Visitation To Panthertown Is At An All Time High

Panthertown Valley is part of Nantahala National Forest and is visited each year by more and more people from around the world. We have continued to work on the trail system to improve the quality of experience for everyone who visits. We have seen increased recreational usage in all types of activities, from hikers and mountain bikers, horseback riders and rock climbers, wildflower seekers and rock hounds. Vehicles from far away states are often seen parked at the trailheads, with more (continued page 4)
In Appreciation

Thanks to our friends at the Highland Hiker who have adopted Wilderness Falls Trail, and to their Cashiers store employees for working on the trail with us this year. Thanks to Lake Toxaway Company for adopting Greenland Creek Trail and for hosting a trail work day this summer, to Bald Rock for adopting Deep Gap Trail, and to Laurel Falls for adopting Blackrock Trail. Contact us to Adopt-A-Trail.

We are grateful for our business community members who have made generous commitments to help us protect Panthertown and maintain our conservation efforts: Bear Lake Reserve, Laurel Falls Community Association, and Flickinamazing, publisher of Waterfalls of Panthertown Valley.

Thanks to residents of Bald Rock and The Divide at Bald Rock for graciously hosting a horse exhibition and silent auction this summer to benefit Friends of Panthertown. Together we raised more than $8,600 that will go towards Panthertown conservation.

Special thanks to Wade Hampton Donor Advised Fund for awarding us a $3,000 trail work grant this fall, and to Cashiers Community Fund for a $5,000 stewardship grant.

News & Happenings

Welcome to our Autumn edition of The Panther’s Roar. Visitation to Panthertown is at an all time high this year. Now that fall leaves are beginning to show their colors, the trails in Panthertown will continue to get extensive use for at least another season to come.

Cover photo was contributed by Thomas “Badger” Mabry. Submit your stories and photos to appear in an upcoming issue!

U.S. Forest Service & Friends Announce New Flat Creek Parking; Improved Trail Access

This summer, with our assistance, the U.S. Forest Service built an improved parking area with horse trailer access at the northern entrance to Panthertown. The new Flat Creek Parking Area is located off Rock Bridge Road across from Turkey Knob Trail and not far from Rattle Snake Knob Trail. This parking area may also be used by hikers wishing to access hard to reach places like Bonas Defeat and Flat Creek Falls. Friends of Panthertown funded trailhead improvements at Cold Mountain in 2015 and Flat Creek in 2016 through a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant. To access the parking area, take NC 281 N. from Toxaway to Rock Bridge Road. Follow road to trailhead.

U.S. Forest Service: Transporting Firewood Can Spread Harmful Insects

Transporting firewood can spread harmful insects including the destructive emerald ash borer. U.S. Forest Service advises, “You can help prevent the spread of destructive bugs and diseases by following a few simple rules: Don’t bring your own firewood to campgrounds or other forested areas. Obtain firewood from the forest in which you are camping or from a nearby vendor. If you have moved firewood, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.”
Bald Rock Horse Exhibition & Silent Auction

Thanks to all those who supported this summer’s Friends benefit event held at Bald Rock. We appreciate all those who attended, volunteered, sponsored, donated, and took part in the event. Together we raised over $8,600 in proceeds.

SAVE THE DATE

Friends of Panthertown
Annual Meeting & Social Event

Wednesday
October 12, 2016
5:30 - 7:30 pm

Jackson County Public Library Complex
Sylva, NC

All welcome. Public invited.

Panthertown Q&A
Stewardship Project Updates
Meet Friends, Kid’s Activities

More info or RSVP
(828) 269-HIKE (4453)
friends@panthertown.org

Door prizes!
Light refreshments! served.

Autumn 2016
**Message from our President (Continued from page 1):**

Vehicles from far away states are often seen parked at the trailheads, with more arriving each weekend.

During the past year, and into the future, Friends of Panthertown has been busy working in partnership with U.S. Forest Service to improve recreational opportunities and experiences in Panthertown Valley. Our volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours this year performing routine trail maintenance and improvements, and we will continue to work on special conservation projects throughout the valley into 2017.

Earlier this spring we sent out a survey to our e-mail list and the results are in. We heard back from more than 200 respondents. 27% came from North Carolina, 46% from South Carolina, 12% from Georgia, 15% from Florida. 75% identified as hikers, 25% as mountain bikers, and 12% as equestrians. Fishing, photography, and swimming were responded as the most popular additional activities.

More results from our survey and updates of our conservation projects will be shared at our annual meeting to be held at Jackson County Public Library on October 12. We hope to meet you there and on the trails this fall!

**HAPPY FALL! - by Margaret Carton, President**

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**WATERFALL SAFETY**

- Never climb on or around waterfalls.
- Never jump off waterfalls or dive into plunge pools since rocks and logs can be hidden beneath the surface of the water. And, currents that can drag and keep you underwater.
- Never play in the stream or river above a waterfall. Rocks can be slippery and currents could take you on a deadly trip over the falls.
- Many waterfalls have trails around them. Stay only on marked trails. This is for your safety.
- Mist from waterfalls can cause slippery rocks or mud along nearby trails. So look down as you walk near the waterfall!
- Since many waterfalls are in remote areas, a medical rescue could take hours.
- Wear walking shoes with a good grip (no flip-flops!).
- Be aware of the time for sunset and get back to your car before night.
- During the winter, watch for icy patches along trails caused from the mist of the waterfalls. Many times, a winter view is better since there are no leaves on the trees to hide parts of the falls.
Our hard working volunteers maintain the trails in Panthertown for all to enjoy!

Trail notes from Mike Purdy, Friends of Panthertown Vice-President and Trail Boss

Once again we kicked off the spring season with senior girls from Shorecrest Preparatory School taking on a service project during their spring break. They camped in Panthertown Valley for 4 nights and every afternoon they took on a different work activity depending on where they were camping. This year we pruned the Mac's Gap Trail, Riding Ford Trail, Panthertown Valley Trail, Granny Burrell's Falls Trail, and part of the Great Wall Trail.

We also had a group from Western Carolina University’s International Program take on the challenge and help us prune the Green Valley Trail earlier this year. We appreciate all our hard working volunteers and always welcome anyone interested in participating!

Earlier this spring, officials from the U.S. Forest Service inspected and selectively sprayed areas where we had removed invasive Autumn Olive trees last year. There were a few sprouts from the stumps but we saw no new sprouts coming up. We will continue to keep a close eye on this situation to prevent this non-native species from taking over again.

Our friends at Highlands Hiker have adopted the popular Wilderness Falls Trail and together we did some much-needed cleanup work along that trail in May. Lake Toxaway Company community volunteers took care of Greenland Creek Falls Trail in July. Bald Rock volunteers maintained the Deep Gap Trail this year. Volunteers from Laurel Falls Community helped us maintain Turkey Knob Trail in August. And for our last trail maintenance project of the year, residents of Long View Ridge plan to work on Blackrock Trail in November and welcome other volunteers to join them and help out on the trail. Visit our website for more information about Adopt-A-Trail and volunteering.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
Thank you from Friends of Panthertown

Your support helps us protect and maintain more than 30 miles of well-worn public trails in Panthertown. We advocate on behalf of our members, working together with hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and in partnership with U.S. Forest Service to improve recreational opportunities in Panthertown for all to enjoy. By joining Friends, you become a valuable part of conserving this precious natural resource.

Members get the satisfaction of being a part of our conservation efforts plus:

- Panthertown news and project updates
- Invitations to member-only hikes and events
- Friends of Panthertown decal to show off your support
- Receipt for your tax-deductible membership donation

Join or renew in 2016 with a donation of $150 or more and ALSO receive:

- Panthertown Valley Trail System Map published by U.S. Forest Service, and
- Friends of Panthertown Field Notes Pocket Notebook for your trail notes, and
- Weatherproof Leave No Trace Pocket Reference Card

Join or renew with a donation of $250 or more and ALSO receive your choice of:

- Friends of Panthertown t-shirt (assorted colors and sizes available) or Burt Kornegay’s essential map: A Guide’s Guide to Panthertown

Supporting local businesses will receive:

- A Friends of Panthertown Business Member certificate to display
- A link to your business from our website
- Recognition in our newsletter and at our event

Special opportunities are available for donors contributing $1,000 or more (contact us for details).

Renew Your Membership Online Anytime at www.panthertown.org/join