

AUGUST 2023

# 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](http://afnha.org).

## Goodbye AmeriCorps Members and thank you for your service!

Last week we celebrated the end of our 2022-23 AmeriCorps service term. We gathered at Stuart Recreation Area to recognize our members' successful completion of their service year. Each member received a Certificate of National Service.

We will welcome our new members in just a few weeks as we start the 2023-24 service term. We are still recruiting for several positions. Read on to learn more.



# President's Volunteer Service Award

Two of our AmeriCorps Members received the President's Volunteer Service Award, which honors our country's most outstanding volunteers. Josh Wanstreet and Katelyn Dean both received a Lifetime Achievement Award for over 4,000 hours of national service. Josh and Katelyn each received a personalized certificate and congratulatory letter from the President. Congratulations!

Do you know an exceptional volunteer that you would like to recognize? AFNHA is an official Certifying Organization that can approve volunteers' eligibility for the PVSA.



AmeriCorps program manager Chrissy Hall (left), with members Katelyn Dean (center) and Josh Wanstreet (right)

# AmeriCorps Opportunities

We are currently recruiting for over 30 positions for the 2023-24 service year beginning September 7th, 2023. AmeriCorps is open to anyone aged 17 years or older. A service year is an excellent opportunity for recent graduates, those looking for a gap year, retirees, or anyone looking for a change who wants to make a difference in our communities.

AFNHA AmeriCorps service allows an individual to benefit local communities and landscapes while gaining professional skills and experience, and earning money to pay for school or student loans. AmeriCorps members receive a recently increased stipend of \$20,000, a \$6,895 education award upon completion, and may be eligible for a WV Higher Education Tuition Waiver.

Know someone who might be interested? Send them our way! Learn more about the program and how to apply at <https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/ Americorps-positions>



**YOU can earn money for school**



**YOU can learn new skills**

# Conservation Positions

Conservation members conserve natural resources through projects including ecosystem restoration, habitat monitoring, and environmental education. Some positions are focused on fieldwork, while others focus more on environmental education and outreach to community members and volunteers. Most conservation positions are with government agencies or major conservation non-profits' local offices.

[Watch this video](#) to see how one member's AmeriCorps service led to a staff position at the Monongahela National Forest

Open positions:

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Monongahela National Forest: Conservation Education Assistant, Restoration Technician, Watershed and Fisheries Technician, Sites Homestead Interpretive Guide, North Zone Interpreter

The Nature Conservancy

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Yew Mountain Center

Learn more at <https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/conservation>



# Heritage & Community Development Positions

Members help rural communities with economic development based on their cultural heritage resources and tourism assets. Positions will be based in specific communities and organizations around the AFNHA area. Projects may involve historic interpretation, documentation, and preservation at museums or historic sites or outreach and event planning at community development organizations. Types of sites include historical societies and museums, visitor centers, tourism, and community development groups.

Open positions:

Augusta Heritage Center

Beverly Heritage Center

Belington ON TRAC

Elkins Depot Welcome Center

Hardy County Heritage Trails

Monongahela National Forest

Pocahontas County CVB

Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee

WV Railroad Museum



Learn more at <https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/heritage-community-development>



# Tourism Summit

Earlier this month we traveled to Allegany County, Maryland to host our annual Highlands Creative Economy Tourism Summit. This year's summit focused on improving visitor experience for sustainable tourism and featured presentations and discussions from various organizations in western Maryland working in recreation and heritage tourism.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the event, view photos, and access a copy of some of the slideshows and resources presented.

We were glad to meet new community members in our region. Thanks to everyone who hosted our group, helped plan behind the scenes, contributed to our sessions and discussions, and represented their organizations at the event. We are honored to have the opportunity to hold these conversations that cross county and state lines.

We hope to see you at one of our monthly online meetings. Sign up for our September 28th meeting or learn more at [www.afnha.org/creative-economy](http://www.afnha.org/creative-economy). If you have participated in ANY of these meetings, trainings, panels, or summits by AFNHA or Eastern, please take the time to fill out [this survey](#) and let us know if you think that these sessions have been helpful, or if you have any suggestions for improving the program.



# Appalachian Forest Discovery Center

Thanks to *Only in Your State* for calling us “one of the coolest visitor centers in West Virginia”!

## Movies at the Museum

Catch FREE documentary showings every Monday in August at the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center inside the historic Darden Mill in downtown Elkins!

### 8/21 - *The Resilient Forest*

The Resilient Forest documents the settlements, early history, industrialization, folklife, recreation, conservation, and forestry practices that have formed the cultural identity of Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.

### 8/28 - *Reel 'Em, Boys, Reel 'Em*

A film by Augusta Heritage Center, Reel 'Em features West Virginia traditional square dancing and step dancing. This documentary follows the Mountain Dance Trail as it winds across the Mountain State.

## AFNHA Seeking Museum Design Consultant!

Help us develop and design a new major exhibit for the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center reflecting our new revised themes. See the Request for Proposal [HERE](#). Proposals are due ASAP to accommodate a planning grant application to be submitted September 1.



# AmeriCorps Story

## School Visits at Seneca Rocks

By Ezmie Trevarrow

This year for the first time, the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center and the USDA Forest Service hosted 4th graders from Pendleton County for a day full of outdoor recreation, cultural heritage, and fun! 56 students from the surrounding area visited stations set up on the Discovery Center grounds focusing on the area's cultural heritage and outdoor recreation activities to encourage more exploration of the public lands around them.

Read more of Ezmie's story [HERE!](#)



# Events

Click links for more info

- Aug 18-20 | [Friendsville Days](#)
- Aug 19 | [Frankfort District Historical Society Cruise In](#) | Hunt Club Plaza
- Aug 20 | [Preston County History Day](#)
- Aug 20 | [Art in the Park](#) | Berkeley Springs State Park
- Aug 26 | [Buckhannon Riverfest](#)
- Aug 26 | [Lowered on the Lawn car show](#) | Philippi
- Aug 26 | [Bulls 'n Barrels Rodeo](#) | Teets Cattle Company
- Sept 2-3 | [Holly River State Park Festival](#)
- Sept 2-3 | [Art in the Park](#) | Watoga State Park
- Sept 8-9 | [Nicholas County Potato Festival](#) | Summersville
- Sept 9 | [Flatwoods Monster Convention](#) | Sutton
- Sept 9-10 | [Heritage Days Festival](#) | Cumberland
- Sept 9 | [Hampshire Highlands Music & Arts Festival](#)
- Sept 9 | [Freshwater Folk Festival](#) | White Sulphur Springs
- Sept 9 | [Helvetia Community Fair](#)
- Sept 14-17 | [Treasure Mountain Festival](#) | Franklin

## Regional News

- [2023 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Selected from Monongahela National Forest](#)
- [Summersville Lake to become West Virginia's next State Park](#)
- Randolph County Fair seeking demonstrators for heritage events. Visit [www.randolphcountyfairwv.com](http://www.randolphcountyfairwv.com) or email [randolphcountyfair@yahoo.com](mailto:randolphcountyfair@yahoo.com) for more information.
- [Allegheny County, Maryland, Nominated for Best Place to Visit for Fall by USA Today](#)
- [Volunteer West Virginia accepting mini-grant applications through August 21](#)
- [Local partners included in \\$490,647 ARISE grant from ARC to support forest farming](#)
- [Philippi Receives Grant to Restore Philippi Grand Theater](#)



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