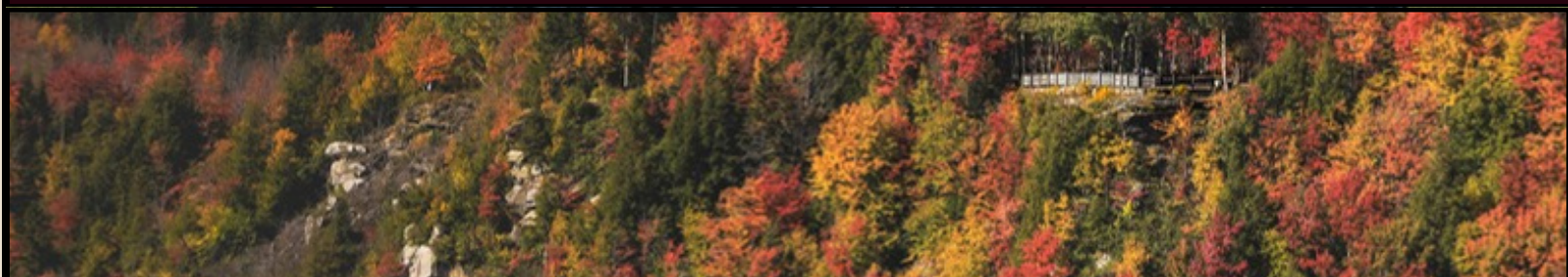




APPALACHIAN FOREST

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

2025 Annual Report





Introduction

Dear Community Stakeholders, Partners and Friends,

Our 2025 Annual Report follows. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are eager to share our organizational growth and accomplishments.

We meet virtually each quarter and annually at locations across our region. Our stakeholders—both organizations and individuals such as you—help make decisions with us. Participants are automatically considered members with voting rights at our gathering.

In 2025, we were again empowered to help fund more than Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) in grants for worthwhile projects driven by our partners. The economic and program development benefits are substantial.

Our AmeriCorps program placed dedicated personnel with partners throughout the sixteen counties of our West Virginia region. Many of the placements included AmeriCorps members who engaged in their second or more years of work. AmeriCorps bolstered historic preservation, site interpretation, resource conservation and positive visitor experience.

The Highlands Creative Economy working group meets virtually each month. We held our Annual Tourism Summit—coordinated by the Highlands Creative Economy participants—on September 18, 2025 at Allegheny Springs, in Snowshoe, Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

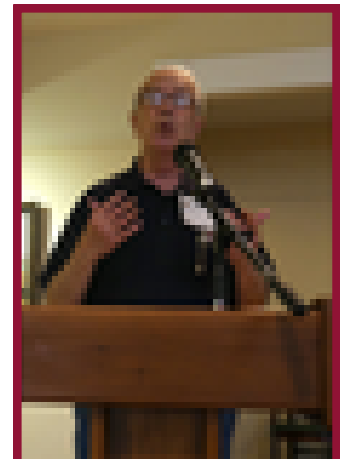
We are charged with providing unmatched opportunities for visitors to and residents of our 18county region in West Virginia and western Maryland. Our Executive Director, J. Logan Smith, leads that effort.

Become a community Member of the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area today. We invite You to join us in our work.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Johnson

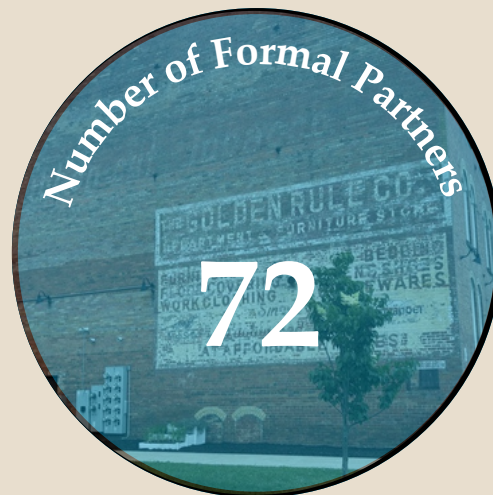
Robert C. 'Bob' Johnson, President
Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area





Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

By the Numbers





Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area *Grants*

The Appalachian Forest Grants program supported 14 organizations in 2025 and involved supporting events such as Forest On The Go, Old Brick Playhouse's High Mountain Harmony, and the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting. \$129,922 were awarded from the grant program in support of programs all across our region related to tourism, conservation, and education.

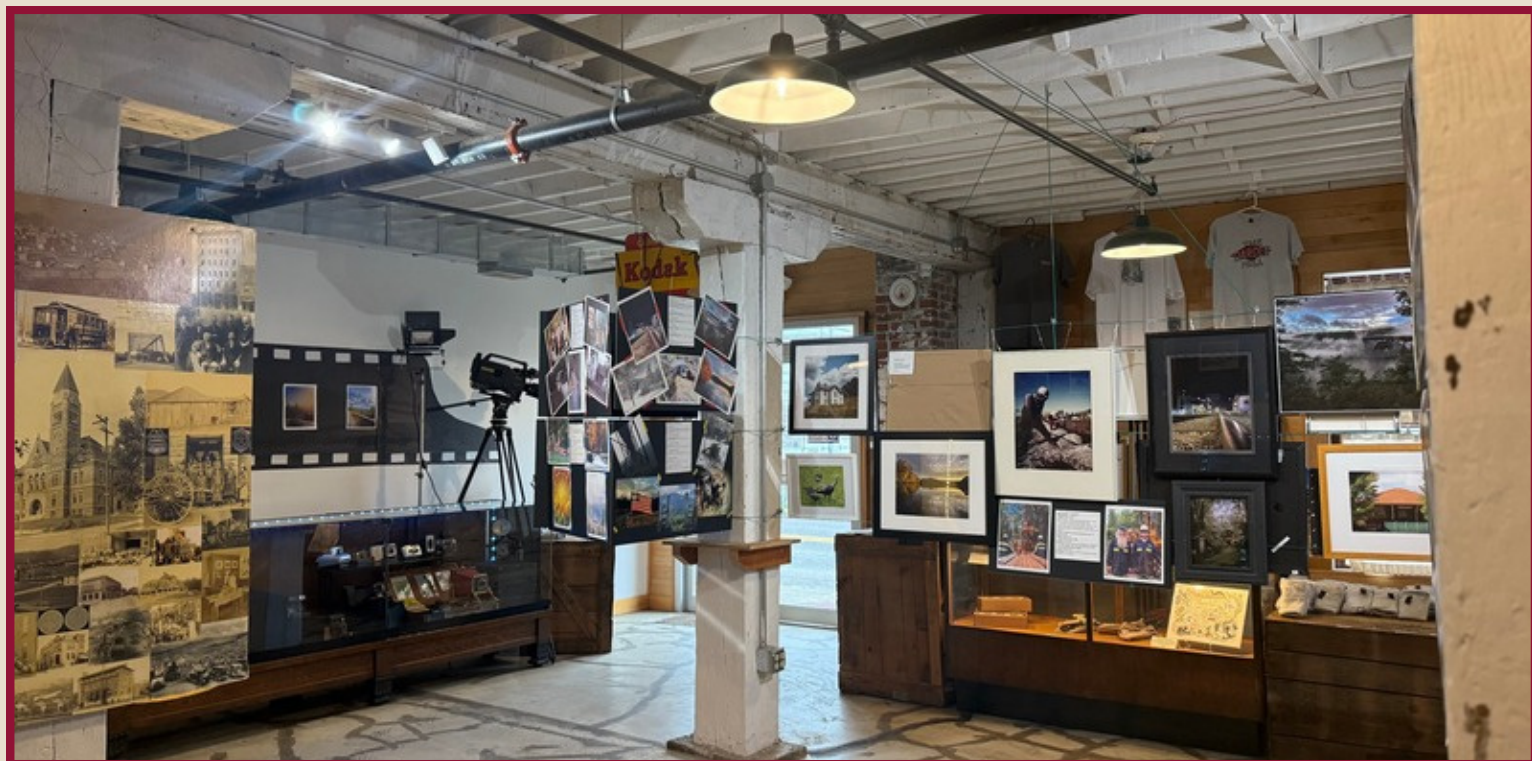
These projects are expected to produce an addition \$195,000 in matching and leveraged funds in local communities.



A MEMBER OF THE
**National Heritage
Area System**



Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area *Discovery Center*



2025 featured "Beneath Our Feet: The Hidden World of Caves and Karst," an exhibit created in part with AmeriCorps member assistance. This immersive exhibit shed light on the important role and multitude of caves within the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area and included a replica cave with a simulated crawl space, interpretive panels, and unique artifacts that reveal how karst landscapes and cave ecosystems support drinking water supplies, agriculture, and biodiversity.



The Discovery Center hosted 13 events, including Movies at the Mill, that were attended by over 200 guests. 4 presentations were delivered by local experts including professors of local schools, directors and cinematographers of Appalachian films, and renowned musicians. Our exhibits were visited by over 3000 guests.



Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area *AmeriCorps*



In our 2024-25 service year, we supported 37 members at 24 organizations whose sites, programs, and activities were visited by over 33,000 individuals. These members delivered educational programs to an audience of over 5500 individuals, treated and improved 4550 acres of public land, and managed 2196 hours of volunteer service. 80% of participants who participated in our stewardship education programs reported increased knowledge of environmental stewardship.

AmeriCorps major projects in 2025 included managing an outreach series on crayfish of West Virginia, designing and building an exhibit on the Strader Family at the Beverly Heritage Center, and reviewing the collections policy for Monongahela National Forest.

Read AmeriCorps Stories Here





Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

AmeriCorps Sites



BARBOUR COUNTY
HISTORICAL MUSEUM





Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area *Partnerships*



The Beverly Heritage Center is recognized as a significant tourist destination and for its interpretation of crucial regional history, exemplifying the AFNHA's themes of heritage and culture.

Discover the Appalachian Forest Story

The AFNHA Discovery Site Program highlights key places that bring the Appalachian Forest's history, culture, and natural beauty to life. Each site reflects one or more core themes—Forests and Forestry, the Logging Boom, and Mountain Culture—helping visitors explore the people, landscapes, and traditions that shaped this region. Together, these sites form a connected journey across the Appalachian Forest, offering education, authentic experiences, and opportunities to enjoy and protect our heritage.



discoverafnha.org



AFNHA has expanded its partner program and partnered with 84 organizations in 2025.

With the expansion of our partner program, we opened our first Discovery Site, The Beverly Heritage Center, and plan to announce several additional Discovery Sites soon.

Learn more about the AFNHA Partner Program!

The Highlands Creative Economy program continues to use collaborative partnership strategies to support tourism professionals and destinations throughout our region. Participants gain valuable knowledge and skills, explore potential funding opportunities, and strengthen connections with other sites and initiatives across the area.

This year, we hosted a stakeholder meeting in Snowshoe, partnered with the US Forest Service in hosting Discover Nature Day, and held a Discovery Tour through important sites in Pocahontas County. We awarded 4 recreation development grants totaling over \$18,000, and disbursed 14 education and interpretation grants totaling over \$64,000.



Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area *Conservation Programs*

AFNHA Supported Educational Programs and Products

**AFNHA
Pollinator Initiative**

**Cheat River
Snorkeling Adventure**

**Barbour County
Museum**

**Woodchopping
Museum Visitor
Services and Tours**

Caves and Karst

**The Strader
Collection**

**Casey's
Winter Dream**

**Movie Night
at the Mill**

**Movie Night
at the Mill**

Philippi Tour Videos

**Town of Bath
Website Redesign**

**Upshur County
Historical Society
Journal**

**Junior Ranger Books
for Seneca Rocks**

**Seneca Rocks
Interpretive Plan**



Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

America's 250th in the Appalachian Forest



Founding Families of the Forest

Throughout 2025, the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area planned the development of an exhibit for the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center for the summer of 2026 based on America's 250th in the Appalachian Forest. This will be additional programming connected to our ongoing America's 250th blog series and other related programming. In 2025, 16 number of blogs were released dedicated to sharing the history of our nation.



**Jane Gates: An
African-American
Trailblazer of
Allegany County**



**Tales From
North River Mills**



**The Golden Rule: A
Tradition of
Community Care**

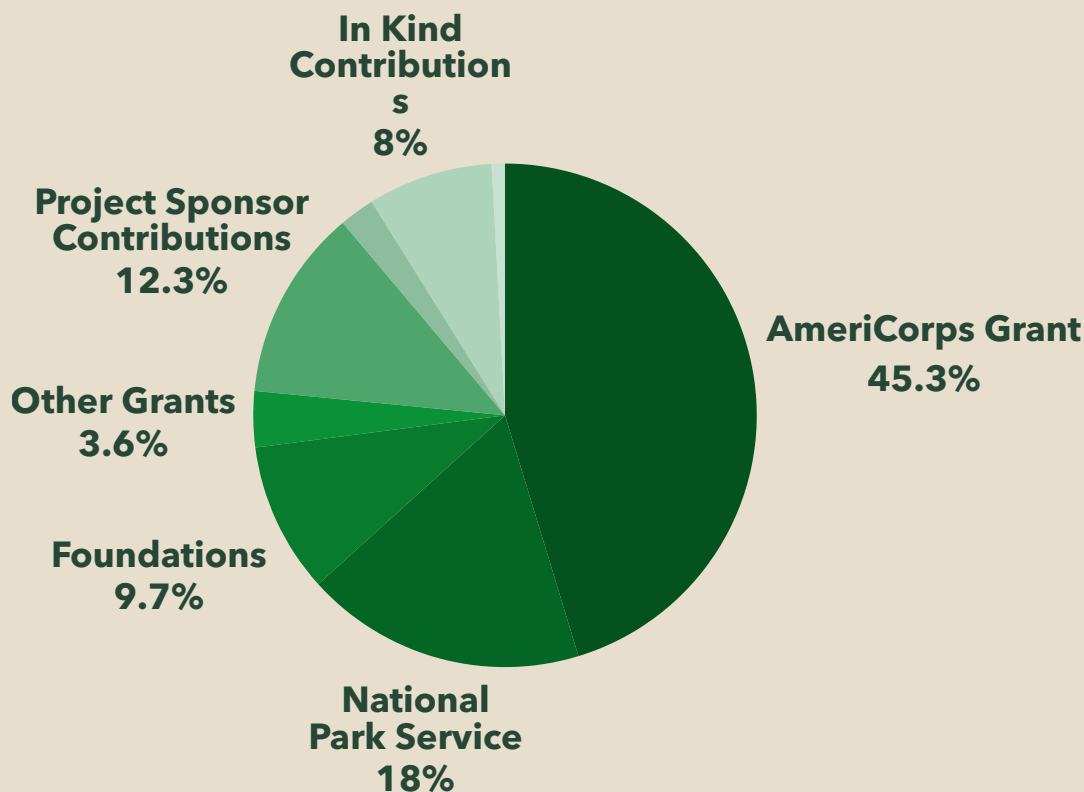


Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

Financials

Revenue

AmeriCorps Grant.....	\$638,959
National Park Service - NHA Funding.....	\$254,150
Foundations.....	\$136,207
Other Grants.....	\$50,777
Project Partner Contributions.....	\$173,528
Darden Mill.....	\$31,832
In Kind Contributions.....	\$119,416
Other Revenue.....	\$12,085
Total.....	\$1,416,954



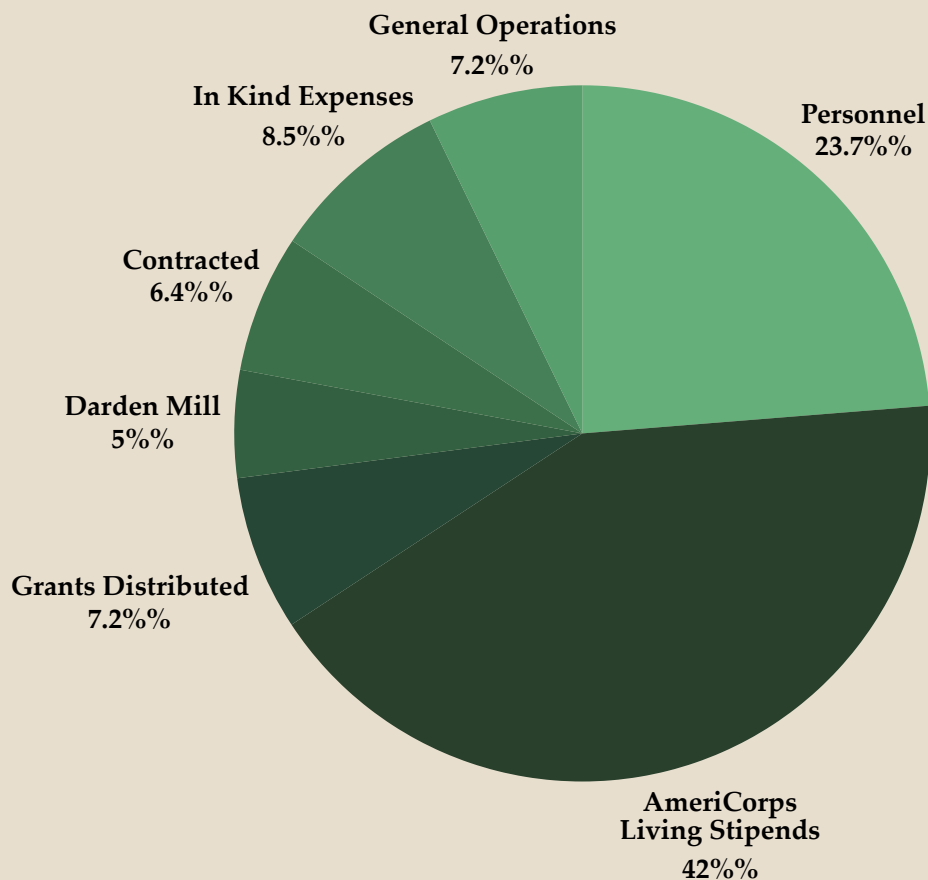


Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

Financials

Expenses

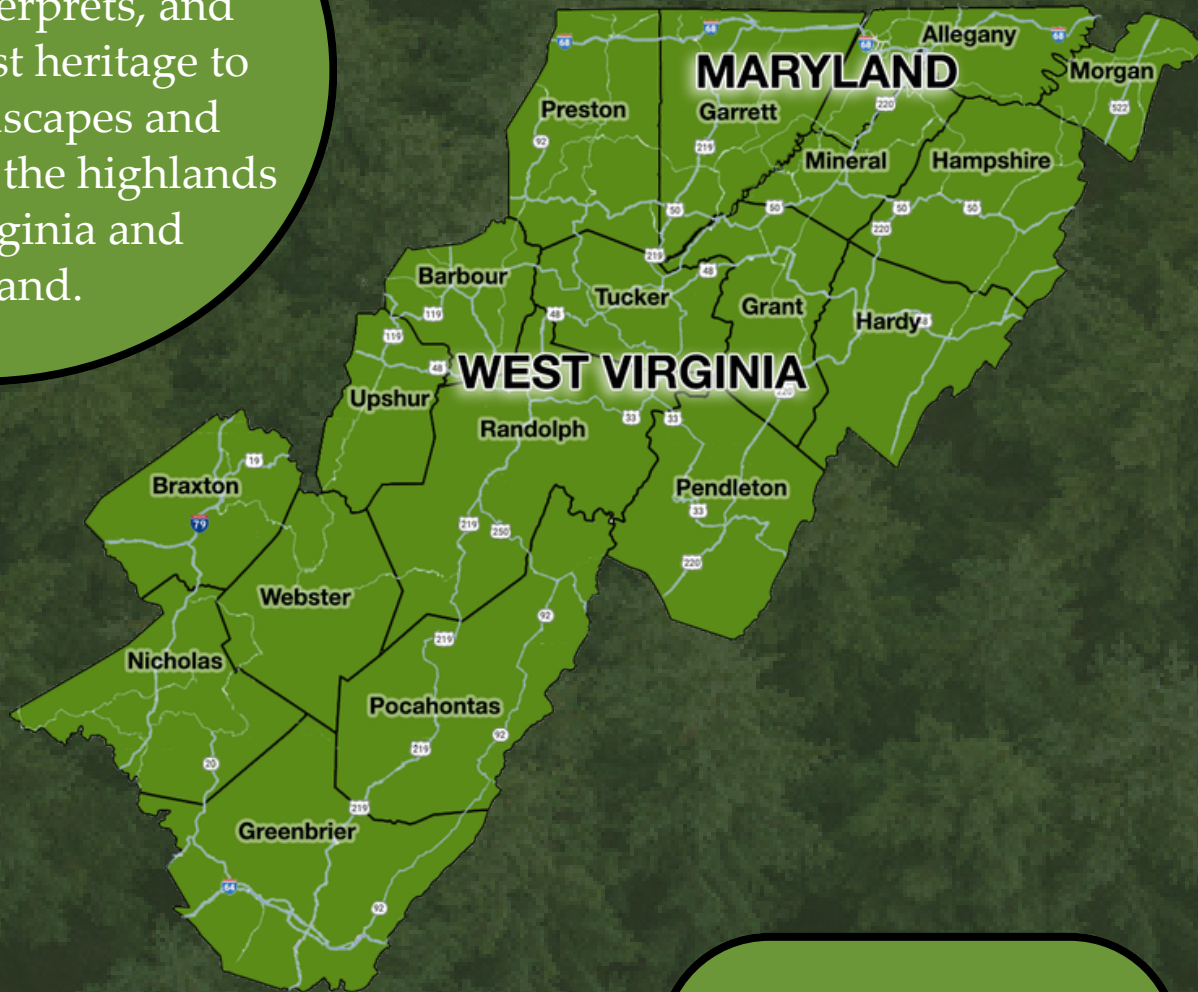
Personnel.....	\$335,252
AmeriCorps Living Allowances.....	\$593,409
Grants Distributed.....	\$101,699
Darden Mill.....	\$70,532
Contracted.....	\$90,375
In Kind Expenses.....	\$119,416
General Operations.....	\$101,968
Total.....	\$1,462,428





APPALACHIAN FOREST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area conserves, interprets, and promotes forest heritage to enhance landscapes and communities in the highlands of West Virginia and Maryland.



Contact

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Area System**