

JULY 2022

GROWTH RINGS

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area News

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Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area promotes and supports a network of partnerships based around our unique Forest Heritage. We work in 16 West Virginia counties and 2 counties in western Maryland.

To learn more about us and the work we do, including our AmeriCorps program, visit afnha.org.



Save The Date!

August 25, 2022 at Canaan Valley Resort, 9:30am~5pm

Highlands Creative Economy Tourism Summit

Sponsored by Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area and Eastern WV Community and Technical College



Come together to learn about and discuss topics related to tourism in the highland counties of WV and MD encompassing the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.

The event will take place outdoors at the Canaan Valley Resort in Davis, WV.

The event is free and lunch will be provided. If interested in attending, visit afnha.org to pre-register.

Partner organizations wishing to display informational items about their organizations please contact us.

afnha@afnha.org

Planned tracks include Tourism Marketing, as well as Tourism Product Development. A range of speakers will present on related topics with a wrap-up discussion on partnerships and visitor experience.

Check back to our website for final agenda and sessions by August 1

REGISTER HERE

We Want Your Feedback!

Review & Comment on the Management Plan Draft **NOW** at afnha.org

Management Plan Update

Our official Management Draft Plan is NOW AVAILABLE online!

Review and comment on the Management Plan draft online now at afnha.org. The Management Plan is available for public comment from June 24 - July 24.



Hard copies of the Management Plan are available in each of our AFNHA counties. Click [here](#) for the online version, and an updated list of locations where you can read a hard copy version.

Direct any questions to planning@afnha.org.

Send a Letter of Support

Support letters from partner organizations will also be included in the plan. To learn how to submit a support letter email Phyllis at phyllisb@afnha.org with questions!

AFNHA Important Dates

July 24 - End of Public Comment Period for our NHA management Plan. Click [HERE](#) to see a digital copy and find out more.

July 28 - Highlands Creative Economy Meeting | 10am via Zoom

August 25 - [Highlands Creative Economy Tourism Summit](#) at Canaan Valley Resort, 9:30am~5pm (Outdoor Pavilion)

September - New AmeriCorps Program Year starting off

Our National Heritage Area Events

July 15-23 | The Allegany County Fair and Ag Expo

July 16 | Hampshire County Farm Crawl - What's a farm crawl? A day when people can explore the farms in Hampshire County. Farmers may sell products, provide tours, or share with visitors what it takes to run a farm.

July 23 | Beverly Heritage Days | 10am @ Beverly Heritage Center

July 29-31 | Annual Mushroom Foray | All Day @ Blackwater Falls State Park

July 30 | Augusta Festival in Elkins City Park | West Virginia Open Fiddle & Banjo Contest | Augusta Block Party

August 6 | Night at the Museum - [The Appalachian Forest Discovery Center](#)



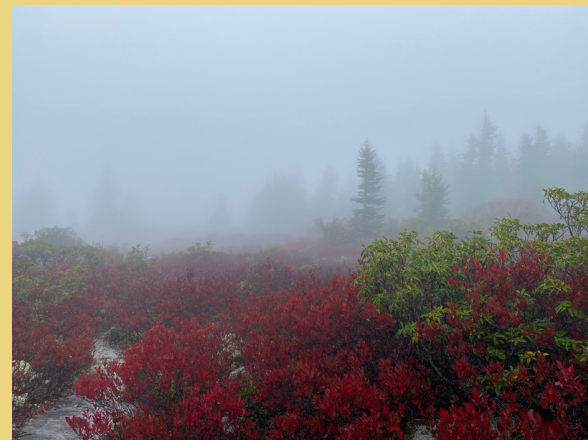
Red Spruce Indicator Species

Kaitlyn Olson with TNC in Elkins, WV

Wild and wonderful West Virginia contains a wondrous and unique ecosystem of red spruce. This species of tree and the ecosystem it creates is historic to West Virginia. In the 1800s and into the 1900's it was a highly sought-after tree for lumber. Now, it's the focus of some of the conservation work taking place in West Virginia and the Central Appalachians. The lumbering industry took a heavy toll on this ecosystem, reducing the acreage of red spruce forests from over 500,000 to just a little under 30,000. This means the other species that rely on this ecosystem for habitats, like the endangered cheat mountain salamander and the West Virginia northern flying squirrel, also suffered. Today, conservationists are working to restore this ecosystem in order to create healthy spruce forests and bring back the biodiversity this ecosystem creates. So, how do we know the actions being taken are working? That's where indicator species come in.

An indicator species is an organism that reflects a specific environmental condition by its presence, absence, or abundance. The presence, absence, or abundance can cause a change in the environment and can be used to determine the health of an ecosystem. Many species can be indicators and for red spruce 11 species of birds have been identified as indicator species. It's been proven that in the Central Appalachian mountains, bird populations change in a predictable manner when habitats change or degrade. What makes birds so great as indicator species is how easily they can be detected. Someone looking to assess the health of an ecosystem can sit in the forest and simply listen to detect these birds, creating an effective way to determine presence, absence, or abundance. There are specific times of the year this can be done and certain weather conditions, but other than that there isn't much to limit the assessment of ecosystem health using bird indicator species.

The 11 birds that function as indicator species for the red spruce ecosystem were identified in a study done by a Ph.D. candidate at West Virginia University and published this year (Clipp et. al., 2022). Of the 11 species identified, 8 are associated with red spruce ecosystems where the overstory coverage of red spruce is higher than 50% and 3 are associated with medium overstory coverage of 10%-50%. This means that through surveys, it's possible to see if the conservation efforts taking place are having a positive impact. It will take many years before it will be possible to see any change as it takes a while for spruce to get to overstory coverage even with active efforts to assist in red spruce growth. Hopefully, the efforts will be successful and the wild and wonderful red spruce forests of West Virginia can thrive again.



AmeriCorps



Hiking Challenge

Interested in hiking? AFNHA will be releasing a hiking challenge for beginner-to-intermediate hikers (although advanced hikers are welcome to join) on Monday, July 25th.

A curated guide for beginner hikes will be available via Story Maps alongside a map of all hikes in the AFNHA region. Some hikes include the Gaudineer Knob Scenic Trail and the Audra State Park. After completing 6 total hikes, you'll receive this embroidered badge for free!

More details will be provided on the [AFNHA](#) website when the hiking challenge is released.



Night at the Museum

Explore the Discovery Center after hours as our exhibits come alive! Talk to a settler about life at the Seneca Rocks homestead. Watch weavers and basketmakers at work. Learn about medicinal and edible plants in Appalachia, and sample snacks, sodas, and jams made with native plants! Make a basket out of yarn, craft your own medicinal tea, and string together a simple bird feeder.

Night at the Museum is free and open to all ages—kids and adults alike. The West Virginia Railroad Museum will also be open!

August 6, 4:30-7:00 pm at the [Appalachian Forest Discovery Center](#), 101 Railroad Ave. Elkins, WV



**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
REACH OUT TO US!
VOLUNTEER@AFNHA.ORG
WE'D LOVE TO CONNECT YOU WITH
ONE OF OUR PARTNERS.**

AmeriCorps Recruitment - Apply Today!

AFNHA AmeriCorps



Conservation and Heritage positions for the 2022-2023 service year are OPEN! Some positions can be converted to half-time or 6 month positions based on the candidate needs and timeline. We continue recruiting until all slots are filled.

Visit appalachianforestnha.org/positions for more details.

AFNHA AmeriCorps positions are eligible for living stipend, Segal Education Award, and WV State Tuition Waiver. Contact Chrissy Hall, Program Manager at chrissyh@afnha.org with any questions

AmeriCorps Opportunities

AFNHA has numerous positions focused on cultural heritage and community development within our region. The positions primarily consist of duties associated with asset enhancement and education & outreach. Below are great sites looking for an AmeriCorps member to serve a year with them!

Alpine Festival Inc & Art Spring in Davis, WV
Randolph County Museum, Beverly, WV
Camp Pioneer, Beverly, WV
Richwood CVB and Millwhistle, Richwood, WV
Upshur County Historical Society, Buckhannon, WV



[EMAIL CHRISSEYH@AFNHA.ORG TO APPLY](mailto:CHRISSEYH@AFNHA.ORG)

AmeriCorps Host Site Applications



AmeriCorps sub-sponsor site assignments for 2022-2023 are being reviewed now. Any WV nonprofit or government partner who is interested in hosting a member but missed applying, please contact Chrissy Hall, Program Manager at chrissyh@afnha.org to see if slots may still be available.



Follow Us On Facebook & Instagram!

