

MAY 2022

GROWTH RINGS

APPALACHIAN FOREST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA NEWSLETTER

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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 or contact us at afnha@afnha.org for more information

Welcome to the Team

AFNHA is excited to welcome Samantha Peet as its Communications Director! Originally from south central Pennsylvania, Samantha proudly served with the AFHA AmeriCorps program and the Elkins Depot Welcome Center from 2015-2017 and fell in love with the region. After her service, she remained in Elkins and worked with a local marketing agency and as a freelance writer.

Samantha is passionate about rural tourism, community development and changing the narrative about rural West Virginia. When she isn't communicating AFNHA's mission, she enjoys exploring the Monongahela National Forest and spending time with her husband (also an AFHA AmeriCorps alum) and her two cats and two dogs. She finds it impossible to resist good food and the opportunity to travel.



She can be reached at: samanthap@afnha.org and (304) 636-6182 ex. 2

Logo Refresh



**APPALACHIAN
FOREST**
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

With the completion of the management plan on the horizon and the National Heritage Area distinction, it was decided it was time to give the organization logo a new look.

Seeking to convey a new look and feel without losing the identity of AFNHA, a brand refresh was decided on. You'll notice the familiar red oak leaf with accompanying mountains and rivers.

Designed by Jeff Dawson of Dawson Associates and a member of the planning team, the logo refresh includes several versions, including a stacked, round, horizontal and different color options.

Look to social media and the website as we continue to roll out the new logo!

Museum Announcement



AmeriCorps
West Virginia

New Exhibit Opens

We're back - with a brand new exhibit!

Have you ever thought?

- How can you use the plants in your backyard for food and medicine?
- What native plants were eaten by giant sloths?
- Why will climate change impact folk traditions?

"Plants and People: How Plants Have Shaped Culture and Tradition" answers these questions and more as it explores the folklore and traditional uses of wild plants in Appalachia.

The Discovery Center is open Thursday - Sunday every week from 9:30-4:30.

We're planning workshops throughout the summer in conjunction with the exhibit, so keep an eye out for updates!

Come and see us!



AmeriCorps Stories!



AmeriCorps
West Virginia

Emily's Story

By: Emily Langer

As the end of my service year approaches, I find myself reflecting on my path and where I am headed. I am a second year AmeriCorps and two years ago, I would not have guessed that I would be where I am today. These past two years have been filled with uncertainty for most people. It was a big decision to pack up my city life (in the height of the pandemic) and leave behind friends and family to follow a calling that I think a lot of us who enter this field are familiar with.



It is a fortunate thing to find your vocation so early in life even if the path to get there is filled with obstacles. I've been drawn to the outdoors since a young age and although I have explored different career paths my heart has always brought me back to conservation. As Aldo Leopold said, "There are some of us who can live without wild things, and some who cannot".

Extending my time in AmeriCorps has allowed me to get so much more out of my experience while making a greater impact in this field. We wasted no time continuing our study on the federally threatened cheat mountain salamander and completing what was our sixth and seventh rounds of occupancy surveys. This additional time also allowed us to see the project enter its next phase.

Completing projects from previous years also allowed us to see the start of new ones, including a study on saw-whet owls. Little is known about their migration patterns and surveys will allow researchers to determine if the owls are utilizing the area during their migration periods. This second year has also given me the opportunity to work with agency partners like the Forest Service to further my career training and development in areas like river snorkeling and chainsaw training.

Collaboration with other sites as well as other members has been an exciting opportunity and has only added to the value of my AmeriCorps experience. I will carry these experiences with me through the rest of my career and although it saddens me to say goodbye to this beautiful area and its people, I would not be surprised if West Virginia called me back home for a third time.



AFNHA seeks an Operations Manager!



AFNHA is Hiring!

AFNHA is hiring for a new staff position. We are taking applications now, until the position is filled.

The position is for an **Operations Manager**. This person will provide administrative support for our programs, including implementation of some of the management plan recommendations.

See www.appalachianforestnha.org/employment for job descriptions and how to apply.

AFNHA Upcoming Dates

June 1 - AFNHA AmeriCorps Team Meeting at Seneca Rocks Discovery Center | 10am

June 23 - Creative Economy Monthly Meeting via Zoom | 10am

June 28 - AFNHA Stakeholder Meeting and Management Plan Public Comment at Adaland Mansion | TBD

June 29 - Virtual Management Plan Public Comment Meeting | Tentatively 2pm

AFNHA Annual Meeting and Management Plan

The AFNHA Annual Meeting will be held Tuesday June 28 at Adaland Mansion outside of Philippi, Barbour County. This will include a public meeting to review the Management Plan, stakeholder conversations on moving forward, and annual elections for AFHA, Inc.

Almost two years from the official launch of AFNHA Management Planning in June 2020, the plan is drafted and review is underway. Once the plan draft is completed and formatted, it will be



posted on our website and made available to the public for a formal 30 day public review, likely starting in late June. In addition to the in-person public meeting June 28, we will also hold a virtual public meeting June 29 to discuss the plan and invite comments.

We are asking for letters supporting the plan and intention from partner organizations to participate in AFNHA moving forward. For any partners who want to review the informal draft or get your letters done now, email planning@afnha.org for a link to the draft-in-progress and letter info. All comments and letters will be acknowledged in the final version.

Watch www.appalachianforestnha.org for the posted plan later in June and for more info on planning meetings and how to submit comments.



We still have OPEN slots for the 2021-2022 AmeriCorps Term!



AFNHA AmeriCorps is still recruiting for some positions for the current term. These will mostly be 6 month positions, to start as soon as feasible.

Now Recruiting for New AmeriCorps Term!

AFNHA AmeriCorps is NOW recruiting for new positions for the new 2022-2023 term. These positions will start in September, for a full-year. We are accepting applications and starting interviews now. Details of the available positions are posted on our website.

Visit www.appalachianforestnha.org/ameri-corps-positions for more details.

Contact Chrissy Hall, Program Manager at chrissyh@afnha.org with any questions on our AmeriCorps program.

Host Site Applications

AmeriCorps sub-sponsor site assignments for 2022-2023 are being reviewed now. Any West Virginia non-profit or government partner who is interested in hosting a member but missed applying, please contact Chrissy to see if slots may still be available.



Follow AFNHA on Facebook and Instagram!



AFNHA Receives the APEX Award



The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (AFNHA) was awarded the Active Partners in Educational Excellence (APEX) Award from Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, for our collaboration on the Highlands Creative Economy Program.

The award was presented during the 2022 Commencement ceremony held in May, and recognized AFNHA for “active leadership, collaboration, and growth of the Creative Economy efforts” according to Megan Webb, Eastern’s Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education, who presented the award.

The APEX Award honors organizations engaged with the College in extraordinary service to the citizens, employers, and communities of the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia.

AFNHA appreciates this honor and recognition, and is especially honored that Eastern has trusted us to continue the growth of this program which they initiated several years ago.

We look forward to many more years of partnering together to support our Creative Economy.