

Spring has sprung in the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area!



Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

April 2014 E-Newsletter

Greetings,

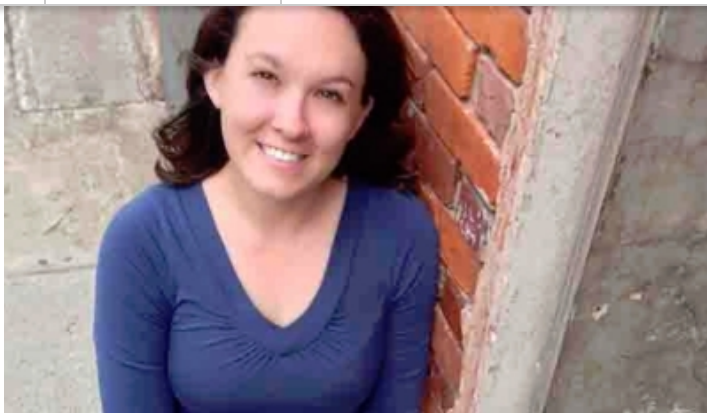
Despite the odd flurry of snow, the birds are chirping, the crocuses have bloomed, and there are plenty of happenings going on in the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area! Remember to sign up for our annual [Spring Stakeholders Meet](#), on Wednesday April 30 - Thursday May 1, if you haven't already. And don't forget to keep your eyes peeled for festivals, concerts, fairs, and other exciting events springing up all over the state!

Finding Home in Tucker County

By Emily Wilson-Hauger
AFHA Heritage AmeriCorps Member



Experience the heritage of your area! *Sites of the Month* spotlights events and locations within the region, based on AFHA's four themes: forestry,



"The important thing to do is to learn all you can about where you are and if you're going to work there it becomes even more important to learn everything you can about that place to make common cause with that place and then resigning yourself, becoming patient enough to work with it over a long time." From ["Wendell Berry on his Hope for Humanity"](#), October 2013.

It seems we, as Americans, have an ever-diminishing sense of "home" or "place." We're mobile and globally-minded. In six years, my husband and I lived in 5 different towns in 4 different states for jobs, graduate schools, and internships. Though we were born and raised in Pennsylvania, our sense of "home" escaped us. Having been heavily influenced by Wendell Berry's writings among others, we were ready to commit to a place, a land, and a community.

In October 2012, after much thought and conversation, Matt and I packed and moved to one of our favorite outdoor recreation destinations "Davis, West Virginia. We hoped to make Tucker County our home long term. As the first months progressed, we felt unconnected to the community as we struggled to form meaningful relationships. My ongoing job search, Matt's situation of working from home, and our introverted natures failed to provide us with substantial



[Seneca Rocks Discovery Center](#) will be hosting "Discover Nature Day" on Saturday, May 3rd. Learn about the threats that invasive species pose to our native forests and landscapes, and help out by pulling some garlic mustard at an official Garlic Mustard Challenge pull from 10:00 a.m. until noon. For the kids, the event will feature live bats and snakes, activities for the whole family, free lunch, and an inflatable cave! Check the Potomac Highlands CWPMA [website](#) for more details.



The Darden House is located at 412 Davis Avenue in Elkins, and was built in 1904 by businessman Ralph Darden. In honor National Historic

development professional and relatively new Tucker County resident.



*The Tucker County Courthouse, in Parsons, WV.
Photo: Emily Wilson-Hauger.*

After meeting some AFHA AmeriCorps members at a volunteer tree-planting day in Canaan Valley, I soon found myself enthusiastically applying for the program. AmeriCorps became my way of expressing a commitment to learning more about my community and to serving it in meaningful ways.

Many AmeriCorps members choose a program based on location or type of service for their term.

However, I chose to serve with AmeriCorps where I already committed to remaining once my term expires. The AFHA AmeriCorps program presented me with the avenue I needed to invest in Tucker County, using my experience and education.

Now halfway through my term serving with three community and economic development organizations in Tucker County, â€ the [Tucker](#)

[Landmarks Commission](#)

will be hosting a ["Darden Party"](#) at the historic Darden House on Saturday, May 3rd in downtown Elkins. The event will include a preservation fair, where interested guests can learn about preserving their own buildings. The event is free and will also include live entertainment, food and demonstrations from local preservation-minded groups and businesses.



[Richwood, WV](#) has come to be known as "The Ramp Capital of the World." This year, on Saturday, April 26th, the town will be celebrating its [76th Annual Feast of the Ramson](#). (If you didn't already know, "ramson" is another word for "ramp," or a type of wild onion.) Come join in a tradition that Appalachian residents have taken part in for years! The event

“ I remain impressed by the social, cultural, natural, and economic assets that residents are working hard to cultivate. I learn daily about the complex history of a peoples™ connection to the land. I strive to foster relationships with residents, organizational leaders, county officials, and business owners that are vital to an environment of collaboration for further sustainable development in the region. As I partner on projects and events as an AmeriCorps member, I become ever more entangled into the community and its œcommon cause.” □



Wilson-Hauger photographed with other citizens and supporters of Tucker County, at the West Virginia State Capitol for Tucker County Day.

Recently, I was appointed to the Tucker County Planning Commission as a resident of the county. This is of great significance because though my time with AmeriCorps will inevitably end (this year or next), my formal service to the community will not cease. Tucker County, and the Davis/Thomas area in particular, are feeling more like œhome” □ every day as I learn and serve, and I hope to continue to work for that home a long time to come.

Discover Nature Day

By Beth Simon

craft show highlighting local artists and crafters from around the region.



[The Wild Edibles](#)

[Festival](#) is a great way to learn about foods that can be found right here in our natural forests! Attendees should register ahead of time, and can choose from a variety of workshops and walks led by knowledgeable instructors and guides. Learn how to identify and prepare the tasty and nutritious bounty of our wild plants! Make and sample wildflower teas, main dishes, desserts & more. The event will be held on Saturday, April 19th in Hillsboro, WV.

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

Email us at:

info@appalachianforest.us

and let us know your favorite sites throughout



Simon, right, volunteering earlier this fall at Caves and Bats ROCK!, an free educational event at the Elkins YMCA, hosted by AFHA and the West Virginia DNR.

Spring has sprung and in a big way.

Everyone is outdoors, and rightly so. There's exploring, fishing, biking, ramp-foraging, home-repairing to do. Even Iâ€™m outsideâ€”I am writing this on the porch on a bright and breezy, 80 degree afternoon. Around here, natural wonders aboundâ€”forests, streams, mountains, cavesâ€”and with so much splendor, it can be easy to take it all for granted!

For me, however, everything here is new and exciting. I came from sunny South Florida to Elkins, WV in August for an AmeriCorps position with Monongahela National Forest. Despite the beaches and the stable weather, Florida can get a little stale. West Virginia seems to have it all! I love the winter, the mountainsides, the winding streams, the wildflowers, and the connection that the people have with the land. This spring, I invite you to look through an outsiderâ€™s eyes and re-discover what you love about Appalachia.

On May 3rd, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Monongahela National Forest, and WV Department of Natural Resources invite you to do just that: take some

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get outside and learn about why our backyard is so special. Come to Seneca Rocks Discovery Center and participate in a [Garlic Mustard Challenge](#) event from 10:00 to 12:00. By pulling this [non-native invasive species](#), you'll not only be helping the environment, but you'll also have the chance to win prizes, including \$100 for the person who pulls the most and \$200 for the top-pulling team (3-4 people).

From 12:00 to 1:00, get a free lunch and watch a live bat demonstration. Then, from 1:00 to 4:00, stay for an opportunity to touch live snakes, discover the water cycle, go on a "Bug Hunt," walk an interpretive trail, celebrate Smokey Bear's 70th Birthday, get crafty, and learn about Tucker the Turtle. In other words, just like the outdoors, there is something for everyone!

If for some crazy reason you cannot make it, make sure you take some time out to re-discover what nature here in the Appalachians means to you. For more information or if you would like to volunteer at "Discover Nature Day," please contact Beth Simon, bethasimon@fs.fed.us, [\(304\) 636-1800 x169](tel:3046361800).

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