



SHENANDOAH
NATIONAL PARK TRUST



FIELD NOTES

Newsletter | July 2022

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A Massive Volunteer Effort Spruces Up Shenandoah

Many hands really do make light work!
The Park saw this adage in action on April 23, when around 120 volunteers participated in the first-ever Show Your Love for Shenandoah Day.

In honor of National Park Week and National Volunteer Week, volunteers from all over the state converged on the Park for a day of service. Students with JMU GIVE cleaned up trash at the Park's overlooks and worked on some trails, removing debris and clearing waterbars. Other students broke down old picnic tables and sorted the components for recycling. Employees from KPMG conducted overlook maintenance, trimmed vegetation and cleared culverts around Skyland Resort.

At Rapidan Camp, Girl Scouts scrubbed the decks and performed landscape maintenance. A ranger presented a program on First Lady Lou Henry Hoover, who was president of the Girl Scouts and a founder of Rapidan Camp.

Shenandoah National Park Trust board members helped demolish and clear old structures on Tanner's Ridge. This large tract west of Big Meadows was recently purchased and donated to the Park, thanks to the efforts of the Trust and the previous landowners' commitment to conservation.

The event was a true partnership. The Trust and the Shenandoah National Park Association provided financial support, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) and Appalachian Conservation Corps (ACC) provided project leaders, and the Park's concessioner Delaware North donated breakfast and lunch.

"Overall, I think it was a huge success," says Jessica Kusky, Volunteer and Youth Program Manager for Shenandoah National Park. She hopes to make Show

Your Love for Shenandoah an annual occurrence.

The Show Your Love for Shenandoah planning committee included staff from the Appalachian Conservation Corps, Delaware North at Shenandoah, National Park Service, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Shenandoah National Park Association and Shenandoah National Park Trust. Although the committee was excited to open this opportunity to their stakeholders, early signups from local groups filled the event to capacity.

Are you interested in joining the more than 1,000 volunteers who donate their time to Shenandoah annually? Please email us at info@snptrust.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities in the Park and for the Trust.

The Trust is proud to be providing a full-time volunteer coordinator who gives the Park staff more capacity to maximize volunteer efforts. Last year, our Volunteer and Youth Project Lead was able to facilitate over 40,000 hours of volunteer hours in the Park!



Dear friends,

I have now been at the Trust for 18 months, and what a fun adventure it has been! During this time, I have had the privilege of learning about why so many of you love the Park. These stories are rooted in joyous memories of exploring the Park as a child or bringing your children and grandchildren to Shenandoah.

For many of our supporters, this joy goes even deeper, evoking a deep-rooted feeling of wonder joined with a strong sense of responsibility. Our responsibility is not just to the land itself but to all the people who will have the chance to experience its beauty. The fact that the Park is in our own backyard makes our commitment resonate even more. For 24 million people, Shenandoah National Park is within a 4-hour drive. Think of all the memories being made, right now, right here, for so many people across the Park's region.

Thanks to your support, the Shenandoah National Park Trust is ensuring that those memories will endure, just as the land itself endures and thrives. The work we are doing today will connect people to the land through shared memories, and together we will build the connections that will sustain us tomorrow.

Throughout this newsletter, you will see how your support is growing generational stewardship for Shenandoah National Park — today, tomorrow, and for decades to come.

See you on the trail,



Jessica Cocciolone

Executive Director | Shenandoah National Park Trust

 N.Lewis | NPS



Inside Shenandoah

Our national parks truly are places where people can come together. Because Shenandoah National Park is so close to Washington, D.C., our 1.7 million annual visitors are as diverse as the nation itself. As summer is in full swing, we are glad to see many of you returning to the Park.

One of my favorite things to see is multiple generations spending the day together in Shenandoah. Families hike together, set up adjoining campsites, share meals in our picnic areas or return to Big Meadows Lodge for their annual visit.

We often pass the tradition of visiting national parks from generation to

generation. Grandparents bring their children and grandchildren to experience their favorite trails and overlooks. Children bring their parents or grandparents! Every Kid Outdoors (**everykid-outdoors.gov**) is a wonderful initiative that gives fourth graders a free annual pass to all U.S. public lands. They can use this pass to bring their family to Shenandoah or any other national park.

The staff at the Park are grateful for the many ways that the Shenandoah National Park Trust supports our efforts to reach the next generation of Park visitors. The Trust funds school programs and field trips; bear safety education that teaches children how to interact

responsibly with wildlife; and volunteer efforts, like the recent Show Your Love for Shenandoah Day, that involved people of several generations making the Park a better place. Thank you for your support of the Trust and the Park. I hope you, too, will get the chance to make wonderful memories with family and friends in Shenandoah this summer.

Warm regards,



Patrick M. Kenney
Shenandoah National Park Superintendent

Meet the Frontline Defenders of the Park's Bears



L to R: Matt Harris, Pam Gray, Reese Taylor and Kai Schafer

Pam Gray had long felt a fascination for black bears — a fascination tinged with fear. “I knew that to become less afraid meant I had to understand them,” she says. So she studied bears, reading everything she could find.

Gray, a retired adjunct professor of acquired brain injury at James Madison University and a Virginia Master Naturalist, decided to go one step further. She called a contact at Shenandoah National Park about volunteering and said, “Oh please, can you find something for me with bears?”

Gray connected with Rolf Gubler, a biologist who heads the Park's bear management program, and became the first volunteer member of the team. This approach pairs a volunteer with a Trust-funded staff technician for bear education and aversive conditioning efforts.

While a technician is inspecting campsites for unsecured food and trash, Gray might be speaking with campers

about proper procedures to keep these out of reach. And when a tech is hazarding a too-curious bear with tools like air horns, projectile noisemakers and paintball rounds, Gray explains to on-lookers what's going on and why these measures are necessary. The aim is to re-instill the bear's proper fear of humans and establish “no trespass zones” for the bear.

Many Park visitors don't understand the dire consequences of leaving food unsecured. “Bears are highly opportunistic,” Gubler says. “They have an incredible sense of smell. It's seven times greater than a bloodhound.”

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ketchup packet — that animal is considered food-conditioned. After a second or third food reward, the Park's bear team must intervene and relocate the conditioned bear. Otherwise, the animal will keep returning to the campsite or picnic area, increasing the chances of human-bear conflict. “They become less and less afraid, and that's when trouble happens,” Gray says.

A relocated bear has a much higher risk of being struck by a vehicle or killed by a hunter outside the Park's borders.



To help bears avoid this fate, the bear team tirelessly patrols Shenandoah, educating as many visitors as they can. Adults are usually receptive, Gray says, but “honestly, it's the kids who immediately understand what we're doing.” Children get excited about picking up trash, because they want to play a part in protecting the bears.

Teaching the next generation can make a lasting difference in the Park, both for black bears and the people who love them. Gubler remembers a foggy late-summer day years ago when he spotted a bear on the Limberlost Trail. The bear was high up in an oak tree, gobbling acorns, oblivious to the presence of a human. Gubler watched in awe. “It was a wild bear,” he says. “The way it should be.”



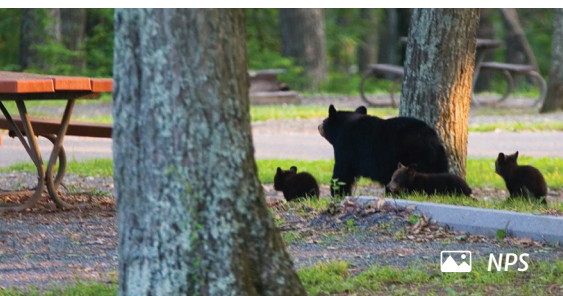
Tips for Protecting Shenandoah's Bears

Secure all food (including pet food) and trash in bear-proof containers or storage lockers, even if you're just stepping away from your campsite for a few minutes.

It's not just food that can attract bears, but anything strongly scented, such as bug spray or even sealed wine and soft drinks.

Respect bears by observing them from a distance of at least 50 yards.

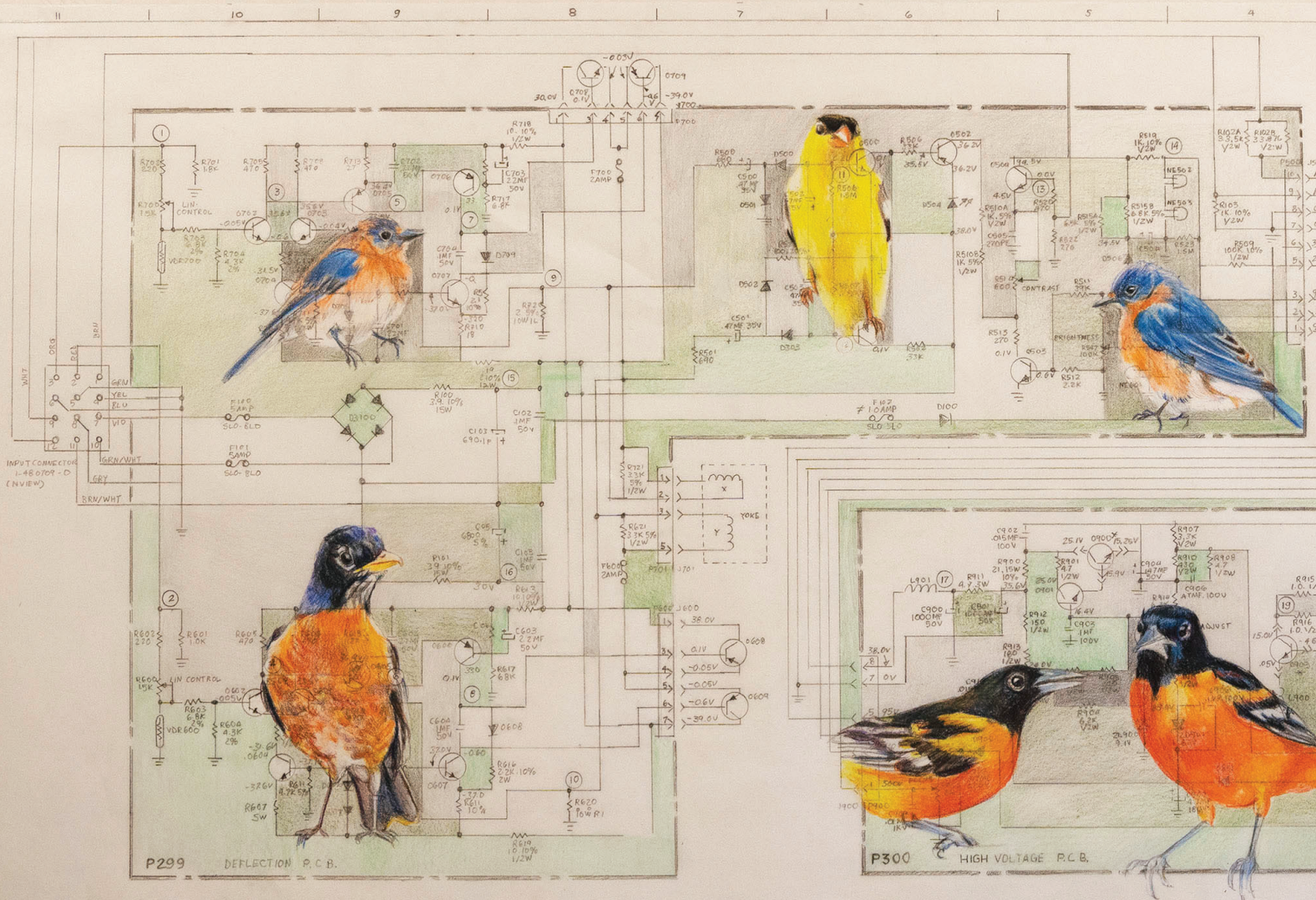
If you see a bear on the side of Skyline Drive, don't stop in the middle of the road. Pull over to a safe location to observe the bear from a distance.



Shenandoah Artist-in-Residence Sandy Kessler Kaminski



Sandy Kessler Kaminski has always been fascinated by the collision of human activity and nature — and years later, what remains. In Pittsburgh, where she lives, she observes people in an uproar over developers cutting down trees. Meanwhile, in her own small neighborhood, nature is quietly taking over the houses that people have abandoned.



GENERAL NOTES:

Cancel	Start a Meeting
Video On	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use Personal Meeting ID (PMI)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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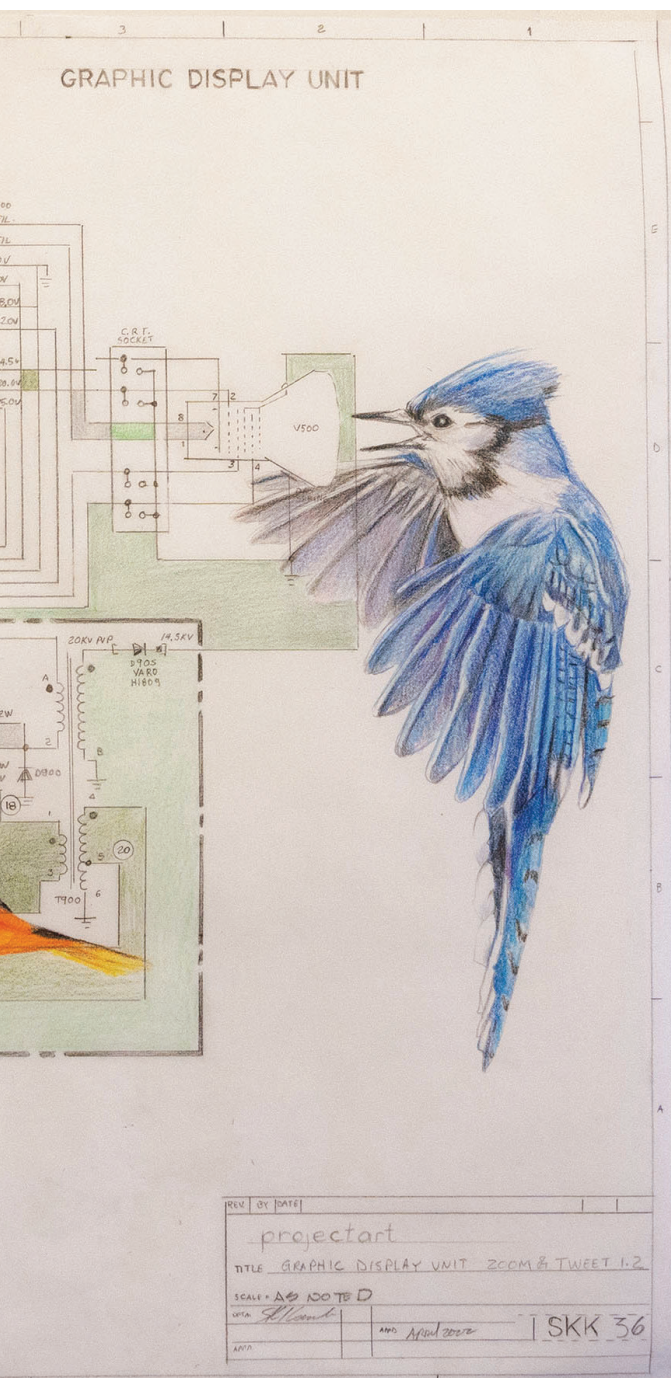
Start a Meeting

ACCESS

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Kaminski's work explores, sometimes playfully, the intersection of human activity, technology and nature.



This cycle of transformation inspired her most recent work, a depiction of the Carrie Blast Furnaces — massive, rusting remnants of the U.S. Steel Homestead Steel Works that are now a National Historic Landmark. Kaminski redrew original engineering drawings and overlaid them with illustrations of the American sycamore and staghorn sumac that are reclaiming the site.

Kaminski, one of the Trust-sponsored Artists-in-Residence for 2022, will take a similar approach during her summer stay in Shenandoah National Park. She intends to research the construction and replanting efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps, copy the original engineering drawings and plans, and then draw over them the plants that are growing there today. “I thought it would just be fascinating to see what plants have survived — what is reclaiming the area,” she says.

In her three weeks in the Park, she plans to bike, hike, and create as many drawings and photos as possible: “I feel like Lewis and Clark, with a journal and a camera.” She hopes to inspire other Park visitors by teaching them how to sit in nature, observe, and draw.

With funding from the Trust, Kaminski will welcome a Richmond-based nonprofit, Art 180. Art 180’s mission is to “provide young people from across the Richmond area the freedom to express themselves creatively and transform our community with their artwork, stories, and lives.”

“I have the pencils ready. I have pastels. I am good to go,” Kaminski says. “I am laying the foundation to create some of the best work of my life.”

If you visit the Park this summer or fall, you may encounter Kaminski or one of the other four Artists-in-Residence, fully funded with support from the Trust’s donors. Jillian Sico is a printer, papermaker, and book-binder; Ken Heyman is a plein-air landscape painter; Jaime Barks is a painter of modern landscapes; and Carl Johnson is a nature photographer. **You can learn more about the Artist-in-Residence program on our website at <https://www.snptrust.org/project/artists-in-residence>.**





Saving Eastern Hemlocks for the Next Generation



When President Herbert Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, searched for a place of respite during the Great Depression, they chose a hemlock grove along the trout-filled headwaters of the Rapidan River. Rather than chop down an old hemlock, they incorporated the tree into their cabin, gracing the landscape and marking their commitment to Park preservation.

Nicknamed the “redwood of the East,” the eastern hemlock creates a microecosystem that cannot be replicated. According to Harvard Forest researchers, “No other tree species in our eastern landscape exerts such a widespread and profound influence on the environment and other organisms, including ourselves.” The hemlock’s deep shade can cool stream water as much as seven degrees Fahrenheit to the ideal temperature for brook trout. Migrating songbirds such as the Blackburnian warbler, black-throated green warbler, wood thrush, and blue-headed vireo seek out hemlocks almost exclusively.

This mighty giant is now under threat. For decades, eastern hemlocks have been in an epic battle with a tiny insect known as the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), which literally sucks the life out of these stately trees. Since 1996, a handful of Park employees and volunteers have been injecting insecticide into the soil around each tree. The good news is that these efforts are working: over 28,000 treated hemlocks are starting to thrive again.

But the hemlock woolly adelgid is especially tricky, and climate change has only emboldened this predator. While cold, hard winters lower the HWA survival rate, warmer temperatures have allowed these pests to thrive and move into previously impenetrable territory.

Through the generosity of our loyal supporters, hope has arrived in the form of a biocontrol: the *Laricobius* beetle, a small beetle native to the Pacific Northwest that preys on the HWA. Over the past four years, Shenandoah staff have been releasing these beetles, and they have since become successfully established. They are reproducing and spreading, though not in high enough numbers yet to stop the HWA. When the beetle population becomes stable, these biocontrols will diminish the need for chemicals, and will combat the HWA more efficiently than repeatedly treating infested trees one by one.

The future of the eastern hemlock in Shenandoah is still uncertain, but today it is much brighter because of your support. Your generosity, along with the creativity and perseverance of Park staff and the support of the scientific community, will ensure that there is hope for these majestic eastern giants. For that, we are grateful.

A Salamander-Spotting Adventure

In April, the Trust funded a special Shenandoah field trip for 8th–11th graders from Elk Hill Charlottesville School. Elk Hill is a nonprofit that serves youth and families in Central Virginia. Its K–12 schools provide individualized interventions and instruction for students who have trouble succeeding in standard schools. Students may have intense anxiety, behavioral issues, learning differences, and/or past trauma.

Experiences in nature have proven to be an effective way to help Elk Hill's youth work through big feelings, try new challenges, and get out of their comfort zone. That's exactly what they did on their day in the Park.

The program involved investigating salamanders, including the Shenandoah salamander. Rangers led the students through identifying organic and inorganic parts of a meadow ecosystem in the Park. Then, the group moved to a

wooded area to conduct a population count of salamanders. Because it was so cold, says Erika Tucker, who teaches Health & P. E. at Elk Hill Charlottesville School, the rangers "weren't optimistic that we would see anything."

But they did. The students' salamander-spotting efforts were wildly successful, and one group found as many as nine. "They were pretty excited," Tucker says. "They were much more willing than I expected to actually pick them up and handle them."

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Rangers demonstrated how to handle the amphibians without hurting them by using a plastic barrier.

Elk Hill students sometimes struggle with spontaneity or surprises, Tucker explains. So she worried about their reaction when the planned trip took a few unexpected turns. Some students weren't able to go, and the ones who took their place didn't get the



📷 Rob Simpson

chance to do the pre-visit activities. None of the students had ever been to Shenandoah before. And the weather was frigid.

But Elk Hill students loved their experience. One highlight was visiting the nature center and museum at the ranger station, where they learned about the history of the Park. On the way home, the group stopped at the Park's famous overlooks and took some pictures. Shenandoah — and its salamanders — had won new friends for life.





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Donor Profile: Suzanne Gilman

For Suzanne Gilman, camping with her family at Lewis Mountain is a 25-year tradition. Last summer, she told her grandchildren the epic campfire tale of the Bold Raccoon. When their parents were young and staying in the very same cabins, a raccoon ran out of a nearby tree to try to grab a s'more. Terrified, Gilman's son backed up, with his fork and marshmallow in hand, and called for his mom.

"Of course I was the hero of the night when I clapped my hands and sternly shooed the beggar back where he came from!" Gilman says. "He thought I was a spoilsport."

Gilman, a retired nurse, learned to love the outdoors as a child in California. She remembers renting cabins at Big Bear Lake and riding horses with her uncle in the Sierra Mountains. "It was something I always liked," she says, "and I wished my parents did more of."

When Gilman had her own three children, she often brought them to Shenandoah National Park. She now does the same for her grandchildren. Lewis Mountain is her favorite camping spot: you can cook over a fire outside, and the cabins are clean, comfortable

and secure. "If there's a bear," she says, "you just close the door and watch him through the window."

Her preferred cabin is number 13. Because it's accessible for people with disabilities, Gilman was able to bring her mother there when she was in hospice care and using a wheelchair.

Her oldest grandson, Nicholas, adores his "beautiful Shenandoah mountains." Every time the family drives up to the campground, Gilman says, "all of a sudden, he says '7th turn-out, Lewis Mountain next!'"

One of his favorite Park activities is stargazing; he searches for the planets and can name all 83 of Saturn's moons.

The entire family loves the Lumberlost Trail, a Trust-funded TRACK Trail. This 1.3-mile loop trail is the only fully accessible circuit trail in Shenandoah. It's paved, making it easy to walk with a stroller, and features

17 benches (Nicholas counted them) for breaks.

Gilman has been a Trust supporter for many years. "You put your money where your joy is," she says. For her and her family, joy means time spent in the Park.



Suzanne and her grandson, Nicholas

Mark Your Calendar!

Fee-Free Days in Shenandoah

Park admission (normally \$30 per vehicle) is waived on these days:

- **Thursday, August 4, 2022**
Anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act
- **Saturday, September 24, 2022**
National Public Lands Day
- **Friday, November 11, 2022**
Veterans Day

Hike in the Park

- **Friday, August 12, 2022**
- **Saturday, September 17, 2022**
- **Saturday, November 5, 2022**

Wine on the Rooftop in Charlottesville

- **Thursday, September 15, 2022**
- **Thursday, October 6, 2022**

At Home in Shenandoah Virtual Event

- **Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

Rapidan Society Celebration

- **Sunday, October 16, 2022**

Giving Tuesday

- **Tuesday, November 29, 2022**

Visit [snptrust.org/events](https://www.snptrust.org/events) for registration links and more information!



LICENSE PLATES

The Shenandoah National Park license plate program generated over \$200,000 in revenue last year for the Trust. Putting a bear on your bumper benefits the Park in your backyard! Learn how to get your plate: <https://www.snptrust.org/licenseplates/>



PLANNED GIVING

Learn more about making a planned gift, funding an endowment, or other ways you can make Shenandoah National Park Trust the beneficiary of your estate. Please contact Jessica Cocciolone at jcocciolone@snptrust.org or 434-293-2728.