

ACTIVE SWV WV STATE PARK TOUR 2018 REPORT

ACTIVE

SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

Wellness Creates Jobs



ACTIVE SWV

304-254-8488 • info@activeswv.com

116 N Heber Street, Suite B, Beckley WV 25801

INTRODUCTION

Active Southern West Virginia (Active SWV) provides opportunities to increase physical activity by removing barriers for residents to adopt a lifestyle of active living to improve the health of the workforce. This is accomplished by volunteers leading physical activity programs in communities, parks, schools, and businesses. Active SWV provides all the necessary training and continued support for volunteers to lead safe, beginner friendly activities throughout Nicholas, Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers Counties.

PARTNERSHIP

West Virginia State Parks are a valuable resource to the health and quality of life for the residents in southern West Virginia. Having safe places for people to be physically active overcomes a barrier to living an active lifestyle. Active SWV seeks to highlight park venues and connect residents to these parks. Active SWV Community Captains highlight and support park Naturalist programs and help to increase participation in park programs.

Active SWV hopes these programs will demonstrate how community members can become Active SWV Community Captains to lead additional physical activity programs in their local State Parks. We invite all ages and abilities to experience a group physical activity program with the goal of finding new Community Captains to continue programming in each of these parks. Volunteer Community Captain training is provided for free and covers safety, communications, promotion, and certifications.



Active SWV Tai Chi at Hawks Nest State Park

ACTIVE SWV STATE PARK TOUR PARTNERS

Active SWV is proud to announce a new partnership in 2018 with West Virginia State Parks in the New River Gorge region. Active SWV has been working hard to bring variety into our programming and explore new areas of our great state. First Sunday Hikes were led by Community Captains Levi and Rene Moore at participating state parks in the New River Gorge region. This collaboration will bring opportunities to offer other Active SWV programs in the state parks as well as increase visitors to the beautiful State Parks in WV.

Babcock State Park

Babcock State Park and its 4,127 acres of rhododendron-lined trails and rippling, rock-strewn streams is one of West Virginia's most iconic locations. Located 20 miles south of the New River Gorge Bridge, the park is most known for the Glade Creek Grist Mill, a fully functional replica of the original Cooper's Mill, located nearby. Other attractions include recreational activities like hiking, fishing and boating.

<https://wvstateparks.com/park/babcock-state-park/>

Pipestem Resort State Park

Pipestem Resort State Park sits on the east rim of the Bluestone River Gorge, which carves through the plateau to the scenic Bluestone River 1,200 feet below. The 4,050-acre park is located on the border of Summers and Mercer counties and features two hotels, one of which lies at the bottom of the gorge and can only be accessed by an aerial tramway. In addition to canyon floor sites, Pipestem offers elevated views from the Bolar Lookout Tower overlook.

<https://wvstateparks.com/park/pipestem-resort-state-park/>

Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park

Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park sets on the rim of the Gauley River Canyon, an important 156-acre park with a Civil War battle site. The park is part of the Civil War Discovery Trail, which links more than 300 historical sites in 16 states, and commemorates the 1861 Battle of Carnifex Ferry, a major Union victory that led to the eventual Confederate withdrawal from western Virginia. Carnifex Ferry is one of the oldest state parks in the United States and is a popular site for Civil War reenactments.

<https://wvstateparks.com/park/carnifex-ferry-battlefield-state-park/>

Bluestone State Park

Bluestone State Park, wild and wonderful - you'll find both at Bluestone State Park. This wilderness park, located five miles south of Hinton in southern West Virginia, is best known for Bluestone Lake, the state's third-largest body of water. The park's 2,155 acres of forest and rugged mountain terrain are perfect for hiking, fishing and camping.

<https://wvstateparks.com/park/bluestone-state-park/>

Hawks Nest State Park

Nestled in the heart of whitewater rafting country, Hawks Nest State Park is a 270-acre recreational area with a nature museum, aerial tramway, jetboat rides, hiking trails and one of the most challenging whitewater boating waterways in the nation. Its 31-room lodge offers luxurious rooms, dining and spacious conference and meeting facilities. Located near Ansted in Fayette County, about 10 miles north of the New River Gorge Bridge, Hawks Nest is known for its scenic overlook, which provides a bird's eye view of the rugged New River Gorge National River below.

<https://wvstateparks.com/park/hawks-nest-state-park/>

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IN 2018

Group Hikes: Scheduled First Sunday Hikes

- April 1st – Pipestem Resort State Park, **16 participants**
- May 21st – Babcock State Park, **18 participants**
- June 3rd – Bluestone State Park, **18 participants**
- July 1st – Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park, **7 participants**
- July 27th – Bluestone State Park, **22 participants**
- August 5th – Pipestem Resort State Park, **7 participants**
- September 2nd – Babcock State Park, **10 participants**
- October 7th – Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park, **15 participants**
- November 4th – Bluestone State Park, **8 participants**

Water Aerobics

- Hawks Nest State Park July- September: **327 hours of participation**

Tai Chi

- 6 week program at Hawks Nest State Park September – October: **40 hours of participation**

Indoor Fitness

- Hawks Nest State Park September – December: **51 hours of participation**



Active SWV Water Aerobics at Hawks Nest State Park

PROGRAM SUCCESS IN 2018

- Park Superintendents were excited and willing to provide resources to the Active SWV volunteer Community Captains such as meeting time, maps, Naturalist support when possible, and promotion through hanging fliers.
- Three participants attended all 8 group hikes offered on the first Sunday of the month May through November. They were rewarded with \$25 gift cards to WV State Parks.
- The first Active SWV water aerobics program was offered in the outdoor pool at Hawks Nest State Park, free and open to park guests. This program grew to meet twice a week and reported regular attendance at 25-30 people. As the weather became colder, the group was moved to an indoor pool at a local hotel, but participants request to move back to the outdoor Hawks Nest pool in summer 2019.
- The volunteer Community Captain leading the water aerobics continued her training to lead a group fitness class adding a third weekly program to the calendar at Hawks Nest in 2018. This program is continuing through 2019.

PROGRAM PROMOTION IN 2018

- Active SWV webpage calendar of events, www.activeswv.org/events
- Active SWV monthly email newsletter, sign up on our website
- Active SWV webpage blog posts
- <https://activeswv.org/active-swv-state-parks-tour/>
- Facebook Active SWV page, <https://www.facebook.com/ActiveSWV/>
- Facebook Group Page: Active SWV WV State Park Tour, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/396280424170578/>
- Email and printed monthly program fliers, see example here: <https://activeswv.org/events/monthly-program/>
- Radio, newspaper, and tv news station interviews and articles
- https://www.register-herald.com/health/active-swv-partners-with-state-parks-to-offer-monthly-hikes/article_d7c08ea0-acbf-5514-b641-dac8d7496fa3.html
- <http://www.wvexecutive.com/active-southern-west-virginia-state-parks-tour/>
- https://www.montgomery-herald.com/news/active-swv-partners-with-state-parks-to-offer-monthly-hikes/article_73f9da04-273e-11e8-88d5-ff8de945edbf.html
- <https://woay.tv/active-swv-is-proud-to-announce-a-new-partnership-with-west-virginia-state-parks-in-the-new-river-gorge-region/>
- <https://www.wvntstv.com/west-virginia-news/first-sunday-hikes-come-to-wv-state-parks/1017601025>
- https://www.register-herald.com/news/active-southern-west-virginia-hosts-water-aerobics-class-at-hawks/article_83dd736d-2c35-580f-9153-eb112f8d2e4e.html
- https://www.fayetttribune.com/community/free-water-aerobics-to-be-offered-tuesdays-at-hawks-nest/article_157c9daa-838b-11e8-8a5e-1b84b145b558.html
- <https://woay.tv/free-water-aerobics-class-at-hawks-nest-in-fayette-county/>



GOALS FOR 2019

- 1. Increase the variety of programs offered; pickle ball, stand up paddle boarding, biking, birding, etc.
- 2. Increase the number of participants at programs.
- 3. Recruit participants to become volunteer Community Captains.
- 4. Promote to residents the programs offered by park Naturalists.

MADE POSSIBLE BY PARTNERSHIPS:

- The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority understands the value of a healthy workforce and supports Active SWV with office space and community partnership.
- The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation has supported Active SWV since 2017 to engage residents in southern West Virginia in regular physical activity.
- The Appalachian Regional Commission supports the mission of Active SWV in 2019 and 2020.
- Community Foundations such as the Beckley Area Foundation, Nicholas County Community Foundation, and Hinton Area Foundation support the programs of Active SWV.
- The New River Gorge National River has been in a cooperative agreement with Active SWV since 2016, supported by the National Park Foundation.
- The Army Corps of Engineers at Summersville Lake has been in a cooperative agreement with Active SWV since 2015.



Striving to make southern West Virginia a model of health, wellness, and active living by providing free physical activity programs to people of all ages and abilities.

Community Captains



Community Captains are champions of their communities who want to lead others to healthier and active lifestyles. Through volunteering they remove barriers that prevent people from being active by providing free weekly and monthly physical activity programs in their communities. Activities range from beginner-friendly walking and running groups to tai chi and yoga.

Kids Run Clubs



Active SWV Kids Run Clubs help participants develop an enjoyment and understanding of exercise, while learning healthy habits for life. Run Clubs are hosted at schools across Fayette, Raleigh, Nicholas, and Summers Counties. The program is accessible to all children with no cost to the participant or school. Interested teachers, faculty, family members, or community members can be trained by Active SWV to lead the program as "Run Club Coaches."

Workplace Wellness



Employers in Southern West Virginia can improve the health of their employees by participating in the Active SWV Workplace Wellness program. Many people spend a significant portion of their lives at work, which is why it is imperative workplaces prioritize health initiatives that are simple, inexpensive, and long-lasting. This program provides structure and support for a multi-year approach to increase physical activity in the workplace by utilizing a score card to measure results.

Active SWV Bike/Walk



By rethinking the region's infrastructure to support active lifestyles, Southern West Virginians can improve their health and wellness with more opportunities to get outside and exercise, while increasing economic activity and job creation. Active SWV Bike/Walk is committed to making walking and biking safe, fun and convenient and providing a network of accessible hiking trails and fitness trails.