

GROWTH RINGS

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area News



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Updates

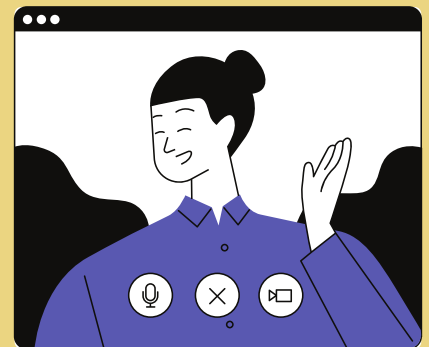
Management Planning

In our March newsletter, we announced our initial public meetings that would have happened May 20th and May 21st. Our consulting team was scheduled to visit us that week and get oriented with the area, meet with some key stakeholders, and become get to know our staff.

Due to COVID-19, **we are suspending all in person meetings, including the May 20 & 21 meets.** We are disappointed to put our in person meetings on hold, but are working hard to create virtual outreach content until we are able to get our consultants on the ground and more meetings scheduled.

Virtual Engagement

AFNHA staff, AmeriCorps members, and the consulting team are working together to create materials stakeholders can engage with virtually. **Get engaged with one of our task groups using the link on the next page.** Be on the lookout for surveys. We will need your help in shaping the way AFNHA serves our partner organizations moving forward, so please be on the lookout for email updates about how to stay in touch with us through this process, virtually. Like us on Facebook for the most up to date news about AFNHA.



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 two counties in Western Maryland.

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



Task Groups

Moira Gasior

Task groups are a group of people coming together to inform a specific aspect of the management plan. For example, the Interpretation & Visitor Experiences Task Group will look at our significant stories and how to tell them, as well as how to enhance visitor experiences, promote and attract tourism. Someone interested in interpretive planning and/or tourism development would fit in well to this group.

The task groups will be engaged through email, potentially online meetings, and in person meetings when feasible. The conversations being had by each group will inform the way AFNHA functions. Our consulting team will also be involved in each task group. Here are the task groups we need your help with:

- **Planning Working Group**

Board members, staff, consultants, and volunteers interested in helping to guide us through this process, including setting goals and objectives. A generalist group giving feedback through out the process.

- **Local Ambassador**

We are looking for at least one person per county to be AFNHA contact for your local community. They will help to plan public meetings, site visits for planning staff, and possibly targeted meetings with groups in your community. They will also help us to get the word out and share planning information with your community.

- **Interpretation & Visitor Services**

This group will look at our significant stories and how to tell them, as well as how to enhance visitor experiences, promote and attract tourism. Includes wayfinding, thematic development, tourism planning, etc..

- **Resource Stewardship & Enhancement**

What strategies we can enact for conservation and support of environmental, cultural, and heritage assets? How can we enact stewardship in the work we do? How do we protect our assets? Those interested in ecological conservation, historic preservation, and tourism would suit this group.

- **Organization Structure & Management**

This group will address how AFNHA will relate to and benefit our partners, management, and sustainability. What will be the structure and roles of AFNHA going forward, and what services can we offer? What does your partner organization or community need to grow? What gaps exist in your community regarding tourism, conservation, or heritage development?

**CLICK HERE
TO SIGN UP!**

Questions? Contact
[planning@afnha.org!](mailto:planning@afnha.org)



AmeriCorps Service During COVID-19

Moira Gasior

This photo was taken by AmeriCorps member Brandy Harvey this winter when AFNHA AmeriCorps took a fieldtrip to different sites in Barbour County. The Adaland Mansion, where this photo was taken, as the last stop on their tour.

AmeriCorps gives individuals opportunities to do hands-on work in local communities. Our AmeriCorps program places members at partner sites working on community development, historic preservation, ecological restoration and conservation, and heritage tourism development. But what happens when something like COVID-19 hits and many events, meetings, and projects have to get pushed back or cancelled?

Thankfully, our AFNHA AmeriCorps members and supervisors are incredibly adaptive! Here are some examples of the work our AmeriCorps members are able to do while practicing safety measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.



Hannah Wroton, Monongahela National Forest

"In person meetings and events are cancelled, I am 'teleserving' from home currently, and things haven't changed a ton for me like they might have for other members. I am getting to start on some wildlife projects early but otherwise it's just trying to keep on top of projects that had been getting pushed back, nothing really exciting to highlight unfortunately."

Eric Pluta, WV Division of Forestry

"DOF is considered essential, for me right now I have been essentially isolating myself in my work, literally, at a work shop painting sign posts and digging holes in the forest with no one around for said posts."

Megan Dister, Monongahela National Forest

"I am developing online lessons to send out to parents with Run Wild. I'm hopeful that they might provide a sense of normalcy for the kids, but also it's hard to know if it's just another document for parents to read when they are swamped working from home and trying to engage their kids with educational activities. I've thought about maybe doing some videos too- but either way trying to stay connected with my participants."

AmeriCorps Service During COVID-19 (cont'd.)

Laura Frick, WV Railroad Museum

"Most of what I work on is the museum's 2020 exhibit. I was in the middle of writing and designing content when coronavirus hit, so my site activities haven't actually changed too much. If anything, I now have more time to work on the exhibit since the opening has been postponed."

Sarah Rosenkrans, Appalachian Forest Discovery Center

"I am actually working from Arkansas to be closer to family. I'm going to have weekly phone calls with my supervisor and email check-ins. We are still aiming to have my exhibit done by May, though whether we open or not remains to be seen. The only delay on that is that we can't actually install anything."

Chris Mielke, Beverly Heritage Center

Chris Mielke is making virtual content from his home in Baltimore, MD, related to the Beverly Heritage Center.

Morgan Agee, Trout Unlimited *(right)*

"I'm using this time to focus on a collaborative project with staff to organize all of TU's fish, temperature, and project data into a user-friendly system. TU is also still planting trees using a small crew with proper social distancing, and I will be helping them as we try to still complete those projects. Aside from my site, I volunteered at Mountaineer Food Bank warehouse in Gassaway packing emergency food boxes"

Events & Other Announcements

Rampin' in Randolph Recipe Challenge!

Disappointed Ramps & Rail Festival (or your other favorite ramp festival) was cancelled? Itching share a ramp meal with loved ones?

You are invited to participate in our Rampin' in Randolph Recipe Challenge! Share your favorite ramp recipe for the opportunity to be included in a ramp cookbook that will be sold at next year's Ramps & Rail Festival. If your recipe is selected you will receive a free copy of the cookbook.

Even though we won't get to eat at this year's Ramps & Rail Festival we encourage you to gather and cook your own.

Questions? Contact elkinswelcomecenter@gmail.com or call (304) 635-7803.



To submit your recipe...

**SUBMIT ON
FACEBOOK !**

**FILL OUT THE RECIPE
FORM HERE!**

*You can also submit via email at elkinswelcomecenter@gmail.com

Virtual Programming @ BHC

Like the Beverly Heritage Center on Facebook to tune into their virtual programming. AmeriCorps member Chris Mielke is creating great online content each week!

**[LIKE THE
BEVERLY HERITAGE CENTER](#)**

AFNHA HOT Seeking Projects for 2020

The Hands on Team project must be supervised by a qualified project supervisor, and there is a cash-match requirement. Qualifying projects are awarded on a rolling basis until all program time is filled. Must be within our 16 WV counties.

**[CLICK HERE TO VIEW HANDS ON
TEAM PROJECT APPLICATION](#)**