



Virginia Association of Surveyors

Appalachian Trail Crossing 2005

—by David L. Holland, LS



"The woods were full of peril—rattlesnakes and water moccasins and nests of copperheads; bobcats, bears, coyotes, wolves, and wild boar; loony hillbillies destabilized by gross quantities of impure corn liquor and generations of profoundly unbiblical sex; rabies-crazed skunks, raccoons, and squirrels; merciless fire ants and ravening blackfly; poison ivy, poison sumac, poison oak, and poison salamanders." [Bill Bryson, *A Walk in the Wood*]

Virginia Association of Surveyors *Appalachian Trail Crossing 2005*



The Appalachian Trail wanders more than 2,000 miles along America's eastern seaboard from Georgia to Maine. Running through fourteen states, the trail climbs from 668 feet to 5,500 feet, and along it are some of the world's best hardwood forests. Of the trail's 2,000 miles, 540 miles run through Virginia—more than in any other state. A fifth of Virginia's Appalachian Trail lies in the beautiful Shenandoah National Park, in parallel to the Skyline Drive and the the famous Blue Ridge Parkway, and crossing through Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

It's every hiker's dream to experience this national natural wonder, and so, when the Virginia Association of Surveyors board of directors decided to hold a fundraiser, we did not have far to look for a suitable activity. A membership wide 540 mile walk-a-thon was organized on the Appalachian Trail in order to garner donations towards land surveying education. The lion's share of this annual VAS-sponsored surveying education fund is donated to the surveying programs at Old Dominion University and East Tennessee State University.

The eleven chapters of the Virginia Association of Surveyors were assigned five-mile sections of the Appalachian Trail to be hiked from May through December 2005. Each chapter decided how their AT hike was to be accomplished and took care of logistics. For the most part, individual chapter members volunteered to hike eight-to-ten mile segments of their assigned fifty-mile portions of the trail.

All VAS members, associates, and affiliates were encouraged to donate to the "Appalachian Trail Crossing 2005" fundraiser. Donors could donate a lump sum, or they could participate in a miles-hiked program, by sponsoring an individual hiker. Each chapter was expected to garner donations for their share of the fundraiser.

Throughout the 2005 hiking season, articles and letters were written to report on the progress of this aggressive fundraising program. Most of these articles are posted on the VAS website at www.vasurveyors.org.



*Continuing a
58-year-old tradition
of promoting the
practice of land
surveying*





Appalachian Trail, from p.18

Each participating chapter was provided with a chapter-engraved brass surveyor's compass to be carried along the trail during the hikes. The compasses were auctioned off at the 2006 VAS convention in Richmond at the end of January to augment the VAS educational funds.

The Appalachian Trail Crossing fundraiser proved to be enormously successful considering the complexity and logistics of the program. Not only did we end up making a lot of money for our educational supplement fund, but the positive publicity and public relations generated throughout the Commonwealth for the VAS and the land surveying profession was worth its weight in gold.

The fundraiser provided all members with an opportunity to get involved and to participate in a statewide VAS project which ultimately benefits all. A total of eighty-three hikers plus two dogs collectively hiked 300 miles (60 percent) of the Virginia portion of the Appalachian Trail from May 2005 through December 2005. Additionally, due to the generosity of the members, associates, affiliates, and friends of the VAS a total of over \$20,000 has been collected, and donations are still coming in.

This fundraiser will continue through 2006 in order to complete the hike—200 miles of the trail are yet to be traversed. If anyone reading this article would like to contribute to this worthwhile fund for the education of future land surveyors, send a donation to:

Virginia Association of Surveyors
Appalachian Trail Crossing 2005/2006
8752 Landmark Road
Richmond, Virginia 23228

As can be expected, this VAS project required considerable time, effort, motivation, and money to culminate into a successful venture. Many people had to step up to the plate, and thanks to them the Virginia Association of Surveyors has once again met the challenge of its 58-year-old tradition of promoting the practice of land surveying.

*Continuing a
58-year-old tradition
of promoting the
practice of land
surveying*



Old Dominion University - Allred E. R. Bary, Jr. Hall

Old Dominion University [www.campusprint.com]

David L. Holland is the chairman for the VAS "Appalachian Trail Crossing 2005" committee and the current president of the Virginia Association of Surveyors



East Tennessee State University [www.nayre.org]