
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2007

Revised: 1/2026



Appalachian Trail - North District
Shenandoah National Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Appalachian Trail - North District
Resource Classification:	Component Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	975386
Parent Landscape:	300129
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	Shenandoah National Park
Alpha Code:	SHEN
Park Organization Code:	4840
Park District:	SHEN
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

The Appalachian Trail–North District in Shenandoah National Park (NP) is one of three component landscapes, together with the Central District and South District, that comprise the 103-mile long Appalachian Trail (AT) landscape within the 196,000-acre Shenandoah NP. The portion of the AT in Shenandoah NP is part of the 2,175-mile trail that follows the Appalachian Mountains from Georgia to Maine as conceived in 1921 and developed and opened as a continuous trail in 1937. The North District includes twenty-four miles of trail from Possums Rest Overlook, accessed from Skyline Drive at Milepost (MP) 10.4 at the north end of the park near Front Royal, to Thornton Gap at MP 31.3 at Route 211. From the southern end of the North District, the AT continues for another seventy-seven miles south through the Central and South Districts to MP 105.4 on Skyline Drive.

The study boundaries of the CLI for the Appalachian Trail (AT)–North District include a twenty-foot wide corridor, ten-feet to either side of the trail's centerline. This distance was selected because it generally encompasses the constructed features associated with the trail such as retaining walls and signs. Features beyond this corridor were inventoried if they were associated with the construction of the AT, were easily viewed from the trail, or if they were part of the hiking experience (i.e. shelter or view). The trail corridor intersects Skyline Drive, numerous named side trails, and unnamed spur trails that lead to Skyline Drive overlooks, parking areas, rock outcrops, and views. Other trail junctions provide access to historic and non-historic cabins for day or overnight use.

History Overview – North District:

This area of the Blue Ridge Mountains was known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries, with the first human presence beginning about 6,000-7,000 years ago, sometime after the last Ice Age. The first recorded European exploration of the area took place in 1669. After the arrival of European settlers, the local Native Americans were dying of introduced disease, and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or had moved away (Resource Management Plan, 1998:23). As the better farmlands were taken, the new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they hunted, farmed, grazed livestock, and cleared the land of timber. Farming continued, including raising livestock, growing corn, and planting orchards but slowed during the droughts of 1929-1930. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah NP in Virginia's Blue Ridge area to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the population centers of the East Coast.

In 1921, the idea of the AT was born when Benton MacKaye published “An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning.” It was a synthesis of ideas of the recreational movement and growing interest in regional planning and ignited a volunteer effort to build the AT from Georgia to Maine. MacKaye organized and convened the Appalachian Trail Conference in 1925, which later became the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. In 1927, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) was organized by Myron H. Avery, and in 1928 construction of the AT in Shenandoah began (Lambert, 1979:159). By 1930, the last portion of the AT in Shenandoah NP was completed and its alignment generally followed the ridgeline in a north-south direction.

In 1931, the construction of Skyline Drive along the ridgeline in Shenandoah NP began, and between 1931 and 1938 the PATC worked to rebuild portions of the AT that were supplanted by the drive. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) arrived in Shenandoah to work on the drive, the AT relocations, and other projects. The CCC improved old roads for the trail and constructed new trail using the National Park Service (NPS) Rustic style design guidelines, often employing stone retaining walls and trail edging to support the trail bed. The CCC also built stone and log cabins and shelters, and developed compatible yet more modern zinc-banded concrete trail markers. With the entry of the United States into World War II, the CCC was disbanded and park visitation slowed, although hiking continued. After the war, recreational interests increased nationwide and visits to the park rose along with hiking of the trail.

In 1956, NPS Director Conrad Wirth launched the “Mission 66” program, which anticipated high use of the parks, and planned improvements and expansion of facilities accordingly. In Shenandoah NP, a new highway overpass was constructed at Route 211 in 1960-61 and this area of the AT was relocated west. Visitation to Shenandoah NP and hiking the AT continued to increase in the 1970s, but the trail was showing signs of wear after so many years of heavy use. It had become more enclosed with vegetation, and erosion had changed the pitch on the trail bed requiring interventions such as log water bars.

Visitation was also on the rise on the entire AT. Recognizing the ever-increasing outdoor recreational needs of an expanding population and the promotion and preservation of outdoor areas and historic resources, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Trails System Act in 1968 designating the entire AT as the first National Scenic Trail on the East Coast. At this time, the PATC became a partner of the NPS. Developmental pressures also began to emerge along the trail. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the Appalachian Trail legislative amendments (Foster, 1987:149). These laws provided new tools and funding for land acquisition and additional lands were acquired along the trail corridor. That same year, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail was designated as a unit of the National Park system.

In 1981, the NPS Appalachian Trail Comprehensive Plan was developed and outlined how the AT was to be managed and maintained in light of its growing use and various outside pressures. In 1983, the Appalachian Trail Conference and PATC entered into a cooperative agreement with the NPS for the management of the AT in Shenandoah NP. The gypsy moth epidemic of the 1980s and the start of the hemlock wooly adelgid infestation of the 1990s changed the character of some portions of the trail as trees succumbed to the diseases, leaving behind open areas and changing the scenic views.

Significance Summary for the Appalachian Trail—North, Central, and South Districts:

The AT in Shenandoah NP is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, community planning and development, politics/government, and entertainment/recreation. Under Criterion A, it is significant for its association with the early regional planning effort to establish a linked pedestrian greenway corridor on the East Coast. It also derives significance for its role in the history of park development to develop national parks for public enjoyment and to preserve natural features and scenic areas, by creating a pedestrian spine which parallels, both conceptually and geographically, the vehicular spine of Skyline Drive. Under Criterion C, the AT is significant as an example of trail design and methods of construction established by the NPS and implemented by the CCC. Now known as the NPS Rustic style, its principles and practices endeavored to harmonize development with the natural environment and enable the visitor to experience scenic features and views.

The period of significance for the AT in Shenandoah NP is from 1928 to 1942. In 1928, the PATC, made up of volunteer members, began construction of the trail in Shenandoah NP, which had been authorized as a national park in 1926 but would not be fully established until 1935. The period extends until 1942, encompassing the completion of the AT by the PATC in 1930; the relocation and reconstruction of portions of the trail caused by the building of the Skyline Drive, done by the CCC using NPS trail design and construction methods from 1933 to 1938; and the completion of the trail refinements by the CCC as the program came to a close, they disbanded, and the United States

entered World War II. Today, the AT in Shenandoah NP retains sufficient integrity to convey its fourteen-year period of significance.

Integrity Summary – North District:

The AT–North District in Shenandoah NP retains the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The AT still travels a north-south alignment over the ridgeline although there have been some realignments since the historic period. The trail continues to display the harmonization of NPS Rustic style design elements with the natural character, and overall there are few modern intrusions along the trail corridor. Materials have been maintained, are evident in the constructed features, and are generally in good condition. Although the trail is more wooded today than it was historically and views are more limited, the feeling and setting of a wilderness trail are still intact, as originally envisioned by Benton MacKaye. Lastly, there remains a strong association of the PATC, CCC, and the NPS with the AT.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

The trail sections corresponding to the North District, Central District, and South District of Shenandoah NP are component landscapes of the 103-mile Appalachian Trail landscape in Shenandoah NP. The park also includes the following landscapes and component landscapes:

- Rapidan Camp landscape
- Headquarters landscape
- Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace landscape
- Skyline Drive landscape with component landscapes: Big Meadows, Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Lewis Mountain, Piney River, Pinnacles, Skyland, Simmons Gap, South River Picnic Grounds

Landscape Type:

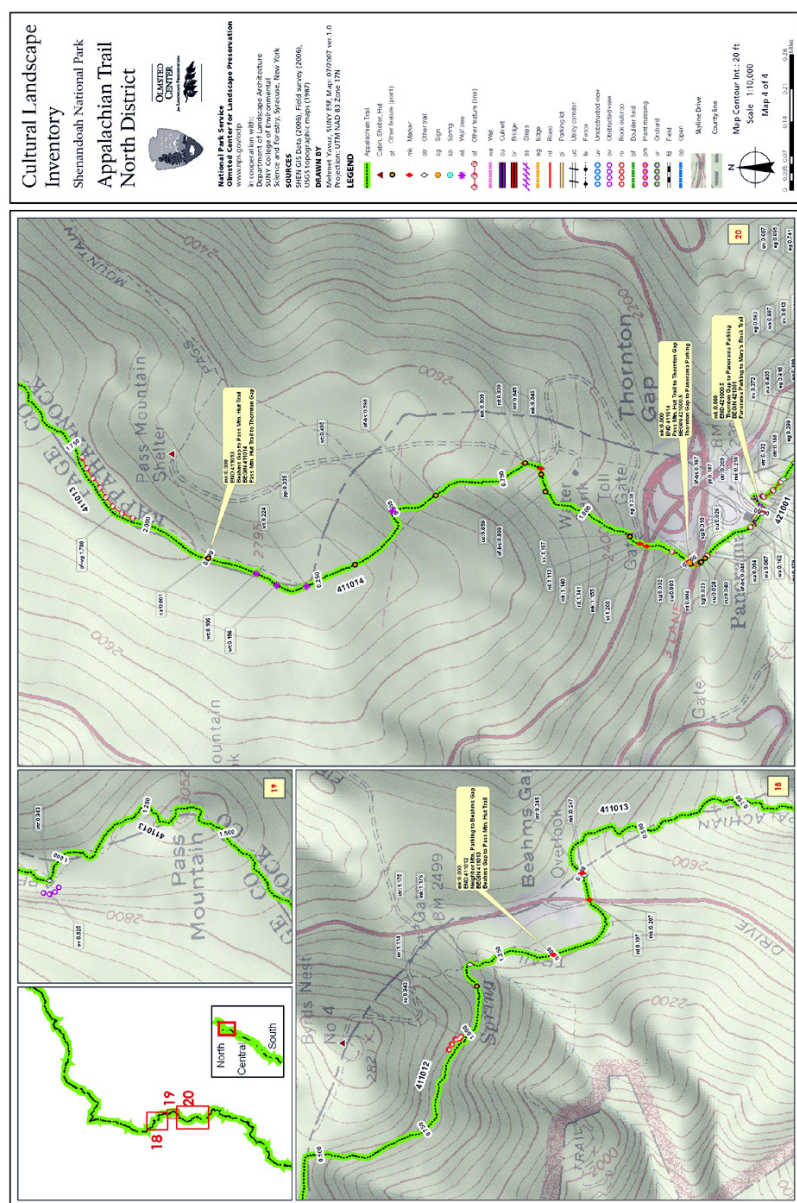
Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name:	Appalachian Trail	Other Name Type:	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	App. National Scenic Trail	Other Name Type:	Current

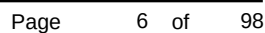
Site Plan

Appalachian Trail - North District
Shenandoah National Park



Maps 1- 4 – Appalachian Trail—North District in Shenandoah National Park, VA, also at end of document.

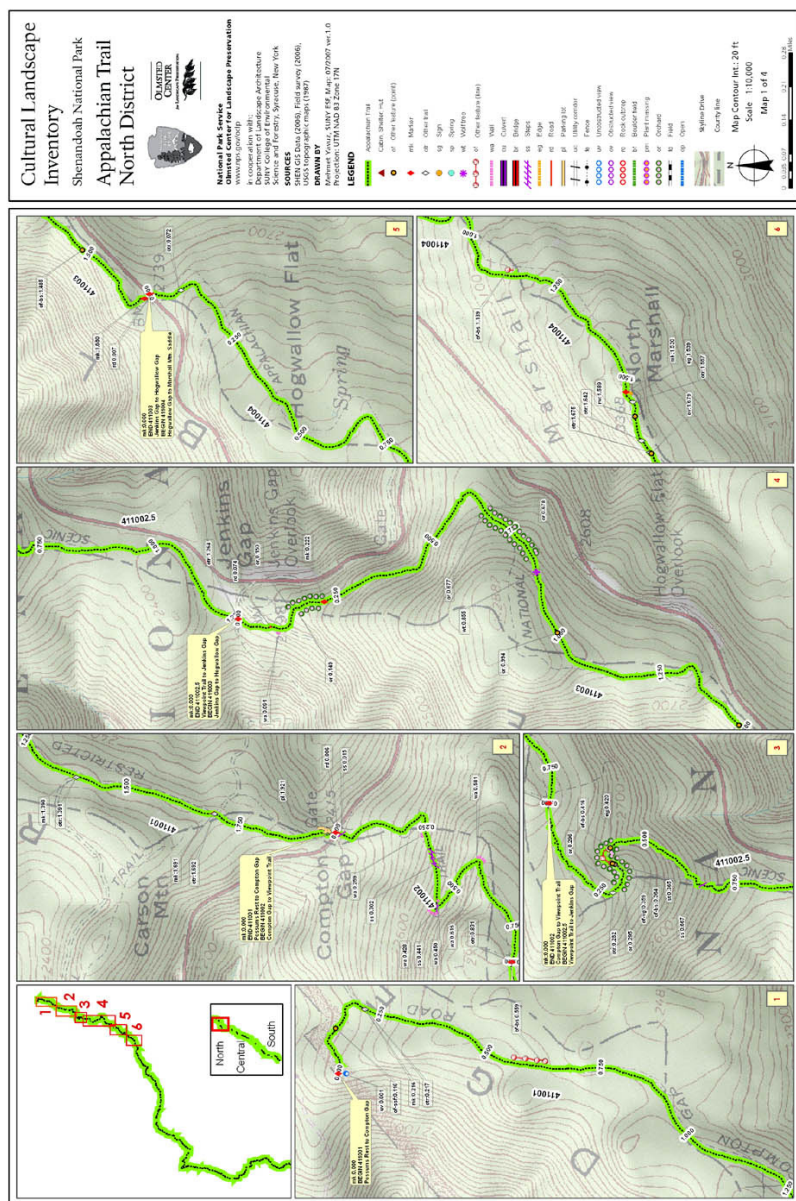
Cultural Landscapes Inventory



Cultural Landscapes Inventory



Cultural Landscapes Inventory



Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	08/27/2007

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
United States Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

AUG 21 2007

H30 (NER-RS&S OCLP)

Dr. Ethel Eaton
Office of Review and Compliance
Department of Historic Resources
Commonwealth of Virginia
2801 Kensington Ave.
Richmond, VA 23221

Dear Dr. Eaton:

Enclosed you will find three Cultural Landscapes Inventories (CLIs) documenting the entire length of the Appalachian Trail (AT) landscape – North District, Central District, and South District –located within Shenandoah National Park (NP). Portions of the AT, namely the trail crossings at Skyline Drive, are listed as part of the Skyline Drive Historic District. We seek your concurrence that the entire AT is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The CLIs have been prepared by a team of historical landscape architects with the State University of New York – College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and the National Park Service (NPS) Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but

SHPO concurrence letter, September 19, 2007 (4 pages). List of North District features is available on the CLI database.

document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For example, the NPS List of Classified Structures inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Portions of the AT within the North, Central, and South Districts of Shenandoah NP are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Skyline Drive Historic District. Included in the original National Register listing are seventeen of the twenty-nine existing crossings where the AT and Skyline Drive intersect, counted as one contributing site, which span the 125-foot-wide district right-of-way to either side of the drive (250-foot-wide overall). Additional segments of the AT were included in subsequent boundary increases of the Skyline Drive Historic District made in 1997 and 2003 that incorporated park facilities adjoining the Skyline Drive corridor. In these areas, the AT passes through approximately 300-feet of the Simmons Gap ranger station and park maintenance facilities cluster, through approximately one mile at the Skyland resort, and provides the eastern boundary of the Loft Mountain campground and picnic area. Within these boundary expansions, the AT is not listed as a contributing resource. At Skyland, however, the AT follows approximately 2,500 feet of the Stony Man Nature Trail, which is listed as a contributing resource.

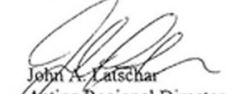
The Statement of Significance for the original Skyline Drive Historic District listing describes the significance of the AT in the area of regional planning. However, the AT is minimally addressed and treated primarily as a precursor to the development of Skyline Drive. As noted above, not all AT crossings with Skyline Drive are identified in National Register documentation. These crossings represent only a very small fraction of the many contributing resources that have now been identified in this CLI.

The AT in Shenandoah NP is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, community planning and development, politics/government, and entertainment/recreation. Under Criterion A, it is significant for its association with the early regional planning effort to establish a linked pedestrian greenway corridor on the East Coast. It also derives significance for its role in the history of park development by creating a pedestrian spine which parallels, both conceptually and geographically, the vehicular spine of the Skyline Drive. Under Criterion C, the AT is significant as an example of trail design and methods of construction established by the NPS and implemented by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Now known as the NPS Rustic style, its principles and practices endeavored to harmonize development with the natural environment and enable the visitor to experience scenic features and views.

The period of significance for the AT in Shenandoah NP is from 1928 to 1942. In 1928, the volunteer PATC began construction of the trail in Shenandoah NP, which had been authorized as a national park in 1926, but would not yet be fully established until 1935. The period extends

Thank you for your attention to these reports. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Killion at 617-223-5053.

Sincerely,


John A. Latschar
Acting Regional Director
Northeast Region

cc:
Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park

I concur that the Appalachian Trail is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and with the categorization of the Appalachian Trail landscape features at Shenandoah National Park, as contributing, non-contributing, and undetermined.


Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

9-19-07
Date

until 1942, which encompasses the completion of the AT by the PATC in 1930, the relocation and reconstruction of portions of the trail by the CCC using NPS trail design and construction methods necessitated by the building of the Skyline Drive from 1933 to 1938, and the ending of the trail refinements by the CCC as the program came to a close, they disbanded, and the United States entered World War II.

The CLI fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly the associated landscape characteristics and features, and finds that the three Appalachian Trail landscapes – North District, Central District, and South District – retain overall integrity in the areas community planning and development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, landscape architecture, politics/government, and social history. The landscape characteristics and features that date to the periods of significance should be preserved since they contribute to the historic character of the property.

On the enclosed lists there is one type of feature – the AT crossings at Skyline Drive – that has been previously evaluated in the National Register. In the documentation, fifteen crossings are discussed in the narrative, but seventeen crossings are identified in a list by UTM coordinates. The CLI has documented a total of twenty-nine crossings. It is unclear as to which National Register-listed crossings correspond to crossings identified in the CLI. Because the National Register collectively counts the crossings as one contributing site, all twenty-nine crossings are therefore listed in this report as “previously evaluated” as they are clearly the same type of feature.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description, National Register Information, Statement of Significance, and Analysis and Evaluation Summary in the enclosed CLI.

Based on the CLI, we seek your concurrence on the following:

- The Appalachian Trail landscapes are significant under Criteria A and C.
- The areas of significance are community planning and development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, landscape architecture, politics/government, and social history.
- The period of significance for the three Appalachian Trail landscapes is 1928-1942.
- The cultural landscape retains integrity to the period of significance.
- The property retains landscape characteristics and associated features that contribute to the sites' historic character (see attached lists).

If you concur with the items above and our categorization of the Appalachian Trail landscape features associated with the trail at Shenandoah NP, as contributing, non-contributing, and undetermined, and as enumerated on the enclosed lists for each trail district, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator (Address: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 15 State Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02109) **within thirty days.**

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
Condition Reassessment
2013**

Shenandoah National Park
Appalachian Trail Landscape
Appalachian Trail-North District
Appalachian Trail-Central District
Appalachian Trail-South District
Skyland

Shenandoah National Park concurs with the condition reassessments for the Appalachian Trail Landscape, Appalachian Trail-North District, Appalachian Trail-Central District, Appalachian Trail-South District, and Skyland, including:

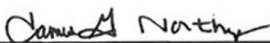
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good – Appalachian Trail Landscape
 Good – Appalachian Trail – North District
 Good – Appalachian Trail – Central District
 Good – Appalachian Trail – South District
 Good – Skyland

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristics will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The condition reassessments for the Appalachian Trail Landscape, Appalachian Trail-North District, Appalachian Trail-Central District, Appalachian Trail-South District, and Skyland at Shenandoah National Park are hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park



Date

Condition reassessment form, August 1, 2013.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Appalachian Trail-North District
Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Appalachian Trail – North District including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Appalachian Trail-North District is hereby approved and accepted.

Chas Cartwright 8-27-2007
Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park Date

Concurrence form from Shenandoah National Park, August 27, 2007.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Appalachian Trail-North District
Shenandoah National Park

The Appalachian Trail Park Office concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Appalachian Trail - North District, Shenandoah National Park, including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

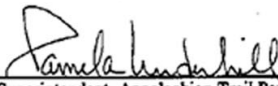
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Appalachian Trail-North District is hereby approved and accepted.


Superintendent, Appalachian Trail Park Office

8/28/07
Date

Concurrence form from Appalachian Trail Park Office, August 28, 2007.

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Updates Certification Form
2026**

Shenandoah National Park
Appalachian Trail Landscape
Appalachian Trail – North District
Appalachian Trail – Central District
Appalachian Trail – South District

Shenandoah National Park certifies the CLI updates for the Appalachian Trail Landscape, Appalachian Trail-North District, Appalachian Trail-Central District, and Appalachian Trail-South District, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good – Appalachian Trail Landscape
 Good – Appalachian Trail–North District
 Good – Appalachian Trail–Central District
 Good – Appalachian Trail–South District

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI updates for the sites listed above at Shenandoah National Park are hereby approved and accepted.

JAMES STAKELY  Digitally signed by JAMES STAKELY
Date: 2026.01.22 11:15:57 -05'00'

Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park

Date

Park concurrence form, January 22, 2026.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	Change in Condition	08/01/2013	Condition reassessment completed as scheduled.
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	01/22/2026	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2026 update to the Appalachian Trail-North District CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Virginia	Page County
Virginia	Rappahannock County
Virginia	Warren County

Size (Acres): 58

Land Tract Number(s)

Boundary Description:

The inventory boundary of the Appalachian Trail–North District in Shenandoah National Park (NP) is defined by a twenty-foot wide corridor, ten-feet to either side of the trail's centerline. This arbitrary distance was selected because it generally encompasses a majority of the constructed features associated with the Appalachian Trail (AT) such as retaining walls and signs. The boundary occasionally expands outward from the twenty-foot wide corridor to include features that were associated with the construction of the AT, were easily viewed from the trail, or were part of the hiking experience, such as a shelter or view.

The North District includes twenty-four miles of trail from Possums Rest Overlook accessed from Skyline Drive at Milepost (MP) 10.4 at the north end of the park near Front Royal, to Thornton Gap at MP 31.3 at Route 211.

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
USGS Map 1:24,000	Line	-78.087182597804	40.6459021233948	
USGS Map 1:24,000	Line	-78.3233037221845	38.6602392391202	

Location Map:

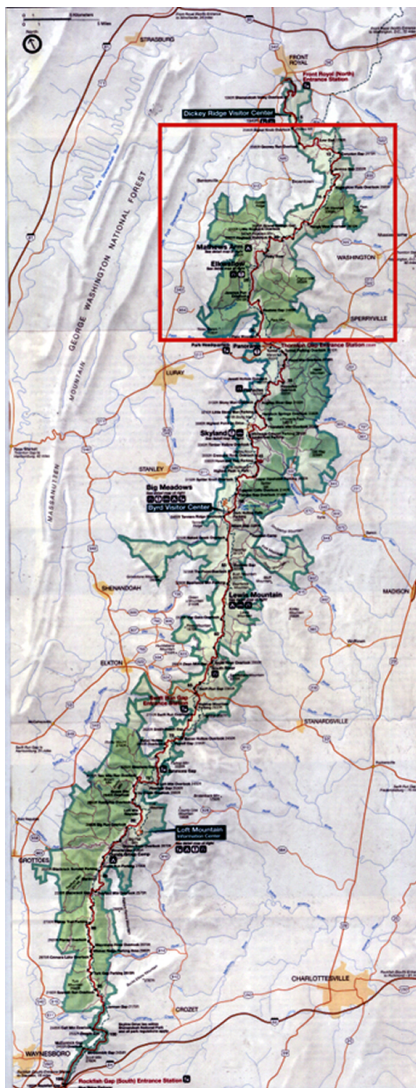


Figure 1: North District, Shenandoah National Park (NP) with Appalachian Trail (AT) (dashed green line) and Skyline Drive (red line). (Shenandoah NP, 2006 and State University of New York [SUNY], 2006)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The Appalachian Trail–North District in Shenandoah NP is located along the ridgeline of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. The highest elevation on the AT–North District is at the second peak of Hogback Mountain at 3,475 feet and the lowest elevation is at the junction of Jeremy’s Run Trail at 2,100 feet. The trail still follows much the same route as it did when first constructed between 1928 and 1938. It climbs peaks such as Compton, the Marshalls, the Hogbacks, and Pass Mountain among others and descends into the gaps of Compton, Jenkins, Gravel Springs, Elk Wallow, Beahms, and Thornton. Stone retaining walls constructed by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the National Park Service (NPS) allow portions of the AT to negotiate steep slopes.

Beginning in 1931, the construction of Skyline Drive, also along the ridgeline, necessitated relocating portions of the AT, and much of this work was undertaken by the CCC. The AT connects with Skyline Drive at eleven points in the North District. The AT also intersects with networks of side trails built by the PATC and CCC that are still used by hikers to reach other high peaks and to follow descents into hollows along streams and waterfalls.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The Appalachian Trail–North District is located in Page, Rappahannock, and Warren counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Shenandoah NP is managed by the NPS and the AT–North District is cooperatively managed and maintained by the NPS and PATC.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

The Appalachian Trail–North District is part of Shenandoah NP, where recreation is the primary cultural use. Part of the park includes many thousands of acres of federally-designated wilderness. In the surrounding region, tourism is a significant industry. Agriculture, particularly poultry production, is the main industry to the west, with convenient north-south access via Interstate 81 and Route 340. Suburban development in the Washington D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area dominates the east, with east-west access via Interstate 66 and Routes 7, 50, and 211. The northern end of the AT–North District can be accessed from Route 522, east of Front Royal. The southern end of the AT–North District can be accessed from Thornton Gap and the junction of Skyline Drive and Route 211, between Luray and Sperryville.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 08/27/2007

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Appalachian Trail (AT) in Shenandoah National Park (NP) is nationally significant under Criterion A in the areas of regional planning and recreation, and under Criterion C for its design and construction and its association with National Park Service (NPS) Rustic style. According to the management category definitions, the AT–North District meets several criteria listed for “Must Be Preserved and Maintained”: the inventory unit is related to the park’s legislated significance and the inventory unit serves as the setting for a nationally significant structure or object.

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: Memorandum of Understanding

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Appalachian Trail Park Office (ATPO-NPS), Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), and Shenandoah National Park "4-way" (#MU-2490-99-008).

Type of Agreement: Other

Management Agreement Expiration Date: 02/01/2012

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

"General Agreement Between Shenandoah National Park and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club for Maintaining Certain Trails, Huts, and Maintenance Buildings" (#G4840070001).

Type of Agreement: Other

Management Agreement Expiration Date: 08/01/2012

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

"General Agreement Between Shenandoah National Park and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club for Trail Patrol and Ridgerunner Programs" (#G4840070002).

Type of Agreement: Cooperative Agreement

Management Agreement Expiration Date: 03/01/2011

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

"Cooperative Agreement Between Shenandoah National Park and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club: Interpretive Demonstration Way Station, Primitive Cabins at Shenandoah NP" (#4840060004).

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands contribute to the significance of the AT in Shenandoah NP as they are a key part of the viewsheds from the trail. Along the AT–North District, vegetation limits many views. There are broad views from North Marshall Mountain and a view to the west and to the valley below from the trail just below Little Hogback Overlook. Currently, there is a non-contributing southwestern view into the park from the AT’s northern entry at Possums Rest. Over time, hikers have created short spur trails that lead to openings in the canopy or to rock outcrops.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Undocumented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Portions of the Appalachian Trail (AT) within the North, Central, and South Districts of Shenandoah National Park (NP) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Skyline Drive Historic District. Included in the original National Register listing are seventeen of the twenty-nine crossings where the AT and Skyline Drive intersect, counted as one contributing site, which span the 125-foot-wide district right-of-way to either side of the drive (250-feet-wide overall). Additional segments of the AT were included in subsequent boundary increases of the Skyline Drive Historic District made in 1997 and 2003 that incorporated park facilities adjoining the Skyline Drive corridor. In these areas, the AT passes through approximately 300-feet of the Simmons Gap ranger station and park maintenance facilities cluster, through approximately one mile at the Skyland resort, and provides the eastern boundary of the Loft Mountain campground and picnic area. Within these boundary expansions, the AT is not listed as a contributing resource. At Skyland, however, the AT follows approximately 2,500 feet of the Stony Man Nature Trail, which is listed as a contributing resource.

The Statement of Significance for the original Skyline Drive Historic District listing describes the significance of the AT in the area of regional planning. However, the AT is minimally addressed and treated primarily as a precursor to the development of Skyline Drive. As noted above, only a portion of the AT crossings with Skyline Drive are identified in National Register documentation. Since these crossings represent only a very small fraction of the many contributing resources that have now been identified, this cultural landscape inventory has recorded the current National Register documentation as “undocumented.”

Eligibility: Eligible - SHPO/THPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 09/19/2007

Concurrence Narrative:

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Office of Review and Compliance concurred that the Appalachian Trail is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and with the categorization of the Appalachian Trail landscape features at Shenandoah National Park, as contributing, non-contributing, and undetermined.

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Within all three districts of Shenandoah NP, the AT is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, community planning and development, politics/government, and

entertainment/recreation. It is significant under Criterion A for its association with the early regional planning effort to establish a connected pedestrian greenway and recreational corridor on the East Coast. The AT also derives significance under Criterion A for its association with the twentieth century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment, to conserve natural features and scenic areas as public parks, and develop natural areas, including sub-marginal lands for public recreational use. The planning and building of the AT was significant in the history of the park's development, creating a pedestrian spine that paralleled, both conceptually and geographically, the vehicular spine of the Skyline Drive. The AT is also significant under Criterion C as an example of trail design and method of construction intended to harmonize with the natural environment and enable the visitor to experience scenic features and views. The initial AT established by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) was built by club volunteers who used their own tools. They followed the trail line scouted and set by Myron H. Avery, the club's president, and cut away brush and tree limbs and marked the trail with painted blazes on trees to create a narrow footpath through the wilderness. In the portions of the AT that were relocated and reconstructed by the National Park Service (NPS), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) implemented authorized trail construction guidelines that were developed in the west coast national parks and adapted to the specifics of the east coast landscape. They included a four-foot-wide trail bed and followed principles and practices of NPS design, now characterized as NPS Rustic style.

The period of significance for the AT in Shenandoah NP is 1928-1942. It begins in 1928 with the PATC's initial development of the trail that extended through 1930, as is still evident in sections along the high ridges. The period continues when almost immediately upon initial completion, the PATC began relocating and reconstructing portions of the AT because of the construction of Skyline Drive. While it is not known for certain how much of the trail remains intact from the 1928-1930 period, the overall location of the trail and its connection to the larger AT remains from this time. In 1933, the PATC's work on the trail was assisted by the CCC who arrived to work on the AT, Skyline Drive, side trails, cabins, and shelters, and to plant vegetation. By 1938, the majority of the relocations and reconstructions of portions of the AT were finished. The period of significance extends to 1942 when the last of the CCC trail refinements, including side trails, cabins and shelters, and plantings, were completed and the CCC at Shenandoah NP was disbanded because of World War II. By this time, the AT within the park was well-established and connected north and south to the rest of the AT as a regional and recreational trail that stretched 2,175 miles from Georgia to Maine, which was hiked by thousands. Today, the AT in Shenandoah NP retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance during the fourteen-year period of significance.

Sections of the AT in Shenandoah NP, primarily its crossings along Skyline Drive, are listed in the National Register as a contributing resource in association with Skyline Drive, but the trail itself is not separately listed. The entire Appalachian Trail in Shenandoah NP is eligible for the National Register and may be considered a separate historic district, as part of the Skyline Drive Historic District, or as a district under the multiple listing, "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks (1993)." Other areas contemporary to the AT in Shenandoah NP have been listed in the National Register such as Skyland, Big Meadows, Park Headquarters, Piney River, Simmons Gap, and Lewis Mountain.

The 2,175-mile Appalachian Trail, in its entirety, has not been formally evaluated for its eligibility to be listed in the National Register. However, outside of Shenandoah NP, several other sections of the AT have been determined to be eligible or are listed in the National Register. The entire AT corridor in New Jersey, including sections in Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties, was determined eligible for the National Register in 1978. A section of the AT in Massachusetts was listed as part of the Mount Greylock National Historic District in 1998, which recognizes and preserves the work of the CCC. A section of the original trail in Vermont that crosses the Pico/Killington range was determined eligible for the National Register by the Vermont State Historic Preservation Officer. Similarly, the section of trail through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Pennsylvania was determined eligible for the National Register by the NPS.

National Register Criterion A:

The AT in Shenandoah NP is significant under Criterion A for its association with early regional planning to establish a connected greenway corridor on the East Coast. In October 1921, the Journal of the American Institute of Architects published Benton MacKaye's article "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning." MacKaye called for the creation of a continuous wilderness footpath along the Appalachian Range from Maine to Georgia to provide respite from encroaching civilization. MacKaye envisioned the

trail as the backbone of an entire wilderness system of wild reservations and parks, which linked together by side trails, would be a reservoir for maintaining the primeval and rural environment of the Appalachians.

In 1928, MacKaye, who had become a highly respected member of the American Regional Planning Association of America founded in 1923, published *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning*. The text expanded his theory of controlling the growth of metropolitan areas in the eastern United States and drew attention to the critical importance of preserving the Appalachians as an “indigenous” environment (Maddux, 1997).

MacKaye inspired the growing number of hiking and outdoor recreational enthusiasts throughout the eastern United States. They seized upon his idea of the connected trail and started to develop the trail through previously-established and new trail clubs. The trail’s supporters instantly recognized the scenic and recreational value of Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains, and thus the area became an early focus of trail planning. In March 1925, the first Appalachian Trail Conference was held in Washington, D.C., and a committee formed that represented the numerous geographical regions crossed by the proposed trail. William A. Welch, manager of the Palisades Interstate Park in New York and New Jersey and a member of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission, was appointed chairman of the committee. (Maddux, 1997:96)

In November of 1927, the PATC was organized in Washington, D.C. by Myron H. Avery, who was elected PATC president and held the position until 1940 when the former naval officer, an expert of maritime and admiralty law, was called again to war. It was during his tenure that work on the AT in Shenandoah NP began in 1928. Avery was also chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference from 1931 to 1952. The hard-driving Avery was devoted completely to the development of the AT in Shenandoah NP and rallied AT hikers and volunteer trail-builders to work on establishing the trail and its side trails starting in 1928. Using their own axes and pruning tools, the PATC began to clear the trail and build numerous side trails which provided access to other peaks and hollows. The alignment of the AT, generally along the ridgeline in a north-south direction, was completed in Shenandoah NP in 1930. The PATC’s early construction of the AT founded a tradition of volunteer management and maintenance of the entire AT that continues today.

In 1931, when construction of the Skyline Drive along the park’s ridgeline began, Avery chose to work with the NPS to align and improve portions of the trail where the trail and Drive conflicted. Others, such as George Pollock Jr., founder and manager of Skyland and a founder of the PATC, hosted meetings at the resort to participate in laying out the new road and revised portions of the trail and also to promote the interests of the resort. MacKaye, however, never could reconcile his vision of a “footpath through the wilderness” with the proximity of the Skyline Drive motorway and developed areas in Shenandoah NP, and he had a permanent falling out with Avery because of it (Schaeffer, 1999). MacKaye left the ATC and went on to found the Wilderness Society.

The AT in Shenandoah NP is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of Shenandoah NP, one of the first and largest national parks established in the eastern United States. By the 1920s, most of the national parks had been established in the West, but were largely inaccessible to the large population centers of the East. In annual reports of 1919 and 1923, NPS Director Stephen P. Mather pointed out the need for eastern national parks. A growing concern among private citizens, planners, politicians, and conservationists raised interest in developing a national park in the Southern Appalachians close to the nearby metropolitan areas. In February 1925, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to determine park boundaries in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Great Smoky Mountains, and Mammoth Cave region of Kentucky, and to accept offers of land donations to create such parks. By April 1926, the volunteer Shenandoah Appalachian National Park Committee had reported pledges of more than one million dollars to purchase lands for the proposed park (Engle, 2006:17). In May 1926, Congress and President Calvin Coolidge authorized the establishment of Shenandoah NP, although no funds were allocated for land purchases. Private citizens and the Commonwealth of Virginia were charged with acquiring the land (Maddux, 1997). In December 1935, Congress formally established the park when Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes accepted 176,430 acres from the state (Schaeffer, 1999). On July 3, 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated Shenandoah NP in a ceremony held in Big Meadows.

From its beginning as a collection of privately-owned and state lands within the proposed national park

boundaries, a key feature of Shenandoah NP was the AT, which formed the pedestrian spine of the park. The AT took advantage of the park's spectacular natural setting, following the crest line of the Blue Ridge and providing panoramic views of the Piedmont Plain to the east and the Shenandoah Valley to the west. Almost as soon as it was done, the trail and the PATC had to contend with the growth of the new park, and in particular with the development of what would become the park's vehicular spine, Skyline Drive. The first section of Skyline Drive was originally envisioned to connect President Herbert Hoover's Rapidan Camp to Skyland but later evolved to extend over 100-miles from Waynesboro to Front Royal. Like the AT, the route of Skyline Drive followed the ridgeline. The PATC had to negotiate to keep the trail where it was already established, but in the places where the trail and drive overlapped, the PATC was required to shift the AT away from the road (Schaeffer, 1999).

By 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs brought an unprecedented infusion of professionals and laborers to generate improvements in state and national parks. Federal programs provided economic relief in the form of employment for both skilled and unskilled laborers. The AT within Shenandoah NP was just one focus of the New Deal labor that improved the park's circulation systems, which gestured to the characteristics of nineteenth-century urban parks as developed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. The motorway, Skyline Drive, was developed along the ridgeline and served as the park's main "spine." The AT also traced the linear ridgeline in the park and was multi-use, forming the primary pedestrian and equestrian-way. A far-reaching network of side trails were blazed to link with the AT and Skyline Drive and became secondary pedestrian routes for hiking to waterfalls, springs, ridge-tops, and rock formations. Some of the pre-existing roads were upgraded into a system of "truck trails" and used for fire and service roads, also connected to the AT and Skyline Drive (McClelland, 1998:181). The development of roads and trails benefited from the teams of NPS landscape architects, architects, and engineers, as well as the craftsmanship of the CCC, all of which contributed to the construction of Skyline Drive and the relocation and reconstruction of considerable portions of the AT.

National Register Criterion C:

The AT in Shenandoah NP is significant under Criterion C for illustrating American park design and in particular for reflecting the NPS Rustic style (1916-1942) that had been developed and refined in national parks in the West and implemented by the CCC. The historical underpinnings of the NPS Rustic style have their origins in the American landscape design profession's principles and practices, which derived from the nineteenth-century ideas about landscape preservation and harmonization of built features. The origins of these tenets reach back to Andrew Jackson Downing's writings in the *Horticulturist* magazine and his seminal *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841), which were influential in establishing the concept of the pleasure ground and urban park. According to Downing, a visitor, while moving along a walk, path, or trail, experienced a carefully designed sequence. The pathway or trail was not merely a conduit, but integral to the created structure of the landscape. Scenic views, topographic changes, and natural features such as vegetation, streams, and rock outcroppings were revealed, modified, or enhanced to inspire an awe and reverence for nature and a rejuvenation of the visitor's spirit. This philosophy carried through to the design details for using native construction materials, naturalistic plantings, and incorporating vernacular forms of construction derived from traditions of pioneer settlers. On an immense scale, the national parks were very large pleasure grounds created for the American public to experience wilderness and restore their connection to nature. Downing's concept was codified in the March 1, 1872, law that established Yellowstone NP, the nation's first "public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" (McClelland, 1998:34).

One of Downing's most avid twentieth century followers, Frank A. Waugh, landscape architect with the U.S. Forest Service and author of *The Natural Style in Landscape Gardening* (1917), also was important to the NPS's design of parks, particularly with the use of native vegetation, and road and trail development (McClelland, 1998:184). Waugh appreciated Downing's verve for native plants and encouraged the American public to celebrate indigenous plants, not only for the beauty of their flowers and foliage, but also for their character-enhancing abilities when applied to a rustic style landscape. Waugh used Downing's plant theory as a base for his own and expanded it to the larger context. Waugh saw trails (and roads) as providing the framework for the entire design of the recreational area within national parks. By 1915, trail-building methods had been established in western national parks such as Yosemite. However, with site conditions varying greatly between different national parks, additional techniques were developed in order to implement the latest design ideas across the country. In the next fifteen years, improvements were made and in 1934 the NPS published the first standards in trail construction, which were employed in

constructing the AT in Shenandoah NP. NPS landscape architects located trails, revealed scenic features and views, and preserved significant vegetation, rockwork, and other natural features (McClelland, 1998:242). They were concerned with camouflaging the trail's structure and erasing signs of construction for an overall harmonious effect. Engineers worked to maintain a grade not exceeding eight percent and used switchbacks only when necessary. Their standard was a refined four-foot-wide trail bed built on a gravel base, with tree stumps, rocks, and roots removed (USDI, 1937).

PATC and NPS trail construction exhibited distinct techniques. In the late 1920s, the PATC worked to cut and mark the trail, and created a footpath by clearing brush and branches to allow for easy passage (PATC, 1929:1-2). The two-foot-wide tread way was not graded or surfaced. The NPS development of the AT within Shenandoah through the 1930s reflects the NPS principles and practices of park landscape design implemented in state and national parks through federal work-relief programs of the 1930s, primarily the CCC. Designed through the NPS Branch of Plans and Design, the development of the trail according to the NPS Rustic style offered the hiker and recreational enthusiast an experience of nature that was both romantic and wild. The CCC protected and preserved the natural scenery and features by routing the AT around large rock outcrops and ancient trees, and by prohibiting use of exotic plants. Along the trail, the CCC revealed scenic vistas at key intervals and developed overlooks. They avoided right angles and straight lines in the trail and created a sinuous line that provided a sense of mystery and surprise. The CCC used native plant materials, such as oak, mountain laurel, witch hazel, and Virginia creeper. The CCC also transplanted existing and planted new native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers to erase the scars of construction and earlier land uses such as grazing and farming. Buildings and structures, such as retaining walls and trailside shelters and huts, were constructed of local materials such as chestnut and stone, and were designed in a romantic evocation of pioneering building techniques through the use of dry-laid masonry and log construction. At the same time, trail markers were created in a modern, stylized design using concrete and stamped metal that was readily recognizable within the natural setting (McClelland, 1998:242).

The NPS Rustic style is still evident in the AT's landscape features, including twelve cabins and shelters that date from the historic period. Skilled stonework can be seen in the more than 15,000 linear feet of retaining walls that still support the trail and integrate it into the rocky landscape. So too is the graceful alignment of the trail that sweeps around the shoulders of mountains and highlights such natural features as looming rock outcrops or the sound of nearby splashing stream.

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criterion A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criterion C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1928 - CE 1942

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	General Recreation	
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	Regional Planning	
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works	
Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs 1865-1939	The Great Depression And The New Deal, 1929-1941	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	Origin And Development Of The National Park Service	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	Range And Forest Protection	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	Scenic Preservation	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	The Conservation Movement Matures 1908-1941	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	The Great Depression And Conservation	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	Wilderness System	
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	The Federal Government Enters The Movement	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Community Planning and Development

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment - Recreation

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Social History

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	97000375
Primary Certification Date:	04/28/1997
NRIS ID:	97001112
Primary Certification Date:	09/19/1997
NRIS ID:	03001251
Primary Certification Date:	12/05/2003

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	DHE 069-00234-0019
Name:	Skyline Drive Historic District
Listed Date:	07/03/1997

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE 7000 - 1600	Settled	First human presence in the Blue Ridge Mountains as seasonal encampments.
CE 1000	Farmed/Harvested	Farming develops in the valleys.
CE 1669	Explored	Dr. John Lederer, first European to record exploration in this area of the Blue Ridge Mountains, describes a forest full of game and a large open area believed to be Big Meadows.
CE 1700 - 1799	Settled	Immigrants from Tidewater area come to Piedmont region and from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah Valley, leading to disappearance or departure of Native Americans from area.
CE 1750 - 1830	Settled	Settlers move from lower elevations into the Blue Ridge Mountain hollows, where they pursue farming, grazing, timbering, and hunting game.
CE 1830 - 1888	Built	Recreational use of the Blue Ridge Mountains begins around 1830 with the opening of Black Rock Springs Hotel, south of current Route 33. The first recreational summer outing at Skyland is led by George F. Pollock, Jr. in 1888.
CE 1921	Established	Benton MacKaye publishes "An Appalachian Trail: A Project of Regional Planning," establishing the vision for the Appalachian Trail.
CE 1925	Established	Benton MacKaye establishes Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC).
CE 1926	Established	May 22: Congress authorizes Shenandoah National Park (NP), but without funds for land purchases.
CE 1927 - 1928	Established	Myron H. Avery organizes Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC).
CE 1928	Built	PATC begins building the Appalachian Trail (AT) from Thornton Gap to Skyland resort.
CE 1929	Built	PATC continues the AT from Chester to Thornton Gap in the North District.
CE 1929 - 1939	Built	PATC builds side trails that connect the AT to the tops of other peaks and down into hollows.
CE 1930	Built	PATC completes the building of the AT in Shenandoah NP.
CE 1931	Moved	Contractors hired by the Bureau of Public Roads begin construction of Skyline Drive. It causes the PATC to begin relocating portions of the AT from Thornton Gap to Skyland.
CE 1933	Built	PATC, and possibly CCC, build Range View Cabin along the AT.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1933 - 1942	Built	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) arrives in May and helps with Skyline Drive construction as well as relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT which includes building stone retaining walls, culverts, edging, and spring heads.
CE 1933 - 1942	Planted	CCC plants native species such as mountain laurel, witch hazel, and oak along the AT.
CE 1935	Established	December 26: Secretary of the Interior accepts deeds for park lands from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
CE 1936	Established	July 3: President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicates Shenandoah NP.
CE 1936	Reconstructed	CCC completes relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT in the North District from Chester to Thornton Gap.
CE 1937	Built	Last mile of the entire AT completed at Mt. Sugarloaf, Maine.
CE 1938	Built	Most trail relocations and reconstruction through Shenandoah NP completed by this time. At this time, trail management is under the direction of the National Park Service (NPS).
CE 1938	Established	Appalachian Trailway agreements signed with NPS, U.S. Forest Service, and ATC.
CE 1939 - 1940	Built	CCC builds Pass Mountain Shelter.
CE 1940	Built	CCC builds Indian Run Shelter and Gravel Springs Shelter.
CE 1941	Built	CCC builds Elk Wallow Shelter.
CE 1942	Abandoned	CCC camps close and the program is ended because of World War II.
CE 1945	Established	Myron Avery notes that graded trails have matured with vegetation and mosses.
CE 1948	Established	Earl Shaffer completes first thru-hike of the AT.
CE 1950	Naturalized	Old farm fields along the AT return to forest from earlier years of clear-cutting and farming.
CE 1955	Established	Emma Gatewood is the first woman to complete an AT thru-hike.
CE 1960 - 1961	Moved	AT is relocated west of the Panorama facility with the construction of the Lee Highway/Route 211 overpass.
CE 1968	Established	AT becomes the first National Scenic Trail on the east coast with the signing of the National Trails System Act, Public Law 90-543. Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council (ANSTAC) charged with right-of-way selection, marking and maintenance, and general administration of the AT. PATC becomes a partner with the NPS.
CE 1970	Established	Master National Park Service/Appalachian Trail Conference cooperative agreements signed. Relocations within twenty feet of the centerline do not require pre-approval.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1974 - 1975	Moved	AT relocated west from Chester Gap to Lake Front Royal. The route changes where the AT exits the Park near Possum's Rest in the North District.
CE 1976	Conserved	Congress sets aside 80,000 acres in Shenandoah NP as wilderness, or approximately 2/5 of the total parklands. The AT travels through the wilderness area in the North District by Mt. Marshall and Pass Mountain.
CE 1978	Established	President Jimmy Carter signs into law AT legislative amendments including a \$90 million commitment in funds to protect the AT. The law allows for the purchase of lands adjacent to the South District of Shenandoah NP where the AT travels in and out of the park. Appalachian National Scenic Trail designated as a unit of the National Park system.
CE 1980 - 1990	Altered	Gypsy moth epidemic destroys foliage in Shenandoah NP and begins to change the vegetative character of the AT.
CE 1981	Established	Appalachian Trail Comprehensive Plan passes as Public Law 95-625 and outlines how the AT is to be managed and maintained.
CE 1983	Established	Appalachian Trail Conference enters into a cooperative agreement with NPS for management of the AT. Shenandoah NP and PATC continue their partnership in managing and maintaining the trail .
CE 1995 - 2000	Altered	Hemlock wooly adelgid begins to devastate the hemlock populations in Shenandoah NP. The AT's character impacted by loss of hemlocks.
CE 2006	Moved	PATC relocates AT east, away from the power tower complex near Hogback Overlook in the North District.

Physical History:

8,000-9,000 YEARS AGO to 17TH CENTURY: NATIVE AMERICAN USE

This area of the Blue Ridge Mountains was known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries, with the first human presence beginning about 9,000 years ago, sometime after the last Ice Age. The Paleo-Indians were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps. With the development of farming in the valleys by 1000AD, Native American use of the mountains focused on game hunting (Resource Management Plan-hereafter called RMP, 1998:23). The Manocan and Manahoac tribes used this area, and a buffalo path is said to have passed through Rockfish Gap at what is now the southern most end of Shenandoah National Park (NP) (Writers Program of the WPA, 1940).

1669 to 1926: EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT, SUBSISTENCE FARMING, MINING, AND RECREATION

The first recorded European exploration of this area of the Blue Ridge Mountains took place in 1669. Dr. John Lederer, who led the party, described the woods as wild and full of game. In 1716, Alexander Spotswood, Governor of Virginia, led an expedition across the Blue Ridge to encourage settlement in the area, likely crossing at Swift Run Gap or Big Meadows (Lambert, 1989:32-33). English, Scots-Irish, and Germans then immigrated to the area from the Tidewater to the Piedmont, and from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley (Maddux et al., 1992:7-2). Throughout this time, the local Native Americans were dying of introduced disease, and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or had moved away (Lambert, 1989:21-22; RMP, 1998:23).

As the better farmlands were taken, new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they relied on hunting, farming, grazing, and timbering that led to clearing of the land (RMP, 1998:23). The openings in the forest were later advanced by the arrival of the chestnut blight in the early part of the 1900s, which killed the chestnut trees and left “ghost forests” of their sculptural remains. The blight also robbed the local people of nut crops and rot-resistant wood that was suitable for construction (Engle, 1999:67).

At some sites, industrial uses also developed in the 1800s. In the Stony Man Mountain Tract, from 1845 to 1850, copper was mined and charcoal was produced for smelting. Copper mining continued in the mountains into the 1920s. Iron and manganese also was mined in the Blue Ridge (Lambert, 1989:77-85). Recreational use of the mountains began around 1830 with the opening of Black Rock Springs Hotel, south of current Route 33. The first recreational summer outing was held in 1888 on the Stony Man Tract Skyland, led by George Pollock, Jr., who recognized the area’s recreational potential. This outing eventually led to the establishment of a permanent mountain resort that would later be known as Skyland. In other areas, farming continued including raising livestock, growing corn, and planting orchards but slowed during the droughts of 1929-1930.

In 1921, Benton MacKaye published “An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning.” The document was a synthesis of ideas from the recreational movement and from the growing interest in grappling with the modern day urban, suburban, and rural issues of regional planning. MacKaye, in his 1922 follow-up article, “Progress Toward the Appalachian Trail,” in *Appalachia*, said he hoped “To open the great eastern playground. Our ultimate aim is more than just a trail – it is a whole system of them, a cobweb planned to cover the mountains of the eastern country” (MacKaye, 1922: 244).

1926 to 1931: INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARK AND APPALACHIAN TRAIL

In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah National Park (NP) in Virginia's Blue Ridge area to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the population centers of the East Coast. However, the act did not provide federal funding to acquire land. Until it was officially established in 1935, park acreage was donated in its entirety by the Commonwealth of Virginia, which had purchased most of the land through condemnation (RMP, 1998:23). These transactions resulted in the removal of homesteads, farms, and previous uses from those lands (McClelland, 1998:290).

In 1927, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) was organized by Myron H. Avery, and in 1928 construction of the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Shenandoah NP began (Lambert, 1979:159). Club members brought their own axes and pruning tools and began to clear the trail and by later that year had built the trail from Thornton Gap to the Skyland resort (PATC Bulletin #5, 1928; Engle, 2006: 159). Work continued into 1929 and a section south from Skyland to Fishers Gap was completed in the spring and by the fall the trail extended to Swift Run Gap. At the same time, another PATC crew was building the AT in the northern part of the Blue Ridge, from Chester Gap to Thornton Gap (PATC Bulletin #21, 1930). In addition to work on the AT, the crews also built numerous side trails that provided access to the tops of other peaks and down into hollows. By 1930, the PATC completed the southern portion of the AT from Swift Run Gap to Rockfish Gap, often using old roads. This marked the completion of the AT in Shenandoah NP.

1931 to 1942: SKYLINE DRIVE CONSTRUCTION, APPALACHIAN TRAIL RELOCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION, CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS, AND TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

President Franklin Roosevelt officially dedicated Shenandoah NP on July 3, 1936, but many park developments had already been underway. By this time, portions of the AT's initial route had been relocated and reconstructed to accommodate what was envisioned as the park's most important asset. As described in the Report of the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee from June 30, 1931: "the greatest single feature, however, is a possible skyline drive along the mountaintop, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley...and commanding a view [to the east] of the Piedmont Plain...Few scenic drives in the world could surpass it (Engle, 1999:15).

In 1931, the National Park Service (NPS) announced intentions to build Skyline Drive along the ridgeline. Construction was accomplished by private contractors, and the first road section was to be from President Herbert Hoover's Rapidan Camp to the Skyland Resort, around twenty miles, but evolved into a thirty-four mile segment from Swift Run Gap to Thornton Gap. This section, called the Central District, was completed by 1934. The thirty-two mile North District section, from Thornton Gap to Front Royal, opened to the public in October 1936 and the thirty-two mile South District section, from Swift Run Gap to Rockfish Gap, opened to the public in August 1939 (Maddux, 1995:8-9,10,11).

As Skyline Drive was also routed along the ridgeline in Shenandoah NP, from 1931-1938 the PATC worked to relocate and reconstruct portions of the AT that were supplanted by the drive. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) arrived in Shenandoah NP to work on the drive, the AT relocations, and other projects. The CCC program was created during the Depression as an economic stimulus aimed at improving and supporting national parks and forests. CCC projects in Shenandoah NP included the construction of fire roads, trails, shelters, and comfort stations, removal of dead chestnut trees, and cultivation of native vegetation for replanting (Figs. 4-6). Work also included installation of utilities, eradication of white pine blister rust, and improvements to streams (Engle, 2001).

The CCC worked under the direction of NPS landscape architects and engineers who had established general design guidelines in the 1918 NPS park design and planning policy. According to the policy, roads, trails, buildings, and other improvements were required to harmonize with the landscape (McClelland, 1998:135). By the late 1920s, the NPS focused on designing and building trails that could "serve both the horseback rider and the hiker" (McClelland, 1998:87).

By 1934, the CCC was at work on the AT in all three sections (North, Central, and South Districts), with work in the Central District nearing completion. Skyland's George Pollock Jr. went so far as to publicize "a through bridle path built along the crest of the ridge, superseding the old Appalachian Trail" (Lambert, 1979:163). In October 1934, the NPS Engineering Division published its first set of standards for foot and bridle trails, which guided the CCC's work on the AT: "...Specifications for trail building called for a four-foot standard width, which could be developed by cutting into the slope or by benching the supporting ground with a dry-laid wall of large stones when the slope was very steep. Dry random rubble walls could be built down hill to retain soil and rocks on steep slopes or uphill to retain material above the trail and prevent slides" (McClelland, 1998:242). The CCC's work was guided by these standards.

By 1935, the CCC had progressed with the work on the AT, with some portions relocated and reconstructed and others reconstructed in place in the Central District from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap and a portion in the South District from Brown's Gap to Black Rock Gap. In 1936, work on the North District section of the AT was finished (CCC Progress Chart 4/1/35; Shenandoah NP Master Plan text, 1936). A milestone was reached for the entire AT in 1937 when the last mile of the AT from Georgia to Maine was opened at Mount Sugarloaf, Maine.

In 1937, CCC trail design and construction was articulated in project-training manuals developed by

the U.S. Department of the Interior, such as Emergency Conservation Work, Project Training – Brick and Stone Work and Emergency Conservation Work, Project Training – Construction of Trails. These particular manuals included straightforward text and simple line drawings showing how-to and how-not-to examples of construction (Fig. 7). These standards were already used in practice and were used in developing the AT–North District in Shenandoah NP. Drawings showed how to cut a trail out of a steep slope, on a gentle slope, and across flat ground. On slopes, the recommended cross-pitch was $\frac{1}{2}$ " per foot or 2" in the typical trail width of four feet (Fig. 8). The Construction of Trails manual detailed the level of work required in trail construction and advocated a team approach: "using the best trail builders to lead the line...starting construction from a flagged location and approval from all Branches interested in its construction...the landscape architect who is charged with utilizing the scenic features and blending the trail with the landscape; the engineer who is concerned with problems of construction; the forester whose duties involve the protection and propagation of natural cover; the geologist who will assist in locating the trail so as to take advantage of geographic and geologic features and protect them from destruction; and the wildlife technician in whose care the zoological and botanical values are entrusted" (USDI, Construction of Trails, 1937:2).

Natural features were acknowledged and carefully considered in trail construction. As seen with the AT–North District, trails were often located to pass rock outcrops that were very large, displayed local geologic history, or had curious formations. According to the Construction of Trails manual: "If the trail passes a rock face or has been of necessity cut into a rock exposure, the only work required is the removal of loose rock which might endanger users of the trail...exposures of the bare rock often contain important stories which enhance the value of the trail. This is also true of some cut banks of unconsolidated material" (USDI, Construction of Trails, 1937:6,8)

Trails were built to preserve as much of the existing plantings as possible, which followed the developing program of landscape naturalization. By 1930, the NPS had established policies which excluded all exotic seeds, plants, and animals from the national parks (McClelland, 1998:97). Each area to be developed was first carefully studied to understand the local plant ecology and then planted accordingly.

"Some planting may be done by the foreman (during his construction) with the material he takes out of the right-of-way when he is clearing. Good plants should be carefully taken up when clearing and planted naturally in places that are bare or they may be used to conceal construction. In all the planting policy should be to create a condition that is as natural as possible" (Fig. 9) (USDI, Construction of Trails, 1937:25).

Trees also were considered an asset and preserved wherever possible:

"Where trails pass close to large trees and the location is kept below the tree, the type of construction shown in Sketch No. 16 should be adopted. This will make it possible to build the trail to the proper grade and location without injury to the tree roots" (USDI, Construction of Trails, 1937:11) (Fig. 10)

CCC work also improved the infrastructure of the portions of the trail that were relocated and reconstructed through the use of naturalistic local stone retaining walls, culverts, edging, and springheads. In the Brick and Stone Work manual:

"Rubble masonry may be laid coursed or uncoursed....Most of the low retaining walls, slope walls, and miscellaneous structures in park projects are laid up in rubble masonry. It fits into the surroundings better than more formal kinds of masonry, and is usually built of stones found nearby. For these projects, it is the most attractive masonry when well built, and satisfies all of the requirements of such field structures. More than that, rubble masonry is a thing of beauty when well done, and its composition and pattern call for good judgment and imagination...Rubble masonry is one of the best things that an enrollee (CCC) can learn to handle, for experts in this trade are in demand, and architects and landscape architects always have need of men who can lay up this type of masonry in an artistic manner. The thing we find most beautiful is that which satisfies our sense of proportion and of suitability of materials, and our feeling of good taste in design. It will be simple and appropriate, in a pattern pleasing in its variety and balance, and having unity with its surroundings" (USDI, Brick and Stone Work ,1937:9,11) (Figs. 11-12).

In 1938, the CCC concluded its work on relocating and reconstructing portions of the AT within Shenandoah NP (Lambert, 1979:181). Around this time, the number of CCC enrollees decreased as

more jobs became available elsewhere (Lambert, 2001:263). However, they continued to work with the PATC on the park's trail system where it connected the AT to many side trails. The CCC built cabins and shelters along the AT–North District including Range View Cabin (primarily built by the PATC, 1933), Pass Mountain Shelter (1939-1940), Indian Run and Gravel Springs Shelter (1940), and Elk Wallow Shelter (1941) (PATC Guide, 1959: 21-28). In 1942, with the United States' attention on World War II, the CCC was disbanded.



Figure 4: Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) photo showing two men staking the alignment of the AT near Range View Cabin, circa 1935. (Shenandoah NP Archives)



Figure 5: A CCC crew constructing a retaining wall for the AT, which will be surfaced with a gravel walking tread, circa 1935. A string line is used to guide stone placement (location of photo unknown). (Shenandoah NP Archives)



Figure 6: CCC photo showing a completed section of the AT with a bench cut into the natural slope, a lower retaining wall, and graded gravel tread at an even grade and width, circa 1935 (location unknown). (Shenandoah NP Archives)

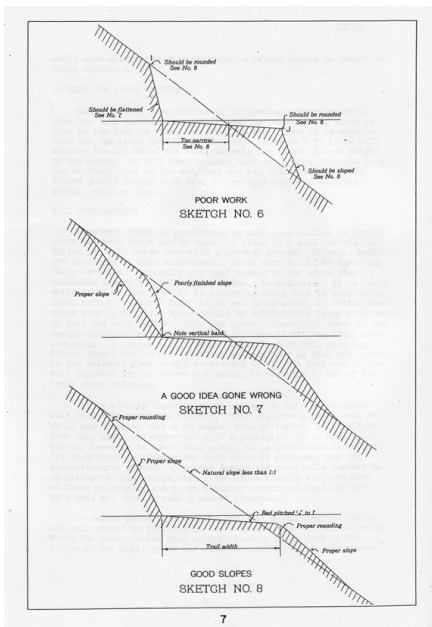


Figure 7: U.S. Department of the Interior 1937 manual, *Construction of Trails*, used by the CCC. Diagram illustrates proper construction of bench cuts for side-hill trails, such as the trail section in Figure 6. (Shenandoah NP Archives)



Figure 8: CCC photo showing completed Neighbor Mountain side trail, circa 1935. The trail has a width of 42-48 inches, is edged with stones, and is surfaced with gravel. (Shenandoah NP Archives)

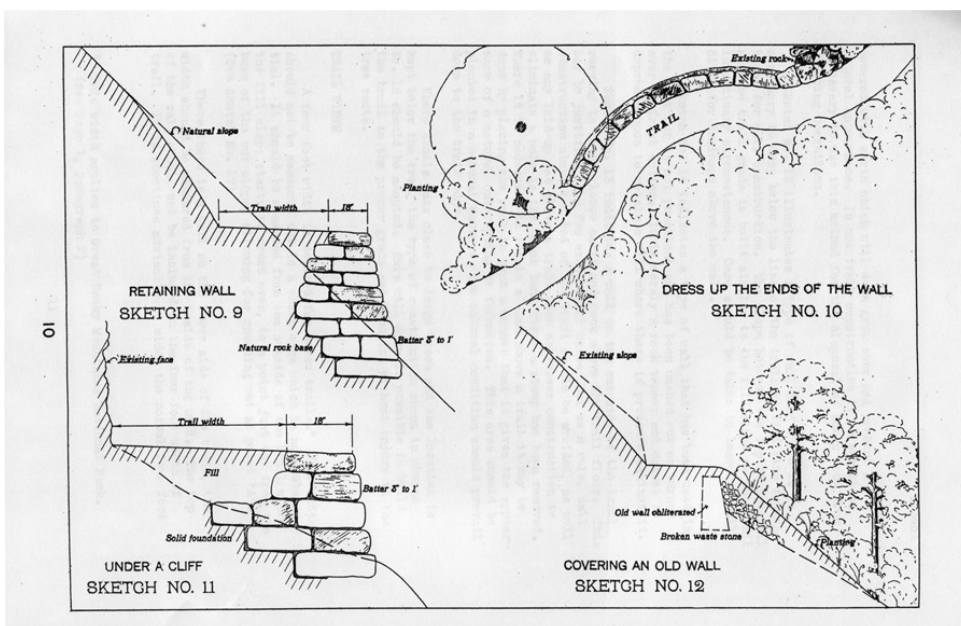


Figure 9: U.S. Department of the Interior 1937 manual, *Construction of Trails*, illustrates proper construction of retaining walls. The structure widens under the tread for durability and drainage. (Shenandoah NP Archives)

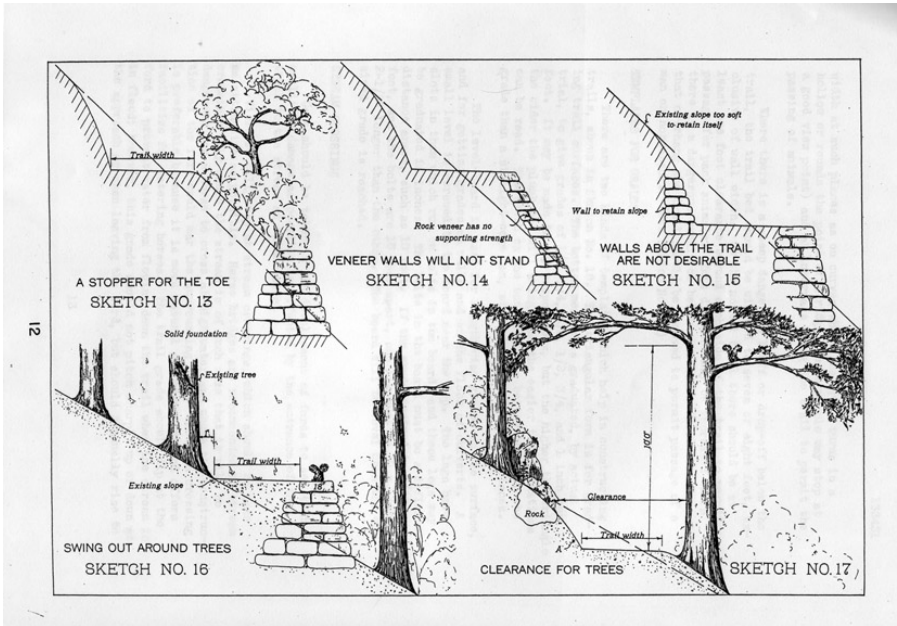


Figure 10: The 1937 manual, *Construction of Trails*, shows proper construction of retaining walls around trees, dissuades use of walls above the trail, and suggests a 10-foot clearance for horses. (Shenandoah NP Archives)



Figure 11: CCC photo showing heavy hauling during the construction of the AT south of Mt. Marshall Trail, circa 1935. The CCC used wheelbarrows to bring in material from borrow pits for surfacing the trail tread. (Shenandoah NP Archives)



Figure 12: CCC photo showing rubble walls along AT near Mt. Marshall, circa 1935. The trail ascends at an even grade and width, with a substantial amount of gravel added for a durable tread. (Shenandoah NP Archives)

1942 to 1956: WORLD WAR II AND RENEWED RECREATIONAL INTEREST

With the departure of the CCC, the NPS assumed “the whole weight of the park work” (Lambert, 2001:263). The war brought rationing of gas and tires, and motoring through Shenandoah NP virtually stopped. Yet hiking continued, although somewhat less so, and skiing the trails became a new, albeit occasional, use. Although skiing focused on the Pinnacles area, one ranger reported, “there was also skiing on “many” open areas...with varying slopes and on graded trails with their standard four-foot width because of the variety of scenic beauty which they offer” (Quoted in Lambert, 1979:184). Park Superintendent Freeland, in a 1940s letter to Jean Stephenson, Appalachian Trail Conference newsletter editor, emphasized:

“...There are many groups making three to ten day trips, utilizing the lean-tos. Apparently, the curtailment of normal vacations and normal living has resulted in a greater urge to seek the mountains. After all, the conception of the Appalachian Trail was needed immediately after the last war, and to meet a greatly felt need; and we feel that if it can be done we should see it is maintained, not only for use now, but so it will be available when the war is over and the men returning” (Quoted in Lambert, 1979:185).

In 1945, Myron Avery returned to Shenandoah NP from Navy service in the war and saw that the years had weathered the trail, vegetation had filled in, and moss started covering the rocks. He remained concerned about the park’s combined use of horse and foot trails, and in time equestrian use of the AT was eventually banned:

“The war...has brought a real gain to the Park Service trail systems in the East...But the gains of this maturity may yet prove all too transient. It is a gain, which should be preserved at all costs. This factor presents, to my mind, one of the most serious problems of post-war planning...The Park Services does not recognize any distinction between trails for foot and horse travel. Presumably, its western experience has not indicated that combined use brings serious problems. It requires little observation, however, to make clear that all this maturity will be speedily and totally lost by any horseback travel. The moss and vegetation will be speedily chopped up. Drainage will wash off the soil, leaving only a small bed of rocks so unpleasant for foot travel. ...Superintendent Freeland declined to exclude horses from the graded trails” (Lambert, 1979:186).

After the war, visitation to the park eventually rebounded. By the 1950s the NPS was planning construction projects under a program called “Mission 66” that would help plan for an expected increase in visitation to national parks across the country.

1956 to Present: LEGISLATION, TRAIL ALIGNMENT, BUILT FEATURES, AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

NPS Director Conrad Wirth launched the ten-year Mission 66 program in 1956. For the AT–North District this translated to developing a highway overpass at Route 211 in 1960-61 and relocating the AT in the North District west away from its original location near the old Panorama lodge and hotel. The trail emerged from the woods and crossed the new four-lane highway before continuing into the Central District and around the new Panorama facility.

The 1960s and 1970s continued to see an increase in visitation to Shenandoah NP and hiking of the AT. Use became increasingly multi-purpose throughout the park:

“Groups of day-hikers shepherded by leaders from different trail clubs had become common. Hikers also came as individuals, couples, and in family groups, and there was a surge in backcountry campers as well. Bicyclists and motorcyclists had definitely increased, and there were birders, wildflower enthusiasts, observers of ecology and the environments, fishermen, horseback riders, sunbathers, rock climbers, and seekers of old sites or cemeteries and legends of people who roamed or dwelt here...” (Lambert, 2001:273).

During this same period, a series of laws and agreements were introduced to help protect the AT and its environs. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Trails System Act which designated the AT as the first National Scenic Trail on the East Coast. The act stated that National Scenic Trails were for “recreation and for the conservation and enjoyment of the areas through which the trails would pass” (Foster, 1987:15,16). The law charged the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council (ANSTAC) with right-of-way selection, marking and maintenance, and the general administration of the AT (Foster, 1987:17). ANSTAC and the NPS signed cooperative agreements that permitted relocations of less than twenty feet from the centerline without going through an approval process. This allowed maintenance crews to shift the trail slightly when necessitated by erosion.

In 1976, 80,000 acres of Shenandoah NP were designated as wilderness area in order to protect the overall wild character of the park. The AT–North District benefited from this protection and retained its naturalized forests in the North District areas along North Marshall, the crest line east of Jeremy’s Run, and through Pass Mountain (Fig. 13). In 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the Appalachian Trail legislative amendments (Foster, 1987:149). These laws provided new tools and funds for land acquisition and additional lands were acquired along the trail corridor. In the AT–North District, it allowed for the purchase of land northwest of Possums Rest Overlook. In 1981, a NPS Appalachian Trail Comprehensive Plan outlined how the AT was to be managed and maintained in light of its growing use and various outside pressures, and in 1983 the Appalachian Trail Conference and PATC entered into a cooperative agreement with the NPS for the management of the AT.

A significant relocation of the trail in the North District occurred in 1974 when the AT was shifted west from Chester Gap to Lake Front Royal and Route 522 because of the development of the housing subdivision, Blue Ridge Mountain Estates accessed from Route 610. This changed where the AT exited the park at Possums Rest, yet retained the wilderness aspect of the trail and possibly anticipated future land acquisitions in the area to protect the AT. The most recent relocation was in the summer of 2006. The PATC moved the AT in the North District at Hogback Mountain. Originally, the trail passed along the western edge of the ridge and had wide views of the valley below and the radio tower over one’s left shoulder when hiking north to south. The valley still is seen along the initial approach and then takes a turn east and travels through the cooler, darker woods. Some shelters in the North District were removed due to easy access and over use such as Elk Wallow Shelter, or due to changes use such as Indian Run, which now is a PATC maintenance facility. New cabins and shelters have also been added to accommodate the needs of hikers such as Tom Floyd Wayside Cabin just outside the park and Byrd’s Nest 4 Shelter. Range View Cabin, and Gravel Springs and Pass Mountain Huts (formerly called shelters), are maintained by the PATC and enjoyed by hikers.

With the constant increase in use, much work has been accomplished to maintain the condition of the

AT in Shenandoah NP. Over the years, some treadway surfaces have lost some of their layered material due to erosion and direct and recurring impacts on the surface. While the trail in the past was designated for both horse rider and hiker, only Possums Rest Overlook to Springhouse Trail in the North District is currently designated for both. Wood waterbars that divert water off the trail have been replaced and new waterbars installed, and check dams that contain erodible soils have also been constructed. Corrugated metal culvert pipes have been added when there was more water than a check dam or waterbar could handle. Stone edging and retaining walls have been repaired if needed, but some stone edging has become partially buried from the accumulation of leaf duff and soils dislodged by erosion. New signs have been added to improve communication with hikers and in the North District include signs that mark the boundaries of the designated wilderness area, registration boxes and maps under plexi-glass, and metal utility markers.

The character of vegetation has also changed along the trail. Since the 1930s, Shenandoah NP has witnessed the gradual succession of open areas into secondary growth hardwood forests as well as the maturation of plant material installed by the CCC, and as intended by the NPS Rustic style. Mountain laurel proliferated and oaks, maples, and pines multiplied, vines crawled over rocks and up trees, and perennials spread into drifts. Bare mountainsides became covered in spring bloom and then fall color. As a full palette of native plant material has taken over, the AT has exchanged wide-open views for more selective ones.

In the 1980s, the gypsy moth epidemic devastated Shenandoah NP. The moths defoliated many of the deciduous trees, changing the character of the vegetation along the AT at the time. New plant growth replaced those that could not tolerate the successive defoliation. In the 1990s, another devastating infestation occurred with the arrival of the hemlock wooly adelgid. The loss of the hemlocks changed the character of some segments of the AT, whether walking along the trail or looking at a view in the distance. A hiker, while in the woods with hemlocks, would feel the density of the evergreen foliage and coolness from the shade. This darker and denser forest provides a significant contrast for the hiker when the AT would open up to a clearing. With the hemlocks mostly gone, the woodlands in some areas are lighter and hikers can see around and through the deciduous and understory trees. A rock outcrop may be revealed or a new view opened up. The hemlocks that survive are propagating and starting new stands, giving hope that resilient strains may yet develop. However, the wooly adelgid has destroyed some very old, large hemlocks.

Wilderness

In 1964, the United States Congress passed a law known as the Wilderness Act which created a National Wilderness Preservation System. The Act defined wilderness as "an area where earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Today over 100 million acres throughout the United States are protected as wilderness for present and future generations to explore and enjoy.

Shenandoah National Park contains nearly 80,000 acres of federally designated wilderness. Help protect this wilderness and other wild places by practicing the principles of *Leave No Trace*.

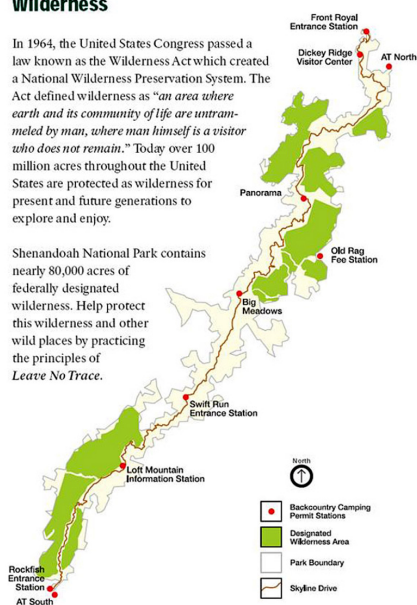


Figure 13: Shenandoah NP Wilderness Area map. (Shenandoah NP, 2006)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation-Other	No	Yes	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation-Other	Yes	No	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Recreation/Culture-Other	Recreation/Culture-Other	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

Reservations are required at the cabins.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The physical integrity of the Appalachian Trail (AT) landscape in Shenandoah National Park (NP) is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1928-1942) with current conditions. The North District portion of the AT retains integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to its development during the historic period. The features that convey this significance include the linear trail corridor as it rises and falls with the ridgeline, hugs side slopes on the built out trail bed and terraces, and engages natural features such as rock outcrops, streams, and aged trees; remnant and intended successional vegetation; and views to the valleys to the east and west. Additional features that convey significance include historic trail edging, retaining walls, cabins, shelters, huts, and trail markers. The reconstruction of portions of trail during the 1930s to move it away from Skyline Drive and build it to National Park Service (NPS) standards was undertaken through the collective efforts of the NPS, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) within the period of significance. The overall historic character of the Appalachian Trail (AT)–North District has not changed dramatically since the end of the period of significance.

Post-1942 changes and additions to the AT in Shenandoah NP do not reflect the significance of the trail as described under National Register Criteria A and C and are considered non-contributing. These changes include the building or removal of shelters, trail realignments, culvert and waterbar work, and wall reconstruction. Some shelters were added in the AT–North District in the 1960s and 1970s such as Byrd’s Nest 4 Shelter, and some were removed such as Elk Wallow Shelter. Major trail realignments, such as the move west from Chester Gap to Possums Rest are considered non-contributing segments but are included as part of the linear trail resource. Sections of trail bed have worn away in some places from years of use and erosion, which has damaged some stone walls and edging. There have also been additions of unplanned spur trails or “desire lines” from the AT to reach vantage points for views or makeshift campsites. Part of this is due to encroaching vegetation, which represents perhaps the most conspicuous change to the AT corridor landscape since the historic period. The trail’s spatial character, which historically was generally open, has filled in with secondary forest growth and has created the so-called “green tunnel.” This change, however, is a result of maturing CCC-planted vegetation and natural succession from old fields to forest and largely represents historic intent.

Historic trail segments that were either abandoned or removed from the AT after the historic period (1928-1942) and which retain integrity, such as the Passamaquoddy Trail near Skyland or the section west of Loft Mountain Campground, may be significant as part of the historic development of the AT. These sections, however, were not inventoried for this report.

Methodology:

Nine landscape characteristics have been evaluated for the AT–North District: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small scale features. Of the nine landscape characteristics, the four most important today are natural systems and features, spatial organization, circulation, and buildings and structures. The four characteristics and their associated features shaped the design of the trail and are fundamental to the historic character of the trail landscape.

The study boundaries of the Cultural Landscape Inventory for the AT–North District include a twenty-foot wide corridor, ten-feet to either side of the trail’s centerline, that generally encompasses the most of the trail’s constructed features such as retaining walls and signs. Features beyond this corridor were evaluated if they were associated with the construction of the AT, were easily viewed from the trail, or if they were part of the hiking experience (i.e. shelter or view).

The discussion of each landscape characteristic’s historic and existing conditions is followed by a table of landscape features recorded within the twenty-foot trail corridor. The feature name is followed in parentheses with the PATC Route number and a feature number (e.g. “411002.5, 0.365”). PATC Routes in the North District begin with 411 and are used by the park for management and maintenance activity. Feature numbers are based on the mileage point or points along the trail as they were inventoried in the field. Each feature is

evaluated as to whether or not it contributes to the historic character as defined by the period of significance. Features are evaluated as undetermined if historical research and field survey work did not provide adequate information to make a determination.

Existing conditions maps for the AT–North District are graphic representations of the trail. As such, symbols representing specific features are shown in proximity to the trail and are not to be interpreted literally. Loop trail connections with the AT were inventoried. However, loop trails themselves were not evaluated beyond the twenty-foot corridor and are not graphically highlighted on the maps.

ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY

Location:

Location refers to the place where the trail was built, and generally corresponds to the trail alignment. The AT as initially built by the PATC followed the north-south ridgeline in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and connected to side trails. From 1931-1938, portions of the trail were relocated and reconstructed to accommodate the construction of Skyline Drive, and the trail was shifted wherever the two converged. However, the trail maintained its general north-south alignment and traced ridgeline topography, connecting to side trails, and integrating the natural features into the trail corridor. Although there have been some changes since the period of significance such as the approximately 2,000-foot move west from Chester Gap to Lake Front Royal at the northern most point of the AT in the park and the approximately 1,500-foot move east away from the radio tower at Hogback Mountain, the realignments represent only a fraction of the total mileage of the AT–North District.

Design:

Design refers to combination of elements that characterize the built landscape of the AT, recognized today as the NPS Rustic style. This historic design is evident today through the trail's winding alignment, naturalistic materials, and vernacular building techniques, and reflects a philosophy of a romanticized natural environment that was executed through the 1930s in the improvement of the AT-North District in Shenandoah NP. The design incorporated native materials in planting, rock work, and log work to harmonize the trail with the natural surroundings. An important element of the design was to assist and allow nature to take its course and let transplanted native material reseed or colonize to erase scars of construction and former land uses. Over time, plants matured into large masses, obscuring rock excavations or blending an orchard into the woods. Stone walls and edging comprised of native rock support and delineated the trail bed and display vernacular building techniques.

Shelters and cabins, usually built on spurs off the main trail, were also character-defining design features of the AT and were an integral part of the hiking experience. They were often place-specific with names that evoked the lore or specific feature of the site and were built with native stone and local timber such as chestnut. Indian Run Shelter became a PATC maintenance building and the Elk Wallow Shelter was removed in the 1970s, and a new shelter, Byrd's Nest 4, was added in the 1970s. Cabins, shelters, and huts, however, are still distinguishing features on the AT–North District. Historic structures that continue to display their original design within the North District include Gravel Springs Hut, Range View Cabin (built by the PATC), and Pass Mountain Hut.

In somewhat of a departure from the NPS Rustic style, stylized concrete-post trail markers, reminiscent of hitching posts, with stamped zinc bands were installed as a standardized identification system throughout the trail within Shenandoah NP. The different design (many parks at the time were using rustic logs for signs) was most likely intended to enhance visibility and increase durability. Since the end of the historic period in 1942, the trail has been managed to maintain its historic rustic design, and the concrete trail marker posts continue to be maintained as the standard trail marker. While some aspects of the trail's historic design have changed, such as the introduction of metal culverts or the addition of asphalt in limited high-use areas, the AT–North District overall continues to exhibit integrity of design.

Setting:

Setting refers to the physical environment of the AT-North District Shenandoah NP. As initially conceived by Benton MacKaye, the AT was to function as pedestrian spine in the wilderness that connected to side trails and brought hikers to peaks with views and into glens with streams and waterfalls. The AT, as constructed by the PATC, passed through forests, open farm fields, and orchards; skirted the edges of woods; and traveled along

old dirt farm roads. The AT also occasionally encountered cabins and shelters. Along some trail sections, however, the backcountry wilderness experience was momentarily suspended. With the construction of Skyline Drive, portions of the AT were relocated and reconstructed and in several locations crossed the road corridor that was comprised of mowed shoulders, parking areas and pullouts, and asphalt pavement. There were also structures and circulation features associated with the occasional developed rest or concession area.

Segments of the trail that historically passed by or through open fields and orchards have become more enclosed as vegetation has filled in, creating the so-called “green tunnel,” yet traces of these open spaces remain as evidenced by massive trees, called wolf trees, and by changes in forest composition. The AT–North District also winds through two areas of pine plantations likely planted by the CCC and is evidence of previous natural resource conservation efforts on worn-out agricultural land. While the setting of the trail has become more enclosed since the end of the historic period, this was an intended change to the setting. Overall, the AT–North District retains its natural setting, with only limited exposure to non-trail features – namely Skyline Drive, trailhead parking areas, and other infrastructure elements – evident in its immediate setting (other modern development is visible in some distant views).

Materials:

Materials are the elements used to construct the trail, including stone, wood, plants, concrete, and zinc bands. Stone work from the 1930s CCC construction is still evident in the retaining walls, trail edging, steps, cabins, and shelters. Concrete and zinc trail markers designed and constructed in the period of significance are used at AT junctions and have been replaced in-kind when necessary. The CCC planted a large variety of native oak (*Quercus* spp.), pine (*Pinus* spp.), hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.), apple (*Malus* spp.), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginica*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). Ferns, vines, and perennials also remain and many have naturalized. Large wolf oaks, remnants from old agricultural fields, are indications of past land use. Secondary growth includes more oaks, hickory (*Carya* spp.), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), which have filled in the open spaces. Invasive plants such as tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and oriental lady's thumb (*Polygonum caespitosum*) have entered the landscape. For building materials, the introduction of non-historic materials to accommodate heavy use and reduce maintenance include the use of metal on roofs and metal signs at trail entrances. Because these are limited in extent, overall the AT–North District retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship:

Workmanship refers to the physical evidence of the construction techniques on the AT. Although sometimes obscured by vegetation, the stone retaining walls continue to illustrate the dry-laid construction workmanship of the CCC. Stone trail edging also remains, yet is sometimes partially buried because of wear on the treadway from intensive visitor use. In some areas, erosion has reduced some treadway surfaces to the rocky base and has reduced the original four-foot width. Historic cabins and huts still exhibit the original stone work and some of the log work although there have been additions of metal roofs and changes to the interiors. The concrete trail markers with zinc banding are in good condition and are replaced in-kind as necessary. Overall the AT–North District trail corridor retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling:

Feeling refers to how the AT communicates a particular time period. The trail was designed and constructed to provide a feeling of romanticized and picturesque wilderness. Although the trail still traces the ridgeline and provides the same level of difficulty, many of the sweeping panoramic views have been lost due to the overgrowth of vegetation. Although the intention was for the trail's setting to naturalize, fewer open areas remain and the winding trail passes mostly through thick woods, which have created what is known as the “green tunnel.” The trail, however, still opens up at the crossings of Skyline Drive as it did in the period of significance. Despite the much more enclosed conditions of the trail, the AT–North District continues to strongly evoke a wilderness feeling.

Association:

Association is the connection between the historic events and the distinct methods of design and construction of the AT. The AT–North District continues to exhibit its historic associations with the PATC, CCC, and NPS. The trail still links to the side trails, fire roads, and the Skyline Drive. The trail also connects to the north and beyond the park to the northern terminus of the AT in Maine, and to the park's Central and South Districts through the

rest of Shenandoah NP and beyond the park to the southern terminus of the AT in Georgia. Historic retaining walls, stone edging, cabins, and huts designed in the NPS Rustic style as implemented by the CCC through the New Deal programs accommodate AT hikers today. In the two locations where the trail has been realigned at Chester Gap to Lake Front Royal and at Hogback Mountain, the original trail alignments remain, but have lost their historic association with the AT. Despite these changes, overall the AT–North District retains integrity of association.

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:

The natural systems and features of the AT–North District include the mountains, valleys, watersheds, rock outcrops, and native vegetation. The trail corridor lies astride the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, a part of the Appalachian Range that stretches from Georgia to Maine. In his 1921 article, “An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning,” Benton MacKaye envisioned “a long trail over the full length of the Appalachian skyline from the highest peak in the north to the highest peak in the south” (MacKaye, 1921:328). The Blue Ridge Mountains separate the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the rolling hills of the Piedmont Plain to the east. It was this natural setting that established the fundamental character of the trail as well as the larger park, preserved for the enjoyment of the public who mostly traveled from nearby metropolitan areas.

The trail corridor within the North District traverses named peaks such as Compton, North and South Marshall, Hogback, and Pass Mountains, and passes through Compton, Jenkins, Hogwallow Gap, Gravel Springs, Elkwallow, Beahms Gaps, and then enters Thornton Gap. In the North District, Hogback Mountain is the highest peak at 3,475 feet, while the lowest elevation is at Jeremy’s Run Trail at about 2,100 feet. The AT travels along very old rock from the volcanic greenstone starting at Possum’s Rest to Hogback Mountain, where the rock type transitions to one-billion-year-old gneiss. From Hogback Mountain, the rock becomes greenstone again until Elkwallow Gap where it meets a band of quartzite that continues onto Byrd’s Nest 4 Shelter. The rock type then again becomes greenstone through to Thornton Gap (Chew, 1988: 86,87,92).

In accordance with the U.S. Department of the Interior 1937 manual, Construction of Trails, it appears the trail was routed to run along the side of rock outcrops to reveal the local geologic history. Two particularly noteworthy rock outcrops are on the way to Compton Peak (Route 411002) that extends twenty-five-feet above the trail and close to Beahms Gap Overlook (Route 411012) which is broad and long, beginning low and then increasing in size until a very large expanse twenty-feet from the trail extending for 225 feet.

The AT–North District lies within three major river systems of the mid-Atlantic region, the Shenandoah/Potomac, James, and Rappahannock. Each flows into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Within park boundaries there are seventy watersheds, forty-two on the west side and twenty-eight on the east side of the ridge. Seventy springs occur near the park’s ridge line (Shenandoah NP staff, 2006). Although the AT runs mostly along the dry ridgeline, it was also designed to connect through side trails to the lower valleys, streams, and waterfalls. The trail encounters three small streams: on the south slope of Compton Peak and the west side of the trail (Route 411002.5), on the east side of the trail close to Thornton Gap (Route 411014), and the trail crossed south of Elkwallow Gap (Route 411010).

Oak (*Quercus* spp.), hickory (*Carya* spp.), and American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) once covered the mountains, but by the time the trail was being built in the late 1920s and 1930s, few living American chestnut trees remained because of the chestnut blight, a tiny fungus (*Endothia parasitica*) introduced probably from Asia (Connors, 1988:62). The 1931 PATC Guidebook wrote of groves of locust and scrub oak, dead chestnut, and good timber (PATC, 1931:53-57). Such groves provided transitions from woods to clearings or fields. They also exposed some of the summit areas as seen in this description, “This road (the AT) ascends to left of lower wooded third summit of The Hogback (14.19 m.) and after slight descent reaches, through area partly open and partly covered by dead chestnut, summit of fourth peak of The Hogback (3,433 feet) at 14.49m (PATC, 1931:56).

Since 1942, natural systems and features have remained largely unchanged, with the exception of natural succession and reforestation as intended by the work of the NPS and the CCC. Chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus*) and northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) are common along the ridge line today although their numbers have declined. By 1990, fifty-nine percent had been affected by the gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) (Shenandoah NP staff, 2006). Many hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) have been killed by the hemlock wooly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) which has reduced the evergreen canopy along portions of the trail. Secondary growth includes hickory, black locust (*Robinia*

pseudoacacia), pine (*Pinus* spp.), and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) with an understory of striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*), sumac (*Rhus* spp.), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), ferns, and various perennials and vines. By 1990, the number of tulip poplars had increased to sixteen percent and cove hardwoods to fifteen percent (Shenandoah NP staff, 2006). Masses of hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) line portions of the trail adding interest and softening the woodland character (Figs. 14-15).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Rock outcrop (411002, 0.216—0)	122541	Contributing					No
Stream (411002.5, 0.365—0.410)	122543	Contributing					No
Massing, plant (411007, 0.780—0.866)	122545	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Stream (411010, 0.593—0)	122547	Contributing					No
Rock outcrop (411012, 0.940—0.983)	122549	Contributing					No
Stream (411014, 1.208—1.212)	122551	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 14: The AT passes an old tree and rock outcrop near Neighbor Mountain Trail. The 1937 manual, Construction of Trails recommended that trails pass rock outcrops to display local geological history. (SUNY, 2006)



Figure 15: The AT crosses a stream near Elkwallow Gap. A collapsed abutment suggests the CCC may have constructed a small bridge over the stream to provide an even walking tread.(SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions:

In 1930, when the PATC had completed the AT in the North District, the spatial character of the trail was defined by a series of enclosed forested areas, open meadows, and rock outcrops. In its 1931 Guidebook, the PATC described the spatial character:

“At edge of open field take center road of three-forking roads, to follow line of cairns (commencing at junction of the three roads) down slope of open field in Jenkins Gap and straight up opposite slope. Line of cairns crosses road at 5.69 m. and enter well-worn dirt road at edge of woods. (5.82m.). Turn left into this road, which passes through gate at 6.18 m. near top of hill and skirts left side of open field. Pass road on left of 6.47 m. and at 6.71m. go through gate into orchard” (PATC, 1931:54).

This description detailed the spatial sequence the hiker entered in and moved through, from a node of intersecting roads, into an enclosing glen, on top of a hill, along a partially enclosed area, walled off on one side by woods and open to the sky on the other side by a field, and into an orchard partially enclosed vertically and overhead by the grid of trees. The AT experience was a variable one which included many open areas.

Although the construction of Skyline Drive required the relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT by the CCC, the spatial character of the trail remained largely unchanged. It still traced the ridgeline while taking advantage of open areas and views and then traveled through woodlands. The trail sometimes continued to follow old roads that provided for a wider and more open trail. The AT–North District crossed Skyline Drive in eleven places and was aligned to cross the road and then lead away from the road corridor. Where the AT paralleled the road, it ranged in distance from 3,200 feet at its greatest distance along the Route 411014, Pass Mountain Hut Trail to Thornton Gap, to 100 feet where it traveled closest to the road at Route 411008, near Hogback Overlook.

Existing Conditions:

Since 1942, woods have enclosed the majority of the trail corridor. Many of the once open fields are now filled with successional growth. The variety and rhythm of the open and enclosed areas has diminished and the AT is now often described as a “green tunnel.” It appears, however, that this change in the spatial character was at least in part intentional, as many old fields were not maintained during the historic period, and so subsequently grew into woods. Secondary growth of trees and shrubs have obscured many broad and long views. In places, the “green tunnel” opens up where views remain because of rock outcrops or intentional clearing by park management. The AT still crosses Skyline Drive in eleven places, which act as open areas between the wooded parts of the trail. However, these crossings are inventoried as circulation features (Fig. 16).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Hogback Clearing (411007, 0.662—0.681)	122553	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 16: The typical “green tunnel” enclosed character of the AT in the North District as seen in this photo near Jeremy’s Run Overlook. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Conditions:

The AT–North District in Shenandoah NP was primarily an area of farms. Some holdings had been abandoned long before the AT and park were developed, and others had been sold willingly or not, as described to hikers in the following three entries in the 1931 PATC Guidebook (PATC, 1931:54,56):

“Follow line of cairns close to edge of woods on left edge of field to come at 4.9 m. to spring in sag of ravine near ruins of old house.”

“The Trail follows well-worn wood road with wire fence on right. At 7.3 m. pass tumbledown shack on left.”

“AT 15.84 m. road passes orchard, old house, and stone foundation on left.”

Hikers passed farmyards that once had or still had chickens, pigs, and goats, and vegetable gardens, orchards mostly of apple, some of peach with fruit for eating or making moonshine, pastures for cattle and sheep, and woods for timbering and stripping chestnut and hemlock bark for tanning. Shenandoah NP land records and park establishment history indicates that the mountains were still actively being used until well after 1936, and the NPS and the Department of Agriculture’s Resettlement Administration had to relocate close to 500 families from the park (Shenandoah NP staff, 2007). After that time, land uses were primarily recreational. According to the U.S. Department of the Interior 1937 manual, Construction of Trails, the AT was constructed to carry both horses and hikers. This multi-use activity continued until well after World War II.

Existing Conditions:

Since 1942, the AT has continued to function as a recreational trail for the hiker whether trekking on a through-hike from Georgia to Maine or hiking smaller segments of the trail and associated side trails. Traces of old farmsteads are disappearing, but are still revealed in extant wolf trees in old farm fields or in remnant orchards that the trail passes through (Fig. 17). The limits of old fields can also be discerned by the age of the woods. Today only the approximate two-mile northern-most segment of the AT in Shenandoah NP is a combined horse and hiker trail. Horse riding is excluded from other AT segments, as are bicycles and other wheeled vehicles.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Orchard (411002.5, 0.295—0.425)	122555	Contributing					No
Orchard (411003, 0.149—0.219)	122559	Contributing					No
Orchard (411003, 0.677—0.823)	122561	Contributing					No
Orchard (411003, 0.994—0)	122563	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 17: The AT travels through a remnant orchard near Hogwallow Gap. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Historic Conditions:

The AT–North District in Shenandoah NP generally followed a north-south orientation as it traced the ridgeline terrain of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Topographical considerations influenced the design and construction of the AT. In some cases, old roadbeds were graded to a maximum of fifteen percent and improved for trail use. Wherever possible, trails were designed with long sweeping curves. In rocky or steep sections such as those on the north side of Compton Peak and ascending the north side of the second peak of Hogback, switchbacks were built to ease the hike. Retaining walls were constructed to support the trail bed and maintain the grade, which was not to exceed fifteen percent (NPS Shenandoah NP Master Plan, 1936).

Existing Conditions:

Since 1942, there have been some changes to the built topography of the AT–North District. In general, the graded trail has not retained the three-percent cross pitch due to erosion, and in some places drainage ditches have been installed to divert water from the trail (Figs. 18-19). The relocation west from Chester Gap to Lake Front Royal, where the trail leaves the park at Possum's Rest, made for a bit steeper slope. At Hogback Mountain, the recent move east away from the radio tower has bypassed what was once the highest elevation of the AT in the North District. The move west to make way for the new entrance station, Panorama Restaurant, and overpass at Thornton Gap shifted the trail down the slope. The trail's general north-south orientation is still consistent with the ridgeline terrain.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Drainage ditch (411001, 0.559—0.625)	122565	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Drainage ditch (411004, 1.139—1.153)	122567	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 18: A CCC-built stone retaining wall supports the AT treadway near Compton Peak. (SUNY, 2006)



Figure 19: In accordance with the 1937 manual, Construction of Trails, this section of the AT passes an exposed rock outcrop of geological interest near Compton Peak. The tread is evenly graded along the ridgeline. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Conditions:

Vegetation refers to the indigenous and introduced plant materials along the trail corridor. The PATC's 1931 Guidebook of the AT–North District described a trail corridor that passed through native woods, fields, and abandoned agricultural lands (PATC, 1931:53-57). The farm fields often had a few large trees to provide shade for livestock and farmer.

The CCC's post-construction work on Skyline Drive and the relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT required the preservation of as much native plant material as possible. When plants had to be removed for construction, the CCC transplanted many native trees, shrubs, perennials, and vines as prescribed by the principles of the NPS Rustic style. Additionally, native plants were grown in nurseries at the CCC camps or brought from commercial nurseries or other national parks and then planted along the trail. Many pines were started from seed or grown from seedling stock in pine plantations. Some plantings were intended to naturalize with mixed plantings and others to reforest former agricultural fields (Engle, 1999, 85-87). The CCC planted species such as oaks (*Quercus* spp.), pines (*Pinus* spp.), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), sumac (*Rhus* spp.), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) among others to harmonize the newly constructed trail with its surroundings and allow for naturalization.

Existing Conditions:

Since 1942, vegetation within Shenandoah NP's North District, and along the AT, has matured and filled in. Many of the open fields, rocky mountain tops, and bare slopes that the trail once encountered have transitioned to secondary growth hardwood forest comprised of oak, hickory (*Carya* spp.), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) along with sumac, witch hazel, mountain laurel, upland low blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*), fern (*Dennstaedtia* spp.), and Virginia creeper.

Both the park and the trail corridor display a large variety of perennials. Common species include rose azalea (*Rhododendron prinophyllum*), black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), and fly-poison (*Amianthium muscitoxicum*). More unique species include trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), wild bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximia*), twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*), and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), which provide interest throughout the seasons. Invasive exotic plants have arrived such as tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and oriental lady's thumb (*Polygonum caespitosum*). The invasive exotics have proliferated and changed the character of the vegetation along the trail.

Wolf trees, which are field trees with low branches around which younger woods have grown up, are numerous and recall the farm fields that once existed. They're usually large in diameter and height and contrast with the younger woods that surround them (Fig. 20). These ancient trees stand out along the trail corridor and recall the rich history of the park and the trail.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Tree, specimen (411002.5, 0.359—0)	122571	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411003, 0.855—0)	122573	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411009, 0.206—0)	122575	Contributing					No
Plantation, pine (411013, 1.780—1.969)	122577	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411014, 0.106—0)	122579	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411014, 0.156—0)	122581	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411014, 0.225—0)	122583	Contributing					No
Plantation, pine (411014, 0.335—0)	122585	Contributing					No
Tree, wolf (411014, 0.495—0)	122587	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

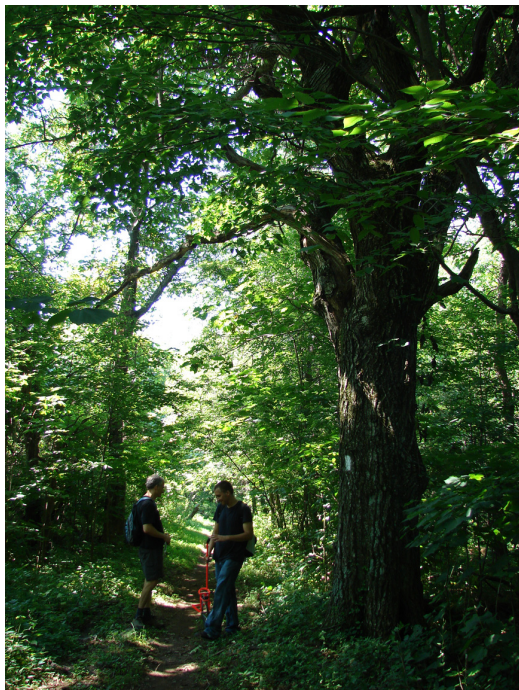


Figure 20: A red oak wolf tree along the AT indicates an old field near the junction with Pass Mountain Hut Trail. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Conditions:

By 1930, the PATC had completed the AT within the North District, cobbling together a route comprised of old farm and logging roads and new construction. At the same time, they were marking and developing a system of side trails off the AT to springs, into hollows, and to scenic natural features. As described by the PATC Guides, these side trails opened areas to hikers: "...the overgrown wood road, which leads approximately 1.25m to the Devil's Staircase, magnificent wild ravine, one of the principal scenic attractions at the north end of Shenandoah National Park" (PATC, 1931:55).

The Piney Branch Trail

"leads up a splendidly forested ravine with beautiful waterfalls" (PATC, 1933:1).

In 1933, when the CCC began their work on Skyline Drive and relocating and reconstructing portions of the AT, they improved old roads for the trail and constructed new trail using the NPS Rustic style principles and design standards that were eventually articulated in the U.S. Department of the Interior's 1937 manual, Emergency Conservation Work, Project Training – Construction of Trails. Specific standards were set for trail construction to accommodate both hiker and horse:

"...four-foot-wide tread with natural soil and gravel to a depth of three inches with stone edging as necessary, maximum fifteen percent grade and three-percent pitch, long-sweeping curves instead of long tangents or sections of a circle, switchbacks only when necessary and with long sections, and retaining walls only in rocky, steep terrain where necessary to maintain the required grade and reach certain elevations and objectives" (NPS Master Plan, 1936).

The CCC also improved many of the old roads for use as side trails and as fire roads (formerly known as truck trails), for example the Jinny Gray. The AT relocations and reconstructions were completed by 1938 and the last segment of Skyline Drive was opened in 1939. The AT and Skyline Drive intersected eleven times.

Existing Conditions:

The AT–North District in Shenandoah NP retains much of its historic alignment, stone edging, and natural soil/gravel base (Fig. 21). Since 1942, however, some areas of the trail have narrowed and eroded, resulting in loss or concealment of stone edging and loss of soil base. The trail has been relocated in some places, including approximately 2,000-feet from Chester Gap to Possum's Rest (the old AT is now Compton Gap Trail), approximately 1,500-feet east from Hogback Mountain, and approximately 1,000-feet west at Thornton Gap to make way for the new Route 211 overpass, entrance station, and Panorama Restaurant. The trail in these realigned sections is narrow with a hard-packed soil treadway and some runs of stone edging.

The AT continues to provide access to the side trails that were constructed in the historic period, such as the Piney Branch Trail and Devil's Staircase that is currently known as Big Devil's Staircase, as well as the fire roads such as the Jinny Gray and known today as the Keyser Run Fire Road. However, short unplanned and unmarked spur trails have developed to reach viewpoints and rock outcrops because vegetation has grown in along the trail corridor and on the mountaintops. The AT still crossed Skyline Drive in eleven locations (Routes 411002, 411004 (2), 411006 (2), 411008 (3), 411009, 411013, and 411014).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
AT–North District treadway corridor (411001—41104, 0—24)	122589	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411001, 0.217—0) (Compton Gap Trail)	122591	Contributing					No

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Trail, side crossing (411001, 1.391—0) (Springhouse Trail)	122593	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411001, 1.692—0) (Dickey Ridge Trail)	122595	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411001, 1.693—0) (Indian Run Maintenance Building)	122597	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411002, 0.006—0.013) (Skyline Drive)	122599	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411002, 0.831—0) (Viewpoint Trail)	122601	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411002.5, 0.282—0) (spring)	122603	Contributing					No
Edging, stone (411002.5, 0.420—0)	122605	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411002.5, 1.264—0)	122607	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411003, 0.074—0.077)	122611	Undetermined					No
Road, crossing (411004, 0.007—0.010) (Skyline Drive)	122613	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411004, 0.072—0) (spring)	122615	Contributing					No
Edging, stone (411004, 1.539—1.545)	122617	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411004, 1.557—0) (overlook)	122619	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411004, 1.642—0)	122621	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411004, 1.675—0) (view)	122623	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411004, 1.880—0) (rock outcrop)	122625	Undetermined					No
Parking lot (411004, 2.125-3.136)	122627	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Road, crossing (411004, 2.186—2.195) (Skyline Drive)	122629	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411005, 0.623—0) (view)	122631	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411005, 0.764—0) (view)	122633	Undetermined					No

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Edging, stone (411005, 0.777—0.781)	122635	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411005, 1.600—0) (Browntown Trail)	122637	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411006, 0.002—0.007) (Skyline Drive)	122639	Contributing					No
Parking lot (411006, 0.007-0.023)	122641	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, spur crossing (411006, 0.168—0) (Gravel Springs Hut)	122643	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411006, 1.295—1.299) (Skyline Drive)	122645	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411006, 1.568—0) (Keyser Run Fire Road)	122647	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411006, 1.882—0) (overlook)	122649	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411007, 0.001—0)	122651	Undetermined					No
Edging, stone (411007, 0.225—0.233)	122653	Undetermined					No
Edging, stone (411007, 0.409—0.417)	122655	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411007, 0.866—0) (spring)	122657	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411007, 0.894—0) (view)	122659	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, spur crossing (411007, 0.914—0) (view/hang gliding)	122661	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Edging, stone (411007, 0.921—0.934)	122663	Undetermined					No
Edging, stone (411007, 0.973—0.987)	122665	Contributing					No
Edging, stone (411007, 1.033—1.049)	122667	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411007, 1.257—0) (radio tower)	122669	Undetermined					No
Road, crossing (411008, 0.000—0) (Skyline Drive)	122671	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411008, 0.026—0) (Sugarloaf Trail)	122673	Undetermined					No

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Trail, spur crossing (411008, 0.160—0) (to rock outcrop)	122675	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Road, crossing (411008, 0.324—0.329) (Skyline Drive)	122677	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411008, 0.348—0) (parking lot)	122679	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, spur crossing (411008, 0.599—0) (campsite)	122681	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, side crossing (411008, 0.690—0) (Overall Run Trail)	122683	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411008, 1.109—0) (rock outcrop)	122685	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411008, 1.328—1.332) (Skyline Drive)	122687	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411009, 0.238—0) (Piney Branch Trail)	122689	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411009, 0.375—0) (Piney River Road)	122691	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411009, 0.395—0.411) (Piney River Road)	122693	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411009, 0.763—0) (Range View Cabin)	122695	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411009, 0.777—0.785) (Piney Ridge Trail)	122697	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411009, 1.574—1.582) (Skyline Drive)	122699	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411010, 0.037—0) (parking lot)	122701	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411010, 0.357—0) (Elkwallow Wayside)	122703	Undetermined					No
Trail, side crossing (411010, 0.570—0) (Jeremy's Run Trail)	122705	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411011, 1.026—0) (Thornton River Trail)	122707	Contributing					No

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Parking lot (411011, 1.291-1.947)	122709	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, spur crossing (411011, 2.229—0) (Jeremy's Run Overlook)	122711	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411012, 0.285—0) (Byrd's Nest 4 Shelter)	122713	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, side crossing (411012, 0.286—0) (Neighbor Mtn. Trail)	122715	Contributing					No
Edging, stone (411012, 0.307—0.324)	122717	Undetermined					No
Trail, spur crossing (411012, 1.175—0) (spring)	122719	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411013, 0.197—0.204) (Skyline Drive)	122721	Contributing					No
Trail, side crossing (411013, 0.245—0) (Rocky Branch Trail)	122723	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411013, 0.943—0) (view)	122725	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411014, 0.809—0) (Pass Mountain Hut)	122727	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411014, 0.845—0)	122729	Contributing					No
Trail, spur crossing (411014, 1.113—0) (Pass Mountain Hut)	122731	Contributing					No
Road, crossing (411014, 1.140—1.153) (Skyline Drive)	122733	Contributing					No
Edging, stone (411014, 1.238—1.252)	122735	Undetermined					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21: Some sections of stone edging placed along the AT by the CCC to define the trail is disappearing because of erosion and heavy use near Neighbor Mountain Trail. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions:

Numerous stone and log shelters and cabins were built along the AT–North District during the historic period. Shelters were important for trail hikers for overnight stays and during inclement weather, and were often built near springs for access to drinking water. The structures made use of many of the abundant dead chestnut trees in log construction as well as in the porches and rafters.

Early shelters built by the PATC most likely adapted the NPS Rustic style principles that had been in practice in the Western parks since 1916 and that emphasized the use of native materials to harmonize with the landscape and provide a unified design. One of the first shelters built along the AT–North District was Range View Cabin, constructed by the PATC in 1933. The stone and wood cabin was situated east of the AT via a short spur trail in the Piney River area and was accessible from Skyline Drive at milepost (MP) 22 and from the Piney River CCC camp that opened in 1935. The cabin could accommodate eight people and was equipped with cooking utensils, blankets, stove, and outdoor fireplace (PATC Guidebook, 1959:26).

The CCC arrived in 1933 and also began building shelters. Like the PATC shelters, the CCC shelters also featured local stone and logs and incorporated the ideals of the NPS Rustic style which stated that:

“...buildings be in harmony with the natural surroundings and secondary to the landscape...stone and logs used in construction should be in scale with each other and their surroundings and natural counterparts” (McClelland, 1998:335).

The CCC constructed many cabins and shelters in the North District. In 1939-40, the CCC built Pass Mountain Shelter on the east side of the AT. This structure was an open, stone shelter with built-in bunks for six. In 1940, the CCC built Indian Run Shelter east of the AT via an old road and north of Compton Gap. The stone structure had built-in bunk beds for six and was a short tramp from milepost (MP) 10.4 on Skyline Drive. That same year, they built Gravel Springs Shelter (formerly Gravelly Springs) east of the AT via a short spur trail and about 1,500 feet from Skyline Drive's MP 17.5. It too was a stone structure with built-in bunks for six. The CCC built the log Elk Wallow Shelter in 1941 on the west side of the AT about a half-mile walk up to Skyline Drive near MP 24 (PATC Guidebook, 1959: 28-35).

Historic photographs show that the CCC was also responsible for many of the stone walls and steps along the trail and surrounding the shelters. Like the cabins and shelters, the design of these structures also made use of local stone and timber as promoted by the NPS Rustic style principles that were eventually formalized in the U.S. Department of the Interior 1937 manual, *Construction of Trails*. According to the manual, stone retaining walls were to be built below the trail and would not be highly visible to the hiker. Also evident were runs of slab-laid stone steps, particularly along steep parts of the trail and near developed areas such as overlooks.

Existing Conditions:

There have been some changes in buildings and structures since 1942. The historic Indian Run Shelter was converted to a PATC maintenance building in the 1980s. The historic Gravel Springs Shelter, now called Gravel Springs Hut, and historic Pass Mountain Shelter, now called Pass Mountain Hut, are three-sided facilities that allow overnight stays on a first-come, first-served basis. Range View Cabin still is a locked cabin that requires reservations from the PATC (Fig. 22). Elk Wallow Shelter was removed in the 1970s, but two new structures were built. A new cabin called the Tom Floyd Wayside was constructed just outside the park along the AT, and a three-sided stone and wood day-use shelter named Byrd's Nest 4 was built by the NPS in the rustic style.

Numerous historic structures remain evident along the AT–North District, including retaining walls and steps (Fig. 23). CCC-built stone retaining walls exist along the downhill sides of the trail although some are covered by vegetation. Several other retaining walls appear to have been repaired in places, and the character of some of the stone steps suggests that the steps may post-date the historic period. One section of trail crosses a stream that appears to include a collapsed stone bridge abutment, possibly built by CCC (Route 411010) (see Fig. 15).

New types of trail construction have been added in several areas to address erosion and puddling, and employ Appalachian Trail Conservancy trail maintenance techniques. Ramp steps of logs most likely are waterbars that have silted in and now function as steps. More recently, fords have been constructed, which are built of stepping-stones placed to facilitate stream crossings, and turnpikes, which raise the trail up off wet areas (Route 421000.5). Utility corridors also periodically cross the trail, and utility boxes are occasionally visible from the trail. There is a concrete foundation of unknown origin and date.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Cabin (411001, 0.000—0) (Tom Floyd Wayside)	122737	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Steps, ramp (411002, 0.015—0.017)	122739	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wall, retaining (411002, 0.259—0.271)	122741	Contributing					No

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Steps, set-behind (411002, 0.302—0.336)	122743	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411002, 0.428—0.438)	122745	Contributing					No
Steps, rip-rap (411002, 0.441—0.448)	122747	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wall, retaining (411002, 0.450—0.456)	122749	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411002, 0.581—0.589)	122751	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411002, 0.616—0.625)	122753	Contributing					No
Ford (411002.5, 0.364—0)	122755	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Ford (411002.5, 0.160—0.418)	122757	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Steps, slab-laid (411002.5, 0.667—0.671)	122759	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411003, 0.091—0.098)	122761	Contributing					No
Foundation, concrete (411003, 1.485—0)	122763	Undetermined					No
Wall, retaining (411004, 1.589—0)	122765	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411004, 1.765—1.791)	122767	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411004, 1.841—1.846)	122769	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411004, 1.854—1.864)	122771	Contributing					No
Steps, slab-laid (411004, 1.956—1.960)	122773	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411005, 0.783—0.789)	122775	Contributing					No
Hut (411006, 0.170—0) (Gravel Springs Hut)	122777	Contributing					No
Steps, ramp (411007, 0.001—0.033)	122779	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Steps, ramp (411007, 0.178—0.185)	122781	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Steps, stone (411007, 0.193—0.201)	122783	Contributing					No
Steps, stone (411007, 0.261—0.264)	122785	Contributing					No
Steps, stone (411007, 0.302—0.303)	122787	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411007, 0.327—0.332)	122789	Contributing					No

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Steps, stone (411007, 0.460—0.461)	122791	Contributing					No
Wall, rip-rap (411007, 0.501—0.514)	122793	Contributing					No
Wall, retaining (411007, 0.559—0.575)	122795	Undetermined					No
Wall, retaining (411007, 1.219—1.230)	122799	Contributing					No
Steps, stone (411008, 0.007—0.011)	122801	Contributing					No
Utility corridor (411009, 0.547—0.558)	122803	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility corridor (411009, 0.666—0.681)	122805	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Cabin (411009, 0.764—0) (Range View Cabin)	122807	Contributing					No
Utility corridor (411009, 1.276—1.283)	122809	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility corridor (411009, 1.453—1.475)	122811	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility corridor (411009, 1.502—1.511)	122813	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Shelter (411012, 0.287—0) (Byrd's Nest 4)	122815	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility line (411012, 1.114—0)	122817	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Hut (411014, 0.001—0) (Pass Mountain Hut)	122819	Contributing					No
Utility box (411014, 0.598—0)	122821	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility corridor (411014, 0.859—0)	122823	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Turnpike (411014, 0.899—0)	122825	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Steps, ramp (411014, 1.107—1.113)	122827	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 22: The historic Range View Cabin built in 1933 by the PATC on the east side of the AT in the Piney Branch area. (SUNY, 2006)



Figure 23: Slab-laid stone steps, built by the CCC in the 1930s near the north end of Hogback Overlook. The CCC stonework was often built in association with overlooks to accommodate a wider range of hiking abilities. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions:

The AT–North District initially featured many broad views. The AT often passed by or through open fields that allowed for views to peaks within the park, as detailed in two entries in the PATC 1931 Guidebook: “The Trail then winds along crest and down south slope of Five Mile Hill to enter open field at 4.77m. with north and south peaks of Mt. Marshall and The Hogback in full view on skyline” and “At 5.5 m. with The Hogback in full view on skyline, road leaves woods” (PATC, 1931:53-54). Due to its general alignment along the park’s undulating ridgeline, the AT offered views to both the majestic peaks within the park and to the hollows and valleys below, which inspired feelings of walking in the shadows of mountains and discovering their highest peaks.

The NPS Rustic style also encouraged the establishment of specific viewpoints from the trail. “As in road design, the landscape architects helped to locate the trails, capturing scenic features and views...” (McClelland, 1998:233). On the AT–North District, this meant preserving views from rocky outcrops along the trail and across the summits such as Compton Peak, North and South Marshall, the Hogbacks, and Pass Mountain.

Existing Conditions:

Since 1942, vegetation has naturalized throughout the AT–North District and reforested the old farm fields. Due the density of the secondary growth forest, views from the trail are now limited, so much so that the trail is often described as a “green tunnel.” As a result, hikers have created over time short spur trails that lead to nearby rock outcrops or the edges of steep downward slopes where a view can be experienced. It is likely that the obstructed views from the trail were once open views. There still are, however, broad views from North Marshall Mountain, and a view to the west and to the valley below from the trail just below Little Hogback Overlook (Fig. 24). Currently, there is a non-contributing southwestern view into the park from the AT’s northern entry at Possums Rest.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View (411001, 0.001—0.004)	122835	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
View, obstructed (411004, 1.679—0)	122837	Contributing					No
View (411004, 1.809—1.817)	122839	Contributing					No
View, obstructed (411005, 0.784—0)	122841	Contributing					No
View (411007, 0.017—0.050)	122843	Contributing					No
View, obstructed (411007, 0.551—0.553)	122845	Contributing					No
View, obstructed (411007, 0.889—0.927)	122847	Contributing					No
View, obstructed (411008, 0.070—0.122)	122849	Contributing					No
View, obstructed (411013, 0.925—0.946)	122851	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 24: A 44-foot long unobstructed view to the west along the AT near Mt. Marshall, between Hogwallow Gap and Gravel Springs Gap, offers a view to the farmland that lies at the foot of the mountain range. (SUNY, 2006)

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic Conditions:

The AT featured a number of small-scale features for wayfinding and other utilitarian purposes. When the PATC completed the AT–North District in 1930, they had used stone cairns to mark the trail route through open fields and over rocky mountaintops as there often was not a constructed trail bed. When the CCC relocated and reconstructed portions of the AT in the 1930s, a standard trail marker was developed for use along the entire AT in Shenandoah NP. The markers were four-foot-tall, six-inch-wide concrete pillars with embossed zinc banding displaying the AT logo. They were reminiscent of hitching posts and marked the junctions of the AT and the side trails. The PATC also used metal AT markers and nailed them to trees, and developed a system of white-painted blazes on trees to mark the trail that was used throughout the entire AT from Maine to Georgia.

Other small-scale features within the trail corridor included wooden gates and wood and wire fences associated with adjacent farms. Along one stretch, the PATC 1931 Guidebook said, “From second peak (Hogback) the Trail leads down through poor timber to cross wire fence at 14m. and joins road coming in on left” (PATC, 1931:55). Sometimes the AT passed through the gates and fencing and at other times the trail ran alongside farm fields and orchards delineated by fences.

Existing Conditions :

The most predominant small-scale feature on the AT–North District today are the historic concrete and embossed-zinc trail markers (Fig. 25). They continue to serve as a key wayfinding feature for the AT and the side trails in the park. When the markers are in need of repair or replacement, they are replaced in-kind. Many of the old metal AT signs have rusted away or have been acquired by hikers as souvenirs, and have not been replaced. Occasionally, however, one can be discovered nailed to a tree.

White blazes still mark the entire AT from Georgia to Maine and are repainted by the PATC as needed. Other markers indicate utilities with a metal post. Registration boxes and maps occur at major junctions such as when entering the park or entering the designated wilderness area. Maps are displayed vertically under plexiglass within six-foot-tall, four-foot-wide brown metal signpost structures. If a registration box is included, it is attached to the side of the post. Where the trail merges with an access road for utilities, a low yellow-painted chain between two-foot-tall concrete bollards closes off the road.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411001, 0.000—0)	122853	Contributing					No
Registration box (411001, 0.116—0)	122855	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411001, 0.216—0)	122857	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411001, 1.390—0)	122859	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411001, 1.691—0)	122861	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411002, 0.000—0)	122863	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411002.5, 0.000—0)	122865	Contributing					No

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Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411003, 0.000—0)	122867	Contributing					No
Marker, utility (411003, 0.222—0)	122869	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411003, 1.680—0)	122871	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411004, 0.000—0)	122873	Contributing					No
Marker, utility (411004, 1.530—0)	122875	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411004, 2.130—0)	122877	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411005, 0.000—0)	122879	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411006, 0.000—0)	122881	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411006, 0.024—0)	122883	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411006, 0.169—0)	122885	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411006, 1.290—0)	122887	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete) (411006, 1.566—0)	122889	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411007, 0.000—0)	122891	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411007, 0.867—0)	122893	Contributing					No
Gate (411007, 1.275—0)	122895	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411008, 0.025—0)	122897	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411008, 0.325—0)	122899	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411008, 0.688—0)	122901	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.000—0)	122903	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.239—0)	122905	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.391—0)	122907	Contributing					No
Marker, utility (411009, 0.397—0)	122909	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.412—0)	122911	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.762—0)	122913	Contributing					No

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Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 0.787—0)	122915	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411009, 1.572—0)	122917	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411010, 0.000—0)	122919	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411010, 0.041—0)	122921	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411010, 0.571—0)	122923	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411011, 1.025—0)	122925	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411012, 0.000—0)	122927	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411012, 0.284—0)	122929	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411012, 1.176—0)	122931	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411013, 0.000—0)	122933	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411013, 0.207—0)	122935	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411014, 0.000—0)	122937	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411014, 0.808—0)	122939	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411014, 0.846—0)	122941	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411014, 1.140—0)	122943	Contributing					No
Marker, trail (concrete and zinc) (411014, 1.155—0)	122947	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 25: A historic concrete and zinc AT marker circa 1935 near Elkwallow Gap. (SUNY, 2006)

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 6

Next Assessment Due Date: 01/22/2032

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 01/22/2026

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/25/2023

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to the effects of Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed. Planning and scheduling for this update will occur in FYs 2023-2024.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 08/01/2013

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

In consultation with Ann Kain, Cultural Resource Manager, and with concurrence from the Superintendent, the Appalachian Trail landscapes are currently in "good" condition. They show no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, their cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions, and no immediate corrective action is required to maintain their current condition.

According to project statements in PMIS for the AT, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) has annually accomplished trail tread maintenance, construction and rehabilitation of waterbars, check-dams, and drainage ditches, re-grading trail surfaces, vegetation removal, and re-routing/construction of new trail (146690 et al.), and there are future PMIS statements to continue this important work. There is also a project statement for a Cultural Landscape Report for the portion of the AT in the park (147447).

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 08/27/2007

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition. Some trail sections are subject to erosion and improper drainage problems, but typically are diligently addressed by the NPS and PATC.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Adjacent Lands

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Incompatible development beyond the trail corridor and park boundaries may negatively affect views and vistas and the hiking experience.

Date Identified: 09/10/2007

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Erosion of the treadway is potentially the biggest impact on the AT as it can damage the treadway and effect the integrity of stone edging and retaining walls.

Date Identified: 09/10/2007

Type of Impact: Improper Drainage

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: This impact can also affect the condition of the treadway and associated stone structures.

Date Identified: 09/10/2007

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Development

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Addition of incompatible features within the park can affect the character of the resource.

Date Identified: 09/10/2007

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Preservation

Treatment Completed: Yes

Document Type: General Management Plan

Document Date: 1983-01-23

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

Regarding the Appalachian Trail (AT) within Shenandoah National Park, the 1983 General Management Plan states that “efforts will be continued to protect and to minimize possible intrusions.” The AT is also categorized as a “permitted development” of the park’s “Natural Zone” management area (General Management Plan, 1983:77,101).

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography:

Citation Author	Citation Title	Year of Publication	Citation Publisher	Citation Type	Citation Location	Citation Number
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Birchard William and Robert D. Proudman	Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance, Second Edition	2000	Appalachian Trail Conference	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Chew, V. Collins	Underfoot: A Geologic Guide to the Appalachian Trail	1988	Appalachian Trail Conference	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Connors, John A.	Shenandoah National Park: An Interpretive Guide	1988	McDonald and Woodward	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Engle, Reed L.	Everything Was Wonderful: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Shenandoah National Park	1999	Shenandoah National Park Association	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Engle, Reed L.	The Greatest Single Feature...A Sky-line Drive: 75 years of a Mountaintop Motorway	2006	Shenandoah National Park Association	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Foster, Charles H. W.	The Appalachian National Scenic Trail: A Time to be Bold	1987		Narrative		
Hooper, Carol of Robinson and Associates, Inc.	National Register Nomination: Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase #1)	1997		Narrative		

Appalachian Trail - North District
Shenandoah National Park

Lambert, Darwin	Shenandoah National Park Administrative History	1979		Narrative		
Lambert, Darwin	The Undying Past of Shenandoah National Park	1989		Both Graphic And Narrative		
MacKaye, Benton	An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning	1921	Journal of the American Institute of Architects	Narrative		
MacKaye, Benton	Progress Toward the Appalachian Trail	1922	Appalachia	Narrative		
Maddux, McClung and Peyton	National Register Nomination: Skyline Drive Historic District	1996		Narrative		
McClelland, Linda Flint	Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction	1998		Both Graphic And Narrative		
National Park Service, Denver Service Center	General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan: Shenandoah National Park	1983		Both Graphic And Narrative		
National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design	Progress Chart, March 1, 1935 – April 1, 1935 Shenandoah National Park (4th Enrollment Period, Narrative Reports)	1935		Both Graphic And Narrative		
National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design	Master Plan 1936, Shenandoah National Park, Trail System-Recreational	1936		Both Graphic And Narrative		
National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation	NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Piney River, Shenandoah National Park	2006		Both Graphic And Narrative		

Appalachian Trail - North District
Shenandoah National Park

National Park Service	National Park Service, Shenandoah National Park http://www.nps.gov/shen/naturescience/htm	2006	NPS	Both Graphic And Narrative		
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Guide to the Paths in the Blue Ridge	1931	Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Narrative		
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Guide to the Paths in the Blue Ridge	1934	Potomac Appalachian Trail club	Narrative		
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Supplement to Guide to the Paths in the Blue Ridge	1935	Potomac Appalachian Trail club	Narrative		
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Guide to the Paths in the Blue Ridge	1959	Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Narrative		
Robinson, Judith Stephanie Foell, Tim Kerr of Robinson Associates and Reed Engle, Shenandoah National Park	National Register Nomination: Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase #2)	2002		Narrative		
Schaeffer, Lee	Appalachian Trail Guide to Shenandoah National Park with Side Trails, 12th Edition	1999	Potomac Appalachian Trail Club	Both Graphic And Narrative		
United States Department of the Interior	Emergency Conservation Work, Project Training – Construction of Trails	1937		Both Graphic And Narrative		
United States Department of the Interior	Emergency Conservation Work, Project Training – Brick and Stone Work	1937		Both Graphic And Narrative		

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – Map 9: Appalachian Trail and other trails in Shenandoah National Park, Northern Section, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1963.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – Shenandoah National Park (Northern Section), Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Map Number 9, Third Edition, 1941.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – USGS Chester Gap Quadrangle 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic), 1967.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – USGS Bentonville Quadrangle 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic), 1966.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – USGS Thornton Gap Quadrangle 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic), 1965.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Land Acquisition Division, Appalachian National Scenic Trail: Segments 423-428, 1984.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: List – Shenandoah National Park Vascular Plants, Shenandoah National Park.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Interview - Shawn Green, Park Trails Coordinator and South District Resource Specialist, Shenandoah National Park, July 2006, Karen Cowperthwaite, State University of New York, 2006.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Map – Map 9: Appalachian Trail and other trails in Shenandoah National Park, North District, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Revised 2005.

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
SHEN_AT Landscape-AT North-AT Central-AT South_CLI Updates Notes_2026.pdf		

Source