

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting

April 17, 2023

Foundation President Greg Bray convened the meeting at 10:05 at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia. Approximately 60 attendees were present. They introduced themselves and stated which park or foundation they represented.

Secretary's Report: Bob Hoke said the draft minutes of the 2022 Annual meeting were mailed to all foundations shortly after the meeting and copies, without the attachments, were in the packet of handouts for today's meeting. He said approval of the minutes would be requested later in the meeting so attendees could read them first.

Treasurer's Report: Kim McCluskey said the 2022 financial report was included in the handouts. She made the following comments:

- After several years of low interest rates the Foundation's accounts and CDs, valued at \$308K, are now getting better interest rates.
- A \$25K donation for a wildlife center at Chief Logan SP has been received.
- Donations are being accepted for a project to rebuild the fire tower in Lost River SP.
- Blackwater Falls SP now has a foundation.
- The procedure for processing Round It Up (RIU) donations has been simplified. Instead of sending multiple checks, the State now sends a single check with documentation about where the RIU money came from. A total of \$46K in RIU donations was received in 2022.

The 2022 Treasurer's Report is Attachment 1.

There was a **motion to accept the 2022 financial report as presented**. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Park System Report: Matt Yeager gave a report on recent accomplishment in the parks:

- Lodge renovations were completed in Cacapon, Blackwater Falls, Pipestem, North Bend, Hawks Nest, and Tygart Lake

- A new water park concession was built in Tygart Lake and a second tube run area in Canaan Valley
- A major stream mitigation and foot bridge replacement was completed in Tomlinson Run
- The campground bathhouse in Camp Creek was renovated in-house.
- New signage was designed and created for the front desks of all lodge parks.
- A new gateway entrance sign identical to the original forest sign from the 1930s was installed in Coopers Rock.
- A new gift shop and camp store was created in Holly River.
- A water line was replaced in Watoga.
- The WV DEP completed a dam removal and stream improvement project in Kanawha SF.
- Significant progress was made toward leases and purchases necessary for land acquisition for the Elk River Rail Trail.

New Projects under construction or well into design in 2023:

- Wastewater improvements were made in Blackwater Falls, Coopers Rock, Canaan Valley, Hawks Nest, Beech Fork, Cedar Creek, Coopers Rock, Kanawha, Valley Falls, and Moncove Lake.
- Overflow parking and restroom near the bat shelter, and new mountain bike trails in Cacapon.
- Five new cabins and 25 campsites in Coopers Rock SF.
- Tram replacements in Hawks Nest and Pipestem.
- Campground electric and a horse stable upgrade in Kanawha SF.
- Upper and lower tram building structural renovation in Pipestem
- A spray park in Twin Falls.

- A new event pavilion in Watters Smith

Matt said there are still many challenges, including workforce uncertainties, failing infrastructure, visitation increases, new technologies, and lack of good internet. He credited the maintenance personnel and park supervisors with performing well under trying circumstances. He said there is a still lot of aging equipment that needs to be replaced.

He said that Beartown SP received about \$4K in donations through an unattended donation box in the park. A total of \$32K was received through on-line donations.

Legislative Session Update: Ken Caplinger passed out an update on the 2023 legislative session (see Attachment 2). He said he was impressed with the input given to the legislature by individual members of many local foundations. That input helped get improvements to several bills. He also said the local foundation have followed the regulations on lobbying carefully.

In response to a question about the impact of Class 3 electric bikes (up to 28 mph) someone said they saw no problem allowing them on paved rail trails, but allowing them on regular forest trails will be a serious safety and visitor experience problem.

Someone asked whether Federal grants received to construct non-motorized trails will have to be repaid if motorized bikes are allowed on those trails. There was no firm answer, but several people said they thought they would and/or that that park would no longer be able apply for future grants.

There was a question about whether public notice is required before park land disposal is done as authorized by SB 161. Nobody knew the answer.

Someone asked about SB 4 that allowed for adoption of trails by organizations. Nobody had any knowledge of how it will actually be implemented. There was a discussion about whether a local foundation could adopt all the trails in a park so responsibility wouldn't be fragmented to multiple outside groups who may not be able to do effective maintenance. Someone said such a bulk adoption would probably up to the park's superintendent.

There was a discussion about the impact of motorized vehicles on park visitation. Clisby

Jennelle said at Cabwaylingo the type of visitor changed when ORVs were allowed. He said that any park allowing ORVs will become an ORV-only park.

Ken said the FY 2024 budget includes \$52M for park improvements, potentially including two new parks. He said he didn't know where the potential new marks would be.

State Parks Endowment Fund: Greg Bray gave a brief overview of the Endowment Fund. He said it has about \$14.8M in assets and that its Board will be meeting soon to amend the bylaws to implement HB 3370.

Distribution of accrued interest will start on July 1 and will be used to augment (not replace) the existing Park System grant process. The details of how the grant process will work have not been set up yet.

An unanticipated early use of the Fund was to match a large Federal grant to construct trails in Cacapon SP. Fast action was needed to avoid losing the grant. The match has been repaid.

Websites with grant information: Bob Hoke said the handouts included a sheet with a number of websites that provide information on possible state and Federal grant programs. He prepared the handout after receiving a number of site addresses from Maggie Hutchinson. The handout is in attachment 3.

Approval of 2022 Minutes: Approval of the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes was deferred from earlier. There was a **motion to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes as distributed**. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Election of officers: Greg Bray said the current President, Treasurer, and Secretary are all willing to continue in office. He then solicited any additional candidates. There were no additional candidate volunteers. There was a **motion to reelect the three current officers**. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Greg then asked for candidates to fill the vacant Vice President's position. After some informal off-line discussion, Kevin Anderson said he was a candidate. There were no other volunteers so there was a **motion to elect Kevin Anderson as Vice**

President. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The officers are:

President: Greg Bray
 Vice President: Kevin Anderson
 Secretary: Bob Hoke
 Treasurer: Kim McCluskey

Book recommendation: Lin Dunham mentioned a book titled *Birth of the Park System* that was written in the 1980s and is a history of the West Virginia parks. The book is out of print, but is supposed to be reprinted soon.

The Care, Feeding, and Motivation of

Volunteers: Greg Bray introduced Bob Beanblossom, the featured speaker, and summarized Bob's very extensive resume. He is currently at the U.S. Forest Service's Cradle of Forestry in the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina.

Bob started his presentation by saying a study he did while in the the West Virginia Park System in the 1990s concluded that local foundations had contributed at least \$3.5M to the system. He said that figure has obviously grown significantly over the years.

Bob said he is now a volunteer in the Pisgah National Forest in western North Carolina. The Forest was created in 1916 under the Weeks Act that allowed the government to purchase private land for conservation. The forest is a very popular tourist destination and many folks who relocate to the area like to do volunteer work in the Forest.

The Cradle of Forestry in America is a historical area within the Pisgah National Forest. It is where the science of forestry started in the U.S. and is a popular tourist destination.

The Cradle is in the Pisgah District, one of three districts in the Forest. A number of organizations support the district in various ways and volunteers donate roughly 45,000 hours annually in the district. The Forest Service actively encourages its volunteers and treats them like employees in many ways. He made several points about the volunteers:

- Volunteers are recruited on volunteer.gov and with national advertising. All applicants are screened by phone, background checks are done, and there are physical requirements.

Those with a history background are likely to be selected.

- Volunteers are encouraged and supported. They get dedicated campsites and access to a dedicated activity building with showers and cooking facilities. They are rotated to different tasks to reduce the likelihood of boredom or burnout.
- Volunteers get significant training and the FIND Outdoors organization provides distinctive uniforms for their volunteers. Once a volunteer is on the job they are treated almost the same as a regular Forest Service employee and follow the same regulations and procedures as employees. Bob said this is very important and the goal is to "make the volunteers feel like they are part of the staff".

Bob said that Park supervisors should tell their employees that volunteers should be treated as Park System employees whenever possible. He said "volunteering should be fun" and being treated as an equal helps make that happen. He also said that volunteers are not free. They require staff time, training, and supplies.

Volunteer programs need to be publicized. Word of mouth still works, but articles in local newspapers and social media will help attract more folks.

Bob mentioned a group of conscientious objectors who come to the Pisgah Forest each year. They take on serious projects like constructing bridges and cabins. He said careful planning is needed to make full use of their skills and time, but the benefits are significant.

Bob emphasized that volunteers don't get paid, but they need recognition of their work. Awards, recognition certificates, appreciation dinners, etc. go a long way toward making volunteers feel appreciated.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.

Attachments:

1. 2022 WVSPF financial report
2. Summary of the 2023 Legislative Session
3. List of grant-related websites

Attendees at the WVSPF Annual Meeting on April 17, 2023

(“SP” = “State Park” “SPF” = “State Park Foundation” “SFF” - “State Forest Foundation”)

Name	Organization	Email or Phone
Paulita Cousin	Blackwater Falls	paulita.l.cousin@wv.gov
Linda L. Cronin	Blackwater Falls SP	linda.lcronin@gmail.com
Pamela Mersch	Cabwaylingo SFF	cabwaylingosff@yahoo.com
Mark Mersch	Cabwaylingo SFF	304-385-9012
Clisby M. Jennelle, IV	Cabwaylingo State Forest	clisby.m.jennelle@wv.gov
Lin Dunham	Cacapon Resort SPF	lin_dunham@frontier.com
James Michael	Cacapon Resort SPF	304-258-5277
Josephine Lester	Camp Creek SPF	304-308-8273
Shirley M. Miller	Camp Creek SPF	304-425-5826
Cassidy Norman	Canaan Valley Resort SP	cassidy.p.norman@wv.gov
Matthew Baker	Canaan Valley Resort SP	mbaker@canaanresort.com
Ben Herrick	Canaan Valley Resort SPF	ben.herrick37@gmail.com
Ben Leedom	Cedar Creek SP	ben.j.leedom@wv.gov
Cody M. Moore	Cedar Creek SPF	codybass9@gmail.com
Randy Buckner	Cedar Creek SPF	rbuck77827@aol.com
Kevin Anderson	Cedar Creek SPF	kanderson1836@gmail.com
Dave Hopkinson	Coopers Rock Foundation	dph@vt.edu
Alan Collins	Coopers Rock Foundation	alan.collins@mail.wvu.edu
Dave Pruitt	DNR HQ	david.e.pruitt@wv.gov
Rick Ferris	Elk River Trail Foundation	rickferris@ucwv.edu
Ken Tawney	Elk River Trail Foundation	elkrivertail@gmail.com
Gregg Stam	Forks of Coal Foundation	
Leanna Preston	Forks of Coal Foundation	lebrpreston@aol.com
Maggie Hutchison	Greenbrier River Tail Foundation	maggie.hutchison2013@gmail.com
Donna Boggs	Holly River SP	donnal.boggs@yahoo.com
Phillip Setterlund	Holly River SP	philsetterlund@hotmail.com
Susan Hennings	Holly River SP	shenn@me.com
John Hughes	Kanawha SF	jlhughesjr@suddenlink.net
Luanne McGovern	Kanawha SF	lmmcg32@yahoo.com
Clark Sanford	Kanawha SF, WVDNR Parks	clark.l.sanford@wv.gov
Bob Hoke	MSR&LHA (Cass Railroad)	bob@rhoke.net
Paul Elliott	NBRT	paul.m.elliott@wv.gov
Jennifer Wilt	NBRTF	info@nbrtf.com
Kathleen Panek	NBRTF	relax@gillumhouse.com
Kelsey Gilbert	North Bend SP	kelsey.r.gilbert@wv.gov
Jonathan Summers	North Bend SSP	summers03@zoominternet.net
Kevin W. Wolfe	Prickett's Fort	kevin.w.wolfe@wv.gov
Greg Bray	Prickett's Fort	director@prickettsfort.org
Matt Yeager	South Charleston Parks	matt.j.yeager@wv.gov
Clinton Cochran	South Charleston Parks	clinton.c.cochran@wv.gov
Dillard Price	South Charleston Parks	dillard.j.price@wv.gov
Jesse Anderson	South Charleston Parks	jesse.d.anderson@wv.gov
Michaela Reger	Stonewall Resort	mreger@stonewallresort.com
Brennon O'Sullivan	Stonewall Resort SP	brennon.e.o'sullivan@wv.gov
Rudy Henley	Stonewall SPF	jrhenley@stonewallresort.com
Monte Pearson	Tomlinson Run SP	304-564-5497

Sam Morris	Tomlinson Run SP	samuel.a.morris@wv.gov
Jacob Jackson	Tygart Lake SP	jacob.a.jackson@wv.gov
Shelley Elsey	Tygart Lake SP	shelleyheinzmanelsey@yahoo.com
Candy Layfield	Tygart Lake SPF	cjlayfield@aol.com
Robert Beanblossom	U.S. Forest Service	r.beanblosson1862@outlook.com
Brett Harshbarger	Valley Falls SP	brett.w.harshbarger@wv.gov
Valinda Loy	Valley Falls SP	valindaloy@yahoo.com
Diane Olivia	Valley Falls SP	giftshopwm@me.com
Joshua Feather	Watoga	josh.m.feather@wv.gov
Jody Spencer	Watoga & Greenbrier Rail Trail	jody.d.spencer@wv.gov
Maureen Conley	Watoga SPF	maureenconleywv@gmail.com
Ken Caplinger	WVSPF At-large Board member	kencaplinger@gmail.com
Milt Gutman	WVSPF At-large Board member	greenridgefarm@frontier.com
Kim McCluskey	WVSPF Treasurer	kmac5036@yahoo.com

West Virginia State Parks Foundation
Statement of Income and Expenses
General Operating Fund
Year ending December 31, 2022

Income	2019	2020	2021	2022
Annual Dues	340	340	460	480
Interest Not Allocated	128	142	1	7
Unrestricted Donation	834	83	112	87
Reimbursement	41			
ATM Lease Fees	1,144	706	750	563
Total Income	2,488	1,271	1,322	1,136
Expenses				
Administrative Expenses	64	26	25	25
New Foundations	0			
Annual Meeting	165	78	62	86
Web Site		172		30
Outreach	64			
Pay Pal and Similar Fees	1		56	68
Total Expenses	294	276	143	208
Net Income for Year	2,194	995	1,179	928

West Virginia State Parks Foundation
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
Year Ending December 31, 2022

Assets	2019	2020	2021	2022
Checking Account	66,104	78,907	31,609	50,931
Certificate of Deposits	201,289	204,952	131,442	206,673
Money Market Account			100,005	25,015
Total Assets	267,393	283,859	263,056	282,619
Liabilities				
	2,019			
Accounts Payable				
Restricted Funds	257,519	273,031	250,986	269,313
Total Liabilities	257,519	273,031	250,986	269,313
General Operating Fund	9,832	10,827	12,071	13,074
Total Liabilities and General Operating Fund	267,351	283,859	263,057	282,387 Note 1

Note 1: Outstanding checks

#1366	1/11/2022	Cacapon Resort State Park	\$100
#1382	5/15/2022	Pipestem Resort State Park	\$100

West Virginia State Parks Foundation
Summary of Restricted Fund Activity During 2022

restricted fund ("SP" = State Park, "SF" = State Forest)	Opening Balance	I N C O M E				E X P E N S E S			Ending Balance	Diff	Notes
		Donations	Interest	Grants/ Other	Total Income	Program Service	other	Total Expenses			
Park Funds:											
Audra SP	7,741		4		4			0	7,745	4	
Babcock SP	1,232	1,631	0	1,500	3,131			0	4,363	3,131	
Blackwater Falls SP	6,449	178	3	850	1,031	491	12	503	6,977	528	1
Bluestone SP	22,225		15		15			0	22,240	15	
Cacapon SP	3		0		0			0	3	0	
Canaan Valley SP	21		0		0			0	21	0	
Carnifex Ferry Battlefield SP	76		0		0			0	76	0	
Cedar Creek SP	261	268	0		268			0	529	268	
Chief Logan SP	3,348	2,221	2		2,223			0	5,571	2,223	
Coopers Rock SF	2,717		1	1,350	1,351	3,381		3,381	687	-2,030	2
Droop Mtn. Battlefield SP	2,123	5,255	1		5,256			0	7,379	5,256	
Greenbrier SF	7,344	1,482	4		1,486			0	8,830	1,486	
Holly River SP	5,173		4		4			0	5,177	4	
Kumbrabow SF	299		0	25	25			0	324	25	
Lost River SP	3,822		1	129	130		1	1	3,951	129	3
Moncove Lake SP	10,802		7		7			0	10,809	7	
Pipestem SP	14,963		4		4				14,967	4	
Seneca SF	1,194		0	300	300		3	3	1,491	297	4
Tygart Lake SP	881	1,487	0		1,487			0	2,368	1,487	
Project Funds:											
								0			
Blackwater SP Playground	2,095		1		1			0	2,096	1	
Cashdollar Fund	83,675		68		68	3,440		3,440	80,303	-3,372	5
Endowment Fund	39,138	26,634	15		26,649	17,747	53	17,800	47,987	8,849	6
Farm to Table Project	2,060		1		1			0	2,061	1	
Fisher Playground (Tygart Lk)	33,314		15		15			0	33,329	15	
Pipestem Sustainability Grant	29				0			0	29	0	
Totals (restricted funds)	250,985	39,156	147	4,154	43,457	25,059	69	25,128	269,313	18,328	
General Operating Fund	12,071	1,136	7		1,143	140		140	13,074	1,003	7
Totals (including GOF)	263,056	40,292	154	4,154	44,600	25,199		25,268	282,387	19,331	

See notes on the following page

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Restricted Funds

2022 Spending

1. In 2020 The Garden Clubs of WV made a \$500 donation to Blackwater Falls State Park designated to be used at the Nature Center. This year the park naturalist purchased wildflower seeds for planting at the center. The \$12 charges are PayPal fees for donations specified for Blackwater Falls State Park in memory of Patricia Hartley.
2. Coopers Rock State Forest purchased two memorial benches.
3. West Virginia State Parks Foundation worked with citizens at Lost River State Park to establish an account for the Lost River Big Ridge Fire Tower. Bob Hoke and Kim worked to set up PayPal donations and a line item for this project. In 2023 you will see a separate line for this project but at the end of 2022 the donations were still appearing as Lost River.
4. Seneca State Forest received several donations specified for the forest in memory of Mary Jane Clovis. The \$3 expense is for fees paid to PayPal.
5. Cashdollar Funding was used for upgrades to the Nature Center at Blackwater Falls State Park including the purchase of and installation of AV equipment and the purchase of a water filling station. Plans for the nature center at Twin Falls were discussed but nothing has transpired.
6. A total of \$17,547 Round It Up Funds were paid out to state park foundations in 2022. An additional \$200 was paid to foundations from online donations specified to the park foundation. The costs of \$53 were for fees for online donations.
7. Expenses from the general fund included printing for the annual meeting, website domain charges and annual filing for the WV Secretary of State.

Attachment 2

SUMMARY OF 2023 WV LEGISLATIVE SESSION RELATIVE TO STATE PARK SYSTEM

Senate Bill 161 is now law and gives DNR the sole authority to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any property under its jurisdiction that is deemed obsolete or no longer needed. Prior approval of the Secretary of Commerce is required. The DNR Director may convey property in exchange for money, security, or other property.

Senate Bill 162 is now law and allows the DNR Director, with approval of the Commerce Secretary, to lease state-owned pore spaces under state forests, natural and scenic areas, wildlife management areas and other lands for carbon sequestration. Parks excluded.

Senate Bill 468 is now law and makes the Cabwaylingo State Forest ATV /ORV /UTV trail pilot project permanent. The Senator from Wayne County tried to amend the bill language to also open the door for off road trails within the rest of the park system on all state forests. That failed and the law now also includes language that prohibits establishment of any additional off road vehicle trail systems within state parks and forests. It does allow the DNR Director to approve development and use of connector trails, roads and parking from private trail systems, including Hatfield McCoy; solely for the purpose of providing access to state park/forest recreational facilities and lodging by off road trail system users.

House Bill 2062 is now law and allows Class 1 and 2 e-bikes to be used on roads/trails where regular bikes are allowed. But unlike the original bill it excludes Class 3 e-bikes and prohibits speed modification of e-bikes or when the motor engages. Class 3 e-bike allowance in the original bill was a concern due to their speed of up to 28 MPH. Class 3 will still be prohibited on a bicycle path, multiuse trail, or single use trail unless it is within a highway or roadway.

House Bill 3370 is now law and amends the possible uses of the State Park Endowment Fund established in 2020 which collects royalties from state owned gas, oil, and other mineral rights under the Ohio River and tributaries as well as any gifts, grants, contributions, or other monies designated for the fund. The original purpose of the fund and investment revenue was for maintaining, improving, and preserving state parks, forests, rail trails, and recreational facilities.

HB 3370 added to the possible uses of the fund to include use as collateral for loans of up to \$5 million for new or existing facilities (\$ 10 million in aggregate) on WV State Parks and resorts constructed on US Army Corps property, wherein such projects have no collateral for loans, and on any other property under the jurisdiction of DNR, or on a hybrid tourism destination.

FY 24 Budget passed with an extra \$52.9 million dollars for park system improvements. The Commerce Secretary has stated that this would be for two new parks, more lodging, game courts and additional recreational facilities, and tram replacement at Hawks Nest and Pipestem.

(Provided by Ken Caplinger on April 17, 2023)

Links to Potential Grant Information

During an email exchange a couple months ago Maggie Hutchison of the Greenbrier River Trail Foundation sent me a list of potential grant sources. This paper includes those links and brief comments about some of them.

Most of the sites are for grants to construct or maintain trails. However, some non-trail projects may be eligible for grants, or can be made eligible, if the grant request is appropriately worded.

transportation.wv.gov/highways/programplanning/grant_administration/Pages/default.aspx

This site is the West Virginia Department of Transportation. It provides information about grants for bicycle/pedestrian and recreational trails. Maggie Hutchison said her foundation has worked with Adam Batty (304-414-6903) at the WV Dept. of Transportation/Highways and he is very knowledgeable and interested in helping.

www.railstotrails.org/about/

www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/#sources

www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/recreational-trails-program/

www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/active-transportation-infrastructure-investment-program/

www.railstotrails.org/media/1173656/caats_atiip_2922.pdf

www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/transportation-alternatives/

The railstotrails.org site is obviously focused on supporting rails to trails projects, but the site also contains links to other resources that may be useful if you don't have a potential rail trail in your park.

www.arc.gov/grants-and-contracts/

This link goes to the Appalachian Regional Commission website. It provides information on a number of programs to foster economic development.

www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants

www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc

The Federal RAISE Discretionary Grant Program helps communities build transportation projects that have significant local or regional impact and improve safety and equity, especially in areas of persistent poverty & historically disadvantaged communities. The grant submission deadline was February 28, but it is possible that a new deadline will be forthcoming.

www.grants.gov/

This is a rather busy-looking site that may or may not be helpful.

usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a

This site has an interactive map that allows you to find "Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts (Historically Disadvantaged Communities)". It may be useful in seeing whether RAISE funding would be applicable in your area.

This information is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to grants, but may serve as a starting point in some cases.

2022 Reports Submitted by Local Foundations

Blackwater Falls State Park Foundation

In October 2022 a group of Canaan Valley Master Naturalist volunteers met with Blackwater Falls State Park naturalist Paulita Cousin to discuss establishing a new foundation in support of activities and programs at the park. The members continued to meet monthly working through the steps to establish a local nonprofit foundation and research the certification process for International Dark Park designation.

At this time all of the required documents have been submitted to both the state and the IRS to gain 501(c)(3) non-profit status. As we await that approval our group continues to meet monthly with the Blackwater Park SP staff to learn more about park operations and needs not covered by State appropriations, as well as the specific upgrades required to become a certified Dark Skies Park.

Joined with members of the Kanawha Valley Astronomical Society, our immediate project is championing Blackwater Falls' application for International Dark Skies designation. To that end Informational materials and presentations will be shared during the upcoming 2023 WV Wildflower Pilgrimage. Significant upgrades to the park's lighting will need to be tackled -- and that is where the newly formed Blackwater Falls SP Foundation will be of assistance -- through fundraising activities and grant applications.

We are eager and excited to build on the work Paulita, BFSP Naturalist, has already accomplished in making Blackwater Falls State Park a very special sky watching destination.

Linda L Cronin, linda.lcronin@gmail.com 304-642-1372

Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc.

Preface. The contributions of the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc. would not be possible without the continued support of the West Virginia State Parks. The support we receive from State Park Leadership is critical to insuring the alignment between the Blennerhassett Island State Park/Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History and the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc.

Most notable to these lines of communication are Brad Reed (Chief of State Parks), Clinton Cochran (Regional Director), Craig Pyles (Blennerhassett State Park Superintendent), and Brent Baker (Blennerhassett State Park Assistance Superintendent).

Comprehensive Inventory of Assets.

The Foundation has been working on a multi-year project in order to perform a comprehensive inventory of all the historical assets on display in the Blennerhassett Mansion and the Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History, and all additional artifacts stored at the Museum which are not currently on display. This project was officially completed at the end of March 2023. It was a monumental effort which has provided both the Blennerhassett State Park and the Foundation with a detailed inventory of all of our combined assets.

Landscape Upgrades at the Mansion.

The landscaping in front of the Blennerhassett Mansion had deteriorated over time. A program was initiated to replace this landscaping. The project was completed in September 2022. In addition, the "Formal Garden" located behind the Mansion was updated with new

mulch. Both of these items have significantly improved the overall presentation of the Mansion and grounds.

Maple Shade Structural Integrity Inspection.

Maple Shade is a home with local historical significance which was moved to Blennerhassett Island in order to preserve its historical significance and enhance the experience for our visitors. There have been items observed in recent years which have raised some concerns about whether there were some structural issues beginning to take place. The Foundation contracted with a local Architectural Firm to do a thorough on-site inspection and evaluation of the structure. This inspection was completed and a detailed report was issued. Fortunately, there were no significant findings. Plans are in place to address the action items which were noted in the report.

HVAC Upgrades in the Museum.

An ARPA Federal Grant was obtained by the Foundation to support the replacement of an HVAC System in the Museum. Competitive bids were obtained for the installation and the contract was awarded. Final installation should be completed during the second quarter of 2023.

Painting of the Mansion

It has been several years since the exterior of the Mansion has been painted. The Foundation, in conjunction with our State Park Leadership, have been working on a project to allow us to get this much needed Maintenance Item completed. We began the

evaluation of alternatives in 2022 and hope to have a detailed plan in place by the summer of 2023. Once

again, we are projecting this project to last over multiple years.

Cacapon Resort State Park Foundation

Treasurer's Report

At the last meeting 4/20/23, the Foundation Treasurer, Jay Redick distributed a copy of the Treasurer's Report showing an ending balance of \$75,333.22 in the checking account with \$51,431.34 in committed funds leaving an available balance of \$23,901.88. The report also showed \$2,595.76 in the CD at CNB, \$3,500 in the maintenance account, \$54,430.60 in the bike trail account, and \$41,411.88 in the bench project account. Beth gave Jay \$52.98 from the iron ranger to be deposited. Rex made a motion to move the remaining \$6,428.34 left in the nature center fencing project out of committed funds into available funds as this project is complete, Beth seconded, and motion passed. The timeline for the \$25,000 committed for the Gazebo at the Falls was discussed and Rex agreed to follow up.

Mountain Bike Trails Update Mark Hoyle Project Leader

Mark Hoyle who lives in nearby Winchester Virginia started the Mountain Bike Trail riding at Cacapon with a team of volunteer mountain bike enthusiasts. He is a member of the Cacapon Foundation and recently reported at our last meeting that all was going well on the construction of the new Mountain Bike Trail coming down from the top of Cacapon Mountain. Future trails will be built with funding from a 3.5 million EDA grant.

Secure Housing for Bikes

This is a new project in the design stages to wash and store mountain bikes for customers who stay at the Lodge.

Green Trail Lighting

This project is to establish lighting for one of the walking trails at Cacapon. The poles have been set and all needed materials purchased. Since the lighting will be on poles a test was run with one light to ensure walkers were not blinded by the lighting. The two project leaders will soon be working with an electrician to set the lighting and bury the wire. Project leaders for this project are Todd Buzzerd and Ben Omph who are working with an electrician hired by the Foundation.

Gazebo at the Falls

This project has been placed on hold.

Nature Center Fencing Project

Lin Dunham and Howard Clark were the project leaders for getting fence established around the Nature Center

to provide a protected area for butterfly plantings and other plant exhibits.

Bench Project

Beth Duboff is the project lead. Rex Barnes and Howard Clark are helping Beth with the project. Beth and her team have done an outstanding job. They recently reported that 42 benches have been donated and 36 have been installed with an additional 3 in the next couple weeks leaving three in inventory. We are still waiting to order the last pallet of benches since there is only a six-week lead time.

Rex reported that we are looking for volunteers to refurbish the remaining six old benches.

Maintenance of Completed Projects- Carpenter Bee Project for Nature Center Building.

Rex hired a company to help refurbish the outside log surface of the Nature Center from Bore Bee and wood pecker damage.

Recycling at Cacapon State Park

Sylvia Thomas and Mark Conrad are working with Kelly Smith to set up recycling bins in the Lodge. If the process goes well in the Lodge, then the next step will be to establish outside containers.

Repair of Dog Park Fence

Project lead Lin Dunham reported that some damage has occurred from tree blow downs to the Dog Park fencing. Once the downed trees and other dead trees are removed Lin will contact the company who built the fence to have repairs completed.

New Business

Bikes for Warm Springs Middle School

Beth Duboff is working on a new project grant with the Berkeley Springs Middle School to buy 18 mountain bikes and training as part of the school physical education program.

Tennis Court Repair

Beth has also researched and established a grant request through the LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) funding that may be available to resurface the tennis courts and line them for tennis and pickleball. She has someone preparing what needs done and the costs associated with completing for submission to the state.

RV Camping sites at Cacapon Resort State Park

An RFP was advertised and closed on March 3 for the establishment of regular camp sites and/or RV camp sites at Cacapon Resort State Park. This has created a lot of community concerns. A public meeting will be held at Cacapon State Park Lodge Tuesday, 4/18/23 at 5pm.

Berkeley Springs and Paw Paw High School Proms

Glen Stotler initially helped the Foundation fund the local High School Proms at Cacapon State Park. With plenty of safe space available Cacapon is an excellent place to hold the Proms. The Proms are scheduled for May 6 and May 13 this year at Cacapon Resort State Park. In the early years of the Foundation a horse drawn

Carriage was purchased and given to Cacapon State Park for the Proms and any other uses that Cacapon may have for the Carriage. This year the Foundation is providing \$500 to Berkeley Springs High School Prom Committee and \$250 to Paw Paw High School Prom Committee. The Paw Paw High School has a small enrollment.

The West Virginia State High School Envirothon Competition will be held later this week at Cacapon Resort State Park. This year there will be 33 teams participating.

Canaan Valley State Park Foundation

In the 2022 calendar, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation completed several listed projects and events. The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation hosted another Sunrise Scramble ski race. The Foundation completed the viewing platform and installed an interpretive sign at the Red Creek Valley Overlook. The Foundation funded the completion of an archeological study required for the installation of the Headwaters Trail and the Canaan Valley Resort State Park. And the Foundation funded and continues to fund the installation of barbecue grills and bicycle washing stations throughout the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

One of the upcoming projects for the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation consists of the funding and construction of a picnic pavilion for the Canaan Valley Resort State Park. The Canaan Valley Resort State Park is in need of picnic facilities for the day visitors. The installation of a picnic pavilion will go a long way toward servicing that need. In addition to the pavilion, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation continues to fund the installation of picnic grills and bicycle washing stations at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

Completed projects for the previous year.

Sunrise Scramble March 2023



One featured Canaan Valley Resort State Park activity is the annual Sunrise Scramble. The Sunrise Scramble event is organized by the Canaan Valley Resort State Park Foundation and is undertaken as a fundraising activity to assist in promoting uphill and back-country skiing at the

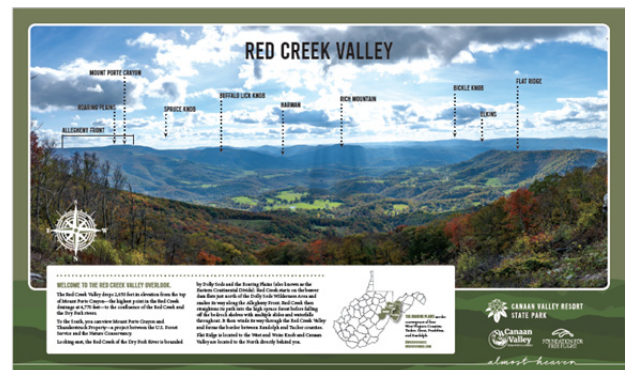
Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

The Sunrise Scramble has grown into one of the premier events in the area. The event helps to define skiing activities in the Canaan Valley Resort State Park rivals the Governor's Cup with respect to annual participation.

Completion of the Red Creek Valley Overlook Interpretive Sign

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation completed the installation of both a viewing platform and an interpretive sign at the Red Creek Valley Overlook.

The overlook is located at a phenomenal viewshed that oversees the Red Creek valley. The site construction was established and funded by the Mountaineer Hang Gliding Association and the Foundation for Free Flight and was established as a paragliding launch located behind the Canaan Valley State Park Ski Hill. The site has grown to become one of the most popular views in the region.



Headwaters Trail

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation partnered with Heart of the Highlands Trails to assist with and fund the development of the Headwaters Trail.

The Headwaters Trail is part of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System, connecting non-motorized trails throughout Canaan Valley and all of Tucker County.

The Headwaters trail will be part of a comprehensive, landscape-oriented, multiuser trail system that is accessible to the general public.

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation worked with West Virginia State Parks to fund the archeological study needed to construct the Headwaters Trail. Because seventy-five percent of the Headwaters Trail resides within the Canaan Valley Resort State Park, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park stands to be the principal beneficiary of this trail.

Ongoing activities at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

Bicycle Trails, Bicycle Wash Stations, Picnic Tables, and Barbeque Grills

This year, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation plans to continue working on the installation of bicycle trails, bicycle wash stations, and picnic tables in various locations around the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

Bicycle riding and trail hiking are major attractions in the state park and throughout the local community. The Canaan Valley Resort State Park contributes to these attractions by providing trails, facilities, and bicycles for rent. This year, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park Foundation plans to further contribute to these

activities by providing trail maintenance and bicycle maintenance stations within the park.

For years, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park suffered from a dearth of picnic facilities. The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation seeks to remedy the shortage by funding the park's installation of picnic tables and barbeque grills.

Picnic Pavilion

One major thing that the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation plans to do to provide picnic facilities within the park is to move forward with the construction of a dedicated all-weather picnic facility within the park. In that regard, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation is again avidly working forward with the construction of a picnic pavilion. The foundation has been the lucky recipient of a \$25,000 gift toward the completion of the project. The foundation plans to apply for an additional \$25,000 matching fund from West Virginia State Parks. The foundation has been talking to local contractors and builders concerning project costs and hopes to complete a final design by summer's end. With a design in hand, the Foundation would like to initiate project construction sometime this year.

Cedar Creek State Park Foundation

The Foundation has had another very successful year. The Foundation accomplished several new improvements to the park as well as volunteer labor to assist the staff with routine maintenance projects. Volunteers provided approximately 506 hours helping the park staff with replacing a broken waterline, painting the General Store, Recreation Building, and two bathhouses. Pouring concrete for six new pads, spreading mulch in all the playgrounds and general small repair projects throughout the camping season.

Several projects were completed this year by foundation members direct donations for specific projects that were of interest to them. One family purchased shower heads, curtain rods, curtains and handrails for the bathhouses throughout the park totaling \$650.00. Three members purchased concrete for six new pads on campsites totaling \$1,800.00. Two members purchased new tools and truck mounted boxes for the maintenance truck totaling \$3,000.00.

The Foundation provided \$780.00 for gravel to be used as needed and purchased spring rider toys for the playgrounds valued at \$2,917.00.

A stream cleanup held in June resulted in many tires and old metal and plastic items being removed from Cedar Creek, which runs through the park boundary.

The Foundation has four annual events for campers and local citizens which are:

The Fourth of July celebration. This event attracted a large crowd that enjoyed music, food and several different activities for children and adults.

The Fall Festival in September. This was the third year for this event and it was a tremendous success in terms of the number of vendors and crowd size. It was our largest fund raiser for the year.

A Halloween Trunk or Treat. Campers decorated their sites and passed out candy to children as they went through the park. Over a hundred children and adults from both the campground and local community participated. Prizes were given for the top three best decorated sites.

Christmas lighting displays. Camp sites were decorated by local businesses and churches throughout the park and is a drive through event open to the public over two weekends in December. Large crowds enjoyed both weekends.

Coopers Rock Foundation

Major accomplishments on the forest during 2022:

- Finished construction of a historical replica of a wooden entryway over the main road into the state forest designed to resemble an original CCC entryway.
- Provided funding for electricity to be extended to the restrooms at the Rhododendron Campground.
- Disc golf course opened on 71 acres of what used to be DOF managed lands in conjunction with the Mountain Goats Disc Golf Club.
- Organized over 400 Hours of work performed by the CRF Volunteer Trail work program including the roadside trail, Rhododendron trail, the Overlook Picnic Area, and the Day Use Parking Lot area. This total includes tent pad construction at the Rhododendron Campground.

Events held during 2022:

- Winterfest in February – cross country skiing, sledding, winter tree ID hike, women’s frying pan toss
- Fund raising trail race in April (50 Km and half marathon)
- Celebration of the Outdoors in October – raptor demonstration, guided hikes, kids’ activities
- Fundraiser at the Morgantown Art Bar in November

Current projects being pursued:

- Obtaining funding and a contractor to renovate overlook bathrooms.
- Tree planting on harvested timber areas of the forest.
- Creation of a trail map of the forest

Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc.

In 2022, Elk River Trail Foundation (ERTF) commenced work to implement the Elk River Trail Town Plan completed in October 2021, which included having public meetings in each trail town. ERTF is applying in 2023 for a \$1.385 million Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant to implement the plan. The project encompasses business coaching, façade renovations and upgrades to dilapidated buildings, wayfinding signage, improved connectivity to towns, five additional or improved public river access points, construction of four town trailhead improvements, a robust marketing program partnering with the Department of Tourism, adding staff and accounting services, and increased website/social media presence. The Elk River Trail is now in Phase 1 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s new “Rural Partners Network” program as part of the “Pioneer Trail Town” signature project.

ERTF has also in 2022 – early 2023:

- Received a grant to install a bike repair station at the Ivydale Trailhead with the goal of having one at each trailhead.
- Received a grant for an anti-litter campaign along the river.

- Planned a river clean-up that was postponed until 2023 because of unfavorable river conditions and now working on an expanded clean-up effort.
- Obtained a grant and purchased mileage marker signs to install along the river, which will be coordinated with the trail mileage markers and road mileage markers and provided to first responders to improve reaction time and contribute to safety of paddlers and boaters.
- Embarked upon a project to improve its website, add interactive maps showing all trailheads and river access points, directions to each, and local tourist amenities and attractions in the vicinity, and engage a web designer to continually update the website.
- Started a project to place benches along designated parts of the trail.
- Participated in the first Elk River Trail Marathon and is assisting with planning the second.
- Begun the process of selling land to DNR that will be used in connection with a new visitor’s center to be constructed in Dundon (across the river from Clay).

Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation

During 2022 the following actions were taken by the Forks of Coal State natural Area Foundation:

- The Foundation completed the installation of exhibits and furnishings at the Claudia L. Workman

Wildlife Education Center. This included the addition of a bee hive, peregrine falcon mount, 3 coal and Coal River history information banner stands,

- bench seating for the lobby, crowd flow ropes, terraria equipment and animals, and sponsor plaque.
- An additional informational panel on American Indians has been designed and is in production
- An additional bee hive and informational sign has been designed and is in production
- Participated in Opening Day Celebration with DNR of the Center. Estimated over 1500 visitors came to the Center that day.
- Participated in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with Governor Justice the following week.
- Participated in Back to School STEAM event for youth
- Approximately 70 bricks were ordered and installed at the Center
- Wetlands sign has been designed and produced with 2022 Stream Partners Grant funds
- Received 2023 Stream Partners Grant for purchase of water quality monitoring equipment
- Provided volunteers for Center staff for several school visits and public programs
- Worked with DEP to develop and produce an informational brochure for the Center. Distribution to area highway rest centers and business is ongoing.
- Worked with Boone Career and Technical Center to repair and install the outdoor Christmas Tree
- Worked with Boone Career and Technical Center to complete trail maintenance and improvements. Activities included weeding, mulching, water runoff management, and sign installation.
- Worked with a local Girl Scout troop to plant trees near the Center
- Other trail improvements were made on several work days throughout the year. These included:
 - Installation of geocache by a local Girl Scout
 - Rerouting of parts of the Blue and Orange trails
 - Removal of downed trees and shrubs
 - Installation of Roof Rock sign
 - Installation of Chimney Swift Tower interpretive signs
 - Installation of Mine Portal interpretive sign
 - Planting in the Pollinator Field
 - Creation and mowing of pollinator field wandering trail and hillside trail
- The Foundation has purchased several pieces of equipment to aid in trail maintenance.
- Received deed to 185 acres of Workman Estate property across the highway from the State Natural Area.

Greenbrier River Trail Foundation

In GRTF's second year the focus was on support of the Park Superintendent's number one priority: re-decking the 37 bridges on the Trail. In support of this goal, the GRTF Board initiated the following actions:

- Co-sponsored 2022 application on behalf of WV Division of Natural Resources (State Parks) and GRTF for a WV Department of Transportation (Division of Highways) Federal Transportation Alternatives grant in the amount of \$764,000. No award announcement has been made at this time.
- If awarded, a 20% match of \$153,000 is required. In 2022 the GRTF Board applied and received funding for a total of \$120,000 from the Foundations listed below for match funds. We continue to work on securing the additional \$33,000.

■ Hollowell Dawkins	\$20,000
■ Seneca Foundation	\$25,000 (Pledge)
■ James F. B. Peyton Foundation	\$50,000
■ State Parks Foundation	\$25,000

Other activities:

- Louise R. Lester Grant: Applied, awarded and executed a 2022 grant supplemented by GRTA funds (\$5,000 + \$3,500) for poured concrete stairs for access from the Trail at MM15 to the River. Steps from the Trail to the River now provide easier and safer access for Trail Visitors. Steps make it possible, easier and safer for small children, parents carrying infants, the elderly, and people with mobility impairments to access the River.
- The James F. B. Peyton Foundation \$25,000 2021 grant to support landscaping requirements in the new Caldwell Trailhead Parking Lot remains in process due to the delays in contracting by the WV Department of Transportation/Division of Highways. According to the plan, we executed Phase I (Screening of the Property Border: \$12,808) in November and December 2021. Hopefully, Phase II will be completed in the Spring of 2023.
- Continued to expand reach of Little Green Light (LGL) donor management software to foster Fundraising. In 2022 approximately \$4,500 was raised from Greenbrier River Trail Association and Foundation databases. Two (Spring and Fall) 2022

Newsletters prompted the donations. We currently have 1,400 members in the database which is integrated with Pay Pal and MailChimp to facilitate collection of funds and efficient communication of Newsletters etc.

- QR codes were also approved by WV DNR (State Parks) and allow easy Trail user contributions via phone while visiting the Trail.
- Routine Trail maintenance (cut and remove downed trees, scrub/paint bathrooms, clean shelters, repair shelters, weed removal around new landscaping at Caldwell Trailhead; install QR signs)
- Considerable time devoted to grant writing and administration.

Meanwhile, GRTA also has several actions and grants in process including:

- Development of 5.5 acre parcel at Caldwell for new Trailhead parking and picnicking. (GRTA transferred ownership to DNR State Parks) Purchase complete (\$112,500 + \$5,625 match); Development (\$121,540 + \$15,924 match) in Process matching funds have been paid. We have experienced contracting delays with WV DOT/Division of Highways. We are currently being told that the contract will be advertised in January 2023.
- Additional toilets and shelters (this work was completed w/o the grant; funds approved for re-purpose of this grant for Caldwell Trailhead) (\$42,500 + \$10,600 match) Matching funds were paid by GRTA to WV DOH in 2021. WV Division of Highways has indicated that these match funds will be returned to GRTA for re-purposing.
- US Forest Service: 2020 Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Title II grant, for Informational Signage (\$40,000) In Process. Considerable work was accomplished by Board members and volunteers in support of this

effort. Submitted signs have been approved by the State Park Superintendent. In the spring of 2023 we will assist the Superintendent with installation of the signs which will complete the project.

- On behalf of the Trail (completed under the auspices of GRTA) the 2022 Great Greenbrier River Race cleared approximately \$18,000 which will be used for future Trail projects. The Greenbrier River Trail Marathon in its second year broke even. We anticipate more focused work on sponsorships to make the GGRM profitable.

In April the Chair of GRTA/F attended our second State Parks Foundation meeting with WV State Park officials and former officials still tirelessly working to making WV State Park system better.

Volunteer Hour Summary

ACTIVITIES	GRTF		GRTA		TOTAL
	Board	Volunteers	Board	Volunteers	
TOTALS	905	179	343	840	2,24
	GRTF Hours:	1,084	GRTA Hours:	1,183	

2023 Plans

In support of the State Park Superintendent’s identified priorities we highlight the following 2023 plans:

- GRTF Board members are working with Greenbrier East High School (Kevin Warfield and his STEM students) to conduct a Risk Assessment of the Trail with a focus on drainage. A report of this nature will support requests for future Foundation and RTP grants.
- Application in 2023 for a Recreation Trail Program grant for \$25 - \$30k for gravel from MM16 south.
- Close coordination, administration and completion of 2023 Race, Marathon and Grant activities outlined above.

Holly River State Park Foundation, Inc.

2022 was a very productive year. We purchased reservoir fence, mulch, gravel, two refrigerators for cabins, fire rings, grills, fireplace grates. Had a new pavilion built to house Cider Press and Cane Mill donated by Walt Shupe. It attracts a lot of visitors.

Also ball field upgrade. Looking forward for a better 2023.

Kanawha State Forest

In the past year the foundation has completed our ADA area which has an ADA playground and trail. The final addition was installed recently with an ADA vault toilet. We are proud of this addition to allow additional people to enjoy our beautiful forest.

It has been a dream of our foundation to complete a 13-mile ridge trail known as Middle Ridge Trail. With the help of a local grant by businesses and another foundation we completed one access this year. The other access is in the application process with an

Abandon Mines grant and should start work early in 2024.

With the assistance of the park trail coordinator a communication system has set up to identify down trees and erosion control on the trail network. Once identified and reported to the park office an email blast is sent out and volunteers come out to remove the tree or shore up the trail. With over 60 miles of trails this system was very much needed. Our volunteer program has been very successful in not only maintaining our trails but includes painting shelters, signage and landscaping.

We continue to offer hikes throughout the year and have partnered with the local Master Naturalist program to provide hike leaders for our events. Additionally with the renovations to the new park office a Nature Center was created. With the work provided by the Mater Naturalist and the funding of the foundation, the Nature Center is now open. Since the center is open the

foundation has restarted our outdoor classroom education with our local elementary schools' grades K-12. The local schools have booked every week in April and May this year. Education modules were developed to be provided on these days based on the age group. The modules include tree identification, insect identification, stream habitat, bear habitat, and owl pellet dissection. We hope to expand this education next year to include middle and high school students.

An old Growth Forest was identified within the park. Guided tours for individual who cannot access this area were developed with the generosity of another grant. Wireless headsets were purchased to allow the presenter to explain the area while the individual can sit in their car.

The WV geological society also donated kiosk explaining the geological features within the park. They explain how the mountains were developed and explain why coal mining years ago was important to the area.

Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association (Cass Railroad)

MSR&LHA is no longer involved with the railroad at Cass, but we continue to support the Park. Our 2022 accomplishments included:

- Supported a very successful "Cass Days" event that drew the largest crowd ever to attend a Park event. All of the Park's parking was filled and shuttles had to be run from a site outside of town.
- Funded the creation of a historically appropriate new sign for the Company Store gift shop based on the actual sign on the store in the 1940s.

- Purchased a new digital projector for the Community Center.
- Provided funds to improve the northern terminus of the Greenbrier River Trail that terminates in Cass.
- Provided partial funding for an AmeriCorps volunteer to work on various projects in Cass.
- Purchased additional decorations to help make the Park a more festive destination during the holiday season. Funding was also for Halloween activities and a visit from Santa Claus.

North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation, Inc.

Since last year's State Parks Foundation meeting, the North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation, Inc. (NBRTF) has been very busy. After completion of the fiber installation project, all 72 miles of the trail are now open to the public.

A comfort station was placed along the rail-trail near mile marker 14, two miles east of Walker. This project was funded through a \$38,200 grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trail Program administered by the West Virginia DOT. We also wrapped up another DOT grant which replaced two culverts and completed a mile of ditching in Wolf Summit, Harrison County. Through donations and membership fees, the Foundation was able to pay 20% of the cost of both projects.

The Parkersburg Area Community Foundation awarded the NBRTF a grant for \$8,150 for five additional Fix-It-Stations which were installed along the rail-trail in

Wood, Ritchie and Doddridge counties. Equipped with emergency tools and tire pumps, these stations are now in use at Happy Valley, Walker, Petroleum, Cairo, Pennsboro, West Union, Smithburg and Salem. A Fix-It Station is coming soon to Wolf Summit. These stations aid cyclists with flat tires or mechanical problems while using the trail.

Ken Adams, NBRTF Vice-Chair, was awarded the Governor's Service Award on June 16, 2022 at a banquet at the Cultural Center in Charleston. Ken received his award from Ann Urling, Deputy Chief of Staff, in recognition for all he does for the North Bend Rail Trail and the Foundation.

A funding campaign by Vice-Chair Ken Adams raised \$15,000 for ongoing bridgework and deck repairs in Doddridge, Ritchie and Wood counties. The Ritchie County Commission donated over \$38,000 to the

NBRTF to reconstruct or repair all bridges in Ritchie County.

Last Year the NBRTF participated in Celebrate Trails Day, a luminary walk at North Bend State Park, the Ephraim Bee Festival, Volcano Days, the Apple Butter Festival and the Head for the Hills Poker Run. Through product sales and donations at these events, the Foundation raised funds for supplies and tools for trail maintenance and upgrades.

The NBRTF has a new website...info@nbrtf.com. It is still a work in progress, but our goal is to eventually allow people to purchase products, make donations and pay their membership dues online. The Foundation also logged over 3,000 volunteer hours in 2022

Two weeks ago the Foundation was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the WV Transportation Alternative and

Recreational Trails Program to survey and ditch the trail. This is Phase 1 of a multi-phase project to divert damaging rain and groundwater from the trail.

Last week the Foundation submitted a PACF Community Action Grant for \$19,000 for 15 animal resistant trash receptacles recommended by our trail superintendent, Paul Elliott.

Our goals for the upcoming year are to build a shelter beside the new comfort station at Walker and a new shelter in Salem to replace the current dilapidated shelter. We would like to purchase more handicap-accessible picnic tables and fire rings to place along the trail. As usual, we will keep promoting the rail-trail and continue writing grants and raising funds at several local events.

North Bend State Park Foundation

During the past year the North Bend State Park Foundation, Inc. has focused on expanding our Board of Directors and on fundraising. We have added four new Board members, replacing two who timed off the Board under our six year term limits. The net gain in members nearly fills all our Board seats.

We have had a long-standing relationship with the Ellenboro Volunteer Fire Department Bash. For about fifteen years we have sold instant win tickets at their event. Historically we have been paid \$1,500.00 for our work. For the 2022 Bash the Fire Department raised our pay to \$2,500.00. We supplied about a dozen workers for their ticket sales, and we sold over one hundred thousand tickets for them.

We added a new fundraising event this year. We organized and hosted Chocolate with Friends which was a chocolate themed event held in conjunction with North Bend's Sweethearts Weekend on the Saturday before Valentine's Day. Twenty-two couples from the Sweethearts weekend attended and one hundred ten people from the community attended. We had chocolate treats from over twenty businesses and home bakers and chocolatiers. All the costs were covered by donations allowing the Foundation to enjoy a profit of \$3,084.00. We believe everyone enjoyed this event and that it has potential to grow. We intend to make it an annual event.

We did not undertake any new projects in the past year. We did do some minor funding for gravel for trail

improvement. We hope to identify and move forward on a larger scale project in the coming months.

Past Foundation Projects:

- Construction of a sidewalk to the most popular picnic and activity shelter.
- Planting of about one hundred trees at Cokeley Campground.
- Installation of solar lighting at Cokeley boat launch.
- Purchasing materials for wooden outdoor furniture for the pool.
- New signs for all the trails within the park.
- Purchased playground equipment at multiple locations
- Repair and extension of the Extra Mile Trail, including a wooden deck.
- Purchased software for activity booking.
- Constructed two wooden multiuse bridges on trails
- 2018 - Assist with construction of first two miles of "Old Farm Trail"
- 2019 Using matching funds, was responsible for the completion of the final mile of the "Old Farm Trail",
- 2020 Using matching funds – turnkey construction of an ADA compliant ramp and walkway, with railings.

Stonewall State Park Foundation

Stonewall State Park Foundation continues to facilitate fundraising and support for improvements projects at Stonewall Resort State Park, located in Roanoke, West

Virginia. In the past year, we have taken many steps to improve Stonewall Resort, including the following:

- Progressing the restoration of the Historic Fox Cabin, including replacing the roof and rafters, and installing decking and a fireplace. Work continues on the cabin in 2023.
- Providing Wi-Fi access to the RV campground.
- Completing a reseal of the lodge parking lot.
- Expanding the Passive Park Trail and adding a boardwalk and mini bridges.
- Continued to hold the Roanoke Shoe Drive, in which we provide a new pair of shoes for every child at Roanoke Elementary School. In 2022, we were also able to provide socks and sundry packs to each child.
- Sponsoring the Beyond the Fairways Tournament with First Tee of West Virginia, encouraging

individuals and groups to participate as a method of fundraising.

- Hosted a public workshop at the Fox Cabin to give log chinking lessons and using the proceeds to renovate and repair the Fox Cabin.
- Sponsoring the Lewis County Math Field Day at Stonewall Resort, and providing lunches for 75 students and teachers.

The Foundation will continue to aid the Resort in completing various expansion projects to enhance the property. By working with the WVDNR, Stonewall has been able to apply for various large grants to create new opportunities for the community.

Tomlinson Run State Park Foundation

Last year the Tomlinson Run volunteer foundation hosted a variety of events, including a car show, mountain bike race, half marathon, 5k race, pre-1840 rendezvous, and a cooked breakfast on weekends throughout the summer. These events are open to the public, and we welcome everyone to come and participate. In addition to these events, we have also made some significant investments in new equipment. We have purchased four new kayaks, which were available for visitors to use and enjoy on the park's lake. We believe that kayaking is a fantastic way to explore

the beauty of the park and to get some exercise while doing so. We also purchased two new bunk beds and mattresses for one of our new camping cabins.

Overall, we are thrilled with the progress we have made in enhancing the offerings of the Tomlinson Run State Park. We hope that these improvements will encourage more visitors to come and enjoy the park's natural beauty.

Tygart Lake State Park Foundation

Park Officials:

Superintendent, Pat Miller
Assistant Superintendent, Ben Queen
Naturalist, Jacob Jackson

Officers:

President, Jenny Bobela
Vice President, Candy Layfield
Treasurer, Netti Harper
Secretary, Shelley Elsey

The Tygart Lake State Park Foundation program is supported by the energy and volunteer work provided by this small, but fierce organization that provides the park and community with countless volunteer hours. Our mission is to successfully assist in improvements and upgrading the park facilities through annual events, fundraisers, and special projects.

Events:

- **Easter Egg Hunt** - Hunting 3,000 eggs, lots of candy, and pictures with the Easter Bunny.
- **Spring Employee Appreciation Luncheon** - Staff from the State Park, Marina, and the Adventure Park

were served a cookout style lunch to kick off the 2022 season.

- **Murder Mystery Dinner Show** - Naturalist - We sponsored this sold-out program.
- **Earth Day** - Volunteers, First Energy, participated in Park Cleanup Day/Trail Clean up.
- **Memorial Day Weekend of Events** in conjunction with The Spirit of Grafton. Music in the Park, we had a band at the lodge for visitors and boaters on the lake. Kona Ice Vendor was at the lodge and the parade route. Memorial Day Parade, members decorated the park truck, wore foundation T-Shirts, marched, and handed out candy to the spectators.
- **Fishing Derby** - Sponsored and distributed fishing poles, prizes, and refreshments.
- **Celebrate WV Program** - Sponsored WV Day Activity - the Mick Sutter, Music Program.
- **Music in the Park** - Summer Music Series, occurs monthly with a variety of bands.
- **Snakes of West Virginia** - Program sponsored by naturalist at the Nature Center.

- **Art in the Park** - Sponsored by the Taylor County Arts Council at the Nature Center.
- **Birds of Prey** - Wings of Wonder, sponsored by naturalist at Nature Center shelter.
- **Farm to Table** - The Lodge sponsored and provided locally grown food to a sold-out dinner with Bluegrass music.
- **Appalachian Autumn Fest** - crafters, vendors, and exhibits as well as hayrides, Chinese auction and apple-butter making, while the spectators helped with stirring.
- **Fall Employee Appreciation Luncheon** - Staff from the State Park, Marina, and the Adventure Park were served a luncheon to show gratitude for 2022 season well done.
- **Fall Event** - Naturalist - Friday, Geology Presentation with a Hike on Saturday.
- **Spooktacular Drive Through**/Trunk or Treat for Halloween Event with community support
- In November marched in Annual Veteran's Day Parade and sponsored a Turkey Trot.

Christmas

- **Breakfast with Santa** - At the lodge, members provided Christmas cookies, hot chocolate, a craft, a picture with Santa, face-painting, and a book give-away.
- **Christmas Parade** - We decorated the park truck, marched, and distributed candy.

Valley Falls State Park Foundation

2022 Income

- Gift Shop Sales \$38,857.00
- Chair Rentals for weddings \$1,243.00
- Grant from Marion County Commission
- Individual donations

2022 Projects

- Foot bridge with railings repair, Eagle Scout Project funded by Foundation
- Seven playground mats for high traffic area installed in recently improved playground
- Purchased plow and spreader attachment for mule
- Baby changing stations and new soap dispensers installed in each bathroom
- Painted Gift Shop
- Master Gardener plus other Foundation volunteers continue improving flower beds

Progress and Development

Projects

- Trails

Park Awareness and Tourism

- Facebook Page
- Mountaineer Country Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Travel booklet showcasing park with rack cards and pamphlets.
- Local newspaper coverage for all events.
- Signs - Park and Sponsors

Networking

- Acknowledge local Chamber of Commerce efforts
- Collaborate and support park officials and employees
- Seek supporters, key contributors, and Corporate sponsorships
- Establish financial and funding efforts
- Collaborate with Marina for boating and Princess Cruises.
- Join forces with Boat Clubs, boat owners, and Ace Water Adventures.
- Apply for Grants and funding opportunities

- Sponsor of Christmas light display (1st of 5 years) at Morris Park as part of United Way fundraiser
- One volunteer attended vendor show at Appalachian Glass in Weston
- Providing two port-a-johns while restrooms are closed for the winter months

2023 Volunteer Hours

- Gift Shop was opened weekends plus Fridays and holidays May through October
- Approximately 975 volunteer hours including master gardener and meeting attendees

Public Relations

- Continued updating of Facebook page
- Light display at Morris Park

Park Events

- Endurance Marathon, Enduro Mountain bike race (96 participants), car show, Trail run race, Saw-Whet Owl banding and kayak training course event

2023 Projects

- Gift Shop will be opening in May
- An approximate 24x30 foot educational shelter to be used for presentations by our Park Superintendent,

saw whet owl banding, and as a shelter for bikers and hikers is in the planning stages.

Watoga State Park Foundation

Watoga State Park was extremely popular in 2022, having over a 100% occupancy rate at times, and maintaining a very high level of use throughout the year. A contributing factor to the park's popularity and high occupancy numbers were efforts by the Watoga State Park Foundation to assist with maintenance, activities, and development.

Dark Sky Designation and Events

In October 2021, the Foundation, through its Dark Sky Committee, obtained official International Dark Sky Association (IDA) designation as a Dark Sky Park, the



first-ever in West Virginia. The Foundation worked relentlessly for two years to meet IDA specifications for light fixtures throughout the Park, conduct light studies, educational programs, and more.

The annual report to the IDA for 2022 has been submitted and accepted.

The Foundation held four educational events for the Dark Sky program in 2022. The Foundation hosted a Night Sky Photography workshop by renowned state photographer Jesse Thornton. Additional required educational events were held, such as Night Lives of Birds and Nocturnal Wildlife, focusing on Synchronous Fireflies, with Watoga recognized as a protected habitat for these species. The Foundation's first Star Party was held at Droop Mountain Battlefield Lookout Tower in September with attendance by many people from near and far, learning about telescopes, light pollution, and how to reduce their lighting footprint. The Foundation received a \$1,300 grant from Pocahontas County Fairs and Festivals for the Star Party.

Workman Cabin

The Foundation obtained funding for repairs to the Workman Cabin, a small, pioneer-era log cabin, located in the park, through grants from the Pocahontas County Historic Landmarks Commission. The Foundation began restoration efforts on the Cabin in 2021. This work involved replacing portions of the foundation and installing new flooring. In 2022, Wayne Pollard, foundation board member and volunteer, finished the

cabin's windows, shutters, doorknobs, and steps. Many other volunteers have selflessly donated time, resources, and financial assistance to this project.

Bicentennial Hike

The Foundation sponsored a guided hike to the Workman Cabin on July 2, 2022 to celebrate Pocahontas County's bicentennial. The cabin and cemetery were cleaned and prepared by Foundation members and volunteers. Sollie Workman, Mark Mengele, and Anne Workman led the tour.

Watoga Trail Races

The Foundation sponsored its 6th Annual Mountain Trail Challenge Half-Marathon and 5k races on August 13, 2022. This involved hundreds of volunteer hours from many citizens from the community as well as from



the Foundation Board. The Foundation received a Pocahontas County CVB Grant to assist with publicity.

It also received donations from about 20 local businesses, through the efforts of board member Wayne Pollard.

Benches and Rocking Chairs

For several years, the Foundation has installed 75 memorial benches in the Park. The Bench Project was replaced this past year with the Rocking Chair Project. Like the benches, the rocking chairs have a plaque mounted on them, but they are situated on Park cabins' porches and decks.

Art in the Park

The Foundation is a part of Art in the Park, an arts, crafts, and music event held annually during Labor Day weekend. This event is sponsored by a separate artisan organization, but the Foundation has participated since its inception.

Trails and Grounds Maintenance



Foundation board members David Elliott and Anne Workman, as well as regular volunteer Sollie Workman, have devoted numerous hours to trail maintenance throughout the Park. David also cleaned and marked the trails for the trail races. The

Crossroads Church Youth group from Maryland and the Washington, D.C.-based Tae Kwon Do Club has assisted the Foundation for several years with trail upkeep.

Foundation board member Mary Dawson and others planted wildflowers and ferns in front of Park headquarters. The Foundation purchased additional flowers for the grounds.

Disc Golf Course

The Foundation has been working on a Disc Golf Course for several years. We have nine holes operational. The Foundation is working to complete the 18-hole course and planning to host disc golf tournaments in the near future.

Future Projects

The Foundation is looking into replacing the log playground equipment in the park.