



In March, renovation began on The Bluffs Restaurant's interior in preparation for its reopening this summer. *Photos by David Huff*

Your Gifts are Reopening The Bluffs Restaurant!

Plus, travel through Parkway history with a new online photo archive, enjoy two Kids in Parks activities, and learn how you made the park safer for all visitors.



A new roof is one of the many repairs your donations have made possible at The Bluffs.

Repaired and replaced fixtures will remain true to the original look of The Bluffs.
Photos by David Huff



Much-needed TLC Begins at The Bluffs

Sparta-based business, Muddy Creek, cooking up a great menu

We're looking forward to welcoming customers back to [The Bluffs](#) for homestyle cooking and good times! In March, ten years after the restaurant at Doughton Park closed, interior renovations began. The new operator, Muddy Creek Enterprises, is busy recreating and perfecting recipes for the reopening tentatively scheduled for this summer.

Muddy Creek Enterprises, owners of the Muddy Creek Café & Music Halls in Sparta and Winston-Salem, will run the restaurant under an agreement with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. This long-awaited revitalization of The Bluffs has truly been a community effort, so the Foundation is thrilled to partner with a local business.

“On behalf of the National Park Service, we are so pleased to see this beloved area of the park come back to life,” said Parkway Superintendent J.D. Lee. “The Bluffs at Doughton Park was one of the earliest developed areas on the Parkway. This site is integral to the park’s history and will again be part of its future thanks to the support and involvement of so many.”

The Bluffs opened in 1949 and was the first of what would be only four restaurants on the Parkway. The former coffee shop closed in 2010.

During its 61 years in business, the interior of the facility remained largely unchanged. For the rehab project, new interior fixtures and design upgrades were selected to replicate the original look of the restaurant. The interior design will also follow the guidelines of the National Park Service and N.C. Historic Preservation Office. Atriax Group of Hickory, N.C., is overseeing the design and construction.

Thank you to all the donors, who together have given almost \$1 million to save this treasured place. It reminds Parkway visitors of simpler times, meals enjoyed with family, and days exploring Doughton Park. We can't wait to share a table with you again!



Renovations will include new kitchen equipment funded through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Explore the Parkway's History From Home

A fascinating trove of photographs documenting the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway is now available online. Your gifts to the Foundation allowed the National Park Service team to host an intern who organized, digitized, and prepared images, maps, and drawings for the public to access via an online gallery.

Working with the Parkway's museum curator, Kat Connelly served as the digital archives technician through an internship with the American Conservation Experience, a nonprofit organization that provides environmental service opportunities to help restore the country's public lands. She spent several months uploading more than 7,000 photographs and documents to npgallery.nps.gov, where they can be viewed and downloaded.

"The most rewarding part came from seeing the 'start to finish' documentation of the Parkway," says Connelly. "I watched time move through still images of construction progress, changes in visitors' clothing and styles of cars, landscape alterations, and increasing traffic as different spots grew in popularity."



Intern Kat Connelly made thousands of photos available.

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."

– Frank Lloyd Wright



Top: A worker stands clear of blasting at Mount Mitchell as Parkway construction begins near the peak in 1940.

Bottom: Ranger Willie McDaniel speaks with visitors at Mount Pisgah Inn in 1973.

The project will serve visitors, students, researchers, writers, educators, and park staff for decades to come. It also helped Connelly forge a path as a future steward of our national parks.

"I will take my Blue Ridge Parkway experiences—from childhood visits with my family to this recent professional opportunity—with me wherever I continue my career with the National Park Service."

View the gallery

In the digital archive, you can find photos of everything from campfire circles and picnics to the early days of construction, and much more. Visit npgallery.nps.gov/BLRI.

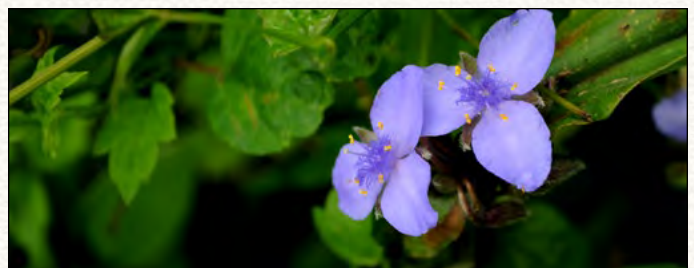


Photo by Vicki Dameron

Kids in Parks

Connecting kids and families to the outdoors



Our Kids in Parks program provides a network of hiking, biking, paddling, and disc golf trails outfitted with free activity guides for children and families. The mission behind these TRACK Trails goes beyond fun; the goals are to encourage kids to be physically active and help them build meaningful connections with nature. The adventures also help inspire the next generation of stewards, who will care for all public lands, including

the Blue Ridge Parkway. The first TRACK Trail opened at the Blue Ridge Parkway Asheville Visitor Center in 2009. Today, there are more than 200 trails across the country in national parks, forests, city green spaces, school yards, and additional locations. They are fun, free, and available to help all families stay happy and healthy.

Children can record their adventures on the website to earn prizes and plan more adventures.

e-Adventures to the Rescue

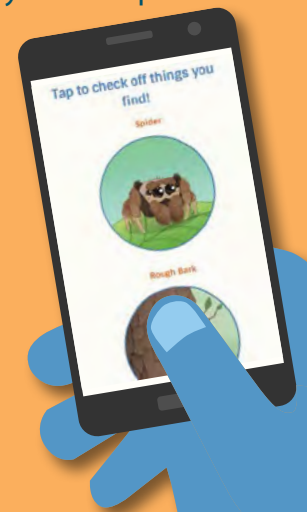
When the staff of our Kids in Parks program learned of school closings due to precautions about the coronavirus and parents struggling to find ways to entertain and educate their children at home, they shifted gears to help!

Normally, families can find Kids in Parks activity brochures at TRACK Trails across the country. The guides encourage children to truly engage with the outdoors by identifying trees and birds, viewing the forest from the perspective of animals, and searching for natural features, among other fun activities. But travel restrictions and park closings are keeping many people at home.

To keep the fun going, Kids in Parks developed e-Adventures, allowing kids and families to use their electronic devices to learn about and engage

with nature in the outdoors spaces they can visit right now, like their own backyards or open greenspaces nearby.

Plus, when the e-Adventure is complete, kids can TRACK their activity through the program's website and earn prizes designed to make their next outdoor adventure more fun!



play the
e-Adventures at
kidsinparks.com/e-adventures

TRACK Trails on the Blue Ridge Parkway

How many have you been to?



1. Asheville Visitor Center
2. Price Lake
3. Price Meml. Park Picnic Area
4. Blue Ridge Music Center
5. Mabry Mill
6. Rocky Knob Picnic Area
7. Peaks of Otter
8. James River Visitor Center

For more information about TRACK Trail locations, please visit the website:

kidsinparks.com

Bringing the Fun of Kids in Parks to You

We hear from people of all ages who enjoy the Kids in Parks program's TRACK-tivity guides, so we've included these activities for you, your children, grandchildren, a teacher, or

even a family in your neighborhood. If you can't physically share the page in the newsletter right now, you can take a picture and send it via email or text. Or you can hang on to it for an in-person adventure together in the future.

Find more TRACK-tivities at kidsinparks.com/hiking-resources



OUTDOOR ORCHESTRA

A trip outside can be like a visit to a concert hall. Listen for these unique sounds that combine to create the symphony of nature.



DRUMS



Woodpeckers hammer at trees with rhythm like a drumroll.



WINDS



Songbirds make sweet whistles like a flute.



HORNS



Crows blast out 'caws' like a blaring trumpet.



STRINGS




Crickets rub their wings to make sound like a bow on the strings of a violin.



CHOIR




Frogs croak out like a chorus on warm evenings.




Colors of Spring


Different pollinators are attracted to different color flowers. Look for pollinators as you search!
Can you find these colors?




pink or red
hummingbirds, butterflies




purple
butterflies, flies, moths



yellow
bees






white
bats, bees, beetles, moths



orange
hummingbirds, butterflies

Kids in Parks provides a network of kid-friendly hiking adventures for families to enjoy!

www.kidsinparks.com

Test Your Parkway Knowledge!

How well do you know the Blue Ridge Parkway? Take this quiz to find out

- 1) There are 26 tunnels along the length of the Parkway. How many of them are in Virginia?
 - a) 22
 - b) 16
 - c) 6
 - d) 1

- 2) Why do the Blue Ridge Mountains appear blue?
 - a) The trees reflect light from the sky, creating a blue effect
 - b) The trees release chemicals into the air, creating a blue effect
 - c) Far viewing distances reduce the amount of color your eyes can discern
 - d) All of the above

- 3) Which location marks the highest elevation on the Parkway?
 - a) Mount Mitchell
 - b) Mount Pisgah
 - c) Richland Balsam
 - d) Humpback Rocks

- 4) Which of the following artists have performed at the Blue Ridge Music Center?
 - a) Allison Krauss
 - b) Old Crow Medicine Show
 - c) Rhiannon Giddens
 - d) All of the above

- 5) Long-serving U.S. Representative Robert Doughton was instrumental in the creation of the Parkway. What was his nickname?
 - a) Roadway Robert
 - b) Farmer Bob
 - c) Blue Ridge Bob
 - d) Doughton the Driver



- 6) What two national parks does the Blue Ridge Parkway connect?
 - a) Shenandoah
 - b) Mammoth Cave
 - c) Great Smoky Mountains
 - d) Congaree

- 7) What state was the Parkway once slated to pass through?
 - a) Tennessee
 - b) West Virginia
 - c) South Carolina
 - d) Georgia

- 8) In addition to apples, Moses H. Cone planted many varieties of fruits on his estate near Blowing Rock. This included how many varieties of peaches?
 - a) 11
 - b) 7
 - c) 33
 - d) 80

How did you do? [Tag us on Facebook](#) and let us know!

Answers: 1) d 2) b 3) c - Although Mount Mitchell is higher in elevation, it's located in North Carolina's first state park just off the Parkway. 4) d 5) b - Before his political career, Doughton was a farmer in Alleghany County. 6) a, c 7) a 8) c



Your gifts funded the Parkway Communications Center, which opened in 2012.

A Safer Parkway, Thanks to You

Investment in dispatch system and communications center helps protect visitors and park

The Blue Ridge Parkway's 469 miles run through two states and 29 counties. For law enforcement rangers, ensuring the safety of millions of visitors is no small feat on an ordinary day. Now, they are seeing a large influx of people looking to find comfort in the outdoors during this difficult time.

Your generosity laid the groundwork for making this a safer time for visitors and rangers. In 2012, your donations funded the construction of a Parkway Communications Center at National Park Service headquarters in Asheville, N.C. It provided a secure, dedicated work environment and state-of-the-art radio communications network.

And just last year, your gifts funded a new Computer Automated Dispatch (CAD) system. Previously, dispatchers relied on hand-written logs and managed four to six computer programs to address any situation at hand, from a report of injured wildlife to a vehicle

accident. The new system streamlines how dispatchers assist rangers and local emergency responders with access to immediate mapping, site details, and background information. During periods such as these, when staff are even more isolated, the ability for the law enforcement staff to reliably and efficiently communicate with dispatch and with each other is even more important.

"The investment in the dispatch center and computer automated dispatch system is a tremendous gift to the park," said Alexa Viets, Chief of Resource Management and Interpretation for the Blue Ridge Parkway. "For law enforcement staff in particular, this system is critical."

The dispatch team has been able to increase efficiency by more than 50 percent, allowing each member to provide better service and more attention on each call. The project was a collaboration between two parks, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and two partner groups, the Foundation and the Friends of the Smokies, allowing both parks to install the system and collaborate in times of emergency. The project is serving as a model for communications innovation across the National Park Service.

Thank you for investing in the protection of your fellow Parkway travelers and the rangers who strive to make every visit a safe one.



Park Rangers now benefit from a new dispatch system.

The Strength of the Parkway

Dear Friends,

As the news about COVID-19 continues to develop, the National Park Service has made the difficult decision to close much of the Blue Ridge Parkway to protect potential visitors, residents of the communities that neighbor the route, the Park Rangers, and the park itself. Still, we know there are brighter days ahead.

As a national treasure that came to life during the Great Depression, the Parkway is no stranger to difficulty. Like the road itself, its history includes many highs and lows. It benefited from the Civilian Conservation Corps before seeing many of those young men go off to war. It enjoyed tremendous federal financial support for many years, although its budget today falls far short of its needs. Snow and ice, landslides, and shutdowns have closed parts or all of the Parkway at various times. But, it has endured.



Whatever may come in the next weeks and months, the Parkway will be waiting for you and your loved ones when you can return safely to enjoy all it offers. During these stressful times, I hope this knowledge, along with all of your great memories of the Parkway, bring you comfort and hope.

Please take care & be well,

Carolyn Ward

Chief Executive Officer

cward@brpfoundation.org

Stay up to date

Check for park alerts. Although much of the Parkway is closed, we encourage you to check for updates from the National Park Service at www.nps.gov/blri.

We also invite you to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) for updates on Parkway status and on all of the good work you have made possible.



717 S. Marshall St., Suite 105B
Winston-Salem, NC 27101-5865



Protect the Parkway. Get the Plate.



After a 36-year career with the National Park Service, Gary Johnson is still taking care of the Parkway by renewing his “PLNR” (planner) plate each year. He worked in 56 national park units before serving as the Parkway’s Chief Landscape Architect and Planner until his retirement in 2011.

You can protect the Parkway by purchasing the North Carolina specialty plate, too. For each plate, \$20 benefits the scenic motorway and \$10 supports the state highway wildflower program. Visit GetThePlate.org for details.