Editorial Changes:
You can Help!

The Highlands Voice is looking for a new editor. After two years of producing the Voice each month, Paul and Judy Frank informed the Conservancy's Board of Directors in July that they would not be able to continue with the Voice since they had moved to Tennessee.

During the past several months, Paul Frank has been acting editor with typing and layout done by Sally Keeney of Elkins. Unfortunately, Sally and Paul have indicated they can no longer continue in this capacity.

Historically, the editor of the Highlands Voice has been an active member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy with an interest in writing and/or editing. As envisioned by the Voice Committee, appointed by the Board in October, the current position would include some of the duties editors have had in the past, while others will be farmed out. The editor will be in charge of assigning articles, writing some copy, editing all copy, and ultimately furnishing the copy to our new design and layout service. Bob Arnold and associates, who were associated with the Voice some years ago, will prepare the Voice for printing, beginning with this issue. Printing will continue to be done at the Elkins Inter-Mountain, with Sally and Robert Keeney handling the bundling and mailing, using their computer for our mailing list.

If you are interested in writing an occasional article, please do. If you can furnish an occasional photograph (black and white preferred), please do. Perhaps you have talent as a graphic artist, we need it.

But most of all, we need an editor! It's a big job, but most members of the Conservancy agree that the Highlands Voice is an important reason for their belonging. If we don't find an editor to keep the Voice going, the health of the Conservancy will be in jeopardy.

To be editor, there are no formal qualifications required. Previous experience in writing is helpful, however. A resident of West Virginia will probably have an easier time keeping abreast of issues. The major reward will likely be personal, knowing you are playing a critical role in keeping hundreds of readers informed on important environmental issues. To help offset the time and sweat sacrificed by the editor, the Board has agreed to a stipend of $100 per month. Past editors have usually found the work to take at least 20 hours per month (more if co-opted writers don't produce as promised). Inquires, nominations, or expressions of interest should be sent to the Voice Committee, P.O. Box 306, Fairmont WV 26554.

All dressed up, no place to go

Cranberry Bill Stalled

by Leslee McCarty

All dressed up and no place to go-that was the scene for Cranberry and Laurel Fork just before Congress adjourned in October. It was thought that the Cranberry Bill would be considered by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee before adjournment, and that it had a fair chance of passing. Unfortunately, no one had counted on the power of one Senator to throw a monkey wrench into the works.

Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, in an effort to stop three bills—the sale of Alaskan Railroad, authorization of water projects in Western States and a bill to allow the timber industry to withdraw from contracts to timber federal lands—also stopped all 21 bills the committee was to consider—leaving Cranberry and Laurel Fork out in the cold.

It is hoped that the Cranberry Bill will be considered during this lame duck session of Congress, BUT the strong support of both our senators is essential.

So, if there are Cranberry and Laurel Fork supporters who haven't yet written to Senators Byrd and Ran- tolpth encouraging their continued support of the bill, it's not too late! Senator Byrd's office, in particular, has been helpful in making sure the bill receives consideration. Notes of thanks and further encouragement of strong support for the bill would be very timely. Write today so you won't have to make a New Year's resolution to do more for the Cranberry and Laurel Fork next year.

From Voice to you
Merry Christmas

&

Happy New Year
Letter to the Editor

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following letter was received in response to the article by Purbaugh in the Oct.-Nov. VOICE. Letters are always welcome, although subject to editing if necessary.

Mr. John Purbaugh
Managing Attorney
West Virginia Legal Services
1033 Quarry Street
Suite 700
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Dear Mr. Purbaugh:

I read with interest your article entitled, “Two Steps Back,” published in The Highlands Voice concerning our September 14 meeting. On one issue, in particular, I was either misrepresented or not understood. We, or at least I, did not discuss enforcement that night. I discussed the new mandatory civil penalties associated with cessation orders.

It is true that civil penalty assessments are being sent out from Charleston. However, this has nothing to do with on-the-spot enforcement. These assessments are sent out well after the cessation order has been terminated and are based on the number of days between issuance and termination of the order. Chapter 14 of the permanent program regulations dealing with inspection and enforcement is being rewritten to, among other things, reflect the procedure for civil penalty assessments being used.

Enforcement procedures, including warrants and fines for all violations other than cessation orders, have not changed nor are expected to change. It has been the strength of the West Virginia program for more than a decade. We are undertaking civil penalties with cessation orders only because the law mandates that we do so. While we are doing it in a manner somewhat different than that envisioned in the regulations developed in 1980, it does not constitute a change from prior practice concerning civil penalties, because civil penalties have only now become a regular part of the enforcement program within the Division of Reclamation.

I trust that you will take appropriate steps to correct the misconceptions presented in your article.

Sincerely,
Brent T. Wahligquist
Deputy Director
Dept. of Natural Resources

Tax Deductions

Under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Inc. is classified as a Section 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization.

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As such, all donations to the conservancy are tax deductible by the donor as a charitable deduction.

The Highlands Conservancy will finish 1982 with a deficit of several thousand dollars, and your donation would be especially welcome this year.

Please request for financial information and specific questions can be addressed to the treasurer. Checks should be made payable to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Inc., and mailed to WVHC, P.O. Box 506, Fairmont WV 26554.

Help the Conservancy and help yourself save taxes by making your donation this year!

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P.O. Box 1853, Elkins WV 26241 (636-7218).

The Highlands Voice
Changes at WRB

Larry George, chairman of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's Cranberry Wilderness Committee, resigned in October from the State Water Resources Board after serving four years. This is the second resignation in recent months, the other being Dr. Don Brannon, also an outspoken conservationist, who often sided with George on controversial decisions. (See Oct-Nov Voice)

Dr. David Samuel of Morgantown, professor of Wildlife Biology at West Virginia University, and Robert Scott of Elkins, a retired federal expert on mine reclamation, have been appointed by Governor Rockefeller to fill the seats of Forest Kirkpatrick, whose term expired last year, and George. Brannon's seat remains vacant. Samuel and Scott will take office immediately and serve subject to confirmation by the State Senate when it meets in early 1983. The other two members of the board will continue in office. They are John Ailes, Sr., chairman, a lawyer and newspaper publisher from Romney, and William Blaas, a retired USDA employee from Princeton.

Samuel, 42, who has taught at WVU since 1969, is an author of more than 100 publications, including the newly published Best Current Practices for Fish and Wildlife on Surface Mined Lands in the Northern Appalachia Coal Fields, which he co-authored with Robert L. Smith. He was founder of the Mountaineer Chapter of the National Audubon Society in Morgantown and is presently active with several national archery organizations.

Scott, a registered civil engineer, retired earlier this year from the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, where he specialized in problems of acid mine drainage from abandoned surface and deep mines. Previously to his OSM service, he was in charge of experimental projects of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at Crown (Monongalia County) and Norton (Randolph County). Both projects involved testing various techniques for reducing acid mine drainage pollution. Scott is also an author of many publications, including a recent report to the state Dept. of Natural Resources analyzing the costs required to clean up the acid mine drainage on the Cheat River Basin, one of the state's worst polluted basins.

Reviewing his tenure on the Water Resources Board, George pointed with pride to the development and promulgation of a host of new or revised regulations by the board during the past couple of years. These have allowed state takeover of the federal NPDES permit program, Hazardous Waste program and the Underground Injection Control program, among others. George served on the board while enrolled for three years at the WVU Law School. He is now a practicing attorney in his native Huntington.

State pays for legal ads

The state Department of Natural Resources is picking up the tab for legal advertisements that coal companies are required by law to run.

Bill Chambers of the DNR's reclamation division says that as the state assumes primary responsibility for strip mine regulation, companies face the prospect of having to pay for hundreds of additional new permits. He says the permits are required under the new state rules.

Chambers says that as a favor to the companies, the state is assimilating all of the permit notices into advertisements which the state will run, relieving companies of having to buy the time in town. He says he doesn't know yet what the cost will be, but says it could run from $1,000 to $5,000.

Chambers said strip mines established when the federal government had primary jurisdiction over reclamation, are being graded by the state. He said those under new state rules require permits frequently, are the ones. The revised permits might require more information or additional bonding, he said.

Also, the new state rules cover all coal mines, so that deep mines opened before 1976 and some other facilities such as tipple and refuse piles must now have permits that were not required earlier, Chambers said.

Acid rain may be damaging

A major environmental group has released a report showing "new dramatic evidence" that acid rain is capable of damaging more regions of the United States than earlier studies have indicated.

The report, by the Izaak Walton League of America, one of the nation's oldest conservation groups, is based on research into the sensitivity of lakes and streams to acid rain: Much of eastern Canada; New England; the Appalachian mountains; and the Northwest and North Central United States.

Received by a team of 54 scientists, the 1,200-page EPA draft report said sulfur dioxide pollution in the United States existed of the Mississippi River (discovered from 1950 to 1979).

It said the largest sulfur emission increases occurred in the Midwest, where many industrial and fuel combustion activities account for at least 90 percent of the total sulfur dioxide emitted.

Following release of the study, EPA Assistant Administrator Kathleen Bennett reiterated the Reagan administration's position that more research is needed before industries are forced to spend trillions of dollars to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions from coal-burning plants.

She argued that while the report shows strong evidence of connected sulfur emissions from the Midwest, there still is scientific uncertainty about the "transformation, transport and effects phenomena of acid rain."

State Car proves methanol works

by Tom Kukucka

West Virginia state government's experiment with a methanol-fueled automobile, now in its second year, is being called a success. But don't look for the state to begin converting its entire fleet anytime in the near or even distant future.

The state Department of Finance and Administration converted the car of a 1980 Plymouth Volare to run on methanol in the spring of 1980, and the car has since logged 26,000 miles around the city as a taxi service for state employees.

"It's operating satisfactorily," says John Bell, the administration's transportation director. "It seems to get better mileage in warmer temperatures. Why, I don't know."

Simply stated, as the temperature lowers the efficiency of the methanol decreases. Methanol fails to ignite when it's below 40 degrees. What has intrigued Dean Harper, the engineer who serviced the conversion, is the fact that the auto gets poor mileage around the city but performs as well or better than gasoline on the interstate and turnpike.

"It's getting about half the mileages as gasoline around the city," says Harper, a retired Union Carbide engineer. "I ran it once on turnpike speed and it got better mileage."

Around the city, Bell says, the car is getting just five miles per gallon. He says the car isn't being tested outside the city and for good reason.

"There are no facilities for methanol on the open road. There is no way you can go to a service station," said Bell. The car may only refuel at the statehouse motor pool or the Sky Chemical Company in Nitro, which sells methanol to the state for 90 cents a gallon.

The state spent a reported $2,000 on the conversion, which involved enabling the carburetor and removing plastic parts from the engine. Which the fuel would dissolve. But Harper says in order to better gauge the efficiency of methanol as fuel, all parts of the car must be built or altered for methanol consumption. You need more than a simple change. Methanol is a better fuel than gas it is we work it at the proper compression ratios and timings," says Harper.

Nevertheless, Bell says there will be no additional conversions for any of the state's 6,500 cars.

"We proved we could do it. The car runs good with methanol," he says. "It is a smoother running operation (than gas) but as far as making any conclusions, we have not done so. I think Mr. Harper would like to have the car for more test."
DOH takes low road

by Skip Johnson
Charleston Gazette

The Department of Highways has tentatively chosen the southern route for completion of long-stymied Appalachian Corridor H east of Elkins, but whether the highway actually will be built is still a question mark.

This route would take the highway from its present stopping point at Bowden in a northeasterly direction near Mouth of Seneca, northeasterly to Petersburg and then due east to an intersection with Interstate 81 near Strasburg, Va.

DOH spokesman Gary Chernenko said the agency has given its environmental staff the go-ahead to complete the final impact statement using the southern route.

He said the route still needs the approval of the Federal Highway Administration. He declined to label the DOH action as final selection of the highway's route, but said it was "an approach that the door is open.

Chernenko estimated it will take from one to 1½ years to complete the impact statement.

The southern route was one of five being considered by the DOH. Its estimated $329 million price tag puts it in the middle, costwise, among the possibilities.

Some major roadblocks lie in the path of the highway's completion, including funding and the likely opposition of several governmental agencies and environmental groups.

Some major roadblocks lie in the path of the highway's completion, including funding and the likely opposition of several governmental agencies and environmental groups.

Resource agencies oppose route

The route tentatively chosen for the Corridor H highway by the West Virginia Dept. of Highways is the "most damaging to the environment of all this alternative," according to Don Phares, a fish biologist for the state Dept. of Natural Resources, Phares, and some two dozen other federal, state and local environmental and conservation organizations, attended a meeting November 9 in Elkins with the State DOH officials planning Corridor H.

For nearly three hours the DOH staff heard a long litany of reasons why the southern route (Elkins-Bowden-Seneca-Petersburg-Strasburg, Va.) was unacceptable.

Since this route was first proposed during the Moore administration, the DNR has consistently fought it on the basis of its severe environmental impact. Soon after taking office, the Rockefeller administration stopped all planning until a northern alternative route through Parsons. But even this "formed" C. Richard Parsons could be moved.

Both DNR and state environmental agencies and conservation organizations, including the Highlands Conservancy, believed the northern route would not accomplish the purposes for which the highway was sought (development), at a far lower environmental cost.

In addition to DNR objections, other agencies at the Elkins meeting were equally concerned. Representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are extremely fearful that construction of Corridor H east of Bowden will destroy the North Spring trout hatchery that supplies the major portion of the water used by the Bowden National Fish Hatchery. The FWS spokesman, Chris Low, informed the DOH and the Federal Highway Administration's representative that in order to build the hatchery, it would ruin the main spring that feeds Bowden Federal Trout Hatchery.

The highway would go through the National Recreation Area in the Monongahela National Forest near Seneca Rocks and Mountaintop. Supervisor Ralph Mumme said Tuesday the DOH "hasn't shown convincingly that this is the only prudent alternative."

Mumme said public law requires that if there is a prudent way to bypass federal recreation areas, it has to be done.

It was announced last spring that under pressure from the Reagan administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission had scrapped plans for Corridor H as an economy move.

"Our decision at that time was to go ahead and complete the study phase," Chernenko said, although it's true there is presently no money for construction. If money becomes available in the future, we'll have the study phase of the way."

The highway has been stalled at Bowden for more than six years, partly because of environmental concerns. The federal government would ruin the main spring that feeds Bowden Federal Trout Hatchery.

Also, the highway will encounter several trout streams east of Bowden.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which owns Bowden Hatchery, says the facility could not operate without a steady supply of good water from the spring and a similar incident at the Edray Hatchery during the construction of the Highland Scenic Highway.

When asked for the rationale for choosing the southern route, Paul Wilkinson, DOH Planning Division Director, listed several reasons, including that this route was least cost, shortest distance, fastest travel time, and required the least maintenance, among other factors. Several in the audience questioned whether these factors were actually true, pointing out that mitigation costs, for example, were not counted and would be "highest for this route. Other factors, such as maintenance costs are highly speculative. The DOH did not indicate that either environmental factors or the public comment solicited at six public hearings in 1981 were even considered.

The only concession to environmental concerns that the DOH appeared to have considered was their decision to study the use of two lanes, rather than four, in a couple of specific locations where topography would preclude four. One such area was the crossing of the Allegheny Front, between Harman and Orego, where a two-lane alignment (actually three including a passing lane) could follow the existing route of US 33.

This would allow the preservation of White's Run, a well-known trout stream, which otherwise would absorb the full four lane impact down its narrow valley. Two lanes will also be studied along the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac between Seneca Rocks and Cabins. This concession was apparently an attempt to satisfy the objections of the U.S. Forest Service to the severe adverse impact that Corridor H would cause to the Seneca Rocks-Drusk Crone National Recreation Area.

While consideration of possible use of four-laning seen a possible step, several comments were expressed indicating that such a design would cause traffic bottlenecks, leading eventually to the full four-laning anyway. At a later time, the construction of an additional two lanes might be even more difficult than building four at the outset.

Willis Herring, Deputy Director of the DNR, was quoted as restating the DNR's position favoring the "no build" alternative. In official comments to the DOH at the draft EIS, the DNR had further stated that if a build alternative was chosen, the northern route was preferable to the southern one, due in part to the many stream crossings on the southern route. Together with other environmental objections and the inability to mitigate for those losses, the southern route was the least desirable.

At the end of the meeting, the DOH announced that the final environmental impact statement would not be published until early 1984.
A new phrase to be added to electoral dictionary

The “Green vote” became a phrase to be added to the electoral dictionary during 1982 in West Virginia, as in other states, and even other countries. Loosely defined it refers to the organized participation of environmentalists in the political process. It ways often similar to what other interest groups have done in the past. In West Virginia, the most significant development was the formation of CIPAC (Citizens Environmental Action), the West Virginia Citizens Political Action Committee. Formed late in the process and operating on extremely limited funds, CIPAC was still credited with making a crucial difference in several races.

On the national level, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Environmental Action, joined the older group of Conservation Voters, in contributing money and staff to targeted races for both congressional seats and statewide offices. The Sierra Club, for example, reported spending $225,000 in 15 Senate and 155 House contests. Overall, three-fourths of the endorsed candidates contributed money and staff to the green newcomers who toppled incumbents.

In West Virginia, the biggest environmental winner was probably Bob Wise, who defeated the conservative, anti-environmental incumbent Mick Staton in the Third Congressional District. This district is centered in Charleston, but includes everything north to Lewis County, west to the Ohio River, and south to Boone County. Wise was a clear pro-environment contrast to Staton, who brought Interior Secretary James Watt to the state to speak on his behalf. Wise credited the Sierra Club’s endorsement, and CIPAC’s get-out-the-vote efforts with being crucial to his victory.

One interesting environmental issue that surfaced during the campaign showed the contrast between the two candidates. Wise had consistently opposed the Corps of Engineers Stonewall Jackson Dam project in Lewis County. Staton had voted against it in Congress last year, before he was re-elected to include Lewis County. This year Staton refused to disclose his position, asking instead that the voters trust his judgement. Finally, after being chastized by editorial writers across the state for his arrogant attitude, Staton announced his support for the dam.

The Sierra Club’s endorsements in West Virginia included, in addition to Wise, four candidates for each house of the state legislature. These were Luchi, Nelson, Boettner, and Cook in the Senate and Chambers, Hamilton, Brown and Humphries in the House.

CITPAC endorsed 25 candidates of which 23 won. These included Wise and Harley O. Slaggetts, Jr., running for the Second congressional district seat held for may years by his father. Other endorsements went to several of those endorsed by the Sierra Club.

In an interview with the Voice, David Grubb, a CIPAC board member, discussed the three levels of support his group provided. As a minimum, an endorsement was made where a candidate provided a clear choice on environmental issues. Citizens issues used as a criteria by CIPAC. In a targeted race, the maximum level of effort included CIPAC hiring door-to-door canvassers to interview voters prior to the election, pass out literature, and support the CIPAC slate, and provide precinct workers on election day. This approach was used in three races, including Wise’s.

At its peak, CIPAC had 18 canvassers on its payroll, each working for approximately the minimum wage.

Grubb believes that the use of canvassers, rather than the more traditional approach of simply giving grants to candidates to use as they see fit, was a little over $20,000 in three months from 3,000 different people. Those contacted often remarked that they felt they could trust CIPAC’s endorsements because it was an independent group, controlled by a board of directors who were themselves involved in these issues. In addition to Grubb, they include two Conservancy board members, Charleston Vice-president, Perry Bryant, and Past President, Linda Cooper Elkinton.

As to the future, Grubb told the Voice, “It is not a question of if in 1984, but what we want to do.” The results of the hastily-organized 1982 activities were viewed as a pilot program, he said, to test whether such an approach could make an impact in West Virginia politics. CIPAC’s expectations were more than exceeded. Their board will meet next month to evaluate the campaign and prepare for 1984. Grubb hopes the same approach will be used statewide with similar success. In the meantime, Grubb indicated CIPAC will be helping in candidate recruitment, especially in districts where the incumbents are opposed to the CIPAC issues.

In summarizing the CIPAC effort, Grubb remembered having said last summer that the establishment of CIPAC represented “one of the most significant political developments in the past decade in West Virginia.” At the time he thought that phrase might be simply so much hyperbole, but now he believes it may prove to be realistic.

For more information, CIPAC can be contacted at 1324-B Virginia Street East, Charleston WV 25301.
Shavers Fork being threatened

by Bard Montgomery

A proposed coal refuse dump on Shaver's Fork would threaten trout and other fish with toxic acid drainage, Rick Webb told a public meeting in Elkins November 15. Speaking for the Highlands Conservancy, which had protested a permit application for the refuse dump, Webb requested that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) deny Ingram Coal Company's permit or require major modifications of the design.

Ingram has applied to construct a gob pile near its coal preparation plant at Cheat Bridge. Establishment of this plant by New Era Resources in 1975 was opposed by the Conservancy, which cited potential water pollution from coal washing operations and impairment of recreational activities in this popular trout stream. The plant cleans and loads coal from both strip and deep mines in the Shaver's watershed operated by Ingram and other lessees of the landowner, Mower Lumber Company.

A small gathering of environmentalists and coal company representatives were convened by the DNR in an informal conference to discuss the proposed dump. Webb cited test results of coal refuse samples from the plant which have shown a net acid potential of the waste to half the values determined by lab tests. These values ranged as high as 32 tons/ thousand CaCO3 dry matter for the Sewell seam. Average values for the waste material would be much lower, said Romano.

Mower Lumber Company vice-president Ralph McDonald also disputed Webb's assertion that Shaver's Fork is vulnerable to acid discharge from mining disturbances. "I know more about the geology of Shaver's Fork than probably any man alive," claimed McDonald.

He asserted that strip mining in the watershed has beneficial effects on the river.

Support for Webb's position was voiced by former highway engineer John Ward. Speaking for Trout Unlimited, Ward said the coal waste "should be handled like the hazardous industrial waste that it is and be completely isolated from the environment." Ward criticized the "finger-channel" drains proposed by Ingram and recommended that an eight-foot deep stone "carpet drain" be placed under the waste pile to allow groundwaters to underpass it without contacting it.

Ward recommended that the waste be sealed above and below with compacted clay, and that the site be covered with 18 feet of topsoil to accommodate long-term forest revegetation. The Ingram proposal calls for only twelve inches of topsoil to be seeded with grasses and planted in pines.

Members of the Conservancy Mining Committee and of Mountain Stream Monitors, accompanied by Ingram personnel and DNR Reclamation inspectors visited the site of the proposed refuse dump and an active disposal site nearby on November 9. They were frankly impressed by the active operation where coal waste is being filled into an old strip-mine bench and compacted before being covered with top soil and seeded.

Committee member Geoff Green, a civil engineer, commented at the conference that "the company is doing as good a job as could be done under the circumstances." A water sample collected at the mouth of Fish Hatchery Run, which drains the active site, proved to be nearly neutral in pH value. This clear flowing stream showed no adverse effects from the present disposal operation.

Nonetheless, a contour-band of small springs and seeps lies above the active site and continues into the proposed site, posing the possibility of water infiltrating refuse at the proposed site and leaching out acid and iron. Samples of the coal waste at the active site were gathered and tested by Mountain Stream Monitors. Two of the seven samples showed highly acidic, ranging in pH from 3.3 to 4.5 in successive lab tests. Surface waters from proposed site would pass through treatment ponds which appear to operate effectively at the present time. But Conservancy members doubt that perpetual treatment would be possible if it should prove necessary. Reclamation bonds are customarily released in steps over a five year schedule.

The Conservancy asked that DNR require the following modifications if the permit is granted:

- Expanding the drainage system to make sure springs and groundwater do not contact the refuse;
- Two to three feet of compacted clay above the pile to seal out surface water;
- Two to four feet of topsoil to sustain revegetation;
- The exclusion of coal from outside the Shaver's watershed;
- Monitoring and testing of the refuse in the pile;
- Mapping of the refuse pile to show source and acid potential of material in each zone;
- Limiting the permit to Phase I

The proposed fill would occur in two phases, with Phase I lasting eight years and Phase II twelve to sixteen years. Each phase would fill a relatively flat area on top of "hogbacks" or ridges flanking a small hollow. Ingram's original proposal to fill the hollow was rejected by DNR due to the probability of water contamination.

DNR Director Dave Callaghan must rule on the permit application by December 14. Fortunately, he will have available for consideration the written comments of Rick Webb, John Ward and Conservancy Mining Committee Chairman John Purnbaugh.

The tape recording of oral comments was discovered to be blank after the conclusion of the conference.
Coal slump quiets debate over mining on Shavers Fork

by Skip Johnson
Charleston Gazette

Mining on the Shavers Fork River in Randolph County, which has long been a subject of controversy between environmentalists and the industry, is virtually silent because of the slumping coal market.

All of the surface mines on the southern end of Shavers Fork have shut down, and only two of four deep mines opened on the Monongahela National Forest on the northern end are operating.

Surface mining operations which have been suspended in recent weeks are those of Ingram Coal Co., Rehoboth Coal Co. and Mountaintop Fuel.

Enviro Energy, the developer of the deep mines, is still producing coal at two mines but at far less than capacity, according to company officials. The two mines employ 62 people, also far fewer than had been contemplated at this state.

"The coal economy is affecting us drastically," said Lloyd Lang, president of Lang Brothers of Bridgeport, parent company of Enviro.

"It has nothing to do with the quality of coal. The market simply isn't there.

Lang said he sees no cause for optimism in the near future. "I've been talking to some Europeans," he said, "and their economies are in the same shambles as ours.

But Lang pointed out coal production in West Virginia is running at levels ahead of or as high as last year, despite mine closings around the state. "So I don't know what to think," he said.

Lang said Mountaintop, another Lang subsidiary, did well in the export market until late last year. "But this year it dried up prematurely," he said.

The idle mines on Shavers Fork are indicative of mining generally in Randolph County, once a top producer. Now only a few small mines are operating throughout the county.

Pete Pilsenbarger, chief of the land reclamation division of the Department of Natural Resources, said his inspectors are still busy reviewing permit applications. "But we're getting requests for change permits to inactive status," he said.

Pollutants turning

Blue Ridge Mountains white

Pollutants are turning the Blue Ridge Mountains white, an Appalachian State University study indicates.

The study, supervised by chemistry professor James Buchanan, found that smoke heavy with sulfur dioxide from the Ohio Valley is turning white and settling in the mountains, thus limiting visibility.

The mountains stretching across western North Carolina got their name from the blue haze that rises from evergreen-covered hillsides. But the blue haze is being covered up by the white smoke, according to the seven-month ASU study.

The project was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state Board of Science and Technology and the ASU Research Committee.

Coming In The Next Issue

- More details on the Midwinter Workshop, January 15-16
- A report on the Cranberry Wilderness legislation and the lame duck session of Congress
- A DNR response to the Don Brannon interview in the Oct-Nov VOICE
- Brief statements of candidates for election to Conservancy officers
- Other late-breaking environmental news

![Ingram Coal Co. preparation plant at Cheat Bridge.](image)

Organizational membership:
Regular—$20 from a small organization anxious to help the Conservancy score conservation gains in the Mountain State.
Associate—$30 from a large organization whose membership approves the efforts of the Conservancy.
Sustaining—$60 from a large national organization which appreciates the importance of a highlands area to the people of the eastern seaboard.

Description of membership categories:
Individual membership:
Regular—$10 from the rank and file who can give time and interest to the conservation.
Associate—$20 from those who can afford a small extra gift in addition to their interest in West Virginia's outdoors.
Sustaining—$50 from those able and willing to give larger amounts necessary to underwrite our programs.
Senior—$5 from conservations over 65 years of age.

Membership category (see descriptions opposite)

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Make checks payable to The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.
Holiday Gifts
The CONSERVANCY Way!

- **Arm patches** - $2
- **Window decals** - $1.50
- **Canaan T-shirts** - $6
  may feature deer, bear, heron, hare, goshawk, woodcock, trout or starflower
  (please specify)
- **Monongahela guide** - $7.00
- **Cranberry guide** - $3.30

T-shirts may be green, blue, red or black - children's S, M, L or adults' S, M, L, XL - please specify

Canaan ceramic tiles are also available (not shown) - $5

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**W. Va. Highlands Conservancy**
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Fairmont, WV 26554

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Total: $2.75

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