

# GROWTH RINGS



## *Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Newsletter*

*Vol 3 No 1*

### ***The Resilient Forest Exhibit Opens***

The first major exhibit to be developed for the AFHA opened in March in the Elkins Railroad Depot. "The Resilient Forest" uses artifacts and historic photos bring to life the coming of the railroads to Randolph County, the growth of towns, the leaders and the workers, recovery and rebirth of the forest. The AFHA Randolph County pilot community group initiated the project, with fiscal sponsorship from the Randolph County Historical Society and help from many others, including the Elkins-Randolph County Chamber of Commerce and Monongahela National Forest. Funding was provided by the West Virginia Humanities Council, and WVU Office of Service Learning, Kellogg Support Funds. Robert C. Whetsell, author of *Elkins West Virginia: The Metropolis Revisited* and producer of the recent interpretive film "The Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia" designed the exhibit. Rob is an active member of the AFHA Interpretation Task Group.

The exhibit tells of harvesting the uplands forests starting in the late nineteenth century to fuel the industrial revolution in the rest of the country. New railroads brought modern transportation; new towns like Elkins were created; and the mountain forests were systematically cut. Yet the practices of the time had unintended consequences, including severe fires and flooding. The rise of scientific sustainable forestry practices and creation of public lands have aided the regrowth of the forests. Today, West Virginia's mountains support a vital and healthy forest industry as well as wildlife and recreation.

The exhibit can be seen 8:30 – 5 Monday through Friday, at the Randolph County Visitor Center – Elkins Railroad Depot, Third Street and Railroad Avenue, Elkins.

### ***Feasibility Study posted for public comment***

It's been a long winter, but the rewrite of the AFHA Feasibility Study is finally ready for viewing!!! The new version can be seen on the AFHA web site [www.appalachianforest.us](http://www.appalachianforest.us). This document is an expansion of the Phase 1 Study we had last Fall, with expanded statement of significance, description of how AFHA meets each of the National Heritage Area criteria, and demonstrations of local support. Over the winter, AFHA staff, Governing Council, and other volunteers spoke or made presentations to individuals and groups numbering over 3000 in the project area, and collected over 150 support letters for NHA designation.

Now is the "public comment" period for the Feasibility Study. We encourage everyone to read the document, and send us any comments you may have. At the same time, we are presenting it to the National Park Service for their review. We will incorporate the comments into a final version to be presented to our Congressional delegation.

### ***AFHA Non-profit Receives Grant***

In January AFHA non-profit was approved for a National Forest Foundation grant. This will provide \$15,000 for start-up costs for the non-profit organization.

Objectives for this grant are to support expenses for developing the non-profit organization including board development training and application for 501(c)(3) status. It will also provide to develop promotional materials that explain the organization and attract more participants, and to develop an interim work plan and priorities in conjunction with our Feasibility Study.

## ***Presentations needed for Stakeholders Meeting***

Communities and organizations will have the opportunity to share the progress and accomplishments of forest heritage related projects at the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Stakeholders Meeting (see page 3 for meeting details). The afternoon session of the meeting will allow 5-10 minute presentations from any group that would like to share their recent work. There is plenty of room for more presentations, so please contact Jeremy to reserve your spot, [jmorris5@wvu.edu](mailto:jmorris5@wvu.edu) 304-293-2941.

### ***A New AFHA website coming soon***

A new AFHA website will be unveiled later this Spring. The site will feature a new design and will offer a section that will introduce visitors to sites and tours within the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area.

The staff would like to provide a list of our partners and link to them from our site. If your organization would like to be listed in this directory, please provide full contact information to [Jmorris5@wvu.edu](mailto:Jmorris5@wvu.edu)

### ***New Mini-grants approved in January***

In January, there were four new mini-grant projects were approved by the AFHA review committee. Mini-grants approved this cycle *include*:

*Sycamore Tree Brochure, Webster Springs Main Street*. This project will create an interpretive brochure for the 500-year old Webster County Landmark. \$750.00

*Bakers Island Signage project, Webster Main Street*. This project will create signage that promotes the forest-related festivals of Webster County. \$805.33

*Randolph County Demonstration Project Showcase Events; Randolph County AFHA Task Group*. This project will support AFHA promotion and presence at major Randolph County festivals and events \$800.00

*The Last Forest Study Guide; Pocahontas Communications Cooperative*. This project will fund a pilot test of the educational study guide based upon G.D. McNeil's book *The Last Forest* \$500.00

## ***Forest Discovery Center takes first step***

The Elkins Milling Company/Darden's Mill building on the railyard in Elkins has been saved from demolition by AFHA partner organization C-HOPE (Citizens for Historical Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County). After a year of planning, building support, and fundraising, C-HOPE convinced the previous owners to sell them the building instead of demolishing it. An AFHA mini-grant helped to fund the initial architectural study of the building. Since the purchase, the badly damaged roof has been patched, cleanup has begun, and grant applications for rehabilitation have been filed. The AFHA Interpretation Task Group is working on planning for an AFHA Forest Discovery Center museum and artisan's center in the building, with funding from a National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

### ***Mini-grant proposals due May 15<sup>th</sup> & some process notes***

The next round for AFHA mini-grants will close on May 15. All proposals should be received by the end of the workday. Grants will be reviewed within two weeks of that day; grant seekers will receive a note of preliminary approval at that time. The grants are then sent onto the USDA for their review and approval. After the USDA approves grants the AFHA can then negotiate the contract to release funds.

Thus far the mini-grant programs has been a very tenuous process to navigate. However, WVU and AFHA staff have worked diligently to help streamline this process, so that future grant recipients will have a much quicker turn around time.

Anyone with questions about the mini-grant program should contact Jeremy Morris at 304-293-2941 ext 2456; [jmorris5@wvu.edu](mailto:jmorris5@wvu.edu)

### ***Summer Forest Heritage Events***

This summer the AFHA staff will again be putting together a listing of Forest Heritage events taking place within the project area. This will either be done as a bi-monthly listserv or perhaps a paper mailing (depends upon the response we receive). Anyone organization interested in having their event listed should contact staff by May 15<sup>th</sup> [jmorris5@wvu.edu](mailto:jmorris5@wvu.edu).

# **THE APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA**

Stakeholders Meeting  
April 23 & 24  
Garrett County Maryland

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Please RSVP(jmorris5@wvu.edu) if you plan to attend any portion of the meeting.  
We need accurate numbers for meals and tours.

## **Friday April 23rd**

Deep Creek Discovery Center (all day at this location)

### **10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

General Business meeting  
Review of Feasibility Study and National Heritage Area Status

### **12:00 pm to 1:00 pm**

Lunch from BumbleQ's Restaurant and time to visit the Interpretive Center

### **1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

Presentations from Communities, Task Groups, and projects  
Anyone interested in presenting should contact jmorris5@wvu.edu  
We have plenty of room for presentation and they don't need to be overly formal presentations.

### **3:00 to 4:00 pm**

Governing Council meeting  
Stakeholders are welcome to stay and attend

### **5:30 pm into the evening**

Tour and Dinner on Deep Creek Lake

## **Saturday April 24th**

### **9:00 am** Tour of Kitzmiller MD

View Botanic Garden, Riverwalk and Company Store

### **10:30 am** Tour of Potomac State Forest

with Forester John Denning

**Lodging:** A hold has been placed on rooms at the Panorama Motel in McHenry, MD. They have 3 singles available and 2 doubles. I will cancel any unreserved rooms on Tuesday April 20th. The Panorama can be reached at 301-387-5230

<http://www.deepcreektimes.com/panorama/>

If lodging becomes full at the Panorama then please try the OakMar in Oakland 301-334-3965. Rooms are very reasonably priced.  
Or visit <http://www.garrettchamber.com/> for other lodging in the area

### **Directions to the Discovery Center:**

From Elkins area: Take 219 North; pass through the town of Oakland and on 8 miles until Glendale Rd. Turn right on Glendale about 1 mile and bare left onto State Park Rd. Follow State Park Rd. for 2.5 miles to arrive at the Discovery Center. The State Park is fairly well signed and should be easy to navigate.

From I-79: Take I-68 East to the Friendsville exit, exit 4. Take MD 42 South. Continue on 42 S. for 7 miles until the junction with Rt. 219. Turn right onto to 219 S. proceed 6 miles until Glendale Rd. Turn left onto Glendale Rd about 1 mile and left onto State Park Rd. Follow State Park Rd. for 2.5 miles to arrive at the Discovery Center. The State Park is fairly well signed and should be easy to navigate.

Spring Greetings from the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

Important Appalachian Forest Heritage Area  
Information enclosed

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