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SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK



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Welcome



Welcome to Shenandoah National Park! Established in the heart of the Appalachians in 1935, the park owes much of its construction, masonry and landscaping to the **Civilian Conservation Corps**. The creation of the park allowed the forces of nature to regenerate the scenic mountain terrain, which now provides a refuge for nearby urban populations.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated Shenandoah National Park to "this and to succeeding generations for the recreation and the re-creation" they would find here.

Like generations before you, you can explore, relax, and join us in securing the same memorable Shenandoah experience for future generations. Shenandoah needs your support to ensure it will be preserved and protected for many years to come. Enjoy the park, but be respectful at all times.



FUN FACTS

Established: Shenandoah National Park was established in 1935.

Natural Features: The park features 300 square miles of the Blue Ridge Mountains, rising above the Virginia Piedmont to the east and the Shenandoah Valley to the west, with two peaks rising above 4,000 feet.

Popular Activities: Hiking, camping, fishing, wildlife viewing, horseback riding and many more recreational activities await you at the park.

Plants & Animals: More than 1,400 vascular plants, 100 trees and 300 species of animals thrive in the park. Deer, squirrels and

With the support of the American people, the National Park Service (NPS) works to protect this landscape and its visitors. The NPS and concessioner Delaware North Companies (Delaware North at Shenandoah National Park) work in partnership to ensure that your visit is a memorable one.

This *American Park Network* guide to Shenandoah is provided by Delaware North to enhance your appreciation and enjoyment of the park. It has been made possible by the support of the sponsors whose messages appear inside. We hope this guide will become your companion while you explore Shenandoah National Park. Take it along while you hike, mark it up with notes and enjoy! Don't forget to pass it along to a friend, family member or even a complete stranger. The best way to ensure the future of the park is to encourage others to experience it!

groundhogs are common sights. Shenandoah National Park is home to one of the largest concentrations of black bears in the United States.

Scenic Driving: Skyline Drive, the park's scenic byway, has more than 75 overlooks with scenic views for miles.

Hiking: More than 500 miles of trails lead to stunning views of waterfalls, spectacular mountain vistas and lush forests.

Camping: There are five campgrounds in the park. Backcountry camping is allowed with a permit.

Contents



American Park Network® publishes Oh, Ranger! ParkFinder™, OhRanger.com, and Oh, Ranger!® guides—a collection of visitor guides for public lands all across America—and operates Oh, Ranger! Wi-Fi in parks and public lands. American Park Network is an official partner of the National Forest Foundation, National Parks Conservation Association, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, American Hiking Society and the Student Conservation Association.

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Cover: The Milky Way over Big Meadows.
Credit: Spike Silvernail



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QUESTIONS, GO TO
OhRanger.com

What's New!

The Truth About America's Public Lands

"No amount of experimentation can ever prove me right; a single experiment can prove me wrong."

— Albert Einstein

I think everyone can agree that Albert was a pretty smart guy. His quote suggests he was also quite open to being proven wrong. Einstein set the bar for both genius and humility by his unyielding embrace of the scientific method.

In a world where information is often clouded by personal perspective, it's crucial that we follow Einstein's lead and proceed with care when it comes to facts and truth. Facts, by definition, are verifiable, objective data — things we can observe, measure and ultimately prove. In the absence of new learning, facts are grounded in evidence that remains constant despite opinion or belief. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines truth as *"being in accord with fact or reality."* One person's reality may be quite different from another's. Truth, therefore, requires context. If we're open, it's not that hard to see how different life experiences may provide us with wildly different (and subjective) realities.

America's public lands are steeped in both facts and truth. From the geology of the Grand Canyon to the biodiversity in Yellowstone, facts about these places are backed by years of research and scientific study. But the truth of these lands is more complex. It's about the cultural significance they hold, the stories they tell, and the way they connect us to the past and to each other. The truth includes understanding the important role these lands play — for future generations, to native communities, with regard to preservation, as engines of economic development and so

much more. 'Truth' may lead one person to favor mining while another's truth may dictate conservation above all else.

As with many issues, we won't all agree on how to balance facts and truths. Different perspectives exist on how to best utilize public lands. We need to resist the urge to simply dismiss the opinions of others whose views don't align with our own. Facts provide a foundation for understanding. Truth is shaped by personal and collective values. It's essential that we utilize facts in decision-making while, at the same time, embrace the truth in its full complexity. There's never been a better time to commit to listening, remaining open and considering different experiences and values. Only then can we have constructive dialogue that leads us to common ground. The Organic Act of 1916 created the National Park Service and placed equal weight on conservation as it did recreation, which are often in direct conflict. More than a century later, it's still hard to reconcile such opposing goals... and that's a fact!

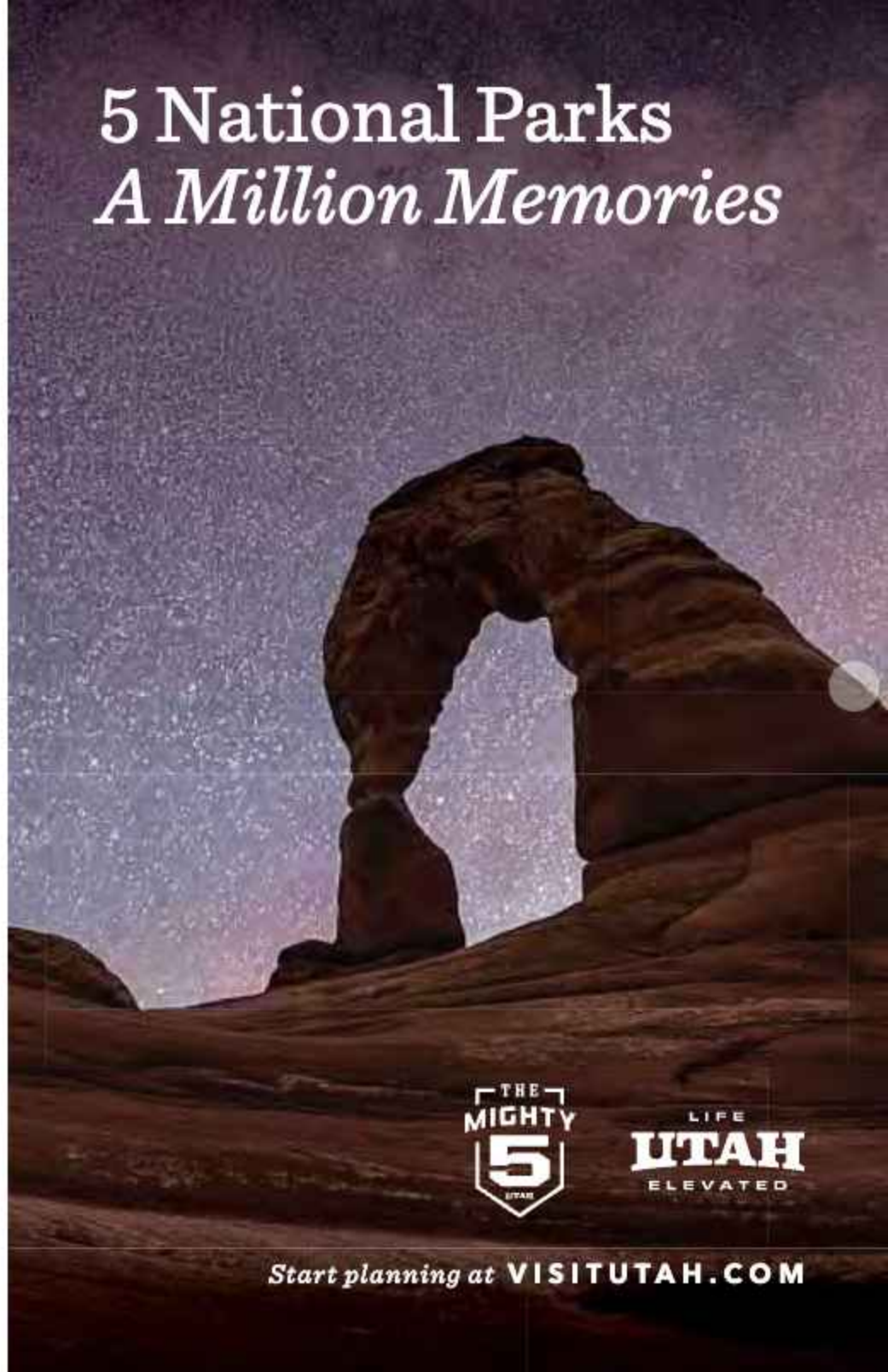
Let's approach the stewardship of our public lands with an acknowledgement of facts, a respect for truth and an openness to understanding each other's perspectives, especially when we disagree. Together we can ensure that America's public lands remain a rich resource and a legacy for generations to come!

Mark H. Robinson
Founder & Editor-in-Chief

mark@americanparknetwork.com



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GETTING TO SHENANDOAH

Air: The park's south entrances at Rockfish Gap and Swift Run Gap are serviced by commercial flights to Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport, which is eight miles north of Charlottesville on Highway 29, **(434) 973-8342** or **gocho.com**; and Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport, 18 miles northeast of Staunton or 14 miles south of Harrisonburg on Highway 256, **(540) 234-8304** or **flyshd.com**. Dulles International Airport is 1.5 hours northeast of the junction of U.S. 211 and Skyline Drive, and 1 hour east of the junction of I-66 and U.S. 340 at Front Royal. For more information, visit **metwashairports.com**.

Bus: Greyhound offers bus service to nearby Charlottesville, Virginia. To make reservations, please visit **greyhound.com**.

Train: Amtrak serves nearby Charlottesville, Virginia. For more information about pricing and schedules, please call **(800) 872-7245** or visit **amtrak.com**.

Rental Cars: Agencies operate at the airports and major surrounding cities outside the park. *Note: Keep in mind there is no public transportation into*

the park. Visitors must find their own way into the park.

Bike: Bikes are permitted along Skyline Drive and on all paved areas in Shenandoah National Park. The two-lane road has steep hills, numerous blind curves, and frequent heavy fog. Cyclists should be aware of wildlife and heavy traffic, particularly in the fall. Please use extreme caution, be visible and ride predictably.

PARK VISITOR GUIDE

The NPS park visitor guide details seasonal information about the park, such as hours of operation and closures. It can be found in all visitor centers in the park as well as at the entrances.

PARK ENTRANCES

Nearly all of the overlooks, trails, historic sites and facilities in Shenandoah are accessed from Skyline Drive. This 105-mile scenic road runs north and south along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains offering visitors stunning views and many chances to enjoy the park's nature and wildlife.

There are four entrances to Shenandoah, all accessible by major roads. Starting from the north, **Front Royal Entrance Station** (Mile 0.6) via U.S. 340 and Highway 55; **Thornton Gap Entrance Station** (Mile 31.5) via U.S. 211; **Swift Run Gap Entrance Station** (Mile 65.7) via U.S. 33; and **Rockfish Gap Entrance Station** (Mile 104.9), the southernmost entrance, is accessible via I-64 and U.S. 250. GPS systems are often unreliable.

Note: To help you find features, facilities and services, concrete mile markers have been placed on the right-hand side of



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The southern Caribbean island of Curaçao welcomes you with the warmest embrace. From the moment you arrive, you're immersed in a world of vibrant color, rich culture, and a blend of European and Caribbean flair. Beyond its unique personality and charm, the island boasts endless adventures above and below the sea. Water lovers can enjoy scuba diving, snorkeling, jet skiing, boat trips, the ultimate beach day on one of over 35 beaches, and more. Back on land, activities include museums, spas, tours, biking, safari excursions, golf courses, festivals and beyond. Wherever you turn, you can count on a vibe like no other on an island that is sure to capture your heart.

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Skyline Drive as you head south. They are numbered from north to south, beginning with Mile 0 at the junction of U.S. 340. For your convenience, "mile" references are included throughout this guide for a variety of services.

ENTRANCE FEES

Shenandoah National Park is one of more than 108 national park sites that charges an entrance fee. Shenandoah National Park entrance fees are \$30 for vehicles, \$25 for motorcycles, and \$15 for individuals on foot or bicycle. Each pass is good for seven days. An annual park pass is \$55. Federal lands passes are accepted as well. See page 7 or visit nps.gov/shen for more information. Eighty percent of the fees collected are returned to Shenandoah for a variety of projects. The other 20 percent goes to support parks that do not charge an entrance fee.

Digital passes for select federal public lands, including Shenandoah, are available at recreation.gov/pass or in the Recreation.gov app.

ENTRANCE FEES AND FEDERAL RECREATION LANDS PASSES

A federal recreation pass is helpful if you plan to visit many national parks, forests or other federal lands. For information, call (888) 275-8747 or visit store.usgs.gov/pass. For fee free days, see nps.gov/shen.

Type	Cost	Availability	Details
Annual Pass	\$80 \$20	General Public Seniors (62+)	This one-year pass is available on site, by phone or online (see above). Add \$5 processing.
Senior Pass	\$80	U.S. residents age 62+	This lifetime pass is available on site or via mail order. ID required. Add \$10 processing.
Military Pass	Free	U.S. active duty military members and their dependents	This one-year pass is available on site. ID (CAC Card or DoD Form 1173) required.
Access Pass	Free	U.S. residents with permanent disabilities	This lifetime pass is available on site or via mail order. ID and documentation required. Add \$10 handling.
Volunteer Pass	Free	250 cumulative volunteer service hours	Inquire locally to obtain information about this one-year pass.

EVERY KID OUTDOORS

To help engage and create our next generation of park visitors, the Every Kid Outdoors initiative provides an opportunity for every fourth-grade student across the country to experience their federal public lands and waters in person. Each fourth-grader can have their own Every Kid Outdoors pass which admits the pass owner and any accompanying passengers in a private non-commercial vehicle to the park.

Visit everykidoutdoors.gov to obtain the pass, and you must print it and present it at the park. The Every Kid Outdoors pass is valid until August 31, 2025.

VISITOR CENTERS

There are two visitor information centers in Shenandoah. Dates and times of operation may vary. Refer to the visitor guide, call the park recorded phone messages number at (540) 999-3500, or visit nps.gov/shen.



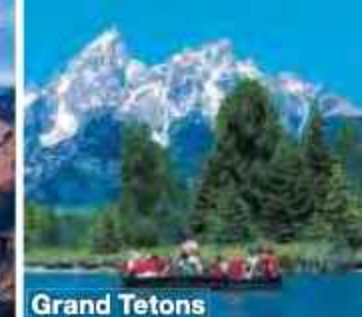
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Park Regulations & Safety

Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (Mile 4.6), is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Tuesday (closed Wednesday and Thursday) from April 11 until late fall. It is closed during winter, however bathrooms are open year-round. Built in 1938, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the visitor center is a comfortable place to view exhibits, get information and watch an introductory video. Videos can also be viewed online at nps.gov/shen.

Harry F. Byrd, Sr. Visitor Center (Mile 51), named for the former Virginia senator, is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., from late March through late fall. It is open every day except Tuesday and Wednesday during the rest of the year, weather permitting. Visitors can learn about the creation of Shenandoah and its evolution into the park we love today through an interactive exhibit. Visit nps.gov/shen to find virtual tours, exhibits, and stories about Shenandoah.

A mobile visitor center, operated out of a colorful Sprinter van, is now serving the park's south district. The van is most often parked at Beagle Gap (Mile 99.5), but visits other areas of the park as well.

The large open area across from the visitor center is known as **Big Meadows**. This rare high-elevation meadow offers unique habitat for flora and fauna. Be sure to ask at the visitor center about ranger-led tours of Big Meadows and the surrounding area.

Park information, backcountry permits, Junior Ranger information and souvenir passport stamps are available at both visitor centers in the park. You can also find books, maps, hiking guides and other interpretive materials for sale at these locations.

If you'd like to learn more about the park, there are several publications that delve into its history, geology and wildlife. Many titles are sold at park stores managed by the Shenandoah National Park Association. Visit snbooks.org/product-category/books/ for specific titles.

STOP-OFFS

There are several stop-offs along Skyline Drive that sell souvenirs, apparel, groceries and hand-crafted items. To find out more about the locations and specific mileposts of the stop-offs, please see the "Visitor Services" chapter.

The following park regulations are intended to enhance your enjoyment of the park. They are designed to protect the park, its wildlife and its visitors. Please remember to practice Leave No Trace principles. Take your trash, and any left by others, out of the park with you, and leave the park cleaner than you found it. See the "Preservation" chapter for more information.

CAMPING

There are five campgrounds in the park. See the "Camping" chapter for more information about using the park's campgrounds. Those interested in a wilderness experience should review the regulations to obtain a permit to backcountry camp.

ELECTRIC BIKES

All classifications of electric bicycles up to 750W are allowed in Shenandoah where bicycles are already permitted. The superintendent may restrict or impose conditions upon the use of e-bikes, or close locations to the use of e-bikes as he or she deems appropriate.

FIREARMS

Visit nps.gov/learn/management/firearm_policy.htm for information about carrying firearms in the park.

FIRES

Wood fires are permitted only in existing fireplaces at campgrounds and established picnic grounds. Do not bring wood into the park. Firewood must be gathered or purchased within the park. Backcountry campers must use camp stoves.

FISHING

Fishing is allowed in the park, but specific regulations must be followed. Virginia residents aged 16 and over must have a Virginia fishing license. Non-residents 16 and older must also have a license. Visit dwr.virginia.gov/fishing to learn how to obtain a fishing license. See the "Things to Do" chapter for more information. Visit nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/fishing.htm to download a copy of the most recent fishing regulations.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES

All **motor vehicles and bicycles** must remain on paved areas. No off-road riding of any kind is permitted on trails or fire roads or in grassy, open areas. The maximum park speed limit is 35 mph.

PETS

Pets are permitted in Shenandoah but must be on a leash no more than six feet long at all times. Pets are allowed in all campgrounds and in many lodge rooms at Skyland, Big Meadows and Lewis Mountain, but not in public buildings, on conducted walks and hikes or on trails marked with a "No Pets" sign.

In developed areas, visitors must dispose of pet droppings in a trash container. Service animals are allowed in the park, at the concessioner facilities and on all trails. Check the park visitor guide or visit nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/pets.htm for a listing of trails closed to pets. *Note: There are no kennels in the park.*



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Current Park Information	(540) 999-3500	nps.gov/shen
Emergency	(800) 732-0911	
Relay Center/TDD (from VA)	(800) 828-1120	
Voice	(800) 828-1140	
Lodging Reservations (Skyland, Big Meadows, Lewis Mountain Cabins)	(877) 247-9261	goshenandoah.com
Campground Reservations	(877) 444-6777	recreation.gov
Lost & Found	(540) 999-3500	
Shenandoah National Park Association	(540) 999-3582	snbooks.org

SAFETY TIPS

Park rangers are on duty at visitor centers, campgrounds and entrance stations. Call **(800) 732-0911** for emergencies only. Rangers also patrol Skyline Drive and maintain offices throughout the park. The following tips can help you enjoy a safe vacation in Shenandoah.

FALLING

Falling is the single most common accident in the park. Always exercise extreme caution around cliff ledges, waterfalls and stream beds where rocks are algae-covered and slippery. Do not throw rocks from cliffs—it not only displaces natural features, but also can injure others below.

VANDALISM

Please take only pictures and memories home with you. Do not deface, destroy or remove any flowers, trees, shrubs, rocks or objects. Vandalism is unlawful; violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Remember, if everyone picked just one flower, whole meadows of flowers would disappear. An exception to this do-not-pick rule applies only to edible fruits, nuts and berries. Be diligent about picking only what you will eat while visiting the park.

WILDLIFE

Feeding, petting or harassing wildlife is prohibited. Animals may seem tame, but they are wild and can injure you. When you feed wildlife, they lose their fear of humans, making them easy prey for poachers and prone to being hit by cars.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water is a valuable and sometimes scarce resource. Because water levels fluctuate on the mountain, it is important to conserve it. For additional information, please see the "Preservation" chapter.

PERMITS

Free permits are required for **backcountry camping**. Backcountry permits must be obtained through **Recreation.gov** or by calling **(877) 444-6777**. They are no longer available onsite. Visit **nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/bc-permit.htm** for more information.

Special use permits including **Hang gliding** are available at Shenandoah. A \$50.00 non-refundable application fee applies and permits are valid from the date issued through December 31st of the current calendar year. For more information, see the "Things To Do" chapter.

Permit applications and instructions for hang gliding, weddings, filming, religious services and other special events can be found at **nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/special-use-permits.htm**.

HIKING

Hiking off-trail is unsafe, damages vegetation, causes erosion and creates unsightly paths. If you are having trouble on the trail, ask another hiker to seek help. Always plan ahead and pick a place to meet up, should you become separated from your party.

Be aware of standing dead trees that have perished from disease, insect and storm damage. They can topple at any time, especially on windy days, so exercise care. Be sure to take plenty of water for everyone in your group, including pets.

TICKS

To reduce your risk of being bitten by ticks, which are active year-round, stay on trails and avoid grassy, brushy areas. See the "Walking & Hiking" chapter for more information.

BEARS

Shenandoah is black bear country! Avoid encounters with bears by making noise to warn them of your approach. A loud shout or clap will often scare them away. If you do come upon a bear, do not move abruptly, which may startle him or her. Stay calm and slowly leave the area without turning your back. Always be alert.

Never get out of your car or approach a bear for a better look or for a picture. Never camp in an area that has obvious evidence of bear activity, such as digging, tracks or scat.

Keep your gear clean and free of food odor. Do not sleep near your food, garbage or your food preparation area. Campers must store food in their vehicles and backcountry campers must "bear-proof" their food by sealing it. Store any food,

toothpaste, makeup, fragrant items and soiled clothes in a bag. Use a 20-foot rope to hang the bag 10 feet above the ground and four feet from the trunk of the tree.

DRIVING

Observe posted **speed limits** while driving. Watch for turns. Be especially alert for animals crossing the road. The speed limit on Skyline Drive is 35 mph. Please observe it for both your safety and the safety of the animals. Be sure to pull completely off the road to view wildlife.

Protect your property. Lock your car and store **valuables** in the trunk. Visible valuables are easy targets for those tempted to break in. If you are having **car trouble**, try to report it to another driver who can advise a park ranger. Do not rely on cell phones, which can have limited reception in the park.



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Who's Who At The Parks ■ Visitor Services



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) is the federal custodian of Shenandoah National Park. For more information, contact Shenandoah National Park Headquarters, 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835; **(540) 999-3500**; nps.gov/shen.

DELAWARE NORTH AT SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

Delaware North is a global leader in hospitality and food service that is grounded in a family ownership. Under the leadership of Jeremy Jacobs and his three sons, Delaware North has become one of the most admired family-owned hospitality management and food service companies. With more than 60,000 associates, it's one of the largest privately owned companies. Delaware North provides lodging, food service, camping and grocery supplies, laundry, shower facilities, horseback rides and gasoline to visitors. For more information, contact Delaware North at Shenandoah National Park, P.O. Box 727, Luray, VA 22835; **(877) 247-9261**; goshenandoah.com.

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

The Shenandoah National Park Association (SNPA) was organized in 1950 as a nonprofit organization to support the interpretive and educational programs of Shenandoah National Park. The association sells maps, pamphlets, field and trail guides, and books about the human and natural history of the Blue Ridge region. Profits are channeled back into Shenan-

doah National Park primarily through support of the park's interpretive, educational and resource preservation units. For more information, contact SNPA, 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835; **(540) 999-3582**; snpbooks.org.

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK TRUST

The Shenandoah National Park Trust was established in 2004 as an official fundraising partner of Shenandoah National Park. Donations to the Trust are put to work directly to help ensure the future of Shenandoah National Park, as well as enrich the experiences of current visitors. The Trust works in concert with the park to support the park's highest priorities. These include natural and cultural resource protection, education and visitor enjoyment. As a nonprofit organization, it relies on donations to fulfill its mission. For more information or to make a donation, contact PO Box 341, Charlottesville, VA 22902; **(434) 293-2728**; snptrust.org.

POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) was founded in 1927 as a volunteer organization to maintain a portion of the Appalachian Trail. The club develops and maintains trails, as well as historic shelters and cabins, in the area. It encourages hiking and related outdoor sports, and publishes maps, guidebooks and more. For more information, contact the PATC, 118 Park Street S.E., Vienna, VA 22180; **(703) 242-0315**; patc.net.

Park visitors will find conveniently located service facilities along Skyline Drive and at park waysides and other visitor areas. Services include merchandise, food, lodging, gas and a variety of books and maps about Shenandoah National Park.

For information about attractions, restaurants, accommodations and services outside the park, contact: Shenandoah Valley Travel Association, P.O. Box 261, Luray, VA 22835, **(800) 847-4878** or visitshenandoah.org; Warrenton-Fauquier County Visitor Center, 21 Main Street, Warrenton, VA 20186, **(540) 341-0988**; Virginia Tourism Corporation, virginia.org or **(800) 847-4882**; or the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, 901 East Cary Street, P.O. Box 798, Richmond, VA 23219, **(804) 545-5600**.

ATMS & BANKS

Automated teller machines (ATMs) are available in the Dining Room Building at Skyland (Mile 41.7), at Big Meadows Lodge (Mile 51) and at Big Meadows Wayside (Mile 51.2). Banks are located outside of the park in Luray and other nearby communities.

GAS STATIONS

Only unleaded gas and oil are available at Big Meadows Wayside (Mile 51.2). There are no auto repairs or towing services. There are, however, limited emergency services, which include tire changing, lock opening, jump starts and emergency refueling. The gas station is open spring through fall only, so it's a good idea to fill your tank before entering the park, especially in winter.

Big Meadows Wayside (Mile 51.2) offers to-go food and sit-down dining, groceries, gas, camping and hiking facilities as well as an ATM and gift shop. It's open Sunday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. from late March to November.

There are also three electric vehicle charging stations, one at the Harry F. Byrd, Sr. Visitor Center and two at Skyland.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Cameras, digital memory cards and other supplies are available at both lodging facilities and waysides throughout the park.

GIFT SHOPS

Various gift and craft shops are located throughout the park. They carry hand-crafted jewelry, wood carvings, pottery, quilts and woven items. Many of these wares are produced by the skilled artisans of the Appalachian area. You will also find ecological and environmentally friendly products, including apparel, recycled paper products, cards and home décor.

LOST & FOUND

To retrieve lost items, or to turn in found articles, go to any entrance station or visitor center. If you've already left the park, send inquiries to Shenandoah National Park, Lost & Found, 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835; or call **(540) 999-3500**.

MEDICAL

The nearest hospitals are located in Front Royal, three miles north of the Front Royal Entrance Station; in Luray, 10 miles west

of the Thornton Gap Entrance Station on U.S. 211; in Fishersville, five miles west of Rockfish Gap; and in Harrisonburg, 20 miles west of Swift Run Gap.

For emergency ambulance service, call **911** or **(800) 732-0911**. Always bring a first aid kit, extra water and food when you go on long hikes.

POST OFFICE

Mail drops are located at the gift shops at Elkwallow, Skyland, Big Meadows, Lewis Mountain and Loft Mountain.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

In-park services are sometimes offered by private organizations and open to the public. Check at information desks for times and locations. Nearby communities offer religious services.

SHOWERS & LAUNDRY

Delaware North provides wheelchair-accessible, coin-operated showers and laundry near campgrounds at Big Meadows, Lewis Mountain and Loft Mountain.

SPECIAL SERVICES &

There is wheelchair access at Skyland and Big Meadows lodging and dining facilities, the Lewis Mountain Campstore and Cabins, at many comfort stations, and at the concession-operated showers at Big Meadows, Lewis Mountain and Loft Mountain campgrounds. Virtual tours can be viewed online at nps.gov/shen or by downloading Shenandoah's National Park app.

The **Limberlost Trail** (Mile 43) is fully accessible. The entire trail is a hard-packed, crushed greenstone surface and most

portions meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines for slope. Information or assistance may be obtained by calling the Virginia Relay Center at **(800) 828-1120** (TDD) from within the state or **(800) 828-1140** (voice). Or, write to Shenandoah National Park, 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835.

STORES & SUPPLIES

Souvenirs, crafts, snacks and food service are available at lodges and waysides. Waysides also sell camping supplies and groceries. Gasoline is available at Big Meadows Wayside.

Elkwallow Wayside (Mile 24.1) stocks limited groceries, camping supplies, food, souvenirs and crafts.

Big Meadows Wayside (Mile 51.2) is the place for groceries, camping supplies, gas, snacks, souvenirs and crafts. There are showers and laundry facilities at the Big Meadows campground.

Lewis Mountain Campstore (Mile 57.5) sells souvenirs, crafts, camping supplies and groceries, and has showers and laundry facilities.

Loft Mountain Wayside (Mile 79.5) is near the campground and has showers and laundry. It sells souvenirs, groceries, locally made crafts and camping supplies.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY - PLAY, STAY AND EXPLORE

For information on the region's local produce, craft beer, vineyards, working farms, orchards and farm-to-table restaurants, check out virginia.org.

■ Preservation



WILDERNESS RENEWAL

In 1976, Congress designated 40 percent of Shenandoah as wilderness, which is defined in **The Wilderness Act** as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man...." Shenandoah is part of a national system of wilderness areas on our public lands that provides refuge for both animals and humans who are drawn to these areas for inspiration, education, solitude and recreation.

Sitting by the edge of a stream or taking in a mountain vista, we begin to feel like integral parts of the natural world. Reconnecting with nature can help us escape the everyday stresses of life; however, even if you never step foot in a wilderness area, you'll still reap the benefits. For example, spring-fed waters flow from Shenandoah into rivers and streams that reach as far as the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States. Keeping this ecosystem healthy provides food, wildlife habitat and recreational access for millions of people in the region. Shenandoah's wilderness area is an experience as well as a place. While you explore the areas of the park, take notice of your surroundings and reflect on the significance of this "enduring resource."

WATER

Big Meadows is one of the few high-elevation wetlands in Virginia and is home to a diversity of plants and animals that are rarely found elsewhere in the state. Over the last decade, local population growth and other factors have more than doubled water consumption in the area. The increased usage places

additional stress on the area's natural resources.

Periods of drought place flora and fauna at risk, and we encourage you to follow a few simple practices to help conserve water in the park:

- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Turn off faucets while doing the dishes, washing your face and hands, or brushing your teeth.
- Report stuck valves or dripping faucets to a park or concessions employee.

FIRE

Resource managers understand fire is a naturally occurring phenomenon that is essential in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Pinecones from the native table mountain pine, for example, need fire



to open and release seeds that will grow into new trees. The NPS staff occasionally employs prescribed burns to maintain the vitality of forests and meadow areas. Uncontrolled fires, however, pose a threat to preserving Shenandoah's natural and cultural resources. In spring and fall, the park is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of human-caused fires. For more information, see the "Park Regulations & Safety" chapter.

POACHING

Wildlife poaching is a major concern in Shenandoah. The NPS closes portions of Skyline Drive at night during the hunting

LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave No Trace is a national program that teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly, and promotes and inspires proper stewardship of America's public lands. Many land management agencies are cooperating partners in this program. You can help minimize impacts to the natural resources and social experiences of other visitors by practicing these seven principles:

- **Plan ahead and prepare**
- **Travel and camp on durable surfaces**
- **Dispose of waste properly**
- **Leave what you find**
- **Minimize campfire impacts**
- **Respect wildlife**
- **Be considerate of other visitors**

Consider applying these principles during your travels. We always need your help in preserving our shared lands for future generations. It is the most important thing you can do for the places you love. Make the commitment to Leave No Trace today and start to make a difference. For more information, please visit LNT.org.

season to deter poachers from entering the area to hunt illegally. **Hunting is always prohibited in the park.**

AIR QUALITY

Enjoying the scenic beauty of the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont region is an integral part of the park visitor experience, and the NPS carefully monitors visibility in the park. Some of the characteristic blue haze is natural as trees release tiny water droplets and other gaseous molecules into the air. Sadly, 70 to 80 percent of the visibility degrading haze seen in Shenandoah is caused by humans. Within the last half-century, visibility has decreased by about 50 percent.

Sulfates and nitrogen oxide from power plants and other industries in Virginia and nearby states are carried to Shenandoah on air currents. Congressional legislation requires the air over Shenandoah to be the cleanest possible. To help combat a growing problem, NPS staff monitor the park's air quality.

Acid rain forms when sulfur and nitrogen by-products in the air combine with water vapor and return to the earth as acids. The acids may damage sensitive plant foliage and change the chemical balance of streams and soils. If an imbalance occurs, living things may fail to reproduce or even die. Since 1979, park staff have worked with the University of Virginia and other organizations in cooperative studies to detect and measure acid rain and its effect on the ecosystem.

With your help, and under the protection of the National Park Service, Shenandoah's natural beauty will be here for many years to come.

YOUR MONEY AT WORK

Unless you already have a pass, you must pay an entrance fee to enter Shenandoah. These fees help preserve the cultural, historical and natural resources of this unique park, and support their ongoing preservation.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act allows parks to retain a portion of collected fees for various projects, as permitted by Congress. Shenandoah invests this money in improvements. Your fees have supported many of these enhancements, including:

- Dickey Ridge Visitor Center's exhibit and film, which introduce you to the world of Shenandoah National Park, can be viewed online at nps.gov/shen.
- Construction of an ADA-compliant restroom at Byrd Visitor Center.
- The rehabilitation of campground Comfort Stations (restrooms).
- The restoration of Massanutten Lodge at Sky-

land featuring exhibits and historic furnishings that can be viewed during limited hours or virtually. See nps.gov/shen for hours.

- An extensive exhibit at the Byrd Visitor Center, which can also be viewed virtually at nps.gov/shen.
- The restoration of President Herbert Hoover's Rapidan Camp, also known as the "summer White House."
- The construction of an ADA-compliant, state-of-the-art amphitheater at Skyland.
- Preservation of park archival collections.
- Management of vegetative growth along Skyline Drive to reveal vistas of the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont Plain.

As a partner in the stewardship of Shenandoah, you are helping to ensure its survival for future generations. With your support, the park can continue to provide many more years of habitat for living organisms as well as enjoyment for visitors. This treasure is invaluable to the region and its people.

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Between 1933 and 1942, 10 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps were established within or on leased land adjacent to Shenandoah. During this time, more than 10,000 young men lived in these camps under the supervision of the Army. They worked on projects directed by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads. Their activities involved building trails, fire roads and towers, log comfort stations, picnic grounds and construction projects associated with Skyline Drive.

By the end of 1934, the CCC had built a sawmill, shingle mill, blacksmith shop and sign shop to produce materials to construct park buildings. They set up nurseries in Front Royal and Big Meadows to grow the trees and shrubs that would ultimately be used to revegetate areas disturbed by construction.

After the official establishment of the park on December 26, 1935, the CCC expanded its activities. They built and landscaped the overlooks along Skyline Drive. They also constructed the stone guardwalls. The "CCC Boys" as they were known, built hundreds of miles of trails and installed much of the infrastructure to ready the park's facilities for visitors.

These young men created the form and fabric of the new park so that future generations could find recreation here. All of their hard work is still enjoyed by visitors today.

In September 2006, at Shenandoah's annual CCC Reunion, the park dedicated a bronze CCC worker statue at Byrd Visitor Center plaza, Big Meadows (Mile Post 51). The statue was part of a campaign the group started in the 1990s to commission a bronze statue of a CCC worker from the Elliot Gantz Foundry of New York. The group's goal was to erect a reproduction of the statue in every state to commemorate the Corps' work throughout the United States. The first statue was erected in 1995 in North Higgins State Park, Roscommon, Michigan. Shenandoah National Park's bronze statue was the 32nd state commemoration.

The life-size bronze statue is loosely based on the depression-era drawing of "Iron Mike," a representative, although idealized, young man. Shirtless, dressed in denim field pants and a floppy hat, the enrollee proudly stands with his axe at rest. The statue was made possible by a gift from the Barlow family of Stanley, Virginia, in memory of Russell T. Barlow and Louise P. Barlow. Mr. Barlow was an enrollee at camp NP-2 (Big Meadows) from 1934 to 1936. Mrs. Barlow was one of three Stanley sisters who married CCC enrollees from the Big Meadows camp.

Visit the park's website to see an interactive program about the CCC: nps.gov/shen.



While scholars may debate the specific meaning of "Shenandoah," they all agree that it has something to do with the land. Ranging from "**Silver Water**" to "**Great Meadows**" and "**River of High Mountains**" to "**Daughter of the Stars**," these various definitions attest that the land inspired people like its original inhabitants; modern visitors are moved by the beauty and diversity of the park's landscape. Boasting unparalleled natural beauty, the park continues to draw visitors for rest, recreation and rejuvenation.

NATURAL SITES

Bursting with wildflowers and blueberries, **Big Meadows** is the largest area in the park, and it is almost treeless. The meadow might have been created by tundra-like conditions and later perpetuated by fire—either naturally by lightning or deliberately by native peoples—to cultivate wild berries and attract game. Deer, elk and bison likely helped keep it open, until settlers started grazing their cattle here. It's estimated that by 1900, the meadow comprised 1,000 acres!

Since the establishment of the park in 1935 and the cessation of grazing, the meadow has shrunk considerably, as it is reclaimed by trees and shrubs. To keep a 130-acre part of the meadow open, NPS staff controls woody shrubs, such as elderberry and huckleberry, by burning and mowing, thus allowing grasses and herbaceous plants to grow.

More than 270 species of plants grow in the meadow and attract the park's diverse wildlife. A variety of wildlife depends on this area, including the wetland in the meadow's center.

There is evidence of many prehistoric encampments located in the meadow. In more recent history, it was the site of one of the first **Civilian Conservation Corps camps** as well as the park dedication ceremony in 1936.

Shenandoah is part of the Appalachians, one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world and, as such, it has many unique rock formations. Some rocks exhibit **columnar jointing**, a geologic phenomenon caused by the rapid cooling of molten lava. As cooling continued, vertical fissures and cracks penetrated deeper, creating large columns of rock with four to eight sides. Columnar jointing can be seen at **Compton Peak** (Mile 10.4), **Little Devils Stairs** (Mile 19.4), **Crescent Rock Trail** (Mile 44.4), the **Limberlost Area** (Mile 43), **Franklin Cliffs** (Mile 49), **Blackrock** (Mile 51.2) and several spots on **Stony Man Mountain**.

An overview of the park's highlights would be incomplete without mentioning its **waterfalls**, which can be reached on foot and are spectacular in the spring. See the "Walking & Hiking" chapter for a list of some of the trails that lead to waterfalls.

The park also boasts over **70 scenic overlooks**, including Hazel Mountain, Hazeltop Ridge, Pinnacles, Jewell Hollow, Spitler Knoll, along Skyline Drive, each offering breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and surrounding hills and valleys. These easily accessible pull-offs offer unparalleled views in every season and direction, and are perfect for to see sunrise and sunset, or just to stop and stretch your legs.



HISTORIC SITES

Shenandoah boasts not only a rich natural history, but also a rich human one. The park traces the lives of the area's many early settlers, and visitors can see artifacts from their habitation at that time.

Reminders of the days of the **mountain residents** can be found in the ruins of houses, barns, animal pens and fruit cellars, some more than a century old. The remnants of some 500 homes and farms are now mostly a handful of still-standing walls, an occasional chimney and more than 100 family cemeteries. There is also evidence of **American Indian** habitation; however, these sites are generally restricted to archeologists who are researching and preserving them.

History buffs will enjoy visiting and exploring **Skyland, Massanutten Lodge** and **Rapidan Camp**. The latter was built by President and Mrs. Hoover as their "Summer White House." In 1932, the Hoovers donated the 160-acre tract for inclusion in the future park. Rapidan Camp is located at the end of **Mill Prong Trail**. Visitors may hike down from **Milam Gap** (Mile 52.8) or take the van tour from the **Byrd Visitor Center** (Mile 51).

Massanutten Lodge was the home of Addie Nairn Pollock, co-owner of Skyland Resort. The lodge's living room has been historically refurnished. The lodge also houses an exhibit, **The Women of Skyland**, which documents the lives of several women who frequented the resort in the Roaring Twenties.

Although they came from very different backgrounds, they shared a common need to reach beyond many of the social barriers of the time. The lodge, located in Skyland, is a significant historical site in the park.

The **Fox family homesite** at Fox Hollow can be seen at the end of a short hike from the **Dickey Ridge Visitor Center** (Mile 4.6). A guidebook explaining the site is available at the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center or the trailhead.

A 1.5-mile hike down a steep trail (Mile 37.9) leads to **Corbin Cabin**, which was built in 1909 by George T. Corbin. Corbin was forced to vacate the land on which the cabin sits in 1938, when the land was incorporated into Shenandoah National Park. The cabin is one of a few buildings preserved during the creation of the park, and still stands despite recent forest fires. The cabin, and several others, are now maintained by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and can be rented by the public. Please visit patc.net for more information and to make reservations.

There are more than 100 cemeteries in the park. Some are small plots with only a few markers; while others have as many as 100 gravesites with the remains of multiple families.

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Things To Do



No matter which season you visit Shenandoah, there is always something to do or see in the park. Springtime is great for wildflower viewing, while summer is best for camping and other outdoor activities. Autumn brings colorful fall foliage. Snow is not uncommon in the winter, and signs of wildlife abound when the park is blanketed in white. This chapter captures the seasonal highlights within the park.

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

Delaware North sponsors a variety of special activities and programs at Big Meadows and Skyland throughout the season. Starting in late May, attend a twilight hike at Big Meadows Area. Other options include monthly wine

tastings or basket-making workshops at Big Meadows Lodge; the popular night skies presentations; Basic Outdoor Skills programs; craft making and more. Call Delaware North at Shenandoah National Park at (877) 247-9261, or check out the current events on goshenandoah.com.

Ranger-guided programs give visitors the opportunity to explore Shenandoah with a Ranger and are typically offered in the spring, summer, and fall. You can also attend a virtual program at nps.gov/shen. Rapidan Camp, a National Historic Landmark and the rustic getaway of President Herbert Hoover is available to tour. Reservations are required. Visit recreation.gov for more details.

BIRDWATCHING

Shenandoah National Park is an excellent location to birdwatch. More than 190 species of resident and transient birds are known to live in or visit the park. Approximately half of these species breed here, including 18 species of warblers. Roughly 30 of the species—including tufted titmice, red-tailed hawks, Carolina chickadees, wild turkeys and barred owls—are year-round residents.

Due to the park's location along the crest of the Blue Ridge and the extent of the forested habitat, Shenandoah provides essential habitat for neotropical migratory birds, both for nesting and as a travel corridor. Certain areas, such as Big Meadows, support species that cannot be found anywhere else in the park.

FUN FACTS



Q. WHAT TYPES OF HIKES DOES THE PARK OFFER?

A. There are trails for all levels. Some lead to a waterfall or viewpoint, while others penetrate deep into the forest and wilderness. Be sure to take plenty of water, wear appropriate shoes and allow about an hour for each mile. Most hikes to waterfalls are long and strenuous, so be sure to select a hike of the proper level.



BYRD VISITOR CENTER EXHIBIT

Byrd Visitor Center (Mile 51) is a great place to stop for information, films, a park store and exhibits. *Within a Day's Drive of Millions*, a highly interactive exhibit, tells the stories of Shenandoah's establishment and development, including the controversial acquisition of privately owned land, the work of the **Civilian Conservation Corps** and the little-known story of desegregation in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the exhibit, interactive maps highlight the locations of former homesites. Hundreds of historic photographs and documents take visitors through the decades of the park's past, offering a great way to pay homage to that period.

Visit a model of the Lewis Mountain Camp Store, the center of Shenandoah's historic journey through desegregation. Experience the shift in the nation's environmental ethics during the 1970s and follow its impacts to the



present day. Plan your own wilderness experience in Shenandoah National Park through an interactive touchscreen program.

As each decade unfolds, Shenandoah's landscape changes in reflection of America's values. This exhibit chronicles those changes and involves you in the Shenandoah of the future. Visit the Byrd Visitor Center in person or virtually at nps.gov/shen!

KIDS IN PARKS TRACK TRAILS

Kids in Parks has an expanding network of family-friendly outdoor adventures called TRACK Trails. Each TRACK Trail features self-guided brochures and signs that turn any visit into an extraordinary experience. At Shenandoah, the Limberlost TRACK Trail (Mile 43) is a 1.3-mile loop built for visitors of all ages and abilities. This gentle trail winds through sprawling mountain laurel, tall oaks, and feathery ferns. It's home to all sorts of creatures. Discover many changes and explore the wonders of Limberlost using your senses and imagination.

PICNICKING

Get back to nature and take advantage of one of Shenandoah's **picnic areas**, located at **Dickey Ridge** (Mile 4.6), **Elkwallo** (Mile 24.1), **Pinnacles** (Mile 36.7), **Big Meadows** (Mile 51.2), **Lewis Mountain** (Mile 57.5), **South River** (Mile 62.8) and **Dundo** (Mile 83.7). Each picnic area features tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains and restrooms. *Note: The picnic area at Dundo has vault toilets only and is under a boil water advisory.*

HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding, permitted on designated trails, is a wonderful way to



enjoy Shenandoah. You can also sign up to take a guided ride on horses or ponies through wooded trails at Skyland Stables (mile 42.5 on Skyline Drive). For more information, visit goshenandoah.com.

BICYCLING

Bicycling is permitted only on Skyline Drive and on paved roads in developed areas. Bikes are forbidden on backcountry trails and fire roads. Cyclists must comply with all applicable traffic regulations and should stay on the extreme right side of the road. Since Skyline Drive is a two-lane, two-way roadway and does not have bike paths, cyclists must ride single file. When there's fog or limited visibility, cyclists must mount a white light on the front wheel (visible from at least 500 feet) and a red light or red reflector (visible from at least 200 feet) on the back of the bike.

SWIMMING

Swimming is permitted in Shenandoah streams. Swim at your own risk, but be sure to wear old tennis shoes or water

shoes, as the rocks underwater can be sharp and slippery.

HANG GLIDING

Hang gliding and paragliding are authorized with an advanced permit at several locations within Shenandoah. You can obtain applications and instructions at nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/special-use-permits.htm. A \$50.00 non-refundable application fee is required. Permits are valid from the date issued through December 31st of the current calendar year and must be renewed annually.

FISHING

All streams in the park are open for fishing year-round. Shenandoah has over 70 fishable streams, a subset of which are open for harvest (currently 17). Anglers must use a single-hooked, artificial lure (with or without barbs). The minimum size limit is nine inches for brook trout and seven inches for brown and rainbow trout. The maximum creel limit is six fish per day. Size and creel limits for other game fish species follow

Virginia regulations. A Virginia fishing license is required for anyone 16 and older fishing at the park. A license may be purchased at Big Meadows Wayside, local sporting goods stores, or online at dwr.virginia.gov.

Ethical fishing techniques are critical to sustaining the park's native brook trout populations. For more detailed information, including a list of streams open for harvest, consult the updated *Recreational Fishing* brochure available at entrance stations, visitor centers, campgrounds and the park website. Fishing guides or paid instructors must obtain a commercial use authorization from the park superintendent before entering the park.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

Winter offers opportunities for quiet solitude in Shenandoah National Park. As the leaves fall from the trees and cooler temperatures improve visibility, valleys below and mountains beyond appear more spectacular than ever.

You'll also have a better chance of seeing **woodland animals** like deer, squirrels and turkeys as they forage for food. Foxes and bobcats are active in winter too. **Look for tracks** of mice, rabbits and other animals.

Winter snowfall sometimes makes **cross-country skiing** and **snowshoeing** possible on certain hiking trails or fire roads. Visitors must bring their own gear.

Winter in Shenandoah is unpredictable. Temperatures are usually cooler in the mountains than in the valley and weather conditions can change quickly. What falls as rain in the valley can turn to ice and snow on the mountain. Winter storms in Shenandoah may leave several inches of snow or ice on the ground.



BE SAFE THIS WINTER

- **Find out current weather and road conditions.** Call the park at (540) 999-3500.
- **Enter the park with a full tank of gas and supplies.**
- **Drive a winterized car with snow tires.**
- **Obey the 35-mph speed limit.** Weather conditions may dictate slower speeds.
- **Watch out for animals and construction crews on Skyline Drive.**
- **Dress for temperatures 10-15°F cooler at higher elevations.**
- **Carry a first-aid kit, snacks, water, maps and extra clothing.**

Be prepared for quick changes in the weather. **Wear warm, layered clothing.** Plan ahead so you don't have to rely on routine ranger patrols and note that facilities are not open in winter. Enter the park with a full tank of gas, first aid kit, snacks, water and maps. Always share the details of your trip with a friend or family member so that help can be summoned if you don't return as scheduled. For current weather and road conditions, call (540) 999-3500.

Note: Most services and facilities are closed from late fall to early spring. Portions of Skyline Drive are periodically closed due to inclement weather and at night during deer hunting season. Byrd Visitor Center is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday in winter, weather and road conditions permitting. Contact the park for hours of operation and more information.

Exploring The Area



The Shenandoah Valley is full of inviting small towns and bustling downtown districts for you to explore. They offer a diversity of lodging options that will make it easier to extend your stay. Whether you're looking for a history lesson, a distillery tour, boutique shopping or fun family activities, the gateway communities of Shenandoah National Park are worth a visit. To plan your next trip, visit virginia.org.

FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA

As the northern gateway to the Shenandoah Valley (and Shenandoah National Park), Front Royal, Virginia is a town built around getting out and exploring. The "canoeing capital of Virginia," Front Royal is home to the **Shenandoah River State Park**, where you can rent a kayak or canoe and take in the region's beauty from the water.

A half-dozen scenic and award-winning golf courses draw amateurs and pros alike to Front Royal, and the downtown has no shortage of delicious eateries, vintage boutiques, and quirky souvenir shops.

Shenandoah National Park has multiple campgrounds, with sites available for both RVs and tent campers. If you're looking for something a little less rustic, there are luxury cabins available for rent in Shenandoah River State Park, and Front Royal boasts some of the quaintest bed and breakfasts on the East Coast.

LURAY, VIRGINIA

The hilly mountain town of Luray dates back to the early 19th century, and stepping onto its charming downtown streets is like stepping back in time. Detailed brick architecture and storefronts are home to modern

boutiques, antique stores, and Victorian and retro-inspired shops and restaurants.

Luray is also home to the most popular and largest system of caverns in the eastern U.S. **Luray Caverns**, known as "geology's hall of fame," will leave visitors marveling at cathedral-sized rooms, giant stone formations and countless natural wonders.

GROTTOES, VIRGINIA

In 1804, a man named Bernard Weyer was trying to retrieve a hunting trap from a groundhog hole when he discovered an enormous system of caverns. A tourism economy sprung up around the caves, known as Weyers Cave, **Grottoes of the Shenandoah**, and – more recently – Grand Caverns.

The caverns hold the distinction of being the oldest continually operational show cave in the United States, and were even visited by both Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War (some of their signatures are still visible on the cave walls today).

There's plenty to do in Grottoes above ground, too. Hike or bike through Grand Caverns Park and Mountain View Park, spend some time at the Grand Caverns swimming pool, or grab your rod and reel and head for the banks of the Shenandoah River.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Located just west of the park, Shenandoah County comprises a number of picturesque towns along Route 11, as well as a couple nestled in the mountains. This diverse region offers year-round options that will appeal to everyone in your party.



Visit Bryce Resort in Mount Jackson on skis during the winter or a mountain bike in the summer. Explore the historic homes and **Shenandoah Valley Cultural Heritage Museum** in Edinburg. Civil War buffs won't want to miss the **Virginia Museum of the Civil War**. Woodstock is Virginia's fourth oldest town and home of the Woodstock Tower, overlook of the "seven bends" of the Shenandoah River.

If you have time, follow the **Shenandoah Spirits Trail** that connects the county's wineries, breweries, distilleries, and cideries. Along the way you'll find award-winning farm-to-table restaurants to sate your cravings. Or just stop by the **Route 11 Potato Chip** factory to try some gourmet potato chips, lovingly made in small batches. Check out visitshenandoahcounty.com for more information or to obtain an area visitor guide.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

Just a short drive from the park, Charlottesville's small-town feel and big-city amenities will charm you. On a stroll through

the city's historic streets, you'll find local wineries, independent bookstores and carefully curated galleries. It's home to first-rate museums like the **Virginia Discovery Museum**, where hands-on exhibits and activities will keep kids entertained for hours—a great way to spend a rainy day!

Charlottesville also boasts championship golf courses designed by top architects, and waterways such as Mint Springs, Chris Greene Lake, and Walnut Creek Park, which are open to swimming, canoeing and fishing.

Charlottesville is a draw for history buffs, boasting the historic home of Virginia's most famous son: Thomas Jefferson. His legacy is preserved at Charlottesville's two UNESCO World Heritage Sites—his home, **Monticello**, and the **University of Virginia**, which opened a year before its founding father's death. It took decades to complete the construction of the plantation and its grand house. Tours of Monticello are available, and the gardens and grounds are open to visitors year-round. You'll find more ideas at visitcharlottesville.org.

Camping



Shenandoah's campgrounds offer both first-come, first-served campsites, as well as reservable sites, from spring through late fall (the "peak season"). Family sites (up to six people) and group sites are available, as well as generator-free sites. Reservations may be made up to six months in advance by visiting recreation.gov or by calling (877) 444-6777. All campgrounds have a 30-night limit, except Big Meadows, which has a 14-night limit during the peak season. All campgrounds allow pets, but they must be leashed at all times. There are no hookups. Opening and closing dates vary each year. For specific dates, visit nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/camping. Rates are subject to change.

Mathews Arm (Mile 22.1) Rate is \$30 per night. There are 165 sites, flush toilets and a dump station. No showers or laundry facilities are available. Find camping supplies at nearby Elkwallow Wayside.

Big Meadows (Mile 51.2) Group campsites can hold seven to 15 people for \$75 per night and standard sites—limited to six people—cost \$30 per night. Big Meadows has 221 sites, flush toilets, coin showers, coin laundry, a dump station and a camp store.

Lewis Mountain (Mile 57.5) All sites are \$30 per night. This campground, the smallest in the park, has 30 sites, flush toilets, coin showers, coin laundry and a camp store.

Loft Mountain (Mile 79.5) Rate is \$30 per night. This campground has 207 sites, flush toilets, coin showers, coin laundry, a dump station and a camp store.

Dundo Group Campground is a small campground with three total sites for \$75 per night. The Appalachian Trail passes through the campground, and all sites include fire rings and picnic tables. Dundo Picnic Grounds is currently under a boil water advisory. Visit nps.gov/shen for updates. *Visit gocampingamerica.com for additional RV information.

INVASIVE SPECIES: THE EMERALD ASH BORER

Visitors may not bring outside firewood into Shenandoah National Park unless it is USDA-certified kiln dried. The Emerald Ash Borer, a non-native beetle from Asia discovered in the U.S. in 2002, feeds on the vascular tissue of ash trees resulting in tree mortality. Ash trees are a significant component of the park. This destructive beetle has already been found in the park and efforts are underway to protect ash populations. You can help to minimize the chance of transporting this beetle, as well as other plant pests and disease, into the park by purchasing firewood from within the park only. You may also gather dead and down wood inside the park, or bring your own charcoal if you are planning to cook.



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Do you really need RV insurance on your travel trailer?

As RVers, we know the allure of the open road and the freedom it offers. However, with freedom comes responsibility, including the important decision of securing insurance.

What is RV insurance?

RV insurance is designed to cover various types of RVs, including travel trailers, toy haulers, motor homes, fifth wheels, and camper vans. While liability insurance is not required for most travel trailers, having RV coverage could benefit you and your adventures.

How can RV insurance protect you?

- **Protection against accidents:** May provide financial protection for repair costs, medical expenses, and liability in case of an accident.
- **Coverage for theft and vandalism:** Could help with repairs or replace your trailer with less out-of-pocket expenses if it's lost or stolen.
- **Natural disasters and weather events:** May cover the cost of damage from storms, floods, or other natural disasters.

Is your travel trailer covered under your home or auto insurance?

While your home or auto policy can protect your trailer in certain instances, it can also leave you with gaps in your coverage.

For example, your auto policy may only cover your trailer while you're on the road, not if you're parked or at a campsite. The same goes for home insurance—if you're on your home's property it might be covered, but damage from a storm at a campground wouldn't be.

What specialized coverages does Progressive offer?

Progressive offers a variety of specialized coverages that aren't included on a standard auto insurance policy like:

- **Roof Protection Plus®:** Covers repairs or replacements for RV roofs, including if the cause is wear and tear.*
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Confidence on the road

Having RV insurance gives you confidence you're protected no matter where you roam. From remote national parks to bustling campgrounds, RV insurance ensures you have the support and financial protection you need if something goes wrong.

While insurance for your travel trailer may not be legally required, it's a crucial investment in protecting your RV, finances, and peace of mind.

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Walking & Hiking



Ambling along Shenandoah's trails is one of the best ways to experience the park. Stop by a visitor center for trail recommendations and hiking maps. Day-hiking maps are free at entrance stations and visitor centers and are also downloadable from the park website. Topographical maps are available for sale at visitor centers, gift shops and online at snpbooks.org. When hiking, always stay on trails and pay attention to the concrete posts found at trail intersections. Near the top of the posts are metal bands indicating the trail name, direction and distance. All trails also have blazes, which are marks made on trees with paint. The color of the blaze indicates the following:

White Blaze: Appalachian Trail

Yellow Blaze: Open to hikers and horseback riders

Blue Blaze: Open to hikers only

Red Orange Blaze: Park boundary

Double Blaze: Indicates a sharp turn or change in direction.

Many of Shenandoah's more than 500 miles of hiking trails begin at Skyline Drive. Some trails lead to a waterfall or viewpoint. Others penetrate deep into the forest and wilderness. They descend to a point of interest and then climb back out again. Be sure to take plenty of water, appropriate shoes, and allow about an hour for each mile.

As you hike through Shenandoah's forests, notice the thriving birches, maples and white pines. Look for wildflowers, like bluebells and violets in spring and yarrow and wild columbine in summer. Discover ferns and mushrooms and listen for and spot birds in the trees.

Always carry a map, plenty of drinking water and food. To avoid blisters, wear sturdy, comfortable, broken-in hiking shoes and quality outdoor socks. On longer hikes, bring extra clothing and rain gear (showers are fairly common in the summer). Always pack out any litter, including cigarette butts.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Please practice Leave No Trace principles and guidelines while exploring Shenandoah National Park, especially by keeping to hiking trails with durable surfaces. Leave the trails as you found them, and be considerate of those visitors who will follow you. Review the seven principles of Leave No Trace in the "Preservation" chapter. Whether you are hiking and camping in Shenandoah National Park's wilderness or driving along Skyline Drive for an afternoon, following Leave No Trace principles and guidelines will help protect the park and preserve the park experience for you and future generations of visitors.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL

In 1921, conservationist Benton MacKaye proposed an "experiment in regional planning"—the Appalachian Trail. Work began the following year and, by 1937, the trail—**2,176 miles in length**—reached completion. The first person walked its entire length, from Georgia to Maine, in 1948. Every year, 300 to 400 hikers repeat the feat. Notable hikers have included a six-year-old boy, several octogenarians and a blind man with his service dog. The entire trip takes four to six months to complete.



The trail crosses 14 states, eight national forests, two national parks and 15 major rivers. Elevations range from 6,642 feet at Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to near sea level in the Hudson River Valley. Some of the most impressive sections are found along the 105 miles that traverse Shenandoah National Park. For more information about the Appalachian Trail, visit nps.gov/appa.

OLD RAG AREA

From March 1 to November 30, 2022, visitors who wish to use trails in the **Old Rag Area** (Saddle, Ridge, and Ridge Access trails) will need to purchase an Old Rag day-use ticket in advance, in addition to an entrance pass. This is a pilot project intended to help evaluate and adapt to a permanent system in the future. Learn more at nps.gov/shen/plan-yourvisit/faqs-oldrag.htm.

TICKS

To prevent ticks from latching on to you, tuck shirts into pants and tuck pants into socks. After hiking, thoroughly wash and inspect yourself. Wear light colors so ticks can be easily seen and use insect repellent. If a tick attaches itself to your skin, remove

it with fine-pointed tweezers. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. Rarely does part of the tick remain in the skin; if this occurs, seek medical attention.

Lyme and other serious diseases can be transmitted by deer ticks. Cases are documented each year in the park. The best way to prevent disease is to practice frequent tick checks. Some ticks are smaller than a pinhead. Check yourself carefully, and be aware of the possibility of a tick-borne illness. If you become ill after your visit, even if you haven't found any evidence of ticks, tell your physician you were in tick habitat.

TRAIL MAPS

Detailed topographic maps are available at visitor information centers and entrance stations, concessioner locations and by mail from the Shenandoah National Park Association, 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835; **(540) 999-3582**, and online at snpbooks.org. Free maps for day hikes are available at visitor centers and entrance stations. To plan your trip before arriving at the park, download maps at nps.gov/shen. The park also offers **Backcountry Camping Trip Guides** online.

DAY HIKES

Trail Trailhead	Description	Round-trip Distance Time	Difficulty Elevation Gain
Rip Rap Loop Mile 92.1	This hidden gem is characterized by outstanding geology, exceptional scenic views, stream crossings, cascade and swimming hole. Rarely crowded. Boundary access is being resolved at Rip Rap and Pocosin intersection. Use the Skyline Drive trailheads to hike these trails.	9.8 miles 9 hours	Very strenuous Significant elevation
Overall Run Falls Mile 22.2	This long, steep trail is worth walking; it leads to a spectacular view of the tallest falls in the park (93 feet). Valley views. In a dry year, there may be little water.	4.7 miles 5 hours	Strenuous 1,850 feet
Mary's Rock Trail from Meadow Spring Mile 31.6	This winding trail climbs up through the forest to a rock ledge. Spectacular view to the west, as far as the Allegheny Mountains.	2.8 miles 2 hours	Moderate to Difficult 640 feet
Whiteoak Canyon Mile 42.6	Hike to the first of six falls in Whiteoak Canyon. This trail crosses the Limerlost Trail and passes through beautiful forest and gorge. Hikers can access this trail from the Park's boundary off Route 600.	4.6 miles 4.25 hours	Moderate to Strenuous 1,040 feet
Limerlost Mile 43	The Limerlost Trail has a crushed greenstone walkway and a gentle grade. People of all ages come here to see birds, flowers, new tree growth and find a sense of peace.	1.3 miles circuit 1.0 hour	Easy 100 feet
Upper Hawksbill Mountain Summit Mile 45.5	Rocky trail to the summit of the park's highest peak at 4,049 feet, where rare balsam fir and red spruce can be seen.	2.1 miles 2.0 hours	Moderate 520 feet
Dark Hollow Falls Mile 50.7	Excellent view of Dark Hollow Falls. The waterfall is a series of frothing cascades.	1.4 miles 1.5 hours	Moderate/ Steep Return 440 feet
South River Falls Mile 62.8	Fairly steep trail through lush woods with view of the falls. Longer hikes available.	1.6 miles 2.25 hours	Moderate 850 feet
Blackrock Summit Mile 84.8	Outstanding views and rock outcroppings. You'll stay awhile at this mammoth pile of quartzite rocks.	1.0 mile 1.25 hours	Easy 175 feet
Fox Hollow Trail Mile 4.6	The trail passes the old homesite of the Fox family, remnants of rock piles and a cemetery. The trail is beautiful, passing through forests and wildflowers and is good for kids.	1.2 miles 1.25 hours	Easy to Moderate 310 feet
Stony Man Trail Mile 41.7	This trail, one of the loveliest in the park, passes ferns, wildflowers, hardwoods and rare red spruce and balsam fir. The westward view, from Stony Man's "forehead," is unforgettable.	1.6 miles 1.5 hours	Easy to Moderate 340 feet
Rapidan Camp Hike Mile 52.4	Take the Appalachian Trail to Mill Prong Trail, follow it downhill to historic Camp Rapidan, President Hoover's rustic getaway.	4 miles roundtrip 3 hours	Moderate 870 feet

Note: Many trails have downloadable maps which can be found at www.nps.gov/thingstodo

History & Culture



FORMATION OF THE REGION

The geologic story of Shenandoah National Park began over 1 billion years ago. Molten magma, miles beneath the earth's surface, slowly solidified to become the "basement rock," or core, of what we know today as the Blue Ridge Mountains. For the next 500 million years, erosion and the uplifting of the earth's crust exposed the granitic basement rock. You can see the granite component of this rock in Old Rag Mountain and its surroundings.

Over millions of years, the uplift of the earth's crust formed deep cracks in the granite, which led to volcanic activity. For centuries, molten basaltic lava burst forth and poured over the land, forming a smooth, flat plain called the "Catoclin Formation." (The bedrock underlying Big Meadows was formed by at least 12 of these lava flows, which collectively are approximately 1,800-feet thick.) The cooling and contraction of the lava produced a network of polygonal cracks, or columnar jointing. Please see the "Sights To See" chapter for more information.

THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

When **continental drift** (the separation of the Americas from the continents of Europe and Africa) began about 600 million years ago, it formed a broad, shallow depression from Alabama to Newfoundland. For 300 million years, an ancient sea flooded the area that is now the Appalachian Mountains. Layers of water-borne sediments accumulated on the ocean floor, followed by limestone

sediments composed of fossilized marine animals and shells. The sediments were subjected to heat and pressure which eventually compressed the two layers into metamorphic rock.

As a result of the eons-old shifting of the earth's **tectonic** or **crustal plates**, North America and Africa collided. This re-elevated and fractured the sea floor, causing the older, underlying layer of metamorphic rock to tilt upward and slide over the younger layer, creating the historically towering mountain range that we call the Appalachians.

For 250 million years, the powerful forces of wind, water and frost have worn away the Appalachians, a range which once rivaled the elevations of the Rockies. These forces continue to create and refine the spectacular scenery of Shenandoah National Park. Water runoff, as demonstrated by the "500-year" rainstorm of June 1995, has carved the mountains' distinctive alternating pattern of ridges and valleys. As you explore the park, look for signs of its geologic history and how wind, water, frost and ice continue to sculpt the land.

HUMAN HISTORY

The post-ice Age people who knew these lands were hunters and gatherers. They were nomads who moved with the seasons, picking nuts and berries and hunting caribou, elk and musk ox with spears and clubs. They had no permanent villages in the area that is now Shenandoah National Park, but stayed in encampments for short periods of time.

Among the many native tribes living in and around the park area were the **Monacans** and the **Manahoacs**, who lived in the region just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. These were the tribes that explorer **John Lederer**, a German physician and scholar, encountered on his journey to the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669.

Around 1650, the tribes began suffering from new diseases, including smallpox, measles and tuberculosis, introduced by French and Dutch fur traders and early Tidewater pioneers. It is estimated that 2,000 Monacans and Manahoacs lived in the region, but by 1730 most of them had died or moved away.

It is possible that Lederer was not the first European explorer to visit the Blue Ridge Mountains. **Captain John Smith** explored the Rappahannock River in 1608 and may have reached what is now Shenandoah National Park, but Lederer was the first to leave a written account of his journey. With the help of native guides, Lederer reached the crest of the mountains on March 18, 1669, and then spent six days hiking through the snow, "hoping to find some passage through the Mountains." He described steep slopes, thick brambles and a forest teeming with wild game.

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS

In 1716, **Governor Alexander Spotswood** led a well-supplied party of 63 men from Germanna, near present-day Fredericksburg, Virginia, across the mountains to the Shenandoah River and back. Spotswood was eager to encourage settlement in the area before the French arrived to begin their own settlements. He initiated a generous land grant program that exempted

settlers from taxes and attracted thousands into the area. Germans from Pennsylvania, as well as the English and Scotch-Irish from Virginia's Tidewater region, began settling in the Shenandoah Valley.

USING THE LAND

The settlers moved into a forest rich with chestnut trees and wild game. By 1790, there were about 67,000 people in the area, most of whom lived in the lower Shenandoah Valley. By 1800, many small industries—such as tanneries and cider presses—were established. Mills, fueled by the resources of the area's mountains, provided work and markets for goods. Absentee landlords and corporations that had been formed to extract mineral deposits and timber impacted the natural resources. Bison, elk and wolves were extirpated and deer, bear and turkey became rare.

The demands on the land began to take a toll. During the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the fortunes of the people of the Blue Ridge steadily declined.

Chestnut blight arrived in 1904, carried into the United States by imported Chinese chestnut trees. With the death of the chestnut in much of the east over the next 30 years, a prime source of income rapidly vanished. About half the people had moved off the Blue Ridge by 1925, just as plans began to establish a national park here. Severe drought and a widespread epidemic of hog cholera furthered the economic plight of a rural population, moving into the Great Depression.

THE CCC

In 1933, more than two years before the park was formally established, two **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**

camp were set up to help build visitor amenities. The CCC was one of the public works programs that Roosevelt created within months of taking office. In 1933, the first two CCC camps located in national parks were established at Skyland and Big Meadows. Congress took advantage of the future park's proximity to Washington, D.C., and used it to demonstrate Roosevelt's Depression cures. In August 1933, the president took a highly publicized whirlwind tour through Shenandoah's camps to bolster public confidence in his **New Deal**.

SKYLINE DRIVE

The construction of Skyline Drive started on July 18, 1931, before the park was established. It was initiated as a drought-relief measure by President Herbert Hoover who had a fishing camp in the area. The road was first built by contractors who hired local farmers needing work away from the farm because of crop failures. In 1934, part of Skyline Drive opened temporarily to eager and curious visitors.

The road was essentially finished on August 29, 1939. Most of the picnic grounds, comfort stations, overlooks and landscaping were built by the CCC. The cost of building this roadway was approximately \$5 million at the time—almost \$100 million today.

SHENANDOAH TODAY

In the intervening decades, the forest grew and wildlife began to proliferate. After more than 8,000 years of human use, Shenandoah was returned to its more natural state and has become one of the most beautiful areas in the National Park System. In September 1997, Skyline Drive Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

More than 300 buildings and structures along Skyline Drive are listed in the Register as representative of the "best of the 1930s." In 2008, Skyline Drive was designated a **National Historic Landmark**. It also has the distinction of being one of the most popular scenic byways in the country. With your assistance, the NPS can protect and preserve the cultural and natural resources of the park.



Lodging & Dining



Shenandoah invites visitors to enjoy an array of lodging and dining options. From the comfortable accommodations at Skyland to the trailside huts along the Appalachian Trail, there is a place for all tastes.

Skyland and Big Meadows Lodge hold events throughout the season, including Virginia wine tastings, culinary events, night sky programs and twilight hikes. There are numerous other activities at the park to choose from, too. Among them are **whiskey-wine shuttle** and **basket making workshops**. And, whether you are a novice or a veteran, anyone with a sense of adventure would probably enjoy the rock climbing/rappelling programs and guided hikes led by the Shenandoah mountain guides.

For a full event schedule and to make lodging reservations, call (877) 247-9261 or visit goshenandoah.com. All Delaware North facilities accept American Express, MasterCard, VISA and Discover. All public areas and lodging accommodations are smoke-free environments.

All of the 285 rooms throughout each lodge have recently been upgraded including new mattresses and soft goods. Limited Wi-Fi is available in the public areas at Skyland and Big Meadows. The dining rooms in Skyland and Big Meadows were refurbished as well. Chefs at all of the restaurants in the park worked on updating the menus, incorporating ingredients sourced from local farms and suppliers. **Skyland** (Mile 41.7) offers accommodations with the ambiance of the past

century reflected in its rustic cabins. There are 178 guest rooms, some of which have limited accessibility for those with disabilities. There is a grab-and-go food counter, a gift shop, horseback-riding, wine-tasting and culinary events. There are TVs in the preferred and premium rooms, and some traditional rooms. Skyland is a pet-friendly facility that is open early April to late November.

The Skyland dining room serves modern takes on regional dishes as well as their signature blackberry ice cream pie.

Big Meadows Lodge (Mile 51) is named for the large meadow near the resort. There are 27 rooms in the historic lodge and 72 rooms in both rustic cabins and traditional-style buildings, some with suites and televisions. Big Meadows is a pet-friendly facility. Vehicle fuel is available at Big Meadows Wayside. There is also entertainment on some nights. Opens mid-April. Like the Skyland dining room (B L D), Big Meadows offers regional dishes, such as fried chicken, trout, ribs and blackberry ice cream pie.

Lewis Mountain Cabins (Mile 57.5) welcomes you with furnished bedrooms, but no refrigeration. Guests must bring their own cooking utensils and cold storage for food. Units have private baths, lights, heat, towels and linens, and there is a camp store that sells basic food items. Lewis is a pet-friendly facility. The cabins are open from early-April through late November. Eight **trailside huts** along the Appalachian Trail at intervals of eight to 14 miles are open to long-distance hikers who pos-



sess a valid backcountry camping permit for three or more nights. These huts are operated by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). They are located at **Gravel Springs** (Mile 17.6), **Pass Mountain** (Mile 31.6), **Byrds Nest #3** (Mile 33.9), **Rock Spring** (Mile 48.1), **Bearfence** (Mile 56.8), **Hightop** (Mile 68.6), **Pinefield** (Mile 75.2) and **Blackrock** (Mile 87.2).

The PATC operates six fully enclosed **backcountry cabins**. Each cabin has a table and fireplace, bunks for eight to 12 people, a nearby spring and a pit toilet. The cabins are located at **Range View** (Mile 22.1), **Corbin** (Mile 37.9), **Rock Spring** (Mile 48.1), **Pocosin** (Mile 59.5), **Doyles River** (Mile 81.1) and **Jones Mountain**. These cabins are kept locked, so you must obtain a key from PATC by

mail prior to your visit. Reservations can be made by contacting PATC, 118 Park Street SE, Vienna, VA 22180; (703) 242-0315 or patc.net.

Waysides (B L D) along Skyline Drive feature lunch counters, snack bars, stores and souvenirs. **Elkwallow Wayside** (Mile 24.1) is open early April to early November. **Big Meadows Wayside** (Mile 51.2) is open late March through mid-November and includes to-go food and sit-down dining. **Loft Mountain Wayside** (Mile 79.5) is open mid-April to early November.



WHAT WAS THE
HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TRIP?
TELL US! @OhRanger

Nature & Wildlife



Shenandoah boasts more species of plants than all the countries of Europe combined! Over the past seven decades, Shenandoah has seen the return of many trees, flowers and animals native to the area. As the earth reclaims what had been temporarily fashioned into farmland, the forest gains an ever-increasing foothold. A wildlife and plant observation log is kept at the Byrd Visitor Center desk. We encourage you to add your sightings to the list.

FLOWERS

There are more than 1,100 species of flowering plants in Shenandoah, including 18 varieties of **orchids**. The march of flowers begins with the arrival of spring, when longer days and warmer temperatures breed **bloodroot** and **hepatica**. In April, the trillium, dogwood and violets bloom, while birds court and build nests. May brings azaleas, golden ragwort, more violets and marsh marigold. From June to August, there is a vivid succession of **black-eyed susans**, delicate **Queen Anne's lace**, **asters**, **mountain laurel** and **evening primrose**. Changing colors of the leaves in the fall compete with **asters**, **wild sunflowers** and **goldenrod**.

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is a native plant species that stands from one to three feet in height. With clusters of orange flowers on the top, it is great subject matter for photography. Other native plants that can be found in the park include the following:

Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) is a blue, bell-like flower that blooms in the latter half of the summer. It grows in dry grasslands, on cliffs and in shallow soil.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) gets its name from the red sap contained in the stout rhizomes (root-like stalks).

TREES

Shenandoah nurtures about 100 species of trees, 47 species of ferns and mosses, and hundreds of different fungi. This region was once dominated by the American chestnut and a variety of oak trees. Today, oak and hickory are dominant in the park. The **black locust** is generally the first tree to grow in fields and meadows. **Pitch pine**, **Virginia pine** and **scrub oak** dot the dry slopes of the southern section of the park, while cove hardwoods such as **red oak**, **ash** and **basswood** flourish along the streams.

The **American chestnut** (*Castanea dentata*) accounted for about a quarter of all the trees in Shenandoah when Europeans first arrived here. It was a valuable, fast-growing tree, with an average height of about 80 feet, and a trunk with a diameter of three to four feet. Durable and straight-grained, its wood was popular for constructing homes and its nuts were eaten by squirrels, turkey and people.

By 1904, a **fungus**, *Endothia parasitica*, found its way to the United States. Quickly spread by insects and wind, it entered the bark of the tree, caused reddening and splitting, and ultimately death.

This chestnut blight affected the entire range of chestnuts in America, and by the early 1930s, the trees were almost extinct. Remains of this once-beautiful tree can be found in the park today. Sprouts grow from old stumps to even produce a few chestnuts before succumbing to the blight.

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WATCHABLE WILDLIFE



BLACK BEAR

Bears like to feed on juicy plant parts, insect larvae, fruits, nuts, acorns and occasionally meat. To survive the scarcity of food in winter, bears cut their metabolic rates in half. They don't usually hibernate but do sleep a lot. • **Weight** 200-585 lbs • **Length** 4.5-6.5 ft • **Less active** in winter.

BOBCAT

Bobcats usually avoid humans, so seeing one is a rare treat. Remaining active during the day, bobcats normally prey on smaller animals, such as rabbits and mice. In spring, bobcats give birth to between one and seven kittens. • **Weight** 10-25 lbs • **Length** 3.5 ft (including tail) • **Active** year-round.

GROUNDHOG

Also known as a woodchuck, the groundhog's short, powerful limbs and curved, thick claws are well adapted for digging. They live in burrows with two to five entrances, which are their primary means of escape from predators. Herbivorous, groundhogs primarily eat wild grasses. • **Weight** 5-8.5 lbs • **Size** 1.5-2.5 ft • **Inactive** in winter.

RACCOON

Raccoons are highly intelligent, adaptable animals. They are nocturnal and generally seen in the early morning or late evening in wooded areas. Raccoons are omnivorous, feeding primarily on small mammals, fruits, nuts, fish and insects. • **Weight** 10-30 lbs • **Length** 2-3 ft • **Active** year-round.

TURKEY VULTURE

Of all the birds soaring in the air, the most impressive may be the turkey vulture. These scavengers are most often found foraging for carrion above open country, especially within a few miles of the rocky or wooded areas that they use for nesting. • **Weight** 3.5-5 lbs • **Length** 24-28 in • **Wingspan** 6 ft • **Active** year-round.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

White-tailed deer are commonly seen along Skyline Drive grazing on green plants and woody vegetation. Their four-part stomach allows them to consume food that other mammals cannot. Deer can be active at any time of the night or day. • **Weight** 90-310 lbs • **Length** 6-7 ft • **Active** year-round.

SEASONAL CALENDAR



SPRING Spring is the time for blooming wildflowers and migrating birds. Look for hepatica, bloodroot, blue-eyed grass, golden ragwort and trillium in the woodlands during April and May. Pink azaleas usually bloom in mid-May to early June, while mountain laurel blossoms mid-to-late June in the park's higher elevations. The peak of the bird migration is in late April and early May, when birds come to nest and breed in the Blue Ridge Mountains. When **Canada warblers, scarlet tanagers, wood thrushes** and **black-throated blue warblers** arrive, they fill the forests with trilling and songs. Butterflies you may see in the spring include the spring azure and the eastern tiger swallowtail.

SUMMER Summer is a busy time in Shenandoah, as plants, flowers and animals raise their young. The blossoms of fairy candles are seen in the forest in July, and Turk's cap lilies and evening primroses bloom in open areas. In August, false foxgloves are found in groves of oak trees. Look for black-eyed Susans as well. By July, the fledglings must learn to fly and leave the nest. You'll see **chestnut-sided warblers, indigo buntings, phoebes, gray catbirds** and **goldfinches** nesting here. Butterflies include the monarch and the great spangled fritillary.

FALL Goldenrod is a harbinger of autumn, when leaves turn and the migratory birds fly south. **White snakeroots, asters, gentians** and **goldenrod** bloom as the colorful fall display of leaves begins in late September and reaches its peak in mid-to-late October. **Migratory birds** travel south to their winter nesting grounds in the southern United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. For protection from predatory birds, songbirds fly in groups at night. They then rest and forage during the day. **Redtail hawks** migrate by day; their peak migration through the park is in mid-September.

WINTER Winter in Shenandoah is cold and quiet as life slows down, but as you explore the park you will find that it is full of life. It is important to keep your eyes and ears open for signs of animals. You may hear the hoot of the **barred owl**, the caw of the raven or the gobble of the **wild turkey**, all of which are year-round residents of the park. The **chickadee, downy woodpecker, titmouse** and other small birds flock together during winter to forage and for protection. Some northern birds, such as the **white-throated sparrow, hermit thrush** and **purple finch**, also winter in the park. Look for tracks in the snow from turkeys, deer and bobcats. Against the white snow, it is sometimes actually easier to spot wildlife.

Photography



Exploring our national and state parks is one of the best ways to reconnect with nature—and bringing along a camera or binoculars can elevate your experience. Whether you're a seasoned photographer, a casual wildlife or bird watcher, or a first-time visitor hoping to spot something special, a few smart tips can help you get the most out of your time on the trail.

Photography isn't just snapping images—it's a way to tell a story, capture fleeting moments, and preserve the atmosphere of a place. In our parks, every image can reflect the splendor of a landscape, the subtle beauty of wildlife, or the unbridled energy of a waterfall. Whether you're aiming to document your journey, make art, or simply share your experience with others, thoughtful technique makes a big difference. To get the most out of your visit:

- **Time it right:** Shoot during golden hours (early morning or late afternoon) when the light is soft and warm. Avoid harsh midday sun when shadows are strongest.
- **Pack light but smart:** A mirrorless or DSLR camera with a wide-angle lens for landscapes and a zoom for wildlife covers most situations. Bring extra batteries!
- **Use a tripod:** For steady sunrise or night shots, use a lightweight tripod for better results.
- **Compose carefully:** Follow the "rule of thirds" to add depth to your images.

BINOCULAR BASICS

A good pair of binoculars is the perfect companion for your trip—they don't just bring distant wildlife into view—it enhances your awareness of your surroundings, helps you spot elusive creatures, and allows you to witness natural behaviors without threatening them. Whether you're birding, watching

predators from afar, or scanning the treetops for movement, using binoculars skillfully can turn a simple hike into a rich, immersive experience. Here's how to get the most from them:

- **Choose the right specs:** An 8x42 pair offers a great balance of magnification, brightness, and stability for most users.
- **Adjust for your eyes:** Use the center focus wheel and diopter ring to fine-tune clarity.
- **Stabilize your view:** Rest your elbows on a surface or use a trekking pole for added support.
- **Scan with purpose:** Look for movement or color changes in the landscape. Animals are often camouflaged and reveal themselves through motion.

To protect both the environment and wildlife, always stay on marked trails to avoid damaging fragile ecosystems. Give animals plenty of space by using zoom lenses or binoculars, and follow all park regulations regarding restricted areas and seasonal closures. Moving quietly and minimizing noise not only reduces stress on wildlife but also increases your chances of witnessing natural behaviors in a more undisturbed way.

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Using cameras and binoculars encourages observation. You'll begin noticing subtle things—a fox's behavior at dusk, the changing texture of bark in different light, or a flash of color in the canopy. These tools sharpen your senses and help you build a more meaningful connection with the outdoors.

From photographing fog rolling through a valley to spotting a hawk soaring overhead, the combination of thoughtful observation and the right gear brings national and state park adventures to life.

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Just For Kids



EARTHCACHING

The EarthCache program combines exploring selected trails and learning about the history and geology of the park. It is an educational experience that combines modern technology using GPS with an outdoor adventure.

This family-friendly activity is fun for all ages and skill levels. EarthCaching is a "virtual" hunt that contains no physical hidden container or cache. EarthCaching is a hunt for the Earth's natural and geological features as the "treasure." Instead of leaving or removing anything, EarthCachers document observations, answer questions and then report findings on the EarthCache website.

BECOME A JUNIOR OR EXPLORER RANGER

Pick up a complimentary *Junior Ranger Explorer Notebook* (ages 7 to 12) at any visitor center or gift shop, complete

the activities inside, and earn a Junior Ranger patch or badge. Check at a visitor center for Junior Ranger Program schedules and locations. Explorer Ranger Activity books (ages 13 and up) are also available for free at visitor centers on a first-come, first-served basis. There are free downloads of all activities at: nps.gov/shen/learn/kidsyouth/index.htm.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Ranger-led programs are generally offered spring, summer and fall. To find the most up-to-date programs, please visit nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/rangerprograms.htm.

VISIT A WATERFALL

There are more than a dozen waterfalls in Shenandoah National Park that can be reached by way of hiking trails. From the trailhead just below the South River Picnic Grounds (mile 62.7) **South River Falls** is the 3rd tallest in the park at 83 feet.



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If You Only Have A Day

Driving Skyline Drive is the perfect way to acquaint yourself with Shenandoah. The road curves along the entire length of the park and mileposts help locate park facilities, services and areas of interest.

DRIVE FOR A WHILE

Driving from one of the four entrances to the next exit takes about an hour. At most developed areas along **Skyline Drive** are interpretive signs and bulletin boards with information. Several trails are easily reachable from Skyline Drive. See the "Walking & Hiking" chapter for more information.

SCENIC OVERLOOKS

There are 75 scenic overlooks along Skyline Drive. One of the northernmost ones, **Signal Knob Overlook** (Mile 5.7), is a must-stop for history buffs. Signal Knob rises on Massanutten Mountain across the Shenandoah River,

showing even today why it was an important Civil War site used by the Confederate troops to relay signals.

Range View Overlook (Mile 17.1), at 2,800 feet, is reputed to be the best view of the northern section of the park, as well as of the Massanutten and Allegheny mountains. Driving at dawn, stop at **South River Overlook** (Mile 62.7) to savor the sunrise at this 3,000-foot elevation. The historic **Big Meadows Lodge** (Mile 51) is also worth a stop. Take time to explore the property or enjoy a meal in the rustic setting of the lodge's dining room.

TOURS AVAILABLE

You might also want to join one of the park's many **hikes, walks or talks**. Topics include history, animals, tours of historic park structures and hikes along the Appalachian Trail.



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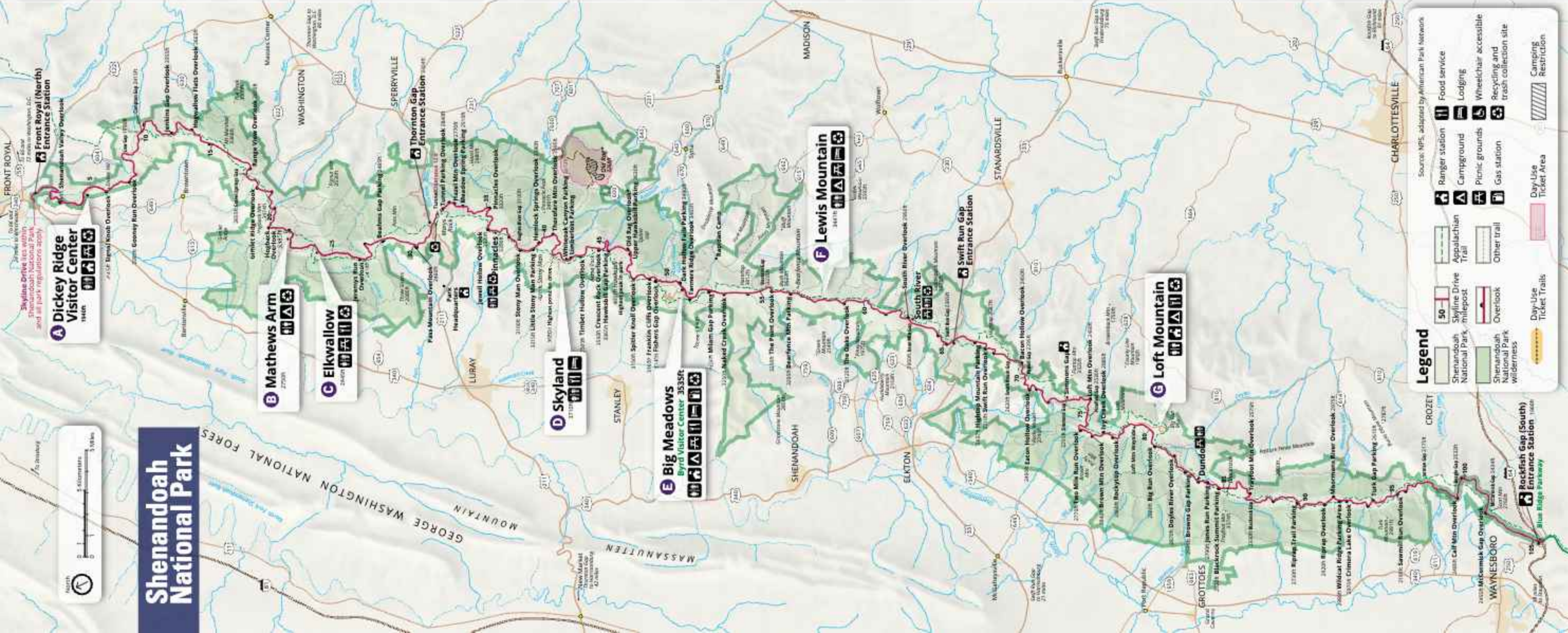
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A Dickey Ridge Visitor Center

- Campground (with trailer sites)
- Trailer sewage disposal facility
- Restrooms

C Elkwallow

- Elkwallow Wayside
- Camping supplies
- Gift shop
- Groceries
- Mail drop
- Carry-out food
- Picnic area
- Restrooms

D Skyland

- Skyland
- ATM
- Dining
- Gift shop
- Lodging
- Mail drop
- Newsstand
- Taproom
- Amphitheater
- Conference hall
- Horseback riding
- Restrooms

E Big Meadows

- Amphitheater
- Big Meadows Lodge
- Dining
- Gift shop
- Lodging
- Mail drop
- Newsstand
- Restrooms
- Taproom
- Big Meadows Wayside
- ATM
- Camping supplies
- Dining
- Gas station
- Gift shop
- Groceries
- Mail drop
- Restrooms

F Lewis Mountain

- Campground (with trailer sites)
- Laundry/showers
- Trailer sewage disposal facility
- Picnic area
- Ranger station
- Restrooms
- Campground (with trailer sites)
- Laundry/showers
- Picnic area
- Restrooms

G Loft Mountain

- Amphitheater
- Campground (with trailer sites)
- Loft Mountain Campstore
- Camping supplies
- Groceries
- Laundry/showers
- Mail drop
- Picnic area
- Restrooms

H Rockfish Gap

- Amphitheater
- Campground (with trailer sites)
- Loft Mountain Campstore
- Camping supplies
- Groceries
- Laundry/showers
- Restrooms
- Loft Mountain Wayside
- Food service
- Gift shop
- Mail drop
- Restrooms
- Trailer sewage disposal facility

Stone wall repair along Skyline Drive between miles 72.8 and 75.7 will require a single lane closure. Visitors should expect delays.

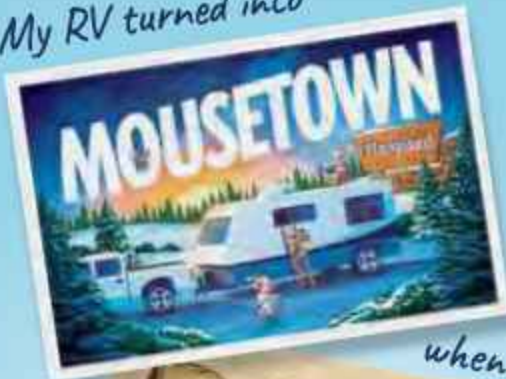
Save Time Entering the Park!

We encourage you to purchase your entrance pass in advance at recreation.gov and plan your trip to enter at Swift Run or Rockfish entrance stations to avoid the longer lines at Front Royal and Thornton Gap entrance stations, especially during peak time periods.

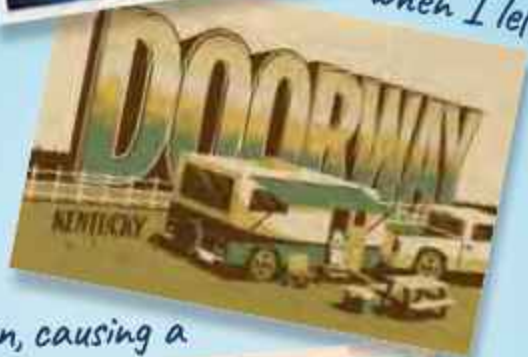
* From March 1 to November 30th each year, visitors to Old Rag Mountain, including hikers on the Saddle, Ridge, and Ridge Access trails, need to obtain an Old Rag day-use ticket in advance, in addition to a Park entrance pass. Each day-use ticket will cost \$2.00 and covers only the ticketholder.

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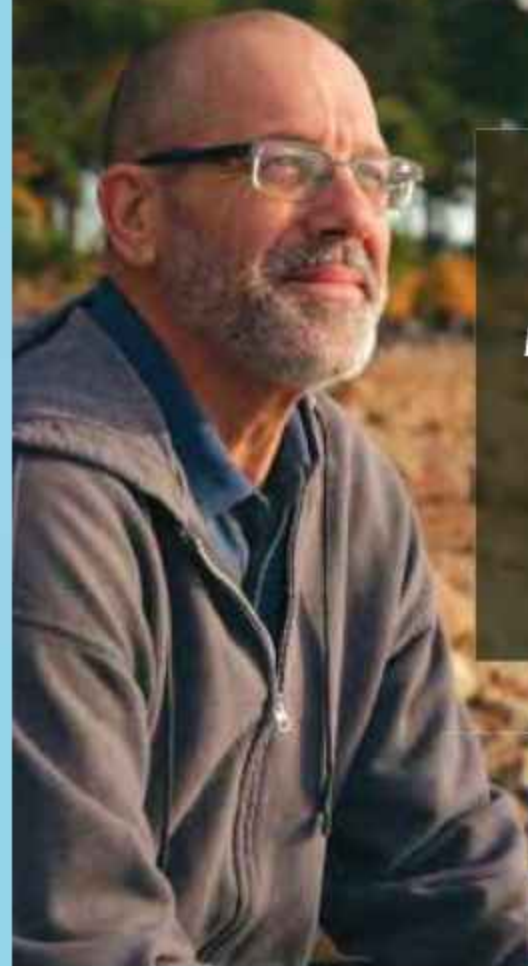
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