The mission of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is to help preserve, promote and enhance the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality and cultural distinctiveness of the Blue Ridge Parkway and its corridor for future generations. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner of the National Park Service-Blue Ridge Parkway. Spread along all 469 miles of the Parkway, our unique mix of members and volunteers seek to perform an invaluable service to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Members of FRIENDS financially support Parkway work and NPS programs, special projects, and events. FRIENDS Chapters are community-based organizations that empower and coordinate volunteers, projects, and events in their local areas.
The National Park Service’s Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program was created by an act of Congress in 1969. The program grew steadily, and in 2017 more than 315,000 Americans volunteer for their national parks every year. On the Blue Ridge Parkway, VIPs work to preserve the cultural heritage and natural resources of the region through the support of education, training, and resource protection activities. All FRIENDS volunteers are part of the VIP program, and 11,927 hours were logged in administration, interpretation, and maintenance in 2017! FRIENDS also provides funding for any Parkway interpretive and educational needs that are requested, like:

### OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM:

### WHAT WE DO

**HISTORICAL & CULTURAL GARDENS**

Gardens at Mabry Mill, Humpback Rocks Farm and Brinegar Cabin came alive due to our volunteers. Flax, sorghum, tomatoes, squash, bean and traditional herbs were grown. At Johnson Farm, the apple orchard was restored with heirloom apple trees.

**CULTURAL MUSIC SERIES**

The Sunday Afternoon traditional music programs at Humpback Rocks, Mabry Mill, and the Roanoke Mountain Concert Series are loved in their communities and by our VIPS!

**CAMPGROUND SUPPORT & PARKWAY CLEAN-UPS**

Volunteers assist the NPS by helping to get Parkway campgrounds ready for visitors each Spring. Local chapters hold Parkway clean-up events to help maintain the beauty of the Parkway.
OVERVIEW OF THE SAVING PARKWAY VIEWS PROGRAM:

From the beginning, the Blue Ridge Parkway was intended as a visual attraction. As the years passed, the curated vistas and overlooks became less spectacular, threatened by brush and overgrowth of trees. Some sites hadn’t been cleared in 70 years and many of the original views all but disappeared. Vista restoration work was completed in late fall of 2017 by a team of NPS employees. The AIR (Arborist Incident Response) Team program was established in 2011 in response to a recognized need for skilled personnel who could respond to all-risk incidents, resulting in severe tree damage, and provide hazard mitigation and resource protection.

VISTA RESTORATION

The vista restoration work mentioned above has been carried out at 53 overlooks and vistas in Virginia and North Carolina so far. The work will continue in 2018.

LICENSE PLATE FUNDS

Each year the Virginia Blue Ridge Parkway license plate grows in popularity. Every tag purchased provides $15 to support vista restoration on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia. In 2017, our Virginia license plate program brought in $90,045! This is the highest year yet and will fund more of the restoration work that has the Parkway looking its best for visitors from all over the world.
OVERVIEW OF THE PARKWAY FOREVER PROGRAM:

FRIENDS wants to ensure that the Parkway’s trails, overlooks, cemeteries and other assets are top quality for Parkway visitors. Our adoption programs assure regular maintenance and repair to trails and overlooks inside the Parkway boundaries. FRIENDS volunteers are trained by NPS on the proper safety and maintenance procedures for maintaining the park. Work hours and task reports are provided to FRIENDS. These further assist the NPS, by alerting them to safety or accessibility problems.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL
Through the Adopt-A-Trail Program, Blue Ridge Parkway volunteers repair, maintain and construct Parkway trails. Volunteers spent around 2,133 hours maintaining trails!

ADOPT-AN-OVERLOOK
Through the Adopt-An-Overlook Program, volunteers keep overlooks trash-free and pristine for visitors. Volunteers spent over 1530 hours maintaining overlooks!

ADOPT-A-CEMETERY
The Adopt-A-Cemetery Program includes cleaning and maintenance but also grave marker data collection. Volunteers spent almost 148 hours caring for cemeteries!
The Future Stewards program educates and engages today’s youth in conservation, ecology and forest stewardship, fostering long-term commitment and volunteerism for this pristine park and its incredible natural resources. Involving young people, from elementary school to college age, gives them a first hand look at the impact of their work and helps to develop a life long love of the outdoors. FRIENDS also funds environmental education through NPS interpretive programs, supports Student Conservation Association (SCA) work on the Parkway as well as an Alternative Spring Break program that brings in groups of university students for spring and fall projects on the Parkway.

OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE STEWARDS PROGRAMS:

PARKWAY INTERNS
Part of our mission is to preserve the Parkway for future generations. In 2017, FRIENDS funded ___ interns who worked at Parkway headquarters to assist and explore the use of technology for interpretive programs and media.

ALTERNATIVE BREAK
This popular program hosts more students every year from universities throughout the country. They give countless hours and immerse themselves in Appalachian culture.

JUNIOR RANGER SUPPORT
We provide funding for the NPS Junior Ranger program, to cover the costs of materials like the activity sheets and handbooks. Thousands of children visiting participate!
OVERVIEW OF OUR COMMUNITY CHAPTERS:

FRIENDS’ chapter network is the backbone of our volunteer outreach efforts along the Parkway. Most FRIENDS volunteers belong to a Parkway community chapter. Each chapter has work projects approved by the Parkway. Chapter sections -- identified by milepost numbers, the numbering system starts at the north end of the Parkway near the Shenandoah National Park (Milepost 0) and the numbers increase as you travel south ending with 469 near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Working from a workplan created and approved by the NPS and FRIENDS, our chapters have accomplished projects such as maintaining trails and overlooks, support during the concert series at Humpback Rocks, Roanoke Mountain and Mabry Mill, painting picnic tables and buildings and replacing fire rings at campgrounds. These chapter members also keep a high profile in their communities and work to represent FRIENDS through outreach, volunteer recruitment and general promotion.
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