



Mount Katahdin, Maine

Bear Mountain State Park

Springer Mountain, Georgia

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, designated a linear National Park by the 1968 National Trails System Act, is a continuous, marked public footpath extending approximately 2,144 miles from Mount Katahdin, Maine to Springer Mountain, Georgia along the Appalachian Mountain range. It maintains a wilderness character by following the scenic ridges of the Appalachian Mountain ranges of the White,

Green, Berkshire, Ramapo, Kittatinny, Blue Ridge, Great Smoky and Nantahala Mountains. The Appalachian Trail is protected along most of its course by federal or state ownership of the land. The entire trail environment is maintained as a place for everyone to hike and enjoy the Appalachian Mountains, while at the same time conserving the natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of this one-of-a-kind, linear park.



Bear Mountain Bridge In conjunction with other private investors, the Harriman and Perkins families financed the steel cabled Bear Mountain-Hudson River Bridge. Opened in 1924 as a toll road, the 2-lane, 1600 foot span provided a grand entrance to Bear Mountain Park from the east side of the Hudson River, linking the New York highway systems of the early century. The New York State Bridge Authority assumed control over the Bridge in 1940.

The Appalachian Trail Maps

In 1920, Major William A. Welch, General Manager and Chief Engineer for the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, created the first Harriman State Park trail map. It presented the routes of the hundreds of miles of old roads in the Highlands and Ramapo Mountains. The 1920 map was used by hiking clubs to lay out new routes, including the PIPC section of the Appalachian Trail. It remains the base for our modern day trail map. If you are interested in enjoying the views from a variety of locations you can obtain a map at the Bear Mountain Inn, the Administration Building, or at the Visitor Center Book Store on the Palisades Interstate Parkway.



The Appalachian Trail: History In 1920, Massachusetts regional planner, Benton MacKaye first proposed the Appalachian Trail as a footpath for walkers and campers along the entire Appalachian Mountain system from Maine to Georgia. The idea for the Trail was an outgrowth of the construction of regional systems of woodland and mountain trails and the protection of country roads, maintained and enjoyed by among others, the Appalachian Mountain Club in NH, the Green Mountain Club in NY/VT, the Adirondack Mountain Club and the Blue Mountain Club, PA. The concept appealed to members of outdoor hiking and camping clubs as a means of finding escape to the nearest wilderness, conserving the outstanding scenic features of the eastern seaboard and restoring as much of pioneer conditions as possible from the ever growing congestion of the modern highways and cities. The first section – upon which you are standing – was marked and opened in this park in 1923. Under the leadership of MacKaye and Myron H. Avery, ATC chairman from 1931 to 1952, The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference and its various clubs, federal agencies, including the Civilian Conservation Corps, and state governments combined forces to complete the continuous trail by August 1937. Forces of nature and politics acted to postpone and force the relocation of some portions of the Trail until 1951 when all sections were opened and marked.

The Appalachian Trail Markers

Diamond shaped metal markers bearing the trail logo originally distinguished and directed hikers along the Appalachian Trail route. Major Welch designed these first trail symbols with the AT monogram and the legend "Appalachian Trail-Maine to Georgia" that became the standard emblem of the conference. In addition, vertical, rectangular white blazes, six inches by two inches, painted on trees, posts and rocks label the trail. A double blaze – one above the other – is placed before turns, junctions, or other areas that require hikers to be alert. Blue blazes mark AT side trails. These lead to shelters, water supplies, or special view-points. Paint blazes of various colors mark most of the other trails in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park.



*Afoot and light-hearted,
I take to the open road,
Healthy, free,
the world before me,
The long, brown path before me
leading wherever I choose.*

– WALT WHITMAN,
"SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD"



Walt Whitman Statue

Sculpted by Jo Davidson, the eight-foot bronze statue of Walt Whitman, "the poet of the outdoors," commemorates Mrs. Mary W. Harriman's gift in 1910 of \$1,000,000 and 10,000 acres of land for the establishment of the Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park section of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. The statue depicts the poet striding along the open road. It can be seen on the Appalachian Trail in the Trailside Museum area.



Trailside Nature Museums And Wildlife Center The original concept of the Appalachian Trail called for the establishment of 14 Nature Guide Centers, one in each state located near metropolitan areas along the pathway. In 1925, Frank E. Lutz, Curator of the American Museum of Natural History's Entomology Department, blazed an educational nature trail in Harriman Park in connection with his Station for the Study of Insects, beginning the first nature trail established anywhere in the United States. In 1927, the AMNH initiated, with the assistance of a grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the Trailside Museum, Nature Trails and Craftshop set on the Appalachian Trail and overlooking the Hudson River. As first conceived, two miles of labeled nature trails extended through the Hudson Highlands at Bear Mountain, including the first section of the Appalachian Trail that traversed, as if a covered trail, through one door and out the back of the 1927 Trailside Museum Building. Along these woodland trails, several small rustic stone museum buildings, including the original 1927 "Trailside Museum" tell about the wildlife, geology, herpetology and history of the area. The Trailside Zoo has a collection of animals native to the Park. The Zoo accommodates only non-releasable wildlife that are injured or raised in captivity. The Trailside Museum remains the prototype for nature centers along the 2000 mile Trail.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Established as a federation of outdoor clubs and individuals along the Atlantic seaboard and adjoining states for the purpose of making the Appalachian Trail a walkers' path from Maine to Georgia, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy was organized in 1925. The ATC is a non-profit educational organization, composed of clubs and volunteers dedicated to maintaining and protecting the Trail. Today with its active partners, the National Park Service which has overall responsibility for the Trail, the U.S. Forest Service, and states and local communities, volunteers monitor and maintain the Trail and its shelters and help with day-to-day operations at headquarters. Most volunteers are associated with one of the 31 ATC-member organizations – hiking, mountain, and outdoor clubs that have been assigned responsibility for specific sections of the Trail. The Conservancy publishes a set of official ATC guidebooks and maps, and other information on hiking and trail use. It also supports a private land trust to acquire and protect additional land adjacent to the trail corridor. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy headquarters is located in Harpers Ferry, WV near the Trail's halfway point. From here, the ATC coordinates maintenance of the Trail through the affiliated clubs and 4 ATC field offices. For further information, write the ATC, PO Box 807, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425, or call (304) 535-6331.



Trail Shelters

After plans drawn by Major Welch, volunteers built several campsites and rustic shelters by scenic outlooks along the Trail route to provide overnight wilderness protection for long distance hikers.

This sign was made possible in 1998 by a grant from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Furthermore, the publication program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund and an anonymous donor. Further information about the NY-NJ Trail Conference can be found at www.nnjtc.org, 201-512-9348, or New York - New Jersey Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430. For more information about the Palisades Interstate Park Commission visit us on the web at www.FriendsofPalisades.org.

TRAIL BLAZE COLORS

- (B) Blue
- (Bl) Black
- (R) Red
- (U) Unmarked
- (W) White
- (Y) Yellow

..... Graded
——— Ungraded

Trails are shown in red.

LIST OF TRAILS

- 1777 British March
- 1779 American March
- 7 Seven Hills
- ASB Anden-Surebridge
- AT Appalachian
- AW Anthony Wayne
- B Beech
- BD Blue Dot
- BNM Brecknock Mountain
- C Cornell
- CC Conklin Crossing
- DEA Dean Dorothea Railway
- DM Diamond Mountain
- DUN Dunning
- F Fawn
- H Hazet
- HHS Hillburn-Torne-Sebago
- I Iona
- K Kakiat
- L Lichen
- LP Lodge Path
- MW Major Welch
- N Nantux
- PG Poppleton Gorge
- PM Pine Meadow
- RB Reeves Brook
- RBH Raccoon Brook Hills
- RC Red Cross
- RD Ramapo-Dundberg
- RTT Red TT (Unauthorized)
- SB Story Brook
- SMB Southern-Bear Mountain
- SKI Ski
- TMI Tuxedo-Mount Ivy
- TO Lower
- TR Triangle
- TT Timp-Torne
- V Victory
- WB White Bar
- WC White Cross

You are here.

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
 In addition to providing the public with over 1,700 miles of hiking trails in the bi-state region, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, a federation of 100 hiking and outdoor clubs and 10,000 individual members, is committed to trail land protection and education. Originally established in 1920 to voluntarily construct and maintain the hiking trails of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, by 1923 the NY-NJ Trail Conference in collaboration with the Commission built the first section of the Appalachian Trail here in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks. The Conference continues to manage the Appalachian Trail in New York and New Jersey. Over the years, in cooperation with park authorities, over 370 miles of Conference foot trails have been built on PIFC lands alone. Today the partnership with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission continues.

The Local Geology
 The trails pass through 1.3 billion years of geologic history within the Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks. A major continental collision 1.1 billion years ago heated and compressed virtually all of the visible rocks here into banded gneisses. About 850 million years ago, fault and fracture action created large magnetite iron ore bodies. These were extensively mined during the 18th and 19th century occupation of the area. During the next 650 million years, the rocks of the Park were uplifted as mountain ranges, and eroded several times. Over the past 2 million years, erosion was greatly accelerated by huge mile thick ice sheets that scraped and removed all of the surface material and leveled the large mountain that once stood atop these rocks. The last glacier retreated about 12,000 years ago, leaving u-shaped valleys, bare hillslopes, erratics, pot-holes, boulder fields, large swamps and the Hudson River, actually a fjord with its bed over 100 feet below sea level in many places.



Perkins Tower A new road, constructed by hand in 1932 by the Civil Work Administration, traveled up to the top of Bear Mountain. The road provides access to this stone tower built in honor of George W. Perkins, Sr., first president of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. It affords an excellent view of the Hudson Highlands and beyond.

Iona Island This scenic salt marsh island has had a variety of uses throughout its history. In the 18th century, this strategic venue centered the independence struggle in the Hudson Highlands. The propagation of the Iona Grape turned the island into the earliest and best known Hudson Valley vineyard of the 19th century. Later in the century, thousands of river excursionists journeyed to the Iona Island summer resort. Sold to the United States Government in the 20th century, the Island's superior Hudson River location distinguished it as a major naval ammunition depot during both world wars. The Palisades Interstate Park assumed jurisdiction over Iona Island in 1966, focusing on its importance as a wildlife and bird center.



Bear Mountain Inn Late in 1910, the Palisades Interstate Park was extended to include the Bear Mountain section. Thousands of visitors came by rail and steamboat to enjoy the forest park, the lakes and the magnificent views of the river. The Park Commissioners realized the need to provide a center for its seasonal activities. The architectural firm, Tosker and Marsh, designed The Bear Mountain Inn as a general restaurant building, replicating the American rustic resort style tradition by using native stone and heavy chestnut log materials found on site and crafted in 1915 by park employees. Large stone fireplaces and rustic timber framing highlight the dining spaces. By the mid-1920s, park visitors could be accommodated overnight.

BEAR MOUNTAIN & HARRIMAN TRAILS

Trails of the Bear Mountain-Harriman Parks
 The Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park's trail system is an extensive web of paths, trails and old roads that satisfy the hiker seeking natural beauty and a quiet escape. While the best known of these is the Appalachian Trail, within the 80-square-mile area of the Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks and set amid the scenic Hudson Highlands, lies a network of hundreds of miles of marked trails of great variety.

Major William A. Welch
 Appointed in 1912 as the Palisades Interstate Park Commission's General Manager and Chief Landscape Engineer, Major William A. Welch designed the built and forested environment of the Park. An innovator in public-private partnerships, Major Welch was one of the co-founders of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, acting for 10 years as that organization's first chairman. In 1925, he also chaired the newly organized Appalachian Trail Conference. Helping to establish national and state park systems throughout the country, Major Welch founded and served as the first president of the National Council of State Parks.



Native Wildlife

- Bald Eagle
- White tail Deer
- Black Bear
- Timber Rattlesnake
- Beaver
- River Otter
- Coyote
- Red Tail Hawk

An amazing diversity of wildlife can be found in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks, only 40 miles north of New York City.

Trail Ethics
 Treat the land the trails cross and its neighbors with respect and care. Keep to the trails' defined footway. Leave your campsite cleaner than you found it. By leaving little or no trace of your presence, you help preserve the trails for future enjoyment. And remember: millions of hours have been donated by volunteers to build and maintain these trails, most at their own expense.



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ACTUAL SIZE: 3' X 5'