Yogi-ing Purists, Trail Magic and Men in Skirts: An Analysis of Appalachian Trail Culture

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Abstract
This thesis explores the motivations and experiences of those thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail in the 20th and 21st Century. A detailed analysis examines the influence of conservationism, urban development, and collective American values on trail culture. The analysis uses Susan Fast's methodology from her 2000 article, "Rethinking Issues of Gender and Sexuality in Led Zeppelin: A Woman's view of Pleasure and Power in Hard Rock," as a model. Personal experiences from hiking the A.T. in 2003 are analyzed in juxtaposition with other hiker's written accounts. The bulk of these journals come from the website TrailJournals.com.

The Appalachian Trail extends over 2,100 miles from Georgia to Maine. The A.T. was initiated based on the ideas of Benton MacKaye. The trail was completed in 1937 and is now used by three to four million people per year. The popularity of hiking the trail has increased with time, in part due to people's perceived ideas of what nature holds for them. The study explores various accounts of those who found themselves in transition, such as retiring, graduating from school, or experiencing a divorce. These individuals looked to hiking the Appalachian Trail as an enriching experience before going back to normalcy in everyday society.

This particular form of outdoor recreation is contingent upon the individual's experience living in an urban/suburban environment. Hikers escape from and yet long for connectivity to civilization. The Appalachian Trail is therefore an environment that not only reveals Americans' ideal of nature but what Americans value. This study looks at the unique outdoors experience hikers face and the emergence of their transformative selves that result from such an adventure. It reveals common trends in hiker motivations over the years, and contrasts thru-hiking culture with collective values promoted by modern American society.

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The Appalachian Trail is no place to test new gear for the very first time. Be sure to give all of your equipment a try before you set out on your hike. If you can, take a weekend backpacking excursion along a local trail to make sure everything performs up to your expectations. While it is true that the Appalachian Trail winds its way through some of the most remote areas of the Eastern United States, it also crosses more roads than you might expect along the way. Don’t be too surprised when you suddenly—and unexpectedly—find yourself standing alongside a busy highway waiting for an opportune moment to dash across. This man made $2.8 million swing trading stocks from home. With no prior experience, Kyle Dennis decided to invest in stocks. He owes his success to 1 strategy. She was nervous, but determined to finish the Appalachian Trail and Mahoosic Notch was her last mile. She had walked every mile of the AT except this one. I hiked with her to the road crossing, where there was a excited crowd of former thru-hikers. The reason Maine and White Mountains trail is so rugged is the lack of topsoil; graded side hill is extraordinarily difficult to construct. So the trail tends to be steeper and include a lot of rock scrambles. Be prepared. Creepy men are everywhere. The Appalachian Trail is no exception. We outline how you can best protect yourself from unsavory characters while on the Trail. Art, Architecture & Culture | Buddhist Influence on Chinese Religion. A statue of the Buddha at Yungang Grottoes in Datong City, Shanxi Province, China. This is just one of 51,000 statues carved at the ancient cave site where Photo courtesy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The idea for the Appalachian Trail was birthed by Benton MacKaye. In 1921 MacKaye made his ambitious vision public with his proposal: An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning. However, in his proposal MacKaye envisioned much more than a simple hiking trail. However, in 1948 new life was breathed into the trail by a man named Earl Shaffer. A recovering WWII veteran, Shaffer set out on the A.T. and became the first recorded thru-hiker in history—a feat that at the time was believed impossible. ARTICLE: Trail Angels and Trail Magic on the Appalachian Trail ARTICLE: The Generosity of Trail Magic ARTICLE: Trail Magic – Love It or Hate It? Volunteer Efforts. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) didn't invent Trail magic, but for more than 90 years, we have managed and cared for the Trail where this concept was born. People's interpretation of Trail magic varies widely, however Trail magic can include: Finding what you need most when you least expect it. Experiencing something rare, extraordinary, or inspiring in nature.