Shenandoah National Park News Release

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Shenandoah National Park Announces Special Events for the Fee-Free National Public Lands Day

Luray, Virginia: Shenandoah National Park will host several special events to commemorate the 25th National Public Lands Day on September 22, 2018. Entrance fees to the park will be waived on this special day.

85th Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion – “Keeping the Tradition Alive”
Shenandoah National Park, along with the Barlow family of Stanley, Virginia, will co-host the 85th Annual Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Alumni Reunion. The public is invited to meet with CCC families and participate in alumni reunion events at the Big Meadows Lodge Massanutten Room (mile 51 Skyline Drive) beginning at 10:00 a.m. The full CCC reunion schedule can be found at https://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/cccreunion.htm

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 as a work relief program, putting young men to work in Federal and State lands during the Great Depression. CCC camps were first established at Skyland (NP-1) and Big Meadows (NP-2) in May 1933, and from 1933 to 1942 the park supervised the work of 11 CCC camps. The Skyland and Big Meadows Camps were the first in the National Park Service and were visited by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in August 1933. During the course of the New Deal program over 1,200 “boys” a year worked to build facilities and create the landscape of the park. The park we see today would not exist without the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Visitors wishing to learn more about the CCC should stop by the Byrd Visitor Center (mile 51 Skyline Drive) and explore the highly interactive exhibit, “Within a Day’s Drive of Millions.” This exhibit tells the story of Shenandoah’s establishment and development including the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps.
Conservation Corps. Visitors can also view a free film entitled *The CCC Boys*. Please ask for the film at the visitor center information desk.

**25th National Public Lands Day Volunteer Event**

Monarch butterflies and milkweed seeds will be the focus for the 25th National Public Lands Day volunteer event in Shenandoah National Park. National Public Lands Day is the nation’s largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. This event will be held Saturday, September 22, 2018, at Byrd Visitor Center, mile 51 on Skyline Drive. The event begins at 9:00 a.m. and is open to the public.

**Milkweed Seed Collection Volunteer Event**, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Join us to collect the seeds and pods of the poke milkweed, *Asclepias exaltata*, and common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, in Big Meadows. Participants will learn to identify the milkweed plant and the differences between the fruit of these two species. Park staff and volunteers will lead groups at collection points. Collected seeds will be used in various plant restoration projects throughout the Park to re-establish native habitat, especially helpful in places where invasive plants are removed. More milkweed plants in the Park mean more food for Monarch butterflies!

Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Volunteers must register at Byrd Visitor Center between 9:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Wear long pants and closed-toe shoes, apply sunscreen and bug spray, and bring plenty of water.

**Interpretive Table & Children’s Activity Table**, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Learn all about Monarch butterflies, their biology, and migration, with butterfly activities and coloring pages for kids of all ages. Come color and tag your own paper butterfly!

**Monarch Tagging Demonstration**, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Park Rangers will demonstrate and describe the “hows” and “whys” of Shenandoah’s Monarch tagging project. Tagged butterflies will be tracked as they migrate south to overwinter in Mexico. Data gathered will help scientists determine Monarch migration patterns, survivorship, and population trends. The Monarch tagging program is being presented in conjunction with the University of Kansas Monarch Watch.

**Junior Ranger Program**, 2:30 p.m. – Join a Ranger for a program on butterflies and the important role the Park plays in protecting their habitat.

**Monarch Butterfly Release**, 4:00 p.m. – Watch as we release the tagged Monarch butterflies!
National Public Lands Day is a great day to visit Shenandoah National Park, because it's your chance to help with a Park-improving volunteer activity while learning how to help even more in the future.

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