

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**Virginia Outdoors Foundation's
Bull Run Mountains
Natural Area Preserve**



A view into the Preserve's forest - photo by Miguel Montalvo

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Looking north up the Bull Run Mountains from Thoroughfare Gap

ABOUT BULL RUN MOUNTAINS NATURAL AREA PRESERVE

The Bull Run Mountains are the easternmost mountains in Virginia. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation's (VOF) Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve is approximately 2,350 acres that serves as a living laboratory and open-air museum in the backyard of our nation's capital. The Preserve contains 10 different plant community types and a plethora of regionally uncommon and threatened plant and animal species. In addition to the biodiversity, this land holding permanently protects dozens of regionally important cultural history sites that tell the story of the Preserve's diversely peopled past. In 2002, this land was dedicated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as a Natural Area Preserve to protect the unique ecosystems and cultural resources found here. As the owner and manager of the preserve, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation is committed to protecting the mountain's significance and sharing it with the public through managed access.

The Bull Run Mountains was an early hotbed of scientific activity, and the Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve continues to serve as an important site for scientific research. We have a data driven approach that is critical for our ability to effectively balance public use with our duty to preserve a healthy, natural ecosystem. With three different sections, the preserve is an active and dynamic resource as a living laboratory, hosting K-12 school groups, university students, and researchers throughout the year.

SCIENCE BASED

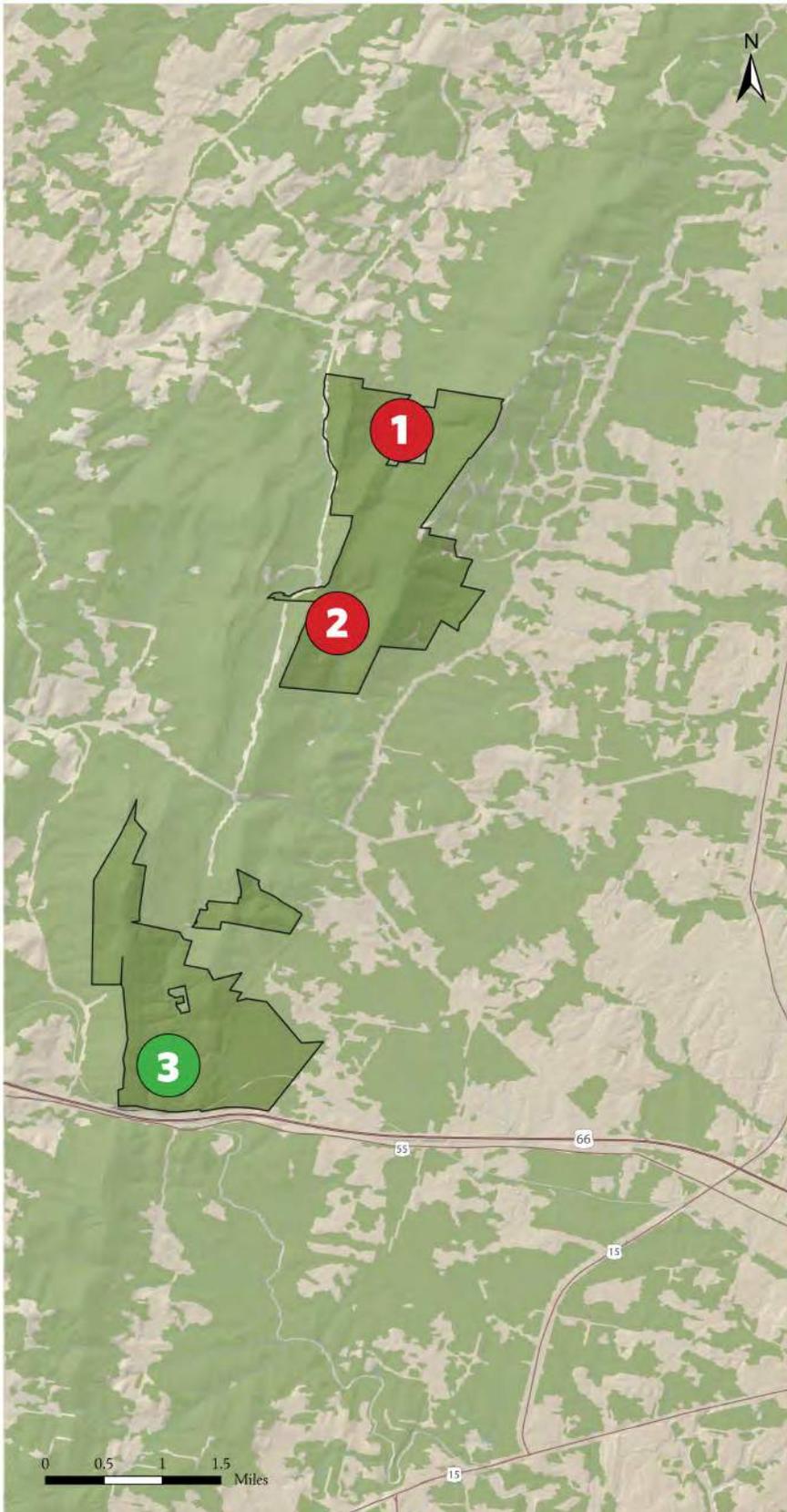


DATA DRIVEN



OUTREACH FOCUSED





SECTIONS OF THE PRESERVE

1 RESTRICTED ACCESS **NORTH SECTION**

The North Section is not open to public visitation. VOF does issue access permits to educational classes, environmental groups, and researchers. Tightly managed use and visitation is critical to the long-term sustainability of this pristine and delicate section of the preserve.

2 RESTRICTED ACCESS **JACKSON HOLLOW**

Jackson Hollow is not open to public visitation. VOF does issue access permits to educational classes, environmental groups, and researchers. The site houses our Research Outpost and is home to our stream restoration area and native brook trout releases. These activities are led by VOF staff, who are working with area schools, stream experts, and Trout Unlimited's Trout-in-the-Classroom program.

3 FRI - SUN ACCESS **SOUTH SECTION**

The South Section of the preserve is open to the public Friday through Sunday year-round. It features approximately 7 miles of trails and allows visitors to explore a range of natural habitat types. Cultural ruins dot the trail system, revealing the preserve's diversely peopled past. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and loyal volunteer base kindly assist VOF in the continued maintenance of our trail system.

LETTER FROM THE PRESERVE MANAGER

Joe Villari

With the help of our community and partners, I am elated to report that together we have made significant progress in 2020 - despite COVID-19 pandemic pressures felt both globally and locally. With communities turning en masse towards the safety and restorative qualities of outdoor spaces, we had the opportunity to welcome so many friends (new and old!) to the joys and wonders of VOF's Preserve at Bull Run Mountains.

In addition to the increased appreciation and enjoyment of The Preserve's trail system, we were proud to see our Fellowship Program come to fruition. This inaugural season saw a team of early career professionals lead several unique projects that contributed to the breadth and depth of our collective knowledge related to the natural and cultural history of the Bull Run Mountains.

Special Project Fellows (Kellen Hope, Miguel Montalvo, and Annie Mickum) shone a light on the life of late Bull Run Mountains native, Jack Dawson, through photo documentation, cataloging and inventorying, and the gathering of oral histories. Meredith Hart served as our Natural Science Fellow, gathering baseline data essential to better understand our regions' unique insect biodiversity. Barinaale Dube served as our Cultural History Fellow, exploring the rich histories of the many Black and African-American families who carved out life here in, what is now, The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains. Each of these fellows served as a beacon of hope in a challenging year, and we are confident that their contributions will propel this program into a sustainable, annual part of our offerings.

Looking ahead, we are excited for everyone to have the chance to come out and meet Becky Conway, who has recently joined us as our Outreach Assistant. We will also be welcoming back 2020 Cultural History Fellow, Barinaale Dube, in a new role as our Cultural History Interpreter. With these two personable additions, we look forward to continue sharing our ever-evolving understanding of the mountains' scientific and cultural significance.

We have been carefully listening to the thoughtful input and feedback that has been provided by members of our surrounding communities these last few years. With that data, we have put together a plan to optimize The Preserve and build upon its potential as a living laboratory, open-air museum, and a critical community resource. To be executed in stages, 2021 will kick off these trail and site infrastructure improvement plans - which are discussed in greater detail within the pages of this report. We also want to extend a sincere welcome to all in our community with an interest in joining us in our work to expand and enhance the conservation of critical habitat and the spirit of our rural community. See more about this on Page 30 of this report.

Finally, it may be cliché, but it is true! None of what we do would be possible without the support of our friends, neighbors, volunteers, and partners. So, I want to take this moment to thank each-and-every one of you who came out this year to share moments with us. You make our work worth doing. I especially want to thank those who have selflessly dedicated so much of their personal time and resources in pursuit of our shared mission. You make us a community. I look forward to sharing 2021 with each of you.



Joe Villari,
Preserve Manager



MEET THE STAFF



JOE VILLARI
PRESERVE MANAGER



SUMMERS CLEARY
PRESERVE SPECIALIST

Part-time Staff Joining us in 2021



BARINAALE DUBE
CULTURAL HISTORY
INTERPRETER



BECKY CONWAY
OUTREACH ASSISTANT

ABOUT VIRGINIA OUTDOORS FOUNDATION



The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) was created in 1966 by Virginia legislature "to promote the preservation of open-space lands and to encourage private gifts of money, securities, land or other property to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, scientific, open-space and recreational areas of the Commonwealth."

VOF acquired its first parcels in the Bull Run Mountains in 1979. Today, it owns and manages 2,350 acres spread across three sections: the North Section, the South Section, and Jackson Hollow. In 2002, the entire property was designated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as a Natural Area Preserve, dedicated to protecting the unique natural and cultural resources found here.



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Natural Science Fellow, Meredith Hart, displays her first specimens collected - photo by Summers Cleary

VOF's Inaugural Fellowship Program

VOF's Fellowship Program was developed to provide early career professionals with the opportunity to gain experience co-developing and executing a research project in their chosen interest area. While providing key early career opportunities, this program also helps the Preserve fill areas of specialized expertise and build internal capacity in the arenas of scientific and historical research, program development, multimedia, and/or other special projects that otherwise may not be possible with permanent, full-time staff.

This season, the Preserve was elated to hire an amazing team of fellows:

Barinaale Dube, Cultural History Fellow

Meredith Hart, Natural Science Fellow

Miguel Montalvo, Special Project Fellow

Kellen Hope, Special Project Fellow

Annie Mickum, Folk History Intern

From top to bottom: Barinaale Dube, Cultural History Fellow, during one of her *Black and African American History of the Preserve* guided hikes.

Meredith Hart, Natural Science Fellow, using a net to survey for insects in the sediment of Catlett's Branch.

Kellen Hope and Miguel Montalvo take a pause during work to photograph a rough green snake (*Opheodrys aestivus*).
Photos by Joe Villari





Barinaale Dube, Your Cultural History Fellow

Barinaale Dube is a current junior at Howard University where she is studying Economics, Classics, and Africana Studies. Her considerable skills and experiences in the outdoor world, and her studies in teaching history through storytelling, equip her with essential tools for researching the cultural history of the Preserve.

Barinaale has focused on researching the history and stories of Black individuals and families who settled and shaped the landscape of what is now the Preserve. Her research has focused on three patriarchs and their families; Hampton Cole, the Corum family, and the Robinson family.

Barinaale presented her research to the public through a video-series, blog posts, and a Fellowship Report. Her work is helping forward the Preserve's pursuit to create a more inclusive environment through our trails, research, education, and outreach. Through a combination of preliminary archeological work, scouring through census, marriage, birth and death records, and talking with the descendants of the mountain's families, Barinaale has begun to tell the story of the Preserve's diversely peopled past. Not only are we uncovering the narratives of the Black and African-American families here in the Bull Run Mountains, but we will be working to embed these stories into the long-lasting legacy of the Preserve.

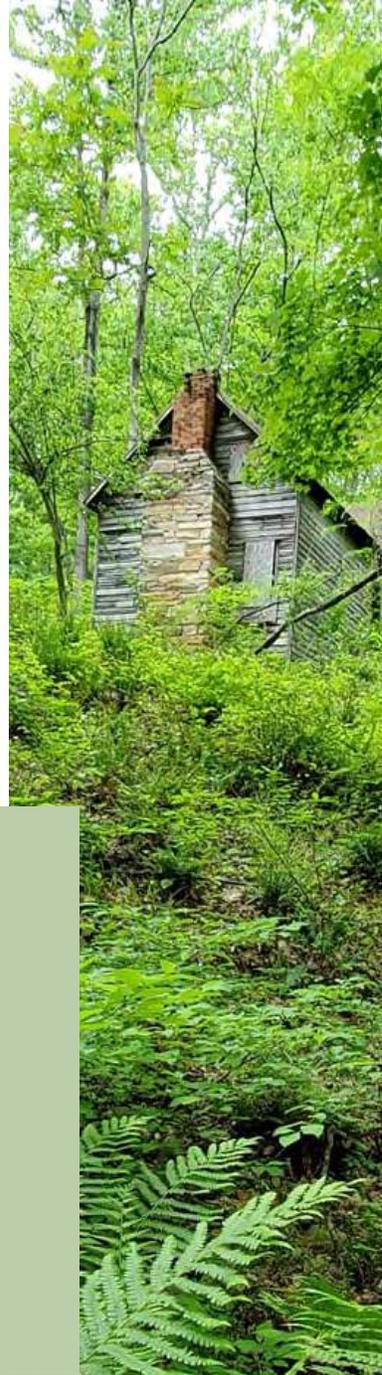
We are excited to announce that Barinaale will be returning in 2021 as our Cultural History Interpreter!



Barinaale pauses for a smile inside the Lower Corum House during an architectural survey - photo by Summers Cleary

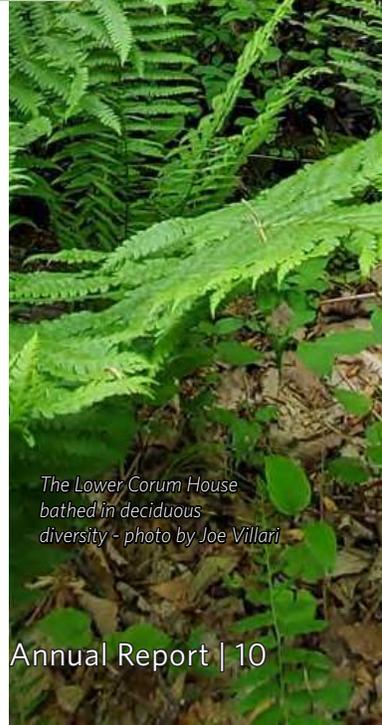


From left to right: Volunteer Archeologist Patrick O'Neill, VOF Deputy Director Leslie Grayson, and Barinaale Dube pause for a smile during field work at the Upper Corum House - photo by Joe Villari



Barinaale worked tirelessly to uncover the life histories of **3 families**, led **6 guided** hikes on the Black and African American History of the Preserve, and collaborated with partners such as the **Afro-American Historical Association**, and **The Archeological Society of Virginia**

The Afro-American Historical Association was an invaluable resource for Barinaale during her fellowship - photo by Joe Villari



The Lower Corum House bathed in deciduous diversity - photo by Joe Villari

Meredith Hart, Your Natural Science Fellow

Meredith Hart is a current junior at George Mason University studying environmental science with a concentration in wildlife studies, and a minor in global health. Meredith joined the VOF Preserve team with a project already in mind. Starting in June, she studied the aquatic and terrestrial insect biodiversity of the Preserve. Her project encompassed intensive field work that employed multiple trapping methodologies, identification, and analyses.



Meredith uses a net to skim the surface of Catharpin Creek at one of her aquatic trap sites - photo by Summers Cleary

Meredith has presented her findings to the public throughout her field work through blog posts, social media posts, and a Fellowship Report. An entire list of specimens collected, as well as the physical specimens themselves, will be housed within the Preserve's research collections and be utilized in future scientific inquiry.

Meredith's study serves as a foundation to support further inquiries into the biodiversity of the Preserve.

Her project is planned to be submitted to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal - further showcasing the Preserve's scientific and experiential importance.

5

different trapping
methods used

25

trap sites
throughout
study area

84

different insect
families identified

2,367

total
specimens
collected



An ebony jewelwing (*Calopteryx maculata*) found in Jackson Hollow - photo by Meredith Hart



Miguel Montalvo and Kellen Hope, Your Special Project Fellows

Miguel Montalvo is a contractor for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, working in marketing and audience data. Miguel brought his esteemed talents to photo-document the home and contents of Jack Dawson, a Bull Run Mountains beloved resident.

Kellen Hope, Smithsonian Institution, National Air and Space Museum's Collections Care and Preservation Fund Contractor, also joined as a Special Project Fellow. Kellen brought her museum expertise and a keen eye to lead us through the cataloging of Jack Dawson's home and its contents.

Kellen and Miguel have worked together to document and describe the Jack Dawson homesite. Miguel's work behind the camera provided excellent photos that documented the home's contents, as well as evocative photographs that breathed life back into the site.

Kellen diligently documented every single item within and outside Jack's house, providing a detailed list of items that made up a lifetime in the mountains. Through these efforts, the fellows enabled the creation of a report that brings to life the story of Jack Dawson and his place within the Bull Run Mountains.





Annie Mickum, Your Folk History Intern

Annie Mickum, a native of The Plains, joined the Preserve team as our Folk History Intern. She focused on capturing oral histories and local information that created a community-painted portrait of the life and spirit of iconic mountain figure, Jack Dawson.

Annie brought skills and expertise from her recent degree in Culture and Media Studies at the New School in New York City. She received not leaks, but floods of information from those who knew Jack Dawson during his lifetime. Through a series of interviews, Annie began to weave a narrative of Jack Dawson and the unique life he lived in the mountains.



Jack Dawson, photographed outside of his home - photo by Dr. Susan Leopold

The Jack Dawson project was a collaboration with a partner organization, focused on capturing the life and spirit of Jack Dawson through photo documentation, cataloging, and oral histories. Jack Dawson was an iconic mountain character, known and beloved by many living in the mountains. He lived on a property that now borders the Preserve with his dog, living a lifestyle closer to that of someone in the 1800s rather than the early 2000s. Up until his passing in 2011, Jack Dawson lived in his family home, a gathering place for many in the community.

Building upon Dr. Susan Leopold's 2011 doctoral thesis, *Dormant Ethnobotany: A Case Study of Decline in Regional Plant Knowledge in the Bull Run Mountains of Virginia*, Annie's work has increased partnerships and relationships with members of the Bull Run Mountains and surrounding communities. She has played a key role in our partner project documenting the life of Jack Dawson.





EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

*Brook trout fry (Salvelinus fontinalis)
waiting to be released into Catharpin Creek
- photo by Joe Villari*



TROUT REINTRODUCTION

Despite the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully worked with 7 public schools to reintroduce a total of 486 brook trout fry in the spring of 2020. Our participating students, ranging from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade, raise trout fry in their classrooms and release them into the Preserve. We have released nearly 1,000 brook trout fry since we began these efforts in 2017. Once established, this will be the closest naturally thriving brook trout population to Washington D.C.

Lorien Wood School teachers and students release their trout fry into Catharpin Creek - photo by Redmond Manierre

FELLOWSHIP HIKES

Cultural History Fellow, Barinaale Dube, and Natural Science Fellow, Meredith Hart, shared the research they conducted over this year with the public through several guided hikes.

Barinaale took hikers to three different sites on the Preserve tied to three families she researched over the summer, recounting their life histories.

Meredith brought hikers through the Preserve, teaching them insect sampling techniques and information on the insect biodiversity of the Preserve.

Meredith Hart, assisted by Summers Cleary, gives participants some hands-on experience with sweep net trapping - photo by Joe Villari



STREAM RESTORATION

Our brook trout reintroductions are paired with an active stream monitoring and restoration program. As a result, area students have cleared over a quarter mile of invasive plants from critical riparian buffers and planted over 20 black willow (*Salix nigra*) saplings in their place.

Funding for this project was obtained through a nearly \$4,000 Chesapeake Bay Fund grant awarded to a James Madison High School biology teacher, Dick Gongaware, partnering with the Preserve for restoration efforts.

James Madison HS students plant black willow saplings and remove invasive species in the floodplain of Catharpin Creek - photo by Joe Villari





THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY BIOBLITZ

The Preserve serves as an official science partner to many of Virginia's research universities departments and programs, including the George Mason University's (GMU) Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS). Our Preserve Manager, Joe, actually serves as the TWS Liaison for this group. This year, the Preserve participated as a key survey site during the 3-month national TWS Bioblitz competition on iNaturalist. Our student chapter ranked 1st and 3rd in the "Most Species" and "Most Research-Grade Observations" categories, respectively.

Joe Villari pauses with a freshly netted dragonfly during bioblitz field work - photo by Callie Broaddus

STREAM MONITORING

Thomas Jefferson High School students have conducted stream monitoring survey work in the Preserve's Jackson Hollow section for the past two years. While the COVID-19 pandemic put a pause to their field work, the students were able to make several visits this year to record stream characteristics and conduct macroinvertebrate surveys. This monitoring work provides hands-on research work for high school students, and gives the Preserve invaluable information about one of its streams and surrounding ecosystems.

Thomas Jefferson HS students, with the aid of VOF staff, conduct macroinvertebrate surveys in Catharpin Creek while their teacher, Dr. Shawn Stickler, identifies specimens - photo by Joe Villari



GUIDED HIKES

Preserve staff, continuing our guided hike series, hosted the 2nd Annual Cemetery Night Hikes on the South Section. These October night hikes took visitors through the darkened preserve, educating them on our native creatures of the night, macabre local lore, natural history facts, and the various historical burial practices that have been documented within the Bull Run Mountains. These hikes offer a new interface with the Preserve and the history it holds.

Cemetery Night Hike participants take a look at the headstone of William Dawson under the glow of headlamps - photo by Joe Villari





VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

*Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC)
Co-District Manager, Mike Custodio, takes
a break after sawing through a downed tree
- photo by Summers Cleary*

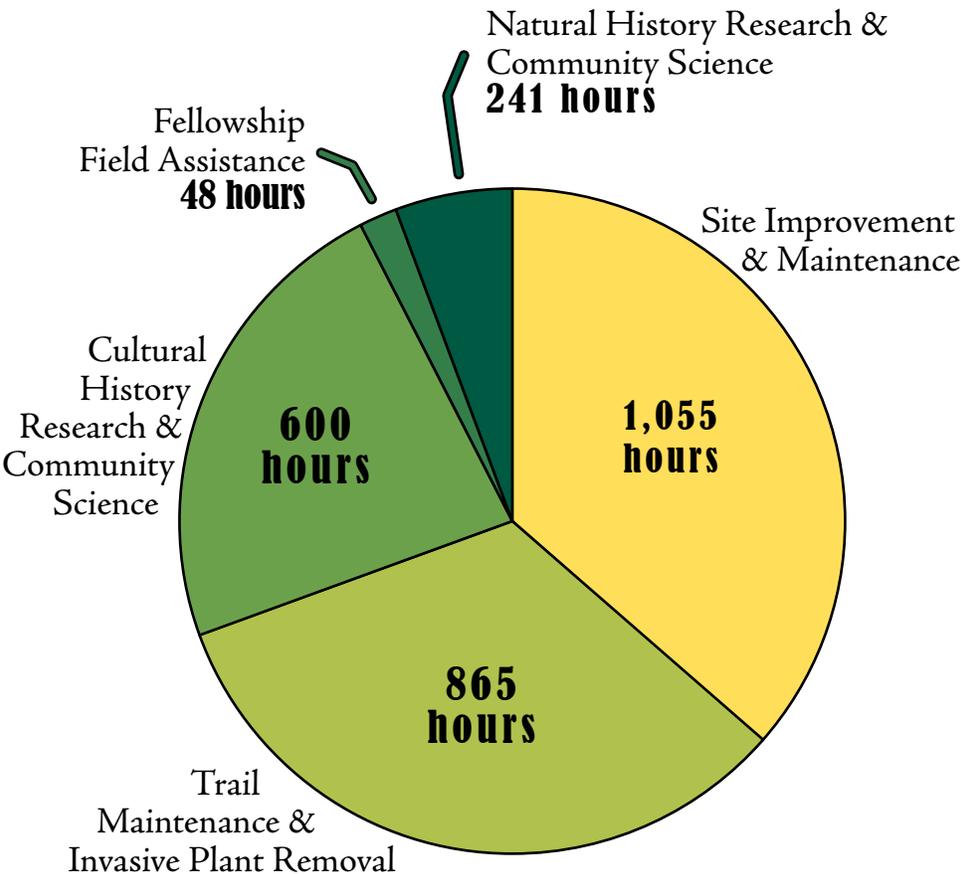
Volunteer Program

The Preserve is a multifaceted project, with a number of activities happening at any one time. Without the invaluable contributions of our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to come close to completing the breadth and depth of the work that we do.

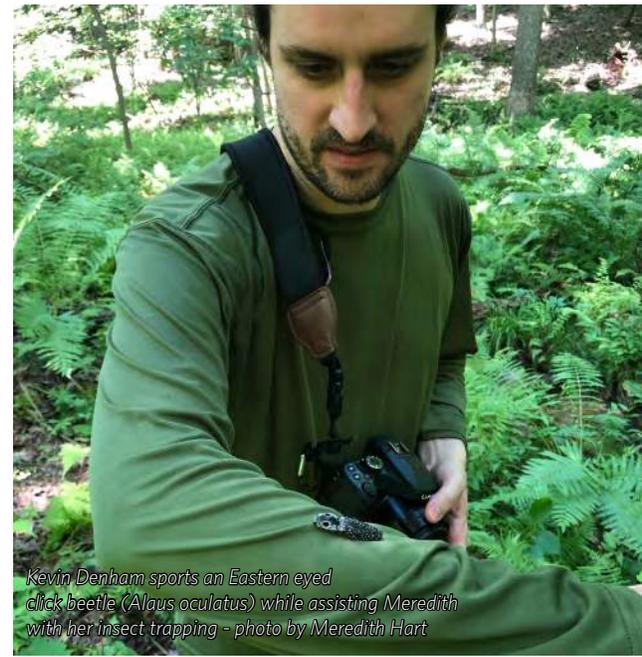
This year, volunteers contributed significant hours to trail maintenance, invasive species removal, natural and cultural history research, community science, field assistance for our fellows, and many other projects.

2,809 *volunteer hours in 2020*

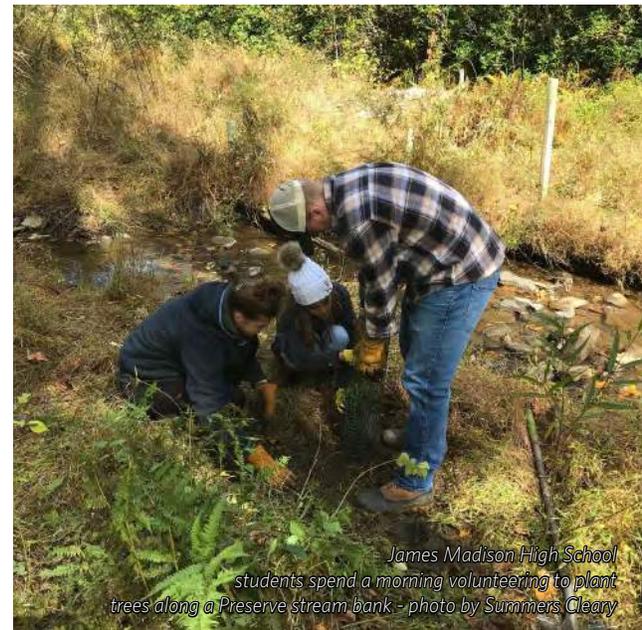
(For reference, 2,080 hours is what a single, 40hr-a-week employee works in a year!)



The Preserve trail maintenance crew after a monthly trail workday - photo by Kevin Denham



Kevin Denham sports an Eastern eyed click beetle (*Alaus oculatus*) while assisting Meredith with her insect trapping - photo by Meredith Hart



James Madison High School students spend a morning volunteering to plant trees along a Preserve stream bank - photo by Summers Cleary



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

An eastern Hercules beetle (Dynastes tityus) - photo by Michael Carr



DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES

This past year, Preserve staff were able to integrate a critical component into our Cultural History work: meeting our descendant communities related to the Bull Run area. Specifically, preserve staff had the honor of taking Feagan descendants to the recently re-discovered Feagan Cemetery. We also had the chance to listen and collect firsthand accounts of what it was like to grow up in the mountains during the mid-to-late 1900s from members of the Robinson/Corum family. While we uncover our history, we must consider how it is best represented. By including our descendant communities in the conversation, we can give the closest representative voice and respect to our families as they are woven into the Preserve's historical narrative.

Feagan family members gather at the Feagan cemetery - photo by Matt Scolforo

PALEONTOLOGY

The Preserve has excitedly hosted Virginia Tech PhD candidate, Ben Kligman, throughout the 2019 and 2020 field seasons as he researches into the paleontology of Triassic/Jurassic aged rock exposures on the Preserve. These exposures are rarely found on accessible properties along the east coast and the subject has never been intensively studied; the primary paper on the subject was published in 1949. This work, carefully monitored and co-led by VOF staff, will aid in providing Preserve visitors, young and old, with a complete deep time understanding of the Preserve.

Ben Kligman is assisted by Summers Cleary at one of his study sites - photo by Joe Villari



CEMETERY MAPPING

Howard Thompson, local resident of the Bull Run Mountains, spent much of his time in the early 2000s walking transects through the mountains, mapping cultural sites. Mr. Thompson mapped a total of 66 cemeteries, recording their location and pertinent information on a map for VOF and the Piedmont Environmental Council.

This year, VOF staff have relied on Mr. Thompson's work as a key guide in their cultural history work, and have had the pleasure of joining Mr. Thompson in the field. Staff discovered a new cemetery within the bounds of the Preserve, adding to the wealth of information Mr. Thompson started.

Summers Cleary joins Howard Thompson at a cemetery previously unknown to Preserve staff - photo by Joe Villari

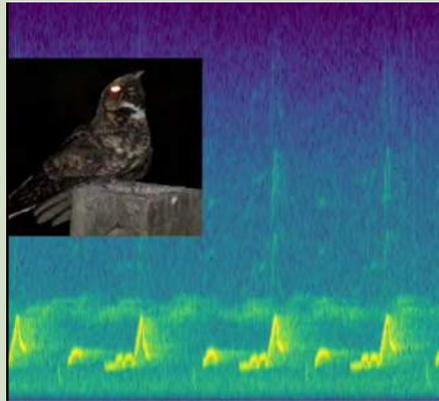


Research Highlights

ARCHEOLOGY

Patrick O’Neill has been working with staff as the Preserve’s Volunteer Archeologist for three years. It is an understatement to say that Patrick is a powerhouse of archeological research and fieldwork. Patrick has put in over 500 hours of work in 2020 alone, uncovering the peopled past of the Preserve. He has been researching land patents, genealogical and census records, conducting cemetery mapping along with the Archeological Society of Virginia, and analyzing historic aerial imagery and maps to get a sense of the activity on the Preserve’s past landscape. Patrick has helped staff tie families and life histories to most of the Preserve’s cultural sites on the South Section of the Preserve, and many in the North Section. With Patrick’s contributions, we can now add stories to our interpretations of each cultural site.

Patrick O’Neill at the Lower Corum House - photo by Joe Villari



*A visualization of the call of the Eastern whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*) - still from a video by Jacob Saucier*

Jacob Saucier recording in the field - photo by Ian Realo

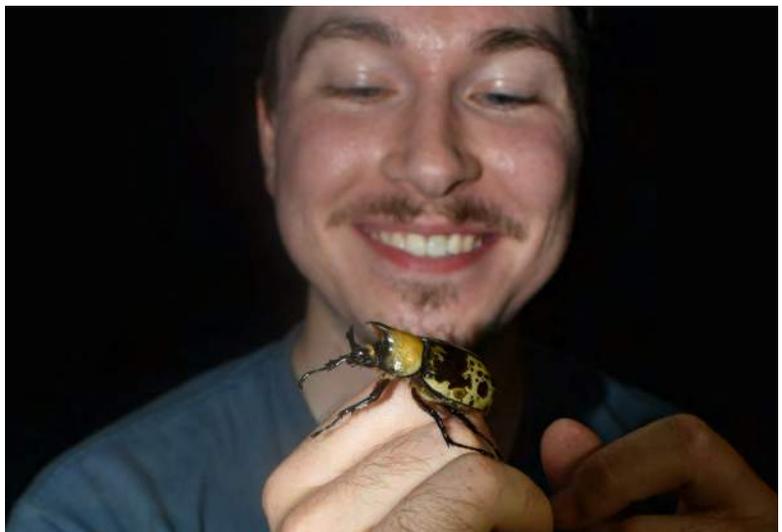
ORNITHOLOGY

Smithsonian Institution Ornithologist, Jacob Saucier, has been stationing himself out at the Preserve’s Research Outpost to assist us in building a sound library documenting the Preserve’s native birds and amphibians. Throughout the year, Jacob has armed himself with recording equipment, exploring the Preserve and recording our fauna. Jacob’s audio library is a unique tool to help us identify species that are inhabiting the Preserve, and creates a wonderful educational tool, allowing visitors to listen to fauna of the Preserve – fauna they may very well hear in their own backyards!

ENTOMOLOGY

Research Associate and George Mason University undergraduate, Michael Carr, has been looking into the “big beetles” of the Preserve, such as the Hercules and stag beetles. Through a variety of survey techniques, including UV blacklighting and hand collection, Michael has created and curated a growing comparative collection of insects for future research and community outreach programs at the preserve. Michael has also assisted the preserve in developing and managing the community science-driven iNaturalist project, which currently includes over 3,900 observations and 650 “research-grade” species.

*Michael Carr holding one of his study subjects, an eastern Hercules beetle (*Dynastes tityus*) - photo by Kellen Hope*





HERPETOLOGY

Marty Martin has been conducting research into the mountain's Timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) population for decades. We have been privileged to host this herpetological legend for many years and utilize his invaluable data to guide our management efforts. This ongoing partnership is critical as The Preserve supports the easternmost population of timber rattlesnakes, a species in overall population decline. Thanks to Marty's work, we are able to track the progress and health of our timber rattlesnakes to ensure the continued success of their populations.

Marty Martin observing a timber rattlesnake. Inset shows detail of this snake - photos by Joe Villari

VEGETATION HEALTH STUDY

Erin Bodie is a current graduate student at Northeastern University working on her Masters in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with a focus on remote sensing. This year, Erin conducted a vegetation health analysis of the Preserve from 2019 – 2020. Erin analyzed the Preserve and its surrounding areas with aerial imagery, calculating the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) for both years - an indicator used to assess the amount of healthy, live green vegetation. Erin analyzed the change in the amount of healthy green vegetation (HGV) between the two years, and found a marked increase. Larger-scale studies like this are immensely useful for overall Preserve management and serve as indicators to the impacts of our management strategies.



Erin's NDVI output for 2020; dark green shows increase in HGV

Erin Bodie, enjoying a snowy morning - photo by Erin Bodie



NEW PARCELS, SHARED HISTORY

We are excited to announce that our Preserve grew by 65 acres this year. Ten of those acres were thanks to a Preservation Trust Fund grant and the goodwill of the Corum Family descendants. This parcel is a critical acquisition that will permanently protect an integral part of Bull Run Mountains' African-American history. In 2021, we plan on continuing work to acquire critical parcels and piece together the story of the diverse communities that historically called the Preserve home.

Corum Family Descendants, from left to right: Cheryl Washington, Ann Washington, and Charles Washington Jr. - photo by Joe Villari



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

South Section public access trailhead covered in fresh snow - photo by Joe Villari

Event Highlights



Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) joined Preserve Staff and Volunteers to conduct an architectural survey of the lower Corum House.

DHR Architectural Historian, Aubrey Von Lindern, brought her expertise to the Preserve to give a cursory look at the lower Corum House to get a rough idea of when the house may have been constructed. Aubrey educated our crew on some indicators of the age of the structure as we carefully explored the inside of the house. This exploration marks the first official survey of the Corum House interior, and the beginning of a partnership with DHR that will continue to benefit our research into the Preserve's cultural history.

Lower Corum House - photo by Joe Villari

Preserve staff present cultural history and diversity work at the Small Museum Association Conference in College Park, Maryland.

VOF Preserve staff, Joe Villari and Summers Cleary, presented progress on our ongoing cultural history project at the Small Museum Association (SMA) conference focused on "Museums as Catalysts of Social Change" which honored the 100th anniversary of the women's suffrage movement. Their 60-minute talk was titled "Making History Our-story: An On-going Case Study from an Open-air Museum". It showcased VOF's work at the Preserve, and how we are making the most out of our publicly accessible hiking trails, interpretive signage, and ArcGIS StoryMaps to allow visitors to explore the cultural narrative of mountain life in a non-traditional museum setting.

Presentation room at the SMA conference - photo by Joe Villari



Mountainside Montessori Adolescent Class visits the Preserve, mapping the Dawson Cemetery and contributing to the greater understanding of our cultural history.

Preserve staff hosted Mountainside Montessori School adolescent class, led by their instructors Theo Grayson and Angus Goldberg, on a series of field visits to the Preserve's South Section Dawson Cemetery. Their field visits began the students' research into the histories of people who called the mountain home and have been laid to rest here.

While a great exercise into research methods for the students, their work will provide critical information and fall into our larger long-term cultural history project. The students are working to uncover the identities of those buried in the cemeteries, and information on their life histories within the mountains.

Mountainside Montessori students are pictured here, documenting the Dawson Cemetery; taking pictures of gravestones, noting dates and making maps of each cemetery for spatial reference - photo by Joe Villari



Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) returns to the Preserve for their Reading the Landscape course.

Sir Peter Crane, President of OSGF, and ecologist Michael Gaige, taught their second Reading the Landscape course, visiting the Preserve's North Section for one of the two field days. Participants hiked through the North Section, learning methods of observation and deduction to investigate historic landscape alterations and uses. The Preserve gave students the opportunity to study a re-forested landscape with ample signs of past cultivation and human use in what would be a trying environment.

Sir Peter Crane speaks during the Preserve field day - photo by Joe Villari





THE PRESERVE as a community resource

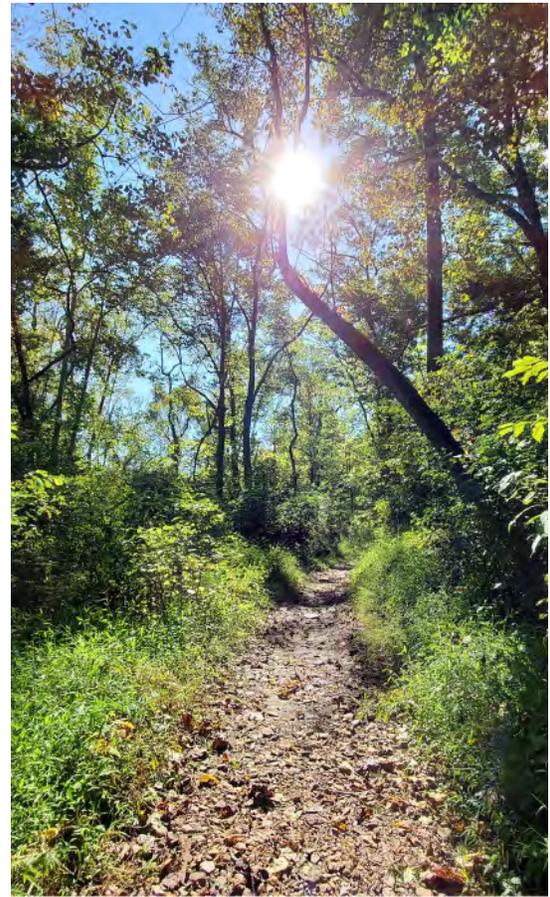
Hikers explore around the outside of the Lower Corum House during a guided hike - photo by Summers Cleary

Upcoming Improvements in 2021!

We are committed to optimizing the experience that our trail system provides the communities we serve - and we need your input. Please join us this Spring (specific date TBA) for an online community presentation on these upcoming improvement plans and help us make The Preserve the best possible community resource.

We will be moving our trailhead and parking lot in 2021 to improve safety and accessibility, and create a more inclusive environment for all visitors. The map below shows our short move up Beverley Mill Drive. With this move, we plan to bring you new and enhanced sustainable trails, increasing the mileage you can hike at the Preserve. In addition to these improvements, we will be able to consider adding proper bathroom facilities at the new trailhead, or a small outdoor classroom to provide a designated space for all ages to come and learn about the natural and cultural history of these mountains.

For information on these upcoming improvement plans and public input session, follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and check our website.



Sunshine on the Fern Hollow Trail -
Photo by Joe Villari



Map displays planned trailhead & parking lot move 0.4 miles up Beverley Mill Drive
Map by Summers Cleary

A Physical Connection: Can We Preserve the Core of Our Community?

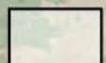
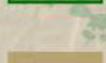


Aldie

50

Thoroughfare Gap

66

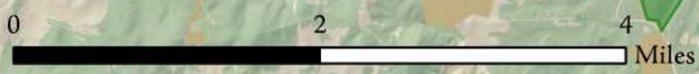
-  Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve
-  Bull Run Mountains Special Project Area
-  Land under VOF Easement
-  Land under Local Govt. or Private Land Trust Easement
-  Land under Other State Protection

We all know VOF's Preserve as a living laboratory and open-air museum. But it also serves as a critical core and corridor that protects threatened wildlife habitat and the rugged spirit of our Northern Virginia mountain community. While the Preserve is an impressive 2,350 acres, it is just the conservation spine of a larger body. The fate of the Bull Run Mountains is one collectively shared by our entire community.

The Bull Run Mountains Special Project Area covers 12,800 acres. Roughly 5,000 acres within this area are protected under VOF Conservation Easement. About 700 acres are protected by local government or private Land Trust Easements.

The last critical component of this area is not quite captured by this visualization, as it is all of you - visitors and neighbors, alike. We, together, are collective managers of an impressive regional resource. How each person approaches their own interactions with, or management of, this ecosystem significantly contributes to the overall conservation of this mountain range. With this goal in mind, we are looking to our community for ways we can work together to physically connect the North and South Sections of The Preserve and collectively optimize the wild spirit of this mountain range.

Map created by Summers Cleary





Join the Movement





Pink lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) - photo by Callie Broaddus

Get in the know!

Become a Preserve insider now by following us on Instagram, Facebook and Meetup!



fb.me/bullrunmountains



[@bullrunmountains](https://www.instagram.com/bullrunmountains)



**Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve
Guided Hikes Group
&
Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve
Volunteers**



Photo by Joe Villari



WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

There are many ways to contribute to the Preserve, and we welcome and encourage each and every avenue!

Volunteering

Without the critical support of our volunteers, we would not be able to complete any of the projects we embark upon. Volunteers assist with Preserve initiatives from trail maintenance to geological research.

Follow us on Social Media

Stay tuned to Preserve updates by following us on our **Facebook, Instagram, Meetup and Blog** pages. Keeping up with our social media pages enables our community to stay aware of day-to-day activities, upcoming public programs, and new discoveries made by staff, volunteers, research associates, and visitors.

Community Science Participation

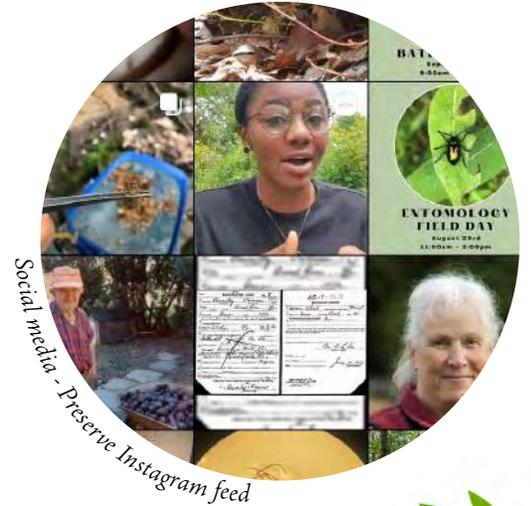
While hiking at the Preserve, you can contribute to our knowledge and exploration of our unique resources through ongoing Community Science Projects such as our **iNaturalist project: The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains**.

Donations

Donations in kind are used to support our critical trail maintenance and habitat stewardship activities, as well as support our research and public programming endeavors. Find out more at <https://www.vof.org/support/>



Trail maintenance



Social media - Preserve Instagram feed



iNaturalist observation by Sarah Causey



Public programming

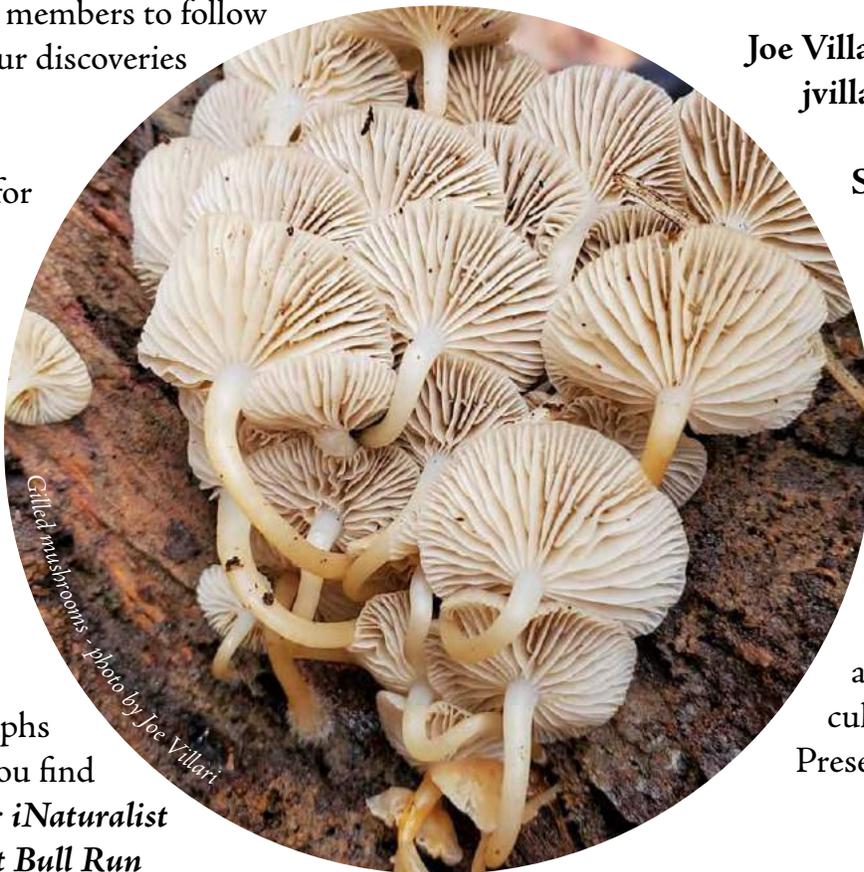
SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOG, AND MAILING LIST

The easiest way to stay involved with day-to-day events and discoveries at the Preserve is to follow us on our social media and keep up with our blog posts.

All of our public events, discoveries, and important updates about the Preserve are posted to our **Meetup, Instagram, Facebook, and Blog** pages. We encourage each of our community members to follow our pages, and share your discoveries at the Preserve with us.

We are always looking for visitor contributions.

You can contribute to biodiversity monitoring and management initiatives through our ongoing Community Science Projects. As you hike through the Preserve, take photographs of the flora and fauna you find and upload them to our *iNaturalist Project: The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains*. Adding observations to this project is an easy way to broaden your naturalist identification skills, and help us to learn the breadth of biodiversity we have in the Preserve.



Joe Villari - Preserve Manager
jvillari@vof.org

Summers Cleary - Preserve Specialist
scleary@vof.org

By joining our outreach and communication avenues, you are contributing to the community environment we are working to cultivate at the Preserve.

Find our pages in these locations:

Website & Blog: www.bullrunmountains.org

Instagram: www.instagram.com/bullrunmountains
or @bullrunmountains

Facebook: fb.me/bullrunmountains

Meetup: search for "Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve Guided Hikes Group" & "Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve Volunteers"



Summer views in the Preserve - photo by Miguel Montalvo



Looking up into the canopy - photo by Joe Villari

Stronger Together!

We realize that 2020 was a challenging year for all and many are struggling financially.

If anything, this past year has highlighted the vital importance of publicly accessible outdoor spaces and the value of a united community. With that in mind, we invite everyone to join us in making the most out of the Preserve as a community Resource.

Your contributions and support (in whatever form it may come) help us ensure our long-term ability to offer sustained public access and to continue developing our K-12 educational initiatives, free public programs, and critical historical and ecological research.

Thank you for your Support!



PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

*Bird's nest fungi (Family Nidulariaceae) grow on a red cedar
(Juniperus virginiana) - photo by Joe Villari*

DCR Natural Heritage Program

The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains is one of 65 Natural Area Preserves across the entire State. VOF staff work closely with the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program (DCR-DNH) to properly manage the Preserve at Bull Run Mountains to protect its unique natural and cultural resources in perpetuity.

Michael Lott, DCR-DNH's Northern Region Steward & Regional Supervisor, and Gary Fleming, DCR-DNH's Vegetation Ecologist, have been integral to VOF's work at the Preserve. Gary Fleming laid the foundational ecological profile for the Preserve, justifying the need for the state's highest level of protection. Michael Lott, manager of our sister Preserve Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve, provides crucial and constant support as our DCR advisor.

The partnership between VOF and DCR, as well as the invaluable assistance from Michael Lott and Gary Fleming, have allowed VOF's Preserve at Bull Run Mountains to become the ecological gem that we all know and love. To learn more about DCR-DNH's work and how you might be able to support them, please visit <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/>



Top: Gary Fleming during field work - photo by Irv Wilson
Bottom: Michael Lott, and DCR-DNH Northern Operations Steward James Watling, during a visit to the Preserve - photo by Joe Villari



Blue Ridge Wildlife Center

We would like to thank the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center (BRWC) as they have helped us treat a variety of sick and injured Bull Run Preserve inhabitants so they could be safely released.

BRWC has helped us with six box turtles, two hawks, one raven, and one opossum. We are so lucky to have BRWC serving the wildlife in our region. Please consider supporting BRWC and help them continue to give our wildlife a second chance.

To learn more about BRWC's work and how you might be able to support them, please visit <https://www.blueridgewildlifectr.org/>

Dopey the Owl, ambassador animal at BRWC, supervises the visitor center - photo by Joe Villari

Afro-American Historical Association



Barinaale Dube, AAHA Director Karen Hughes White, and Patrick O'Neill gathered at AAHA - photo by Joe Villari

The Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County (AAHA) is located in the nearby town of The Plains, Virginia. The AAHA serves as an unparalleled archive and community resource that permanently preserves the rich history of Fauquier County's Black residents and makes it available to researchers, families, and the greater public. In addition, the AAHA hosts regular community events and has a 4,269 square foot museum that holds 1,634 artifacts on the lower level of its building.

In 2020, the AAHA was instrumental in supporting the work of our Cultural History Fellow, Barinaale Dube. Further thanks are due to the AAHA's Founder and President, Karen Hughes White, who has been an irreplaceable partner in the pursuit of the Preserve's "Making History, Our-story" initiative by generously providing us with historical expertise, guidance, and support related to the histories of several family lineages of interest. To learn more about AAHA's work and how you might be able to support them, please visit <https://www.aahafauquier.org/>

Archeological Society of Virginia

The Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) has joined forces with VOF and Virginia's Department of Historic Resources to formally survey the Preserve's regionally important, but previously understudied, homestead and cemetery sites. Since this partnership was established in 2019, ASV's Northern Virginia Chapter President and archeological powerhouse, Patrick O'Neill, has helped us piece together the diverse lives of those who historically called, what is now the Preserve, home. Patrick and our Preserve Manager, Joe Villari, look forward to hosting several more public archeology days where we will invite folks out to learn directly from trained archeologists and field scientists, as soon as we can safely hold larger work groups again. Countless unexpected and unprecedented discoveries have been made since 2019, both in the field and within the archives. With ASV's continued support, there is little doubt that we have just barely scratched the surface - and so many more exciting discoveries await us in 2021. To learn more about ASV's work and how you might be able to support them, please visit <https://www.virginiaarcheology.org/>



Quartz projectile point found on the Preserve by one of our volunteers, now part of our First Nations archeological collections - photo by Joe Villari



CLOSING REMARKS

*Preserve cultural history ruins blanketed in snow -
photo by Redmond Manierre*



Photo by Miguel Montalvo

a note from...

Leslie Grayson, VOF Deputy Director

When the Virginia Outdoors Foundation embraced the Bull Run Mountains project in the late 1970s it was a bold move for the small fledgling state foundation to take on such a complex and ambitious challenge. Decades later the ongoing work of conservation, protection, and discovery is bearing fruit in unimagined ways. The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains is a natural and cultural treasure, it is a refuge, a classroom, a research site, and a place to refresh our humanity.

I have no doubt that future generations will applaud the work done to ensure that this extraordinary place is here to experience and that the significance of conserving these mountains will deepen over time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie H. Grayson".

Leslie Grayson
Deputy Director



Hungry Run Creek, bordered by ferns - photo by Joe Villari

Closing Remarks

a note from...

Brett Glymph, VOF Executive Director

Protect the quality of Virginia's outdoors and make its resources available to its people.

Vision statement from the VOF Strategic Plan 2019-2023

VOF found its vision statement by rediscovering words from the 1965 document "Virginia's Common Wealth" produced for the General Assembly by the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission. Recommendations from this seminal study led to the creation of VOF, the Virginia Outdoors Plan, and many of today's successful natural and cultural resource programs and agencies. The desire to protect and provide access to Virginia's open spaces is what drives our work. Now, more than ever, our citizens need access to open space. VOF has responded with increased focus on meeting this need. We have recently created grant programs to support projects that secure quality open spaces for those that need it most. We are working hard to enhance and share the few properties we own with the public. The Preserve at Bull Run Mountains is our flagship property and I invite you to experience its wonder. 2021 is a new year full of hope and inspiration and I hope that you get out and enjoy the outdoors.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett C. Glymph". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brett Glymph
Executive Director



The North Section Stone House enveloped in fog - photo by Joe Villari

Special Thanks To

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Afro-American Historical Association
Archeological Society of Virginia
Blue Ridge Wildlife Center
Bull Run Mountains Conservancy
Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund
Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Natural Heritage
Department of Historic Resources
Fauquier County Government
George Mason University
GMU TWS Student Chapter
Howard University
Leopold's Preserve and the
White Hall Farm Foundation
Norfolk Southern
Oak Spring Garden Foundation
Outdoor Afro
Piedmont Environmental Council
Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
Prince William County Government
Reserva: The Youth Land Trust
Roland Farms
Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center (RELIC)
Sacharuna Foundation
Smithsonian Institution
The Clifton Institute
The Mycological Association of Washington, DC
Trout Unlimited
Turn the Mill Around Campaign
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
Virginia Herpetological Society
Virginia Master Naturalist
Virginia Native Plant Society
Virginia Natural History Society
Virginia Tech
Virginia Working Landscapes

K-12 PARTNERS

Deer Park Elementary School
Franklin Sherman Elementary School
George Mason High School
Gro Preschool & Natural Education Space
Hillside Elementary and Burgundy Farm
James Madison High School
Lorien Wood School
Mountainside Montessori
The Hill School of Middleburg
Thomas Jefferson High School

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Ben Kligman
Bosco Gorske
Callie Broaddus
Christina Lambacher
Chuck Hoysa
Copper Fox Distillery
David Shilton
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Michael Barreda
Michael Carr
Michael Gage
Michael Lott
Michael Hochstetler
Mike Custodio
Mike Massey, Randy Dasher, and our
entire Stewardship Committee
Our many Oral History Project interviewees
Our many generous anonymous donors
Patrick O'Neill
Phyllis Scott
Preston Pennington
Redmond Manierre
Sarah Causey
Shawn Bailey
Sonnie Cuffey
The Anastasiou Family
The Bowling Family
The Currier Family
The Feagan Family
The Ritter Family
The Washington Family
Theo Grayson
Tim Dunn
The Residents of Hungry Run
Valerie Huelsman

*Front cover | Feather of a
yellow shafted Northern flicker (Colaptes
auratus) rests on a patch of broom moss*

Photo by Joe Villari

Back cover | Thistle flowers in the rain

Photo by Miguel Montalvo

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Report designed by Summers Cleary, VOF

