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## 2020 Season Preparation: It starts in the off-season

As the saying goes...

**"Champions are made in the off-season"**

This month we tackle housekeeping items to get ready for the busy season.

**Please read the section below to learn about updating your Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) form.**

We also want to share with you the year-end report from the **NPS Camera Trap Project**. FRIENDS has a few volunteers helping place and retrieve the cameras. It's always fascinating to see what they capture so take the time to click the button to view the "highlight reel".

Thank you for all you do!  
All of us at FRIENDS

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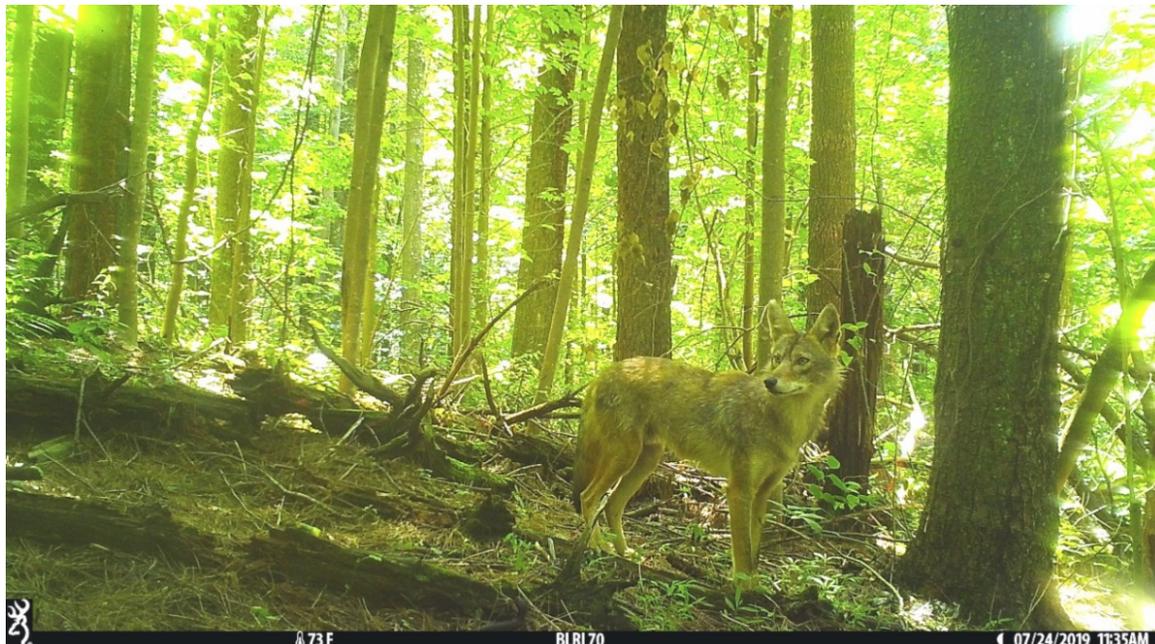
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## News from the Parkway

### 2019 Camera Trap Project Update

The Parkway travels through the heart of the southern Appalachians--one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet. As a result, the Parkway forms a unique transect from which to study biodiversity and the role and impact people have on the

region's wildlife.



Through the use of "camera traps" park biologists hope to study not only what animals call the Parkway home, but the role that humans play in influencing wildlife along the corridor. The cameras will hopefully give us a clearer picture of the health of the southern Appalachian ecosystems and habitats along the Parkway.

Cameras were set out between May and October at predetermined locations along the Blue Ridge Parkway at half-mile intervals using Blue Ridge Parkway mile-posts. Seventeen (17) camera traps were located at existing NatureServe sites--previously established as part of the Parkway's Inventory & Monitoring Program. Forty-five (45) camera traps were located at sites identified by Resource Management Staff. Volunteers were recruited through the Virginia Master Naturalist Pro-gram, the Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation.

You can view the full report written by **Tom Davis, Parkway Biologist**, and see the images captured on the camera traps by clicking the buttons:

National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway  
**[Full 2019 Camera Trap Project Update Report](#)**

**Blue Ridge Parkway Wildlife Camera Trap Photos**

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## **Safety First: Important Volunteer Service Agreement Form Process Update**

**Volunteer Service Agreements (VSA) need to be updated annually. If your current VSA on file is dated prior to November 1, 2019, you'll need to submit a new one.**

**Why is the VSA important?** It is required paperwork to volunteer on the Parkway and protects you if you get injured while volunteering. [Click here to download the VSA Form](#)

**This looks new. What do I do with Box 23?** One of the required boxes highlighted in yellow is Box 23. Read the five [Volunteer Position Descriptions](#) to determine what type

of work you'll be doing as a Parkway volunteer:

- [Trail, Overlook and Cemetery Volunteer](#)
- [Resource Management Volunteer](#)
- [Maintenance Repair Volunteer](#)
- [Interpretive Volunteer](#)
- [Facility Grounds Keeping & Landscape](#)

Enter the Position Description Title(s) that apply to you in Box 23.

**How do return the completed VSA form:**

1. Mail it to PO Box 20986, Roanoke, VA 24018
2. Scan and email it to [staff@friendsbrp.org](mailto:staff@friendsbrp.org)
3. Give it to your FRIENDS Chapter Chair

The VSA Form and the Position Descriptions are on the FRIENDS website in the **Resource Center** and on the **Position Description page**:

## FRIENDS Website: Volunteer Position Descriptions

### Chapter News Briefs

#### Peaks of Otter Chapter

Joe Robinson has stepped down as the Peaks of Otter Chapter Chair. Joe has done a great job for the past year and we're grateful for his leadership.

If you live in the Peaks of Otter area and are interested in the open position (see info below), please contact the office at 540-772-2992 or email [staff@friendsbrp.org](mailto:staff@friendsbrp.org).

#### Chapter Chair:

**The Peaks of Otter Chapter of Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway** is looking for a new leader to work closely with NPS staff to ensure the Peaks of Otter area of the Parkway is the preserved, protected and enhanced.

#### This position requires:

- Working closely with NPS to identify volunteer projects
- Communicating effectively with chapter members

#### Description of Activities:

- Working closely with Friends Home Office and communicating with NPS staff and the local chapter
- Building a Steering Committee of like-minded volunteers who want to serve the

park.

Chapter leads set the tone for the chapter. You are not required to hold monthly meetings but can if desired. You can build your steering committee based on activities the chapter is interested in.

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## Roanoke Chapter

The **Roanoke Chapter** has been busy beautifying the Parkway from MP 100 to MP 122. Three workdays are on the calendar this month with crews working hard and having fun together. So far the weather has cooperated for 2 out of the 3. Fingers are crossed for another good day to complete the leap-day beautification!

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## Fisher Peak Chapter

The winter is typically slow but with some nice afternoon temperatures the **Fisher Peak Chapter** has been able to get some work done.

- They performed general trail maintenance such as removing fallen limbs, cleaning water drainages, and removing trash on the 2 trails at the Music Center that the chapter has adopted. People tend to continue hiking during the milder winter weather, so we are still seeing evidence of usage.
- At the request of the Parkway's natural resources department, the chapter deployed a wildlife camera in December and again in January to monitor winter activities.
- Several chapter volunteers assisted another group of trail adopters with several projects. One project required repairing a section of tread damaged by water runoff. Another involved installing a stretch of puncheon in an area of trail that is often wet and difficult to drain.



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## Asheville Chapter

Earlier this month, the **FRIENDS Asheville Chapter** had their first power tool training led

by **Steve Estep**. Attendees were chapter members **Bill Rothwell, Victor Harabin, and Skip Capone**.

Steve worked extensively for months with National Park Service maintenance rangers to prepare and create the FRIENDS Train the Trainer program. His training to be a volunteer trainer mirrored that of a seasonal park staff member. This program will help more volunteers to receive the power tool training they need to work on the parkway. He plans to offer a few more training opportunities, and is helping the newly formed **Balsam Chapter** get their own program going. FRIENDS hopes to expand the Train the Trainer program throughout the parkway!

That overgrown vegetation in the campground does not stand a chance now!





## Volunteers by the Numbers

Time frame: National Park Service Fiscal Year  
October 2019 - September 2020

### Volunteers with 50 + Hours

We congratulate the following volunteers:

**Aubrey Arrington**

**George Blonar**

**Ken Carpenter**

**Bob Johnson**

**Pete Lascell**

**Tanya Poole**

**Carol Whiteside**

**Libby Wilcox**

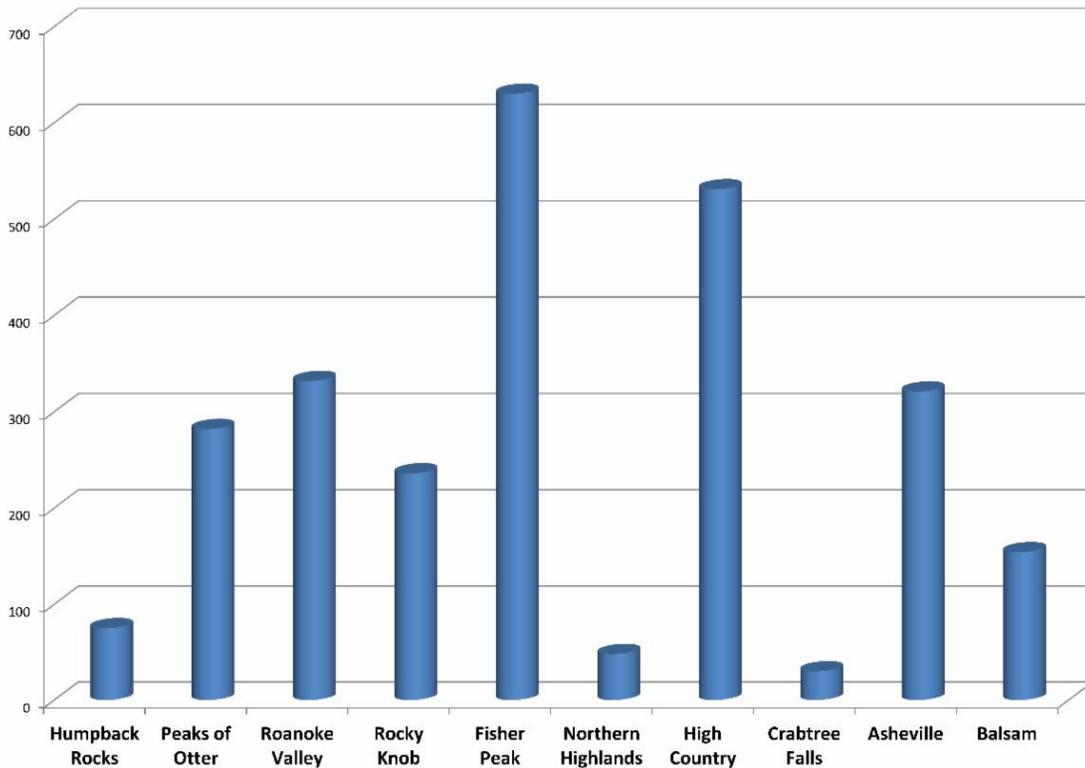
Your name next?

Keep reporting your hours!

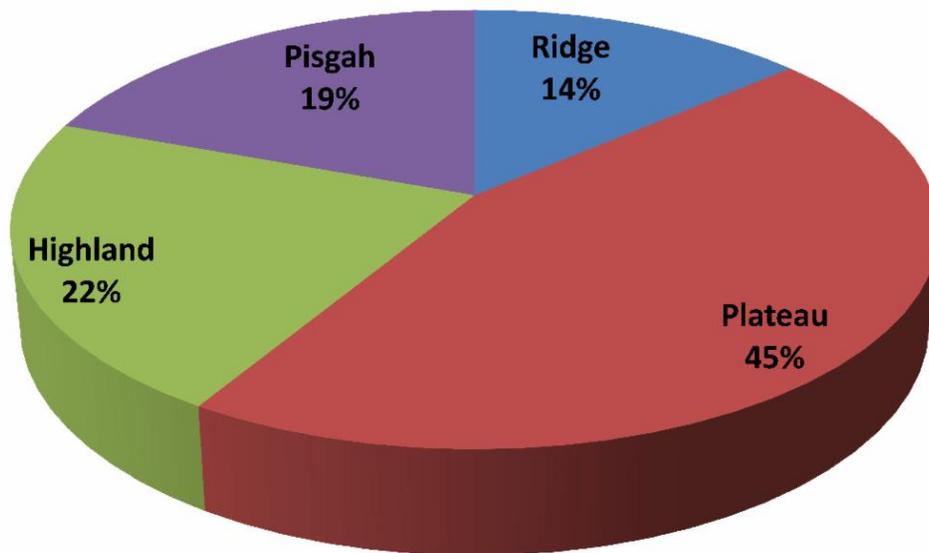
[Report Volunteer Hours](#)

[Volunteer Hours by Group](#)

## Volunteer Hours by Chapter



## % of Volunteer Hours by District



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Have you been out on the Parkway working?

Do you have hours to report?

- Email them to: [staff@friendsbrp.org](mailto:staff@friendsbrp.org)
- Mail them to: PO Box 20986, Roanoke, VA 24018

- Or click the button below to send them through the Google form

**NOTE:** If you are part of a chapter, check with your chapter chair about how to enter your hours. They may be sending them in for you.

[Report Volunteer Hours](#)

## Volunteer Incentive Program

FRIENDS has a volunteer incentive program to recognize the outstanding work our volunteers do for the love of the Parkway.

Hours Per Calendar Year	Recognition Award
50 hours	A set of Parkway note cards
100 hours	A Parkway print
200 hours	FRIENDS Umbrella
250+ hours	National Park Service Park Pass

Read more about it in the volunteer manual. Click the button below:

[Volunteer Manual](#)

### Wondering what activities to count as volunteer hours?

Review the FRIENDS Volunteer Hour Guidelines to make sure you are getting credit for your hard work!

[FRIENDS Volunteer Hour Guidelines](#)

## Help Wanted

### Volunteers Needed: Adopters for Cemeteries, Overlooks and Trails

[View CEMETERY List](#)

[I'm interested in adopting a CEMETERY!](#)

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[View TRAIL List](#)

[I'm interested in adopting a TRAIL!](#)

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[View OVERLOOK List](#)

[I'm interested in adopting an OVERLOOK!](#)

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"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."  
–Elizabeth Andrew

## Upcoming Events

For a full listing of Parkway events visit the [Parkway Events Calendar](#) or the [FRIENDS Events Calendar](#).

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## Are you a member of FRIENDS?

As a FRIENDS **volunteer**, you give your **TIME** for the love of the park!

But have you ever wondered how the vistas are restored or the demonstration gardens are funded?

Our **members** support the work of NPS staff and FRIENDS volunteers. Every year we create a list of funding requests that we hope to fulfill. **Gifts from our annual members make that happen.**

For \$40 a year you can become a member of FRIENDS and help the park and other volunteers!

[Become a Member](#)

[List of Current FRIENDS Member Benefits](#)

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[Volunteer Resources](#)

Click the links below to quickly access resources:

<a href="#">Volunteer Manual</a>	<a href="#">Report Volunteer Hours</a>	<a href="#">Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) Form</a>
<a href="#">FRIENDS Volunteer Hour Guidelines</a>	<a href="#">VSA Instructions</a>	
<b>Position Descriptions:</b>	<a href="#">Interpretive Volunteer</a>	<a href="#">Maintenance Volunteer</a>
<a href="#">Resource Mgmt Volunteer</a>	<a href="#">Grounds Keeping Volunteer</a>	<a href="#">Trail, Overlook, Cemetery Volunteer</a>

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