



**SHENANDOAH**  
NATIONAL PARK TRUST



# FIELD NOTES

Newsletter | March 2023

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## A BLANK CANVAS: How Art Opened the Door to Shenandoah

**For more than a century, artists have brought National Parks to people through awe-inspiring compositions. Last summer, the Trust partnered with ART 180, a Richmond-based nonprofit, and used art to bring people to Shenandoah National Park.**

On August 2nd, a group of teenage artists arrived at Big Meadows for a three-day experience in Shenandoah. For many of these artists, the outdoors were a blank canvas, and the week would be full of firsts. The Trust worked with the Park and ART 180 to organize a positive introduction to National Parks.

Trust-funded Artist-in-Residence Sandy Kessler Kaminski and Volunteer Lead Leah Cawthorn conducted programming for the teens, including drawing, hiking, stargazing, and stewardship principles.

"For the young people, it was very enlightening," said Nicole Jones, ART 180's Deputy Director. "It was an opportunity to experience something new—to come out of their everyday environment and focus on nature."

Kaminski also reflected that, "This connection with Shenandoah gives the young people a



Art 180

better understanding of Virginia as a whole, beyond their familiar cityscape."

Jones described how the teens noticed a significant difference in temperature between their hot urban neighborhoods and the cool mountain campsites, noting that it was a first-hand experience that

*"What we do is about agency – it's about young people seeing themselves as Rangers, as Artists-in-Residence."*

helped them understand the public health impacts of climate change.

"It was educational; it was experimental. They loved it!" Jones concluded. "This experience gave them the opportunity to deepen their connections with each other, themselves, and nature."

Through this partnership with

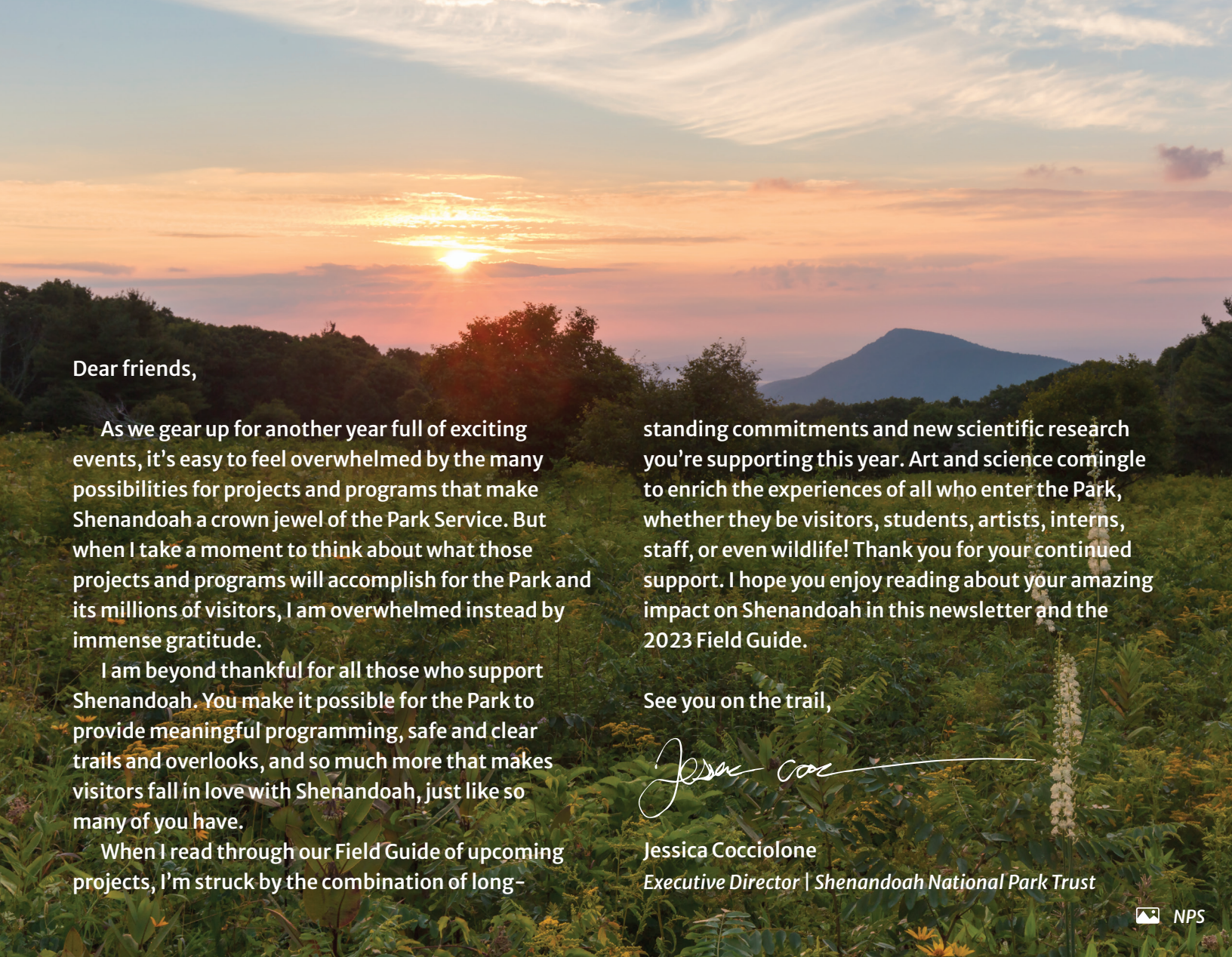
ART 180, the Trust can open doors to Shenandoah for young people to experience the outdoors. By promoting equitable access through existing communities, efforts like these will continue to cultivate the next generation of Park stewards.

"Art is the vehicle, not the change," said Jones. "The transformation is happening at a deeper level. What we do is about agency – it's about kids seeing themselves as Rangers, as Artists-in-Residence."

The Trust is committed to empowering the next generation to forge lifelong relationships with the outdoors. Thanks to your generosity, the Trust is proud to continue partnering with ART 180 to welcome another group of young artists to Shenandoah this summer!







Dear friends,

As we gear up for another year full of exciting events, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the many possibilities for projects and programs that make Shenandoah a crown jewel of the Park Service. But when I take a moment to think about what those projects and programs will accomplish for the Park and its millions of visitors, I am overwhelmed instead by immense gratitude.

I am beyond thankful for all those who support Shenandoah. You make it possible for the Park to provide meaningful programming, safe and clear trails and overlooks, and so much more that makes visitors fall in love with Shenandoah, just like so many of you have.

When I read through our Field Guide of upcoming projects, I'm struck by the combination of long-

standing commitments and new scientific research you're supporting this year. Art and science comingle to enrich the experiences of all who enter the Park, whether they be visitors, students, artists, interns, staff, or even wildlife! Thank you for your continued support. I hope you enjoy reading about your amazing impact on Shenandoah in this newsletter and the 2023 Field Guide.

See you on the trail,



Jessica Cocciolone  
Executive Director | Shenandoah National Park Trust



## Inside Shenandoah

When winter storms brought down many trees and closed Skyline Drive just before the holidays, it created significant operational challenges in reopening the Park to visitors. We appreciate all the hard work of the Park staff and volunteers in facing those challenges. The Trust was a key partner in helping support the efforts of volunteers that came out to help reopen the Park.

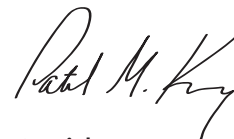
The severity of the storm's damage made us wonder about the health and resilience of Shenandoah's forest. The forest faces many stressors, including climate change and invasive species, which present complex management challenges for the National Park Service.

As you will see in the Field Guide, the Trust funds projects that address climate change in its many forms, from research in the field to biocontrols for invasive species, as well as behind-the-scenes operations that make the Park more accessible for the diverse needs of Park visitors.

We are fortunate to welcome new leaders to our team in the Park. Deputy Superintendent Raquel Montez arrived in December and was a key leader in our storm response. Jeremy Sheier has joined us as the Park's Business Manager, Jon Beck as the Safety Officer, and Gary Zbel as the Park's Facility Manager.

I am inspired by the region's love for Shenandoah National Park, by the Trust's ability to mobilize public support for the Park, and the Park staff's capacity to keep Shenandoah a vibrant place to visit. We are very grateful to the Trust for helping us broaden the impact of our work, and for making it possible to meet the ever-changing needs of Shenandoah.

Many thanks,



Patrick M. Kenney  
Shenandoah National Park Superintendent





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## Cold Water in a Warming World: Protecting Shenandoah's Native Brook Trout

**Brook trout have been a staple in Shenandoah's mountain streams since long before Herbert Hoover established his famous fishing retreat at Rapidan Camp in 1929. Park archives tell of Frank Weakley, a resident of Big Meadows who guided fishing excursions and sold trout at markets in the early 1920s.**

In addition to being an exciting catch for fishermen, brook trout are indicators of a healthy ecosystem, as they can only survive in cold, clean water. Unfortunately, trout populations in Shenandoah have recently been indicating that climate change is affecting the Park. Due to warming water temperatures in the last few years, trout have disappeared entirely from at least two low-elevation streams.

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The Trust is funding a comprehensive new study to gather data from all streams in Shenandoah to help the Park make decisions about how to protect the remaining populations.

"We have a long-term, robust monitoring program here at the Park, but it's not covering everywhere," said Evan Childress, Shenandoah's Supervisory Fish Biologist.

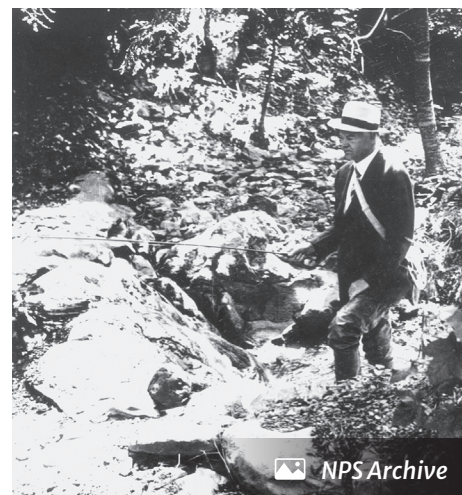
In addition to continued monitoring, volunteers will conduct environmental DNA ("eDNA") testing in streams across the Park this summer. This testing will compare genetic material filtered from stream water with known genetic sequences from brook trout to indicate if the species is present, and even infer the size of the populations. With new data, the Park will be able to make informed decisions about how and where to prioritize protective measures.

"Forest cover, especially along the streams, is critical for shading and keeping temperatures cool," said Childress. He believes that focusing existing conservation efforts — including Trust-funded biocontrol treatments for hemlock trees — around streams with thriving trout populations would effectively protect the threatened

species. "The general prescription is to maximize the health of systems now so that they can take as much disturbance as possible from climate change," he concluded.

The Trust will be hosting a virtual event with Childress as part of Shenandoah's National Park Week celebration.

**Follow the QR code to register and learn more about this iconic Park native!**



NPS Archive

**President Herbert Hoover at Rapidan Camp**





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## MANY WAYS TO GIVE: Hal Hallet & Alexandra Lampros

In 1995, Hal Hallett adopted a section of the Appalachian Trail in the Central District of Shenandoah National Park, between Milam Gap and Hazeltop Summit. Alexandra Lampros was part of the group that helped him maintain it. Eventually, it was only the two of them working the trail section. Hal and Alex married in 1998 and have been maintaining the trail ever since. "It was part of the wedding package," joked Hal. "Hal & Alex & a two-mile section of the AT."

The couple, retired from careers in the Department of the Interior, knew of the Trust long before deciding to become donors in 2016. Hal said, "It was at the restoration of the Pinnacles Research Facility that we really became aware of what the Trust was doing and realized the merit of the work."

They have continued to increase their giving as they see the impact of

the Trust meeting the Park's needs. "We know from working in the Interior that the Park needs all the help it can get," Hal explained.

Alex, who is currently helping co-ordinate the second annual Show Your Love for Shenandoah volunteer event, added, "We've been working in the Park for a very long time, and we're committed to seeing it succeed: good trails, good programs for families and kids, getting people outdoors and respecting the environment."

Hal and Alex believe that work to mitigate the effects of climate change and consistent, equitable access are key to the Park's future, and they aren't limiting themselves to a singular way of giving in order to help make those things happen.

"It's been a life-long commitment to support Shenandoah in whatever way we can," concluded Alex. "We dedicate ourselves to what we love."



Hal Hallett & Alexandra Lampros

## Mark Your Calendar!

**March 5-6** – Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival

**March 25** – Hike in the Park

**April 19** – Great Community Give

**April 20** – At Home in Shenandoah: Brook Trout (Virtual Event)

**April 22** – Show Your Love for Shenandoah Volunteer Event and Fee-Free Day in the Park

**April 22-30** – National Park Week

**May 2** – Give Local Piedmont

**May 7** – Shenandoah Soiree

**May 18** – Wine on the Rooftop

**June 24** – Hike in the Park

**July 8** – Hike in the Park

**July 21-22** – Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park

**August 4** – Fee-Free Day in the Park

**September 14** – Wine on the Rooftop

**September 21-23** – Art in the Park

**September 23** – Fee-Free Day in the Park

**October 20-21** – Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park

**November 11** – Fee-Free Day in the Park

**November 28** – Giving Tuesday

**Visit [snptrust.org/events](https://snptrust.org/events) to learn more and see our calendar**



**Put a Bear on Your Bumper!**  
Last year, Shenandoah license plate sales generated \$260,000 for Shenandoah!

Whether you're renewing your existing license plate or starting the process for a new vehicle registration, scan this QR code and discover how easy it is to support our Park with a Shenandoah specialty plate!



## Monthly Giving — Club 105

Club 105 members make their annual contribution to the Trust in monthly installments to ensure that Shenandoah has a dependable, ongoing source of funding for key projects. Scan this QR code to learn more!

