

Policy and Structure for
Appalachian Trail Committee Coordination
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
October 14, 2009

Background:

Over the past several years the ATC has repeatedly requested a single point of contact at the Trail Conference to which they could direct all policy, management and administrative issues. Recent experience with ATC, relating to budgets, proposal submissions and management priorities, has highlighted the need for closer coordination among the three local AT committees and the Conference staff. Furthermore, the establishment of the Mid-Atlantic ATC Partnership Committee (MARPC) as the primary means for developing policy and management guidelines in the mid-Atlantic region (with the Stewardship Council on a trail-wide basis) is a formal mechanism for its delegate(s) to deliver information to the Trail Conference, and conversely to establish priorities to take to the Partnership meetings. Also, given the Conference staff reorganization, each of the local AT committees will be working closely with one of the three regional representatives, and it is not obvious who should or can be a single point of contact. Finally, the maintenance of two separate AT MOU's and three separate Committee Management Plans and other options for developing and aligning these documents should be considered. This document offers a proposal to deal with these issues.

Information:

The ATC's MARPC meets twice per year, once in spring (in Boiling Springs, PA) and once in the fall (location varies in the Mid-Atlantic service area). The NYNJTC is entitled to three delegates at the MARPC meeting, plus [at least] one alternate, but only one vote at these meetings. [Note that votes are rarely taken at these meetings].

Policy and Structure:

1. The three AT Management Committees will continue to make decisions and request resources related to managing the Appalachian Trail and related issues within their areas.
2. Consideration should be given to either combining or streamlining the MOU's and/or Management plans. Specifically, a single NY management plan should be considered, and the two state MOUs should have similar or identical contents whenever appropriate.
3. NY-NJ AT coordination leadership
 - a. Each of the three AT management committees [NJ, NY Dutchess-Putnam, and NY Orange-Rockland] will designate a representative to the MARPC; this person may be that committee's chair but need not be. The NYNJTC Trail Council Chair, in consultation with the Trails Council Chair can select additional at-large representative(s) to insure that four individuals have been designated.
 - b. From this pool, the NYNJTC Trail Council Chair will select the Chief Delegate and the Primary Alternate to the MARPC.
 - c. At MARPC meetings, the Chief Delegate, or the Primary Alternate, will exercise the single NYNJTC vote in consultation with those other representatives present at that meeting.
 - d. The Chief Delegate [or Alternate, if necessary] will represent the NY-NJ TC and its AT Committees to the MARPC and the ATC Stewardship Council on all policy matters. If a NYNJTC volunteer happens to be a member of the Stewardship Council, the Chief Delegate can delegate SC representation to such member.
4. NY-NJ AT Meetings
 - a. The Chief Delegate will call meetings be held (at least) twice per year, nominally about three weeks prior to the scheduled ATC MARPC meeting, involving the three NYNJTC field staff members, the chairs of the three AT management committees and/or their designated MARPC representatives, the Conference Executive Director (or his designee), the delegate(s) and alternate(s) representing the Conference on the MARPC, and [as appropriate] any members of the ATC Board of Directors and/or the ATC Stewardship Council. The Chair of the Trails Council will also be invited.
 - b. These meetings will involve the following agenda items:
 - i. Development/revisions to local management plans [see item 2 above] and recommendations regarding updating and implementing the state MOU's.
 - ii. Any policy matters to be brought to the MARPC by NYNJTC, or vice versa [e.g., review of ATC policy proposals]...

- iii. Review of the NYNJTC elements of the ATC 5-year plan (usually includes items involving capital expenses by the ATC or NPS) and development, prioritization and coordination of wish lists and budgets for local management committees
 - iv. Review and, if necessary, prioritization of any grants being submitted from NYNJTC to ATC under the Grants-to-Clubs, or any other, grant programs.
 - c. A staff member will be assigned to take notes of the meeting, and the results will be circulated via email to those listed in item (4.a) above.
- 5. The Chief Delegate will be the single point of contact for the ATC on all NY-NJ AT matters, except as indicated below. It is expected that the Chief Delegate will direct most matters to the staff and committee most directly affected or the NY-NJ AT Committee as a whole. The primary purpose(s) of the single point of contact shall be communications regarding financial issues (e.g., grant proposals and administration, budgets, expense approvals, etc.), training and crew scheduling, and other "umbrella" issues.
 - a. Most general announcements from ATC to the NY-NJ AT interests will be sent directly to the NY-NJ AT email list (currently atchairs@lists.nynjtc.org).
 - b. In case of emergency situations (e.g., law enforcement activities, fires, incursions, etc.) ATC may freely contact the management level closest to the problem, such as a committee chair or even an area supervisor as appropriate.
 - c. Issues clearly specific to one committee, such as renewal of special-use permits, contacts with neighboring land-owners, well testing results, etc., can be communicated directly to that committee.
 - d. Any communication directly with a committee, supervisor, or other volunteer should be followed up with an email for record to the email list, or at least the Chief Delegate.
 - e.
- 6. The NY-NJ AT committees will review this arrangement at the end of one year from initial implementation.