



APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA

Upgrade to AFHA 2.0!

History is not the only thing growing at AFHA! We are working to update and expand our internet presence. The AFHA website has served us well over the years, but needs to keep improving. Changes in both the website interface and content are currently under development. In the near future you can expect to see new content including Google maps, AFHA Blog, multimedia content, online brochures, and more. In addition, you may find AFHA on your favorite social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and Flickr.

GPS / GIS

In recent years the emergence of GPS (Global Positioning Systems) technology has taken the consumer market by storm. While many of us are familiar with GPS units, whether handheld or dash-mounted, there is more to the technology than simply finding your way. At AFHA we have already begun using GPS in conjunction with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) for mapping everything from tourism sites to trees and trails. This combination of field-based data collection and geodatabase storage allows us to create interactive maps with multiple layers of data. The ability to collect, store, sort, and share relevant GIS data improves our capacity to interact with our governmental, educational, and philanthropic partners.

Geo-Cache the AFHA!

All work and no play may have made Jack a dull boy; however, there is nothing dull about us! While the tasks involved in updating and expanding our internet presence may be all work, there is always time to play in the AFHA! One of the added benefits of using GPS technology is the ability to provide recreational opportunities. Geo-caching is a relatively new and exciting way for people to discover natural wonders and hidden places in the AFHA. As part of our internet expansion, we are exploring this new recreational activity and working to organize a series of geo-caches throughout the area. Come learn more and share your ideas and suggested locations as part of our upcoming Stakeholders meeting.



AFHA Volunteer Program

AFHA started the New Year off with a volunteerism workshop, in partnership with Concord University, to help launch a comprehensive volunteer program. With the input of community leaders, local residents, and college students, we have been able to refine volunteer recruitment, management, activities, and sponsors into a comprehensive program which will allow AFHA to pursue its goals while simultaneously serving to strengthen the capacity of other area organizations. In conjunction with VolunteerWV.org, AFHA is actively engaged with many volunteer-based projects already and enthusiastically seeking new partners and projects for the future.

For the first year of this effort, we are concentrating on launching the Monongahela Volunteer Program – to help accomplish on the ground projects such as trail work, tree planting, and non-native invasive species control on the Monongahela. We will also be partnering to assist with volunteer recruitment and recognition for a number of our AmeriCorps sub-sponsor projects. Some tentative dates are given on the back of this newsletter. Come learn more at the spring Stakeholders meeting – and watch the AFHA website for more information and a calendar of volunteer opportunities.

Garlic Mustard Challenge

May is the month of mustard, garlic mustard that is. As a part of the AFHA Volunteer Program, AFHA AmeriCorps has partnered with the Monongahela National Forest to organize the first annual “Garlic Mustard Challenge.”

In an effort to address the widespread problem of non-native invasive species and their detrimental effects on West Virginia’s forest ecosystem, a goal has been set to remove 10,000 pounds of the NNIS this year. Four garlic mustard pulls have been planned so far. They will be held at locations of infestations across the Mon including Camp Pocahontas, Summit Lake, and Big Bend. AmeriCorps member Evan Burks and USFS ecologist Cindy Sandeno will also give a presentation for the WV Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls the weekend of May 9th.

If you or someone you know is interested in forming a volunteer group or hosting a pull, please contact Evan Burks at eburks@fs.fed.us or volunteerism@appalachianforest.us.

AmeriCorps Gets Things Done!

Historic Preservation Team

Astounding progress has been achieved by Joe, Darrell, Russell, Anna and Claudette, the AFHA AmeriCorps preservation team. At the time of our last newsletter there was a delicate balance between the creative vision and the realization of the Darden Mill project. Today the realization is nearer as electricity, heating, drywall, and paint make the mill feel more like the soon-to-be home of AFHA. The team is also working on the Collett House in Beverly, restoring windows and preparing for foundation work on the 1800s log structure. Additional projects planned for this year include work on the 1824 Bosworth Store that houses the Randolph County Museum, and rehabilitation work on the Whittaker Station interpretive logging camp at Cass Scenic Railroad State Park.

Conservation Team

Two of our conservation team members are working directly with the Monongahela National Forest, as Evan works as an ecosystems technician from the main office, and Nathan gives recreation assistance on the Gauley District. The MVP volunteer projects discussed on page one are among the fruits of their work.

Neither snow nor rain nor the gloom of winter has kept our AFHA AmeriCorps from continuing work on the historic Rothkugel Plantation. Our last outing may have been plagued by cold and rainy weather, but a "dirty-dozen" refused to throw in the towel. We were able to record many new trees, and used GPS in mapping the future interpretive trail. After organizing the data from our last excursion we are set to return to the site this spring. We are seeking volunteers to join us April 4th and 5th in more adventures discovering the history and scientific work of Max Rothkugel.

Erin, the current AmeriCorps member assigned to Elkins Friends of Trees, has helped to create a tree brochure that describes the different responsibilities of Friends of Trees and the Elkins Tree Board. The brochure explains the protocol for planting and removing trees along city streets, and gives a suggested street tree list with examples of trees that will grow well in the city, as well as trees that should be avoided. Current work includes helping to create a website for Friends of Trees and the Tree Board.

Heritage Development

A variety of sub-sponsors have AmeriCorps team members helping from history, to arts, to tourism. While most of them have multiple responsibilities, here are some highlights -- Iva is working with the Randolph County Community Arts Center preparing for the upcoming Smithsonian Roots Music exhibit; Stacy is helping organize the Old Brick Playhouse; Amanda and Linda are helping expand tourism information at the Depot Welcome Center and Randolph County CVB Visitor Center; Joan is developing children's heritage programming in Beverly; Chris is doing archiving for the Upshur County Historical Society; and Kent is developing the Webster County Historical Museum.



AFHA is ON TRAC

Seven West Virginia communities in the AFHA were among the 13 recently chosen to participate in the Governor's ON TRAC program. ON TRAC – an acronym for Organization, Training, Revitalization and Capacity – is a new program created by Main Street West Virginia to help communities boost economic growth with evaluation, education and networking resources. This program provides communities with access to Main Street technical assistance, suitable for small communities without the capacity for full Main Street participation, or for communities working towards Main Street designation.

Belington, Beverly, Elkins, Rowlesburg, Sutton, Romney, and Webster Springs were among the ON TRAC communities selected. AFHA stakeholders are familiar with Elkins, Rowlesburg, Sutton, Romney, and Webster Springs from stakeholders meetings, and have heard about AmeriCorps projects in Elkins, Beverly and Webster Springs.

Full Main Street communities in the AFHA include Kingwood, Philippi, Ronceverte, and White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia and Oakland, Frostburg, and Cumberland in Maryland.

Belington is beginning work with AFHA as AmeriCorps member Claudette is now helping with improvement of the old cemetery located on Laurel Mountain, near the site of the Battle of Laurel Mountain. Preserving this cemetery will involve restoring headstones and logbooks, landscaping, fencing, and more. It is just one of the projects Belington will be working on as an ON TRAC community.

National Service Days for AFHA

Make a Difference Day started early in Elkins. It was Friday October 25th 2008 and the weather was great to be working outdoors. The community came together to restore a pediment and replace missing brick on the old Riverside school.

The Riverside School was an all black school during the time of segregation, offering an excellent education during a time of great suppression.

Some of the original alumni have formed a non-profit organization called the Riverside Alumni Association, and are working to purchase and historically preserve Riverside School. Their goal is to turn the top floor into a museum and archive about the school and the black community, and use the lower level as a mentoring facility for the youth.

All products and materials for the work day, as well as lunch for the volunteers, were donated from local businesses. The local Youth Build students and teachers came and volunteered time and hard work. Saturday the weather was rainy so work moved to the Youth Build shop to work indoors. Youth Build works with at-risk youth working on academics as well as construction. This project offered them a different perspective of construction, historical preservation.

In another Make a Difference Day project, a group of AmeriCorps members and volunteers removed 97 bags of trash from the Pink Helicite Sinkhole on the Monongahela.

For Martin Luther King Jr. Day, AmeriCorps members again offered elementary age children an assortment of diversity awareness games and activities during the day off of school. The kids had fun, participated actively and with lots of smiles. The parents said the kids learned a lot, while they appreciated the good organization and supervision for the activities.

2009 Spring Stakeholders Meeting

March 26 & 27

Webster County

AFHA On The Ground!

Thursday, March 26

Use the Webster Springs Cranberry Flats Driving Tour brochure to explore beautiful forests and charming small towns. Choose your route to the event to let you see as much as you have time for. The brochure is available on www.appalachianforest.us/visit.htm.

- 1:30 pm** Special opening of Cranberry Mountain Nature Center for our group (seasonally closed).
- 2:00 pm** Group walking tour of Cranberry Glades Botanical Area. See the Glades in the early spring.
- 4:00 pm.** Join us in Webster Springs for a walking tour of historic Webster Springs, and a visit to the newly interpreted Webster County Museum. Meet at the Addison Visitor's Bureau shop to start the tour.
- 5:30 pm** Join us for dinner and games at Camp Caesar, as we explore examples of GPS-based tourism activities that AFHA is considering. We will begin with a brief tutorial session then dinner and GPS games at leisure. Be prepared to look for clues and solve riddles! Prizes will be awarded to the winners!

RSVP

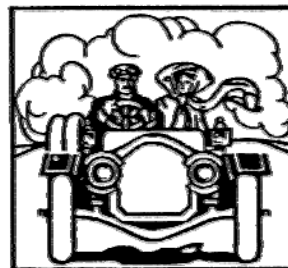
Informal dinner available - RSVP for dinner count!

7:00 pm AFHA Board Meeting

Friday, March 27

At Camp Caesar, Cowen. We will be meeting in the 4H Building—look for signs.

- 8:00 am** GPS games resume at leisure for the "early risers"!
- 9:00 am** GPS team challenge! Gather for a quick team challenge game before the meeting
- 10:00 am** Meeting begins—Intros and updates
- 11:00 am** New tourism trails—examples and discussion
- 12:15 pm** lunch
Welcome — What's Happening in Webster County and beyond
- 1:30 pm** AFHA Volunteer Program
- 2:30 pm** AFHA Council meeting
- 3:00 pm** Adjourn



Directions:

Camp Caesar
4868 Webster Road,
Cowen, WV, 26206

Take I-79 to Exit 57
(Summersville, Beckley)
and follow Rt. 19 South for

10.5 miles. Turn left onto Rt. 82 at Birch River. Follow Rt. 82 for 16 miles to Cowen, turn left on Rt 20 and proceed 5 miles. Camp Caesar is located on the left.

From Webster Springs—take Rt 20 south about 10 miles, watch for Camp Caesar sign on the right.

Lodging:

Camp Caesar—Dormitory Style lodging, \$15, bring your sleeping bag and linens. Make reservations through AFHA

Thursday dinner, Friday morning light snacks, and Friday lunch will be provided. Expenses are partially supported by sponsor - donations to help with costs will be appreciated.

Other options: Mineral Springs Motel
One Spring Street
Webster Springs, WV 26288
(304) 847-5305

Or see www.websterwv.com

SNOW?? *Because we're in the mountains, even late March brings the chance of snow cancellation. We will notify you of changes IF we know you are coming. Or check our website on Thursday morning for any last-minute updates or changes.*

Event sponsorship by Webster County Economic Development Authority. Thanks also to Camp Caesar.

RSVP

Please let us know if you plan to attend, and which day(s), so we have reservations for meal count and overnight at Camp Caesar. Call 304-636-6182 or email afha@appalachianforest.us.

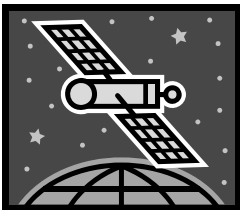
RSVP



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Morgantown, WV 26505

GPS Training for Natural Resource Professionals and Forest Landowners



The WVU Extension Service/
Appalachian Hardwood Center is
offering a Global Positioning System
(GPS) course in collaboration with
Jonathan Kays (University of Mary-
land Natural Resources Extension
Specialist). Workshop participants

will learn how to use GPS handheld receivers, with spe-
cific applications to forestry and logging uses. The ad-
vanced course will show how to integrate a free mapping
program, Terrain Navigator, with GPS applications.
Workshop dates and locations:

Jackson's Mill, WV

March 24th--Introduction to GPS; 8:30am-4pm

March 25th--GPS and Terrain Navigator; 8:30am-4pm

Beckley, WV

April 7th--Introduction to GPS; 8:30am-4pm

April 8th--GPS and Terrain Navigator; 8:30am-4pm

Each day long course is \$35 and includes lunch and train-
ing materials.

For more information contact:

Dan Magill,

Phone: 304-293-9419

E-mail: dmagill@wvu.edu



...Is the periodic newsletter of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Inc., in partnership with West Virginia University Division of Forestry and Extension Services. Our mission is to work locally to conserve, develop, interpret, and promote a regional network of forest-based resources and experiences in the highlands of West Virginia and Maryland for the enjoyment and appreciation of residents and visitors in order to enhance economic and community development.

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