




SHENANDOAH
NATIONAL PARK TRUST

2023 FIELD GUIDE

 N.Lewis | NPS

Welcome to the 2023 Field Guide. The Trust has built an ambitious yet attainable plan to grow our annual investment in Shenandoah National Park to \$1 million per year by 2025. By supporting work that goes beyond what the National Park Service can accomplish on its own, the Trust enables critical research, outreach, and programming that enrich visitors' experiences and create a stable future for Shenandoah National Park.

The Trust has outlined four pillars that will serve as the foundation for all our investments going forward. This framework is informed by research data as well as input from Park staff and diverse community partners, including many of you. At all levels of our programming and projects, you will see significant impacts emerge through these efforts.

Today, visitors to Shenandoah marvel at the Park's stunning overlooks, enjoy the flora and fauna, and learn about its rich history. Decades from now, future Park visitors will see and appreciate the work of the Trust and its donors: preserving historic features, removing invasive species, restoring ecosystems, and teaching every generation to love and care for Shenandoah. We are grateful to our supporters, and we hope you will join us in this important work.

PILLAR I: EXPERIENCE SHENANDOAH

The Trust funds educational and enrichment opportunities that encourage public engagement as well as initiatives that keep trails and other public spaces safe and accessible—this work allows visitors to build meaningful, personal connections with the Park while preserving the landscape.

Goals

- **Use technology, data, and science to anticipate the current and future needs of visitors, and define the capabilities needed to address these challenges.**
- **Maintain and improve the Park's physical amenities, including trails, overlooks, and campgrounds.**
- **Help the Park to ensure visitors' safety and wellbeing.**



PROJECTS

Trail Maintenance

 **Funding needed: \$45,000**

With the strain of ever-increasing visitation and limited staffing resources, many of Shenandoah's trails have fallen into disrepair. This year we are supporting the maintenance of sixteen trails, part of an extensive trail network—with over 500 miles of backcountry and frontcountry trails—that is at the heart of the visitor experience.

Volunteer-Lead Position

 **Funding needed: \$53,500**

Shenandoah's volunteer program is a powerful force that provides vital project support and creates enthusiastic advocates for the Park's mission. Each year, approximately 700 volunteers donate more than 42,000 hours to the Park—an effort worth an astonishing \$1.2 million in services and a priceless investment in building community connections. Volunteers perform backcountry patrols, wildlife surveys, astronomy and other guest interpretive programs, geologic research, and archaeological work. SNPT funding will help cover the cost of supplies, housing, uniforms, and vehicles, as well as the interns integral to coordinating this key program.

Artist-in-Residence

 **Funding Needed: \$15,000**

The Artist-in-Residence program invites professional artists to interpret the Park landscape through traditional and contemporary media. Artists have a long history with our national parks—Thomas Moran, Ansel Adams, and many others contributed to the establishment of national parks by revealing these amazing landscapes to the American public. In 2023, five Trust-funded Artists-in-Residence will spend three weeks in the Park. During their residency, artists will provide public programs to share their experiences with Park visitors.

Views Forever

🌲 Funding Needed: \$100,000

Skyline Drive—which is 105 miles long and runs the Park's entire length—is an astounding hallmark of our National Park Service. The Drive boasts 75 overlooks offering stunning views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the rolling Piedmont to the east. It remains one of the most visited recreational mountain roads in the United States, with most visitors spending their time in Shenandoah at overlooks. But many are hidden by years of tree growth, and with funding from the Trust, arborist crews will continue their work to clear these views for all to enjoy.



Housing for Year-Round Volunteers

🌲 Funding Needed: \$40,000

National parks depend on volunteers and Shenandoah is no exception. To maintain public safety, the Park needs more volunteers in picnic areas and campgrounds. Increasing volunteers at visitor centers will free NPS staff to offer more public programs and run the Mobile Visitor Center. Long-term, full-time volunteers are essential, but these positions require housing, which is scarce. In 2023, the Trust will fund the upgrading of four trailer pads so volunteers can safely use their own RV's. The result is a 10–20% increase in annual volunteer hours for this type of volunteer position.

Connecting People to Their Park

🌲 Funding Needed: \$25,000

Social media has the power to reach new audiences and create a vibrant community of national park advocates. Funding for this project will be used to hire a 6-month seasonal employee to create better and broader engagement among the Park's audiences. This position will create high impact visual media across a variety of social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram) which are essential tools for reaching new, more diverse audiences. Such outreach will facilitate deeper connections with the public by providing accurate, engaging, and timely content, as well as sharing important news and events.

PILLAR 2: WILD SHENANDOAH

With over 40% of Shenandoah designated as wilderness, tens of thousands of living creatures make their homes in the Park, from black bears resting beneath rock overhangs, to tiny aquatic insects darting through mountain streams cooled by towering hemlocks. To protect these flora and fauna, the Trust invests in proactive, science-based strategies that restore and protect the Park's natural resources, thus preserving ecological integrity and promoting climate resilience.

Goals

- Support Park staff in adopting a culture of comprehensive, adaptive management.
- Explore and develop a conservation-based approach to boundary protection.
- Effect significant improvements in ecological integrity, connectivity, resilience, and sustainability.
- Educate Park staff, partners, residents, and visitors about the changes taking place at the Park so that they can participate in our stewardship efforts.

Understanding the Impact of Warming Temperatures on Brook Trout

🌲 Funding Needed: \$50,000

Shenandoah National Park staff closely monitors fish population trends in larger streams, particularly native brook trout. But information is scarcer when it comes to small, low-elevation streams that are likely to be vulnerable to warming temperatures. These smaller streams can serve as an early warning sign of climate impacts, so the Park must act now to help sustain brook trout populations. SNPT will fund work by NPS scientists and interns to use eDNA and/or video monitoring techniques; these teams will also manage citizen-scientists who will collect data from various Park sites and will subsequently share results with the public.

Invasive Species & Pest Program

🌲 Funding Needed: \$125,000

This program removes non-native plants and insects that crowd out native plant species, degrade habitats, and affect the visitor experience. Invasive plants are one of the most significant threats faced by Shenandoah National Park, and this threat is only expected to increase with climate change. A multi-pronged approach, rooted in the latest research, includes early interventions, biologic controls, and insecticide treatments to protect native species such as hemlocks and ash trees.

Keep Bears Wild

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$75,000**

The Bear Conservation Program ensures the health and safety of Shenandoah's black bear population. This initiative funds the installation of more bear boxes – essential tools for proper food storage at campsites. Bears who become “food-conditioned” are a danger to visitors, thereby increasing the likelihood of human–bear interactions. Visitor education can provide crucial information that keeps people and bears safe; this program will also fund bear tech positions in charge of teaching visitors about bear stewardship through campground programs and one-on-one outreach, especially during this time of increasing Park visitation and more first-time visitors.



The Edge Fund

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$1,000,000**

The Edge Fund allows the Trust to purchase land or receive land donations on behalf of the Park. To date, the Trust has donated more than 1,300 acres of land with a value of over \$3.5 million dollars to protect the Park's boundaries. Shenandoah National Park's founders understood that unchecked private development would threaten Americans' enjoyment of natural spaces and potentially harm the landscape and wildlife therein. Their legacy of conservation continues today. SNPT works with private land holders and Park staff to protect environmentally sensitive areas along Shenandoah's borders. Preserving these lands provides unimpaired habitats to myriad flora and fauna and promotes species resilience. We also work to ensure the wellbeing of the natural soundscapes, vistas, habitats, and viewsheds that contribute to the magic of the visitor experience.

PILLAR 3: STEWARDS OF SHENANDOAH

Shenandoah National Park is a living classroom with endless opportunities to learn about history, geology, ecology, and more. The Trust is proud to fund programs and initiatives that educate and engage youth, ensuring that a younger and more diverse generation of Park visitors will become supporters and stewards of this vast public resource. The future of Shenandoah depends on the next generation of Park stewards who will preserve and protect the Park for generations to come.

Goals

- Support life-long learning opportunities as the foundation for building stewardship of Shenandoah.
- Provide opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to experience the outdoors and be inspired by nature.
- Engage and educate the next generation of Park stewards via media, volunteer opportunities, events, job opportunities, and community partnerships.



PROJECTS

The Play, Learn, and Serve Program provides educational, recreational, and service-learning experiences for over 10,000 children through adults every year. There are three components to this program:

Service-Learning Programs

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$20,000**

The Trust funds extended, in-depth programs held over multiple days that provide recreational (play) and educational (learn) experiences coupled with work projects (serve).



Adventures in Your Big Backyard

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$30,000**

The Trust funds summer and after-school youth engagement programs designed to introduce young people to the outdoors through educational and recreational experiences. Participating youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters allow us to reach underserved audiences who would not otherwise have the opportunity to visit Shenandoah National Park.

Scientists in the Making

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$60,000**

Curriculum-based programs that meet local, state, and national learning standards can support classroom instruction for kindergarten to adult learners. Trust-funded initiatives include in-Park field trips, ranger-led programs in local classrooms, online learning programs, and professional development opportunities for educators.



The Shenandoah Youth Corps

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$75,000**

Getting out into the field with Park staff is incredibly empowering for students, building confidence and inspiring youth to pursue nature-related career paths. In summer 2023, two work crews of 12–15 young adults, ages 16 to 19 years old, will work in the Park for a 4-week immersive learning experience. The Youth Corps provides much-needed repairs and improvements to trails, monitoring of sensitive species, weed elimination, archeology, and rehabilitation of historic structures. This program strives to reach youth from underserved or urban communities to establish a deeper connection with Shenandoah National Park and inspire the future stewards of our public lands.



College Internships

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$80,000**

For young people dreaming of a career in science, especially those who love the outdoors, the Trust funds 6–7 Shenandoah Interns who will work collaboratively with Park staff in areas of management, interpretation, museum support, and research. In the process, they will gain valuable work experience for future careers in conservation while adding immense value to the visitor experience in Shenandoah. This program strives to reach out to a diverse pool of young adults, with several internships offered to youth from historically underrepresented communities.

PILLAR 4: STORIES OF SHENANDOAH

Shenandoah National Park provides a lens through which to view and understand Virginia history and culture. The Park has been home to Native Americans who came to the Shenandoah mountains to hunt and forage each summer; communities of mountain folks who settled in the “hollers”; the Civilian Conservation Corps who built the original Park infrastructure; and many others. The Trust strives to preserve and share the rich history of the land that encompasses Shenandoah National Park, and the peoples whose voices must be heard and remembered.

Goals

- Honor and share the stories of the people of Shenandoah, including: indigenous cultures and early settlers, both free and enslaved; the people displaced by the creation of the Park; and those who worked to build, expand, and integrate the Park into the landscape and community.
- Engage in interactive historic and cultural storytelling that connects visitors to Park lands and the surrounding communities.
- Share the rich ecological history of Shenandoah.

PROJECTS

Preserving Our History, One Collection at a Time

🌲 **Funding Needed: \$15,000**

Shenandoah National Park and the Trust are both committed to saving our nation’s natural wonders and historic places. We are both also committed to telling the stories of Virginia, and of our nation and its public lands. SNPT will fund an Archival Intern who will help process backlogged archival materials and convert these vital pieces of our history into digital media. Through these efforts, the archivist will give Park staff a more complete understanding of the content and structure of its collections. Additionally, by helping to preserve and catalog these materials, this rich history will be made accessible to the public.

We’re incredibly grateful to our donors for making these achievements possible!

Will you help us do even more for the Park in 2022?

Scan the QR code or visit www.snptrust.org/donate to make a gift today.

