



AT Community Program



Robert “Bo” Bobinski
Georgia Appalachian Trail Club
AT Community Coordinator



AT Community Program



Who lives near the AT?

Who has Thru-Hiked the AT?

Who has Section Hiked the AT?

Who has stepped foot on the AT?



AT Community Program



The idea of the trail was born in the early 1920s about a foot path that followed the “spine” of the East Coast. In 2025, that “idea” celebrates its 100th anniversary.

These mountains have a rich history steeped in diverse cultures, commerce, outdoor recreation, and iconic points of interest.



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One-third of the US population is within a day's drive of the Appalachian Trail



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The "AT"



- **2,198.4 miles**
- **14 States**
- **6 National Parks**
- **8 US Forests**
- **2 National Wildlife Refuges**
- **74 State Parks, Forests, & Game Lands**
- **380,000 acres managed directly by the ATC**
- **2d largest unit boundary in the National Park System**



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- **Considered the longest (2,198.4 miles) hiking-only foot path in the world**
- **Part of the National Park Service**
- **Maintained under a Cooperative Management Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, State Agencies, and 30 AT Maintaining Clubs**
- **Every year, approximately 3,000 people attempt a Thru Hike**
(less than 25% succeed)



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•GA – 78 / 6

•NJ – 72 / 2

•NC – 97 / 3

•NY – 91 / 3

•TN – 288 / 2

•CT – 52 / 0

•VA – 557 / 18

•MA – 90 / 5

•WV – 2.4 / 2

•VT – 151 / 3

•MD – 41 / 1

•NH – 161 / 2

•PA – 230 / 5

•ME – 282 / 4



AT Community Program



A Trail Town is a community through which a trail passes that supports trail users with services, promotes the trail to its residents, and embraces the trail as a resource to be protected and celebrated. Trail Towns are built on a relationship between a town, its trail, and those who use and care for it. A community may have been officially designated a “Trail Town,” or it may simply espouse the characteristics of a trail-serving community.



AT Community Program



- **Started in 2009**
- **Goal was to assist trailside communities with economic development & tourism**
- **Promote stewardship & conservationism through volunteerism**
- **Partnerships are the foundation**



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AT Community Program



- **The purpose is to provide direction & resources for all partners involved in the program**
- **Increase visibility & economic health by enhancing rural outdoor recreation**
- **Increase stewardship & conservationism by aiding with conservation planning & promoting natural resources as valuable assets**
- **Increase & enhance awareness of the AT and the role the community has for both the trail & its visitors**
- **Connecting the rural town charm to the lure of the trail**



AT Community Program



The Three Pillars

Asset-Based Economic Development

Community-Based Conservation

Stewardship through Volunteering



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Asset-Based Economic Development



- **Advisory Committee (routine meetings, strategy, etc)**
- **3-4 million annual visitors (Thru-Hikers =1%)**
- **\$125—\$168 million annual spending**
- **\$27 million tourist spending locally**
- **\$36 million local economic multipliers**
- **Year-round use**
- **Trail part of a larger visitor experience**
- **Survey revealed the trail increases services, amenities, community engagement, Federal/State investments, increased signage & awareness**



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Asset-Based Economic Development



- **Dollar General stores (I counted them!)**
- **Outfitters**
- **Food & Beverage**
- **Lodging (BnB, Hostels, Hotels/Motels)**
- **Add-on activities (water sports, cycling, festivals, NGA wine tours, etc)**



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Community-Based Conservation



- **Protecting what supports the community**
- **Identifying & collaborating on mutually beneficial relationships between people & nature**
- **Collaborative planning, implementation, & monitoring**
- **Sustainable recreation**
- **Nature & Wildlife preserves, wetlands, waterways**
- **Understanding how the trail impacts the environment & how the environment impacts the trail**



AT Community Program

Stewardship through Volunteering



- **Trail maintenance**
- **Community Hikes / Clean Ups**
- **Leave No Trace talks @ schools / events**
- **Festivals**
- **Student Outreach (Middle & High Schools, Colleges & Universities)**



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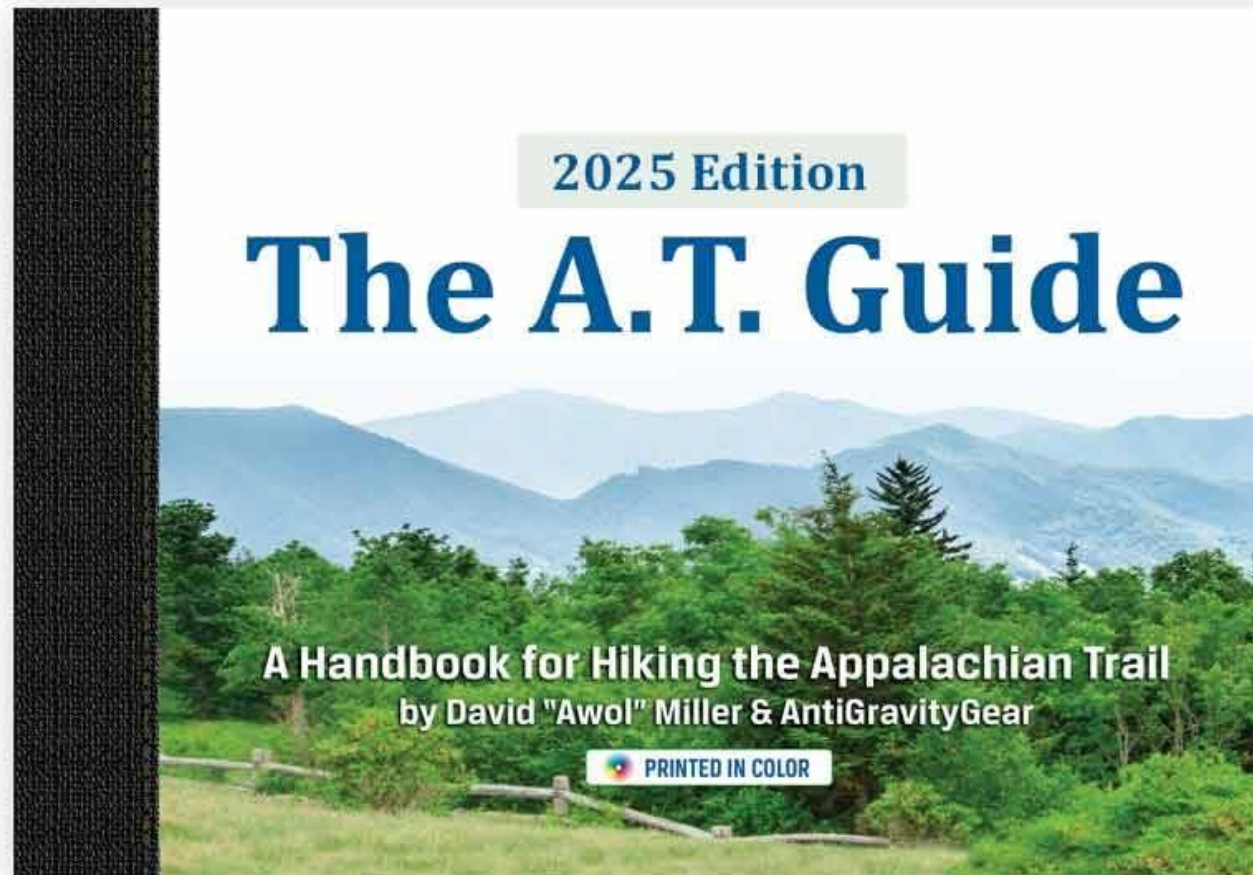
Trail Guidebooks / Social Media



- **AWOL**
- **Far Out**
- **Annual Thru-Hiker Facebook Page**
- **AT Community Social Media**



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BLAIRSVILLE, GA
34.8732, -83.9584
Mag. Dec. 5.82° W

37.3 ★ TESNATEE GAP, GA 348 (RUSSELL HWY)
38.2 HOGPEN GAP, GA 348 (RUSSEL HWY)

» **Blairsville, GA 30512 (14W)**
☎ 706.745.4123, M-F 8:30-5, Sa 8:30-12:00, (services at Neel Gap, US 19) **Southern Ruck Vogel State Park, January 14-16, 2022**

📍📶📧📞📧📧 **The Grateful Hiker (15.5W)**
772.321.0905 Hiker friendly. Access computer to get permits. Hikers may come & wait for their hotel room to become avail, wait for shuttle, or p/u pkgs. Mail: 94 Town Sq, Blairsville, GA 30512 (3267)

52.5 UNICOI GAP, GA 75

🚚📞📧📧 **Gracie "RU" CLASS OF 16** 813.294.6994
"Hitch-A-Hiker" truck w/svc from Atlanta to Fontana. Can accommodate lrg groups. Hiker box w/limited supplies. Will stop for resupply.

📞📧📧 **Timothy & Cydni Patton** 678.570.5128 (best to txt/ call ahead 24 hrs) Range: Amicalola Falls to Winding Stair Gap. Up to 4 people.

» **Helen, GA 30545 (9E)**
☎ 706.878.2422, 706.878.2181, M-F 9-12:30 & 1:30-4, Sa 9-12, Lodging tax 15%. Tourist town with many hotels, restaurants, gift shops, ice cream shops, river rafting & tubing rentals. Visitor Center on Bruckenstrasse (near the PO) has info about places to stay & a free phone for making reservations.

📞📧📧 **Riverbend Motel & Cabins (9.3E)** 706.878.2155
Downtown Helen convenient to amenities. \$30 pet fee. (2894)



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(...Cont'd from pg. 17)

» **Hiwassee, GA 30546 (10.6W)**

Budget Inn (10.1W) 706.896.4121 Hiker friendly. \$49.99S, \$8EAP, pet rooms + \$15. Coin laundry. Section-hiker free parking. Visa/MC ok. Mail: 193 S Main St, Hiwassee, GA 30546(1358)

Holiday Inn Express (10.9W) 706.896.8884 \$107 Up, full b'fast incl. Indoor pool, hot tub. No pets. CC ok. Mail: 300 Big Sky Dr, Hiwassee, GA 30546(1360)

Lake Chatuge Lodge (11.9W) 706.896.5253 reservations@lakechatugelodge.com \$109/Up incl c b'fast.

Hawg Wild BBQ & Catfish House onsite.(1361)

Hiwassee Hometown Pharmacy (10.1W) 706.896.1924 Outfitter/hiking gear supply co-located in pharmacy. Hiker friendly, hiker box, M-F 9-6, Sa 9-1.(3238)

Trailful Outdoor Co. (10.5W) 706.521.4453 hello@trailful.com Provides extensive selection of hiking & backpacking gear, footwear & apparel.(3216)

Ingles (10.6W) 706.896.8312 7 Days 6a-11p. Pharmacy M-F 9a-9p, Sa-Su 9a-6p. **Starbucks**, deli, bakery, salad bar.(1363)

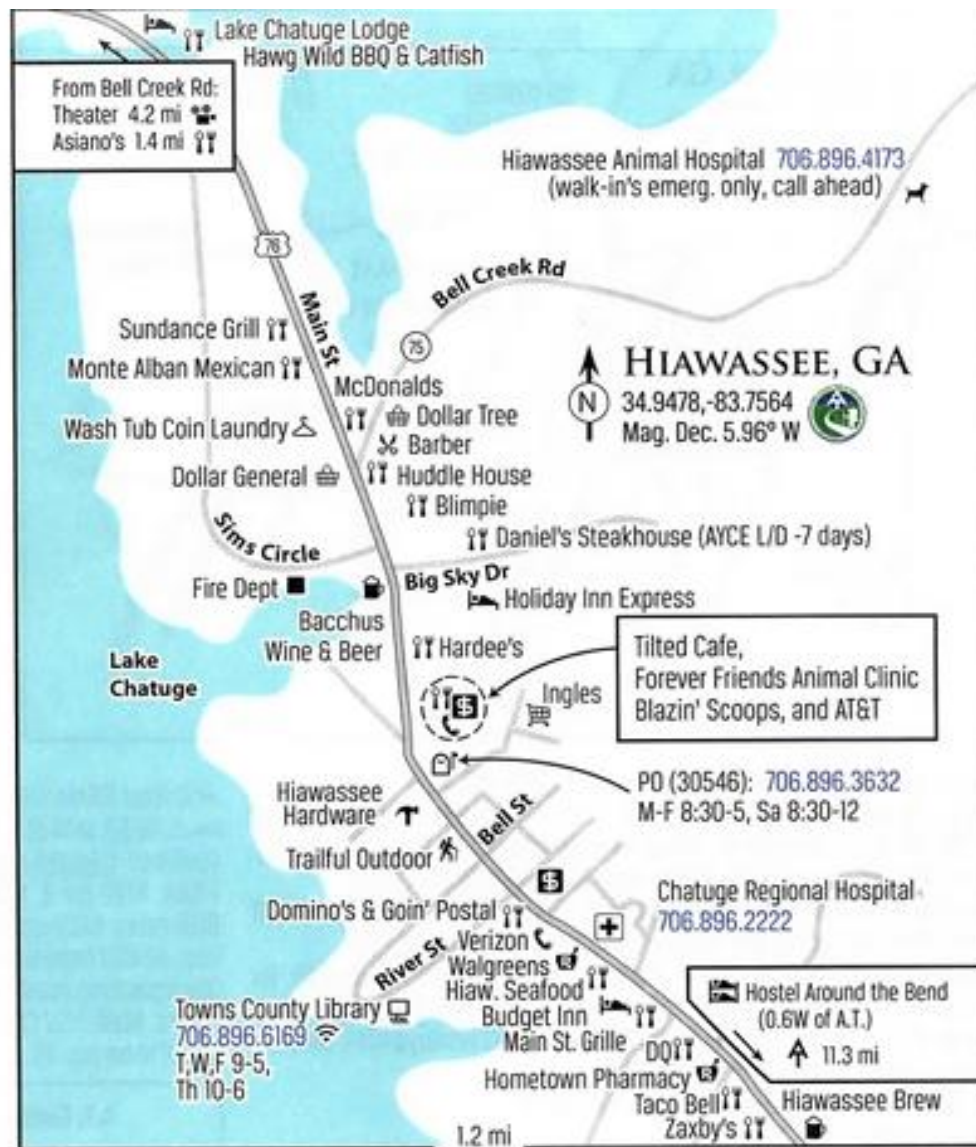
Goin' Postal Hiwassee (10.3W) 706.896.1844 Virtual mailbox svc. Will open & scan, send img, & fwd mail at your request.(1364)

85.0 ★ **DEEP GAP, USFS 71**

105.7 **ROCK GAP**

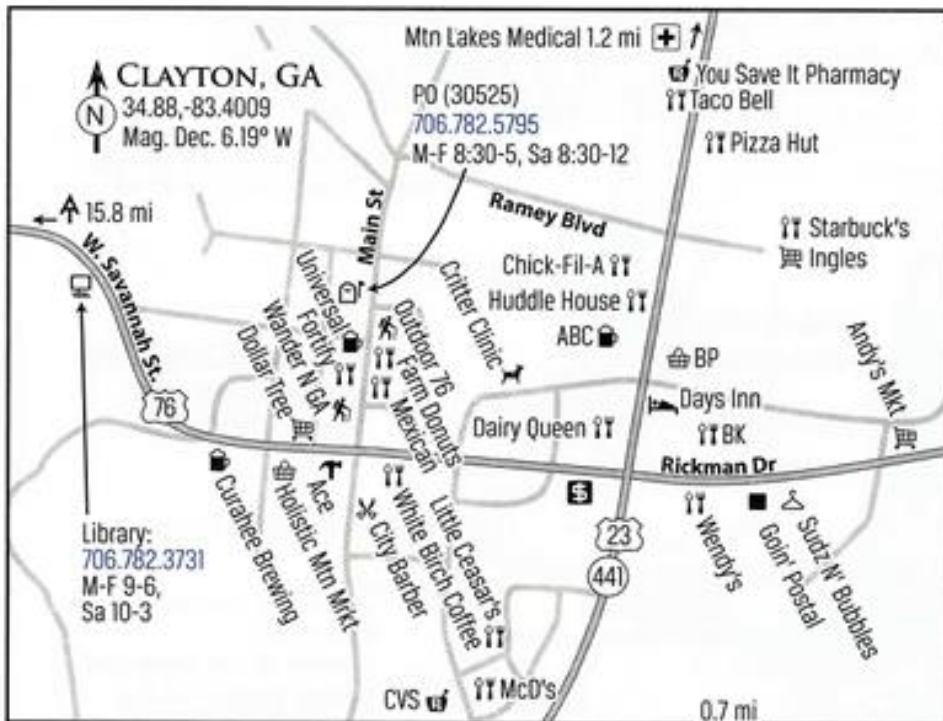
Macon County Transit (See entry at Winding Stair Gap)(3029)

Standing Indian Campground (1.5W) 828.369.0442, 828.524.6441 Campsites \$20, open for booking Apr 1 - Oct 31. 1st Come 1st srv off season. Camp store has small selection of foods.(178)





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GEORGIA 17

☞ **Nacoochee Village Tavern & Pizzeria** (10.5E)
706.318.7530 Su-Th 12p-9p, F-Sa 12p-10p.
Serving local microbrews. 10% Disc for AT hikers. (3185)
» **Hiwassee, GA 30545** (12W), (see Dicks Creek Gap)

69.2 DICKS CREEK GAP, US 76

☞ **Hostel Around the Bend** (0.6W)
706.389.9668 Pvt rooms & bunks. Free guest laundry. Call, txt, or visit website for reserv. Guest shuttle svc. Slackpacking, Unicoi Gap PU/DO avail. Free mail holding for guests: 7675 Hwy 76 E, Hiwassee, GA 30546 (3316)

» **Clayton, GA 30525** (15.8E)
☞ 706.782.5795,
M-F 8:30-5, Sa 8:30-12

☞ **Outdoor 76** (15.8E)
828.347.1465 M-Sa 10-6, Su 12-5. Located on Main St. Specialty/lightweight AT gear, clothing, & footwear. Pedorthic trained footwear experts specializing in foot problems. Free AT summit bandana & 10% off entire purchase for thru-hikers. Free shipping to our Franklin location. Showers \$5, laundry \$5/load, fuel /oz, shakedown, WiFi & free hugs. Free 9:30a shuttle from Dicks Creek Gap to Clayton, GA Mar 1-Apr 30, M-F. Sign AT banner. Mail: 104 N. Main St, Clayton, GA 30525 (3157)

☞ **Helendorf River Inn** (9.4E) 800.445.2271
visitus@helendorf.com Rooms for 1 to 4 persons starting around \$200. Wkend rates higher. Incl grab n' go b'fast bag. Coin-op Laundry. Pets \$20 (ltd rooms). 10% Off for AAA, AARP, & military. (1282)

☞ **SureStay by Best Western** (9.4E) 706.878.2191 Ask for AT thru hiker rate (rates are seasonal), c b'fast, no pets. (1283)

☞ **Country Inn & Suites** (9.6E) 706.878.9000 Call for rates, hiker discount, incl full b'fast, indoor pool & hot tub. (1285)

☞ **Econo Lodge** (10.4E) 706.878.8000 Wkdays \$114, wkends higher, incl c b'fast. Pets \$20. (1284)

☞ **Betty's Country Store** (9E) 706.878.2943
Su-Th 7a-8p; F-Sa 7a-9p. (1286)

☞ **Critter Clinic** (16E) 706.782.6674 Wkdays 2-5, Sa 9:30-12. Walk-ins ok. (3228)

☞ **Henson Cove Place B&B w/Cabin** (5.8W) 706.970.1533 (cell/txt) relax@henson-cove-place.com Cabin for 1-4 persons, full kitchen, 3BR, 1.5BA: \$120 for 2, \$135 for 3, \$150 for 4 w/dog, \$150 for 4. Dogs \$10. B'fast \$10PP. B&B rates \$130-up & incl b'fast. All stays w/free ride to/from AT from Dick's Creek Gap, or \$20 from Unicoi Gap and/or into town for provisions. Free laundry & internet. Slackpacking (cash only). CC & well behaved pets ok. Shuttles, parking for section hikers. Mail: 1137 Car Miles Rd, Hiwassee, GA 30546 (1357)
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A.T. Guide updates sheet found at (awol.site/2022updates)



AT Community Program



[Trail Guides](#) [App Features](#) [Blog](#) [Help](#) [Gift Cards](#) [Log In](#)

**FarOut is the No. 1 navigational app
for the best long-distance trails in
the world.**





AT Community Program



~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ at The Appalachian Station at 19E
Top contributor · May 9 at 2:38 PM · Roan Mountain, TN · 🌐

Exceptional Food, Beer, n Cheer
So glad to be here 🍷 ... See more





AT Community Program





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YOUTUBE.COM

Mohican Outdoor Center a wonderful place to take a Zero

Thru-Hikers! We're just 0.2 miles off the trail in New Jersey — a must-stop, even if you're just low on supplies. We've got almost everything you need! Come sa...



AT Community Program





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Tag Grant Program



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Grants





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Do trails matter?

14,810

88,600



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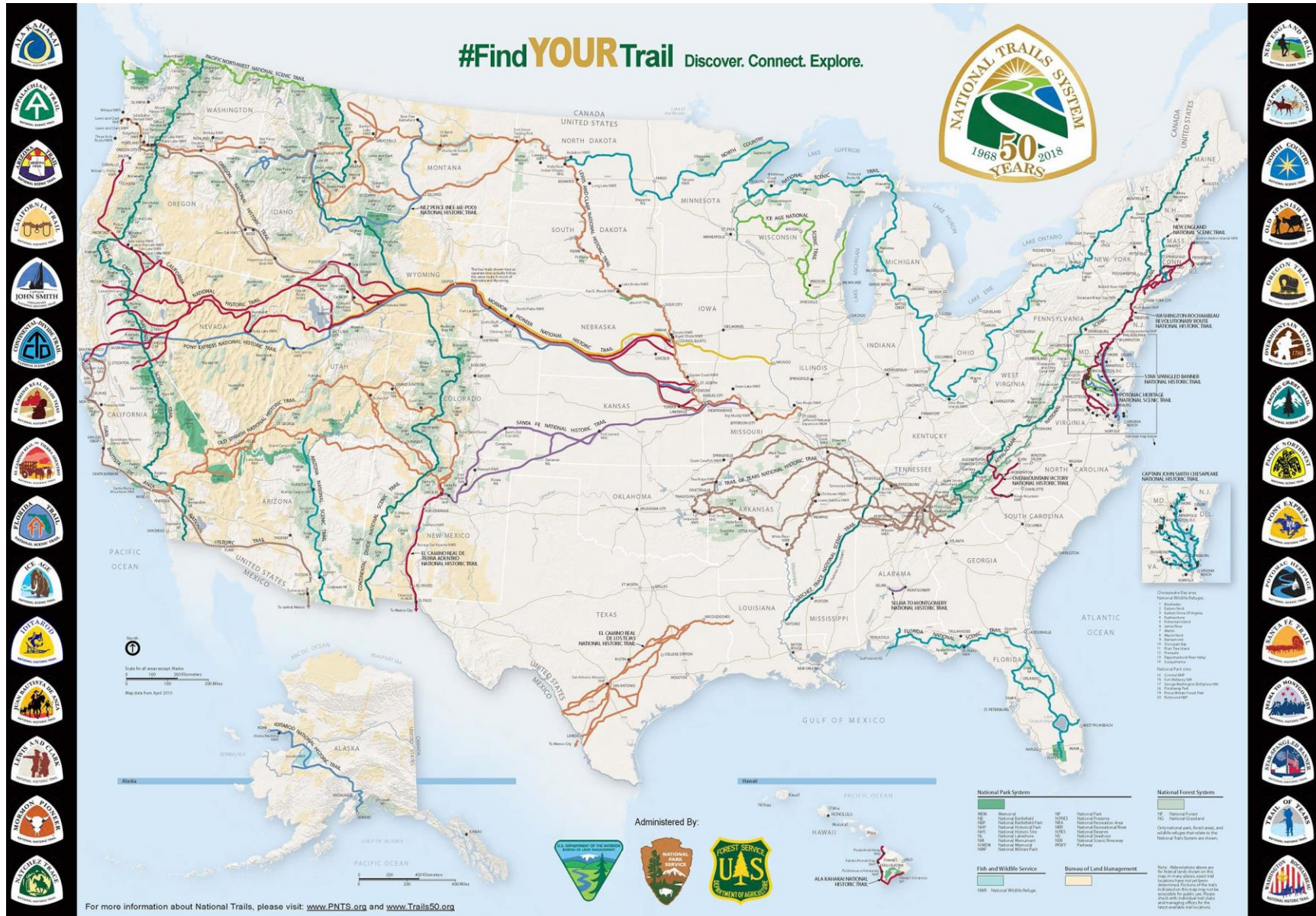


America's National Trails System is more than 88,600 miles long and consists of 11 National Scenic Trails, 19 National Historic Trails, 1,300 National Recreation Trails, and seven side and connecting trails. The Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail were our nation's first National Scenic Trails.

Our National Scenic and Historic Trails total more than 60,600 miles and link 70 wildlife refuges, 80 National Parks, 90 Bureau of Land Management areas, 90 National Forests, 123 Wilderness Areas, and 100 major metropolitan areas. More than 230 million people live within 60 miles of a National Trail.



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Questions?