Kumbrawbow, in the courts and in the snow.

by Bill Rogers

The voice of reason wants to reassure you about Corridor H. Here's a standard response to protest letters: "In considering development questions, I always seek a sensitivity between economic and environmental concerns." But the project is still in trouble, after 25 years, because both concerns point the same way. So what's on the other side of the scale? A few chunks of self-interest, a whole lot of inertia.

Corridor H doesn't make sense on its own economic terms. This idea shouldn't be a surprise. Other big government projects that degraded our environment did not boost our economy. Resource uses of public lands are familiar examples of poor investment, but new highway construction in rural areas belongs at the top of the list.

The Appalachian Development Highway system had two purposes: first, to attract the east-west travel that had bypassed the mountains, with the notion that development would follow, and second, to ease commuting within the region. Corridor G, an example of the second kind, has increased commuting into Charleston, and may contribute to job growth in Boone and Logan Counties. But the impact of a highway in a densely-populated area that lacked easy access to a nearby city has nothing to do with a corridor through two national forests, precious farmland, and rural communities.

Appalachia isn't all one thing.

Do jobs follow new roads into the country? After more than 25 years of special funding for these highways, we have an answer: no, they don't. Highway construction in rural areas often hurts the people it was meant to help. The politicians haven't caught up, but economic development specialists know it.

Ralph Widmer, the first executive director of the Appalachian Regional Commission, reviewed its programs for the 25th anniversary. More than half the money was spent on highways. "With hindsight," he said, "the original premise for the system in this connection can be called into question." Manufacturers didn't escape the cities to rural areas. If wages were their main concern, they moved to Mexico or Malaysia instead.

Otherwise they went only so far as the suburbs. The ARC insists that most jobs have been created in the counties with major highways, and that Corridor H "Needs Study" relies on this claim. But where were those counties located? Widmer found that most new job growth occurred close to metropolitan areas on the fringe of Appalachia-Atlanta, Cincinnati, even New York and Philadelphia—or around cities within the region—Winston-Salem, Huntsville, and others. That "spillover growth" won't reach the Patteeze Highlands.

Widmer called for a redirection of investment in Appalachia. (see page 7)

WVHC Winter Board Meeting
Will be held January 8, 1994 at the office of the WV Rivers Coalition in Buchanan, beginning at 10 A.M.

Everyone welcome!

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---from the heart of the mountains---

by Cindy Rank

GIFTS IN BIG SHINY BOXES

What's all the fuss about the new Division of Environmental Protection (DEP)?

Has the W.V. environmental community gone over the edge on this one? Are the individuals speaking up against DEP only sore losers because in one or another particular battle recently the current director hasn't supported their position? Was the legislation that spells out the form and functions of DEP a "consensus" document that the environmental community is now reneging on merely because it didn't get its way during negotiations?

If you are to believe industry hype (and statements by DEP and the Department of Commerce, Labor and Environmental Resources: CLER), the answer to each of the above questions is YES.

I, for one, admit that it's all a bunch of hooey.

Were there people at the legislative committee hearing in early December that had personal grudges against the DEP and/or its representatives? Yes...and there were also people there who spoke in favor of DEP for equally personal reasons.

In fact, one of the greatest weaknesses of this legislation is the excessive amount of discretionary authority it gives to the one person appointed to head the new umbrella agency. All rises and falls on that person's whims—be it good, bad or indifferent. No doubt you'll love it if the director is on your side, but it just doesn't make for good or responsible government.

Is this a "consensus" piece of legislation, at one time agreed upon by all the interest groups represented on the Advisory Committee that defined the structure of the new DEP? NO.

A carefully crafted letter of support signed by members of the drafting sub-committee might lead you to believe there was consensus, but in truth there was not; nor does the careful reading of that letter require such a conclusion.

I was one of the Committee members who refused to sign off on the bill being proposed to the legislature. I believed then, as now, that the present version of the bill only addresses a portion of the purposes set out in the enabling legislation (H.B. 217 passed in October 1993) but it falls far short of providing the increased environmental protection the new name implies.

So, what was this legislation meant to do that it doesn't do?

Back in the summer of '91 House Bill 217 was conceived to ward off Big Brother Federal Office of Surface Mining who was nipping at the heels of a woefully inadequate mining regulatory program and threatening to take over control of that program and the substantial funds that accompany it.

I was "at the table" in 1991 and didn't like the direction that the legislature decided to take. To me, problems in the mining program could and should have been resolved by garnering more money from industry to strengthen WV's effort to enforce both federal and state surface mining laws and increasing the legislature oversight of that whole process, period.

Instead, someone, somewhere had the bright idea that the Legislature should also tinker with the rest of the environmental regulatory programs so that all would work together a little more smoothly. Hence, the birth of DEP.

It was a coup for the coal industry: Attention was no longer focused on coal and the mining program, but was dispersed (continued on page 8)
Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Public Input Sought
This month the youngest of all National wildlife refuges expanded by 160 acres with the acquisition of Buffington Island, the ninth and largest island in the refuge. Heavily used by man for its natural resources, Buffington will be returning to its natural state. Used most recently for its gravel and timber, the island was once important to native americans for the abundance of mussels. Recent excavations have uncovered native american mussel shell disposal pits containing species now extinct. Wildlife is still incredibly abundant on the island.

Thirty eight islands were originally considered for inclusion in the refuge, but probably no more than 25 will ever be acquired. Two islands have already been lost through commercial dredging since the refuge was conceived. Fourteen others have disappeared in the same stretch since 1950.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is now developing plans for the management and use of the islands. Various projects and activities being considered are wildlife habitat creation, preservation, hiking, bird and animal viewing and killing (or, hunting). Public input is being sought until January 31, 1994. If you are interested in getting involved, write or call the ORDWR office as soon as possible. ORDWR, PO Box 1811, Parkersburg, WV 26102-1811 (304) 422-0752.

Thanks to the Charleston Gazette and Rick Steckhauser for graphic and information.

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

- Islands acquired to date.
- Islands not owned by Fish and Wildlife Service

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Map: Islands acquired to date.

Gazette graphic

Apple Grove Pulp and Paper

The pollution permit applications for land and water discharges are close to the public comment stage, according to Eli McCoy, formerly chief of Water Resources and now deputy commissioner of WV Department of Environmental Protection. After they are released for comment, citizens will have 30 days in which to obtain, read, digest and make comments on the permit application. Jim Baker, community organizer for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, said she was surprised to hear this from Eli McCoy. Many had not expected Apple Grove to submit the applications until the Legislature adopted the newunker water quality standards proposed by the Water Resources Board.

Extirpated WV Vertebrates
Bison
Eastern Timber Wolf
Elk
Fisher*
Mountain Lion
River Otter*

Bighorn Shiner
Lake Sturgeon
Longnose Sucker
Mississippi Silvery Minnow
Shovelnose Sturgeon

Designates reintroduction from the WV Natural Heritage Program
Recognizing Old-Growth Trees

By Robert Leverett

The Highlands Voice, December 93-January 94 - Page 4

The term 'stag-beaded' has many connotations. It can indicate a tree that has been logged or that has been harvested by a certain method. In many regions, it is used to describe trees that are still standing, but have knots or gnarls in the bark. These knots may be the result of past logging practices or natural factors such as wind or disease. The term is often used to describe trees that are difficult to cut down, as they may have large knots or branches that make it difficult to access the center of the tree.

In the case of old-growth trees, the term 'stag-beaded' may be used to describe a tree that has been left standing for a long time, possibly due to low demand for timber or because of conservation efforts. These trees may have unique characteristics that are valuable to scientists and researchers, such as large knots or unusual growth patterns.

In many cases, old-growth trees are protected by law, and their preservation is considered important for maintaining biodiversity and preserving natural ecosystems. However, in some regions, old-growth trees may still be logged for timber or other purposes, and the term 'stag-beaded' may be used to describe trees that are removed from their natural habitat.

The term 'stag-beaded' is also used to describe trees that have been left standing for a long time due to the natural process of growth and development. These trees may have unique characteristics that are valuable to scientists and researchers, such as large knots or unusual growth patterns. In some cases, these trees may be protected by law, and their preservation is considered important for maintaining biodiversity and preserving natural ecosystems.

Running Buffalo Clover

by P.J. Harman

from Native Notes (Vol. 2 No. 2), published by the West Virginia Native Plant Society

Running Buffalo Clover (Trifolium stoloniferum), one of the few clover species native to West Virginia, was once thought to be extinct until Rodney Barbera, formerly of the West Virginia Natural Heritage Program and an original organizer of the WVNPS, found a small population in the New River Gorge at Cottontown, Fayette County, West Virginia in 1984. Within a few years, several populations had been found in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. By 1989, the plant had been declared a federally-endangered species and there was a little money available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to survey for other populations of Running Buffalo Clover (RBC). Since this species had once been associated with sugarcane and had been harvested by RBC in the savannahs of the clover and prairie grasses, we of the West Virginia Natural Heritage Program decided to investigate the possibilities of this species being associated with game trails in West Virginia. We wanted to know, "Where were the large herbivores foraging and traveling across West Virginia at the time the first trappers and surveyors came into our state?" We examined many reports to RBC in the earliest journals of the early explorers of that hugsly forested wilderness?"

To help us answer these questions, in 1989, we hired Linda Smith to search the historical archives of our larger libraries to find any references she could to 'buffalo', 'buffalo', 'buffalo', 'buffalo', etc. "Buffalo" and "clover". We asked her in the end to create a coarse map of the known

A large red oak growing at Kumbrabow State Forest. The branching pattern shows progression to Old-Growth characteristics.

Figure 1 Running Buffalo Clover (Trifolium stoloniferum) (illustration by Sam Norris).

major game and Indian trails across West Virginia at the time of settlement. One of the more helpful references Linda found was a Ph.D. dissertation about the early salt industry in the Ohio Valley and associated trinitaries. She also found important journals like those of George Washington: "I first came surveying down the Ohio River. Washington reported that thousands of bison, elk, and deer were seen grazing in a large reserve near present Letart, West Virginia, and that the prairie-like open woods was filled in part with a bush white clover. At the time Washington came down the Ohio, it is reasonable to assume that clover was not yet the introduced White European Clover but the native Running Buffalo Clover. In the fall of that same year, a group of hiders with the Brooks Bird Club stumbled onto two small clumps of the species in the middle of an old road on Rich Mountain West (there are two in Randolph County)! We confirmed it, and the ardinance began to soar!"

The following year, we sent 6 seasonal botanists across the state to search for this elusive native clover, but after a month, no new sites had been found. Finally, Bill Roody and Donna Mitchell found a sizable patch along a jeep trail on Laurel Mountain along the Barbour/Randolph border, and we began to focus our attention in Randolph County at its sites.

In 1992, Linda Smith led us to a new site along a US Forest Service road on McGowan Mountain and we subsequently found four more populations in the same general area. The amazing fact about these most recent sites is that they occur in the middle of access roads that are annually mowed for wildlife or logging haul roads and skidder trails.

In a recent meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio with researchers who are investigating and protecting RBC, it was reported that this species has a very low genetic diversity throughout its range with the notable exception of a few populations in West Virginia and Kentucky! This may mean that the species is in serious long-range trouble, but that these genetically diverse populations in West Virginia could indicate that the center of this species distribution could be the Allegheny Mountains.

The research continues! Over 50 volunteers throughout West Virginia have been trained in the identification of Running Buffalo Clover and are looking for it throughout much of the state. If you would like to keep an eye out for this interesting endangered species, here's what to do: look along (see next page)
West Virginia Native Plant Society

After a long hiatus the WVNPS is once again on an active mission. Early in 1993, over 20 old members and newly interested folks met and started the reorganization and revitalization process. The West Virginia Native Plant Society was founded to promote the preservation and conservation of the native plants and vegetation of West Virginia and to further the education of the general public on the values of native plants and vegetation.

Already several meetings and field trips (to Fernow Experimental Forest, Greenbloom Mountain and Greenbloom Gap) were held and three issues of the newsletter (called Native Notes) have been published. The Kanawha Valley has already formed its own chapter and both Huntington and Elkins seem to be on their way to forming chapters. For more information on membership and Society activities write WVNPS Corresponding Secretary PO Box 2755 Elkins, WV 26241

jeep trails, old roads, historical home sites and cemeteries, or similar habitats where partial to filtered sunlight reaches the ground and the area is generally moist. The plant can be identified by its long runners (stolons), large pointed bracts at the base of its leaves (stipules), and a flowering head on a stalk that arises from between a pair of leaves which in turn arise from a larger stalk off a runner (see figure 1). Without the ability to find a population in a county where we didn't have a record for 10? If you want to see what this fascinating species looks like, join us for a WVNPS hike at Fernow Experimental Forest.

Editor’s note: Its too late to get in on the Fernow Clover Hike, but if you join now you won't have to miss out on future expeditions.
Water Quality Forum - January 18, 1994

by Frank Young

The West Virginia Environmental Institute will sponsor a public forum on water quality on January 18. The forum will be held at 7:00 P.M. in room C and D of building 7 (called the Little Conference Center building). This is on the east side of California Avenue at the State Capitol in Charleston.

The main emphasis of the forum will be a public discussion of a proposal to institute Harmonic Mean Flow as the method for determining base amounts of water for dilution of carcinogens discharged into streams.

Because water quality is expected to be a legislative issue this year, this forum is scheduled early in the session and all legislators are being invited to attend. Hopefully, many will. This is an opportunity to help legislators better understand the issues surrounding water quality changes.

To focus on the issues, the meeting is expected to begin as a short discussion session by one advocate for Harmonic Mean Flow, 19710 Flow (the present method), and an advocate for Zero Discharge of any known carcinogens. The remainder of the forum will be open to anyone present to ask questions and make public comments.

THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY -

AND KEEP MORRIS INSIDE

by Norm Steenstra

Various national and state conservation groups have been warning us that there is solid evidence of a worldwide decline in the number of songbirds. Loss of forest habitat as well as "local" habitat changes are some of the explanations given for these declines. Peat bogs and wetlands, usage of pesticides and lawn fertilizers, and increased use of pesticides and lawn fertilizers are some of the explanations given for these declines.

Recent discussions with other folks have substantiated that either the birds have adopted a new night song or there aren't as many as there were a while ago. I have no science on this, just my ears. My family and I have crossed our own field, but I can't say that anything definitive exists on this subject. The people most likely to know about this are the people who have adopted a new night song or are able to identify patterns of this magnitude. I doubt that anything definitive exists on this subject. The people most likely to know about this are the people who have adopted a new night song or are able to identify patterns of this magnitude. I doubt that anything definitive exists on this subject.

The WV Environmental Institute, sponsor of the forum, is a group of Environmentalists. The Institute has been in existence since 1985. Many environmental groups are attempting to explore environmental issues facing West Virginia.

For further information, contact Frank Young, WVDEP environmental representative, 372-9495.

Where is the Corridor H process now? from By The Way, published by Corridor H Alternatives (CHA)

The West Virginia Division of Highways selected Scheme D (from Elk to through Parsons, Scherr, Moorefield, and Strasburg VA) as their preferred route for the proposed 120-mile highway. But this does not guarantee that the highway will be built. More public hearings are scheduled this spring, and we understand the Highway Division plans several information meetings this winter in West Virginia. Watch your local newspaper for meeting announcements.

WHEN DO THEY WANT TO BUILD? Money has been authorized by Congress but not yet appropriated. The Highway Division wants to start building late in 1995. But next year is an election year for all US Representatives, many US Senators and state legislators. Politicians these days are doing very little braggling about this unneeded, destructive, billion-dollar highway, because so many people are starting to question it. Your voice counts now, more than ever, so keep accountability alive by getting involved and communicating with your representatives.

WHAT DO WE WANT? Our survey, sometimes dangerous, mountain roads in Virginia and West Virginia need improvement. However, traffic through the Shenandoah Valley and Potomac Highlands does not justify 100 miles of four-lane testing through some of the most beautiful scenery and traditional small towns in the east. We'd like to invest in a variety of improvements to existing roads. West Virginia taxpayers don't need Corridor H at all and should not have to pay for it. West Virginia taxpayers would have to cough up $200 million in the states 20% matching share for Corridor H federal funds. These monies could be better spent improving and maintaining existing roads and bridges in both Virginia.

CHA obtained draft alignment maps using a Freedom of Information Act request. The alignment maps are much more detailed than the Corridor H maps. They show the actual road placement. CHA has taken these maps to over a dozen community group meetings to educate the folks. If you haven't already, you should join Corridor H Alternatives, and get all the latest info, as well as help this all-volunteer group in their efforts. The latest issue also has a petition you and your friends can sign. Even if you don't live in WV, you can write to your representatives and ask them how they can support this boondoggle in another state, when most of the citizens of West Virginia don't want this particular highway.

The Real Scheme

Proposed Corridor H is a waste of tax dollars.

Waterfall (from page 8) threats.

Once numerous and extensive, the waterfall (elk) were wiped out in the east well before the turn of the century. As one authority (O.M. Allen) pointed out, the enormous range could be mapped "by plotting the cities, counties, creeks and rivers named after it." But by the beginning of the ninetenths century human population pressures, loss of habitat, demand for meat and the sport in the east of running down the elk on horseback, they had already vanished from south of the canadian border. Some claim it was the defeat of using Elk teeth as insignia for the Fraternal Order of Elks which caused the extant toll. The last pure Eastern Elk was shot on September 1, 1877 in Pennsylvania by the famous buffalo hunter Jim Jacksby.

The last elk was killed in the Kawasana Valley in 1820 on Two Mile Creek of the Elk River, 512 miles from Charleston. The elk survived for a few decades longer in remote mountainous areas of the state. There is a report of an elk killed at Elk Lick on Middle River, Pocahontas County in 1867 and tracks were seen in 1873 near the headwaters of Cheat River.

One of the oddest sights I've ever seen was the lone elk enclosed in a small pasture at the DNR's French Creek Wildlife area. That day a curious group was keeping it company. Someone told me that there were originally two elk imported from out west, but one had died. What is an elk without the migration, the herds, the fights, the births, the wolves? A reminder of what we have lost, and of what we might someday, with a little humility, allow to roam again through these hills.
Billion Dollar Ramp
(from page 1)  Local economic development, he said, will depend on the quality of labor more than any other factor. Appalachia’s biggest problem remains its "education gap." We should put our money to bring economic growth. One benefit he didn’t mention was an educated public is harder to fool.
At last winter’s preliminary hearings, road supporters told stories about people who had left to find work. One of my young neighbors from Montrose had gone to South Carolina. He had returned, as most West Virginians do, sooner or later, but he remained unemployed. His wrenching emotional plea for a new highway was based on the genuine fear he heard. He should use his representatives for fraud.

The Congressional Budget Office was set up to give politicians support for rational decisions: It’s hard to kick old habits, it’s easier to point to tangible, tried and true projects in your district. This would be true even if highway builders did not give money to politicians. Congress doesn’t always listen to its budget office—the Stonewall Jackson Dam is a concrete example—but at least it has the information. In 1998, Congress asked the CBO to review highway investments, both new construction and rehabilitation. New construction in 1981 was rated a very poor investment, with a low rate of economic return. How can a highway change economic patterns if it’s not built? An academic answer is "spatial polarization," a practical answer is Wal-Mart. Corridor H would channel more business to the new store near Elkins. In Reaphn’s words, Elkins, the larger town, "will merely siphon off economic activity from less competitive areas along the highway’s route (e.g., Parsons)." It’s amazing to find people in Parsons supporting the road. Even Elkins, though, would not necessarily see a retail boom. Its downtown would be bypassed and the same polarization would encourage more shopping at the malls near Clarksburg. Superhighways can redistribute growth, but they can’t generate it.
Small retailers aren’t the only ones who would suffer. The effect is on local manufacturing—would be opposite what the politicians claim. Instead of encouraging "value-added" business, e.g., furniture manufacturing, a super highway would make it cheaper to ship the wood to producers who are located closer to other impacts. Our present road system actually protects new and less efficient producers. Corridor H would accelerate an old routine: strip WV’s He had returned, a very poor investment, with a low rate of economic return.

Outside the state, our highway officials admits still quite happen. In 1993, the editor of the Appalachian Development would persuade Virginia’s piece of Corridor H. WVDOT’s presentation to the Virginia Transportation Board included this headline: "Corridor H Will Provide Access to Raw Materials in Central West Virginia to Boost Manufacturing Sector of Economy in Virginia." The manager of Howes Leather, in Pocahontas County, has pointed out that real estate speculators are the road’s main proponents. His employees would see their property taxes rise as second-home developments brought demands for new services. The speculators’s model is Aspen, Colorado, where local people have been displaced.

Here in the Highlands, we have seen a vision of the future along Corridor H: high-speed exit of timber and job-seekers to Virginia, ghost towns in the mountain valleys, real estate developments that push up taxes and force older residents off their land, a brief boom in chicken-rising to further pollute the Forks, and a couple of new trout streams.
This vision won’t come true. Corridor H is an idea whose time has gone. The last “jump” in the Appalachian highway system wasn’t built because it was too expensive (it would cost as much as the original estimate for the whole system) and because it would have created the most environmentally-sensitive region. Its purpose as a truck route between Cincinnati and Washington duplicated Corridor E. The project stalled long enough for everyone to see it would be bad for the economy as for the environment.

Notes
1. The quote comes from Senator Jay Rockefeller’s letter (our copy is dated Oct. 25, 1993), but the sentiment is common.
2. Caspec, Vol. 4, No. 4, Autumn 1992, published by Fine Cabin Ram Ecological Laboratory, High View, WV 26808. Several papers on highways and rural economic development by Terence Repland and others are available from Regional Research Institute, WVU, 311 N. High St., PO. Box 6825, Morgantown, WV 26506, 293 2896.
5. The ARC study is quoted in the Corridor Selection DEER at 1:4, in Sen. Rockefeller’s letter, and many other places. The author did not claim that his partial survey of planning districts was reliable. 241 counties with Interstate and ARC corridors reported more new jobs than 156 counties without such highways. This was not net growth: plant closings and other job losses were ignored. If spatial polarization resulted from the highways, some jobs were simply moved.

Kumbrabow (from page 1) separate.
Both sides have high school students there. (The wise users are really copying our tactics!) Darrell McGrew comes in and sits on our side. And we wait. I’m all ready for the big story, the expert witnesses, the DOJ 15 minute video, the bullshit and the truth. There’s no announce-
ment, but word of mouth has it that the Judge is sick and will not be in today.

The trees still stand. No new date has yet (December 20) been set. We know it’ll be soon. They stoned and sent money to help pay legal expenses to Joe Marshall, 108 3rd St., Elkins, WV 26241. Thanks, Joe, for doing this and everything else too.

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide Now Out

Edition 6 of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide is now available. This edition is bigger and better than ever, with 368 pages, 96 pages of maps, 49 photographs, 177 trails totaling 812 miles, and a new full color cover. West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is the publisher. Authors are Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist (same as edition 5). Allen has hiked all the trails of the Monongahela N.F. over the past few years. Bruce was the editor for the first four editions. The hiking community and the U.S. Forest Service provided trail reports and photographs. Edition 6, like edition 5, also provides information for ski-touring and backpacking.
The growing throngs of visitors and the public at large regard the Monongahela National Forest as a ‘Special Place’. And indeed it is. The hiking, backpacking, and ski-touring opportunities it provides are among the best in the eastern U.S. The more outstanding areas are becoming known far and wide—Ober Cock Wilderness, Dolly Sods Wilderness, Flatrock Plains, Roaring Plains, Blackwater Canyon, Spruce Knob, North Fork Mountain, Shaver’s Mountain, Laurel Fork Wilderness, Cranberry Back Country, Cranberry Wilderness, among others.
Profits from the sale of these guides support a wide variety of worthy environmental projects in the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.
To order your copy of Edition 6 of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, send $11.45 (this includes $1.50 shipping and handling) to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321
West Virginia residents must add $6.60 sales tax. (total of $12.05)

I have included a check or money order for the amount of $ to WVHC for ___ copies of the Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide.

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
to all corners of environmental regulation... a brilliant move on someone's part!

So, with a broader scope of reorganization (while problems with coal continue in other forums), what was the proposed legislation supposed to do?

Legislative staff crafted a brief policy statement and list of nine purposes in an attempt to address the perceived goals of the administration/agency, legislature, industry and environmental community alike.

The policy statement is decent enough even in its brevity and expansive generalities. The purposes are a bit more to the point. The 1,405 page proposed legislation may well streamline the interaction of the agencies in permitting, but it leaves unsaid any number of the stated purposes that might advance public input, increase environmental protection, etc.

The bill itself creates accountability of greater environmental protection will have to continue it's dance with the visions of imaginary sugar plum fairies because this piece of legislation does little to make that dream become reality. Rather than setting clear standards and procedures to direct the interaction of various agencies and interest groups, this bill melds all into one form that is to be determined by the whim of the appointed head honcho who may be Prince Charming one year only to be replaced by the Big Bad Wolf the next.

Granted, there is always some degree of flexibility, discretion and personal choice with any appointments and agencies, but this bill creates an inordinate amount of each without the guidelines, and directions that make for accountability and good government. The trappings are there, but the substance is not.

The old DOE (Department Of Energy) suffered from the heinous "wolf-guarding-the-henhouse" image from the day it was created. And though this new DEP was meant to change all that, it merely changes the external image. If it's worse the new DEP promotes the wolf so that now he is not only in charge of just the henhouse, but the entire barnyard and all the pasture land as well.

No thanks. Count me among the ungrateful children on this bogan Christmas gift. The big bow and shiny wrappings are only hiding a box full of hot air and a passed full of those spring loaded snake-like surprises gleefully waiting to be released.

Join the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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Wapiti (Elk) - Cervus canadensis canadensis

Extirpated from the east - 1877

Really a giant form of European Red Deer, elk are the second largest deer in the universe, surpassed in size only by the moose.

A full-grown male may weigh 1,000 pounds and stand more than 5 feet tall. The males grow antlers, which they shed annually. These massive structures will reach a spread of more than 5 feet. During the summer, elk prefer to graze and browse in the mountains. Older bulls spend the summer alone, with females and younger males forming great herds.

In the fall, for the mating season, new herds are formed consisting of a single bull and 5 to 20 females. Males fight for possession of these mating groups, challenging each other with their characteristic call, known as a bugle. The males then rush one another, crashing into each other with their antlers, until the weaker bull runs away. The force of impact is incredible and the resounding crash can be heard for long distances.

As winter moves in, the elk move down to protected valleys, often migrating several tens of miles. In the spring, on the return trip to the mountains, the females give birth to a single calf, which weighs 30 to 40 lbs. Wolves, coyotes, cougars and bears prey on the elk. A blow from an elk's hoof can easily break a wolf's back. The elk are excellent runners, able to attain speeds of 35 miles per hour and can often outstrip any (see page 6)

Membership Benefits

* 1 year subscription to the Highlands Voice
* Special meetings with workshops and speakers
* Representation through WVHC efforts to monitor legislative and agency activity

The WVHC, at age 26, is the oldest environmental group in West Virginia. The Conservancy has been influential in protecting and preserving WV's natural heritage. Your support will help WVHC to continue its efforts.