

Return Service requested



The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION SETS HEARING ON BIG POWERLINE

The case of the Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company's (AKA TRailCo) application for a new 240 miles long, 500 Kilovolt power line across northern West Virginia is in full legal mode.

The West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) has set a procedural schedule, including public comment hearings in Charleston and in local communities along the proposed line route. Later, in early 2008, formal evidentiary hearings will be held in Charleston.

And letters of public comment may be submitted by anyone- whether or not they are a directly affected party- at any time until the case is decided and closed next spring.

The public comment hearings will be held before an Administrative Law Judge in Morgantown, Canaan Valley, Moorefield, and Grafton. These will be held the weeks of October 8 through October 19, 2007, "or as soon thereafter as can be accommodated". Newspapers in those areas will provide legal notice of the exact dates and location of those public hearings.

In addition, public comment hearings will be held in Charleston at the PSC's offices on November 28th and 29th, beginning at 9:00 AM.

There are approximately 30 parties to the TRail Co. case. In addition to 16 individuals, opponents of the project include Allegheny Club, Inc., Bhavana Society Forest Monastery and Retreat Center, Sierra Club, Inc., CPV Warren, LLC, and the Toms Run and Halleck Road Community.

For more details about this Trail Co. project and why it is a serious threat to the mountains and river valleys of West Virginia- including even of southern West Virginia- see the July edition of the Highlands Voice.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

West Virginia Sierra Club: <http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org/>
WVPSC: www.psc.state.wv.us Search for case number 07-0508-E-CN
TRAILCo <http://www.aptrailinfo.com/index.php> - Allegheny Power subsidiary. Includes maps of route, as well as links to the WV, PA and VA applications.
Laurel Run Watershed Association, <http://www.laurelrunwatershed.org/>
Monongalia County info.
Halleck and Southern Monongalia County Community Association: <http://www.notowersinwv.org/>
Capon Valley Coalition <http://caponvalleycoalition.com/> News items from Hardy & Hampshire County
Or contact: Frank Young- fyoung@mountain.net

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Guest Commentary by John McFerrin

In June, the Public Service Commission denied the application of U.S. Windforce to build a wind farm at Liberty Gap in Pendleton County, West Virginia. It did so not because there was anything so terribly wrong with what was in the application. Rather, it did it because there was not enough information in the application that the agency could do its job.

Here is how things are supposed to work: the Public Service Commission has siting requirements for windmills. In approving a location, it is supposed to balance the applicant's interest and the state's need for electricity with community interests, including such things as existing land uses, social and environmental values, etc.

It is an approach with which everyone can agree. Nobody wants to ban windpower outright. Neither do we want to allow it in every possible location. We just want to balance the need for electricity with other community needs. There might be vigorous disagreement on how we strike that balance but everybody agrees that some sort of balancing is appropriate.

The Public Service Commission denied the Liberty Gap application because it didn't provide enough information for the Commission to strike this balance. By regulation, the applicant was supposed to submit a map characterizing the area within five miles of the site, address historical and cultural impacts, and provide evidence regarding viewshed, noise and endangered bat species. It either didn't provide the information at all or did it poorly.

Given this lack of information, the Public Service Commission had no choice. With no information, it could do no balancing. With no ability to balance the interests, it could not approve the site. End of story.

That a state agency took its responsibilities seriously and refused to approve something it could not evaluate properly should not be remarkable. It is only remarkable in contrast to the way in which the Department of Environmental Protection goes about its business.

For the past twenty five years it has been the law that the Department was supposed to analyze the cumulative hydrologic impact of coal mines. If there were several mines near each other, the Department was supposed to determine the cumulative impact of all of them on the water of the area. For an equally long time, mining companies who applied for permits were supposed to submit data on the hydrologic consequences of the mining.

For years the Department did not do anything to analyze the cumulative impact of mines. Then it began a token effort which continues to this day. So far as I know the Department always required at least a token effort at studying data on the hydrologic consequences. It wasn't real demanding with what came in. Having something in the blank on the application form in response to that question was usually enough.

The same is true of reclamation plans. The idea always was that the land should be at least as useful after mining as it was before. The practice was that there just had to be something in the Reclamation Plan part of the application. It is not apparent that the Department ever looked at whether the land would be useful or whether there was any possibility that the use could be achieved.

The difference between the ways the Department of Environmental Protection and the Public Service Commission approach their statutory duties is a result of cultural differences between the agencies. The Public Service Commission is new to the regulation of wind farms. From its decision in the Liberty Gap case, it apparently has a culture of reading the law and doing what it says.

Acting under various names under various governors, the Department of Environmental Protection has been involved in coal mining for about forty years. It was long ago captured by the industry it regulates. Its culture is to approve permits.

That the capture is complete appeared most openly during the second Arch Moore administration when his top coal mine regulator referred to himself as part of "we in the industry." Today the capture is just

(Continued on p. 5)

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STREAM BUFFER ZONE
- PROPOSED RULE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT-
Public Hearings and Comments

Brief Update and Reminder

By Cindy Rank

To the best of our knowledge as the VOICE goes to press this month, public hearings will be held for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement (OSMRE) to receive comments on the proposed Stream Buffer Zone Rule and the supporting draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Where, when and how many hearings will be held is still unknown, but one will surely be in Charleston, WV.

The comment periods on both were originally *scheduled to end on October 23, 2007*, but many of us have asked for additional time. It's fairly certain that OSMRE will grant an extension but rumor has it that it may not be for the entire 90 days that have been requested.

Please be thinking of what you might want to say or write and send your comments now to the addresses e-mail and postal addresses listed below.

For background information and suggested talking points

- 1) Re-read John McFerrin's extensive coverage in last month's issue of the *Highlands VOICE* (September 2007) which can be found in your personal paper piles, or on line at www.wvhighlands.org.
- 2) Check the official government document site for information and to submit comments online at: www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main and search for DOCKET ID "OSM-2007-0007-0001" (the proposed rule) and/or DOCKET ID "OSM-2007-0008-001" (the supporting EIS).

Written comments should be sent to:

Dennis G. Rice [RE: the rule - Identify by referring to RIN1029-AC04]
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
U.S. Department of the Interior
1951 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Via e-mail: drice@osmre.gov

David Hartos [RE: the EIS (identify by referring to OSM-EIS-34)]
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
U.S. Department of the Interior
3 Parkway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Via e-mail: dhartos@osmre.gov

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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.

MORE ABOUT THE BIG POWER LINE

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Letters of Public Comment:

The state PSC will accept letters of public comment on the project. Send letters to:

Sandra Squire, Executive Secretary
WV Public Service Commission
PO BOX 812
Charleston WV 25322

Be sure to reference CASE NO. 07-0508-E-CN; TRailCo Power Line Application

Tell the PSC that you oppose construction of these transmission lines because:

- * They will dramatically increase the amount of air pollution and greenhouse gases emitted by West Virginia power plants.

- * They will result in increased destruction from coal mining, including mountaintop removal, mine subsidence damage, acid mine run off, and other environmental damage.

- * They will deter investment in clean renewable energy sources and in energy conservation

- * They will cost billions of dollars, much of which will likely be paid for by West Virginia residents. There does not appear to be a need for these lines - for security, reliability, power demand, or any other reason. Higher energy costs will deter business and industry from staying in, or moving to, West Virginia.

- * Allegheny should invest in green energy and efficiency, not in wasteful transmission lines. West Virginia can not continue to be a sacrifice zone for Allegheny's greed. Conserve energy, our mountains, and our community and Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful. I urge you to oppose these lines, and the TrailCo application.

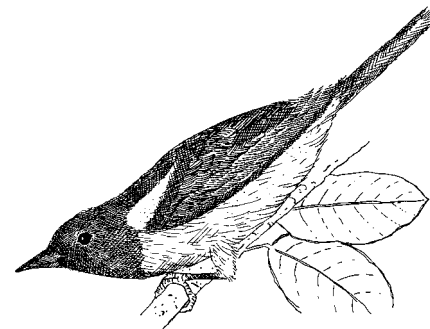
SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS PROJECT

The WV Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) is not a legal party to the case. But WVHC does have supporting roles as both a public advocate in opposition to the TrailCo power line proposal, and as a conduit for fundraising in support of the \$30,000 budget of a coalition, lead by the Sierra Club, for a team of lawyers and expert witnesses who will offer testimony and evidence showing that there is no need or public interest served by the TrailCo project.

The "bumper sticker" slogan for the campaign is "WV Is Ours; Stop Allegheny Towers"

It is important to raise the funds needed to procure and pay these experts for their testimony in opposition to granting a Certificate of Need for this unnecessary environmental monstrosity. You can help with your tax-exempt contribution to the WV Highlands Conservancy, dedicated to the fight against this power line. Send your tax-exempt contribution to WV Highlands Conservancy, PO BOX 306, Charleston WV 25321. Be sure and mark your check or attached note for the "stop TrailCo towers' campaign, or a similar memo.

Or you can make your contribution on our website at: <http://www.wvhighlands.org>. Simply write "stop TrailCo towers" in the "Your Comments" text box when checking out your shopping cart there.



ALREADY HAVING HIS SAY

UNHAPPY TrAILs to West Virginia

Portions of several letters from Thomas Ward, long time member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

To the Editor:

Two destructive high tension power lines will cross Tucker County 200+ feet wide each, if approved. And the County Commissioners "need more information." – What a joke.

This latest outrage to be delivered to West Virginians is the Trans Allegheny Transmission Line.

Reason why Tucker Countians have to have their farms and land overlaid by unsightly high tension wires over a cleared path 200 feet to 2,000 feet wide — because the suburbs of Washington, D.C. don't want the smoke and pollution of a new power plant, which is necessary to supply their needs.

There is no other reason for this here.

One writer...says he doesn't object to the line – just that it crosses his farm. Well, if it's built it has to go somewhere.

I oppose it altogether. Let the nation's capital's suburban residents build their own power plant.

The Allegheny Power Line proposed for the benefit of the suburbs of the District of Columbia will seriously damage the words "wild, wonderful West Virginia" if constructed.

I am a victim. I deplore to see these 15 story electric towers dominating my Cheat River property.

Others are beginning to awaken. I'm glad the wide awake commissioners of Preston County voted unanimously to oppose. And Virginia points out that it will affect "some 48,000 acres of land protected under preservation easements, including 11 existing historic districts, our natural historic landmarks, 19 state and national historic districts and seven civil War battlefields."

Now, is the West Virginia governor on top of this?

Let's all wake up and stop this abomination.

THE BATTLE OF KATES MOUNTAIN

Kate's Mountain is a 3,500 acre tract in Greenbrier County, adjacent to the Greenbrier State Forest. The property is extensive with very steep hill sides but a lot of really nice flat ridge tops. Most of the timber is 8" to 10" oak & hickory (cut in the 40ties), etc. The west side borders the Greenbrier Hotel property; the south side borders the Greenbrier State Forest; the east and north sides are at the bottom of the mountain along Dry Creek. The top of the mountain is flat; at one time a beacon for the old Greenbrier Valley Airport was located there. The top of the mountain is higher than anything else in the neighborhood, the local top of the world.

The only roads on the property are Kates Mountain Road (a well maintained gravel road) and a few unimproved roads off of the Kates Mountain Road.

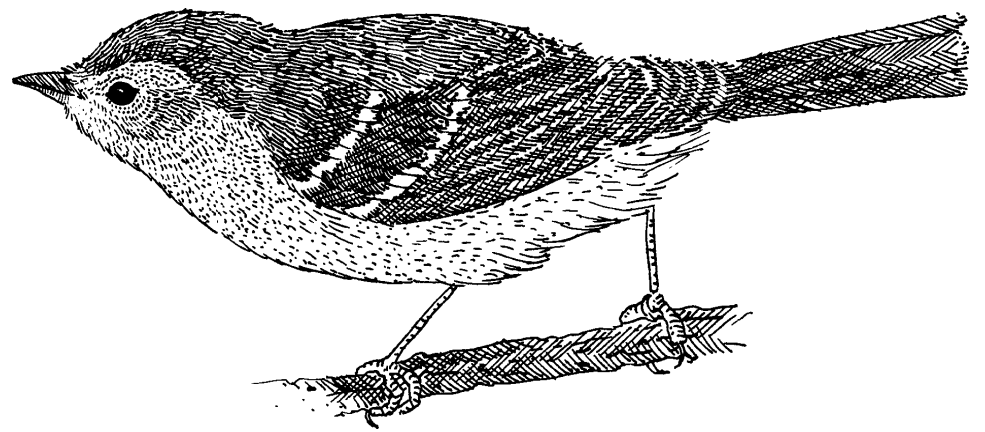
For as long as anyone can remember, access to Kates Mountain has been unrestricted. The land was not posted. It lies adjacent to Greenbrier State Forest; many people assumed that it was a part of the Forest.

Now that all may change. Joint owners (all members of the family that owns the property) are involved in a dispute over the property. Some family members seek to divide the property with the ultimate goal of cutting any marketable timber and developing any parts of the land that could be used for development.

Other family members have a different vision. They seek to have the land dealt with in such a way that the present character of much of it is preserved. This would involve possibly developing some parts of the land, the parts most remote from the State Forest. The remainder of the land, over two thirds of the total, would be preserved in its present state, possibly eventually becoming part of the State Forest.

The details of both visions have yet to be worked out. At this point, we have only these starkly contrasting visions for the future of Kates Mountain.

How this controversy is resolved is of great interests to conservationists because of the habitat involved. Kate Mountain is a natural habitat for rare plants and flowers. It has been known for the last one



hundred years as home to unusual and one of a kind plants found in West Virginia. Some parts of Kate Mountain are shale barrens, places where hard shale rocks out crop in steep hill sides. There are fifteen species of these rare plants growing on Kate Mountain. Three of these were originally described there, including Kate Mountain Clover, originally described in 1892.

The property is also home to several bird species, including the Cerulean Warbler, a species of concern.

More Tale of Two Agencies (Continued from p. 2)

as complete although no regulator now refers to himself as part of "we in the industry."

That the industry and the agency are one and the same is so much a part of the culture that everyone takes it for granted. When a coal company has a Christmas ham delivered, it is not a bribe or an attempt to gain favor. It is a recognition of the obvious—that the industry and the agency have become one and the same. An actual bribe would take some real money; who would want to own an agency that could be bought for the price of a Christmas ham? It's just a recognition of the obvious, that friends who do lots of business with each other during the year like to remember each other at Christmas.

It is small wonder that the coal industry and the coal regulators have so much in common. They are the same people. Inspectors are routinely hired by companies as Permitting Specialists or Reclamation Consultants. Pretty soon everybody in the Department of Environmental Protection either knows or used to work with everybody in the coal industry. It's no wonder they exchange cards at Christmas.

If there is any doubt that the coal industry has captured the regulators, consider how difficult it is to think about the contrast between coal

regulators and agencies where the industry has not been able to capture its regulator. Everybody accepts that the FBI and the bank robbing industry are adversaries. J. Edgar Hoover never said, "We in the robbing industry. . ." Everybody accepts that the police and murderers are adversaries. No police chief ever said, "We in the murdering business. . ."

While there are obvious differences between bank robbing, murder, and coal mining, the relationship between those who engage in those endeavors and those who are to control them is the same. Like bank robbery and murder, coal mining has the potential to do enormous harm to people and society. To survive, society has the FBI, the police, and the Department of Environmental Protection. The FBI and the police recognize that they and those who undertake the endeavors they control are adversaries.

At the Department of Environmental Protection, they are friends. It is incapable of thinking of itself as an adversary of the coal industry.

If asked, the Department would describe itself as a great compromiser, balancing the needs of the coal industry with those of the society. Such an approach shows a willful ignorance of history. Can anyone seriously argue that the laws regulat-

ing coal mining came about because the industry was having difficulty producing coal? Was it causing too little pollution, running roughshod over too few people? Was it making too little land unproductive for future use?

Or was it ruining too much water, too many lives, and too much land? When that happens, society reacts by setting up some agency in opposition to the coal industry. Until that agency is captured by the industry it is supposed to restrict, it protects water, land, and lives. So how does this apply to the Public Service Commission? Based upon the limited evidence we have, it has not yet been captured by the wind industry. Although it may remain that way, it is always possible that it will eventually be overtaken and become a rubber stamp for wind energy projects. At issue is the future of wind energy and a fair balancing of the need for electricity and the legitimate concerns that people have about wind energy projects. We shall see which way the Public Service Commission turns.

Editor's Note: President Hugh is visiting Korea. He will return with his usual column next month.

GROUPS CHALLENGE BOONE COUNTY MINE

LAW STUFF

By Cindy Rank

On September 17, 2007, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy joined Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and Coal River Mountain Watch in a court motion to restrain Jupiter Coal from proceeding with its Callisto mine in Boone County.

For those of you who met and talked with Maria Gunnoe at our Spring Review in 2006, this is the 1200 acre mountaintop removal mine on the ridge above Maria's home and the towns of Bob White, Cazy, Marthatown and Bim along Pond Fork of the Little Coal River. We asked Judge Chambers to order the Corps to rescind this permit for the same reasons he ordered the Corps to rescind four other similar permits last year.

This Callisto permit was added to our 404 litigation last year, but was not specifically addressed during the court hearings. We had understood that this mine (along with the others) would not begin until the Fourth Circuit ruled on the appeal of Judge Chambers original decision(s). However, Jupiter recently informed our lawyers that it intended to begin construction of a 212 acre Valley Fill (# 4) and the sediment control pond below the fill.

Maria took the stand in court to reiterate her personal concerns about the mine and concern for several families who live downstream of the proposed valley fill.

Here is a summary of this ongoing litigation written by Margaret Janes of the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment:

When: originally filed in September of 2005

Plaintiffs (who brought the case): West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Coal River Mountain Watch, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Defendants (who is being challenged): Army Corps of Engineers located in Huntington WV

Why: Our complaint claims the Corps issued 404 permits for valley fills at numerous mines in violation of the Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act because: 1) the Corps did not, as required, evaluate the cumulative impacts caused by valley fills to watersheds and to the region; 2) the Corps did not correctly evaluate the harm to streams; 3) the Corps did not offset that harm through mitigation; 4) the Corps did not look at associated non stream impacts caused by the valley fills (i.e. they used an inappropriate scope of analysis); and 5) the sediment ponds and instream waste treatment systems used at the mining sites did not comply with Clean Water Act.

Decision: The Case was heard in federal court before Judge Chambers of the Southern District Court of WV in Huntington. Judge Chambers decided in favor of the plaintiffs on two separate occasions in March and then in June of 2007. Both decisions are under appeal before the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond. A decision is expected sometime in the first half of 2008.

Mines involved: (note - mines were added to the case as permits were issued)

- Aracoma Coal, Camp Branch Mine – 4 Valley Fills burying 15,059 ft of stream - permit revoked on March 23, 2007 by court order.
- Elk Run Coal, Black Castle Mine – 9 Valley Fills burying 13,401 ft of stream – permit revoked on March 23, 2007 by court order.
- Independence Coal, Laxare East Mine – 7 Valley Fills burying 24,860 ft of stream – permit revoked on March 23, 2007 by court order.
- Alex Energy, Republic No. 2 Mine – 3 Valley Fills burying 9,918 ft of stream – permit revoked on March 23, 2007 by court order.
- Alex Energy, Republic No 1 Mine – 4 Valley Fills burying 10,095 ft of stream – May 27, 2007 Alex Energy to ask Corps to suspend permit.
- Mingo Logan Coal, Spruce No. 1 (Pigeonroost) Mine – 5 Valley Fills burying 30,978 ft of stream and .12 acre wetland – January 31, 2007, standstill agreement between Mingo Logan and plaintiffs.
- Jupiter Coal, Callisto Mine – 4 Valley Fills burying 5,750 feet of stream - standstill agreement between parties June 21, 2007, then subsequent no-

PEOPLE STUFF

By the people who live there

The mine, which is operated by Jupiter Holdings LLC, will permanently destroy 5,750 feet of streams in tributaries of Roach Branch, Dry Branch, and Lem White Branch of Pond Fork in Boone County. These streams eventually flow into the Little Coal River. Already, mountaintop removal mining has permanently buried or otherwise impacted more than 1,200 miles of streams and destroyed over 387,000 acres of the forests in central Appalachia.

Shane Green, 35, grew up in the last house up Dry Branch hollow, closest to the proposed valley fill. "With all the blasting, the house will be completely unlivable; you will have to condemn this place."

"The first good rain, then they'll tell you: 'We started a valley fill up there, if you get any mud coming your way...' There'll be floods and landslides," Green said. "It's disturbing the peace too. You'll be sitting here one evening, the lampshades shake, stuff starts vibrating off the table. That's disturbing the peace and they don't care. We are like rats to them," Green added.

Green's brother Timothy said, "My dad won't be able to retire in peace if that valley fill goes in up there. He was going to build a new place here and he's not going to do it now."

"We'd rather not have the valley fill up there," said a resident of Dry Branch who did not want to be identified for fear of retaliation. "This is our home and we are not planning on moving. We've been here all of our lives, we've raised our children here. You could have a big rain and that valley fill would cause a flood and wash away the home we have lived in for over 40 years."

"Our community is disappearing. If Jupiter gets this permit, it will be the proverbial nail in the coffin," said Maria Gunnoe, a Bob White resident who lives in the shadow of the Callisto Mine and is an organizer with the Huntington-based Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. "It will literally depopulate the little bit that's left of our home. Mountaintop removal is illegally polluting life-giving streams and depopulating communities for a few outside jobs and profits for coal companies. Nothing but devastation comes back to the communities where this coal is mined."

tice that Jupiter planned to construct VF 4 - hearing 9/26/07 and agreement that Jupiter would not disturb area prior to Court's ruling expected no later than Oct 12, 2007.

- Coal-Mac, Phoenix No 5 Mine – 5 Valley Fills burying 10,859 feet of stream – standstill agreement February 16, 2007 between parties.
- Independence, Falcon Mine – 4 Valley Fills burying 5,635 feet of stream – standstill agreement between parties 6/22/07

The Jupiter Callisto Mine was challenged because the company wanted to disturb new areas — i.e. build a new sediment pond and start a new 212 acre valley fill (VF # 4 on Dry Branch of Pond Fork of the Little Coal River). To prevent new disturbance, we challenged the proposal in court. The September 26, 2007, hearing was before Judge Chambers seeking a temporary restraining order/preliminary injunction to prevent Jupiter from constructing VF 4. The judge's decision on the Jupiter mine is expected no later than October 12, 2007.

HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

For the first time, a comprehensive history of West Virginia's most influential activist environmental organization. Author Dave Elkinton, the Conservancy's third president, and a twenty-year board member, not only traces the major issues that have occupied the Conservancy's energy, but profiles more than twenty of its volunteer leaders.

Learn about how the Conservancy stopped road building in Otter Creek, how a Corps of Engineers wetland permit denial saved Canaan Valley, and why Judge Haden restricted mountaintop removal mining. Also read Sayre Rodman's account of the first running of the Gauley, how college students helped save the Cranberry Wilderness, and why the highlands are under threat as never before.

With a foreword by former congressman Ken Hechler, the book's chapters follow the battle for wilderness preservation, efforts to stop many proposed dams and protect free-flowing rivers, the 25-year struggle to save the Canaan Valley, how the Corridor H highway was successfully re-routed around key environmental landmarks, and concluding with the current controversy over wind farm development. One-third of the text tells the story of the Conservancy's never-ending fight to control the abuses of coal mining, especially mountaintop removal mining. The final chapter examines what makes this small, volunteer-driven organization so successful.

From the cover by photographer Jonathan Jessup to the 48-page index, this book will appeal both to Conservancy members and friends and to anyone interested in the story of how West Virginia's mountains have been protected against the forces of over-development, mismanagement by government, and even greed.

518 pages, 6x9, color cover, published by Pocahontas Press

To order your copy for \$24.95, plus \$3.00 shipping, visit the Conservancy's website, wvhighlands.org, where payment is accepted by credit card and PayPal. Or write: WVHC, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Proceeds support the Conservancy's ongoing environmental projects.

CALLING ALL SONGBIRDS!

This is a call for musicians!!!!!!!!!!!!

Jen Osha and Sam McCreery are putting out a CD and are looking for songs about Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining. The final product will have roughly 12-15 songs and 5-7 interviews as well as an interactive map. This is the first part of larger cultural mapping project based around the Coal River Mountain area in Boone and Raleigh Counties in southern West Virginia. This project will spread awareness of MTR and show people that there is a rich culture in this area.

We are looking for songs that are place based around the Coal River Mountain area. We would like to connect the songs directly to the map.

We are also looking for suggestions for the CD's title.

We would like all song submissions in by December 30th. You can send them to:

Sam McCreery
200 Cherry St
Morgantown, WV
26501

E-mail any questions or concerns to sam.mccreery@gmail.com



The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy presents:

The Annual Fall Review And 40th Anniversary Celebration Cheat Mountain Club

October 25-28, 2007

Join us this fall when nature puts on her best party colors and we all gather to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Sitting on the banks of the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River, the historic Cheat Mountain Club has been a welcoming gateway to the great outdoors, and quiet retreat from the outside world, for over a century. Built around hunting, fishing, and wilderness adventure, the CMC continues to provide the best of West Virginia's mountain hospitality with a gracious, comfortable lodge set in a place of spectacular natural beauty. Plan to come! We will have art, outings, presentations, a reunion, a banquet dinner, and lots of fun.

Program details are still coming together, but a tentative itinerary includes:

October 25, Thursday: Afternoon Check-in, evening program and social.

October 26, Friday: Guided outings and hikes to nearby locales, riding one of the area's excursion railroads, fly-fishing on the Shavers Fork, or just relaxing at the lodge. After dinner we will have an evening program with plenty of time to greet old friends and meet new ones. Author and veteran WVHC Leader, Dave Elkinton will be on hand to launch his new book, "Fighting to Save the Highlands: The First 40 Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy"

October 27, Saturday: More guided hikes and outings. In the afternoon we will have a Reunion of veteran Conservancy leaders: Past officers, Voice editors, and issue activists have been invited, and already several have committed to join us. After an Anniversary Banquet Dinner, we will have a panel discussion featuring three leaders from three different decades and issues. Moderated by Rupert Cutler (a founder), the panel will include Bob Burrell (first Voice Editor, and second President), Cindy Rank (past President and mining leader) and Frank Young (past President and wind energy leader). Jessie Milnes and Andy Fitzgibbon will provide live music after the panel discussion.

October 28, Sunday: Possibly more outings and the Highlands Conservancy Annual Meeting beginning at 9:30 am and followed immediately by the Board Meeting.

Lodging:

Space in the CMC Lodge is limited, first come, first serve.

- Double Occupancy room beds are \$40/night
- Beds in the 3rd floor loft (1 King, 4 singles) are \$25/night
- Cost of the rooms in the lodge includes breakfast.

Camping is available on the grounds: \$5.00/person

Learn more about CMC at www.cheatmountainclub.com

Other Nearby Accommodations:

Greenbrier Inn (Bed and Breakfast)

www.greenbrierinn.us

Durbin, WV

(866) 387-2469

The Hermitage Motel

www.hermitagemotel.com

Durbin, WV

(888) 456-4808

Linger Inn Vacation Retreat

<http://www.bbonline.com/wv/lingerin>

Huttonsville, WV

(304) 335-4434

Meals:

Breakfast for folks not staying in the lodge: \$5

Bag Lunches: \$8

Dinner: \$20

For More Information and Reservations,

Contact Buff Rodman

buffrodman@hotmail.com

(412) 828-8983

Join Now !!!

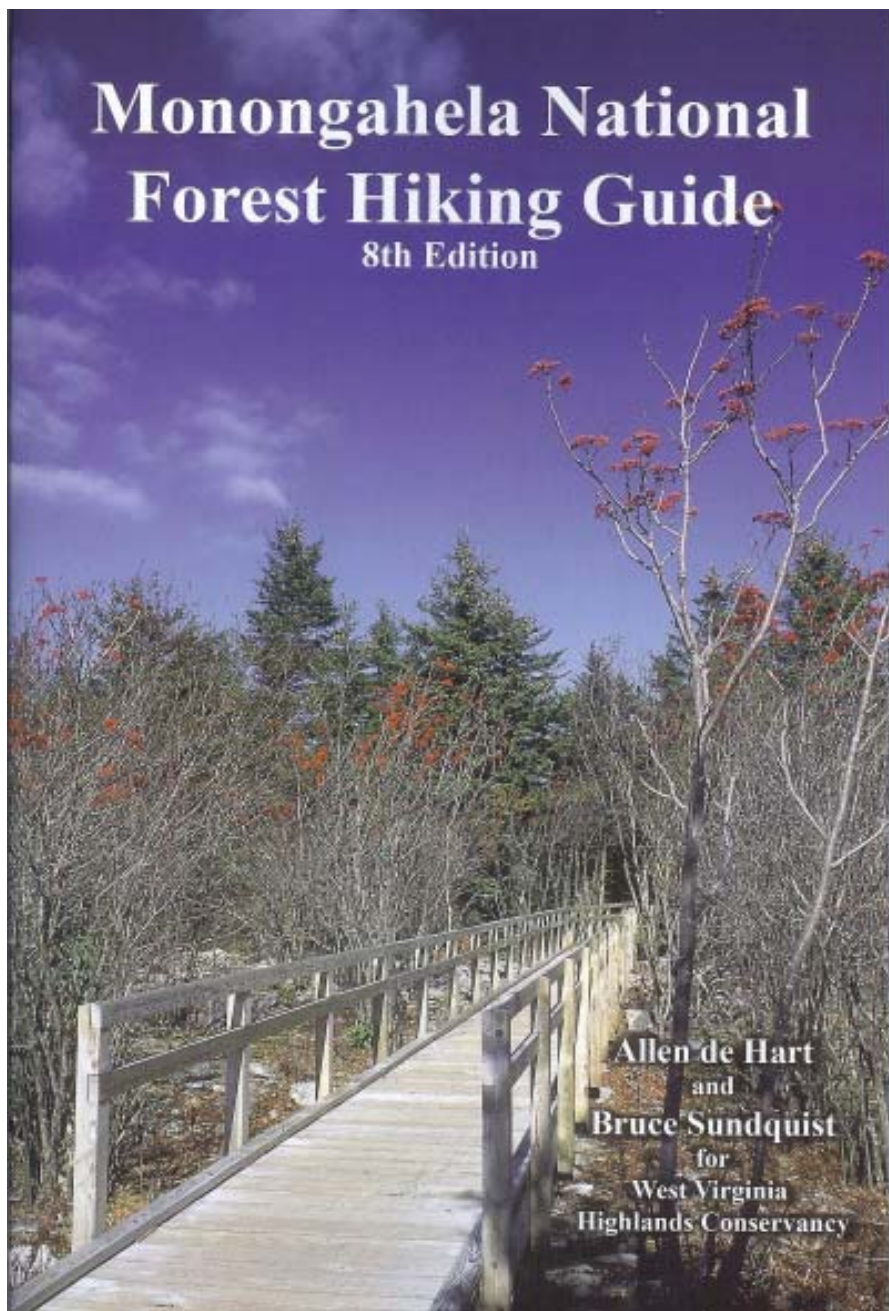
Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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	\$ 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!**



The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

By Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist

Describes 180 U.S. Forest Service trails (847 miles total) in one of the best (and most popular) areas for hiking, back-packing and ski-touring in this part of the country (1436 sq. miles of national forest in West Virginia's highlands). 6x9" soft cover, 368 pages, 86 pages of maps, 57 photos, full-color cover, Ed.8 (2006)

**Send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:
 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**

P.O. Box 306

Charleston, WV 25321

OR

Order from our website at

www.wvhighlands.org

New 8TH Edition Now Available on CD

WV Highlands Conservancy proudly offers an Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide (8th Edition), with many added features.

This new CD edition includes the text pages as they appear in the printed version by Allen deHart and Bruce Sundquist in an interactive pdf format. It also includes the following mapping features, developed by WVHC volunteer Jim Solley, and not available anywhere else:

- All pages and maps in the new Interactive CD version of the Mon hiking guide can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
- 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: 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.
- ALL NEW Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of many of the popular hiking areas, including Cranberry, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and many more

Price: \$20.00 from the same address.

KEEPING FOOD SAFE FROM BEARS

By Helen McGinnis

Thirty-five years ago black bears were rare in the Mon. Now they are common. The increase in the bear population is probably due to the WV Division of Natural Resources (DNR) modification of the bear hunting season in response to knowledge of bear behavior gained from radio-telemetry studies. These studies established that pregnant females and females with dependent cubs go into hibernation earlier than males. By setting the bear season late, the DNR assured that most breeding females would be in their dens, safe from bear hunters.

Not only are bears increasing in numbers, but so are humans out camping, backpacking and building their homes in bear habitat, guaranteeing an increase in contact between the two species. Unfortunately, people inadvertently train bears on how to get human food, garbage and food set out for birds. An excellent book is available, aimed especially at homeowners in bear habitat:

Masterson, Linda. 2006. *Living with Bears: A Practical Guide to Bear Country*. PixyJack Press. 255 pp. This book goes overboard with its recommendations for backpackers. Only backpackers in grizzly country would want to follow them.

You don't just want to protect your property and your food; you also want to protect the bear. A bear that becomes used to raiding campsites and homes for food sooner or later will be killed when it becomes too bold. "A fed bear is a dead bear."

CAR CAMPING: Never leave food or garbage unattended when you leave your campsite or retire for the night. Store food and garbage in your car, not in your tent. Obviously, you should never deliberately feed bears or leave garbage behind when you pack up and leave.

BACKPACKING: Don't leave food or garbage unattended in camp. Don't fool yourself and try to bury garbage. Bears and other animals will smell it and dig it up. You will be teaching bears to visit popular campsites. Sooner or later they'll be trying to get food while the campsites are still occupied.

Here are four methods of keeping your food and camping equipment safe. Three are "rope over branch" variations. They are relatively easy to do, requiring only rope, waterproof bags for storing your food, and (preferably) a small cloth bag with a drawstring to hold the rock that you will be throwing over a branch.

The problem with the "rope over branch" methods is that savvy, well-educated bears in areas that are very popular with backpackers or overnight canoeists learn how to get food caches down. Ropes can be yanked or chewed. A branch can be broken down or the bear can do a balancing act out to where the cache is hung. Also, you need sizable trees and suitable branches. If you do cache your food with rope(s), be sure it's a good cache. Otherwise, you are just teaching bears, step by step, how to raid good caches.

Unless bear cables or other devices are provided, bear canisters are the only solution in treeless areas inhabited by savvy bears. So far, I am not aware of any bears reaching the "savvy" level in the backcountry of the Mon.

One Rope Over Branch: Required: 30 feet of nylon rope about 1/4" in diameter. Waterproof stuff bag or garbage bag for storing the food. (I would never use my pack to cache food because I would not want it demolished if a bear should get hold of it.) Highly recommended: a homemade small bag of sturdy fabric about 2 X 4" with a drawstring to hold the rock. It will help prevent the rock from coming loose from the rope and jumping back to bonk you on the head.

Procedure: Find a branch strong enough to hold your food bag, at least 12 feet above the ground. Put a rock or rocks in your little bag, tie it to the end of the rope, and throw the rock over the branch. The rope should be at least 4 feet from the tree trunk—6 feet is better. (Think of a large bear on the trunk reaching out with its long arm and clawed forepaw.) Tie the food

bag to the rope and pull it up so that the bottom of the bag is at least 10 feet from the ground. It that's difficult, use a branch or a trekking pole to push up on the bottom of the bag. Tie the long end of the rope to a tree trunk high off the ground.

Problems: Suitable branches may be hard to find or non-existent. Savvy bears will know how to pull on the rope or break down the branch to get the cache.

Two Ropes Through Crotches in Trees: This method may work where trees are present but branches for the one-rope method cannot be found. Required: two 30-ft ropes and rock bag.

Procedure: Find two trees with suitable crotches at least 12 feet apart. Throw ropes over the crotches. Tie the ends of the ropes to the food bag and hoist it up so that the bag is suspended between the two trees, at least 10 feet above the ground and 6 feet from the trunk of each tree.

Problems: A push-over for savvy bears. I personally do not have the throwing accuracy or strength to do this. This method is very popular in the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area of northern Minnesota. Here I have seen many ropes caught in high-up tree crotches, some with attached rocks, suggesting that the ropes often become snagged and cannot be removed.

The Loop Method: This method makes the rope inaccessible to savvy bears. Required: one 30-foot rope, two food bags.

Procedure: Put your food in two bags of roughly equal weight. Find a suitable branch, which needs to be higher than required for the one rope method. Throw the rope over the branch, attach one food bag, and pull and push the bag as high as you can get it. Take the second food bag and tie it to the other side of the rope as high as you can reach. Tie a generous loop in the rope about 6 inches long. Tuck the rest of the rope up next to bag, out of reach from the ground. Then push this bag up until it is level with the first bag. Both bags need to be at least 10 feet above the ground.

To retrieve the bags, insert a branch or trekking pole into the loop and pull the second bag down.

Problems: A suitable branch for suspending the cache may be hard to find. It definitely helps to be tall so that you can tie the second bag as high as possible. Savvy bears can still break down the branch or do a balancing act out to the food bag.

Bear Canisters: They stand up to the most savvy black bears and grizzlies, too (not that we have them in the Mon!). Many national parks require backpackers to use them. Required: bear canister and for some brands, an outer fabric sack with loops so that you can attach the canister to your pack.

Procedure: Put your food in the canister. Close the lid. Leave the canister on the ground (not in the sack). BearVault canisters are rain proof.

Do they work? One national park where they have been required for years is Yosemite. In 2005 I was backpacking in the adjacent Emigrant Wilderness, where canisters are not required. I met a man who'd been backpacking in Yosemite recently. One afternoon he had barely reached his campsite, removed his pack, and detached the canister when a bear showed up. It looked at him, looked at the canister, looked at him and the canister again, and left without even trying to get at the food. A truly savvy bear!

In grizzly country, you would put the canister a long ways from your camp. That shouldn't be necessary for black bears. I wouldn't leave a canister near a large stream or lake, just in case it got batted into the water.

Problems: Expensive—\$70 to \$80.00. Heavy: A BearVault canister, preferred by many, weighs 2 lbs. 9 oz. Limited capacity: It looks as if it would be a struggle to get more than 4-man-days of food into a canister. It may also be inconvenient to attach to a pack. You can read reviews of the BearVault canister and how to attach it by Googling "Backpack Gear Test."

Fate of Passersby

By Betsy Reeder

In this Appalachian confusion of landscape
Ridges snag the sky as it swims by
Collecting tendrils in hollows
The Gorge gathers her bedding of mist every night.

A land loathe to be parted from the sky
Wise to the lifeline of water it supplies
Vapor and trees intermingle, nearly indistinguishable
An embrace released reluctantly as the sun climbs

I, too, have been snagged passing by
Landed at last in a bedspread of trees
Sprawled on steep, worn-rock folds

Earth, forest, mountain, water, sky
Pieced by hands as old as river stones
Stitched by song of bird and flash of fish
An animate quilt of greens and blues and golds

Anchor me here
That the rising sun only warms me
Never lifts me away.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get free **I ♥ Mountains** bumper sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in with the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to provide 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** stickers. Let Julian know which (or both) you want.



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy intern James Tawner with Prof. Angela Lamb of Concord University. Mr. Tawner and Conservancy Vice President Julian Martin did a presentation at Concord on September 25.

Are You Lost? Does the Post Office Think You Are?

Attention Voice Readers!

Do you know if your address can be confirmed by the USPS as a “deliverable” address? That means that your street address, city, and state can be looked up in the USPS database and assigned a zip+4 code.

You can find out by going to this website <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>. You type in your street address, city and state, hit submit, and it will respond with a zip+4 code, or tell you that the address was not found. If your address was not found, you can check with your local post office to find out why.

If your address can't be confirmed on the USPS website, you are probably still receiving mail there – especially in WV, where everybody knows everybody – but the USPS charges us more to deliver your Voice, and sometimes they return it to us. Every month a few copies of the Voice are returned to us as “undeliverable – insufficient address” although we know we have been sending it to that address for months or even years. I will be attempting to make our address list conform to the USPS standards, but it would make this gargantuan task much easier if you, yes you, would check out your address at the USPS website above and email me any corrections at blittle@citynet.net.

And you will be helping us save money. Thank you. Beth Little, Administrator

Your comments and opinions are important to us.

Please email any poems, letters, commentaries to the VOICE editor at johnmcferrin@aol.com or real, honest to goodness, mentioned in the United States Constitution mail to WV Highlands Conservancy, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

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

October 6 - 8 (Sat-Mon) 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.

October 6-8 (Sat - Mon Columbus Day): MNF, WV, Cranberry Backcountry Backpacking trip: 31 mile strenuous trek with 4500 ft elevation change utilizing the beautiful Pocahontas and Fork Mt trails. Several vistas. Three miles of road walking required to close the loop. Tentatively, the trek starts at Summit Lake near Richwood. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or E-mail at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

Sat, Oct 13. East Fork of Greenbrier proposed Wilderness hike -5 miles of moderate difficulty along scenic East Fork of Greenbrier River in fall colors. Call/email Beth Little for more info and to confirm at blittle@citynet.net 304-653-4277.

October 13 Lake Sherwood: Day trip to 165 acre lake, particularly beautiful in the fall. Meet in White Sulphur Springs at the intersection of Highway 92 and 60 at 11:00 a.m. We will tour and then drive up Highway 92 to Neola and out 14/1 to the lake for lunch. We will also hike about a mile up a native brook trout stream. Most of us would leave at 5:00 p.m. although there are facilities for those who want to extend their visit. Leader Don Gasper, (304) 472-3704

***October 20-22 (Sat - Mon): GWNF, VA, Cole Mt, Mount Pleasant Backpacking Trip:** Day one - Backpack approximately 4 miles and set up base camp at Cow Camp AT Shelter. Day 2 - day hike approximately 12 moderate miles visiting 3 magnificent vistas: Cole Mt, Mount Pleasant and Pompey Mountain. Day 3 - backpack back down the mountain. Note: Elevation Gain on day one is approximately 2400 feet over 3 miles. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or E-mail at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

October 26-28 (Friday through Sunday) West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review, Cheat Mountain Club. Various outings available. For details see schedule on page 8.

***November 3-4 (Sat - Sun): GWNF, VA, Big Schloss Overnight Backpack:** 12 mile moderate backpacking trip. This may be suitable for novices if you are experienced hikers. The hardest part is a 1400 foot climb over 4 miles on the first day. The short out and back to the primary vista will be packless. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or E-mail at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

Items with an (*) are VA trips.


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 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 distribute them.

HATS FOR SALE

West Virginia Highlands 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  *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. Beside the logo is "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" in green. The lower back of the hat has the *We  Mountains* slogan.

Pictures of both appear on our website www.wvhighlands.org. 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

BACKPACKING IN LAUREL FORK WILDERNESS

By Mike Juskelis

Whenever we go on a backpacking trip over a 3 day holiday weekend we try to avoid the places we know will be crowded. We leave venues like Dolly Sods and Otter Creek Wilderness to the hiking hordes that descend upon them and seek out a place rich in solitude. This time we chose the Laurel Fork Wilderness. Initially I had laid out a 30 mile loop but this required hiking 2.7 miles on CO 27 on the final day. A pre-hike scouting trip 3 weeks before the outing revealed that some sections of this road were without shoulders and could prove hazardous to pedestrians. We decided to plant a car at the Allegheny Trailhead on this road and do a "drivers only" shuttle at the end of the trip. The plan worked out great.

I was joined by Doc, Gadget Girl, Cave-man, Paul, Skywalker, Da Judge, Jack and Jill. We assembled at the northern terminus of the West Fork Rail Trail (also part of the Allegheny Trail for 3 miles) and began hiking around noon. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the humidity was low.

During the West Fork Rail Trail portion we passed one pastoral view after another. Instead of looking down into a farm valley we found ourselves looking at old barns, homes, outbuildings and green pastures all with backdrops of moun-



tain ridges and azure blue skies. The predominant ridge to the east was Middle Mountain (which we would cross twice on this trip) and to the west was Shavers Mountain.

We turned east onto the High Falls Trail and had lunch in the shade near Glady Fork. We soon found ourselves hiking up the Beulah trail. The initial climb wasn't bad but the second climb to the ridgeline was steeper. From there we descended into Laurel Fork Wilderness – South where we spent the night.

The next day proved to be somewhat challenging, not because of the difficulty of the terrain

(It was nearly flat for the most part and without rocks.) but because in at least 3 places the trail just seemed to disappear in the middle of meadows chock full of chest high Golden Rod and Flat-topped Asters. They're pretty to look at but very difficult to walk through. As we floundered around in the meadow I looked to our right and the railroad grade we were following miraculously reappeared. We beat feet to it and dropped our packs once we hit the grade. Doc, GG and I backtracked on the grade and marked the sketchy trail with rock cairns and two bottomless galvanized wash tubs left over from the logging days. It seems that the trail simply followed the edge of the meadow until it was back on the grade on the other side.

In another mile or two we found ourselves in a similar predicament. This time the meadow was substantially smaller and less weedy. We reconnected with the railroad grade in no time.

I should note here that except for these two times we were mostly walking on an old road and/or railroad grade that closely paralleled the Laurel River offering splendid views of the valley and Middle Mountain. The final meadow we had to work through was a straight shot while staying parallel to the river. I had scouted this portion on my last trip and was very familiar with it. The high weeds that I had stomped through back then were still pretty smashed down and showed the way quite well. Soon after that we forded the river and arrived at a very large campsite with fire ring shaded by some very majestic Hemlocks. Even with all of the "bushwhacking" we were finished hiking by 3:30. After setting up our tents some of us waded in the river while others took little power naps (That would be me.).

Having been deprived of fire the previous night Skywalker built one of his patented dryer lint/tee-pee/never-fail-to-light fires. He insisted on making us wait until 7:45 before he lit it. It was indeed a good fire.

We awoke the next day to even more blue skies. It seems that we all took our time getting ready but we still found ourselves on the trail by 8:30. We usually don't start until around 9:00. The trails today would be well-worn, signed and blazed. Little time would be spent decision making. The views of the meadows along Beaver Dam Run were top drawer. The climb up and over Middle Mountain was through a slight saddle in the ridge

so it was much easier than our first day's climb. We made it to FR 14 pretty quickly, walked up it a few yards, crossing Beaver Dam Run, and then jumped on the McCray Run Trail.

The first 1.2 miles of this trail is a pretty boring walk on a service road but we made great



time. At the end of the service road we turned right onto an old grassy woods road. Our opinion of this trail soon changed as we found ourselves walking through a dense Hemlock Forest. For about 2 miles I don't think we saw another species of tree except for an occasional Birch. Most of this section was flat or downhill. As far as plain old forest walking this section has to be one of the best!!!

At the end of the McCray Trail we turned left onto the Allegheny Trail, the final leg of the trip. Most of the time the trail used an old railroad grade that closely followed Glady Creek with its nice swimming holes. Here again the predominant tree specie was Hemlock. There were two places where the trail left the grade to avoid blowouts, rising steeply high above the stream and then following a narrow rocky side-hill trail before descending back to the railroad grade. Knowing that Doc's car was only a couple miles away made these challenges seem less significant.

My research led me to believe that we would probably have to do a bootless wade of Glady Fork. As we arrived at the ford we were all pleasantly surprised to find a well-constructed steel and wood bridge perched high above the fork. The last hiker came out of the woods at 1:30. We quickly recovered the other cars and were heading back home by a little after 2:00. Total distance was about 28 miles. It was a great trip!

ROAMING THE ROARING PLAINS

By Mike Juskelis

I honestly don't know how to start this report. Everything was so spectacular. We had perfect weather (though a little bit nippy at night), we only had to carry our packs in and out 2.5 miles and the terrain and scenery was more rugged and awe-inspiring than I remembered from our 2005 trip. I wish The Highlands Voice was printed in color. We could then just put photos from all of the vistas (too many to count) here and let them tell the tale. Since we work in black and white I'll provide some details instead.

Since we only had to backpack 2.5 miles to our base camp at the entrance to the Hidden Passage we all slept in, arriving at the trailhead by 1:00 P.M. I was joined by Hard Core, Short Stack, Jody, Doc, Cave Man, Cognac Jack, Skywalker and Indiana Moser.

By 1:30 we were on the trail. We hiked at a pretty good clip but stopped to check out a new campsite and a couple of nice vistas along the way.

We arrived at camp around 3:00 and casually began setting up our tents and collecting firewood. It was going to be a cold one tonight! After we completed our camp chores we hiked down to a hidden vista to take in a view of the South Prong Drainage and the ridge that defines the southern rim of the Rohrbaugh Plains in Dolly Sods.

The next morning we woke up to find frost on the surrounding vegetation. We started a small fire to knock the chill off and prepared breakfast. We were all eager to start our hike along the canyon rim. We were

on our way by 9:00. Knowing the ruggedness of the terrain we approximated that we would make it back between 5 and 6 P.M. This included taking time to enjoy almost every vista along the way. Needless to say the views were outstanding.

Traversing the many talus slopes proved a lot easier with day packs then compared to carrying a 30 – 40 pound backpack. Still, we had to boulder hop the last rock field for nearly ¼ mile before descending it to join something that more closely resembled a trail. We were all just about done with rock scrambling by then.

Once on a real trail we picked up the pace. We were walking through some new growth woods and about ready to enter a sunny field. I placed my foot next to a cairn and instantly heard that all too familiar "SSSSSS" sound. Less than a foot away from my foot was a five foot long Timber Rattler with his head raised in cobra fashion. We all fell back a few steps and watched our new reptilian friend. He did not want to give ground. We found an easy detour around the "Mother of all snakes" and continued on our way.

We were following what appeared to be an old grassy jeep road that periodically went through some young woods. For a while the trail seemed to peter out but we found it again in a sunny fern meadow. At the end of the meadow we found ourselves walking on a well worn trail under a predominantly Red Spruce canopy.

Soon we were at a huge campsite at

the junction with the Roaring Plains Trail. There was a cliff that offered one final outstanding view of the Long Run drainage and much of what we had just hiked. After a well deserved break we made quick work of the



Roaring Plains Trail, 1.5 miles of FR70 and a short but steep section of the South Prong Trail to arrive back at camp. We completed the hike at exactly 5:00.

Knowing that the walk back to our vehicles was going to be relatively easy we rose the final day at our leisure. Even with taking the time to dry our tents and making breakfast we were on the trail by 9:30. We were finished by 11:15. After freshening up some of us chose to explore the Bird banding area and Bear Rocks while the rest of us headed home. I personally feel this has been our best adventure this year.



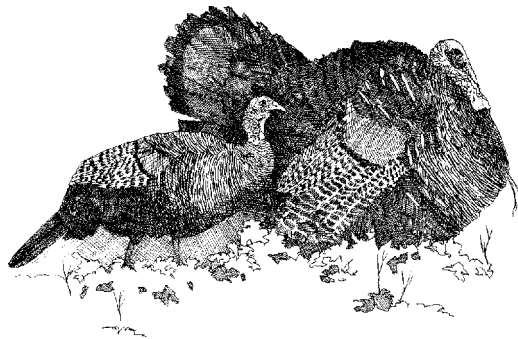
THE EFFECTS OF CLEARCUTTING ON THE NATIONAL FOREST

By Don Gasper

This is to describe more fully the hydrological environmental impacts of just "clearcutting" and "selective cutting", and to recommend something of a solution.

The National Forest new management plan for the Monongahela National Forest sets the stage for the next 20 years of logging. It relies more heavily on clearcuts and they could be twice as large. This paper is prepared because of the immediate impact of sediment on brook trout streams; trout eggs must spend the entire winter under the gravel and are easily smothered by the settling of sediments. Also many of the National Forest brook trout stream beds were found to have sediment fines at levels that would begin to reduce reproductive success. The New Plan still gives no special protection to native brook trout, though they are a "management indicator species" to be monitored.

Clearcutting effects do, of course, apply to all headwater streams, and sediment production does prevent the top-down promise of channel recovery and flood reduction that might be obvious to all at the end of the next 20 years in little-disturbed watersheds.



Clearcutting removes the canopy and its evapotranspiration which dries the soil. It takes 5 to 10 years for canopy re-establishment. Whether the patch is 1 acre or 40 acres (the National Forest's new maximum) the same hydrological problems arise. The channel immediately below then must carry over twice as much annual flow than it has in the last 100 years, and channel adjustments then must be made. Peak flow increases are measurable when only 25% of a watershed is clearcut or when an additional 25% is clearcut. Peak flows cause bank and bottom scour, and even "head-cutting" where the channel enlarges itself upstream toward the ridge-tops.

This scour produces a sediment load that the channel must carry. Sometimes it is observed as a "sediment wave" that must work its way downstream causing gravel bars that increasingly deflects the flow into banks that generates even more sediment, and as banks collapse, they can even cause "tree topple". The widened stream is shallower and warmer, and its pools are filled. Food and over winter survival are reduced. The riparia, with its protected stream-side shade necessary for cool trout water, is undermined from within.

Secondly, a sediment load can so plug and raise a riffle that it effectively lowers the bank and then "out of bank" peak flows occur. These may scour a new channel generating a truckload of gravel every 10 feet - and this may go on for hundreds of feet. This is a catastrophic event.

Rather than being "attenuated", or lost in a larger channel, the impact of a small clearcut can cascade and magnify and influence the channel far off site below. Its effect may be considered lost somewhere downstream, but there it may add to more subtle, little recognized forces, and break a bank at a weak point. Downstream the advantage of "desynchronization" of high flow deliveries are generally off-set by increasing hydrological abuse in the larger watershed, and there is no advantage as it all becomes even flashier and more flood prone.

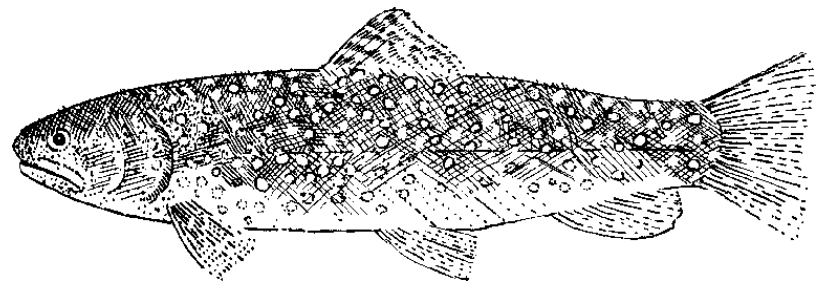
These necessary hydrological consequences of clearcutting call to

question whether clearcutting is any longer a respectable forest practice. There are no "best management practices", other than canopy retention itself, that foresters have devised that address this at all. Lastly, "clear-felling" studies, wherein trees were simply cut and were not removed and there were no roads or disturbance, showed that without the functioning forest canopy, peak flows, channel scour and sediment increased. In fact, many studies show more sediment is produced from channel scour than from surface logging disturbance. They are, of course, additive.

In conventional logging some roads are necessary for clearcuts. These may be active haul roads only a year or two every 100 years - more likely, most, every 50 years. This is not clear to me, nor is the fact that they may over time reach everywhere, every patch. However it is clear that "selective cutting" to reach every tree generally results in ten percent of the watershed being permanently transformed into road surface that may be reentered every 20 years. Roads, themselves, are harmful to stream channels.

Roads superimpose a new drainage system upon the present one. Their compacted surface and their interception of slower subsurface flow contribute to rapid ditchflow that invariably results in higher peak flows. These are in addition to peaks due entirely to canopy removal. These peak flows, as described earlier, are hydrologically destructive of channel stability and integrity and reverse any small step toward channel recovery.

In some places today's forests need some cutting. They need some thinning and some "timber-stand improvement". The regrowth of this forest, the first we have ever seen, has been a haphazard, chaotic, struggle, we assume toward a beginning "climax" state at perhaps 200 years. The National Forests presently must have some harvest. An allowable quota is determined by political regional influence and the inherent sustainability and improvement of the forest as a resource. The New Plan calls for about the same amount of timber harvest as in the past. This could be responsibly accomplished by selective logging using helicopters.



Speakers Available !!!!!

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

AL GORE TRAINING PROJECT TAPS ALLAN S. TWEDDLE AS GLOBAL WARMING MESSENGER

Charleston resident, Allan Tweddle, has recently completed a training program led by former Vice President Al Gore to spread the message about the scientific basis of, and solutions for, global warming.

"Allan is an outstanding example of the millions of Americans who have been energized by the call to action on the climate crisis," said Gore. "We are so pleased that he has made a serious commitment to this challenge by coming to Nashville to become part of this unprecedented grassroots effort."

"Allan will be spending the next year making presentations around West Virginia discussing how individuals and businesses, schools, and other organizations can be a major part of the solution to the growing crisis of

global warming," continued Gore. "We are together cautiously optimistic that real economic opportunities and the reversal of global warming coexist."

Allan was part of a select group of individuals chosen to receive this important training. Each trainee took part in an intensive tutorial about the scientific and social issues surrounding global warming, led by Gore and a team of renowned scientists and environmental educators. In addition, each received technical training to become experienced presenters of a version of Gore's computer-based slide show, which became the basis of his best-selling book and documentary film, "An Inconvenient Truth."

Organizations interested in inviting Allan to present the Climate Change Project are invited to contact him at allantweddle@msn.com.



GARDEN PARTY A GROWING SUCCESS

The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition would like to extend a great big thank you to everyone who helped make the 6th Annual Garden Party at Walnut Farm a HUGE success.

We hope that the 300+ supporters who attended this year's Garden Party had an enjoyable time. It was a beautiful day with lots of great friends, supporters, food, music and fun.

Special Thanks to;

Our Special Guest

The Honorable Congressman Alan Mollohan

Our Musicians!

Sam Lamont

Wolf Creek Session - Joan & Keith Pitzer, Mike Broderick and Alice Fleischman

Supporting Restaurants who provided all the great food and beverages:

Siriannis Restaurant - Davis

Hellbender Burritos - Davis

Bright Morning Inn - Davis

Supporting Businesses who provided raffle and auction items:

Whitegrass Ski Touring Center

Pathfinder

The Adventure's Edge

Patagonia

Piannafiddle

The Wild Bean

Elk Ridge Nature Works

Highland Prospects - Davis

Appalachian Woodenware

Outfitter at Harper's Ferry



Black Bear Burritos - Morgantown

Whitegrass Cafe - Canaan Valley

West Virginia Brewing Company - Morgantown

Patchwork Films

Omni Productions

Mike Breiding Hostas

Becky Young Baskets

John Jett

Rob Riffe - Mystic Crystal

The Art Company - Davis

A little Behind

Mountain State Balloon Company

West Virginia Raptor Rehabilitation Center