

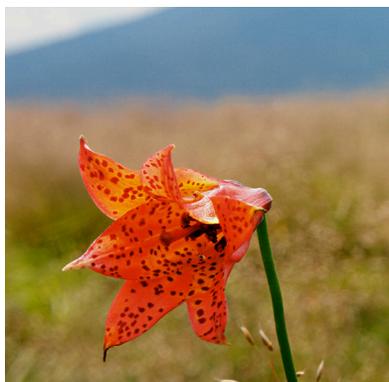


Roan Bald in Tennessee is home to some rare plants. Blu Ridge Kitties photo.

Rare Plant Monitoring

Northeast Temperate Network Program Brief

Right: Gray's Lily is a beautiful and rare wildflower that grows along parts of the AT's southern corridor. Jon Erickson photo.



Below: The Presidential Range of NH's section of the AT is considered to be a particular "hotspot" for rare plants. Dennis Wilkinson photo.



The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a treasured national icon. This extended footway traverses the Appalachian uplands of the eastern United States for more than 2,100 miles from Georgia to Maine, providing a unique and rich opportunity for outdoor enjoyment and an appreciation of natural and cultural resources. The importance of 'rare' species to the APPA has been recognized for many years.

Why monitor rare plants?

The AT corridor provides critical habitat for many species of rare plants. These plants add to the mosaic of natural wonders along the trail and are integral to the essence of the place.

The importance of 'rare' species to the AT has been recognized for many years. Between 1989 and 2001, AT rare plant inventories were conducted in each of the 14 APPA states. These inventories combined with later efforts identified 1,846 species occurrences of rare and less rare but noteworthy species and 297 exemplary vegetation communities at 482 sites. Out of the 1,878 total occurrences, 254 are rare plant species and 13 of those are federally endangered plant species. While rare species are found in almost every AT state, notable hotspots or clusters occur in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains of NH, the Mt. Rogers -Whitetop area of southwest VA, and the Roan Highlands along the border of NC and TN. The threats most frequently observed by these inventories were trampling, trail maintenance activities, invasive exotic plant species, and exotic insect pests. Additional threats noted included erosion, all-terrain-vehicles (ATVs), and plant competition or succession.

How is the monitoring done?

Volunteers are key to monitoring rare plants on the AT.

The protocol was designed to be implemented by trained volunteer monitors. It includes a combination of straightforward measurements and observations designed to track the size, extent, and condition of known rare plant occurrences, important site variables, and visible threats. The protocol can be used for monitoring a wide variety of plant lifeforms including grasses, herbs, trees, and shrubs, with methods varying slightly among different groups. The protocol is relatively simple and requires only a few basic pieces of equipment.

More information:

For access to the full monitoring protocol, resource briefs, and volunteer documents - visit NETN's website and navigate to the Rare Plant Monitoring webpage. You can also "like" NETN on Facebook to keep abreast of all NETN monitoring activities.



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