

Return Service requested



# The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

## Major milestone in efforts to protect the Monongahela National Forest

# WILDERNESS BILL INTRODUCED!

By Hugh Rogers

On January 29, West Virginia's Congressional delegation introduced the "Wild Monongahela Act – A National Legacy for West Virginia's Special Places." This bill marks a major milestone in the Highlands Conservancy's continuing efforts to protect the Monongahela National Forest. But the work isn't over yet.

It has been forty years since we set out to gain wilderness protection for the Mon's special places. Not long after the Highlands Conservancy was formed, our attention was drawn to a host of threats to the forest. Proposed super highways along our scenic ridgelines, dams on our free-flowing rivers, and massive clear cuts had shocked West Virginians and visitors who love these areas. In the 1970's and 1980's, the Highlands Conservancy played a lead role in protecting five wilderness areas, amounting to roughly 8% of the Mon's 919,000 acres.

Today, the forest is at risk again. Massive high voltage power transmission lines have the Mon in their sights. Energy developments such as gas exploration, coal mining, and huge wind generating facilities are also threatening our treasured national forest lands. The Forest Service continues clear cutting the forest and

carving it up with roads. The conclusion reached by the Highlands Conservancy's founders still remains valid: Wilderness designation is the only way we can assure these special places are protected for future generations.

Wilderness protection for national forest lands is not easy to achieve. In 1983, when the bill protecting the Cranberry Wilderness passed and was signed into law, the headline in the Highlands Voice read, "After 12 years, Cranberry Becomes Wilderness." To see legislation introduced and passed requires, more than anything, stick-to-it-iveness.

Our current efforts officially began at the 2001 Highlands Conservancy Spring Review. The theme was "Celebrating West Virginia's Wilderness." Many interested members came together in Canaan Valley to discuss how best to continue the tradition. Ed Zahniser, son of Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser, gave a moving keynote address, "Wilderness in the Blood."

Soon afterwards, then Administrative Assistant, Dave Saville, got together with Helen McGinnis, Don Gasper, Peter Shoenfeld and other Highlands Conser-



Spice Run Proposed Wilderness Area

Photo by Jonathan Jessup

McGinnis, Don Gasper, Peter Shoenfeld and other Highlands Conser-

(More on p.8)

### What's inside:

Thoughts from President Hugh	2	Speakers available	8	Spring review	16
Roster of officers	2	Get hats and bumper stickers	9	Get T-shirts	16
Power line news	3	How to join	10	Get a brochure	16
Massey pays fines	4	Get a great history book	10	Save a few trees	16
Letters make a difference	5	Our readers write	11	Chance to count frogs	16
Reasons to hope	6	Outings	13		
Board highlights	7	Get a hiking guide	14		
Tree planting	7,8	State of the forests	15		
Important notice	7	Follow the birds	15		

Visit us on the web at [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org)

From the Heart of the Highlands  
by Hugh Rogers

## “The Verdict Is Just the Beginning”

John Grisham, whose legal thrillers set moral issues to the music of suspenseful plots, took a few years off to write a non-fiction book on the same theme. Now he's back with *The Appeal*, and though it's being sold as a novel, and the characters are his invention, it doesn't sound fictitious at all—not to West Virginians, anyway.

When a chemical company loses a jury trial over toxic waste it dumped into a town's water supply, the company's president spends millions of dollars to elect a sympathetic judge to the state's supreme court, which will hear the appeal. He wants protection beyond that one case. It's the precedent, and the company's exposure to future lawsuits, that really concern him.

In a nutshell, as the publisher's advertisements put it, “The verdict is just the beginning.” Grisham has been told that the plot seems “far-fetched.” On the “Today” show at the end of January, he said this: “It's already happened. It happened a few years ago in West Virginia. A guy owned a coal company. He got tired of being sued. He elected his guy to the Supreme Court. It switched back his way. Now he doesn't worry about getting sued.”

Earlier in the month, the coal guy in question, Don Blankenship, CEO of Massey Energy, had appeared in newspapers all over the country in photos taken on the Riviera during the summer of 2006, while his latest appeal was pending. He didn't look worried. His companion was the Chief Justice, Elliott Maynard—not to be confused with Justice Brent Benjamin, the guy who'd been elected in 2004 thanks to a Blankenship-funded multi-million-dollar ad campaign smearing Benjamin's opponent.

Last November, both justices voted to overturn a \$50 million jury verdict against Massey Energy (that verdict is now worth \$76 million, including interest over the five and a half years since it was awarded). The vote was 3 to 2.

The plaintiffs filed motions for a rehearing and asked the two justices not to sit on the case, given their potential conflicts of interest. The Chief Justice did recuse himself; Justice Benjamin did not. It seems the photos from Monaco were more current—and more embarrassing—than the three-year-old ad campaign.

In a brief statement, the Chief Justice said his recusal was necessary to avoid the appearance of impropriety. No appearance in the papers, no impropriety? The fact that his friendship with Blankenship went back thirty years had not moved him at all. One of the plaintiff's lawyers commented, “It's unfortunate that it took so long for the justice to disclose his very extensive dealings with Don Blankenship.”

Meanwhile, in other dealings with Blankenship and his company, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a \$30 million settlement of more than four thousand violations of the Clean Water Act. Massey agreed to pay a fine of \$20 million and spend another \$10 million for “pollution control improvements.” Based on the penalties authorized in the Act, the fine could have been well over a billion dollars.

We're not complaining about the size of the fine. We're just disgusted with where the money went, and what the settlement means. After all, the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is supposed to monitor compliance with the Clean Water Act. When the EPA has to step in, it's like having the State Board of Education come

**(Hugh's not finished yet. More on p. 15)**

## Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662, hugh.rogers@gmail.com  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Buff Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139; (412) 828-8983; buffrodman@hotmail.com  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE AFFAIRS: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Marilyn Shoenfeld, HC 70 Box 553, 23 Sands Springs Lane, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, mshoenfeld@mountain.net  
SECRETARY: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733, johnmcferrin@aol.com  
TREASURER: Bob Marshall, 886-Z Divide Ridge Road, Kenna WV 25248 (304)545-6817, woodhavenwva@netscape.net  
PAST PRESIDENT: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945, fyoung@mountain.net

### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2009)

Bob Henry Baber, 207 Howard St., Glenville, WV 26351, (304) 462-0320, mayorbobhenrybaber@yahoo.com  
Dave Fouts, HC 80, Box 993, Maysville, WV 26833, (304) 749-8172, foutsberg@citlink.net  
Roger Forman 100 Capitol Street Suite 400, Charleston WV 25301, rdr@citynet.net; (304) 346-6300 work (304) 389-4748 cell.  
Larry Thomas P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larrythomas@aol.com  
Carter Zerbe, 16 Arlington Ct., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)343-3175; scz3667@aol.com

### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2008)

Don Gasper, 4 Ritchie St., Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304)472-3704  
Bob Gates, 1117 Virginia St.E., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)342-2624; photonzx@ntelos.net.  
Russ McClain, 104 Guy St. Elkins, WV 26241, (304)637-2201; mcclainw@davisandelkins.edu  
Bill McNeel, 1118 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954, (304)799-4369; wpmcneel@gmail.com  
Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; PShoenfeld@gmail.com

### ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY: Robert (Bob) Handley, HC 67 Box 508 Renick, WV, 24966 497-2266; grbat@ntelos.net  
PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS: Jean Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139, (412)828-8983; jeanrodman@verizon.net  
BROOKS BIRD CLUB: Cindy Ellis, RR 1, Box 163, Red House, WV 25168 (304) 586-4135; ellis\_6511@msn.com  
MOUNTAINEER CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED: Frank Slider, Rt 1, Box 163-A2, Middlebourne, WV 26149, (304) 758-2500; sliderf@ovis.net  
WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION: Don Garvin, P.O. Box 666, Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304) 472-8716; DSGJR@aol.com  
DOWNSTREAM ALLIANCE: Craig Mains, 137 Hoffman Ave., Morgantown WV 26505; cmains@wvu.edu  
FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE KANAWHA: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802; clrank@hughes.net

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MINING COMMITTEE: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802; clrank@hughes.net  
PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Bob Marshall, 201 Virginia St.W., Charleston, WV 25302, (304)345-5518; woodhavenwva@netscape.net  
OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945; fyoung@mountain.net  
WIND ENERGY COMMITTEE: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; PShoenfeld@gmail.com  
ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733; johnmcferrin@aol.com  
RIVERS COMMITTEE: vacant  
HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662; hugh.rogers@gmail.com  
OUTINGS COMMITTEE: Jonathan Jessup, 8225 Adenlee Ave. #40, Fairfax, VA 22031, (703) 204-1372; jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

### MISCELLANEOUS OFFICES

SPEAKERS BUREAU: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com  
WEB PAGE: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820 PShoenfeld@gmail.com and Jim Solley, jamesolley@comcast.net

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Beth Little, HC 64, Box 281, Hillsboro, WV, 24946 (304) 653-4277; blittle@citynet.net

HIGHLANDS VOICE EDITOR: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733; johnmcferrin@aol.com

# WHERE WOULD THIS TRAIL LEAD US?

By Frank Young

TrAIL is an acronym for the proposed Trans-Allegheny Interstate line. As most *Highlands Voice* readers surely know by now, nearly a year ago the Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company (TrAILCo), a wholly owned sub-company of Allegheny Energy Company (formerly Allegheny Power Co.) filed an application with the WV Public Service Commission (PSC) for approval to construct a 500 kilovolt capacity electricity transmission line through 114 miles of West Virginia, crossing Monongalia, Preston, Tucker, Grant, Hardy and Hampshire Counties. The new line would originate in southwestern Pennsylvania, and would terminate in northern Virginia.

To where would the TrAIL we are talking about here lead, then? For many of us who have looked into what's behind the alleged need for this needless spoiler of prime vistas, backyards and front yards along its 114 mile path, it would lead directly to more coal. It would lead to more coal mining including strip mining, to the burning of more coal, to construction of more pollution belching power plants in the Ohio Valley region, and to construction of many more monstrously large and imposing power lines and their supporting steel towers

The unabashed purpose of the TrAIL is to feed the east coast's increasing gluttony for more and more electricity- as long as it's generated somewhere else, and as long as it's "cheap"- meaning that its costs are borne disproportionately by communities other than those that consume all this electrical energy. And West Virginians washed in the blood of coal slurry and bathed in the other related miseries of coal know well about these externalized costs- meaning costs not reflected in the artificially low "market" price of electricity gen-

erated by coal. "Coal by wire" is not cheap- although it's generated on the cheap.

A large and potent informal coalition of groups and individuals has mounted a massive campaign to have the TrAIL application denied by the state PSC. The "bumper sticker" slogan for the campaign is "WV Is Ours; Stop Allegheny Towers".

In January the state PSC held eleven days of evidentiary hearings on the TrAIL application. More than two dozen stakeholders, called interveners, presented evidence, cross-examined witnesses, and made their arguments in front of the Commissioners

TrAIL opponents can take some cautious comfort in the general perception that the TrAIL application is going down in defeat. The informal coalition of groups in opposition even includes an independent electricity generating company that has some medium sized natural gas fueled power plants, is and planning on building more of them in the DC to Boston corridor. Several of these project opponents are optimistic that the TrAIL project application will be denied by the state PSC. And the PSC's own staff had recommended against approval. The PSC is expected to rule on the application by late March.

The opposition to the TrAIL application has been costly. Expert witness testimony can cost hundreds of dollars an hour. And there are still thousands of dollars of these expert witness fees unpaid due to insufficient funds. 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.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy supports the evidentiary case

against the TrAIL application. And we ask readers to support this important endeavor too. The "bumper sticker" slogan for the campaign is "WV Is Ours; Stop Allegheny Towers".

You can help with your tax-exempt contribution to the WV Highlands Conservancy, dedicated to the fight against this power line. Send your 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 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.

(This article developed from sources including WV Sierra Club, WV Public Service Commission, and communications among various attorneys and other representatives of the opposing parties. Contact: [fyoung@wvhighlands.org](mailto:fyoung@wvhighlands.org).)

The *Highlands Voice* is published monthly by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Articles, letters to the editor, graphics, photos, poetry, or other information for publication should be sent to the editor via the internet or by the U.S. Mail by the last Friday of each month. You may submit material for publication either to the address listed above or to the address listed for Highlands Voice Editor on the previous page. Submissions by internet or on a floppy disk are preferred.

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](http://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.*



**Massey Gets Its Comeuppance, Or at Least Part of It****MASSEY ENERGY FINED FOR CLEAN WATER ACT VIOLATIONS**

By Cindy Rank

**MASSEY**

No doubt a many readers of the Highlands Voice have already heard about the record setting fines levied by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) against Massey Energy for over 4,000 violations of Clean Water Act discharge permits at some 44 mines in West Virginia and Kentucky.

Articles appeared in local and regional papers, as well as the New York Times, Washington Post and even as far south as the Florida Herald-Tribune.

In May 2007 EPA filed a civil suit against coal giant Massey Energy and several of its subsidiaries for discharging pollutants and violating water discharge permits (NPDES permits) thousands of times over a six year period (2000 through 2006).

In its complaint, EPA recognized the long history of non-compliance by Massey, citing numerous spills, breaks, valley fill failures and pipe line breaks at several Massey operations. Of course the most egregious of these was the Martin County Coal incident near Inez, Kentucky in October 2000. Arguably the largest coal slurry spills in the history of the United States, and referred to as the largest single pollution event in the Eastern United States, over 300 million gallons of waste coal drained into an adjacent underground mine and broke out into nearby waterways. The Tug Fork River was fouled for some 10 miles, thousands of fish were killed, water intakes were forced to shut down and riverside yards in WV and KY were covered with several feet deep muck and goo.

In its litigation EPA claimed that despite the long history of Clean Water Act (CWA) violations and enforcement efforts by federal, state and local authorities, Massey Energy and its subsidiaries continue to violate the Clean Water Act, and remain in substantial noncompliance with the law.

Citing violations documented in self-monitoring reports each company is required to submit, EPA found that Massey discharged excess amounts of metals, sediment, acid mine drainage and slurry waste into hundreds of rivers and streams. Many of the pollutants were in amounts 40 percent or more than allowed.

However, since neither West Virginia nor Kentucky had taken action against companies reporting these violations, the federal government stepped in to do what the states had failed to do.

By law the civil penalties for the listed violations could have amounted to over 2 billion dollars (that's 2 with a capital "B").

The Consent Decree filed with the court January 17<sup>th</sup> requires Massey Energy to pay \$20 million (basically a penny on a dollar). Additionally Massey will have to take a number of measures aimed at preventing future violations including:

- Hire independent monitoring consultants
- Devise a tracking system for future reporting of pollutant discharges
- Abide by extensive monitoring requirements, with reports to be sent to environmental groups (several groups including WV Highlands Conservancy sought to intervene in the case and will be apprised of these reports) as well as government agencies
- Internal audits of treatment systems when sampling discharges

- Additional testing and reporting obligations.

News releases from EPA and from our citizens groups are posted on the [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org) website with links to further details of the consent decree.

**AND MORE**

Now for the "more" part of this story that consists of two major questions which I leave for further discussion in future issues of the VOICE.

1) Why, you may ask, was it the federal EPA and not our own West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection that cited these companies, and collected the requisite fines? ..... A good question on several counts.

- The Discharge Monitoring Reports are routinely received and entered into the Department of Environmental Protection's computer system by very conscientious employees, but the reports were never printed out or reviewed. .... Randy Huffman, Director of the mining office, had this to say in a Charleston Gazette story January 20<sup>th</sup>: "For whatever reason we were not getting it done. There was a glitch and they (his predecessors) got off track with it."

- At a Coal Symposium just days before the settlement was filed, the same Director Huffman bemoaned the fact that a growing budget gap will hamstring the agency's strip-mine inspection program in the next few years. .... One has to believe that the Department of Environmental Protection's overall budget would have benefited greatly from fines amounting to 2 billion dollars, or even the 20 million EPA expects to collect!

2) Going forward, what should we expect? In the January 20<sup>th</sup> Gazette article, DEP officials admitted the agency is still about a year behind in reviewing the coal industry's pollution reports, and the agency has not issued any citations or assessed fines for any violations discovered on reports it reviewed for late 2006 and 2007. Jeff McCormick, assistant director for enforcement, was quoted as saying operators with violations received letters notifying them of the problems, but no monetary penalties have been sought from any mining companies. He also said DEP's current plan is to fine companies only when an agency inspector takes a water sample that shows a violation, but no fines are being issued for violations noted on a company's monitoring reports. This is an approach that not only runs counter to the clear intent of the Clean Water Act, but also negates one of the strongest enforcement tools afforded the state agency by that law.

3) And, finally, if violations by Massey and its many subsidiaries were overlooked for the past six years, how many more companies have documented similar violations without any repercussions. DEP is taking action (though the validity and effectiveness of their approach is questionable) from 2006 forward, but were there no other companies with violations reported for the same six years that EPA sued Massey for? Was the rest of the coal industry without violations during that time?

My guess is, this story is far from over.



# YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

When your member of congress gets up in the morning, gets a cup of coffee and grabs the paper guess what section he/she turns to first? Yep, you guessed it, the editorial section. So does his/her staff in West Virginia and back in DC. The letters to the editor section of local papers is where lawmakers get to see what their constituents are thinking and what issues, concerns and topics are being debated in their communities.

Moreover, letters to the editor can make a real difference in efforts to protect wilderness and influence lawmakers. Letters help inform our neighbors about issues and help to rally support for legislative efforts. If you don't believe me just ask Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA). Sen. Landrieu has been a swing vote on opening the Arctic National Wildlife for years and the oil and gas companies have spent millions of dollars to sway her votes. Conservationists' main weapon in this fight has been the all mighty letter to the editor and in many instances these letters have kept Sen. Landrieu from giving in to oil and gas industry pressures and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has remained wild and free of drilling.

Here in West Virginia your letters are needed to support the Congressional delegation's new wilderness bill and help give them the cover to improve the legislation to include special places like Seneca Creek, Roaring Plains and East Fork of the Greenbrier.

Writing a letter to the editor is easy and takes only a few moments. The key is to reference what you are writing about early in the

letter and get to your point as quickly as possible. Long letters are often not published and in the sound bite world we live in, readers often lose interest if your letter is not succinct and to the point.

Write about what you know and avoid getting into speculation. If you don't know the facts, don't make them up. That said most letters are not about facts but rather your opinion and you should feel free to voice your opinion.

The important part is that you get the letter written and you send it in and once it is in you follow up with the editor. Editors will often send an email or contact letter writers to let them know they received the letter but they are very busy and sometimes letters fall through the cracks. Try not to over do it if they are slow in publishing the letter. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. They will not print your contact information, but will generally verify it's authorship before printing a letter.

Letters to the editor are a key component of any wilderness campaign, they help us open a dialogue with the community, get the attention of decision makers and advocate for our position. So if you want to help the effort, start writing lters. Next time you see something in your local paper about our wilderness bill, send in a letter, either supporting something you red that you liked, or, refuting something you didn't. Keep it positive and to the point. It will make all the difference. Below is contact information for some of our state's more important newspapers. Thanks!

Beckley Register Herald	rhnews@register-herald.com	304.255.4400	PO Box 2398	Beckley	WV	25802
Bluefield Daily Telegraph	editor@bdtonline.com	304.327.2811	PO Box 1599	Bluefield	WV	24701
Charleston Daily Mail	dmnews@dailymail.com	304.348.5124	1001 Virginia St.E.	Charleston	WV	25301
Charleston Gazette	gazette@wvgazette.com	800.982.6397	1001 Virginia St.E.	Charleston	WV	25301
Clarksburg Exponent Telegram	news@exponent-telegram.com	304.626.1400	PO Box 2000	Clarksburg	WV	26302
Dominion Post	newsroom@dominionpost.com	304.292.6301	1251 Earl L Core Road	Morgantown	WV	26505
Elkins Inter-Mountain	newsroom@theintermountain.com	304.636.2121	PO Box 1339	Elkins	WV	26241
Grant County Press	news@grantcountypress.com	304.257.1844	PO Box 39	Petersburg	WV	26847
Huntington Herald Dispatch	news@herald-dispatch.com	304.526.4000	PO Box 2017	Huntington	WV	25720
Martinsburg Journal	mlorensen@journal-news.net	304.267.2829	207 W. King Street	Martinsburg	WV	25402
Mineral Daily News Tribune	michele@newstribune.info	304.788.3333	PO Box 879	Keyser	WV	26726
Mountain Messenger	ads@mountainmessenger.com	304.647.5724	PO Box 429	Lewisburg	WV	24901
Parkersburg News & Sentinel	editorial@newsandsentinel.com	304.485.1891	519 Juliana St.	Parkersburg	WV	26101
Pocahontas Times	pepritt@pocahontastimes.com	304.799.4973	810 Second Avenue	Marlinton	WV	24954
Point Pleasant Register	nfields@mydailyregister.com	304.675.1333	200 Main Street	Point Pleasant	WV	25550
Putnam Cabell Post	dantyson@cabellstandard.com	304.562.6214	2085 U.S. Route 60	Culloden	WV	25510
Shepherdstown Observer	David@WVobserver.com	304.876.2414	P.O. Box 3088	Shepherdstown	WV	25443
Times West Virginian	timeswv@timeswv.com	304.367.2500	PO Box 2530	Fairmont	WV	26554

## Editor's note:

***In an obvious oversight, The Highlands Voice was not included in the list of "our state's important newspapers." Although neither the Voice editorial staff nor its readers need to be convinced of the wisdom of wilderness designation, it is included here, just on principle.***

Highlands Voice johnmcferrin@aol.com 304 252-8733 P.O. Box 306 Charleston WV 25321



## THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS

By B. Dan Berger

She may be only 3 1/2-years old but she can cast her little light blue Dora the Explorer fishing rod a good twenty feet. How do I know? Because I occasionally hear the weighted red plastic minnow at the end of her line loudly whack the window of the front door of our small home on the river. It makes me proud and cringe at the same time. I run out of the house and gently turn her around and encourage her to cast away from the house, and I go back and sneakily inspect the window for cracks.

My wife Aimee and I have been taking our daughter Shelby to the North Fork of the South Branch in West Virginia since she was in the womb. We strongly believe children these days have too many toys,



computer and video games, and of course, face-time in front of the television. Let me be clear, we too are guilty of all the above. But we also make a concerted effort

to balance it all by spending a lot of time in the great outdoors that our Creator has graciously provided us.

Since moving from Florida to the Washington, DC area seven years ago, we have been coming to Monongahela National Forest, staying several times a year in the beautiful cabins at Harman's. Now that we have been blessed with our own home just a couple miles up from Harman's, we spend as much time out of the big city as possible; just about every holiday and weekend.

Shelby will come with me to the river and fish for a few minutes and then quickly become distracted by all the fantastically smooth stones and river-rocks under her feet. She will throw them into river until it is time to go. By the way, trout are NOT attracted to the splashing sounds of a child's Roger Clemens-like fastball.

She will stand with me in the middle of the river and reel in the line on my rod. Unafraid, she will inspect, touch and hold the trout or small-mouth bass we have caught in these Potomac headwaters prior to us releasing it. And then she will quickly turn around and walk noisily through the water to shore and start whipping stones into the river that would even impress the Boston Red Sox. We are thinking collegiate softball scholarship.

And when we do watch television together, Shelby loves the ESPN fishing shows as well as the various episodes on animals or the incredible outdoor destinations on Discovery Channel. We talk to her regularly about the importance of



enjoying the outdoors but also the necessity for its conservation. Proudly, she will point out when she sees litter and claim loudly, "not a very nice person has littered our mountains." We pick up the trash and throw into the bed of my truck.

As adults, we have a responsibility to expose our young children to as many things as possible.

And that includes not just learning the alphabet or counting numbers, but learning about the outdoors. One of my favorite memories is watching my daughter chase fireflies, and occasionally, be successful in catching one. Gently inspecting the pulsating-lighted insect, then letting it go. Can't do that in front of a television.

We regularly visit Dolly Sods and drive through Smoke Hole Canyon, and she is impressed every time as if it was her first trip. The trees, plants, rocks, streams, cliffs, waterfalls and long-range views. She absorbs it all in. As do her parents.

Although many of us volunteer and contribute to several important conservation organizations, we all must take the extra step and teach our children about the environment. So, turn off the computer or television and take your children or grandchildren fishing. You and they will create terrific memories together, and get this, they will fall in love with

the outdoors and develop an appreciation for the beautiful world around them. And you can proudly know that you have helped to create the next generation of conservationists.

**Dan Berger is a lifelong outdoorsman and avid flyfisherman. He lives in Cabins, WV.**





# BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By Cindy Ellis

The board meeting of January 27, 2008 was held on a sunny Sunday at the Citizens Action Group office in Charleston. We had twenty attending, but snow in the mountains kept some folks away.

Treasurer Bob Marshall presented both next year's budget and an end-of-year report for 2007. Program revenues did very well and a couple of unexpected grants were received. Our membership income was the highest ever. Hiking guide sales are good and the new book "Fighting to Protect the Highlands: The First Forty Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" will be on tour soon with author Dave Elkin ton. The 2008 budget uses the prediction that membership is likely to continue to grow.

Mae Ellen Wilson reported on the efforts of the Endowment Committee to "put to work" the generous bequests we received in the past. She explained how our investment "ship" continues to successfully "navigate dangerous waters and how the "iceberg" of credit risk has been avoided by diversifying. The consensus from board members was that we're pleased with the outcome and we should make no "course changes." [Sorry about the excessive quotes, but a few of us were really helped by Mae Ellen's nautical and other figures of speech in this report and the one at Fall Review.]

We were gratified to find that Beth Little does wish to continue in the position of Administrative Assistant. In her Membership Report she reminded us of processes for dealing with recruitment and stability of the membership roster. We now have members in all WV counties and in all the US states except Missouri.

Our phenomenally hard-working webmaster, Jim Solley, sent word that electronic sales are functioning well with PayPal.

"Send material!" was the word we received on behalf of "VOICE" editor, John McFerrin. The board discussed our journal's disclaimer box and decided that the message speaks for itself and is fine as is.

Julian Martin reported much positive activity from those working on Outreach issues, including trips to Kayford Mountain, and presentations with college and high school groups. Sales of shirts, hats, and stickers have netted nearly \$8000. On the other hand, a newly formed "WV Environmental Education Association" may have been hijacked by corporate interests for their own purposes. This will be investigated.

Our Spring Review sounds unusually active and inviting. It will be held in Elkins in conjunction with the "Sustainable Fair," an event of The Sustainable Living for West Virginia group. This could shape up to be a great Green happening for us in April. The Sustainable Fair will host workshops, 50 booths [we will man one], children's activities, an art exhibit, a college-sponsored concert by the WV Symphony, and Sunday excursions [some to sustainable homes]. President Hugh Rogers promises that the last snowfall will be melted in time to allow us all arrive.

Bob Gates, board member and independent filmmaker, wasn't sure if he would produce a film of the WVHC 40th anniversary. But he did. Now the board isn't sure how to share or save it, but will decide more at the next meeting.

A challenge was issued. Beth Little urged each board member to make plans to lead an excursion for the Outings Committee. Peter

Shoenfeld hopes to re-invigorate our Outings offerings and the challenge came out of our discussion of that good goal.

A Public Lands Committee report was presented by Marilyn Shoenfeld on behalf of that newly-organized committee. They selected the objectives of developing a constituency and monitoring proposals for the Mongonahela National Forest. Then Dave Saville spoke of the victories and disappointments accompanying Congressman Rahall's imminent introduction of the Wilderness Bill and credited Don Garvin with his helpful role. Dave urged the continued effort to contact the WV congressional delegation, including working on amendments to secure areas not yet included in the bill.

Members were also encouraged to continue directing comments to the management plan process in regard to wilderness areas in the New River Gorge area. It was pointed out that the group Christians for the Mountains have produced a video, "God's Gift: A Wild and Wonderful Land." Finally, Dave reported that the Red Spruce project has been so successful that an intern will be used this spring.

Don Garvin and Frank Young explained recent legislative matters. Frank pointed out the post-session timing of many successful efforts. He also asked that thought be given to evaluating our sponsorship of the WV Environmental Council; "How well is this working?" Don praised WVHC support of legislative interim sessions as very helpful. He gave brief reviews of several environmental issues and pushed hard for board members to come to Charleston to personally lobby their own legislators on Clean Streams.

Cindy Rank sent a printed report of the multitude of issues being dealt with by the Mining Committee. She said, "Stay tuned to articles in the VOICE and notices on [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org) for updates and additional information," as her list included these issues or phrases, "Massey, Selenium, Buffer Zone, Mercury Litigation, Clean Water Protection Act, Coalbed Methane, Slurry Underground Injection Study, and Blair Mountain." She listed 5 recent books of interest:

"Moving Mountains" by Penny Loeb  
 "Strange As The Weather Has Been" by Ann Pancake  
 "Bringing Down the Mountains" by Shirley Stewart Burns  
 "Monongah" by Davitt McAteer  
 "Coal River" by Michael Shnayerson

Frank Young reported on the proposed TrAIL power line, which has met with deep and wide opposition.

Our final agenda item was the Wind Committee Peter Shoenfeld said that reports of additional proposals for projects continue to surface. The Beech Ridge project appeal may be decided in April. Larry Thomas presented a report on the Laurel Mountain project in Randolph and Barbour Counties.. There was a motion to oppose that project and soul-searching discussion ensued. We again spent much time on "cultural attachment" and "special places." As there is not yet a pressing deadline in this case, the question of our opposition to that one project was postponed until the April meeting.



**West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**  
**West Virginia Seed Source Red Spruce and Balsam Fir Seedlings**

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy continues its efforts to conserve and restore the Red Spruce/Balsam Fir Ecosystem in the West Virginia Highlands. Once again in 2008 we will be providing high quality seedlings grown from seed collected locally by volunteers. All proceeds go to support red spruce ecosystem restoration efforts in West Virginia.

**Spring 2008**

**Red Spruce**

2-0 plug 12-18 inches. These are a 2 inch plug 6 inches deep. These quality seedlings, available no where else, are the same product we have been using very successfully for many years.

**Canaan Valley Balsam Fir**

These husky trees, 12-18 inches, are a 1 year plug grown in a transplant bed for 2 additional years.

**Spring 2008 Price for Balsam Fir or Red Spruce**

100 - \$195

1,000 - \$950

Flexible delivery dates during April 2008. Limited availability - Minimum order 100.

For more information visit our website at [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org)

or contact:

Dave Saville

304-284-9548 office

304-692-8118 cell

[dave.saville@wvwild.org](mailto:dave.saville@wvwild.org)



## More About Wilderness (Continued from p. 1)

vancy members and began to plan the campaign. We teamed up with Sierra Club activists Frank Slider, Mary Wimmer and Beth Little, and with help from Fran Hunt and The Wilderness Society's Wilderness Support Center, we formed the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition.

The Wilderness Coalition is a loosely knit association of existing conservation organizations working towards a single goal: to protect important federal lands in West Virginia as wilderness. We combined our resources and hired a full time coordinator, Matt Keller. We set about taking an inventory of important roadless areas of the Mon and evaluating them for their wilderness potential. In September 2004, we released A Citizens Wilderness Proposal for the Monongahela National Forest.

Since that time, hundreds of volunteers have worked tirelessly to build support for the proposal. Businesses, organizations, elected officials and individuals from all walks of life have spoken with a loud and unified voice, and that voice has been heard by our Congressional delegation. The introduction of the Wild Monongahela Act is an important

milestone in our efforts. We can't quit now! The next phase of our campaign has just begun.

Congressman Rahall told Ken Ward of the Charleston Gazette, "This is a battle for the heart and soul of West Virginia." We must re-double our efforts to support our delegation as they move their bill through Congress. At the same time, we can encourage them to improve it by including the important areas that have been left out. It is not too late to include Seneca Creek, East Fork of Greenbrier, and all of the Roaring Plains in the bill. Please check out the insert in this issue of the Highlands Voice for more information on our efforts and how you can help. And keep checking in to the Coalition's website ([www.wvwild.org](http://www.wvwild.org)) to learn the latest news and the kind of support we need to get to the finish line.

Thanks to everyone who has helped to get us this far along in the process. We hope you will continue working with us to bring our efforts to fruition. Wilderness is indeed in our blood.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO VOICE READERS

If your address has changed lately (the last year or so) because of the 911 readdressing of rural addresses, please let us know so we can make sure you will continue to receive the Voice. Email Beth Little at [blittle@citynet.net](mailto:blittle@citynet.net) or send a postcard to Beth Little, HC 64 Box 281, Hillsboro, WV 24946 (Pocahontas County hasn't finished readdressing yet). Thank you. Beth Little HC 64 Box 281 Hillsboro, WV 24946 304-653-4277

### 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](mailto:Martinjul@aol.com), or 304-342-8989.



## COREY BONASSO JOINS HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY RED SPRUCE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION EFFORT

The WV Highlands Conservancy has recently hired Corey Bonasso as an intern that will provide assistance with the Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration program. From Carolina, West Virginia, Corey was raised in the hills where he developed a great appreciation for nature and the outdoors.

Corey is currently finishing his final semester in the Davis College of Agriculture and Forestry at WVU in the field of Forest Resource

WVU spring planting on the refuge.

Corey is a long-time musician of many stringed instruments, as well as an aspiring potter. His internship will involve developing a Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration Plan for Freeland Run area of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, Corey will help with outreach surrounding these efforts. If you would like to know more about our work to restore the red spruce ecosystem in West Virginia contact Corey at [cbonass1@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:cbonass1@mix.wvu.edu).



WVU students gather each Spring to plant spruce on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Management. Corey's interests encompass the entire system of living forest organisms, rather than looking at a stand for its board foot volume.

In the past Corey has helped organize students from WVU to volunteer a weekend in the spring to plant red spruce and balsam fir on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The event has been a huge success that has sent over 10,000 spruce and fir seedlings back to their home in the mountains. This spring will mark the fourth annual

### How does Corey define Forest Health?

A healthy forest system is one that contains a diversity of plant and animal life with a species composition native to the area that finds balance with itself. Healthy life is that which has the ability to be sustained by its surroundings, recover from diseases, and have effective reproduction indefinitely.

### **Corey Bonasso**

Photo by Cory Chase



### **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.

### **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 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. 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](http://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 James Solley, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306

## Join Now !!!

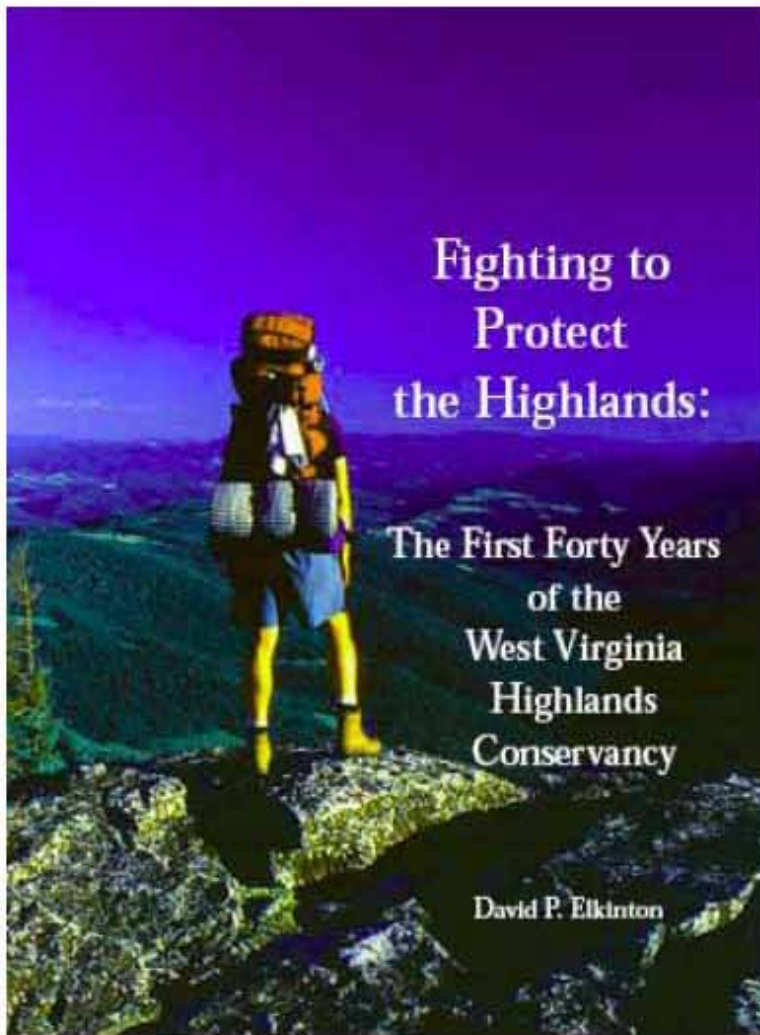
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**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!**



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](http://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.



## ***Our readers write***

### **The Promise of Wind Power**

Dear Editor,

Has there ever been such a darn good anti-windmill, implicitly pro-fossil fuel article as the recent one in the Voice? All without be-moaning a single bat, bird, tree or view. And hardly a nimby in sight! ("False Promises of Wind Power," Jan. 2008.) I can now appreciate much more the fluctuating solar & wind power impact on the existing power generation grid and system. It's a fine analysis it seems to me, as far as it goes, but the status quo is accepted as a given.

The word "change" has been much in the air lately (along with the increased CO2) and somewhat paradoxically, if the fossil fuel power companies stay unchanged, there will be more "climate change." Engineers love problems and almost never feel one is unsolvable. The technical expertise that developed the grid and the systems that eat mountains to feed power stations were all designed by engineers, and I'm sure engineers could happily redesign regional grids and power stations to smooth out the peaks and valleys of fluctuating electrical power, instead of the "coal fields" themselves as is now happening.

Transitionally, as solar and wind become significant factors, older, big coal fired sources might be retired and new more efficient regional "make up" plants designed and built. Peak power times might be devoted to new related industries capable of part-time Operations. These might include geothermal energy site preparation; preheating conventional power plant boiler water; pumping hydroelectric outflow water back up to the reservoir, storing some of that energy for gradual release as needed,

Rethinking our energy policy and fixing our infrastructure for the looming crisis will be a painful, long and costly job, maybe even more expensive just to get started, than the destructive Iraq War. Maybe even more painful. But if we could be talked into a ghastly and unnecessary war, perhaps with our new awareness and our new politicians and newly invigorated environmental organization we will be able to talk ourselves into a necessary constructive action. Someday we can take the pesky towers down & remediate the ridges, but putting back the mountains won't be so easy, and it's good to remember that we want to save the biosphere and not just the skyline.

Bob J. Baker  
Spencer, WV

### **More on the promises of wind power**

Dear Editor:

This letter has three aims: First is to remonstrate with you for publishing a tendentious opinion piece masquerading as an article on wind energy. Second is to rebut both the general conclusions and misleading support "data" in that piece. Third is to discuss what steps and stance WVHC might take on the issue of wind turbine placement in the highlands.

The author, Arthur Hooten, is identified simply as a member of the Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County and not as a member of WVHC. One might reasonably assume that FBPC is a group formed to oppose wind farms in Pendleton - fair enough. Except the piece nowhere addresses the issue of placing wind farms in Pendleton County, but rather launches a ham-fisted economic and political attack on what he calls "Big Wind".

The headline assigned to articles in a news organ is normally under the purview of the editorial staff; so I must assume that in using the head-

line. The False Promises of Wind Power, you not only think it proper to publish such a piece as news, but that you have checked its "facts" and agree with its thesis. Last I checked WVHC had no organizational position on wind power generally; so, you're The Way The Voice Works disclaimer notwithstanding, by failing to label the Hooten "story" as pure opinion - facts not checked - you de-value the Voice as the legitimate organ of the Conservancy.

My distinct impression from reading the voice and speaking with other WVHC members is that many of us are conflicted about the issue of wind farms in the highlands. On the one hand we don't want the landscape industrialized with rank on rank of wind turbines, while on the other we support the need to eliminate - or at least severely limit - mining and burning of coal to protect both the West Virginia environment and the earth climate.

As for Hooten's allegations - the real big wind - delivered in sententious all-knowing tones, let's begin with the technology of wind power which he terms new and unproven. Simply put it is neither new nor unproven. On a smaller scale it has been around for several centuries all over the world. At the present industrial scale it's about 30 years old and, at an average generation cost of around five cents per kilowatt-hour, is economically competitive with virtually all new power generation, regardless of fuel type or motive force.

Hooten states that the variability of wind makes wind generation "not at all helpful to the grid". Well the grids in Denmark, Germany and Spain don't seem to agree. Wind energy supplies between five and 20 percent of the electricity in those countries. Further I am unaware of any objection to wind generation by the PJM Inter-connection, our own grid -and a huge one too.

Wind may be variable, but it is not unpredictable. Hooten must not pay attention to weather reports: they all predict average wind velocity over at least a 24-hour period and seem pretty accurate. Since PJM adjustments to load are done on almost a minute-by-minute basis, current weather predictions are quite sufficient to accommodate wind variability over a whole grid.

Hooten's comments on capacity factors of wind turbines are at best misinformed or even cynically misleading. He cites a German utility study of turbines that "revealed that more than half the time they produced less than 11% of their nameplate capacity". To begin with these are pretty vague figures: in my experience the Germans are given to much more precise numbers than Hooten cites. Capacity Factor is the ratio of actual production to maximum potential production, expressed as a percentage, over some time period -usually as year. While capacity factors vary among sites, a typical one would be 25 percent.

Hooten seems to be implying that turbine capacity factors are unacceptably low. Well if one assumes that "more than half the time" is 55 percent and "less than 11 percent" is 10 percent, then doing the math yields a capacity factor of about 50%! Around here that would be a phenomenal - even absurdly high - number, but in the North Sea, where an increasing number of really big five megawatt turbines are being installed, it could be actual.

As for subsidies, it is true that the Federal government subsidizes wind power, albeit to a small fraction of the extent to which it has long subsidized coal, nuclear and oil - over which it currently is conducting a trillion dollar war in the Middle East. Probably "big wind" doesn't really need the Federal subsidy to make a profit, since it's the cheapest source you can build today. What Hooten doesn't tell us is that the biggest "subsidy" comes not from taxpayers, but rather from ratepayers who voluntarily line up to pay

***Continued on the next page***

## More letters

a one to two cent per kwh premium for wind generated power. We must thank Hooten for pointing out that electrons in a power line are fungible, that's it's a wise watt than knows how it was generated. So long as the utilities don't sell more wind generated electricity than goes into the grid, what difference does it make where the electrons originated?

So what are the alleged false promises? Wind turbines provide the cheapest new source of electric power. They contribute virtually no CO2 or any other pollutant. They displace polluting fossil fuels in the generation mix. Up to a point we are nowhere near, they don't interfere with grid operation or require additional spinning reserve. They're a great investment. They don't claim to look pretty, although some of us liken them to Brancusi sculptures.

It is interesting that Hooten, David Buhrman and others choose to attack the entire wind power technology rather than the particular projects which galvanized them into action in the first place. By painting wind power as an evil per se they divert attention away from the obvious fact that they are engaging in the age-old not in my backyard phenomenon.

Americans tend to feel very entitled: to have what they want and not have what they don't want. What is presented as factual analysis is in reality a selfish and hypocritical diatribe adduced in the service of moving burdens elsewhere.

That said, there are some real issues that concern the mission of WVHC, the major one being esthetic. There are landscapes that none of us want to see festooned with wind turbines. It is very disturbing that the Forest Service, with little debate, seems to be opening its lands to wind farms. What are our options?

One would be to follow Hooten's lead and develop a position opposing virtually all wind power generation. I have major objections to this option:

It would play into the hands of Big Coal - way, way bigger than "Big Wind" -especially in West Virginia. By refusing to accommodate that which could displace coal we weaken our opposition to the destruction caused by coal mining.

We risk politically marginalizing WVHC by being the perennial losing party in wind farm siting disputes.

We create a serious rift among the membership, many of whom believe that the threats of climate change trump - to some degree - any entitlement to a completely turbine-free landscape.

Another option would be to remain on the sideline and let the advocates and opponents battle it out in the PSC and the courts. I would find such an option unacceptable, since preservation of wild, undisturbed landscapes lies at the very core of our mission. We must participate!

That brings me to option 3: first create an internal capacity to address issues of site location, size and treatment. Next work to convene sympathetic groups to develop common positions on these issues. Finally work with all stakeholders such as the wind industry, PSC and tourism groups to gain protection we deem essential for the wild and wonderful places in our highlands.

Laurie Cameron  
Hillsboro, WV

## Fires in the backcountry

Dear Editor:

My name is Matt Kearns. Currently I live in New London, CT with the US Coast Guard, but I am originally from Cross Lanes, WV. One of my favorite things to do when I go home on my limited leave time is to hike in the Mon. I've had some fantastic trips over the past few years and I always look forward to the next occasion that will bring me home and help me reconnect with my native lands. I would just like to make a quick comment on something that frequently upsets me whenever I do hike in the Mon, in the hope that more attention may be drawn to this matter and more individuals might reconsider their backcountry practices.

For me personally, there is one thing (besides trash) that can really detract from a wilderness experience - fires. Seeing fire rings and scorched earth in campsites along streams and trails is tremendously unsightly. Fire building is contrary to the principles of Leave No Trace backcountry etiquette, and isn't recommended on trailhead signs. I was very surprised to read trip reports posted in the VOICE blogs that frequently mentioned the use of fires, given that many of the readers dedicate so much time, resources, and energy to preserving West Virginia's wild places. I will not belabor the issue, and I understand that we are free to enjoy our wilderness experience in any way that we like. I just ask that we always think about our actions in the backcountry and determine if they truly align with the practices of Leave No Trace and the design behind wilderness areas - limiting man's impact in our most natural and special environments.

I love nothing more than spending my time at home in the forests of West Virginia and I enjoy knowing that my presence will be forgotten by the land soon after my departure. I hope that we will all continue to promote responsible use of our backcountry, preserving the natural integrity of our most favorite places so that we may share them with our children.

Matt Kearns  
New London, CT

## Mountaintop removal commercials bug reader

I can't watch another one of these stupid Walker Machinery bug commercials without "going Elvis" and shooting my TV. Do they really think they can convince the audience that we're fighting to end mountaintop removal mining just for the sake of Mr. Bug's habitat? What am I saying? Of course they do. That's why they're running the ads. They do think we're that stupid.

I want to let everyone know that the other habitat that we're fighting for is our habitat. You know, those of us who live with a valley fill in our backyard, or a slurry impoundment hovering above our communities, homes and schools, or have lost our well water because of blasting. That's whose habitat we're trying to save!

Their attempt to trivialize our fight to save our homes is pathetic. So go ahead and spend that money on these stupid commercials. We know you've got it to spend. But most West Virginians are not that stupid.

James Tawney  
Summersville



# West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



## Outings, Education and Beyond

**Saturday, March 8, Stonewall Jackson Dam nature tour.** A little hike and a little talk about air/water, floods, geology, streams and lakes. Neither difficult. We will meet at the Stonewall Jackson Dam Nature Center. Turn off I-79 at the South Weston exit. At the foot of the exit, turn south (upstream) to the dam. About 2 miles. Meet about 11, eat our lunches, hike, and then head home about 3 p.m. We will have some drinks and an interesting place to warm up. No notice is needed. If you need more information you can call Don Gasper at 304 472-3704.

**Saturday, 04/05/08 – Bucktail Tr/Halfmoon Lookout Loop, GWNF, WV:** 9.7 mile strenuous hike to one of the best views in GWNF. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 8:00. Bring lunch and water. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Monday, 04/19 – 21/08 – AT Shuttle Backpacking Trip, JNF/GWNF, VA:** Strenuous 26 mile Backpacking trip starting at Sunset Field, passing through the Thunder Ridge and James River Face Wilderness areas and ending at the Punch Bowl. Cross the James River on a \$1,000,000.00 footbridge. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday-Sunday, 05/03 – 04/08 – Beginner's Backpacking trip/White Oak National Recreation Trail/North River Gorge Loop, GWNF, VA:** 10 mile moderate hike for experienced hikers that want to move up to backpacking. Hike 6 miles the first day with an elevation gain of 1000 feet over 3 miles and 0.5 miles of open woods bushwhacking. Camp in a beautiful Pine grove next to the river. Day 2 is a mostly flat hike back to the cars along the river. There will be 7 substantial stream crossings that might require a change of footwear. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 8:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday-Monday, 05/24-26 – Memorial Day backpack, Canaan Mountain, Monongahela National Forest, WV:** 29 mile hike of moderate difficulty with mature forest, giant Spruce and Hemlock trees, streams, highland bogs and vistas. Leave from the Rt 32/I-70 Park and Ride at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Thursday to Sunday, 06/05 – 08/08 – Car Camping and 2 day hikes,**

**Loft Mountain Campground, Shenandoah National Park, VA:** Four day trip. Possible short hike on the first day for early arrivals. Featured hikes are the Austin Mt/Furnace Mt loop (12.6 miles) and the Rocky Mount Circuit (9.8 miles). Both hikes are rated strenuous. Join us for one or both. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Monday, 07/12 – 14/08 – Dolly Sods North and Wilderness Area Backpack, Monongahela National Forest:** 26+ mile moderate backpacking trip through this wild area that looks more like the Canadian Shield than a typical North American forest. We will explore some seldom visited trails on the first day. Several technically challenging stream crossings possible that might require a change of footwear. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Friday to Sunday, 08/08 – 10/08 – Otter Creek Backpack/Base Camp w/day hike, Monongahela National Forest, WV:** Day one hike approximately 9 miles along Otter Creek and up and over McGowan Mountain visiting the highland bogs of Yellow Creek and Moore Run. Day 2 10 mile day hike visiting several swimming holes on the return leg. Day 3 is a nearly flat 5 mile hike out along Otter Creek. Several technically challenging stream crossings that might require a change of footwear. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 8:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Monday – 08/30 – 09/01/08 – Seneca Creek Backcountry, Monongahela National Forest, WV:** Day one features a moderate 10 mile hike exploring trails on the western slope of Allegheny Mt before descending to our base camp below beautiful Seneca Falls. On day 2 we'll explore the High Meadows above the creek without packs. On day 3 hike back to cars using the Seneca Creek Tr, Tom Lick Tr and Allegheny Tr (approximately 7 miles). Several technically challenging stream crossings that might require a change of footwear. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Tuesday, 09/13 – 16/08 - Car Camping and 2 day hikes, Loft Mountain Campground, Shenandoah National Park, VA:** Four

(More on the next page)

## More hikes:

day trip. Possible short hike on the first day for early arrivals. Featured hikes are the Rip-Rap Hollow Loop (9.5 miles) and the Turk Branch/Moorman's River Circuit (9.7 miles). Both hikes are rated strenuous. Join us for one or both. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

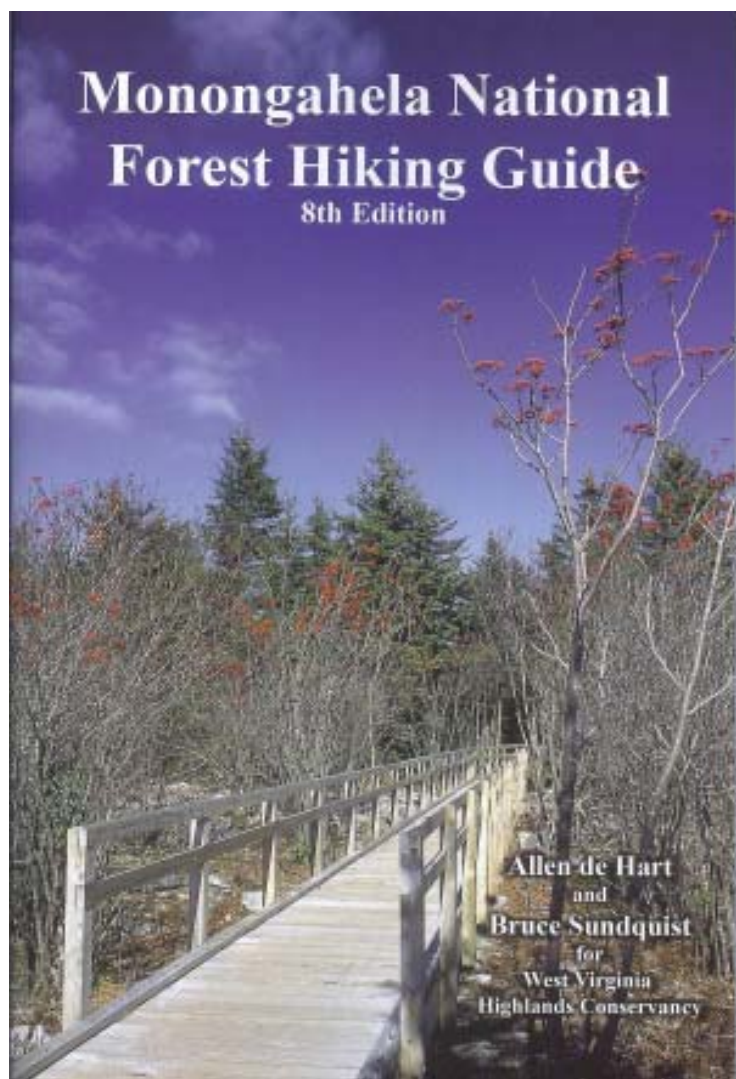
**Saturday to Monday, 09/20 – 22/08 – Roaring Plains Backpack and Base Camp with Day Hike:** Day 1 hike in 2.5 miles and set up camp at the entrance to the Hidden Passage. Day 2 features a 12 mile day hike along the Canyon Rim with possible side trips. Day 3 backpack out the way we came in. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 10:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Monday – 10/25 – 27/08 – Cold Mountain/Mount Pleasant Backpack Base Camp w/Day Hike, George Washington National Forest, VA:** Easy 3 mile backpack into and out of camp with a sensational moderate 12 mile day hike in between with some of the most breathtaking views in central VA. Suitable for experienced hikers who wish to move up to backpacking. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 10:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**Saturday to Monday – 11/01-03/08 – Hog Camp Gap to Spy Rock Backpack/Base Camp:** Strenuous rating but with low daily mileage.

We will hike 7 miles over scenic Tar Jacket Ridge and set up a base camp at the Seeley-Woodworth shelter. The next day we will hike packless to Spy Rock. The round trip will only be about 6 miles. If the weather is good we will linger a bit at Spy Rock, enjoying its 360 degree view for as long as we can. On the hike out we will add Lovington Spring Tr to add some variety to the third day. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at [mjuskelis@cablespeed.com](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com) or 410-439-4964.

**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](mailto:martinjul@aol.com) or Larry Gibson (304) 542-1134; (304) 549-3287.



### Paper Edition

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](http://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.



United States Forest Service Does an Assessment**THE STATUS OF WEST VIRGINIA'S FORESTS**

By Don Gasper

Every 12 years Foresters assess West Virginia's forests. The U.S. Forest Service has prepared a very attractive, informative and brief report from which this is taken, their # NE-INF-152-04. This is a summary of that report.

Forests protect watersheds and their flows, provide opportunities for recreation in an aesthetic natural appearing environment, serve as habitat for wildlife and fish, and produce needed wood and other products. They have played a major role in our history and culture. Our public forests total 12% of West Virginia.

**Forest-land Area Trends**

Today forests cover 12 million acres of West Virginia. They are not seen in decline. Increases have occurred steadily since some logging during World War II, about 1950. The increased forest area is due to more fields and pasture growing up than are being cleared. This more than off-sets losses from roads and development, mining, and logging. Of the forest that has been removed from 1990 to 2000, logging has removed 92% of it; this is twice as much as in the previous 10 years. However, growth is greater than removals almost 2 to 1. The other 8% of forest loss is due to land-use changes.

Forest inventory figures indicate that 76% of W.Va. is forested, and that this figure is leveling off. Only two other states have a higher percentage. Not all counties have the same percent of forest cover. Webster and McDowell are 93% forested. Berkeley and Jefferson have the least, only 44%. There are 24 other counties between 80 and 90%. Our forests are becoming older and bigger. Today these are not

only generally more enjoyable for hiking and camping, but provide food and cover, cavities and bark flaps for wildlife, nesting and feeding sites, and large dead trees standing and fallen.

The average acre has 14 standing dead trees, and 85% of these are from 5" to 12" in diameter. Today 70% of our forests average 10" in diameter with a stocking of 150 trees/acre that are over 5". Forests have tripled in this respect over these 50 years – increasing in size, volume and value. Hardwoods make up 94% of this volume; the evergreen-conifers make up the rest of our forests.

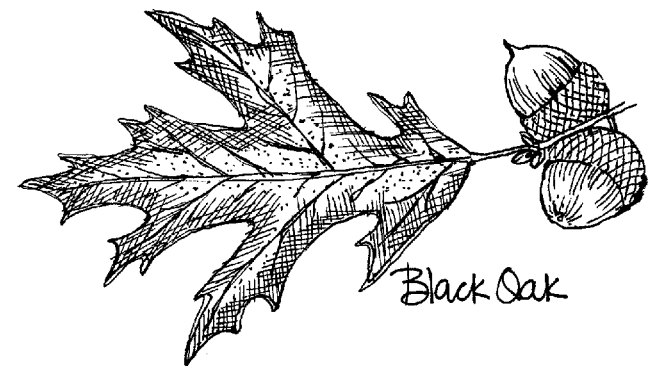
Although our forests are composed of over 100 tree species, 15 species account for 84% of the volume. Yellow poplar leads with white oak, red maple, chestnut oak and northern red oak next. These are about half as abundant as yellow poplar. The oaks are declining; 50 years ago they made up 39% of our forest, today it is 34%. Oak accounts for about half the total volume logged.

West Virginia's annual tree mortality is .7%, and it is the same in near-by states. Fire, wind, frost, insects, and disease contribute to mortality. Highest mortality rates are in the Virginia Pine – 4%. This loss they attribute to fire control and it's being over topped and shaded. The beech is next with 1.3%. This average annual loss constitutes a reduction in important game food by 10% in just 10 years. The beech bark disease is serious. The chestnut oak has a decline of .3%, and further reduces game food. This is attributed to gypsy moth defoliation. Oaks are declining as mentioned earlier. Tree vigor is mentioned as a growing concern, but crown "dieback", an indicator, was only 1%

of 20% of the trees of many tree species that were sampled.

This report did not mention that a concern has recently centered on the hemlock woolly adelgid attack in the eastern part of our state. Mountain top removal and other mining has recently been responsible for much forest loss. Our high elevation spruce, where fifty years of Acid Rain has acidified and leached the substrate, is now a concern. Acid Rain has also affected our flowering dogwood – and our gardens.

This research report ends noting the recovery reflected in these figures. Forests are maturing in size and volume in spite of near doubling of timber harvests since 1990. Tree health is generally good though the introduced forest insects and diseases are a concern. Today West Virginia forests are playing an increasingly important role in the State's growing economy.

**MORE FROM PRESIDENT HUGH (Continued from p. 2)**

in to run your county's schools because your county board has been found incompetent. Later this month, the West Virginia Senate will hold oversight hearings on the DEP's failure to enforce the law.

While the DEP has a federal agency and the legislature looking over its shoulder, the Supreme Court justices act alone. There is no appeal from a justice's decision not to remove himself from a case in which he has an apparent conflict of interest. There is only one form of oversight: it's called an election.

John Grisham's native state of Mississippi also elects its appellate judges, although, in a recent poll, a majority of respondents didn't know it. Imagine what goes through their minds when they reach that part of the ballot.

**FOLLOWING BIRDS GOES HIGH TECH**

With assistance from the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries, and volunteers from the Three Rivers Avian Center, the National Park Service is fitting Peregrine Falcons with satellite transmitters. They can use these to track the birds from their release in the New River Gorge to wherever they go.

To see pictures of the birds as well as maps showing where each individual bird has been, go to [http://www.nps.gov/neri/naturescience/peregrine\\_2007.htm](http://www.nps.gov/neri/naturescience/peregrine_2007.htm).



*Thanks to Cindy Ellis for pointing out this site.*

## START PLANNING NOW

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Spring Review will be Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> in Elkins, WV.

This year the Review will be held in conjunction with the Sustainability Fair. The Sustainability Fair will include workshops on Recycling, Green Business, Sustainable Tourism, Goat Farming in West Virginia, Slow Food USA, and Collaborative Century 21: An Earth to Table Initiative. There will also be an environmental art exhibit and children's program and music. Sunday features an edible wild plant walk and a tour of a wind/solar powered house. Saturday evening there will be a Sustainable "Epicurious" Dinner.


Keynote speaker for the Fair will be Deborah Koon Garcia, writer and director of the film *The Future of Food*. *The Future of Food* is a 2004 documentary film which makes an in-depth investigation into unlabelled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly made their way onto grocery store shelves in the United States for the past decade.

There will also be booths available for displays by various groups, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. There will also be opportunities for organizations and individuals to sponsor the Fair.

Please visit [www.lapaixherbproducts.com](http://www.lapaixherbproducts.com) which has a link to the most updated Sustainable Fair Agenda.

The Review will also include the Sunday Board meeting. All members are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion although only Board members may make motions and vote.

## 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. Short sleeve in sizes: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Long sleeve in 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: James Solley, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.



## DROP US A LINE

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

## ANOTHER (MODEST) WAY TO SAVE TREES

Did you know? You can read the Voice online, usually days before it appears in your mailbox, and **the pictures are in color!** Past issues are available too – all the way back to August 1998. Just go to our wonderful website [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org), scroll down and look in the bar on the left. (You should check out our website now and then, just on general principles).

There are valid personal reasons for still wanting the hardcopy version: I would rather curl up on the couch with a hot cup of tea and fight with my cat over turning the pages, than stare at a screen. But if you like getting your news electronically, and you have trouble keeping track of where you laid the latest issue, and you don't need any more fire starter, you might consider becoming a **virtual Voice reader** (not to be confused with virtuous Voice reader).

Just let me know at [blittle@citynet.net](mailto:blittle@citynet.net) that you would like to forego the hardcopy, and I will make a note to exclude you from the Voice mailing list.

This will not affect any other mailings, and you can always switch back. In fact, I would appreciate any communication about changes in address, extended vacations (bulk mail like the Voice is usually returned instead of forwarded), etc. Right about the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month is when the mailing list goes to the printer.

## 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.

## WANT TO COUNT FROGS?

A team from Marshall University is conducting a multi-year project to survey frog populations in West Virginia. It needs volunteers to help. Volunteers participate by spending time outdoors at night listening for frog calls. This information is very useful to our knowledge of the biodiversity of frogs in West Virginia. By volunteering, you will be assigned a route with a map and designated stops. Volunteers will receive training in listening for and identifying frog calls.

If you wish to volunteer or for more information, contact Amy Hamilton at [hamilton16@marshall.edu](mailto:hamilton16@marshall.edu) or call 304-523-3925. Packets will be sent out early February to participants.

