

APPENDIX E1. MATC TRAIL SIGN SYSTEM

Introduction

Routed wooden signs have been used on the Appalachian Trail since the mid 1960s. Signs have been placed at road crossings, campsites, trail junctions, and many other locations in order to give hikers mileage information, and to direct them to and from the Appalachian Trail and its features. In addition to the customary routed signs, some printed or silk-screened signs are used to provide information at campsites. In 1992, the Club maintained nearly 400 unique routed signs.

Since 1976, the MATC Sign Chairman, working with a committee of four to eight sign makers, has coordinated the sign program. Appendix E1 documents the policies and conventions that have evolved over time to guide the design and content of MATC trail signs. The booklet *Instructions for Making Signs for the Appalachian Trail in Maine* (Lester C. Kenway, 27 November 1990) provides instructions on fabricating signs.

Designs, Policies, and Conventions for MATC Signs

The design and content of Trail signs varies according to a sign's purpose.

Road Crossing or Trailhead Signs

The MATC traditionally placed prominent signs at A.T. crossings of major public highways or other roads that provide primary access to the Trail. Due to theft, most such signs have been replaced by "mileage signs". The **design criteria**, including letter sizes, for road crossing signs are:

1. The words "APPALACHIAN TRAIL", centered at top (2")
2. Three to six features along the Trail to the north, with mileages listed in ascending order (3/4")
3. Three to six features along the Trail to the south, with mileages listed in ascending order (3/4")
4. "MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB", centered at bottom (3/4")
5. Optional: MATC logo (4")

The **design conventions** for road crossing signs are:

1. List names and distances to next road crossings north and south.
2. To avoid casual use and abuse of sites, do not list names of, or mileages to any campsites.
3. Usually only one sign is provided, but two are acceptable.
4. Each mileage line includes a 1" x 1 1/2" arrow pointing north or south.

Example: Sign #1.10 at 5.2 miles, Katahdin Stream Campground:

APPALACHIAN TRAIL	
KATAHDIN STREAM CAMPGROUND - 1079 FT.	
KATAHDIN STREAM FALLS	1.2 ->
THE GATEWAY	3.6 ->
THOREAU SPRING	4.2 ->
BAXTER PEAK - 5267 FT.	5.2 ->
CHIMNEY POND VIA SADDLE TRAIL	6.8 ->
ROARING BROOK VIA SADDLE TRAIL	10.1 ->
<- DAICEY POND	2.4
<- WEST BRANCH OF PENOBSCOT AT ABOL BRIDGE	9.3
<- MAINE - N.H. STATE LINE	260.9
<- SPRINGER MT. 3782 FT. GEORGIA	2020.0
MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB	

Mileage Signs

Now used at most road crossings, mileage signs are placed a short distance into the woods on either side of the road. Maine Department of Transportation signs alert drivers to the proximity of an A.T. crossing. The mileage signs confirm that a hiker is on the A.T. and provide mileage information. The **design criteria**, including letter sizes, for mileage signs are:

1. The words "APPALACHIAN TRAIL", centered at top (1 1/4")
2. Two to three features along the Trail to the north, with mileages listed in ascending order (3/4") or
3. Two to three features along the Trail to the south, with mileages listed in ascending order (3/4")
4. "MATC", centered at bottom (3/4")

Example: #12.00 at 0.0 miles at Andover B-Hill Road (Southbound):

APPALACHIAN TRAIL	
<- EAST PEAK OF BALDPATE MTN.	6.3
<- MAINE HIGHWAY 26 AT GRAFTON NOTCH	10.1
M.A.T.C.	

The **design conventions** for mileage signs are:

1. List name and distance to next road crossing north or south.
2. To avoid casual use and abuse of sites, do not list names of, or mileages to any campsites.
3. Usually provide one sign a short distance in from the road on each side.
4. Each mileage line includes a 1" x 1 ½" arrow pointing either north or south.

Campsite Signs

Signs at campsites provide information regarding the name of the site and the distance to the next campsite or road crossing. The **design criteria** for signs where the campsite is located on the Appalachian Trail are:

1. The words "APPALACHIAN TRAIL", centered at the top (1 ¼" letters)
2. The name of the campsite (1")
3. Name and mileage to the next campsite to the north (¾")
4. Name and mileage to the next road north (¾")
5. Name and mileage to the next campsite to the south (¾")
6. Name and mileage to the next road south (¾")
7. "M.A.T.C.", centered at the bottom (¾")

Mileages are listed in ascending order.

Example: #9.06 at 9.2 miles, Sabbath Day Pond Lean-to

APPALACHIAN TRAIL	
SABBATH DAY POND LEAN-TO	
<- MAINE HIGHWAY 17	3.8
<- BEMIS MTN. LEAN-TO	8.2
LITTLE SWIFT RIVER POND	4.7 ->
CAMPSITE	
MAINE HIGHWAY 4	9.2 ->
PIAZZA ROCK LEAN-TO	10.6 ->
M.A.T.C.	

The **design conventions** for campsite signs are:

1. If the next campsite is a tent site, both the tent site and the next lean-to site will be listed.
2. The sign is usually bolted to the lean-to, if the site has a lean-to.
3. The same style of sign is provided at tent sites that are located on the A.T.
4. Each mileage line has a 1" x 1 ½" arrow pointing either north or south.

If the campsite is located on a short side trail, then three signs are provided: a mileage sign, a side trail sign, and a nameplate. The mileage sign design criteria and conventions are identical to those for a campsite on the A.T. except for the omission of the campsite name and bolting the sign to the lean-to.

Example: #4.54 at 27.4 miles, Leeman Brook Lean-to

APPALACHIAN TRAIL	
<- LITTLE WILSON FALLS	3.6
<- LONG POND STREAM LEAN-TO	12.4
MAINE HIGHWAY 15	3.0 ->
HORSESHOE CANYON LEAN-TO	11.9 ->
M.A.T.C.	

The **design criteria** for a campsite side trail sign are:

1. "TO (name of campsite)", (3/4" letters)
2. (1" x 6" arrow) (distance), (3/4")
3. "M.A.T.C." centered at bottom, (3/4")

Example: #4.541 at side trail to Leeman Brook Lean-to

LEEMAN BROOK <- LEAN-TO 100 FT. M.A.T.C.

The **design conventions** for a campsite side trail sign are:

1. The sign is usually located with the mileage sign.
2. The arrow is located to point left or right as needed, but not up or down.

The campsite nameplate sign simply provides the name of the campsite, in 3/4" letters.

Example: #4.542 at Leeman Brook Lean-to

LEEMAN BROOK LEAN-TO M.A.T.C.

Side Trail Junction Signs

When the Appalachian Trail connects with side trails, both the A.T. and the side trail are marked with appropriate signs. The **design criteria** are:

1. "(name of side trail) TRAIL", (1 1/4 inch letters)

2. One or two intermediate destinations, (3/4")
3. Terminus of the side trail, (3/4")
4. "M.A.T.C.", centered at bottom

Example: #7.081 at 9.3 miles at junction with the A.T.

SAFFORD BROOK TRAIL	
<- FLAGSTAFF EAST ROAD	2.3
<- FLAGSTAFF LAKE	2.7
M.A.T.C.	

The side trail **design conventions** are:

1. Side trail signs are constructed to the same standards as A.T. signs, using the same color stain and lettering.
2. Side trail sign content will follow the same conventions as for A.T. signs in similar circumstances (e.g., side trail signs at trail heads will not refer to campsites on the A.T.).

Summit Signs

Signs are maintained on major summits along the Trail in Maine. Summit signs help the hiker learn where he or she is and serve to provide landmarks by which to judge progress. These signs may provide mileage information or simply identify the name and elevation of the summit. Mileage signs are usually provided only at prominent peaks, such as E. Baldpate, Saddleback, S. Crocker, Avery Peak, Moxie Bald, White Cap, Rainbow Ledges, and Katahdin. The Katahdin summit sign is of unique design, due to its special significance. The **design criteria** for the summit mileage signs are:

1. The words "APPALACHIAN TRAIL", centered at top (1 1/4")
2. ("name of summit) (1 1/4")
3. "ELEVATION - (elevation in feet)" (1")
4. (nearest campsite to the north) (mileage) (3/4")
5. (nearest road to the north) (mileage) (3/4")
6. (One or two other major summits to north) (mileage) (3/4")
7. (nearest campsite to the south) (mileage) (3/4")
8. (nearest road to the south) (mileage) (3/4")
9. (optional - one or two nearby summits to the south) (mileages) (3/4")
10. "M.A.T.C." centered at bottom (3/4")

Mileages are all listed in ascending order.

Example: #7.18 at 11.1 miles, summit of Avery Peak

APPALACHIAN TRAIL	
AVERY PEAK	
ELEVATION - 4088 FT.	
JCT. SAFFORD BROOK TRAIL	1.8 ->
LITTLE BIGELOW MTN.	5.6 ->
EAST FLAGSTAFF ROAD	7.8 ->
<- BIGELOW COL	0.4
<- WEST PEAK - 4150	0.7
<- MAINE HIGHWAY 27	8.7
M.A.T.C.	

Example: #7.28 at 10.8 miles, West Peak of Bigelow

WEST PEAK
ELEVATION 4150 FT.
M.A.T.C.

Resource Protection Signs

The following designs have been developed for use in sensitive areas:

1. Alpine areas (currently used on Baldpate, Saddleback, and Bigelow)

PLEASE HELP US TO PRESERVE THE FRAGILE ALPINE PLANTS STAY ON TRAIL
THANK YOU M.A.T.C.

PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL ----->
M.A.T.C.

PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL <-----
M.A.T.C.

2. Horns Pond Campsite

PLEASE HELP US TO PRESERVE THE
GROUND COVER SURROUNDING HORNS POND

- STAY ON MARKED TRAILS
- DO NOT CAMP IN AREA BETWEEN THIS TRAIL AND THE POND

3. Cranberry Peak Pond sign

CRANBERRY PEAK POND

FRAGILE AREA
NO CAMPING

M.A.T.C.

4. Fire sign

NO FIRES
ALLOWED

M.A.T.C.

5. Water supply sign

WATER SUPPLY
PLEASE
DO NOT CAMP IN
THIS AREA

M.A.T.C.

6. Tenting only sign

TENTSITE
ONLY
NO FIRES

M.A.T.C.

Auxiliary Signs

1. Toilets

TOILET -->

<-- TOILET

2. Water

WATER -->

<-- WATER

Water signs must say simply "water", not "spring" or any other term that might imply a tested and protected source. The water signs are placed only when a water source is not visible from the Trail. At "improved" sites (anything other than a natural water flow), the following sign is used:

WATER NOT TESTED

3. Viewpoints

VIEWPOINT
----->
M.A.T.C.

VIEWPOINT
<-----
M.A.T.C.

4. A.T. north and south signs (for use where A.T. exits a logging road northbound and southbound, respectively)

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
NORTH -->

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
<--NORTH

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
SOUTH-->

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
<--SOUTH

5. A.T. symbol and arrow (also used to mark confusing turns on and off logging roads.

A
T -->

A
<--T

6. A.T. N-S secondary logging road crossing sign

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
<--N-----S-->
M.A.T.C.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL
<--S-----N-->

Printed Signs

- 1. Invitation to join the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (placed in all lean-tos)

Hikers
You are invited to join the
Maine Appalachian Trail club

All work on the Trail and shelters is done by volunteers.
The club needs your support in order to manage and maintain the Trail in Maine.

Please contact us if you would like to help or contribute towards our efforts.

The Maine Appalachian Trail Club
P. O. Box 283
Augusta, Maine 04332

www.matc.org

- 2. Carry in/Carry out (placed in all lean-tos)

CARRY IN/CARRY OUT
(Circle with broken bottle)

The MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB is cooperating with other
Outdoor organizations and State and Federal agencies to
Keep our backcountry clean.

Please help us

Collect what the less thoughtful have left behind and
CARRY OUT EVERYTHING YOU CARRY IN

The Maine Appalachian Trail Club
P. O. Box 283
Augusta, Maine 04332

www.matc.org

- 3. Interior privy sign

Please DO NOT DUMP
TRASH IN PIT

Thank you
M.A.T.C.

Numbering and Inventory System

Each Maine Appalachian Trail Club sign is identified with a 3 to 5-digit number that keys it to the master sign list (format XX.XXX). The first one or two digits correspond to the *Maine Guide* section (1-13) in which the sign is located. The second two digits represent the sign number (north to south in ascending order) for the signs within each *Guide* section. All two-digits signs are located on the A.T. and refer to points on the Trail. The third digit to the right of the decimal point indicates that the sign refers to or is located on a side trail. Along a side trail, sign numbers are assigned in ascending order according to the distance away from the A.T.

Examples:

3.17 = *Guide* section 3 (Jo-Mary Road to West branch of the Pleasant River), sign #17. The master sign list shows this as the summit sign on Little Boardman Mt.

7.082 = *Guide* section 7 (Long Falls Dam Road to Maine Highway 27), sign #082. This is the second sign away from the A.T. (trail junction is at sign #08) on a side trail. The master sign list shows this as the sign for the Safford Brook Trail at the East Flagstaff Road.

Sign Ordering System

When new signs are needed, they are either initiated by the Sign Chairman or ordered by the District Overseers. The Sign Chairman responds to reports by maintainers, hikers, and overseers in order to ensure that new signs are prepared in a timely fashion. Some overseers prefer to review all requests from maintainers before forwarding them to the Sign Chairman. The Chairman receives and reviews requests at the end of the Trail season and distributes sign orders to the various sign makers by 1 November. Completed signs are either distributed at the Annual Meeting or shipped to overseers and maintainers during the spring.