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NATIONAL PARKS NEED OUR VOTES

With one click we can help the National Park Foundation raise up to \$600,000 from the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation! From now through January 21, the National Park Foundation will be one of four charities competing for a percentage of the grant. Please cast your vote for the national parks daily at www.lowes.com/give or www.facebook.com/lowes, and help spread the word about this outstanding fundraising opportunity for our national parks.

Read [MORE](#).

IT'S THE JOURNEY THAT MATTERS

We celebrate with the following list of travelers who have completed all 469 miles of their journey along the Blue Ridge Parkway. No doubt, they learned what American science fiction writer, Ursula LeGuin, wrote more than 50 years ago, "It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters in the end." Visit here for more information about what it takes to earn your own [469-Mile Award](#).

Congratulations to Rob Comanici, Ed Curtis, Pat Curtis, David Gibb, Ronit Gibb, William Hanna, Dorothy Hanna, Robert Heinritz, Linda Heinritz, Frank Hinshaw, Shelby Hinshaw, David W. Marshall, Bruce Royal, Susan Royal, Justine B. Vogel, Doug Williams, Ken Dunker, Karen Sidle, Warren Sidle, J. Todd Rector, Tammy Jo Veres, Charles Larkin II, Maribel Larkin, Breanna Larkin, Ian Larkin, Dennis Norville, David Hamilton, David Ely, Cathy Ely, Richard Van Gorp, Karen Van Gorp, Jenny Ramsey Fultz, Rodney Abee, Linda Abee, Melissa Wheeler, Donald D. Curtis, Line Dempsey, Terri Dempsey.

MARATHON VOLUNTEERS

The Blue Ridge Marathon on the Parkway will be held in Roanoke -- rain, snow! or shine -- on the weekend of April 15-16, with a festival expo on Friday night and the marathon itself on Saturday. Last year's event raised \$20,000 in support for the

Blue Ridge Parkway, and organizers are hoping to double that amount this year by doubling the number of runners, sponsors, visitors AND volunteers! That's also where FRIENDS comes in, of course.



FRIENDS needs to recruit 150 of the total 500 volunteers needed for the weekend. Watch for a special email, coming soon, about how to sign up as individuals, families and groups. Plan to serve as aid station workers, course marshals, info table workers, host home providers, or superstar volunteers. We do hope that a few Roanoke area FRIENDS will open their homes (ala bed and breakfast) at no cost to FRIENDS volunteers coming in from outside the Roanoke area.

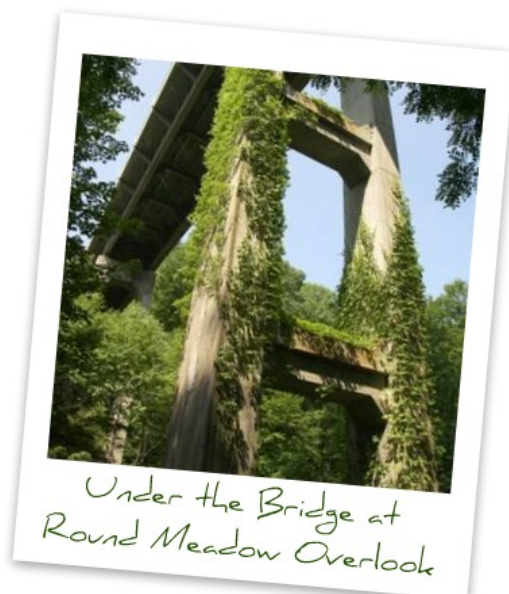
Read more about the Blue Ridge [MARATHON](#) and start planning now to help.

FRIENDS WELCOMES NEW PARKWAY FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

FRIENDS is grateful for our "partnership on the parkway" with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, and welcomes Carolyn Ward as the new leader of the Foundation. Read [MORE](#). As one of several National Park Service and Blue Ridge Parkway partners, the Foundation's fund-raising complements FRIENDS primary role as the Parkway's membership and volunteer organization. FRIENDS and Foundation continue to work together in large-scale efforts such as the BRP specialty license plate programs in North Carolina and Virginia.

I AM THE ROUND MEADOW CREEK TRAIL PLEASE ADOPT ME

With parking and access at Round Meadow Overlook (mp 179.2), the Parkway's Round Meadow Creek Trail is a half-mile loop that runs along a rushing mountain stream, creeps under a dramatic Parkway overpass, and winds through a mix of hardwood trees, evergreen hemlocks, rhododendron, and mountain laurel. Rated easy to moderate, with an elevation gain of 100 feet, this 20-minute walk is a favorite for thousands of Parkway travelers, so it needs some regular care and attention. Visit this [LINK](#) for more information about adopting this or another Parkway trail.



YOU CAN HELP FROM HOME

Staff at FRIENDS office in Roanoke have a few volunteer tasks that could possibly be handled remotely, from a distance, and at home. If interested, please email [Rod Broker](#) or phone 800.228.7275.

CHAPTER INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON WHETSTONE RIDGE

Preliminary efforts are underway to develop a FRIENDS chapter in the Whetstone Ridge area of the Parkway. Whetstone Ridge is located at about mp 29 and was once the site of a small restaurant, gift shop and visitor center along the Parkway. Even earlier in history the Whetstone Ridge area provided many a Blue Ridge mountain family with fine-grained stones used to sharpen knives, axes and other tools. The site now houses Ridge District administrative offices.

The chapter hopes to engage residents of communities along the highway 56 corridor -- and beyond! -- to adopt Parkway trails and overlooks in the Whetstone Ridge area, encourage volunteer and financial support for programs at Humpback Rocks Visitor Center, and strengthen connections in other ways between their communities and the Parkway. We are, after all, the local stewards of this national and natural resource which runs through our back yards and brings the world here to experience the beauty and significance of our proud Appalachian history and culture.

The starting point for the Whetstone Chapter is gathering a few more interested Parkway-lovers into a small leadership team who, together, will take up pieces of this important cause. Contact Paulette Albright (540/377-5754) or Rod Broker if you are interested in serving or need more information.

FRIENDS is also looking for local leadership in other communities all along the Ridge District from Humpback Rocks to the Peaks of Otter.

ITEM OF THE MONTH FROM FRIENDS ONLINE STORE

You see how good our vests look on the Warren Wilson College students (below), so imagine how sharp one of those vests would look on you or someone you love! You'll also experience the radiant warmth that comes, externally, from wearing the vest during this colder weather, and, internally, from proudly sporting your vest in public with its colorful FRIENDS logo prominently displayed. Visit FRIENDS [ONLINE STORE](#) for more information about this or any item offered for sale.

VIPs OF THE YEAR IN PISGAH DISTRICT



Students from Warren Wilson College in North Carolina were collectively recognized in October 2010 as Pisgah District VIPs (Volunteers in Parks) of the Year. Several students, pictured here with Superintendent Phil Francis, represented the more than two dozen Warren Wilson students actually involved in Parkway projects during two recent seasons of volunteering. The Asheville FRIENDS Chapter has a history of working with Warren Wilson students which demonstrates mutual commitment to be stewards of our natural environment and resources.

In recognition of their timely and dedicated service to the Parkway, FRIENDS awarded each participating Warren Wilson student with a distinctive sleeveless vest from our online store.

Parkway Superintendent Phil Francis had this to say about the Warren Wilson College students:

Congratulations on your selection as the Pisgah District Volunteers of the Year Award! Your collective efforts were an invaluable asset to the Pisgah District Maintenance Division. Two student crews, one last fall and another this spring, accomplished significant projects at the Mt. Pisgah Campground and at the Oteen Maintenance Area. Both groups were full of self-starters, eager to work, and possessing a variety of technical skills appropriate to the tasks.

By all accounts you are a remarkable group, with an outstanding sense of civic duty and pride in your work. You exemplify everything college volunteers should be and I am honored to recognize your group as the Pisgah District Volunteers of the Year.



Make a
Donation

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway benefits significantly from volunteer services, but we need your financial support to fund our programs. FRIENDS is unique: for every \$1.00 you invest, Parkway volunteers provide \$3.00 of volunteer service back to the Blue Ridge Parkway! Together we are making a difference! [Please be generous](#) in support of our mission to preserve, promote and enhance the Parkway. Thank you.

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have a comment to share or question to ask about the Parkway or FRIENDS? What would you like to read about in a future edition of the eNews? [EMAIL](#) your comments or questions.

STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR FRIENDS

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