

PATH WAYS

Of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

PATH Year 59, No. 1

Spring 2023

Why not Try Inn-to-Inn Hiking in Slovenia?



Rich taking a water break in a Slovenian village.

Story and photos by Sue Freeman

The small European country of Slovenia, found east of Italy and south of Austria, developed a new trail just before Covid hit. Rich and I booked a self-guided Inn-to-Inn trip hoping to hike it before it was discovered by a hoard of people. Of course, as with all travel, our trip was delayed two years by the virus.

But we got to go this past year, and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The Juliana Trail, a name derived from Julius Caesar, is a 170-mile loop through the Slovenian (or Julian) Alps. It's a cobbled-together ring of hiking trails, farm paths, remote gravel roads, and a fair number of paved roads, including two paved rail trails. They

advertised it as "well marked," but that was an exaggeration. The

company (A Self-Guided Life, found at www.lifeadventures.si) that booked our B&Bs and luggage transfers, set us up with the app GPS My Ride and a series of offline maps. They were a lifesaver. They kept us on track and beeped at us if we took a wrong turn.

We didn't opt to backpack, though other people do. Instead, we carried day packs and hiked from Inn to Inn. Each day our luggage was transferred by taxi. This meant we started each



The Juliana Trail is a mix of hiking paths, old roads and walks through many villages.

day with a hearty breakfast and found a restaurant each night for a filling local dinner. Most days we enjoyed some local bread & cheese for a light lunch. Slovenia is not a place for vegetarians. Despite the prolific vegetable gardens in most yards, the restaurants served meat, often game like venison, wild boar, or horse. Octopus and squid were common on most menus. We tried a variety of their local dishes; some we'd eat again, some not.

Usually, we hiked 10 to 14 miles a day, our longest being a 17-mile day. Some days were easy with mostly level terrain, others were killers with extremely steep trails. The Slovenian Alps are steep mountains, so even when traversing a hill, we'd be on a narrow trail with a dramatic precipice to one side. Most days we'd hike through several clusters of homes either in valleys or high in the mountains, and would look for a grocery store, restaurant or bar for a cappuccino or beer in the village at the end of the day.

Each day was different, which we enjoyed. Some days we were enveloped in forests all day. Other days we hopped from one farm community to another, passing through woods and pastures. Sometimes we followed aquamarine rivers or climbed through deep gorges carved by water. The bedrock of these Alps is limestone, so erosion produced a pure white sand. Snow melt and spring runs ran down streams and rivers into lakes that all glistened in a gorgeous Caribbean

blue color. We dipped a few times in the lakes and rivers, but we exited quickly because the water was bone chillingly cold.

We met other hikers sporadically, but most were hiking other trails; Slovenia has a wide network of intersecting trails in the northwest section where the Juliana Trail can be found, including some that head into the high-altitude section of the Alps. We stayed in the mountains below tree line, which suited us well.

We got to meet quite a few locals, some of the two million residents of Slovenia. They are a proud people, as can be inferred from their neat yards, lack of litter or graffiti, and prolific vegetable gardens. Their land was ground zero for World War I, back when they were part of Austria-Hungary. After WWI they became part of Yugoslavia, and they gained their independence in 1992. Today they're part of the European Union. In terms of architecture and topography, the country reminded us of Switzerland.

I've learned as we have progressed from long-distance backpacking to Inn-to-Inn hiking to build in some rest days. These give us a chance to sleep in and explore whatever is unique about each town. On this trip I scheduled a rest day roughly every 4 days, and we were glad to have them. It's our philosophy as we age to slow down and smell the roses -- or maybe it's just what our aging bodies demand. Either way, it makes for a more enjoyable hiking experience.

Rich enjoys trains, so one day we were sitting at a cafe at a train station having a beer, when a train rolled in. We couldn't see the train being loaded, but when it pulled out of the station, its series of flat-bed railroad cars were loaded with automobiles with people inside their cars, waving at us from the windows. Instead of driving a series of long, winding, gravel roads up & over the mountains, they rode the train car shuttle through tunnels. We, on the other hand, climbed up and over each of those mountains.

As we hiked one day, we passed a field where a group of people were hand harvesting potatoes. Another fond memory was visiting a castle high on a hill in the tourist town of Bled. We stopped in the wine cellar to learn that this was the first part of the castle to be built, back in 1011, and were offered a sampling of wine made of grapes from vines that date back to the 9th century. It was delightful, as was all the wine we drank along the route, which generally sold for \$1.50 a glass.

We had no difficulty navigating in a country whose language is Slovenian. Most other tourists were European, and the common language was English. Virtually all the people we encountered (mainly people working in the tourist service industry) also spoke English. However, if you asked us what town we were heading to, we probably couldn't tell you because we couldn't pronounce it. The Slovenian language is loaded with extraneous j's and l's and is missing many vowels! This added to the exotic nature of traveling here and added to the fun.



Sue and Rich maintain the AT just north of O'Lystery Picnic Shelter on Va. 42.



From our new president, David Atkinson

Greetings, and Happy New Year, fellow PATH members.

I guess the 'Happy New Year' thing is a bit old by now. Like many of you, I feel like I am already behind for the year and it's only February. After the election at our annual membership meeting in November (shown above) -- which, by the way, had a great turn-out and tons of good food, it was a relatively quiet December. I thought being President of PATH may not be too bad after all. Then came January and suddenly my email inbox was flooded with important information about meetings I needed to attend; calls I needed to be on; and work projects that needed planning. One thing I quickly learned was that there is a bewildering number of acronyms used by our partners. However, every day I learn something new, and as challenging as it may be, I am excited about the experiences this new year will bring.

Many of you I have not had the privilege of meeting, and you really don't know who I am. I have only been a member of PATH since 2017 or 2018 (I can't remember which) and still feel like I have so much to learn. My wife, Sydney, and I retired from North Carolina state and local government in 2017. She from Public Health and me from Human Services. We both enjoy travel, and until COVID hit we tried to take a big trip every year. We sold our house in Raleigh and moved to Asheville, where we have always planned to live after retirement. Last September we began a significant renovation project on our house which was only supposed to take "8 or 9 months" and at the rate work is proceeding it appears we will be under construction until the end of time. Every day brings a new surprise! Our two dogs, Bebe and Delia, have taken it all in stride. Me, not so much.

I look forward to seeing you all at our March workday and getting back out on the trail. Stay tuned for info on upcoming work projects -- as soon as I can figure out how to send a group email to PATH members.



David A.

Bits and Pieces

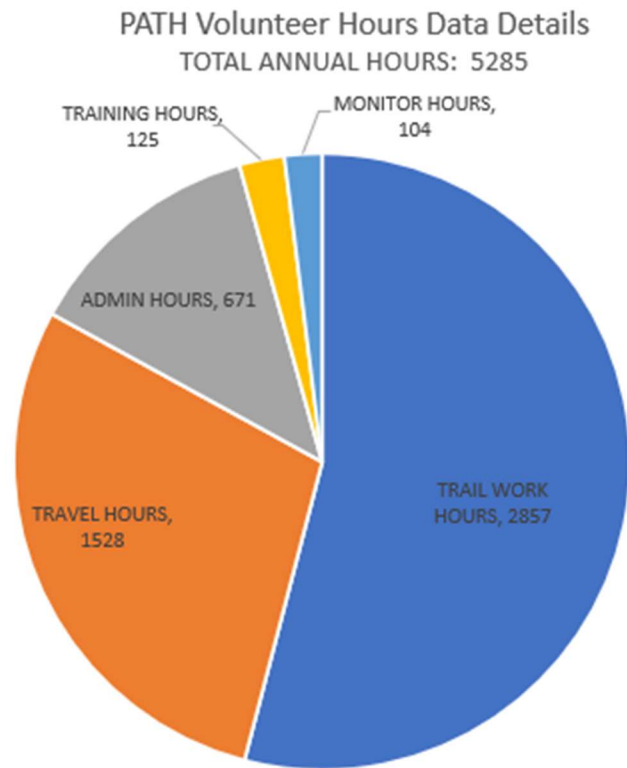
■ Remember to **PAY YOUR DUES** for the new year. Dues were due Jan. 1, and we forgot to put a notice in the last newsletter. Fortunately, a lot of people attended the annual meeting in late November, and most of them have paid. If you haven't, please do it now. You can pay on the Web site, by Paypal or by mailing in the form on the last page of this newsletter. **DO IT NOW!** Single \$20, Family \$25, Student \$15.

■ Earlier in 2022, PATH's board of directors approved a **CODE OF CONDUCT**, after a healthy nudge from ATC that we should be doing that kind of thing. Ours is not anywhere near as long as theirs – thank heavens – it's only one page. But it was approved at the annual meeting in November. It's attached on the last page of this newsletter. For the record, we don't know of anyone in violation of the code. The committee who wrote the code included **Tina Tempest, Martha Emrey and Tom Dillon.**

■ **THE TRAIL BOSS COMMITTEE:** As reported in the Holiday newsletter, we're trying to have a committee do the "Trail Boss" job this year, scheduling work projects each month and making sure that campsites and assembly sites are available each month. Vice president **Chris Bracknell** said of this plan in December, in a letter to section leaders, "It is vital that the section leaders report maintenance needs that require a team to help." The committee will include Chris, north and south overseers, the tool boss and the events coordinator, a new job. The events coordinator will be responsible for securing assembly sites, coordinating potluck meals and the like.

This is a newsletter for the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, a trail work club that maintains approximately 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia. This newsletter comes out four times a year, as long as we have enough material and contributions. It is sent by email to the PATH List and others, or by U.S. Mail to members who don't have email. Feel free to print and post in your local outdoor store. **SUMMER DEADLINE MAY 20, 2023.** Web site: www.path-at.org. Or for info: PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com. Or see our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PiedmontATHikers/

Tom Dillon, editor (tdillon27127@earthlink.net) or (336) 725-2760



How PATH'S trail work broke down last year, as compiled by timekeeper Michele Nester. Thanks, Michele.

■ **LICK CREEK BRIDGE:** The Forest Service and ATC have partnered with the Federal Highways Administration to design and construct a replacement for the Lick Creek footbridge as part of the national transportation infrastructure program. The new bridge is a replacement in kind – going back in the same location, elevated above the floodplain. Actual construction of the replacement bridge should begin later in 2023. This was a statement from the Forest Service early in February. We add, “HALLELUJAH.” It can be a difficult ford. Area maintainer **Ed Martin** called it “the best news I’ve heard in five years.”

■ This is the last call here for PATH’s **NEW YELLOW T-SHIRT**. You can both see and order it, short or long sleeve or hoodie, at this link. Thanks to **Rich Freeman, Ron Hudnell** and **Ed Martin** for putting this project together. Here’s the link:
<https://mommastees-custom-tees-llc.square.site/product/PATHVolunteer/262>

Milestones

■ **Margaret Wainwright**, 87, of Chapel Hill, N.C., a PATH regular with her dog Maya for a number of years through 2014, passed away Dec. 27, her daughter reported to Leslie Killeen. A memorial service took place Jan. 8 at Carolina Meadows there.

Margaret was a native of England, a world traveler and the widow of Geoffrey Wainwright of Duke Divinity School. She is survived by her children, Joanna (Lance), Catherine and Dominic (Jeannie) and grandchildren, Wesley Paulman and Matthaïos and Sofia Eleni Aravosis, as well as a niece, nephews and many cousins and dear friends. Contributions can be made to The Nature Conservancy or Orange County Justice United in Margaret’s memory.

2023 Calendar

This schedule for 2023 is obviously somewhat abbreviated, since we haven’t had a fulltime trail master for the coming year. We’re working on it.

March 10-12, 2023 **Southern Partnership Mtg.** **Lake Junaluska, N.C.**

This will take place at the Lake Junaluska Conference Center, 91 N. Lakeshore Drive, Lake Junaluska, N.C. 28745. It’s an ATC attempt to get southern AT clubs and agency partners all on the same page for the season. Contact jstowe@appalachiantrail.org. Or visit https://volunteer.appalachiantrail.org/s/atc-project-details?c_reclId=a0q8Z00000CuG1K

March 17-19, 2023 **March Work Weekend** **Sugar Grove, Va.**

Trail survey and maintenance, with a potluck or meal out Saturday night. We’re looking for wintertime damage to our trail sections and trying to put together a work schedule for the spring. Please report what your trail section needs ahead of time.

April 14-16, 2023 **April Work Weekend** **Sugar Grove, Va.**

General trail maintenance, with a potluck or meal out Saturday night. We’re continuing to take care of wintertime damage to our trail and preparing for the coming wave of through-hikers on our 65 miles of trail.

May 12-13, 2023 Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally Konnarock, Va.

The 49th edition of this annual rally features hikes, excursions and nature seminars and operates out of the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, a restored early 20th century schoolhouse in Konnarock. Visit www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org or call (276) 388-3155.

May 19-21, 2023 May Work Weekend Stony Fork Camp, Va.

General maintenance, hopefully with a potluck or meal out Saturday night. This may also be our 2023 Summerfest (or Springfest, if you insist) extended work weekend. Location could change to the Settlers' Museum.

May 19-21, 2023 AT Trail Days Damascus, Va.

This annual event in Damascus celebrates the Appalachian Trail and is a sure gathering place for this year's crop of through-hikers. Music, seminars, hikers' parade, many other events. It will most likely operate out of the new Damascus Trail Center.

May 22-26, 30-June 2 Wilderness Skills Institute Cradle of Forestry, N.C.

These are two weeks of courses ranging from introductory trail work to Wilderness First Aid to rock work to crosscut saw techniques. For info, visit www.wildernessskillsinstitute.org/sawsi. Applications are now open.

June 16-18, 2023 June Work Weekend Stony Fork Camp, Va.

General maintenance, hopefully with a potluck or meal out Saturday night. This may also be our 2023 Summerfest.

August 4-7, 2023 AT Vista 2023 Johnson City, Tenn.

AT Vista 2023, Aug. 4-7 in Johnson City, Tenn., is a long weekend of hikes, workshops, excursions and entertainment planned to replace the late lamented ATC Biennials. More info and reports, as well newsletter and registration links, are at www.atvista.org.



PATH Officers

President

David Atkinson, 10 Sunset Summit
Asheville, N.C. 28804
(252) 622-8040
1david.atkinson@gmail.com

Vice President

Chris Bracknell, 1137 Gleaves Road,
Ivanhoe, Va. 24350
(276) 621-5528
wbracknell@juno.com

Secretary

Hunt McKinnon, 2201 Sir Walter Court,
Greenville, N.C. 27858 (252) 916-3220
Mckinnonw@ecu.edu

Treasurer

David Faucette, 1105 Hunting Ridge Road,
Raleigh, N.C. 27615 (919) 848-3811
dfaucette1948@gmail.com

Want to Join?



We will be working on the Trail in 2023, despite coronavirus, monkey pox or whatever illness you want to name. If you'd like to join us, here's how: You may join PATH (or renew) at our Web site, www.path-at.org, with PayPal, or print and mail this form with check or money order. You can also attend work weekends/meetings and join or renew there. Please don't mail cash!

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Annual membership dues are \$20 for an individual _____, \$25 for a family ____ or \$15 for a student_____. Donations are also

accepted. Donation total _____

Send payment to PATH Treasurer, P.O. Box 4423, Greensboro, North Carolina 27404. Total amount enclosed _____

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

P.O. Box 4423

Greensboro, N.C. 27404

Address correction requested



Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers (PATH)

Code of Conduct

Be Respectful. Be Nice. Be Safe.

If you see someone not being respectful, nice, or safe – say something.

PATH welcomes all to participate in the mission of protecting, managing, and advocating for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. We strive to maintain a welcoming, safe, and productive environment, and as such, have developed this Code of Conduct.

In all of our activities as PATH members, we acknowledge that we are representatives of our club and the greater Appalachian Trail community. We strive to represent well both PATH and the ATC.

As volunteers, we have the **right** to:

- be treated with respect,
- have a workplace free of harassment, discrimination, or hostile conditions,
- receive a suitable assignment,
- receive training and necessary support,
- have qualified supervision,
- have safe working conditions,
- have our time used effectively,
- and have fun.

As volunteers, we have the **responsibility** to:

- make safety the highest priority,
- act in a professional, respectful manner,
- be aware of and follow Trail policies and guidelines,
- participate in and learn from training sessions and meetings,
- perform high quality work,
- care for Trail resources,
- avoid conflicts of interests,
- and seek and accept guidance and support.

PATH actively seeks new members, supporters, stewards, and constituents and maintains an environment of respect, encouragement, and opportunity for all. We do not engage in any behavior that is unwelcome, discriminatory, or exclusionary toward others of any kind based on identities including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, mental ability, neuro(a)typicality, physical characteristic, socioeconomic background, nationality, age, religion, or beliefs. This includes, but is not limited to, unsolicited judgments on a person's lifestyle choices, and practices: things like food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment.

Should issues arise within the club, we will seek to resolve them by:

- First, trying to resolve the issue in a calm and professional manner with the offending party
- If unsuccessful, presenting the matter to any PATH Officer or Board Member for assistance
- If still unresolved, contacting ATC: <https://appalachiantrail.org/a-t-network-misconduct-reporting-tool/> or call (304) 535-6331 and asking for someone in the Volunteer Program

In summary, as members of PATH we will be safe, be properly trained, and respect others and our natural resources. We will use common sense, act with kindness, and take pride in our role as ambassadors of the Appalachian Trail.

As approved by the PATH Board on August 20, 2022.