

The Parkway Sentinel

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

April 2006

Greetings!



This Month's Features-

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As spring comes to the Blue Ridge Parkway I draw your attention to two important ways you can help:

1. Support the Parkway Program of your choice – your donations will fund FRIENDS Parkway Programs [here](#).
2. Read about how you can help through FRIENDS Petition drive [here](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Cull". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Please forward this e-newsletter to anyone you feel would be interested! If this message was forwarded to you by a friend, you can [receive your own subscription](#) by visiting our web site.



Parkway Message

Variety - The Spice of the Parkway (all quotes from NPS-owned 1958 interview with Stan Abbott)

The Blue Ridge Parkway, unlike most national park areas, is a planned landscape... planned down to the smallest detail in ways that most visitors do not notice at first glance. Landscape architects and engineers dovetailed their skills and creative genius for the benefit of the millions who have enjoyed this drive over seven decades.



Stanley W. Abbott, a Cornell-educated landscape architect, was the first employee on the scene in 1933. He was given the broad, initial task to "lone-wolf it" down through the mountains to get to know the region and begin to think about how to build a graceful road through the rugged Blue Ridge. Over the ensuing months and years, there were long reconnaissance trips through the region... meetings on the verandas of country hotels... or informal gatherings over rough sketches on dining room tables. The principles that defined the Parkway and still guide management today slowly began to come into focus.

It is those design principles and guidelines that will be the subject of a series of articles over the coming months.

The "most important" of many criteria, according to Stan Abbott, was variety, something he called "the spice" of the Parkway.

The already completed Skyline Drive hugged the ridgetops through Shenandoah National Park for 105 miles and those whose task it was to design the Parkway felt that more variation in the road would yield a better experience for the visitors. In his typical poetic style, Abbott later said that "one panorama following right on another, thinking of that as fortissimo doesn't make the interesting piece of music that fortissimo mixed with a little pianissimo provides." One of the practical-minded and plain spoken engineers involved in the early stages of planning, put it more bluntly. "One can get gorged on scenery!" So, "intimate glimpses" such as moss on a shake roofed building would stand in contrast to the "heroic panorama that looks out forever" – each element adding its own variety and charm.

The delight of the Parkway, again quoting Abbott, "lies with ever-changing location, in variety." Engineers, with their practical "how-to-build" perspective, and the artistic viewpoint of the landscape architects "drilled and drilled on the business of following a mountain stream for a while, then climbing up on the slope of a hill pasture, then dipping down into the open bottom lands and back into the woodlands."

Today's visitor may marvel at the up close details or find the sweeping views breathtaking, and that is how early planners of the Parkway meant for it to be. The variety of experiences is unmatched, and all designed as part of the "rhythm of the road" that makes the Parkway so special for all that enjoy it today.

Author: Peter Givens, Interpretive Specialist, Blue Ridge Parkway NPS

(Next: The horizon will be the boundary)



Saving Parkway Views

Practicing "shared stewardship"



In the 1940s, author and environmentalist Aldo Leopold suggested that Americans should view the landscape as a "community to which we belong" rather than as a "commodity belonging to us." On March 25th, over 100 friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway demonstrated that feeling of community in a powerful way. Braving cold winds and at times, pelting rain and snow, these folks planted two hundred hardwood seedlings, helping to protect another Parkway view shed in the Roanoke Valley.

Groups of college and high school students, scout troops, Explore Park staff, families, and individuals came together because of their common concern and love for the Parkway. With seedlings donated by the Virginia Division of Forestry and under the watchful eye of the staff of



Creative Nursery and Landscapes,

these valuable Parkway partners

invested their Saturday morning in the kind of labor-intensive work that could not otherwise be accomplished under current staffing.

This kind of "shared stewardship" of the Parkway is a necessary part of managing all NPS areas in this day and age. It is not a new idea, however. Decades ago, former Superintendent Granville Liles noted that the Parkway is a unique part of rural America that "...provides an unusual setting for the planner, the politician, landowner, land manager, and citizen to unite their efforts and develop together the framework for... uses of this special region of America."

The united effort at the viewshed planting project was an excellent example of how the Parkway has become "a community to which we belong." The entire Parkway staff says thanks. We couldn't have done it without you!

[I would like to donate to help save parkway views.](#)



Volunteers In Parks

Volunteer Needs:

Volunteers are needed to help in the Blue Ridge Parkway Recycling Program. Following are the tasks associated with handling the recyclables, with task # 1 being the minimum level of assistance we could use. If folks could do more (or all) that would be great.

Task 1: Empty, sort and bag recyclables from recycling containers and place in designated area for pickup by park staff. Put new plastic bags in recycling bins.

Task 2: Duties in Task 1 plus transport bagged recyclables to the nearest Parkway recyclables storage area.

Task 3: Duties in Tasks 1 and 2 plus pick up recyclables from the Parkway storage area and transport to the nearest public or commercial recycling center.

The above tasks could be performed at one or more developed areas and could even include handling recyclables at overlooks and at park offices, depending on the level of effort the volunteer/s is willing to put into it.

Here's a little background on the "recycling" issue, from Ray Shaw:

"Several years ago, we installed recycling bins at all Parkway campgrounds and picnic areas as well as at selected overlooks and parking areas. Additionally, some level of recycling is done at most of the parkway office areas. It was a good idea from the standpoint that the NPS is a leader in the area of environment, and recycling of aluminum cans is required by NC state law. However, actually dealing with the recyclables once they have been placed by visitors in the containers is another story. Emptying the recycling containers, sorting the materials, transporting to storage area and then finally taking recyclables to the recycling center is time consuming. The biggest problem is our employees are already over-extended and at the end of the day, recycling is not the first priority...so it doesn't always get done."

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Mountains-to-Sea Trail

April 29-30, 2006 – Marion, NC- Bald Knob MST Workday – Come put the finishing touches on this section of the MST. All of the trip detail information is posted at – ncmst.org. Help us get this section ready for designation and spring hiking. You will need to RSVP for this event to Allen de Hart – 919-496-4771 or adh4771@aol.com

[I would like to donate to help the Volunteers in Parks.](#)



Our Online Store



FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway Peanuts [\(view now\)](#)

Enjoy these delicious premium salted peanuts while also helping to protect the Blue Ridge Parkway for future generations. [Visit Store](#)



Donate or HELP support FRIENDS

Help Us Preserve the Legacy

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway offers young and old, together, the opportunity to connect with friends and family to save the Blue Ridge Parkway for their continuing enjoyment - and for future generations.

The Blue Ridge Parkway connects the Shenandoah National Park with the Smoky Mountains National Park. It is America's most scenic drive encompassing 469 miles transversing 29 counties in Virginia and North Carolina. Over 22 million people touch its borders annually - making it America's most frequented park treasure!

By joining Preserving the Legacy you will be supporting projects that will protect this extraordinary Parkway and adjacent land and views for yourselves and for future generations. FRIENDS is an official Park Service partner. Please join us by choosing one of our deserving Programs today!

[Donation Page](#)

If you have any questions, please [contact us](#)

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