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June 2014 - AFHA is looking for new members. Apply Today!

AFHA AmeriCorps Recruitment

Individuals interested in serving in AFHA AmeriCorps for the new term starting in September 2014 can apply by submitting a cover letter and resume to phyllisb@appalachianforest.us. Visit our [website](#) for more info. Potential AmeriCorps sub-sponsor sites should let us know immediately if you are interested, and will need to submit an application by end of June.

AFHA Welcomes New Staff!



Alison Thornton has been an AFHA AmeriCorps member with the Beverly Heritage Center for two years, and will be joining AFHA as a staff member this fall. She will assist with management of the AmeriCorps program.

A Busy Spring

By Rachel Puelle
AFHA Heritage Team Member

Puelle, at Heritage Day at Aurora School, teaching children about blacksmith tools and how they were



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.



[Privately owned forestland](#), although most often not accessible to the general public, is an important part of the living and working

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My position as an AmeriCorps member for AFHA is unique: I get to work in two different fields: heritage development with the Aurora Project (organizing arts based and cultural events), and community development with the Parsons Revitalization Organization (focusing on economic and downtown revitalization). I have had the chance to work with fellow AmeriCorps and different community organizations throughout both Tucker and Preston Counties and there are no limits when it comes to my job description. I have found myself setting up meetings with local government and business leaders, canoeing down the Cheat, organizing events with photographers to college professors, learning about non-native invasive species, acting as docent for an amateur photography show, and spending countless hours making flyers, brochures, and posters to hang in post offices, libraries, restaurants, and public spaces across half the state. Here are just two of the projects I have been working on in the past few weeks.

This year was the first time that Parsons actively participated in ArtSpring, a county-wide arts festival held annually on Memorial Day weekend all across Tucker County. When Audrey Stefenson, an AFHA AmeriCorps Volunteer working in Thomas, WV, approached PRO to organize an event for down in the valley, we jumped on the chance to create an art exhibit. With help from Audrey and a few tireless volunteers, PRO cleaned out a few years worth of dust from the historic Parsons Train Depot and prepared the space to display several woven art and quilt pieces by Heather Togbetse. Heather's grandmother lived in Parsons in the early to mid 1900s and her story of growing up inspired Heather's work. In addition to Heather's exhibit, PRO sponsored a woodworking demo/sale on Saturday, May 24th. Three woodworkers came and sold their wares outside the depot while visitors walked in and

Owner's Association of West Virginia offers [educational tours](#) to help woodland property owners keep their land productive and healthy. On Saturday, July 19th, landowners Jim and Jeff Kochenderfer will lead a tour through Randolph and Tucker Counties, highlighting techniques to improve, increase, and maintain desirable tree species in woodlands. RSVP with Dan Magill at dmagill@wvu.edu.



[Traveller's Rest](#) is located along Route 50 in Mineral County, WV. The building was once home to a tavern and is currently being restored. Rehabilitation of the windows began in the summer of 2012, and now the Mineral County Historical Foundation is partnering with the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia to weatherize the historic building's windows.

the state. It was a great weekend!

Quilted artwork by Heather Togbetse

Over in Preston County, the Aurora Project's summer event series commenced with a bang this past weekend with *Storytelling with Ilene Evans*. Ilene Evans is an excellent performer, adding singing, musical instruments, and movement into her stories.

Audience members got to play traditional instruments (including a cajon and two African kalimbas), and sing and sway as the stories moved us. Since the Aurora Project's facilities are undergoing construction - we are in the middle of restoring several cabins of an early 1900s resort into an artist residency facility - we held the event in the Aurora Community building. The space was intimate and cozy, the perfect size for hearing Ilene whisper and draw us in, and also ask questions about her craft at the end of the performance.

As Ilene told stories with African to European to Appalachian origins, she challenged the audience to think of the stories found right along Rt 50 and throughout Preston County. I found Ilene's questions particularly thought-provoking because I have grown up listening to stories about life in Preston County from my grandparents my whole life. We could not have asked for a better night.

What will I be doing in the next 3 months? Check out auroraproject.org and parsonsrevitalization.org for details on upcoming events and projects to find out!

Catching Smokey Fever

By Stephanie Petersen

AFHA Conservation AmeriCorps Member

chance to learn preservation and weatherization techniques, as well as a chance to preserve an important piece of history. All of the tools and equipment will be provided. If you are interested in helping with this project, please send an email to:

americorps@pawv.org



[Arthurdale Heritage Inc.](#) will be celebrating its annual [New Deal Festival](#) on Saturday, July 12th. The celebration includes live music, food, children's activities, an antique car show, and much more. This year's festival marks the 80th anniversary of the homestead community, which was built in 1934 on approximately 1200 acres in rural Preston County, WV. Originally there were 165 homes and several community buildings, many of

[Smokey Bear](#) has been the mascot for forests everywhere over the past 70 years. His reach has even made it to my home state of Iowa, which has less than 50,000 acres of state forestland. I never knew the important role Smokey Bear plays in the region and in much of the nation until I began my service on the Monongahela National Forest (which alone occupies over 919,000 acres of forestland).

Within my first week I started to realize the love people have for Smokey around the area. The Forest Service keys that were lent to us came on a Smokey key chain. At the office, there is any kind of Smokey gear you could imagine. Even Smokey himself makes appearances at public events throughout the area. He is a pretty big celebrity. So, when word went around the office that they needed someone to be Smokey in the holiday parade I jumped at the opportunity. It was like a childhood dream come true! Not only would I get to be Smokey, but I would get to be Smokey in a parade! I felt I was ready to take on the role. I was properly trained in fire safety and [Leave No Trace](#) outdoor ethics. I had seen Smokey Bear in action at previous events. More importantly, other than being a tad too short, I was the right size for the costume.

The AmeriCorps members are in charge of making a float each year for the Marlinton Christmas Parade. We had a lot to live up to; the previous AmeriCorps members had made some awesome floats. As the day of the parade approached we were able to put together a pretty neat holiday wilderness campsite for Smokey, complete with a fake campfire. Before I knew it the day came and my excitement grew at the thought of finally being Smokey. I arrived at my site and was helped into the suit. This job definitely requires another person to help stuff, strap, and zip Smokey together. Shortly after I was escorted to the float by Smokey's handler and...we were off! We drove down to town and got in the line of floats. All seemed

Homestead Museum.



[Spice Run Wilderness Area](#)

Not for the faint of heart, the 6,030 acre Spice Run Wilderness is located south of Calvin Price State Forest and does not include any system trails. The area is about 2 miles in length and 3.5 miles wide and is found within portions of the Alvon, Anthony, Denmar, and Droop USGS quadrangle maps. The wilderness is filled with oak, hickory, maple and some pockets of hemlock with an dense understory of rhododendron, grasses and ferns. Elevations range from 2,000 feet along the Greenbrier River to over 2,800 feet throughout interior portions of the area.

Do you have a suggestion

start, so we kept our hopes up. But, the second the parade began to move forward it started to downpour. Thoughts of regret began seeping into my mind, just like the water was seeping through the suit. Then, as we turned the corner onto the parade street, all thought of regret vanished. The crowd was so excited to see Smokey. Kids and adults alike were yelling his name, and I was reminded of why I wanted to be Smokey in the first place. Smokey is a symbol of protection to the land that West Virginians have cared for across generations. The people of the state love him for that, and I must admit that even I have caught the Smokey fever.

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and let us know your favorite sites throughout AFHA!

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