

NEWS RELEASE

u.s. department of the interior

national park service

For Immediate Release

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SEARCH AND RESCUE GROUPS SEEK SUPPORT FOR LIFESAVING

Searching for and rescuing persons lost in National Parks is expensive business, according to Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Robert R. Jacobsen. "Last year alone \$1,613,360 was spent on search and rescue of visitors in National Parks across the nation," said Jacobsen. "An additional \$670,000 is estimated to have been contributed by other agencies and volunteer search and rescue organizations in National Parks."

Last October's search and rescue of an 18-year-old hiker, lost over 50 hours on Old Rag Mountain in Shenandoah National Park, cost the National Park Service \$25,000. Volunteer search and rescue groups, the Madison County Rescue Squad, and the U. S. Customs Service involved with that rescue contributed 1200 hours. In addition to these one-time costs, the agency and volunteer groups spent thousands of dollars last year preparing for emergencies such as this.

"Volunteer search and rescue groups depend upon private support and contributions to equip them with the necessary equipment, secure the best training available, and support their incidental costs. Shenandoah National Park received invaluable assistance from several volunteer groups during the recent rescue effort," said Jacobsen. "We believe the public should have an opportunity to support search and rescue activities."

To that end, the Shenandoah Natural History Association has established a fund--the proceeds of which are to be used solely for the purpose of providing support and additional equipment for the Park and its cooperators. Contributions to "SNHA - Life Support Fund," Route 4, Box 292, Luray, Virginia 22835, will be used as needed for technical equipment, communications equipment, support supplies and training for search and rescue. All such donations are tax deductible, charitable contributions, and the Shenandoah Natural History Association will provide acknowledgements for tax purposes if donors include their names and addresses with their contributions. "All donors can be assured," said Jacobsen, "that their funding and equipment will be greatly appreciated and usefully employed in this important public protection activity."

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