

Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Annual Report 2016-2017



MISSION

To preserve, enhance, and celebrate the Blue Ridge Mountains as a valuable resource and treasured space for present and future generations

VISION

The Blue Ridge Mountains stand secure as a national treasure for all time – ancient and sacred space that is maintained as a model of natural and cultural preservation – a free and accessible destination for recreation, discovery, and renewal that inspires others to join us and sustain our effort.



Letter from the President

Commemorating our 10th anniversary this year has provided a wonderful opportunity to lift up out of our ongoing activities to take stock of where we have been and where we hope to go; to savor accomplishments and envision future possibilities. And, in honor of this anniversary, to stage our first-ever fundraiser – a major undertaking and wonderful success!

For a small (but growing) organization “staffed” largely by a working Board, *Friends* has much to be proud of in what most who have been involved in its evolution would no doubt consider 10 “short” years. A few of our signature accomplishments in advancing our mission of preserving, enhancing, and celebrating the Blue Ridge include:

- hosting a storytelling event with mountain music to encourage elder local mountain folk to share their tales of living on the Blue Ridge;
- undertaking research to identify and catalogue the history and ecology of the Blue Ridge;
- earning the Stewardship Forest designation for Blue Ridge Regional Park as a result of our restoration work there during annual Stewardship Volunteer Days;
- convening two summits of conservation organizations in the region to explore how we might leverage collective impact, as a result of which the Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance was birthed;
- establishing the Friend of the Mountain award to recognize organizations and individuals who make significant contributions on behalf of the Blue Ridge;
- establishing the Jane Pratt Blue Ridge Education Scholarship to honor high school seniors who have demonstrated commitment to the environment and stewardship on the Blue Ridge;
- playing a key role in successfully galvanizing citizen resistance to the AT&T application for a massive facility on Short Hill Mountain;
- partnering with like-minded organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation, Virginia Native Plant Society, and the Regional Park Authority to address considerations particular to our stretch of the Blue Ridge.

So where do we go from here? As we look ahead we have begun to set our sights on expanding our outreach to communities in our focus area. We want to build on our educational award program to include a broader and more diverse array of youth. And we will continue to explore new opportunities for stewardship on the mountain . . . all the while remaining vigilant and responsive in the face of threats to the Blue Ridge.

We are deeply grateful for your support and invite your continued engagement as we shape the path forward.

All best.

Carole Napolitano
President, *Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains*

Preserving and Enhancing our Mountains

Autumn Stewardship Volunteer Day

Friends' Board members and several other volunteers continued the ongoing stewardship work at Blue Ridge Regional Park on October 21, 2017. The group focused on trail maintenance, opening up several trails that were becoming overgrown.

The Stewardship Committee is continuing to explore how *Friends* can take a more strategic approach at Blue Ridge Regional Park and recently engaged the Park Authority with ideas for developing a natural resource concept plan to identify more potential stewardship activities and projects. Stay tuned!

Photos clockwise from top:
James Remuzzi discusses
strategy with volunteers;
volunteers hard at work; James
ready to remove invasive
species



Membership and Development

A major milestone approaches as *Friends* expects to welcome our 200th member by the close of 2017 or early 2018! Sources of new membership continue to include strong word-of-mouth engagement on the part of current members and Board, as well as from publicity for events such as the Bluemont Fair and for scholarships and Friend of the Mountain Awards. The "Sounds of the Blue Ridge" benefit concert in October also helped promote *Friend's* visibility and attract new members. Enhancements to our website, growth in our Facebook presence, and better tracking of our membership by our new administrative assistant have all helped to retain and grow membership.

Jane Pratt Blue Ridge Mountains Education Award

Our annual scholarship awards in memory of founding member, the late Jane Pratt, was presented to two graduating high school seniors in two of *Friends* focus counties.

Rachel Weinstein, a graduate from Loudoun Valley High School, who joined one of *FBRM's* Stewardship Volunteer Day at Blue Ridge Regional Park, has spent much of her life in the outdoors - hiking and volunteering to keep the mountain environment as pristine as possible. Rachel is continuing her studies in Environmental Science at James Madison University.

Alexis Zimmer-Chu graduated from Woodgrove High School. In her qualifying essay for the scholarship award, Alexis cited a lifelong love of the mountains, including attending camp at The Mountain Institute at Spruce Knob. Alexis is currently a student at Oberlin College pursuing environmental studies.



Photo on left: Jed Shilling, Rachel Weinstein and Peter Weeks

Photo on top: Jed Shilling, Alexis Zimmer-Chu and her parents, Dan and Lisa

Land Use Advocacy

Mt. Weather Development

The Land Use committee responded to the notice posted in the newspaper about changes that are proposed to the Mt. Weather facility. Having polled some of our members, we discovered that the existing exterior lighting from the facility is quite invasive, and visible from much of southwestern Loudoun. We also noticed that there were obvious bald spots on the mountain from below. Additionally, having read the environmental impact statements that were filed, we responded to the notice with a letter that is attached to this report. The reply is also posted. This situation differed from the AT&T installation project in that they did not file an environmental impact study. Hopefully the Mt. Weather project construction will make the installation less invasive than it is now.

Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan

Members of *Friends* attended several Envision Loudoun project meetings. We also stayed in touch with the *Loudoun Coalition* to keep abreast of proposed changes as they developed. Given the slow progress and sorting out of the data gathered and the opinions put forth, we have been waiting for the right time to put forth our position statement. While there is a tremendous amount of material and many thoughts inherent in the rewriting of the Comprehensive Plan, we feel that our position should be very simple and direct. The document is attached.

Celebrating Our Mountains

2016 Annual Meeting

In 2016 *Friends* held its Annual Meeting at the Barns of Rose Hill in Berryville. Our guest speaker, David Lillard, editor of *The Observer* and project manager

at the Downstream Project, spoke of the social value of preservation and shared the story of how natural spaces he has experienced shaped who he is today.



For the first time in the history of the award, three **Friend of the Mountain Awards** were presented to Kim Rapp, Jean Baderschneider, and Sam Kroiz, for their efforts in leading and inspiring others to help preserve the Blue Ridge Mountains: Kim and Jean for helping the state

ABC Board realize that benefits to the agricultural economy must also consider the concerns of existing landowners; and Sam for his work in raising public awareness about the proposed AT&T facility on Short Hill Mountain.



It was a festive afternoon with wine from Twin Oaks Winery, mountain music by The Short Hills Mountain Boys, and a delicious spread of homemade food provided by members of our Board — all in a beautiful venue.

Bluemont Fair

Friends participated, for the 6th consecutive year, as an exhibitor at the Bluemont Fair. A new location near the entrance gate allowed us to connect with numerous fair goers, welcome new members, and share our mission on behalf of the mountains with many folks who stopped by to hear about our work.



Sounds of the Blue Ridge: 10th Anniversary Concert Fundraiser

In honor of our 10th anniversary, *Friends* hosted its first fundraiser to help build the endowment established last year and also to support educational and stewardship activities. The centerpiece of "Sounds of the Blue Ridge" was a concert of mountain and traditional folk music performed by Furnace Mountain Band, widely known in the region for its fine vocal harmonies and virtuosic playing. The late-afternoon event on October 29th took place at Franklin Park Performing Arts Center and featured, in addition to the concert, a live auction and a lush reception of hors d'oeuvres provided by Savoir Faire and wine from Twin Oaks Tavern Winery.

In spite of inclement weather, the turnout for the event was great, the crowd was lively, the band was clearly having fun – and brought along a special guest to play several numbers with them – and many of our guests remarked on what a wonderful time they had had.

Our success was made possible by the dedicated work of a special concert fundraiser committee and by the support, both financial and in-kind, of numerous donors and sponsors.

A vertical poster for the "Sounds of the Blue Ridge" 10th Anniversary Concert Fundraiser. The top features a landscape photo of the Blue Ridge Mountains with a "10 YEARS" anniversary logo. The text on the poster includes: "Please join us to celebrate Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains 10th Anniversary with an afternoon of live music by Furnace Mountain Band at Franklin Park Arts Center. A reception following the concert will feature delectables catered by Savoir Faire and wine from Twin Oaks Winery." It also lists the date "SUNDAY OCTOBER 29, 2017 4:00 - 6:30 PM", the venue "Franklin Park Arts Center 36441 Blueridge View Lane Purcellville, VA 20132 (540) 338-7973", and the featured band "Furnace Mountain Band" with members David Van Deventer, Danny Knicey, Morgan Morrison, and Aimee Curl. A mission statement at the bottom reads: "Our Mission: To preserve, enhance, and celebrate the Blue Ridge Mountains as a valuable resource and treasured space for present and future generations." The left side of the poster has the text "Sounds of the Blue Ridge 10th Anniversary Celebration Concert and Reception" written vertically.



Annual Meeting 2016



Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Annual Income Statement and Financial Position

12 months ending 8/31/16

Revenue

Endowment Fund	\$8,185.00
Membership Fees	\$4,735
General Funds	\$7,239.82
Total Revenue	\$20,159.82

Expenses

Administrative Services	\$3,326.30
Credit Card and Bank Fees	\$34.98
Insurance	\$350.00
State Fees	\$50.00
SUBTOTAL Administrative Expenses	\$3,761.28
Printing Supplies	\$214.27
Event Supplies	\$4,376.79
Membership & Development	\$314.57
SUBTOTAL Fundraising & Marketing	\$4,905.63
Jane Pratt Education Scholarship Awards	\$2,032.85
SUBTOTAL Program Services	\$2,032.85
TOTAL Expenses	\$10,699.76
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$9,460.06

Thanking our Generous Donors and Sponsors

Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains is grateful for the financial contributions of all its members and donors. We wish to offer special recognition to the following individuals and organizations for their generous support in the form of significant monetary donations or in-kind services.

Jean Baderschneider, CEO, The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery

Dr. Martha Calihan

Clark Carr, CW Carr Auctions

Vern and Mary Conaway

Michael and Diane Dennis

Doukénie Winery

End of the Road Reading Group

Furnace Mountain Band

Gates Family Trust

Goose Creek Meeting

Tim and Jocelyn Greenan

JK Moving Services

June and Warren Krupsaw

Leesburg Junction

Sandi Marra and Chris Brunton & Marra Consulting Group

Tamra and Charlie McAtee

J Randall Minchew

Dave Moyes and Associates

Norman Myers, Myers Appraisal Services

Charles Tiffany Richardson Family Fund

Carole and Stephen Napolitano

Edward Neham

Maria Nicklin, Furyworks

George Ohrstrom, II

Old Dominion Land Conservancy

Dean Pollock and Judy Caplan

Savoir Fare

Jed Shilling

Bruce and Edie Smart

Deborah and Irving Snyder

Steven and Sarah Stinger

Jeffrey Stoiber, Stoiber & Associates

Henry Stribling

Twin Oaks Tavern Winery

Marie Uehling

David and Lynne Updegrove

Al and Betty Van Huyck

Virginia Easement Exchange

Peter Q Weeks

Wells Fargo

Alan and Sandra Winter

Board of Director Members (as of August 31, 2017)

Carole Napolitano, *President*

Norman Myers, *Vice President; Chair: Land Use Committee*

Deborah Snyder, *Secretary*

Peter Weeks, *Treasurer; Chair: Membership and Development Committee; Co-Chair: Education Committee*

Vickie Fuog

Sandra Marra

Mark Shields

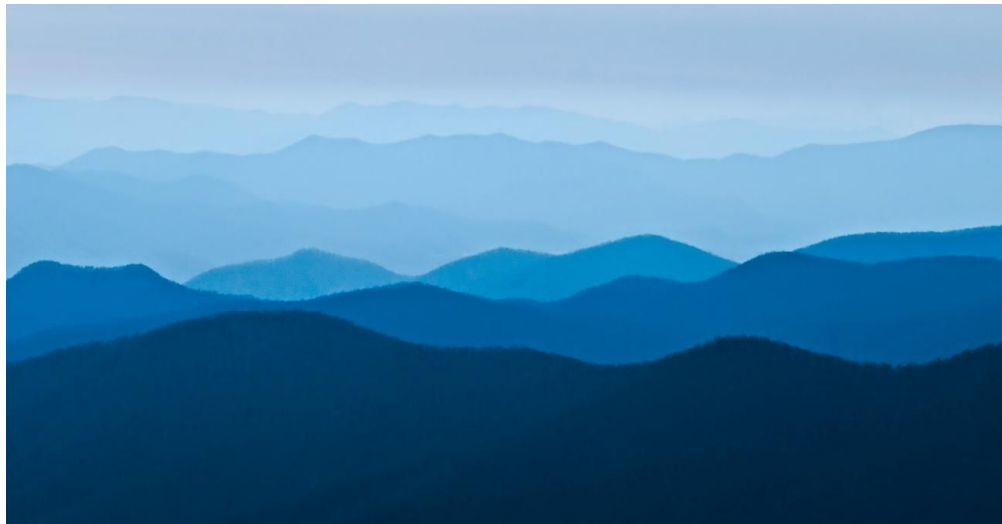
John “Jed” Shilling, *Co-Chair: Education Committee*

Rebekka Skinner-Prinz, *Chair: Celebrations, Communications and Outreach Committee*

James Remuzzi, *Chair: Stewardship Committee*



Left to right: Jed Shilling, Sandi Marra, Mark Shields, Deb Snyder, Carole Napolitano, Norman Myers, Peter Weeks, Rebekka Prinz, James Remuzzi (Vickie Fuog not pictured)



To learn more about *Friends* . . . and to join or donate, visit www.friendsofblueridge.org

Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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