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MORE OF CANAAN VALLEY PROTECTED

Highlands Conservancy Celebrates Canaan Valley Land Purchase

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has congratulated and thanked Allegheny Power, West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd and Congressman Alan Mollohan for negotiating the purchase of 12,000 acres in Canaan Valley from Allegheny Power Company, for inclusion in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

In a written statement from the Conservancy, Linda Cooper, a Canaan Valley native and landowner, and long-time proponent of its protection, said; "This is an historic moment for our state. The Wildlife Refuge is a key part of the economic development picture for Canaan Valley, Tucker County, and the West Virginia Highlands."

Cooper explained, "Members of the Highlands Conservancy began the fight to protect this world class resource in the early 1970s when a controversial plan to build a pumped-storage reservoir in the Valley generated widespread opposition. Joining the 30-year struggle to protect Canaan Valley, were the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, and others, as well as many state and federal agency representatives.

"The project would have flooded most of Canaan Valley and had serious impacts to the adjacent Dolly Sods area," she noted. "From stopping the dam, to gaining National Natural Landmark status, to establishing a National

Wildlife Refuge, to the continued acquisition of these lands for the benefit of the public, it has been a long hard road. We are now all celebrating this most significant step in procuring the long term protection of Canaan Valley for this and future generations."

In 1995, the nation's 500th Wildlife Refuge was created, with 24,000 acres inside the proclamation boundary. To date, the refuge has only been able to acquire 3,246 acres from willing sellers in the southern portions of the Valley. Allegheny Power has owned the bulk of the valley since it acquired the lands for the power project.

"The expansion we are here to celebrate today nearly triples the total area protected," said Cooper. "This is the best Valentine's Day present we could imagine. Thanks to the land purchase, that Senator Byrd and Congressman Mollohan arranged, we now have a real Wildlife Refuge. And the protection and promotion of the unique ecology and wildlife in the Valley can begin in earnest."

Much like Yellowstone and Yosemite, Canaan Valley's vast and diverse resources are among the nation's most unusual. They support local businesses and draw tourists from all over the world.

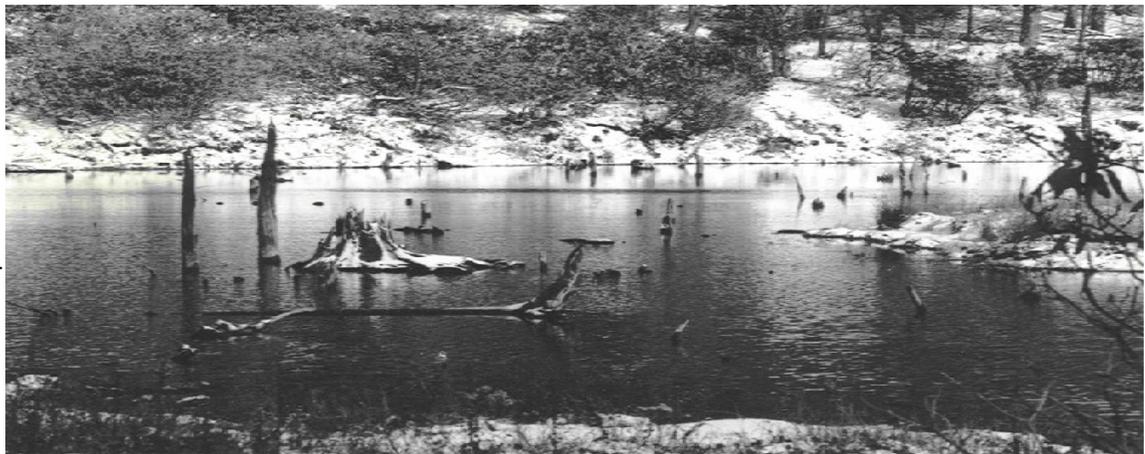
"With this expansion of the Refuge, local officials can better appreciate the long-term economic value of preserving the refuge in its natural state. Tucker County can emulate other national areas that establish businesses, and expand the local economy in ways that highlight and sustain the best features of the region. A sustainable future

demands that we preserve the resources that our economy is dependent upon."

"Now, we must continue with our campaign to protect and preserve the remainder of the amazing resources in the watershed of the Blackwater River—namely—the Blackwater Canyon. Once this is achieved we will have in place all of the parts of a powerful, long-term engine for responsible *sustainable* development and job creation in the Highlands."

Canaan Valley is truly a National Treasure. Sitting high in the Allegheny Mountains in eastern Tucker County, the Valley's 3200 feet elevation and 35,000 acre Blackwater River watershed, make it the highest valley of its size east of the Rocky Mountains. With over 6,700 acres of wetlands, it comprises the largest wetland area in West Virginia and in the central and southern Appalachians. Combined with the northern forest character, it supports many plants and animals that are unusual and rare. Forty different wetland and upland plant communities intermix in Canaan Valley that support more than 580 different species of plants and 280 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes. No where else is there a place with all of the characteristics of Canaan.

Canaan Valley in winter.
Photo by Jonathan Jessup.



From The Western Plateau of the Mountains
by Frank Young, President

Passing The Torch

The *Highlands Voice* is the voice of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. We hope that when folks read the *Highlands Voice* that it lights their fires of interest about the good things in the highlands of West Virginia. We use the *Voice* then, as a torch, to light the fires of passion for the great highlands outdoors.

We call the keeper of the torch the Editor. Bill Reed has been the Editor of the *Voice*, the keeper of the torch, for more than five years. That's a record- at least in recent Conservancy history. Being the Editor is not easy. The Editor must come up with articles for publication. The Editor prioritizes those articles. The Editor strives to arrange the articles into a format that's appealing to our eyes and easy to read.

The Editor then, is sort of a policeman of the traffic we call *Voice* articles. The Editor is usually, but not always, the first to know when readers are either pleased or displeased with what is and is not published.

Readers are sometimes happy, sometimes angry, sometimes indifferent. I suppose that if I were editor of the *Voice* I'd be most confused when readers were indifferent. I'd think that meant that readers were bored with the publication. When some readers are angry while others are happy, an Editor can find a "balance" of sorts. But if readers are bored and indifferent, what can the Editor do?

Well, one thing the *Voice* hasn't been under Bill Reed is boring. Like it or hate it, Bill Reed's *Highlands Voice* had variety of content. It had wit, wisdom and humor. Some thought it had a balance of focus on local, regional and world issues. Others thought the *Voice* should focus more strictly on issues of the organization and of the West Virginia Highlands. As Bill's "boss" and the defacto "referee" of *Voice* reader's occasional discontent, I tried to placate readers' anger, appreciate and pass along the kudos offered, and coach Bill in Editor's etiquette.

And Bill, the self-styled irascible and proud fellow he is, determined his own etiquette. And I love him for it, perhaps because in many ways Bill's independence mirrors my own.

Several months ago Bill, who has increasing intolerance to cold West Virginia winters in the mountains of Raleigh County, asked to be relieved of *Voice* editorship duties, pending selection of a suitable replacement *Voice* Editor.

Sadly, I realized that Bill deserved a break, a rest from the monthly grind of procuring, selecting, sometimes writing and then putting together the *Voice* in the tedious, time honored method of physically cutting and pasting random sized articles and pictures into some pattern of rectangles called pages- twelve to twenty pages every month of the Highlands *Voice*.

Like it or loathe it, the *Highlands Voice* was there month after month (except for the occasional vacation we allowed Bill) and year after year for five years.

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CORL CALLS FOR BETTER LOGGING PRACTICES

At a press conference in Glen Jean, Fayette County, the Coalition for Responsible Logging called upon the legislature to pass legislation requiring responsible logging by timbering companies. The Coalition for Responsible Logging (CORL) is a coalition made up of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Catholic Committee on Appalachia, the Religious Campaign for Forest Preservation, Trout Unlimited, the West Virginia Environmental Council, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the West Virginia Sierra Club, and the West Virginia Organizing Project. The press conference is being held on the hilltop property of Bob Evans whose home, driveway and water line were flooded last summer because the adjacent steep hillside had been improperly timbered.

CORL chairman Bob Marshall said that it believes that the ineffectively regulated timber industry was a contributing factor to last summer's flooding. "Common sense tells you that if you remove all the plant material, especially the trees and things from the hillside, when the rain comes, it's got nowhere to go but on the ground and down the hollow," Marshall said. "... the more you timber, especially clear-cuts, we are going to see an increase in flooding. That's one of our real concerns right now."

CORL supports legislation that would:

- Ensure that timbering operations are designed in such a way as to minimize sediment to the streams

- Require that adjacent landowners be notified of a timbering job

- Require that sediment control measures known as "best management practices" be enforced so that they will be mandatory. Current lack of enforcement makes compliance with those standards voluntary.

- Protect streams and rivers from sediment and muddy run-off.

- Avoid logging on steep slopes that can increase flooding.

- Hold irresponsible operators accountable for reclaiming illegal sites.

- Improve enforcement of the regulations through increased funding of state agencies and stiffer penalties for violators.

The Last Oak

by Nelson Tinnel

On a barren hill all alone
clings a tiny oak
to a jagged stone

The loggers came
with wheel and claw
No longer they use the axe and saw

No more the horse with chain and hook
with blade and claw
the earth they took

They stripped the land
and scarred its skin deep to the stone
like a wounded thing with fractured bone

The trees, their roots were its veins
and now the streams their blood stains
This tiny oak, will it stand?
for 100 years on this barren land

Can its seed find root on this skeletal rock
till men come again and seem to mock
the laws of god that they forgot

Nelson Tinnel is a resident of Muddlety, in Nicholas County, West Virginia. He has worked with the Coalition For Responsible Logging in logging reform efforts, providing pictures, a television interview, written materials, and testimony to a joint legislative interim committee studying the state's Logging and Sediment Control Act.



Stakeholder is debates about forest practices (also known as a screech owl)

TROUT DODGE THE BULLET

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection denied a permit to a Maryland company, Mettiki Coal, which had sought to extend its underground mining operations into West Virginia. The proposed mine would have gone underneath a trout stream that is a tributary of the North Branch of the Potomac River. The Department denied the permit because it concluded that the proposed mining would cause "material damage" to a trout stream.

The company had proposed to mine the coal by the longwall mining method. In such a method, machinery shears away the entire coal seam, leaving nothing to support the overlying layers of rock and dirt. Such mines are designed with the assumption that the overlying layers of rock and dirt will collapse almost immediately after the mining is completed.

Longwall mining beneath streams damages the springs and streams by creating cracks in the strata lying beneath the spring or stream. As the longwall mining moves forward, the overlying strata would not collapse as a solid unit but would inevitably crack. These cracks would cause water that would otherwise be available to fill surface streams or springs to disappear underground instead.

In denying the permit, the Department of Environmental Protection relied upon a report called a Cumulative Hydrologic Impact Assessment. In that assessment, DEP hydrologist Joann Erwin concluded that the mining would severely damage an unnamed North Branch tributary and native trout stream known locally as Hind Leg. The proposed mine would mine directly under at least eight of the seventeen springs that feed Hind Leg. The trout stream relies upon those springs for much of its flow.

"Fracturing of the aquifers will deplete the quantity of water available to the trout stream," the report said. "Fracturing of the streambed will additionally deplete the flow, perhaps to the point of no flow." The report concluded, "Material damage to the surface water will occur due to the loss of spring flow into the native trout stream."

In response to the decision to deny the permit, Cindy Rank, mining chairwoman for the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, said, "I'm speechless. I'm amazed and delighted. I think that the implications of this mining proposal were quite frightening."

No trout were immediately available for comment.

Mittiki Coal has appealed the decision to the West Virginia Surface Mine Board. No hearing date has been set and it is unlikely there will be a hearing before April.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF LAWLESSNESS AND CORRUPTION

Commentary by Frank Young

Coal. The black rock that burns. Coal is West Virginia, some say. When the coal is gone there will be nothing left, some say.

Politically, coal means the coal industry. The coal industry includes coal mining companies, railroad and trucking companies and loading docks and transport barges, banks and insurance companies that finance and insure coal operations, law firms that work feverishly to fiend off pesky government regulations and civil actions against coal, and a host of “supporting” services from fuel suppliers to manufacturers, sellers and servicers of giant dozers, trucks, loaders and draglines. And, of course, the coal industry includes the people who work at jobs all these components of the industry employ.

Coal controls the West Virginia statehouse, some say. It’s hard for an observer who has spent much time observing the legislature to argue with that one. Coal rules at the legislature. What coal wants, it usually gets. If coal doesn’t get exactly what it wants, it takes it anyway.

Witness coal trucking. 80,000 pounds is the maximum legal weight for motor vehicles on any public highway in West Virginia- less than that on most roads. Trucks hauling coal routinely haul twice that much. Yet, coal truck owners and operators are indignant about criticism for lawbreaking, yelling, “We’re not outlaws!”

I write this at the end of a week which saw citizen outrage at and toward the legislature like we haven’t seen since the “garbage wars” of the early 1990s. The outrage is expressed most by coal miners and their neighbors, friends and relatives who are tired of seeing other friends, relatives and neighbors killed by outlaw coal truck owners and operators.

The current outrage over coal truck outlaws is but another layer in the atmosphere of lawlessness in the coal industry.

Atmosphere of lawlessness? Who says so?” one might ask. A federal judge says so. In ruling on lawsuits filed by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and others, Federal District Court Judge Charles Haden has said that the issuance of coal mining permits and the mining of coal in West Virginia has been taking place in “an atmosphere of lawlessness”.

Time after time the courts have ruled that state permits are issued contrary to established law, that state regulators operate a wholly inadequate and therefore illegal coal mining reclamation bonding system, and that hundreds or thousands of miles of streams are illegally filled with debris. And the records rooms of regulatory agencies are awash in file after file of citation after citation of charges relating to water quality violations, illegal impoundments and dozens of other kinds of illegal coal operations activities.

Yet, aside from the writing of numerous “Notice of Violations” forms, many to the same operating companies and for the same violations, nothing changes. Citations are rarely prosecuted to the point of assessing meaningful penalties. Those that are prosecuted are challenged in an almost endless legal maze of appeals. Even then, they are usually whittled down to petty fines that are not a significant deterrent to further lawbreaking. Repeat violators are almost never punished by “cease and desist” type actions, and I don’t know that there ever was a real person criminally prosecuted for breaking any laws related to mining of coal under any permit ever issued.

In short, then, it is evident that coal does virtually whatever it wants to do, unimpeded by

either respect for the laws, by regulatory agencies or, up until now at least, by even the courts. I submit that the network of private companies and public agencies that conspire to virtually exempt coal from the law is nothing short of a criminal enterprise and constitutes public and private corruption.

From the issuance of bogus permits, to illegally mining the coal, to the failure to provide for bonding for reclamation of lands debauched by coal operations, to illegally transporting the coal to loading docks and other facilities, coal is indeed mined and marketed in an atmosphere of lawlessness and associated violence to affected communities and public highway users both near to and far from the actual natural placement of coal deposits.

Indeed, Coal is King. Through political manipulations Coal virtually makes its own laws. Then it violates and disregards the laws it doesn’t like, and conducts its operations in a violent and threatening manner in what is nothing short of a condition of terror- a reign of terror.

I saw and heard the terror this week in the eyes and the voices of coalfield residents begging for relief from the siege of outlaw coal trucks and their operators who are killing and injuring their families and their neighbors. I see and feel the terror every time I drive on a highway in the southern coalfields and strive to steer my vehicle clear of the nearly 100 ton trucks barreling down on me on a two lane road designed for Model Ts and which is so “grooved” by heavy trucks that my vehicle follows the “groove” instead of in the direction of steer. I hear the threats from Coal Association spokesperson Bill Raney and coal trucking company owners who say that coal trucks “must” haul grossly overweight, regardless of the law. I see the violence in the pictures of passenger cars flattened by overweight trucks that could not be stopped in time. I see violence in the devastation caused by floodwaters that poured off barren, unreclaimed mine sites that are unable to hold back, absorb and release in a natural, restrained flow even the normal rains of mining regions.

West Virginia state government has spent millions of dollars to fight “terrorism” and to provide for “security” from unknown, imagined somethings or somebodies, somewhere. But what about homegrown terrorism? What about coal? We know where it is. We know who it is. We spend so much in providing “security” from phantom “terrorists”.

But what about security against the acts of the coal terrorists? The breach in security in the coalfields of West Virginia is a gaping breach, begging to be secured. Yet we ignore- NO, WAIT, we don’t ignore- we nourish the coal terrorists right here among us.

Coal. If coal turns the lights on, why are our leaders at the statehouse all in the dark? Someone needs to turn their lights on. Our leaders need to stop the lawlessness, the violence and the reign of terror resulting from the reign of King Coal.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE ENERGY POLICY

As the U.S. Senate takes up energy legislation and in response to President Bush’s recently-announced climate change plan, over 1,200 senior leaders of major religious denominations have written to every U.S. Senator with specific proposals for “energy conservation, fuel efficiency, and alternate energy development to protect God’s creation and God’s children.”

Signatories on the letter include leaders of such major faith communities as United Methodist, Presbyterian, United Synagogue of Con-

servative, Judaism, Greek Orthodox, Episcopal, American Baptist, Lutheran, and Catholic bishops of major metropolitan areas.

Against the backdrop of efforts against terrorism, the 1,200 leaders stressed “the intimate link between the safety of our people and the reliability of our energy system.” The Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches said, “We’re telling the Congress that energy conservation is necessary for homeland security as well as environ-

mental protection and justice. Lives are at stake here.”

In preparation for nearly two years, “Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaigns” have now been established in 21 states, from auto-manufacturing Michigan to coal-mining West Virginia to energy-producing Texas.

“When we reflect upon “Let there be light” in Genesis (Gen 1:3),” said Rabbi Eric

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NO ACTION ON OVERWEIGHT COAL TRUCKS

Governor invisible on Issue

Unless there is some dramatic and unexpected development very soon, the West Virginia legislature will recess without taking action on overweight coal trucks.

The legislature had before it two proposals. One was to improve enforcement of current law. Since trucks routinely weigh two and one half times what current law allows, enforcement of current law would have resulted in a dramatic reduction in the weight of trucks on West Virginia highways.

The other proposal would have raised the weight limits to approximately twice what current law allows. Since current practice is to operate trucks that weigh more than twice what the law allows, doubling the weight limits and enforcing the new limits would still have resulted in a reduction in the weights of trucks on West Virginia highways.

As the session came to a close, the legislature had not taken action on either one of the proposals. Legislative leaders said that they were reluctant to take action when there

was no consensus on what it should do. The waning days of the legislature featured a rally in favor of improving enforcement of the current limits and a parade of horn honking coal trucks circling the capitol to show their support for raising the weight limits. Legislative leaders have not made any public statement concerning how, given the lack of leadership from public officials, a consensus of these divergent viewpoints might be achieved.

Governor Bob Wise has been virtually silent on this issue. At one point he told a newspaper reporter that he favored raising the weight limits. Since then he has had no proposal for addressing this problem, getting to a consensus, or anything else on this issue. He has announced that he would support whatever consensus emerged.

CORPS TRIES TO LEGALIZE BIG FILLS

The Bush administration wants to change the law to legalize large valley fills from mountaintop removal mining operations.

When the federal Clean Water Act was passed thirty years ago, one of its purposes was to eliminate what was then a common practice: using the nation's waterways for waste disposal. Now the Bush administration seeks to retreat from that goal by redefining waste.

To do mountaintop removal mining, the coal industry has to dispose of the dirt and rock that once was the top of the mountain. The current practice is to dump it in a nearby valley, a valley which in most if not all cases contains a stream. While there are upper reaches of valleys which have no streams, the lower parts of valleys routinely have streams.

Under current law, the fill material (the dirt and rock) are considered a waste product. As a waste product, they could not be dumped into streams. To allow this fill to be dumped into streams would be contrary to the longstanding Clean Water Act policy of not using streams for waste disposal.

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John Muir, Nature's Visionary by Gretel Ehrlich

Patron Saint of the American Wilderness, John Muir was the archetypal free spirit. Following his own call of the wild, he wandered through the Appalachians and the Sierra to Alaska, Siberia, South America and Africa. His eloquent words changed the way Americans saw their mountains, forests, seashores and deserts. 240 pages filled with stunning modern images of the vistas Muir loved, whimsical sketches from his own restless pen, and period photographs that capture his gaunt charm.

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Mail to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Working to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful!

Come one, come all, and join in a festival of heady highlands journeys designed to excite and delight the eyes, exult the arms and legs, and enrapture the soul - West Virginia Mountain Odyssey!

This year, we are offering three different kinds of outings, Recreational Outings, Educational Outings, and Volunteer Outings:

- *Recreational Outings* will include day hikes, backpacks, canoe trips, caving trips, bicycle trips, and, hopefully, some cross country ski excursions, and others. Something for every palette.
- *Educational Outings* will include a unique outdoor experience called an "EarthWalk", natural history excursions, culturally and historically oriented activities, and trips designed to better familiarize the public with locations that are the focus of conservancy projects and concerns. In addition to EarthWalks, the Outings Committee is also soliciting folks to lead natural history oriented trips – wild flowers, birding, wetlands, botanizing, unique environments in West Virginia, etc.- historical and cultural explorations, and experiences aimed at educating people about sites that are the target of advocacy activities of the Conservancy. A bird observation outing, led by Dr. Ed Gates, is scheduled for May.
- *Volunteer Outings* will give folks an outstanding opportunity to contribute their time and energy to conservation and reclamation projects, etc. in the Mon. Not only do we enjoy the forest, but we should also contribute in some way to sustaining its viability as one of the Eastern gems in the Federal inventory. More to come!

How Can I Get Involved in All This Mountain Madness ?

Participate in an Outing. In fact, participate in *many* outings! Coming on an outing is a great opportunity to really get to know other Conservancy kindred spirits. We work to protect WV, but we also need to enjoy it. Look over the current [Outings List](#) and choose what journeys pique your interests. *Be sure to contact the leader immediately, as space may be limited!* The trip leader will explain the details of the trip to you. Remember, outings are being added all the time, so if you don't find anything that appeals to you, keep checking the website and the VOICE for something to turn up. Volunteer to Lead a Trip. The Outings Committee is actively soliciting volunteers to lead trips. We are encouraging folks to share what they love and cherish about the highlands with others. Don't keep it a secret! If you would like to lead a trip, contact Jack Slocomb at 301-777-8810 (email JSLOCOMB@prodigy.net) or Peter Shoenfeld at 301-587-6197 (email peter@cais.net). We especially welcome people who are interested in sharing their knowledge of WV history and culture. *If you would like to share a place you love with others, but you feel uncomfortable leading the trip by yourself - not to worry. We will try to find an experienced leader to assist you. Join the Outings Committee -* We need your help! Especially in advertising WV Mountain Odyssey. *Our outings program is a major outreach tool for the Conservancy!* Therefore, the more people we can entice to participate, the more possible new members we can recruit to keep our ranks filled and support our great conservation initiatives in WV. Although current outings will be published in the VOICE and posted on the website, we could reach many, many more folks if this information appeared regularly in some major local newspapers. So if there is anyone out there who could help us with this, you would most certainly make an invaluable contribution to this project. It would also be very helpful if people could list outings in organizational newsletters. We really need to get the word out about WV Mountain Odyssey. If you'd like to join the committee, Contact Jack Slocomb, Outings Chair, at 301-777-8810 or by email at JSLOCOMB@prodigy.net.

The Outings Committee is looking forward to a wonderful season of outdoor adventure and fellowship

And this is just the beginning, folks

You ain't seen nuthin' yet

WE WANT YOU TO JOIN US IN THE FUN!

Your Way Out Outings Committee

Jack Slocomb, Dave Saville, Ruth Blackwell Rogers, Peter Shoenfeld, Trudi Phillips, and Bob Marshall

For an idea of how much fun you can have on an outing, see the photos on page 9!

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey Schedule

Jan.22-May 2(every Tues and Thur) "Green-Easy Walks" in Morgantown every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 8-9 AM. Starting point is at the Train Depot on the Caperton Trail. Pace starts slow and will speed up to people's needs. Co-sponsored with the Morgantown Green Space Coalition. Call Greg Good at 291-3091 or email him at ggood@wvu.edu to participate.

March 23-24 (Sat-Sun) Great North Mountain backpack. An early spring trek through an outstanding natural area and proposed Wilderness along the VA/WV line near Wardensville. Contact Peter Shoenfeld, peter@cais.net, (301)587-6197.

April 6-7 (Sat-Sun) Shaver's Fork headwaters exploration and pathfinding. Eighteen mile overnight. Contact Dave Saville, daves@labyrinth.net, (304) 284-9548.

April 27 (Sat)- Annual Osbra Eye Memorial Wildflower Walk in Kanawha State Forest. Choice of 5 different routes, including one for photographers. Sponsored by the Kanawha State Forest Foundation. Walks start at 9 AM and are over by noon. Meet at the swimming pool in the Forest. For further information, call Shirley Schweizer, (304) 925-2771

April 27 (Sat)- Middle Mountain ascent. An easy, scenic hike up to a spectacular rock formation overlooking Laurel Fork Wilderness. Will meet on US 33 around 11 AM. Call Tom Rodd, (304)558-1985 (weekdays, office) or (304) 265-0018 (weekends, home), thomasrodd@hotmail.com

May 4 (Sat) Canoe trip on the South Branch of the Potomac River. This trip was a favorite last year. Contact Carter Zerbe, (304)343-3175.

May 4 (Sat) The Sierra Club Metropolitan Washington Regional Outing Program's annual 100K hike along the C&O Canal between Washington DC and Harpers Ferry West Virginia. Three versions of the hike are being offered: (i) the full 100K starting at Thompson's Boathouse in Washington DC at 3am, (ii) the 80K starting at Carderock Maryland at 6am, and (iii) the 50K starting at Edwards Ferry lock in Maryland at 10:30am. In order to prepare for this hike, this group is also sponsoring a series of training hikes. For further details, contact Carol Ivory, (703) 476-8730, carolivory@erols.com or see onedayhike.tripod.com/hikes.htm.

May 10-12 (Fri-Sun) Backpack trip on the North Fork Mountain Trail. Enjoy the spring up high...atop the ridgeline on North Fork Mountain. This backpacking trip will be a combination day hike/backpack. Thursday night will involve camping either on the trail or at Big Bend campground. You can join the group Thursday night, or later, in time for the weekend backpack. Contact Susan Bly at 304-258-3319 or sbly@shepherd.edu for further details.

May 10-12 (Fri-Sun) Highlands Conservancy Spring Review. Outings will be scheduled. Watch www.wvhighlands.org and the Highlands Voice.

May 25 (Sat) Bird Observation Outing at Blackwater Falls. Dr. Ed Gates, Wildlife and Habitat Ecologist at the Appalachian Laboratory, will lead this fascinating outing. Participants will view returning migrating birds at the height of their spring activity, identify them by their songs, and learn about their behavior patterns in a pristine natural habitat. An easy early morning walk in the headwaters area of Seneca Creek. Bring binoculars. To register or for more information, contact Jack Slocomb at (301)777-8810 or email at JSLOCOMB@prodigy.net.

June 1 (Sat) Spring Cleanup on the Allegheny Highlands Trail. Join members of Highlands Trail Foundation along the 21-mile railtrail between Elkins and Parsons to explore and spruce up this new recreational resource. Leader: Karen Carper, karen@elkinsbike.com or 304-636-4519.

June 22-23 (Sat-Sun) - 2.5 mile overnight backpack trip on Allegheny Front south from Bear Rocks to near the Blackbird Knob Trailhead. No trail, but an open country walk through low heathland in peak Mt. Laurel bloom. Several wind-carved rock formations among extensive and blooming mountain laurel. Excellent views. Wear long pants to protect your legs from the heaths. Plan for possible cool temps and winds. Leader: Jonathan Jessup, (703) 204-1372, jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

June 22 (Sat) - Solstice Simultaneous Summit Celebration! Leader: Ruth Blackwell Rogers, (304)636-2662, ruthbr@wvhighlands.org.

July 5-7 (Fri-Sun) - Canyons Rim Trail hike, Roaring Plains. An unpublished and unmaintained high elevation trail with stunning views into Roaring Creek and Long Run Canyons. We'll connect using South Prong Trail. Experienced hikers only please as the going will be rocky. Photos and more information on this trail can be seen at: <http://www.geocities.com/jonathanjessup/rp-set1.html>. Leader: Jonathan Jessup, (703) 204-1372, jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

July 11-14 (Thur-Sun) Bicycle trip on the Greenbrier River Trail. Travel the entire 75 mile rail trail on bikes while camping out at Watoga State Park. "The former Greenbrier Division of the C. & O. Railway was built at the turn of the century to serve the booming timber industry of that time. The trail passes through numerous small towns and traverses 35 bridges and 2 tunnels as it winds its way along the valley. Throughout much of its length, the Trail is directly adjacent to the beautiful Greenbrier River and is surrounded by peaks of the Allegheny Mountains." Contact Susan Bly at (304)258-3319 or sbly@shepherd.edu for further details.

July 13 (Sat) - Canoe Trip. Six scenic, flatwater miles on the Buckhannon River Pool just above Buckhannon. Meet at Sheets in Buckhannon at 11 AM. Leader: Don Gasper, (304)472-3704.

Aug 17 (Sat)-Explore Fisher Spring Run Bog. This large, open and seldom visited bog is just within the Dolly Sods Wilderness. Wildflowers and many plant life forms adapted to bog and high elevation conditions are the focus of this trip. Waterproof boots are a must. Leader: Jonathan Jessup, (703) 204-1372, jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

Almost Anytime. Visit Kayford Mountain south of Charleston to see mountain top removal (MTR) up close and hear Larry Gibson's story about how he saved his mountain, now almost totally surrounded by MTR. Bring a lunch—there is a picnic area on Larry's mountain. Just call Larry or Julian Martin. Leaders: Julian Martin, (304)342-8989, Martinjul@aol.com and Larry Gibson, (304) 586-3287 or (304) 549-3287 cellular.

Young column, continued from p. 2

BEST WISHES, friend Bill.

Regrettably, I began the search for a Bill Reed clone.

Fortunately, I didn't have to search very far or wide. Conveniently, still in Raleigh County, I found John McFerrin, not a clone of Bill, but unemployed (sort of), belly ablaze with fire from within, and, most importantly, willing to work cheap.

Welcome aboard, John!

Many of you already know John. He was the Conservancy's President from 1994 through 1998. John's writing ability is without question—having been demonstrated in article after article in the *Highlands Voice*, in the *Charleston Gazette* as its best contributing columnist, and, I am told, in an assortment of legal papers in courthouses around West Virginia.

For those who don't know, John and his wife, Karen, are both attorneys. But we're gonna' take a chance on him anyway.

This issue of the *NewHighlands Voice* is the maiden voyage with John at the helm. The *Voice* is new in more ways than one. It has a new Editor. And it will certainly have a new look. John has endeavored to put the *Voice* together by computer rather than by manual cut and paste. We'll see how it goes.

In the meantime, John can edit only what you, the reader, and other *Voice* article contributors, send us. Try out your own writing talents in the *Voice*. If you have memorable hiking or other fun outdoor experiences, especially but not necessarily from the highlands to share, you can send them to us. Concerned about a bad logging site that's causing erosion and letting mud flow into a stream? Unload in the *Voice* about it. Are mining, oil and gas drilling and pipelines or other disturbances of the natural world upsetting you? You can tell us about that. Have a favorite scenic view that you don't want to keep just for yourself? You can share it with other *Voice* readers. Concerned about poor management of public lands? The *Highlands Voice* will tell the world about it!

Farewell and travel well, Bill Reed. Do come back and check on us and John now and then, OK? John's just learning his way around, you know. But we'll give him time to learn. A month or so anyway.

Religious leaders, continued fr. p. 4

Yoffie, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations," we realize that God has given us sources of clean energy: sun, wind, water and the human ingenuity to devise clean, safe technologies."

"We're telling our congregations that energy conservation is a way to honor our covenant with our God," said Archbishop Khahag S. Barsamian, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

"The President's energy plan would have us drill in the Arctic, increase nuclear power, and subsidize big polluting energy companies. There are safer, more sustainable strategies," said Rev. Dr. Edgar. The 1,200 leaders and 21 state campaigns called upon the Senate to pass legislation which would:

"Substantially increase vehicle fuel efficiency; encourage the auto industry to produce vehicles using hybrid-electric, fuel cell, and other clean technologies; and provide incentives for their purchase.

"Prevent drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.

Invest more resources in renewable energy sources such as wind, geothermal, solar, and biomass technologies.

"Include carbon dioxide as a regulated pollutant from power plants.

"Increase funds for low-income energy assistance and inner-city rail and mass transit.

"From our pulpits and in our pews, we will preach and pray the message of creation care and energy conservation. And we hope, this week, that our Senators will be God's stewards." Bishop Thomas J. Hoyt Jr., Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Senior Religious Leaders Letter and 21 state campaign represent a milestone for environmental activity in the American religious community—marked significantly by unanimous approval of all the U.S. Catholic bishops on an environmental justice pastoral letter: *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*.

Corps, Continued from p. 5

The fact that the practice is illegal has not, of course, prevented it from going on. The Army Corps of Engineers has allowed the filling of one thousand miles of streams in West Virginia alone. Now the Corps of Engineers wants to legalize its past practice. It wants to change the definition of fill material so that it could permit the filling of West Virginia streams. It wants to change the definition so that the material is no longer considered waste and could be disposed of in streams. A permit from the Corps of Engineers would still

PAN ANNUAL MEETING and PARTY

The Plateau Action Network (PAN) is a local watershed association in Fayette County with a broad agenda. Goals include community outreach, education surrounding environmental issues, protection of the lower New River watershed, and development issues that affect the watershed.

With spring just around the corner, the Membership Party, PAN's biggest annual event is being planned for March 23rd at 6:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to join PAN supporters for this fun evening at "Smokey's on the Gorge" pavilion located at Class VI River Runners, just outside of Fayetteville. Great food, a silent auction, door prizes, a cash bar, a chance to show community support and rally on PAN's behalf are on tap. Joe Lovett, executive director of the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment will be the keynote speaker and then live music and dancin' with the Voodoo Kats.

A \$15.00 donation gets you a ticket in, a one year membership to PAN and a 2002 newsletter subscription. If you'd like more information contact Meridith Gregg at 574-1067. Tickets will be available at the door. Hope you can join us as we celebrate another year of PAN success and look towards a future of working together to promote responsible economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Corps, Continued from previous column be required.

The Clinton administration made a similar proposal in 2000. During the public comment period in the Spring of 2000, over 17,000 public comments were registered protesting the rule changes. In the face of this overwhelming opposition, the Clinton administration decided not to finalize the proposal. The Bush administration is poised to reverse that decision and make the rule final.

Because the Corps took public comment on a similar proposal two years ago, the Bush administration is planning to finalize the rule without any public notice that this rule change is under consideration or any additional opportunity for comment. Because the administration is going forward with the new rule without opening a new comment period, we need to get a lot of messages to President as quickly as possible!

If you wish to oppose the change you can email the president at , write him by United States mail at The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20500, or call him at 202-456-1414. The proposal is labeled Proposed Rule: FR Doc. 00-9940.



Jim Solley relaxes in the sunshine and blue sky at Judy Springs. This was on Saturday after we hiked in and set up camp.

The fun you can have on a Mountain Odyssey outing!!!



Greg Good (above) after he climbed out of his tent on Sunday morning and discovered 6 inches of snow.



Dave Saville (left) gets ready to head out on Monday morning. Nothing like putting on those frozen leather hiking boots after climbing out of the sleeping bag at 5 degrees above zero.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Please join us for the
West Virginia-Pennsylvania
Wilderness and National Forest Planning
Training & Volunteer Weekend
APRIL 13-14, 2002

Sponsored by West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Friends of Allegheny Wilderness,
and The Wilderness Society

Mark your calendars and plan to join fellow West Virginians and our neighbors to the north to learn more about wilderness & forest issues and what you can do to help protect the Mountain State's remaining wildlands! The weekend event will feature an overview of conservation issues on the Monongahela and Allegheny National Forests, workshops on wilderness and forest issues (see agenda preview on reverse), and a "Wilderness Celebration" on Saturday night! Speakers include Ed Zahniser, son of Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser.

When: April 13 and 14 (people are encouraged to arrive Friday evening, April 12)

Where: Powdermill Nature Reserve, near Rector, Pennsylvania. 55 miles east of Pittsburgh off PA Turnpike.

Agenda: Preview of the agenda appears on reverse

Questions? Contact:

West Virginia: Dave Saville, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, 304-284-9548, daves@labyrinth.net;

Pennsylvania: Kirk Johnson, Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, 814-723-0620, alleghenyfriends@earthlink.net

LOGISTICS

Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday will be provided to all participants. Please note on your registration form if you prefer vegetarian meals.

Lodging: There are rustic cabins with beds, running water and bathroom facilities available for your use at the Powdermill Nature Reserve. **Those spaces will be filled by those who register first!** Overflow lodging will be provided at cabins in nearby facilities. A limited number of tent sites are also available at Powdermill for those who want to camp.

Linens: Participants will need to bring their own bedding and towels to use at Powdermill and off-site lodging facilities.

Beverages: Coffee, tea, juice and soda will be provided at meals. If you prefer other beverages, please BYOB.

Directions: Powdermill Nature Reserve is located 3 miles south of Rector on Route 381 in Cook Township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Powdermill is 55 miles east of Pittsburgh, just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the Donegal exit (Exit 9). Turn left onto Route 31 East and drive approximately 3 miles to Jones Mill, where you turn left onto Route 381 North. Continue for 6.6 miles to the Powdermill Nature Reserve (on your left).

REGISTRATION FORM - PLEASE COMPLETE, DETACH AND MAIL TO APPROPRIATE ADDRESS BELOW

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

___ Enclosed is my \$20 registration fee for the WV-PA Wilderness & National Forest Planning Training Registration fee covers lodging and meals. **Registration and travel scholarships are available** Use contact information above to inquire about scholarships.

Yes, I will need lodging: ___ Friday night ___ Saturday night

All meals on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday will be provided to all registered participants. Please check here if you prefer vegetarian meals ___

Please mail your registration form to:

West Virginia: PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25231 **Pennsylvania:** 220 Center Street, Warren, PA 16365

West Virginia-Pennsylvania Wilderness and National Forest Planning Training & Volunteer Weekend

AGENDA PREVIEW

Friday, April 12

5:00 p.m. – Arrivals, registration (Dinner on your own – kitchen facilities available)

7:30 pm - Informal reception and speaker

Saturday, April 13

8:00-9:00 – Breakfast

9:00 – Welcome and Introductions

9:30 – 10:30 Learning about the forest service, forest planning and Wilderness.

10:45-11:45 – Overview of conservation issues on Mon and Allegheny National Forests.

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:15-5:30: Three session of concurrent workshops – you choose what you want to go to! Topics will include: How to get involved with Forest Planning; Winning Wilderness – case study from successful Virginia campaign and developing your own wilderness efforts; Economics and Wilderness; Mapping and inventorying wildlands AND MUCH MORE!

6:30 – Dinner

7:30 – **Wilderness Celebration!** Music, dancing and storytelling!

Sunday, April 14

8:00-9:00 – Breakfast

9:30-11:00 a.m. – Saturday recap. Identify issues of greatest concern and divide into groups for more in-depth discussions

11:15 – Feedback from smaller group discussions. Opportunity to get advice from fellow participants & presenters; share ideas; & learn how you can continue to be involved in WV or PA wilderness and forest issues.

12:15 – Lunch

1:15 – Conference ends

TRAIL WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

Trails Coalition to Host Workshop

Construction, Maintenance Tips to be covered...

The West Virginia Trails Coalition will be hosting a trail construction and maintenance workshop on Saturday, April 13, 2002, at their Nitro Headquarters. The classroom portion of the training is scheduled to start at 8:00 a.m. and will be at the WVTC office which is Room 207 of the Nitro Community Building at 302 2nd St. in Nitro. This is at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 21st St. and the WVTC office is upstairs above the Senior Center.

The training session will be conducted by Charlie Dundas., President of Tri-State Corporation. Charlie has been in the trail construction business for several years and is an interesting and informative instructor in nearly every phase of trail development. The classroom instruction will run from 8:00 to 11:00 (approx) and will cover sighting, grades, benches, turns, stream crossings, aesthetic parameters and generally accepted standards for trail design and construction. This session will also introduce the newcomer to the commonly used hand tools and their safe and effective use.

Following the classroom session, we will go to Kanawha State Forest where Superintendent John Hensley will have some trail construction projects ready for us to put our newly learned techniques to practical use.

Participants should dress appropriately for outdoor work (boots and gloves recommended), and bring water and snacks for 3 or 4 hours on the trail. Afterwards we will have an informal cookout for those who want to participate.

This workshop is the first in a series of training sessions being planned around the state by the WVTC. The goal of the Coalition is to develop a "pool" of volunteers who

have been trained in the basics of trail development and the WVTC will then serve as a "clearinghouse" to match volunteers up with trail building and maintenance needs as they are approved as WVTC Projects. Several projects which have already been approved are Twin Falls State Park, The American Discovery Trail, the Allegheny Trail (which is a 300 mile long trail running from the WV/Pennsylvania border in Preston County to Peters Mountain in Monroe County), Stonewall Jackson State Park, and the Monongahela National Forest. Several others are in the planning stages and nearing approval by the Board, so there will be no shortage of interesting assignments for the pool of volunteers to do. Additional workshops over the next several months are tentatively planned for Twin Falls State Park (May 3), Elkins (June 7), and Buckhannon (August 15). Additional details will be forthcoming as plans are firmed up for these subsequent sessions.

For additional information or to register for the April 13 workshop, please call the WVTC office at 755-4878 or fax 755-4887. Or you may contact Carroll Jett, WVTC Projects Director via e-mail at carrolljett@yahoo.com. There is no charge for any of the workshops, but pre-registration will be a tremendous help in planning for refreshments, etc.

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

Published by the

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

The new 7th edition covers:

- more than 200 trails for over 700 miles
- trail scenery, difficulty, condition, distance, elevation, access points, streams and skiing potential.
- detailed topographic maps
- over 50 photographs
- 5 wilderness Areas totaling 77,965 acres
- 700 miles of streams stocked with bass and

trout

send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

Or, visit our website at
www.wvhighlands.org

Everyone is Welcome
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's
2002 Spring Review
May 10, 11 & 12
Handley Cabin
"In the middle of nowhere on the upper Williams River"
Pocahontas County that is.

The Williams River Headwaters Like it is!

Friday evening
snacks, campfire, orientation, maps, displays.

Saturday

We'll have tours and outings of:

- **Upper Williams River**- Our featured outing will look at the portion of this watershed that is scheduled to be logged by the Forest Service. Our special guest, Heartwood's Mark Donham, will lead the trip, along with the Marlinton District Ranger.
- **Cranberry Wilderness**- One of the east's largest!, we'll experience what's so special about this place and see why and how it needs to be made even larger.
- **Highlands Scenic Highway** - Don't miss it!
- **Cranberry Mountain Discovery Center**
- **Cranberry Glades**
- **Falls of Hills Creek**
- **Edray Trout Hatchery**
- **Canoeing on the Williams River**

Saturday evening banquet and Panel Discussion

Forest Plan Revision

In 1985 the Monongahela National Forest adopted it's current "Land and Resource Management Plan (the Plan). It was intended to last 10 years, 15 tops. It is outdated and in many cases obsolete. Yet the Forest Service continues to use it in guiding their Forest management. After several false alarms, and postponements, it appears that the Forest Service is actually going to begin the Plan revision process this year. We must be ready. It is the one time when citizens can have a say in how the National Forest is managed. We must be at the table with a steady, loud voice. As the timber resources on the Forest mature and become more valuable in the market place, the exploitative forces of industry will be great.

We'll hear from Forest Planners for the Forest Service as well as from Mark Donham, Program Director for Heartwood.

Heartwood is an association of groups, individuals, and businesses dedicated to the health and well being of the native forest of the Central Hardwood region, and its interdependent plant, animal, and human communities.

Sunday

Board of Directors meeting
Outings continue

Bunk space is available at Handley Cabin

Tent Camping allowed on grounds, or at Tea Creek or Day Run Forest Service Campgrounds nearby.

Motels in Edray.

We'll have meals through Sunday Lunch

Look for more information, registration form, and complete details in the April Issue of the Highlands Voice.

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