

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
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The Highlands Voice

The Monthly publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Volume 38

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April, 2005

WEST VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT AT THE LEGISLATURE

By Donald S. Garvin, Jr., WVEC Legislative Coordinator

Study of Mercury Pollution

The presence of toxic mercury in West Virginia rivers and streams may have been the most important environmental issue dealt with during the 2006 Session of the West Virginia Legislature.

Humans are exposed to mercury primarily through eating fish. In the United States, mercury contamination is so pervasive that at least 45 state health departments have issued fish consumption advisories – West Virginia has issued a fish consumption advisory for EVERY stream in the state.

Mercury is a highly toxic substance and bioaccumulates in the food chain. Exposure in the womb can cause severe effects in fetuses and children such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, deafness, and blindness. Exposure has also been linked to cardiovascular effects in adults and children, heart attacks in adult men, an increased risk of breast cancer in women, blood pressure problems and heart-rate irregularities in exposed chil-

dren and adults, and the potential to affect the immune system.

While United States Environmental Protection Agency has set a daily consumption reference dose for mercury, there is no evidence of a safe level given that health effects have been demonstrated at exposures below the reference dose.

Coal burning electric power plants are the largest unregulated source of mercury in the nation. EPA found in 2000 that “mercury (from coal-fired power plants) is both a public health concern and a concern for the environment.

Since the regulation of mercury obviously involves the politics of coal, readers of the Voice would not be surprised that West Virginia’s Department of Environmental Protection proposed a rule for regulating mercury air emissions that adopts a Bush Administration EPA mercury “Cap and Trade” rule that actually delays any specific action to reduce mercury until after 2010, and will not result in adequate reductions in emis-

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Visit us on the web at www.wvhighlands.org

From the Heart of the Highlands
by Hugh Rogers

Coal's Road

This just in from the Helvetia road in western Randolph County: "The guy with the scales showed up on Tuesday. We knew he was around when we saw six or seven loaded coal trucks parked along the road. The drivers were nowhere in sight."

The road from Mill Creek up to Helvetia has a certain notoriety even outside the county. Twenty years ago, when our school board voted to "consolidate" the K-through-12 Pickens School into schools in the Tygarts Valley, the Pickens-Helvetia community, aided by parents from other rural schools, carried the fight to Charleston—and won. If you have paid any attention to the long-running school-closure wars, you know how rare such a victory must be. A main reason that the state school board overruled the county board was the road that school buses had to use.

At least one member of the state board drove up to see how bad it was. Reportedly, he was terrified.

Some things have changed since then. Miles of guardrail were installed, which made the road safer but narrower. The Carter-Roag mine closed and then, about fifteen months ago, reopened. As the price of coal has risen, coal has moved back north. Another mine opened at Long Run, nineteen miles away. Coal truck traffic descending from the two mines to the preparation plant at Star Bridge, on the Left Fork of the Buckhannon River, is heavy in both senses. I haven't driven the road for a couple of years, but friends tell me it's worse than ever. Travelers to the recent Maple Syrup Festival in Pickens were shocked by its condition. And in the past fifteen months, there have been four accidents on the road involving coal-hauling tractor-trailers.

So there has been some agitation to fix the road and enforce truck weight limits. But here's what happens wherever coal is mined and carried over public highways. As soon as a weight-enforcement officer is spotted, word goes out on CB's and cell phones and any trucker who's running heavy pulls over and jumps out from behind the wheel. Overloaded trucks stranded between their origin and their destination are not considered prima facie evidence of weight-limit violations. They could be stationary transfer containers. Or they could have got caught in a freak downpour of coal. Maybe their drivers were abducted by little green men.

Some rules of this game were changed by the Legislature in 2002 and 2003. The weight limit for trucks was set at 80,000 pounds but could go as high as 120,000 (plus a 5% leeway) on a "Coal Resource Transportation System" to be designated in certain counties in the southern part of the state.

People who use the Helvetia road knew about the 80,000 pounds. Some in the community thought the new higher limit was what had ruined the road. Others figured the limit must be regularly violated: only that could explain the road's deterioration. Loaded trucks temporarily abandoned beside the road seemed like prima facie evidence to them.

Either way, they wanted the road fixed. They didn't imagine it could get worse.

In late February, United Coal, Carter-Roag's parent company, petitioned to have nineteen miles of Randolph County routes 34, 35, and 46 designated as part of the Coal Resource Transportation System. The Division of Highways quickly completed a preliminary evaluation. In their judgment, the necessary improvements to allow the larger

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Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

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Mining Matters

LEGAL BATTLE AGAINST MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL MINING GOES ON

By Cindy Rank

Two more chapters in the ongoing saga of our battle with the Army Corps of Engineers are being written as this issue of the VOICE goes to press.

One involves litigation filed by the WV Highlands Conservancy, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and Coal River Mountain Watch now being considered in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District West Virginia.

In that case, United States District Court judge Robert Chambers is being asked to force the Corps of Engineers to conduct broad environmental impact studies on every application for a new mountaintop removal permit.

Lawyers for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and other groups [the WV Highlands Conservancy and Coal River Mountain Watch] specifically targeted permits for three Massey Energy operations based in Boone, Kanawha and Logan counties.

The case is a follow-up to a previous ruling by United States District Court Judge Joseph Goodwin blocking the Corps from reviewing valley fill proposals through a streamlined "general permit" process.

In the new case, the environmentalists argue that the corps was wrong to approve mining operations through more detailed "individual permit" reviews because those reviews did not include a study called an Environmental Impact Statement.

"The mining and valley fills at these three mines collectively will destroy over 2,000 acres of land and smother over seven miles of streams," the lawyers said in the court papers. "Yet, the corps has neglected to examine in a meaningful way the inevitable damage that will be caused by these mines, or to develop any realistic plan for mitigating that damage."

The other follows from an earlier chapter in *Bragg v Robinson* (1998-99).

One outcome of the Bragg case was a commitment by Hobet Coal (a subsidiary of Arch Coal) to revise its permit for the Spruce #1 mine in Blair West Virginia. Originally proposed for 3113 acres – or nearly 5 square miles – Spruce was the largest mining permit ever applied for in West Virginia.

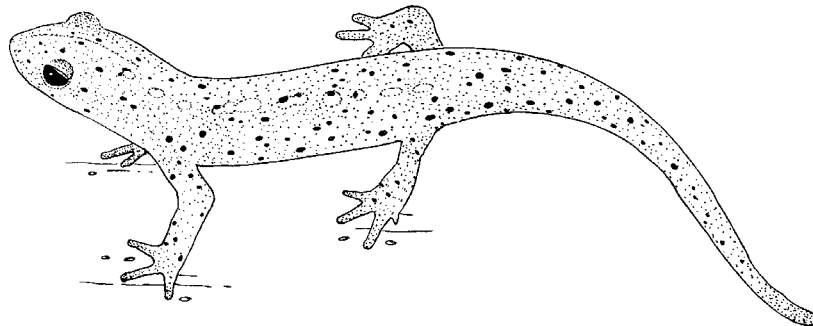
The Corps has just released a long awaited Draft Environmental Impact Study for the giant Spruce #1 mine. The announcement appeared in the March 31st Federal Register. A public hearing is scheduled for May 1st and comments are due by May 15th.

The total number of acres has been reduced to 2,278 acres, and the main fill in Pigeonroost hollow no longer extends as close to the Weekly family's doorstep. But the permit still includes 6-8 (depending on what part of the narrative you read) valley fills that will bury and otherwise impact significant portions of Pigeonroost Branch, Oldhouse Branch, and the Right Fork of Seng Camp Creek – all tributaries to Spruce Fork of the Little Coal River.

A cursory glance at this 450 page DEIS document and its numerous attachments and exhibits gives me little assurance that it is any more than a restatement of the inadequate proposal offered for review at a public meeting at Chief Logan State Park in May of 2001.

According to the Federal Register Notice, Copies of the Draft EIS (in CD format) may be obtained by contacting USACE Huntington District Regulatory Branch at 304-399-5210 or 304-399-5710.

Copies are also to be at the Blair Post Office, the Kanawha County Public Library in Charleston and the Logan County Public Library in Logan, WV.



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The *Highlands Voice* is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer use 100% post consumer recycled paper when available.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy web page is www.wvhighlands.org.

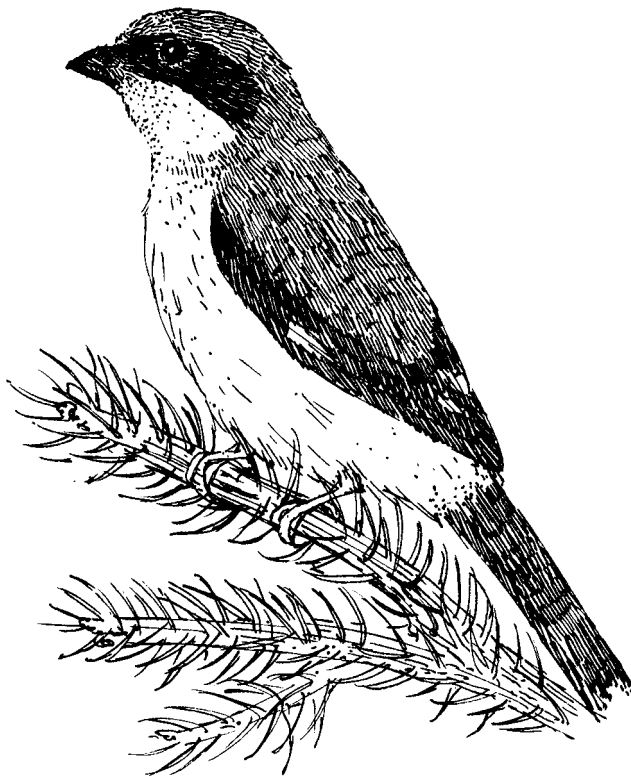
The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as a tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Its bylaws describe its purpose:

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.

GREENBRIER COUNTY GROUP OPPOSES WINDFARM

By David Buhrman

We like to say "Give people energy and they will use it. Teach people about energy and they will use it wisely." Mountain Communities for Responsible Energy is an all volunteer group of Greenbrier County citizens who simply want their neighbors to know that giant wind turbines installed on miles and miles of West Virginia's ridgelines will seriously impact the heritage views that have made our state a major tourist destination. Building them will demand new permanent roadways



capable of handling 100-ton loads, trucks transporting turbine blades 135 feet long, thousands of yards of concrete for foundations, etc. Documented construction of a ridgeline facility is at: <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~hills/cc/gallery/index.htm#photos>

One look at this website and you will never again think wind turbine construction on ridgelines is good for the environment.

Beech Ridge Developers say one benefit of the wind factory will be conservation of oil. That is blatantly misleading because only 3% of all US oil consumption makes electricity. Five-sixths of that usage is tarry residual oil or coal-like petroleum coke-both otherwise almost useless byproducts of refining. So, only 0.4% of US oil is distilled products made into electricity.

The majority of electricity generation in this country comes from burning coal.

Requiring scrubbers and precipitators on dirty power plants could be the most cost-effective and environmentally beneficial strategy to reduce air pollution in our area. The Mt. Storm plant now serves as a national model for how affordable technology can bring about dramatic improvements in air quality. From 1995 to 2003 the cumulative annual emission levels of NOx, SOx, and

even CO2 actually declined from power plants operating within the Mid-Atlantic Region despite an increase in their combined electricity generation of about 15% over this period. <http://uspirg.org/uspig.asp?id2=15501&id3=USPIRG&>

Look up the Canadian study done for Prince Edward County at: http://www.aandc.org/research/wind_pec_present.html. The study notes the British Dept. of Trade estimates a modern wind turbine saves about 0.078 tons of CO2 emissions/hour. However, a single 18 wheel truck traveling at 60mph produces 0.08 tons CO2 emissions per hour! Given the uncontrolled growth of road traffic, the erecting of turbines may be seen as a futile exercise. How many turbines would we have to build each year merely to keep pace with traffic growth? Are CO2 emissions from transportation a problem? Absolutely, but don't be fooled into thinking wind turbines will have much effect whatsoever in addressing this problem.

The Beech Ridge Developers say the existing Mountaineer Project in Tucker Co. hasn't destroyed anyone's life. Look in the March 3rd, 2005 issue of the Pendleton Co. Times and you can read the story of one resident who says their entire quality of life has indeed been destroyed.

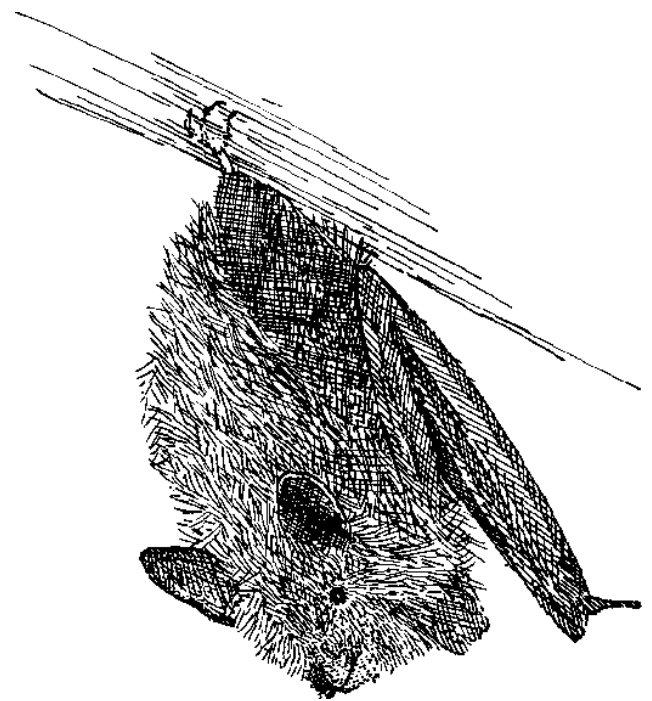
Unobstructed ridgelines sloping down to picturesque valleys have been the selling point for tourists and second home builders in Greenbrier County for a long time. Documented studies from Scotland reveal that tourism and property values are significantly harmed when 400' foot tall industrial wind turbines are built: <http://www.viewsofscotland.org/library/tourism.php> In news from Highland County, Virginia where a much smaller wind turbine facility has been proposed, Brian Richardson reported that real estate transactions for a recent five-month period dropped by over 50% from the same five months a year earlier. This strongly supports anecdotal reports from realtors and others that interest in buying property or building there has fallen off substantially. <http://johnrsweet.com/Personal/Wind/index.html>

Beech Ridge Developers would have you believe the turbines will be built in an area too degraded to have ecological value. While it's true that numerous mining spoils and clear cuts exist in the region, they primarily occur adjacent to the ridge tops where turbines will be constructed. Aerial photos actually show a very large percentage of the area where they are likely to put turbines has relatively mature forest and has not been heavily cut over. The destruction of hundreds of acres of forest habitat, as well as the fifteen miles of clear cut ridge tops and extra wide roads necessary for this project, has the hunting community very concerned.

If built, Beech Ridge developers will recover \$200 million of their \$300 million dollar investment thru tax breaks. Our state, that already

exports 70% of its electricity will have lost some of the "wild and wonderful" flavor it has so successfully been marketing to tourists. And for what? Peak electricity demands occur on hot still summer days when the wind doesn't blow. "Mountaineer" facility in Tucker County averages only 10% efficiency during the month of August. Industrializing Greenbrier County's ridge tops for inefficient and environmentally degrading wind power projects defies logic.

All of this is a financial boon for developers and a boondoggle for you due to higher tax and electric bills for an energy source that is about as effective in fighting global warming as a garden hose would be in dousing a 10,000 acre forest fire! It's time to tell the truth. There is no silver bullet for halting global warming. The two primary causes of greenhouse gasses, coal for electricity and oil/gas for transportation, are and will be a part of our lives for the foreseeable future. We should be focusing on how to make them both cleaner. Don't simply accept what the wind developers say because it's what you want to hear. Demand that they support their statements with real world facts. The integrity of our environment is not only a source



of pride; it is also critical to our economic well being. It makes no sense to sacrifice who we are and what we have.

Visit: www.wvmcre.org to stay informed on opposition to the Beech Ridge Wind Project in Greenbrier County.

MORE ABOUT THE LEGISLATURE (Continued from p. 1)

sions of mercury from coal-fired power plants to protect public health until 2018.

It should also not be a surprise that our state's coal-driven legislature adopted the DEP rule. But in an unusual moment of legislative sanity, they added an amendment to the rule that requires DEP and the Bureau of Public Health to conduct a study of the potential human health risk from mercury; DEP is also required to examine the availability and cost of technologies to limit mercury emissions.

So, while the legislature has allowed DEP to implement the weak air rule for mercury later this year, DEP and the Bureau of Public Health are required to report the results of their studies to the legislature next year. Given the politics of coal in West Virginia, this can only be seen as a major victory for the environment.

Well, how else did environmental issues fare in the 2006 legislative session? It was pretty much a mixed bag, marked mainly by what was not done.

Anti-Wilderness Resolution Fails

Voice readers will certainly be glad to know that the Senate refused to consider another "Anti-Wilderness" resolution. Senator Karen Facemyer (R – Jackson County) once again proposed a terrible resolution urging the U.S. Forest Service not to propose any new wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest. Due to pressure from lots of phone calls and e-mail messages made especially by members of the groups that comprise the WV Wilderness Coalition, the resolution was not taken up by committee.

Lower Taxes for Timber Industry

However, the timber industry was successful in getting the legislature to reduce the already-minimal severance tax on timber harvesting. This is the money that funds the State Division of Forestry, and state foresters are currently complaining that they are underpaid and understaffed. Governor Manchin must not agree, because he signed the bill reducing the tax.

Ban on Sludge Impoundments Goes Nowhere

The West Virginia Environmental Council was successful in getting a bill drafted and introduced that called for a ban on the construction of new coal sludge impoundments as well as the underground injection of sludge, and also called for the use of alternative disposal methods for this waste. However, we were unable to move the bill beyond introduction. We were also successful in getting study resolutions re-

garding coal sludge impoundments introduced in both houses, but we were likewise unable to get the resolutions moved for consideration by Senate and House rules committees.

Public Health Assessments on New Rules Can't Get Going



WVEC was also successful in getting a bill drafted and introduced that would have required the Department of Health and Human Resources to prepare a "Public Health Impact Assessment" on any new rule proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection, and would have required that DEP consider these assessments in its rulemaking process. The bill was never taken up by committee.

Plan for Developing Comprehensive Energy Plan Scalded to Death by the Steam

WVEC also assisted in drafting a bill that would have combined existing staff and funding from the Department of Commerce and the Development Office into a new Division of Energy, as a support mechanism for the Public Energy Authority. The bill would have enabled PEA to develop a comprehensive energy plan for the state, including a renewable energy portfolio with a significant emphasis on renewable energy initiatives. The bill passed the Senate, and then died a disgraceful death in the House.

This and That

Likewise, the legislature refused to advance legislation that would have: established

a voluntary program for industry to measure and report "greenhouse gas" emissions; banned the construction and permitting of windfarms until additional permitting procedures are developed by the Public Service Commission; studied the creation of a "High Allegheny" national park; established a deposit and refund system for beverage containers (the "Bottle Bill"); and established a system for public financing of election campaigns ("Clean Elections").

More on the Neverending Saga of Stream Antidegradation Rules

However, the legislature did pass one piece of legislation that will no doubt heighten the environmental debate in the 2007 legislative session. They passed a bill that "clarifies" that the presumptive list of Tier 2.5 streams established in the Antidegradation Rule must come back to the legislature for final approval. Even though DEP believes the list did not have to be reconsidered by the legislature, the bill passed both houses and has been signed by the governor.

This bill alone insures that next year's legislative session will be a raucous one.

Lobby Team Lives to Fight Another Year

Finally, on behalf of the entire West Virginia Environmental Council lobby team, I want to take this opportunity to thank the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy for the strong support you have given us over the years. Without that support there would not be a voice for the environment at the West Virginia legislature.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get free 1 (Heart) Mountains bumper sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to provide bumper stickers to their customers/members may have them free—if they can afford a donation that will be gratefully accepted. Cost to WVHC of printing and mailing is \$.25 per sticker.

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 1 [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, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE 'SPRING' FORWARD AT —

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's Annual Spring Review Weekend

Friday, April 28th, Saturday April 29th and Sunday, April 30th

To be held at: OPOSSUM CREEK RETREAT

Near Fayetteville, WVA

Weekend Theme: "Beauty and the Beast" The beautiful mountains of Southern West Virginia will surround us, such as in the New River Gorge and the Gauley River National Recreation Area. But not far away, mountaintop coal removal has destroyed creeks, hollows and communities, irrevocably altering the environment. The contrast should make us all pause to appreciate what we have and advocate to restore what is being taken away.

Friday: 9:00 AM Trip to Kayford Mountain, site of mountaintop coal removal (advance notice required)
4:00-10:00 Arrival and welcome at the "The Meadows". Meet the Highlands Conservancy board members and each other. Light food and drink will cheer you after your journey. Enjoy the campfire and plan your weekend.

Sat: 8-4 Day trips: 8:00 AM **Trip to Kayford Mountain**; meet the people who live with mountaintop removal..
9:00 **Outing to the New River Gorge**; learn about the controversial development plans for the area and enjoy the beautiful scenery. A limited number of digital cameras will be available (you are free to bring your own) to photograph the day's events. Slide shows can be compiled to show in the late afternoon and early evening.

Short takes: **Bird watching program, with Geoff**, at Opossum Creek Retreat. Birds are early risers, so watching will commence at 6:00 a.m. You can join the group at any time.

Sam Norris, WVDNR, will do a **wild plant walk**..

Dr. Ray Canterbury will be on hand to discuss his studies of the **Golden Winged Warbler** and the effect of windmills on birds.

Rose Sullivan will do a nature printing workshop in the afternoon

4-6PM A showing of the **award winning film "Mucked"** by West Virginia film maker Robert Gates. This film graphically describes the effect of MTR on people and

A slide show by West Virginia photographer Jonath Jessup.

6PM Dinner

7:30-8:30P Discussions based on the day's trips will include an overview of mountaintop removal's current status (literally—aerial maps of the coal counties are available)

Lorrie Sprague of the National Park Service will share the National Park Service's view of local development and other planning issues in the area.

8:30-? Entertainment and music to round out the evening.

Sunday: Breakfast 7:45-8:45
WVHC Board of Directors Meeting 9:00-4:00
Hikes and other outings will be available.

HOW TO GET THERE

From I-64/I-77: Take exit 48 onto U.S. Rt. 19. Go north to Ames Heights Road.

From I-79: Take Exit 57 to U.S. Rt. 19 (toward Beckley). Go south on Rt. 19, past Summersville, to Ames Heights Road.

Ames Heights Road: About one half mile north of the New River Gorge Bridge on U.S. Rt. 19 is Ames Heights Road. Take Ames Heights Road about 7/10 of a mile to a fork. Take the right branch (Opossum Creek Road) and go 1.5 miles to Graydon Baptist Church. Turn left just before Graydon Baptist Church. Go 3/10 of a mile. You will see a white mail box on your right and our entrance on the left. Follow the dirt road through the woods. The larger building is The Meadows. The Cabins surround it but are in the woods and not clearly visible.

Phone: 304 574-4836 or 1-888-4884836

PLENTY TO EAT AND A WARM PLACE TO SLEEP

Food and Lodging Arrangements for the Spring Review

Lodging: There are a limited number of rooms available at the Opossum Creek Retreat cabins. The cost is approximately \$20-32/night/per person depending on room type. There is space for a few tents.

To reserve: email Marilyn Shoenfeld (mshoenfeld@mountain.net)

Other nearby housing will be available if Opossum Creek is filled.

Meals: Friday night—snacks and beverages, no charge

Saturday breakfast

Saturday box lunches

Saturday dinner

Sunday breakfast

Prices for meals have not yet been fixed but will be in the range of \$7.00. Saturday dinner will be \$20.00 or less. BYOB

For more information, contact Marilyn Shoenfeld (304-866-3484) mshoenfeld@mountain.net

or Barbara Weaner (304-478-2123) sweaner@planetwv.com

Please check our website at www.wvhighlands.org

More from President Hugh (Continued from p. 2)

sixty-ton trucks on the road—widening, resurfacing, bridge strengthening—would cost \$3.8 million, plus additional funds for increased annual maintenance.

\$3.8 million would barely cover repairs to the road as it is. This is a road where, in many places, two trucks cannot pass abreast but a Honda could disappear.

Our experience with Corridor H has taught us to be skeptical about Division of Highways estimates. The four-lane highway that was supposed to cost \$10 million per mile actually cost close to \$20 million, and that was for work done five years ago. It's gone up since then. When politically powerful interests are involved, double the estimate.

The coal company's application to designate the nineteen miles between the two mines as "special coal haulage roads" will be considered by a brand-new body, the Coal Resource Transportation Designation Committee. The Legislature had so many requests to extend the so-called Coal Resource Transportation System from the southern counties named in the law that it said, We need somebody to process all this.

The committee has five members, who represent (1) the commissioner of highways, (2) the state police, (3) the coal industry, (4) the mine workers, and (5) the largest citizen action group. Julie Archer, from the West Virginia Citizen Action Group, has been appointed by the governor, has attended the first two meetings, and has helped me understand the rules.

The law requires a public hearing on the application in Randolph County. That could happen in May or June. I expect the public will raise hell. Twenty years ago the community rallied against a proposal to greatly increase the road's use by school buses. Buses use the road now, for both short and long trips, but it's not only school children who are at risk. Everyone is at risk. That includes the "independent contractors" who transport the coal, whose contracts reward speeding and overloading. Some of those drivers live in the community. They know the dangers.





West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

GET TO KNOW: Spice Run Proposed Wilderness Area

The following information is brought to you courtesy of the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition. For more information, see www.wild.org.

This wild area is one of 13 recommended for Wilderness designation by The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition. Its 7,254 acres are located in the Greenbrier watershed of Greenbrier and Pocahontas counties. With an elevation range of 2,000 to 3,284 feet and dominant vegetation of mixed oaks, it rises from the Greenbrier River on its western boundary, and is named for Spice Run, which is also the boundary between Pocahontas and Greenbrier Counties. The area is bounded on the north by Calvin Price State Forest, on the east by County Road 21 and private land, and on the south by roads up Little Creek. It contains the watersheds of Spice, Davy and Kincaid Runs, all native brook trout streams which drain into the Greenbrier River.

If designated, Spice Run would be one of the most remote wilderness areas in West Virginia. Access is by rough jeep road on the west, by canoe or kayak on the Greenbrier River, or by fording the Greenbrier on foot from the Greenbrier River Trail, which can only be done during normal to lower flows. There are no marked trails within the area, just a jeep trail along Spice Ridge, which separates Spice Run from Calvin Price State Forest, and another coming in from the south to Slab Camp Mountain. In their Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS) analysis for Spice Run, the U.S. Forest Service reported that the area had high potential for wilderness experience. It was found to have very strong opportunities to provide solitude and primitive recreation. Spice Run's wilderness attributes were among the highest of all areas evaluated in the WARS process.

Across the Greenbrier River, the logging town of Spice Run was located next to the railroad, which is now the Greenbrier River Trail. Here the timber was hauled out by the Spice Run Lumber Co. at the turn of the last century. Pillars from a bridge spanning the Greenbrier still stand in the river. The forest has grown back, and the wildlife has returned, making this a great place to hunt or hike for the adventurous explorer who needs no trail to keep from getting lost.

If you'd like to get to know Spice Run, be sure to check the list of outings in this issue, and sign up for one or more of three hikes Frank Gifford is offering in the area in May. For detailed maps of the area, see the Denmar and Droop USGS Topographic Maps, or stop by www.friendsofthemon.org and Explore.



Photo © Jonathan Jessup

Jonathan Jessup Has a New Website!

Great news for those of us who already know and appreciate Jonathan Jessup's nature photography, and for those of us who have yet to experience the pleasure: Jonathan's new website has made its debut.

The site includes galleries with hundreds of photographs and forums where users can communicate with each other and with Jonathan. His is an absolutely stunning body of work that bears witness to the glory of West Virginia and the Monongahela National Forest as well as other natural areas in the eastern United States. There are no words to describe the scope and beauty of his photographs. You simply must see them for yourself.

The artist has been a tireless supporter of both the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, and his photographs appear regularly in the Highlands Voice. Although Jonathan makes this incredible visual bounty available to all free of charge through his website, his work is supported entirely by donations, and he needs your support to continue to share his photography.

Treat yourself to a visit to his site:
www.jonathanjessup.com



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

CALL FOR TRAIL MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

Those of us who use the Monongahela National Forest need no convincing. We know that its quiet beauty is precious and irreplaceable. It gives us so much: a sense of wonder, solitude, spiritual renewal, and a refuge from the pressures of a world that sometimes moves too fast. The Mon's wild beauty provides visitors with an abundance of gifts, offering opportunities for everything from exhilarating recreation to quiet contemplation.

The United States Forest Service, which manages our National Forest, has a wide array of responsibilities. There are over 800 miles of trail on the Mon, and the USFS is charged with keeping them all passable. We'd like to help.

As part of our *We're Friends of the Mon!* initiative, we will be organizing trail maintenance volunteers who are ready, willing and able to give back to the Forest. Our focus will be on Wilderness areas. We want to hear from any of our readers who have experience in trail maintenance as well as any who'd like to learn how it's done.

In addition to signing up a pool of recruits for this ambitious undertaking, we'd like to identify area leaders for each of the existing and proposed Wilderness areas. The leaders will assist us with coordinating a spring inventory of trail conditions and providing maintenance outings. *We're Friends of the Mon!* will provide leaders with support in the form of volunteer recruitment, trail maintenance information and maps, report sheets, and publicity for trail maintenance events. We'll work with Forest Service personnel to provide you with information on current trail conditions and maintenance priorities.

The five existing Wilderness areas are:

Cranberry: 9 trails, 65 miles

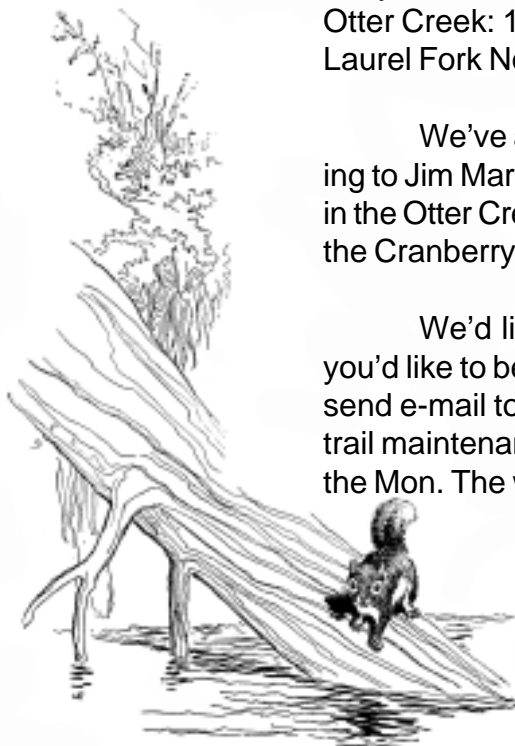
Dolly Sods: 9 trails, 25 miles

Otter Creek: 11 trails, 45 miles

Laurel Fork North & South: 7 trails, 25 miles

We've already heard from the Forest Service regarding their need for trailwork. According to Jim Markley, from the Cheat Office, the Big Springs Gap - Turkey Run - Moore Run Trails in the Otter Creek Wilderness need attention, and Brandon Harden of the Gauley District tells us the Cranberry Wilderness needs a great deal of tread work.

We'd like to have your input, so please share your ideas, questions and concerns. If you'd like to be an area leader, or you'd like to sign up as a trail maintenance volunteer, please send e-mail to dee.quaranto@gmail.com. Please indicate whether you have experience with trail maintenance or are a beginner, and whether you are interested in any particular areas on the Mon. The weather is turning and the trail is calling. Let's get out there and give back.





West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest



Mountain Odyssey - Outings, Education and Beyond

If you'd like to join us for any of these outings, please sign up with the hike leader, who can give you more information. Their initials appear after each listing; contact information is at the bottom of the listings. If you'd like to lead an outing, please send an e-mail with description to: dee.quaranto@gmail.com. We may update our outings before your next issue of the *Highlands Voice* arrives, so be sure to see our new website www.friendsofthemon.org for up-to-the-minute information.

Open Dates: Visit Kayford Mountain South of Charleston 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 lunch for a picnic on Larry's mountain. Call ahead to schedule. JM, LG

May 6: Proposed Spice Run Wilderness Area Hike Four easy to moderate miles with some uneven footing, bushwhacking, and easy stream crossings. We'll hike to a beautiful remote area in the heart of the proposed Wilderness, stop for lunch and have time for lounging or further exploration before hiking back out. FG

May 12: Proposed Spice Run Wilderness Area Strenuous hike of 12 to 16 miles will require fording the Greenbrier River, or hiking four miles along Slab Camp Mountain to reach the Wilderness Area, depending upon water levels in the Greenbrier. Itinerary depends upon access route. This is an extremely remote area that is seldom visited by humans. FG

May 20-21: Proposed Spice Run Wilderness Area Backpack in via ford of Greenbrier or, if river levels prevent fording, hiking along Slab Camp Mountain; camp along Davy Run. Explore, hike back out - an extremely remote area seldom visited by humans. FG



Northern Goshawk

May 21: Proposed Cranberry Wilderness Addition Day Hike A day-long serious hike through the 12,000 acres being proposed as an addition to the Cranberry Wilderness. Strenuous climbs, stream crossings and maybe some bushwhacking. DS

May 27-29 (Memorial Day Weekend) Canaan Mountain Backpack Hike approximately 30 mostly moderate miles through mature hardwood and evergreen forests; approximately 4 miles of road walking and astounding views from Table Rock and Libby Point. MJ

June 3: Otter Creek Hike An easy hike down Big Spring Trail to Otter Creek and 4 miles out the lower end. Meet at Sheetz in Parsons at 11 AM, return at 5 PM. Bring lunch. You may fish a little. DG

June 24-25: Spruce Knob Backpack Explore abandoned Spruce Mountain trail and railroad grades, encountering vistas of the Seneca Creek backcountry. Basecamp in Camp 4 Low Place. Approximately 700 foot elevation gain/loss with 12-

17 moderate miles. SB

June 24-26: Cranberry Wilderness Backpack Day 1: Backpack in about 7 miles on Big Beechy Trail; set up a base camp on. Day 2: A 10+ mile slackpack through the Wilderness. Day 3: Hike out about 8 miles along scenic Middle Fork of the Williams River. MJ

July 8: Stocking Fingerling Trout Meet at Bergoo on the Elk River 5 miles above Webster Springs at 11 AM. Hike up along the beautiful Right Fork of Leatherwood for 1&1/2 miles and return. Out at 5 PM. Bring lunch. Fairly easy. DG

July 9: Mount Porte Crayon Day Hike Celebrate the 65th anniversary of the dedication of this mountain in honor of David Hunter Strouther,

who, under the pen name Porte Crayon, was one of the earliest explorers to write about his adventures in the West Virginia Highlands. A long, strenuous hike including considerable bushwhacking. DS

July 30: Sinks of Gandy Caving Trip A beginners spelunking trip where Gandy Creek plunges for a mile-long meander beneath Yokum Knob. We'll also visit nearby Stillhouse Cave. Helmets and 3 light sources required. DS

August 5: Flatwater Float on 6-Mile Pool in Buckhannon River Bring canoe, life jacket and lunch. Meet at Sheetz in Buckhannon at 11 AM, take out at 4 PM. Just show up, or call if you wish. DG

August 19-20: Big Run Waterfall Hike/Bushwhack, MNF Olson Tower Area Explore a stream closeup and personal: hike and "stream-whack" along Big Run's waterfalls, cascades and dunking holes. Moderate/strenuous: 7 miles Saturday, 5 miles Sunday. Previous bushwhacking experience a must. Basecamp in MNF. SB

August 26: Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Mountain Overlook Hike Experience seldom-seen northern portions of the Refuge on a fairly easy 7 mile hike. The Highlands Conservancy has adopted part of this route; we may do some light trail maintenance as we hike. DS

August 26-28: Otter Creek Wilderness, MNF Backpack Moderate. Day 1: Backpack in on Otter Creek, Yellow Creek, McGowan Mt and Moore's Run Trails, visiting bogs before descending to camp. Day 2: Slack pack on Possession Camp, Green Mt. and Otter Creek Trails, exploring falls and pools on return. Day 3: An easy 5 miles out. MJ

September 16 & 17: Roaring Plains, MNF Backpack Tour one of the most spectacular areas of the Mon, the proposed Roaring Plains Wilderness area. A serious overnight trip covering many miles. DS

September 16-18: Dolly Sods North and Dolly Sods Wilderness, MNF Backpack Approximately 30 miles of hiking through Dolly Sods: Raven Ridge, Cabin Mountain, The Falls of Red Creek, Big and Little Stonecoal, The Lion's Head, The Forks and Dobbin Grade. MJ

September 29-October 1: Seneca Creek Backcountry, MNF Backpack Day 1: Arrive early if you like and car camp at primitive Spruce Knob Lake Campground. Day 2: Explore seldom - mentioned trails on the western flank of Allegheny Mountain before descending to camp below Seneca Falls. Day 3: Backpack up Seneca Creek. MJ

September (dates to be announced): Tree Planting in Canaan Valley We'll be planting Red Spruce on the Wildlife Refuge. DS

October 7-9: Cranberry Backcountry, MNF Backpack Hike approximately 30 miles through this scenic area. MJ

October 14 & 15: Red Spruce Cone Collecting A volunteer opportunity to collect red spruce cones for our red spruce ecosystem restoration project. DS

October 19-26: Highlands Conservancy's 41st Annual Fall Review We'll be at the historic Cheat Mountain Club for a whole week! Outings, workshops, music, special speakers, and more. Stay tuned!

Hike Leaders:

DG: Don Gasper (304) 472-3704

DS: Dave Saville (304) 284-9548; daves@labyrinth.net

FG: Frank Gifford (304) 653-4338; entropypawsed@yahoo.com

JM: Julian Martin (304) 342-8989; imaginemew@aol.com

LG: Larry Gibson (304) 586-3287; (304) 549-3287

MJ: Mike Juskelis (410) 439-4964; mjuskelis@cablespeed.com; see www.midatlantichikes.com for details and VA hikes not listed here

SB: Susan Bly (304) 876-5177 (day); (304) 258-3319 (7 - 9 PM); sbly@shepherd.edu

Volunteer for West Virginia Wilderness Campaign

YES! Count on my support and assistance for the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's efforts through the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition to achieve wilderness designation for unprotected wild places on the federal, public lands of West Virginia.

Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (O) _____ Email: _____

I prefer to be contacted via: mail email phone

I can help protect Wilderness by (check one or more):

- Hosting a 'Wild Mon' party at my house or local public gathering spot (We'll send you our video and other helpful materials)
- Distributing literature at public events
- Writing letters to the editor or opinion editorials for my local newspaper
- Coordinating a letter writing campaign in my community
- Phone calling to involve citizens in Coalition action
- Attending events/press conferences
- Leading Mountain Odyssey outing to proposed Wilderness areas
- Involving my organization in the campaign to protect wilderness
- Other (please describe): _____

I am interested in attending or learning more about:

- West Virginia Wilderness Workshop, June 2-4, 2006 at the Mountain Institute: a weekend workshop where you will learn skills to be an effective advocate for protecting National Forest land.
- West Virginia Lobby Week in Washington DC, late summer 2006: an opportunity to travel to DC to learn lobbying skills and then meet with West Virginia's Congressional Delegation about Wilderness legislation

Thank you for your support of Wilderness! Please mail this form back to:
Attn: Harrison Case, West Virginia Wilderness Coalition Outreach Coordinator, 635 Afton Street, Morgantown, WV 26505 Phone: 304-906-9317 Email: harrison_case@wvwild.org http://www.wvwild.org



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

West Virginia Wilderness Workshop

When: June 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2006

Where: The Mountain Institute (on Spruce Mountain near Spruce Knob)

Why: To learn how to protect additional Wilderness areas on the Mon National Forest, meet others interested in Wilderness and get involved in the campaign!

The **West Virginia Wilderness Coalition** cordially invites you to join us for a weekend of learning, strategy and fun. We have a great opportunity to protect special places on the Mon and many of you are responsible for the progress we've made so far! We'll be gathering atop Spruce Mountain on the campus of the **Mountain Institute** for workshops on grassroots organizing, working with the media and more. We'll also be conducting strategy sessions to plan the coming months of our Wilderness Campaign which we hope will lead to the introduction of legislation that will protect special places on the Mon. We have several local groups across the state organizing for wilderness protection and members of these groups will be in attendance as well. It will be an excellent opportunity to get plugged into the campaign.

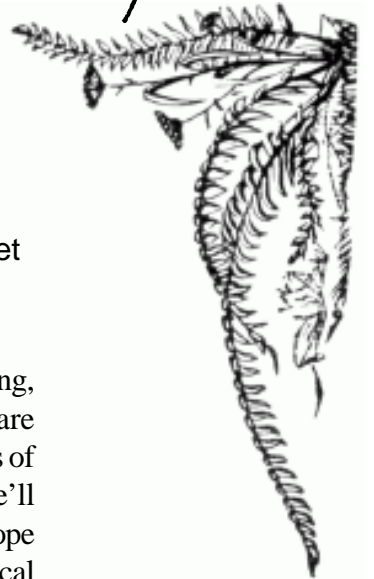
Activities will be kicking off Friday evening with speakers, a viewing of our Vision for a Wild Mon video and a blazing campfire. We'll get started Saturday morning at 10 am with a series of speakers who will provide some background info on WV Wilderness and bring us right up to the present. We'll break up into groups and have focused workshops on different skills that are crucial for being an effective activist in protecting wilderness in West Virginia. We'll end the session by working together to develop strategies for the coming months of our campaign, which will be focused on building support for the introduction and passage of a West Virginia Wilderness Bill. It will be a fun Saturday night with a delicious TMI dinner followed by live music and socializing. On Sunday, we'll take some time to bring things to a close and plan actions for the coming months. The rest of the day will be spent exploring the beautiful proposed Seneca Creek Wilderness Area, which is right up the road.

Since the Mountain Institute will be cooking up yummy meals for us, and because there is limited space, we'll need you to fill out a brief registration form if you are interested in joining us. The form on the next page can be clipped from this issue of the *Highlands Voice* or you may go to www.wvwild.org and submit your registration online. There is a registration fee of \$15 that will help defray the cost of meals and lodging at TMI. Please do not let this fee stop you from participating. If it would be a hardship, arrangements can be made!

The deadline for registration is May 22nd 2006 but we'd appreciate you doing it sooner!

To register after this deadline, you'll need to contact Harrison Case at 304-906-9317 (Harrison_case@wvwild.org) or Matt Keller at 304-864-5530 (matt.keller@wvwild.org).

I urge you to attend this important gathering of Wilderness advocates from all over the state. It is my hope that the weekend will be a pivotal moment in our campaign for the protection of these wild places we all hold so dear. There is much information on our website www.wvwild.org about the work we've done to date. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the workshop or the campaign in general, please do not hesitate to contact us. A more detailed agenda for the workshop is being drafted and will be sent out to folks interested in attending.





West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

Wilderness Workshop Registration Form

The deadline for registration is May 22nd, 2006.

Please fill out this form and send it back as soon as possible to confirm your registration. Please send a check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy for your \$15 conference fee (to help cover food and lodging) along with your registration form to:

West Virginia Wilderness Coalition
PO Box 6
Masontown, WV 26542

Please do not let the \$15 fee stop you from participating. Arrangements can be made if you this fee would be a hardship. This fee will only cover part of your food and lodging so additional donations are very much welcome.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Fax: _____

What organization(s) are you affiliated with? _____

Are you a vegetarian or do you have any other special dietary needs?

In case of emergency please contact:

Name: _____

Phone number: _____ Relation: _____

FULL CAMP: _____ Friday _____ Saturday

OR: I PREFER INDOOR LODGING:
_____ Friday _____ Saturday

Please check all meals you will eat during the workshop (we need a count before the event):

Saturday June 3rd

Sunday June 4th

Breakfast _____

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

The following is just to get an assessment of participants' level of knowledge and experience:

Have you seen the West Virginia Wilderness slide show? _____

Have you worked on West Virginia Wilderness issues before? _____

If so, how long, and in what capacity have you worked on this issue?

Registration Confirmation

By signing this form and returning it you pledge to attend the West Virginia Wilderness Workshop at the Mountain Institute, June 2-4, 2006 unless a personal or family emergency should arise. Please realize that a spot will be reserved for you and meals and lodging paid for in advance. If a situation arises and you need to cancel your registration, please notify us as soon as possible.

Signature _____

Date _____

Questions? Contact Matt Keller, (304)864-5530; matt.keller@wwild.org
Thank You!





West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

ACTION ALERT

As part of the Management Plan revision for the Monongahela National Forest, the Forest Service recently held a 90-day public comment period. An unprecedented 15,000 individuals submitted comments on the Draft proposals. Well over 90% of the comments supported Alternative 3, which recommends the most wilderness designations, instead of Alternative 2, the agency's preferred alternative, which rolls back protections for many of our wild places on the Mon.

Now its time for West Virginia's congressional delegation to act! **Please write a letter to your Representative and both Senators.** Encourage them to urge the Forest Service to recommend more Wilderness in their final plan and to introduce legislation that will permanently protect these special places. For more information, see:

www.wvild.org/get_involved_05.htm

Below are some talking points. Please remember: the more you personalize your letter and talk about your own experiences, the more effective it will be!

Ask your Representative and our Senators to:

—**Hold the Forest Service accountable** to the many thousands of people, an overwhelming majority, who formally commented in favor of Alternative 3 and the wilderness areas it recommends.

—**Please sponsor legislation that protects all of the deserving wild and wonderful places.** While the areas the Forest Service recommended in Alternative 2 are a good start, several others were neglected including Seneca Creek, parts of Roaring Plains, Big Draft, Spice Run, and East Fork of Greenbrier.

Let your elected officials know:

—**Wilderness areas are important for a variety of reasons including:**

1. Ensuring recreational opportunities are protected for future generations
2. Protecting important wildlife habitat as well as hunting and fishing rights
3. Protecting watersheds and therefore drinking water sources for nearby communities
4. Contributing greatly to our fast-growing tourism economy



CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES:

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
311 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3954
Fax: (202) 228-0002
E-mail via webform: byrd.senate.gov

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6472
Fax: (202) 224-7665
senator@rockefeller.senate.gov

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
2307 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3452
Fax (202) 225-9061
E-mail via webform: www.rahall.house.gov

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
2302 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4172
Fax: (202) 225-7564

The Honorable Shelley Moore-Capito
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2711
Fax: (202) 225-7856
E-mail via webform: capito.house.gov

COMMENT PERIOD FOR PROPOSED FOREST SALES EXTENDED

On March 29, Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey announced a one-month extension on the public comment period for the proposed sale of more than 300,000 acres of National Forest lands. While the Bush Administration claims that the sale is necessary to raise \$800 million to fund rural schools, the loss of forestlands would be permanent and the solution temporary. The plan has been roundly criticized by Republicans and Democrats all over the country and by four former heads of the United States Forest Service.

TAKE ACTION

The list of potentially eligible lands in West Virginia includes 36 parcels in four counties - a total of nearly 5,000 acres. See www.wvhighlands.org for a list of parcels and maps of areas that may be sold. Please take a moment and let the Forest Service know that you oppose selling national forestland. **Comments on the proposed land sale must be received by May 1** and may be sent by e-mail to SRS_Land_Sales@fs.fed.us. Written comments may be sent to: USDA Forest Service, SRS Comments, Lands 4S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Mailstop 1124, Washington, DC, 20250-0003. Send faxed comments to (202) 205-1604.



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

On the Mon

by Dave Saville

Many people aren't aware, or don't understand, that the Mon is managed by the Forest Service for "Multiple use." The legal framework for this management is laid out in the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act (MUSY). Logging, mineral extraction, grazing, wildlife management, recreation and watershed protection are all uses of National Forests the Forest Service must balance.

As part of our *We're Friends of the Mon!* program, we hope to better inform our members of the various projects taking place on the Mon and some of the many "special uses" occurring there. In this section of the Highlands Voice each month we will list some of these projects and special uses. We will include a few details about the action, who the responsible Forest Service officer is, and contact information where additional details can be obtained. Details of most of these projects can be found on the Forest Service's website at www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf. Follow the link to "Forest Planning."

Cherry River Logging - Environmental Assessment (EA) The comment period for this project ends April 20, 2006. The Cherry River project area is about 6,400 acres of Forest Service lands near Richwood in Nicholas County. This project will log as much as 1,700 acres in the area, construct up to 6 miles of new roads and reconstruct up to 2 miles of roads. The EA is available on the Forest Service website. For more information contact Jane Bard, project team leader, at the Gauley Ranger Station at 304-846-2695.

Blackwater Rail-Trail Special Use Permit - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) The comment period for this EIS ended in February and the Forest Service received over 5,000 comments opposed to the agency's plans to turn the rail-trail into a logging road. They have proposed allowing Allegheny Wood Products to use the public's portion of the trail to log Blackwater Canyon. The Highlands Conservancy submitted detailed comments opposing these plans and asking the Forest Service to re-do it's DEIS. Stay tuned as the saga on protecting Blackwater continues. Contact Bill Shields, NEPA Coordinator, at 304-636-1800 x 287

Grazing Opportunities The Forest Service is putting out for bid requests for grazing lands on the Mon. There are currently 8 allotments covering 457 acres in Pocahontas County, 2 allotments covering 175 acres in Randolph County and 2 allotments totaling 140 acres in Pendleton County up for auction. Contact Jeff Hammas 304-478-2000, or Rondi Fischer 304-799-4334

Cerulean Warbler Study This project would examine the response of Cerulean Warbler populations to 3-23 acre silvicultural treatments (logging) in Tucker County. Contact Terry Evans 304-478-2000x136

Middle Mountain Wildlife Stewardship Project This project would create 5 "savannahs" on Middle mountain in Pocahontas County. These are clear cuts made to create "wildlife habitat." The Forest Service says they are "critically needed." Contact Marlinton District Ranger Rondi Fischer or project leader Robert Stovall 304-799-4334

Gauley Mountain Mine Portal Closure Proposes to erect a "bat-friendly" barricade at the abandoned Rose Run coal mine portal on the West side of Gauley Mountain in Pocahontas County. The purpose is to block human entry for public safety reasons. Contact project leader Linda Tracy 304-636-1800x275

Laricobious Beetle Release This project would release predatory beetles to combat hemlock woolly adelgid in 2 locations. One near Lake Sherwood in Greenbrier County and another near Pocahontas Campground in Pocahontas County. Contact Richard Turcotte 304-285-1544

Williams River Bridge Replacement This project proposes to replace the single lane bridge at Three Forks with a new 2-lane structure. Contact Robert Stovall Acting Gauley District Ranger, 304-846-2695

Abandoned Wells Plugging Project This project would cap 2 leaking, abandoned gas/oil wells, one in the Glady Fork River in Randolph County, the other in Seneca Creek in Pendleton County. Contact Linda Tracy 304-636-1800x275



MONONGAHELA FOREST HIKING GUIDE

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

Published by the
West Virginia
Highlands Conservancy

The 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

BROCHURES

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.

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.

Compact Disc version of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

WV Highlands Conservancy continues to bring its publications into the computer era with it latest innovation- the publication of the Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, **Allen Dehart, Bruce Sundquist**, 7th Edition, with maps and many other enhancements by WVHC contributor **Jim Solley**

This premier edition of MNF7, on computer disc, includes the text pages as they appear in the printed version of the 7th edition in an interactive pdf format. It also includes the following ancillary features, developed by a WVHC dedicated volunteer, and **not available anywhere else:**

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- All new, full color topographic maps have been created and are included on this CD. They include all points referenced in the text.

Special Features not found in the printed version of the Hiking Guide:

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- Trail mileages between waypoints have been added to the maps.
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Introductory free shipping & postage offer:

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To receive the latest in printable hiking trail descriptions and printable topographic trail maps send \$20.00 to:

Hiking Guide CD
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
P.O. Box 306
Charleston WV 25321

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, and XL. \$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

SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE IN LONG SLEEVE MODEL

We now have I [heart] Mountains long sleeve shirts in sizes S, 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

A TRIP TO TROUT POND

by Susan Bly

This outing was very well attended with 14 participants. The day was clear with sunny blue skies, but with a cold wind which was the only fly in our ointment. Trout Pond is a small jewel in the federal crown of properties with an improved campground, beach and lake nearby.

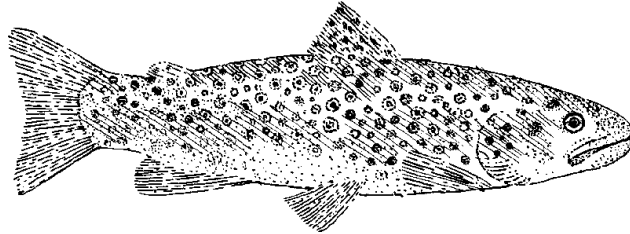
We began our hike by passing by Rockcliff Lake, gazing at the mountains across the way. After a small break at the dam, I led the group down the wrong side path, but quickly rectified that after a few wrong steps. Back up over that steep rock you just navigated there folks.

We proceeded along Chimney Rock trail and then up Long Mountain. We stopped occasionally to remove limbs from October's snowstorm which had fallen across the path. Easily removed. One hiker said that the Canaan Mountain area was hit pretty hard by the storm. He regaled us with a tale of climbing and crunching over dozens and dozens of downed limbs on the Mountainside and other trails. I have personally seen the "meltdowns" which consisted of fallen trees – roots and all – across the Blackwater Canyon rail trail. These trails need a lot of volunteer hours this year.

We took a nice break in a sunny meadow along the Long Mountain trail which is a wildlife clearing. This would be a prime area for camping and perhaps seeing wildlife as dusk falls. Some of the folks lay down in the warm dry grass to decrease their wind resis-

tance and stay warmer.

Temptation to remain was resisted and on we traveled up to SR671. Through the trees we could see Tibbet Knob and Big Schloss, two rock outcroppings which are popular and distinctive. We had lunch at an overlook along



the North Mountain trail, reveling in the views of distant Shenandoah National Park, Bryce Resort and the spine of Massanutten Mountain.

After lunch our group was getting cold so some decided to head on out. Unfortunately, misguided directions led this small group down the trail in the wrong direction. Jason, a fellow hiker, turned them around. They all earned Brownie points for puffing back up a hill after a 10 minute jaunt.

We went on down SR671 to intersect with the Trout Pond trail. We passed three more wildlife clearings before progressing down the ridge towards the Recreation Area. An Eagle Scout project called Lena's Overlook consists of a signboard which displays and identifies the ridges, mountains and other features for the ob-

server. Visibility was clear enough to show Roaring Plains and Spruce Knob clearly.

We descended to Trout Pond's campground and after a break, divided into two groups, the former to keep the original 8.5 miles and the latter to earn their Brownie points by going a total of 10 miles by completing the Trout Pond trail and reversing the original route around Rockcliff Lake to the cars.

All enjoyed a brisk spring hike and observing another small section of West by the grace of God, Virginia.

RED SPRUCE FOR SALE

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has red spruce seedlings for sale. These are trees grown from seeds we collected in Canaan Valley, West Virginia. Time is short. I need to have orders by April 20th at the latest.

2 year old plugs

\$2.75 each 10-49 + shipping

\$1.50 each 50-499 + shipping

\$0.85 each over 500. + shipping

For more information, or to place an order, contact Dave Saville at daves@labyrinth.net or 304-284-9548.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Memorial Day Weekend
May 26-29, 2006**

~JOIN US FOR~

Healing Mountains

The 16th annual Heartwood Forest Council and the 6th annual Summit for the Mountains

Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, WV (38 miles north of Charleston)

With programs on Forests, Mountains, and Coal: the connections between them; their impact on air, water, and climate; their role in our history, economy, and culture; with a special focus on ending the devastation of Mountaintop Removal coal mining

Invited and confirmed speakers include: Granny D*, Cynthia McKinney, David Orr*, Jack Spadaro*, Woody Harrelson, Judy Bonds, Maria Gunnoe*, Larry Gibson*, Willie Nelson, Bobbie Ann Mason, Erik Reece, Ed Wiley, and more. (*confirmed)

Details & registration coming soon.

Join Now !!!

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!

WIND ENERGY PROJECTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Linda Cooper, President
 Citizens for Responsible Wind Power

- **West Virginia still has no firm regulations and enforcement procedures related to industrial wind development**

- No state or federal statues regulate wind developments.
- WV PSC licenses them and has "siting" regulations that ask a lot of questions but set no standards.
- WV PSC has no provisions for enforcement after certifying a project.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service has "recommended" standards.

- **Bill introduced in WV Senate this year to impose moratorium on further construction until responsible rules and regulations in place.** Did not get out of Senate Judiciary Committee.

- **Overview of current operating, certified, or proposed industrial wind turbine projects** With no responsible rules or regulations in place, and our scenic mountains, local property owners, and the economies of local communities threatened, CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE WIND POWER, INC. and its associated local organizations are appealing PSC certificates, conducting law suits,

providing information, and doing everything we can think of to keep these turbine developments from being built.

See details and links at www.responsiblewind.org.

Still in need of something to read?

For a copy of an article on Health Effects of Wind Turbine Noise, e-mail Calvin Luther Martin at rushton@westelcom.com with your mailing address. For links to articles about the European experience with wind energy, go to <http://www.viewsofscotland.org/library/tourism.php>

WIND ENERGY PROJECTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

Owner or Developer	Status	Site Area	# 300-500 ft Turbines
<u>FPLEnergy</u> Mountaineer Wind Energy Backbone Mountain Tucker Co	Operating	6.9 sq. miles	44
<p>-Word is that on foggy mornings right now (spring migrations), birds and bats litter the ground under the turbines. Reported to United States Fish and Wildlife Service.</p> <p>-County still trying to get company to pay tax bill as mandated.</p>			
<u>NedPower/Shell</u> Mt Storm / Allegheny Front Grant County	Certified /construction pending -litigation underway -appealing with PSC	12.5 sq. miles	200
<p>-While Public Service Commission pre-construction conditions of certification have not been met, land prep activities—logging, core drilling, etc.--have been underway on construction site since Xmas. Complaints have been filed with PSC but no action from them. Survey stakes site turbines within ¼ mile or less of homes.</p> <p>-WV DEP water discharge permit was granted after above activities commenced and despite the fact that application included only 81 acres of whole project (area 1). Neither environmental considerations as required under NPDES or high potential for release of acid mine drainage during construction--not considered as part of water discharge permit. Citizens for Responsible Wind Power has appealed permit to CEQ.</p> <p>-Preparations for nuisance suit against company filed by local residents (1st in nation) continue. Exceedingly expensive but good experts/testimony/legal counsel available. Decrease in property values with project primary contention. NedPower/Shell has retained four top attorneys to help them. First hearing is 4/5 in Keyser—NedPower/Shell requesting dismissal.</p>			
<u>U. S. Wind Force</u> Mount Storm Grant County	Certified 8/29/02 -appealing with PSC	20 sq. miles	166
<p>Wind Force recently announced sale of production from this project. Although pre-construction license conditions have not been met, the company recently announced sale of production from project. Complaints filed with PSC but no action.</p>			
<u>US Wind Force</u> Liberty Gap Wind Force LLC Jack Mountain, Pendleton Co	Application filed -contesting with PSC	10 sq miles	50±
<p>Massive protest from local community to this project with PSC. Several local Intervenor, including Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County, Inc.(FOBPC). See their website for updating information [hushhushrush.com]. Motion to dismiss filed by company. Local PSC hearing likely before May 31, 2006. Full PSC certification proceedings to follow. Proposed project includes 12.75 miles of transmission lines.</p>			
<u>Invenergy</u> Beech Ridge Wind Farm Greenbrier County	Application filed -contesting with PSC	500 sq. miles	124±
<p>Awe-inspiring response from local residents protesting this project with PSC. As of 3/19/06 2,020 letter of protest received by PSC. Local intervenors including the local Mountain Communities for Responsible Energy (MCRE). For more update info, visit their website at: www.wvmcre.org. Local PSC hearing will be 1 pm and 7pm on 4/25/06 at state fairgrounds event center (2mi. south of Lewisburg) PSC certification proceedings to follow including evidentiary hearing scheduled for 5/11-12/06.</p>			

A Visit With the Conservancy's First President**FINDING TOM KING**

By Dave Elkinton

When he opened the front door, I saw the same twinkle in his eye, and felt the same warm hospitality that I remembered from the early 70's. It was Tom King, now 85, retired Bridgeport dentist, at home and ready for the questions of a Conservancy history buff. The daffodils were breaking out, it was a sunny day in the 70's, and it brought back for both of us the memory of those early West Virginia Spring days when a canoe on the car roof calls out for a fast-moving stream.

I had wondered a lot about Tom. As far as I knew, no one in the Conservancy had heard from him, or had any contact with him for decades. He had made his last appearance at the 1979 Mid-Winter Workshop at Jackson's Mill, where he joined first Voice Editor Bob Burrell, on a panel reflecting upon the first ten years since the incorporation of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Even Dave Saville's legendary database, of past, current (and future) members of the Conservancy did not contain Tom's data. Frankly I thought he had moved away, or worse yet, was no longer alive.

Happily Tom is very much alive and full of great memories. As we discussed the formation of the Conservancy, some of the early meetings and fall reviews, I had the feeling I was unearthing memories that had been in storage a long time, but were well preserved nonetheless.

Tom was an avid canoeist and hiker. With his family, especially his son Edwin, he canoed many of the branches of the Cheat river system and upper Potomac system. As any paddler will testify, there is no better motivation to become an advocate of river preservation. Hikers similarly become wilderness advocates. In a series first of conversations, followed later by informal meetings, a group of canoe enthusiasts, hikers, rock climbers and others formed a coalition of groups, and ultimately the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, in 1967 at a meeting at Blackwater Falls State Park. Tom King was elected its first President.

We discussed a few of the highlights of Tom's four years as the Conservancy's leader. Otter Creek was particularly close to Tom's heart. He remembers one hike at the Fall Review of 1969, when a young Jay Rockefeller and his wife Sharon joined by 119 others, hiked into Otter Creek, led by Sayre Rodman. Jay was then West Virginia's Secretary of State, but most people thought he'd be a future governor.

Tom wrote in the October 1969 Voice: "I was almost overwhelmed by the wilderness beauty of the Otter Creek valley, it is an area to



Mr. and Mrs. Tom King

which I will return many times in the coming years...Everyone I talked to including the two leaders just mentioned [Jay Rockefeller and Angus Peyton, former Commissioner of Commerce] agreed that Otter Creek was easily the most beautiful natural area in the State."

Otter Creek was to become the first of many, many issues the Conservancy took to court. To briefly summarize, the Forest Service owned the surface, which the Conservancy wanted to be designated as capital-W Wilderness by Congress, but the Island Creek Coal Company owned the mineral rights. They began to exercise their rights and announced a core-drilling project to determine the feasibility of mining. Particularly disturbing was their plan to build some 27 miles of roads to access their drilling sites. Two young Conservancy members, both lawyers from Washington, Jim Moorman and Fred Anderson, believed a case could be made for an injunction to stop the destruction of the surface until Otter Creek's potential Wilderness designation was determined. Tom King played a crucial role by soliciting the involvement of a prominent Clarksburg attorney, Willis Shay, to act as local counsel.

Tom says that Willis Shay was confident that the court would stop Island Creek. Others were less confident. At that time Island Creek was as powerful politically as any company in the state. US Federal District Judge Robert Maxwell made front-page news across the state when he agreed with the Conservancy, and issued an injunction.

As some will remember, a settlement was reached, whereby Island Creek performed their core-drilling by mule train, thus minimizing the surface disturbance, found coal economically unfeasible to mine, ultimately sold the mineral rights to the Forest Service, and Otter Creek was among the first sixteen areas included in the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975. Otter Creek's successful protection was a major milestone in the Conservancy's early history.

So why had Tom dropped from the environmental horizon? It turns out that he and his wife decided to travel the world. He proudly showed me a world map, covered with string and pushpins, recording many trips to various continents during the years 1970-1990. Earlier trips, when Tom served on submarines in the Pacific, were also included.

As I was preparing to leave, I asked Tom if he ever thought this organization he helped start would have achieved such success. He expressed his pride in the Conservancy's early and later achievements, but also said he doesn't hear as much about it in the media as he used to. Coming from a perspective of a love of nature, the early leaders knew the need to fight for the preservation of areas that were threatened. Involving the general public, plus including friends in the political, judicial, and media worlds, was a key to their early success. The dentist from Bridgeport was the perfect leader. Think of him when you next visit Otter Creek. Thanks Tom.

Note: Dave Elkinton is researching the history of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. We will gladly receive email at daveelkinton@hotmail.com.