mtn. Trail, Scales Trail, Crest Trail, Seed Orchard Trail and VA Highlands Horse Trail. Crossings of the AT with Multipurpose Trails, though,

can bring wandering bicycle and horse riders onto the AT, so we watch for this, post signs, and discuss problems with our agency partners.

Side and connecting trails allow hikers options for planning hikes. The National Geographic map of the Mt. Rogers area shows these alternatives.

At present, the club has no plans to apply to the ATC for official designation for connecting trails or multipurpose trails that cross the AT in our area.

I. Overnight use areas – See Appendix, Table 5:

1. Shelters

MRATC's section of the AT has seven shelters (Saunders, Lost Mountain, Thomas Knob, Wise, Old Orchard, Hurricane Mountain, and Trimpi) and eight privies. Section monitors should monitor these structures when doing maintenance on their sections. Shelter registers and brooms should be replaced as needed and bear boxes checked for trash. Fire rings at shelters should be cleaned up periodically. Trash should be removed. For privy maintenance and springs, see Sanitation and Drinking water below. Other things to watch for and report: increased graffiti or other vandalism and other needed repairs, such as damaged siding, hazardous trees leaning near shelters and privies. Use of AT shelters should be by long distance hikers by priority, not by groups. If hiking groups seem to be regularly monopolizing shelters, the problem should be discussed with the ATC and agency partners.

The club does not currently propose erecting any new shelters on our trail section. Those we have are close enough to each other to provide reasonable hiking distance between them. If in future the club determines there is a need for a new shelter, or a shelter replacement, the club would evaluate a site, including the availability of a water source, and follow the procedure of submitting the request to the ATC, using criteria outlined in *Locating and Designing Shelters and Formal Campsites* (See Volunteer Toolkit: Trail Management Policies on the ATC's website.).

2. Campsites

Since our trail section is almost entirely on public lands and camping is permitted by the Forest Service, one of the club's primary concerns is camping impacts. Campers sometimes set up extra fire rings and cut tree limbs for firewood, threatening the natural resources and scenery we value and the natural viewshed hikers enjoy.

Section maintainers should disperse these extra fire rings and report tree cutting and other resource damage to the club's Trails Coordinator for mitigation discussions with the Forest Service and ATC.

Camping is not permitted within the boundaries of Grayson Highlands State Park, except in Park campgrounds.

Hikers should not remain at shelters and campsites for more than a few days by USFS policy. Club members noticing longer term use may mention the policy to the hikers as seems appropriate and report abuse to the Trails Coordinator to pass along to the MRNRA and the ATC.

The maximum number in a group for camping is ten. The club has discussed with the ATC and Forest Service the possibility of setting up group campsites at a little distance from the trail, but at present, camping on our trail section has not been seen to cause problems which would make this a planning priority.

J. Drinking water sources:

Except for Hurricane, all the shelters on MRATC's trail section have springs for hikers' water supply. Hurricane's source is a small creek nearby. At Wise, a better source than the seep spring near the shelter is Big Wilson Creek about 1/8 mile north of the shelter. Section maintainers should monitor the water sources and clean out leaves and debris as needed. Report damaged or missing spring pipes and missing signage at shelters indicating location of springs to the club's Trails Coordinator. The sanitation of springs is not guaranteed and hikers should always treat their water.

K. Sanitation and privies:

Each shelter on our club's trail section has a privy nearby. Wise has two. Five of the privies are "composting." (One of the two at Wise, plus Thomas Knob, Trimpi, Hurricane, and Old Orchard). Saunders, one of the Wise privies, and Lost Mountain are pit privies.

The composting privies are designed with two bins. The toilet riser is over one bin. When the privy fills up, the toilet riser is moved over the inactive bin and the used, or active, bin is left for a year or two so the contents can decompose. It is important for hikers to use duff (partly decomposed leaves, sometimes mixed with wood shavings) to aid in decomposition. They should rake up more duff with the rake and pail provided and pour it into the galvanized can provided in the privy so there is a ready supply of duff. Section maintainers should check on the duff supply and add to it as needed. They should note the need for additional educational signage for hikers about sanitation and report this to the Trails Coordinator. They should also use a pole to push down privy contents in between bin-switches. Emptying composted material and switching the toilet riser over the second bin is a task requiring a few people, so the need to switch should be reported to the club's Trails Coordinator.

Sanitation is one of MRATC's primary concerns, since some campers do not effectively cat-hole waste. Section maintainers should check around camping areas and clean up as possible, reporting large scale impacts of poor sanitation to the club's Trails Coordinator for discussion with the ATC and Agency Partners for mitigation planning, including the possible need for adding privies.

L. Trail crew safety and training:

Club members and their guests performing work on trails in the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area are covered for possible injury by the U.S. Forest Service. Guests sign a copy of a USFS Volunteer Service Agreement form (See Appendix.). Club members sign the USFS and NPS Group Volunteer Service Agreement form. Guest groups also sign a Group Volunteer Service Agreement form. The club's Trails Coordinator or designee will provide safety cautions at trail work outings. Trail workers agree to the USFS Job Hazard Analysis for work on national forest land and the NPS JHA for work on state park or AT Community land. Additional JHAs for special kinds of work are available on the ATC's website.

Club members who want to be certified to use chainsaws or crosscut saws on Forest Service land must complete the Forest Service training workshop and hold current first aid/CPR certification. Workshop dates are announced on the ATC's website: www.appalachiantrail.org.

PART 4: Public Use, Public Information, and Emergency Response

A. Public information, education, and outreach

MRATC supports the ATC in educating the public about the AT by working with AT Communities and the ATC's Trail to Every Classroom program and participating in community events. The club publishes a newsletter, brochures about the club and local hikes, maintains a website (www.mratc.org) and Facebook page with information on hikes and club activities, and is accessible on Instagram and Twitter to encourage community members to participate. MRATC also works with youth groups to promote Trail stewardship for the future.

In addition, the principal task of the ridgerunner, hired by the ATC for the heaviest part of the hiking season, is to provide backpacking education for hikers and visitors.

B. Advertising

Commercial advertising on the AT is not permitted. Club members encountering commercial advertising (signs and leaflets) should remove them.

C. Visitor and group use, large scale recreational use, and commercial use of the AT

The club supports the ATC in encouraging visitor use of the Trail but making efforts through Leave No Trace hiker education and sustainable trail maintenance to reduce visitor impacts on natural resources, and particularly, camping impacts (extra fire rings, damage to vegetation, noise).

Group size is limited to 10 for camping and 25 for hiking, except in wilderness areas where the group size for hiking is 10.

At this date, the club has not yet planned off-trail camping sites for groups, which would cut down on the number of hikers trying to stay at trail shelters at the same time, but will continue to monitor group use and discuss crowding mitigation with the ATC and our Agency Partners.

On National Forest lands, Special Use Permits are required for large recreational events and commercial use of the Trail. In our area, these are handled through the Mt. Rogers NRA Headquarters.

D. Emergency response (See Appendix 1 for local emergency contacts.)

Fires, crime, and rescue are the responsibilities of local, state and federal professional responders. Club members should report incidents to 911 and to the ATC and Forest Service as appropriate. Club members can offer minimal medical assistance and transportation as makes sense in the situation.

E. Ridgerunner

The club participates in the ATC's Ridgerunner program. During peak hiker season, usually late April to Labor Day, a Ridgerunner, hired by the ATC hikes our trail section, covering it in about a week. The job of the Ridgerunner, primarily, is to help hikers and provide trail and backpacking education. He/she carries a map, first aid supplies and an emergency contact device. Another function the Ridgerunner provides is to report to us trail and trail structure issues which need our attention. He/she may also help with privy upkeep, remove extra fire rings, and do minor brush clearing.

PART 5: Conflicting Uses, Competing Uses, and Monitoring

A. AT boundary corridor monitoring

As participants in the ATC's boundary program, the club monitors the AT boundary corridor and boundary monuments close to Damascus and abutting private property for possible encroachments (trash, deer stands, vehicle use, etc.), reporting to the ATC regularly on the condition of the boundary corridor and reporting encroachments to the Forest Service if action is needed. The club removes trash as possible, renews painted markings and boundary signs, and lops to maintain visibility on the boundary line.

B. Motorized vehicles, bicycles, pack animals, hunting

Motorized vehicles, bicycles, horses and pack animals are not permitted on the AT. Since the AT on our club's trail section is crossed by multi-use trails and horse trails (such as the VA Creeper Trail, the Scales Trail, the Beech Grove Trail, the Crest Trail, the VA Highlands Horse Trail), there is a possibility that the users of these other trails could wander onto the AT with their horses or bicycles. Such use could damage the AT and could also endanger AT hikers. Club members and section maintainers noticing evidence of intrusion should report this to the club's Trails Coordinator for remediation (such as signage) or discussion with the Forest Service for other action.

Hunting is permitted on National Forest lands. Hunters should not shoot across the AT or from it.

C. Geocaching and trail magic

Geocaching activities could cause damage to the Trail or natural resources as people go off-trail to search. Trail Magic events have increased on the AT in recent years, and several occur each year on our trail section. AT hikers enjoy the food offerings, but there is the danger that food left out can carry bacteria, cause litter, and risk animal intrusions. Club members and section maintainers noticing evidence of nuisance Trail Magic or geocaching should report it to the club's Trails Coordinator for discussion with the ATC and Agency Partners.

D. Utility and wind energy structures, pipelines

The ATC has policies against the intrusion of energy and communication facilities on the AT and its viewshed. Club members noticing new intrusions should report them to the club's Trails Coordinator for discussion with the ATC and Forest Service. Club members can get involved in community meetings as appropriate to discuss effects of utilities on the AT.

PART 6: Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

A. Rare, threatened and endangered species

The terms "threatened" and "endangered" pertain to the specific legal status of a plant or animal species as designated by the secretary of the interior, under the authority of the [Endangered Species Act](#) of 1973.

MRATC members monitor specific rare plant populations under the ATC's Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plant program and report changes regularly to the ATC. The Elk Garden area on our trail section is considered one of the richest areas of wild plants in the Appalachians.

The club takes into account possible impacts on rare plants as we perform trail maintenance or plan relocations or trail facilities and will work with the ATC and agency partners to be sure actions in sensitive areas will not affect rare species.

B. Wilderness areas

On September 3, 1964, the United States Congress passed Public Law 88-577, commonly known as the [Wilderness Act](#). The act defined wilderness as an area that:

In contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain, ... an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

The AT in our club's trail section passes through three federally designated Wilderness areas, which can be seen on the National Geographic map of the Mt. Rogers area: the Raccoon Branch Wilderness (Smyth County between Rtes. 16/650 and Rte. 670), the Little Wilson Creek Wilderness (south of the Scales to north of Wise Shelter, and the Lewis Fork Wilderness (north of Elk Garden to the edge of Thomas Knob and Rhododendron Gap and also south of Fox Creek to north of the Scales). These areas are marked with signs erected by the Forest Service.

To maintain the primitive character of Wilderness, efforts are made to keep noise and impacts minimal. No chainsaws, motors, or wheels are permitted, so tree cutting is done with crosscut saws. The trail in Wilderness is usually narrower and tree cutting is at a level just to keep the trail passable. The AT is blazed, but side trails are not always blazed. Hiking groups should be ten or fewer. Camping is permitted (maximum group size 10), but to keep impact low, club members who see extra fire rings or other camping impacts should remove them, or report damage to the Trails Coordinator. Club members who see large hiking groups should report them to the Trails Coordinator for reporting to the ATC. Club members can remind large groups they see of the Wilderness policy on group size as appropriate.

The Thomas Knob/Rhododendron Gap area, where the AT skirts Wilderness, and the Mt. Rogers high country in general are subject to hiking and camping impacts and the club continues to monitor this and work on mitigation with the ATC and our agency partners.

C. Vistas, open spaces, vegetation management - See Appendix, Table 6

The AT on MRATC's trail section passes through pastures and mountain bald areas. Notable are Whitetop Mountain, the Wilburn Ridge area in the Mt. Rogers high country, the Scales (Pine Mtn., Stone Mtn.). There is a smaller open area near Slabtown Road. The Forest Service has maintained these as open by performing controlled burns and by leasing pasture land to local farmers. These practices are meant to keep certain areas unforested along the Trail and facilitate the enjoyment of mountain views and improve habitat for wildlife. More management work is needed, however, to control the ingrowth of unwanted vegetation.

To date, the club has not cut trees to open up vistas on our section, but we are now participating in meetings with the ATC and Forest Service about open area planning and maintenance. The USFS management strategy for open areas prioritizes those important for trails, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Clearing in open areas would be done with the plan to maintain a feathered edge along the woods line, removing unnecessary vegetation and pushing back the edge. The Forest Service hopes to use funds from timber harvesting to fund catch-up efforts for open area management. A high country management plan has been initiated to cover all of the Mt. Rogers high country, including all of the Crest Zone open areas.

The pasture north of Elk Garden, which is grazed, has been placed in the funding cycle for brush thinning in FY 2020. The Slabtown pasture, which is grazed, but is overrun with nonnative invasive Autumn Olive, was bulldozed in 2015 and treated with herbicide in 2017. These efforts will continue.

Club sawyers and other club members will participate with the ATC and Forest Service in efforts to control vegetation ingrowth in open areas under jointly made plans.

D. Unique areas, special natural, historical or cultural resources – See Appendix, Table 6

To date, MRATC has not identified any special cultural resources on our trail section, except perhaps the Scales, formerly an area where cattle were gathered and weighed. This area is kept open and fenced by the Forest Service. It is also used by campers with vehicles, which if not monitored, could result in litter, too many fire rings, and tire tracks impacting soil. Trail club members noticing problems should bring them to the attention of the Trails Coordinator for discussion with the Forest Service.

Unique natural areas would include Whitetop Mountain and Wilburn Ridge for their scenic views and geology. Controlled burns by the Forest Service keep these areas open.

E. Invasive, non-native plant species

Non-native plants crowd out native species in places along our trail section. Autumn Olive bushes proliferate in the Slabtown pasture and at Beartree Gap. Multiflora Rose infests these areas as well. Coltsfoot grows along roadway edges near the Trail in places like Dickey Gap. Kudzu keeps trying to grow into the Trail on Rte. 58, just north of Damascus. Garlic Mustard grows along the AT near Teas Rd. and in Damascus.

The club participates in the ATC's invasive plant pulling and removal program to try to keep the population of invasives under control by setting special days devoted to this and by removing invasives during trailwork sessions.

F. Insect pest and wildlife and animal management

The Forest Service has regular programs to spray areas infested with gypsy moths with chemicals to control moth reproduction. The club has not been involved in monitoring for insect pests, although spruce die-off in the high country is a concern and it is uncertain whether it is caused by the spruce beetle or by air pollution.

The wild pony herd is kept to a sustainable number by the Wilburn Ridge Pony Association. Longhorns have been introduced in the Mt. Rogers high country and they are allowed to graze there during the year and then are removed for the winter. All this livestock does tend to lead to animal trails all over the high country, which are then used by hikers and further eroded. Neither the club nor the Forest Service has made efforts at animal trail repair to date, and it would not be feasible to try to really control the impacts these animals make. The ponies sometimes try to get food from hikers and “Don’t feed the ponies” education hasn’t solved that problem entirely.

Bears have occasionally been a problem for campers careless about where they store food. The club has tried to warn people by putting up signs. Trail club members hearing about or noticing bear problems should report them to the Trails Coordinator for immediate referral to the Forest Service and the ATC. In 2018, due to a large number of reports of bears trying to steal hikers’ food at campsites on MRATC’s trail section, the club worked with the ATC and Forest Service to install metal food storage lockers. As of 2020, these are located at all seven of the club’s trail shelters and at the Scales and near Rhododendron Gap.

G. National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

Before constructing a shelter, large trail bridge, or doing any large-scale clearing or trail construction, The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires an evaluation of potential environmental impacts. The club works with the ATC’s Virginia Regional Office and the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (USFS) to be sure a project site is evaluated by natural resources experts before work starts.

PART 7: Club concerns for action; resources and future planning

1. Mount Rogers High Country:

Club concerns:

The Mt. Rogers high country attracts large numbers of people. Besides being the location of the highest mountain in Virginia, the scenic views in that area are outstanding. Heavy foot traffic and over-camping produce substantial impacts on the trail and natural resources. People construct multiple fire rings and sometimes leave trash. Some people cut live tree branches for campfires. The Thomas Knob privy is inadequate to the traffic, so people leave waste in many places. There is not always a Ridgerunner up there to educate people about responsible camping.

Planned action:

The club has talked to the ATC VA Regional Office and the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (USFS) about these issues over the last few years. We have agreed to work on education posters, signs and brochures. One brochure for groups was produced in 2015. We are working with the MRNRA to revise public information on the kiosk at Massie Gap.

We have agreed we don't want to try to ban campfires, since much of the time, there would not be anyone available to enforce this.

We have discussed the possibility of adding a privy in the high country to address the sanitation needs of the large number of hikers and campers in that area.

The club has had rehabilitation work for the trail in the whole Mt. Rogers high country on the list of Konnarock Crew projects for the last eight years and progress is gradually being made to improve the tread where so many feet have hiked.

2. Rare plants

Club concerns:

There are rare plants close to the trail both north and south of Whitetop Mountain which are subject to trampling. They have also been impacted by club maintenance efforts to keep the trail wide enough. Some plants at the Elk Garden parking area have been cut down by VDOT during mowing.

Planned action:

The club ceased weedeating a few years ago. We continue to monitor rare plants in the ATC's monitoring program to assess the health of the plant colonies. The ATC is working with VDOT and will be putting up signs to eliminate the mowing problem at Elk Garden and hopefully make trail users in the area more conscious of their impacts on plants.

3. Club recruitment and leadership

Club concerns:

Over the last several years, the ATC has been asking more from club volunteers who formerly just maintained the trail and did recreational hiking. Responsibilities now include contributing to policy making, monitoring natural resources, and doing outreach in AT Communities. Many club members don't want to take on these responsibilities or the club leadership needed to get them taken care of. It is also difficult for clubs in scattered rural areas to recruit enough new and younger members who will be stewards of the trail in upcoming years.

Planned action:

The ATC helped MRATC with a big recruitment effort in the fall of 2016, aiming at getting new people to sign on to monitor a subsection of the club's trail section. This had mixed success. Several new people signed up for sections, but they did not get involved with other club activities, even though we contacted them to encourage them.

We will keep looking for ways to get club members involved in club activities, and hopefully, in club leadership. The new Steering Committee leadership model is an effort to spread the leadership workload and involve more club members to participate regularly on committees for trails, outreach and natural resource monitoring. The one-to-one approach (having club members work on their friends to join the club) continues to be the most successful in recruiting new members.

Resources and future planning:

For further information on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, including new policies, training workshops, trail design and construction, sanitation, camping impact management, and other topics of interest, visit www.appalachiantrail.org. Check under Policies and Planning and Training Opportunities. Also check the Reference Materials in the Trail Maintainers Library in the Toolkit for Trail Clubs.

Planning for trail maintenance, new structures, club outreach and other club activities is coordinated by the club's Board in cooperation with the ATC and our land managing partners and with input from club members. It is an ongoing process. This Local Management Plan is meant to be a tool to educate club members about our trail section, planning, and trail issues and concerns. The club's officers, coordinators and board members, as well as the section maintainers, should be familiar with its contents. It is posted under Organization Documents on the club's website. As a working document, it should be revisited regularly and revised to include updates and clarification.

APPENDIX 1: Check-out/check-in and emergency contacts

Information for trail section monitors:

Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club
Check In/Check Out Procedure
April 2020

This procedure applies to club members monitoring or working on the trail, but can also be applied to recreational hikes.

The procedure is fairly simple:

1. A monitor accepts first responsibility for personal preparedness and should leave word with their emergency contact of choice including where they plan to go and when they expect to return. An information sheet will be provided to each monitor for their emergency contact and will be available to any club member wishing to use it. This sheet includes anticipated parking location, vehicle information and emergency numbers for use when necessary.
2. If the monitor does not return by the prescribed time, the emergency contact should attempt to contact the individual through whatever means are available. Monitors are encouraged to consider SPOT or similar devices which allow communication even in areas where cellular service is unavailable.
3. Once the emergency contact determines that it is necessary to seek outside help, he or she should call the equivalent of 911. Since the monitor may well be in a different county at the time of this call, the appropriate emergency dispatch number for the correct county will be provided on the information sheet.
4. If the monitor's section is located between Elk Garden and Fox Creek (Rt 603) a call should then be made to the Grayson Highlands State Park on-call number. This will also be indicated on the information sheet.
5. Once step 3, and in some cases step 4, is complete the emergency contact is encouraged to reach out to the club contacts listed on the form. These individuals have agreed to assist, if available, in any way deemed helpful by emergency services and would enlist additional club and ATC resources as appropriate.

Questions about this procedure can be referred to mratcinfo@gmail.com.

Emergency Numbers Per Monitoring Section

Trail Section (S to N)	Est. miles	County Covered	Central Dispatch
State line - Water St.	3.5	Washington	276-676-6000
Water St. to Feathercamp	5	Washington	276-676-6000
Feathercamp to Saunders	4	Washington	276-676-6000
Saunders to Bear Tree Gap	2.7	Washington	276-676-6000
Bear Tree Gap to Rte. 859	2.6	Washington	276-676-6000
Rte. 859 to 601	4.2	Washington	276-676-6000
601 to Buzzard Rock	3	Washington	276-676-6000
Buzzard Rock to Elk Gdn.	3.5	Grayson (some Wash.)	276-236-8101
Elk Gdn. to Thomas Knob	4.5	Grayson (some Smyth)	276-236-8101
Thomas Knob to AT/VHHT (Massie)	3	Grayson	276-236-8101
AT/VHHT to Scales	5	Grayson	276-236-8101
Scales to Fox Creek	5	Grayson	276-236-8101
Fox Creek to Barton Gap	3.5	Grayson (some Smyth)	276-236-8101
Barton Gap - Dickey Gap	4.5	Smyth	276-783-7204
Dickey Gap to Rte. 670	5.5	Smyth	276-783-7204

General emergency numbers:

US FOREST SERVICE – Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area – 276-783-5196

Grayson Highlands State Park 276-579-7092

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Harpers Ferry 304 535 6331
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy, VA Regional Office 540-904-4393

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE 804 674 2014
 DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES 800 468 8892

Check-out/check-in log:

Monitor Phone

Emergency Contact Phone

Monitoring Section

Date	Time Out	Destination	Vehicle Make/Model	License Plate	Expected Return Time

Central 911 Dispatch

Club Contacts

APPENDIX 2: Abbreviations

AT – Appalachian Trail

ATC - Appalachian Trail Conservancy

ATC VARO – Appalachian Trail Conservancy Virginia Regional Office

FS – Forest Service (USFS)

MRNRA – Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area of the Jefferson National Forest (USFS)

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act (See Part 6 G)

USFS – United States Forest Service

VDOT – Virginia Dept. of Transportation

APPENDIX 3: MRATC's Steering Committee Leadership Model (adopted 2020, after 2-year trial)

I. Trails Coordinator: (voting Board member, elected as a Board member by membership.)

Oversees the following and **coordinates work of a committee** to do trail work planning and supervision.

Trail work planning, including suggesting projects for special groups (ex. Hardcore, Boy Scouts, etc. - Work with Youth Subcommittee Coordinator as appropriate)

Trail work supervision, training and safety

Trail section monitor supervision and training

Club's Konnarock plans

Prepares (or has committee member prepare) grant applications to ATC as needed for materials for projects

Communicates about trail issues with ATC, Forest Service, Grayson Highlands St. Park

Primary communicator from club to Forest Service

Primary contact with Ridgerunner

Sends information relating to trail work and scheduling to Activities Coordinator and to Secretary or designee for emailing to club members and reports on trail work and planning at meetings

Submits information/articles relating to trail work to club newsletter

Reports additions to trail structures to NPS

Boundary checking and reporting

II. Outreach Coordinator: (voting Board member, elected as a Board member by membership).

Oversees a committee, each member responsible for one or more of the following:

Newsletter, Website and Facebook content and suggestions; other social media.

Club members serving in Newsletter, Website and Facebook task positions are annually appointed by the Board.

Subcommittee for Youth engagement (coordinate service projects with Trails Coordinator) (Coordinator for Youth engagement is annually appointed by the Board.)

AT Communities (Abingdon, Damascus, Marion/Smyth County) – These community reps serve as contacts and help with publicity and event planning.

Events staffing – with help from other club members

Sends dates for club events to person preparing Activity Schedule for newsletter quarterly.

Publicity and public relations, club brochures

III. Natural Resources Coordinator: (voting Board member, elected as a Board member by membership). Oversees the following. May work with committee as needed.

Natural resources (rare plants, invasive plants, phenology, etc.) – coordinates with ATC

Open spaces and vistas – planning (Coordinates with Trails Coordinator and ATC and Forest Service)

IV. Club Recreational Activities Coordinator: (voting Board member, elected as a Board member by membership.) Responsible for the following:

Works with other club members to offer recreational hikes

Prepares Activity Schedule for newsletter (to include information from the Trails, Natural Resources and Outreach coordinators)

Makes arrangements for club social events & potlucks and solicits club members' help.

V. RPC Rep. and Alternate (voting Board members, elected as Board members by membership)

Responsible for being the link between the ATC and the Steering Committee. (If the ATC happens to contact a member of the Steering Committee, he/she would loop in the RPC reps.)

Requires constant communication, most by email.

Requires attention to communications with the ATC, passing these on to the appropriate club Coordinator right away so information is disseminated and issues are addressed. (If it's specifically a Trail issue, the Coordinator for Trails; if it's an AT Community subject, the Coordinator for Outreach, etc.)

If specific Coordinators have a question for the ATC, they might want to contact the appropriate person in VARO directly.

VI. General Club Administration group: Secretary, Treasurer, Timekeeper, Membership Coordinator, Administrative Assistant

(Administrative Assistant, Membership Coordinator and Timekeeper are appointed by the Board annually. Secretary and Treasurer are elected by membership every two years and are voting Board members.)

Secretary: Records minutes of club meetings and disseminates to members via email. Secretary or designee sends weekly updates on club news and activities to club members with email addresses.

Treasurer: Keeps club's financial records, pays bills, and reports financial information to club at meetings or as requested. Receives dues from new and renewing members and notifies Membership Coordinator. Files IRS online 501 form and VA Annual Rept. annually.

Timekeeper keeps monthly records of submitted volunteer hours and reports these to the ATC and F.S. annually and to the Trails Coordinator monthly. Requests relevant patches, bars, etc. from ATC and F.S. to be given to club members.

Membership Coordinator: Updates club membership list and sends to Coordinators at least quarterly and to Treasurer, Administrative Assistant and Secretary whenever there is a change. Prepares and sends membership cards with letter to new and renewing members. Sends New Member Handbook and current newsletter to new members.

Administrative Assistant prepares agenda (and makes copies) for meetings, based on submissions from Steering Committee Coordinators, submits to Secretary (or designee) for dissemination by email in advance, and notifies Agency Partners. Assures that there is an arranged meeting place and a chairperson for a particular meeting (one of the Coordinators), or chairs it. Secures a Nominating Committee for Coordinators and other Board Members to be elected. Arranges for Board to discuss and resolve filling of any interim vacancies. Performs other administrative duties, such as making newsletter labels, producing annual list of club officers/directors/coordinators, as needed to help Secretary, Coordinator for Recreational Activities, and Coordinator for Outreach.

Notes/explanations

The entire Board along with the Secretary and Treasurer will be consulted on club issues and will be the voting body as it has been in the past.

Election to Coordinator and Board positions is for a period of two years, staggered so not all will be newly elected at the same time.

Some Board members may be elected by the membership to Coordinator positions and take on those responsibilities, with the help of other club members. If a member nominated as a Coordinator is not already a Board member, this person would automatically be on the slate to be elected as a Board member.

Coordinator vacancies would be handled in the same way as officers and Board member vacancies in any other regular organization: appointment of someone by the Board on an interim basis until election by the membership at the next Annual Meeting.

Some people may want to serve as one of the Coordinators and also be on a committee under a different Coordinator, according to their interests and enthusiasm. Other club members may be asked, or may volunteer, to be on committees. Committee members do not have to be elected by the club; only the Coordinator needs to be elected.

Task Coordinators (Newsletter, Timekeeper, Website, Youth, Membership, etc.) are annual appointments by the Board, to be sure these responsibilities are covered.

The club forms a Nominating Committee and develops a slate for the Coordinator positions and other Board members, as well as club Secretary and Treasurer, to be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

In order for this leadership model to work without resulting in poor connections with the ATC and Forest Service and poor communication with club members, it depends on close and frequent communication among Coordinators and could also require their holding extra meetings if issues can't be addressed well by email.

The Chair for meetings is rotated among Coordinators, or can be the Administrative Assistant.

APPENDIX 4: By-Laws of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club (2020 rev.)

Article I: Title, Authority and Purpose

This organization is incorporated in the State of Virginia under the name Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club. Its purpose is to educate and inform the public about the Appalachian Trail and its values and to manage, preserve, maintain, and promote the enjoyment of the Appalachian Trail corridor. It is a Class A maintaining member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) organization. This management is done in partnership with the Jefferson National Forest and the Virginia Division of Conservation and Recreation.

Article II: Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall consist of the five Steering Committee heads: Trails, Outreach, Natural Resources, Recreation, and RPC, and the Secretary and Treasurer. There shall be at least one additional Director at large for every 50 members or part thereof. The Board of Directors shall direct and supervise the collection and disbursement of funds; formulate and set policy; have responsibility for the Local Management Plan; determine requests from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in the areas of funds, labor, grants and equipment; facilitate communication between the Club and its agency partners; appoint members to represent the Club at the annual meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy; appoint Task Committee Chairmen; elect Board members to fill vacancies; appoint a Nominating Committee chairman each year; and call membership meetings as needed. All elections by the Board will require a simple majority and ties will be broken by the current meeting's Chair. All vacancies filled by the Board will be up for election at the next annual meeting.

Article III: Officers

The officers of this organization shall consist of the five Steering Committee heads and the Treasurer and Secretary. They shall be members in good standing and be elected by the membership for a two-year term. Elections will be held at the annual meeting and be determined by the voting members present at that meeting. The Committee heads and half of the Directors will be elected in odd years. The Secretary, Treasurer, and half the Directors will be elected in even years. All terms begin following the annual meeting.

Article IV: Duties of Officers

The Steering Committee heads will rotate the responsibility to preside at meetings; lead club activities in compliance with the Articles of Incorporation, the By-Laws and the Local Management Plan; assure the effective liaison between the Club and its agency partners; and appoint ad hoc committees as needed. According to the new leadership model, each of the five Steering Committees also oversees specific tasks. The Trails and Boundary Committee plans and organizes trail maintenance, in compliance with the Local Management Plan or as conditions warrant, and also is responsible for equipment maintenance. The Outreach Committee is in charge of community events, publicity, and the Youth Engagement Subcommittee. The Natural Resources Committee monitors rare plants, invasives, and phenology and also addresses issues pertinent to natural resources, such as open areas. The Recreational Activities Committee manages the recreational hike schedule and organizes the club's social events. The Regional Partnership Committee representative attends ATC meetings and is responsible for timely communication with the Conservancy, government agencies and agency partners on issues pertaining to the club and the Appalachian Trail. The Treasurer makes deposits, reconciles bank statements, pays bills and prepares financial reports for the quarterly Board meetings and the Annual Membership Meeting. The Secretary records minutes at the annual meeting and all Board meetings, as well as Board votes by email between meetings (as notes appended to the minutes of the previous meeting), and responds to correspondence as directed by the Board or the Committee heads.

Article V: Membership

Members shall be persons who have paid annual dues for the current year. Members will receive the quarterly bulletin, be eligible to vote at the annual meeting in person or by email, attend Board meetings, propose agenda items, participate in discussions, hold office and participate with their guests in hiking and other club activities. Members are expected to consider the safety and well-being of the

group. Persons who have not yet reached their 18th birthday may join the club. However, when engaging in club activities, any member under 18 years of age must be accompanied and supervised by an adult member who is also a parent, grandparent or guardian. Youth groups performing service projects shall be considered under the supervision of the groups' leaders.

Article VI: Dues

Dues shall be set by the Board of Directors. Annual dues are payable by the first of the calendar year. The membership of new members who join the Club after July 1st shall extend through December of the following year.

Article VII: Meetings

The annual meeting shall be held on the last Saturday in February unless extenuating circumstances require the Board to reschedule it. Other membership meetings may be called by the Board or by petition of two-thirds of the membership. The Board of Directors shall meet quarterly or address issues online when needed, in lieu of a physical meeting. Due to the widespread population of MRATC and in an effort to modernize, members may participate remotely even when meetings are held at a specific location. Additional Board meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Steering Committee. A quorum for a Board meeting will be considered a simple majority of the Directors. All Board meetings will be open to members.

Article VIII: Club Task Coordinators

Club Task Coordinators are appointed annually for specific jobs: Membership, Timekeeper, Newsletter Editor, Website and online mail, Facebook, and Youth Coordinator. Three AT Communities representatives are also appointed, one for Damascus, one for Marion/Smyth, and one for Abingdon. An Administrative Assistant with widespread general knowledge of club business helps where needed. An ad hoc Nominating Committee addresses the need to seek volunteers for upcoming vacancies each year. Steering Committee Coordinators may each decide on nomination procedures for future Coordinators of their Committee, but Committee membership is open to all. Club Task Coordinators shall be appointed by the Board and are responsible for reporting on their activities at Board meetings. The Newsletter Editor shall be responsible for the preparation and content of a quarterly newsletter. The Membership Coordinator shall be responsible for promoting new memberships, for seeing that new members receive a Newsletter and club information and for introducing new members to Club activities. The Timekeeper shall be responsible for keeping records of individuals' participation in work trips and for other activities as required by the ATC, the Forest Service or the National Park Service. The Timekeeper reports these data annually or as directed by specific agencies. The Youth Coordinator will look for opportunities to engage youth and coordinate youth service projects with the Trails Committee. The Webmaster shall be responsible for updating the content of the Club's website and a mail coordinator answers email inquiries and helps with hike scheduling.

Article IX: Amendments

All amendments to the By-Laws and By-laws revisions must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors. Once approved by the Board, the proposed amendment or revision shall be published in the Bulletin and/or distributed to the membership prior to the meeting at which it will come up for vote. Passage requires a four-fifths majority of those present and voting.

Article X: Liability

The Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club and its Officers and Directors are not liable for any accidents that might occur during any Club activities. The Forest Service maintains an Agreement for Sponsored Voluntary Services with the Club covering injuries incurred while performing trail work.

Article XI: Dissolution

If for any reason this corporation should terminate or its purposes fail, then and in that event, all assets then remaining in this corporation shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes or to the federal government or to a state or local government for a public purpose. In no event shall any of the funds upon termination of this corporation be distributed to a nonexempt organization, person or entity.

Appendix 5: Volunteer Services Agreement form

Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resources Agencies
for Individuals or Groups

Please print when completing this form

Site Name/Project Leader George Washington Jefferson NF Mt. Rogers NRA, Sara Abbott		Agency 2017-VS-11-080814-0002	Reimbursement (if any) None	
Name of Volunteer or Group Leader – Last, First, Middle Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club		Age (If Individual Agreement) <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56 and Older		
Are you a U.S. Citizen? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Visa Type	Email Address	Home Phone	Mobile Phone	
Street Address		City	State	Zip

IF VOLUNTEER IS UNDER AGE 18 – Name of Parent or Legal Guardian	Home Phone	Mobile Phone	Email Address
Street Address	City	State	Zip

I affirm that I am the parent/guardian of the above named volunteer. I understand that the agency volunteer program does not provide compensation, except as otherwise provided by law; and that the service will not confer on the volunteer the status of a Federal employee. I have read the attached description of the service that the volunteer will perform.

I give my permission for _____ to participate in the specified volunteer activity sponsored by _____ at _____
(Name of Sponsoring Organization, if applicable) (Name of Volunteer Duty Station)

From _____ to _____
(Date) (Date) (Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

Emergency Contact Name	Home Phone	Mobile Phone	Email Address
Street Address	City	State	Zip

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL COMPLETES THIS SECTION

Description of service to be performed. Include details such as time and schedule commitment, use of personal equipment, government vehicle, skills required (note certifications if necessary), level of physical activity required, etc. Attach the complete job description and job hazard analysis to this form. If this is a group agreement, the leader is to provide the group name, a complete list of group participants to be attached to this form, and parental approval (above) completed for each volunteer under the age of 18. Volunteer duties for groups working with the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club include:

- For each scheduled event taking place on National Forest lands, the club will submit a roster of participants and the hours contributed for each to the NRA office on the attached OF301b form.

Government Vehicle required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Valid State Driver's License	<input type="checkbox"/> International Driver's License
Personal Vehicle to be used?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Please verify that the volunteer is in possession of one of these documents. DO NOT keep a copy of the document for his/her file.	

I understand that I will not receive any compensation for the above service and that volunteers are NOT considered Federal employees for any purpose other than tort claims and injury compensation. I understand that volunteer service is not creditable for leave accrual or any other employee benefits. I also understand that either the government or I may cancel this agreement at any time by notifying the other party.

I understand that my volunteer position may require a reference check, background investigation, and/or a criminal history inquiry in order for me to perform my duties.

I understand that all publications, films, slides, videos, artistic or similar endeavors, resulting from my volunteer services as specifically stated in the attached job description, will become the property of the United States, and as such, will be in the public domain and not subject to copyright laws.

I understand the health and physical condition requirements for doing the work as described in the job description and at the project location, and certify that the statement I have checked below is true:

- I know of no medical condition or physical limitation that may adversely affect my ability to provide this service.
- I do know of a medical condition or physical limitation that may adversely affect my ability to provide this service and have explained it to _____.

(Name of Agency Official)

I do hereby volunteer my services as described above, to assist in agency-authorized work. I agree to follow all applicable safety guidelines.

(Signature of Volunteer)

(Date)

The above-named agency agrees, while this arrangement is in effect, to provide such materials, equipment, and facilities that are available and needed to perform the service described above, and to consider you as a Federal employee only for the purposes of tort claims and injury compensation to the extent not covered by your volunteer group, if any.

(Signature of Government Representative)

(Date)

Termination of Agreement

Volunteer requests formal evaluation Yes No Evaluation Completed _____
(Date)

Agreement terminated on _____
(Date) (Signature of Government Representative)

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0596-0080. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI) prohibit discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA and USDI are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Privacy Act Statement

Collection and use is covered by Privacy Act System of Records OPM/GOVT-1 and USDA/OP-1, and is consistent with the provisions of 5 USC 552a (Privacy Act of 1974), which authorizes acceptance of the information requested on this form. The data will be used to maintain official records of volunteers of the USDA and USDI for the purposes of tort claims and injury compensation. Furnishing this data is voluntary, however if this form is incomplete, enrollment in the program cannot proceed.

Appendix 6: MRATC Section Monitor Guidelines

Section monitors are the eyes & ears for the entire Mount Rogers A.T. Club & Club leaders. Info gathered from section monitors helps prioritize the schedule of Club-led work days.

Try and visit your section once a month, or at least 4 times a year. Enjoy it! Get to know your section! After a few visits, you can prioritize any light maintenance work you can do by yourself or with your co-monitor.

Section Monitors should keep an eye on several Trail-specific features:

- **Trees across the Trail (blowdowns):** Can they easily be stepped over, or need to be removed? Note estimated diameter, and general location (North/South, and general distance from road/shelter/side trail.)
- **Signage and Blazes:** Are signs in good shape, need to be replaced? Are the 2"x6" white blazes fading and need to be refreshed? Is signage confusing or is signage needed?
- **Vegetation and Trail Corridor:** Is vegetation growing into the 3'-4' wide trail corridor? Is trimming/lopping required? Remember: cut more from the uphill side, and allow the downhill side to grow – it helps keep hikers on the Trail.
- **Tread:** Are there sections that are narrowing, too much of an angle, bermed?
- **Drainage & Erosion:** Are the waterbars & drainage dips cleaned out and getting water off the trail?

Shelters, Privies, Campsites:

- Check overall condition of all structures and note graffiti
- Pack out trash from fire rings, shelter, privy, and surrounding areas
- *Shelters:*
 - Check shelter register(w/pencil) & broom; replace if necessary
- *Privy:*
 - Check cone height, duff can
- *Campsites & Fire Rings:*
 - Are there too many? Are they too big? Should some be eliminated?

For safety, follow Check Out/Check In procedures. See Appendix 1 for information.

All volunteer hours are tracked and logged. Report time logged to Ron Bobko (mrattimekeeper@gmail.com). Report: location, type of work (lopping, tread definition, drainage, etc), hours spent, trail mileage, and drive time from house to trailhead and back.

Report any trail issues to Doug Levin (mrattinfo@gmail.com). Things to report: blowdowns (diameter, step-over?, location on trail), spring/water source issues (new pipe or channel dug?), tread/water/erosion issues (include location and general narrative of problem – berm, vegetation, roots, worn out or inadequate waterbar/logs steps). Include photos if possible.

Thank you for all your hard work & dedication!

APPENDIX 7: Tables

Table 1:

MRATC Inventory: Bridges - 670 - Damascus

Loc.	Length, Width	Height from stream bottom	Descrip.	Other features or status
So. Fork Holston Gully S. Dickey Gap	L 111 1/2' , W 42"		horiz. Decking, concrete pilings	
	L 18', W 3'	5'	bowling alley Deck, 2 rails	constructed Nov. 2019
Comers Ck. Falls	L 32', W 3'	6'	horiz. decking, log stringers, 2 rails	9 steps down, N side; Cracked stringer 2019 - scheduled for replacement 2022-23.
Fox Ck. North	L 21', W 3 1/2'	6 1/4'	horiz. decking, stringers, no rail lengthwise	3 steps + deck up, S side. Scheduled for replacement 2021-22.
Fox Ck North near 603	L 11 1/4', W 18"	30"	decking, stringers, 2 rails	6 wood steps down
Fox Ck. South ("500 Mile bridge")	L 13 1/2', W 28"	28"	log, 1 rail	
Little Wilson Ck.S	L 16', W 19"	7 1/2'	3, 6"x6", spaced, 1 rail	
Little Wilson Ck N	L 16', W 19"	6'	3, 6"x6", spaced, 1 rail	
Quebec Branch	L 22', W 22"	3 1/2'	horiz. decking, stringers, cable rail	
Summit Cut Creek Jct.	L 9 1/2', W 35"	24"	horiz. decking, stringers VCT trestle	new bridge built above old one, level with road, by a good samaritan - 2017
Taylor's Valley	L 16', W 36"		bowling alley deck, 1 rail	replaced log bridge March 2020
Straight Branch	60 ' L; 4 1/2 ' W	4 1/2'	horiz. Decking on composite understructure, 2 rails	new bridge constructed 2017
Feathercamp Beech Grove Trail	L 10' , W 21"	19"	stepstones 3 logs	23 ' bridge removed, replaced with stepstones, 2010 due to unsafe stringers. Plan to replace stepstones with new bridge.
Damascus downtown			2 hwy. bridges, sidewalk	Plan to replace with new bridge 2020.

Table 2:

MRATC Inventory: Trailheads Rte. 670 - Damascus						
Loc./Rte.	Capacity	Description	Safety	Information	Comments	Litter or abuse
670 Teas Rd.	3 cars	head in pkg.				
672 Slabtown Rd.	5 cars	pull offs				cans, occasional litter
Dickey Gap 16/650	6 cars	new pkg. lot 2017		new kiosk No. side AT 2013 plus kiosk in pkg. lot		vandalism, 2017
603 Fox Creek	10 cars	pkg. lot	vandalism 2008	kiosk	popular need more pkg.	
613 Scales	12 vehicles	camping area		kiosk		privy, trash can
Massie Gap Overnight Pkg.	25 cars	pkg. lot next to AT spur		kiosk		
600 Elk Garden	10 cars	pkg. lot	vandalism May 2009	kiosk	popular need more pkg. - some park on grass	occasional litter although trash can is provided in privy
White Top (FS 89)	8 cars	pkg. lot				
601 Beech Mtn. Rd.	5 cars	grassy pkg. lot		spring		cans, occasional litter, fire ring
58 Summit Cut	3 cars	pull off				cans, occasional litter
859 Grassy Ridge Rd.	3 cars	pull offs				occasional litter
728 Creek Jct.	8 cars	pkg. lot (side trail 1/2 mi. to AT/VCT)		kiosk @ pkg lot		privy
Bear Tree Gap (58)	6 cars	pull off both sides of road				cans, occasional litter
58 Feathercamp/ Straight Branch bridge	4 cars	pull-off				cans, occasional litter
Damascus		street pkg.; long term pkg. lot		info kiosk Town Park; Visitor Ctr. at Library		

Table 3:

MRATC Inventory: Side Trails - Rte. 670 - Damascus			
Location	Side Trail (name)	Comments	Blazing
1/4 mi. S of 670	Slabtown Trail	Old AT. Starts near Rte. 670, crosses 672 at stile, ends near Trimpi Shelter; abt. 3 mi. long.	blue
1 1/2 mi. S of 672	trail to Trimpi Shelter		blue
2 mi. N of Dickey Gap	trail to Raccoon Branch campsite and Bobby's Trail and Raccoon Branch Campground	not regularly maintained	blue
Dickey Gap (Rtes. 16/650)	Hickory Ridge Trail	1 mi. long; ends near VA Highlands Horse Trail Crossing; not regularly maintained	
2 mi. S of Dickey Gap	Dickey Gap Tr. To Hurricane Campground	1/2 mi.	blue
4 mi. S of Dickey Gap	Hurricane Ck. Tr.	1/2 mi. to FS 84	
Old Orchard spring trail		1/4 mi.	blue
3 1/2 mi. S of Fox Creek	Pine Mtn. Trail	2 mi. from AT to Rhododendron Gap	blue
Scales	Scales Trail	Scales to Park boundary (Grayson Highlands St. Park) 1 mi. long	
Scales	VA Highlands Horse Tr.	Scales to Little Wilson Ck. Tr.	orange diamonds
Scales	Crest Trail	3 mi. horse/ped. Trail to Rhododendron Gap	
Grayson Highlands St. Park	Seed Orchard Tr.	From campground to Scales Trail - abt. 1 1/2 mi.	
Grayson Highlands St. Park Backpackers' Pkg. lot	AT spur trail	3/4 mi. long	blue
1/4 mi. N of Grayson Highlands St. Park boundary	Wilburn Ridge Tr.	1 mi. long. Connects on both ends to AT	blue
Rhododendron Gap	Pine Mtn. Trail	2 mi. from Rhodo. Gap to AT 1.5 mi. N of Scales	blue
1/4 mi S of Thomas Knob Shelter	Mt. Rogers spur tr.	1/2 mi. to summit of Mt. Rogers	blue
Deep Gap: 2 mi. N of Elk Gdn. (Rte. 600)	spring trail	1/4 mi. to good spring	blue
Deep Gap: 1.9 mi. N of Elk Gdn	campsite trail	abt. 1/10 mi.	
Creek Jct.	side tr. to pkg. lot	abt. 1/2 mi.	
Bear Tree Gap	Bear Tree Gap Tr.	1/4 mi. to Rte. 58	
2 access trails to Saunders Shelter, plus trail to spring		each abt. 1/4 mi.	blue
1/2 mi. N of Saunders Shelter	Saunders Tr.	aka FS 832 (woods rd. to Rte. 58 - 2 mi.)	part blue
2 mi. S of Saunders Shelter	AT spur trail	1/3 mi. to VA Creeper Trail/Taylor Valley	blue
1/10 mi. S of Rte. 58 at Feathercamp	Feathercamp Tr.	1.9 mi. to Iron Mtn. Trail	blue
1/2 mi. S. of Rte. 58 at Feathercamp; or off Rte. 58 across from VCT pkg. at Straight Branch	Beech Grove Tr.	1 mi. to Iron Mtn. Trail	(multipurpose)
2 1/2 mi. S. of Rte. 58 at Feathercamp	Iron Mtn. spur trail	1/10 mi. to Iron Mtn. Trail	
2 mi. S. of Damascus at campsite	trail to spring	1/4 mi. long	blue

Table 4:

MRATC Inventory: Crossings of Multipurpose Trails 670 - Damascus		
Location descrip.	Type of Trail or Name	Any noted effect on AT
1 mi. N of Dickey Gap	VA Highlands Horse Tr.	crossing only. Watch for effects since new pkg. lot 2017
Chestnut Flats	Iron Mtn. Trail	crossing only. Occasionally, horse riders get onto AT
3/4 and 1.4 mi. S. of Fox Ck.	Old Orchard Horse Tr.	crossing only. Occasionally, horse riders get onto AT
Scales	VA Highlands Horse Tr., Crest, Tr., Scales Tr.	horses. Little effect noticed
1/4 - 1/2 mi. N. of Wise	Wilson Ck. Tr., Scales Tr.	horses. Little effect noticed
Park boundary near Massie Gap	VA Highlands Horse Tr.	crosses AT - no effect
Rhodo. Gap	Crest Tr. (horse)	horses. Little effect noticed
Deep Gap	VA Highlands Horse Tr.	adjacent to AT - no effect
Elk Gdn.	VA Highlands Horse Tr.	adjacent to AT - no effect
Creek Jct.	VA Creeper Tr. (bikes, horses)	(coaligned) bikes, horses
1/2 mi. on AT S of Straight Branch Bridge	Beech Grove Tr. (horses, bikes, motorcycles)	horses, bikes, motorcycles; no effect noticed
Damascus	VA Creeper Tr. (bikes, horses)	(coaligned) bikes, horses

Table 5:

MRATC Inventory: Overnight sites: Shelters 670 - Damascus					
Name	Dimensions	Yr. Built	Description	Notes	Litter, graffiti
Trimpi	L 20', W 12'	1985	stone	capacity: 4	sm. amt. litter
Hurricane Mtn.	L 16 1/2', W 10 1/2'	2004	wood; overhang: 20'Lx9"W	capacity: 6-8	sm. amt. litter
Old Orchard	L 12 1/2', W 7 1/2'	1970	lg. logs	capacity: 6	occasional food pkgs.; excessive graffiti 2013
Wise	L 15', W 8'	1996	wood (milled)	capacity: 6	occasional food pkgs.
Thomas Knob	L 17', W 8 1/2'	1991	logs overlaid with log siding; additional upper sleeping deck	log siding added 2011; capacity: 10	sm. amt. litter
Lost Mtn.	L 16 1/2', W 10 1/2'	1995	logs	capacity: 6-8	sm. amt. litter; graffiti
Saunders	L 15 1/2', W 10'	1987	logs, milled	capacity: 6-8	sm. amt. litter; increased graffiti 2013

Table 6:

MRATC Inventory: Open areas, vistas, unique or historical/cultural areas - Rte. 670-Damascus				
Location	Type	Description	Problem?	Maintenance
S of Rte. 672, Slabtown Rd.	Vista	pasture with vista; grazing	invasive Autumn Olive	bulldozing and herbicide at 2-3 year intervals (F.S.)
Scales, Stone Mtn. AT near jct. with Pine Mtn. Trail	Open, vista, unique, historic open, vista	open area with vistas from Stone Mtn.; former cattle weighing location; grazing	camping area: fire rings	FS: burn, privy, trashcan
Grayson Highlands St. Park near Massie Gap, Wilburn Ridge toward Rhododendron Gap	Open, vistas	open area with vistas: Wilburn Ridge; cattle and ponies		FS - controlled burn 3-5 yrs.; grazing
Rhododendron Gap S, past Thomas Knob Shelter	Open, vista	vistas N & S of the shelter; wild ponies	campfire rings, poor sanitation	FS burn - 3-5 yrs.
Mt. Rogers	unique	highest mtn. in VA; fir forest; salamanders		little maint.; no signs; keep spur trail passable
Brier Ridge	Open, vista	vista: open area with views; no grazing currently due to difficult access		FS burning - 5 yr. rotation
Elk Garden North: Rte. 600	Open, vista	meadow, hill with vistas; grazing	Needs tree clearing	FS - grazing
White Top Mtn. & Buzzard Rock	Open, vista	mountain vistas; mostly open area		FS - controlled burn, 2-3 yrs.
Beech Mtn. Rd.	open	pasture	ingrowth of trees	grazing
Creek Jct.	Historical, cultural, unique	Hassinger Bridge; AT runs on VA Creeper (rail) Trail		
Bear Tree Gap to N&S of Saunders Shelter	vistas	Vistas. Views of Taylors Valley		no efforts currently to remove trees to keep views open
Feathercamp - Damascus	vistas	Mtn. vistas 2 1/2 mi. S; also views of Widener Valley and Damascus 3 mi. S		no efforts currently to remove trees to keep views open