



BEYOND BORDERS: Uniting Neighbors Around Conservation



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Within the borders of Shenandoah National Park, 200,000 acres of protected forest blankets the Blue Ridge Mountains – a long, deep green spine of wildlands through central Virginia. This forest serves as the backbone for the region’s conservation efforts, linking hundreds of private properties, farms, and public lands together in a tapestry of vibrant ecology and community. For decades, collaboration across these varied stakeholders has resulted in conservation projects around the park’s boundary. However, connecting that work to the park has been limited by capacity and communication with the park, leaving Shenandoah isolated within its own borders and unique federal priorities — a tear in the fabric of the regional conservation effort.

The Trust is uniquely positioned to bridge this gap as both an active park partner and connector for gateway communities. Last spring, the Trust launched the **Good Neighbors Program**, an initiative designed to unite the park with its surrounding communities around large landscape conservation efforts. “It’s a highly collaborative approach that brings together people across geographies, sectors, and cultures to collaborate on conserving landscapes and the environmental, cultural, and economic benefits they bring to the region,” explained Elizabeth Mizell, the Good Neighbors Program Manager.

By fostering connectivity between Shenandoah and its neighbors, the Good Neighbors Program aims to encourage vitality within outdoor spaces, preserve cultural heritage, and support the park’s role as an economic driver for the region. Whether it’s assisting private landowners in managing forests sustainably, combating invasive species at the park’s edges, or protecting critical gateway habitats through conservation easements, the focus is on collaboration and long-term impact, both in the park and the broader region.

“Without a thriving forest ecosystem in the park, there wouldn’t be a reason to visit,” Mizell said.


It’s a vision of a unified region where ecological health supports economic vitality and cultural richness.

“We’d lose that economic driver – all those jobs and tourism dollars – along with it.” In the decades to come, she envisions a thriving Shenandoah, bordered by healthy forests, preserved historic landmarks, and neighbors engaged in conservation. It’s a vision of a unified region where ecological health supports economic vitality and cultural richness.

Shenandoah’s future depends on the actions of its community—private landowners, conservationists, and supporters alike. Through partnerships and grass-roots efforts, a connected, resilient landscape is within reach. Together, we can ensure that the beauty, biodiversity, deep cultural roots, and economic benefits of Shenandoah endure for generations to come.

Learn more about the Good Neighbors Program on our website at snptrust.org/good-neighbors or by emailing emizell@snptrust.org

Dear friends,

As spring returns to Shenandoah, the season of renewal reminds us why we cherish this remarkable landscape. Wildflowers bloom, wildlife stirs, and the trails invite us to reconnect. Yet, while nature's rhythms remain steady, uncertainties in the federal government create challenges for our public lands.


Through every season, Shenandoah National Park Trust stands ready. Regardless of shifting policies or funding concerns, our commitment to Shenandoah remains steadfast. With your support, we continue to fund essential projects, safeguard critical ecosystems, and ensure outdoor recreation is accessible to all.

As we embrace the renewal of spring, we reaffirm our role as a dedicated partner to Shenandoah National Park. Together, we will protect and strengthen this extraordinary place—no matter what lies ahead.



Jessica Cocciolone
Executive Director | Shenandoah National Park Trust



 NPS



Inside Shenandoah

J. Tracy Stakely | Superintendent | Shenandoah National Park



Shenandoah National Park is a unique resource for our region and our nation. Over 20 million neighbors live within just four hours of Shenandoah. The park's developed areas, backcountry wilderness, and scenic Skyline Drive provide numerous opportunities for these local neighbors and visitors from around the world. Viewing magnificent scenery, experiencing quiet and solitude, engaging in outdoor recreation, and learning about the region's cultural and natural history are just a few of the ways to experience Shenandoah.


When I began my tenure as superintendent last fall, I was encouraged to

learn of the strong partnerships that have supported the work of preserving resources and promoting the park over many years. It is through these collaborative efforts that we can really make a positive impact. Community engagement has long been a central tenet of my leadership, and while I'm at the park, I hope to continue improving collaboration with the park's staff, partner organizations, and local communities to achieve shared goals. I feel this is best accomplished by learning from everyone's unique perspectives and experiences and then using that valuable input to guide the work.

In my first six months I've already heard about the many successful and ongoing partnership efforts with the

Trust and witnessed the high level of passion for and dedication to collaborative work between our staff, our partners, and the public. This spring, I'm looking forward to welcoming a new community of seasonal staff into the park. I also hope there will be many new park enthusiasts eager to engage with the Trust and the park. I look forward to hearing the new ideas each of these individuals will bring. I know they will help us develop innovative and exciting partnership opportunities to enhance an already amazing place and help us improve park access for all.

Thank you for engaging in our collaborative work to preserve, protect, and share this magnificent park. Your support really does make all the difference.

 NPS

Perspective, Presence, Peace:

Project Healing Waters

Shenandoah National Park is a refuge, a place where the world is quiet. Cell phones don't have service, the speed limit holds people to a slower pace, and many wilderness destinations are only accessible on foot. For military veterans involved with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF), the park offers a special kind of refuge: healing.

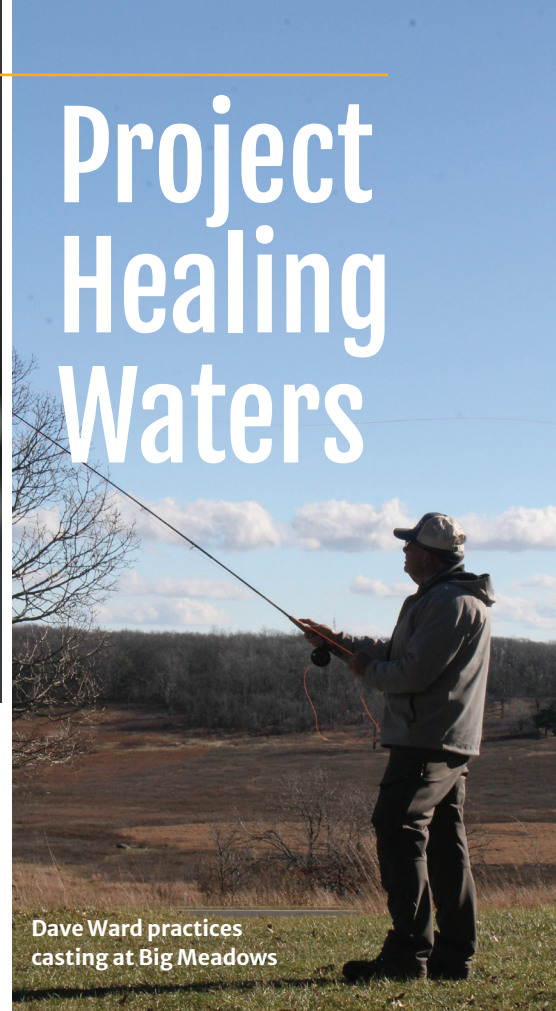
PHWFF is an organization that helps disabled veterans heal from the experiences of physical and mental trauma through fly fishing and being in the great outdoors. "Many of these veterans come home angry, and for years, all they do is worry about their memories, their bills,

their addictions, their lives; there's no peace." said Dan Genest, a volunteer for the organization. "But you get them out on the river, and all that stuff disappears. Even if it's just for a few hours, it's a huge lift off them."

For many veterans, it is both difficult and necessary to find an activity that is so fully engaging that it can completely occupy their minds and bodies for a long period of time. Shenandoah's streams provide a setting for that active healing, removed from the often-overwhelming distractions of daily life.

Veteran Matthew Daniel said, "I think all of us have a series of thoughts that we carry around with us day to day, and some of those are painful. When you can be in the water, that stuff fades, and you come to just one point in time... you're more authentic." He compared outings with PHWFF to physical therapy, explaining how it made him stronger each time he went and helped him get back to a place of normalcy.

Daniel also spoke to the community element of the healing process he's found through PHWFF, saying, "The more you're around people who support you and have gone through the same things, the more those monsters start getting a lot smaller and a lot more manageable. Fly fishing itself is healing, and the camaraderie changes the dynamic. It becomes something even stronger."



Dave Ward practices casting at Big Meadows

This past Veteran's Day, representatives from PHWFF chapters across Virginia offered public programming at the park's visitor centers, teaching people how to become fully present in the park through tying flies and casting lines with practice rods.

As veterans guided visitors through the intricacies of winding string, wire, and other materials around fishing hooks to make flies, Dave Ward, the leader of the

Fredericksburg program, shared that no matter whether someone was tying or casting, "it's that very concentration and focus that you're paying attention to. You have to be totally present. It takes your mind

off of everything else. Makes it quiet." The Trust is proud to partner with PHWFF in Shenandoah National Park this spring, funding two group excursions into the park to help veterans heal both physically and emotionally. Healing is at the heart of this partnership, as is the shared goal of advocating for healthy streams and healthy minds across the country.

Matthew Daniel teaches a visitor how to cast.



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WHY WE GIVE:

Eddie Bumbaugh & Jane Cox

Between generational family ties and a profound love of nature, Eddie Bumbaugh and Jane Cox have deep roots in the Shenandoah Valley and a deep connection with Shenandoah National Park. The pair has long enjoyed recreating on the park’s many trails, although one in particular has brought them back to Skyline Drive again and again: the Appalachian Trail.

Over the course of two decades, Eddie section-hiked the AT with two friends. Now he and Jane enjoy tackling smaller sections, parking their e-bikes at one intersection of the Trail and the Drive and hiking their way back to them, then pedaling back to their vehicle.

Despite all their time adventuring in the park, they first encountered the Trust through a friend in Harrisonburg in 2013, and they’ve been dedicated annual donors ever since. “We believe in the mission, and we’ve seen the results when we visit the park,” said Jane. “When you see all the good things that are happening and how hard the rangers are working – and realize that there are always budget shortfalls and unfunded priorities – it feels like the right thing to do to help enrich the programs with additional resources.”



Eddie and Jane are also thinking ahead, and they’ve included the Trust in their will. “We donate to national organizations now,” shared Eddie, “but in terms of the Designated Fund through the Community Foundation, we decided to keep it local and regional, so the Trust ranked high with us.”

Jane added: “We love the natural world, and we appreciate the integrity of the fabric of ecology; it’s the glue that holds things together. And it’s not hard to start unraveling those relationships if they’re not protected. We want to leave assets to our daughter and grandchildren, but there should be a surplus, and contributing to something that’s bigger than us is a way to carry our values forward.”

In addition to their giving, Eddie & Jane are carrying things forward in another way: they’ll be co-hosting the first Shenandoah Social in Harrisonburg on April 24th to help others in their community discover the Trust in the same way they did more than a decade ago.

Mark Your Calendar!

- March 27** At Home in Shenandoah: Stewards of Safety
- April 12** Hike in the Park
- April 19** Fee-Free Day in the Park
- April 19-27** National Park Week
- April 24** Shenandoah Social: Harrisonburg
- May 3** Show Your Love for Shenandoah
- May 15** Wine on the Rooftop
- May 17** Hike in the Park
- June 1** Shenandoah Soirée
- June 12** Wine on the Rooftop
- June 19** Fee-Free Day in the Park
- July 18-19** Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park
- August 4** Fee-Free Day in the Park
- September 18** Wine on the Rooftop
- September 26-27** Art in the Park
- September 27** Fee-Free Park Entrance
- October 12** Rapidan Society Picnic
- October 16** Wine on the Rooftop
- November 11** Fee-Free Day in the Park

Visit snptrust.org/events to learn more and see our calendar.

Planned Giving



No matter how big or small, every planned gift lays a stronger foundation for the future of Shenandoah. Leave a legacy and ensure our park remains a place for all to enjoy by including the Trust in your estate plans.

If you are interested in learning more about planned giving, or if the Trust is already in your plans, let us know by emailing Jessica at jccoccolone@snptrust.org or calling the office at (434) 293-2728.

