



Rockfish Valley Foundation

Enhancing the Quality of Life and Celebrating the People, Land, and History of the Rockfish Valley

WE ARE AS BIG AS ALL OUTDOORS. NATURE IS OUR GAME!

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

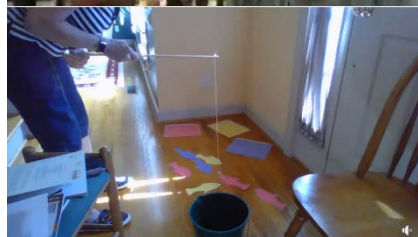


*by Channing Franklin, 3rd Grade
Rockfish River Elementary School (EarthArtAthon submission)*

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Wild Wednesdays: Now Outside in Spruce Creek Park!



Many of you have been enjoying our virtual Wild Wednesday Reading Program on our [Facebook page](#). We have been laughing along with you as our talented volunteers and program director share stories and lead activities with us.

We are excited to announce that we will be doing Wild Wednesdays outside starting June 24, 2020. This will be both on-site in Spruce Creek Park and virtually on Facebook live. Join Rita Crawford and her kids on the 24th for a reading of "Chief of the Reef" written and read in-person by Jamil Nelson.

If you want to watch our past live programs, follow these links below. You can also follow this [link](#) for the complete list of RVF's virtual videos. Enjoy!

Katrina Broughman (May 13th)

["Woods and Meadows"](#): With Step-By-Step Projects for the Young Scientist"

Betsy Agelasto (May 20th)

["From Seed to Plant"](#)

Rita Crawford (May 27th)

["Cecily Cicada"](#)

Sarah Addison (June 3rd)

["We're Different, We're the Same"](#) – Sesame Street Series

Kathie Driscoll (June 10th)

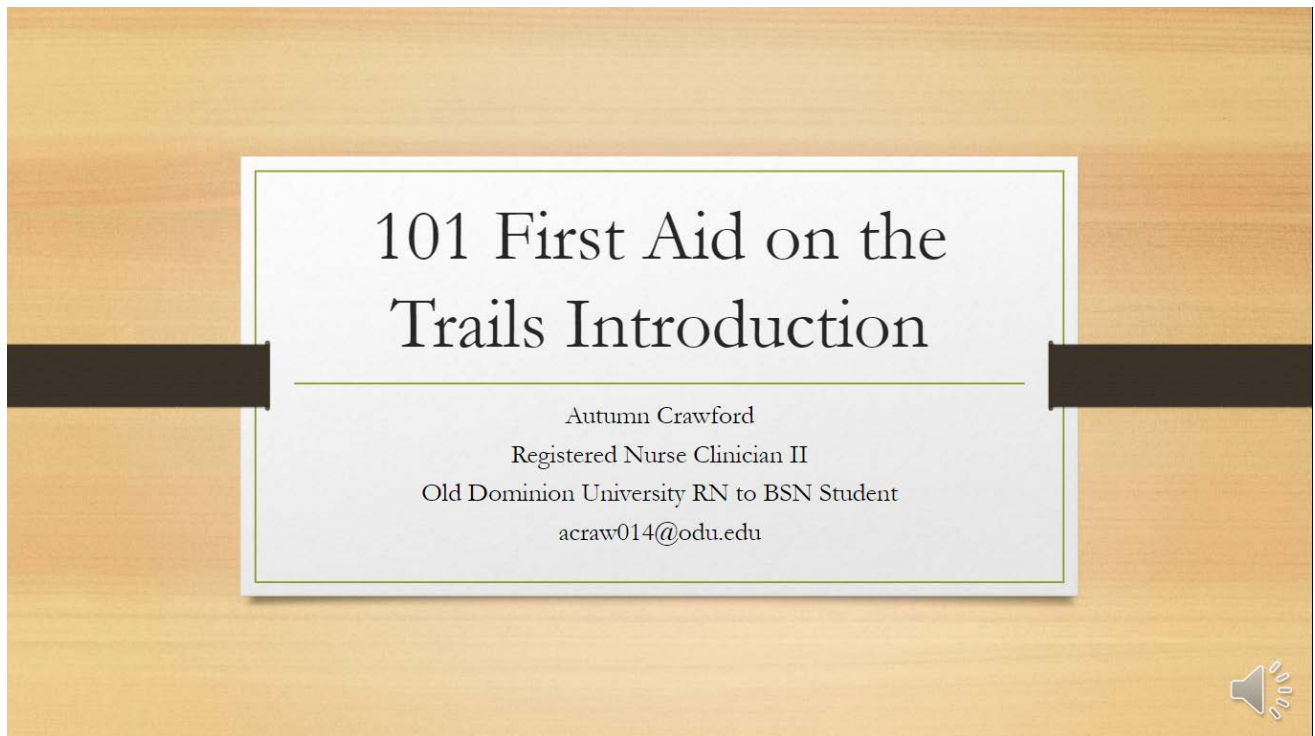
["Fish is Fish"](#)

Katrina Broughman (June 17th)

["Heroes of the Environment: True Stories of People Helping to Protect Our Planet"](#)

We look forward to seeing you either at Spruce Creek Park or virtually at 10am on June 24th and every Wednesday following that! We plan to continue Wild Wednesdays until the end of the summer. Want to get involved with Wild Wednesdays? Have a question to ask or a comment to share? Email contact@rockfishvalley.org today!

Virtual First Aid Training for RVF Volunteers



Are you a current or potential RVF volunteer? If so, we are excited to virtually connect you with a First Aid Training presented by Autumn Crawford, a Registered Nurse Clinician and student at Old Dominion University.

There will be two online trainings available via Zoom:

Thursday, June 25th, 2020, at 7pm

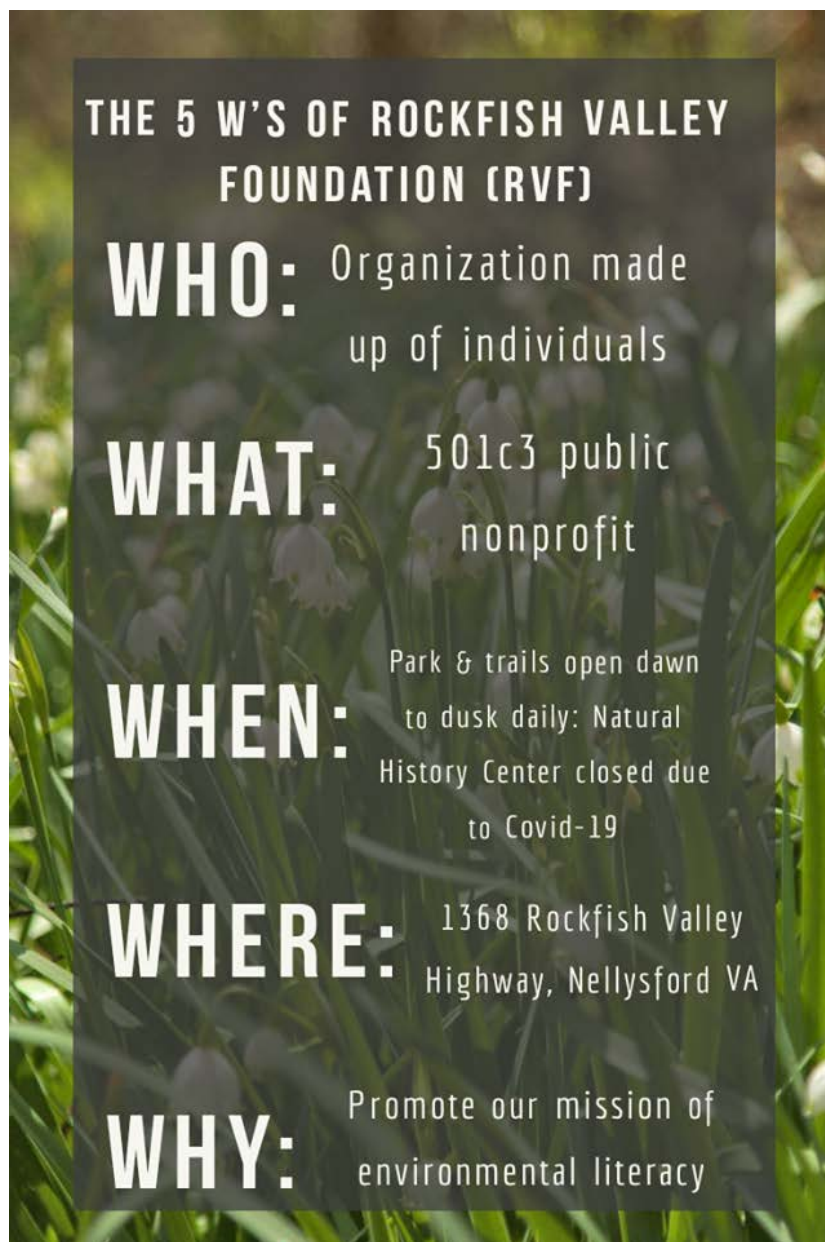
Thursday, July 2nd, 2020, at 7pm

To be linked and have access to one of these trainings,
Please email us at volunteer@rockfishvalley.org
and to let us know whether you plan on participating!

We will then send you the Zoom link
or call-in information for your preferred date.

Please note: this does not convey any certification to attendees and is not led by a certified instructor.

Who is RVF?



the members of our crew.

Starting Thursday, June 11th, 2020, RVF launched a weekly #WhoisRVF social media campaign on its Facebook page.

We also shared the five W's of RVF (who, what, when, where, & why) to educate our audience about who we are, where we are located, when we are open, why we exist, & what we do.

RVF is grateful to have a variety of individuals on its team. These individuals help sustain RVF in multiple ways.

Stay tuned for our weekly #RVFpersonoftheweek which highlights RVF's key team members.

Watch our [Facebook page](#) for a weekly #ThankfulThursday post & join us in celebrating all of

#WhoisRVF
ThankfulThursday



Chris Gensic
RVF PERSON
OF THE WEEK
June 11, 2020
Congratulations, Chris!

Our first #RVFPersonoftheWeek was Chris Gensic. This is his story.

Growing up as the son of a Marine Corp father, Chris Gensic moved around quite often, sometimes living on a

base with many places to walk and enjoy, sometimes living in subdivisions off base with no real place to walk or enjoy nature. His grandparents owned a cabin in the woods of north Wisconsin with plenty of room to wander in nature. While attending the University of Virginia to obtain a degree in Environmental Science and then a Master of Urban and Environmental Planning, he did not own a car for much of that time and walked often around Charlottesville. He began to see the differences in cities that had opportunities to walk and enjoy nature and urban areas, and places that did not, and how it those places affected his quality of life. As an adult, he decided he would dedicate his times, skills, and energy to creating places for others to enjoy walking in nature.

While working at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, he created the first Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways plan for the greater Charlottesville area. Having a good plan is the first step, the question then became how to make it a reality. Enter Peter Agelasto who asked Chris to help him open his property in Nelson County available for public use with trails. Peter noted that Nelson had no real public spaces for people to stop and take in the natural and cultural wonders of the Rockfish Valley. This confluence of a generous landowner and the passion Chris had led to the beginnings of the Rockfish Valley Foundation, with the first steps being laying out trails to provide the access to nature the world needed. Chris and Peter spent the first year cutting trails into the land alongside the Rockfish River and the fields and forests nearby, all with views of the mountains that surround it.

Chris then accepted what is still his occupation as the Park and Trails Planner for the City of Charlottesville. In that role, he is able to work to connect the parks, neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas of the City. The job also entails acquiring land and legal access for trails, working to improve the natural spaces, and inviting the public to enjoy these spaces. In his more than 13 years in that role, more than 300 acres of new parkland have been opened to public use, miles of trails, both natural and paved, have been created for the community to enjoy, new bridges provide passage over creeks and railroads, and a greenbelt around the City is becoming a permanent reality for generations to enjoy. A fan of smart urban growth that balances with protection of natural spaces, Chris is proud of the manner in which the area fosters well planned growth that protects what makes the area so special and attractive.

Being a catalyst and champion for protecting and activating spaces for all people to enjoy is a legacy Chris is lucky to be a part of creating. The Rockfish Valley Foundation and its trail system provided the inspiration and skills to solidify his path towards achieving the goal of a world where spaces like the RVF exist for people of like mind to come together and also find themselves alone. He counts among his favorite accomplishments the removal of “no trespassing” signs. The Agelasto family and the Rockfish Valley Foundation showed him many years ago that his dreams, and the dreams of many people like him, can become reality.

Blue Ridge Nature Centers: Puzzle Quest



There are four important nature centers in the greater Charlottesville area: Rockfish Valley Foundation in Nellysford, The Nature Foundation at Wintergreen and Wild Rock in Crozet, and Ivy Creek Foundation in Charlottesville.

We are excited to announce discussion of a collaborative project to bring awareness to all four with a discovery journey dubbed "Puzzle Quest."

How it will work:

Participants will go on a quest across the central Virginia region of the Blue Ridge to solve a puzzle. To solve the puzzle, you must visit all four nature centers.

Check our Facebook and website to be sure this will occur.

Questions? Email contact@rockfishvalley.org.

EarthArtAthon (Earth Day 2020) T-Shirt Winners

EarthArtAthon Winners

Lila Cooper
 Daylin Crawford
 Avery Hash
 Ambyre Taylor
 Jack Winter
 Rivera Bruno Irizarry
 Stella Wolfe
 Carina Crawford
 Anna Winter
 Danielle Fitzgerald
 Addison Greenwood
 Mason Murphy
 Peyton Floyd
 Avery Bush
 Channing Franklin
 Emma Bush
 Landen Day

EMAIL US BY COB MONDAY, JUNE 22ND, WITH YOUR PREFERRED SIZE TO CLAIM
 YOUR T-SHIRT (YOUTH LARGE - ADULT LARGE SIZES AVAILABLE)!
 PROGRAMDIRECTOR@ROCKFISHVALLEY.ORG

Congratulations to the winners of our preliminary EarthArtAthon Digital Art Show! All participants will receive a free Earth Day 2020 t-shirt from RVF. To watch the live name drawing that took place on Friday, June 12th, click [here](#).

When Covid-19 first came, RVF had to decide how to respond flexibly. We had planned to have an Earth Day Festival in April, but we quickly learned that our plans would have to change. As a result, we decided to convert our Earth Day Art Contest to a virtual digital art show.

We had 24 submissions from 17 different participants from Nelson County, Charlottesville, and beyond.

Individuals were encouraged to create any form of art about celebrating the earth or taking care of the planet, so we had entries ranging from photography to collage painting and even song singing! You can view the entire slideshow of submissions [here](#) or on our [website](#).

If you are a winner, please email us by **Monday, June 22nd, 2020** at contact@rockfishvalley.org with your preferred t-shirt size. Sizes range from youth large to adult large. See the photo to the left for what the t-shirt looks like.

Once again, congratulations from the Rockfish Valley Foundation!



National Trails Day: A History of RVF's Park and Trails

RVF was excited to celebrate National Trails Day (NTD), which is the first Saturday of June each year. This year, it fell on Saturday, June 6th, 2020. The public is encouraged to see the value the trails and open space have to folks, especially in these times. While the Natural History Center's opening date has been postponed due to concerns about Covid-19 and public health, the Rockfish Valley Trails and Spruce Creek Park remain open for public use. RVF trails are a creature of the Foundation. They are not a county nor a state facility. Their maintenance and improvement relies on community donations. To donate, go to www.rockfishvalley.org. And, if you really want to help us, select us on Amazon Smile.

RVF's trails have an interesting history. Did you know that its trails are not part of the Nelson County parks system, but instead are a local community-provided trail operated by RVF, a 501c3 non-profit public foundation? It is not a taxpayer funded park. Its network of trails provides public access to the South Fork of the Rockfish River and Reid's Creek. Parking is available at both Spruce Creek Park and Rockfish River trailhead.

The natural-surface trails are open for hikers, birdwatchers. Six miles of trail in loops of various lengths can be woven together or enjoyed as smaller pieces, allowing a new experience with every visit. Trail, the loops offer spectacular views of natural beauty near and far. Sections of the Rockfish and Reid's Creeks are being cared for under DCR's Adopt-a-Stream program, and a Scenic River designation is being sought for the South Fork and balance of the Rockfish River in Nelson County.





RVF celebrated National Trails Day with the addition of four new benches on the trail upstream of the Camille Trail Head. "You

can thank Paul Connell, head of Nelson High School shop, for labor and RVF donors for materials," says RVF Chairman Peter Agelasto III. "They are first class and placed right where you would like them. They join the two new picnic tables upstream." Connell is one of RVF's several valued partners who have made our trails happen and continue to keep them safe, clean and enjoyable. Agelasto continues, "The Camille Trail head has protected access for the truck to clean the porta john thanks to the "M family" twins and their brother and their graphic skills. Thanks to this very creative family. Our Rockfish Valley is full of special people and this is [an] example. Stay tuned as they will also create a sign that protects the dog poop waste can from human trash and suggests what you bring in [when] you take home. This regulation follows the example of state parks and most trail systems. Enjoy and protect this community asset - read the signs!"



More recently, the gravel mountain has moved thanks to super volunteer Dan Erhman. More parking! There is also a bit more gravel under bridge. We hope you enjoy this as well.

There are two major ways you can help support our local trail system. The first way is to become a volunteer. You can do that by emailing volunteer@rockfishvalley.org. We need volunteers for all sorts of projects, including trail maintenance and improvements such as installing benches, planting trees and shrubs, litter patrols, taking out the trash (see photo), etc. Agelasto explains that another new project is also underway: "We are looking for volunteers to help clean invasives and debris from Still House Branch for a project to make it a special place as well."

The second way to support our trails is by donating. There are multiple avenues for doing this. One way is if you shop through Amazon Smile to select Rockfish Valley Foundation as the benefiting charity. Another way is to donate to us through our website. You can also donate by sending a check to: Rockfish Valley Foundation, P.O. Box 235, Nellysford, VA 22958. RVF, which will be celebrating its 15th anniversary in August, is grateful for all the donations and support it



receives for its efforts to provide an enhanced quality of life and celebrate the land, history, and people of the Rockfish Valley. “We always enjoy visiting the loop trail and Spruce Creek Park at Rockfish Valley Foundation,” says Program Director, Katrina Broughman. “It is absolutely wonderful to be able to have such abundant access to nature. We are so lucky to have these trails in our community!”

Please watch the highway sign at RVF and the RVF website for updates concerning trail maintenance and museum opening.

National Trails Day: Take a Hike! **with Grayson Harlow**



Take a Hike!

Love Comment Share

RVF recently celebrated National Trails Day on Saturday, June 6, 2020. Grayson Harlow, a member of our Education Committee and a park ranger at James River State Park, took audience members on a virtual hike around Rockfish Valley Foundation.

Watch the [video](#) here! Join Grayson on his hike from anywhere in the world! This is a great way to learn how to “observe some of the plants and wildlife you might find out in the woods,” Grayson tells us. “Let us know what trails you explore today and whatever fascinating pieces of nature you discover.”

Volunteers: We Need You!

Go to our [website](#) or email volunteer@rockfishvalley.org if you want to volunteer. The policy and application is there. We have been actively seeking volunteers, and we want to mention two volunteers who are making your visits to the trails more pleasant. We want to shout out to Dan Ehrman. Because of him, you are not being hit in the face by pin oak branches or white cedar branches. He has been cutting the lower branches on the pin oaks that were hitting people and is currently attacking the cedar oak overgrowth

as well as brambles that have run amuck. The other shout-out is to Dennis Burgert.

Your enjoyment of the Camille Trailhead is due to the work of Dennis. He is also mowing upstream trails and clipping weeds from under benches and picnic tables. RVF is a community of volunteers and we thank you.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars!

We hope to be able to still hold both of these events but will make changes depending on Covid-19 in the coming months.

Check our Facebook and website for updates.

Save the Dates!

Aug 23rd is RVF's 15th Anniversary Celebration.

A decision will be made by Aug 1st as to whether the Earth Day Festival will be part of the 23rd event. We have at this time confirmed the band BiG! However, the restrictions of the virus cannot be predicted. We have our fingers crossed.

Old Wintergreen Day

In addition, the third annual Old Wintergreen Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th.

Nelson Scenic Loop



June 10th was the 10th anniversary of Nelson Scenic Loop.

Interested in seeing it? Commence your journey at the Spruce Creek Park and the Natural History Center on Route 151 in Wintergreen, Virginia.

The Visitor Center showcases the loop and its associated points of interest.

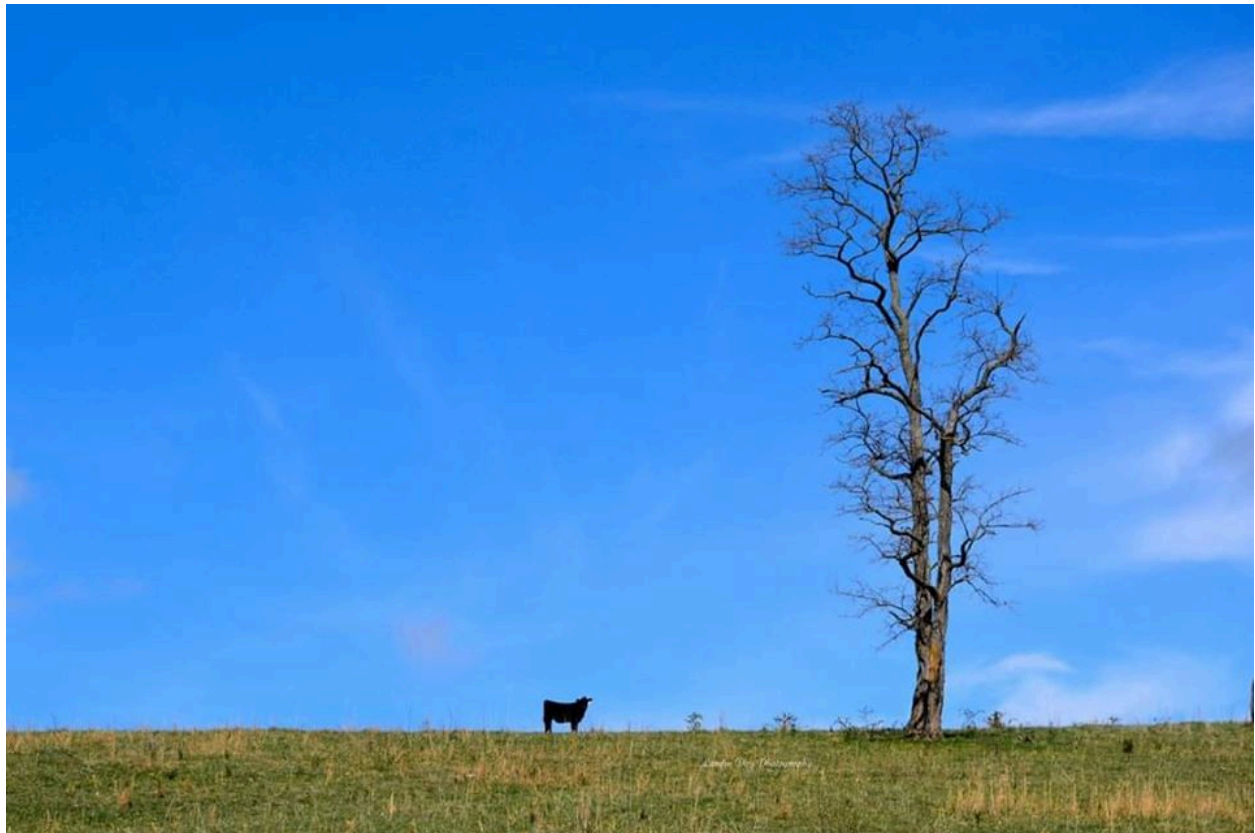
While there, learn about the 1969 tragedy of Hurricane Camille, and stroll the adjacent Rockfish Valley Foundation trails.

Learn more on <https://www.nelsonscenicloop.com>

10 Facts about the Loop



1. 50 Miles Long
2. Consists of 4 Scenic By-Ways
3. Traverses Three Ridge Mountain Watershed
4. Rises from Elevation 850 – 4050
5. Bisected by Rockfish and Tye Rivers
6. Blue Ridge Parkway is 75 Years Old
7. Monticello Fish Hatchery is 80 years Old
8. Nelson County founded in 1807
9. Wintergreen Resort Contains 10,000 Acres
10. Appalachian Trail Runs the West Border



*"I Stand Alone – Social Distance."
By Landen Day*

Thank you for supporting RVF!

Have a wonderful summer, and stay healthy!