

PATH WAYS

Of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

PATH Year 57, No. 2

Summer 2021



This is a computer-generated illustration of how the under-construction Mountain Valley Pipeline would look from the Appalachian Trail. See Bits and Pieces on Page 6. (ATC photo)

Hiker: ‘Guthook’ Saved Me on the AT

More and more people are hiking the Appalachian Trail with the assistance of technology. PATH member Don Smyth thru-hiked in 2018 and has become a believer in something called Guthook, a smartphone application that he says replaces paper maps and a lot of other things. Here’s his take on it.

By Don Smyth

It saved me at least three times! Somehow, I got off the trail and was headed in the wrong direction. But Guthook, the trail-hiking smartphone app, quickly identified where I was and where I should have been.

Guthook was first released in 2012 by Atlas Guides, and it has transformed hiking. The name Guthook was the trail name of Ryan Linn, one of the co-founders, who met Paul Bodnar, the other co-founder, in 2010 while they were thru-hiking the Pacific Coast Trail. Ryan currently lives in Maine and volunteers with the Maine Appalachian Trail Club.

One of the unique features of Guthook in comparison to trail maps, data books, and the AWOL Guide, is the GPS feature, which is what saved me when I got off trail. Just like Google

Maps in your car, when the GPS feature is turned on, you can see where you are on the trail, how far it is to the next water source, or campsite, or other things that are important. The GPS feature uses satellites, so it is always available even in the most remote sections. It's best to keep the GPS turned off in the app until you need it, so it doesn't use up all of your battery charge unnecessarily.

Another unique feature of Guthook is the social commenting that anyone can make on any waypoint icon (i.e. shelter, water source, hostel, etc). So, you can see if the next water source is dry, or if the shelter has mice, or if the hostel is a good one or not so good.

Guthook is actually a platform that you download from the app store for free, and then you purchase the contents for a particular trail. There are more than two dozen trails available in the US and abroad. For example, you can get these trails:

- Appalachian Trail, which is further broken down into nine sections, like Springer Mountain to Standing Bear Farm, or Southern Virginia (\$8.99 for each section or \$59.99 for all sections)
- Continental Divide Trail (\$39.99)
- Pacific Coast Trail (\$29.99)
- John Muir Trail (\$14.99)
- Vermont's Long Trail (\$39.99)

Earlier this year, Atlas Guides offered the Guthook Appalachian Trail maps for free for regular maintainers but that offer expired in February 2021. Atlas Guides and the ATC plan to announce a similar free program probably in January 2022.

Besides the unique features, Guthook has the traditional trail map, which is similar to a paper map. You can zoom in and out. Another useful view is the elevation profile, which I especially liked. All the waypoint icons are visible in either view for shelters, campsites, water sources, parking areas, road crossings, hostels, towns, and other services. You can also see a list of all the upcoming water sources and the mileage to reach them, or a list of all the upcoming campsites and shelters which is very handy.

As trail maintainers, you might be interested in "View Recent Comments," which are sorted by most recent date. The comments are attached to a waypoint icon and show the mile marker. For instance, honeybadgerhelps made a comment on 4/27 about the Chestnut Knob Shelter at Mile 569.8, "Great protection from last night's wind. The view is five stars." For the PATH section (Mile 530.2 to Mile 592.2), we monitor the comments weekly for any maintenance-related work that is needed.

There are other features and settings that I didn't discuss in this short article, but as hikers or maintainers, I would recommend using Guthook in whatever manner proves helpful and comfortable for you.

Two other recent articles on Guthook are:

"How the Guthook App Revolutionized Thru-Hiking"

<https://www.outsideonline.com/2396304/guthook-guides-app-mapping-thru-hiking>

"To Guthook or Not to Guthook"

<https://thetrek.co/appalachian-trail/to-guthook-or-not-to-guthook/>

2021 Calendar

Maybe, just maybe, we're getting back to normal. Keep your fingers crossed!

June 5, 2021 **National Trail Days** **Nationwide**
A celebration of trails and hiking. Look for events in your area at www.americanhiking.org.

June 17-19, 2021 **June Work Weekend** **Stony Fork, Va.**
Not final, but hoping to work on a gravel turnpike foot path on the AT just north of Dry Run; we hope we'll be able to gather for a potluck. Also hikes, lopping and light trail maintenance.

July 16-18, 2021 **July Work Weekend** **Stony Fork, Va.**
Continuing working on the turnpike project at Dry Run, which was started in June, with the help of Mount Rogers NRA volunteers. THIS MAY BE SUMMERFEST.

Aug. 6-9, 2021 **AT Vista** **New Paltz, N.Y.**
This is a two-day weekend event commemorating Benton MacKaye's 1921 article laying out the idea of an Appalachian Trail. But it is only virtual. An in-person event is tentatively set for Aug. 5-8, 2022. More info is at www.atvista2020.weebly.com. Also see more in Bits and Pieces.

August 20-22, 2021 **August Work Weekend** **Stony Fork, Va.**
Working out of Stony Fork Campground. Hoping for a potluck Saturday evening.

Sept. 17-19, 2021 **September Work Weekend** **Stony Fork, Va.**
Working out of Stony Fork Campground. Hoping for a potluck Saturday evening.

October 15-17, 2021 **October Work Weekend** **Stony Fork, Va.**
Working out of Stony Fork Campground. Hoping for a potluck Saturday evening.

October 8-11, 2021 **39th ALDHA Gathering** **Abingdon, Va.**
The annual gathering of the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association. It was planned last year but was postponed because of the pandemic. Email Blaze@aldha.org for more information.

November 20, 2021 **PATH annual meeting** **TBA**
The PATH annual meeting should take place somewhere in North Carolina or Virginia.

This is a newsletter for the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, a trail work club that maintains approximately 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia. This newsletter comes out four times a year, as long as we have enough material and contributions. It is sent by email to the PATH List and others, or by U.S. Mail to members who don't have email. Feel free to print and post in your local outdoor store. FALL DEADLINE AUGUST 20, 2021. Web site: www.path-at.org. Or for info: PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com. Or see our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PiedmontATHikers/

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Letters: Promoting PATH

Don't know what the membership is now; it was about 85 in the early 1980's. I had an idea, pursued it and it worked. PATH was able to increase to about 250 members for a while.

I made a list of all the Zip Codes in our membership area, usually just listing the first 3 digits. The members and interested hikers we hit were from about I-77 Statesville area to the Outer Banks and from Charlotte north to Martinsville, Va. We also included the Zip Codes for the PATH area of the trail extending out maybe 50 miles in each direction, plus any Zip Code areas we thought would have potential members.

We also made sure that all outfitters, backpacking stores, outdoor centers, etc., had extra newsletters. We also made sure that the TV stations, newspapers, radio stations and all media was included.

Then I contacted ATC, back then it was Brian King I worked with, and requested mailing labels for ATC members in all the Zip Code areas we were interested in. The ATC sent me about 600 labels at no charge, enough to justify a bulk postage permit. We sent out a great newsletter to all these potential members and got a great response. We increased our membership to about 250 over about a year.

I repeated this the following year and then every other year after that. We would send out the newsletter in March at a time when everyone was getting cabin fever and they were eager to come up on worktrips. On many trips we could easily have one volunteer for each of our trail miles.

Just a thought from a past experience.

Danny Booker, Reidsville, N.C.

Danny Booker was president of PATH in the years 1989 to 1992.

Want to Try Some Apple Biscuits?

By Paul Clayton

I'm sure these have been made before, but I've never seen a recipe. Grated apple replaces the milk as the liquid.

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 c self-rising flour
- 1 tsp sugar
- pinch salt
- cinnamon to taste
- nutmeg to taste
- 1 peeled and grated apple
- 1 tbs evaporated milk
- 1/4 tsp vinegar



Mix the flour, sugar, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg in a bowl, then rub in the butter. Grate the apple into another bowl and add the evaporated milk and a few drops of vinegar. The vinegar will acidify the liquid and help the baking powder to react. Add the apple mix to the flour mix, stir it up and turn out onto a floured board. Pull it into a mass and mix with your hands until it is dough. Add flour or evaporated milk if it is too wet or dry. Roll the dough out, fold and roll, fold and roll, just as for regular biscuits. Cut out the biscuits and bake in a fast oven for about 15 minutes, until they are golden and done.

The finished biscuits don't have much of a distinctive apple flavor and would easily serve in place of regular biscuits. It's a good recipe to have in case you are out of buttermilk.

Milestones



■ Longtime PATH member and worker **Karen Worthington** and her partner **Wayne** moved to Washington State in early May as part of his job relocation. However, she said in an email to PATH members in March that the move “is not goodbye.” She added, “I’ll of course look at returning to PATH on an annual basis for an extended workweek/ weekend because all of you and the club mean to me. The Eastern woodlands are special with so much beauty. But most importantly it’s the good folks of PATH.” (Photo of Karen’s cake by Chris Bracknell)

■ We lost a very frequent trail visitor when **Herb MacDonald** had to have his labrador mix **Angel** euthanized on March 12. She had been sick for months, even with vet care, couldn't walk far without dragging her hind legs and had lost control of her bowels, Herb said. In her prime, however, she was a great dog and a good friend, loving and smart. Angel probably made

more Summerfests than a good number of human PATHers.

Bits and Pieces

■ The picnic shelter at the **Settlers’ Museum**, off U.S. 11, has been used by a lot of hikers and maintainers, and we are considering a donation to the museum for restoration help. This is part of a letter from **David Slough**, treasurer of the Settlers Museum, to **Martha Emrey**. “This year we plan to open on May 1 and close on Oct. 31. We hope that visitorship will rebound, but the situation is still uncertain. I doubt that we will have many, if any, school tours or large group tours. We do have a civil war reenactment booked for the fall and that will bring in some much-needed revenue. At this time, our main focus is on maintenance and improvement of the buildings and grounds. Our major funding needs are as follows: new roof on the picnic shelter (est. \$3,000), climate control system for the farmhouse to protect the furniture and artifacts (est. \$2,500), new fencing for some of the fields around the farmhouse (est. \$2,000).”

■ The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests are proposing **Aerial Treatments to slow the spread of the Gypsy Moth** on 20,896 acres of federal and private lands in Smyth and Wythe Counties, Virginia. Spraying is proposed in early summer. The areas to be treated are named the Nebo, Cedar Springs, Whitetop 1, Whitetop 2 and Whitetop 3 Blocks; they are located five miles northeast, seven miles east and seven miles southwest from Marion, Va., respectively. Approximately 17.7 miles of national forest trails are within the proposed treatment area, including 8.3 miles of the Appalachian Trail and 1.2 miles of the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail. The environmental impacts of this project will be analyzed beforehand.

■ **AT Vista** is a two-day virtual program honoring the the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "*An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning.*"

The organizers are seeking to have hikes conducted in all 14 AT states on Saturday, August 7 and Sunday, August 8, 2021. "We need your club or organization to identify hikes that you would like to conduct," they said in an email. "Our goal is to have at least 100 hikes for participants to join during the two-day period. We are also seeking someone from each state to lead the coordination of getting groups to organize hikes in their state." Email atvistainfo@gmail.com as soon as possible. They want to start promoting hikes in June. AT Vista also plans a



real (i.e., not virtual) program in 2022.

■ **James Jordan**, the Massachusetts man who [killed an Appalachian Trail thru-hiker](#) and seriously wounded another in a May 2019 attack, has been ruled not guilty by reason of insanity. **Judge James Jones** accepted Jordan's plea in Abingdon, Va., following a hearing April 29. He will remain in federal custody indefinitely to receive psychiatric treatment. According to court documents, Jones ordered that Jordan should remain in federal custody "until he has recovered from his mental disease or defect to the extent that his release, or his conditional release, would no longer create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another or serious damage to property." (Thanks to **Greg Weaver** for catching this news. The tragic attack happened on our section just north of Interstate 81. See the link for more information.)

■ The **Mountain Valley gas pipeline**, which is planned to cross the AT on Peters Mountain in Giles County, is still prompting a lot of argument. On March 24, 2021, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission modified a December 17, 2020 order while reaching the same overall result, allowing construction to recommence for a portion of the Mountain Valley Pipeline near Jefferson National Forest. MVP still plans to bore underneath the trail at the summit of Peters Mountain, but that work has not yet started. Some federal authorizations that were vacated on appeal are still pending, and people with the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club say completion of the pipeline is still not certain. Chairman **Richard Glick** and Commissioner **Allison Clements** dissented from the FERC ruling, arguing that FERC cannot authorize Mountain Valley to resume construction while federal authorizations remain outstanding.

■ Following a highly successful work weekend in April on the trail north of Va. 42 and Knot Maul Shelter, we made a tentative decision to replace the failing **Lynn Camp Creek** bridge (see the Spring newsletter) with a ford. There is an old woods road near the bridge location that can easily be adapted into a ford, given enough stepping stones. Stay tuned for more information; there would be a lot less ATC paperwork. The weekend potluck was also a good-bye party for **Karen Worthington**. (See above.)



Jim Houck Photo

Any of you who remember the difficult trail above Dry Run will be overjoyed to see these steps put in by some Konnarock workers this spring. But don't feel upstaged: There's still work to be done on the trail above, as is evident from those roots in the upper left corner. The Forest Service and ATC also joined a PATH member or two May 5 in planting some trees in the riparian zone along Dry Run. Hopefully, that will keep the creek from eroding toward the trail, as it has been doing in recent years. That's Marian Jordan enjoying the steps.

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Want to Join?

We are working on the Trail in 2021, despite coronavirus. If you'd like to join us, here's how: You may join PATH (or renew) at our Web site, www.path-at.org, with PayPal, or print and mail this form with check or money order. You can also attend work weekends/meetings and join or renew there. Please don't mail cash!

Name (s) _____

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Annual membership dues are \$20 for an individual _____, \$25 for a family _____ or \$15 for a student _____. Donations are also

accepted. Donation total _____

Send payment to PATH Treasurer, P.O. Box 4423, Greensboro, North Carolina 27404. Total amount enclosed _____

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