



APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA

Join the 2012 Garlic Mustard Challenge!

By Devin Gill

Are you looking for an opportunity to get the family outside for a day of fun? Then look no further than the *2012 Garlic Mustard Challenge!* The GMC seeks to provide your family with a day of free, outdoor fun while working to protect the pristine West Virginian forests that we all love. The Garlic Mustard Challenge is brought to you by the Monongahela National Forest, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, and the Potomac Highlands Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area.



During GMC events, participants will engage in hands-on invasive species learning activities before compet-

ing in our annual garlic mustard pull. Fabulous PRIZES will be given to our top pullers of the day. The group to pull the most pounds of garlic mustard wins the highly coveted Garlic Mustard Challenge Trophy!

Garlic Mustard is a particularly nasty, non-native invasive species. It is rapidly spreading into disturbed wooded habitats in West Virginia, pushing out our native plants. Many wildlife species depend on spring native plants for food and cover. Garlic mustard deprives wildlife of these important native resources. Only an army of volunteers can help get rid of this invasive species!

Garlic Mustard Challenge events usually begin at 10:00 a.m. Please see: <http://www.phcwpma.org/GarlicMustard.cfm> to learn the latest information about the pulls. The GMC will have lots of great prizes thanks to our generous partners and sponsors: Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Applebee's, All Creatures Great and Small, American Mountain Theater, Brewstel: Microbrewery and Hostel, Cooper & Preston, PLLC, Elkins Wal-Mart, Elkins YMCA, Good Energy Foods, Judy's Drug, Kroger's, Mainline Books, MeeMee's Café and Cakes, Monongahela National Forest, Peebles, Performance Chevrolet - Parsons, Rite Aid - Parsons, Seneca Caverns, Sheetz - Parsons, Southside Depot, Tractor Supply Company, Theatre West Virginia, and The Wellness Center - Parsons.

The Garlic Mustard Challenge began this year at Seneca Rocks Discovery Center on April 14th, with three additional project dates in April. Remaining events scheduled include:

- Big Bend Campground- May 5-6th*
- Blue Bend Campground- May 12st- 13nd*
- Fernow Experimental Forest - May 17th
- Pocahontas 4-H Camp- May 19th

AFHA Tree Plantings, Spring 2012

The AFHA AmeriCorps Team is participating in several tree planting projects this Spring, including the Plum Creek Project, a red spruce planting and an alder tree planting.

The Plum Creek tree planting took place at an abandoned strip mine site in Pocahontas County near Slatyfork, WV in April, 2012. The team, along with local volunteers, planted 2000 Red Spruce and 3000 black cherry trees on publicly available land owned by Plum Creek Inc., one of the largest timberland owners in the country. Plum Creek has been a strong partner and stakeholder in the conservation of our forestland, watersheds, and all around natural environment.

Two AmeriCorps members worked for two weeks to prepare sites located in Canaan Valley for a volunteer day of Red Spruce tree planting. This project was sponsored by the Friends of the 500th in cooperation with the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Red Spruce is an important native species to the WV highlands which were heavily harvested earlier this century. These replantings are important to repopulate strategic areas of the WV highlands with this species. Other AmeriCorps members helped plant alder trees later in the month in Canaan Valley. For more information on upcoming tree planting projects, and to find out how you can get involved please contact AFHA, or our partners at canaanvalley@fws.gov



Rt. 219 Writer's Project

By Roxy Todd

I'm sitting in the dining room at the home of a 90 year old woman named Hazel Shrader. She is telling me about how when she was a baby, US Route 219 was just a mud road. To pave the highway, they got rock from a rock quarry that was near her house, and when they would blast, big slabs of rocks would come hurtling towards her family's home. So they moved Hazel to a nearby house, for her own safety. A manager from the quarry came to tell them one day they didn't have to leave, they weren't in any danger. "And about that time a rock hit the porch just above his head. So he went back and never said no more. And for a long time there was a little dent on the porch where a rock had hit."

she's been telling me. Sure, I've heard about the Great Depression and read about it too. But until someone tells you what they saw personally and what happened to the families they knew, the story is never as real. And I'm a part of it too, now. Something about that gets to me, is important about this thing that I'm doing. Something about the shared story that grips you, changes you. And then it becomes my job to share that story, to give it to others, so it becomes a part of all of us too.



As AmeriCorps volunteers with AFHA and the 219 Project, Emily Newton and I have recorded over thirty life and community histories from people like Hazel who have lived near

US 219. Our work is being presented to the public through radio, newspapers, and a new website, called www.Traveling219.com, with help from the West Virginia Humanities Council. We're also reviving the work done by the WPA West Virginia Writers' Project and the writing they did for the publication, *West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State*, which is now out of print. Our website will highlight some of the work from the WPA writers who wrote a brief guide to US 219, as well as

the work from our current project, with audio stories, historic photographs, and illustrations to bring these stories to a wider audience. The website has over 25 stories already that visitors can listen to on their computers or download to their MP3 players. The website is still being developed, and a lot more content will be added by this fall. But you can check it out now and have a listen at www.Traveling219.com. Tell us what you think. And if you have any questions, or would like to help be a part of this project or volunteer, please contact Roxy Todd at 304-653-4902, roxytoddroxytodd@gmail.com, or Gibbs Kinderman, the project manager, at 304-799-6004, gibbskinderman@frontiernet.net.



Hazel Shrader's mother, Minnie Burwell, with her turkey flock.

The road was still being paved some during the Great Depression. Hazel describes those years to me with such honesty and emotion that I check three times to make sure the recorder is still on, that not a word is lost. "Well we were all poor but we didn't know we were. That was the thing. Everyone else's just like you, they didn't have things either. Many of the men committed suicide because they couldn't face their families, because they had nothing. Sometimes they had strokes or their health disappeared, because they just worried over it so much. In Huntington, they had to put guards at the garbage cans. Because they were hungry." When I go back to transcribe her interview, I swear I share some part of what

Heart of the Highlands Trail Building

The AFHA AmeriCorps team is participating in a series of trail building workshops this Spring sponsored by the Heart of the Highlands Trail, a local non-profit organization located in Tucker County, WV.

The Heart of the Highlands Trail System project, a new concept for trails in Tucker County, West Virginia, will connect the non-motorized, multi-use trail systems of five land management agencies into a comprehensive, landscape oriented, environmentally sustainable, multi-use trail system that is accessible to the public.

The proposed 23-mile Core Loop Trail connects about 12 miles of existing trails by building three connecting trail segments: Splash Dam South Trail, Swinging Bridge to Cortland Trail, and Headwaters Trail. Other connections, such as the replacement of the Camp 70 bridge, will continue to link the Core Loop Trail of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System to partner trail systems and other regional trails.

The AmeriCorps team participated in trail building workshops in the Fall in preparation of this series of project dates in the Spring. Various team members will be spending 4 weeks in rotating shifts helping to clear and prepare this trail system for the Summer.

For more information on how you can be involved in the HOH Trail projects please contact AFHA, or the *Heart of the Highlands Trail System* at PO Box 274 Davis, WV 26260 (info@heartofthehighlandstrail.org)

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area: Ten Years of Growing 2012 Spring Stakeholders Meeting

THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2012

Thomas, Tucker County, WV

AFHA returns to Tucker County, where we first met for the first time back in November of 2001...

Come enjoy beautiful Thomas, to learn about and share in some of the exciting work going on both by AFHA and by our friends and partners in the area. The meeting will be held at the Thomas Education Center, starting at 9 am.



MEETING AGENDA

8:30 am gathering

9:00 am meeting starts with a showing of the new video "The Resilient Forest" (late arrivers may come in during the film)

10:00 am What's happening with AFHA? AFHA AmeriCorps team reports, AFHA news, and discussion of AFHA accomplishments and future directions.

BREAK

11:30 am Tucker County Collaborative Projects – a panel discussion

LUNCH

1:15—2:30 pm Tour of Thomas, learn about Thomas history, and about New Historic Thomas efforts.

2:30 – 4:00 pm. AFHA Board will meet following the tour

Also that same day, there is a Garlic Mustard Challenge pull at Fernow Experimental Forest near Parsons. You are invited to go help with that pull following the meeting.

Lunch will be provided, but donations are requested to help cover the cost.

RSVP – Please let us know if you plan to attend, so the we can plan to have on hand the right number of lunches. Please email afha@appalachianforest.us or call us at **304-636-6182**

Directions to Thomas Education Center from Davis:

- Take Route 32 North towards Thomas
- Pass the Thomas Fire Hall (on right)
- Continue down hill and through Thomas for about 1/2 mile
- Make a right turn (directly opposite Thomas City Hall) onto 3rd Street and proceed up the hill
- Once on 3rd, make the second left
- The Thomas Education Center parking lot is just a few feet on the right

AFHA AmeriCorps and Martin Luther King Day

by Elizabeth Beckerle

This Martin Luther King Day, AFHA commemorated the great civil rights leader by hosting a children's mural painting activity at Old Brick Playhouse in Elkins. Working with local partners, the AmeriCorps volunteers taught local children not only about Martin Luther King, but civil rights leaders Tawakul Karman of Yemen and Mahatma Gandhi of India as well.

The participating children were enrolled with two partnering organizations: the YMCA afterschool program and Expression of Colors Autism Resource Center. The children learned about important liberties and concepts like freedom of speech, racial equality, and respectful discussion through a series of games.

A local artist then helped direct them in painting a mural about what they learned. Working as a group, the children painted a large city with big rolling green hill and fluffy clouds above. The children decided to call the mural "The Green City of Dreams"; the city was a place where everybody is treated equally. The mural now hangs in the YMCA.

The day was really made possible by a mini-grant awarded by Volunteer West Virginia. The Wood Technology Center was very generous and donated the wood for the murals. The AmeriCorps volunteers were also very grateful to all of the area residents who helped complete an AmeriCorps paint-drive the preceding weekend, and otherwise helped to make the MLK day event so successful for the children involved. The Old Brick Playhouse was an excellent resource and wonderful host. AFHA AmeriCorps also welcomed the help of two fellow AmeriCorps VISTAs from YouthBuild and RCHA. The day was a great success and besides producing a beautiful mural, the children and volunteers involved enjoyed themselves immensely.



AFHA is on Facebook!



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FRIENDS OF FIREWOOD

A project at West Virginia University seeks to give the Mountain State's firewood industry the boost it needs to be more substantial and sustainable through a "Friends of Firewood" network. Dave McGill, a WVU Extension specialist and professor of forest resources management, and his partners on the project, will engage firewood producers to promote healthy forests and a healthy firewood industry.

"Fuel wood is used by nearly one of seven households as a primary heat source in many rural counties in West Virginia," McGill explained. "It's important to this informal economy that firewood producers assure a high quality product and maintain vigilance related to forest health issues." Moving of firewood can spread damaging forest pests, so proper handling is very important to forest health and sustainability.

The West Virginia Division of Forestry, the Appalachian Hardwood Center, AFHA and the West Virginia Forestry Association helped develop a list of firewood dealers. The project will survey them to document the size and types of their operations, levels of awareness of forest health issues, firewood safety issues, and attitudes related to potential increased regulation of firewood. The program will also develop a series of training sessions around the state related to firewood hygiene and safety. A professional firewood producers' network, the "Friends of Firewood," will supply producers with continued information, training, and business support. Graduate research assistant Liz Basham is the Friends of Firewood project coordinator and liaison. For more information, contact McGill at 304-293-5930 or dmcgill@wvu.edu.

GROWTH RINGS is the periodic newsletter of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Inc., in partnership with West Virginia University Division of Forestry and Extension Services. Our mission is 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.



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