

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association



Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion

Robert Sylvester

Editor



APPALACHIAN TRAIL
CONSERVANCY

Harpers Ferry

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Foreword

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the *Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion*! Each year, our field editors go out searching for the new hostels, businesses, and town changes so that you can be assured that you have the most up-to-date information on the various changes that the occur on a regular basis along the Appalachian Trail. Those changes could include new town services, shelters built, or trail relocated.

The 2010 *Companion* has been carefully compiled and reviewed. We thank you for purchasing this edition. We hope that you, the Appalachian Trail hiker, will find it to be a great accompaniment to the various maps and guides that you have to make important decisions regarding your hike. From post offices and hostels to town services, this book will provide you with the necessary information needed to make your hike a success.

This book is made possible by the more than thirty ALDHA field editors and ATC staff members who have volunteered countless hours to ensure the information contained is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Thanks to the many folks who contributed to the successful publication of this book.

Please remember on your journey that this guidebook, not unlike the Trail, is as ever changing as the seasons. You may discover something new or something that has changed since publication. To make this a better guidebook for you and other hikers in the future, we would like hear about any of your discoveries and suggestions for inclusion in the next edition. All comments and/or corrections are welcome and can be sent to us at ALDHA *via* <companion@aldha.org> or <coordinator@aldha.org>.

Remember, the journey is the destination, so
Savor the Moments!

Jojo Smiley
ALDHA Coordinator

About the *Companion*

The *Companion* is compiled, written, and edited by volunteers of the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) and published by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) as a service to those seeking to explore the Trail. It is intended for those making thru-hikes but is also valuable for those taking shorter section-hikes or overnight backpacking trips. The *Companion* provides you with details on shelters, water sources, post offices, hostels, campgrounds, lodging, groceries, restaurants, outfitters, and other related services along the Trail. In addition, the *Companion* offers information of historical significance about places you pass through while hiking the A.T. Unlike commercial guides, this book benefits from the latest information from volunteers who measure, maintain, and manage the Trail and those who hike it regularly.

Due to publication deadlines, we cannot guarantee that the information in this book will not change by the time you arrive in an area, despite the efforts of volunteers to acquire the most up-to-date information. Businesses close or change hours, hostels change rates and policies, and the Trail itself is subject to relocation. This edition was produced in the fall of 2008.

As you walk, talk to other hikers, and read shelter registers. The Conservancy's Web site periodically posts updates at <www.appalachiantrail.org/companionupdates>.

Inclusion in this book is not an endorsement by ALDHA or ATC, but rather a listing of services available. Likewise, the businesses listed in this book do not pay for “advertisements” but are listed because of their proximity to the Trail.

ALDHA members do field research for each section of the Trail and are instrumental in gathering information. Without the hard work of the following ALDHA field editors, other volunteers, and ATC staff members, this book would not have been possible: **Georgia and North Carolina**—Scott Dowling (Pilgrim), Ann W. Thomas (Timberpixie); **North Carolina and Tennessee**—Lamar Powell (Hopeful), Judy Young (GrayJay), Sue Kanoy (Bearcharmer); **Southwest Virginia**—Sue Kanoy (Bearcharmer); **Central Virginia**—Charles Davidson (Chase), Laurie Foot (Happy Feet), Leonard Adkins (Habitual Hiker); **Northern Virginia**—David Hennel (Gourmet Dave), Sue Hennel (The Real Gourmet), Gary Ticknor (Greenbriar), Jim Austin (Skyline), Rodney Ketterman; **West Virginia**—ATC Information Services Manager Laurie Potteiger; **Maryland**—Mike Wingcart (Wingheart); **Southern Pennsylvana-**

nia—Bob and Tricia Dudley (Greyowl), ATC Mid-Atlantic Office Manager John Luthy; **Northern Pennsylvania**—Mary Ann Nissley (M.A. from Pa.), Sarah Stafford (Rainbow Brite), Aaron Safford (Mountain Dew); **New Jersey**—Robert Cunningham; **New York**—Mark Hudson (Skeeter); **Massachusetts**—Kevin Reardon (Slider), Hannah Reardon (Catamount); **Vermont**—Cindy Taylor-Miller (Mrs. Gorp), Smith Edwards (Old Ridgerunner), Pete Antos-Ketchum, Kathy Krevetski; **New Hampshire**—Art Cloutman (Gabby); **Maine**—J.W. Gordon (Teej), Sandie Sabaka (Bluebeare), Christopher Keene (Kineo Kid), Kathy Preble (Boarstone), Jaime Renaud (NaviGator). ATC Information Assistant John Fletcher also provided valuable information on town and Trail changes. Mileage figures are based on information from the 2010 edition of the *Appalachian Trail Data Book*. Special thanks to David Miller (AWOL) for the complete set of new town maps for this edition.

TRAIL-MAINTAINING CLUBS AND REGISTERS

Trail-maintaining clubs are listed throughout the book. You may use the addresses provided to contact the clubs with any comments, suggestions, or feedback. Although often a thru-hiker will leave an additional one, the official shelter registers are the property of the maintaining club and should not be removed by hikers. The register is a useful tool for information on Trail conditions and other things that are happening in its section of the A.T. It may also help locate a hiker in case of an emergency. If you wish to donate a register (assuming that one doesn't already exist), you should include a note asking the maintaining club to forward it to you when it's filled.

GETTING TO THE TRAIL

Section-hikers looking for shuttle services should check the business and individual listings for the area in which they plan to hike. Also, check with ATC at (304) 535-6331, <info@appalachiantrail.org>, or check the ATC's A.T. shuttle and public-transportation list available at <www.appalachiantrail.org/shuttles>. (See page 1 for an important note on shuttles.) This same Web site will link to information on Trailhead parking.

Using the *Companion*

MAKING THE COMPANION YOUR OWN

Do not be afraid to abuse your paper *Companion*. While it has considerable information, it has been suggested that it could be made smaller. Unfortunately, no one agrees on what should be left out. So, here is an idea—do your own editing. Rip out what you don't want, use a hole-punch, a pair of scissors, or a highlighter. Send sections ahead to mail drops; mail completed sections home. Do some old-fashioned cut-and-paste. Make this book your own. Or, go to ALDHA's Web site, <www.aldha.org>, download an electronic copy of the *Companion* (in Adobe Acrobat PDF format), and print out only the pages you need.

READING THE COMPANION



Road-crossings and Trailheads with significant services nearby are indicated in south-to-north order.

Towns and post offices (including P.O. hours) are printed in **bold type**. A listing of post offices can also be found on page 273.

East and West—Regardless of compass direction, “**east**” or “E” and “**west**” or “W” are used as they are in the *A.T. Data Book and the series of 11 A.T. guides*: “East” is to the northbounder's right and the southbounder's left, when referring to the Trail.

Services—Major categories are indicated with **bold italics**, specifically *groceries, lodging, hostels, campgrounds, doctors or hospitals, restaurants, Internet access, laundries, veterinarians, and outfitters*.

Trail-Maintaining Clubs—Information is provided at the southern end of their sections and is offset by two rules.

Abbreviations—

In the body of the text:

M—Monday

Tu—Tuesday

W—Wednesday

Th—Thursday

F—Friday

Sa—Saturday

Su—Sunday

FedEx—Federal Express	CATV—cable television
USPS—U.S. Postal Service	EAP—each additional person
UPS—United Parcel Service	D—double
a/c—air conditioning	PP—per person
AYCE—all-you-can-eat	S—single
B/L/D—breakfast/lunch/dinner	T—triple

In the tables at beginning of each chapter:

C—campground, campsites	O—outfitter
cl—coin laundry	P.O.—post office
D—doctor, medical	R—road access
f—fuel	S—shelter
G—groceries, supplies	sh—shower
H—hostels	nw—no potable water
L—lodging	V—veterinarian
m—miles	w—water
M—meals; restaurants	@—Internet

Elevation—The elevation column refers to the approximate elevation (in feet) of the landmark.

Comma—Services separated by commas are in the same location. For example, E-1.5m P.O., G means that the post office and grocery store are both located 1.5 miles east.

Parentheses—Services separated by parentheses are not all in the same location. For example, (E-0.2m C, S) (W-0.1m w) means that the campsite and shelter are east 0.2 mile, and the water source is west 0.1 mile from the Trailhead.

Shelters—May also be referred to in New England as lean-tos. Shown in **bold print**, with distance and direction off Trail, water-source location, and distance to the next shelter (in italics, both north and south). **The distance to the next north and south shelter shown in the *Companion* includes the side-trail(s) distance from one to the other.**

Issues on the Trail

2,000-MILER CERTIFICATES

ATC recognizes anyone who reports completion of the entire Trail as a “2,000-Miler” with a certificate. The term “2,000-Miler” is a matter of tradition and convenience, based upon the original estimated length of the Trail. ATC policy is to operate on the honor system, assuming that those who apply for 2,000-Miler status have hiked all of the A.T. between Katahdin and Springer, not just 2,000 miles of it. In the event of an emergency, such as a flood, forest fire, or an impending storm on an exposed high-elevation stretch, blue-blazed trails or officially required roadwalks are considered viable substitutes for the white-blazed route. Issues of sequence, direction, speed, length of time, or whether one carries a pack or not are not considered. ATC assumes that those who apply have made an honest effort to walk the entire Trail.

HUNTING SEASONS

Hunters are rarely an issue for northbounders, but southbounders need to be aware of the hunting seasons, which may begin as early as mid-Oct, as you progress south toward Springer Mountain. Hunting is legal along many parts of the Trail, and ATC’s Web site lists local hunting seasons. Wearing bright (“blaze”) orange is a necessity in fall, winter, and spring.

SAFETY—OTHER HUMANS

If you tell friends you are planning a long-distance hike on the A.T., one of the first questions is likely to be, “Aren’t you afraid? What will you do to protect yourself?” There are dangers in the backcountry, but, because of mass-media publicity and the popularity of backpacking, your friend was likely speaking of the dangers posed by other humans. Violent crimes have occurred on the Trail, but with a frequency rate of less than two every ten years, on a footpath that more than three million people use each year.

The difference on the A.T. and in any wilderness setting—other than people’s expectations—is that you only have yourself and your instincts for protection. That means you must use common sense to avoid potential dangers.

It is best not to hike alone, but, if you choose to, a few precautions can help keep you safe:

- Don’t tell strangers where you are headed or plan to camp for the night; don’t post plans in real time on on-line journals or blogs.
- If you run into a suspicious person, consider moving on to another location.

- Avoid camping or staying at shelters that are within a mile of a road crossing.
- Leave an itinerary of your trip with family or friends.
- If you use a Trail name, make sure the folks back home know what it is.
- Even with a partner, don't be lulled into a false sense of security. Two or more can also be vulnerable.
- Trust your gut. Always.

Eliminate opportunities for theft. Don't bring jewelry. Keep wallets and money on your person rather than in your pack or tent. Leaving a pack unattended at trailheads or shelters is risky, even when it is hidden, and also may attract wildlife in search of food.

ATC and most long-distance hikers strongly discourage the carrying of a gun on the Trail. Guns are restricted on national park lands (40 percent of the route) and in many other jurisdictions through which the Trail passes. Report any crime or harassment immediately to the local police and ATC. Contact ATC at (304) 535-6331 or <incident@appalachiantrail.org>.

SAFETY—MOTHER NATURE

While natural dangers are inherent to backpacking, many of the dangers are misunderstood. For some, a hike in the woods conjures images of snakebites and bear attacks—both rare.

BEARS

Black bears live along many parts of the Trail and are particularly common in Georgia, the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks, and north of Shenandoah on into New York. While attacks on humans are rare, a startled bear or a female with cubs may react aggressively. The best way to avoid an encounter while you are hiking is to make noise by whistling, talking, *etc.*, to give the bear a chance to move away before you get close enough to make it feel threatened. If you encounter a bear and it does not move away, you should back off, and avoid making eye contact. Do not run or “play dead,” even if a bear makes a “bluff charge.”

The best preventive defense against bears showing up in camp is preparing and storing food properly:

- Cook and eat meals away from your tent or shelter so food odors do not linger;
- Hang food, cookware, toothpaste, personal hygiene items, water bottles with drink mixes in a sturdy bag from a strong tree branch 10 feet off the ground, 6 feet from the tree, and away from your campsite;
- Use bear boxes, poles, or cable systems where provided;
- Never feed bears or leave food behind for them;
- A bear that enters a campsite or cooking area should be considered predatory. Yelling, making loud noises, throwing rocks may frighten it away, however you should be prepared to fight back if necessary.
- If you are attacked by a bear, fight for all you are worth with anything at hand—rocks, sticks, fists.

Less dramatic threats to safety, such as contaminated water, dehydration, and hypothermia, afflict far more hikers—particularly those who are unprepared.

If you are unfamiliar with backcountry travel, ask questions, and read and learn about backpacking safely. Learn about dehydration, heat exhaustion, and hypothermia; learn safe ways of fording rivers and purifying water; learn how to avoid lightning, rabies, and Lyme disease—the most common threats to a hiker’s well-being. A good resource for learning more about these topics is the ATC publication *Step by Step: An Introduction to Walking the A.T.* Before starting an end-to-end hike, take shorter backpacking trips until you feel confident in the backcountry. Finally, information and experience are useless if you forget one thing—common sense.

LYME DISEASE

Ticks that transmit disease may be anywhere there is vegetation. In the South, ticks can be active year-round. In the Northeast, the heightened risk for Lyme disease (LD) is Apr to Jul and Oct to Nov, which coincide with the timeframe thru-hikers pass through the states with the highest reported cases of the disease. Cases have been reported in all fourteen Trail states.

LD is a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by the bite of infected black-legged ticks (formerly known as “deer” ticks). Hikers should watch carefully for symptoms of LD, which may include “flu-like” reactions of fever, headache, chills, and fatigue and a characteristic “bulls-eye” skin rash, called *erythema migrans*, at the site of the tick attachment. Hikers should seek immediate medical attention for treatment. If left untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the

nervous system. Most cases of LD can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.

Steps hikers can take to prevent LD include using insect repellent with Deet for exposed skin; spraying clothing items with the insecticide permethrin; removing ticks promptly; conducting a daily full-body tick check, including the head, under-arms, and groin area; minimizing contact with high grass, brush, and woody shrubs; wearing long pants tucked into your socks; and wearing long sleeves, tucking your shirt into your pants to keep ticks off your torso.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Each year, more people venture into the woods to escape the stresses of modern life. Unfortunately, this puts greater pressure on our fragile natural areas. In order to preserve and protect our wilderness, please follow guidelines developed by Leave No Trace, Inc., and endorsed by ATC and ALDHA.

- *Plan ahead and prepare.* You're more likely to damage natural areas if you haven't brought the right equipment or planned where you're going to stay and go. Know local regulations. Remember: Shelters may be full, so bring a tent or tarp.
- *Travel and camp on durable surfaces.* Stay on the Trail, and don't cut switchbacks. Keep off fragile trailside areas such as those in alpine zones. Camp in designated campsites. If you must camp elsewhere, do so out of sight of any trails, and find a spot that has not been used before, at least 200 feet from lakes and streams, being sure to leave it the way you found it. Camping in undesignated areas that show signs of use destroys ground cover and compacts soil, increasing erosion and damaging habitat.
- *Dispose of waste properly.* Pack out all trash and food waste, *including that left behind by others.* Do not bury trash or food, and do not try to burn packaging materials in campfires. Bury human and pet waste six inches deep in a "cathole" at least 200 feet from trail or water. All toilet paper and feminine-hygiene products should be packed out. Avoid using soap to wash yourself or your equipment. When using soap, use biodegradable soap, and dispose of the "gray water" at least 200 feet from open water.
- *Leave what you find.* Don't take flowers or other sensitive natural resources. Don't disturb historical artifacts, such as cellar holes, arrowheads, *etc.*
- *Minimize campfire impacts.* Know local regulations, which may prohibit campfires. Use a portable stove instead of a fire. If you must build a fire, make a low-

impact fire, use only downed wood, use existing designated fire pits or rings, and don't add rocks to existing rings. Extinguish the fire before breaking camp. Drown out fires, and empty the fire pit. Scatter leaves and twigs to remove any signs that you have been there.

- *Respect wildlife.* Don't feed or disturb wildlife. Store food properly to avoid attracting bears and rodents. If you bring a pet, keep it leashed.
- *Be considerate of other visitors.* Limit overnight groups to 10 or fewer persons; 25 on day trips. Minimize noise and intrusive behavior (including cellphone chats at shelters). Share shelters and other facilities.

More than three million people use a portion of the Trail each year, and, unfortunately, not all of them are aware of the Leave No Trace camping ethic. Those who are less knowledgeable will observe you (respecting you as a long-distance hiker and, supposedly, an expert wilderness traveler) and your practices. Set a good example. If you see an opportunity to teach others, do so. If Leave No Trace camping is not practiced by all, the A.T. will quickly lose its beauty.

KENNEBEC RIVER FERRY SERVICE AND BAXTER STATE PARK

It is your responsibility to honor the established hours of operation for the free ferry service across the Kennebec River between mid-May and Oct 12, 2010; see page 256 for further details. Do not call from the Trail on your cellphone and expect "special" off-hours service or service out of the range of set dates. Due to weather concerns, hikers should do their parts and plan accordingly to reach Baxter State Park as early as possible. We suggest reaching BSP by Oct 1. After Oct 15, there is no camping inside BSP. See page 266 for posted park cut-off times and further information.

TOWN CONDUCT

As a result of tension between hikers and some communities adjacent to the Trail, ALDHA implemented an "Endangered Services Campaign" to educate hikers to be responsible for their actions. In town, consider yourself a walking, talking billboard for all backpackers and the Trail. Your individual actions have a direct impact on the businesses that provide services for the long-distance hiking community.

The success of a thru-hiker's journey depends on Trail towns and the services they provide. Remember that you are a guest of the community, no matter how large or small, even though you may be pumping money into the local



*The Endangered
Services Campaign*

economy. Be courteous to those who earn their livelihood there, and remember that your conduct will have a bearing on how well—or badly—the next hiker is treated. As with so many other things in life, we are never truly alone. You are an ambassador for all those who follow you on the Trail. Nothing can turn a person or town against backpacking and the Trail quicker than an arrogant, smelly, and ill-behaved hiker.

In recent years, some business owners have reduced services or closed their doors to hikers simply because some hikers wouldn't respect their rules. Be a part of the movement that will reverse this practice and ensure that no one closes another door because of bad hiker behavior.

DONATIONS

Many of the hostels listed in this book suggest donations for the services provided. This means that the service should not be considered a gift or that it costs the provider nothing. The honor system of the Trail requires that you leave something.

GIVING BACK

If you would like to give back what was freely given to you by those who maintain the Trail or while you stayed in Trail towns, volunteer your time, effort, or money to the services and people who supported you. Consider contacting a Trail-maintaining club and working with them to organize or participate in a work trip, Trail-construction project, or regular maintenance. Every year, ALDHA sponsors work trips to Trail establishments. The Konnarock and other ATC crews seek volunteers during the summer, and you often will pass a Trail club working busily as you head along the path. Be sure to acknowledge their work with your thanks and respect. Giving back to the Trail and community helps keep the Trail safe and services available.

HITCHHIKING

Hitchhiking is illegal in certain states. It is your responsibility to know the motor-vehicle law as it applies to hitchhiking for the state through which you are hiking, to avoid being fined or hitching into worse trouble. Hitchhiking poses the risk of being picked up by an unsafe driver or by someone who is personally dangerous. Hitchhiking is prohibited on interstate highways, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park.

HIKING WITH DOGS

If you choose to hike with your canine companion, treat your dog as another backpacker. That means bury its waste as you would your own, and carry a water bowl so your dog won't drink directly from Trailside water sources. You are responsible for your dog, and you will be held accountable if it decides to steal another hiker's food or flop its wet body on another hiker's equipment. Keep your pet under control in camp, on the Trail, and in towns. Many hostels and other accommodations don't allow dogs, and, in those that do, a dog does not belong in the communal kitchen and sleeping areas. Closely monitor your pet's feet for torn flesh, bleeding, and other sores. After the weather warms up, check for ticks. It is best to keep your dog on a leash at all times; on national-park lands (40 percent of the Trail), regulations require it. Most post offices allow only guide dogs inside. Carry current rabies-vaccine certification papers in addition to a tag on the dog's collar. Dogs are prohibited in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the zoo area of Bear Mountain State Park in New York, and Maine's Baxter State Park. (For information on kennels near GSMNP and BSP, see entries for those sections.)

APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM SOCIETY

Efforts are underway to open an Appalachian Trail museum in June 2010 in Pine Grove Furnace State Park near the Trail's midpoint. A group has been working on this project for several years and, in 2002, formed the Appalachian Trail Museum Society (ATMS). The group includes representatives of ATC and ALDHA and also is working with the National Park Service. The society is collecting items for eventual display in the museum and monetary donations. They are also in need of volunteers to help in many areas. Please contact ATMS, if you'd like to help, at <www.atmuseum.org>.

APPALACHIAN LONG DISTANCE HIKERS ASSOCIATION

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1983 to promote the welfare of the Appalachian Trail and the Trail community. ALDHA conducts work weekends on the Trail, speaks out on issues concerning the A.T. and its environs, and collects the information for this book. In past years, the group has tackled such issues as backpacker etiquette and environmental threats. More recently, it has worked with various clubs and hostels to maintain areas widely used by hikers. ALDHA is open to anyone (even if your longest hike is a walk around the block). To find out more, e-mail ALDHA at <aldha@aldha.org>, or write to 10 Benning Street, PMB 224, West Lebanon, NH 03784. Visit our Web site at <www.aldha.org>. A membership form is included at the back of this book.

THE GATHERING

Folks who want to learn what it takes to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail can find out everything they need to know at the fall Gathering. If you are already thru-hiking the Trail this year, the Gathering is also the place to find out what's next for your worn-in hiking boots. Slide shows and how-to workshops on the Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide, and other major foot trails help fill the weekend event. The 29th Gathering will be Oct. 15–17, 2010, at Concord University in Athens, West Virginia. Camping will be at the Folklife Center in nearby Pipestem. Registration fees are \$10 per family or individual and include the annual membership directory and quarterly newsletter. Send a check with the registration form on page 288 to ALDHA, 10 Benning St. PMB 224, West Lebanon, NH 03784.

AN INVITATION

This is the seventeenth edition of the *A.T. Thru-Hikers' Companion*, and ALDHA will again depend on comments, suggestions, and volunteers to update it in the fall of 2010. If you see information that needs correcting or come across information that should be included, or would like to be a volunteer field editor, please contact the editor at <companion@aldha.org>.

For additional information about the Appalachian Trail and a complete list of guidebooks, maps, and thru-hiking publications, contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy at P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-0807, or call (304) 535-6331, Monday through Friday except federal holidays, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern time. The e-mail address is <info@appalachiantrail.org>; the Web address is <www.appalachiantrail.org>. For direct access to the Ultimate A.T. Store, e-mail sales@appalachiantrail.org, call (888) 287-8673 weekdays before 4:30 p.m., or visit <www.atctrailstore.org>.

Getting to the Termini

An important note about shuttle services

Beginning in 1995, USDA Forest Service law-enforcement rangers in the South—who report to the regional office rather than the supervisor of an individual forest—began enforcing agency regulations on “special-use permits.” The regulations say anyone taking money for a service involving Forest Service lands (including roads) must obtain a permit to do so; profit is not a factor. Permit-holders must pay a fee (up to \$75) and, more prohibitively, carry high-premium insurance. Some A.T. shuttlers have been fined. Responding to questions from ATC and its Park Service partners, regional officials made it clear they will continue to enforce the policy and cited directives stating that it is to be enforced consistently and nationally. The A.T. crosses six national forests in the South and two in New England. ATC will continue to provide names of shuttle services, but keep that policy in mind—**call ahead to ensure the person is still performing this service.** You can check the ATC Web site, www.appalachiantrail.org/shuttles, for a downloadable copy of that list, or write ATC, Attn.: Shuttle List (address on page ii), for a copy by first-class mail.

Getting to Amicalola Falls State Park, Georgia

No public transportation is available to or from Amicalola Falls State Park, but hikers have several options from Atlanta, Gainesville (located 40 miles southeast of the park), and the mountain town of Dahlonega (located 16 miles east of Amicalola Falls).

LEAVING ATLANTA

If you fly into Atlanta, you can take Atlanta’s rapid-transit trains (MARTA) from the airport to either the Greyhound bus station or the Amtrak station. To reach either station, take the MARTA train north from MARTA’s airport station (\$1.75 fare). To reach the Greyhound bus station, exit the train at Garnett Station. The bus station is located at 232 Forsyth Street, within sight of the entrance to the MARTA station. To get to the Amtrak station, continue north on the train to the Arts Center Station. From the Arts Center Station, bus No. 23 (departing the station every 10 minutes) will take you to the Amtrak station, located about 10 blocks north on Peachtree. If you wish to walk to the Amtrak station, follow Peachtree Street approximately one mile north; the station is on the left (west) at 1688 Peachtree NW. For more information, call MARTA, (404) 848-4711. Other options from the airport to the bus and train stations include

taxis and the Atlanta Airport Shuttle, (404) 524-3400, a privately owned bus service. Atlanta Airport Shuttle vans leave the airport every 15 minutes, from south baggage claim, bound for the bus station and Amtrak station (\$18.50 fare). In addition, AAA Airport Express, (800) 354-7874, <www.aaaairportexpress.com>, from space 10 of the pink aisle in the ground-transportation area, offers rides from the airport to Gainesville hotels, \$40. The shuttle leaves the airport every two hours from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Reservations recommended.

ATLANTA TO GAINESVILLE

Two buses and one Amtrak train leave daily from Atlanta for Gainesville. At publication time, Greyhound buses, (800) 229-9424, <www.greyhound.com>, departed the Atlanta station for Gainesville at 7:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. (\$11.88 M–Th, \$14 F–Su) and arrived in Gainesville at 9:20 a.m. and 4:55 p.m. Buses departed Gainesville for Atlanta at 10:25 a.m. and 6:55 p.m. However, Greyhound routinely revises its schedule; call for current information. Amtrak's train was scheduled to depart from Atlanta daily at 8:08 p.m. and arrive in Gainesville at 9:03 p.m. (\$11). A train was scheduled to depart Gainesville for Atlanta daily at 7:08 a.m. Reservations are required. Call (800) 872-7245, or log on to <www.amtrak.com>.

Gainesville—Lodging: Motel 6, (770) 532-7531, \$47.95S \$48.59D weekdays, \$45.99S \$49.99D weekends, \$3EAP, pet-friendly n/c; Lanier Center Best Western, (800) 782-8966, \$99.95D, no dogs, hot B; Ramada Limited, (770) 287-3205, \$59, B buffet, small pets \$10; Hampton Inn, (770) 503-0300, \$115, no pets, hot B; Best Value Inn, (770) 534-0303, \$55–\$65, no pets. All are within four miles of the bus and train stations.

GAINESVILLE TO AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK

UNITAXI, (770) 534-5355 or (770) 297-0255, offers service to Amicalola Falls State Park (\$65 fare); transports dogs and accepts only cash. Service to the Trailheads at Nimblewill Gap and USFS 42 available at an additional cost.

GAINESVILLE TO DAHLONEGA

Some hikers choose to stay in Dahlonega rather than Gainesville. The site of the country's first gold rush, in the 1830s, Dahlonega sits 16 miles east of Amicalola Falls and offers all major services. UNITAXI (see above) offers service to Dahlonega.

Dahlonega—Hostel: A.T. Hiker Hostel run by Josh and Leigh Saint, (770) 312-7342, <www.hikerhostel.com>, <hikerhostel@yahoo.com>, by reservation; \$70 thru-hiker's special includes pick-up at North Springs MARTA station in Atlanta or

bus/train station in Gainesville, bunk, fuel, stop at outfitters if needed, B, and shuttle to Springer or Amicalola. Gear shipment to hostel available. Bunk & B \$16, private room & B \$38D. Fuel (white gas & alcohol), shuttle service, free Internet access. See Web site or contact hostel for shuttle rates. **Lodging:** Hotel rates in Dahlenega vary with the season. After May 1 and on weekends, expect listed rates to increase. Holiday Inn Express, (706) 867-7777, \$79–\$109, \$5EAP, includes hot B, no pets; Super 8, (706) 864-4343, \$55D, includes B, \$10 for dogs, WiFi; Days Inn, (706) 864-2338, newly renovated, \$49–\$70, one room for pets, B, WiFi; Econo Lodge, (706) 864-6191, \$50–\$80, includes B, pets <20 pounds, Internet access; Smith House, (800) 852-9577, <www.smithhouse.com>, \$139–\$269, includes B, no dogs. The Smith House Restaurant, in operation since 1922, is famous for its family-style AYCE fare: L (beginning in April) Tu–F 11–3, D Tu–F 4–8, Sa–Su 11–8. Hours are seasonal and may vary. Call ahead.

ALTERNATIVES

Several Trail enthusiasts in the Atlanta area offer shuttles from Atlanta to the park and Springer Mountain. The ATC is continually updating its list. Many people who offer shuttles do so on their time off; arrangements are best made at least a week or two in advance. See above for shuttle services.

AMICALOLA FALLS APPROACH TRAIL

Miles from Springer	Features	Services	Elev.	Miles from AFSP
8.8	Amicalola Falls State Park; Visitors Center; AFSP Shelter <i>0.0mS; 7.3mN</i>	R, C, L, M, S, sh, cl, w (W–19 m O)	1,700	0.0
7.6	Amicalola Lodge Rd	R, L, M, w	2,550	1.2
7.4	+Len Foote Hike Inn Trail	E–5m L, M	2,600	1.4
5.6	High Shoals Rd	R	2,800	3.2
4.0	Frosty Mtn	C, w	3,382	4.8
4.5	+Len Foote Hike Inn	E–1m L, M	3,310	5.3
3.7	Frosty Mtn. Rd USFS 28	R	3,192	5.1
2.8	Nimblewill Gap, USFS 28	R	3,100	6.0
1.5	Black Gap Shelter <i>7.3mS; 1.7mN</i>	C, S, w	3,300	7.3
0.0	Springer Mountain		3,782	8.8

+ Fee charged

THE APPROACH TRAIL

Amicalola Falls State Park—Its facilities nestled almost nine miles southwest of Springer Mountain, the park is the gateway to the southern terminus of the A.T. Scales to weigh packs and showers are located near the center entrance, as well as a restroom, pay phone, snack machines, and water fountain. The visitors center sells guidebooks, maps, and gift items. The park holds UPS and USPS packages sent c/o Amicalola Falls State Park, 240 Amicalola Falls State Park Rd., Dawsonville, GA 30534. Indicate on the box to hold the package at either the visitors center or the lodge. The visitors center, (706) 265-4703, is open 8:30–5 daily. While at the park, sign the hiker register inside the visitors center. Long-distance hikers may leave vehicles only in the parking area opposite the visitors center. A \$5-per-vehicle user fee is charged to all park visitors. Dogs must be on a leash within the park. ■ **Camping:** The park also offers campsites and cabins: campsites \$23 with shower, coin laundry, 1- to 3-bedroom cabins (2-night minimum) \$80–\$160. ■ **Lodging:** The desk at Amicalola Lodge, (706) 265-8888, (800) 573-9656, <www.gastateparks.org>, is staffed around the clock; rooms \$75–\$200, B included. Reservations suggested for cabins, campsites, and the lodge. ■ **Restaurant:** The lodge houses the Maple Restaurant, daily buffets, continental B 7–10:30, L 11:30–3, D 5–8.

West 19 miles to **Outfitters:** North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, Collin and Gil Carter, (706) 698-4453, fax (706) 698-4454, <www.hikenorthgeorgia.com>, <info@hikenorthgeorgia.com>, 1215 Industrial Blvd., East Ellijay, GA 30540, closed Tu–W; open M, Th, F 10–6; Sa 9–6; Su 12–6; full-service outfitter, Coleman and alcohol fuels by the ounce, canister fuels, short-term food resupply; will hold packages w/o fee; possible shuttles to Atlanta Airport, Amicalola, Springer Mountain, and Neels Gap; call for possible delivery of packages and store items. Ellijay Outfitters, Sa–Su 10–6, 10 N. Main St., Ellijay, GA 30540; (706) 698-GEAR, <www.ellijayoutfitters.com>, <info@ellijayoutfitters.com>. Mark (Trail Trucker, '01) and Anne Micallef can shuttle as time allows.

Amicalola Falls State Park Shelter (1993)—Located 50 yards behind the visitors center, sleeps 12, and available to thru-hikers at no charge. Built by a group of Trail backpacking enthusiasts from nearby Canton in memory of their friend, Max Epperson. The “A.T. Gang” spent 800 hours constructing the facility. Epperson hiked the Trail as far north as Connecticut before his health failed. Afterward, he continued to offer shuttles and support for his hiking friends. Water source and restroom 50 yards away at visitors center.

Approach Trail to Springer Mountain—From the park visitors center, it is an 8.8-mile trek to the first white blaze, most of it uphill. To cut off the steep, one-mile ascent of the falls, catch a ride to the top of the falls, and pick up the blue blazes there. The southern end was recently relocated just past its start at the visitor center.

Approach Trail *via* Nimblewill Gap—This alternative puts you 2.2 miles south of Springer Mountain on the Approach Trail but requires a bumpy, muddy drive up Forest Service roads. From the park entrance, go east 9.5 miles on Ga. 52 to abandoned Grizzles Store. Turn left on Nimblewill Road, and continue past Nimblewill Church at 6.6 miles. Just beyond the church, pass a road on the left where the pavement ends. Continue to the right on the unpaved road, and reach Nimblewill Gap at 14 miles. This is a very rough road and probably should not be attempted unless you have a vehicle with high ground clearance.

From Amicalola Falls to Springer Mountain *via* Forest Service roads—The easiest and quickest route takes you within one mile of the Springer summit. From the park, go west on Ga. 52 for 13.6 miles to Roy Road, at Cartecay Church and Stanley's Store. Turn right, and proceed 9.5 miles to the second stop sign. At the stop sign, bear right, and go 2.3 miles to Mt. Pleasant Church on the left. Across from the church, turn right onto unpaved Forest Service Road 42. This well-graded gravel road, suitable for all vehicles, winds 6.6 miles to the A.T. crossing at Big Stamp on the north side of the road. To reach the summit of Springer Mountain, walk 0.9 mile south. If you don't want to retrace your steps on the A.T., an alternative is to continue 1.7 miles past the A.T. crossing to USFS 42's intersection with the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). The BMT leads 1.5 miles up Springer and joins the A.T. just north of the southern terminus.

Len Foote Hike Inn—(800) 581-8032, <www.hike-inn.com>. This \$1-million lodge is similar to the huts in New Hampshire's White Mountains. The 40-bed, 20-room inn is approximately 5.0 miles north of Amicalola Falls State Park facilities and 4.5 miles south of the Springer Mountain summit. The yellow-blazed Hike Inn Trail creates a loop with the blue-blazed Approach Trail that leads from Amicalola Falls State Park to Springer. Overnight stays, which include family-style B/D, are \$97S, \$140D, rates subject to change; no dogs allowed. Amenities include linens, hot showers, composting toilets, and electricity (outlets in bath house only). Owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the inn is operated by the Appalachian Education and Recreation Services, Inc., a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. Walk-ins are allowed, subject to availability. Reg-

istration is at the Amicalola Falls State Park visitor center, where you can check on room availability. Open year-round, guest rooms in the bunkhouse are heated. Sleeping bags recommended Nov–Mar.

Black Gap Shelter (1953/1995)—Sleeps 8, privy. Once the Springer Mountain Shelter, before being dismantled and moved to its present location in 1995. This shelter is 1.5 miles south of the summit of Springer Mountain on the Approach Trail. Water is located 300 yards downhill to the right of the shelter.

Getting to Baxter State Park, Maine

No public transportation is available to or from Baxter State Park, but arrangements can be made to conclude or begin your journey with little difficulty. This usually means going through Boston, Portland, and/or Bangor, then to Medway, and then to Millinocket, still 20 miles southeast of the park. The nearest airport is in Bangor; the Portland airport is said to have more competitive rates, and Boston more so. For services and accommodations in Bangor, see page 272. Bus transportation is available from Portland to Medway and also from Boston to Portland.

LEAVING BANGOR

Cyr Bus Lines of Old Town, Maine, (207) 827-2335, (207) 827-2010, or (800) 244-2335, <www.cyrbustours.com>, <info@cyrbustours.com>, serves northern Maine. A bus leaves Bangor Greyhound bus station at 6:00 p.m. and Concord–Trailways bus station at 6:30 p.m. and arrives at Medway at 7:40 p.m. A bus leaves Medway at 9:30 a.m. and arrives at Concord–Trailways station at 10:50 a.m. and at Bangor Greyhound station at 11:10 a.m. (\$11.50 fare). The A.T. Lodge in Millinocket, (207) 723-4321, shuttles.

MEDWAY TO MILLINOCKET

From Medway, in the past, you would have to hitch on Maine 157 or call a taxi to go to either Millinocket, 10 miles to the west, or Baxter State Park, about 30 miles away. Town Taxi, (207) 723-2000, charges \$55 to Baxter State Park (BSP) gate and to Katahdin Stream Campground. Today, however, transportation is available to and from BSP *via* shuttle from the A.T. Lodge in Millinocket. The A.T. Lodge also offers a SOBO special: pick-up in Medway, bed in the bunkroom, breakfast at the A.T. Café, and shuttle to Katahdin Stream Campground; \$70. For more information on that and other lodging and facilities near Baxter State Park in Medway and Millinocket, please see the entries on pages 269–270.

Baxter State Park—The park, (207) 723-5140, has 10 campgrounds available May 15–Oct 15 by reservation on a first-come, first-served basis, \$10PP, two-person minimum (\$20 per site) except at the Birches. The Birches campsite, near Katahdin Stream Campground, is intended for long-distance hikers who have hiked 100 miles or more on their current trip. Hikers staying at the Birches must sign up at the information kiosk just north of Abol Bridge. Please see the entry for Baxter on page 264 for more information and details about camping and regulations near Katahdin. Southbound hikers should reserve a regular lean-to or tent site at Katahdin Stream or Abol campgrounds. Reservations may be made by telephone four months in advance of the date you wish to stay in the park and can be made using a credit card. More information and a chart outlining when reservations can be made is available at <www.baxterstateparkauthority.com>. Inside the park, ranger stations do NOT accept credit cards. Every hiker must register *with a ranger* upon entering Baxter. Information kiosks are located at Abol Stream and Katahdin Stream campgrounds.

Pets—No dogs or other pets are allowed; see Medway and Millinocket entries for kennels (pages 269-270).

Parking—No long-term parking is available, and parking at all trailheads and campgrounds is at a premium and controlled by permits issued at the entrance gates; when the space is gone, that specific parking lot is closed. Plan ahead!

APPROACH TO KATAHDIN

A note for would-be southbounders—Katahdin is no stroll in the park. The profile and topo on the MATC's maps only give you a hint of what to expect—the single greatest sustained climb on the A.T. Get yourself physically prepared before you start at Baxter State Park (you will be on your own once you get past the ranger station). Northbounders routinely leave their full packs on the ranger's porch and hike up with daypacks provided there for that purpose. Every year, several stubborn southbounders, invariably much less-conditioned than seasoned northbounders, insist on carrying their fully loaded packs up the A.T. beyond Katahdin Stream Campground. This results in knee injuries and aborted climbs or even entire A.T. hiking plans. Take a hint from the northbound veterans: Hike Katahdin with a day pack, and pick up your full pack on your way back through the campground—you will still be a thru-hiker, and you will enjoy your day, rather than suffer the entire time and predispose yourself to any number of injuries or the need for a rescue on your first Trail day. The footpath below treeline is more rocks and roots than soil—no problem for the hikers who have been rock-hopping for 2,000 miles, but not a pleasant journey straight from the desk chair.

Above treeline, you pull yourself over rocks in a few places and walk across slanted, roof-sized boulders in others. The climb is tough, even without a pack. The park recommends you bring or borrow a day pack (plenty of water, lots of snacks, sunscreen, a first-aid kit, gloves, hat, and extra layers of clothing). If you don't want to retrace your steps, you might consider going up the Abol Trail (part of which is referred to as the "Abol Slide," because of the loose rocks and steepness formed by a nineteenth-century landslide) and down the Hunt Trail (A.T.). That requires a two-mile walk or ride from Katahdin Stream along the Perimeter Road to Abol Campground before starting your hike. The Abol Trail usually opens after the Hunt Trail; until the sandy, gravelly soils dry out, the trail is slippery, and boulders can become dislodged.

"Weather permitting," you can begin a southbound hike as early as May 31. Before then, trails are so wet, even without snow and ice, that foot traffic would irreparably harm the alpine and subalpine areas. However, even for the following few weeks, the tiny, biting blackflies can drive you out of the woods in agony and frustration, leaving behind a contribution of your blood to the North Woods ecosystem. Overnight camping season in Baxter is May 15–Oct 15. Baxter State Park posts daily weather reports at the Trailheads at 7 a.m. during the hiking season. Categories tell you what is to be expected for the day:

- *Class I*—Recommended for hiking above treeline.
- *Class II*—Not recommended for hiking above treeline.
- *Class III*—Not recommended for hiking above treeline, with the following trails closed (specified trails will be listed).
- *Class IV*—All trails closed at the trailhead. A hiker who climbs Katahdin on a Class IV day is subject to a court summons, fine, seizure of equipment, and permanent revocation of park privileges.