The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association

Appalachian Trail
Thru-Hikers’ Companion

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Editor

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
Contents

Foreword ................................................................. iv
About the Companion ................................................ v
Using the Companion ................................................ vii
Issues on the Trail ..................................................... ix

On the Appalachian Trail
Getting to the Termini .............................................. 1
Georgia ................................................................. 9
North Carolina ......................................................... 21
Great Smoky Mountains National Park ..................... 31
North Carolina & the Tennessee Border .................. 39
Tennessee .............................................................. 53
Virginia: Part 1 (Southwest) ..................................... 59
   Part 2 (Central) ..................................................... 73
   Part 3 (Shenandoah National Park) ...................... 93
   Part 4 (Northern) ............................................... 109
West Virginia ......................................................... 115
Maryland ............................................................ 121
Pennsylvania ......................................................... 127
New Jersey .......................................................... 149
New York ............................................................. 157
Connecticut .......................................................... 169
Massachusetts ....................................................... 179
Vermont ............................................................. 193
New Hampshire .................................................... 209
Maine ................................................................. 229

Appendices
Post Offices along the Appalachian Trail .................. 255
Hostels, Camping & Showers .................................. 261
Equipment Manufacturers & Distributors ................ 264
ALDHA Membership Form .................................... 267
About the Companion

The Companion is compiled, written, and edited by volunteers of the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) and published by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) as a service to those seeking to explore the Trail. It is intended for those making thru-hikes but is also valuable for those taking shorter section-hikes or overnight backpacking trips. The Companion provides you with details on shelters, water sources, post offices, hostels, campgrounds, lodging, groceries, restaurants, outfitters, and other related services along the Trail. In addition, the Companion offers information of historical significance about places you pass through while hiking the A.T. Unlike commercial guides, this book benefits from the latest information from volunteers who measure, maintain, and manage the Trail and those who hike it regularly.

Due to publication deadlines, we cannot guarantee that the information in this book will not change by the time you arrive in an area, despite the efforts of volunteers to acquire the most up-to-date information. Businesses close or change hours, hostels change rates and policies, and the Trail itself is subject to relocation. This edition was produced in the fall of 2006.

As you walk, talk to other hikers, and read shelter registers. The Conservancy’s Web site periodically posts updates, at <www.appalachiantrail.org/companionupdates>.

Inclusion in this book is not an endorsement by ALDHA or ATC, but rather a listing of services available. Likewise, the businesses listed in this book do not pay for “advertisements” but are listed because of their proximity to the Trail.

ALDHA members do field research for each section of the Trail and are instrumental in gathering information. Without the hard work of the following ALDHA field editors, other volunteers, and ATC staff members, this book would not have been possible: Georgia and North Carolina—Ann Thomas (Timber Pixie), Scott Dowling (Pilgrim); North Carolina and Tennessee—Lamar Powell (Hopeful), Robert Sylvester (Sly), Sue Kanoy (Bearcharmer); Southwest Virginia—David Blair (Lone Wolf), Charles Davidson (Chase), Vaughn Thomas (Virginia Creeper); Central Virginia—Leonard Adkins (Habitual Hiker), Laurie Foot (Happy Feet); Northern Virginia—David and Sue Hennel (Gourmet Dave), Jim Austin (Skyline), Gary Ticknor (Greenbriar); West Virginia and Maryland—Mike Wingear (Wingheart), Tom Evans (Flatlander), ATC Information Services Manager Laurie Potteiger; Southern Pennsylvania—Bob and Tricia Dudley (Greyowl), ATC Mid-
Atlantic Office Manager John Luthy; John Wolf (Lobo); 
Northern Pennsylvania—Mary Ann Nissley (M.A. from Pa.), Sarah Woodruff (Blip); New Jersey—Bruce Gregoire (Navigator), John O’Mahoney (Johnny O’); New York—Michelle Ray (Bird-legs); Connecticut & Massachusetts—Henry (Key-Mho-Saw-Bee) and Carla (Mother Hen) LaFleur, Kevin Reardon (Slider), Megan Robson (Nature Girl); Vermont—Smith Edwards (Old Ridge Runner), Dave Hardy, Pete Antos-Ketchum; New Hampshire—Jack Tarlin (Baltimore Jack), Art Cloutman (Gabby); Maine—J.W. Gordon (TJ aka Teej), Sandie Sabaka (Bluebeareee), Nadine Villani (Lobstergrrrl). Foreword by Cynthia Taylor-Miller (Mrs. Gorp). Volunteers Marta Clark (Five-Leafed Clover), Jim Eagleton (Rambler), Greg Paxton, and Mark Suiters (Stumpknocker) and ATC Information Assistant John Fletcher also provided valuable information on town and Trail changes. Mileage figures are based on information from the 2007 edition of the Appalachian Trail Data Book.

Sadly, on July 20, 2006, three-year-veteran field editor and ALDHA member Cheryl Hoover (Amber) passed away.

Trail-maintaining clubs are listed throughout the book. You may use the addresses provided to contact the clubs with any comments, suggestions, or feedback. Although often a thru-hiker will leave an additional one, the official shelter registers are the property of the maintaining club and should not be removed by hikers. The register is a useful tool for information on Trail conditions and other things that are happening in its section of the A.T. It may also help locate a hiker in case of an emergency. If you wish to donate a register (assuming that one doesn’t already exist), you should include a note asking the maintaining club to forward it to you when it’s filled.

GETTING TO THE TRAIL

Section-hikers looking for shuttle services should check the business and individual listings for the area in which they plan to hike. Also, check with ATC at (304) 535-6331; <info@appalachiantrail.org>; or check the ATC’s A.T. shuttle and public-transportation list available at <www.appalachiantrail.org/shuttles>. (See page 1 for an important note on shuttles.) This same Web site will link to information on Trailhead parking.

Using the Companion

MAKING THE COMPANION YOUR OWN

Do not be afraid to abuse your paper Companion. While it has considerable information, it has been suggested that it could be made smaller. Unfortunately, no one agrees on what should be left out. So, here is an idea—do your own editing. Rip out what you don’t want, use a hole-punch, a pair of scissors, or a highlighter. Send sections ahead to mail drops; mail completed sections home. Do some old-fashioned cut-and-paste. Make this book your own. Or, go to ALDHA’s Web site, <www.aldha.org>, download an electronic copy of the Companion (in Adobe Acrobat PDF format), and print out only the pages you need.

READING THE COMPANION

Road-crossings and Trailheads are indicated with this icon.

Towns and post offices (including P.O. hours) are printed in bold type. A listing of post offices can also be found on pages 255–260.

East and West—Regardless of compass direction, “east” or “E” and “west” or “W” are used as they are in the A.T. Data Book: “East” is to the northbounder’s right and the southbounder’s left, when referring to the Trail.

Services—Major categories are indicated with bold italics, specifically groceries, lodging, hostels, campgrounds, doctors or hospitals, restaurants, Internet access, laundries, veterinarians, and outfitters.

Trail-Maintaining Clubs—Information is provided at the beginning of their section and is offset by two rules.

Abbreviations—

In the body of the text:

M—Monday
Tu—Tuesday
W—Wednesday
Th—Thursday
F—Friday
Sa—Saturday
Su—Sunday
FedEx—Federal Express
USPS—U.S. Postal Service
UPS—United Parcel Service
a/c—air conditioning
2,000-MILER CERTIFICATES
ATC recognizes anyone who reports completion of the entire Trail as a “2,000-Miler” with a certificate. The term “2,000-Miler” is a matter of tradition and convenience, based upon the original estimated length of the Trail. ATC policy is to operate on the honor system, assuming that those who apply for 2,000-Miler status have hiked all of the A.T. between Katahdin and Springer, not just 2,000 miles of it. In the event of an emergency, such as a flood, forest fire, or an impending storm on an exposed high-elevation stretch, blue-blazed trails or officially required roadwalks are considered viable substitutes for the white-blazed route. Issues of sequence, direction, speed, length of time, or whether one carries a pack or not are not considered. ATC assumes that those who apply have made an honest effort to walk the entire Trail, even if they did not actually walk past every white blaze. Please respect those standards!

HUNTING SEASONS
Hunters are rarely an issue for northbounders, but southbounders need to be aware of the hunting seasons, which may begin as early as mid-Oct, as you progress south toward Springer Mountain. Hunting is legal along many parts of the Trail, and ATC’s Web site lists local hunting seasons. Wearing bright (“blaze”) orange is a necessity in fall, winter, and spring.

SAFETY—OTHER HUMANS
If you tell friends you are planning a long-distance hike on the A.T., one of the first questions is likely to be, “Aren’t you afraid? What will you do to protect yourself?” There are dangers in the backcountry, but, because of mass-media publicity and the popularity of backpacking, your friend was likely speaking of the dangers posed by other humans. Violent crimes have occurred on the Trail, but with a frequency rate of less than three every ten years; this is on a footpath that more than three million people use for some period of time each year.

The difference on the A.T. and in any wilderness setting—other than people’s expectations—is that you only have yourself and your instincts for protection. That means you must use common sense to avoid potential dangers.

It is best not to hike alone, but, if you choose to, a few precautions can help keep you safe:
- Don’t tell strangers where you are headed or plan to camp for the night.
- If you run into a suspicious person, consider moving on to another location.
• Avoid camping or staying at shelters that are within a mile of a road crossing.
• Leave an itinerary of your trip with family or friends.
• If you use a Trail name, make sure the folks back home know what it is.
• Even with a partner, don’t be lulled into a false sense of security. Two or more can be as vulnerable.
• Trust your gut. Always.

Eliminate opportunities for theft. Don’t bring jewelry. Keep wallets and money on your person rather than in your pack or tent. Leaving a pack unattended at trailheads or shelters is risky, even when it is hidden, and also may attract wildlife in search of food.

ATC and most long-distance hikers strongly discourage the carrying of a gun on the Trail. Guns are not permitted on national park lands (40 percent of the route) and in many other jurisdictions through which the Trail passes. Report any crime or harassment immediately to the local police and ATC. Contact ATC at (304) 535-6331 or <incident@appalachiantrail.org>.

SAFETY—MOTHER NATURE
While natural dangers are inherent to backpacking, many of the dangers are misunderstood. For some, a hike in the woods conjures images of snakebites and bear attacks—both rare. Less dramatic threats to safety, such as contaminated water, dehydration, and hypothermia, afflict far more hikers—particularly those who are unprepared.

If you are unfamiliar with backcountry travel, ask questions, and read and learn about backpacking safely. Learn about dehydration, heat exhaustion, and hypothermia; learn safe ways of fording rivers and purifying water; learn how to avoid lightning, rabies, and Lyme disease—the most common threats to a hiker’s well-being. A good resource for learning more about these topics is the ATC publication Step by Step: An Introduction to Walking the A.T. Before starting an end-to-end hike, take shorter backpacking trips until you feel confident in the backcountry. Finally, information and experience are useless if you forget one thing—common sense.

LYME DISEASE
Ticks that transmit disease may be anywhere there is vegetation. In the South, ticks can be active year-round. In the Northeast, the heightened risk for Lyme disease (LD) is Apr to Jul and Oct to Nov, which coincides with the timeframe thru-hikers pass through the states with the highest reported cases of the disease.

States along the Trail with the highest reported LD cases for 2005 were Connecticut, followed by New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland, but cases have been reported in all fourteen Trail states. See <www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/ld_incidence.htm>.

LD is a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (formerly known as “deer” ticks). Hikers should watch carefully for symptoms of LD, which may include “flu-like” reactions of fever, headache, chills, and fatigue and a characteristic “bulls-eye” skin rash, called erythema migrans, at the site of the tick attachment. Hikers should seek immediate medical attention for treatment. If left untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system. Most cases of LD can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.

Steps hikers can take to prevent LD include using insect repellent with Deet for exposed skin; spraying clothing items with the insecticide permethrin; removing ticks promptly; conducting a daily full-body tick check, including the head, underarms, and groin area; minimizing contact with high grass, brush, and woody shrubs; wearing long pants tucked into your socks; and wearing long sleeves, tucking your shirt into your pants to keep ticks off your torso.

LEAVE NO TRACE
Each year, more people venture into the woods to escape the stresses of modern life. Unfortunately, more people visiting our parklands puts greater pressure on our fragile natural areas. In order to preserve and protect our wilderness, please follow guidelines developed by Leave No Trace, Inc., and endorsed by ATC and ALDHA. By practicing the suggestions below, you can help decrease the effect you have on the areas through which you hike and avoid “loving the wilderness to death.”

• Plan ahead and prepare. You’re more likely to damage natural areas if you haven’t brought the right equipment or planned where you’re going to stay and go. Know local regulations. Remember: Shelters may be full, so bring a tent or tarp.
• Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Stay on the Trail, and don’t cut switchbacks. Keep off fragile Trailside areas such as those in alpine zones. Camp in designated spots and established campsites. If you must camp elsewhere, do so out of sight of any trails, and find a spot that has not been used before, at least 200 feet from lakes and streams, being sure to leave it the way you found it. Camping in undesignated areas that show signs of use destroys ground cover and compacts soil, increasing erosion and damaging habitat.
Dispose of waste properly. Pack out all trash and food waste, including that left behind by others. Do not bury trash or food, and do not try to burn packaging materials in campfires. Bury human and pet waste six inches deep in a “cathole” at least 200 feet from trail or water. All feminine-hygiene products should be packed out. Within 200 feet of any open water, avoid using soap to wash yourself or your equipment. When using soap, use biodegradable soap, and properly dispose of the “gray water.”

Leave what you find. Don’t take flowers or other sensitive natural resources. Don’t disturb historical artifacts, such as cellar holes, arrowheads, etc.

Minimize campfire impacts. Know local regulations, which may prohibit campfires. Use a portable stove instead of a fire. If you must build a fire, make a low-impact fire, use only downed wood, use existing designated fire pits or rings, and don’t add rocks to existing rings. Extinguish the fire before breaking camp. Drown out fires, and empty the fire pit. Scatter leaves and twigs to remove any signs that you have been there.

Respect wildlife. Don’t feed or disturb wildlife. Store food properly to avoid attracting bears and rodents. If you bring a pet, keep it leashed.

Be considerate of other visitors. Limit overnight groups to 10 or fewer persons; 25 on day trips. Minimize noise and intrusive behavior. Share shelters and other facilities.

More than three million people use a portion of the Trail each year, and, unfortunately, not all of them are aware of the Leave No Trace camping ethic. Those who are less knowledgeable will observe you (respecting you as a long-distance hiker and, supposedly, an expert wilderness traveler) and your practices. Set a good example. If you see an opportunity to teach others, do so. Aside from ATC and club ridgerunners, no one else is out on the Trail teaching Leave No Trace camping. If Leave No Trace camping is not practiced by all, the A.T. will quickly lose its beauty.

KENNEBEC RIVER FERRY SERVICE AND BAXTER STATE PARK

It is your responsibility to honor the established hours of operation for the free ferry service across the Kennebec River between the dates of May 18 and Oct 8, 2007; see page 241 for further details. Do not call from the Trail on your cellphone and expect “special” off-hours service or service out of the range of set dates. Due to weather concerns, hikers should do their parts and plan accordingly to reach Baxter State Park as early as possible. We suggest reaching BSP by Oct 1. After Oct 15, there is no camping inside BSP. See page 248 for posted park cut-off times and further information.

TOWN CONDUCT

As a result of tension between hikers and some communities adjacent to the Appalachian Trail, ALDHA implemented an “Endangered Services Campaign” to educate hikers to be responsible for their actions. In town, consider yourself a walking, talking billboard for all backpackers and the Appalachian Trail. Your individual actions have a direct impact on the businesses that provide services for the long-distance hiking community.

The success of a thru-hiker’s journey depends on Trail towns and the services they provide. Remember that you are a guest of the community, no matter how large or small, even though you may be pumping money into the local economy. Be courteous to those who make their livings there, and remember that your conduct will have a bearing on how well—or badly—the next hiker is treated. As with so many other things in life, we are never truly alone. You are an ambassador for all those who follow you on the Trail.

Nothing can turn a person or town against backpacking and the Trail quicker than an arrogant, smelly, and ill-behaved hiker. As one poster for ALDHA’s Endangered Services Campaign says, “Just because you live like an animal does not mean you have to act like one.”

In recent years, some business owners have reduced services or closed their doors to hikers simply because some hikers wouldn’t respect their rules. The good people who provide services to hikers have been burned, abused, and downright ripped-off by that small percentage of hikers who ruin it for others by their unacceptable behavior.

Put your best foot forward, and be a part of the movement that will reverse the trend and ensure that no one closes another door because of bad hiker behavior.

DONATIONS

Many of the hostels listed in this book suggest donations for the services provided. This does not mean you can take advantage of the generosity provided by your host and leave nothing in return. A good conscience requires you to leave something.

GIVING BACK
If you would like to give back what was freely given to you while you stayed in Trail towns, volunteer your time, effort, or money to the services and people who supported you. Consider contacting a Trail-maintaining club and working with them to organize or participate in a work trip, Trail-construction project, or regular maintenance. Every year, ALDHA sponsors work trips to Trail establishments. The Konnarock and other ATC crews seek volunteers during the summer, and often you will pass a Trail club working busily as you head along the path. Contacting Trail clubs may also provide you with opportunities to work with experienced maintainers and Trail-builders. Giving back to the Trail and community helps keep services available and shows those who provide hiker services that their good-will is appreciated by the hiking community.

H I T C H H I K I N G
Hitchhiking is illegal in certain states. It is your responsibility to know the motor-vehicle law as it applies to hitchhiking for the state through which you are hiking, to avoid being fined or hitching into worse trouble. Hitchhiking poses the risk of being picked up by an unsafe driver or by someone who is personally dangerous. Hitchhiking is prohibited on interstate highways, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park. In 2006, several hikers were cited while hitchhiking in New York and New Jersey.

H I K I N G W I T H D O G S
If you choose to hike with your canine companion, treat your dog as another backpacker. That means bury its waste as you would your own, and carry a water bowl so your dog won’t drink directly from Trailside water sources. You are responsible for your dog, and you will be held accountable if it decides to steal another hiker’s food or flop its wet body on another hiker’s equipment. Keep your pet under control in camp, on the Trail, and in towns. Many hostels and other accommodations don’t allow dogs, and, in those that do, a dog does not belong in the communal kitchen and sleeping areas, where other hikers may not wish to share space with your dog. Closely monitor your pet’s feet for torn flesh, bleeding, and other sores. After the weather warms up, check for ticks. It is best to keep your dog on a leash at all times. On national-park lands (40 percent of the Trail), regulations require it. Most post offices allow only guide dogs inside. Carry current rabies-vaccine certification papers in addition to a tag on the dog’s collar. Dogs are prohibited in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the zoo area of Bear Mountain State Park in New York, and Maine’s Baxter State Park. (For information on kennels near GSMNP and BSP, see entries for those sections.)

A P P A L A C H I A N T R A I L M U S E U M S O C I E T Y
Efforts are under way to establish an Appalachian Trail museum near the geographic center of the Trail. A group has been working on this project for several years and, in 2002, formed the Appalachian Trail Museum Society (ATMS). The group includes representatives of ATC and ALDHA and also is working with the National Park Service. The society is collecting items for eventual display in the museum and monetary donations. The kinds of things the society seeks, besides gear, include discarded Trail signs, registers, A.T. journals, documents, and pictures. They are also in need of volunteers to help in many areas. Please contact ATMS if you’d like to help, at <www.atmuseum.org>.

The Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association (ALDHA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1983 to promote the welfare of the Appalachian Trail and the Trail community. Every year, ALDHA conducts work weekends on the Trail, speaks out on issues concerning the A.T. and its environs, and collects the information for this guidebook. In past years, the group has tackled such issues as backpacker etiquette and environmental threats. More recently, it has worked with various clubs and hostels to maintain areas widely used by hikers. ALDHA is open to anyone (even if your longest hike is a walk around the block at home); there are no membership requirements. To find out more, e-mail ALDHA at <aldha@aldha.org>, or write to 10 Benning Street, PMB 224, West Lebanon, NH 03784. Visit our Web site at <www.aldha.org>. A membership form is included at the back of this book.

T H E G A T H E R I N G
Every fall, members get together for the Gathering. Besides routine business, the Gathering provides an inspirational weekend filled with fun and informative workshops and slide shows on long-distance trails, as well as panel discussions on lively topics. The 2007 Gathering, ALDHA’s 26th annual get-together, will take place Columbus Day Weekend, October 5–7, at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pa. Camping facilities will be provided close to campus at a nearby farm. Registration fees are $10 for individuals or $20 for couples. A calendar year’s membership in ALDHA is $10 per family or individual (additional to the registration fee) and includes a copy of the annual ALDHA directory and the quarterly newsletter, The Long Distance Hiker. To preregister before September 1, send a check with your name, address, and telephone number to ALDHA, 10 Benning Street, PMB 224, West Lebanon, NH 03784. A membership/registration form appears on page
AN INVITATION

This is the fourteenth edition of the *A.T. Thru-Hikers’ Companion*, and ALDHA will again depend on comments, suggestions, and volunteers to update it in the summer and fall of 2007 for 2008 hikers. If you see information that needs correcting or come across information that should be included in this book, or would like to be a volunteer field editor, please contact ALDHA or the editor at <companion@aldha.org>. We’ve included a form at the back of the book that you can tear out and mail back to us, too.

### KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

- **March 5**—24th anniversary of ALDHA’s creation
- **March 24**—ALDHA Steering Committee meeting, Ironmaster’s Mansion Hostel, Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Pa.
- **May 18–20**—Appalachian Trail Days, Damascus, Va.
- **June 2**—National Trails Day
- **July 13–20**—ATC Biennial Conference, Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ
- **Sept. 28–30**—ALDHA West Gathering on West Coast
- **Oct. 5–7**—26th Annual Gathering, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.

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Getting to the Termini

An important note about shuttle services

Beginning in 1995, USDA Forest Service law-enforcement rangers in the South—who report to the regional office rather than the supervisor of an individual forest—began enforcing agency regulations on “special-use permits.” The regulations say anyone taking money for a service involving Forest Service lands (including roads) must obtain a permit to do so; profit is not a factor. Permit-holders must pay a fee (up to $75) and, more prohibitively, carry high-premium insurance. Some A.T. shuttlers have been fined. Responding to questions from ATC and its Park Service partners, regional officials made it clear they will continue to enforce the policy and cited directives stating that it is to be enforced consistently and nationally. The A.T. crosses six national forests in the South and two in New England. ATC will continue to provide names of shuttle services, but keep that policy in mind—call ahead to ensure the person is still performing this service, and be prepared to help those who helped you if a fine appears in their future.

Getting to Amicalola Falls State Park, Georgia

No public transportation is available to or from Amicalola Falls State Park, but hikers have several options from Atlanta, Gainesville (located 40 miles southeast of the park), and the mountain town of Dahlonega (located 16 miles east of Amicalola Falls).

LEAVING ATLANTA

If you fly into Atlanta, you can take Atlanta’s rapid-transit trains (MARTA) from the airport to either the Greyhound bus station or the Amtrak station. To reach either station, take the MARTA train north from MARTA’s airport station ($1.75 fare). To reach the Greyhound bus station, exit the train at Garnett Station. The bus station is located at 232 Forsyth Street, within sight of the entrance to the MARTA station. To get to the Amtrak station, continue north on the train to the Arts Center Station. From the Arts Center Station, bus No. 23 (departing the station every 10 minutes) will take you to the Amtrak station, located about 10 blocks north on Peachtree. If you wish to walk to the Amtrak station, follow Peachtree Street approximately one mile north; the station is on the left (west) at 1688 Peachtree NW. For more information, call MARTA, (404) 848-4711. Other options from the airport to the bus and train stations include taxis and the Atlanta Airport Shuttle, (404) 524-3400, a privately owned bus service. Atlanta Airport Shuttle vans leave the airport every 20 minutes, from stall No. 10 of the airport’s ground-transportation area, bound for the bus station and Amtrak station ($12 fare). In addition, AAA Airport Express, (800) 354-7874, <www.aaaairportexpress.com>, from stall No. C-7 of the ground-transportation area, offers rides from the airport to Gainesville hotels, $35. The shuttle leaves the airport every two hours from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Reservations recommended.

ATLANTA TO GAINESVILLE

Two buses and one Amtrak train leave daily from Atlanta for Gainesville. At publication time, Greyhound buses, (800) 229-9424, <www.greyhound.com>, departed the Atlanta station for Gainesville at 7:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. ($11.88 M–Th, $14 F–Su) and arrived in Gainesville at 9:20 a.m. and 4:55 p.m. Buses departed Gainesville for Atlanta at 10:25 a.m. and 6:55 p.m. However, Greyhound routinely revises its schedule; call for current information. Amtrak’s train was scheduled to depart from Atlanta daily at 8:08 p.m. and arrive in Gainesville at 9:03 p.m. ($11). A train was scheduled to depart Gainesville for Atlanta daily at 7:08 a.m. Reservations are required. Call (800) 872-7245, or log on to <www.amtrak.com>.

Gainesville—Lodging: Motel 6, (770) 532-7531, $39.99S $42.99D weekdays, $45.99S $49.99D weekends, $5EAP, pet-friendly n/c; Lanier Center Best Western, (800) 782-8966, $92D, no dogs, hot B; Ramada Limited, (770) 287-3205, $59, B buffet, small pets $10; Hampton Inn, (770) 503-0300, $80–$85, no pets, hot B; Best Value Inn, (770) 534-0303, $55–$65, no pets. All are within four miles of the bus and train stations.

GAINESVILLE TO AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK

UNITAXI, (770) 534-5355 or (770) 297-0255, offers service to Amicalola Falls State Park ($55 fare); transports dogs and accepts only cash or traveler’s checks. Service to the Trailheads at Nimblewill Gap and USFS 42 available at an additional cost.

GAINESVILLE TO DAHLONEGA

Some hikers choose to stay in Dahlonega rather than Gainesville. The site of the country’s first gold rush, in the 1830s, Dahlonega sits 16 miles east of Amicalola Falls and offers all major services. UNITAXI (see above) offers service to Dahlonega.

special includes pick-up at North Springs MARTA station in Atlanta or bus/train station in Gainesville, bunk, fuel, stop at outfitters if needed, B, and shuttle to Springer or Amicalola. Gear shipment to hostel available. Bunk & B $15, private room & B $34D. Fuel (white gas & alcohol), shuttle service, free Internet access. See Web site or contact hostel for shuttle rates. **Lodging:** Hotel rates in Dahlonega vary with the season. After May 1 and on weekends, expect listed rates to increase. Holiday Inn Express, (706) 867-7777, $69–$89D, $5eap, includes B, no pets; Super 8, (706) 864-4343, $47D, includes B, $8 for dogs, Internet; Days Inn, (706) 864-2338, $49–$70, no pets; Econo Lodge, (706) 864-6191, $45S, $50D, $5eap, includes B, no pets; Smith House, (800) 852-9577, <www.smithhouse.com>, $79–$250, includes B, no dogs. The Smith House Restaurant, in operation since 1922, is famous for its family-style AYCE fare: L Tu–F 11–3, D Tu, Th, F 4–8, Sa, Su 11–8. Hours are seasonal and may vary. Call ahead.

**Alternatives**

Several Trail enthusiasts in the Atlanta area offer shuttles from Atlanta to the park and Springer Mountain. The ATC is continually updating its list. Many people who offer shuttles do so on their time off; arrangements are best made at least a week or two in advance. You can check the ATC Web site, <www.appalachiantrail.org/shuttles>, for a downloadable file. Alternatively, if you prefer a hard copy of the list, contact ATC (address on copyright page), ATTN: Shuttle List, and one will be sent out via first-class mail.

**Amicalola Falls Approach Trail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles from Springer</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Elev.</th>
<th>Miles from AFSP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Amicalola Falls State Park; Visitors Center; AFSP Shelter… 0.0mS; 7.3mN</td>
<td>R, C, L, M, S, sh, cl, w (W-19 m O)</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Amicalola Lodge Rd</td>
<td>R, L, M, w</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>+Len Foote Hike Inn Trail</td>
<td>E-5m L, M</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>High Shoals Rd</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Frosty Mtn</td>
<td>C, w</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Frosty Mtn Rd, USFS 46</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3,192</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>+Len Foote Hike Inn Trail</td>
<td>E-1m L, M</td>
<td>3,310</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Nimblewill Gap, USFS 28</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Getting to the Termini**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles from Springer</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Elev.</th>
<th>Miles from AFSP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Black Gap Shelter</td>
<td>C, S, w</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Springer Mountain</td>
<td>3,782</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fee charged*

**The Approach Trail**

Amicalola Falls State Park—Its facilities nestled almost nine miles southwest of Springer Mountain, the park is the gateway to the southern terminus of the A.T. Scales to weigh packs and showers are located near the center entrance, as well as a restroom, pay phone, snack machines, and water fountain. The visitors center sells guidebooks, maps, and gift items. The park holds UPS and USPS packages sent c/o Amicalola Falls State Park, 240 Amicalola Falls State Park Rd., Dawsonville, GA 30534. Indicate on the box to hold the package at either the visitors center or the lodge. The visitors center, (706) 265-4703, is open 9–5 daily. While at the park, sign the hiker register inside the visitors center. Long-distance hikers may leave vehicles only in the parking area opposite the visitors center. A $2-per-vehicle user fee is charged to all park visitors. Dogs must be on a leash within the park. **Camping:** The park also offers campsites and cabins: campsites $24.10 with shower, coin laundry, 1- to 3-bedroom cabins $79–$179. Reservations: (800) 864-7275. **Lodging:** The desk at Amicalola Lodge, (706) 265-8888, (800) 573-9656, <www.gastateparks.org>, is staffed around the clock; rooms $59–$129. Reservations suggested for cabins, campsites, and the lodge. **Restaurant:** The lodge houses the Maple Restaurant, daily buffets, B 7–10, L/D 11–9.

**West** 19 miles to Outfitters: North Georgia Mountain Outfitters, Collin and Gil Carter, (706) 698-4453, (706) 698-4454, <www.hikenorthgeorgia.com>, <info@hikenorthgeorgia.com>, 49 Oak St., East Ellijay, GA 30540, closed Tu–W; open M, Th, F 10–7; Sa 9–6; Su 12–6; full-service outfitter, Coleman and alcohol fuels by the ounce, canister fuels, short-term food resupply, will hold packages w/o fee, shuttles to Amicalola, Springer Mountain, and Neels Gap; call for possible delivery of packages and store items. Ellijay Outfitters, 10 N. Main St., Ellijay, GA 30540; (706) 698-GEAR, <www.ellijayoutfitters.com>. Mark (Trail Trucker, '01) and Anne Micallef can shuttle as time allows.

**Amicalola Falls State Park Shelter** (1993)—Located 50 yards behind the visitors center, sleeps 12, and available to thru-hikers at no charge. Built by a group of Trail backpacking enthusiasts from nearby Canton in memory of their friend, Max Epperson. The “A.T. Gang” spent 800 hours construct-
ing the facility. Epperson hiked the Trail as far north as Connecticut before his health failed. Afterward, he continued to offer shuttles and support for his hiking friends. Water source and restroom 50 yards away at visitors center.

**Approach Trail to Springer Mountain**—From the park visitors center, it is an 8.8-mile trek to the first white blaze, most of it uphill. To cut off the steep, one-mile ascent of the falls, catch a ride to the top of the falls, and pick up the blue blazes there. The trail crosses a paved road that runs above the falls and to Amicalola Lodge, 1.2 miles from the visitors center.

**Approach Trail via Nimblewill Gap**—This alternative puts you 2.2 miles south of Springer Mountain on the Approach Trail but requires a bumpy, muddy drive up Forest Service roads. From the park entrance, go east 9.5 miles on Ga. 52 to abandoned Grizzlies Store. Turn left on Nimblewill Road, and continue past Nimblewill Church at 6.6 miles. Just beyond the church, pass a road on the left where the pavement ends. Continue to the right on the unpaved road, and reach Nimblewill Gap at 14 miles. This is a very rough road and probably should not be attempted unless you have a vehicle with high ground clearance.

**From Amicalola Falls to Springer Mountain via Forest Service roads**—The easiest and quickest route takes you within one mile of the Springer summit. From the park, go west on Ga. 52 for 13.6 miles to Roy Road, at Cartecay Church and Stanley’s Store. Turn right, and proceed 9.5 miles to the second stop sign. At the stop sign, bear right, and go 2.3 miles to Mt. Pleasant Church on the left. Across from the church, turn right onto unpaved Forest Service Road 42. This well-graded gravel road, suitable for all vehicles, winds 6.6 miles to the A.T. crossing at Big Stamp on the north side of the road. To reach the summit of Springer Mountain, walk 0.9 mile south. If you don’t want to retrace your steps on the A.T., an alternative is to continue 1.7 miles past the A.T. crossing to USFS 42’s intersection with the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT). The BMT leads 1.5 miles up Springer and joins the A.T. just north of the southern terminus.

**Len Foote Hike Inn**—(800) 573-9656, <www.hike-inn.com>. This $1-million lodge is similar to the huts in New Hampshire’s White Mountains. The 40-bed, 20-room inn is approximately 4.4 miles north of Amicalola Falls State Park facilities and 6.4 miles south of the Springer Mountain summit. The yellow-blazed Hike Inn Trail creates a loop with the blue-blazed Approach Trail that leads from Amicalola Falls State Park to Springer. Overnight stays, which include family-style B/D, are $97S, $140D, rates subject to change; no dogs allowed. Amenities include linens, hot showers, composting toilets, and electricity (outlets in bath house only). Owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the inn is operated by the Appalachian Education and Recreation Services, Inc., a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club. Walk-ins are allowed, subject to availability. Registration is at the Amicalola Falls State Park visitor center, where you can check on room availability. Open year-round, but the rooms are not heated. Sleeping bags recommended Nov–Mar.

**Black Gap Shelter** (1953/1995)—Sleeps 8. No privy. Once the Springer Mountain Shelter, before being dismantled and moved to its present location in 1995. This shelter is 1.5 miles south of the summit of Springer Mountain on the Approach Trail. Water is located 300 yards downhill to the right of the shelter.

**Getting to Baxter State Park, Maine**

No public transportation is available to or from Baxter State Park, but arrangements can be made to conclude or begin your journey with little difficulty. This usually means going through Boston, Portland, and/or Bangor, then to Medway, and then to Millinocket, still 20 miles southeast of the park. The nearest airport is in Bangor; the Portland airport is said to have more competitive rates, and Boston more so. For services and accommodations in Bangor, see page 254. Bus transportation is available from Portland to Medway and also from Boston to Portland.

**LEAVING BANGOR**

Cyr Bus Lines of Old Town, Maine, (207) 827-2335, (207) 827-2010, or (800) 244-2335, <www.cyrbustours.com>, <info@cyrbustours.com>, serves northern Maine. A bus leaves Bangor at 6:00 p.m. and arrives at Medway at 7:40 p.m. or leaves Medway at 9:30 a.m. and arrives at Bangor at 10:50 a.m. ($10.50 fare).

**MEDWAY TO MILLINOCKET**

From Medway, you have to hitch on Maine 157 or call a taxi to go to either Millinocket, 10 miles to the west, or Baxter State Park, about 30 miles away. Katahdin Taxi, (207) 723-2000, Su–Th 6 a.m.–1:30 a.m., F–Sa 6 a.m.–2 a.m., provides rides to Millinocket ($12 fare), to Baxter State Park gate ($32), and to Katahdin Stream Campground ($45). For information on lodging and facilities near Baxter State Park in Medway and Millinocket, please see the entries on pages 253–254.

**Baxter State Park**—The park, (207) 723-5140, has 10
campgrounds available May 15–Oct 15 by reservation on a first-come, first-served basis, $9/PP, two-person minimum except at the Birches (no other exceptions; that policy applies to everyone staying with you). Keep in mind that the Hunt Trail (A.T. up Katahdin) does not usually open until the end of May. Other trails to the summit open even later. The Birches campsite, near Katahdin Stream Campground, is intended for long-distance hikers who have hiked 100 miles or more on their current trip. (Note: The Birches site has been filled to capacity only a couple of times in each of the last four seasons.) Please see the entry for Baxter on page 248 for more information and details about camping and regulations near Katahdin. Baxter asks that you reserve a regular lean-to or tentsite at Katahdin Stream or Abol campgrounds if you are a southbound hiker, because you know your starting date and The Birches is set aside for those arriving from at least a 100-mile hike with no sure idea of their arrival date. Every hiker must register with a ranger upon entering Baxter. Information kiosks are located at Abol Stream and Katahdin Stream campgrounds.

Pets—No dogs or other pets are allowed; see Medway and