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Shenandoah National Park News Release

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Research Grant is Awarded in Shenandoah National Park to Follow-Up on Acid Rain Impacts to Park Streams and Fish Diversity

Luray, Virginia: Shenandoah National Park is pleased to award the 2016 Shenandoah National Park Trust Research Grant to Christine L. May, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, James Madison University, for her project: “Revealing the Current Relation between Stream Acidification and Fish Species Richness: What is the Trend after Almost Two Decades of Recovery?”

According to Dr. May, “Acid rain is one of the leading and persistent causes of environmental decline in the eastern United States.” Her work will study the effects of acid rain on fish diversity in 14 streams throughout Shenandoah National Park. Specifically, her study will assess the relation between the acidity of park streams and the numbers of fish species that live in those streams. She will compare the data collected today to similar research completed in the 1990’s to determine changes over time.

“The primary threat to park ecosystems from air pollution is the acidification of streams,” said Jalyn Cummings, Air and Water Resources Program Manager at Shenandoah National Park. Understanding the relationship between how air pollution impacts water quality and the aquatic life that depends on the water for survival is important in helping manage park resources.

“We are very grateful to the Shenandoah National Park Trust for supporting this important research project and for their on-going commitment to funding research in the park each year,” said Jim Northup, Park Superintendent. “As a science based organization, the results of this research will help guide our management in the future and help us achieve our goal of maintaining the park unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

“The Shenandoah National Park Trust is pleased to be able to help deepen the understanding of how our park's ecosystems are functioning,” said Trust President Susan Sherman. “Donors to the Trust who support the research grant program are helping ensure the long-term health and vitality of our park.”

To learn more about this project or how to apply for a grant in the future, go to

<http://www.nps.gov/shen/naturescience/research-grant.htm>

About the Shenandoah National Park Trust: The Shenandoah National Park Trust is a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the outstanding natural beauty and cultural heritage of Shenandoah National Park, for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations by fostering public awareness and education, encouraging private philanthropy, and seeking public support. For additional information regarding the Shenandoah National Park Trust visit <http://www.snptrust.org>.

About Shenandoah National Park: Established in 1935, Shenandoah National Park encompasses nearly 200,000 acres of Blue Ridge Mountain habitat, of which nearly 80,000 acres are Congressionally designated Wilderness; Skyline Drive, a National Historic Landmark and Scenic Byway; 500 miles of trails, many leading to waterfalls or breathtaking vistas; and Rapidan Camp, the summer White House of President Hoover. The park offers recreational opportunities year round; facilities are available spring through late fall. For more information about Shenandoah National Park, visit <http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm>.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 409 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.