

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

FAQ and Next Steps

The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area is a regional, grassroots initiative that has been working since 2001 to encourage conservation, community development, and tourism based on forest heritage. Our goals include engaging forestry and forest management, wood products industries, natural areas, outdoor recreation, historic sites, crafts and culture, festivals, tourism, and community development interests, as well as local, state, and federal government partners. We seek to bring together people who are interested in each of these areas, and people from across the county boundaries, to all work together toward mutual goals.

The AFNHA region through the central Appalachian highlands includes 16 West Virginia counties (Greenbrier, Pocahontas, Nicholas, Webster, Braxton, Upshur, Randolph, Barbour, Tucker, Pendleton, Grant, Hardy, Mineral, Hampshire, Morgan) and 2 counties of western Maryland (Garrett and Allegany.)

What will National Heritage Area Designation Mean?

- National recognition of the importance of our forest heritage story and of our region.
- Co-branding with National Park Service. Placement on NPS National Heritage Area website and promotional materials.
- Technical assistance and support from National Park Service
- Eligibility for matching funds through National Park Service. Current expectations are for \$150,000 in new federal funds starting in 2020, and \$300,000 or more annually once plan is approved.
- AFNHA will continue working with willing partners on projects to benefit our region.

What does it NOT mean?

- No new federal land.
- No new zoning or regulations.
- No change in land management for public or private land. AFNHA will not have any land management authority.
- No impact on anyone who does not choose to participate. We work only with willing partners.

What's Next?

- Appalachian Forest bill to be designated as a National Heritage Area was approved by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and was signed into law March 12, 2019. This officially designated Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.
- As the "local coordinating entity" AFHA will work on a "management plan". This is more of a coordination plan – what are our goals and objectives, and how will partners work together to achieve them? We have 3 years to complete this plan. This will include:
 - Multiple public meetings
 - Setting goals and objectives
 - Identifying assets and potential projects
 - Looking at how to leverage new federal funds to benefit local projects

If you may be interested in participating in the planning process or public meetings, we'll keep you informed through the AFNHA e-newsletter (or mailed if you don't use email). **Sign up today!**