

Springtime: A busy season for AFHA AmeriCorps!



Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

May 2013 E-Newsletter

Greetings,

We hope you're enjoying spring in AFHA...we sure are! Our AmeriCorps volunteers have been busy planting trees, running historic reenactments, planning exhibits, engaging the community in environmental outreach, pulling garlic mustard, and much, much more! Stay up-to-date on our projects by "liking" our [facebook page](#), and get involved by [volunteering](#).

Another way to get involved is to sponsor an AFHA AmeriCorps member. We are always looking for new sites with interesting conservation, heritage, or hands-on projects for our members! If you feel the goals of your organization are closely tied to AFHA's [core values](#), and if you would like to consider being a part of the AFHA AmeriCorps program in the future, please contact: afha@appalachianforest.us.

Hands-On Work Keeps Hands Full

By Elizabeth Beckerle
AFHA Hands-On AmeriCorps Volunteer



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.



Beckerle assists with removing a historic window sash from the Kump Education Center for re-glazing and repair.

As an AFHA AmeriCorps member I split my time between working with the AFHA Hands-On Crew and working with a small non-profit, [New Historic Thomas](#). I assist New Historic Thomas, an all volunteer organization, in administrative support: writing agendas, updating the website and updating the contact list. New Historic Thomas was revived in 2012, and since its revival it has secured funding for the environmental assessment of their riverfront, a strategic development plan and design for the Riverfront, a local business market research survey done by a Davis & Elkins College classroom, and to plant and build a Veterans' Memorial Park. New Historic Thomas has also put picnic tables and trashcans along the Thomas Riverfront, and planters and benches along historic Front Street.

I have also been lucky to participate in many great projects with the AFHA Hands-On team. The Hands-On Crew has restored over two dozen historic wooden window sashes from four different historic buildings within the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area: Aurora, Beverly, and Elkins. We are currently working on removing rubble from the ground floor of the historic Delmonte Hotel in Elkins. Eventually, concrete flooring will be poured, and hopefully the ground floor of the building will be open to the public. Besides historic preservation projects, we are also lucky to be able to assist at events ranging from the annual Aurora Barn Dance to the recent Beverly Raid Reenactment.



[Dolly Sods Wilderness Area](#)

Many areas in the Monongahela National Forest were severely affected by Hurricane Sandy. Fortunately, Dolly Sods Wilderness Area was not heavily impacted. This high, windswept region of the Monongahela National Forest is characterized by dense red spruce, wide meadows, deep ravines, and bogs. Around the turn of the century the landscape was logged, and soon after wildfires covered Dolly Sods. Further damage was done when the area was used as an artillery range in the 1940s. The region was protected in 1975 when the Dolly Sods Wilderness and Scenic Areas were created.



[LaVale Toll Gate House](#)

The LaVale Toll Gate House, located in LaVale, Maryland, is the only remaining toll gate on National Road in the state. The Toll Gate House opened up in 1837 for its first year of operation, collecting toll for more than 20,000 travelers. Different rates were charged for animals,

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Elkins and a project of the [Woodlands Development Group](#). I am also lucky to have done a sidewalk inventory for the Elkins ONTRAC design committee. I am lucky to have found such a dynamic, rewarding volunteer position in such a wild and wonderful place.

Self-Actualization Through Volunteerism

By Blake Webber

AFHA Hands-On AmeriCorps Volunteer



Webber measures temperature and pH levels in a vernal pool at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Since I started my volunteer experience at Appalachian Forest Heritage Area as a Hands-On team member in September, I can't believe how many amazing individuals I've met, good people both inside and out. So much of the year has already come and gone, quick like a bunny! I'm proud to say that the projects I've been a part of have rewarded me with new experiences, insights which will propel me steadily and readily into my future. Maybe I'll even tell young'uns stories of West Virginia from my rocking chair one day.

I've been faced with many challenging projects and volunteer opportunities, but through it all, one theme has stuck: self-actualization. The civic and community engagement involved in my work has played a huge role in

National Road declined as railroads expanded into the region. Today the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and open for tours on weekends during the summer.



[Beverly Heritage Center](#)

The Beverly Heritage Center combines four historic buildings in the center of Beverly, West Virginia, to tell the story of the First Campaign of the American Civil War, the pivotal role of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike, and daily life in a small rural county seat through the 19th Century. Keep a close eye on BHC's calendar for upcoming events, including reenactments, crafts, period demonstrations, music, and much more!



[Gauley River National Recreation Area](#)

The Gauley River runs 25 miles through a basin with high ridges and knobs on either sides. Young streams form narrow canyons whose

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skatepark and expansion of the City of Elkins' recycling program both began as quite small projects, and have pleasantly snowballed into tremendous efforts in development.

I am also now weathered in Urban Forestry, having assisted Elkins'™ Tree Board to help survey the city's™ crisis trees. I have even considered forest resource management as a route for further schooling.

Just this past month, I had the tremendous opportunity to assist Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge with their annual study of vernal pools, temporary ponds that provide habitat for creatures like frogs and spotted salamanders. I studied amphibian egg masses, taking notes on the preferable habitat conditions for their survival and reproduction. This opportunity to work out in nature has contrasted well with another project I'm working on: graphic design and interpretive work for the Green Ridge State Forest in Maryland. I am creating a four-panel wayside exhibit to be displayed at the Francis O. Zumbrun overlook along the Great Eastern Trail in Flintstone. Go check it out this summer!

in the Recreation Area is diverse and abundant, and the forested area is home to species of red and white oak, American beech, yellow poplar, hemlock and dogwood. This vegetation also supports a tremendous variety of wildlife species. Plan your rafting trip down the Gauley today!

Do you have a suggestion for *Sites of the Month*?

Email us at:

info@appalachianforest.us

and let us know your favorite sites throughout AFHA!

Check us out on Facebook!



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