

Statement from Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro on Dover and Pawling's Designation as an Appalachian Trail Community

“Congratulations to the Towns of Pawling and Dover for their successful collaboration to secure the Appalachian Trail Community designation. This important designation brings greater attention to our wonderful natural treasures and enhances Dutchess County’s appeal as a world-class destination for outdoor and heritage enthusiasts.”

DOVER AND PAWLING, NY AWARDED APPALACHIAN TRAIL DISTINCTION

Harpers Ferry, WV (March 05, 2013) – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), along with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference approved the application for partnership to officially designate Dover and Pawling, New York as an A.T. Community™. The collaboration of these two communities working to protect and celebrate the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) paid off this past weekend with the approval to become the newest Appalachian Trail Community™.

The Appalachian Trail Community™ is a new program of the ATC, the nonprofit responsible for management and protection of the A.T. Working with a growing network of trailside community partners, the program recognizes and thanks communities for their part in promoting the A.T. as an important local and national asset as well as an international icon.

Pawling and Dover, known as the Harlem Valley A.T. Community, will form the 30th A.T. Community™ to enter into the partnership, and the second in New York. The two towns developed an Advisory Committee to coordinate the application and ongoing activities to promote and celebrate the A.T. as a local and national park and ecological resource. Both Dover and Pawling Town Boards unanimously approved resolutions to apply for designation as an A.T. Community. Receiving over 35 letters of support from elected officials, businesses, educators and organizations in the area, the application had strong a commitment to support the A.T. through activities such as developing an A.T. appreciation day, and working with each school district to create distinct projects linking K-12 curriculum to the A.T. Pawling and Dover Middle/High Schools will also collaborate to establish an inter-school A.T. Service Learning Club.

“The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has already seen a great amount of community effort in supporting the A.T. with the development and dedication of the new boardwalk last year,” stated Julie Judkins, community program manager for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The 1,600-foot, oak-decked boardwalk includes a 34-foot bridge and crosses the length of the A.T. across the Great Swamp in Pawling. More than 75

volunteers spent two and a half years constructing the route, some coming from as far away as Italy and Great Britain. “Building off that enthusiasm and adding new partners to the management effort will increase local stewardship and expand sustainable tourism efforts.”

Over the coming months, the ATC will work with the community to plan a ceremony to officially designate Dover and Pawling as the Harlem Valley A.T. Community™. In addition to this upcoming event, which will include speakers and hikes, the ATC will provide signage, recognition in its publications, and other benefits tailored to each community.

The ATC was founded in 1925 by volunteers and federal officials working to build a continuous footpath along the Appalachian Mountains. The A.T. is a unit of the National Park System, stretching from Georgia to Maine, at approximately 2,180 miles in length. It is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world. Volunteers typically donate more than 220,000 hours of their time doing trail-related work each year, and about 2 to 3 million visitors walk a portion of the A.T. each year.

For more information about the A.T. Community™ program, visit www.appalachiantrail.org/atcommunity.

About the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail, ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow and for centuries to come. For more information about the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, visit www.appalachiantrail.org.

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