

SEPTEMBER

THE YELLOW VEST

Volunteer E-Newsletter

Welcome, Mark Hogsed!



FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway has named Mark Hogsed as its new Executive Director, effective August 3, 2020. Prior to joining FRIENDS, Hogsed, from Forest, Virginia, served as Vice President of Global Programs with World Help, Inc. for 10 years.

"I look forward to leading an organization with such a great history of working with the National Park Service to help protect and promote the Blue Ridge Parkway - a national treasure."

Interesting Parkway Sightings



What do you see? One of our trail adopters shared this amusing story and photo with us. Has anyone else had this experience?

"After spending a volunteer workday performing maintenance on my adopted trails, I often allow my mind to wonder as I make a speedy return to my vehicle in anticipation of a shower and good meal. But on one such return trip, I almost fell as I glanced down to the scene in this photograph.

I began to stumble as I attempted to reposition my footing in order to prevent stepping on what were surely a couple of small snakes in the trail. Only after I corrected my balance and footing did I realize these snakes were actually just young tree roots that had become exposed due to wear on the trail tread. But my heart did leap for a moment!"

If anyone else has an interesting sighting or unique experience, please send it to us at staff@friendsbrp.org.

Safety First



Slippery Decking

For some trail bridges and elevated walkways, rain can mean slippery decking. As wood-decked bridges and walkways age, they can become very slippery just after a rain.

One inexpensive way to prevent accidents in such cases is to apply roof shingles as seen in this photograph. Using leftover shingles from a roof replacement, FRIENDS volunteers reduced the risk of sliding on this bridge which had been weathering for a few years.

The volunteers started by breaking the shingles into an appropriate size. They then laid them out and made some quick measurements to insure an even appearance. One can skip planks based on their width and the average stride of a hiker. The only cost involved was the roofing nails.

If you have any aging decking on your trails and want to try this technique, be sure to discuss it with your NPS maintenance contact to make sure it is an acceptable practice in your area of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Humpback Rocks

- Humpback Rocks has been a popular spot for people to visit during the pandemic. Overlook adopters are out keeping them clean.
- The Bear Patrol volunteers, led by Grant Heggie, are back this season to educate visitors about bear safety.
- The Humpback Rocks Farm was planted a bit later than usual this year because of the pandemic but it's thriving now. Thank you to the garden crew for taking such good care of it. Pictured is Miss Nelson, the scarecrow, ready to welcome visitors and two garden volunteers. Photos provided by Sandy Gallagher.



Peaks of Otter

- Volunteers have been supporting NPS repair work Otter Creek Campground this season so it will be ready for visitors next season.
- FRIENDS member and volunteer Heidi Lang honored her late mother, Elfriede Hasse, by providing memorial funds for lumber to replace seating in the amphitheater at the campground.
- FRIENDS volunteers also are spending time each week tending Johnson Farm. One volunteer witnessed a bear taking a nap in a nearby pear tree! While there was no camera to catch the bear in the tree, Vicki Deppensmith did capture some great pictures of the butterfly activity at the farm recently.



Roanoke Valley

- FRIENDS volunteer and chapter chair George Blonar, a certified sawyer, assisted with removing trees from the road. FRIEND Carol Whiteside, taking the picture, helped clear debris from the road as well.
- Volunteers participated in an equipment safety training session by Drew Daniels to prepare for the season.
- Sundays during the summer you'll normally find Dale Sheets up at the picnic area prepping for the weekly concerts held there. While concerts are not happening on the mountain this season, the chapter met there to spread out and celebrate Dale's birthday.



Rocky Knob



- 15 volunteers cleaned at Rocky Knob Campground, clearing limbs, debris, etc., from the winter.
- Volunteers returned to do the final site cleanup and painting of the re-built picnic tables in preparation for the campground to re-open for the season.
- Firewood is now available for purchase at the Rocky Knob Campground; 31 bundles were sold in the first 8 days! This will be an ongoing fundraiser for the chapter.
- At the Groundhog Mountain Picnic area, all 28 picnic tables, the new gate, and the Fire Tower were painted.
- At Smart View and Rocky Knob, the covered group picnic area stone floors were washed down, (with 60 gallons of water!) and all of the picnic tables painted.
- Trail signs were cleaned and painted at the entry to Rock Castle Gorge trail, the former Civilian Conservation Corp camp, and at Rocky Knob.
- At Thompson Cemetery, MM 176, a new rail fence has been built, replacing an old rotten one; thanks to 4 volunteers and a NPS maintenance employee.
- All of the 23 cemeteries in the Rocky Knob area have been located and adopted by either the family, a church, or our volunteers.
- The mile markers continue to be cleaned and painted as needed and the Parkway welcome sign at Meadows of Dan has been cleaned.
- Trash pick-up continues to be an ongoing, daily occurrence.
- And finally, six volunteers were online for the training for leaf blowers, string trimmers, and lawnmowers!

Fisher Peak

- 3 volunteers attended a Parkway Train-the-Trainer virtual session and are now certified to train chapter volunteers on several types of power tools that are stored in the equipment trailer, and what protective gear is required.
- 3 volunteers cleaned water drains on the MC trails

- Volunteers painted Blue Ridge Music Center paved parking lot lines and handicapped markers
- Built a walkway for a muddy area of the blue trail where water is constantly seeping.
- Worked on hiking trails at the Music Center. Hand cut small trees that had fallen across the trail, removed numerous fallen limbs, and cleaned/re-dug numerous water drains on trail.
- Volunteers finished pulling weeds and mulching all natural areas around the Music Center.
- Assisted the Interpretive department on open days since the Music Center re-opened on July 17. Provided lunch breaks, staffed information booth and provided mountain music instrument demonstrations. They also helped the Interpretive ranger place parking ropes in overflow lots for outdoor concerts.



Northern Highlands



- Several trips were made along our section of the Parkway during the shutdown to check the general condition of the roadway.
- Our overlook and trail adopters and a portion of the Brinegar Garden crew, as well as other interested folks, have gotten back to work and done some cleaning.
- A major clean up of the campground recently took place.
- One two recent occasions volunteers helped out at Bluffs restaurant to help get ready for their reopening. Volunteers helped with a clean up and then returned another day to paint lines in the parking lot.
- Sunday, August 9th, a 5.3 magnitude earthquake hit Sparta.

High Country

- A big project for the High Country volunteers is the Julian Price Campground. They started moving fallen leaves from campsites in late fall and into the winter. Early spring our volunteers again tackled the campsites. After touching base with the Park staff in June when volunteers returned to service, they requested that volunteers

revisit each campsite again to prepare for the summer opening. In all, chapter volunteers worked over 150 hours in the campground and it shows!

- The NPS staff purchased over 30 picnic tables last fall. They anticipated being able to prepare the raw wood benches during the winter months. They were not able to do so and asked for volunteer help. A small team worked several weeks routing the edges, sanding, staining and mounting the bench seats.
- A local news outlet recently covered the chapter, too! Click the green button below to watch the segment.



SPECTRUMLOCALNEWS.COM
Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway
Clean Up The Trails

Watch the Video



Crabtree Falls

- The crew did a workday on the Crabtree Falls loop trail removing several downed trees and building a ramp around a root-ball that took out part of the trail.
- Volunteers have also been clearing the MST where it is on Parkway land.
- Duke has cleared and weed-whacked the Blue Ridge Pinnacle.
- Trail crew work at Crabtree Falls
- All of our overlook adopters have been hard at work since the stay was lifted. The chapter had an unbelievable spring where six overlooks were adopted, including two by businesses in Burnsville, NC, MW Studios, and Appalachian Java!
- This has been a hard season for signs. The chapter found a lot of graffiti and vandalism. Overwhelmingly they have been approached and really thanked for their service.



Asheville

- On June 15th, the chapter had a team at the Pisgah Campground assessing the situation. The next day, work teams were at both the campground and in the flower gardens at the Visitor Center and Headquarters buildings.
- They have had a work crew at the Pisgah Campground one day every week since June 15. Volunteers have rebuilt tent pads, cleared drains, repaired and leveled picnic tables, and trimmed a mountain of brush.
- Very small groups are patrolling the motorway for trash. It really builds up in the Asheville corridor.
- Other teams have been out cleaning adopted overlooks.
- The trail at the Visitor Center is now ready for hikers.
- The gardens at the Visitor Center and Headquarters buildings are beautiful – the garden team has been out four times, pulling weeds and spreading mulch.
- The chapter has a small crew that works to clear branches from the mow-zone so that mowing operations can run efficiently.
- The chapter says their single greatest challenge this summer has been graffiti.
- Volunteers had a training day with NPS staff last month to learn how to remove damaged signs and put up new ones. And we have already put that training to use. We have divided our section of the Parkway into 10 zones, with a different member assigned to patrol each zone regularly to look for more damage.



Balsam

- The Balsam Chapter completed the Train-the-Trainer Safety training earlier this spring with Park Maintenance Staff. Since then, those two volunteers have trained 12 additional people to use power tools and ladders.
- Balsam Chapter volunteers spent a day at Waterrock Knob repairing a section of the visitor center's paneling and painting the building.
- Volunteers also spent half a day at the Richland Balsam Trail weed eating and cutting back brush to open up the trail.
- Volunteers continue to clean up overlooks, including weed eating and mowing when feasible.
- In the next few months, we hope to repair benches, replace fencing at Graveyard Fields, paint over graffiti, replace worn stop and yield signs and mow trails managed by the Parkway.



Volunteers: By the Numbers

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

Volunteers with 50+ Hours

Congratulations to the following volunteers!

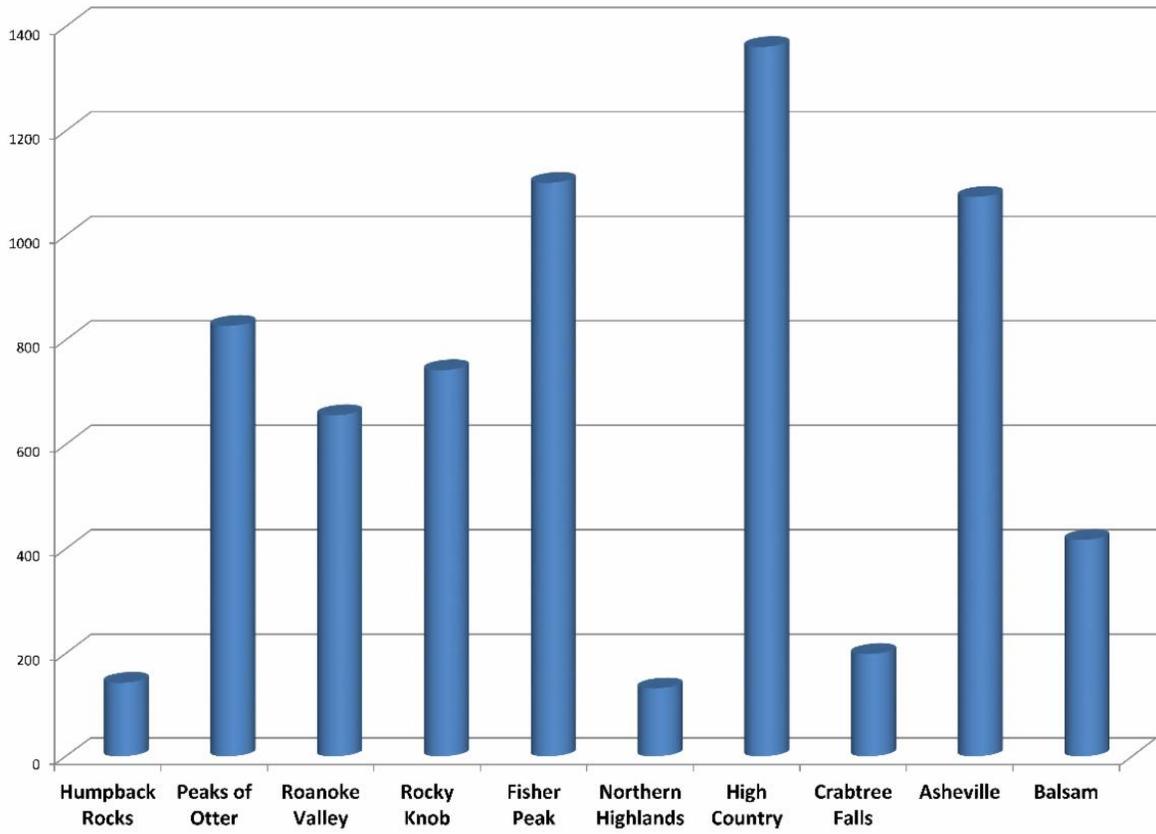
Bill Abbuehl	Susan Byrne	Bob Johnson	Ronald Myers	Timothy Thomas
Ross Akin	Skip Capone	Pete Lascell	Scott Noe	Tom Tolle
Aubrey Arrington	Ken Carpenter	Thomas Lenehan	Michael O'Connor	Carol Whiteside
Lorene Becker	Julie Carpenter	David Lennox	Betty Owens	Libby Wilcox
George Blonar	Drew Daniels	Neal Lipham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

Keep reporting your hours. They count!

[Report Volunteer Hours](#)

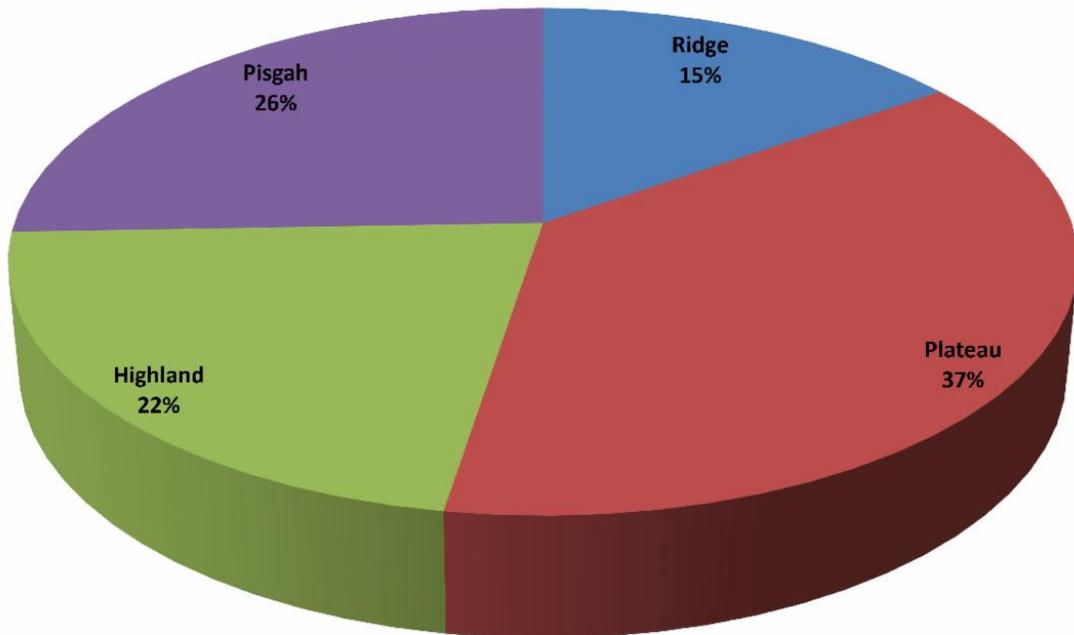
Volunteer Hours by Chapter

Volunteer Hours by Chapter



Volunteer Hours by District

% of 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. They 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!

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