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The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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HOBET 21 MARCHES ON DOWNSTREAM

HEADWATERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

by Cindy Rank

As two District Court judges consider questions about the validity and adequacy of Clean Water Act fill permits in southern West Virginia, the twelve thousand plus (12,000+) acre Hobet 21 operation continues to expand further into Lincoln County burying more of the headwaters of the Mud River.

The pleasant little community of Mud that I first saw in 1995 when visiting the area as a member of the Interim Legislative Committee on valley fills is gone now. Only the Miller's homeplace remains...(saved only after an appeal to the WV Supreme Court)



Birds-eye view of drainage ditches, construction road and sediment pond further below - photo by Viv Stockman standing next to our car on county road passing through the operation

.....And the Caudill home, though it is no longer inhabited by those who cared for it for so many years. Homes along Berry Branch are gone too, the local church is burned, and the mining is expanding over into Big Ugly as well.

Driving down the road from Woodville and Cameo to Mud with Viv Stockman and Julian Martin the day after listening to final arguments in our litigation challenging the Army Corps' authorization of fills at four big mountaintop removal mines, comments by the Justice Department lawyer representing the Corps echoed in my head...

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WV GROUPS SEEK ENFORCEMENT OF SELENIUM LIMITS AT HOBET 21

by Margaret Janes

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC), represented by the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment's Equal Justice Works Fellow, Derek Teaney, in November sent a notice of intent to sue Hobet Mining over violations of selenium limits in its water pollution discharge permits. The permits cover the Sugartree and Westridge Surface Mines, part of the huge Hobet 21 Mining Complex located on the Mud River in Lincoln and Boone Counties.

The notice gives Hobet Mining 60 days to comply with its permits or face a lawsuit over the ongoing violations.

Studies published in 2002 for the Mountaintop Removal Environmental Impact Statement identified the Mud River as a selenium hot spot and linked the problem to the valley fills at upstream mining sites. WV Department of Environmental Protection then gave Hobet three years to clean up its water discharges and required the company to comply with protective selenium limits by November of 2006.

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From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

A Gift from Joe Monahan

Everyone we spoke to about Joe Monahan after his death mentioned his sense of humor. He left **us** smiling with surprise at his generous bequest to the Highlands Conservancy.

Bob Burrell, the founding editor of this publication and co-author of Wildwater West Virginia, wrote us about Joe: "The time of our active friendship, involving paddling somewhere 2-3 trips per month all year 'round (when things weren't frozen over), was the same time I was most involved in WVHC affairs. Although he knew of my activities, I never heard him express any thoughts about them, yet he was quietly watching and very interested. When I learned of his gift, I was as surprised as anyone. He was more than a paddler. He also spent many hours alone in the Highlands camping, hiking, and hunting. And observing!"

Joe was a pioneer C-1 paddler, the first on famous northern West Virginia whitewater runs such as Upper Stony Creek, from the VEPCO dam to US 50 (1971), and the Blackwater River (1972). But he was most closely associated with the Savage River, which he discovered in 1967 and promoted as a site for races.

Charlie Walbridge, another well-known author of river guides, wrote in *American Whitewater* (Jan/Feb 2006): "The first informal Savage River Slalom was held in 1968; there were 26 entries and only 5 successful finishers. Since courses this long and difficult had not been set in the U.S. before, the Savage races exposed serious racers to difficulties that they would encounter in European races. The river taught racers (including me!) a lot about making quick moves in fast water and became a proving ground for aspiring racers from all over the country."

Being Joe, he couldn't keep such an enterprise going without a bit of humor. Charlie wrote that Joe and his friends formed the Appalachian River Runners Federation and wore green jackets emblazoned in bright yellow letters, "ARRF." The whole point seemed to be to jog along the course barking encouragement to their teammates: "Arrf! Arrf!"

Building fiberglass boats, sponsoring races, or guiding an explorer scout post, Joe did whatever he could to further the sport. At Savage River, that included arranging releases from the dam. Charlie Walbridge recalled Joe's brag that he could get an hour's worth of water for a case of beer delivered to the damkeeper.

When his sales job in Cumberland ended, Joe had to move all the way to Texas, but a few years ago he found his way back to this area and re-joined the Highlands Conservancy.

For all his amiability as a companion and organizer, Joe was often solitary. Bob Burrell called this his "unknown side." Joe's executor, Patrick Walton, told us, "Don't forget Dolly Sods!" As Joe got older and less able to make quick moves in his canoe, he spent more time in the wilderness. When backpacking became difficult, he bought a pop-up camper and spent every weekend he could in the Highlands.

His ashes will be spread at Bear Rocks. His life savings will help to keep the Highlands Conservancy going.

Last month, we also received the final distribution of a significant bequest from Drew Forrester. We are grateful to Randal Forrester, Drew's brother and executor, for his help. In an appreciation, "Drew Forrester: a friend remembered," (*The Highlands Voice*, December 2005), John McFerrin wrote about Drew's special qualities. He also explained what such legacies mean to us: "We routinely budget in such a way that all of the income goes out to do the work of the Conservancy. While spending money on our work rather than sitting on it is a good thing, it is nerve-racking to our board and particularly to our treasurer to do it this way. Having a cushion of some sort will make us more stable financially."

Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

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INTERIM VOICE EDITOR: Cindy Rank...Until further notice, please submit all articles, letters, commentaries, etc. to clrank@hughes.net

Another Joe Monahan Story

From Charlie Walbridge memories of Joe Monahan
 In American Whitewater magazine January/February 2006

In spring of 1972, Joe's crew made the first run of West Virginia's Blackwater River. After being turned away by rangers at Blackwater Falls they bushwacked down Pendleton Run, which flows below a small lake in the park. After an hour of walking and "only" two rope-assisted boat lowers, they arrived at a point halfway down what is now considered the Upper Blackwater. "I never saw so much hairy unexplored whitewater in my life," Joe told a rapt group of slalom boaters at the Petersburg Races a few weeks later. "One of us would get out front and paddle until we just got too scared to go on, then he'd eddy out and let another guy lead." They made a number of portages, especially in the upper part, but got through without mishap. Word of the run spread, and others followed. The Lower Blackwater became a classic 70s and 80s run. The steeper, more technical Upper Blackwater wasn't done in its entirety until a group of Cheat River guides made the trip in April of 1983.



Bob Burrell sent this 1971 photo of Joe Monahan in his element.
 The photo was taken by Phil Allender.

SEEKING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BUSINESS IDEAS

Can a West Virginia business be environmentally friendly and profitable? Can such a business succeed in West Virginia? The national business media has begun to cover the growth of "green businesses"; will West Virginia be part of this trend?

To answer these questions, the West Virginia Environmental Institute will sponsor a conference in Charleston in early May, 2007 to explore the issue of environmentally friendly business and how West Virginia can attract and encourage more of it. The Institute is a volunteer non-governmental organization that has worked for twenty years to present all sides of issues relating to West Virginia's environment.

The theme of the May, 2007 conference is **connecting the dots among human health, environmental health, and economic health to yield a bright future for the state.**

We want to consider these three areas of inquiry:

1. What exactly is an "environmentally friendly" business? By what standards is a business determined to be environmentally friendly? Who decides?
2. In West Virginia, what factors encourage the development of these types of businesses? And what makes it more difficult to do so?
3. What can be done by business, government, academia, public interest groups, and others to help encourage more environmentally friendly businesses?

We would like your help. If you have experience with operating or trying to operate what you consider to be an environmentally friendly business in West Virginia, or in a neighboring state, we want to hear from you. If you know of good examples of environmentally friendly businesses, we'd like to learn about them. If you or someone you know might be willing to participate as a presenter at our conference, let us know. Let's get together and discuss how we can help clarify these important issues for the citizens and the movers and shakers of West Virginia.

Contact: WVEI President Dave Bassage, fikescr@earthlink.net, 304-767-1833, or Frank Young, fyoung@mountain.net, 304-372-3945 to share your ideas and to tell us if you would like to be a part of this effort!

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The *Highlands Voice* is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer uses 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.

THE FIRST RUN

by Sayre Rodman (April, 1987)

[From Dave Elkinton: It has been forty-five years since the trip described below on the Gauley River. In researching the history of the Highlands Conservancy, I found this article from the Highlands Voice, April 1987, by the late Sayre Rodman, long-time Conservancy Board member and Public Lands Committee Chairman. I felt it deserved a reprinting, to help us all see how much things have changed. The original publication appeared with some of Sayre's outstanding photographs.]



Few may remember Sayre from the 1970's when this picture was taken, but we all recognize that smile and the ever present twinkle in his eye.

People seem mildly intrigued by the idea of the first run, ever, on the whitewater section of the Gauley River. Nobody had the faintest idea what was down there, even around the next corner. Jean and I and a few friends seem to have lucked into the experience. What was it like?

Compared to the way people think about white water today, any trip in those days was in another world. If you write about a present-day trip with intent to impress people, plenty of potential readers will know what you're talking about. Hundreds will think that they could have run it better. Most of them could. And hundreds of thousands, or maybe millions, have been bounced or splashed on commercial raft trips. They know what Class IV or V water looks and feels like from river level. Serious white water means something to lots of people.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago, talk of 500,000 people who've felt big water would have sounded like weekends on Mars. Only the idea of a useful computer for a few hundred bucks would have seemed sillier. [Remember that this was written in 1987!] If you were on or near nice rapids then, you were very alone. Well, almost alone.

One warm summer morning in 1956, a young couple was skinny-dipping along the Ohiopyle Loop of the Youghiogheny up in Pennsylvania, confident of privacy. On a day like that today, a few thousand people go by. But in 1956, apparently no boats had ever run that river, until Jean and I sloshed into sight, spooking the couple out of the water into the bushes. Sorry about that, you two. Wish we'd told people our names along the river. Don't you think "Naked Lady Rapids" is more easily remembered than "Cucumber Rapids"? But I digress.

Jean and I didn't write much about being probably first down the Yough and the Gauley because, over a few shared six-packs, we did tell almost everyone in the Middle Atlantic States who knew what we were talking about. We and a few friends went down anything we could find within a weekend radius from

Pittsburgh, rowing Air Force surplus rafts. Rigid boaters? Berry and Harrigan and Sullivan in Washington and Bickman and Sweet at Penn State were acquiring their impressive skills, swapping river descriptions with us. In 1961, if everyone who'd run West Virginia Class V water in anything that floats came to a Highlands Conservancy Review, we still wouldn't have broken even.

Why do we think we were the first to boat the hard part of the Gauley River for fun? Hard to be sure. Oldtimers at Swiss told me that kids had gone down in dead low summer water a long time ago, walking parts and floating pools on air mattresses or something. But they were certain that no one was idiot enough to have done it in even moderate water before we did.

Real credit for finding the Gauley, and inventing ways to run it, goes to Ray Moore of Alexandria, Virginia. He was an innovator, who loved to try his own methods of getting where no one else had been, on rocks, in caves, or on rivers. His early tries at Cass Cave would give the NSS apoplexy. In the '50's, he discovered Air Force surplus rafts and West Virginia white water. He was not a slow learner. A February Class IV run in the rain in blue jeans, without life jackets, had seemed reasonable but turned out to be totally unsatisfactory. Don't do it again. He learned efficient ways to row a 6-man raft, solo, with big oars, Western-style. He taught Jean and me what he knew about rafts, short-fused dynamite sticks, and other subjects where one should pay close attention. There was no authority to guide people. If trying freaky ideas disturbed you, you stayed off the rivers.

Our first run at the Gauley was a fiasco. Early in 1959, Ray and a few friends from Washington, plus two of us from Pittsburgh, met at Summersville, far beyond our familiar Potomac



photo by Sayre Rodman

Jean Rodman forging ahead

headwaters. (Jean opted out; our first kid was still sort of new.) Only Ray knew where he meant to run, and we didn't exactly get there.

We put in at Route 39 east of Summersville. We hit the first interesting water (now under the lake) at the old Route 19 crossing. The river was sort of high; out of its banks. We soon were in the woods, lining around rapids, laboriously roping from tree to tree in water over our heads. Rafts may be better than kayaks for this. The owner of a house along the river took pity on

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(First Run - Continued from page 4)



Ralph Krichbaum on the Gauley

photo by Sayre Rodman

the sodden group, and sheltered us for the night. He talked bitterly about the proposed dam, which would one day drown all his land.

We made a few more miles the next day, but it wasn't much fun. One shaken man said that his big raft did an ender cleanly over his head. Fortunately, Ray's guys were good at re-entering their rafts via the bailing-bucket roper. Totally exhausted, we camped just above the dam site. Ray wanted to continue but was too tired to argue, except lying down.

Next day, I kicked rhododendron out to the now-vanished community called Sparks, hitched a ride to the proposed take-out, and returned with a car. I'd already learned that, on Ray's exploratory runs, you bring topo maps and pack frames. With enough psychological drive, you can hump out two deflated rafts per trip. Ah youth. Gauley 1, boaters 0.

I thought of that stream often in the next two years, as our friends developed a more practiced and conservative approach to rafttime. Row precisely, wear good life jackets, scout big rapids. Details like that.

Then in late May in 1961, six people from Pittsburgh tried again, with much better results. The river was probably below 1500 CFS, a bit low, no complaints. Jean and I have had worthwhile outings in nice places. Consider first seeing the tip of Mount Everest by moonlight on New Year's Eve from Tyangboche Monastery. The first Gauley run was about that good.

On day One, we sat out a snow squall under the old Route 19 Bridge, ran superb water the rest of the day, and camped precisely under the present dam. Not many people have run that part. Take the best of the rapids on the Cheat run below Albright; add many more; pack them into shorter distance. A few gentlemen's Class V's, nothing really hairy. I remember it as much better than the part below Sweet Falls. My old slides show a dark foggy day. We enjoyed it, immensely.

You will never see that run, nor will your children. When next you feel grateful for a scheduled release from the Summersville dam, think of the once free-flowing riverbed, down in the mud under the lake. We delighted in running it, a quarter of a century ago. The dam builders took something very special from you.

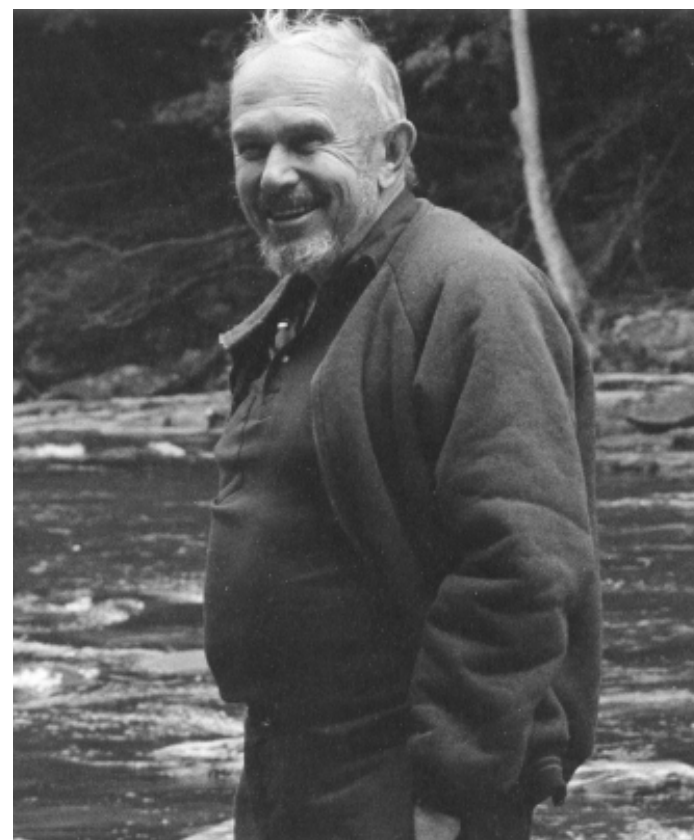
Then, on a bright day, six people, more privileged than we knew, were the first semi-competent modern boaters to find and scout and run the rapids that define the Gauley for thousands today. The run to the Meadow River was just fun. We'd earlier scouted a big one below Carnifax Ferry, big waves but no problem. Below the Meadow, we quickly saw things were getting more interesting. The first serious rapids ate one of my oars. Was it Sweet's "Broken Paddle"?

I think the rapids that nearly killed one of us is now called Iron Ring. Several rafts ran it, impressing the operators but doing nothing unpredictable. Then Kay's boat stalled upstream, and vanished, like a fly taken by a trout, in mid-river. A remarkable lady, she dove, making the snap decision that going thru a hole ahead of a big raft is better than the alternative. We, including her husband, watched the downstream, as did her 6 by 12 foot raft with oars still in tact in the oarlocks. Twice she had come up in the dark, and grabbed a breath. Behind the long slab leaning on the bank, river right, flows a lot of water. In hindsight we might have read the surface currents better.

We were then in no mood to see if we could manage Sweet Falls. We saw it as a sure-fire slicer of raft bottoms, at that water level. Carrying around was easy. While we did so, Kay's lost bailing bucket caught up with us.

We found a campsite on a sandbar, built a huge fire, and enjoyed our second night on this lovely river.

The last day was brilliant and clear, and the purple rhododendron was in bloom along the canyon walls. For a while, we had good fast water to enjoy, with nothing to worry Kay, who felt a tad cautious now. When we hit the quieter water above Swiss, we knew we'd had three memorable days.



Sayre in the 1990's

Note: Dave Elkinton can be reached at daveelkinton@hotmail.com, and welcomes comments and information as he continues his research and writing on the Conservancy's first forty years.

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

To join us for any of these outings, please sign up with the trip leader, who can give you more information. Their contact information appears after each listing. Please contact your trip leader and reserve your spot as far in advance as possible. In doing so, you may learn critical details about the outing. For instance, all available spots may be taken or the trip leader may cancel an outing if an insufficient number of people have signed up.

Our outings vary greatly in difficulty, scenery and type. Groups average between five and ten people, though we have as many as twenty people on some outings. Lower group numbers tend to provide a better experience for everyone. Trip leaders exercise a great amount of flexibility as far as leadership style, foul weather rescheduling, daily route, etc. Please be considerate of your trip leader and follow his/her instructions.

Open Dates 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 lunch for a picnic on Larry's mountain. Call in advance to schedule. Julian Martin (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com or Larry Gibson (304) 586-3287; (304) 549-3287

PLAN AHEAD FOR 2007:

February 3 (Saturday) HIKE - Great North Mountain, VA/WV border

Ever wondered what waterfalls do during the winter? Join us for a look at the beautiful ice formations on this 10 mile moderate hike. Dogs are welcome. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319 7pm - 9pm.

June 16, 17 (Saturday, Sunday) HIKE - West Chapter - Nelson Rocks Preserve, WV

Try out the European "craze" of mountain climbing via ferrata, rock climbing for complete novices. This is not for the faint of heart and requires non-vertigo challenged individuals. Cost per person is \$40. Website: www.nelsonrocks.org
Sunday we will hike either on North Fork Mountain for 6-8 moderate miles or at Seneca Rocks for 2.8, depending on the weather. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319 7pm - 9pm.

July 14 - 16 (Friday-Sunday) BACKPACK - Seneca Creek in the Spruce Knob/Seneca Rocks NRA, WV

This 22.5 mile moderate backpack will take us along a beautiful stream in the Seneca Creek Backcountry. We will hike in 5 miles past the Judy Springs campground to the Upper Falls of Seneca Creek for basecamp. Saturday will involve "stream whacking" along Seneca Creek to explore the sights and sounds of this seldom seen area. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319 7pm - 9pm.

October 7 - 9 (Saturday-Monday) BACKPACK - Otter Creek Wilderness, WV

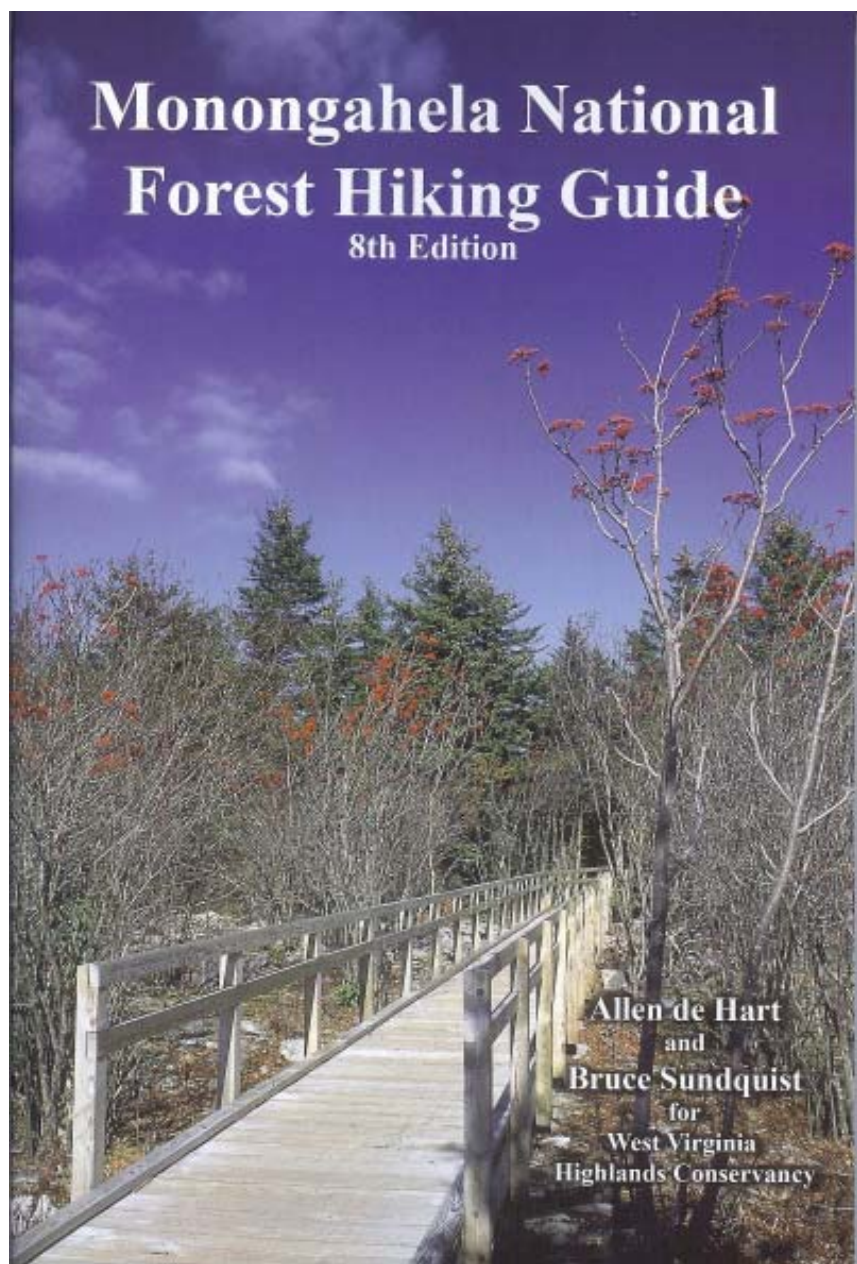
Enjoy the fall colors at their max in a justly famous Wilderness. Count yourself among the lucky ones to see brilliant golds, russet reds and rustling rusts as we backpack 20.6 moderate miles in the Wilderness. INFO: Susan Bly (sbly@shepherd.edu) 304/258-3319 7pm - 9pm

~~~~~  
*If you have a favorite place you want to share with others,  
 plan on leading a hike.*  
 Contact Dave Saville at [daves@labyrinth.net](mailto:daves@labyrinth.net) or 304-284-9548

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MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST HIKING GUIDE

by Allen de Hart & Bruce Sundquist



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COMPACT DISC EDITION

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

This premier CD edition of MNF7 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:**

- All pages and maps, or even a single page can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
- All new, full color topographic maps, including all points referenced in the text

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

- Interactive pdf format allows you to click on a map reference in the text, and that map centered on that reference comes up
- Trail mileages between waypoints have been added to the maps
- Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of the entire Allegheny Trail in the Monongahela National Forest
- Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of many of the popular hiking areas, including Cranberry, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and many more

Introductory free shipping & postage offer:

All this is available to *Highlands Voice* readers for only \$20.00, including postage. 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

(Rural, undeveloped areas....continued from page 1)

Did she really say that remote, less developed areas of Appalachia deserve less consideration than more populated areas ?

But, yes. I too remember the quote that Ken Ward included in his article the following day (see page 12 of this issue of the VOICE): "eleven percent of impacts may be significant in a national park" she stated. ... "Whereas, a much greater percentage of impacts in an area of limited population and no alternative potential land use foreseeable, that may certainly be less significant."

I've long understood that many coal companies view any negative impacts from mines located in remote and undeveloped areas as just not very important. ... But hearing that statement in the halls of justice as an excuse for picking and choosing what portions of the laws apply to what communities is mind-boggling to say the least.

Visits to/through these huge mines, whether it be Kayford or the multitude of mountaintop removal sites I've been on since my first experience at Dal-Tex in 1994, are headache producing events.

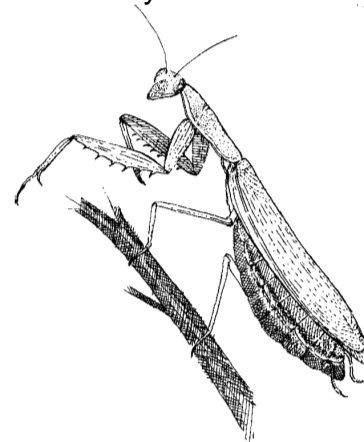
Our drive down county routes 8 & 46 the day after the court hearing in Huntington was particularly shattering. The once wooded drive is now merely a narrow slick goat path perched precariously between an unstable steep hillside above and a sheer drop below. Gone is the home and family who showed me the blasting damage they endured nearly ten years ago. Gone too are the trees that once lined the road and graced the hollow. In their place are drainage ditches below the road, and a pond further on down the hill that marks the toe of the future fill. A variety of saws and trucks and other machines are in the process of destroying and rearranging the geology of yet another section of God's good earth.

Company lawyers in the Huntington litigation wrote that the case is part of the environmental community's "ongoing war against one of the few economic engines left in West Virginia." But from where I sit,

the ongoing war is one being waged by an industry bent on breaking the laws in order to garner the biggest profit in the shortest amount of time.

The goals of the Clean Water Act never included burying thousands of miles of valuable headwater streams. Nor were the goals of the Surface Mine Act ever intended to allow the total destruction of forest, soils and water resources. And neither of those laws was written with the intention of harming the people and communities who depend on those resources.

War has always been hell, but it's particularly painful to see it being waged in our own backyards.



(Selenium Limits at Hobet 21... continued from page 1)

Selenium is a toxic mineral that bioaccumulates in living organisms when levels in the water are elevated. The potential effects of excess selenium on aquatic life are severe and include reproductive failure, birth defects, damage to gills and internal organs, and ocular disease. In humans, while selenium is an essential nutrient at low levels, it can be extremely toxic at higher levels causing hair and fingernail loss, damage to kidneys and liver, and damage to nervous and circulatory systems.

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Associate	\$ 50	\$ 75	\$ 100
Sustaining	\$100	\$ 150	\$ 200
Patron	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$ 750	\$ 1000

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

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

~ Leave a Legacy of hope for the future ~

Remember the Highlands Conservancy in your will. Plan now to provide a wild and wonderful future for your children and future generations. Bequests keep our organization strong and will allow your voice to continue to be heard. Your thoughtful planning now will allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness, wildlife, clean air and water and our way of life.

~~~~~



# Rachel Louise Carson - Centennial Celebration

“A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy, who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from sources of our strength.”

*Rachel Carson – The Sense of Wonder, 1956*

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by Marquette Crockett

The youngest of three children, Rachel Louise Carson was born in 1907 in the rural community of Springdale, Pennsylvania. Carson’s mother, Maria, instilled in her daughter a strong sense of independence and a love of nature and writing. Carson herself later developed these traits into a career when she entered Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham College). Carson began college as an English major, but later switched to biology. After graduation in 1929, Carson completed her M.A. in zoology at Johns Hopkins University, a rare accomplishment for a woman in that era.

In 1936, Carson was the first woman to pass the civil service test and was hired by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - USFWS) as a junior biologist. During her 15-year career, Carson’s talent and dedication helped her become editor in chief of all USFWS publications. Among these publications was an educational series called “Conservation in Action” that explored the wildlife and ecology of National Wildlife Refuges. While working for the USFWS, Carson began to publish her own work. Her first major success came with the publication of *The Sea Around Us* in 1951. Profits from *The Sea Around Us*, an extremely popular account of marine life and ecology, allowed Carson to retire from government service to write full time.

Although unmarried, Carson remained very close to her nieces and adopted her 5 year old grandnephew, Roger Christie, upon her niece’s death. In 1956, Carson wrote a series of magazine articles based on her exploration of the Maine coast with her young grandnephew. These articles, originally titled “Help Your Child to Wonder” were designed to help parents introduce their children to the wonders of nature. Carson wrote, “If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.” These articles were later combined and republished under the title *The Sense of Wonder*.

In 1962, Carson published *Silent Spring*, a work that shook the foundations of public trust in the chemical industry and sparked the beginning of the modern environmental movement. In *Silent Spring*, Carson documented the harmful effects of pesticides and called for the development of strict and responsible controls on their use. The publication of *Silent Spring*, along with similar research, spurred congressional hearings into federal pesticide policy. Consequently, DDT, an especially harmful pesticide, was banned from use in the United States. Perhaps more importantly, *Silent Spring* spurred the American public to begin thinking critically about environmental issues.

After a long period of illness, Rachel Carson died in 1964 at the age of 56 from breast cancer. It is indeed a rare thing when one person so dramatically affects the mindset of an entire nation, but Rachel Carson did exactly that. She taught us to love and marvel at the natural world in *The Sea Around Us* and in *The Sense of Wonder*. In *Silent Spring*, she taught us to consider the breadth of ecological damage that can occur when our society becomes complacent or unthinking in our use of modern technologies.

In honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of this remarkable woman, several local groups have joined together to sponsor a free performance of a play called *A Sense of Wonder*. Written and performed by Kaiulani Lee, *A Sense of Wonder* is a two-act, one woman play based on the life and works of Rachel Carson. Ms. Lee has been touring the country with this play for over ten years. The play has been the centerpiece of regional and national conferences on conservation, education, and the environment and has been performed at over one hundred universities, dozens of high schools, and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Please join us on February 16, 2006, as we present a free performance of *A Sense of Wonder*. The show starts at 7:30pm at the Boiler House Theater, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV. Admission is free, but seating is limited. Tickets are available in advance at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Main Line Books in Elkins or at the door of the Boiler House Theater on the night of the show.

**Sponsors of *A Sense of Wonder* are Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Davis and Elkins College, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Mountaineer Audubon, Friend’s of the 500<sup>th</sup>, and Main Line Books.**

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In the weeks leading up to the presentation of Ms. Lee’s play, *A Sense of Wonder*, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the Friend’s of the 500<sup>th</sup>, and Whitegrass Ski Touring Center will also present three educational winter walks, based loosely on themes from Rachel Carson’s *The Sense of Wonder*.

Dates and times are as follows.

**January 28: Exploring a Sense of Wonder through Photography**, 1 pm, meet at White Grass Lodge, led by Jonathon Jessup and Vern Patterson. Bring your own camera, Snowshoes provided by White Grass. Co-sponsored with the Friends of the 500th and Canaan Valley NWR.

**January 26: Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring**, 7pm, meet at Refuge Headquarters, hosted by Jackie Burns. In the early 1960’s, biologist Rachel Carson felt compelled to draw our attention to the problems posed by overuse of pesticides. Come find out why. The core of this program is an hour long American Experience video about Ms. Carson with questions and answers to follow.

**February 4: Exploring a Sense of Wonder through Animal Tracks**, 1 pm, meet at White Grass Lodge. Wildlife tracking is a great way to learn about nature, get outdoors in the winter and introduce children to nature study. This walk will be led by USFWS Biologist Ken Sturm We will look for wildlife tracks in the snow and enjoy being outdoors in the beautiful Canaan Valley. Snowshoes provided by White Grass, co-sponsored with the Friends of the 500th and Canaan Valley NWR.

**Mid-February:** The third “Sense of Wonder” Walk is TBA. Please check the refuge website for details.

# LETTERS, LETTERS, COMMENTS ....

## Blackwater Canyon Trail - Not a Logging Road

November 20, 2006

Mr. Clyde Thompson  
Supervisor USDA Forest Service  
Elkins, West Virginia 26241

Dear Mr. Thompson

I have listened to you speak, and I can appreciate it that you are trying to be fair to both sides, but to permit Allegheny Wood Products to turn the scenic Blackwater Canyon trail into a lumber road is simply wrong.

As an owner of substantial timber land in eight counties in West Virginia, I can appreciate that right-of-ways are necessary to timber operations, but the Allegheny Wood Products Co., which has a history of being unconcerned about environmental concerns, knew well in advance when they purchased the land in the Blackwater Canyon that one-half was owned by the Forest Service, thus, they knew that they could not use this road without permission.

New technologies exist which make the use of the road unnecessary. I refer to helicopter removal, of course, and I suspect that this method has been ignored by the Forest Service in your decision. I would appreciate if you would reconsider your decision and deny its use.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ward

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### Thanks for Posting the Video

Hi Julian,

I just wanted to thank you again for putting Bringing Down the Mountains on WVHC's website. I've directed probably 20 folks there over the last few weeks (three just this morning) and really appreciate it, as we aren't making any more hard copies. It's a great opportunity for the film & filmmakers AND saves us some valuable resources!  
Thanks....

Krissy Kasserman

Your comments and opinions are important to us.

Please email any poems, letters, commentaries to the VOICE editor at [clrank@hughes.net](mailto:clrank@hughes.net)  
Or send snail mail to WV Highlands Conservancy,  
VOICE Editor, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

## The New Monongahela National Forest 20 Year Plan -- A Flawed Plan

By Don Gasper

The huge Plan describes a flawed plan. It was prepared using an inappropriate guidance. It was prepared without appropriate citizen in-put, as no opinion poll began this planning process. The Plan was made without the revision of the necessary and system road plan that influences nearly everything. It identifies geological strata (41% of the Monongahela) as being so infertile that it cannot be logged, for a new crop may not grow to completion. It does not simply use the geology map to exclude those areas, but creates an administrative nightmare. It is not then protective of the soil. Next, clearcuts are to be doubled to 40 acres, and it is to be "emphasized". Their science is poor on this topic. Its hydrological impact is little developed. It is their intent to explain the unfavorable consequences away, rather than face up to them. Finally, clearcuts and roads will prevent a top-down stream channel recovery. A recovery would be first through brook trout reaches, finally resulting in famous brook trout streams with associated economics and protections. This promise is unrecognized. The greatest flaw in this Plan is its utter disregard for its responsibility to "moderate flows" in communities below.

This is then a flawed and very disappointing Plan.

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### Spruce #1 EIS is Shocking

November 20, 2006

Mrs. Teresa Spagna, Regulatory Project Manager  
Corps of Engineers, Huntington District  
Huntington, West Virginia

Dear Mrs. Spagna:

As a long time property owner in eight counties of West Virginia and the owner of mineral rights and much forest land, I must say I am shocked that the Army Corps of Engineers has issued a final Environmental Impact Statement for Spruce No. 1 mine which seems to ignore the ecological damage that the permit will cause.

Unfortunately, decisions like this reduce the respect that many of us, who have watched the work of the Corps over the years, have for the Corps itself because there is no possible way that any human being in the United States would agree with you, if they spoke honestly, that this permit to the Spruce No. 1 mine wouldn't cause drastic damage not only to the streams but the permanent use of the land after restoration has occurred. To think that there is any forest cover that could reignite this desolate plain with the types of soil that a good forest needs is a joke. I would appreciate if you would reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ward

## Windmill - Mountaintop Removal Article Caused Concern

VOICE editor:

In response to the November commentary by John McFerrin regarding Coal River Mountain Watch and windmills/renewable energy.... I would like to say that a lot of the "so called sniping" had died down and now Mr. McFerrin continues the string with this inciting commentary.

First of all.... people want their electricity and it will come from somewhere.

Second...there is no mercury...no CO2 AND no SLUDGE FROM WINDMILLS. How many miners are dying of wind farms ?????

Wind is NOT perfect but it is preferable to coal and nuclear...it is a START.

Many students all over the country are fighting for renewable energy and they see wind as a viable alternative and to save their butts from global warming and mercury.

To dredge up this fight is irresponsible and now we must take time out of our schedules to respond to this commentary as we are **TODAY** fighting for justice at Marsh Fork Elementary School and for justice of underground SLUDGE injection of the citizens in the coal producing counties. Please read the articles in the Gazette that detail how the coal industry ignores the safety of men and is literally murdering our men for energy.

The Highlands Voice should have used their space better and refrained from attacking Coal River Mountain Watch and people that have been America's sacrifice for energy for over 130 years.

Energy production will stay the same until we show average citizens that electricity CAN be produced by other means rather than coal or nuclear.

I would ask Mr. McFerrin and the Highlands Conservancy where they get their electricity needed to produce the Highlands Voice and the article that slammed Coal River Mountain Watch and our efforts to support clean Renewable energy? Could it come from the death, poison, blood, sweat and tears of us coal field citizens?

Judy Bonds

Rock Creek, WV

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## BROCHURES

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has joined with the Sierra Club, Coal River Mountain Watch, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Appalachian Voices, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Keeper of the Mountains Foundation and Christians for the Mountains to 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 distribute them.

# REFLECTIONS..... and MORE

from **APPALACHIA'S LAST STAND**  
by Beth Wellington

[Editor's note: Ms. Wellington was one of several authors and poets who participated in the West Virginia Writers Tour arranged by OVEC in October of this year...]

## LOOKING OUT OVER AN ABYSS IN BOONE COUNTY

Picture our fifty  
acres, just one family's piece  
of Kayford Mountain.

That metal farm gate  
used to mark our line, the steep  
farm road wound, benign,

though old growth hardwoods,  
song birds in flight, both sides a  
blessed continuum

of Almost Heaven  
West Virginia. Our farm gate's  
now The Gates of Hell.

The smell's not brimstone  
but ANFO, ammonium  
nitrate and fuel oil.

\*

The same Devil's brew  
at Oklahoma City  
Belfast, Gaza Strip:

terrorists, they call  
truck bombers, but Blankenship's  
"a big employer."

Such liars, he hires  
so few to drive the drag lines:  
maggots chewing up

our hills to rubble,  
burying headwater streams  
that sang us to sleep.

We keep thinking we'll  
wake and the knobs will be there.  
We keep thinking no

family photos  
need be bolted to our walls  
to withstand the blasts.

Big Coal has its way  
they will blow up Blair Mountain.  
Permits are pending.

\*

Eighty years ago  
10,000 miners rose up  
ten days at Spruce Run

while federal troops  
fired: civil war to keep  
us company slaves.

Blow up Blair Mountain?  
Feature Vicksburg, Bull Run gone  
for thirty year's coal.

Mountains should abide  
but Massey plays God  
scattering our peaks.

How can we be the  
Mountain State without mountains,  
our home, a war zone?

\*

## T- SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the  
**I ♥ Mountains** slogan on the front.  
The lettering is blue and the heart is red.  
"West Virginia Highlands Conservancy"  
in smaller blue letters is included below  
the slogan. Sizes: S, M, L and XL.  
**Short sleeve** model is \$10 total by mail;  
**long sleeve** is \$15. Send sizes wanted  
and check payable to West Virginia  
Highlands Conservancy ATTN: Julian  
Martin, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charles-  
ton, WV 25321-0306.



## BUMPER STICKERS

To get free **I ♥ Mountains** bumper  
sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin,  
P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Slip  
a dollar donation (or more) in with the  
SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Busi-  
nesses or organizations wishing to pro-  
vide bumper stickers to their customers/  
members may have them free. (Of course  
if they can afford a donation that will be  
gratefully accepted.)

Also available are  
the new green-on-  
white oval  
**Friends of the  
Mountains** stick-  
ers. Let Julian know which (or both) you  
want.



## HATS



West Virginia High-  
lands Conservancy  
has two models of  
caps for sale.

One is khaki and the  
pre-curved visor is  
forest green. The  
front of the cap has

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
in gold above **We ♥ Mountains**. The  
heart is red; and lettering is black.

The other model is tan with a muted  
green pre-curved visor. The front  
sports the lovely, in color, logo that  
appears on the VOICE masthead. Be-  
side the logo is "West Virginia High-  
lands Conservancy" in green.  
The lower back of the hat has the  
**We ♥ Mountains** slogan.

Both are soft twill, unstructured, low  
profile with sewn eyelets, cloth strap  
with tri-glide buckle closure. Cost is  
\$12 by mail. Make check payable to  
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
and send to Julian Martin, P.O. Box 306,  
Charleston, WV 25321-0306

--- All items are also pictured on  
our website and can be purchased  
from our online store. --- Visit:

[www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org).

# Judge Hears Final Arguments in Valley Fill Case

by Ken Ward

(from the *Charleston Gazette* November 30, 2006)

HUNTINGTON - A federal judge on Wednesday questioned the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' approval of the burial of more streams by mountaintop removal coal-mining operations.

U.S. District Judge Robert C. Chambers pressed corps lawyers to explain why the agency doesn't require more detailed environmental studies before approving more valley fills. Chambers also asked why the corps didn't spell out the reasoning behind its decisions in documents available to the public.

"Where is it explained why there is no cumulative impact?" Chambers asked at one point during a five-hour hearing Wednesday.

During an oral argument session, Chambers heard the last from lawyers in a case that challenges the way the corps approves mountaintop removal valley fills.

In October, the judge heard about 32 hours of testimony over six days in the case filed by the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and two other groups [WV Highlands Conservancy and Coal River Mountain Watch].

Environmental group lawyers argue that the corps should be forced to conduct lengthy "environmental impact statements" on Clean Water Act "individual permits" for each of four Massey Energy mine proposals.

Chambers will rule specifically about those four Massey permits, where work has already begun on some of the valley fills. His decision could have a much broader impact on the state's coal industry, setting the rules for future permit reviews by the corps.

Key to the case is whether the corps properly examined if valley fills create significant adverse environmental impacts, and if the agency spelled out a well-reasoned decision on that issue in its permit approval documents.

Stephen E. Roady, a lawyer for the citizen groups, said government has conceded that the fills cause serious damage.

"Nobody denies that," Roady said. "It's pretty obvious that there are significant effects."

Corps lawyers, though, argue that the coal companies build new artificial stream channels and other projects that "mitigate" the damage to below the "significant" impact level.

Environmental groups' lawyers say there is little scientific evidence that such projects really work. The judge questioned how such projects could possibly replace important ecological functions - such as water purification and decomposition of nutrients that move up the food chain - of small, headwaters streams.

Cynthia Morris, a corps attorney, repeatedly reminded Chambers that U.S. Supreme Court rulings don't allow him to interject his own judgment for that of the corps. Instead, Chambers is charged to decide if the corps' action was reasonable, or if it was "arbitrary and capricious," as the environmental groups argue.

Chambers noted that evidence previously presented to him showed fills burying significant portions of the streams in certain coalfield watersheds.

Still, the judge said, the corps ruled that more fills would not cause "significant" adverse impacts, the trigger for requiring more detailed studies.

"One would expect there to be an explanation of why the additional destruction of headwaters streams that adds to that impact isn't a significant effect," Chambers told Morris.

In response, Morris conceded the corps did not provide a detailed analysis of each of the factors it was supposed to consider in weighing possible impacts.

Morris also said any negative impacts were not considered as grave because the mines are located in remote and undeveloped areas of Appalachia.

"Eleven percent of impacts may be significant in a national park," Morris said. "Whereas, a much greater percentage of impacts in an area of limited population and no alternative potential land use foreseeable, that may certainly be less significant."

Morris also said some of the mines are proposed in areas where past coal mining has already degraded the environment, so more impacts would not make as big a difference. In some cases, Morris said, mining would actually improve the area's environment.

"If you're going to be impairing an area that has already been degraded, then the effects are not going to weigh as heavily in that balancing analysis," Morris said.

In court papers, the Bush administration argued that the environmental groups' real goal "is to stop coal mining in Appalachia - which would prejudice the nation's energy supply needs, displace workers, and negatively impact economic development in the region."

Bob McLusky, a lawyer for Massey, said in a legal brief the case is part of the environmental community's "ongoing war against one of the few economic engines left in West Virginia."

McLusky noted that the Massey operations being challenged would produce about 50 million tons of coal over the next five to 15 years, and employ more than 630 people for that time period.

In another brief, former top state water pollution regulator Allyn Turner, now representing the West Virginia Coal Association, said requiring the more detailed permit studies sought would "paralyze the permitting process, disrupt current West Virginia coal operations, and impede further economic development in the region."

Chambers said he hoped to rule on the matter within a month.

In a related case, U.S. District Judge Joseph R. Goodwin is considering whether to block the corps from authorizing new valley fills through a streamlined permit process.

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## ENERGY USE GROWTH RATE CAN BE CUT BY MORE THAN HALF OVER THE NEXT 15 YEARS BY EFFICIENCY, SURVEY SAYS

From an article by Steve Lohr, New York Times November 29, 2006

The growth rate of worldwide energy consumption could be cut by more than half over the next 15 years through more aggressive energy-efficiency efforts by households and industry, according to a study by the McKinsey Global Institute, which is scheduled to be released today.

The energy savings, the report said, can be achieved with current technology and would save money for consumers and companies. The McKinsey report offers a long list of suggested steps, including the adoption of compact fluorescent light bulbs, improved insulation on new buildings, reduced standby power requirements, an accelerated push for appliance-efficiency standards and the use of solar water heaters.

Those moves, among others, could reduce the yearly growth rate in worldwide energy demand through 2020 to six-tenths of a percent, from a forecast annual rate of 2.2 percent, the report concluded.

The estimate of potential energy savings is one conclusion of a yearlong research project by McKinsey that analyzes energy productivity worldwide by regions, fuels and industrial and residential markets.....