

December 2015

## AFHA Planning Tourism Maps

One of AFHA's primary tourism goals is to provide information about our region in engaging and attractive ways. Our efforts to date include an [online Forestry Tour Map](#), which presents a google maps based selection of AFHA sites that fall within the Forestry theme, one of the four core AFHA themes. In the upcoming year we will be working on upgrading our Thematic Tour Maps, utilizing the [Esri ArcGIS Story Map Tour application](#) to showcase further AFHA theme topics and types of sites.

We invite stakeholders to participate in this process in two ways. First, we are seeking volunteers to take part in a short-term task group that will determine how to organize and sort our wide variety of sites into logical groupings for the Tour Maps. Volunteers from a variety of disciplines and types of sites, as well as tourism professionals familiar with attractions in our area, are encouraged to help. Most of the discussion will take place via email. Please reach out to us at [afha@appalachianforest.us](mailto:afha@appalachianforest.us) if you can help.

Second, we would like your help in gathering information about sites. If you represent one or more tourism sites, attractions, or businesses within the AFHA region, please see our website [here](#) for the information that we are seeking about each site. We appreciate any assistance you can offer. We look forward to working with many sites, professionals, and stakeholders to elevate the role of heritage tourism in improving our community.



## SITES



## ~ OF THE ~ MONTH

Experience the heritage of your area! *Sites of the Month* spotlights events and locations within the region, based on AFHA's four themes: forestry, history, culture, and nature.

### FORESTRY SITE

[Greenbrier State Forest](#) is a 5,100 acre site in Greenbrier County capped by the 3,280 foot Kateâ€™s Mountain. Like most of the AFHA region,

## Highlands Trail Foundation

By Taylor Adams

AFHA AmeriCorps Heritage Team Member



*Allegheny Highlands Trail. Photo from the Highlands Trail Foundation's Facebook page.*

Since moving to Elkins, I have yet to be disappointed by all that it has to offer. Along with a host of cultural and heritage events, the town is in the perfect location to take advantage of a variety of outdoor activities.

One of these outdoor resources, the Allegheny Highlands Trail, has been the focus of part of my AmeriCorps placement with the Highlands Trail Foundation.

The Highlands Trail Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating recreational and alternate transportation opportunity through development of a regional trail system in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. The Allegheny Highlands Trail from Elkins to Hendricks is the backbone of that system. The trail is a rail trail, following the same path as a former rail line that ran through the area.

Before serving with the Highlands Trail Foundation I knew little of rail trails and all the benefits they provide to communities. These benefits include safe

was clearcut around the turn of the century. In 1938, the State of West Virginia acquired the area. That same year, a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp was established, and development work began. The Greenbrier State Forest now maintains a 29-acre woodlot demonstration area that was created to demonstrate how farm woodlots can be managed for periodic logging, while also maintaining a healthy stand of trees.



[Riverside School](#) on River Street in Elkins (Randolph County) was built during 1902-1905. The school provided the only public educational opportunity for African-Americans in Randolph County from 1905 until desegregation in 1954, when the school was closed. Prior to 1905 there was no opportunity for African-Americans to receive public education in Randolph County.

allowing citizens to enjoy nature, and the promotion of community identity by preserving traditional transportation corridors.

The Highlands Trail Foundation has had a number of successes in the past year working to promote the trail.

Along with celebrating the foundation's 20th birthday, the 5th annual Allegheny Highlands Trail Bluegrass Festival was held in August. Considerable progress is also being made on trail development and maintenance with the help of the Randolph County Development Authority and the West Virginia Division of Highways. So if you want to explore Randolph or Tucker County in a new and exciting way, consider hopping on a bike and taking advantage of what the Allegheny Highlands Trail has to offer.

For more information, please visit [highlandstrail.org](http://highlandstrail.org).

---

## Fall Still a Busy Season for Trout Unlimited

By Travis Ferry

AFHA AmeriCorps Conservation Team Member

Planting 3000 trees, restoring in-stream habitat and reconnecting over ten miles of native brook trout stream has led to a busy fall in Pendleton County for myself and Trout Unlimited's Potomac Headwaters Home Rivers Initiative (TU's PHHRI). As a second year AFHA AmeriCorps member serving with TU's PHHRI, it was my responsibility to plan and execute the riparian planting portion of this project. Not only is this planting a great

the building into a facility to service school buses. More recently, a Riverside School Association was formed to preserve the building and educate the community on its significance.



[Our Lady of the Pines](#) is a privately owned Roman-Catholic chapel in Silver Lake, West Virginia (Preston County). With just six pews that seat up to twelve people, it is touted as the smallest church in 48 states, although there are several smaller chapels, even within the 18 county AFHA region. Built in 1957-58 by Lithuanian immigrants Mr. and Mrs. P.L. Milkint as a memorial to their parents, Our Lady of the Pines is open to the public for visiting and quiet reflection. Inside, visitors can purchase postcards to commemorate their visit, which can be mailed at the "smallest mailing office"™ which is

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

passage barrier mitigation project TU has completed on the same stretch of stream. This project is among several others in this watershed, which are focused on building a hub of restored habitat to strengthen and reconnect isolated populations of brook trout.



*Volunteers and AFHA AmeriCorps help plant trees alongside a stream. Photo by Mike Anderson, TU Volunteer*

In the Potomac Headwaters, brook trout populations have been fragmented as a result of poor land management practices associated with timber harvest, agriculture, and development. TU's efforts are to restore the cold, clean water, as well as, the instream and riparian habitat that brook trout need to thrive. Ultimately, the goal is to recreate the interconnected populations that once existed here and produced large migratory fish. In the years to come, the trees planted in this stretch of stream will help to provide shade, food for fish, and will help hold stream banks together for roughly a mile of brook trout stream. Stabilizing stream banks keeps sediment from entering the stream, which can smother brook trout eggs. This work also protects valuable pasture land and soil farmers depend on for their livelihoods. The shade from these trees will help keep summertime water temperatures cool in

Lady of the Pines.



[Roaring Plains West Wilderness](#) is a 6,820 acre Wilderness Area within the Monongahela National Forest, in both Randolph and Pendleton Counties. This high plateau area is home to several rare species including the snowshoe hare, bog lemming, fisher, and the Cheat Mountain Salamander. The land was set aside as Wilderness in 2009 by the Wild Monongahela Act. As a Wilderness Area, there is little development in the Roaring Plains, aside from recreational trails, which provides solitude for extended hiking and backpacking trips.

---

Do you have a suggestion for *Sites of the Month*?  
Email us at: [info@appalachianforest.us](mailto:info@appalachianforest.us)  
and let us know your favorite sites throughout AFHA!

AmeriCorps members, Trout Unlimited planted nearly 3000 trees and live stakes on roughly 3.5 acres of riparian area. Without the help of these great volunteers and AFHA AmeriCorps, planting projects such as this one would not be possible.

The in-stream habitat restoration component of the project will provide increased pool and woody material habitat. Pools provide refuge for fish from predators and serve as a thermal refuge in times of extreme cold and heat. They also increase available spawning habitat as scour sorts substrate particles and provides clean gravel for the trout to spawn. This section of stream also benefitted by having its highly eroded stream banks reshaped and planted with live stakes. Live stakes are a dormant woody plant, usually a cutting from a willow or dogwood, which will grow the next spring when planted into the stream bank.

The bridge replacement took an undersized low water bridge and replaced it with a span bridge. Quite often low water bridges and perched culverts serve as passage barriers for aquatic organisms, including brook trout and other fish, which cannot effectively swim upstream when they encounter one. Brook trout especially need access to various parts of a watershed, seasonally. In the fall they may migrate to the headwaters to spawn, in the spring they may move into lower portions of a watershed to forage. Barriers also sever connection to upstream spring sources needed for their cold clean water that provides a refuge for fish during thermal extremes. In fact, there is a spring fed tributary just upstream of the bridge in the photograph below. Replacement of this structure will not only allow fish to freely swim through the bridge, but it will also allow sediment and woody material to freely pass underneath, creating a more natural stream flow than was present before.

Check us out on Facebook!



AFHA Facebook



comes to an end; however that does not mean that myself or anyone at Trout Unlimited will be less busy. Already we are all gearing up and preparing for what should be another busy year in 2016. If anyone is interested in learning more about Trout Unlimited's work in West Virginia, or would like to volunteer for upcoming spring projects such as tree plantings or water quality monitoring workshops, please contact me at 304-614-6699 or [tferry@tu.org](mailto:tferry@tu.org).



*Before shot of low water bridge replacement. Photo by AFHA AmeriCorps member Travis Ferry*



*After shot of low water bridge replacement. Photo by AFHA AmeriCorps member Travis Ferry*

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate ▼](#)

