

## New Executive Director Selected for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Good Morning,

Earlier this year, after David Startzell announced his retirement, I formed a search committee from the board and engaged a professional firm to conduct a national search for a new Executive Director. Working with the firm, the committee narrowed down the pool from more than 150 candidates. The board then met in special session last December to interview the finalists and make a selection. After much deliberation I am pleased to welcome Mark J. Wenger as our new Executive Director. Mark will begin his new position starting this February.



Mark is active in the A.T. community as a life member of both the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) and the Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club. He is past program chair, vice president, and president of TATC. He was most recently Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) representative and RPC chairman for the Virginia region. He also served on the steering committee for the recently completed 2011 Virginia Journeys, the ATC's 38th Biennial Conference. Mark has also led an extensive number of outdoor trips (backpacking, canoeing, cycling, and whitewater rafting) for the TATC earning him the Ray Kernel, Jr., Trip Leadership Award. On August 1, 2011, he completed an 8-year, 3-month effort to section hike the A.T.

Mark previously held a variety of leadership positions over 32 years with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williamsburg, Virginia, the largest outdoor museum in the world and one of the largest museums in the United States. The Foundation is devoted to the preservation and interpretation of eighteenth-century American life with emphasis on the revolutionary time period. He brings to the ATC and in-depth knowledge of organizational, operational, financial, communications, and development skill sets in the not-for-profit field. In his most recent position, he served as Director of Facilities where he was responsible for managing an operating budget of \$30 million, maintaining more than 800 buildings, 1,500 acres, and 200 employees and volunteers.

Mark graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana with a Bachelor of Architecture degree. He received a Master in Architectural History from the University of Virginia and is a licensed architect in Virginia and Louisiana.

He is also active in a number of other groups. He has volunteered for over 22 years with the Boy Scouts of America at the local, council, and regional levels. He is Outdoor Ethics Advisor for his council providing him a vehicle to champion the cause of Leave No Trace while at the same time promoting more but responsible use of the outdoors. He serves on the board and is vice chair of the Williamsburg Landing, a large, not-for-profit retirement community. He is active with his college fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, at the national level. He serves of the board of the Mountain State Railroad and Historical Logging Association based in Cass, West Virginia. He has served on a number of local, state, and national bodies, both governmental and private. One he is most proud of is chairing the Parks and Recreation Commission of James City County, Virginia, as they undertook a bond referendum to establish more parks and an extensive network of trails to connect them. The bond referendum passed by an overwhelming margin.

I am confident that Mark will continue to build on the high standards and excellence that defines this organization while moving us forward to serve the next generation of Trail users. Please join me in welcoming Mark to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Sincerely,  
Bob Almand