

## Blue Ridge Parkway (VA, NC)



Natalie Lester grew up in northern Virginia, right where the urban sprawl of DC transitions into rural agriculture. Her family's heritage, however, crosses the Virginia/West Virginia border and resulted in an undeniable personal connection to mountains. Such mountains were easily accessible where Natalie attended college- at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia near the north entrance of the Blue Ridge Parkway. While at JMU Natalie double majored in Communications and Justice, focusing on Advocacy and Social Justice. After graduating she spent 10 months on the west coast with AmeriCorps NCCC, serving on a team completing community service projects that ranged from pouring curb and gutter in a small Nevada town to preparing taxes for low income families in the city of Seattle. In addition, Natalie has spent a total of 7 years working intermittently for the National

Park Service, moving from hands-on maintenance work to administrative services. Her passions lie in fostering connections and building community, so her current position with Blue Ridge Parkway is particularly exciting in its focus on volunteer coordination and community outreach.