

OCTOBER

THE YELLOW VEST

Volunteer E-Newsletter

When FRIENDS Become Family: Remembering Bill Wilkerson, FRIENDS Volunteer



Bill Wilkerson, a long time Blue Ridge Parkway and Roanoke area volunteer, has died in his home of natural causes.

Bill worked with the Roanoke Valley Chapter of the Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway for about a decade, and we last saw him in August at a power tools training course and to celebrate Dale Sheets' birthday at the Roanoke Mountain picnic area. Trail building and repair were his expertise, but he often showed up for our "beautification programs" to clear garbage from the sides of the Parkway.

Bill also worked with the Roanoke Valley Mid Week Crew from 2015-2017 and logged over 350 hours. He worked on such projects as the steps from the parkway to the Roanoke River (Fisherman's Trail), numerous trails at Carvins Cove, Virginia Pine Trail at Mill Mountain, the trail and amphitheater at Benjamin Franklin Middle School, the first leg of the Catawba Greenway, and the Natural Bridge trails. Bill was a Master Naturalist, and there is an interesting article about him. [Click here to read it.](#)

Bill's Memorial/Celebration of Life will be Wednesday October 7th at 2:00 at Hollins Road Church of the Brethren. It will be outside/socially distanced in the pavilion.

Thank you, George Blonar, for writing the tribute, and to the following for information about Bill's life and providing pictures: Liz Belcher, Dale Sheets, and Barbara and Gary Duerk.

Interesting Parkway Sightings

Meeting new FRIENDS at Rocky Knob

Cary Simms, from the Fisher Peak Chapter, drove north for some hiking. He ran into the following:



Rocky Knob Gorge Trail: Seems friendly, but never said a word



Black Ridge Trail: Nice to see a big grin along the way

Fall in Love with the Parkway Again and Again



During the month of October, we are going to share a photo a day on social media to celebrate "Fall on the Parkway".

Do you follow FRIENDS on social media? If not, click the link to find us on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)

Whether you are on social media or not...

Do you, or someone you know, have a photo to share?

Please email them to staff@friendsbrp.org, and we'll post them. To ensure we can give proper credit, please include:

- Photographer's name.
- Location of the photo (milepost, overlook name, etc. is helpful, but not required).
- Any "story behind the photo" that might accompany the shot, which is often just as powerful as the picture.

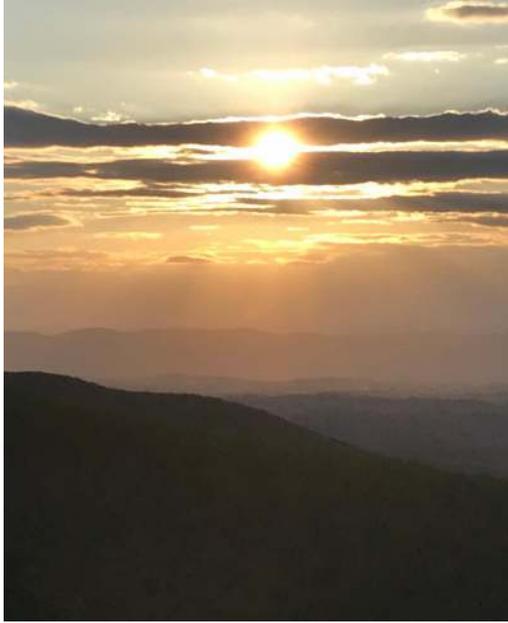
[Email Your Picture](#)

A Post Being Shared this Week from a FRIENDS Volunteer:

Fall in love with Great Valley Overlook MP 99 by Mike Davis

Title: My Oasis in the COVID-19 Desert

To say that 2020 has been a tough year would be the understatement of the millennium! I often visit The Great Valley, Scenic Overlook. It looks different just



about every time I visit depending on the height of the sun in the sky and the weather. But it is always beautiful and inspirational. It is my oasis in these difficult times. I am rarely alone there. Other visitors are careful to keep a safe social distance. Not surprisingly my favorite time of day to visit is sunset. The picnic table is the perfect spot to escape from the stress of the virus!

Chapter Updates



Rocky Knob

To keep hikers safe and on the right path, it was time to remark trails in the Rocky Knob area.

Volunteers from the chapter just completed remarking the 11 mile Rock Castle Gorge Trail. They divided the trail into three-mile increments over four weeks.

Despite it being his day off, Campground Ranger Wayne Bersch (pictured), happily joined the FRIENDS volunteers for their "working" hikes.

Crabtree Falls

Cynthia and Jake Blood from the Crabtree Falls Chapter are often out working on the parkway clearing trails and cleaning overlooks. Great weather and better company prompted a family hike to soak in the wonder of Crabtree Falls.



Asheville

Chapter garden volunteers are in the process of putting the four wildflower gardens to bed for the winter. But first, new wildflowers were put in after they cleared out more weeds. The wood asters and turtle heads are in bloom and looking pretty at the Visitor Center. Next spring more flowers will be planted, but for now they filled in some bare spots and accomplished the first planting in the Memorial Garden redo. Thanks to Gay, Pat, Elka, Sara, Bill, Rose, and Chris for the work.



Balsam

The Balsam Chapter worked on painting the Waterrock Knob Visitor Center and also did trail work on the Richland Balsam Trail this summer.





Volunteers: By the Numbers

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

UPDATE: Volunteer incentives will be extended to December 31, 2020. Keep reporting your hours and close the year with a bang!

Individual Hours	Incentive Item
50 volunteer hours	Set of Parkway Notecards
100 volunteer hours	Parkway 8"x10" Nye Simmons Print
200 volunteer hours	FRIENDS Umbrella
250+ volunteer hours	NPS Park Pass

Volunteers with 50+ Hours

Congratulations to the following volunteers!

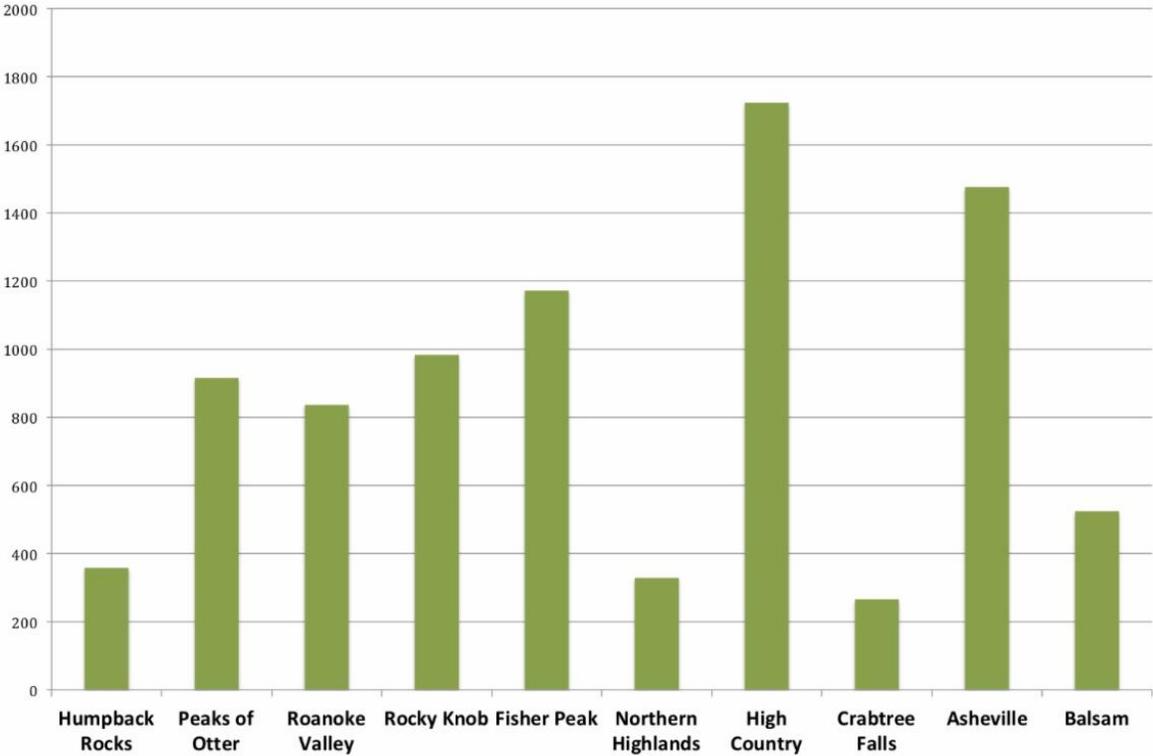
Bill Abbuehl	Skip Capone	Pete Lascell	Michael O'Connor	Tom Tolle
Ross Akin	Julie Carpenter	Thomas Lenehan	Betty Owens	Jane Wallace
Aubrey Arrington	Ken Carpenter	David Lennox	Tanya Poole	Carol Whiteside
Lorene Becker	Drew Daniels	Neal Lipham	Charles Rose	Libby Wilcox
George Blonar	Thomas Dillon	Rusty Mansel	Bill Rothwell	Mark Zeinert
Gene Byrd	Charles Duke	Nancy Midgette	Christine Sashegyi	Your Name Here?
Kevin Byrne	Steve Estep	Ronald Myers	Cary Simms	
Susan Byrne	Bob Johnson	Scott Noe	Timothy Thomas	

Keep reporting your hours. They count!

Report Volunteer Hours

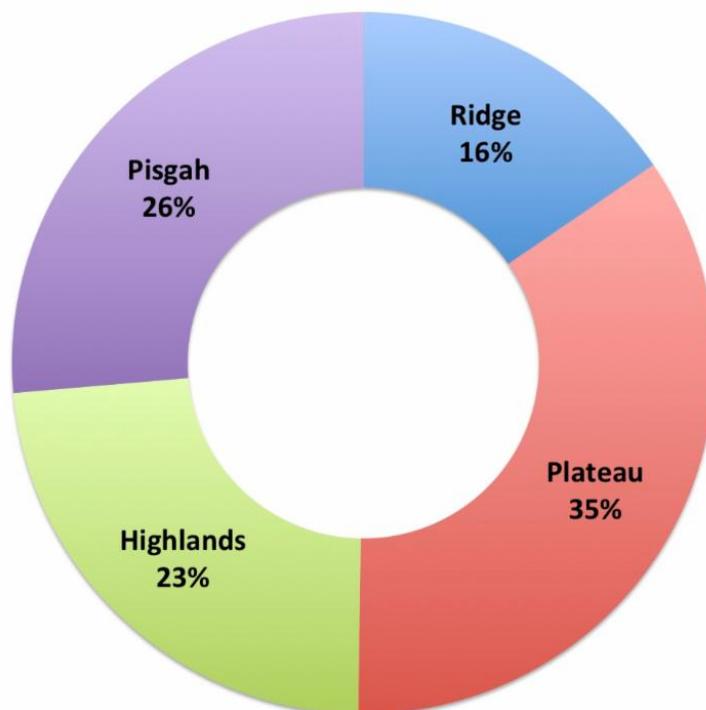
Volunteer Hours by Chapter

Volunteer Hours by Chapter



Volunteer Hours by District

Volunteer Hours by District



Have you been out on the Parkway working? Do you have hours to report?

- Email them to: 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. Your chapter chair may be sending them in for you.

[Report Volunteer Hours](#)

One Click Away: Volunteer Resources & Opportunities

Volunteer Forms & Documents

[Volunteer Service Agreement \(VSA\)](#)

[COVID-19 Job Hazard Analysis \(JHA\)](#)

[VSA Instructions](#)

[VSA Group Form](#)

[Volunteer Manual](#)

[Report Volunteer Hours](#)

Position Descriptions: Read and review to complete your VSA form

[Trail, Overlook &
Cemetery
Volunteer](#)

[Resource
Management
Volunteer](#)

[Maintenance
Repair Volunteer](#)

[Interpretive
Volunteer](#)

[Facility Ground
Keeping &
Landscape
Volunteer](#)

Volunteer Adopter Program Openings

[Overlook List](#)

[Trail List](#)

[Cemetery List](#)

Ways to Support FRIENDS!

Donate

Join or
Renew

Volunteer