



PO BOX 10431
RALEIGH, NC 27605

919-698-9024
WWW.NCMST.ORG

November 13, 2015

David Bauer
District Ranger, Highlands District, Blue Ridge Parkway
49800 Blue Ridge Parkway
Laurel Springs, NC 28644

Dear David,

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail wishes to commend your long standing professional support of the concept, plan, construction and operation of the MST in the Highlands District of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. Your actions in support of our volunteer citizen task forces have resulted in the highest degree of partnership between our volunteers and your agency.

Specifically, your leadership of critical safety training workshops for our volunteers made their work safer and more productive. You personally advocated for greater integration of the trail into the operational and maintenance procedures of the parkway by organizing annual meetings of our task force leaders and Highlands District personnel. By including our volunteers in NPS approved chainsaw instructional classes you helped not only improve the skills of our volunteers but fostered a relationship of mutual aid and respect among district staff and our volunteers.

Your role in the implementation of the 2010 study recommendations to establish back country campsites for the MST in the Highlands District was critical in furthering the operational partnership between the Blue Ridge Parkway, the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, and the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail. Your personal efforts and support led to the formalization of the first district level Memorandum of Understanding between these agencies for the creation of these back country sites and the long term, sustainable management of the MST on parkway lands.

To a person, all who have worked with you regarding the MST during your tenure on the parkway have found you to be an enthusiastic optimist dedicated to working hard in seeking opportunities to work together to provide the highest quality experience for our visitors. Your commitment to forging and maintaining an effective partnership between the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway has laid the foundation for positively working together for decades to come.

Please accept our deepest gratitude for your exemplary public service on behalf of our National Parks and the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail. The legacy you leave upon your retirement from the National Park Service is profound and will benefit our trail partners and park visitors now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jerry Barker, President
FMST Board of Directors

