

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
for the
APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL
between the
CAROLINA MOUNTAIN CLUB
and the
APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONFERENCE

Purpose. This memorandum provides a concise statement of specific understandings and working relationships between the Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) and the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC). It applies only to those activities of the CMC that relate to the management of the Appalachian Trail (AT) and the monitoring of designated national forest lands along the trail.

Background. From its inception in 1925, the ATC worked with existing trail clubs, and fostered the development of new clubs, to create the Appalachian Trail. This partnership evolved into a federation of maintaining clubs, coordinated by the ATC towards the common goal of perpetuating and protecting the Trail. In 1968, the National Trail System Act gave overall responsibility for the Appalachian Trail to the Secretary of the Interior. The Trail is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), in consultation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS), and in cooperation with state agencies over whose lands the AT passes. This memorandum acknowledges the ultimate responsibility and authority for federal and state agencies to administer lands under their jurisdictions in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Delegation. The Appalachian Trail crosses federal lands in national parks and national forests and lands ("ATPO Lands"), outside of the proclaimed or designated boundaries of existing national forests and national parks, that were acquired by the NPS specifically for the protection of the Trail. A 1980 USFS/ATC Memorandum of Agreement provides guidelines for the cooperative management of the AT on national forest lands. National forest plans designate Appalachian Trail "Management Area" (ATMA) or "Prescription Area" (ATPA) lands along the Trail. In 1984 and 1993, certain ATPO lands ("Transfer Lands") were administratively transferred to the Forest Service. In 1984, the Forest Service signed an agreement with the ATC that delegated "operations, development, and maintenance responsibilities" for these lands to the ATC, with authority to sub-delegate to member clubs. Also in 1984, the National Park Service amended a 1970 NPS/ATC Memorandum of Agreement for cooperation in the administration of the Trail by delegating to the ATC the responsibility to serve as the guarantor that the AT volunteer community will adequately manage and protect the AT and ATPO corridor lands. Under these authorities, ATC's Board of Managers, in consultation with Trail maintaining organizations and agency partners, sets policies regarding the protection, management, and use of the Trail. The ATC hereby confirms and the CMC hereby acknowledges the CMC's authority and responsibility for the maintenance of the Appalachian Trail and related facilities and the monitoring of ATMA/ATPA lands between Davenport Gap and Spivey Gap. This memorandum formalizes the CMC's responsibility for the Trail that the Club assumed in 1924.

ATC Support. The ATC agrees to regularly provide the CMC with information on laws, regulations, and agency policies with which the Club must comply. The ATC will regularly communicate ATC policies, Trail standards, and local management planning procedures, and provide backup support for the Club's operational responsibilities. To the extent authorized by the Board of Managers, the ATC will provide technical and financial assistance to the Club for the management of the Trail, monitoring of ATMA/ATPA lands, and provision of public information and education.

CMC Responsibilities. The CMC agrees to maintain the Trail for which it is responsible to ATC's standards for marking, clearing, and treadway care, as specified in such ATC publications as *Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*. The CMC will manage the Trail and Trail-related facilities and will monitor lands designated as ATMA/ATPA lands under the relevant Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) in accordance with policies presented in the ATC's *Local Management Planning Guide*, as detailed in the Club's *Local Management Plan for the Appalachian Trail from Davenport Gap to Spivey Gap* (LMP), and the LRMP. Specific CMC authorities and responsibilities include, but are not limited to 1) Trail construction and maintenance (relocation and side trail design and construction; footpath protection and hardening with water diversion structures, puncheon, and rockwork; pathway obstruction removal; route marking with blazes, signs, and cairns), 2) facilities construction and maintenance (shelter, privy, and bridge construction; trash and illegal fire ring removal), 3) Trail management and monitoring of ATMA/ATPA lands (regular revision of the LMP, Trail assessment, monitoring, regular cooperation and communication with the ATC and agency partners), and 4) information and education (provide information for publication of the *Appalachian Trail Guide to Tennessee-North Carolina*, hiker education, and provision of information about the Trail in CMC's section to the ATC, agencies, and the public). To the extent feasible, the CMC agrees to assist with the Trail protection, management, and monitoring efforts of the Trust for Appalachian Trail Lands.

Cooperative Management. The AT cooperative management system is based on a commitment to cooperation, consultation, and collaboration by all partners. Disagreements that arise should be resolved as close to the source as possible. The CMC has sole authority for dealing with issues among its volunteer members. CMC's President or designee will represent the Club in resolving differences between the Club and state agencies, federal agencies and the ATC. ATC's Vice Chair for the Southern Region, aided by ATC's Regional Representative for Ga., N.C. and Tenn., will represent the Conference in local and regional issues that involve the Club. Questions of Club territorial jurisdiction, acceptance of ATC policies, or Club status within the Conference, and matters that cannot be resolved locally or regionally, are the responsibility of the ATC's Board of Managers, aided by ATC's Executive Director and staff.

Signed David B. Field Signed Elisabeth Feil
David B. Field, Chair Elisabeth Feil, President
Appalachian Trail Conference Carolina Mountain Club

Date 24 April 1997 Date 22 August 1997