



Members of Black Girls Hike RVA hike to Apple Orchard Falls, milepost 78.4 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Stronger Together

The women of Black Girls Hike Richmond, Virginia, trek to Apple Orchard Falls in this photo titled *Stronger Together - Black Girls Hike RVA* by Gina Knox. What started as two friends, Narshara Tucker and Nicole Boyd, hiking together, grew into an official group as more people learned of their adventures and wanted to join in. Twice a month, the women gather to explore a new trail in Virginia. All ages and skill levels have joined them, including a 7-year-old girl with her 75-year-old grandmother.

Stronger Together is a finalist in the Blue Ridge Parkway category of the 18th Annual Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition. Each year, the Foundation sponsors this category. In 2020, photographers were encouraged to capture the Parkway as “Nature’s Escape,” a place for refuge during a turbulent year. The images selected as finalists are on display through June 5 at the Turchin Center at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.

See the photo competition’s other entries at AppMtnPhotoComp.org. To learn more about Black Girls Hike RVA, visit BlackGirlsHikeRVA.com.

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Step Up to Support Mountain Music!

For the last 18 years, the Blue Ridge Music Center has presented concerts featuring master musicians and up-and-coming performers carrying forward the living musical traditions of Appalachia. In all that time, the outdoor amphitheater has relied on the same audio speaker system. Now, the aging and outdated equipment is in danger of failing and leaving the venue silent. The Music Center needs your help to keep the music strong and clear. The cost of replacing the faltering system is \$60,000. With your gift, the venue can give audiences and performers the top-notch musical experiences they deserve.

A new audio speaker system will:

- Highlight the true talents of the bands and musicians who take the stage.
- Provide a finer level of sound quality for concertgoers.
- Attract additional artists who require high-quality speaker systems for performances.

Please give at BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org/support or use the enclosed envelope. The Foundation supports musical programming at the Music Center to help preserve the cultural heritage of the mountains.

Parkway 2020 Visitation

In 2020, the Blue Ridge Parkway ranked No. 1 in recreational visits. It welcomed 14,099,485 visitors, making it one of only three National Park Service sites that received more than 10 million recreation visits — the others being Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The highest visitation recorded for the Parkway was in 2002, with 21,538,760 visitors.

Last year, neighboring **Shenandoah National Park** saw its highest visitation since 1995, with 1,666,265 visitors.



Above: The manor with windows & railings removed.

Below: Column capitals wait to be restored at the workshop.



floor starting in April. We can't wait for you to see the centerpiece of Moses H. Cone Memorial Park looking stately again thanks to your support!

Transforming a Historical Landmark

Flat Top repairs are remaking history

We are thrilled to announce that a long-awaited transformation is underway at Flat Top Manor. If you visit the home this spring, you may not recognize the circa-1901 Colonial Revival landmark. The columns, railings, and windows were removed late last year for repairs. This spring, scaffolding will be erected to continue the major exterior renovations. During the process, visitors will still be able to shop at the Parkway Craft Center and America's National Park bookstore on the first

Stay Connected With Us!

Volunteer

We're working with National Park Service staff to create training opportunities and schedule workdays within the park starting this spring. Our volunteers tackle tasks ranging from gardening and historical site clean-ups to brochure distribution. Join the effort! BRPFoundation.org/volunteer

Webinars

Catch our Insider's Report webinars at 11 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month, as we explore topics

ranging from wildlife to the history of the Parkway. To see what we'll cover next, visit the Events page on our website or subscribe to our YouTube channel to watch the recorded presentations at your convenience. [YouTube.com/BlueRidgeParkwayFoundation](https://www.youtube.com/BlueRidgeParkwayFoundation)

Sign up for our e-newsletter

Did you know you can get updates about the Blue Ridge Parkway, the projects you're making possible, events, openings, and more in your inbox? Stay in the know about the park you love year-round by signing up for our e-newsletter. BRPFoundation.org/e-news

Share Your Journey

"In May of 2020, thinking a vacation was out of the question, I stumbled upon a mention of the Blue Ridge Parkway and began to investigate. By late June, my lodging was booked and I had a simple itinerary.

In July, I entered the Parkway at Soco Gap. My first stop was Thunder Struck Ridge Overlook. How fitting, for I was completely thunderstruck to a point of trembling. I traveled the Parkway up to Roanoke in two days and was greatly saddened when it was time to return home. I fell in love with the Parkway and all that comes with it. I made another trip in October 2020, I have three more trips already planned, and I may move to North Carolina. I thank God every day for putting the mountains into my life, and am a changed man for it." — Gary Ney

Tell us your story at BRPFoundation.org/journey.



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Need to update your information? Contact Rebecca Barnhardt at rbarnhardt@brpfoundation.org.



Trails & Views Forever will allow repairs to hiking spots along the Parkway, like the scenic Craggy Bald trail.

Trails & Views Forever Update

Our Trails & Views Forever program is poised to reach a major milestone. Your gifts are closing in on \$1 million, funds that will repair and enhance the hikes, overlooks, campgrounds, and picnic areas you love! We need your help to meet this mark in our effort to provide a total of \$3 million for these Parkway projects. That means the clock is ticking on your chance to become a Trails & Views Forever Founding Funder. With a \$1,000 gift, you'll receive a limited edition patch, and your name will appear in our annual report and on donor acknowledgement signs along the Parkway.

This chance to give with special recognition opportunities will soon close. New names will not be added to the signs after the first \$1 million is reached, so act now to be a part of this group's amazing impact. A second level of support opportunities for Trails & Views Forever will be announced soon. Stay tuned! *For details, visit TrailsandViews.org.*