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Sharing the Stories that Shape Shenandoah

Since its establishment in 1935, Shenandoah has weathered nearly a century of history as a national park, evolving through the decades. How the park talks about its history has evolved, too.

“We have a long history in this Park of telling difficult stories,” said Claire Comer, an Interpretive Specialist at Shenandoah. From displacement to desegregation and beyond, the park strives to share an honest account of what happens within its borders.

To help the park continue to tell these stories, the Trust is funding the return of Sarah Babcock, the Women’s History Intern who conducted significant historical research last summer, focused primarily on Mittie Tutt, a manager at Lewis Mountain; Lou Henry Hoover, the adventurous First Lady of Rapidan Camp; and Addie Pollock, a conservationist whose Massanutten Lodge still stands at Skyland.

“Sarah will be a big part of our future storytelling,” said Comer. “Her research will inform our personal interpretation, and she’ll be taking the work she did last year and making it available to the public – incorporating that research into our storytelling.”

Sarah is helping Shenandoah weave a fuller, more complete picture of the park, helping visitors – both in person and online – understand its history through the stories of Shenandoah. Her research will help Comer and her team finish developing a new interactive curriculum that

amplifies the story of segregation at Lewis Mountain for students studying African American history in the region, as well as informing the ongoing interpretation of women’s history at Massanutten Lodge. Sarah will also be part of a team effort to revamp the cultural history section of Shenandoah’s website and its official app.

“I think that Shenandoah, like most places, reflects the sweeping trends in American history,” Sarah mused. “When people come to the park and learn the history that shaped Shenandoah, they can go back home and see those same stories reflected in their everyday lives.”

This reflection of broader trends is one of the many aspects of Shenandoah that make it such a precious resource. When people can visit a place that keeps history alive and at the forefront of present experiences, it allows them to understand both the place and themselves through a clearer lens, fostering empathy for those who have come before and those who will come after.

The Trust is proud to fund internships like Sarah’s that not only kickstart careers, but continue elevating the narratives of Shenandoah – within and beyond the borders of the park.

Sarah is helping Shenandoah weave a fuller, more complete picture of the park, helping visitors – both in person and online – understand its history through the stories of Shenandoah.



 Sarah Babcock

Dear friends,

On May 18th, the Trust hosted both a mountainside dedication ceremony for almost 1,000 acres of land donated to the park along Tanners Ridge *and* a small rooftop gathering to celebrate our volunteers. The long but rewarding day struck me as a fantastic example of the vast array of ways our community comes together to support Shenandoah. From local and state partners that made our \$3 million land purchase and donation to Shenandoah possible to the hundreds of donors and volunteers who joyfully give their time, energy, resources, and skills to enhancing our park, I'm humbled by the generosity and fierce adoration surrounding Shenandoah.

When I meet with park staff, it's an honor to bring those gifts to the table. I'm thrilled to be working alongside Superintendent Kenney and Deputy Superintendent Montez to envision the future of Shenandoah. As we work towards raising \$1 million annually to support projects and programs in Shenandoah by 2025, I am determined and optimistic that the strategic support from both within and around the park will make this goal a reality.

Thank you for believing in our mission – see you on the trails!



Jessica Cocciolone
Executive Director | Shenandoah National Park Trust



Inside Shenandoah

Dear Park Supporters,

As we transition through the seasons, I am always impressed with the changes that occur in the park's landscape. The openness and starkness of the winter woods comes alive with spring blooms and gradually becomes a brilliant summer green. The changes in the seasons make me think about the changes that have occurred in Shenandoah National Park's staff. Over the winter we welcomed several new key leaders, and as we move into summer, I am seeing a team of leaders grow together and bring fresh perspective and energy to the park.

We recently celebrated the donation of approximately 1,000 acres of land to

the park from the Shenandoah National Park Trust, a gift that will ensure these lands and the headwaters of Naked Creek – a trout stream and tributary of the Shenandoah River – are preserved for future generations. This would not have happened without the support of the Trust and the families that were willing sellers and very supportive of having their family lands added to the park.

This year, we have received over \$600,000 dollars of funding from the Trust to support our work in conservation and education. I have been known to say this is “the whip cream on top of the pie.” These philanthropic dollars allow us to conserve and restore our

natural resources and educate and engage thousands of future park stewards.

The National Park Service is lucky to have the Shenandoah National Park Trust as a strong partner. We appreciate the Board of Trustees and Trust staff that work to ensure we see this level of support.

Enjoy your park!



Patrick M. Kenney
Shenandoah National Park Superintendent

With Intention: The Vision of Raquel Montez

Deputy Superintendent Raquel Montez believes in the power of perspective and putting people first. She began her National Park Service career in 2013 as a Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, and employees remain her focus in her new role at Shenandoah.

Montez looks and listens with intention, encouraging employees to see the impact of their work and find creative solutions for the future of the park. Then, she guides them through the planning process and invests in the resources needed to make it happen.

“I’m bringing a new perspective – a new set of eyes,” she explained. “My purpose in the park is to help the division chiefs develop their own vision, and then directly connect it to the Superintendent’s greater vision and create steps for how to get there.”



For Montez, this shared vision means developing a united workplan that builds the park’s capacity to take on more future-focused initiatives. It means encouraging Park employees to generate innovative solutions to current and future challenges to the park. With employees bringing new ideas forward, the Trust hopes to extend diverse funding opportunities into new areas of the park.

“Employees often hear that resources are limited, and it becomes a mantra,” Montez explained. “Sure, resources are tight, but there are other things we can do.” As Shenandoah’s official philanthropic partner, the Trust is uniquely positioned to fund creative solutions and remains committed to working with the park to provide resources and meet Shenandoah’s ever-changing needs.

July 21–22 – Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park

August 4 – Fee-Free Day in the Park

September 14 – Wine on the Rooftop

September 22–24 – 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 to learn more and see our complete calendar.

**Mark
Your
Calendar!**



Looking Out:

From atop Skyline Drive, the majesty of the east coast unfolds around every turn.

With mountains that look like folded fabric, birds circling below low stone walls, and ridgelines that arch and stretch towards the Shenandoah Valley and the Virginia Piedmont, the landscape of Shenandoah inspires a deep, breathtaking awe.

75 scenic overlooks offer these sweeping views throughout Shenandoah, and they are the most visited sites in the entire park. In fact, 70% of visitors *only* experience the park's iconic landscape from overlooks along Skyline Drive.

Photographers, painters, and musicians have long been drawn to Shenandoah's vistas. Artists have a deep and storied relationship with our national parks, revealing these breathtaking landscapes to the American public, often for the very first time. Art helped to spark the movement to preserve land for future generations, an idea that gained momentum and eventually led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to dedicate Shenandoah National Park in 1936.

Over the last eight years, many Artists-in-Residence have tried to capture the beauty of Shenandoah's landscape, infusing the views with their own unique styles and perspectives. However, with an eight-year maintenance cycle at most of these vistas, some overlooks haven't been cleared since the Trust's first Artists-in-Residence arrived in 2015.

On one side of the stone walls (or, in some cases, wooden railings), the park maintains regular road maintenance,


ensuring accessible experiences for all visitors. But on the other side, vegetation creeps upward, slowly but surely obscuring the views.

While the park tries to prioritize preserving the views that continue to inspire generations of artists and park visitors, regular maintenance isn't always feasible. Clearing overgrown vegetation is both time-consuming and expensive, often requiring unique heavy machinery and trained crews, costing more than \$1 million every cycle.

To provide more consistent care for these valuable spaces, the Trust continues to prioritize the preservation of iconic overlooks. In the last 15 years, the Trust has funded the restoration of the Old Rag Overlook (2009) and the Hawksbill Observation Platform (2016), as well as numerous annual grants for regular overlook maintenance.

In 2020, the Trust initiated "Adopt an Overlook" – a program that allows individuals, organizations, and corporate partners to cover the cost of clearing a particular overlook. Rockingham County, Augusta County, and Greene County Tourism have already funded the maintenance of vistas in their regions, preserving views of their beautiful landscapes.

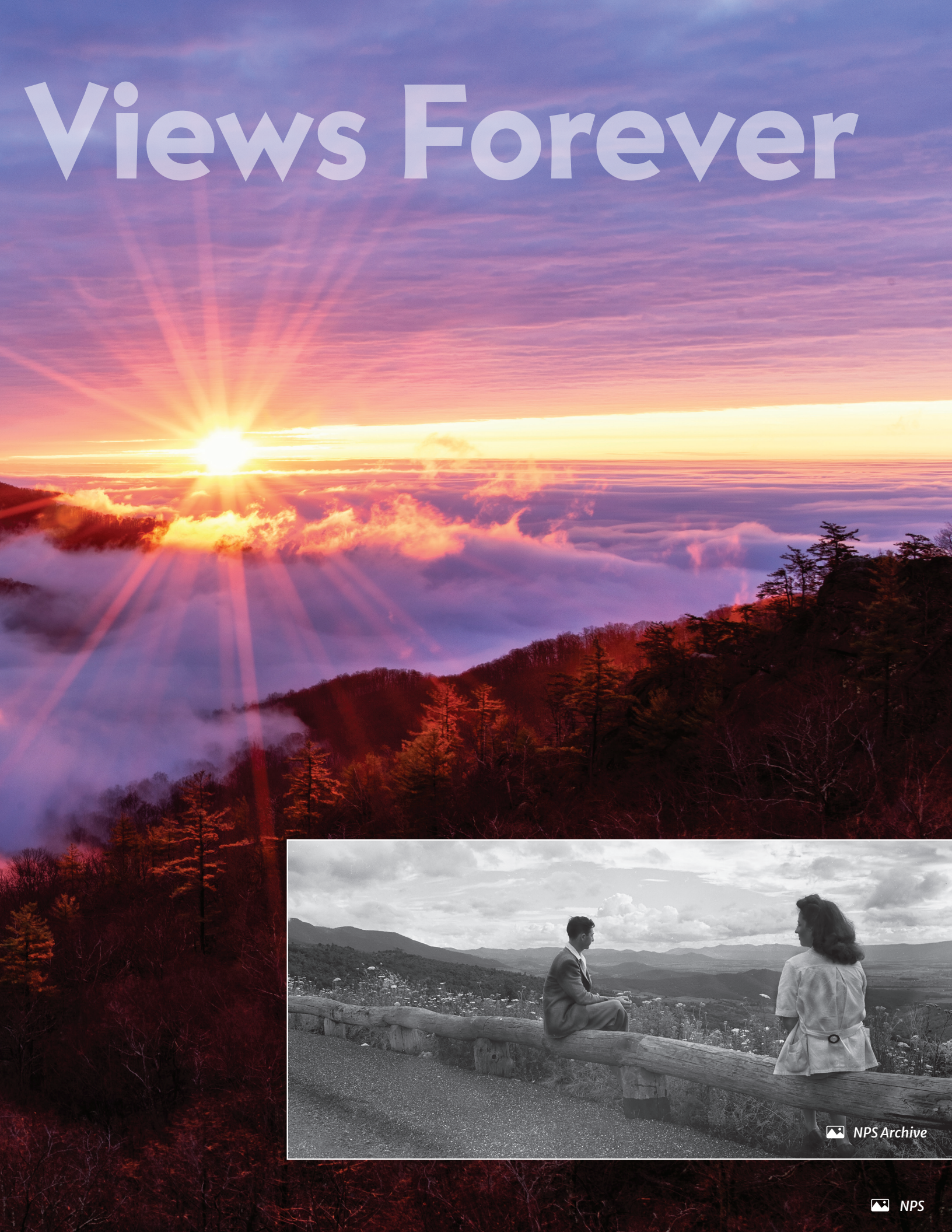
Skyline Drive has been inspiring visitors for nearly 100 years, and the Trust believes in the necessity of preserving the viewscape for the inspiration of generations yet to come.




Clearing overgrown vegetation is both time-consuming and expensive, often requiring unique heavy machinery and trained crews.

To request more information about the Adopt-an-Overlook program, contact Ethan at eserr@snptrust.org.

Views Forever



 NPS Archive

 NPS

The Power of Partnership: Show Your Love for Shenandoah

For Earth Day, park partners joined forces to host the second annual *Show Your Love for Shenandoah* volunteer event. Under the guidance of park staff, more than 150 volunteers arrived at Skyland on April 22nd ready to tackle invasive plants, dirty signs, washed out trails, clogged ditches, and more.

The Trust worked with Volunteer & Youth Project Lead Leah Cawthorn, the Shenandoah National Park Association (SNPA), Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), Appalachian Conservation Corps (ACC), and Delaware North to take on urgent projects across the Central District.

With this combined effort, volunteers were able to make a considerable impact in our park – building tree cages and removing invasive garlic mustard from a sensitive biological area to protect native species; repairing waterbars to keep trails from washing out; clearing debris-filled drainage ditches along Skyline Drive to prevent flooding; and cleaning interpretive signs and campgrounds to help

visitors fully experience the beauty and history of Shenandoah.

“Volunteers are an integral part of the park,” said Cawthorn. “They’re necessary to make the whole picture complete and an essential piece of our success as a National Park.”

The Trust continues to fund Cawthorn’s position so that volunteers and youth crews can thrive mutually with our park. Shenandoah has long lists of consistent and changing needs, and volunteers lighten the load on park staff. In return, volunteers learn new skills and develop deeper connections with the land, getting to know Shenandoah on a level that most visitors overlook.

The Trust is proud to bring individuals and organizations together to give back to our park and thanks all the volunteers who braved the chilly weather to show their love for Shenandoah. The massive scale of this volunteer event would not have been possible without the united efforts of individuals, NPS staff, and park partners.



Corrina Wendel, NPS Volunteer Coordinator, and Leah Cawthorn shelter from the rain after wrapping up the Show Your Love event.

The Trust has been funding Cawthorn’s position since 2021 and has facilitated nearly 100,000 hours of volunteer work in that time, including major events like this one.



If you are interested in volunteering, scan this QR code or go to snptrust.org/connect/volunteer and fill out a Volunteer Interest Form.





SONYA LARA | POET & ESSAYIST

May 1-22

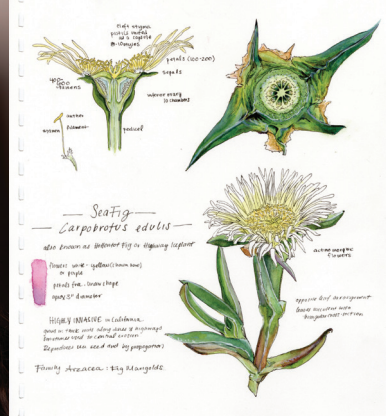
Sonya led a public program on May 6th to kick off Wildflower Weekend, reflecting on birdsong and challenging visitors to think deeply about the scientific and social labeling of both birds and people in Shenandoah and beyond.

“I think it’s kind of magical that the park will be fossilized in some of my poetry and creative nonfiction. Regardless of how the park evolves and changes years down the line, it’ll always be cemented in that one way that I was able to experience it.”

NINA GRAULEY | SCIENCE ILLUSTRATOR

July 10-31

“I’d love to make an infographic, mini -field guide, or some other informative illustration that would raise awareness about the wonders found in the park and what people can do to continue to preserve them. For the public program, I am planning to share more about field sketching and botanical illustration with park visitors through a guided hike or workshop!”



PAUL ATKINSON | INFRARED & NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHER

July 31 – August 21

“In a place like Shenandoah National Park, the possibilities are endless for a photographer. Having this space to delve deeper and connect with the landscape will give me the freedom to try new things, to experiment, to explore. My art lets me visualize so much more than just what my eyes can see – I want to share that excitement.”



INES SUN | VISUAL ARTIST

September 5-26

“Primarily I will use Sumi ink to sketch from the mountain. I will run Chinese Calligraphy workshops to show how to connect breathing and brush stroke. We will use characters of mountains, sun, moon, water, etc. from our surroundings as inspiration to practice.”



**SAVE THE DATE:
September 22-24**



Join the Trust this fall for the inaugural *Art in the Park: Scenes from Shenandoah* – a weekend full of free programming with local artists, musical performances, professional painting and photography, and more!

See the tentative schedule here: snptrust.org/art-in-the-park



JILL HALEY | MUSICIAN

October 2-23

Jill creates music inspired by national parks and performs her compositions around the world, accompanied by video of the places that sparked her creativity. Her primary instruments are oboe and English horn.

2023 Artists-in-Residence



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WAYS TO GIVE: The Legacy of Land

Keith Cain always knew he wanted to make a lasting gift to Shenandoah. He'd been organizing a Planned Gift, but when he attended a Rapidan Society event last fall and heard about the Trust's recent donation of nearly 1,000 acres of land to the park, he wondered if he might make that gift differently – and more immediately.

"My plan was to restrict my gift for land purchase – to expand the park," he said. "Then I heard about Tanners Ridge, which got me thinking, 'Why not buy the property now?' It really happened that night."

Park neighbors in Sperryville had alerted the Trust to the impending sale of 23 acres along Shenandoah's boundary in hopes that the land could be protected and remain undeveloped, preserving woodland and access to Sam's Ridge Trail. Within two weeks, Keith bid for the property.

"I was the lowest of three bids," he recounted. "But the owners said they took my offer because of my plan to donate the land to the park."

The benefits of land donations are far-reaching. In addition to preserving trail access and preventing encroaching development, expanding Shenandoah's borders is the best way the Trust can combat climate change. By preserving bordering lands, the park maintains a natural forest and thick tree canopy, providing more carbon sequestration, oxygen production, and habitat for plants and animals that depend on cooler temperatures to survive.



Keith Cain

For Keith, donating land meant more than providing these benefits – **it was also a way to turn a memory into a legacy.** "My father really loved Shenandoah National Park, as do I," he said. "I'm doing it, but it's about him."

Keith's donation is a unique blend of a Planned, Memorial, and Land gift, representing a significant commitment to protecting, enhancing, and preserving Shenandoah for this and future generations. "Land is forever," he concluded. "This was a permanent way for me to leave an on-going gift."

Keith's donation is a unique blend of a Planned, Memorial, and Land gift.

Leave a Legacy in Shenandoah



Become a member of the
Shenandoah Legacy Society by
including Shenandoah National Park
Trust in your will or estate planning.

THE EDGE FUND

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.

If you're interested in learning more or giving to the Edge Fund, donating land, or establishing a Planned Gift, contact us at (434) 293-2728 or email info@snptrust.org.