

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

April 15, 2024

Foundation President Greg Bray convened the meeting at 10:05 at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia. Approximately 60 attendees were present. They introduced themselves and stated which park or foundation they represented.

Secretary's Report: Bob Hoke said the draft minutes of the 2023 Annual meeting were mailed to all foundations shortly after the meeting and copies, without the attachments, were in the packet of handouts for today's meeting. He said approval of the minutes would be requested later in the meeting so attendees could read them first.

Treasurer's Report: Kim McCluskey was not present. Vice President Kevin Anderson read a letter from Kim. It is Attachment #1 to these minutes. Once the 2023 report is finalized, it will be sent to the local foundations for review and approval. Kim's letter said the Foundation has assets of \$338K.

Park System Report - Part I: Paul Redford gave a report on the current status of the Park System:

- The Park System is big operation with over 160,000 acres, 1,500 buildings, and many other assets.
- Customers generally give the system an "excellent" rating, including rooms, food service, and other amenities.
- Approximately \$483M is spent in West Virginia each year by Park visitors and 58% of that is from out of state visitors.
- Paul gave several examples of successful projects done by local foundations and said their support is a significant factor in the system's success.

Park System Report - Part II: Matt Yeager made the following comments:

- Matt reviewed the steps the Planning, Engineering, and Maintenance (PEM) organization goes through for each project. The process is complex and takes time.

- He mentioned a number of 2023 accomplishments, including \$20M for Hawks Nest and Pipestem trams, the Blackwater Falls trading post, cabins at Coopers Rock, Beech Fork and Kanawha rest room upgrades, and others.
- He mentioned numerous projects that are expected to be completed in 2024 and others that will be going to design during the year.
- All parks will be getting new signs soon. They will be a consistent style, but will be adapted to local infrastructure when appropriate.

Comments by Sam England: Former Chief of Parks Sam England gave a brief presentation:

- He is now the Executive Director of *WV Trail*, a non-profit organization that supports non-motorized trails throughout the state. He noted that trails have economic and social benefits, but they also help connect communities.
- He said projects by groups like the local foundations are often limited by a lack of funds. He suggested creating a funded position within the statewide foundation with that person's mission to seek funding for local foundation projects. He said that has worked well for WV Trail and should work for the Foundation. Ken Caplinger said it might be possible to fund the position with a grant from the Benedum Foundation. Sam said that the Foundation will need to have a strategic plan in place before requesting a grant. Ken said we should make a motion later in the meeting asking the officers to look into creating a funded grant writer position.
- He is on the Board for the State Park Endowment Fund that is funded from royalties from gas extracted under the Ohio River. He said the Fund has a balance of \$42M. Interest on the money has been less than anticipated, but royalty income is larger than expected. A strategic plan will be developed soon, perhaps by the summer, to determine the rules for local foundations to request matching grants from the Endowment Fund. He said the grants will probably have an initial \$25K limit and require a

50% match, but some amount of volunteer labor will be acceptable as part of the match. He encouraged local foundations to begin preparing grant requests now so they can be submitted when the rules are finalized. He also said any potential projects should be coordinated with the foundation's park superintendent.

Legislative Session Update: Ken Caplinger gave a summary of park-related bills in the 2024 legislative session. His report is in Attachment #2.

- He congratulated the local foundations for following the lobbying guidelines and only doing educational outreach on bills of interest. He also said that David Stover of Wyoming County was crucial in the failure of SB 688.
- Everyone should think about how to better distribute timely information in addition to the emails that are sent during the legislative session.
- He said Emily Fleming, former Chief of Parks, said that visits to local parks by the Legislature's Parks Subcommittee are very important and any park being visited should try to make a good impression.

Recognition of Jim Michael: Ken Caplinger said that the Cacapon Foundation recently celebrated Jim Michael's many years of service to both the Cacapon Foundation and the statewide Foundation. In addition to Jim's many accomplishments in the Cacapon Foundation, he was instrumental in forming the statewide foundation in 1998 and served as its President until 2019. Ken said Jim was an excellent example of a dedicated and valuable volunteer supporting West Virginia's parks at both the local and statewide level. Ken said he was sorry Jim couldn't attend the meeting, and there was a round of applause for Jim.

Motion to look into hiring a grant writer: As a follow-up to the discussion during Sam England's presentation, Greg Bray made a motion that **the officers of the WVSPF investigate the feasibility of hiring a grant writer for the Foundation.** The motion was seconded and approved.

Endowment Fund Questions: A couple folks said they were confused about the two endowment funds, one under the park system and the other in the statewide foundation. Bob Hoke said he would write a brief paper explaining the two funds and

include it as an attachment to the minutes. It is Attachment #3.

Keynote Speaker: Eriks Janelsins is the President and CEO of the Oglebay Foundation in Wheeling. The Foundation operates the city's Oglebay Park.

- He gave a general overview of Oglebay Park and said it is the only self-sustaining local park in the country. The initial land parcel was purchased in 1925 by a group of 170 citizens and Earl Oglebay donated his 750-acre Waddington Farm to it in 1928. Much improvement work was done to the property during the depression by the WPA and CCC.
- Philanthropy and profit from lodging and food sales in the Park pay for its operation. The Foundation's "Forever Yours" campaign is an ongoing fundraising effort. There is no fixed goal, but the Foundation tries to get 100,000 donations of all sizes each year. Donors are told about the Park's significant impact on the local community, including K-12 programs, zoo science, and many other programs that encourage involvement by many segments of the local community.
- The Foundation has a comprehensive master plan to encourage donations. This includes a catalog of needs, naming rights, and other information that can be quickly given to a potential donor.
- The Foundation looks for a commitment over time from major donors, not just a one-time gift. They don't accept gifts for projects that don't conform to the Park's master plan and esthetics. They calculate the return on investment for project donations and if there isn't a payback, they require an endowment to support the project. For example, a \$100K project like a cabin may need an additional \$400K endowment to provide funds for maintaining the cabin. The Foundation charges \$5K for a memorial bench. The bench costs about \$900, plus about \$400-500 for installation, and the unused money goes into the endowment fund.
- The Foundation has a 3-year strategic plan, a 5-year capital plan, and a 10-year financial model. There are projects costing approximately \$17M current under development or construction.
- It is important to present a strong case for support to potential donors and to have

prepared answers to several questions ready ahead of time: Why does the organization exist? What human problems does it solve? What services does the organization provide to solve those problems? Why should the donor make a gift? How necessary is the project? Who will benefit? How much money is needed? What are the expected results (like number of visitors)?

- For each donor you should be able to explain why here, why now, why this project, and why the donor should support it.
- It is important to give the donor a reason to support the project you are pitching. You also need to match donors to appropriate projects and follow up after they make a donation.
- Hints for getting donor support: Make a solid presentation, but don't pressure a donor. Donors have many motivations so be sure to emphasize how your project matches their interests. Donors need to feel they get something in return. Sometimes this is just recognition, but you need to find out what they want. You need to frequently communicate back to a donor about project progress. And, of course, you should always make them aware of the tax implications from their donations.
- Not all projects need to be large. Small projects often have a dedicated constituency that provides initial funding, but that funding group may grow as the project is implemented.
- Recurring gifts are strongly encourages instead of one-time donations.
- Useful resources include the National Association of State Park Foundations (<https://naspf.org/>) and the National Association of Park Foundations (<https://www.the-napf.org/>).

Election of officers: Greg Bray said the current officers are all willing to continue in office. He then solicited any additional candidates. There were no additional candidate volunteers. There was a **motion to reelect the current officers**. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The officers are:

President: Greg Bray
 Vice President: Kevin Anderson
 Secretary: Bob Hoke
 Treasurer: Kim McCluskey

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Attachments:

- Treasurer's comments for 2023
- Summary of the 2024 Legislative Session
- Explanation of the Endowment Funds

Attendees at the WVSPF Annual Meeting on April 15, 2024

("SP" = "State Park" "SPF" = "State Park Foundation" "SFF" - "State Forest Foundation")

Name	Organization	Email
Sam England		samuel.a.england@gmail.com
Marshall Markley	Blackwater Falls SP	marshall.w.markley@wv.gov
Ben Leedom	Blackwater Falls SP	ben.j.leedom@wv.gov
Linda Cronin	Blackwater Falls SP Foundation	linda.lcronin@gmail.com
Robin Ollis-Stemple	Blennerhassett Island Hist. Found.	robinostemple@gmail.com
Keith McClung	Blennerhassett Island Hist. Found.	croconfloralswv@gmail.com
Clisby Jennelle	Cabwaylingo SF	Clisby.M.Jennelle@wv.gov
Mark Mersch	Cabwaylingo SF Foundation	1mark.mersch@gmail.com
Pam Mersch	Cabwaylingo SF Foundation	cabwaylingosff@yahoo.com
Kelly Smith	Cacapon & Berkeley Springs SPs	kelly.l.smith@wv.gov
Lin Dunham	Cacapon Resort SP Foundation	lin_dunham@frontier.com
Beth DuBoff	Cacapon Resort SP Foundation	duboff4@gmail.com
Pam Buchanan	Camp Creek SP	pam.j.buchanan@wv.gov
Josie Lester	Camp Creek SP	josielester58@gmail.com
Don McFarlan	Canaan Valley Resort SP	donald.b.mcfarlan@wv.gov

Cassidy Norman	Canaan Valley Resort SP	cassidy.p.norman@wv.gov
Ed Rader	Canaan Valley SP Foundation	eddyout@cancantv.tv
Frank Witsberger	Cass Scenic Railroad SP	frank.l.witsberger@wv.gov
Cody Moore	Cedar Creek SP	codybass9@gmail.com
Lisa Gains	Cedar Creek SP	lag4415433@aol.com
Daniel Conrad	Cedar Creek SP	daniel.c.conrad@wv.gov
Kevin Anderson	Cedar Creek SP Foundation	kanderson1836@gmail.com
Adam Polinski	Coopers Rock Foundation	adamzapple88@gmail.com
Dave Hopkinson	Coopers Rock Foundation	dph@vt.edu
Brad Atkins	Coopers Rock SF	brad.m.atkins@wv.gov
David Pruitt	DNR Parks / PEM	david.e.pruitt@wv.gov
Matt Yeager	DNR Parks / PEM	matt.j.yeager@wv.gov
Clinton Cochran	DNR Parks Central Office	clinton.c.cochran@wv.gov
Jesse Anderson	DNR Parks Central Office	jesse.d.anderson@wv.gov
Dillard Price	DNR Parks Central Office	dillard.j.price@wv.gov
Paul Redford	DNR Parks Central Office	paul.a.redford@wv.gov
Jim Weber	Droop Mtn, Greenbrier River Trail	charles.j.weber@wv.gov
Matt Holbert	Elk River Trail Foundation	sn00p09@yahoo.com
Barry Curry	Elk River Trail Foundation	bkc Curry19@gmail.com
Nancy Harris	Greenbrier River Trail Foundation	nancy.harris.wv@gmail.com
Lyn Guy	Greenbrier River Trail Foundation	lynguy@frontier.com
Joe Baughman	Hawks Nest SP	joe.d.baughman@wv.gov
Johnny Osborne	Hawks Nest SP Foundation	jboll080@msn.com
Greg Shaffer	Holly River SP	greg.k.shaffer@wv.gov
Phil Setterlund	Holly River SP Foundation	philsetterlund@hotmail.com
John Hughes	Kanawha SF	jlhughesjr@suddenlink.net
Clark Sanford	Kanawha SF - WVDNR	clark.l.sanford@wv.gov
Bob Hoke	MSR&LHA (Cass Railroad)	bob@rhoke.net
Kathleen Panek	North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation	relax@gillumhouse.com
Jonathan Summers	North Bend SP Foundation	summers03@zoominternet.net nbspfinc@gmail.com
Eriks Janelins	Oglebay Foundation	ejanelins@oglebay.com
Greg Bray	Pricketts Fort	director@prickettsfort.org
Brennon O'Sullivan	Stonewall Resort	
Rudy Henley	Stonewall SP Foundation	jrhenley@stonewallresort.com
Sam Morris	Tomlinson Run SP	samuel.f.morris@wv.gov
Monte Pearson	Tomlinson Run SP	
Jacob Jackson	Tygart Lake SP	jacob.a.jackson@wv.gov
Candy Layfield	Tygart Lake SP Foundation	cjlayfield@aol.com
Brett Harshbarger	Valley Falls SP	brett.w.harshbarger@wv.gov
Valinda Loy	Valley Falls SP Foundation	valindaloy@yahoo.com
Rene Conley	Valley Falls SP Foundation	touchstonegenewer@gmail.com ?
Jody Spencer	Watoga SP	jody.d.spencer@wv.gov
Joshua Feather	Watoga SP	josh.m.feather@wv.gov
Wayne Pollard	Watoga SP Foundation	waynep@frontiernet.net
Anne Workman	Watoga SP Foundation	amworkman@frontiernet.net
Ken Caplinger	WV State Parks Foundation	kencaplinger@gmail.com
Milt Gutman	WV State Parks Foundation	mgutman@gutmanadvertising.com

ATTACHMENT #1 - Kim McCluskey's Treasurer's Report Notes

Sorry I can't be with you all. Having knee replacement today.

It has been a busy year and a busy start to 2024.

I have gone to QuickBooks online version. Still learning workings and pulling report. I am a little behind making the annual report late.

CDs are once again making money. All CDs came due this year. All were renewed as 7-month CD's paying 5%.

Waiting on the Round It Up check for 2023. Paperwork all done by DNR. Thanks to their accounting team for once again doing one check for all parks. Total: \$41,170.03. If you have a foundation your RIU funds get paid to your foundation. If there is no foundation the money is received by WVSPF into the Endowment Fund.

Bluestone State Park this year purchased a RTV for park use from American Equipment Group at a cost of \$20,779. Money was from their restricted funds.

The Cashdollar funding is set aside for three nature centers within the state parks system, Twin Falls, Blackwater Falls and Tygart Lake Nature Centers. In 2023 the foundation worked with Twin Falls to prepare a space in the lodge to move the nature center back to the lodge. We continue to work with Twin Falls on preparing the site.

Several grants were accepted on behalf of specific parks in 2023/2024:

- \$25,000 Chief Logan Wildlife Center by the Lawson Heirs. Purchased a new fence in 2023 and this year toys and items for the animals.
- \$20,000 Chief Logan by the Lawson Heirs for picnic tables and fire rings in the campground and picnic area.
- \$20,000 Twin Falls by the National Association of State Park Directors for a handicapped fishing area.

In 2023 a new restricted account was added for the Big Ridge Fire Tower at Lost River State Park. Online donations were accepted.

Payments from the General account in 2023 included checks to three new foundations that were created (in the past three years). These new foundations were Blackwater Falls, Cedar Creek, and the Elk River Trail State Park Foundations. Each received reimbursement of start-up costs up to \$300.

Balances in all accounts as of March 28, 2024: All Accounts are at Truist Bank

Three CDs:	\$77,250.00
	\$54,892.06
	\$60,313.64
Money Market Account:	\$127,584.11
Checking:	\$18,740.79
Total:	\$338,780.60

ATTACHMENT #2 - Ken Caplinger's Legislative Session Summary**Brief summary of 2024 Legislative Session Relative to WV State Parks**

As has been the case for the last several years there were a number of introduced bills in the Legislature that would have affected the park system. It is always a matter of opinion as to which are potentially impactful in a positive, negative, or neutral fashion. 2024 was no exception. I will attempt to first describe the ones that drew the most attention and then move on to a few others. I am not aware of the details of the budget bill that was passed and its impact on Parks and so will leave that issue to park staffers who are here to address should they choose. Let's hope that the FY 25 budget will cause no problems through any significant reductions in the DNR/Parks financial resources. Also, I must say that I commend all of you and your Foundations for staying within the guidelines imposed upon 501-C-3 non-profit organizations. Condensed down to a few words, the IRS does not allow a majority of a non-profit's activities to be directed to lobbying and the DNR/Parks guidelines basically mirror this. To violate this mandate risks tax free status and also recognition by DNR/Parks as a cooperating entity. The best way to avoid crossing this line is for our Foundations to focus on providing educational information to legislators about the potential impact of proposed legislation rather than outright lobbying, and for us to remember that we all, as private citizens, can reach out to our Senators and Delegates to inform them of our opinions on proposed legislation. Now, let's proceed to an overview of some pertinent 2024 legislation.

- One very concerning bill was SB 688. Thankfully it did not pass. This was very fortunate as under its stated purpose of woodlands wildfire control on all public lands through removal of "biomass", it could have possibly opened the door for logging in the state park system. Retired Parks District Administrator and Forester Robert Beanblossom was very helpful in pointing out that biomass is the mass of any living biological organisms in a given area or ecosystem at a given time. It can include all plants including trees. The bill passed the Senate but never made it out of House Government Org. Committee. We can thank all of you who

as citizens expressed concern to their legislators as well as WV Rivers, WV Highlands Conservancy, WV Trails, WV Public Lands, Friends of Blackwater and a number of retired DNR/ Parks System employees who tirelessly worked against this bill.

- SB 737 did not pass and never made it out of committee. This would have opened up all state owned public lands and structures to property taxation. It would have imposed an enormous financial burden on DNR/ Parks.
- SB 167 did not pass. It passed in Senate but did not make it out of House Economic Development and Tourism. It would have allowed county commissions to impose a user fee (called a health and safety fee) for ALL lodging, tourism, and recreational facilities and raised prices paid by all park system visitors and even local folk just wanting to use things like swimming pools, picnic shelters, golf courses, boat rentals and the like. This bill (like SB 737 which I mentioned a moment ago) had the intent of helping counties pay for law enforcement and emergency services, which many struggle to fund. However, one would hope that other ways can be found to do so.
- SB426 - WV Recreational Trails Development Act – By definition, the bill would have "required the Department of Transportation to PRIORITIZE design and construction of recreational trails in the state; assigning duties to the department for development, maintenance, and funding; establishing reporting requirements; and setting an effective date." It appears that the bill would have set legislative requirements for more expedient expenditure of RTP (Recreational Trails Program) and TA (Transportation Alternative) funds and caused the Dept. of Transportation to report annually. Also, it would have created a statewide trails plan. The outcome of the bill was that it was introduced, passed Senate and was never acted on in House Gov. Org. Committee. This bill would have been a positive if it had passed as the Park System has likely been unable to develop and improve trails to full extent using

these funds as the Dept. of Transportation funding allocation cycle has been unpredictable and use of funds seems to lack strategy.

- SB 222 – This bill passed and mandates that the DNR Director work with the Dept. of Tourism and the Dept. of Veterans Assistance to develop a plan to provide WV military veterans reduced or discounted rates for state park camping, lodging, and park activities.
- Surprisingly enough, I am not aware of any attempts this session to open up park system trails to off road vehicle/ATV use. As you are doubtless aware this has been a big issue for several legislative sessions over the past few years.

This is probably not a complete list of all 2024 bills that could have, or will, affect the park system and if I have missed any of great significance our active Parks staffers here can speak up and mention what those might be. However, they were the ones that seemed to attract the most attention. Let me conclude with a few other reminders.

- In talking to former Parks District Administrator and former DNR Deputy Director/legislative liaison Emily Fleming she suggested that I take this opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of the Legislative Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Subcommittee visits to park system areas. These provide great opportunities for you and your members to play a crucial role in meeting with and educating legislators during these tours when they happen to schedule a trip to your area.

- The Board of the Statewide Foundation and I would also like your input on ways you might suggest on how to improve ways to reach out to advise your foundations when park system concerns surface that might need your attention. As of now it is usually done through email from Statewide Foundation Secretary Bob Hoke after the Board agrees that particular issues need attention. Any ideas? If none at the moment, feel free to call or email us later.

Let me close by quoting the aforementioned Robert Beanblossom. At the height of the concern this session about SB 688 Bob stated the following... “The 100 years the WV State Park System has been in operation have created a set of public lands that have dramatically increased in financial value. The for-profit world has homed in on those values and there is going to be constant pressure from them to harvest that value for themselves. We, and all park supporters, are going to have to be vigilant to continue to preserve and protect these resources for everybody's benefit and not just the greedy few from timbering, off-roading, giant RV parks, and who knows what else. The growth of the power of those who love and appreciate the state park system has been remarkable and instrumental in the last few years. Their ability to mobilize their forces and flex their muscle has become our most important tool.”

Thanks to each of you and your Foundations for all you do to protect, preserve, and improve this great state park system.

ATTACHMENT #3 - Explanation of the Endowment Funds

his paper explains the difference between the **WV State Park Endowment Fund** that is managed by the Parks Office and funded primarily by royalties from natural gas leases under the Ohio River, and the **WVSPF Endowment Fund** that is funded primarily by Round It Up income from parks that do not have local foundations.

West Virginia State Park Endowment Fund and Matching Grant Program

The State Park Matching Grant Program has been in existence for many years, but it didn't have a funding source prior to 2020. Projects were funded when possible with existing State Park operating funds.

Now the State Park Matching Grant Program has a funding source, which is the State Park Endowment Fund.

This Fund was established by the legislature in 2020. West Virginia owns the gas rights under the Ohio River and revenue from the lease of these rights is the primary source of income for the Endowment Fund, although other donations are welcome. It is important to know that the Endowment Fund is dedicated to State Park maintenance and repairs to existing infrastructure.

The Fund is administered by an Endowment Fund Board that consists of representatives from the Park System, the State Park Foundation, and other persons familiar with the operation of the Park System. The Board will be meeting soon to consider an expenditure strategy. There will likely be a portion of the Endowment Funds available for State Park Matching Grant requests within the next year.

Foundations should be envisioning projects and creating a request for a State Park Matching Grant. Information about the grants, including appropriate projects, details on the required match, and the application procedure, will be distributed to the local foundations when it is finalized.

WVSPF Endowment Fund

The statewide foundation's Endowment Fund is completely separate from the Park System's Endowment Fund. The only things they have in common are similar names.

The Park system's "Round It Up" (RIU) Program accepts small donations from folks when they are paying for lodging or making other purchases in the parks. The Charleston office gathers this money and keeps track of which parks it came from. Once a year they send a single check to the statewide foundation's Treasurer, Kim McCluskey, along with a list showing what parks the money was from.

If a park has an established local foundation, Kim sends the full amount of that park's RIU donations to the local foundation.

RIU donations from parks that do not have local foundations are placed in the WVSPF Endowment Fund. Donations made to the statewide foundation that are not designated for a specific park or project are also placed in the Endowment Fund.

This Fund is intended to be used for infrastructure maintenance and for projects that benefit the entire park system. The Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$74K. Disbursements from the Endowment Fund are determined by the statewide Foundation's officers.

2023 Reports Submitted by Local Foundations

Blackwater Falls State Park Foundation

BFSP Foundation efforts in 2023 focused on board expansion, Dark Sky Park certification and identifying additional park needs and fundraising opportunities. To that end:

- Members of the Kanawha Valley Astronomical Society, the Tucker County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the WV Astrophotography Association were invited to meetings and board membership
- The Foundation was granted 5013C status from the IRS allowing fundraising efforts to begin in earnest
- Four Donation boxes were purchased to be placed at the Nature Center, the Trading Post, in the Main Lodge and as well as a freestanding box for events
- The Foundation hosted information tables at the WV Wildflower Pilgrimage, and at the first annual KVAS Astrophotography Weekend
- During the September KVAS Astronomy Weekend the Foundation hosted a luncheon with members of the Tucker Co Commission, Davis Town Council and guest speakers from the Rappahannock Dark Skies initiative where an overview of the newly established Blackwater Falls State Park Foundation's mission and membership was shared

- Seven Foundation members and friends participated in the "wet and wild wonderful" Run For It event in Davis WV raising funds for the group
- The Foundation received notification from Dark Sky International that Blackwater's eligibility criterion for Dark Sky Park application had been met, and the group was invited to proceed with the necessary lighting surveys, light pollution maps, night photos from various park locations and work with Dark Sky engineers on the lighting at Sled Run

At the start of 2024 Foundation members welcomed new Park Assistant Superintendent Ben Leedom and newly hired Park Superintendent Marshall Markley, both of whom are bringing vast experience working with other State Park Foundations to our monthly meetings. With their expertise and encouragement we look forward to offering additional fundraising events, purchasing new recreational equipment and bike racks, researching much needed playground upgrades and providing support for the newly formed Blackwater Stargazer Club. Happily to that end an "intelligent" telescope has been purchased to support educational programming and bring the wonders of the night sky to park visitors and local community groups.

Blennerhassett Historical Foundation

The contributions of the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc. would not be possible without the continued support of the West Virginia State Parks. The support we receive from State Park Leadership is critical to insuring the alignment between the Blennerhassett Island State Park/Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History and the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc.

Most notable to these lines of communication are Chief of State Parks Brad Reed, Regional Director Clinton Cochran, Blennerhassett State Park Superintendent Craig Pyles, and Blennerhassett State Park Assistant Superintendent Brent Baker, to whom the Foundation is most grateful.

- **Completion of a comprehensive inventory of assets.** This multi-year project ensures a catalog of assets on display in the Blennerhassett Mansion and the Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History.
- **Replacement of the HVAC replacement of museum.** Thanks to a federal ARPA grant, final installation of a new HVAC system providing comfort for guests of the museum, volunteers and employees in offices, the library and meeting rooms

- **Hosted local community leaders for Foundation Day on Blennerhassett Island on August 12, 2023** with more than 100 local leaders and their families visiting the park, meeting with foundation members and park staff.
- Re-vamped the Friends of Blennerhassett Island with a new name, logo, and membership levels. **The Blennerhassett Society** is being launched this spring.
- **Commissioned and installed handcrafted replica cupboard base** added to the Blennerhassett Mansion.
- **Partnered with park in presenting Mansion by Candlelight** with over 200 costumed volunteers and 2,500 park guests.
- Met in a March 2024 weekend retreat to re-establish Foundation priorities and **update the August 2002 park Master Plan.**
- **Worked with the park staff and local legislators to secure funding** of mansion and park maintenance including boat ramp, mansion roof and mansion exterior painting, among other things.

Cacapon Resort State Park Foundation

Deer fence was installed at the Nature Center which saved gardens used for vegetable growing and butterfly projects and studies. As a result, no deer have gotten into any of the gardens. This was totally funded by the Foundation.

\$750.00 donated to the Berkeley Springs High School Prom and the Paw Paw High School Prom which are held at Cacapon Resort State Park.

Foundation donated \$246.74 to purchase Zebco rod and reel kits for Kids Fishing Derby, a Nature Center Project.

The Foundation donated \$500.00 to Morgan County Sheriff's Youth Camping Day at Cacapon State Park.

The Foundation hired an electrician and with Foundation Members' help and a Foundation member's tractor/frontend loader new lighting was installed on light poles at a walking trail which was originally built by the Foundation in previous years. The Foundation provided all lighting research and funding of lights, fixtures and wiring.

The Foundation provided \$4944.00 to help finish paving at the Batt Picnic Area parking lot road.

Through an annual grant from the Tom Seely Foundation \$3115.00 was given to the Foundation so the Nature Center could purchase items for children projects at the Nature Center.

The 50 Bench Memorial Bench Project was completed this year. This project was a great success.

The Foundation successfully worked with the Warm Springs Middle School administration to acquire a grant that provided 30 Mountain Bikes and accompanying curriculum with staff training to be used in PE classes to teach students how to ride mountain bikes so they can enjoy Cacapon's amazing new trails along with their non-local visitors.

The Foundation provided funding for Carpenter Bee Treatment, Wood Pecker damage repairs and cleaning and staining of the Nature Center. This is slated as an annual maintenance procedure which the Foundation will fund.

The Foundation provided \$800.00 for repairs to the Deck at the Cacapon Mountain Overlook. The construction of the Deck at the Cacapon Mountain Overlook was a previous Foundation Project.

Homecoming at Cacapon Resort State Park was held this year 10/1/23. In the past this Foundation event was always held on Sunday of Labor Day Weekend. We changed the date because there were other Labor Day events occurring at the same time. Although we changed the date this year's event was a great success.

Camp Creek State Park & Forest Foundation

- Volunteer hours for 2023 were 635 hours spent on events, trail maintenance, orchard work, park maintenance, etc.
- Improvements in the bath house included new metal roof and guttering
- Purchased new water heater for the amphitheater
- Purchased 2 - 20x40 canopies for events

- Events we sponsored or participated in during 2023:

1. April 15th Ramp Dinner and Lumberjack competition/flea market
2. May 6th Jeep'n at the Creek Event
3. July 19th Birds of Prey concession sales,
4. September 16th Fall Festival with music, vendors, and flea market

Canaan Valley State Park Foundation

In the 2023 calendar, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation completed several listed projects and events. The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation hosted another Sunrise Scramble ski race. The Foundation completed the archeological study required for the installation of the Headwaters Trail at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park. The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation submitted a grant for the construction of a picnic pavilion at the State Park. The State Park Foundation worked with Access On The Go for the

funding and construction of handicap accessible trails, And, The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation continues to fund the installation of barbeque grills, rain shelters, and bicycle washing stations throughout the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

The major project for the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation consists of the funding and construction of a picnic pavilion for the Canaan Valley Resort State Park. The Canaan Valley Resort State Park needs picnic

facilities for day visitors. The installation of a picnic pavilion will go a long way toward servicing that need.

Completed projects for the year.

Sunrise Scramble

One featured Canaan Valley Resort State Park activity is the annual Sunrise Scramble. The Sunrise Scramble event is organized by the Canaan Valley Resort State Park Foundation and is undertaken as a fundraising activity to assist in promoting uphill and back-country skiing at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

The Sunrise Scramble has grown into one of the premier events in the area. The event helps to define skiing activities in the Canaan Valley Resort State Park. The Sunrise Scramble rivals the Governor's Cup with respect to annual participation.

Headwaters Trail

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation partnered with Heart of the Highlands Trails to assist in the development of the Headwaters Trail.

The Headwaters Trail is part of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System, connecting non-motorized trails throughout Canaan Valley and all of Tucker County. The Headwaters trail will be part of a comprehensive, landscape-oriented, multiuser trail system that is accessible to the public.

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation worked with West Virginia State Parks to complete the archeological study needed to construct the Headwaters Trail. With seventy-five percent of the Headwaters Trail residing within the Canaan Valley Resort State Park, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park stands to be the principal beneficiary of this trail.

Access On The Go

The Access On The Go project is a project designed to make the trails at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park available to people with disabilities. Because 25% of the residents of West Virginia suffer from some mobility disability, the Access On The Go project will help make trails at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park available to them. By upgrading the trails, we will increase the client base that can use the park trails. In addition, an upgrade of the trails that makes them accessible for disabled people will also improve the trails for the general public. This upgrade will result in all park visitors benefiting from project.

Bicycle Trails, Bicycle Wash Stations, Picnic Tables, and Barbeque Grills

This year, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation plans to continue working on the installation of bicycle trails, bicycle wash stations, and picnic tables in various locations around the Canaan Valley Resort State Park.

Bicycle riding and trail hiking are major attractions in the state park and throughout the local community. The Canaan Valley Resort State Park contributes to these attractions by providing trails, facilities, and bicycles for rent. This year, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park Foundation plans to further contribute to these activities by providing trail maintenance and bicycle maintenance stations within the park.

Finally, for years, the Canaan Valley Resort State Park suffered from a dearth of picnic facilities. The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation seeks to remedy the shortage by funding the park's installation of picnic tables and barbeque grills throughout the park.

Cedar Creek State Park Foundation

The Foundation, Cedar Creek State Park Staff, and community hikers started 2023 off with a new event that had never been done before at Cedar Creek State Park. The new event was called the First Day Hike initiative, which many other West Virginia State Parks participate in each year. The Foundation accomplished several new improvements to the park including the replacement of all current trash cans with new metal trash cans that made things look much nicer. The foundation also provided new wooden bases to some of the campground sites to get these trash cans up off the ground. The foundation also provided many hours of volunteer labor to assist the staff with routine maintenance projects that they were working on throughout the season.

Several projects were completed this year by foundation members' direct donations for specific projects that were of interest to them. Projects like the addition of

more concrete pads and gravel in the campground really benefited the whole area along with the new spring rider toys that were installed on certain playgrounds were great new additions to the park in 2023. Foundation members also helped spread mulch on the playground sites to improve the safety aspect of these locations. A stream cleanup held in April resulted in many bags of waste being removed from Cedar Creek State Park, which is always a great help to keep the grounds looking nice and welcoming. The Foundation also purchased baby changing stations and pool lounge chairs in 2023 to attract more people to use the only swimming facility in our county. Along those lines, a new volleyball net was also purchased by the foundation to improve that recreational facility.

The Foundation, Cedar Creek State Park Staff, and community hikers also for the first time participated in National Trails Day Campaign, which was a fun and

exciting hike on the Park View trail. The Fourth of July celebration was held this year as well and the event attracted a crowd that enjoyed bluegrass and gospel music, food and several different activities for children and adults. The next big event for the Foundation was our Fall Festival in September. This was the third year for this event and it was a tremendous success in terms of the number of vendors and crowd size that attended both days of our event especially the old thyme square dance on Friday evening. It was our largest fund raiser for the year. The community and foundation members also got to enjoy the Wings of Wonder presentation presented by the Three Rivers Avian Center in August of 2023 which brought many young children and their families to the educational event.

A Halloween Trunk or Treat was held in October and campers decorated their sites and passed out candy to children as they went through the park. Over a hundred children and adults from both the campground and local community participated. Prizes were given for the top three best decorated sites. After the trunk or treat was finished the foundation also hosted a Halloween Dance that was highly attended, and the children loved doing the monster mash and other Halloween themed dances. The last event of the year for the foundation was a Christmas light display. Campsites were decorated by local businesses and churches throughout the park the event and is a drive through event open to the public over two weekends in December. Large crowds enjoyed both weekends.

Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc.

There are now 73 miles of rail trail open from the Gassaway Trailhead in Gassaway to the Hartland Trailhead in Clay County, and another 3.5 miles are completed from Queen Shoals to the Clendenin. Work continues to complete the roughly 20-miles section of the trail between Hartland and Queen Shoals and a short section through the Town of Clendenin. The Foundation does not take credit for all these improvements but wishes to memorialize them to show progress toward completion.

Restrooms have been installed at several locations along the Elk River Trail.

A one-mile section in the Town of Clendenin has been paved thanks to funding provided by the Kanawha County Commission. The construction of the Clendenin Trailhead is slated to commence in the spring of 2024. The Foundation worked with the Kanawha County Commission and the Town of Clendenin to pursue the WV Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives grant that was awarded to the Town of Clendenin in the amount of \$187,500.

The two bridges that were washed out on the 18 miles rails-with-trail section of the old Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad have now been replaced. Rail Explorers, which already has operations in several states, has entered into an agreement with the WV Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities (the owner of the rails-with-trails section) and a lease agreement with the Central Appalachian Empowerment Zone for a rail-biking business on the rails-with-trail section along Buffalo Creek. They anticipate hiring 20-25 people and attracting 30,000-50,000 visitors in their first year of operation. They anticipate opening for business in May 2024.

The DNR completed five new public river access points at Coonskin Park, Bream (Big Chimney), Blue Creek, Clendenin South (near the old Herbert Hoover High

School site), and Clendenin North. The DNR's sites generally feature paved parking and paved ramp access to the river.

Dundon Trailhead

The Foundation sold the 2.5-acre tract it owned at the Dundon Trailhead to the DNR. The DNR began work to build a visitor's center there given its ideal location at the confluence of Buffalo Creek and Elk River near the center of the rail trail. It is also the point at which the rail trail and the rails-with-trail section converge. The Visitor's Center will be patterned after the old train depot that once occupied nearby property and will include a small museum.

Queen Shoals Trailhead

The Foundation had metal doors installed and restored electric service to its property at the Queen Shoals. The Foundation is seeking a tenant to rent the property for outdoor recreation-related businesses to provide a continuing source of revenue that can be used to pursue trail projects.

River and Trail Clean-up

A grant from WV American Water Co. allowed the Foundation to purchase shovels, trash pickers, rubber gloves and other equipment that can be used and re-used in clean-up efforts. Three river clean-ups were scheduled in 2023, although two had to be canceled due to high water.

Little Italy Property

With the help of Case Equipment Company and its local vendor, State Equipment, furnishing the equipment, volunteers cleared the brush on the Foundation's half acre at Little Italy and erected a memorial to recognize the generosity of the donor in donating the land to the Foundation. The property adjoins the rail trail on one

side and provides easy access to the water trail on the opposite side.

Bicycle Repair Station

The Foundation bought and installed a bicycle repair station at the Ivydale Trailhead utilizing a grant from Cabela's/Bass Pro Shops. Given its popularity, the Foundation has submitted grant applications to have bike repair stations installed at the other thirteen trailheads.

Benches

A grant from the Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement allowed the Rail Trail Committee to install five benches along the trail between Clendenin and Queen Shoals. In addition, a Clay County High School carpentry class built wooden picnic tables that were installed along the trail in Clay County. The wooden benches that were then hand-engraved, carved and sanded with bear and eagle designs with outstanding craftsmanship.

River Mile Markers

The Water Trail Committee mapped, photographed and obtained GPS data for all known public river access sites along the Elk River Water Trail. The Water Trail Committee used funds from grants by TC Energy and a Stream Partners Grant from the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to purchase mileage markers to place at one-mile intervals along the 101-mile Elk River Water Trail running from Sutton Dam to Charleston. The signs have been installed on the Braxton County section. The committee is continuing its work this year. A grant application was submitted for signs to install along the river to allow boaters to identify public access sites.

The data are being incorporated into the Foundation's new web site to publicize their existence and to have the sites incorporated into a river trail map.

Website and Social Media

The Website and Social Media Committee has been hard at work to update the Foundation's website, www.elkrivertail.org, which will be released in early 2024. The new website features updated maps and information about trailheads, public water access sites, and amenities (restaurants, lodging, shopping, local attractions, etc.) in the area surrounding the trails.

Marathon/Half Marathon/5K Race

Ricky Campbell and his AP Timing Group sponsored the second annual marathon/half marathon/5-k races on Elk River Trail as a fundraiser for Elk River Trail Foundation. The race featured runners from twenty-two states, including runners from California, Arizona and Nevada. Registration was capped at 300 because of logistical issues. Special gratitude goes to Central

Appalachian Empowerment Zone, Clay County Little League, the Mountain State Wheelers and the Foundation volunteers for their support.

Chili 'n on the Elk and Beer and Wine Festival

The third annual festival, which qualifies winners for the international chili competition, was successfully held in Clendenin as a fundraiser for the Foundation.

Walking and Biking Clubs

A Foundation committee member and her friends established the Clendenin Walking Club that features a weekly walk on the trail, including one on New Year's Day 2024. The club has as many as 20 walkers on some days!

In Braxton County, the Elk River Rail to Trail Group, sponsored by Bigfoot Braxxie's Bikes, schedules group bike rides, departing from the historic train depot at the trailhead in Gassaway. They start with coffee and doughnuts at 9 am, then "All Aboard" their bikes at 10 am for a ride southbound. Lunch is served back at the Depot at noon at no cost, FREE for all, with donations accepted for food.

Handicapped Accessibility

The Foundation was the recipient of three hand pedal bikes and one rickshaw, courtesy of the West Virginia Assistive Technology System, a project funded by a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation National Paralysis Resource Center. These bikes, designed for use by handicapped individuals, are housed at Bigfoot Braxxie's Bikes in Gassaway and can be rented free of charge.

The Foundation partnered with Elk Conservation District and played a small role in a project that involved the Conservation District, the WV Conservation Agency, and fifth grade students from Davis Elementary School in Gassaway planting a perennial flower bed along the trail in Gassaway.

ARC POWER Grant for Economic Development

The Foundation was awarded a \$1.7 million project and apply for a \$1,365,000 POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to implement some of the recommendations in a trail town study sponsored by the Foundation and the Braxton County Economic Development Authority. The project was chosen to receive the support of the new Pioneer Trail Network operated through Glenville State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development as one its signature projects. The grant will include funds to/for:

- Hire a project director and a "trail circuit rider" to oversee projects
- Retain a professional sign-making company to design and install wayfinding signs in all four trail towns

- Construct handicap-accessible kayak launch sites
- Provide \$1,000 of architectural land planning design services to each qualified business owner for facade renovation and property improvements
- Marketing campaign
- Facade mini-grants up to \$10,000 to remove or rehabilitate blighted structures (\$125,000 each town)
- Technical assistance business support packages of \$5,000 for 20 small businesses (Foundation contracts directly with providers to provide technical assistance)

- Work with Advantage Valley to provide coaching and training for new and existing businesses
- Website improvements for the Foundation and the Trail Towns, brochures, digital marketing, cooperative advertising with WV Tourism

The Foundation is thankful for the partnerships with Advantage Valley, 25045 – A New Clendenin, Inc., and the Braxton County Commission that are providing part of the 20% matching funds and services that made the grant possible.

Greenbrier River Trail Foundation, Inc.

In GRTF's third year the continued focus was on support of the Park Superintendent's number one priority: re-decking the 37 bridges on the Trail. In support of this goal, the GRTF Board initiated the following actions:

- A 2023 application for \$765,000 to supplement the 2022 application/2023 grant approval (of \$763,941) for a WV Department of Transportation (Division of Highways) Federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) grant. (Total: \$1,527,941)
- In 2022 the GRTF Board applied and received match funding for a total of \$120,000 from 4 Foundations (including the State Parks Foundation). In 2023 we secured an additional \$70,000 of match funds leaving \$115,000 to be secured in 2024. (Total match required: \$305,000).

In total we applied for 9 grants and received approval of 5 grants totaling \$81,500. The WV Dept. of Highways 2023 grant application for \$765,000 is still pending.

Projects completed include:

- Mile Marker 4.5 Trail to River Steps: We supplemented "Heal the Trail" remaining funds (\$13,850) with a 2023 approved grants from Pyles/Turner Foundation (\$500) and Marie Leist Foundation (\$2,500) for a second set of poured concrete stairs for access from the Trail at MM 4.5 to the River. Steps from the Trail to the River now provide easier and safer access for Trail Visitors.
- Landscaping for the new Caldwell Trailhead Parking Lot (funded by the James F. B. Peyton Foundation \$25,000 2021 grant) was completed after WV Dept. of Transportation/Highways completed parking lot construction in June. According to our plan, we executed Phase II Landscaping in June/July of 2023. Volunteers also constructed picnic table, kiosk, bicycle repair station, invasive boot brush, and Trail signage (part of the Appalachian Forest Heritage

grant). Split rail fencing remains to be completed and will require additional funding, possibly from a private foundation.

- In 2023 our use of Little Green Light (LGL) donor management software and 2023 (Spring/Fall) Newsletters prompted donations of approximately \$5,000. We currently have 1,500 members in the database which is integrated with Pay Pal and MailChimp to facilitate collection of funds and efficient communication of Newsletters etc.
- We contracted with Gray, Griffith & Mays, CPAs to conduct a 2022 Financial Review of GRTA/F finances. The report is in process. This is part of our effort to improve our governance efforts and to support our grant applications process.
- Routine Trail maintenance (cut and remove downed trees, scrub/paint bathrooms, clean shelters, repair shelters, weed removal around new landscaping at Caldwell Trailhead, etc.)

Meanwhile, GRTA also has several actions and grants in process including:

- US Forest Service: 2020 Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Title II grant, for Informational Signage (\$40,000) In Process. Considerable work was accomplished by Board members and volunteers in support of this effort. In the spring of 2023, we began installation of the signs. Signs remaining to be installed await the warming days of spring 2024.
- On behalf of the Trail (completed under the auspices of GRTA) the 2023 Great Greenbrier River Race cleared approximately \$24,000 which will be used for future Trail projects. The Greenbrier River Trail Marathon, in its third year, added about \$3,700 to our treasury.

Volunteer Hours increased by 854 hours in calendar year 2023 totaling 3,121 hours.

Holly River State Park Foundation

We have been very busy this year... A great year for lots of accomplishments. With our 50/50 grant, we were able to finish one handicap bathroom, and improvements for the men's bathroom at Old Pavilion. Buy new play equipment and restock all game supplies, new horseshoe pits, and new cornhole game. Purchased new round tables and chairs for Old Pavilion. Over 100

tons of stone for campsites. Along with the grant, several others things were made possible by donations, membership, and the quilting group (selling quilts and other handmade items). We funded a new pavilion to display the old cider press and cane mill donated by Walt Shupe

Wishing for another successful year.

Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association (Cass)

Although the Association is no longer involved directly with the railroad at Cass, its "Friends of Cass" Committee is focused on supporting the Park with the goal of increasing the number of Park visitors and enhancing their appreciation of the historic town of Cass.

The FOC Committee ran the very popular Cass Days festival in June. Visitors once again filled every possible parking space in and around town and were treated to vendors, music, the railroad's "Parade of Steam," and other activities. Much of the funding for advertising and

providing the music was provided by grants from Pocahontas County government agencies. Cass Days has become a very popular annual event and will continue.

MSR&LHA and the FOC Committee provided funding for the Park to purchase additional holiday lighting and decorations to enhance the town's appeal during the holiday season. Materials were also purchased so the Park staff could construct benches on the "hay wagon" used to transport visitors during events in town.

North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation

It has been a busy year for our Foundation, and we'd like to share with you a few things we've been working on:

- A generous member recently donated three trail counters to the Foundation. Along with the counters donated to us last year by the Rail-to-Trails Conservancy, we now have enough counters to place in all the counties along the trail. These counters will be installed at various locations so we can collect trail-usage data for planning and grant opportunities.
- There are currently ongoing bridge-redecking projects in Ritchie, Doddridge and Wood counties. Trail crew and volunteers have also undertaken the huge task of trimming vegetation away from the rail-trail.
- In 2023, the Foundation was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the WV Transportation Alternative and Recreational Trails Program to survey and ditch the trail. This is Phase 1 of a multi-phase project to divert damaging rain and groundwater from the trail.
- We are still seeking grant matching funds for our DOH grant and for replacing the shelter in Salem and improving the shelter near West Union. We are also seeking funds to purchase more handicap-accessible picnic tables and fire rings to place along the trail.
- Last year we partnered with MPLX Sherwood and participated in WV DEP's Make It Shine Program. We removed 32 bags of garbage from the trail.
- The Parkersburg Area Community Foundation has awarded the North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation, Inc. a \$6,000.00 grant to fund the purchase of animal-resistant trash receptacles to be placed along the North Bend Rail-Trail. These receptacles are much more efficient and sustainable than the current metal trash cans.
- Our Merchandise Committee has been exploring new ways to promote the Foundation and generate funds. They created a collection of limited-edition lamps handcrafted from insulators once used along the North Bend Rail Trail. They produced only 72 of these lamps, one for each mile of the trail. They come with a Certificate of Authenticity and have been a huge success so far.
- Our board member D. J. Allen received the Commendation for Volunteer Service to the State of West Virginia for her service to the North Bend Rails-to-Trails Foundation, Inc. D.J.'s contributions to the Foundation are immeasurable. She has followed the trail since its early beginnings. For almost thirty years she has served on the board of directors and as an officer.
- In 2023, our board members performed over 3,200 hours of volunteer service.

- We partnered with the North Bend State Park to host our annual Luminary Walk which attracted around 100 hikers.
- We attended several fairs and festivals in north central West Virginia to promote the trail and sell

our products. All funds go directly toward the maintenance and upkeep of the trail. We have zero paid staff on our Foundation.

North Bend State Park Foundation

The North Bend State Park Foundation, Inc. had a productive twelve months since our last report to the State Foundation. Our fundraising efforts raised over \$5000.00. Our board membership and participation are excellent. We currently have more people seeking board membership than we have vacancies. We have printed a new brochure for the Foundation.

We purchased a KayaArm Kayak Dock Launch System for the boat launch. This system provides a more stable launch and exit for persons using a kayak.

Using a 50% matching grant from the Division of Parks we renovated the playground surfaces and containment at all four of the play areas in North Bend. All the old,

deteriorated material was removed, the underlying soil was graded to better provide drainage, new Typar was installed, and 235 cubic yards of Nature's Cushion wood fiber was installed. We budgeted \$33,425.00 for the project. We were fortunate to achieve some labor and material savings and completed the project for \$25,744.00 coming in at \$7,681.00 under budget. From that savings we will have to refund \$3,840.50 to the State.

We also completed a labor only project of trimming brush and maintenance on the Old Farm Trail, which is the NICA compliant Mountain Bike trail that our Foundation completed a few years ago.

Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation

The Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation had their grand opening and ribbon cutting for the new Concession Area last year with a spokesperson from Governor's office and several of the WVDNR present. This coming year and for the two consecutive years the

Foundation will be celebrating the Susquintinal of the building of the original Pricketts Fort, The Revolutionary War in 2025 and the 50th Anniversary of the rebuilding of historic Pricketts Fort in 2026.

Stonewall State Park Foundation

The Stonewall State Park Foundation (SSPF) continues to facilitate fundraising and support for improvements projects at Stonewall Resort State Park, located in Roanoke, WV. In the past year, we have worked on the following projects to improve Stonewall Resort:

- Sponsoring the Beyond the Fairways Tournament with First Tee of West Virginia, encouraging individuals and groups to participate as a method of fundraising.
- Sponsoring the Lewis County Math Field Day at Stonewall Resort and providing lunches for 75 students and teachers.
- Continued to hold the Roanoke Shoe Drive, in which we provide a new pair of shoes for every child

at Roanoke Elementary School. In 2023, we were also able to provide toiletry kits and a day at The Rink (Stonewall's ice-skating rink) to each child.

- Successfully applied for an Innovative Readiness Training Grant Project with the United States Marine Corps, who will be onsite this summer to conduct earthwork and trail maintenance exercises in July and August.

SSPF will continue to aid the Resort in completing various expansion projects to enhance the property, through fundraising, sponsorships, and grants. Work also continues on the Historic Fox Cabin, and SSPF is looking for suggestions or ideas for a person or group that can complete log cabin chinking in 2024.

Tomlinson Run Foundation

Events and Fundraisers:

The foundation organized several events and fundraisers throughout the year, including:

- Breakfast in the Campground on weekends

- Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- Christmas in the Campground
- Halloween in the Campground
- Trunk or Treat

- Ice Cream Socials
- Antique Car Show
- Two Mountain Bike Races

Although no singular event stood out as notably significant, these activities contributed to community engagement and enjoyment. The total expenditure on these events amounted to \$3750.

Community Support:

The foundation sponsored an Eagle Scout project with a financial contribution of \$200, demonstrating their commitment to supporting local initiatives.

Infrastructure Enhancement:

A noteworthy investment of \$1762 was made to purchase new beds and mattresses for the newest

camping cabin, enhancing the overall camping experience for visitors.

Grant Application:

The foundation applied for a matching grant of \$17,163.55 with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to remodel the campground restrooms. It is worth noting that the approval for this grant was received after the first of the year.

In summary, while the foundation did not undertake a single notable project, their consistent engagement through various events and fundraisers showcased a commitment to community involvement. The successful grant application for the campground restroom remodel is a positive development that will contribute significantly to the improvement of park facilities.

Tygart Lake State Park Foundation

- The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is held on the TLSP Nature Center lawn. This event is well attended by children of all ages.
- We appreciate our Park Staff and as a small token of this, our Foundation volunteers, do a Spring and Fall Staff Appreciation Luncheon. We work closely together all year but this gives us an opportunity to fellowship with one another.
- The Annual Youth Fishing Derby is held on the shores of our beautiful Tygart Lake. The USACE joined us as together we hosted a morning of fishing, fun and food. This family event is always a favorite.
- Our participation in our local parades, Grafton's Annual Memorial Day and the local Christmas Parade, give us a chance to get out of the Park and into the community to promote to locals as well as visitors from all over the country.
- Music in the Park continued on the shore of the Lake with our first ever concert at the new Tygart Adventures Water Park. ACE opened their doors for

Park visitors and the community to attend this evening and try out the inflatables free of charge.

- Our much-anticipated Appalachian Fall Fest is our largest fundraiser and brings many from far and wide to the Lodge and into the Park. We begin the apple butter making as the sun rises. The Craft Fair fills the Lodge and the sidewalks with vendors. The Hayride is a favorite for everyone.
- The lakefront Trunk or Treat we host in our marina with the help of community involvement continues to grow. Children are lined up hours before the start of this Sunday afternoon event.
- Breakfast with Santa at The Lodge Restaurant brings families to the buffet breakfast. The children enjoy a craft, along with cookies, cocoa and a visit with Santa.
- Our Facebook page has currently grown to almost 7,000 followers. Social Media is an easy no cost way to engage visitors to our Park and keep them updated on events happening in and around the Park.

Valley Falls State Park Foundation

2023 Income

- Gift Shop Sales \$49,089.00
- Chair Rentals for weddings \$369.00
- Individual donations \$2,077.00

2023 Projects

- New parking lot- funds for prep work and gravel(\$12,000.00)
- Mon Power tree planting program -200 18 inch seedlings were planted

- Two crabapple trees (Prairiefire and Golden Raindrops) were planted
- Funds for Storm glass door and i Pad for gift shop donated by Foundation member
- Provided two porta potties while restrooms closed for winter months
- Two volunteers attended vendor show at Appalachian Glass in Weston
- Master Gardener plus Foundation volunteers continue work on flower beds

- Year-end bonus provided for two Park employees

2023 Volunteer Hours

- Gift Shop was opened weekends plus Fridays and holidays May through October
- Approximately 1,000 volunteer hours including Master Gardener and meeting attendees

Public Relations

- Continued updating of Facebook
- Second year to sponsor Christmas light display at Morris Park
- "Name the Gnome" contest on-site and Facebook

Park Events

- Wild turkey Run (86), Car Show (100+), Kayak Event (122) with participants from 10 states, Endurance Marathon, Enduro Mountain Bike Race, Governor's Honor Academy picnic, and Saw Whet owl banding

2024 Projects

- Gift Shop will be opening in May
- Still seeking additional funding for Educational Pavilion
- Still looking into grant from Walmart for funds for an AED - currently have one on loan from Grant Town Fire Department

Watoga State Park Foundation

The Watoga State Park Foundation communicates on a regular basis with the superintendent and park employees to identify and meet the needs of the park. We are fortunate to have a community that is ready to help support our goals.

In 2023 the Watoga State Park Foundation:

- Sponsored and assisted with 4 dark sky educational programs such as Birds of Prey, Owls, Synchronous Fireflies and a Star Party at the Droop Mountain lookout tower.
- Installed a Dark Sky interpretive sign near the Administration Building.
- Conducted quarterly dark sky measurements to record depth of darkness.
- Compiled data and submitted the required annual report to DarkSky International to show compliance.
- Funded the design of and expanded the Disc Golf course with volunteers
- Cleared debris and logs from hiking trails
- Began assessment and layout of the Arboretum Trail sign project.
- Continued work on the historic Workman Cabin
- Continued work on the Mountain Bike Trail.

- Began the process to produce a Watoga State Park Foundation e-book and print edition. Book will feature and cover the park's history, focusing on CCC's role, human-interest stories and articles about employees and more. 10 writers, 7 photographers, 3 editors and 2 consultants have agreed to assist and donate their time and talents at no charge to the park or Foundation. All profits will be donated to the Foundation to support the park.

In 2024 we plan to continue these projects AND

- Assist with funding for converting the Tennis courts to Pickle Ball Courts.
- Assist the park with funding and installing any remaining non-compliant light fixtures to comply with dark sky certification standards
- Assist with funding new playground equipment
- Install new interpretive signs at the arboretum nature trail.
- Fund and install signs for the Disc Golf course.
- Install memorial porch rockers for cabin decks through donations to the Foundation.
- Continue work on book and finalize publication details.

-- end --