

NOVEMBER 2023

# GROWTH RINGS

APPALACHIAN FOREST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA NEWSLETTER



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Page 1:** Training Resources

**Page 2:** AmeriCorps  
Conference

**Page 3:** Interpretation

**Page 4:** Creative Economy

**Page 5:** Regional Events

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](http://afnha.org).



## Recent Training

Throughout our management planning process, we learned that our stakeholders wanted more opportunities for training. Recently, we hosted trainings on Volunteer Management and Interpretation that were free and open to all partners and stakeholders, building on what we have offered in the past for our AmeriCorps members. So far, we have engaged over 50 individuals representing 22 organizations. Look out for similar events in the future!

Resources from our Volunteer Management Training can be found [HERE](#)

Resources from our Interpretation Training can be found [HERE](#)



# AmeriCorps Conference

In late October, our AmeriCorps members and staff traveled to Flatwoods to join other programs from across West Virginia for the annual AmeriCorps conference and swearing-in ceremony. AFNHA Executive Director Phyllis Baxter received a Legacy of Service award for her years of leadership supporting our AmeriCorps program. Conservation Program Manager and AmeriCorps alumnus Josh Wanstreet received a certificate for his two years of participation on Volunteer West Virginia's AmeriCorps advisory team. Good luck to our members as they "Get Things Done"!



We are still recruiting for several AmeriCorps positions. Learn more about the program and how to apply at [appalachianforestnha.org/americorps-positions](http://appalachianforestnha.org/americorps-positions)

# Interpretation

## **Appalachian Forest Discovery Center**

We received a Major Grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council to plan the redesign of our permanent exhibit at the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center. We will work with Historic Resource Design and Planning, Inc. to revise and replace the long-term exhibit with a new, fresh, and more interactive museum that reflects our updated Management Plan themes.

The Discovery Center is now closed for the winter as we prepare for next year's exhibit on Indigenous Appalachia. Did you miss this year's exhibit? View it and other past exhibits [HERE!](#)

## **America250 in the Appalachian Forest**

“Many contemporary people believe West Virginia was nothing more than a hunting ground for the migratory Native Peoples. People without names, without connection. Yet, in my own survey, I am continuously reminded that West Virginia was home to many Indigenous communities, and these connections were held tight by long-term settlements. We see this by the traces they left behind, such as pottery, copper, shell, luxury items, burial sites, and old-growth trees. Many of the sites that archaeologists research are my direct ancestors, and the ancestors of existing descendant communities throughout the Eastern United States.”

Read more of our latest story by Dr. Joe Stahlman [HERE!](#)

Does your community have a unique story? Does your organization have an exhibit or project that tells the importance of a person or place in our region? Submit a story to our America250 project!

America250 in the Appalachian Forest will commemorate the semiquincentennial of the founding of America by sharing the stories of the people, communities, and places that have shaped our region. Submit a story idea or learn more at [www.appalachianforestnha.org/america250](http://www.appalachianforestnha.org/america250)

# Highlands Creative Economy

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation has awarded a \$197,000 grant to AFNHA to expand the successful Highlands Creative Economy initiative, using regional collaboration to enhance cultural heritage, natural, and human assets to grow tourism and benefit communities. This new grant cycle will expand our program's ongoing training and networking with a new focus on identifying and developing best practices for regional attractions to promote our National Heritage Area as a cohesive tourist destination.

Read more [HERE](#)



# Events

Click links for more info

Nov 17-18 | [Holiday Craft Extravaganza](#) | Summersville Arena  
Nov 18 | [Cacapon River Short Film Festival](#) | Star Theatre  
Nov 18 | [“Season of Canaan” Guided Hike](#) | Canaan Valley Natl. Wildlife Refuge  
Nov 19 | [Songs & Stories](#) | Landmark Theater  
Nov 22-26 | [Opening Weekend](#) | Snowshoe Mountain Resort  
Nov 24-25 | [Festival of Trees](#) | Garret County Fairgrounds  
Dec 1 | [Cookie Crawl & Business Open House](#) | Romney  
Dec 2-9 | [Winter Festival and Market](#) | Canal Place  
Dec 2 | [Holiday Open House](#) | Arthurdale Heritage  
Dec 2 | [Christmas in the Mountains Parade](#) | Davis  
Dec 2 | [Dickens Faire & Festival](#) | Buckhannon  
Dec 2 | [Beverly Old Fashioned Christmas](#) | Beverly Heritage Center  
Dec 9 | [Hometown Christmas](#) | Petersburg  
Dec 9 | [Frostburg State University Chamber Singers](#) | Ashby’s Fort  
Dec 14 | [Pancakes with the Grinch](#) | Philippi Public Library  
Dec 14-16 | [A Christmas Carol](#) | Greenbrier Valley Theatre

## Regional News

[Eastern WV Community & Technical College](#) announces new program to support regional agribusiness sustainability

[Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund](#) accepting grant applications

[New interpretive signs](#) explore historic buildings in downtown Davis

The Elk River Trail Foundation awarded an [ARC POWER grant](#) to kickstart the implementation of the Elk River Trails plan to grow business and downtown development

[Ignite WV competition](#) open for new business proposals

Several regional business are nominated for the 2024 [Best of the Blue Ridge Awards](#)



Follow Us On Facebook & Instagram!

