



Shenandoah National Park Association

Annual Narrative Report

2019 Fiscal Year

(January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019)

Wow – what a year!!! Fiscal year 2019 was our greatest year in sales – a record \$1,428,283. That's an increase of 20.42% (\$ 242,142) compared to 2018. The Park saw a 12.6% increase in visitation. It seemed that we had great weather, especially on weekends, and our new displays and desk at Dickey Ridge Visitor Center was a huge hit. We saw an increase of over 20% at Dickey Ridge and over 23% at Byrd Visitor Center.

Because of a record year, our Aid to Shenandoah National Park for fiscal year 2019 totaled \$334,568 of direct financial support and \$335,938 as programmed services support. SNPA cumulative total of direct aid since 1950 totals over \$3,767,084.

The SNPA seminar program was very successful. SNPA was able to hold seven seminars in 2019 and had a total attendance of 100 participants. An increase of 16.28%.

Below is a brief listing of some of the significant activities of the Association during the year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The members of the SNPA Board of Directors during fiscal year 2019:

Polly deButts, Arlington, VA	Doug Kavolius, Charlottesville, VA
Clark Dixon, Ranson, WV	Bill King, Luray, VA
Dixon Freeland, Luray, VA	Jack Price, Sperryville, VA
Judy Russell, Luray, VA	Chris Anderson, Luray, VA
Bill Henry, Stanardsville, VA	Rose Ann Smythe, Luray, VA
Diana Wright, McLean, VA	Bill Reid, Luray, VA

Associates

John Hedrick, Woodville, VA	Dick Hostelley, Stanley, VA
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Officers of the Board for 2019 were:

Dixon Clark, President/Chairman of the Board
Rose Ann Smythe, Vice-President
Doug Kavolius, Secretary
Judy Russell, Treasurer

Roy Wood, Shenandoah National Park Chief of Interpretation served as the Park Liaison to the Board.

MEETINGS OF THE SNPA BOARD

Scheduled Quarterly Board Meetings:

- Saturday, March 30, 2019. Spring meeting held at Park Headquarters.
- Saturday, June 22, 2019. Summer meeting held at Park Headquarters.
- Saturday, September 21, 2019. Fall meeting held at National Conservation Training Center
- Saturday, December 7, 2019. Winter meeting held at Park Headquarters.

SNPA STAFF FOR THE 2019 SEASON

SNPA Office Staff

Greta Miller, Executive Director
Rachel Burner, Director of Sales & Marketing
Debbie Judd, Office Clerk

SNPA Visitor Center Sales Staff

Karen Taylor, Byrd Visitor Center
Sharon Foster – Dickey Ridge Visitor Center
Lara Ellis - Byrd Visitor Center (part-time)
Tom Varney - Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (part-time)
Tracy Clatterbuck - Byrd Visitor Center (part-time)
Megan Williams – Intermittent sales staff
Shari Yordy – Intermittent sales staff
Denise Machado - spring temporary
Jodi Davis - spring temporary
Bob Davis - spring temporary

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

SNPA sales for Fiscal Year 2019 was \$1,428,283 up 20.42% (a \$242,142 increase) from Fiscal Year 2018. Compared to the previous year, Byrd Visitor Center had a 23.19% increase in sales and Dickey Ridge had an increase of 20.94% in sales. Sales at Cedar Creek/Belle Grove National Historic Park was up 16.02% compared to 2018.

During 2019, the Association spent \$633,628.34 to purchase additional inventory to have available for sale during the year. A large number of the orders were placed early in the year at the annual PLA Convention and Trade Show. SNPA was able to get additional discounts, free freight, and delayed billing. For those vendors that do not participate in the trade show, SNPA orders products as needed.

SNPA had three outlets plus its mail order and wholesale program in operation during the fiscal year. Following is a summary of the sales.

--- Dickey Ridge Visitor Center

2019 was a special year for Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. During the winter months the entire bookstore was stripped of all the bookcases, displays, and sales desk and all new fixtures and sales desk was installed and set up ready for opening day in April. A few of the SNPA Board members volunteered to help clean up around the outside of the visitor center to rake leaves and help make the entrance look clean and inviting. The new fixtures are much lighter and make the room much brighter. We anticipated this new store will see a nice increase in sales! And it did - Dickey Ridge had a record year with total sales of \$617,035.521 (this includes sales tax) an increase of \$106,845.35 (20.94%) compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year.

Dickey Ridge opened on April 5 on a 5 day schedule, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. through April 30 and from November 13 – December 1. The center went to 7 day schedule May 1 through November 11. Dickey Ridge had extended hours (9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) on Friday and Saturdays from May 24 through November 9.

Visitation at Dickey Ridge was up 19.36% for the year and the number of customers was up 15.54%. Dickey Ridge had a \$2.66 average sale per visitor, compared to \$2.62 average in 2018. Dickey Ridge was open 236 days during 2019 compared to 224 days in 2018.

--- Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Visitor Center

The Byrd Visitor Center also had a record year in 2019 with sales of \$846,437.59, (this includes sales tax) an increase of \$159,314.17 (23.19%) compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year.

During January, February, March, and December the Byrd Visitor Center is usually open on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday Mondays if Skyline Drive was open. Unfortunately a government shutdown in December extended through most of January and Byrd was opened only one day in January. February only saw four days of operation – most of the last half of the month experienced snow/ice and down trees. The Skyline Drive was finally cleared from all the debris and the visitor center was opened on March 15 for weekends.

The visitor center opened on April 5 on a 5 day schedule, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. through April 30 and on a 7 day schedule beginning May 1 through December 1. From December 6 – December 29, the visitor center was open on weekends.

Byrd Visitor Center went to extended hours (9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) on Friday and Saturdays from May 24 through November 9.

Visitation at Byrd was up 12.20% for the year and the number of customer transactions was up 20.32%. The average sale per visitor was \$2.50, up from the 2018 average of \$2.28. Byrd was open 257 days compared to 274 in 2018. That's 17 less days of operation with an increase of 23.19% for the year.

Thanks to all the staff that worked so hard to help us achieve such a great sales record!—

Cedar Creek/Belle Grove Visitor Center

Cedar Creek Visitor Center was open on a five-day schedule (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) during January, February, March, November, and December. During the core season (April through October) the visitor center was open 7 days a week.

Sales at the Cedar Creek totaled \$7289.39 (this includes sales tax) an increase of \$1006.75 (16.02%) over 2018. Visitation at Cedar Creek for Fiscal Year 2019 totaled 4100 (an increase of 1.74%) with 450 customers (an increase of 13.07%).

--- Website / Wholesale

Online mail orders continue to remain steady for the year with an average of about 3-4 orders per day. Spring has always been a busy time for people to start planning their trips and ordering maps and hiking guides. We normally get quite a number of orders in December for holiday gifts, but we did not have a Shenandoah National Park Calendar to sell, so web orders were down for December. SNPA also wholesales our own publications to the park concessioner and local businesses and bookstores. Total sales from our website and wholesale orders totaled \$47,613.66 for the year.

Other Business

Brown, Edwards & Company conducted the annual audit of the Association's finances and business affairs at the end of the fiscal year. The auditor came to the office on February 18 to begin work on the annual audit for fiscal year 2018. Jim Fries attended the March 2019 Board of Directors meeting to present the financial report. Fries reviewed each page with the Board and answered any questions they may have had.

Board Treasurer, Judy Russell came into the office each month to review all the accounts.

The SNPA Board met in January to complete the Executive Director evaluation and to review the results of the Board Member Evaluation. The Board President shared the results of the Executive Director evaluation with Miller in March.

On January 10-11 Nathan Prillwitz with Impact Photographics from Ashland, Virginia came to complete the final installation of the new display fixtures and the sales desk at Dickey Ridge. SNPA also had a carpenter take pieces of the old sales desk and build a new table for the Passport Cancellation Station to be placed in the main lobby of the visitor center. As mentioned earlier, a few of the SNPA Board Members came up to Dickey Ridge on April 3 to help rake leaves from the around the building to help spruce up the front where the cars come into the parking lot, and the walk way that visitors use to enter the building. The Visitor Center was ready for visitors – and boy did it look great!

The Annual Public Lands Alliance (PLA) Convention and Trade Show was held in Denver, CO February 24 - 28, 2019. SNPA representation included SNPA Board members Clark Dixon and Diane Wright, and SNPA Staff Greta Miller and Rachel Burner. Roy Wood attended as our Park Liaison. The conference was great and the park approved a number of new sales items that were

found at the trade show. SNPA also won the *Outstanding Public Engagement Award* for the Mobile Visitor Center project. This is a project that started in 2015 when SNPA purchased a van to be used as a mobile visitor center for the southern section of the park. A custom interior was completed in 2018 and the response from the public when it has been placed in service at an overlook has been great.

The Shenandoah National Park Association programmed eight resource seminars for 2019. This was an increase from the six that were held in 2018. The seminars held were:

- April 27, Trout Fishing seminar
- May 11, Painting seminar
- May 24, Geology seminar
- June 5, Trees seminar
- June 15, Backpacking Basics seminar
- August 7, Naturalist Overview seminar
- August 17, Nature Photography
- Sept 7 – Mushrooms of SNP seminar.

The June 15, Backpacking Basics seminar did not receive enough registrations, and the course was cancelled. There were a total of 100 participants for the seven seminars that were held and the seminar committee will be using all the participant evaluations to help make plans for the 2020 seminar schedule.

The Superintendent hosted a Park Partners meeting on Thursday, May 9 and again on Wednesday, November 13. Representatives of PATC, SNP Trust, Delaware North, and SNPA met to get a report from the Superintendent on current/hot issues within the Park and then share what each of their organizations were currently working on/supporting. Board President Clark Dixon and Executive Director Greta Miller attended the meeting along with our Park Liaison/Chief of Interpretation Roy Wood.

On Saturday, June 15 Shenandoah National Park held its annual SNP Neighbors Day. This was a free fee day for all park visitors with the special event where park visitors could visit booths set up by the chambers of the surrounding counties. The Park partners also set up a tent to meet and greet Park visitors in an area outside between the visitor center and the Big Meadows Wayside. SNPA Staff Karen Taylor and SNPA Board Members Clark Dixon, Bill Reid, and Jennifer Goodwin manned the SNPA table.

September 20-22, the SNPA Board of Directors had a Board Training/Fall Meeting at the National Conservation Training Center in Sheperdstown, WV. SNPA invited Harpers Ferry Association to participate over the weekend. We began meetings on Friday afternoon with a training provided by NPS Rich Fedorchak and Cooperating Servicewide Coordinator Monique VanLandingham. On Saturday the group received a “Basic Boardsmanship” refresher class. In the afternoon the SNPA Board met to review the Strategic Plan, and on Sunday, the Board had it’s quarterly Board meeting. Nine of the 12 Board Members attended along with SNPA Staff Greta Miller and Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Jennifer Flynn and Park Liaison/Chief of Interpretation Roy Wood. Harpers Ferry Association had their Executive Director Catherine Bauldeu and four Board members attend.

SNPA held the annual SNPA Sale on Tuesday, December 10, at the SNPA Office/Warehouse. Park employees were invited to stop by throughout the day to do some holiday shopping with a special 40% discount. More than 50 employees purchased \$2,898.53 worth of merchandise,

which included 14 membership renewals.

As mentioned in the 2018 Annual Report, the Educational Center Committee continued to meet throughout the year discussing ideals for a center to be built in the park to hold all the school groups that the Education office host. The building could also be used for the SNPA Resource Seminars, and other park programs. Park Management is considering the idea and has met numerous times with the committee and with a local architect, but no decision has been made that can be announced. The park concessioner, Delaware North, donated \$15,500 toward the architect site study. The funds were received and then donated and placed in the Interpretive Fund until SNPA receives invoices from Train Architects.

During the fiscal year, SNPA placed \$20,000.00 into the SNPA Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund is for emergency use if the Association ever lost a sales operation and needed funds to get through the loss of sales. The goal is to have \$350,000 (three months operating expenses) on reserve for emergency use by the Board.

SNPA received a \$3,000 donation from one of our tee shirt vendors, Wild Tribute at the end of the year. This was donated to be used to purchase a large telescope to be used during the Night Skies Festival and for other ranger programs. SNPA donated the funds to the Park and placed them in the Interpretive Account. SNPA will order the telescope in early 2020.

The Association continued the *donation roundup* feature on the cash registers at our stores and collected \$8,585.11 during the year. These funds were collected to assist with our mission to provide support to interpretation and education. At the end of the year, the funds were donated to the Park and placed in the Interpretive Account towards the Education Building project.

\$2,000.00 was placed into the SNPA Vehicle Fund. This fund is to have a reserve for when a need arises to replace either of the SNPA vehicles.

The Association donated \$500.00 to the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) for the session breaks during the convention in Denver, CO.

SALES PRODUCTS

The Association added a few new items to the sales list. The stores displays are full, and we usually cannot add many new items, unless we discontinue ones that may not sell as well as in the past. SNPA is constantly reviewing sales numbers as well as watch trends and watch what other cooperating associations are selling.

The Association only had one publication that had to be reprinted for the year. A total of 7,500 copies of *Easy Hikes on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in Shenandoah National Park* were printed. This should carry SNPA through 2021.

SNPA has done very well with it's apparel line. The Association continues to work with *Wish Designs* to create custom, embroidered apparel. This is the 6th year that we have created a wildflower tee shirt. This year it featured the turk's cap lily and was one of our best seller

wildflower tees of all.

SNPA continues to work with Wild Tribute to create some custom designed tee shirts and has continued selling the blue “gradient bear” design in 2019 as well as added a new “SNP van” tee and a long sleeve “gradient bear” to sell during the year.

The Association did bring one new line of products to Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. For years we were getting requests for bug spray. We found a supplier that carried both a bug spray that could also be used to guard against ticks. Ironically, the name of the product is *Ranger Ready* and it comes in four scents. Dickey Ridge sold over 201 spray bottles during 2019. SNPA was not allowed to sell at Byrd Visitor Center because of the close proximity to Big Meadows Wayside who carried bug spray.

SNPA MEMBERSHIP

At the end of December 2019, SNPA had a total of 1,216 embers: 541 individual members, 382 families, 189 life, 91 supporting, 11 Old Rag Society, and two Stony Man Society members. During the year, members received a copy of the park newspaper, *Explore Shenandoah*; Board member election ballots; membership renewal notices; and monthly eblasts of special events/happenings.

Delaware North at Shenandoah, Inc. and local attraction Luray Caverns continued providing SNPA members special discounts. Members could reserve rooms at Big Meadows or Skyland at a 30% discount (with a few restrictions) and could receive 20% discount on food service, horseback riding, and purchases from the gift shops. Members could also receive \$6.00 discounts on tours at the world-famous Luray Caverns in Luray, Virginia. Members can also get a 10% discount from the local Appalachian Outfitters store in Luray.

SNPA will turn 70 on May 13, 2020. A “Save the Date” postcard was sent to members to announce a special SNPA Membership Day/70th Anniversary celebration scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2020.

SNPA STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

SNPA continued to update its Strategic Management Plan. The three goals are:

- Maximize Aid to Shenandoah National Park;
- Encourage an Active Membership Program;
- Ensure SNPA Operates as a High-Performance, Accountable Non-Profit Organization.

As mentioned earlier, the Board reviewed the SNPA Strategic Plan during the weekend meeting in September at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. The committee is going to discuss the possibility of having a strategic planner to take a look at our plan and discuss whether or not we need him to come in and do a review and recommendation.

AID TO NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SNPA's purpose is to provide support to the interpretive program in Shenandoah National Park. The Association is proud to report that direct financial aid was a record \$334,568 and programmed services totaled \$335,938 for a total aid of \$670,506 for 2019. Cumulative total of direct aid to the park since the Association began in 1950 totals \$3,767,084.

Because of a record year not only did the Association meet the budget but the SNPA Board approved an additional \$60,000 to be donated to support Interpretation and Education. These funds were placed into the Interpretive Account to be held until the Park can decide how best to use the additional funds.

Funds that were donated in 2019 to be used as a "guaranteed" amount for 2020 was \$65,000. This was an increase of 8.33% increase over the 2018 \$60,000 that was donated.

The following is a summary of how the funds (\$60,000) that were donated in 2018 to be spent in 2019 were allocated. Any funds that were not spent by the Park was put in kept in the account as "reserves" for the Chief of Interpretation to use at a later date.

The Park ordered 250,000 copies of the full color 4-page issue of the park visitor guide, *Shenandoah Overlook* at a cost of \$9,037.52. The printing is funded by co-sponsorships: SNPA, the park concessioner, Delaware North, and Merck Manufacturing. In the fall, with increased visitation, all the newspapers were distributed, and SNPA funded \$1,345.81 to print an additional 29,000 copies. Total funding for the newspapers for the year breakdown was:

- SNPA provided \$6,468.32 toward the cost of the printing
- Delaware North provided \$3,415.01 toward the cost of the printing
- Merck Manufacturing, Elkton, VA contributed \$ 500.00 toward the printing

Co-sponsored the *Wildflower Weekend* event on May 5-6, 2019. SNPA funded the printing of 2000 copies of a *Wildflower Weekend* brochure to distribute in the park and in local community businesses (\$469.33) and prizes such as ribbons, wildflower books, SNP pass for awards for the youth art contest (269.42).

Provided discretionary funds for the Superintendent. Funds were used to purchased SNPA books and stock items, provide snacks/meals for special events such as management training, Park Partners meetings, and other VIPs. (\$513.53)

Provided discretionary funds for the Chief of Interpretation office to support the Interpretive and Educational Programs. (\$336.31)

Provided discretionary funds for the Park's Education office to support their work towards outreach. Provided support for teacher workshop, interns, meeting registrations, and other miscellaneous purchases. SNPA's funding for these educational needs. (\$2,508.13)

Provided discretionary funds to purchased interpretive aids and supplies for the Interpretive program. Provided support for the interpretative training, passport cancellation stamps, interpretive backpack supplies, interns, and other miscellaneous expenses. (\$5,662.77)

Provided discretionary funds to purchased materials and supplies for the Media office.
(\$7,697.55)

Provided funding to support the Park's Volunteer (VIP) program and the Volunteer Appreciation dinner. (\$1,922.81)

Provided funding to support the Park's Archives by purchasing supplies, reference materials and supporting the Archives interns. (96.94)

The unused portion of our aid (\$34,054.89) was placed in the Reserves for future use on exhibits, mobile visitor center, and other needs for Interpretation and Education.

Provided Association staff valued at \$148,038 to assist in staffing the visitor center information desks and handling sales at the *Park Stores*.

SNPA FUTURE PLANS

- Continue placing funds into the SNPA Emergency Reserve Account for the Association.
- Annually review and update the SNPA Strategic Management Plan. Consider having plan reviewed by a professional strategic planner to get suggestions on ways to improve it.
- Create a "Succession Plan" for the Executive Director position.
- Continue sharing information to members through e-blasts.
- Continue to add products, press releases and other information to the new website
- Participate in the PLA Conference in Arlington, VA in March 2020.
- Review seminar results and evaluations and make plans for 2020
- Continue exploring possibilities to build an educational facility for interpretive school programs and SNPA seminars.