

May 2014 - AFHA is looking for new members. Apply Today!

AmeriCorps Grant Awarded!

AFHA AmeriCorps has been awarded a new competitive grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. This grant for continuation of our "Enhancing Assets to Benefit Communities" program will fund 27 members to provide conservation, community development, and historic preservation service for the 2014-15 service term. Our second heritage program grant is still under consideration, but if awarded may be for up to 10 additional heritage development members - giving us the largest program ever for AFHA AmeriCorps.

AFHA AmeriCorps Recruitment

Individuals interested in serving in AFHA AmeriCorps for the new term starting in September 2014 can apply by [submitting](#) a cover letter and resume. Visit our [website](#) for more info. Potential AmeriCorps sub-sponsor sites should let us know immediately if you are interested, and will need to submit an application by end of May.

AFHA Seeks Staff Member

AFHA is seeking applications for a new, part-time staff program associate starting in September. Duties will include helping to manage the AmeriCorps program and assisting with the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center. [Contact us](#) for a position description.



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.



[Lost River State Park](#) is home to structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The

Tales from the Sash Hole: The Frankenstein Window

By Riley Ubben

AFHA Hands-On Team Member

Ubben, restoring a historic window sash.

He was hardly a window at all when I found him.

Glass broken, frame held together with rusty screws, he was so disheveled that I considered leaving him behind, but I knew that I could give him new life. I pulled him out from the wreckage and brought him to the AFHA workshop. A young preservationist in training, I attempt to rebuild the Frankenstein window.

The wind howls as I remove shards of glass from the wood. One pane remains unbroken, so I spend half an hour carefully scraping the glazing around it bit by bit, like really, really taking my time, but the thing just breaks anyway when I try to get the glazing points out. I wonder if Frankenstein is taunting me, but I assure myself that he is only a window. Harnessing the power of electricity, I heat up the paint so that it may be removed with ease. I have my mask on during all of this, by the way, because I'm all about safety.

Once Frankenstein is free of paint, I mix up a two-part concoction of liquid wood. The first part will penetrate his soft, moldy skeleton and the second part will strengthen it. I apply the liquid with a brush, and it's kind of anti-climactic at first because it just looks wet and sticky but the next day Frankenstein is rock solid. The bottom of the frame is in three pieces and I need to make it one. I make a brace to hold the pieces in a straight line while I epoxy the wood together, but Frankenstein resists, twisting himself all out of whack. I won't let him die. I make a few incisions, straighten

regrowth of our forests and also built many public recreation facilities. There are 15 log cabins in the park constructed by the CCC enrollees of Camp Hardy. The cabins still retain some original furnishings, including dining room tables, corner cupboards, and chairs with cane seats. Several also still retain their original iron and other light fixtures. Unusual for the rustic cabins, they include indoor plumbing and bathrooms. Rent one out for a night, or an entire week this summer!



[Evergreen Heritage Center](#), located on approximately 130 acres in the heart of Allegany County, MD, is a historic estate that pre-dates the Revolutionary War. The heritage center includes the Evergreen mansion (now a museum), beautifully landscaped grounds and gardens,

Like a record collector, I flip through my stack of glass, searching for the right fit. Most of the pieces are too small to ever fit into anything, but you can't just throw these things away. I find six panes that are large enough to cut to size. I score them, snap off the excess, then trick out Frankenstein with his custom-fitted glass.

Once I add new glazing and new paint, Frankenstein looks like a new window. I have to admit that when I began, I had concerns that my creation might turn against me, but everything totally worked out. Frankenstein is now a driven, career-oriented window eager to start his new life in Buckhannon.

Amphibians: Mascots of Spring

By Rachel Fedders

AFHA Conservation AmeriCorps Member

Fedders, surveying a vernal pool.

Ah, Spring. The wildflowers are blooming, the frogs are calling, and the trees are leafing out. This time of year is full of new growth, new life, and regeneration. As an Americorps member in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, spring means that I get to joyously fling myself into the field season!

Traditional symbols of spring include the rabbit and the egg. For me however, one of the most suitable emblems of spring is the amphibian. The metamorphosis that many species of amphibians undergo is an apt metaphor for the radical natural transformations that occur in the spring. In some parts of West Virginia, the amphibians have already finished the majority of their breeding activities, but here in the Allegheny Highlands, the high elevation and cooler

7th from 1-4pm the Evergreen Heritage Center will host an open house to unveil its new Heritage Sawmill and Wood Shop. The afternoon will include fun activities for children and adults, including logging and milling demonstrations, lessons on building a bird house, and tree identification and measurement, and more!



[The ArtSpring Festival](#), now in its fourth year, is a county-wide celebration to highlight the arts community of Tucker County during memorial-day weekend. This tour of Tucker County - through Thomas, Davis, Canaan Valley, and Parsons - brings together and celebrates the best of the arts community and includes events such as fine art and craft demonstrations, gallery exhibits and art

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Luckily, amphibians have many great places to live and grow in Canaan Valley. Green frogs (*Rana clamitans*), pickerel frogs (*Rana palustris*), and the ubiquitous spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) can be found in the 8,500 acres of wetlands that carpet the valley floor. American toads (*Bufo americanus*), wood frogs (*Rana sylvatica*), spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*), and eastern newts (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) lay their eggs in woodland vernal pools in the valley. Species such as the red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) and the federally threatened Cheat Mountain salamander (*Plethodon nettingi*) make their homes in upland forests, laying small clutches of eggs beneath rocks or inside rotting logs. Other upland salamander species documented in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge include northern slimy salamanders (*Plethodon glutinosus*), Wehrle's salamanders (*Plethodon wehrlei*), and Allegheny Mountain dusky salamanders (*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*).

Left to right: wood frog eggs in a vernal pool, wood frog tadpole, eastern newts mating in a vernal pool.

Unfortunately, amphibians are threatened by destruction and fragmentation of habitat, pollution, climate change, and disease. When wetlands are destroyed or vernal pools disrupted, amphibians lose vital habitat and breeding grounds. Many species of salamander can't cross roads or trails due to the risk of drying out, so their habitat can be highly fragmented by most kinds of development. Amphibians' permeable skin makes them especially susceptible to environmental pollutants. A trend toward smaller body size in salamanders has been attributed to warmer weather and reduced rainfall. The deadly Chytrid fungus, which is becoming more and more widespread, is decimating

performances, a traditional square dance, kids crafting and outdoor painting, an outdoor farmer/artisan market, and much more!



The [Falls of Hills Creek Scenic Area](#) is a hidden treasure tucked away in a narrow gorge just off the Highland Scenic Highway. This popular 114 acre area consists of a series of three waterfalls: Upper (25 feet), Middle (45 feet), and Lower (63 feet). The Lower Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in WV, is the gem of this trio. A trip the to the Lower Falls involves a fairly strenuous trek down a series of well-maintained boardwalks and stairs. If you're up for the challenge, the view is well worth the hike!

Do you have a suggestion

survival of these cool creatures.

So why should we care about amphibians? Well, if you care about nature, amphibians' sensitivity to environmental hazards means that they can teach us a lot about the health of the environment. Declining amphibian populations serve as a warning of imbalance in nature. In regards to food chains and nutrient cycling, salamanders comprise a significant portion of the overall forest biomass and consume an enormous quantity of insects and other invertebrates. Salamanders may also contribute to carbon sequestration, having far-reaching effects on the global carbon cycle. If you like learning about rare and unique species, the Cheat Mountain Salamander is endemic to WV, meaning it is found only within the state and nowhere else in the world. Not only that, but the entirety of Cheat Mountain Salamander range falls within AFHA boundaries! West Virginia is home to 49 amphibian species; Maryland is home to 41. These organisms represent an important and fascinating biodiversity of which we should be proud.

I hope that reading this article has made you as enthusiastic about amphibians as writing it has made me! Although we humans can't physically metamorphose like some amphibians do (wouldn't that be cool though?!), we can definitely work to transform our attitudes and behaviors, pledging to live more consciously and sustainably in order to make certain that these delicate and susceptible species are able to persist long into the future.

info@appalachianforest.us

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