



**Trail Champions**  
**The Campaign for the Maine Trail Center**  
**Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC)**  
***Our Story***

**The mission of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club:**

Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) is a volunteer managed nonprofit organization, created in 1935, to assume responsibility for the management, maintenance and protection of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in Maine. We are responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of 267 miles of the A.T. footpath, over 60-miles of related side trails, 43 campsites, and for monitoring National Park Service lands (34,000 acres).

The A.T., in Maine, which charges no fees, is the largest network of hiking trails in the State. Hikers spend over 92,000 days on the trail each year. Maine residents and families, visitors from around the nation and foreign countries, college and youth groups, and long-distance backpackers enjoy this resource. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club provides opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts to camp, hike and also to participate in the stewardship of public lands. MATC volunteers donate more than 25,000 hours annually.

**MATC's Key Programs:**

***Footpath Maintenance/Corridor Monitoring*** – Volunteers adopt over 200 trail maintainer and corridor monitoring sections along Appalachian Trail lands. They clear downed trees, trim brush, build bridges, paint blazes, clean-out waterbars, and monitor boundary lands.

***Campsites*** - MATC volunteers maintain campsites including shelters, fire pits, tenting areas and privies (toilets). We are currently engaged in a multi-year effort to replace 43 pit-privies with composting privies that comply with accessibility standards.

***Trail Building Skills*** - MATC supports our volunteers by teaching skills such as: bridge building, -waterbar construction, shelter building, privy maintenance and chainsaw safety.

***A.T. Ridgerunners*** –Ridgerunners provide Leave No Trace guidelines to up to 10,000 hikers on the trail each year. The primary focus of messaging is towards youth groups and long-distance backpackers at popular destinations such as the Gulf Hagas Preserve, Saddleback and Bigelow Mountains.

***The Maine Trail Crew*** – Since, 1991, every summer two crews restore heavily impacted trail sections. The increasing volume of boot traffic on the A.T. and severe storms induced by climate change have caused accelerated erosion on Maine's thin glacial soils degrading the natural environment. Our trail crews mitigate impacts through stone-work and other erosion control techniques. Crews are made-up of skilled leaders, interns and volunteers. They are transported to remote sites where they tent before returning to base-camp to rest and reorganize between projects. The value of the Maine Trail Crew's work since 1991 is \$1.7 million with a current replacement value of \$2.2 million.

### **Why we urgently need a new Maine Trail Center:**

The lack of a suitable permanent, centralized, multipurpose facility from which to operate has hampered our efficiency and created hardship. Our Trail Crew's current base-camp, located on a small island in a lake in Dover-Foxcroft, lacks safe drinking water and is accessible only by a raft. Crew members have traveled to a community center for showers and to wash clothes. This property has been sold and without an alternative we risk suspending our Trail Crew program. MATC has suffered the burden of relocating the Trail Crew 5 times in the past 30 years. None of these properties have fully met our needs.

### **The purpose of the Maine Trail Center project:**

- To provide a permanent, stable and enduring home-base for the organization.
- To increase MATC's capacity to maintain hundreds of miles the A.T. and address a backlog of maintenance and restoration needs in backcountry areas.
- To provide better logistical support for the Trail Crew, Ridgerunner and volunteer programs.
- To attract and retain more volunteers from diverse communities.
- To provide training and work-force development for volunteers, staff, students, land trusts and other conservation organizations.
- To increase opportunities for the public to access and enjoy the Appalachian Trail.

### **The Maine Trail Center will be a resource for other conservation groups.**

In a survey of the Maine Land Trust Network, many of the state's 80-plus land trusts expressed a need for training, including in: trail design, building, maintenance, restoration and chainsaw use. There is no single site that offers training in these skills anywhere in Maine; the Trail Center will fill that void. *We have endorsements from multiple organizations for example, from: Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, Maine Conservation Corps, Somerset Woods Trustees, Town of Skowhegan, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Unity College, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, International Appalachian Trail, Trust for Public Land, and The Nature Conservancy.*

### **Why Skowhegan?**

MATC identified a 55-acre tract of land in Skowhegan ideal for the new Trail Center. It is centrally located to the A.T., provides varied terrain and a sustainably managed woodlot that will offer excellent training opportunities. It is convenient to airports and bus stations which is critical for volunteers who travel from afar. Skowhegan is a major town with shops, a convenient grocery store, restaurants and services within walking distance of the new Trail Center—a great benefit to crew members often without transportation.

### **The Vision and Planning of the Maine Trail Center:**

Trail Champions is a creative solution to a community problem and a thoughtfully planned project. We consulted with architects, engineers, fundraisers and conducted a feasibility study. The Center will contain a meeting space, kitchen, housing, showers, laundry and an office. A maintenance building will provide storage and a workshop. The Center will meet the needs of the Trail Crew while being a flexible space for a wide range of organizational functions, meetings and trainings. It will include green energy design; The Center will be constructed to current building and life-safety codes.

### **Recent Changes to the Maine Trail Center project:**

MATC has revised plans resulting in a less expensive project, but one that will fill all of our needs and be appropriate for the economic times during a global pandemic. We have decreased both the size of the facility and the campaign goal. The original project budget was

\$3,457,677; with a smaller facility, our fundraising goal is now \$1,374,500. Some changes for the Center include:

- We are now planning to operate on a seasonal basis. Heat pumps will operate in the main building during the spring and fall.
- The redesigned buildings are 70% smaller and will have a passive solar design including southern exposure, a concrete thermal mass, and high-standard insulation. Photovoltaic generation of electricity can be added later.
- Crew Quarters will house 24 people in two bunkhouses and 10 people in tents rather than three all-season buildings. Overnight capacity will remain at 32 beds.
- The seasonal design will not require separate housing for a caretaker.
- The office space will be defined by partitions rather than in a separate room.
- Computer stations will be eliminated, but we will provide Wi-Fi service for staff and volunteers.
- The two parking lots will be combined, integrated with the driveway (which will be 15% shorter) and surfaced with recycled asphalt (no pavement).

#### **Early success with the *Trail Champions Campaign*.**

With 100% support from the MATC Board of Directors the campaign has raised funds from individuals, business and foundations. We have a supportive relationship with the Somerset Woods Trustees who are providing the land for the Center.

#### ***Trail Champions Goal:***

Building Construction	\$390,300
Driveway	\$231,000
Utilities	\$163,200
Maintenance Fund	\$50,000
Contingency	\$140,000
Campaign Expense (funds expended 2011 to 2021)	\$400,000
Total expense	<u>\$1,374,500</u>
Raised	\$733,458
<b>Balance to raise</b>	<b>\$641,042</b>

In 2021, we will continue to submit grant applications for funding to build the Center and solicit donations from individuals and businesses. We will complete the capital campaign by December 31, 2021 and begin construction the following Spring. The Maine Trail Center will meet the needs and goals of Maine Appalachian Trail Club and provide a place dedicated to sharing trail building knowledge with the conservation community. The increased sustainable capacity for trail work and training opportunities provided by our new home will have a transformative impact on our organization.

#### **Contact Information:**

**Lester C. Kenway**, Maine Appalachian Trail Club President

Phone - 207-947-2723    Email – [campaignchair@matc.org](mailto:campaignchair@matc.org)

**Holly Sheehan**, Maine Appalachian Trail Club Coordinator

Phone - 207-518-1779    Email - [campaign@matc.org](mailto:campaign@matc.org)

*MATC is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*