

## Appalachian Trail Museum to open in Pine Grove Furnace State Park

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The Appalachian Trail stories and memorabilia will be memorialized in more than just the minds and hiking boots of the thousands of hikers who made their way along the rocks, streams and trees of the hallowed trail.

The Appalachian Trail Museum Society, a nonprofit organization formed in 2001, has finally found a home at Pine Grove Furnace State Park and will open June 5.

Within two miles of the half-way mark in the trail -- which spans from Georgia to Maine -- 2,178 miles of hiking adventure -- stories and lore will gather.

The building that will house the treasures is under renovation, waiting for new floors and refurbished walls from an all-volunteer crew.

"They're have been a lot of people eager to pitch in," said Larry Luxenberg, president of the Appalachian Trail Museum Society.

Located in the state park, next to the Appalachian Trail, the building is a meeting point for groups of hikers on week-long camping trips, and those who just want to wander the woods for the day. There will be a hikers' lounge where everyone can put their feet up and soak in history.



The Appalachian Trail Museum will open in Pine Grove Furnace State Park in June. (COURTESY WWW.MILLPICTURES.COM)

Luxenberg said the initial featured exhibit at the museum will tell the story of the late Earl Shaffer, a York County native and William Penn High School graduate. In 1948, Shaffer became the first person to hike the Appalachian Trail in a single season.

The trail shelter that Shaffer built on Peters Mountain was recovered in 2008 and it will be part of the exhibit.

Artifacts from other early hikers including Grandma Gatewood, Gene Espy and Ed Garvey and general trail history will be on display.

Also planned is a children's discovery area to introduce children to the trail, hiking and other outdoor activities. The museum will include an indoor and outdoor center to welcome hikers and give visitors a chance to hear about Appalachian Trail experiences.

Also available are the photographs of the more than 12,000 thru-hiker photos taken at Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC) headquarters in Harpers Ferry, W.Va., since 1979.

Thru-hikers are hikers who hike the Appalachian Trail from start to finish rather than in sections -- an experience that typically takes six months.

These photos will be displayed on a big-screen TV.

"It's really amazing," Luxenberg said. "In general the AT means a lot to thousands and thousands of people."

To get involved, contact Luxenberg by e-mail at [info@atmuseum.org](mailto:info@atmuseum.org).

There is also a list of items to donate -- walking sticks, backpacks, pots and pans, building supplies -- on the Web site.