

SEPTEMBER 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.

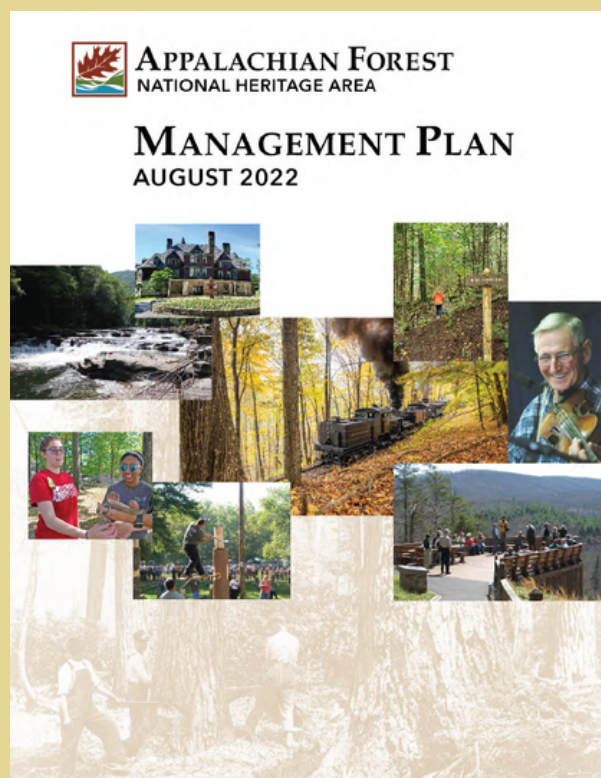
To learn more about us and the work we do, including our AmeriCorps program, visit [afnha.org](http://afnha.org).



## Management Plan Approved!

The National Park Service approved the Management Plan for the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (AFNHA) on August 28, 2023. Completing over three years of outreach and a year of review, the Management Plan will guide AFNHA activities moving forward as a National Heritage Area, based on five main goals. Approval of the plan makes AFNHA eligible for increased federal matching funding.

Read more [HERE](#)



# Welcome New Staff

## **Christy Wham - Administrative Manager**

Christy grew up in Central New Jersey, 5 minutes from Historic Hightstown, NJ. She went to The College of New Jersey, graduating in 2014 with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, Finance. During school Christy played Division III Field Hockey. Her team won the 2011 NCAA D3 Women's Field Hockey National Championship Title.

Christy is an AmeriCorps alumni, serving in 2015 at CalServes in Santa Rosa, California. Her service year was spent at the Redwood Empire Food Bank, where she focused on spreading awareness of food insecurity, research and implementation of a new volunteer tracking system. Christy earned her Masters of Science in Accounting, Tax, from Purdue University Global, graduating in December 2019. Christy moved to Elkins, WV in 2023.

Christy supports the administration of AFNHA programs in all capacities, and has a primary focus area in accounting, bookkeeping, record keeping, software systems, and operational/office needs.



# Welcome New Staff

## **Josh Wanstreet - Conservations Programs Manager**

Josh Wanstreet brings a combined five years of experience serving as an AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Vista member to AFNHA having completed his final year of service in August 2023. This experience earned him the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for serving four thousand hours in AmeriCorps. After serving in the US Air Force between 1997 and 2003 he enrolled at Fairmont State University graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology and a minor in Political Science.

As Conservation Programs Manager he supervises and works with AmeriCorps members for the 2023-2024 Monongahela National Forest Visitor Use Monitoring Survey, the AFNHA Pollinator Initiative and the Appalachian Forest Volunteers program. He is fortunate to be part of a passionate and dedicated team that works to serve communities throughout the state. He can trace his paternal family's ancestry to Doddridge County, WV settling in 1832 after emigrating from Oldenburg, Germany. In his spare time he enjoys playing traditional Appalachian fiddle and banjo music, kayaking, square dancing and training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. He has lived in Elkins since 2012.



# Welcome New Members



This month we welcomed our new AmeriCorps Members who are starting the 2023-2024 service year.

We are still recruiting for several open positions. 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 [appalachianforestnha.org/ameri-corps-positions](https://appalachianforestnha.org/ameri-corps-positions)

# AFNHA Program News

## Highlands Creative Economy

AFNHA has been awarded a \$197,000 grant from the **Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation** to expand the successful **Highlands Creative Economy** initiative, using collaboration and assistance to enhance cultural heritage, natural, and human assets to grow tourism and benefit communities.

Join us for our next Highlands Creative Economy meeting on Thursday, September 28th. See agenda or register on our [website](#).



## Upcoming trainings

October 11, Wed, 9:30-4 pm -- **Relationship Management** with Becky Mathis-Stump, and **Volunteer Management** including Appalachian Forest Volunteers program training. Location TBD (Randolph County). Free to all AFNHA partners, required for AmeriCorps members and supervisors. Lunch provided.

November 3, Friday -- **Interpretation training:** Interpretation basics, personal and non-personal interpretation, developing exhibits, and interpreting difficult stories. Trainers will include Dr. Dave Smaldone (WVU), Kyle Warmack (WV Humanities Council), and more TBA. Open to all and highly encouraged for AmeriCorps members, partners, and grantees doing interpretation projects.

# AFNHA Program News

## NVUM

In partnership with the Monongahela National Forest, AFNHA will conduct the 2023-2024 **National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) Survey**. This year-long project will conduct surveys of visitors at recreational sites across the Monongahela National Forest to assess visitor satisfaction across multiple criteria.

We will conduct nearly 300 surveys at 92 public access sites on the Mon throughout the year, primarily focused during the high-use period in the early October - November of 2023 and April - September of 2024. We are seeking 2-4 Seasonal Full to Part Time Surveyors residing in the Mon Forest region. See our [job description](#) or contact us for more information.

Read more [HERE](#)

## America250

Does your community have a unique story? Does your organization have an exhibit or project that tells the importance of a person or place in our region? Submit a story to our America250 project!

**America250 in the Appalachian Forest** will commemorate the semiquincentennial of the founding of America by sharing the stories of the people, communities, and places that have shaped our region.

Submit a story idea or learn more at

<https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/america250>



# Upcoming Events at the Darden Mill

The **Appalachian Forest Discovery Center** will open through the end of October. Come see our **“Material Culture” exhibit** before we close for the season, or attend these special events during the Mountain State Forest Festival:

## **Mountain Weavers Guild demonstrations**

10am-4pm, October 6-7

Friday October 6

**Dulcimer lesson and workshop:** 10am to 12pm

**Musical performance by *Fair Play*:** 4:30pm

## **"The 1858 Artists' Excursion on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad"**

A Portrayal of "Porte Crayon" and lecture presented by Don Teter

7pm, October 5, 2023



# Events

Click links for more info

Sept 15-14 | [Maryland Restaurant Week](#)  
Sept 15-17 | [Treasure Mountain Festival](#) | Franklin  
Sept 19 | [“WWI: Grant and Pendleton County” Presentation](#) | Petersburg  
Sept 22-24 | [Hardy County Heritage Weekend](#)  
Sept 22-24 | [Leaf Peepers Festival](#) | Tucker County  
Sept 23-24 | [Mineral County Heritage Trail](#)  
Sept 23 | [Autumn Harvest Festival & Cookoff](#) | Marlinton  
Sept 28-Oct 1 | [Preston County Buckwheat Festival](#) | Kingwood  
Sept 30 | [Frostburg Fall Arts Walk](#)  
Sept 30 | [Downtown Fall Market](#) | Buckhannon  
Sept 30 | [Oktoberfest](#) | Adaland Mansion  
Oct 7 | [Burgoo Cook-off](#)  
Oct 7 | [Sutton Fall Festival](#)  
Oct 7 | [Alderson Fall Festival on the Bridge](#)  
Oct 7-8 | [Apple Butter Festival](#) | Berkeley Springs  
Oct 7-8 | [Burlington Apple Harvest Festival](#)  
Oct 11-15 | [Autumn Glory Festival](#) | Garrett County  
Oct 13-14 | [Lantern Tours](#) | Beverly Heritage Center  
Oct 14 | [Art Walk Richwood](#)

## Regional News

Applications open for [Chesapeake Gateways Network Grants](#)

Eastern WV C&TC begins new [Hospitality and Tourism Education Program](#)

Cumberland, Greenbrier River Trail, and Blackwater Falls featured as [“20 Must-Take Fall Trips”](#) by Southern Living

New [Seneca Rocks Regional Development Authority](#) to serve Grant and Pendleton Counties

Green Bank featured by [Thrillist](#)

Watoga State Park Foundation installs new [Dark Sky information sign](#)



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