



# **Chapter Handbook 2020**

*A Leadership Guide*



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## **About FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway**

*FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and an official National Park Service (NPS) partner of the Blue Ridge Parkway.*

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway was organized in 1988 as a membership-based non-profit organization. It was founded when concerned individuals felt that the organization along with its members and volunteers could be a catalyst for ensuring the preservation, conservation and enhancement of the Parkway that brings so many visitors to its bordering communities.

FRIENDS provides hands on stewardship to the National Park Service and provides funds for special Parkway projects. FRIENDS focuses on being the link between those communities and Parkway visitors by engaging the communities to become involved in Parkway projects. We want to connect people to the parkway!

Our mission is to preserve, promote and enhance the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and cultural distinctiveness of the Blue Ridge Parkway and its corridor, including surrounding scenic landscape, thereby preserving this national treasure for future generations.



## FRIENDS Programs

### Supporting our Park:

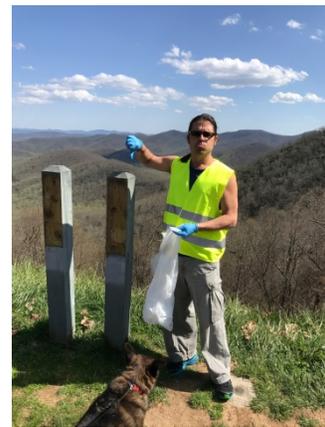
*We provide funding and volunteers to support these NPS programs:*

- Interpretative Internships
- Junior Ranger Programs
- Historical Preservation
- Cultural Music
- Garden & Farm Projects
- Interpretative Services



### Parkway Forever:

- Vista Restoration
- Campground maintenance
- Adopt – A – Trail
- Adopt – A – Overlook
- Adopt - A - Cemetery

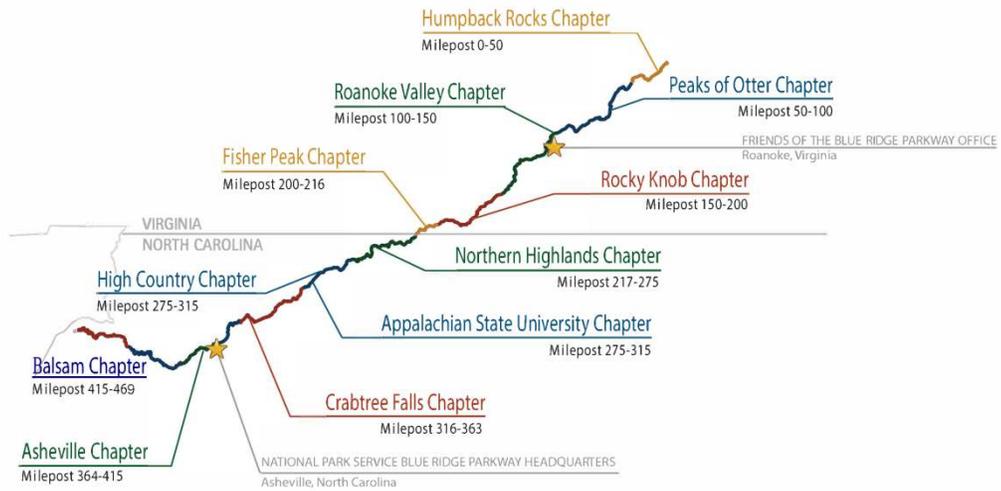


### Youth Outdoor: (Future Stewards)

- Alternative Break Programs
- At Risk Child outreach
- High school and College Service Clubs

### Chapter Network:

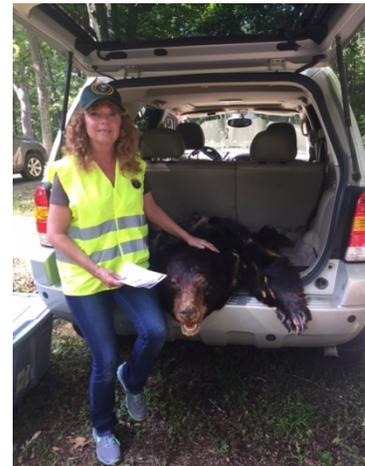
Groups of volunteers that align with the National Park Service to represent their local section of the parkway and their community



To be successful, FRIENDS' programs and projects need to be community-based. Therefore, FRIENDS Chapters are located in border communities along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

*FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway was one of the first FRIENDS groups in the United States to establish chapters\* and today coordinates multiple chapters along the Blue Ridge Parkway.*

\*The Chapters of FRIENDS are chartered by the Board of Directors of FRIENDS pursuant to Article VIII, Section 7 of the Bylaws of FRIENDS, which requires each Chapter created by the Board of Directors to conduct their affairs and programs in conformity and harmony with the Bylaws. The Chapters are not separate entities, but are part of the FRIENDS non-profit organization.





## FRIENDS Overview

Chapters, volunteers and members are the three core components of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway:

- **Chapters** are community-based groups that provide coordinated volunteer opportunities, social events and community outreach to the areas they serve, as part of the FRIENDS organization
- **Volunteers** carry out the work on the parkway. They are usually part of a Chapter, though there are some FRIENDS volunteers that work independently.
- **Members** of FRIENDS financially support our work and NPS programs, special projects and events on the Blue Ridge Parkway through their membership fees and donations. Members may or may not be volunteers.



*FRIENDS extends its reach by working with local and regional governments, common-minded nonprofits, clubs and organizations to achieve its mission and purpose.*

### **FRIENDS Membership: Being Part of the Solution**

To become a member, you simply register and pay a small annual fee. Your dues help FRIENDS provide the materials and equipment needed to complete Parkway projects, as well as, provide for the administration of the FRIENDS organization. As a member, you will be kept informed of Parkway events and projects through emails and periodic mailings. You also gain access to member benefits, such as discounts and specials that support communities and businesses along the Parkway. You are not required to volunteer or be involved with a Chapter, though you are welcome to do so.



## **FRIENDS Volunteers: On the Front Line**

FRIENDS volunteers work on Parkway projects or at Parkway events. As a volunteer, you are encouraged to also become an active participant of your area Chapter. This will enable you to remain aware of the coordinated projects and needs in your local section of the Parkway. As a chapter member, you will have the benefit of meeting and socializing with like-minded people



who offer their time and skills to maintain and preserve the beauty of the Blue Ridge Parkway. A volunteer may also be a FRIENDS member but membership is not required to volunteer.

## **FRIENDS Chapters: The Plan and the Purpose**

Many FRIENDS volunteers belong to a Parkway Community Chapter. Each Chapter has a section of the Parkway for which it is responsible. The section is identified by milepost numbers. Milepost numbers start at the north end of the Parkway near the Shenandoah National Park and increase traveling south, ending with 469 at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

### **FRIENDS Chapters :**

Work with local National Park Service District offices to create and implement an annual Workplan;

- Recruit volunteers;
- Administer programs and projects as part of the FRIENDS approved plan;
- Educate the public on FRIENDS and the Parkway through programs and projects.
- Develop partnerships within the community to create awareness of FRIENDS and the Parkway.
- Youth Outdoor Programs including Alternate Breaks, see [Youth Outdoor Mentor Interest](#)



[Guide](#) and [Alternative Break Booklet](#) for more information.

## CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

### Chapter Steering Committees

- Provides leadership for and supports the growth of the FRIENDS Chapter.
- Works to establish a strong foundation and understanding of Park Service needs in their particular area.
- Meets on a monthly basis and/or as needed to plan for work projects.
- Ensures that the Chapter upholds FRIENDS' mission, works within the FRIENDS and NPS guidelines and adheres to FRIENDS and NPS policies and procedures.
- Works with local NPS district offices to determine the projects and needs within their section of the parkway.
- Implements a project by:
  - Identifying goals.
  - Securing needed volunteers.
  - Setting a realistic timeline to complete the project.
  - Tracking results.





## **Creating a Chapter Workplan**

*It is imperative to work in close collaboration with local NPS staff to determine projects that best support our park.*

1. Chapter Steering Committees and NPS district staff should meet in September to identify goals and evaluate previous year's work, discuss ongoing projects and present new projects for the future.
2. Chapters, along with NPS staff, submit projects and associated costs to both the FRIENDS Office and the National Park Service through an online [Project Request Form](#) supplied by the National Park Service.
3. Once the requests are submitted, they are reviewed by the FRIENDS Office and Parkway leadership and a complete work plan with funding requests is sent to the FRIENDS Board for review and approval.
4. Once approved by the FRIENDS Board, a complete Annual Work Plan will be sent to the leadership of each Chapter.
5. If additional projects are identified throughout the year, the chapter can fill out the [Project Request Form](#) and submit it the FRIENDS office.

## **Steering Committee Key Roles and Responsibilities**

*Chapter Chairs/Co-Chairs play an essential role in the success of FRIENDS, the Chapter and the projects they jointly support. Without the coordination of volunteers and the many other activities conducted by each Chapter, FRIENDS could not fulfill its purpose.*

*Note: Since each chapter is unique, some roles may be combined and other roles may be added.*

- Chair or Co-Chairs
- Program & Volunteer Coordinator
- Marketing & Communications Coordinator
- Social Coordinator
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Other leadership roles as needed

**It is highly recommended that Chapter Steering committee members be FRIENDS**



**members so that they are in alignment with the FRIENDS' mission and goals.**

### **Chapter Chair or Co-Chairs**

- Serve as chief liaison to the FRIENDS Office in Roanoke and local NPS District staff.
- Select Chapter members for the Steering Committee and provide contacts to the FRIENDS Office for approval.
- Maintain a Chapter roster/contact list.
- Ensure that completed Volunteer Service Agreements (VSA) are forwarded to the FRIENDS Office quarterly.
- Share FRIENDS Office and Chapter information to Chapter members via e-mail, etc.
- Hold Steering Committee and Chapter meetings monthly (or as needed) at a convenient time for volunteers.
- Work with FRIENDS Office staff to ensure all financial policies, media protocols, event planning and interfaces with local officials and groups are appropriate and within FRIENDS and NPS best practices.
- Consult with the FRIENDS Office to evaluate and designate Chapter projects and determine the roles of the Office and the Chapter in the completion of the project goals.
- Be able to communicate by phone, e-mail and internet.
- Serve as the public face and voice of the Chapter.
- Ensure safety protocols are followed when volunteers use tools and FRIENDS equipment.
- Work with the Chapter Treasurer to verify Chapter financial records and create an annual budget. (Budgets should be based upon each Chapter's Annual Work Plan and social activities for the year.)
- Strive to ensure that all funds and property are safeguarded and used only for the purpose intended and that all remaining funds and all property are returned to FRIENDS. (All funds, tools, and other materials, regardless of source, remain the property of FRIENDS.)

### **Program & Volunteer Coordinator:**

- Promote volunteer opportunities.
- Determine volunteer needs and necessary tools and equipment.
- Identify and recruit volunteers for cleanup days and special projects.



- Meet and thank volunteers.
- Coordinate collection of Volunteer Service Agreements (VSA) from Chapter volunteers on project sites and return them to the FRIENDS office
- Relay any concerns with maintenance activity to the FRIENDS Office.
- Work with FRIENDS volunteers so they understand the procedure for recording volunteer hours with the FRIENDS Office.
- Promote trail, overlook and cemetery adoptions by individuals, families and groups.
- (Optional) Serve as Adopt-A-Trail/Overlook/Cemetery Coordinator. (FRIENDS Office will contact adoptees quarterly to remind volunteers about maintaining their Trail/Overlook/Cemetery and reporting hours.)

**Marketing and  
Communications  
Coordinator**

- Distribute program and project information to volunteers, community and media via means such as website, Facebook, e-Newsletter and e-Blasts. The FRIENDS Office can help as needed.
- Take photos throughout project work and activities of the Chapter.
- Provide photos to the FRIENDS Office for publicity.
- Use social media to:
  - Inform volunteers and the public about upcoming events and projects.
  - Promote Chapter activities.
  - Showcase individual volunteers, projects and the Chapter.
  - Keep it informative, fun and engaging!
  - Remember: You are managing the social media content and brand for the Chapter and FRIENDS. It is critical to avoid things of a political or controversial nature. As an organization, we have to be mindful of our connection to the National Parks Service and the federal government.





### **Social Coordinator**

- Welcome, introduce and inform new volunteers so they feel connected to the Chapter.
- Plan Chapter events to foster relationships and just have fun. Some examples are:
  - Holiday parties
  - Picnics
  - Restaurant nights
  -

*Social activities that are on the Annual Work Plan and approved will receive funding from the FRIENDS Office.*

### **Secretary/Treasurer**

- Record and distribute minutes of meetings and send a copy to the FRIENDS office.
- Work with Chapter Chair to record and maintain financial records.
- Report all funds received and disbursed by the Chapter to the FRIENDS Office, safeguard funds and maintain accurate records.
- Ensure Receipts and Expenses are sent to the FRIENDS Office for reimbursement.

### **(Optional) Fundraising Coordinator**

*Fundraising is not required, but is allowed. Some Chapters take advantage of events in their community where they receive money for volunteering, etc. Chapters should treat fundraising primarily as a social and marketing opportunity for FRIENDS.*

- Identify options to raise local funds with the help of the Steering Committee.
- At least 7 days prior to any fundraising (whether activity or grant request), Chapters should submit a written plan to the Executive Director of FRIENDS for comment and approval.
- Develop and maintain relationships with local businesses and community organizations for possible sponsorships or donations.



***How can the Steering Committee reach out to FRIENDS members in their geographic location?***

*Due to bylaw policy, the FRIENDS Office cannot provide our membership lists directly to the Chapters. However, we can send an email or letter to our membership and volunteers to encourage their involvement in their local Chapter. Responses will be forwarded to the Chapter for appropriate follow-up.*

**Tips for Running Effective Meetings**

- Schedule monthly (or as needed) Chapter meetings at a convenient time and location.
- Provide a sign-in sheet and name tags.
- Collect contact information.
- Develop a meeting agenda--and stick to it!
- Agendas can be e-mailed to volunteers in advance to cut down on printing time and costs.
- Start and end on time.
- Include opportunities for volunteers to socialize before or after the meeting.
- Send minutes to the attendees and the FRIENDS Office as soon as possible.





# FRIENDS AT WORK

## **FRIENDS Equipment**

In order to do the work needed on the Parkway, FRIENDS has acquired various types of equipment, such as trailers, chainsaws, string trimmers, etc. All pieces of equipment should be cared for and inspected regularly to ensure that they are in good condition and ready for the next use. FRIENDS equipment should be stored in a safe and secure location.

**The National Park Service requires certification or NPS training before certain types of equipment can be utilized on the Parkway, such as chainsaws, string trimmers, and other power tools.**

Chapter leadership should understand the requirements, risks and operation of the equipment they allow volunteers to use during projects and ensure compliance with all regulations. The following are some guidelines for equipment and maintenance of that equipment.

- **Trailers (annual visual inspection and maintenance of equipment needed)**
- **Lawn Mowers (NPS Training required)**
- **Leaf or Snow Blowers (NPS Training required)**
- **Chainsaws (NPS Certification required; every 3 years)**
- **Weed Eaters/String Trimmers (NPS Training required)**
- **Flagging (Approved NPS Training through 3<sup>rd</sup> party)**

## **Important Documents**

1. [Chapter Equipment Inventory](#): This form should be used at the beginning of the season to take inventory of all FRIENDS equipment available to chapters. A copy of this form should be sent to the FRIENDS home office. If any replacement or repairs need to be made to the equipment, please inform the staff at FRIENDS.

2. [Chapter Equipment Sign Out](#): This form can be used by the Chapters to track FRIENDS equipment if individuals have access to equipment storage. This will help track the tools and equipment.

3. [Equipment Maintenance Schedule](#): This contains useful information about maintaining the equipment



available to the chapters.

### **Training Opportunities**

Chapters should work with their local NPS district offices to schedule training. If additional or specialized training is needed, please contact the FRIENDS office.

## **CHAPTER SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS OFFICE**

*Beyond the administrative work of a non-profit, including reporting to the IRS and the Board, the FRIENDS Office provides the Chapter support where needed, including:*

- Training and support for chapter leadership.
- Publicizing the Chapter and its activities with social media posts, press releases, newsletter stories, website articles and eBlasts.
- Assisting the Chapters in recruiting new members and volunteers for projects.
- Recording volunteer hours and required Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) forms from the Chapters.
- Providing membership information to assist the Chapters.
- Maintaining each Chapter Account Statement (which is provided to Chapters monthly).
- Maintaining a listserv for Chapter Chairs (Chapters@FRIENDSBRP.org) to facilitate communication with one another.
- Updating the FRIENDS website and social media pages with Chapter projects and announcements.
- Providing Facebook setup for the Chapter, if needed.



## **Volunteer Recognition Events**

- FRIENDS sponsors a *Parkway-wide volunteer recognition event* organized by the Blue Ridge Parkway District Interpretive Specialists and Asheville Headquarters.
- *Chapter Volunteer Recognition and Parkway Staff Appreciation Lunch*: FRIENDS will sponsor a Chapter volunteer recognition and NPS appreciation event once a year. Funding for this event must be requested on the Annual Work Plan and approved. The Chapter Steering Committee or Social Coordinator will help organize the event for the volunteers and Parkway seasonal workers, along with Interpretive, Law Enforcement and Maintenance NPS staff.

## **CALENDAR REMINDER**

*FRIENDS Chapters stay in touch through monthly Chapter conference calls with the FRIENDS Office and a National Park Service representative. Calls are the last Tuesday of each month.*

*Marketing Assistance available from the FRIENDS Office includes:*

- Business Cards. Contact the FRIENDS Office if business cards are needed.
- Chapter Event eBlasts: On the Chapter's behalf, the FRIENDS Office can send out e-Blast reminders for your Chapter's upcoming events. This is an effective way to increase volunteer turn out. The Office would need:
  - Event information (including date, time, location, etc.),
  - Photos for inclusion in the e-Blast (or the FRIENDS Office can supply photos if needed)
  - The geographic area you would like to target with the e-Blast.
- Chapter Rack Cards: The FRIENDS Office will create Chapter rack cards from information provided by Chapters to help recruit new volunteers and members. These two-sided cards contain general Chapter information along with contact information and can be placed at Visitor Centers, distributed at festivals and events and mailed to FRIENDS members and volunteers in the area.





# FRIENDS POLICY

## **Other Important Notes, Policies and Procedures:**

All Parkway volunteers MUST have a [VSA](#) (Volunteer Service Agreement) completed and signed prior to volunteering on the Parkway. The VSA includes a photo release for Parkway related activities. This form can be found on our website and the volunteer database, Better Impact, found at [www.myvolunteerpage.com](http://www.myvolunteerpage.com) . For group activities involving adults 18 and older, you can use the [VSA Group Form](#) (OF301b).

**A FRIENDS volunteer or NPS Staff must be on site during projects or events on Parkway land.** This is especially important when you are working on a project with a partner group.

**If a volunteer is injured while volunteering in the Park**, the first action is to call 911 and perform lifesaving first aid as needed. As soon as possible, the incident needs to be reported to the NPS supervisor or Project contact. That person will enter the accident information into an agency wide system called SMIS (Safety Management Information System). If the volunteer decides they want to make a workers compensation claim, that incident/accident *must* be in the SMIS system. **Any injury to persons or property** during any activity of a Chapter must be reported immediately to the FRIENDS Executive Director.

**Confidentiality** is important for all members, volunteers and employees of FRIENDS! Confidential information includes all financial and organizational information, communications and documents of FRIENDS and the Chapters not otherwise in the public domain. *No one should disclose in any manner, except as may be required by law or misuse in any way any Confidential Information.*

**No member, volunteer or employee should make or encourage disparaging comments** that may be considered derogatory or detrimental about FRIENDS, the National Park Service, any Chapter, employee, member or volunteer or any other person.

***Remember, we are a team and our focus should be on fulfilling our mission!***

**We must all do our best to comply** with all FRIENDS policies, all applicable federal, state and local laws, the provisions of the agreement between FRIENDS and the National Park Service, and with



FRIENDS bylaws and policies.

**FRIENDS volunteers who work one on one with children** leading hikes, hosting interpretative programs, and interacting with children are required to have a background check. Please contact the FRIENDS office to begin the process.

### ***Smoking, Alcohol, and Drug Use Policy***

- Smoking is prohibited inside the FRIENDS and Parkway offices and at all inside event locations. Please find discrete outdoor designated smoking areas to smoke and extinguish and dispose of butts in a trash receptacle.
- Alcohol shall not be consumed or possessed while volunteering unless it is at the exception of a specific event. Volunteers who violate this policy are subject to immediate dismissal.
- Any volunteer who brings, possesses, is under the influence of, uses, transfers, sells, or attempts to sell on/at a FRIENDS or Parkway property or while at a FRIENDS event, at any time, any form of narcotic, drug, or hallucinogen, except the use of prescribed drugs under the direction of a physician, is subject to immediate dismissal.

### ***Sexual Harassment Policy***

- It is a FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway policy that all employees and volunteers have a right to work in an environment free from any type of discrimination, including freedom from sexual harassment.
- Our policy statement on this subject is as follows: FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway prohibits sexual harassment of employees or volunteers in any form. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Volunteers subjected to acts of sexual harassment should inform their chapter contact or FRIENDS office. Complaints will be reviewed impartially and resolved promptly.

**It should be remembered that volunteer commitment is by the mutual consent of the volunteer and FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway.** Either the volunteer or FRIENDS can terminate the relationship at will. When the relationship between the FRIENDS and a volunteer ends due to a disciplinary process, all FRIENDS property must be returned to the chapter representative or FRIENDS office.



**Any conduct unbecoming a FRIEND** should immediately be reported to the Executive Director of FRIENDS. Such conduct might include lying, stealing, negligence, threatening behavior, sexual harassment or any other behavior that causes harm or sheds a negative light on the important work we are doing.

[The FRIENDS Photo Release Form](#) should be used for FRIENDS activities not on the Parkway; these would include social events and chapter events.

### **Communication Policy**

Chapters are vital to the success of FRIENDS and the National Park Service; therefore, communication between Chapters and the administrative FRIENDS Office is very important.

Rather than having information flowing into the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway Asheville Headquarters from all our Chapters individually, communication should be directed through the FRIENDS Office.

**Materials for public distribution, press releases and requests for information should be forwarded to the FRIENDS Office:**

[communications@FRIENDSBRP.org](mailto:communications@FRIENDSBRP.org) prior to distribution. FRIENDS Staff will work with the appropriate NPS Parkway personnel to ensure information is correct and within NPS communication standards.



*Chapters can and should communicate with their local NPS staff directly.*

Chapters should communicate certain information to the FRIENDS Office regularly (quarterly):

- **Volunteer hours.**
- **Meeting minutes (Chapter & Steering Committee).**
- **Upcoming projects and activities so the FRIENDS Office can help with these efforts...they can be promoted in advance through press releases, social media, etc.**
- **Success stories and pictures of recently accomplished projects and activities so they can be shared in communications.**



- **Completed NPS Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) forms for new volunteers so FRIENDS Office can maintain accurate records and comply with NPS rules.**
- **Requests to meet with NPS Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters Staff.**

Note: Reporting such information helps FRIENDS and the National Park Service provide a clearer picture of the overall volunteer efforts on the Parkway. The information is also a necessary part of our annual financial documents and reporting.

## **FRIENDS FUNDS**

**Fundraising:** FRIENDS Chapters are able--but not required--to raise funds. Since Chapters are not their own non-profit entities, all monies are sent to the FRIENDS Office to be held for approved expenses related to Chapter's or district. If the chapter wants to hold a fundraiser, please submit a [Chapter Fundraising Form](#).

The FRIENDS Office can assist with fundraising efforts. If Chapters have ideas for local campaigns contact the Office so staff can help.



**Virginia Blue Ridge Parkway license plates help fund our organization and efforts on the Parkway. NOTE: North Carolina license plates help fund the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, a Parkway Partner of the National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway.**

### **Chapter Funds & Credit Cards**

*Why can't Chapters have their own bank accounts? Since Chapters are not their own non-profit entities, all monies are sent to the FRIENDS Office to ensure compliance with our 501(c)3 status.*

The funds obtained by each Chapter through fundraising events and initiatives will be tracked by the FRIENDS Office. The funds will be directed towards accomplishing projects and needs chosen from each Chapter's Annual Work Plan after being approved by the Park and FRIENDS Office. Any transaction exceeding \$500 needs approval from the Executive Director.



*At the end of each fiscal year, all funds in the Chapter's accounts  
are carried over to the next fiscal year.*

FRIENDS may issue a credit card to the Chapter Chair for purchases directly relating to the Annual Work Plan. If the Chapter Chair needs to make a purchase for something that does not directly relate to the Work Plan, but that is still considered a legitimate FRIENDS expense, the Chair should call or email the FRIENDS Office for approval *before* the transaction is made. Once approved the Chapter should submit a [Chapter Expense/Reimbursement Form](#) for non work plan related expenses and purchases made without a Chapter credit card.

At times, Chapters have used Chapter funds to help support a local district maintenance or interpretive need such as the replacement of a broken piece of equipment or materials for an interpretive program. The [Chapter NPS Gift Policy](#) defines the procedures that must be followed before making such purchases.

#### **Monthly Credit Card Statement Reconciliation Process:**

- At the end of the month, the bookkeeper will email the Chapter a copy of the credit card statement with a blank Credit Card Detail Form.
- Within 7-10 days, the Chapter Chair should fill out the form, attach credit card receipts, and send them to the bookkeeper so the bill can be paid and the expenses recorded accurately.
- The Chapter's account will be updated accordingly with a copy emailed back to the Chapter for their records.



## Meet Our Chapters

### *Humpback Rocks, MP 0-50*

Formed in 2015, this Chapter's service area includes the *Humpback Rocks Visitor Center and Farm*, *Whetstone Ridge*, and *Wigwam Falls*. Significant projects include overlook adoptions, viewshed restoration, trail maintenance, cemetery adoptions, historic site restoration and the support of summer traditional mountain music at the farm.

*The Humpback Rocks Chapter was the 2016 Ridge District VIP winner.*

### *Peaks of Otter, MP 50-100*

This Chapter's service areas include *Otter Creek Campground*, *James River Visitor Center*, *Peaks of Otter Campground*, *Johnson Farm* and *Abbott Lake and Trail*. Significant projects are campground cleanups, restoration projects, Johnson Farm historic site restoration, trails, overlooks, cemeteries, on-Parkway donation boxes and participation at area festivals.

### *Roanoke Valley, MP 100-150*

This Chapter stays active on this urban stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Activities include trail, overlook, cemetery and picnic area maintenance, litter patrol, sign painting and graffiti removal, citizen science projects, and community outreach. By hosting such community events like **hikes, youth – organized cleanups and other hands-on learning activities** volunteers teach environmental stewardship to youth. This Chapter hosts a group of students from Boston University for Alternative Break. The Chapter also is a big supporter of the "Music on the Mountain" concert series and goes to area festivals to recruit volunteers. To grow the Chapter, they participate in networking socials and potluck dinners to fortify camaraderie and extend volunteer appreciation.



### ***Rocky Knob, MP 150-200***

This Chapter's service area includes the ***Rocky Knob Campground*** and picnic areas, ***Mabry Mill***, ***Smart View*** areas and ***Groundhog Mountain*** picnic area. The Chapter supports the Sunday Mabry Mill music series and participates in area festivals. Volunteers from this area have been working hard painting and cleaning Parkway signs and recently finished painting and installing a new floor at the fire-tower.

### ***Fisher Peak, MP 200-216***

Formed in 2004, this Chapter covers the mileposts closest to the VA/ NC border and the towns of Galax and Hillsville. The service area includes the ***Blue Ridge Music Center*** and trails, overlooks, cemeteries, and on-Parkway donation boxes. Semi-annually, this Chapter hosts students from the **University of Notre Dame** for Alternative Breaks. The students complete Parkway and community projects. New leadership revitalized this Chapter in 2016 with the help of four new steering committee members, and their work has been recognized in local publications. They have made important community connections and help out on and off the Parkway.

### ***Northern Highlands, MP 217-275***

This chapter was formed in the spring of 2011. The region begins at the North Carolina/Virginia state line and goes south to Deep Gap. Parks within the chapter's region include **Cumberland Knob, Doughton Park, and E.B. Jeffress Park**. That means three picnic grounds, an RV campground, a tent campground, 23 overlooks, 18 trails, over 17 historic cemeteries, and numerous intersections. The chapter hosts college groups from Roanoke College, Virginia Tech, and Notre Dame for Alternative Breaks. Other chapter projects include an annual spring clean-up day at Cumberland Knob and Doughton Park; planning, plowing, planting, tending, and harvesting Brinegar Cabin Garden each year; help plan and implement Brinegar Day in early September; attending local festivals and farmers' markets in Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes Counties; cleaning and painting Parkway signs and mile markers; annually celebrate volunteers and Parkway employees with a luncheon; and other projects that arise each year. In 2012 and 2017 this chapter received the Partner Volunteers of the Year award; and in 2016, Brinegar Cabin Garden volunteers were awarded the VIP Volunteers of the Year for the district.



### ***High Country, MP 275-316***

Formed in June of 2010, this Chapter covers the communities of Boone, Linville and Blowing Rock, NC. The service area includes *Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, Julian Price Memorial Park, Linn Cove Viaduct*, trails, overlooks and cemeteries. The Chapter participates at local events and festivals, and one of their major projects has been viewshed tree plantings. They have engaged volunteers of all ages and planted over **2,000** trees to buffer development in their area.

### ***Crabtree Falls, MP 316-363***

This newest Chapter of the FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is focused on trail maintenance; overlook cleanup and supporting the National Park Service mission. Service areas include *Linville Falls* and *Crabtree Falls* with camping and picnic areas at each location. This chapter is a partner of NC High Peaks Trail Association, which is one of the maintaining clubs for North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail that parallels the parkway for much of its length in NC. The Chapter also coordinates our activities with FRIENDS of Mount Mitchell State Park, one of the premier destinations along the Parkway.

### ***Asheville, MP 364-415***

Asheville and the Parkway have been inextricably connected since the Parkway's inception. Each brings something special to the other, and together they are a perfect blend of culture and scenery. The Asheville Chapter of FRIENDS, aware of this unique relationship, works hard to ensure the Parkway between *Craggy Gardens* and *Pisgah* is kept in the best condition possible for both visitors and locals. Litter collection, campground and overlook maintenance, planting of native wildflowers at the Visitor Center, and painting mile markers are just some of the ways this Chapter's fantastic volunteers ensure that visitors enjoy a beautiful and scenic drive.



## **APPENDICES**

- Chapter Expense and Reimbursement
- Equipment Check Out
- Equipment Maintenance Schedule
- Chapter Equipment Inventory
- Photo Release Form
- Youth Outdoor Mentor Interest Guide
- Alternative Break Booklet
- Chapter NPS Gift Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Chapter Project Form
- VSA (Volunteer Service Agreement) Individuals
- VSA Group
- The Chapter Fundraising Form