

Section Maintenance Guidelines

COVID ERA

In addition to monthly maintenance trips, some folks “adopt” a portion of the ODATC section and perform routine maintenance and scouting as their schedule permits. The 19.1 mile ODATC portion of the AT is broken into 13 sections. (See ODACT Section Descriptions) The Jack Albright Loop, while not the AT, is the 14th section. If you are interested in Section Maintenance, please let the Trail Supervisor know.

Section Maintainers are an essential, and much appreciated, resource. But your health is more important. Volunteer work is optional. The choice is made at your discretion. If you choose not to participate now please join us at a later date. That decision is completely understandable. Your decisions and any information shared with ODATC will remain confidential. Should you elect to perform section maintained, please follow the guidelines presented below.

Assessment

You should perform a self-assessment before you leave for your trip. This is for your own protection and those that you might come in contact with to and from the work site and while on the Trail. You might consider completing the CDC Self Checker that is described at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> and reading the CDC guidelines on how to protect yourself and others which are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Do not attend attempt trail maintenance if you have any of symptoms of COVID-19 or have had exposure to a confirmed case within the 14 days prior to a work trip. Symptoms include, but may not be limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If you receive a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 within 14-days after a section work, you are required to disclose this to the Trail Supervisor within 24-hours of discovery. The ODATC contact is (Mark Heede, off2themnts@gmail.com, 804-928-8757).

Cell phones generally work within our section of the AT. If you begin to feel ill during your section work stop working, let your contacts know of the situation, and return home. If the situation becomes an emergency, below is emergency contact information:

Emergency Contact Information

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Augusta Medical Center

78 Medical Center Dr.
Fishersville, VA 22939
(540) 932-4444

[Augusta Medical Center Emergency Department](#)

University Hospital

1215 Lee St.
Charlottesville, VA 22908
(434) 924-2231

[University Hospital Emergency Department](#)

[NPS.gov](#) / [Park Home](#) / [Plan Your Visit](#) / [Basic Information](#) / [Emergency Information](#)

Emergency Information

IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 911.

Missing Persons & Overdue Hikers

To report a missing person or overdue hiker, call (828) 298-2491.

Blue Ridge Parkway/National Park Service Contacts

24-hour emergency number: 800-727-5928

Non-emergency (Staffed 0700-2200): 828-298-2491

Jonathan Holter

Supervisory LEO
Blue Ridge Parkway
Ridge District / Peaks Office
85919 Blue Ridge Parkway
Bedford, VA 24523
(828)-348-3553 (Office)
(540)-537-6117 (Cell)

U.S. Forest Service Contacts

David Whitmore: Recreation Program Manager

540-460-2944 (Cell)
540-291-2188 (Office)

Plinio Beres

Volunteer and Service Programs Coordinator
631-707-4872 (Cell)
540-291-2188 (Office)

Tunde Oyewole

USFS Law Enforcement
540-676-1670 (Cell)
540-291-2188 (Office)

Requirements

In order to participate in section maintenance all A.T. volunteers will need to view a short video and complete an online acknowledgement found at www.appalachiantrail.org/volunteeracknowledgement. This is a requirement for volunteers working under Volunteer in Parks (VIP), on APPA and state lands, to demonstrate they have read and acknowledge and agree to follow actions to improve safety found in the COVID-19 JHA and training.

You will find additional resources from the Adaptive Recovery Task Force related to trail work operations and safety during COVID-19 at <https://appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer/safety/covid-19/> . This page includes:

- Guidelines for AT Volunteers and Staff
- Decision Flowchart for Adaptive Recovery Activities
- Risk Continuum
- COVID JH
- Resources for Self-Assessment (attached)

Do not clean either the privy or the shelter.

Do not pick up trash.

Vehicle Operations

Please do not carpool with anyone other than a household member. Despite environmental impacts of single-rider trips, public health takes priority.

You should also weigh the risk of potential exposure by just traveling to the Trail. When traveling to or from the Trail for work trips, avoid and generally minimize stops for food, gas, restrooms, etc.

When you arrive at the spot where you are meeting your co-worker, leave plenty of spacing between cars and be alert as you enter and exit your vehicle.

As much as we may miss our teammates, prevent risk of transmitting COVID-19 by avoiding face-to-face and immediate contact (such as shaking hands, holding hands, or high-fives).

General Precautionary Hygiene

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

When handwashing facilities are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Be self-sufficient. Bring ample food, water, clothing, washable gloves, tissues, soap/hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), and a CDC approved cloth facemask. Do not share items and wash your hands throughout the day.

Use your own tools when possible. If you use Club tools from the toolshed, they should be disinfected before and after use. Per CDC recommendations, unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronavirus when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution in well-ventilated area by mixing: 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. Cleaning supplies (bleach, hand sanitizer, biodegradable soap) and water can be found in the tools shed.

Tools should not be shared during the section work.

You should also consider bringing a garbage bag and remove possibly contaminated work clothes after the event.

Masks are to be worn when social distance cannot be maintained. You are encouraged to wear masks at all times. There are extra masks in the tool shed if you need one.

Distancing

Maintain social distancing (6' minimum) between co-workers, visitors, and especially bears. If this is not possible, re-consider the work to be performed or move to another location.

Work in less crowded and more remote areas to minimize exposure.

Work in small groups, ideally no more than two or three.

If an area become crowded with hikers or other persons move operations to an alternative location. If this cannot be done while maintain safe operations, cease work and return to the vehicles.

As always:

- Check the weather forecast and dress appropriately.
- Wear substantial shoes or boots, long pants, dress for the weather, and consider bug spray (mostly for ticks).
- Pack food and be sure to bring plenty to drink. Start hydrating before you arrive. (Do not share food or drinks.)
- Review the applicable JHA's and use required PPE.
- Follow check-in and check-out procedures.

Thank you for reviewing these guidelines and routine changes. I trust that you understand why these are in place and the importance of adhering to these measures.

Again, thank you.

Mark Heede
Trail Supervisor

July 2020