

**Media Contact:** Jordan Bowman  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Tel: 304.885.0794  
Email: [jbowman@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jbowman@appalachiantrail.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ATHike](https://www.facebook.com/ATHike)  
Web: [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FUNDING NEEDED FOR MCAFEE KNOB TRAILHEAD PROJECT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

**ROANOKE, Va. (Feb. 6, 2020)** – One of the most iconic locations along the 2,193-mile Appalachian Trail (A.T.), McAfee Knob has become one of Central Virginia’s most defining — and most visited — landmarks. Approximately 45,000 people visit McAfee Knob each year, often overflowing the trailhead’s small parking lot on the opposite side of the heavily trafficked Route 311.

In order to address parking difficulties and minimize risks for both pedestrians and motorists, a coalition of partners are working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to construct a pedestrian bridge over Route 311, redesign the McAfee Knob parking area and install informational signage to help guide hikers to the trailhead. Spearheaded by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the National Park Service (NPS), the VDOT and the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club (RATC), this project will significantly improve safety and the overall visitor experience.



**The construction of a pedestrian bridge and expanded parking area will greatly improve visitor safety at McAfee Knob, one of the most popular locations on the Appalachian Trail.**

“Visitor safety is one of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s highest priorities,” said Andrew Downs, senior regional director of the ATC. “This project will help pedestrians easily and safely cross over to the Appalachian Trail leading to McAfee Knob’s summit, and additional parking areas will minimize the number of people who choose to park on the side of Route 311. However, we’ll need everyone’s help to make this project a reality.”

Construction of the pedestrian bridge is currently scheduled to begin in 2025. However, a small-yet-critical part of the project has not yet been finalized: funding is still needed to purchase a 7-acre parcel of land adjacent to the existing parking area. This land will allow NPS to consider a wider variety of improvements including bathrooms, safer entrances and exits to the parking area, and more orderly parking. The ATC and RATC are currently raising the \$200,000 needed to acquire this parcel and remove existing structures before transferring ownership to NPS.

Significant donations to this project have already been made by RATC and [2019 Cox Conserves Hero National Winner Diana Christopoulos](#). The ATC invites supporters of McAfee Knob and the A.T. to help complete this project by making a donation at [appalachiantrail.org/mcafee](http://appalachiantrail.org/mcafee).

A public information meeting on the pedestrian bridge project is being scheduled for this summer. The final date for this meeting and more information about this project will be posted at [appalachiantrail.org/mcafeeknobproject](http://appalachiantrail.org/mcafeeknobproject).

### **About the Appalachian Trail Conservancy**

The ATC was founded in 1925 by volunteers and federal officials working to build a continuous footpath along the Appalachian Mountains. A unit of the National Park System, the A.T. ranges from Maine to Georgia and is approximately 2,193 miles in length. It is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world. The mission of the ATC 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, please visit [appalachiantrail.org](http://appalachiantrail.org).

# IMPROVE MCAFEE'S | TRAILHEAD



## CHANGES COMING

- Pedestrian Bridge
- Redesigned parking area
- Improved signage
- Land is needed to maximize improvements!

## YOUR HELP IS CRITICAL!

The ATC is raising \$200,000 to purchase a key parcel at the McAfee Knob Trailhead.

- 7 acres including a house on the corner of 311 and Old Catawba Road.
- Makes improvements like bathrooms possible
- Current owner is an AT supporter, but multiple developers have made inquiries!



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