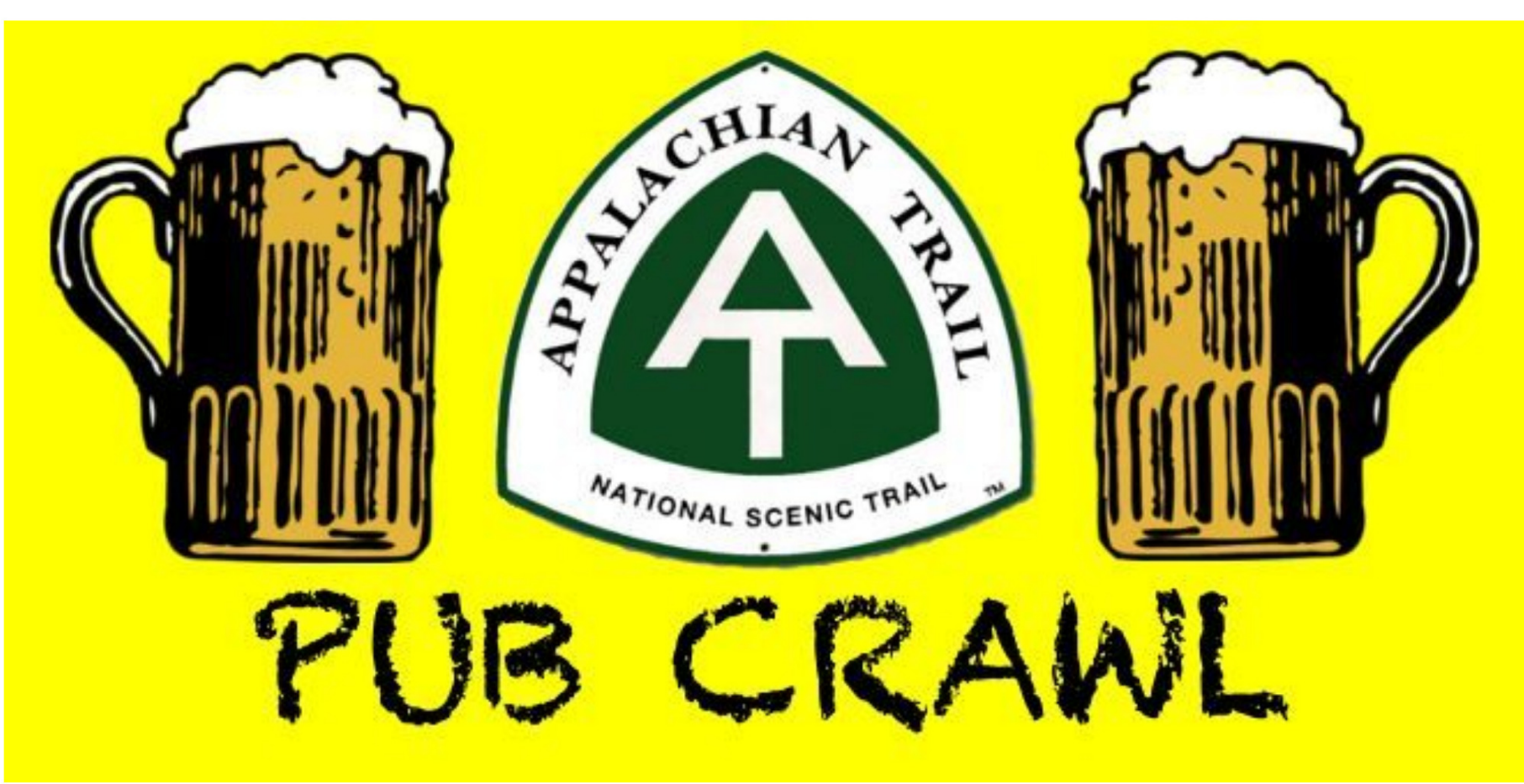


MAY 23, 2015 : JORDAN BOWMAN

BEYOND THE AT

The Appalachian Trail Pub Crawl

Hiking the Appalachian Trail deprives us of many things: family and friends, hot showers, *Game of Thrones* episodes, the ability to be socially "normal"—things that, in the grand scheme of life, we all need to get away from once in a while. But there is one thing that most of us simply can't survive without, something that pleases the soul as much as the taste buds, a common goal for which we are willing to put in just a few extra miles on blistered feet.

I am talking, of course, about **beer**.

While smuggling a few cans into your pack may stay your thirst for a short while, nothing helps take the miles off your feet and shoulders like an icy, freshly drawn draught taken in with friends at a pub.

So here is your guide to pub-crawling your way along the white blazes. Many of these watering holes are seen as landmarks on the trail; others celebrate the craft beer of the surrounding area—and a few of them move the beer from the brewery directly into your glass.

Circle the following destinations on your map or guide and prepare to take the slow path to Maine: *you've got a lot of drinking to do*.

The Rock House Lodge at Outdoor 76
Mile 109.8 - Franklin, NC

Image courtesy of Outdoor 76

What better way to celebrate your first 100 miles on the A.T. than grabbing a cold brew at one of the best outfitters on the trail? The Rock House Lodge specializes in craft beers from North Carolina, with 12 local, seasonal, and small run beers on tap and even more in cans and bottles. The pub is located within the Outdoor 76 outfitter, so you can browse the gear selection while walking off your buzz. Thru-hikers also receive a 10% discount, saving you money for further celebrations down the trail.

Website: *Outdoor76.com*

River's End Restaurant
Big Wesser BBQ & Brew
Mile 137.3 - Nantahala Outdoor Center
in Bryson City, NC

Image courtesy of NOC.com

After descending over 2,000 feet into the Nantahala Outdoor Center (affectionately known as the NOC), you may need something to help take your mind off of the ache in your knees. Situated directly next to the beautiful Nantahala River, River's End offers more than just gorgeous views: the food portions come in one size—extra large—and they have an ample supply of specialty brews, including selections from the nearby Nantahala Brewing Company in Bryson City proper (it's an easy hitch if you have the time to visit).

Image courtesy of NOC.com

On the other side of the river lies the Big Wesser BBQ & Brew, which offers just as many (if not more) selections of local and craft beers in an open-air deck setting. Big Wesser will often host live music as well, so grab a pint and relax to the sounds of local bands and of the Nantahala dashing between the rocks.

Website: *NOC.com*

Smoky Mountain Brewery
Mile 207.3 - Gatlinburg, TN

Image courtesy of the Smoky Mountain Brewery

Take a mid-Smokies break and head down to the Smoky Mountain Brewery & Restaurant in Gatlinburg. Each of the microbrews here are touted for their quality, "brewed entirely without the use of chemical preservatives, additives, or pasteurization." After a sip of one of their mainstay brews, such as the Tuckaleechee Porter, you might just understand why all the effort is worth it.

Website: *Smoky-Mtn-Brewery.com*

Spring Creek Tavern
Mile 274.4 - Hot Springs, NC

Spring Creek Tavern

Image courtesy of The Spring Creek Tavern

The A.T. wanders through Hot Springs to the doorstep of the Spring Creek Tavern, which overlooks the bubbling French Broad River. That's not the only thing bubbling, however: the Tavern features 12 beers on tap, with over half of them brewed in North Carolina. Take a day off and let your tastebuds discover what the Old North State has to offer (hint: it's the Mother Earth Old Neighborhood Oatmeal Porter).

Website: *TheSpringCreekTavern.com*

The Damascus Brewery
Mile 468.8 - Damascus, VA

Image courtesy of The Damascus Brewery

You've completed roughly one quarter of the A.T. and The Damascus Brewery is here to help you celebrate! Rotating a selection of 30 beers throughout the year, you're bound to find something to help you feel at home in Virginia—which is a good thing, because you're going to be here for a while…

The Damascus Brewery also has live music on a frequent basis, so check their performance schedule for the next time you need some tunes near the trail.

Website: *TheDamascusBrewery.com*

The Flying Mouse Brewery
Mile 729.3 - Troutville, VA

FLYING MOUSE BREWERY

Image courtesy of TheFlyingMouseBrewery.com

After descending from McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs, plan a pit stop at the Flying Mouse Brewery on your way through Troutville. Their beers are labeled on a scale from "1" to "8" in regards to the darkness of the beer (with "8" being the darkest), helping you quickly decide which microbrew is right for you.

Website: *FlyingMouseBrewery.com*

Devil's Backbone Basecamp Brewpub
Mile 842.5 - Roseland, VA

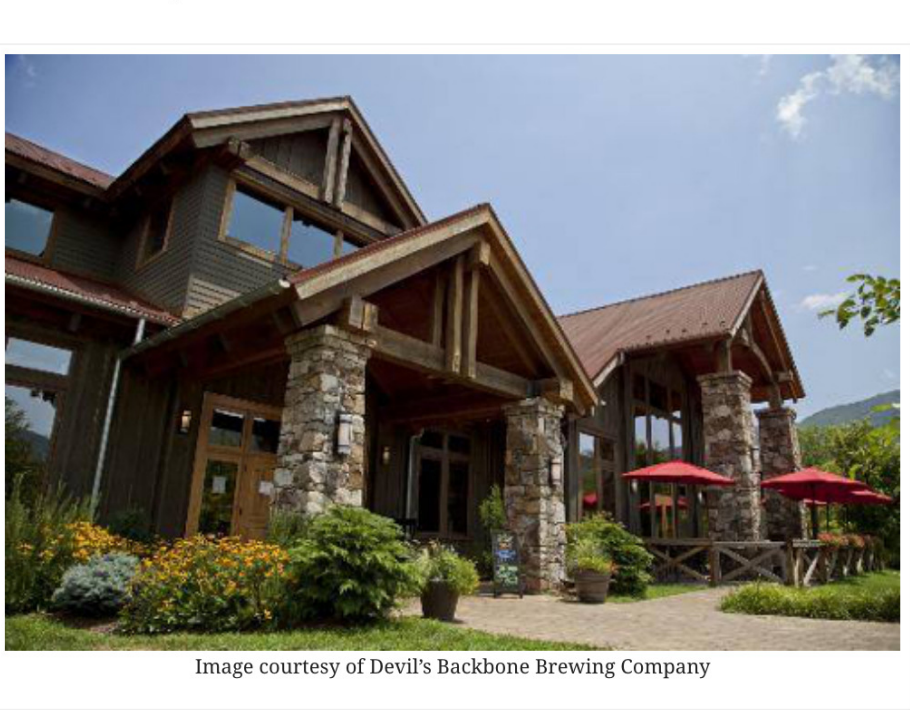


Image courtesy of Devil's Backbone Brewing Company

Mark the spot for the Devil's Backbone Basecamp Brewpub on your map right now—the road you'll need to hitch on (Rte. 664 in Reed's Gap) is inconspicuous, and you *definitely* don't want to miss what this spot has to offer. The D.B. Brewing Company offers a kaleidoscope of microbrew options all on draft, and the food selection is outstanding. On top of that, hikers are allowed to camp on-site and can often purchase a hikers-only breakfast for $5. If that's not enough to pull you off the trail for an evening, I'm not sure what will.

Website: *DBBrewingCompany.com*

Private Quinn's Pub
Mile 1023.4 - Harpers Ferry, WV

Image courtesy of AmericanPublicHouseReview.com

You're now at the psychological halfway point of the trail, and psychologically speaking, you need a beer. Private Quinn's Pub has locally brewed beers on tap and is situated in the middle of historical Harpers Ferry within view of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. Grab a few brews and then go for a stroll through history—and be sure to stop by and say hello to the staff at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy just around the corner.

Facebook Page

Unique Bar & Grill
Mile 1066.9 - Blue Ridge Summit, PA

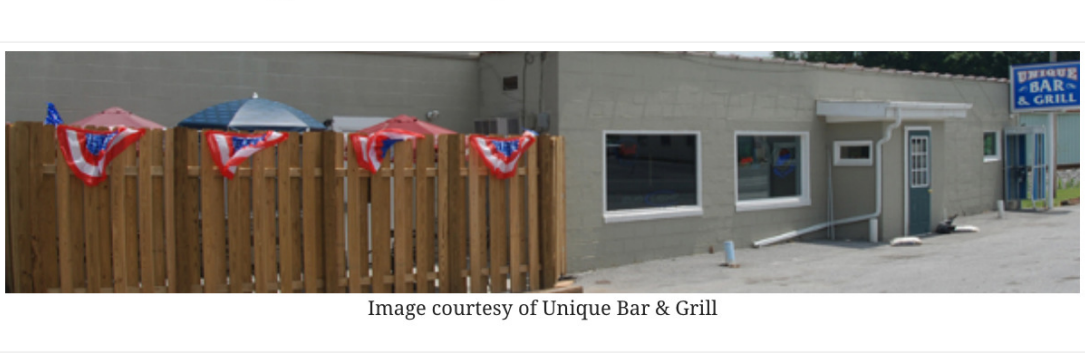


Image courtesy of Unique Bar & Grill

Just above the Mason-Dixon Line resides the Unique Bar & Grill—pour one back in remembrance of the South as you press on toward New England. On top of a good selection of beer and reportedly excellent burgers, the Unique hosts live music regularly and collects "money in the ceiling" (literally) for charitable causes.

Website: *UniqueBarAndGrill.com*

Boiling Springs Tavern
Mile 1121.3 - Boiling Springs, PA

BOILING SPRINGS
EST. 1832
TAVERN

Image courtesy of Boiling Springs Tavern

You've officially passed the A.T. halfway point, so stop into the Boiling Springs Tavern as you pass through its namesake town. While the Tavern boasts its wine selection, it also has an extensive array of craft beers on tap. The Tavern itself is a historical beauty, originally built in 1832 and featuring a beautifully-maintained bar. The food is pricey, but after feasting on ramen and peanuts, it might be worth it to splurge on some grade-A cuisine.

Website: *BoilingSpringsTavern.com*

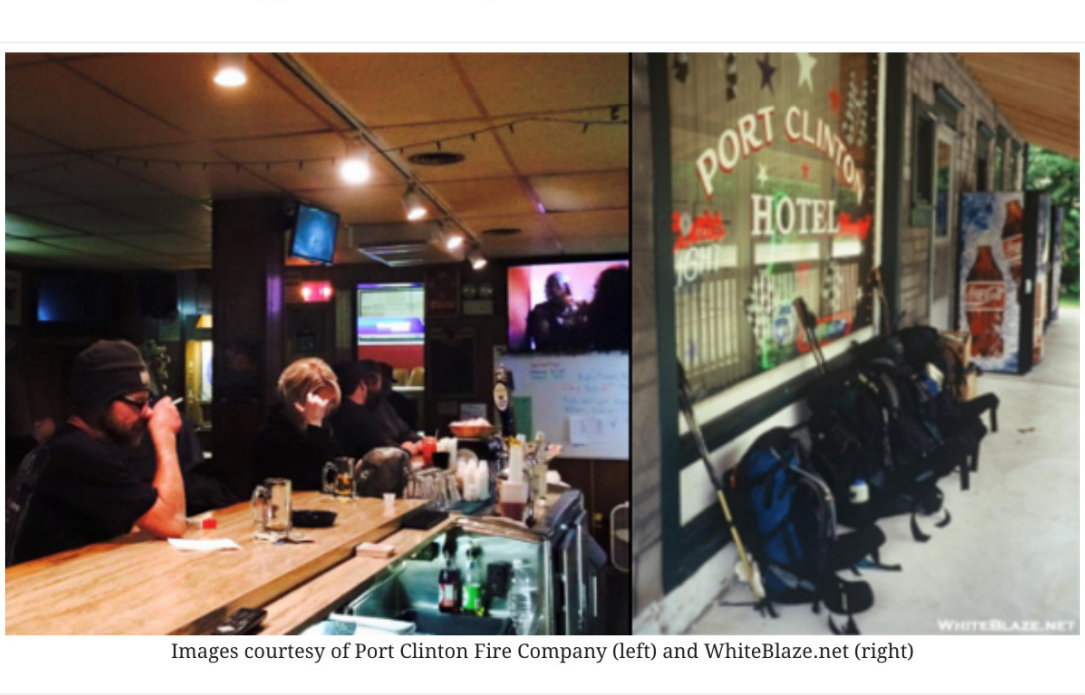
The Doyle Hotel
Mile 1146.9 - Duncannon, PA

Image courtesy of The Doyle Hotel

Few places are more iconic on the A.T. than the historic Doyle Hotel. Originally constructed in the 1770's, it has burned down and been rebuilt, was purchased and remodeled by Anheuser-Busch in 1880 (and sold off during Prohibition), and has been a hiker haven for decades. The Doyle lives up to its beer-loving legacy, offering huge glasses of beer and even bigger servings of food for great prices. Even if you don't stay the night, a stop at the Doyle is mandatory for A.T. hikers.

Facebook Page

Port Clinton Fire Company
The Port Clinton Hotel
Yuengling Brewery (Pottsville)
Mile 1217.5 - Blue Ridge Summit, PA



Images courtesy of Port Clinton Fire Company (left) and WhiteBlaze.net (right)

The A.T. meanders by two watering holes in Port Clinton, both of which having a variety of brews. The Port Clinton Fire Company is technically a members-only establishment, but asking nicely and recognizing yourself as a hiker may convince them to give you a guest membership—and access to cheap draft beverages. The Port Clinton Hotel has a wider range of beverages and food, though they do ask that hikers bathe before entering the dining room. Having caught a whiff of my own stench after a few days on the trail, I completely understand.

D.G. YUENGLING & SON.

Image courtesy of City-Data.com

If you have a day free, hitch a ride to nearby Pottsville, PA and the site of the original Yuengling Brewery, the oldest brewery in America. Free tours are available Monday-Friday all year and on Saturdays from April to December. Even if you don't like Yuengling (for some reason), the building itself is a slice of history, surviving the Civil War and, perhaps even more dastardly, Prohibition.

Websites: *P.C.F.C. Facebook Page*, *PortClintonHotel.com*, and *Yuengling.com*

The Beer Stein
Mile 1277.8 - Wind Gap, PA

Image courtesy of Scott Naef

One of the friendliest pubs on the trail, The Beer Stein allows hikers to pitch their tents in the field behind the building. On top of a full bar and large portions of food, nothing beats being within walking distance of your bed after a few draughts—or bring a six pack with you to keep the party going.

UPDATE: It seems that the Beer Stein has retracted its camping policy. If you plan on stopping for a pint, make sure you have another place in mind to set up camp. You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here…

Facebook Page

The Deer Head Inn
Mile 1293.4 - Delaware Water Gap, PA

Image courtesy of DeerHeadRecords.com

A final stop before exiting Pennsylvania, the Deer Head Inn is a bastion of great jazz music and fine dining. Of course, great jazz and great beer go together like hikers and granola, so pull up a stool at the bar and while away the evening to the sounds of pianos, trumpets, and clinking pint glasses.

Website: *DeerHeadInn.com*

Gyp's Tavern
Mile 1321.8 - Branchville, NJ

Image courtesy of Gyp's Tavern

Located on the shores of Kittatinny Lake, Gyp's Tavern is a great place to kick back and wait for the summer heat to dissipate. Hikers are welcome to charge their electronic devices and dip their toes in the lake while they sample the selections from the bar and grill.

Facebook Page

Wits End Tavern
Mile 1346.0 - Unionville, NY

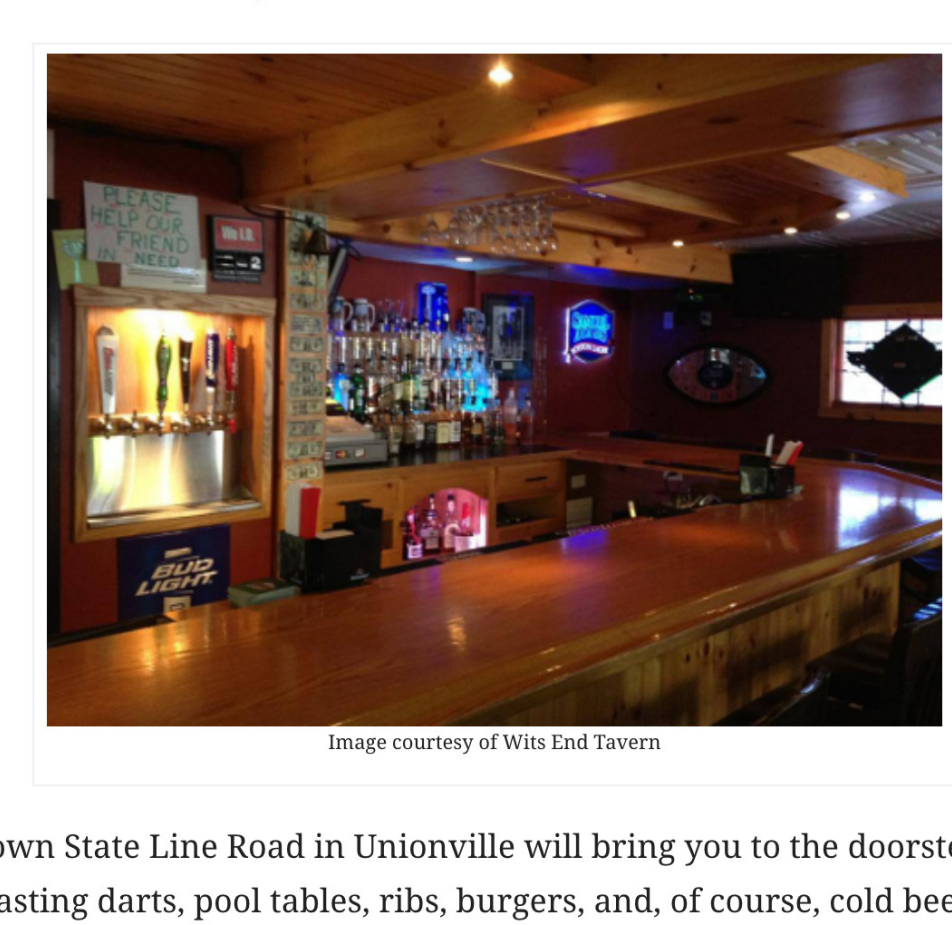


Image courtesy of Wits End Tavern

A quick walk down State Line Road in Unionville will bring you to the doorstep of the Wit's End Tavern. Boasting darts, pool tables, ribs, burgers, and, of course, cold beer on tap, it's a great place for a hiker to indulge in the things she or he misses out on when on the trail. If you stumble into town on Friday or Saturday, the Wit's End hosts live music along with liquid spirits.

Facebook Page

Kingsley Tavern
Mile 1467.1 - Kent, CT

Kingsley
TAVERN

Image courtesy of Kingsley Tavern

The beautiful main strip of Kent, CT stands in stark contrast to the grungy appearance of most hikers, so stop in the Kingsley Tavern and drink until your shame goes away (if you don't feel shame, drink anyway)! The Kingsley Tavern rotates a selection of craft beers on tap, and the outdoor seating ensures that passerby catch a glimpse of you in all your scraggly glory. The food here is also locally raised and delicious, so chow down before returning to the wild.

Website: *KingsleyTavern.com*

Mill Town Tavern
Mile 1569.1 - Dalton, MA

MILL TOWN TAVERN

Image courtesy of Mill Town Tavern

The A.T. passes by the front door of the Mill Town Tavern, so stop in and grab a brew to go with their celebrated chicken wings. Live music and trivia are frequent activities, so keep an eye on the Tavern's Facebook page for updates on upcoming events.

Website: *MillTownTavern.com*

Purple Pub
Mile 1592.6 - Williamstown, MA

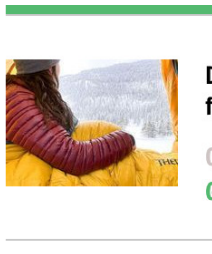
THE PURPLE PUB

Image courtesy of The Purple Pub

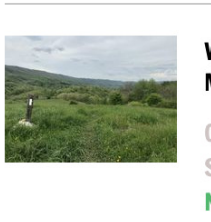
Your last stop for beer before stepping onto the Long Trail, The Purple Pub is just a short hitch away in Williamstown, MA. Featuring local beers from both Massachusetts and Vermont, you can get a taste of what you're leaving behind *and* of what's to come. The food is standard (and quality) pub grub fare, though prepare to taste it again if you chow down before the 1,500-foot climb up to the Vermont state line.

Website: *PurplePub.com*

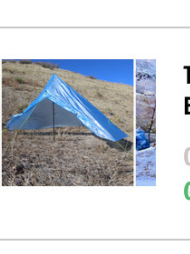
Popular



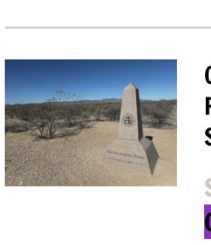
Do You Need a Sleeping Bag Liner for Backpacking?
OCT 6TH : KATIE JACKSON
GEAR



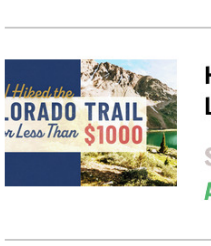
What the Government Shutdown Means for the AT, PCT, and CDT
OCT 2ND : ANNA MCKINNEY SMITH
NEWS



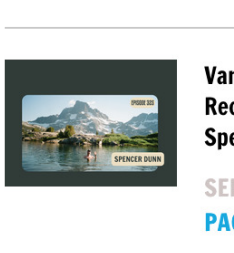
Tents vs. Tarps vs. Bivies: Which Backpacking Shelter Is Best?
OCT 1ST : KATIE JACKSON
GEAR



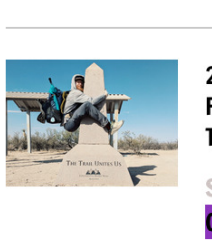
CDT Hikers: US Citizenship, Army Permit Now Required to Access Southern Terminus
SEP 30TH : KATIE JACKSON
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL



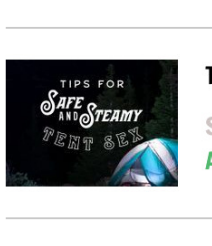
How I Hiked the Colorado Trail for Less Than a Thousand Dollars
SEP 30TH : MOONBEAM K
ADVICE



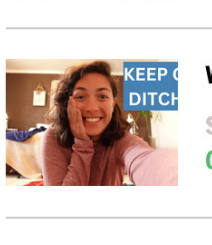
Vancouver Island Trails, PCT Pies Record, and Canadian Culture with Spencer "Boiler" Dunn (BPR #325)
SEP 29TH : BACKPACKER RADIO
PACIFIC CREST TRAIL



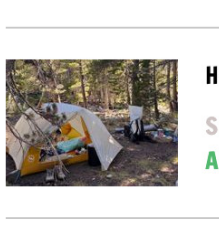
2025 CDT Hikers: Submit Your Finish Photos To Be Featured on The Trek
SEP 29TH : KELLY FLORO
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL



Tips for Safe and Steamy Tent Sex
SEP 29TH : GUEST POST
ADVICE



What's in Chickpea's Backpack?
SEP 25TH : CHICKPEA
GEAR LISTS



How To Clean a Backpacking Tent
SEP 25TH : KATIE JACKSON
ADVICE

The Trek