

# AT Vista 2023 Hiking Program – Details/FAQ

AT Vista is a long-weekend event that is not the same experience as the former Biennials. Limited opportunities for section hiking, so goal is to offer desirable experiences on the Appalachian Trail and other paths in the region.

Study the hike information and ratings before registering, in order to select a hike suitable to your abilities. It is likely to be hot and humid in southwest Virginia, northeast Tennessee, and North Carolina — conditions that will require drinking plenty of water and may affect the mileage you can hike.

**Departure time and place:** Please be at the designated “Hiking Parking” Lot 21a at least 15 minutes before the scheduled departure time. Groups will promptly leave and not wait for late comers. Except for earliest departures, hikers will have time to eat breakfast (7-8 am) in dining hall and are expected to return in time for dinner, depending on the speed of the hikers in the group. Supplies for making trail lunches will be available for purchase during breakfast. Otherwise, it is recommended that you bring items for your trail food. Some hikes leave during lunchtime (noon-1pm).

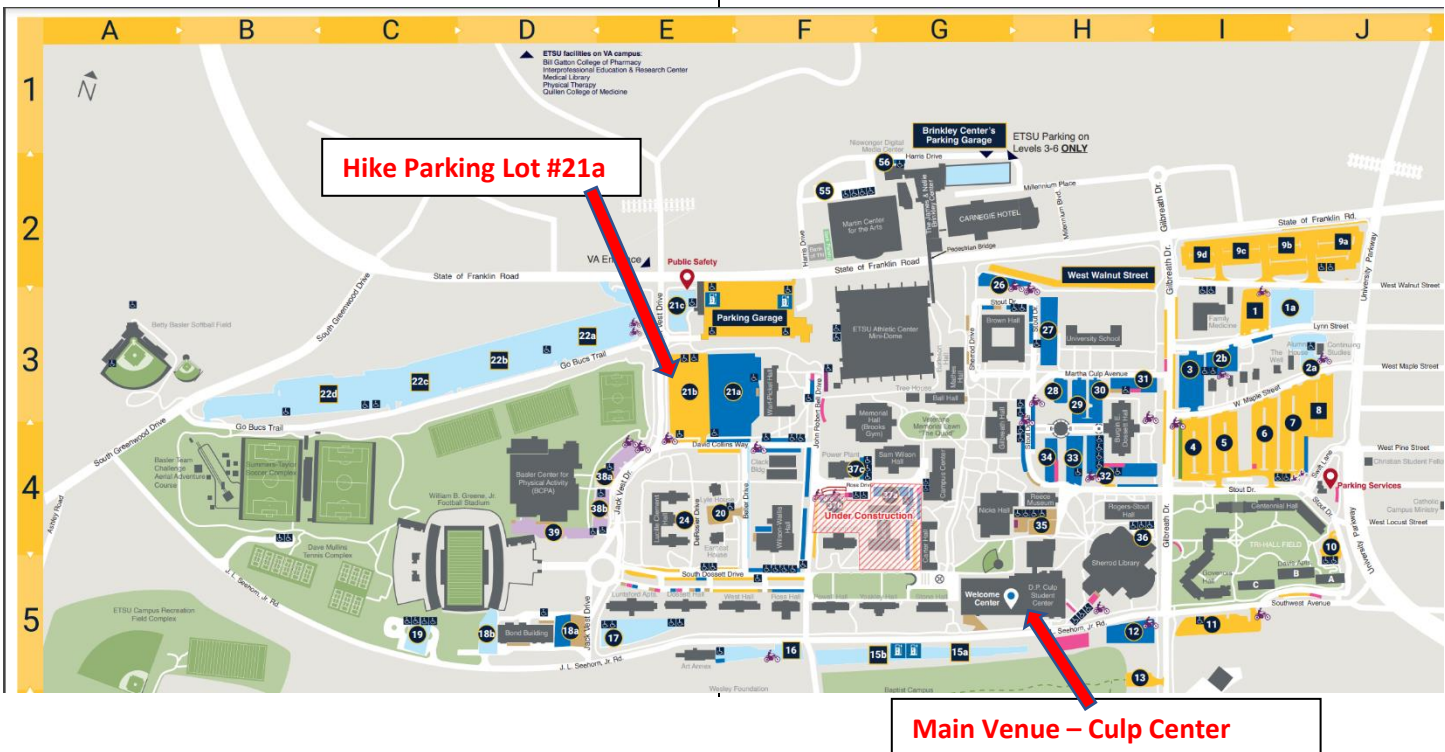
**Drivers are needed for all hikes.** Carpools will be formed to minimize traffic as some trailheads have limited parking, a few due to law enforcement. Please indicate a willingness to drive (on your registration form and when you reconfirm your reservation upon check-in at the conference). If a hike has insufficient drivers, it will be cancelled.

Passengers will compensate the drivers by giving cash for double the drive miles multiplied by 10 cents. Round the result up to nearest dollar. Please bring exact change.

**Hike titles:** “A.T.” indicates that a portion of the hike is on the Appalachian Trail. The title lists the starting and ending points and may mention places of special interest or wilderness areas.

**Hike types:** Four options are being used. In/Out hikes return to vehicles by retracing the path. Loop hikes return to the parking area by a different route. Shuttle hikes involve dropping a vehicle at one end while hiking from the other. Must have sufficient seating in the vehicle left for all drivers to get back to the other end. AT Vista 2023 will not be offering key swap hikes due to liability with driving another’s vehicle. Training will be provided by Greg Ritson, ATC’s Travelling Trainer, for long-time and new volunteers.

**Drive (miles):** One-way route to trailhead using Google Maps. GPS reception is typically good, thus can be used for navigation but having a paper map is good back-up. Some hike leaders may not meet you at ETSU departure parking lot but near or at the trailhead if they live further away.



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**Difficulty:** Participants are assumed to have recent hiking experience versus the general public. Easy is typically up to 5 miles and < 500 ft elevation change. Medium runs 5-9 miles with up to 1200 ft elevation change thus more of a challenge with some steeper sections. Med Hard are also 5-9 miles, but the 1300-1500 ft elevation may involve a steady or steep climb thus demanding for an unconditioned person. Hard for this weekend are 9+ miles with 1,900-3,300' climbs, thus only for experienced hikers in excellent shape. Other factors such as trail condition, water crossings, and hiking speed can be considered.

**Total time:** A rough estimate based on ~50 mph driving, 2 mph hiking pace, and one hour of stops (lunch). Some adjustments were made, but still an approximation of when back at ETSU. It is possible that participants on longer hikes some distance from Johnson City may not get back in time for dinner, so you may want to plan accordingly.

**Group size:** Hikes are typically limited to 18 people, except in wilderness areas at 10 maximum or if parks have own limit. The Channels Nature Area is for three vehicles.

**Friday morning hikes:** Six hikes depart before the official start of the AT Vista event in order to offer a few more long A.T. treks or get back in time for the 5pm Kick-Off Dinner. Campus housing is available starting Thursday night if you want to take advantage of these opportunities.

**First aid:** Hike leaders will be carrying first-aid kits, but you are responsible for your own first aid, rain gear, sunscreen, bug spray, etc. Please bring your own supplies. Do not underestimate the difficulty of the mountains and the effect of hot, humid weather. Bring plenty of water—typically at least a quart of water for every five miles of hiking. Be prepared!

**Dogs:** Hiking with pets will not be allowed. No pets are permitted anywhere on ETSU campus.

**Schedule changes:** The hike program is expected to occur as stated – rain or shine - unless severe weather warnings are forecasted. Hike leaders are committed volunteers who know routes from prior experience; however, back-ups will be employed in case of unforeseen circumstances. If the event headcount fills many of these hikes, then additional hikes may be added to the schedule which will be published on the [ATVista2023.org](http://ATVista2023.org) website

## FAQs

- ***Where can I learn more about these hikes?***

A separate hike description document is linked from the hike program page with brief explanations. CMC and TEHCC share hike information on their websites. AllTrails has many of these hikes but could have some differences from the planned outings.

- ***What will the weather be like?***

We would like to know too... and hope for the best. Typical August day in Johnson City, TN runs between 65 to 82°F with chance of thundershowers during the summer afternoon. One difference are the higher elevations (Big Bald, Roan Highlands) can be 10-15°F cooler at the summit.

- ***Why cannot I bring my dog along – on a leash and I'll drive separately?***

Multiple issues. Dogs are not allowed in designed wilderness (like Pond Mtn Wilderness/Laurel Falls). Some hiking clubs providing leaders have no-dog policies we will respect. Trailhead parking can be tight, so goal is to minimize number of vehicles, thus seats are needed for people. You are free to arrange your own hikes in the area.

- ***Are there any fees?***

Please bring some \$1s and \$5s. There are per vehicle fees for USFS Rhododendron Garden day use area (\$3) and Rock Creek recreation (\$2). Bays Mountain Park in Kingsport will be waiving their \$5 entrance fee. Also drivers are to be reimbursed at 10 cents per mile.