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Groups Ask for Help Preventing Acid Mine Drainage

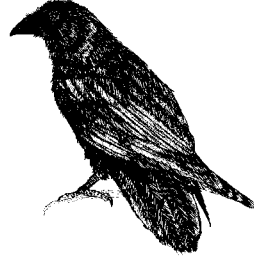
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING TO REVIEW METTIKI MINE

The federal Office of Surface Mining has agreed to review the permit issued to Mettiki Coal, LLC. The permit allows Mettiki Coal (WV), LLC to proceed with its E-Mine. The mine site drains into the North Fork of the Potomac River, and the Blackwater River of the Cheat watershed. The Office of Surface Mining agreed to review the permit in response to a request from the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Trout Unlimited, West Virginia Council and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

The E Mine is controversial because of the strong potential for the mine to become a source of perpetual acid mine drainage after mining. Both state and federal law prohibit the granting of permits to mines that will become permanent sources of acid mine drainage after mining ceases.

The mine is also controversial because of how the permit was granted. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection denied Mettiki a permit, in part in October

2003. In doing so, it noted that the mining activity would violate the Office of Surface Mining's rule protecting streams from new per-



Acid mine drainage? "*Nevermore!*"

petual sources of acid mine drainage.

Mettiki submitted a revised application which the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's field staff recommended be denied. On May 12, 2004, the West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection issued an order approving the permit. In approving this permit, DEP disregarded the

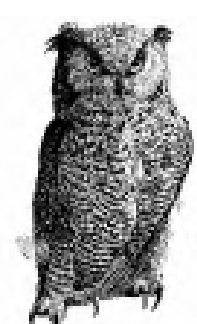
recommendation of its staff in the Philippi Field Office that the permit be denied. DEP rarely disregards its field offices' recommendations. Its decision to do so in this case is especially egregious because E Mine will generate iron and acidic water at levels that violate applicable water quality standards.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and Trout Unlimited, West Virginia Council appealed DEP's approval of the Permit to the West Virginia Surface Mine Board. On March 8, 2005, the Board issued its Final Order. Three Board members voted to deny the Permit and three voted to affirm DEP's issuance of the Permit. Because no action of the Board is valid without the concurrence of at least four members, the Board was unable to render a decision in the appeal and DEP's decision to issue the Permit stands as a final decision.

Everybody involved with this mine agrees that the mine is proposed for an area

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From the Heart of the Highlands
by Hugh Rogers

Spring and All

"Spring and All" is the title of William Carlos Williams's poem, which begins: "By the road to the contagious hospital / under the surge of the blue / mottled clouds driven from the / northeast—a cold wind." Now, at the end of April, a visible contagion leaps from bush to bush and tree to tree and spreads up from valley floors. Last weekend, a cold snowy wind blew through the valley of the upper Elk River in Pocahontas County as we celebrated one of the best Spring Reviews ever.

A more personal link between Spring and a hospital brought the poem to mind. Irene McKinney, West Virginia's Poet Laureate, is recuperating from a bone marrow transplant in the WVU Medical Center. Ruth had visited her there a few days before the Review. On Monday morning we called to see how she was. Much better! She was able to eat and to walk up and down the hall. After hitting rock bottom—the necessary but fearsome zero white cell count that marked the elimination of cancer from her bones—her body was recovering.

That same day, just after noon, as if to trumpet the turnaround, Garrison Keillor read one of Irene's poems on his daily NPR program, The Writer's Almanac. We had read aloud this and other poems of hers on the Saturday night of the Review. I would like to reprint it here.

Atavistic

I wanted to walk without clothing
in the woods beside the creek,
and to come to the barn at night

and sleep beside the horses, curled
in the smell and scratch of hay
with the bitch and pups.

The life of the house was flat,
filled with monotonous talking,
passing to and fro among the rooms,

and for what. My mother hated
animals, the way they ate the
food and dirtied the floor.

They were her enemies; she fought
their right to be there and
would have wiped them off the earth

if she could have. If a cat or a dog
came too close to the back door she
threw scalding water on it, and

was righteous in her anger, shouting
that they were not human and
didn't feel real pain.

If we must choose sides, I said
as a child, I take
the side of the animals.

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OSM To Review Mettiki Mine (*Continued from p. 1*)

that is prone to produce acid mine drainage. The geology assures it. Mettiki proposes to avoid perpetual acid mine drainage by flooding the mine with alkaline water after the mining ceases. This, it contends, will prevent the acid from forming.

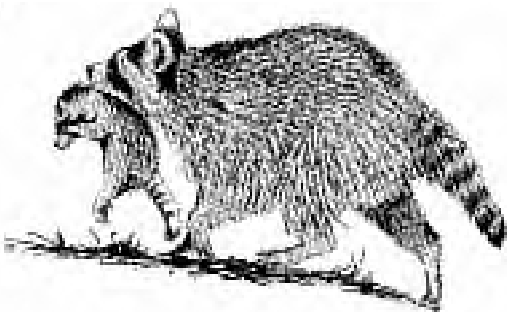
There are two difficulties with this approach. The first is that nobody has ever used it anywhere. If it works here, this will be the first time anyone has ever successfully used this technique. The regulations do provide for experimental practices. Because they are experimental, such practices would normally receive closer scrutiny both when the permit application is being reviewed and, if the experimental practice is approved, during the mining. Here, Mettiki proposed this novel approach (and the West Virginia DEP approved it) as a conventional permit, not as an experimental practice.

The second difficulty with this approach is that there was substantial evidence before the DEP and the Surface Mine Board that the proposed method would not prevent acid mine drainage from forming.

Whether or not this new approach works will be unknown until after mining. If the approach does not work, then the source of long term acid mine drainage will already have been created and the mine will be another source of acid mine drainage which will continue producing such drainage for decades if not centuries.

The groups who requested Office of Surface Mining review anticipate that the review will include a detailed technical analysis of the potential for acid mine drainage as well as the feasibility of the novel method Mettiki Coal has proposed to prevent it. The groups anticipate that such a review will conclude that the proposed method will not be effective in preventing acid mine drainage from forming.

Although OSM has agreed to review the matter, there is no indication of when the review will be completed.



Happy Mothers' Day to You and Yours from the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

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ACID MINE DRAINAGE—THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

West Virginia—and particularly Northern West Virginia—is plagued with many mines that are currently sources of acid mine drainage and will be sources for the foreseeable future. How to deal with these sources is a chronic problem for West Virginia. Many of these sources were created years ago when the law and policy were different.

During the past fifteen years, the federal Office of Surface Mining's actions have assured that states do not issue permits that will create acid mine drainage. While the older mines remain a problem and must be addressed, such policies at least prevent new sources of acid mine drainage from being created and the problem from getting any worse than it already is.

Approval of the Mettiki Coal E-Mine could reverse this policy. Instead of dealing with older sources of acid mine drainage while preventing new sources from being created, approval of the E-Mine may well result in the creation of a brand new source of acid mine drainage. This would be contrary to what had been West Virginia and federal policy for at least the past fifteen years.

Acid mine drainage is caused when a sulfur-rich coal seam is exposed and washed by water. The results are streams that run red and orange. The streams are void of life. Healing these streams can take more than 100 years, or very lengthy and expensive treatment.

Cindy Rank, mining chair for the Conservancy, said, "It is unconscionable for the state to allow the Mettiki permit to proceed. Even today, a great amount of time and money is spent controlling vast underground pools of dangerous, metal-laden mine water."

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as a tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Its bylaws describe its purpose:

The purposes of the Conservancy shall be to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation—including both preservation and wise use—and appreciation of the natural resources of West Virginia and the Nation, and especially of the Highlands Region of West Virginia, for the cultural, social, educational, physical, health, spiritual, and economic benefit of present and future generations of West Virginians and Americans.

You Can Help With the Opposition

CONSERVANCY BOARD OPPOSES ACCESS FEES ON PUBLIC LAND

By Helen McGinnia

During its spring meeting at the Elk River Touring Center, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing access fees for federal lands (see box). Groups nationwide have begun a program to oppose those fees. Here is what you can do:

What You Can Do—Help Ground truth the Recreation Access Tax: Opponents of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act is commonly refer to it as the Recreation Access Tax. When Congress passed the Recreation Access Tax, it they placed restrictions upon where, and under what circumstances, recreation access and user fees could be charged. The Act says the agencies shall not charge:

- (A) Solely for parking, undesignated parking, or picnicking along roads or trailsides.
- (B) For general access unless specifically authorized under this section.
- (C) For dispersed areas with low or no investment unless specifically authorized under this section.
- (D) For persons who are driving through, walking through, boating through, horse-

back riding through, or hiking through Federal recreational lands and waters without using the facilities and services.

(E) For camping at undeveloped sites that do not provide a minimum number of facilities and services as described in subsection (g)(2)(A).

(F) For use of overlooks or scenic pullouts.

A total of 11 restrictions are listed; I've copied only 6 above.²

Scott Silver, head of Wild Wilderness and a leading opponent of recreation fees, says: "From all indications, the agencies are failing to abide by those restrictions and are breaking the law. We are documenting how widespread this problem is and need your help.

"Our friends at Western Slope No Fee Coalition have produced a Recreation Access Tax survey form. The form asks you to identify the site you are visiting (from a list of site numbers we will provide) and to check off whether certain conditions apply. Completing the form takes but a moment.

"Every time you visit a recreation fee site simply fill out a form. Your data will be compiled along with thousands of ground truthing reports from all parts of the country. Reports will be used as part of an ongoing effort to rid public lands of this varmint."

The Coalition would also like to know if fees are being charged at other sites, such as parking areas at trailheads.

Survey forms, instructions and a list of numbered fee-sites for each national forest are available upon request from Scott³, the Western Slope No Fee Coalition⁴, or me⁵. If you are traveling, you can fill out forms for national forests that you visit.

¹<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/boone/recreation/feepass/index.shtml>

²<http://www.wildwilderness.org/docs/therat.htm>

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West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Resolution Favoring Sufficient Funding of Public Land Recreation and Against Recreation Fees

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, H.R. 3283, which was passed by the US Congress in November 2004, allows federal land management agencies to charge access fees for recreational use by the general public on federally owned public lands. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is opposed to the Act and feels it should be repealed because:

- The concept of paying new recreation fees to use public lands is contrary to the founding idea that public lands belong to the American people and are places where everyone is freely welcomed.
- National forests and other public lands should provide the greatest good for the greatest number of Americans. The Act will impose an economic hardship on low-income people wishing to access their own public lands. A high proportion of people living in rural areas, including those near the national forests, are low-income citizens. A disproportionate number of people who engage in physically demanding, low-impact forms of recreation are young people with limited incomes.
- Tourism is an important and growing sector of the West Virginia economy. The Act will discourage visitation to public lands and have a negative impact on the state and local economies that rely on these visitors.
- H.R. 3283 fundamentally changes the way recreation on America's public lands is funded and managed. It puts in place an ecologically destructive incentive to support large-scale, environmentally destructive recreation areas on public lands in order to increase their operating revenue.
- Imposition of fees for recreational activities and entrance fees for federal lands (other than national parks) is a major step towards the privatization of recreation on public lands. Private corporations will be contracted to build and manage facilities and to collect the fees. Resorts, ski runs, ATV and snowmobile trails, highly developed campgrounds for RV users, and marinas would be out of reach to many low-income people. Further, these highly developed facilities will have an unfair advantage over already existing facilities on private land located near public land that are owned and managed by small businesses.
- Public lands access fees are highly controversial and are opposed by hundreds of organizations, county governments, state legislatures, and by millions of rural Americans.
- H.R. 3283 was never approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and was never introduced, never had hearings, and was never approved by the U.S. Senate but was instead attached to an omnibus spending bill as an appropriations rider.

Thus, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy pledges to defend West Virginians' right to freely access their public lands and to work towards both repealing the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and advocating sufficient funding for public land recreation.

CLEAN AIR UPDATE

By Don Gasper

The far sighted old Clean Air Act and its 1977 Amendments promised us a quicker more complete clean-up of our air. Instead, the President has proposed an industry backed "Clear Skies" initiative with a more protracted clean-up schedule. It has still not made its way through the Senate. The "Clear Skies" initiative would include a trading system in which less polluting facilities could sell pollution credits to dirtier facilities.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in trying to put the best face on this situation, notes progress is being made. The program they announced may cost \$4 billion/year, but the Environmental Protection Agency notes a \$85 billion health benefit "for people downwind" will be generated each year. There will also be two billion visibility benefits. In this slower cleanup by 2015 sulfur dioxide would drop 57% below 2003 levels and nitrogen 61%. Mercury will also be reduced from 40 tons/yr to 27.9 by 2015, and 40% comes from these power plants. These improvements will prevent 17,000 premature deaths annually, and 700,000 cases of respiratory ailments per year. The E.P.A notes the mercury cleanup would help protect pregnant women and children from this toxic metal that causes nerve damage.

West Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay beyond receive some of the highest airborne mercury deposition in the nation. Also, 2/3 of the Bay's nitrogen load is airborne in spite of the contributions from all the people and the agriculture. Still today the power companies (Edison Electric Institute) say the technology is not there, even if citizens were willing to pay to protect their lungs and food source. The Bay is complaining that the cleanup of our eastern air is not fast or thorough enough. Pennsylvania has already announced plans to challenge the delaying E.P.A. rule in court.

The environmental groups say also more of a clean-up is needed. The E.P.A. could have all along used the old Clean Air Act to require individual power plants to use the most effective technology to achieve these reductions - retrofitting them all. Instead there are exemptions for the old plants and there is a trading system of pollution allowances. Instead of using the old Clean Air Act to require the cleanup now, the "Clear Skies" initiative delays the cleanups even more.

The National Resource Defense Council furnishes us with a worse case mercury scenario. Mercury emissions will be "regulated" as a bi-product of sulfur and nitrogen controls at least until 2010. California can increase mercury pollution by 841% by 2017 and still be under the E.P.A.'s "cap" on their emissions. Similarly Utah's contribution could rise 257%. Colorado could rise 177%. Even New Hampshire can rise 241%. These are "pollution credits" that can be sold to eastern states, thereby confounding an eastern cleanup.

Finally we must consider court and U.S. Legislative challenges from the Northern States and North Carolina that would force W.Va. and other emitting states to actually clean up. Clearly their air is effected by W.Va. emissions. Clearly now besides the health effects noted earlier, these states charge environmental damage to forests and streams from stream and watershed acidification and an impoverishing nutrient leaching by Acid Rain.

If the President's "Clear Skies" program becomes the law of the land, it would essentially replace our old Clean Air Act entirely, and industry will once again have delayed this promised clean-up.

West Virginia, though caught downwind of Ohio (Ohio is still the greatest emitter of all), and faced with its own clean-up "cap" and application for yet new plants, can pay for and trade "pollution credits". If we did this, our power bill would then increase and we would get no health benefits or environmental relief and these conditions could worsen.

West Virginia can, however, choose its own way out of this situation: it can burn coal cleanly and insist through the E.P.A. that Ohio does also. It can cooperate with New England and North Carolina in a regional clean-up. W.Va. can avoid federal funding penalties by meeting air quality standards as well.

West Virginia citizens will soon see what this new Governor and his Department of Environmental Protection will suggest. Now in this moment of confusion W.V. citizens can let these decision makers know we want clean air. We can no longer simply (simple-mindedly) burn coal. We want to protect our lungs, and our trout streams and forests.

Bob Hanley and Don Gasper at the Spring Review. Photo by Jim Solley.



Meeting new friends: One man's experience at the Spring Review

By George E. Beetham Jr.

Slaty Fork, WV, is one of those mountain towns you could drive right through without realizing it. The village is clustered around the headwaters of the Elk River along US Route 219 between Elkins and Marlinton.

In fact, despite having directions, a good map, and a GPS showing the exact location of the driveway to the Elk River Touring Center, I shot right by the entrance and had to back up.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Spring Review was held at the center. We were joined by other environmental organizations, not the least of which was the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition of which the conservancy is a sponsor.

On Friday night, the Conservancy and Coalition presented the Mountaineer Award to U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall. The evening was a congenial affair, and I had an opportunity to talk with the Congressman, discussing former Virginia Congressman Jim Olin, whose introduction of the Virginia Wilderness Bill of 1984 I had covered while a reporter in Waynesboro, Va.

Indeed, Congressman Rahall remembered Olin, who left a legacy of wilderness areas in the Sixth District of Virginia that must be the envy of all but a handful of representatives.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Bob Henry Baber, mayor of Richwood. Richwood is one of those places I have never been to, but have long known about.

The late Jim Comstock put Richwood on the map with his "West Virginia Hillbilly," "A newspaper for people who can't read, edited by an editor who can't write."

"Hillbilly" was filled with droll stories about the people who Comstock encountered, or who were community legends. Mayor Baber informed me that he was among the many targets of Comstock's acerbic wit. But more importantly, Mayor Baber is totally committed to the environmental movement. We feel he is one of us, and I can vouch for the fact that he is just as friendly.

Later in the evening, a troupe of drummers entertained on the porch outside. The Congressman was among folks who took up a drum and joined in the rhythmic beating. A nearly full moon shown through broken clouds after a heavy afternoon rainstorm. It was one of those magical evenings when you feel embraced by what is happening around you, when everyone can relax and just enjoy life.

The next morning we enjoyed a hearty breakfast. Afterwards, people wandered off to all points of the compass to enjoy the varied activities planned for the day.

I elected to do a couple of things I had been meaning to do: photograph the yard that for years served the Western Maryland Railway at Slaty Fork. Known as Laurel Bank, the yard was a stopping point for crews working from Elkins and other crews working to the mines near Webster Springs. That done, I drove onto the Highlands Scenic Highway to check for potential views of Gauley Mountain, where a wind operator had considered applying for a permit.

Gauley Mountain has stands of red spruce along its ridgeline. We are trying to re-establish red spruce habitat, home to the endangered northern West Virginia flying squirrel, among other species.

Then it was back to the Center to take lunch and join a spirited discussion with the Wilderness Coalition.

Having observed something of the Virginia effort more than 20 years ago, I have been impressed with what I have seen of the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's work, led by President Mary Wimmer and Executive

Director Matt Keller.

No congressional bill is a done deal, particularly even before it has been introduced. In the case of pending proposals for wilderness areas in West Virginia, a lot depends on the Monongahela National Forest's management plan revision, the draft of which due out for public comment this summer.

But the coalition seems well organized and has come through some momentary side-track issues remarkably well. Its work seems on target, and despite any misgivings on the part of the energetic and passionate people involved in the effort, headed toward a successful conclusion. There may be need to compromise, but the outlook seems good for a sizable increase in West Virginia's wilderness acreage.

But what impresses me more is the enthusiasm and energy the members bring to the effort. It is the easiest thing in the world to sit with them and discuss the one thing we all agree on: we need more wilderness.

After a huge dinner, the evening was taken up with Appalachian mountain music, poetry, and more convivial discourse with friends old and new. I am not exactly the easiest person when it comes to meeting groups of people, but it was impossible not to engage with people I had not met before.

I think there is a good reason for that. Whether we belong to the Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, the Wilderness Society, or the Wilderness Coalition, we share common interests and goals. We are concerned, on the one hand, over issues that seem insurmountable, like mountaintop removal coal mining, air and water pollution, development of the highlands, logging, just to name a few. But our concern over those issues has brought us together to act in an effort to mitigate the damages that threaten the mountains we hold dear.

The next day, after another hearty breakfast, your board of directors sat down for its quarterly meeting. Five inches of snow was on the ground that morning. More would have been had the ground not been warmed in the previous week.

And that brings me to the reason for this discourse, which was never intended to be a "What I did on my summer vacation" essay.

The issue was raised that we feel a need for the involvement of younger voices in the Conservancy. Indeed, several younger people had come to the review, some involved in wilderness organizations, and some even signed on to help with various needs, like doing GPS surveys of proposed wilderness areas.

We feel the need for younger people to be involved for two important reasons: to get new ideas and because the day will come when those of us currently serving on the board will pass on, hopefully leaving behind us a legacy of protection, but more importantly a legacy of a viable organization committed to carrying the work forward.

One of the people I had the distinct pleasure of meeting during the review was Jean Rodman. Jean and her husband Sayre were among the early environmentalists who got the Conservancy off to a rousing start. Today's active and committed Conservancy is testament to the quality of the work and organization building the Rodman and others performed on our behalf.



More About the Spring Review (Continued from p. 8)

Sayre passed on last summer, and we are part of his legacy. We are carrying on the work he and others began. We are the current holders of the baton he passes to us. We sometimes feel the shoes we try to fill are large, but we do our best.

We have many successes. We also feel that we fail in some instances - not for lack of trying, but because the forces stacked up against us are powerful. The stakes are high, and we soldier on in the hope that one day the tide will turn and we will have charted a course to protect our mountains.

What I have learned in the roughly two years I have served on the board of directors is that I am incapable of saving the mountains on my own. I wish I had that power, but I do not. Together as a Conservancy, however, we have had many successes. And with our partners, we are embarked on additions to West Virginia's wilderness areas that will serve as a legacy that millions of people will cherish.

If you ask me or any of my board colleagues about our feelings toward the work and our dear friends with whom we work, we will tell your first and foremost that we are having fun. I

will tell you more, ... I am having the time of my life.

When it comes to the Conservancy, there are only friends I have met and friends I have yet to meet. Our next review comes in October, to be held at the Cheat Mountain Club over a week's time. I hope you will be among the friends I meet then. I hope you will be among the people who will sign on to carry our legacy forward, perhaps even improve on it.



Karst and Cave trip, looking at a huge outflow from one of the springs along the Elk. Photo by Jean Rodman

Doug Van Gundy and friend, playing at the dinner. Photo by Jean Rodman



Beth Little, Mary Wimmer, Dave Saville, and Matt Keller of the Wilderness Coalition give Congressman Rahall his award (story on p. 15)



ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

By Barbara Weaner

We are all busy – sometimes too busy – and it would be easy to say “YES! We are doing too much already!” During the Spring Board Meeting at the annual Highlands Conservancy Spring Review, we asked ourselves the question “ Are we doing enough?”, and tried not to come to a trite answer.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteer effort, with the exception of one paid part-time Administrative Assistant, Dave Saville. Although the Highlands Voice may look polished, and the legal battles appear “professional”, and the efforts over the past forty years are impressive, the work and pleasure of the Conservancy comes directly out of the deep love and commitment of folks who care about these mountains and valleys and streams and wildlife and communities and our precious culture. There is no “boss”, no “director”, no well-laid plan.

Beware of complacency, thinking that it will all be taken care of. That we have it all figured out. That your voice, your hands, your mind, your support are not needed. Without you, your neighbors and your friends who have the same caring spirits and commitment to environmental protection, culture conservation and wise use of resources, our way would falter and weaken.

We ask ourselves: When action needs to be taken, are we taking it? Can we be clearer with Conservancy Members about how they can help?

We are going to make a concerted effort to identify within articles how members can be immediately helpful, and what contact person might answer questions. If you are at a loss about how you can help when an

issue moves you, or if you have specific interests or concerns, we want it to be easier for you to find assistance. Feel free to contact any Board member by phone, mail or email. Our information is always listed at the beginning of the Voice within the Roster.

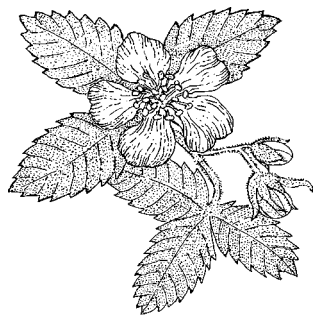
We are going to try to include a WVHC WISH LIST itemizing specific in-kind, monetary or labor donations that are needed, as well as projects that need help, so that you can participate, even if you have little time, or little money, or little experience.

We ask you to spread the word about the work that the Highlands Conservancy has done over the past forty years, inquiring if your friends, neighbors, co-workers, community members will support our efforts. We all need to drink clean water, breath clean air, be free from environmental hazards. We want to be able to work AND enjoy a beautiful homeplace. We need to work AND not be threatened by mudslides, floods, cave-ins, toxic exposures, and destruction of our communities. It is not “us versus them”! We are all here together: we breath the same air, drink the same water, live in the same communities, suffer the same when things fail, and reap the benefits when things work well. We reject the polarization that has been created between “business” and “environmentalists”. We reject the polarization between “natives” and “outsiders”. We reject the polarization between “liberals” and “conservatives”. We are in this together, the problems and the solutions.

We know that work needs to be done, and we want to see it get done, to build bridges, nurture the world we live in, mentor the youth, care for the aging and our communities, so that we may all benefit.

What you can do:

- If you're not a member, join now.
- Talk to your friends and neighbors about joining.
- Call or e-mail us about your particular interest or concern, so we can lind you with others that share the same.
- Come to some outings (listed in the Voice) to meet Conservancy Members
- Make a donation to support the work we do.
- Make a large donation to support the work we do. (There is an endowment fund.)
- Invite one of our speakers to come to your community. (Call or e-mail the Outreach Committee in the Roster)
- Have an in-home or in-community viewing of the Mountaintop Removal and Flood videos our filmmaker-Board member Bob Gates has made.



Speakers Available!!!!

Does your school, church or civic group need a speaker or program presentation on a variety of environmental issues? Contact Julian Martin 1525 Hampton road, Charleston WV 25314 or imaginemew@aol.com or 304-342-8989.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get a free **I (heart) Mountains** bumper sticker(s), send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314

GOOD STUFF FOR FREE

The Sierra Club, Citizens Coal Council, Coal River Mountain Watch, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Appalachian Focus(Kentucky), Big Sandy Environmental Coalition(Kentucky), Kentuckians For The Commonwealth and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy have put together a new brochure entitled “Mountaintop Removal Destroys Our Homeplace STOP THE DEVASTATION!” For a copy send a self addressed stamped envelope to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314.

Quantities are available for teachers, civic and religious groups and anyone who can get them distributed

Join Now !!!



**West
Virginia
Highlands
Conservancy**
www.wvhighlands.org

✕

Yes! Sign me up.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership categories (circle one)

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Org</u>
Senior	\$15		
Student/	\$15		
Introductory/ Other	\$15		
Regular	\$25	\$35	\$50
Associate	\$50	\$75	\$100
Sustaining	\$100	\$150	\$200
Patron	\$250	\$250	\$500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$750	\$1,000

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

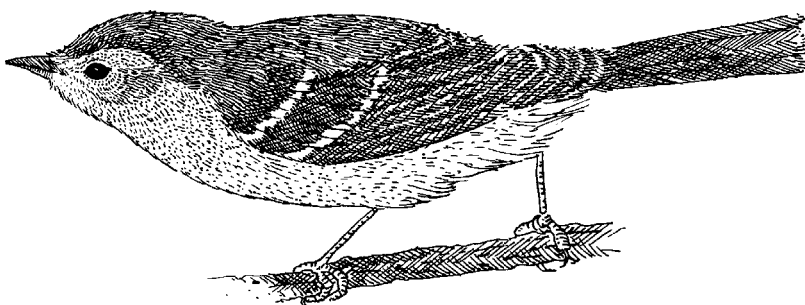
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Working to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful!

West Virginia Youth Conservation Camp

For the past fifty years, the West Virginia University Extension Service, in cooperation with the Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Protection, sponsors a Youth Conservation Camp for children of all ages. Over the past 50 years, over 5,000 students have participated. There will be 150 kids attending **June 13-17 in Cowen, Webster County**, at 4-H Camp Caesar. Camp tuition is \$125 per student.

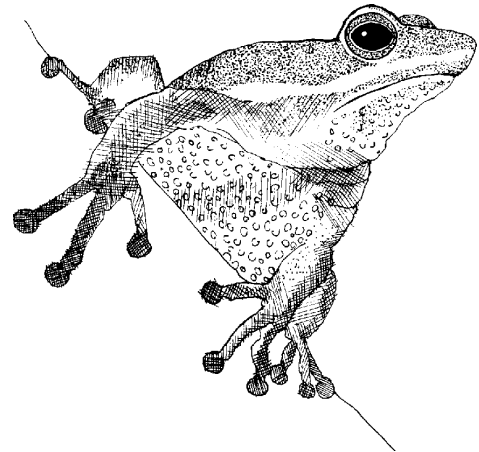
The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy would like to start a Youth Scholarship fund, to support children who might not be able to afford attendance. Please make a donation to our Scholarship fund by sending it to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, with a note that you would like it to be used for the Youth Conservation Camp scholarship for a child with a love of nature, in need of support, please refer them to us.

For more information contact Don Gasper at 472-3704.



Frog Squat

You can take huge leaps
if you don't mind looking like that.
Splayed fingers and toes
Clutch the surface, and spurt out.
You can go a long way in one bound.
But don't stop very long in between.
Count the seconds, and wind your spring.
Stay green. Swivel your eyes
Around efficiently, and use the gift
of your tongue. After a while,
you are your own vehicle.
When you embrace someone, clasp
them for days at a time.



Irene McKinney

*From the book Quick Fire and Slow Fire
With permission from the author*

Knapps Creek

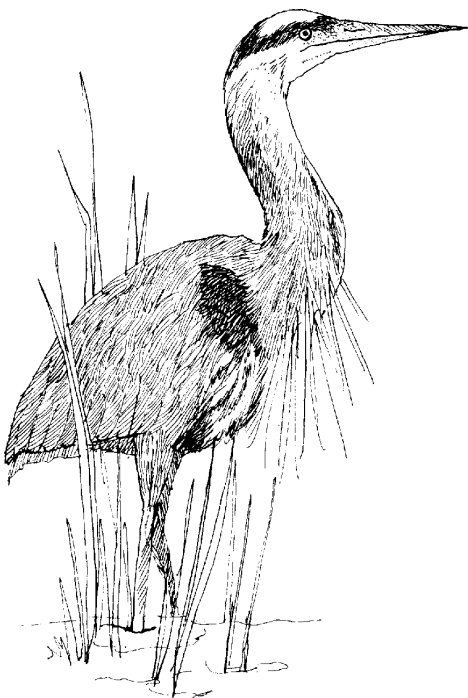
It was still way back in the throat
of Sunday morning when I stole out of the house,
crossed the low ridge of Hamilton Hill,
and lowered myself onto the banks of the creek.
Deep in the bottom of the valley,
along the liquid place where falling down
becomes climbing up,
I lay on a smooth block of sandstone
and listened to the part of the world that was not me.

Upstream, the satisfied sound
of stones being stroked by water,
the voice of their pleasure straining toward human language.
Downstream, the rocks in the water speak in algae,
the rocks on the shoreline speak in moss:
their affection, each for the other, dissolved
with the loss of common tongue.

And here, in a backwater just below my feet,
surrounded by hundreds of sunken poplar leaves
like the drowned shadows of long-dead birds,
in this place where the rocks flow slower than the river,
a pregnant stone is poised to give birth
in the direction of the sea.

© Doug Van Gundy 2005

*From the upcoming book Life above Water
With permission from the author*



POETRY by John King

Late April

Seven
Buzzards
in the
Sycamore
by the creek
the same day
the bell birds
came back.
This is a
good place
to live.

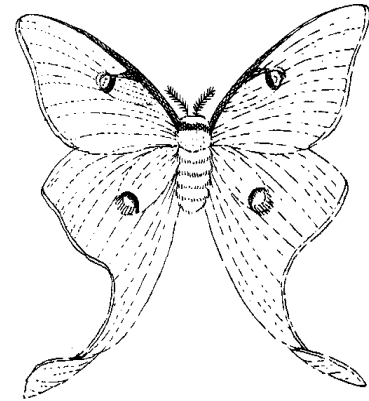
Whole Haiku & A Half

It doesn't matter
Where you are as long as
While you're there You're there
damn sure enough
and altogether

Spring

As you trust seed
so also death.
The promise
is the same

Ordinarily
the earth
drains
well
and
the ocean
is just
full



Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

Years ago I discovered a true oasis while visiting Florida. It was a small springs complete with clear blue waters and multicolored fish. Though somewhat developed at the time, with picnic tables and walkways, the state of Florida charged no access fee. Several years later, upon my return, I noticed an honor system had been implemented. No problem, I decided. I can easily donate a buck to help maintain this facility. Later yet, the honor system had been replaced by a truculent ranger who fined everyone who didn't have their payment stub. I was beginning to enjoy the place less and less. However, the last (and final) time that I visited this natural wonder, I was totally appalled. The fee station had been replaced by an air conditioned building in which lurked a lady with nine inch nails and a bad disposition. It would have cost \$15.00 for my family to enter for the day. The fact that my father in law had a special military pass for his Purple Heart did not augment the charges. It was still fifteen bucks, or turn around!

When I read your article about the inevitability of fees coming to the Monongahela, I could only think of this sad story. Is West Virginia going the way of Florida (God forbid!)? Are all of our public lands to become nothing more than a source of income for the government? Are air conditioned boxes and ranger salaries their idea of *upkeep*? **Why not leave well enough alone? Most of the trails in the area in which I hike are maintained by volunteers. Should they expect a piece of the pie for their efforts when the user fee becomes a reality? And the bit about fees being necessary to provide law enforcement and fund the growing need for homeland security and the war on terrorism just about made me choke, convincing me that this is one issue that you need to take a stand on.**

When I lived in South Carolina, the state tried to impose a boater use fee. Everyone unanimously refused to pay this unfair tax, and it was rescinded. In the words of a famous gentleman: United we stand, divided we fall. It is time for us to unite!!!

Linda Jones
Tanner, WV

Dear Editor:

My personal feeling on the issue of recreation fees is that I'd be happy to pay a fee, as long as that fee went to wilderness protection.

When I lived near Rocky Mountain National Park in 1990, I found that the trails there were deeply eroded and in need of a lot of maintenance. The National Park Service claimed that it didn't have funds for necessary trail maintenance. But when the Park Service found that it had extra money, instead of fixing the trails they decided to turn the beautiful Old Fall River Trail into a road.

I cannot support a fee program that takes my money to create what I want to escape.

Dan Styer
Oberlin, Ohio

VIEWING THE VISTAS ON REDMAN RUN TRAIL

By Mike Juskelis

You couldn't ask for a better weekend to launch the 2005 car camping/backpacking/hiking season! The daytime temps were in the 60s and 70s and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. I was joined by Janet, John, Mary, Greg, Dave, Don and Debbie. After setting up camp in Seneca Shadows on Saturday some of us climbed up to the top of Seneca Rocks to get a taste of what the morrow would bring. We returned to

We visited nine vistas in all. To the best of my knowledge only one has an official name, Chimney Top. I've taken to naming places I visit that don't have formal titles so friends that might follow in our footsteps know of where we speak. There's the obvious Redman Run Overlook and then Singleton Rock named after the man who showed me a really easy way to get to the top of it so that one may look both east and west.

left turn and climb up on a rock. Find your own special place and name it!

Everyone was impressed with how far one could see. It seems that when we weren't experiencing views of the North Fork Valley and Allegheny Front (I could even pick out Haystack Knob in Long Run Valley!) we were getting glimpses through the trees of Petersburg in the valley to the north. The comment was made that even the West Virginians amongst us had never seen this much of their state in one day as we stood there in one spot!

We made Chimney Top our primary break spot and lingered in the warmth of the sun like so many turtles basking on a warm rock. We then proceeded down the mountain at an increased pace, letting gravity do its thing, briefly visiting the final two vistas as we traveled along. By 3:20 we were recovering the other cars at the bottom of Redman Run Trail. Some of us were thinking about the trip home, others were thinking about Hot Roast Beef Sandwiches, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy at the 4-U and all were reflecting on the day's outing.

Today was this hiker's fifth trip along this route. I never grow tired of it though I must admit it's been a while since I've traversed this ridge with its many vistas in the fall. Maybe in 2006 we'll do it in October!

A view eastward from Singleton Rock
Photo by Mike Juskelis



camp, prepared and ate our dinner and sat around the campfire discussing the next day's sojourn and other fireside topics.

We woke up Sunday to a fantastic, crisp, cool morning. A light layer of frost covered everything but by 8:00 you could feel the warm air moving in. We arranged the car shuttle, drove down to Smoke Hole Road and began hiking by 9:20.

The climb up to the ridge line along Redman Run Trail was a strain as always. The pain was lessened considerably by the low humidity and temperature. By the time we reached the top, however, the layers started coming off. Although our average hiking speed was 2.5 mph, it took us over five hours to complete the outing as we made it a point to visit almost every vista along our route.

I'm not 100% sure, but I think this is the only east/west vista north of Redman Run Trail. On a clear day I know you can see eastward to Shenandoah Mountain and perhaps even North Mountain with Cave and South Fork Mountains in the immediate foreground.

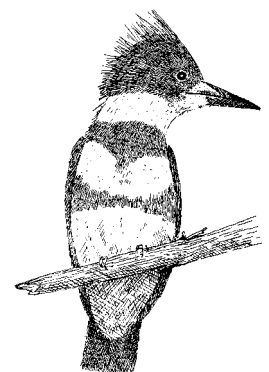
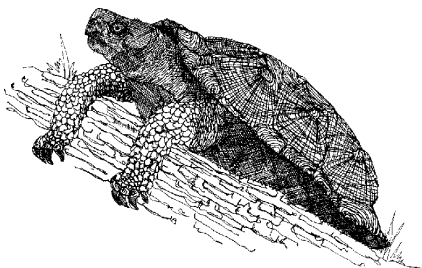
I used to think we were the only ones that knew the way up to the top but the presence of a fire ring on this day tells us otherwise. Beyond Chimney Top, as one begins the descent, there is Old Baldy Overlook (The mountain is actually named New Creek Mt but it looks bald to me!) and the Gap Vista, a view of where the Potomac cuts through the ridge line and Chimney Rocks slides down to meet the North Fork valley. These are names I've given to the more obvious vistas. Along much of this ridge walk, should one desire a view, you need but make a



View of Chimney Rocks from Chimney Top.
Photo by Mike Juskelis.

T SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-Shirts with the I [heart] Mountains slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, and XXXL. \$10 total by mail. Send sizes wanted and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to: Julian Martin, WVHC, Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321-0306



The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy presents it's

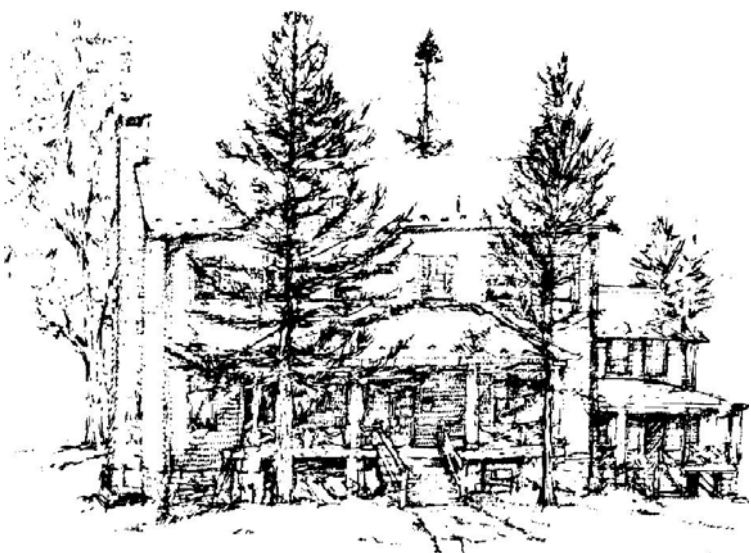
40th annual

Fall Review

at

Cheat Mountain Club

October 20-27, 2005



For over 100 years known as a great place for hunting, fishing and wilderness adventure, the Cheat Mountain Club is a special retreat from the outside world - a gracious, quiet, comfortable lodge that fosters contemplation, good talk, and recreational enjoyment in a place of spectacular natural beauty.

This year we will again dedicate an entire week to our 40th annual Fall Review. In the heart of it all, on Cheat Mountain, on the shores of the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River, we'll have workshops, art, lectures, outings, service projects, dignitaries, music, and a whole lot of fun. Details are still being worked out, but mark your calendar for the greatest Fall Review ever! Contact Dave Saville for more information and reservations. daves@labyrinth.net or 304-284-9548

PHOTOGRAPHS URGENTLY NEEDED FOR 8th EDITION OF MNF HIKING GUIDE

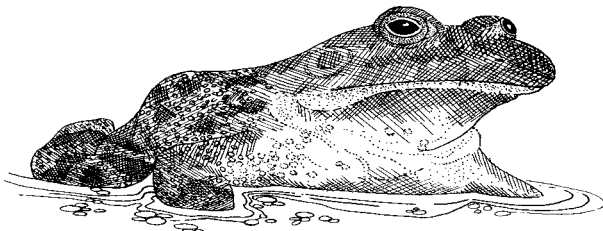
Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist continue to work on the upcoming 8th Edition of the Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, published and marketed by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Meanwhile, the authors need many photos for the new edition. Their plans are to have a new cover and to have all new internal photos except those illustrating mountain ranges (such as on pages 8 and 9 in the current edition).

The photos can be in either black and white or color, either in print or negative.

We will need to enlarge or process most photographs to fit the space and to create continuity. The ideal would be to have a glossy black and white print 5x7 inches. All unused photos will be returned, and after printing those used will be returned. Photos used will be paid for \$10 each and if a cover is chosen the amount is \$75. Location and photographer's name will be necessary, and credit will be given each photographer. (Please see page 35 in the current (7th) edition of the Guide.) At least 40 new photos are needed. Mail them to Allen de Hart, 3585 US40I South, Louisburg NC, 27549. His telephone number is 919-496-4771, and email is: adh4771@aol.com.

Currently a few new trails are being hiked, measured, and described. At least two dozen old trails have enough changes that they will be re-hiked and re-mapped. More than 60 old trails and 15 new trails have been re-hiked or hiked. Because the Forest Service's 2005 edition of its Land and Resource Management Plan will not be published until later this summer, the hiking guide authors have had some delays in knowing about changes in the MNF user policy, trails to be abandoned, and changes in recreational facilities.



SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE IN LONG SLEEVE MODEL

We now have I [heart] Mountains long sleeve shirts in sizes M,L, XL. The shirt is heavy cotton and white with blue lettering. The heart is red. \$15 total by mail. Send sizes wanted and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to:

Julian Martin, WVHC
Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321-0306

HATS FOR SALE

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy caps for sale. The cap is khaki and the pre-curved visor is forest green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in gold above the I [Heart] Mountains. The heart is red; we and mountains are black. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. \$10 by mail. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to Julian Martin, WVHC P.O. Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

May 28th-30th, Canaan Mountain Backpack: 22+ mile, 2 night, strenuous backpack through this under-utilized but beautiful part of the Monongahela National Forest. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

May 28th- 30th, Sat.-Mon. Otter Creek Wilderness Backpack: Plan for a picturesque backpack in the pristine Otter Creek Wilderness. There will be time to explore a rarely visited bog and isolated overlook (found on last year's adventure). We may also explore some side creeks if time/weather allows. Multiple fords and up to 9 miles per day (with packs). May be strenuous. Itinerary may change based on weather and water levels (due to fording). Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740)676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

June 11th-12th, Dolly Sods North/Dolly Sods Backpack, MNF, WV: 14 mile moderate Backpack with sweeping views, vistas, streams and waterfalls. Will try to hike 7 miles each day. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

June 10th-12th, Fri. - Sun. Unrated. GPS Backpack: Crawford Mtn. - Wild Oak NRT - Trimble Mtn. + Natural Chimneys. The area is not far away from Staunton, VA, near Ramsey's Draft. If you like the word "challenge", this backpack is for you - about 15 miles 4,000 ft. elevation gain per day with possible 2 stream wadings. Few sources of water. Warning: this backpack has NOT scouted by the trip leader. There will be one waterfall and numerous overlooks (lots of ridge walking). Leader: Dimitri Tundra 301/770-9639, tarakd@hotmail.com

June 18th, Otter Creek Wilderness Day Hike. One stream crossing along the beautiful Otter Creek. We will take our time and enjoy the sights and sounds. Should be done by 5pm. Contact Don Gasper (304) 472-3704 or just show up at 11am at the Sheetz in Parsons. No e-mail address for trip leader.

June 25th-27th, Seneca Shadows Car Camping/Rohrbaugh Plains day hike, MNF, WV: Camp at modern Seneca Shadows with all facilities. Day 1: Set up camp and hike to the top of Seneca Rocks. Day 2: Moderate 10 mile shuttle hike in Dolly Sods featuring a spectacular vista, views, waterfalls and a few challenging creek crossings. Day 3: Break camp and head home. Reservations recommended. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 2nd, Pond Run/Racer Camp Hollow, Great North Mountain, VA-WV: 9 mile strenuous circuit hikes with multiple stream crossings and a visit to White Rocks vista. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 2nd-4th, Sat.-Mon. Roaring Plains - Canyon Rim Backpack. Explore and witness spectacular, remote, rocky and rarely visited high elevation country. Be prepared for cool temps and weather extremes. Despite high elevation, climbs are gradual. ~16-18 miles plus some exploring/water gathering mileage. Experienced backpackers only please. See photos at <http://www.jonathanjessup.com/rpset1.html> Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740)676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10

July 9th-11th, Otter Creek Wilderness 2 night Backpack, MNF, WV: Hike 14+ miles with several wide stream crossings. Camp near beautiful waterfalls and swimming holes. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 23rd, Flat-water float on the Buckhannon River. Six miles long float with some paddling and some current too. Bring fishing rod if you'd like to. Meet at the Sheetz in Buckhannon at 11am and we should be back at 4 or 5pm. Contact Don Gasper (304) 472-3704. No e-mail address for trip leader.

August 6th-7th, Canaan Fir Cone collecting volunteer opportunity. The Highlands Conservancy has been working for many years conserving West Virginia's unique Balsam fir nicknamed "Canaan Fir." Threatened by overbrowsing by white-tailed deer, and an exotic insect pest, the Balsam Woolly Adelgid, this special member of the forest community needs our help. These trees are not reliable cone producers, and only bear cones once every 3-6 years, last time in 2001. This outing is dependant on a cone crop this year. Contact Dave Saville 304-284-9548 daves@labyrinth.net.

August 12th-14th, Fri.-Sun. Mount Rogers High Country Backpack (VA): Enjoy a 21-mile backpack with spectacular views of open highlands and surrounding mountains. Open areas are similar to a hilly Dolly Sods but with better views and a more remote feel. Hike is mostly above 4000' elevation and about half exposed meadows. Please bring appropriate rain gear and equipment. Trails can be rocky and wet and weather can be unpredictable at times. Prior backpacking experience required. Hopefully, the highbush blueberries will be ripe. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

September 3rd-5th, Roaring Plains, Hidden Passage, Canyon, Rim 2 night Backpack, MNF, WV: 13+ miles with packs plus an optional side trip w/o packs along Long Run Canyon Rim. Night # 2 may be dry. Loads of fantastic views! Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

September 3rd-5th, Fri.-Sun Seneca Creek/Spruce Knob Area or Tea Creek Area: Still Planning - - Information forthcoming. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

September 23rd-25th, High Meadows/Seneca Creek Backpack, MNF, WV: Car Camp at primitive Spruce Knob Campground on Friday night. Backpack 13 miles from Spruce Knob to the headwaters of Seneca Creek on Saturday/Sunday. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

Late September/Early October TBA. Dolly Sods North: Still Planning. Information Forthcoming. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

October 8th-10th, Great North Mountain Backpack, GWNF, VA/WV: 21+ mile strenuous backpack featuring 4 fantastic overlooks. Will hike 7 miles on day 1, 10 miles on day 2 and approximately 5 miles on day 3. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

October 8th-9th and October 15 & 16: Red Spruce cone collecting volunteer opportunity: (two weekends!) As part of the Highlands Conservancy's Red Spruce Restoration efforts, we will be collecting cones from various areas in the Highlands including Snowshoe Mountain Resort, Monongahela National Forest, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley State Parks. Contact Dave Saville 304-284-9548 daves@labyrinth.net.

October 15th-17th, Cranberry Wilderness Backpack, MNF, WV: Approximately 24 mile circuit mostly along the drainages of North Fork of Cranberry River, Cranberry River, Beechlog Run, Laurelly Run and Middle Fork of Williams River. Mileage breakdown: 7 - 10 - 7. Should still have good fall colors this far south! Experienced Backpackers only. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

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, imaginemew@aol.com and Larry Gibson, (304) 586-3287 or (304) 549-3287 cellular.

NICK JOE RAHALL GETS AN AWARD

SLATYFORK, WV – U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II was honored at the Elk River Touring Center during the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's Spring Review for his distinguished conservation record and longstanding commitment to public lands protection and preserving West Virginia's natural heritage. The Mountaineer Conservation Leadership Award was presented at an Earth Day celebration sponsored by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition in partnership with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

"Congressman Rahall has been working to protect the Mountain State's natural heritage for nearly 30 years," said Richwood Mayor Bob Henry Baber, who presented the award to Congressman Rahall. "This is a small way for West Virginians to say thank you for protecting our God-given treasures, like the Mon and the New, Gauley and Meadow Rivers."

Also presenting the award to the Congressman was Beth Little, a member of the West Virginia Sierra Club and the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition.

"Representative Rahall is often pointed to as one of our nation's top lawmakers on environmental issues and, as the senior Democrat on the House Resources Committee, he is the leader in the House of Representatives fighting to protect public lands nationwide," said Little.

Following is a list detailing the conservation leadership of Congressman Rahall:

- Worked on legislation establishing every unit of the National Park System and every wilderness area since 1977, including the Cranberry and Laurel Fork North and South Wilderness Areas.
- Twice extended the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program to finance the restoration of abandoned coal mine lands.
- Sponsored legislation adding the New River Gorge National River to the National Park System and successfully expanding its boundary three times. One expansion recently blocked a proposed gas pipeline.
- Authored the legislation establishing the Gauley River National Recreation Area and Bluestone National Scenic River in 1989.
- Lead the fight against a proposed 765kv power line across the New River and defeated the proposal by designating a segment of the river for study under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- Championed funding for critical land acquisitions in the Monongahela National Forest, including at Shavers Fork.
- Established the southern West Virginia National Coal Heritage Area to preserve and protect historical resources in the region.
- Led efforts to prohibit oil and gas development in National Monuments and to prevent surface coal mining operations in parks and other federally protected areas.



Paul Wilson, Carter Zerbe, and Brent Crowley.



Beth Little, Congressman Rahall, and Bob Henry Baber. Photo by Jim Solley.

• Shepherded comprehensive legislation to reform the Mining Law of 1872 for the first time through the House of Representatives.

• Continues to advocate for more federal wilderness and preserving important environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, Clean Water Act, and Magnuson Fisheries Act.

"West Virginia is lucky to have a conservation champion in Congressman Rahall," said Matt Keller, coordinator of the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition. "It has been more than 20 years since wilderness was designated in our state, and we hope tonight's Earth Day celebration sheds light on the need to designate more wilderness in the Mon. We have some of the best unprotected wild places in the East, very little wilderness."

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Thoughts from President Hugh (Continued from p. 2)

One of the most quoted declarations in English poetry is "Poetry makes nothing happen." Sure, Irene as a child taking the side of the animals couldn't save them from getting scalded. The context of that line in W.H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" makes me think of Irene more exactly: "Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry./ Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still./ For poetry makes nothing happen . . ." In the same way, poor troubled lovely West Virginia hurt Irene into poetry and the public healing of her fortunate wound is one of the glories of our state. Like Ireland, we have our madness and our weather still, but her poetry has changed so many of us and thus has had its effect on the world. Happily, we can look forward to more.

Ruth and I are "come-heres" who have lived in West Virginia for almost thirty years. One of our children was born here, and another married here. The more tightly we're connected, the more deeply we feel our losses. When we came home from the Spring Review, we made another call. This one brought different news. Mike Sites, father of our daughter-in-law Melissa and grandfather of Jamie—can I call him my grandbrother?—had died on Friday night. He had learned of his cancer (never precisely identified) last fall, and it had moved very quickly. Mike was a farmer on the South Branch of the Potomac in Pendleton County. Quiet, wise, generous, independent-minded, he had the best virtues of an agricultural family and was a farseeing steward of the land. We can see his spirit refracted through his children and our grandson, but we can't see him, and right now it is the loss that is uppermost in our minds.