

## **AFHA supporters and stakeholders,**

As we continue to work with our Congressional delegations to seek National Heritage Area designation for Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area, we need to show widespread support. You can show your support by a support letter to AFHA, and/or by contacting your Congressional offices directly.

### **Contact Your Representatives**

Directly contact your representatives. Call their DC office and leave a message, or email through their web site contact. You can also contact their in-state staff and share this message as well.

Contact your Congressman to thank them for their sponsorship of HR 693 to designate Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area, and encourage them to also support HR 581 the National Heritage Area Program bill.

Congressman David McKinley, WV 1<sup>st</sup> <https://mckinleyforms.house.gov/email-me> 202-225-4172

Congressman Alex Mooney, WV 2<sup>nd</sup> <https://mooney.house.gov/contact> 202-225-2711

Congressman Evan Jenkins, WV 3<sup>rd</sup> <https://evanjenkins.house.gov/contact> (202) 225-3452

Congressman John Delaney, MD 6<sup>th</sup> District <http://delaney.house.gov/contact/email-me> 202-225-2721

Contact your Senator's office to thank them for their support and sponsorship of S 3167 to designate Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area. Encourage them to also support a bill to establish a National Heritage Area Program.

Sen. Joe Manchin <http://www.manchin.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact> 202-224-3954

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito <http://www.capito.senate.gov/content/contact-shelley> 202-224-6472

Sen. Ben Cardin <http://www.cardin.senate.gov/contact/> 202-224-4524

Sen. Barbara Mikulski <http://www.mikulski.senate.gov/contact/> 202-224-4654

Please drop an email to [phyllisb@appalachianforest.us](mailto:phyllisb@appalachianforest.us) to let us know the contacts you've made, and if you get a response.

### **Write AFHA Support Letter**

You or your organization can show your support by sending a support letter or resolution directly to AFHA. Then we can share it with our representatives to show our widespread support. If you previously wrote a letter, you can write a new one that indicates renewed support, or discusses progress that AFHA has made since our initial round of letters in 2004 – 2006. We also are seeking letters that support the National Heritage Area Program and passage of a NHA Program Bill. Success with this bill will make passage of the AFNHA bill much more likely.

**For general support letter or resolution, please include** the following sentiments:

I/we support National Heritage Area designation for the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

Also acceptable, although not as strong a statement, is:

I/we support national recognition of the significance of our forest region (or of our forest heritage assets.)

Address it to: Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Board, PO Box 1206, Elkins WV 26241

If you email it, pdf is preferred with an original signature. Send to [phyllisb@appalachianforest.us](mailto:phyllisb@appalachianforest.us)

### **Letter content, samples, talking points:**

The letter can talk about your own organization if you want, and how AFHA has benefited or will benefit your work. It can include ways you expect to be involved or support AFHA. Some additional talking points follow – just pick what applies to you, and feel free to rephrase it if you want. The letter can be short (preferably keep to one page) – but best in your own words. It doesn't matter so much what you say, but more that fact that you have made the effort to write.

### **Talking Points - AFHA:**

- ◆ Our organization supports the national recognition of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area.
- ◆ Designation of AFHA as a National Heritage Area will assure national recognition of the significance of our forest heritage assets and provide support for our partnership efforts.
- ◆ AFHA has demonstrated sustainability through twelve years of operation without NPS funding. With National Heritage Area support, they can expand their outreach and impact.
- ◆ Our organization is an active partner and participates in AFHA activities. (or “looks forward to” if not already)
- ◆ Our organization will contribute participation and resources toward AFHA activities and shared goals.
- ◆ We look forward to continuing to work with AFHA as a partner in these efforts. We will collaborate with and support AFHA activities for conservation, tourism enhancement, and community development in our county.
- ◆ Through volunteer recruitment and AFHA AmeriCorps program, AFHA is making a significant impact in conserving our forests and benefiting our communities.
- ◆ Our community will benefit economically from development of forest heritage tourism resulting from participation in the AFHA,
- ◆ We believe the ongoing activities of AFHA bring significant benefits to our area in diversification of economic opportunity, increased tourism and visitor spending, and support for jobs, forest industry, and small business.
- ◆ Recognition, interpretation, and presentation of our nationally significant historical, cultural, and natural assets can bring substantial educational and economic benefits to our region.
- ◆ Forestry-related heritage tourism can fulfill the need for public education contributing to an increased understanding of and importance attached to “good forestry.”
- ◆ Forest products processing and manufacturing is one of the largest contributors to the economy of the region. The forest is both our home and a means of livelihood.
- ◆ Hunters and hikers, foresters and ecologists, residents and visitors, all value the healthy forests in the AFHA.
- ◆ This designation will provide national recognition and significant new grant funding for the area. It WILL NOT create any new regulations, purchase land, affect private landowners, or impact land or forest management decisions. AFHA works only with willing partners, to provide education, interpretation, collaboration, and support for both forest industry and heritage tourism as economic development.
- ◆ The AFHA seeks to empower those who work, live and recreate in the woods to work together towards a common set of goals for the benefit of the forest they share.
- ◆ By encouraging visitors to experience and understand forestry issues, a more informed constituency will be available to address environmental issues on a national scale.
- ◆ Designation of the AFHA as a National Heritage Area will help to further the goals of conservation and stewardship of our forest and its heritage.

### **Talking Points - NHA Program Bill:**

- ◆ Passage of a National Heritage Area Program bill will aid in the designation of worthy emerging areas such as Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.
- ◆ I support the National Heritage Area program to help the National Park Service reach beyond park boundaries to recognize nationally significant resources and cultural heritage within heritage areas.
- ◆ I encourage creation of a clearly defined system of National Heritage Areas based on criteria that document significance, show community support, and demonstrate success.
- ◆ National Heritage Areas use partnerships and grassroots efforts to make small investments pay huge dividends.
- ◆ The National Heritage Area Program is extremely cost-effective, using public-private partnerships which leverage \$5.50 in other public and private funding for every federal dollar invested.
- ◆ National Heritage areas have a proven record of fostering job creation and advancing economic, cultural, historic, environmental, and community development. In addition to creating jobs, NHAs generate valuable revenue for local governments and sustain communities through revitalization and heritage tourism.

## Sample organization letter

letterhead

date

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Board  
PO Box 1206  
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Board:

<Organization name> supports the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area in its mission to work locally to conserve, develop, interpret, and promote a regional network of forest-based resources and experiences in the highlands of West Virginia and Maryland for the enjoyment and appreciation of residents and visitors in order to enhance economic and community development.

We believe that the natural, historic, cultural, and forest resources of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area tells a nationally significant story. Recognition, interpretation, conservation, and presentation of these resources can bring substantial educational and economic benefits to our region.

The work of National Heritage Areas is to conserve and promote regions where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. We support an official National Heritage Area Program through the National Park Service, as well as the designation of Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area within this program.

<Insert optional info about your organization, or other AFHA talking points here>

Our organization supports recognition of the national significance of the area through the designation of Appalachian Forest Heritage Area as a National Heritage Area. We look forward to participating in Appalachian Forest Heritage Area efforts for the benefit of our community.

Sincerely,

## Sample individual letter:

Date

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Board  
PO Box 1206  
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Friends,

I support the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area in its efforts to enhance economic and community development through conservation and heritage development of our forest heritage. I believe that the natural, historic, cultural, and forest resources of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area tell a nationally significant story. Recognition, interpretation, conservation, and presentation of these resources can bring substantial educational and economic benefits to our region.

AFHA has demonstrated sustainability through over twelve years of operation, with a record of substantial success in conservation and development of our forest heritage assets. With National Heritage Area support, they can expand their outreach and impact, with increased benefits to our area.

<insert additional talking points, or your own reasons you support>

I support recognition of the national significance of the area through the designation of Appalachian Forest Heritage Area as a National Heritage Area. I also support a National Heritage Area Program through the National Park Service to continue this valuable work in our area and across the country. I look forward to joining with and participating in Appalachian Forest Heritage Area efforts for the benefit of our community.

Sincerely,

<signature>

<typed name and address>