



## FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.



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Dear Phyllis,

This wonderful photo of Mabry Mill in winter was recently submitted to us by Ken Hilton.

[Click here](#) to read about "Reinvesting in the National Parks: Create Jobs and Protect America's Heritage."

Also, read how to lend your voice to the issue of protecting hiking opportunities and natural resources in the National Parks. Get involved! Make a Difference!!

The American Hiking Society and the Partnership for The National Trails System will host Hike the Hill: Trails Advocacy Week 2009 in Washington, DC, February 23rd to 26th. [Click here](#) to learn more.

## Saving Parkway Views

Saving Parkway Views is FRIENDS' signature project. FRIENDS needs adult and youth volunteers to help plant 500 seedlings at Milepost 121 (behind Hammersley auto) on Saturday, March 28 at 10:00 AM. Volunteers should begin arriving between 9:00 AM and 9:45 AM, rain or shine at Clearbrook Elementary School for free shuttle service to the work area. There will be a formal welcome at 10:00 AM, and the planting will end approximately 3:00 PM.



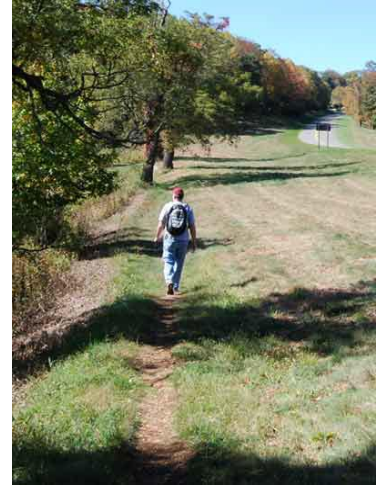
Refreshments, activities and music will be provided. Call us for pre-registration material at 800.228.PARK(7275) or email us at [staff@FriendsBRP.org](mailto:staff@FriendsBRP.org).

## National News

### Help Support the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (PLM)(S.22)

Senate Omnibus Public Land Management Act (S. 22) is an important bill that will protect and recognize some of the most significant hiking opportunities and natural resources in America. Two weeks ago, this bill passed by a comfortable margin in the Senate, but the House will be a greater challenge. In fact, if this legislation receives a single amendment, no matter how apparently well-intentioned, it would be effectively "killed," and years of hard work, compromise, and thousands of miles of trail could suffer. Without making your voice heard, this bill could "die" in the House and never become law.

[Click here](#) to ask your Representative to protect these trails and incredible hiking opportunities and ensure that the PLM's Conservation System will be permanently protected.



In the Trails Forever program, FRIENDS' volunteers repair, maintain and construct Parkway trails. The Parkway has over 100 trails and over 350 miles of trails to be maintained.

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## Local News

### FONSI Issued for Managing Vistas Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel Habitat Along the Blue Ridge Parkway

(Asheville, NC) The National Park Service, Southeast Regional Director has approved the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Vista Management within Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel (CNFS) Habitat. This document records the decision of the National Park Service to provide a long-term management strategy that will best protect and preserve the endangered CNFS while providing for an enjoyable visitor experience of traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway.



The National Park Service has determined that the proposed project will not significantly affect the human environment within the project area; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

The recently approved EA and FONSI are available by visiting the National Park Service's planning website. These documents have also been posted on the Parkway's website. ([Click here](#))

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## Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary News

### ***Make Your Event a Parkway Event***

Become an endorsed event of the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th Anniversary (BRP75) in 2010! Benefits include a listing on the BRP 75th website that is scheduled for spring 2009 launch, inclusion in the official calendar of events, promotion through various marketing strategies, and much more!

To see an update of activities and a report on the January 2009 meetings go to the temporary website, and to learn more about event endorsement, [click here](#). Unveiling of the new official BRP 75th Anniversary website is coming

soon.

### ***BRP75 Community Planning Meetings***

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the upcoming BRP75 Community Planning Meetings, which are being held Feb 23, Feb 24, and Mar 4 in Waynesboro, Roanoke, and Galax respectively. For more information on times and locations of the Community Planning Meetings, [click here](#).

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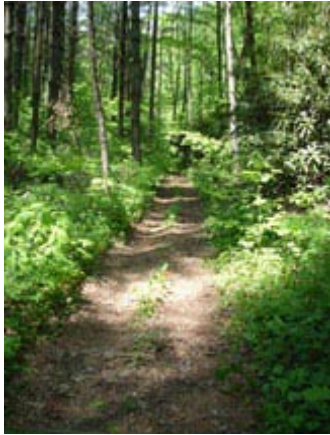
## **Mary Bomar Retires from National Park Service**

Former National Park Service Director Mary Bomar, who spoke to the Southeast Tourism Society's (STS) 2008 meeting in Asheville, N.C., has retired after 25 years of government service. She was the first naturalized citizen to lead the NPS. She's a native of the United Kingdom, and she delighted her STS audience with stories of the irony of her time working at Independence Hall in Boston. The nation has 391 national park units and related cultural and natural heritage programs. The National Parks had more than 275 million visitors in 2007.

"Directors come and go, but the places are timeless--and the hearts of those who care for them are bigger than the 84 million acres in the system," Bomar wrote in a memo to employees. Deputy Director Dan Wenk will serve as acting director until a new NPS director is nominated and confirmed.



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## **538-Acre Tract Adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway Protected**

### ***Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail Included***

Carolina Trust for North Carolina has protected another segment of the Overmountain Victory Trail, as well as wildlife habitat and more than two miles of pristine streams, with the purchase of a 538-acre tract on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Rose Creek property near Spruce Pine has more than a mile of frontage on the Parkway and is visible from The Loops Overlook. It contains about 1.5 miles of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, which traces the route taken by colonial militia to the pivotal battle of Kings Mountain during the American Revolution. [Click here](#) to see map of the property.

[Click here](#) to visit CTNC website to read more details on the Rose Creek project and how our supporters made it possible.

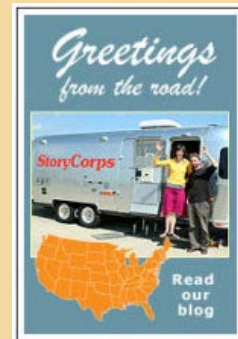
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## **StoryCorps Comes to Asheville, NC**

### ***Get Ready To Tell Your Story***

WCQS-FM 88.1 Radio is hosting the National Public Radio StoryCorps project this spring, when the StoryCorps mobile recording unit that travels around the country collecting stories comes to Asheville March 26 - May 2. The [Blue Ridge National Heritage](#) Area is providing the principal financial support for this exciting project.

NPR's StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind. Since 2003, tens of thousands of everyday people have interviewed family and friends through StoryCorps.



This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our partners and the people of this region to share their stories of the rich heritage and culture of the Blue Ridge. WCQS will be promoting this program and broadcasting the local stories. [Click here](#) for more information.

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## **Blue Ridge Forever Conservation Vision on WLOS-TV**

Tune in to WLOS News 13 Asheville to watch a new series on the Blue Ridge Forever Conservation Vision. The 31-segment series will include a kick-off segment, a segment on each of the 28 focus areas, a segment on farmland, and a wrap-up segment. Each segment will be 2 to 2.5 minutes long and will air during the evening news each Friday between 5:00 and 6:30 PM. The first segment aired January 16, 2009 and the last segment is expected to air August 7. The series will also be available for viewing on News 13's website ([Click here](#) to go to the website).

[Click here](#) to find out more about *The Conservation Vision*. Ten local and regional land trusts and three national conservation organizations are joined in the Blue Ridge Forever campaign to respond to Western North Carolina's urgent land protection needs. The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is responsible for seven of the twenty-eight focus areas identified by Blue Ridge

Forever.

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Photo: Art Weekley and his group stop along the Parkway

### **469-Mile Award Winner Story *Art Weekley of Rhode Island Bikes the Parkway with Compatriots***

"I traveled the length of the Parkway by bicycle on three occasions, 1996, 1997 and 1998. In each instance, I rode with a group of friends organized by Sam Jernigan ([click here](#) for Sam's story). Most of the participants in our group were from Rhode Island and at our age we now refer to ourselves as the "Rhody Wrinkled Riders." We were completely self-contained, camping on the Parkway each night except the first night. Since we did the ride

south to north each time, and there was no suitable campground within rideable distance that day, we would stay at the private campground at Moonshine Creek, 30 or so miles from the southern terminus. The beginning of each trip was timed for the opening day of the Parkway, May 1st. We spent 9 days to complete the ride each time with our average total riding time each year about 57 hours.

Sam did the ride 12 times!! On the occasion of his 10th trip one of the other riders commented that he could understand why someone would enjoy the challenge of the ride the first time and he could understand why someone would enjoy the significance of the ride the tenth time, but he couldn't imagine why anyone would do it the second time!!!

The Parkway is surely an American treasure and while it's a very difficult bicycle ride, it has left me with wonderful memories!! And special thanks to FRIENDS for all of your efforts."

Art Weekley  
Middletown RI  
[ARTWEEK@COX.NET](mailto:ARTWEEK@COX.NET)

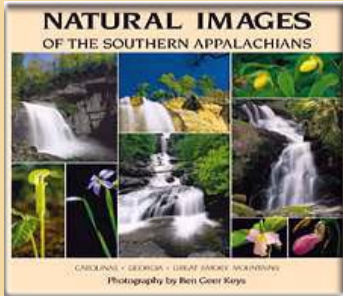
Want to see more photos of Art's journey? [Click Here](#).

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### **March 2009 Landowner Workshops**

The [Western Virginia Land Trust \(WVLT\)](#) will hold a number of landowner workshops all across the WVLT service area this spring to help educate landowners on conservation easements. Each workshop will be about an hour and a half in length and will be held at public meeting spaces such as schools or libraries. Interested landowners are encouraged to come out and learn more about the latest news on conservation easements. There is no cost or obligation to attend. Each participant will receive a special landowner edition of *Saving Land in Western Virginia*, as well as the Land Trust's new DVD on conservation easements, *Your Land, Your Choices*. [Click here](#) for a schedule of workshops and registration information.

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## Announcing Book Award Winners

FRIENDS announces the winners of the drawings for email address submissions. The December 2008 winner is Mr. Nathan Jones of Jacksonville Beach, FL. The January 2009 winner is Ms. Sandra Sparks of Mooresville, NC. Both winners will receive the book, *Natural Images of the Southern Appalachians*, which sells for \$49.95 in FRIENDS' online store. The photography in this beautiful book was provided by a FRIENDS' board member, Ben Geer Keys.

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## Traffic Decreases on the Blue Ridge Parkway

One million fewer people traveled the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway last year. National Park Service statistics show total visitation in 2008 was 18.25 million, down from 19.29 million in 2007. A Park Service official who tallies parkway visits declined to speculate on the reason for the 5.4 percent decrease. However, the decline coincides with the recent increase in gas prices. To learn more, [click here](#).

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## Chapter News

### Appalachian State University Chapter

If you are interested in volunteering for upcoming projects, please contact Heather Paige Preston at [Prestonhp@appstate.edu](mailto:Prestonhp@appstate.edu) or call 828-262-2449.

### Asheville Chapter

The Asheville Chapter of FRIENDS is directed by a Steering Committee that meets monthly to discuss upcoming opportunities to support the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service. A frequent visitor to the chapter is Dr. Greg N. Brown CF, President of the FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy Review of the Society of American Foresters. The Steering Committee Co-Chair, author Dr. Hugh Stephens is a retired member of the Political Science Department and Associate Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Houston, and a politically active resident of Biltmore Forest, NC. We're always looking for a few good folks to join our monthly Steering Committee meetings, hosted by Beth Siegel and Ron Basile at their Red Wolf Run LLC offices in Asheville.

To build on the relative successes of our Viewshed Planting last April and a Weed Identification Workshop in September, the Asheville Chapter is planning a "FRIENDS' Annual Spring Reception", Friday, April 17 at REI in Biltmore Park at 5-7 PM, featuring Anne Whisnant, author of "*Super Scenic Highway: A History of the Blue Ridge Parkway*." Our intentions are to introduce the Asheville Chapter and its goals, solicit new members, introduce the Cooperative Weed Management Area project (CWMA), and have a gentle time with locals who frequent the new REI store in Asheville. We are looking for sponsors for this event.

Also, the chapter is putting some planning behind the CWMA for local Asheville area non-native, invasive species of plants. We hope to have some educational opportunities for youth groups tied to this project, which is being promoted by Nancy Fraley of the NPS. More about this as it becomes clear what role the Asheville FRIENDS Chapter will play.

We would also like to draw attention to a recent \$800 donation from *Bruisin' Ales* in Asheville, particularly the strong and consistent support of owners, Julie and Jason Atallah. [Click here](#) to go to Bruisin' Ales site.



If you are interested in volunteering for upcoming projects, or want more information, please contact Tom Morgan at [tmorgan51@bellsouth.net](mailto:tmorgan51@bellsouth.net) or call 828-242-4131.

### **Fisher Peak Chapter**

Students from Notre Dame University will not be working with the Fisher Peak Chapter volunteers during the spring semester this year. The Chapter's Steering Committee will meet on February 17 to plan for the coming year.

If you are interested in helping the Fisher Peak Chapter, please contact Dottie Bramley at [pdbramley@valink.com](mailto:pdbramley@valink.com) or call 276-236-7658

### **Roanoke Valley Chapter**

If you are interested in volunteering for upcoming projects, or want information on joining the Steering Committee, please contact us at [staff@FriendsBRP.org](mailto:staff@FriendsBRP.org) or call toll free 800-228-7275.

### **Peaks of Otter Chapter**

If you are interested in volunteering for upcoming projects, or want information on joining the Steering Committee, please contact Greg Eaton at [eaton.g@lynchburg.edu](mailto:eaton.g@lynchburg.edu) or call 434-661-8360.

### **Rocky Knob Chapter**

Rocky Knob Chapter is still encouraging folks to adopt a highway in their respective counties and, on the signage, use FRIENDS OF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY -- PLEASE DO NOT LITTER. In Patrick and Henry Counties the contact is Linda Hodge-Gaines, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator, phone: 276-627-1513. Many signs that are currently on the roads are not up-to-date. The commitment is for two years but signs are not necessarily taken down when the two years are up. So choose your road and contact the Department of Transportation in your area to see if someone has adopted the road. This not only cleans up our areas but is a wonderful advertisement for FRIENDS and the Parkway. We also include a stretch of the Parkway in our litter pick up.

If you are interested in helping the Rocky Knob Chapter, please contact Gloria Hilton at [gjhilton1@yahoo.com](mailto:gjhilton1@yahoo.com) or call 540-593-3081.

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