Reaction to Rivers Bill Fluctuates

The West Virginia Rivers Bill, HR 900, which involves federal designations for the Gauley, Greenbrier, Meadow, and New Rivers, was heard in the House of Representatives on May 27. The vote was 344-49; the bill now goes to the Senate.

Inclusion of the Greenbrier River
Local reaction to the bill in Pocahontas County has been mixed. The Greenbrier River Hike, Bike and Ski Trail Association sponsored an open meeting at Danmore so critics and supporters and others interested in the bill could exchange views. About 100 people with concerns about the “Wild and Scenic” designation for the Greenbrier River met with Glenn Eugster of the National Park Service’s state and local rivers program.

Many citizens feared that designating the Greenbrier River a wild and scenic river would force them to sell their land or severely restrict what they could do. Eugster pointed out that no federal acquisition was called for in the Greenbrier legislation, but that the guidelines for wild and scenic status provide that a management plan be drawn up for a river. He also said the federal guidelines are very general and allow for most current activities to continue to be carried out.

Eugster stressed that he has worked in many areas where public officials, landowners, and interested parties, such as fishermen and other users of rivers, have been able to reach a consensus about goals for their rivers and plans for preservation. He also said that he works with groups and individuals on river proposals on an advisory basis, not necessarily as an advocate of protection.

Nearly 50% of the property along the sections of the Greenbrier River to be included in the wild and scenic designation is already publicly owned. Jim Zoia, staff director of the House Mining and Natural Resources Subcommittee, was quoted in the Charleston Gazette (June 4) as saying, “The bill [HR 900] says there will be no public land acquisition above 50%, and I think we’re at 50% right now, given federal state, town or political subdivision ownership.”

Zoia also said the basic purpose of a Wild and Scenic River Act is to preserve rivers in their free-flowing state, not to buy up private land. Federal designation of rivers as wild and scenic does not give the U.S. Forest Service broad land acquisition authority. He said, “None would be acquired from unwilling sellers, and none by condemnation. If someone wants to sell and the Forest Service believes there is a need to acquire the property and money is available, it might go through.”

Current uses of privately owned land along the river corridor, Zoia said, “would be fully protected as long as they aren’t harming the river. I wouldn’t think someone could do absolutely anything they wanted to, but a river management plan would include plenty of local input.”

Some residents living near the Greenbrier River are worried about the possibility of a dam on the river. At the Danmore meeting, they expressed concerns about the 22 miles of the river above Marlinton that have been left out of the wild and scenic designation for a three-year period until the Army Corps of Engineers studies flood control measures for Marlinton and other downstream communities. Some of the people from the Marlinton area expressed anger and frustration over not being notified in advance that the Greenbrier River designation was added to HR 900.

Wild and scenic designation does not prohibit flood control activities such as flood walls or levees on a river, but it does prohibit main stem dams.

New River Fishermen Worried About Possible Flow Changes and BTI

The version of HR 900 that passed the House of Representatives calls for the Army Corps of Engineers to study how changes in the flow from Bluestone Dam could enhance rafting during low-water periods. The New River is well known for its catches of smallmouth bass and channel catfish, and fishermen fear that any more flow changes could seriously affect fishing productivity.

Bill Simms of Whitewater Information, Glen Jean, West Virginia, is in a unique position to comment on HR 900. He is both a whitewater outfitter and a professional fishing guide on New River. “As a commercial raft guide,” Simms says, “I must be foolish to be opposed to the Rivers Bill, but I’m (continued on page 4)
Mountain View
Goodbye, Charlie
by John Purbaugh

"John, I just came to tell you that I'll be leaving on a trip for six months, maybe a year or longer, so there's no need to send me anything more at my Charleston box." Charlie Carlson had become a frequent visitor at my law office in Charleston as I got more involved in the Conservancy. He had come out to the house to show me "the second largest black oak in the state" in a little cove on the farm two ridges over. Now in his brusque way, he was saying goodbye to me.

Charlie was one of the founders of the Conservancy, and served two terms as president. He was born 80-somewhere ago on a farm in rural Kanawha County, and worked at a little of everything, including as an industrial electrical equipment installer and troubleshooter. He worked until retirement for the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources at Kanawha State Forest, and bought a bungalow just a step from the forest entrance. In retirement, he was "Mr. Kanawha State Forest," tending trails, leading hikes for the Kanawha Trail Club and others, and successfully fighting any plans to timber there. Charlie could hike a whole troupe of younger folks into the ground, and has been a fixture at various nature weekends around the State, including Conservancy meetings.

"You wouldn't get a new truck," I asked, knowing that his trusty Ford was due, "No, just had some work done on the old one." Charlie's plans include stops at the Big Bend National Park in Texas, maybe Yellowstone or Glacier, and visiting a sister in Seattle. "Might even try Alaska, being that close."  

Goodbye, Charlie. I'm honored you took the time to be my friend, and I'll miss you while you're gone. Back home.

Summer Board Meeting
(continued from page 1)

work at their daily tasks of cleaning muzzlesloaders, weaving cloth, forging tools in the blacksmith shop, or cooking over an open fire. At times, they may take a break from their work to do a little fiddling and dancing.

Elkinton has arranged for Conservancy members to participate in activities in the areas of West Virginia history and crafts, to engage in a discussion on the State's future as a center for tourism, to enjoy a frontier meal, and to see a "State of the Frontier," Fort: An American Frontier Musical. The outdoor drama has been performed for four seasons and has been favorably reviewed by critics throughout the area. The play written by Sessen Francis is directed this season by Dr. Charles D. Neel, a well-known professor of theater at WVU.

All Conservancy members are invited to join the families of the Board members for any part of the weekend. Discount prices for the activities are as follows:

Living history tour: adults $2.50; senior citizens $2.25; children $1.25 (6-12) (under 6, free).

Frontier dinner: adults $6.50; senior citizens $6.00; children $3.50 (12 and under).

Musical drama: adults $5.50; senior citizens $5.00; children $2.75 (12 and under).

The musical drama is not recommended for children under five, unless they are used to staying up late, because it runs from 8:30-10:45 p.m.

Except for dinner reservations on the evening of July 25, other reservations are recommended but not required. The dining area has limited seating and reservations should be made with Picketts Fort before July 1. Seating will be held for Conservancy members only until July 11. Those who wish to pack a picnic dinner may eat at 6 p.m. in the Fort's picnic area.

The Sunday agenda is limited to a 9 a.m.

Board Meeting at the Elkington's farm, halfway between Fairmont and Morgantown. Camping will be available at the Elkington's, where Sunday breakfast will be provided for a nominal charge. For those requiring more creature comforts, a number of motels are available in the Morgantown-Fairmont area. Picketts Fort State Park is located two miles off I-79 at Exit 139, just north of Fairmont. The Elkington's farm is located on Halleck Rd., off old Rt. 73, between Fairmont and Morgantown. Follow Halleck Rd. 1. and 3/4 miles and watch for signs. From the east, Halleck is off Rt. 119. Proceed to the junction of Tom's Run Rd. and then watch for the signs.

Additional information on Picketts Fort may be obtained by calling TOLL FREE 1-800-CALL-WV and asking for Picketts Fort. This number is available to both in-state and out-of-state callers.

JOIN THE WVHC TODAY

Jim Doyle is "David Morgan" in Picketts Fort outdoor musical drama.

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Guidelines For Articles & Letters To The Editor

The Voice welcomes any well-researched article or editorial on areas of concern, for example, river conservation, public land management, mining. Canaan Valley. General articles on outdoor activities—canoeing, hiking, caving, climbing—or on unusual places or special outdoor events are also needed. All submissions are subject to editing. To assure accuracy in the printing of these articles, the following guidelines have been established:

1.) Whenever possible, articles should be typed, double spaced on 8½ x 11 inch paper, with at least one-inch margins on each side. If the submission is not typed, the author should use lined paper and write legibly on every other line.

2.) Each article should be accompanied by the author's name, address, and telephone number. (Address and telephone numbers will not be printed with the article, but are needed so that the editor may contact the author for additional information, if necessary.) If the article is more than one page, the author's last name should be placed under the page number on each page.

3.) Photographs related to the article are greatly appreciated. Black and white photographs reproduce best, but color photos can be used. Photographs will be returned if the author requests them.

4.) The deadline for each issue of the Voice is the last Friday of each month.

The Voice also welcomes letters to the editor expressing views on any of the topics covered in previous issues or on other environmental concerns. Letters to the editor should follow the guidelines for articles.
Acid Rain Control Status

by Don Gasper

It is not expected that the Reagan Administration will do much about controlling acid rain, as they actually told the Canadians two years ago, "The U.S. will not export pollution - we are good neighbors."

In January, three bills that have long awaited action, that would reauthorize The Clean Air Act to control sulfur emissions and reduce acid rain were introduced in the U.S. Senate. If enacted the provisions of these bills would cut sulfur dioxide emissions by about half in ten years. While the House actually pass such a bill, Senate sponsors note that similar legislation has been stalled for five years. In this long interim, additional studies have consistently confirmed that coal burning electric power stations are the main source of sulfur emissions that cause acid rain and that acid rain endangers fisheries, soils, and crops including forests. Clearly it is more important than ever that this act is passed and the clean-up started.

From 1980 to 1984, sulfur emissions were reduced 2%, while power production went up 17%. Nearly 75% of this reduction can be attributed to burning more low sulfur coal and to the use of smoke-stack cleaning units. The remaining 25% reduction is due to the start-up of cleaning-burning, new plants. In a May 1987 update, the National Coal Association reported that sulfur emissions from 1980-1986 were down 4.5% and use was up 26%. Further sulfur reduction can be expected, but a crash clean-up schedule is needed now.

Senator Byrd has been responsible for stalling these needed controls because, for a time, he thought many jobs in the coal industry would be lost. Many of his recent bill releases stated that clean-up action was not warranted because it was too expensive and more studies on acid rain need to be done before decisive action is taken. More recent studies, however, that provided overwhelming evidence that sulfur emissions cause acid rain, that it was terribly harmful, and that sulfur emission controls would be effective in reducing the problem.

Senator Byrd, himself, about two years ago told the Coal Association that they had to change their entrenched opposition. It really was no longer respectable. Now Byrd has revealed a new stalling tactic. He is not likely to permit the Clean Air Act to be brought to a vote in the Senate, but he has obtained a half billion dollar, three year research program to develop new ways to burn coal cleanly, and more economically. The President, he says, would not be in place until after 1990. Senator Glenn proposes simply that the coal powered plants in the United States be given the ISO to spend as needed on these clean-up studies.

In the past, the American Coal Industry has always claimed they were too costly. They inflated the scrubber's real cost. They spent millions on propaganda to prevent us from installing them. Scrubbers have always been used everywhere in Japan, and the Japanese can surely compete. The citizen of the United States cannot buy scrubbers, when, polled, said they were willing to pay, over 75% of those clean-up the air and protect our waters and forests - our structures and ourselves.

In order to stall further, opponents of a clean-up now claim this clean-up schedule does not give them time to develop new technologies. The passage of this legislation would mean that virtually all of our coal burning power plants would be required to install scrubbers, which would stop delivering low cost, high quality electricity to all of us. The Clean-Air Act would ensure that the entire country would be required to comply with the Clean Air Act standards, and that therefore a balance must be struck to the benefit of both. To those who would contend that such a goal is impossible to achieve, we need only point to the common sense of nature itself, that from a seed the size of your little finger grows a tree may grow 150 ft. tall and live for hundreds of years.

Thus, the time, place, and course, will not live to see, as it were, a climax forest, but it is for us to plant the seeds, not only through our words but by the way we live our lives, by the example we set. Senators Glenn and Byrd, I contend that it is not only possible to have a satisfying life by conservation and cooperation but that it is in fact the best way to do so. Each one of us, no matter who we are or where we live or what we do for a living, can make a contribution to this cause. And the contributions that each responsible person makes, however small and trivial they may seem, are the only way we will ever succeed, for no matter what the legal and political means we engage in for the moment, in the long run it is the hearts and minds of our friends and neighbors that will make the difference, because it is not corporate machinations that are leading us to ruin, but our compliance with them. Thus the health of our bioregion does not ultimately depend on any government or business. It depends on us, and it depends most particularly on our coming to the understanding that a truly good life is not possible by abusing the earth: it is only possible by living our lives, day by day, with attention and devotion to the needs of a healthy, ecological community.

I have been asked to list below a few things that virtually all of us can do to help this cause, but the reader should always keep in mind that the best and most important are the primary initiatives. There are very few aspects of modern life, anyone's life, that cannot be held to task in this matter.

* Buy the smallest, most fuel-efficient vehicle you can use, and maintain it properly.

* There is no aspect of our urban monoculture that has proven as environmentally destruc'tive and culturally dehumanizing as our obsession with motor vehicles. And for most of us controlling our wasteful driving habits is the single most useful thing we can do to help our cause, not to mention saving ourselves a great deal of money. Almost all vehicles of decent quality that are driven in a reasonably careful fashion are capable of 150 to 200,000 miles without major drive-train failure just by doing frequent oil changes and tune-ups and keeping rust under control.

* If you invest in the stock market take pains to find out whether or not the company or any of its subsidiaries you're investing in is involved in exploiting or polluting the earth for its own (and your) short-term profit. A good example would be any corporation, and there are quite a few, profiting from the

(continued on page 4)
Mountain Biking

Back roads with rough surfaces discourage many bicyclists but provide havens for those who enjoy low-gear, fat-tire mountain bikes.

"If any place could be described as having been created as a haven for mountain bicycles, that place is Pocahontas County," claims Gil Willis, owner and operator of the Elk River Touring Center.

The mountain bike is a blend of the old fat-tire bicycle and the modern many-gear, skinny-tire touring bike. The tires on the mountain bike are 2½ inches wide and have knobs on them to provide better traction. Willis says the wider tires act like shock absorbers, giving a more comfortable ride even on a hard-surfaced road. In addition, a heavier frame and a long wheel base give these bikes a greater stability. Willis points out: "They're built for cruising and sight-seeing, not for speed."

A bicycle needs to have a minimum of 15 gears to be classified as a mountain bike.

Reaction to Rivers Bill

(continued from page 1)

first of all a fisherman, and I don't want New River flows tampered with. Claytor Lake releases already cause enough of an up-and-down effect on the river.

Claytor Lake, which is backed up by a dam on the New River in Virginia, ponds water for a hydroelectric generating facility. Since it is a peak power generating facility, its releases into the New River are uneven. Bluestone Reservoir is kept at a fairly constant level, and as the releases from Claytor reach Bluestone, they are in turn passed on to the New River below Bluestone Dam. The surges of water from Claytor may result in daily changes in river levels below Bluestone Dam of up to two feet or more.

Another professional fishing guide, Jim Richmond of Appalachian Outdoor Adventures, says, "Who knows what will happen. Maybe a study will show that a constant release of 2,500 cubic feet per second will be ideal for fishing. But where is that water going to come from? Then Bluestone Lake will have to be raised to make sure there's enough water for that much of a release and then the lake level will fluctuate drastically."

He points out that no matter what happens, some group is going to be unhappy, so why not leave things as they are. "There are 20 or so whitewater outfitters operating under the current conditions, so they must be doing all right. And the fishing is good now. Why tamper with it?"

Both fishermen agree that the provision for allowing the spraying of Bti for black fly control should be dropped from the bill. The black fly is an important link in the New River food chain, and any reduction in its population may result in a reduction of fish in New River. Simms says, "Sure the flies can be a nuisance, but you just can't go around eliminating everything that bothers you."

Living with the land (continued from page 3)

destruction of the tropical rain forests. This may take some doing on your part, and you may perhaps have to settle for a more modest return from a more responsible company, but if you are truly a friend of the earth, no other course is possible.

* If you have even a small plot of arable land, grow some of your own food. This is not only a beautiful thing to do but also means you will be that much less dependent on noxious pesticides, profiting middle-men and government regulators, and perhaps most important you will learn what it really means to give of yourself to the earth, and harvest its bounty in return. Try also to use as much as you can food produced here in the Central Appalachians. This will not only benefit the local economy but will help to discourage the wasting of fuel and pollution of the atmosphere we indulge in by transporting foodstuffs all over the country. One of the primary principals of bioregionalism is the achievement of the highest possible degree of agricultural self-sufficiency.

* Nearly all of us could substantially reduce our consumption of generated energy with not only no decrease in the quality of our lives but a considerable improvement in them. This is because we have ourselves become slaves to cheap energy (though in terms of environmental destruction it is proving to be hellishly expensive), and in thinking that so long as we can afford it we may as well use it, we have inundated ourselves with 'labor-saving' devices and electronic amusements that have been subduing our fundamental values of work and responsibility and stifling the creative gifts within us (whose vigorous use has always been the major determinant of spiritual and physical well-being) for an evermore vicious existence which ultimately becomes mere existence. An interesting and meaningful life is never an easy one.

* Each of us must define for ourselves what are their true material needs as opposed to their spurious, transient, often sociologically generated "needs" the fulfillment of which frequently demands that we engross ourselves in work that is not only unsatisfying to us but which is grossly exploitive of our natural resources or obstructive to social harmony. The most important thing to remember is that it is up to you to decide. It is true that in conducting your affairs and defining your needs in terms of ecological responsibility you will find yourself firmly in the minority regarding many of our current political and economic debates. This may be looked upon as unfortunate or even tragic but in reality is a matter of little concern, for as we see over and over again those people who concern themselves too much with the dictates of temporal fashion are consistently those who have the most unfulfilling lives.

When you know in your heart what is right and proper, and that doing so is its own reward, you know therefore that you do not act in vain.

* There are, of course, as I said, a great many things that I have not mentioned (or even known about) that one can do to live in peace with the land, but then discovering those for oneself through active participation is one of the joys of being alive in this world. Nevertheless there is one thing we must do, all of us, and that is to defend and promote the cause of ecological harmony anywhere and in any way we can, especially the preservation of wild lands and rivers, for those contain the wisdom of the ages, but always remembering that self-righteousness (however 'right' we may be) is invariably causes even greater cultural polarization, and that besides, no one has a lock on the whole truth about anything.

And, Willis says, there are a number of long challenging climbs.

The Elk River Touring Center is also hosting the 5th annual mountain bike festival from July 8-12 in Slatyfork. The festival, formerly called Mountain Bikes in the Mountain State, is now labeled The West Virginia Fat Tire Festival. Activities include informal bike tours through the Highlands; a ride up Bald Knob on the Cass Scenic Railroad and a mountain bike ride back; races, including one for children 12 and under; and live music and camping.

For more information about the festival and mountain biking, the reader may contact the Elk River Touring Center, Slatyfork, WV 26291; phone: (304) 572-3771.