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Appalachian Trail Museum opens in June on National Trails Day

GARDNERS, PA - The Appalachian Trail Museum, a decade in the making, will open on National Trails Day, June 5, 2010. The Museum's home is a 200-year-old grist mill in the historic district of Pine Grove Furnace State Park near Gardners, Pennsylvania.

The Museum, which will be the first hiking museum in the country, is within two miles of the Appalachian Trail's midpoint. The building is next to Pine Grove General Store and near the Ironmasters Hostel, both popular stops for hikers. The store hosts the Half Gallon Club in which hikers try to eat an entire half gallon of ice cream in a single sitting.

The opening exhibits will feature the Earl Shaffer Shelter and artifacts from other early hikers including Grandma Gatewood, Gene Espy and Ed Garvey. Also planned is a children's discovery area to introduce children to the Appalachian Trail and outdoor activities. The Museum will include an area to welcome hikers and give visitors a chance to hear directly about their trail experiences.

The Museum also will display on a large screen the more than 12,000 thru-hiker photos taken at ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry since 1979. The photo project, with support from the Quimby Foundation and in cooperation with ATC, includes a website where all the pictures will be accessible.

The Museum will operate on weekends in the spring and fall and daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The Museum will rely primarily on volunteers for renovation work, staffing the building and for programs such as talks, nature walks and demonstrations of outdoor skills with an emphasis on programming for children. More information is available at www.atmuseum.org.