A Walk In The Woods - Starring Robert Redford, Partners with Appalachian Trail Conservancy to Promote Leave No Trace Ethics Through Educational Board Game

The Appalachian Trail will see an increase in hikers after A Walk in the Woods opens in theaters today across the country, and Broad Green Pictures, distributor of the film has partnered with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and other national organizations in an effort to promote best practices and protect the trail. The ATC, Leave No Trace and the American Hiking Society have collaborated with an Asheville board game company to design a new AT game that teaches Leave No Trace practices in a fun and engaging way and promotes a message of stewardship.

Asheville, NC (PRWEB) September 04, 2015 -- The Appalachian Trail, a 2,190-mile footpath covering 14 states from Georgia to Maine, prepares to greet many new hikers next year. Actor and Environmental Activist Robert Redford will bring the A.T. into the national spotlight when his new movie, A Walk in the Woods, opens in theaters nationwide on September 2, 2015.

In this comedy adventure, Redford and Nick Nolte star as old friends who make the improbable decision to hike the A.T. and that’s when the fun begins. Based on Bill Bryson’s bestseller, the movie co-stars Emma Thompson, Mary Steenburgen, Nick Offerman and Kristen Schaal.

Setting out on foot on one of the longest continuous footpaths in the world is sure to inspire many to plan their own walk in the woods, but with the increase in interest comes new responsibilities: namely preparing hikers for the challenges of such a trek and raising awareness of protecting and preserving the trail itself. There will be more tents, more catholes, and a greater need to teach hikers about the responsibility to “leave no trace” when they visit public lands and natural places.

This is a personal film for Redford, who bought the movie rights to Bryson’s book 10 years ago. He’s long been one of the nation’s leading voices in environmental issues and has recently narrated a PSA connected to the film that promotes Leave No Trace practices on the A.T. and other National Parks. Broad Green Pictures, which is distributing the film, has been proactive in partnering with national organizations like the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to help educate the public about enjoying and caring for the A.T. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the ATC managing and preserving the trail. The organization has been working directly with Broad Green Pictures and other organizations for over a year to create a comprehensive educational campaign called #ProtectYourTrail.”

Broad Green Pictures recently partnered with Outdoor Edutainment, LLC, an Asheville, N.C.-based company that designs board games that help people prepare for their own outdoor adventure while inspiring a spirit of stewardship and deeper connections with nature. Last August, Outdoor Edutainment produced The Appalachian Trail Game, a fun and engaging board game which teaches people about trail safety and best use practices before and during their hike. This year, they have produced a new Special Edition version of the game which includes game card content created in collaboration with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, and the American Hiking Society. “We have been working with our partners for the last six months to proactively address the potential impact of the wave of new hikers who will be inspired to take to the trail after seeing the film,” said Mark Hanf, founder of Outdoor Edutainment, LLC. There’s even a
version of the game small enough to fit in a backpack that people can play on the trail.

Along the way, game players encounter challenges, obstacles and opportunities to learn through cards featuring information about Leave No Trace Principles for hiking and camping, first aid, plant and animal identification, essential gear, trail history and more. It’s a fun and engaging way to foster a love for hiking and trail stewardship. The Appalachian Trail Special Edition game includes 150 new game cards in the categories of gear, chance, challenge and stewardship. There are also a few trail karma cards tossed in to mitigate negative circumstances that arise along their trek.

All the partners agree that the popularity of A Walk in the Woods will bring a multitude of hikers to the A.T., and many will be those who have never set foot on a trail before. While they each have been continually invested in educating hikers throughout the years, they see the game as a key to providing the information in a fun, easy to understand, and useful format.

Ron Tipton, Executive Director of the ATC said, “The new edition of the Appalachian Trail Game is an innovative and fun approach to educate hikers about how to enjoy the Trail experience while doing their hike the right way. The ATC appreciates the timing of this special edition connected to the release of A Walk in the Woods.”

“We view the game as one of those key educational tools for reaching new A.T. hikers, whether they are going out for a day hike or doing a thru hike,” said Ben Lawhon, Education Director for Leave No Trace. “It’s a fun way to gain knowledge and skills to enjoy the A.T. responsibly.”

“One of the greatest challenges of trails like the A.T. is that there are so many transient users,” Lawhon continued. “They’ll be in this shelter tonight and another shelter tomorrow night and because of that they don’t always see the impact of what they are leaving behind or how those impacts accumulate over time. The game helps them learn about the impact and how it can be minimized.”

On August 27, 2015 Outdoor Edutainment launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise $25,000 to fund creation of a special edition tabletop game version which also includes custom laser engraved game pieces only available to Kickstarter backers.


Within the first week of the Kickstarter campaign, backers contributed more than $20,000 toward the initial goal. Amounts over $25,000 received in the next month will go toward fulfilling “stretch goals”, including the creation of new game cards and expansion themes. The Kickstarter campaign closes on September 27, 2015, one day after a National Family Hiking Day sponsored by the ATC.

Broad Green Pictures plans to donate copies of the game to 75 colleges and hostels in the A.T. region. It has also approved use of official movie clips in the Kickstarter campaign for the Appalachian Trail Game Special Edition.

“The game and the movie are a great fit together,” said Kristin Peppel, who handles design, sales and advocacy for Outdoor Edutainment. “The game provides a deeper level of education and inspiration to follow up on after they’ve seen the movie. Users learn new skills from the game to prepare for their own walk in the woods.”
Julie Judkins, Education and Outreach Director for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy said, “As the number of A.T. hikers continues to grow, education becomes one of our best tools to protect the Appalachian Trail and its sensitive resources. The Appalachian Trail Game is a fun, innovative way to prepare people for their A.T. adventures, while also inspiring them to become stewards and advocates for trails and other wild places.”

The Appalachian Trail Game helps prepare participants for some of the hazards they might encounter on the trail, as well as reward them for doing things to protect the trail and educates them about ways to preserve it for future hikers to enjoy. To further assist with trail protection, $1 from the sale of each Appalachian Trail Game Special Edition will be donated to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

To find out more about the Appalachian Trail Game Special Edition, and the new Kickstarter campaign, go to:


http://www.theATgame.com

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