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## News and Notes

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# News and Notes

## **Appalachian Mountain Club Releases Video Depicting Visual Impact of Northern Pass Planned Route**

The Appalachian Mountain Club has released a video series that shows the bird's-eye view of how drastically the New Hampshire landscape would be altered by the Northern Pass transmission line. The short video fly-over—which uses data taken straight from Northern Pass's permit application—depicts how the 186-mile-long proposed route may affect areas of national, local, and, for many, personal significance.

The area up to a half-mile out on either side of the transmission line is shown, including the location and heights of new towers and existing ones that would be enlarged or moved.

To view the video, and read more about the background of the Northern Pass project, see [outdoors.org/conservation/wherewework/wmnf/northern-pass-project.cfm](http://outdoors.org/conservation/wherewework/wmnf/northern-pass-project.cfm).

## **Nancy Pond Trail Rebuilt**

In August 2011, Tropical Storm Irene tore throughout the Northeast, wreaking havoc on public lands. Since 2012, the Appalachian Mountain Club and the U.S. Forest Service have been working in the White Mountain National Forest to mitigate these effects. Past projects include the Nineteen-Mile Brook Trail (2012), Signal Ridge Trail (2012), Avalon Trail, and Mount Willard Trail (2012–2013).

In 2013, the AMC trail crew, funded by the National Forest Foundation's Treasured Landscapes program in cooperation with the WMNF, spent almost 2,000 total hours relocating two sections of the Nancy Pond Trail.

Extensive sections of the Nancy Pond Trail, where it closely parallels the brook, were flooded over and washed away or seriously undercut, leaving the trail unsafe and prone to future flooding. The longest relocation, 0.6 mile long, traversed steep and rough terrain requiring extensive treadway construction and installation of erosion control and drainage structures. Following the route marked by USFS and AMC trails department staffers, the trail crew cleared the trail corridor of trees and brush, then removed the many stumps and roots along the new route. Much effort was then required to dig through

the duff, organic material, and then cut a bench into the slope to construct a firm, even treadway. Along steep sections, the crew also installed 102 rock steps with scree walls and 29 log steps to control erosion.

—*Sally Manikian*

### **Nice Trail for a White Wedding**

Normally, we would not report every long-distance backpacking trip, but Ron Ulrich's 2012 trip on the Pacific Crest Trail took wilderness adventure into a new realm. Ulrich stepped onto the 2,600-mile Pacific Crest Trail like so many other ambitious distance hikers, with dreams of completing its length in one trip. Except Ulrich, an industrial painter turned performance artist, would wear a series of wedding gowns—26 in all.

Wait. Wedding gowns?

Ulrich said he was inspired by nothing other than a love of nature's beauty, and a love of the beauty of the wedding gown, and an artist's love to explore photographic composition. He had never hiked more than 42 miles at once. The dresses ranged from vintage to strange to iconic (a fellow PCT hiker offered her Vera Wang dress). Dresses were donated and collected, along with the basic monetary fundraising that accompanies a distance hike. During the fundraising, training, and preparation for the hike, he carried a wedding gown on his person at all times, never knowing the inspiration to pose would strike.

But why wedding gowns? "I admit I've always found myself enthralled by the beauty of wedding gowns," Ulrich wrote. "They're so fluid in motion, whether down the aisle or down the runway. Even on a dress form adorning a shop's front window, a gown emanates fantasy and illuminates dreams. The often-detailed construction of such a masterpiece, combined with the selection process of the bride, her family and bridesmaids, and the intense amount of time that is sunk into this the one garment—it leaves me feeling that it's a great shame for it to be packed away in the back of a closet somewhere."

Hiking in that many gowns (100 miles per gown) proved to be another layer of logistics on top of an already-long list. Each dress was individually prepared for the rigors of the distance hike: some poofiness removed, corsets let out to fit his frame, and large waists tucked in.

Sticking to the goal of giving each dress its photographic moment, he often found himself wearing one and carrying the other on his back. Most lightweight backpackers don't carry additional weight of satin, tulle, silk, and

beading. Amazingly, Ulrich left trains intact, even if it meant cinching them with carabiners or tossing them up over the pack. Ulrich's tongue-in-cheek version of "Leave No Trace" became "Leave No Lace," as he struggled to keep each gown intact over 100 miles.

On Ulrich's hiker log (see [hiking26.com](http://hiking26.com)), he details the beautiful moments of outstanding scenery, the personal struggles with steep rocks and painful feet, the hospitality of trail angels, characters he met. But unlike other hikers' diaries, his intersperses posts detailing each dress, the size, the origin, the designer, and a description of the character of each wedding dress.

In the end, he packed up and stored 25 of the dresses (like so many wedding dresses) in the back of a closet. But one he shipped north to trail angels the Dinsmores of Baring, Washington, who operate a "hiker haven" for distance hikers, decorated with mementos and paraphernalia of past hikes.

The story didn't end there. Ulrich tackled the Continental Divide Trail in 2013 wearing tuxedos and kilts, and he was aiming to complete the Appalachian Trail wearing bridesmaids' gowns. Read more at [hiking26.com](http://hiking26.com).

—*Sally Manikian*

### **AMC's Outdoors Rx Goes to Washington**

I was honored and thrilled to be recognized in March by the White House as a "Champion of Change" for my years of work with young people in the outdoors and especially the Appalachian Mountain Club's Outdoors Rx program. I was so excited to be there, and I was so honored to be amongst the other winners. John Podesta, counselor to the President, opened the event. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell gave the keynote speech. I sat on a panel with some of my fellow honorees, fielding questions on how to get more urban youth outside.

As part of the award I was able to write a blog about the program and my experience with Outdoors Rx families to date. You can find it at [whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/03/24/prescribing-outdoors-one-family-time-through-outdoors-rx](http://whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/03/24/prescribing-outdoors-one-family-time-through-outdoors-rx). In general, we have found parents are overwhelmed and overworked, and kids are overscheduled. There is so much competition that finding family and outdoor time is tough to fit in. But people understand it's so important.

—*Pam Hess*

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PAM HESS is director of youth engagement for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

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*"I started reading Appalachia for the accident reports, but I kept reading for the great features."—Mohamed Ellozy, subscriber*

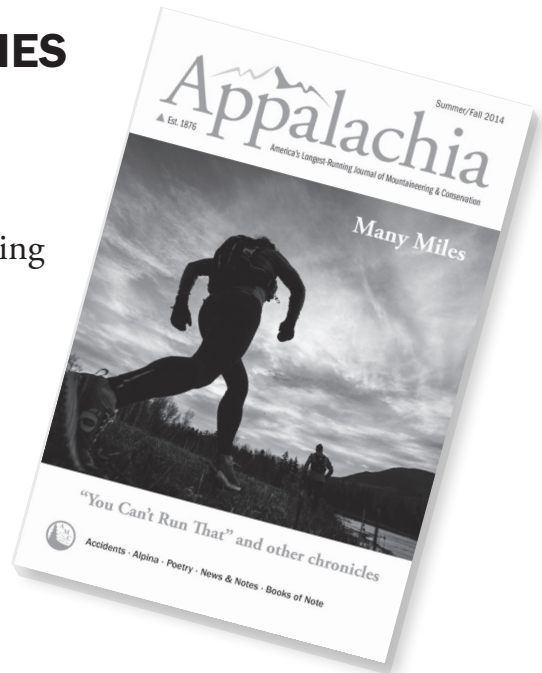
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