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Dear Friend,

Summer is almost here which means the Parkway is more inviting than ever. The warmer weather brings with it beautiful blooms just waiting to be enjoyed. Right now is the best time to see dandelions, silver-bell trees, buttercups and so much more.



For a complete bloom schedule, including suggested Milepost locations, visit the National Park Service's [website](#) or call the Blue Ridge Parkway Information line at 828-298-0398.

QUICK LINKS

- About Us
- Volunteer
- Join Now
- Donate
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FRIENDS News

Biking the Blue Ridge Parkway
Tour de Ridge 2009

PARKWAY TRIVIA

Did you know that the Blue Ridge Parkway is divided into four Districts?

Ridge District
MP 0 - 106

Plateau District
MP 106 - 217

Highland District
MP 217 - 305

Pisgah District
MP 305 - 479

STAY CONNECTED



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L to R: Mary Hutchinson, Ray Luchenbach, Sam Jernigan, Richard Stibolt

FRIENDS member, Sam Jernigan, has recently completed his "lucky 13th" trip bicycling the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway. He has teamed up with fellow Rhode Islanders Mary Hutchinson and Richard Stibolt in addition to Ray Luchenbach from Virginia.

Virginia Ehrich, FRIENDS Director of Membership, met up with Sam and his crew on Monday, May 18th as they stopped in Roanoke, VA.

Their journey began on Monday, May 11th in Cherokee, NC. From there they have traveled to Balsam Gap, Mt. Pisgah, Asheville, Little Switzerland, Blowing Rock, Meadows of Dan and into Roanoke. They spent each night in a near-by hotel to enjoy the local flavor.

After leaving Roanoke, VA on May 19th, they traveled to the Peaks of Otter and then on to Rockfish Gap, completing their journey.

Two of Sam's fellow bikers are quite familiar with the Parkway. This is Mary's fourth time bicycling the full length of the Parkway with Sam. Ray has previously driven the entire length of the Parkway by car. However, this is his first time traveling it by bicycle. This is Richard's inaugural trip on the Parkway.

Sam, Mary and Ray have been awarded FRIENDS' [469-Mile Award](#) for their previous trips. Richard is now eligible for this award as well.

Congratulations on a trip well done and here's to many more to come.

The 469-Mile Club

Recent Award Recipient Announced

Daniel & Leslie Baker

Marguerite Champa

Stephen Champa

Carl & Joyce Gordon

Brenda Mulvey

J.C. & Dionnie Ruiz



Congratulations to all of you for traveling all 469 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway. What an accomplishment! If you have driven, biked or even walked the full length of the Parkway, please let us know. We would love to present you with a 469-Mile Award too. You can email us at staff@friendsbrp.org or complete our [application](#) online.

FRIENDS Volunteer Reunion Held

Pisgah District Volunteers Reunite



Pictured L to R: (front row) Eleanor Moss, Opal Brown & Annette Quint
(back row) Barger Moss, Newberry Brown, Jim Quint & Bob Hewat.

During their 18 years of volunteer service, seven VIP (Volunteer In Parks) volunteers assisted in searching for lost hikers, providing traffic control, conducting evening campfire programs and storm and flood clean up.

The former VIP volunteers recently met in Vicksburg, MS to reminisce about their years of service to

the Blue Ridge Parkway. The group initially met one another while volunteering in the Pisgah District at Gillespie Gap in 1995. They spent their time at Crabtree Meadows and Linville Falls campgrounds in addition to the Linville Falls and the Mineral Museums.

In the past, members of the group have been recognized by the Blue Ridge Parkway as Volunteer of the Year, Pisgah District Volunteer of the Year, Outstanding Volunteer Service award, Department Volunteer Service award, Team Player of the Month award and the 469-Mile Award. However, the greatest award this group shares is their binding friendship and their love for the beautiful Blue Ridge Parkway.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to help preserve the Parkway, please let us know. There are numerous opportunities available all along the Parkway. You can complete our [volunteer application](#) online or email us at staff@friendsbrp.org for more information.

FRIENDS Merchandise Item of the Month

Mabry Mill Drawing



Southwest Virginia native, Ron McCall, has always enjoyed the grandeur and beauty of the Blue Ridge Parkway. His ink drawing of Mabry Mill captures the inherent beauty and character of this old grist mill located on the Parkway, just outside of Floyd, Virginia.

This gorgeous print is available in two sizes: 9x11 and 11x14.

[Visit our Online Store](#)

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of FRIENDS....

Eric Ambro
Dale Carlson
Sara & Phillip Dalton
Mike Felber
James W. Fraley
John French
Tony & Wanda Hatcher
Paul Hughart
Marshall Kibler
Robin Wright
Jennifer Losch Marketing
The Depot Grille

Would you like to join FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway and help preserve a national legacy? We would love to have you! For more information on FRIENDS and how to join, please visit our [website](#).



National News

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

National Parks to Benefit Greatly



The National Park Service recently announced that it will invest \$750 million in nearly 800 projects to stimulate the economy through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Projects will include preserving and protecting national icons and historic landscapes, improving energy efficiency and renewable energy use among other things. Additional funding through the Federal Highway Administration will improve park roads for millions of visitors.

What does this mean for the Blue Ridge Parkway? It will mean over \$13 million in Parkway projects. According to the National Park Service website, these projects include:

- Rehabilitation of the Peaks of Otter dam
- Removal of hazardous trees and encroaching vegetation along the Parkway corridor
- Removal of vegetation on bridges and bridge abutments to increase driver safety
- Repair trails parkwide
- Replace Mt. Pisgah wastewater treatment system

You can view the complete list of NPS Recovery Act Projects by visiting the NPS [website](#).

New Interior Asst. Secretary for Fish, Wildlife & Parks Named *Thomas Strickland confirmed*

On April 30th the U. S. Senate confirmed Thomas Strickland as Interior Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He will oversee and coordinate policy decisions for the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

He is currently serving as Chief of Staff for the Dept. of the Interior. He will serve concurrently in that role. You can read the full press release on the U.S. Dept. of the Interior [website](#).

Congratulations, Mr. Strickland! We look forward to seeing our National Parks, especially the Blue Ridge Parkway, improve under your direction.



FRIENDS NEWS

Chapter Chat *Get Involved!*

*with Eva O. Gray,
Director of Programs*



FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service have established Chapters in the border communities along the Blue Ridge Parkway to help assist the Parkway. FRIENDS' Chapters are involved in numerous projects including viewshed planting, trail maintenance, and split rail fence repair. There are currently seven Chapter organizations and FRIENDS is hopeful to add three more before the end of the year.

FRIENDS currently has Chapters in Galax, VA; Rocky Knob, VA; ASU, in Boone, NC, Asheville, NC, and Roanoke, VA. The original Chapter in Galax focuses on the construction of the Fisher Peak Music Center trails. This Chapter has over 80 members and has been in operation for almost four years. They recently completed the construction of a 4.5 mile trail.

The Rocky Knob Chapter painted all 469 milepost markers along the Parkway. In addition, they spearheaded the split rail fence restoration project which greatly enhances the Parkway experience.

The ASU Chapter recently completed a 40 hour volunteer project at the Sim's Creek Dam, removing debris so the river can flow smoothly again. These dedicated Appalachian State students are committed to including the 75th Parkway Anniversary in their next project.

The Roanoke Valley Chapter recently got a jolt of energy from the newly elected Chairman, Sam Golston and his steering committee made up of Tom Harrison, Ellen Holtman and Larry and Jean Covington. This Chapter is looking for additional steering committee members as well as volunteers. Their first order of business will be to work in tandem with the National Park Service to continue the Roanoke Campground clean-up and renovation. The Adopt-A-Trail program is also high on the list of priorities for this newly formed group. A "shout out" to Sam, Tom, Ellen, Larry and Jean for their commitment to the Blue Ridge Parkway and to FRIENDS.

Local News

National Trails Day Event *Mabry Mill Full Day Hike*

The Chargers and Rechargers Hiking Club plans to hike various trails along the Parkway on June 6, 2009. They will also be picking up litter along the way. As this is a full day event, plan to bring a picnic lunch. For more details, visit the Club's [website](#).





H.O.G. Rally Coming to Roanoke

FRIENDS supports Harley Owners Group

Attention Harley Davidson Enthusiasts! Mark your calendar for June 17 - 20, 2009 when the Roanoke Valley will host over 2,000 Harley Owner's Group (H.O.G.) members.

These motorcyclists will make the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center their base, and will be staying at numerous other hotels in the Valley View area. From there they will take day trips to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Look for them to

come crusin' down the Parkway mid-morning on June 18th and 19th, when they will visit Mabry Mill, and on June 18th, in the afternoon, at the Peaks of Otter.

The Parkway is planning interpretive demonstrations (blacksmithing, music, clogging and woodworking) and lots of fun for all. For a detailed schedule of H.O.G. Rally events on the Parkway, click [here](#).

We will also have booths at the Sheraton Hotel, Mabry Mill and the Peaks. Come join us for the fun and stop by our booth to say hello and get FRIENDS information. Hope to see you there!

For a complete schedule of all H.O.G. Rally events, visit the 2009 Virginia H.O.G. Rally [website](#).

Parkway News

Parkway Voted Best Place to....

The readers of *SWoCo*, a weekly publication of the *Roanoke Times*, recently voted the Blue Ridge Parkway number one in the following categories:

- Best Place for a Family Hike
- Best Place to go for a Bike Ride
- Best Spot for a Picnic
- Best Place to View Fall Leaves

The Parkway also tied for first place in the "Best Place to Take Relatives from Out of Town" category. Are you taking full advantage of the national treasure that is in our very own back yard? Now that summer is almost here, explore the Parkway! Take in the beautiful scenery, hike the numerous trails or picnic at an overlook. Enjoy!



Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary News



According to the National Park Service "The 75th Anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway in 2010 provides an extraordinary opportunity to create awareness, initiate dialogue in local communities, and take action that will insure a strong future for this resource. Blue Ridge Parkway 75, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to: plan, fund, and organize the events and activities of the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th Anniversary; educate the general public about the Parkway's value and assets; and, through collaborative partnerships, realize the vision of the anniversary. This vision will engage local communities and the nation in efforts to sustain a healthy

Parkway for future generations by celebrating 75 years of Parkway history, Appalachian culture, and spectacular scenic views."

Events to celebrate this once in a lifetime anniversary are now under way. We will be sure to keep you posted as they are scheduled.

Parkway Road Construction & Closures

Craggy Gardens Area

The Parkway detour between US 70 and Milepost 382.5 and NC Rt. 226 at Milepost 330.9/Gillespie Gap has been discontinued. Retaining wall reconstruction will continue until the estimated completion in mid-June.

Repaving has begun on the Parkway between Milepost 359.7 and Milepost 375.1. This section includes the Craggy Gardens Visitor Center, which will remain open during construction. The estimated completion date of this project is December 2010. The Parkway will remain open under flagmen-controlled one-lane traffic until that time.

Blowing Rock Area

Roadway fill repair at Milepost 270.3 will close this section of the Parkway until November 2009.



Make a
Donation

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway utilizes volunteer services, but needs your support to fund our programs. Please offer your generosity in support of our mission to preserve, promote and enhance the Parkway. Thank you.