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## More than Miles: The SNP52 Hiking Challenge



Kevin Morgan

### Kevin and Tobey Morgan started exploring Shenandoah National Park because of a dog and a baby.

When their daughter, Lucy, arrived on the scene with almost as much energy as their German Shorthair Pointer, the Morgans knew they needed a plan for staying active outside. “Within her first month of joining us, Lucy was riding in a baby carrier at Big Meadows,” Kevin said. “We kept hiking every weekend by sheer force of will, but we needed to get organized in our adventures.”

The outdoors have long been important to the Morgans, and they knew they wanted to instill that value of nature in Lucy from a

young age. “We felt teaching our child about nature and seeing our dog enjoy the world around us would be important to her development,” Kevin explained.

They searched for a hiking challenge to keep them motivated, but when all they found was the iconic but daunting Shenandoah 500, they realized it might be easier to design their own.

Kevin mapped out loops that would keep his family exploring for a year. Within a few weeks, he had developed the SNP52 Hiking Challenge: 23 loops covering

52 trail segments and 150 miles throughout the park.

It was immediately clear that they had created a resource that could help others get outside, so Kevin and Tobey made the SNP52 free and accessible online by publishing downloadable GIS maps, designing a website, and filming their adventures to provide a visual how-to guide for each loop.

To make those videos more engaging, Kevin researched stories to share about the places they were hiking, promptly tumbling headfirst into the complex, rich history of the land.

The more he learned, the more he came to deeply treasure Shenandoah and its trails. He began to understand how much previous generations had given so that his family could experience Shenandoah as it is today. Every hike became an exercise in gratitude for the past and a desire to take care of this precious place so the next generation might enjoy it, too.

“It’s been a great challenge, and an even better way to bring the family closer together, one step

at a time,” said Kevin. “Especially since Tobey insists on being able to tell Lucy that she carried her for the entire SNP52 Hiking Challenge!”

As the next Morgan generation, Lucy has gotten a head start on enjoying Shenandoah: at just over one year old, she has already completed 17 loops of the SNP52!

**Within a few weeks, Kevin had developed the SNP52 Hiking Challenge: 23 loops covering 52 trail segments and 150 miles.**

Dear friends,

Every spring, I am amazed at how suddenly Shenandoah seems to emerge from winter. The bright green of new life climbs up the mountains, birds migrate back north, and people return to the park to drive, bike, picnic, and – of course – hike.

Shenandoah's trail system is one of the most popular and well-marked in the country, with hundreds of miles of mapped paths leading to peaks, waterfalls, and everything in between.

**For the last nine years, you have made it possible for us to support 16 of those trails and fire roads in the park.** Last year, we partnered with Kevin Morgan, the creator of the SNP52 Hiking Challenge, as he began digging into Shenandoah's history while exploring the park's trails with his family.

Kevin's story reminds us of the significance of keeping these trails safe and accessible. As you read this newsletter, I hope you, too, will see Shenandoah's trails as more than a challenge. I hope this glimpse behind the scenes with the park's trails team – a peek at how much thoughtful planning goes into every single mile – will inspire you to appreciate this incredible resource in a new way. We're so thankful for all your support. Our work, on trails and beyond, would not be possible without you.

See you on the trails!



Jessica Cocciolone  
Executive Director | Shenandoah National Park Trust



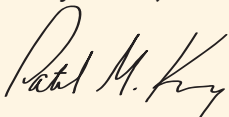
## Inside Shenandoah

As we transition into spring, I hope everyone had a good winter and is excited to get back into your park. Spring is a great time to come out and stretch your legs on the 500 miles of hiking trails within Shenandoah – trails that truly are a national treasure. I believe that the park has a trail for everyone, from the fully accessible Limberlost Trail to Old Rag, an arduous climb.

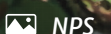
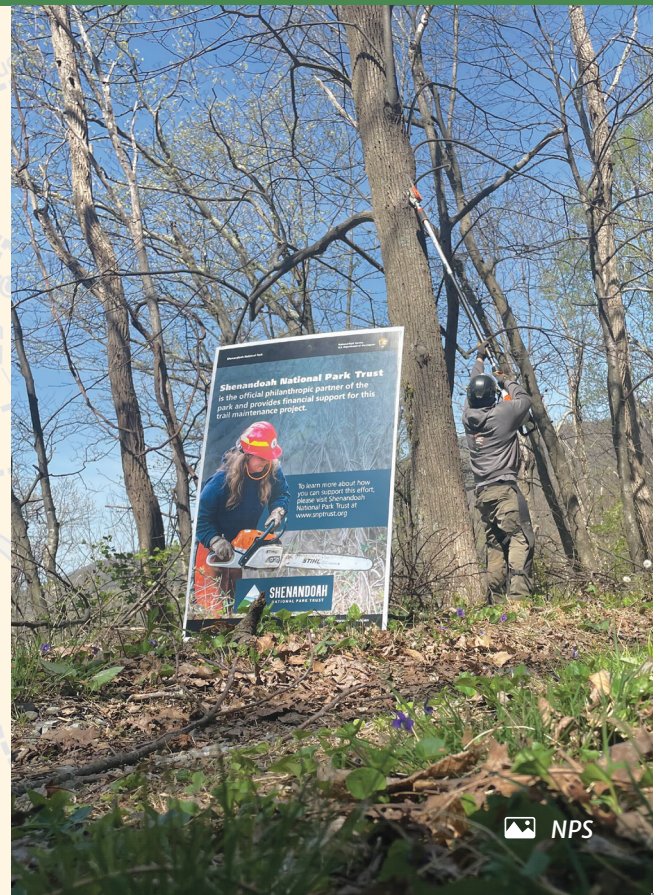
More than 100 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail travel the length of the park, serving as a key backbone of our trail network. Park management, staff, and volunteers work diligently to ensure that these vital trails offer a positive experience. That trail maintenance work is challenging and labor-intensive, and we appreciate the help we get from numerous volunteers and the financial support we receive from the Trust.

I hope you get a chance to experience the park this spring, to get out on your trails and see where your support has helped make Shenandoah a safer and more enjoyable place for millions of people.

Many thanks,



Patrick M. Kenney  
Superintendent | Shenandoah National Park





# TRAILS FOREVER: A Vision for Sustainable Trails

Since its establishment, Shenandoah National Park has been a pinnacle of recreation, with a trail for everyone. In the last 30 years, however, many of those trails have become weathered and worn, and invasives and severe weather have dramatically changed the park's landscapes.

Narrow paths that once wound through canyons sheltered by dense hemlock canopies are now exposed to rain and widened from years of heavy foot traffic. Streams that ebbed and flowed three decades ago now experience patterns of drought and flooding, regularly damaging the trails along their banks.

In short, many of the park's trails are now considered "poorly designed" for today's visitors and challenges. As Steve Printz, a Trail Crew Supervisor, put it: "Every so often, the trails have to be reworked."

Enhancing the trail system's resilience is a park priority. In addition to annual maintenance, the park is thinking about how to redesign trails for the future's visitors and climate.

As part of that long-term vision, Superintendent Kenney hired Nat Phelps as the Facilities Manager for Backcountry/Trails. Phelps brings vast experience with trail design in seven western national parks, and he's looking forward to tackling the unique challenges of an eastern park, including erosion and abundant vegetation.

"It takes a lot of planning, and the work is getting increasingly professional," Phelps said. "It's masonry; it's carpentry; it's construction; it's design – figuring out which materials will work in each unique area."

For Phelps, it's also evaluating the needs of each trail and strategizing years in advance to acquire federal funding. Fortunately, the park service has a rating system in place to prioritize funding where it's needed most. Unfortunately, that system includes everything in Shenandoah, so each trail is ranked against the most used facility in the park: Skyline Drive.

"That's why Trust funding is so important," explained Phelps. "It's a great way to fund immediate, targeted projects and needs. We're really excited about things like Trails Forever, because that kind of funding gives us the potential to do some big projects."

A multitude of factors are constantly changing the park's trails, and maintaining them will remain a priority. The Trust is looking forward to supporting Phelps and his team as they work toward a sustainable future for Shenandoah's trail system.

**Enhancing the trail system's resilience is a park priority. In addition to annual maintenance, the park is thinking about how to redesign trails for the future's visitors and climate.**



James Gregory



NPS



NPS

Learn more about supporting Shenandoah's trails at [snptrust.org/project/trails](https://snptrust.org/project/trails).



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## Why We Give: Beth & Jeremy Hawks

For Beth & Jeremy Hawks, the question has never been, “Do we give?” It has always been, “How can we give best?” This question was central when the couple moved their family to Maryland and Jeremy left the Navy and began working at Booz Allen.

“When I got out of uniform and our lifestyle changed, giving became more important,” Jeremy said. “We recognized how lucky we were in how our life has unfolded, and we wanted to start giving back more.”

The pair sat down and made a plan. They decided where to give, then figured out how to do it best. They found the Trust during their search for an organization that converged around their interests. “Beth prefers giving to organizations that help kids, and I prefer giving to the outdoors,” Jeremy explained. “We found the Trust’s outreach program for schools and how they give access to young people who may not be able to visit the park otherwise, and that really appealed to both of us.”

To make the most of their giving, the Hawks strategically plan their gifts and donate through Booz Allen’s matching gifts program. “We learned that through more methodical planning, we can do more,” Jeremy shared. “We treat it as a fun business!”

After attending a Rapidan Society event and hearing from a planned giving expert last October, Beth & Jeremy are already thinking about what future gifts might look like, from company stocks and shares to the potential for a larger gift to support exciting projects.

“With a little forethought, we can set ourselves up for our giving to be nondisruptive, so it’s always a positive event,” Jeremy concluded. “That’s the goal: to keep focusing on organizations that we feel do good work and enjoy being part of it.”



Beth & Jeremy Hawks

## Mark Your Calendar!

<b>April 17</b>	Great Community Give
<b>April 20</b>	Fee-Free Day in the Park
<b>April 20-28</b>	National Park Week
<b>May 4</b>	Show Your Love for Shenandoah Volunteer Event
<b>May 14</b>	Give Local Piedmont
<b>May 16</b>	Wine on the Rooftop
<b>May 18</b>	Hike in the Park
<b>June 2</b>	Shenandoah Soiree
<b>June 19</b>	Fee-Free Day in the Park
<b>June 20</b>	Wine on the Rooftop
<b>June 29</b>	Hike in the Park
<b>July 12-13</b>	Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park
<b>August 3</b>	Hike in the Park
<b>August 4</b>	Fee-Free Day in the Park
<b>September 12</b>	Wine on the Rooftop
<b>September 27-29</b>	Art in the Park
<b>September 28</b>	Fee-Free Day in the Park
<b>October 5</b>	Hike in the Park
<b>October 10</b>	Wine on the Rooftop
<b>October 25-26</b>	Rapidan Society Weekend in the Park
<b>November 11</b>	Fee-Free Day in the Park
<b>December 3</b>	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 almost \$280,000 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!



## Leave a Legacy

The future of our park will be built on today’s planned and deferred gifts. Together, we can ensure that Shenandoah is protected for generations to come. Scan this QR code to learn about the many ways to leave a legacy!

