

"The creation of the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area will enhance economic growth in Rockingham, Augusta, and Highland counties by greatly increasing the potency of a major attraction to the area."

-David Burns, co-owner, The Sole Source, Harrisonburg

"During the past 40-some years that I've been hunting for grouse, turkey, and deer on Shenandoah Mountain, I've had better luck in the mature forests than in the clearcuts. I'd like to see the area protected from logging to ensure good hunting in the future."

-David Hall, Bridgewater

"Shenandoah Mountain offers some of the best mountain biking and wildest backcountry in the East. This proposal will protect both."

-Thomas Jenkins, Shenandoah Bike Shop, Harrisonburg.

"From the top of Reddish knob one can behold the breathtaking beauty of Shenandoah Mountain. As stewards of God's good creation, we need to preserve this unique natural area for generations to come."

-Ann Held, Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg

"As a native of the region, and as editor of a magazine that celebrates it, I feel strongly about the importance of preserving our wild and beautiful places. The creation of Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area will allow people to enjoy its sunsets, moonrises and shooting stars for generations to come."

-Cara Ellen Modisett, Editor, Blue Ridge Country magazine

Why Support the Shenandoah Mountain Proposal?

Shenandoah Mountain, Laurel Fork, and Kelley Mountain-Big Levels will stay wild and beautiful forever, places where we can get away from the hectic pace of modern life and enjoy nature at its finest. These protected areas will support a wide array of recreational activities, safeguard our drinking water, and benefit our local economy.

- Recreation

People can hunt, fish, hike, camp, canoe, kayak, picnic, backpack, view wildflowers, birds, and other wildlife, ride horses, go caving or rock-climbing, and lead education trips. In National Scenic areas, visitors can also drive on roads and ride mountain bikes on designated trails.

- Tourism

The George Washington National Forest is one of the top ten most visited national forests in the nation. The Forest Service estimates that visitors to Virginia's national forests spend about \$1.4 billion annually for mostly local businesses and services. The Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area will draw even more visitors to the Shenandoah Valley.

- Water

Almost 4 million people – in Harrisonburg and Staunton, and in communities further downstream– get their drinking water from sources that begin on the George Washington. Protecting these watersheds benefits people and fisheries.

What is a National Scenic Area?

An area of public lands designated by Congress to protect its scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and natural resources. Compatible uses include hunting, fishing, camping, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Public roads remain open.

What is a Wilderness Area?

Established by Congress, this is the highest protection for our public lands. Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and horseback riding are allowed in Wilderness. To preserve the land's wild nature, roads, permanent structures, logging, mining, motor vehicles, and mechanized vehicles, including mountain bikes, are not allowed.

The Old Dominion is blessed with a rich natural heritage of majestic forests and rushing streams in the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. Three areas of the George Washington National Forest are particularly outstanding: Shenandoah Mountain, Laurel Fork, and Kelley Mountain-Big Levels.

Drawn by the breathtaking scenery, abundant wildlife, and solitude, generations of families from Harrisonburg, Staunton, and communities all over the Shenandoah Valley have hunted, fished and camped in these areas.

Designating these areas as National Scenic or Wilderness Areas will permanently protect the important resources that we all value: clean water, healthy outdoor recreation, wildlife, our cultural heritage, and a vibrant economy.

That is why the Friends of Shenandoah Mountain have come together. We are neighbors, hunters, local business owners, community and religious leaders, and folks who enjoy these special places and believe that they are integral to our heritage. Our goal is to act as good stewards and pass on this legacy to our children and grandchildren.

FOREST

How would I explain a forest to
Someone who has never been in one –
The trees and the wind thru them,
The birds and their songs and
Their acrobatic flight thru the branches.
The smell of the last time and
The time before and the time before
That, that I was in the woods. The
Sound and the silence. The peace
And the crunch of the leaves and the branches
On the snow. The sound of a stream or
A woodpecker or a squirrel disappearing.
And the trees reaching up and up
And up to gather the sun and turn
Light to air, to jigsaw the moonlit winter
Sky. The trees like a fortress for the natural
World. What if I could not take my
Children for a walk in the woods.

-David Matthews

JOIN US!

Friends of Shenandoah Mountain is a voluntary local coalition of businesses, individuals, faith groups, hunters, conservationists, hikers, mountain bikers, and others who have come together to protect these areas. With your help, we can ensure that these outstanding natural areas will be there for generations to come. Go to www.friendsofshenandoahmountain.org to join our growing list of supporters and to see how else you can help.

VIRGINIA

We Love it Wild!

1

Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area

Rockingham, Augusta, and Highland Counties - 115,000 acres

Shenandoah Mountain's long, rolling ridgeline provides the celebrated western backdrop of the Shenandoah Valley and its many communities. With 10 peaks, including Reddish Knob, rising above 4,000 feet, it offers some of the most spectacular vistas in Virginia. The 115,000-acre section of Shenandoah Mountain between Rt. 250 and Rt. 33 is one of the largest remaining expanses of undisturbed forestland in the Southern Appalachians and is a haven for black bear, deer, and some 250 species of birds. With a network of 150 miles of trails, the mountain offers some of the best hiking and mountain biking in the state.

The mountain crest forms a divide for the headwaters of the historic Potomac and James rivers. Cold, clear streams, including North River, Ramseys Draft, Shaws Fork, and the Calpasture River support native trout and provide clean drinking water for Harrisonburg, Staunton, and several towns in the valley.

Shenandoah Mountain has important cultural and historic landmarks, among them High Knob Fire Tower (constructed by the CCC and WWI veterans), Reddish Knob, Hone Quarry, Todd Lake, Confederate Breastworks, North River Gorge, North River CCC Camp (now a campground), and Camp Todd.

Within the proposed Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area are four special areas that deserve Wilderness designation:



7

Little River Wilderness

Augusta County - 12,490 acres

One of the most remote and pristine places in Virginia, Little River is the heart of the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area. For generations, local residents and tourists have come to Reddish Knob to enjoy the panoramic view of the Little River area.

Ranging in elevation from 1,600 feet to well above 4,000 feet, the area hosts a wide variety of birds, including migratory songbirds, hawks, eagles, and peregrine falcons.

The extensive trail network in and around Little River offers exceptional backcountry hiking and camping. The area is also favored by hunters near and far. Access roads will remain open under the proposal. The proposal accommodates mountain biking on surrounding trails while holding the core area of Little River and Middle Mountain for non-mechanized use.

6

Skidmore Fork Wilderness

Rockingham County - 5,228 acres

Hikers and bikers who climb to the top of the historic, restored High Knob Fire Tower enjoy a sublime view of the entire Skidmore Fork watershed. The area features a 1,400-acre patch of old-growth forest that provides habitat for a diversity of forest life. Anglers value the Dry River trout stream at Rawley Springs, which is fed by cold water from Skidmore Fork. The Skidmore drainage is especially important to the city of Harrisonburg, which gets much of its drinking water from the river basin. Wilderness designation will assure that this municipal water supply remains clean and constant. Protection from logging and road building will minimize the impacts of floods on Switzer Dam and the city's reservoir. Existing roads will remain open for hunters and other forest users.



Lynn Hollow Wilderness

Highland County - 6,168 acres

The Lynn Hollow area is a popular birding destination with spectacular views of Allegheny Mountain ridges receding far into the western horizon.

The area is accessible from Rt. 250 and Forest Road 95, but for the most part, it is exceptionally remote and undisturbed. In conjunction with Ramseys Draft, it will create an impressive wild area divided only by Shenandoah Mountain Trail.

2



3

Bald Ridge Addition to Ramseys Draft Wilderness

Augusta County - 6,550 acres

This area has several scenic peaks and Dividing Ridge, which, as its name suggests, divides the headwaters of tributaries for the Potomac, on the north side, and the James, on its south side.

Horseback riders and hikers have long enjoyed the trails and scenic beauty of this area with spectacular views from Big Bald Knob. This area runs from the crest of Bald Ridge down to 2,600 feet, and to the north extends to the popular camping spots along North River. It is easily accessible for hunters and other forest users from Camp Todd and Braley Pond.



4

Laurel Fork Wilderness Area

Highland County - 10,153 acres

One of the true "crown jewels" of Virginia, the Laurel Fork area is tucked into a corner of Highland County, along the border with West Virginia. This remote, high-elevation area harbors impressive stands of maple, birch, beech, cherry, hemlock, and spruce. It has at least 25 species of plants and animals found nowhere else in Virginia.

Laurel Fork itself is one of the best native trout streams in the state, making it a favorite destination for serious anglers. An extensive trail network ensures excellent birding, hiking, backpacking, and fishing. Wilderness designation will be an excellent way to keep this unique area just like it is.



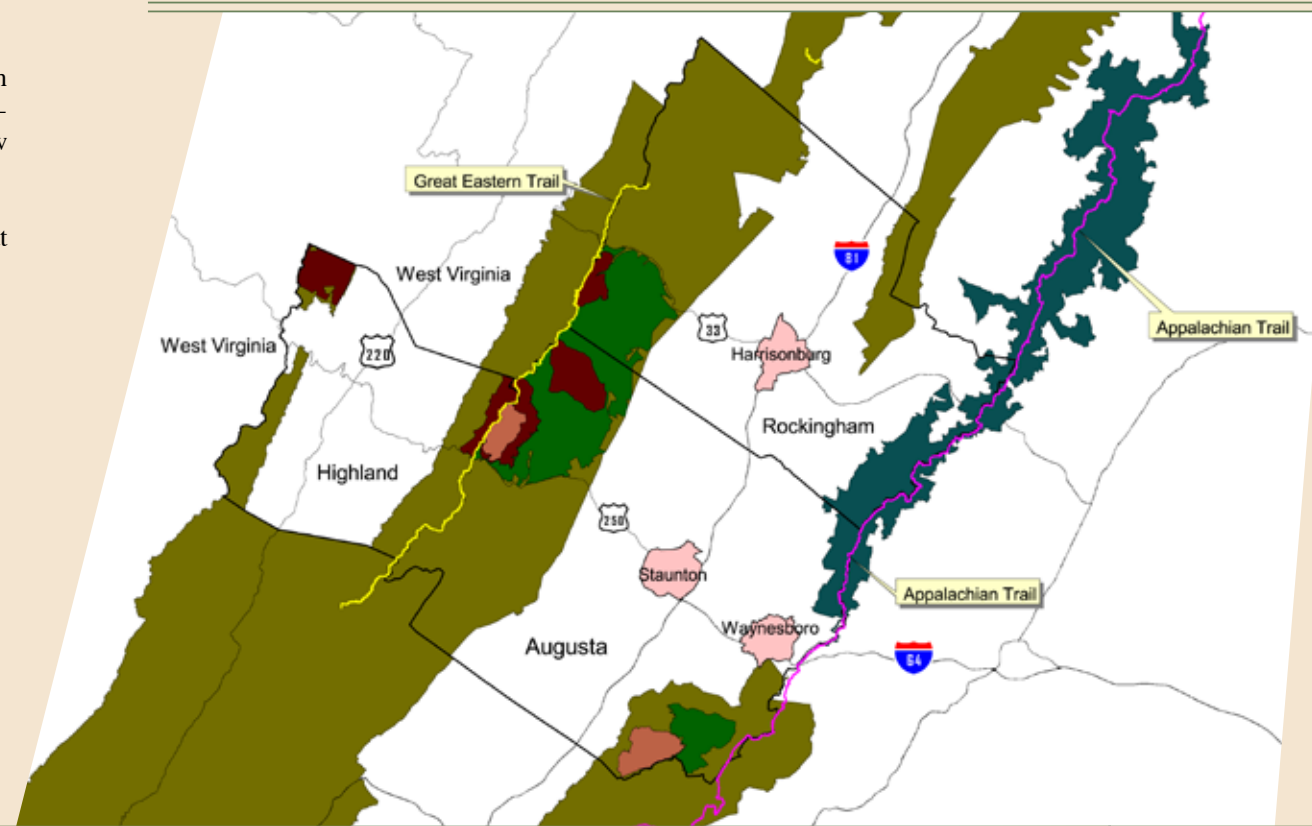
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Kelley Mountain - Big Levels National Scenic Area

Augusta County - 12,895 acres

Stretching from the Blue Ridge Parkway down to the Sherando Recreation Area, this biologically rich area has a challenging trail network that makes it a popular hiking and mountain biking destination. Big Levels is densely vegetated with oak, pine, mountain laurel, wild azalea, black gum, and an extensive growth of young American chestnut.

National Scenic Area designation will protect the biological richness, water quality, and scenic beauty of the area, while continuing to allow mountain biking and hunting.



Owners of private inholdings within the National Scenic and Wilderness Areas will retain all their rights and current roads will remain open for access.

Making it happen

Through a sustained, collaborative effort involving many people with varying interests, Friends of Shenandoah Mountain has developed the Shenandoah Mountain Proposal. Individuals, businesses, organizations, and local governing bodies are showing support by endorsing the proposal.

Friends & Neighbors of Shenandoah Mountain

The proposal is supported by a wide array of businesses, recreation groups, conservation organizations, faith groups, and individuals, including:

- Buckhorn Inn, Churchville
- Mossy Creek Fly Fishing, Harrisonburg
- Augusta and Rockingham Bird Clubs
- Weyers Cave Ruritans
- Creation Care Group, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church
- Ruth's Books and Cards, Bridgewater
- Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
- The Wilderness Society
- International Mountain Biking Association
- Scenic America
- Virginia Back Country Horsemen
- Virginia Native Plant Society
- Virginia Wilderness Committee
- Wilderness Adventure, Staunton
- You Made It Pottery, Harrisonburg



Visit us on the web for more information.

www.friendsofshenandoahmountain.org