



ASHEVILLE CHAPTER

"The Blue Ridge Parkway has everything, a famous commentator once said: romance, history, excitement, beauty."

– "The Blue Ridge Parkway, the First 50 Years," Harley Jolley

Welcome When the Blue Ridge Parkway's first resident landscape architect, Stanley Abbott, envisioned the 469-mile scenic motor road in 1935, he said its purpose was "to reveal the charm and interest of the native American countryside." The same principle today guides the National Park Service and volunteers who maintain the Parkway through the Southern Appalachians, connecting Shenandoah National Park near Waynesboro, Va., with Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Cherokee, N.C.



The FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway Asheville chapter assists National Park Service staff in maintaining the 48-mile section from Craggy Visitor Center to Wagon Road Gap as it winds around high-elevation peaks such as Craggy Dome

(6,085 feet) and Mount Pisgah (5,721 feet), dips into valleys and skirts Asheville (2,200 feet), the second largest city along the Parkway. Most of this route is bordered by Pisgah National Forest. FRIENDS volunteers help clear litter and debris from Parkway overlooks and highway intersections; clean and paint signage and milepost markers; and generally keep an attractive, neat landscape at Craggy Gardens and Blue Ridge Parkway visitor centers, Parkway Headquarters, and Folk Art Center of the Southern Highlands Craft Guild, all busy attractions near Asheville.

One of the FRIENDS Asheville chapter's most ambitious projects is to prepare the Mount Pisgah Campground for the season, which has included installation of bear-proof food lockers and cleaning/repairing campsites. Established in 2007 as one of 8 chapters of the nonprofit FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Asheville chapter also participates in Parkway informational events and activities, works with the Carolina Mountain Club on trail maintenance where necessary, and supports educational and research programs. All chapter activities serve the overarching mission of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway: to help preserve, protect, promote and enhance the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality and cultural distinctiveness of this linear national park and its surrounding landscape.



JOIN THE ASHEVILLE CHAPTER

Because federal funding has not kept up with Parkway needs, FRIENDS' work has become more important than ever. Vital National Park Service staff positions remain vacant, and there is great need for volunteers to pitch in with their time and talents. If you've stopped at the Craggy Visitor Center or Folk Art Center, hiked the Shut-In or Mountains-to-Sea trails along the Parkway, picnicked or camped at Mount Pisgah, or simply driven the "commuter" stretch from U.S. 70 to N.C. 191 - you've enjoyed the benefits of FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

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