

# ***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains***



Photo by Schuyler Richardson



**Annual Report 2012-2013**

*"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."*  
~ John Muir

## Letter from the President

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of Jane Pratt. Jane was the convener of our early organizational meetings that led to the founding of **Friends of the Blue Ridge** in 2007. We will sorely miss Jane's presence, energy and inspiration.



Over the last year, our organization has made strides in its efforts to increase the visibility and impact of our work – and to make good on our plan to bring regional conservationists together to explore potential synergies in efforts to preserve and enhance the mountains. The main focus of our work this year has been planning for the Blue Ridge Summit that will be held October 16, 2013, at the Bluemont Vineyard in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation. The summit will bring together over 50 public and private mountain property owners, non-profit conservation organizations working in the region, and county planners who provide the public policy context in our program area. Our primary purpose will be to explore ways of collaborating to leverage our conservation efforts on behalf of the mountain.

In the meantime, we have continued ongoing initiatives, most notably our volunteer days (twice annually) at the Blue Ridge Regional Park located off Blue Ridge Mountain Road. We are making real progress in removing invasive plants, particularly bamboo, wineberry, and mile-a-minute. This year one of our local Girl Scouts completed her Gold Project by labeling 22 trees and, under our sponsorship, prepared a brochure that provides basic information on the various species in the park. As a result of our efforts over the last four years, the Virginia State Forestry Department has awarded the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority its Forest Stewardship designation.

In September 2012 and 2013, we participated in the Bluemont Fair using our home office in the heart of the village as a base. Board members were on hand to discuss our programs with visitors and to hand out our brochures as well as materials provided by the National Wildlife Federation. Approximately 60 people visited our office during the Fair. December was the occasion of our fifth annual membership meeting at Bears Den where we enjoyed a rousing dance program by the Blue Ridge Thunder Cloggers. And this summer we welcomed a new member onto the Board of Directors: Rebekka Skinner-Prinz, a Leesburg resident, who will lend her talents – and her youthful perspective -- to the Celebrations, Communications, and Outreach Committee.

The various initiatives and activities described above are a direct result of the support of our membership. This year we had a 90% renewal rate which we deeply appreciate . . . and which we consider a testimony to the importance of the work we have undertaken. We continue to look for ways to engage our membership to serve on committees and participate in membership events. We hope you will join us – it's fun, and an opportunity for you to help us make a lasting difference.

Sincerely,

Alfred P. Van Huyck  
President  
Phone: 540-338-3524  
Email: [avanhuyck@aol.com](mailto:avanhuyck@aol.com)

**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.*

## Major Accomplishments and Noteworthy Activities

We are proud to report major accomplishments by **Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains** over the last year.

### Protecting and Enhancing our Mountains . . .

- ◆ Each year **Friends** awards a “Friend of the Mountain” plaque to an individual or group that has acted to preserve the Blue Ridge. The winner of this award for 2012 was the Virginia Native Plant Society for their contribution of removing invasive species.
- ◆ The Land Use Committee spent the majority of the year focused on planning and coordinating the **The Blue Ridge Summit: Leveraging the Impact of our Conservation** that will be held on October 16, 2013. This effort represents a major accomplishment of the Committee and the Board to bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss how they can best work together to sustain the environmental, cultural, and recreational benefits of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Through this exciting Summit we plan to lay groundwork for synergies across the local conservation community.
- ◆ We held volunteer days in October 2012, as well as April and August 2013 to take the next steps with our Blue Ridge Regional Park recovery effort. In conjunction with the Northern Virginia Park Authority, these events were well attended by adults and children who participated in removing invasive species and enjoyed guided nature tours.



**The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority accepts the Forest Stewardship Award**

### Celebrating our Mountains . . .

- ◆ Our 2012 Annual Meeting was held at Bears Den and provided our members with an opportunity to come together to celebrate and learn about our work. Members of the Virginia Native Plant Society led trail walks for attendees of the Annual Meeting.
- ◆ **Friends** participated in the Bluemont Fair again this year and accomplished our goal of attracting more fairgoers than years past to engage them in our work and gain their support. We strategically set up our regional display outside of our office, distributed materials, sold mugs, caps and memberships. This generated more interest in our organization, and guests had the opportunity to meet with Board Members and to learn about our important work.



**Ready for the fair...with a display of our work**

- ◆ As part of one of our volunteer days, *Friends* members Joe Coleman and Phil Daley graciously led nature walks. Their expertise in area plants and animals provided an educational and entertaining experience for our guests.

### Developing Partnerships . . .

- ◆ We will co-host with our partner, the National Wildlife Federation, a summit titled *Leveraging the Impact of Our Conservation Efforts* to explore opportunities for collaborative efforts in service to the mountain. Attendees will include diverse stakeholders in the region (conservation organizations, large property owners, and county planners). One of the objectives of the summit will be to identify starting points for synergies going forward and to put in place a coalition to support collaborative initiatives. Andrew Taber, Director of the Mountain Institute, will offer keynote remarks.
- ◆ The Virginia Native Plant Society continued its collaborative efforts to recover the parks. The Plant Society was helpful in identifying the mile-a-minute vine as a target of our most recent effort as well as apprising us of the optimal time of year to eradicate this invasive species.

### Building Our Organization and Our Presence . . .

- ◆ This year our membership reached a new high of 95 persons, reflecting a growing interest in our work to preserve, enhance and celebrate the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- ◆ We added a new member to our Board of Directors: Rebekka Skinner-Prinz is a resident of Leesburg, Virginia, who brings education program and project management skills to the Board. Rebekka also brings her youth, which will serve our organization well as we seek to reach younger generations. Rebekka will continue her talents as part of the Celebrations, Communications and Outreach Committee.
- ◆ In September 2012, *Friends* and National Wildlife Federation co-hosted a well-attended and celebratory event to raise funds for the conservation summit planned for the fall of 2013. Held at the lovely country home of Jane Pratt and Jed Shilling and featuring live blue grass music and local cuisine, the event provided an opportunity for more than 60 attendees to learn about the Blue Ridge Conservation Corridor initiative. Over \$7,000 was raised to support the Blue Ridge Summit.
- ◆ Our president, Al Van Huyck, continues to chair the Loudoun County Preservation and Environmental Coalition, which offers a platform for sharing information about *Friends*.



**Fundraising event for conservation summit**



***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the National Wildlife Federation are pleased to announce***

## **The Blue Ridge Summit**

*Leveraging the Impact of our  
Conservation Efforts*

- ◆ Share research that ***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains*** and National Wildlife Federation have developed for the sake of creating urgency about threats and opportunities related to the Blue Ridge.
- ◆ Create a forum for exploring ways that diverse stakeholders can work together to increase the conservation impact on the Blue Ridge.
- ◆ Generate excitement about what might be possible working together.
- ◆ Develop actionable starting points for advancing targeted conservation efforts as a result of the Summit and a mechanism for sustaining a collective effort.
- ◆ Lay the groundwork for setting in motion the Conservation Corridor concept and a coalition to support it.
- ◆ Pursue starting points generated at the Blue Ridge Summit and develop supporting structures.



## Plans for 2014

*Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains* anticipates an active year as we finish out 2013 and enter 2014. Here are some of the highlights of our plans for the coming year:

- ◆ Explore developing our social media presence using Twitter and Constant Contact.
  - ◆ Consider opportunities for engaging in outreach to children and youth groups.
  - ◆ Pursue starting points generated at the Blue Ridge Summit and develop supporting structures to sustain viable initiatives.
  - ◆ Continue to host celebrations during the year to build our presence through activities such as the Bluemont Fair and Earth Day.
  - ◆ Host activities for members including volunteer days at Blue Ridge Regional Park and our Annual Meeting. This year the Annual Meeting will be held on November 17, 2013 at Barns of Rose Hill and will feature a live performance by Shorthill Mountain Boys. We invite all members and those interested in learning more to join us.
  - ◆ Develop opportunities to tell our story and present our research to groups throughout the region as a way to generate support for our mission.
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## In Memoriam



Dr. Dorothy Jane "Jane" Pratt, founding member of *Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains*, former *Friends* member and head of the Land Use Committee, died on August 12<sup>th</sup> after battling recurrence of cancer. Jane spent more than 35 years in the field of global and domestic sustainable, equitable development and environmental stewardship. After distinguished work at both the Mitre Company and the World Bank, where Jane held a variety of executive roles and set in motion numerous initiatives, she became President and CEO of The Mountain Institute, which she led for eight years in 1994. Under Jane's leadership, TMI found the Mountain Forum, a global network of individuals and organizations concerned about the well-being of mountain people, their environments and cultures. In her role with *Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains*, Jane's signature contribution was her vision of a conservation corridor on the Blue Ridge, an initiative designed to preserve and maintain the unique natural resources and cultural heritage of the mountains through the implementation of best practices in mountain conservation management.

**Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains  
Annual Income Statements  
9/1/2012 Through 8/31/2013**

	<b>12 mo ending 8/31/2012</b>	<b>12 mo ending 8/31/2013</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Charitable Contributions	10,939	5,917
In Kind Donations	4,494	3,600
Membership Fees	1,890	2,250
Rental Income	900	3,840
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>18,223.00</b>	<b>15,607.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Charitable Donations	1,200	0
Fundraising Expenses	824	485
In Kind Donation Expense	4,494	3,600
Administration	380	1,842
Program Services	399	3,222
Intern Expenses	5,100	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>12,398.00</b>	<b>9,149.00</b>
<b>Income Less Expenses</b>	<b>5,826</b>	<b>6,458.00</b>

## List of Donors

***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains*** is grateful for the financial contributions of all members. We wish to offer special recognition to the following individuals for their generous support between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2013.

**William Beddow**  
**Maggie Bryant**  
**Nancy Byrd**  
**Eric & Ann Carlson**  
**Brad & Baily Davis**  
**Karen & Fred Hetzel**  
**Karolyn Miller**  
**Carole and Stephen Napolitano**  
**John & Sue Nathman**  
**George Ohrstrom II**  
**Liz Pendzich and Norman Myers**  
**Barbara Notar**  
**Piedmont Community Foundation**  
**Jane Pratt & Jed Shilling**  
**Schuyler Richardson**  
**Martha Semmes**  
**Beth and Larry Simms**  
**Edith & Bruce Smart**  
**Mark and Roxanne Shields**  
**Marie Uehling**  
**Al & Betty Van Huyck**  
**Peter Weeks**

### Please Join Us!

#### ***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains***

is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

[Http://www.blueridgemountains-friends.org](http://www.blueridgemountains-friends.org)

[Friendsblueridgemtns@gmail.com](mailto:Friendsblueridgemtns@gmail.com)

Taxpayer Identification Number: 22-3970963





## **Board of Directors Members as of August 31, 2013**

Alfred P. Van Huyck, President  
Carole Napolitano, Vice President and Chair of the Celebrations Committee  
Suellen Beverly, Secretary  
Deborah Snyder, Secretary  
Katie Conaway, Treasurer  
Austin Kane, Chair of the Land Use Committee  
Marie Uehling, Chair of the Development Committee  
Mike Alter  
Peter Weeks  
Dana Rihani  
Rebekka Skinner-Prinz



Board members meet for the Blue Ridge Summit.  
Pictured from left: Mike Alter, Deborah Snyder, Peter Weeks, Carole Napolitano, Katie Conway, Al Van Huyck, Dana Rihani



**Participants assess the situation on Volunteer Day at Blue Ridge Regional Regional Park**



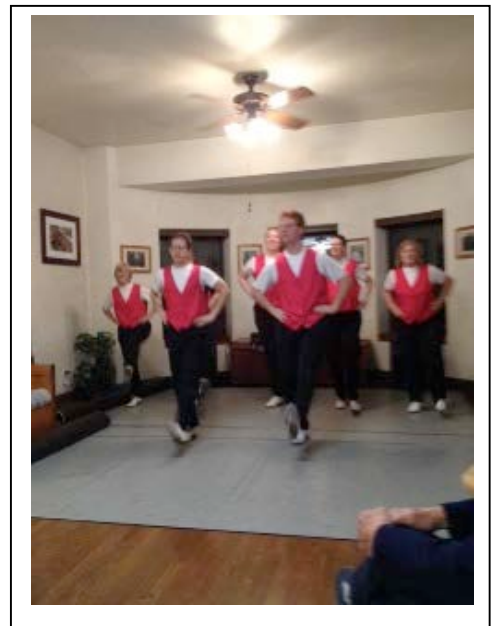
**President Al Van Huyck ready to greet visitors to our display at the Bluemont**



*Add Caption...*



**View from Bears Den – a nature hike prior to the Annual Meeting**



**Blue Ridge Thunder Cloggers perform at the Annual Meeting at Bears Den**



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Committed to preserving, enhancing and celebrating the  
***Blue Ridge Mountains***  
Membership Form

YES! I (we) support the mission and vision of the  
***Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains***

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35 (individual) \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (family)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ I would like to make a special gift to the Blue Ridge Conservation Corridor

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Contact:***

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[www.blueridgemountains-friends.org](http://www.blueridgemountains-friends.org)