



The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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THE PEOPLE SPEAK ON MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL

An Informational Hearing on Senator Jon Hunter's "Ban Valley Fill Bill" was held during the February 27, 2008 meeting of the WV Senate Committee on Energy, Industry and Mining. Anticipating a large attendance, arrangements were made to meet in the larger Judiciary Committee room. Even that room was packed to overflowing and several print and visual media representatives recorded much of the testimony. Printed below is a Charleston Gazette article that captures in brief the flavor and tone of the meeting.

Mountaintop removal foes, supporters speak

February 28, 2008

By By Phil Kabler
Staff writer

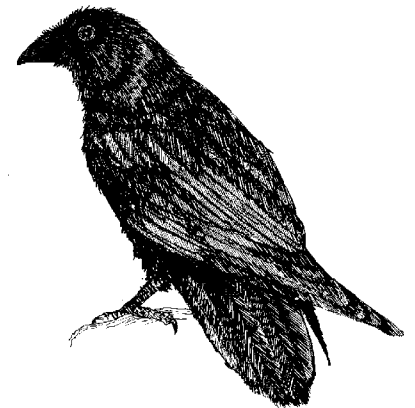
In what could be the swan song of his 12-year legislative career, Sen. Jon Blair Hunter, D-Monongalia, Wednesday gave opponents of mountaintop removal mining a rare opportunity to voice their concerns before a legislative committee.

"In 12 years here, I felt people from the coalfields had not had an opportunity to address the Legislature," Hunter said. "I felt it was important as a people's Legislature to listen to the people."

Wednesday's public hearing drew an overflow crowd to the traditionally pro-coal Senate Energy, Industry and Mining Committee.

Ostensibly, the debate was over Hunter's bill (SB588) to effectively prohibit valley fills by coal operations. Realistically, though, the bill had been dead from the moment it was introduced Feb. 6, with Hunter as its sole sponsor.

"I didn't seem to have a lot of support. I didn't have any co-sponsors," said Hunter, who is not seeking re-



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"Nevermore"

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From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

A Commonplace Column

“Never lend books, for no one ever returns them. The only books I have in my library are those which people have lent me.” —Anatole France

W.H. Auden’s *A Certain World: A Commonplace Book* may include that backhanded advice, but I can’t say for sure because it’s one of those books I’ve lent out and never seen again. Auden kept a notebook in which he copied things that struck him—paragraphs about science or religion, overheard remarks, ancient epigrams—and because he had such a wide-ranging and interesting mind, his commonplace book was worth publishing.

“Commonplace” as an adjective dismisses something as trite or ordinary, but as a noun, historically, it could mean the opposite: a passage worth saving for future reference. Thus, the commonplace book, a collection of such passages.

These days instead of assembling books of quotations we stick them on the bottom of our e-mails. Everything I get from our outreach coordinator, Julian Martin, includes this famous line from *The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss: “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, things aren’t going to get better, they’re not!”

Dave Saville, our former administrator and now full-time wilderness advocate, pulls a quote from an unlikely source: “Having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want.” —Andy Warhol

Dave used to quote a benediction of Edward Abbey’s, wishing you trails that were long and winding and arduous and led to the most fantastic views, but I can’t find the exact language because those e-mails are gone. It’s the nature of the medium and our lives. Thanks for the thought. Click! Next thought.

Some people change their foot-of-message quotations frequently. Cindy Ellis, our director representing the Brooks Bird Club, has treated us to a series of commonplaces in this ephemeral medium. Here’s one from Emily Dickinson: “I hope you love birds too. It is economical. It saves going to heaven.”

Oh yes, that’s Dickinson, on the surface a pretty thought but deeper and sharper the more you look at it. I jotted it down in the back of a monthly planner three years ago. I’ve been copying such things for years, haphazardly and to no good purpose except to cheer myself up, but the other day it occurred to me to share a bunch of the conservation-related quotes and ask readers of the Voice to write in their favorites.

Maybe Dave will supply the blessing from Abbey. I have another from Ol’ Ed, the beginning of *Desert Solitaire*, which Garrison Keillor read on his birthday (January 29) on “The Writer’s Almanac”: “This is the most beautiful place on earth. / There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary. A houseboat in Kashmir, a view down Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, a gray gothic farmhouse two stories high at the end of a red dog road in the Allegheny Mountains, . . . —there’s no limit to the human capacity for the homing sentiment.”

Recently, Cindy has been signing off with this, from E.B. White: “I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent

(Hugh is just warming up; more on p. 10)

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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)HC 64, Box 281, Hillsboro, WV, 24946 (304) 653-4277
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; peter@mountain.net

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)545-6817; 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, jamessolley@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

Mountaintop Removal Hearing (Continued from p. 1)

election after three terms in the Senate.

He said he was encouraged that a majority of committee members turned out to hear the testimony of those opposed to mountaintop removal mining.

"Hopefully, some of them were as moved as I was," he said.

During the hearing, both supporters and opponents spoke on the bill.

Coal industry representatives stressed the economic impact of banning valley fills.

"The economic devastation would be equal to a modern-day Great Depression," said Jason Bostic of the West Virginia Coal Association.

Bob McLusky, a Jackson Kelly attorney who has represented the Coal Association in numerous lawsuits, said Hunter's bill would not only halt surface mining, but most deep mining as well.

"The state will face the largest takings case ... probably ever filed against a state, for billions of dollars," McLusky warned.

However, the majority of the speakers said there is an environmental, societal and moral imperative to protect the state's mountains.

Author and former gubernatorial candidate Denise Giardina said that the Appalachian Mountains are among the oldest on earth, which she said makes them one of God's first creations.

"We, in one generation, are destroying them. Who do we think we are?" she said, pointing a finger at Coal Association representatives in the crowd.

Cindy Rank, with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, emphasized the societal price of mountaintop removal mining, naming a number of southern West Virginia communities that have been "obliterated" in the path of mining operations.

"The people in these small communities are worth more than that, and deserve more than that," she said.

Environmental lawyer Joe Lovett said federal Environmental Protection Agency studies have projected that a significant amount of surface mining that would be lost with limits on valley fills would be made up with an increase in underground mining.

"We are losing our mountains forever for that amount of coal in the short term," he said.

Hunter, meanwhile, said he hopes future Legislatures will be able to accomplish what he could not.

"I have been a long-time supporter of coal mining, but not mountaintop removal," he said.

article above also spoke in support of Senator Hunter's bill. Lorelei Scarbro of Coal River Mountain Watch read a moving statement about her family's history and experience with mountaintop removal in her community. Rev Roy Crist from Ansted shared concerns about expansions of mountaintop removal operations in the New River Gorge and Gauley Mountain area. Nasty weather prevented many people from traveling to Charleston the day of the meeting and we missed hearing from Chuck Nelson of Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

Yesterday's News

There are lots of legislative issues that would be of interest to *Voice* readers. There was a bill to protect the rights of surface owners when a gas company is drilling for gas; there was a bill that would have effectively ended mountaintop removal mining; there was a bill to require a deposit on plastic bottles (the "Bottle Bill"). The perennial controversy over which streams to protect (the "Tier 2.5" controversy) came back. There is proposed legislation that would address how we pay for reclamation on mines where the owner has disappeared or gone broke (the Special Reclamation Fund—for background see the stories in the January issue of *The Highlands Voice*). There are others.

The fate of some of these bills is already known. Surface owners are not going to have any more rights when the Legislature goes home than they do right now. Mountaintop removal will continue, at least so far as the Legislature has anything to say about it. Others are less certain. Their fates are known only to insiders.

Even if *Voice* readers would be interested, there are no stories about these issues. The *Voice* goes to print just before the last week, when the Senators and Delegates run around like chickens with their heads cut off and only the true insiders have a clue what is going on. Anything you read now would be yesterday's news by the time you get the *Voice*.

Fortunately, our own Don Garvin is one of those insiders. In the April issue he will explain what happened.

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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:

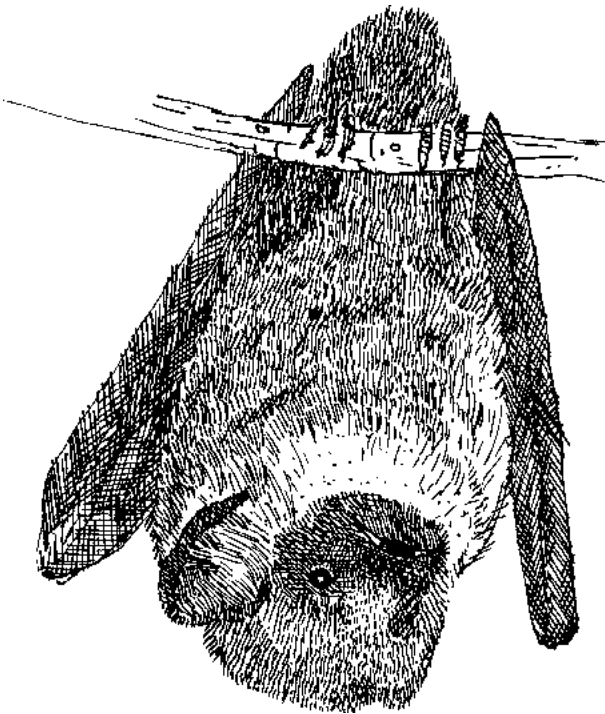
The purposes of the Conservancy shall be to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation—including both preservation and wise use—and appreciation of the natural resources of West Virginia and the Nation, and especially of the Highlands Region of West Virginia, for the cultural, social, educational,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

LAUREL MOUNTAIN WINDFARM PROPOSAL REACHES PSC

By Peter Shoenfeld

On January 31, 2008, AES Laurel Mountain, LLC filed an application with the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) for a siting certificate to authorize the construction and operation of a wind farm on the crest of Laurel Mountain, near Elkins. AES plans to construct and operate up to 65 wind turbines from the southern end of the string near Elkins, then north along the ridgeline, to the northern terminus west of Montrose.

Legal notice of AES' application appeared in the required newspapers on February 13. Petitions to intervene are due no later than March 13. As of February 26, the PSC had received 16 letters of support and 43 letters of protest. Robert Pollock, of Belington, requested an extensive list of studies, to be



commissioned by the PSC but funded by AES, with a 180 day review period to follow.

Two parties have petitioned to intervene thus far. The West Virginia State Building Trades Council, AFL-CIO, routinely intervenes in such cases seeking a commitment to local employment. The Laurel Mountain Preservation Association seeks to intervene in opposition to the project. The lead attorneys are Christopher Callas for AES, Vincent Trivelli for the Building Trades Council, and Justin St. Clair for the opponents.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy considered a motion by Larry Thomas to oppose the Laurel Mountain project at their quarterly Board meeting in January. This led to a rather broad policy discussion but no decision; the motion was tabled and needs to be

soon revisited

The Voice interviewed Pam and Art Dobbs of Montrose, who are opposition leaders and Highlands Conservancy members. Pam stated that their most important reason for opposing the project relates to the difficulty of wind-grid integration, i.e., the wasteful nature of the project in terms of environmental damage vs. coal burning and CO2 production avoided. Pam and Art and many others (see the article by Arthur Hooton in the January, 2008, issue of *The Highlands Voice*) believe that the variable and unpredictable nature of wind availability create a requirement to back up the wind component of the energy on the grid with fossil fuel generation.

This theory is controversial, but if true might dramatically negate the *raison d'être* for wind generation. The author does not yet trust his own understanding, but must note that neither wind industry advertising nor Public Service Commission testimony in West Virginia has yet included a credible refutation applicable to the PJM grid. The author picked up a publication from AES project advocates the "West Virginia Green Energy Alliance" that addresses this problem but provides no real information, stating that "No extra fuel is burned maintaining this extra capacity."

The National Renewal Energy Laboratory (NREL) is mobilizing resources for an "Eastern Wind Integration and Transmission Study," to address this and related problems. This problem obviously is taken seriously by most informed players. Wind-to-grid integration is not the direct responsibility of the wind companies, which may be why we don't hear more about it in PSC cases and follow-on litigation.

Other destructive impacts cited by the Dodds include forest fragmentation, cumulative hydrologic impacts, biological impact on bat populations, local cultural and scenic impacts, and impact on residential development

The local hydrologic impacts are described as coming from diversion of underground flows due to blasting and failure of rain-induced underground recharge because of increased surface run-off over de-vegetated soils. Thus the water table is lowered. This effect becomes cumulative as watersheds converge; at least six existing or currently proposed

projects drain into the West Virginia portion of the Monongahela River.

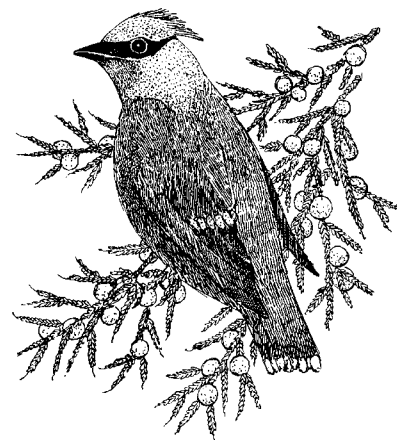
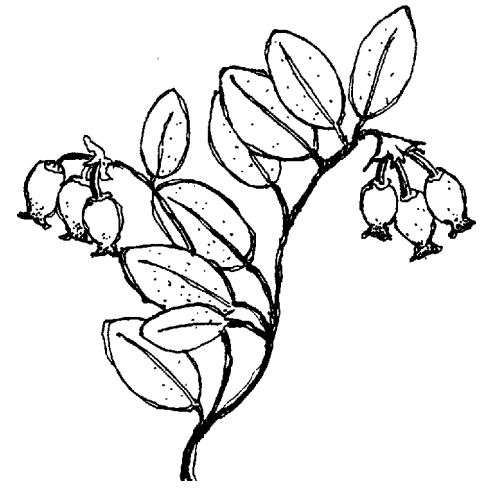
The bat problem predicted is similar to that seen on nearby Backbone Mountain where fall turbine collision mortality in the thousands for red bats, hairy bats, pipistrelles

and other species has been repeatedly observed. However, past discussions have included a dearth of information on "biological significance," i.e., impact of the added mortality on the species population as a whole. However, Art and Pam are cavers, have visited area caves when the turbine-impacted species had retreated there, and have observed only modest individual cave populations, perhaps 200-300 per cave. Art also pointed out that before the turbines these bats faced no enemies or other major hazards. As a result, premature mortality was quite low.

The Dodds tell us that the Laurel Hill Battlefield lies within 1.2 miles of the turbine string. Virtually the entire string is expected to be visible from the battlefield. This battlefield is the scene of an annual Civil War re-enactment, attended by 4000-5000 persons annually. These people come for an authentic re-experience of a dramatic historical event.

This authenticity will be spoiled if the scene is overlaid with up to 65 four-hundred foot, 21st century wind turbines.

They also anticipate severe visual and cultural impacts at open areas in the City of Elkins as the southern end of the string approaches within two or three miles. Davis and Elkins College and the Augusta Festival in the



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MORE ABOUT LAUREL MOUNTAIN

(Continued from p. 4)

City Park were specifically mentioned, as was impact along US 219 and the Allegheny Highlands Trail.

Concerning residential development, not much has happened on Laurel Mountain in the last few decades. There are the beginnings (2 lots sold) of a development called Bear Ridge. There are a number of retired folk nestled in individual homesteads on the mountain. Their numbers should not be expected to increase if the wind project goes through, they say.

A call to the AES Vice President for Communications, seeking responses to some of these criticisms had not yet been returned in time for this article. But some of these subjects are addressed in AES' Public Service Commission application. Wind-grid integration is not discussed. No impacts to groundwater resources are anticipated in construction. Soils are said to be of a type that resists stormwater infiltration.

The likelihood of high bat mortality is acknowledged but plans for mitigation, such as by adaptive management are not discussed. Negligible "lost opportunity for alternate land use," is claimed; negative impacts on tourism and property values are denied. The presence of archaeological, cultural and recreational resource is discussed, but we found no discussion of the reenactment at Laurel Hill Battlefield. A visual impact analysis has been undertaken, and the application has taken the somewhat unusual step of listing notable locations from which the turbines will not be visible.

It is the author's opinion, that while this project disturbs less public land and fewer spectacular viewpoints or "special places" than do other projects previously proposed, the cumulative visual impact of it and all the other projects planned for the northern West Virginia Allegheny region is much too great. The author lives in Canaan Valley and counts 10 projects within a 60 mile or so distance that are either in operation, under construction, approved but not yet constructed, or planned and announced but not yet approved. This is enough to change the experience of simply living in or visiting the area from one of beauty and relaxation to something approaching industrial immersion. It is just too damned many,

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.



WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT NEAR HARMAN PROPOSED AGAIN

By Peter Shoenfeld

In January 2003, the Conservancy Board voted to formally oppose the plans of Guascor Group to develop a 65 unit wind turbine string along the crest of Rich Mountain, crossing US33/WV55 a few miles west of Harman. We learned of this when a friend crashed a secret land-owner/developer meeting, got thrown out, and spilled the beans. This ridge traverses a giant, privately held in-holding at the heart of the Monongahela National Forest. Nearby "special places," (viewpoints) and their distances from the wind project include:

- Spruce Knob—8.3 mi.
- Near Point on Spruce Mountain—7 miles
- Laurel Fork North Wilderness— 1 mile
- Middle Mountain—2.2 miles
- Roaring Plains— 10 miles
- Bickle Knob Tower—9.5 miles
- Near Point on Shaver's Mountain—4.7 miles
- Prime Viewpoint from Shaver's Mountain— 6 miles
- Haystack Knob— 6.3 miles
- Mt. Porte Crayon— 5.5 miles
- Canaan Valley— 6 miles

Get the picture? We did. The Conservancy wrote to Guascor, issued a press release, and lobbied various luminaries and other interested parties throughout 2003 and into 2004. A man named Martin Paituvi, was the person in charge. We sought to discourage him, perhaps successfully. He went to a new company, the Greenwind Corp., which we heard had bought Guascor's US wind development business. Then the project seemed to fade away. We heard nothing of it for perhaps two years, but then started hearing new rumors of persons unknown negotiating wind tower leases on Rich Mountain.

In January, 2008, the West Virginia Public Energy Authority held a public meeting in Charleston. Ellen Lutz of the Gamesa Corporation, presented Gamesa's current WV wind development plans. They are currently pursuing four projects, the largest of which is, you guessed it, Rich Mountain, in Randolph County, WV. It has grown to 75 turbines, spread over 17 miles of ridge top.

In recent years, resort and residential development right along the western slope of the ridges to the immediate east of Rich Mountain has occurred. They'll love it. Having declared their opposition years ago, the Highlands Conservancy will continue to strategize and mobilize. We'll keep you posted.

For more details of the earlier project proposed for Rich Mountain, including pictures and a map, go to <http://www.wvhighlands.org/PDFs/RichMountainWind2004.pdf>. The proposal this time will not be identical to the earlier one but they will be sufficiently similar to give you a good idea of the current proposal.

A DAY AT THE CONGRESS

Wilderness supporters gather with Congressman Nick Rahall after the House Resources Parks Subcommittee hearing on the Wild Monongahela Act. All five members of West Virginia's Congressional Delegation have cosponsored this historic legislation, the first to protect the Monongahela National Forest in over 25 years. The Bush administration has also voiced support for the bill. Joel Holtrop, deputy chief of the National Forest System, told the House National Parks Subcommittee that the areas proposed in Rahall's H.R. 5151 contain "a special kind of wilderness" that warrants protection.



"The wilderness areas described in this bill are special places to my city, to West Virginia and to the rest of the Nation," said Lewisburg Mayor John Manchester, seen with Representative Nick Rahall at a Congressional hearing on the Wild Monongahela Act. Manchester was one of five witnesses representing citizen support for wilderness protections on the Mon. "Lewisburg is not alone in local government support for additional wilderness areas," he said, referring to the many municipal and county resolutions in favor of wilderness from locales across the state.

"It is our belief that each of the fifteen special wild areas identified by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition ultimately deserves to be protected by congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System," said Reverend Dennis Sparks, Executive Director of the WV Council of Churches. House Resources Committee members applauded efforts by the Bill's supporters for building a diverse, bipartisan constituency across West Virginia. Wilderness advocates representing elected officials, businesses and labor, sporting groups and faith based organizations delivered testimony in support of the Wild Monongahela Act and urged Representatives to consider amending the legislation to include several omitted areas.



WILDERNESS LEGISLATION ADVANCES IN THE HOUSE

By Michael Costello

Federal legislation to protect the Monongahela National Forest recently passed another significant milestone and took one step closer to becoming a reality. Leaders representing the state's community of wilderness supporters converged on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to demonstrate broad-based citizen support for additional wilderness protection for some of the state's last wild places.

In the House of Representatives Natural Resources subcommittee on Parks Forests and Public Lands hearing on February 26, Committee members heard testimony from witnesses hailing the Wild Monongahela Act, historic legislation sponsored by all five members of West Virginia's Congressional Delegation.

Testimony was given by the U.S. Forest Service as well as from citizens representing labor, sporting, business and religious organizations. Raised in the hearing were issues ranging from sustainable growth for local economies to improving water quality and wildlife habitat for enhanced hunting and fishing opportunities.

"An intact and undisturbed forest is one of the best management tools for protecting Brook Trout," Bob Bittner, Jr., of the Mountaineer Chapter of Trout Unlimited said in his testimony. "The re-establishment of native species is a primary goal in wilderness."

Testimony from the U.S. Forest Service lauded the Bill. "We strongly support the spirit of this legislation," said Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief for the National Forest System, "and we confirm that all seven areas proposed for wilderness designation meet the criteria for wilderness."

Slated to protect just over 47,000 acres, Holtrop said the Bill represents a "special kind of wilderness" worthy of permanent protection.

Although the hearing focused on the areas included in the Wild Monongahela Act, multiple witnesses expressed their concern for the future of critical areas left out of the introduced version of the legislation. Amendments to include Seneca Creek, Roaring Plains East and North and East Fork of Greenbrier with their important watersheds, among other unique qualities, were suggested by several witnesses.

The political landscape of wilderness on the Mon continues to change with the recent proposed alternative offered by Governor Joe Manchin and the WV Division of Natural Resources. This proposal seeks to remove the Spice Run and Cheat Mountain areas from the Wild Mon Act while adding Roaring Plains North and East as well as part of the Seneca Creek area.

While we applaud the support for the protection of several special places that Governor Manchin has publicly demonstrated, the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition continues to work with decision makers and stakeholders to ensure that as many special places as possible are included in legislation. Now more than ever, your input is needed to ensure a protected future for the National Forests remaining wild places.

Now is the time to contact your House of Representatives member to thank them for introducing this historic legislation and to express your support for wilderness designation for your favorite wild places. You should also phone or send a letter to both Senators and the Governor with the same message. Wilderness safeguards the many natural characteristics in these special areas, so whether the pristine trout streams in Seneca Creek and East Fork of Greenbrier are valuable to you, or you simply cherish the wild, rugged character of places like Spice Run, Roaring Plains and Cheat Mountain, Congress needs to hear from you as the push for a Wild Mon continues.

Areas in Congressman Rahall's District -3rd

Big Draft
Cranberry Expansion
East Fork of Greenbrier
Spice Run

Areas in Congresswoman Capito's District -2nd

Seneca Creek
Cheat Mountain
Roaring Plains North, East and West

Areas in Congressman Mollohan's District - 1st

Dolly Sods Expansion
Otter Creek Expansion
Part of Roaring Plains East

Whom to call:

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-3452
Fax (202) 225-9061

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

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

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2711
Fax: (202) 225-7856

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202)-224-3954
Fax: (202) 228-0002

Governor Joe Manchin III
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305
1-888-438-2731

WILDERNESS COALITION'S MATT KELLER HONORED WITH LAURA FOREMAN GRASSROOTS ACTIVIST AWARD

Each year, the West Virginia Environmental Council makes its annual award announcements at E-day in Charleston. There are several awards given each year. After 5 years of organizing for Wilderness in West Virginia, Matt Keller has been distinguished with the Laura Foreman Grassroots Activist Award for 2008.

This award honors the work of someone who has excelled in grassroots organizing. It is named in honor and in memory of Laura Foreman, long-time Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition organizer whose passion for the people and places of West Virginia led her to tirelessly work to effectively organize, motivate and encourage citizens to stand up for their communities and special places.

Laura died suddenly and unexpectedly in December of 2001. This award is offered to someone who embodies the spirit of and passion for community organizing as Laura did. Matt Keller is such a person and someone we should all be proud to honor in such a way.

Matt began working to protect Wilderness in West Virginia in 2003. After five years, his work has begun to pay off with the introduction of the *Wild Monongahela Act* in Congress in January 2008. Matt has successfully pulled together a broad and diverse coalition of individuals, organizations and businesses to speak with a unified voice in asking our congressional delegation to protect more of our cherished

Monongahela National Forest.

As the legislation is currently written it will protect over 47,000 acres, but Governor Manchin and the WV Division of Natural Resources would like to see the acreage increased. This is a testament to the organizing work of Matt and the thousands of West Virginians who have worked for many years to get to this point. The *Wild Monongahela Act* is truly an historic occasion in West Virginia and, with its passage, we will have added acreage to the National Wilderness Preservation System in West Virginia for the first time in 25 years.

Congratulations to Matt and best wishes for quick passage of the Wild Mon Act! Keeping the Wild in Wonderful West Virginia.



HISTORY AND HERITAGE IN THE CANYON

By Judy Rodd, Director, Friends of Blackwater

Readers of The Highlands Voice know well the many stories of how ordinary people are fighting against injustice in the West Virginia mountains – today. In the coalfields, citizens are battling against dust, sludge, and destruction. In the Highlands, generations of local farm families are challenging the forced siting of industrial wind turbines. In our National Forests, outdoor recreation enthusiasts are defending wilderness from corporate onslaughts.

Voice readers also know that our West Virginia past is just as full of courageous struggles for justice. For example: in 1921 at Blair Mountain in Logan County, thousands of miners fought for decent working conditions. Today, union miners and mountaintop removal opponents have joined forces to protect the historic battleground.

Another example – in 1892, at the head of the Blackwater Canyon in Tucker County, African American parents challenged the closing of their school – and won! thanks to the brilliant legal work of J. R. Clifford (1848-1933), West Virginia's first African American lawyer.

Clifford was born near Moorefield, and joined the Union Army when he was 15. After the Civil War, he attended Storer College in Harpers Ferry, and taught school in Martinsburg, where he published a leading African American newspaper, the Pioneer Press.

Clifford was admitted to practice law in 1887, and he represented a Tucker County African American teacher who challenged a shortened school term for the children of blacks who lived in Tucker County. In 1892 the West Virginia Supreme Court ruled that this discrimination was unconstitutional.

Today, Friends of Blackwater and our partners are telling the inspirational story of how J. R. Clifford and the Blackwater Canyon African American community prevailed in their struggle to thousands of West Virginians. Our reason is simple: when citizens and communities learn about and value their heritage, they will unite to protect that heritage. Telling the story of the struggle for justice in the Blackwater Canyon in the 1890s helps us in our efforts today.

Celebrating the rich and diverse human history and heritage of the Appalachians is just as

important as preserving its rich and diverse biodiversity. When we hike the magnificent Blackwater Canyon trail, we stride over cut-stone archways built 100 years ago by skilled craftsmen — Italians, Croats, African Americans, and many more. When we finish a stirring Tucker County bike ride with a steaming cup of cocoa at the Purple Fiddle in Thomas, the former DePollo general store resonates with hundreds of years of history.

Our struggles for justice must be about more than protecting birds and bugs and plants and animals. We must care for the entire fabric of life – human and non-human. We must protect and preserve our natural heritage – and our human heritage.

Telling the story of Blackwater hero J. R. Clifford has enriched the campaign to save the Blackwater Canyon. It has brought a diversity to our campaign that is humbling and inspirational. J.R. Clifford embodied persistence, courage, and creativity — we strive to follow his example!

February was Black History Month, but any month is a good one to learn more about J. R. Clifford, at www.jrclifford.org — and about the Blackwater Canyon campaign, at www.saveblackwater.org.



Join Now !!!

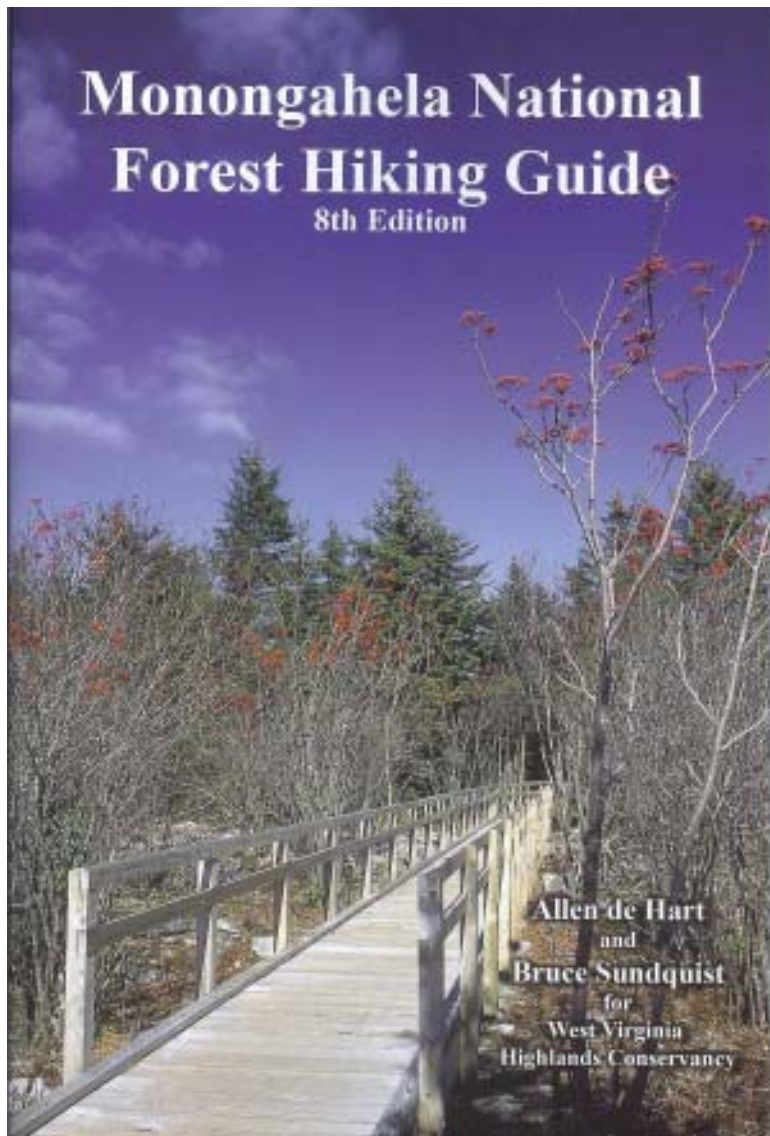
Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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.

Our Readers Write

Finally, something pro-wind

Voice Editor:

It was refreshing to read a pro-wind editorial in *The Voice* by Laurie Cameron who appears to have more than a modicum of interest/expertise on the subject. *The Voice* has, in my opinion, been primarily opposed to wind power at a time when we must utilize all carbon neutral avenues to address global warming. Creditable scientists agree that we have little time to reverse this most egregious problem. The selfish “not in my backyard” argument doesn’t cut it any more. Aesthetics be damned, folks. We are talking about survival!

Indeed at this point, we seem to have few viable options, and certainly wind power must be considered to as one of them.

William Wegener
Carnegie, PA

More about wind

Dear Mr. McFerrin,

We feel that a response is required to the lengthy article by Arthur Hooton in the January 2008 issue of *The Highland Voice*. Hooton argues that wind power cannot make a useful contribution to our power needs. He notes (correctly) that wind is intermittent and makes some backup supply necessary. But he makes the NOT valid point that that intermittency means that yet more wind power is necessary, resulting in an INCREASED need for other power input to the grid. That’s a weird statement, since if the grid accepts wind power from a large area, the intermittency of that power supply is minimized, and there is surely a LESSER total non-wind demand. No one ever said one alternative source would be enough.

This is only one of the highly dubious and basically irresponsible statements Mr. Hooton makes, and he offers no constructive alternative to provide for our every-increasing need for power.

It seems ironic that in the same issue is a piece by Hugh Rogers pointing out that, “Very soon, it will be cheaper to leave coal in the ground and generate electricity by other means.” Why did you give so much space and implied credibility to Mr. Hooton in your otherwise valuable paper?

Sincerely yours,
Phillip and Karin Nelson

More From Hugh (Continued from p. 2)

less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority.”

Board member Larry Thomas offers a pointed warning from a 19th Century Cree Indian: “Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish is caught will we realize that we cannot eat money.”

In the same spirit, the poet William Carlos Williams wrote, “Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize them, he must either change them or perish.”

“Man’s heart away from nature becomes hard.” –Standing Bear

A quirkier view of our relation to nature: “Unable to function as plants, we must serve as manure.” –Edward Conze

“Nature can be trusted to work her own miracle in the heart of any man whose daily task keeps him alone among her sights, sounds, and silences.” –Gene Stratton Porter

And speaking of solitude: “One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a journey, but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me.” –William Hazlitt

Counsel for activists: “Some people become radical out of hatred. Others become radical out of love and sympathy. I come out of the second class.” –I.F. Stone

“The liberals really just want to send a check. Or they want to change a structure. And I’m telling you—you have to change a heart.” –Tim Ritchie

“Politics is a means of finding approximate solutions to insoluble problems.” –Reinhold Neibuhr

“I learned long ago never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it.” –George Bernard Shaw

I’ll conclude this selection with two short poems—after I reiterate the invitation to send your own favorite quotations to Editor John McFerrin, preferably by e-mail. You’ll find his address modestly placed at the very bottom of the roster.

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.
—Robert Frost

A little madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King,
But God be with the Clown—

Who ponders this tremendous scene—
This whole experiment of Green—
As if it were his own!
—Emily Dickinson

Book Review

BRINGING DOWN THE MOUNTAINS

By Shirley Stewart Burns (West Virginia University Press)

Reviewed by Don Gasper

This new book offers fresh proof that the law of unintended consequences never sleeps. In 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act sent mining companies looking for low sulfur coal that would enable them to meet the new standard for allowable pollutants. Since southern West Virginia had ample deposits of desirable low-sulfur coal, the coal industry moved in and set to work. From the point of view of the air, things improved, as they were supposed to.

But two undesirable results came with the deal. Employers used fewer miners, not more, and that was due to the other result: the companies stepped up their use of mountaintop removal (MTR), which offered the quickest and cheapest way to claw the coal from the earth, partly because it needs fewer workers than more traditional methods of mining.

In MTR the heavy lifting is done by the innocuously named dragline, which is actually a monster of an earth-moving machine that may stand twenty stories high. Before it can do its work, the area to be mined is stripped of all trees and other plants and the accompanying topsoil. After it has performed, removing the top of the mountain, the "overburden" is used to regrade another mined area or is dumped into the head of a hollow.

The book bears the subtitle; "The impact of Mountaintop Removal on Southern West Virginia Communities." In the 25 years since this method of mining began in West Virginia, the author tells us, the southern counties have seen a steady decline in employment and a reciprocal rise in environmental degradation.

Ironically, the coal industry that once created flourishing villages and towns is now destroying them. The communities in these coal counties are more and more turning into ghost towns and it is important to document their existence. Burns looks not only at the communities but at the coal giants and the methods by which, both historically and right now, they have worked and are working their will, with the aid of all the usual political suspects.

The book contains endorsements from some long time observers of the industry:

The "most comprehensive" account of the people's attempt to fight back at the onslaught on their environment." Jack Spadaro.

The book is "a wake-up call not only for southern West Virginians, but for anyone who uses electricity generated from coal". Katie Fallion.

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.

GAS WELL RULES: A GOOD START IN PROTECTING STATE FORESTS

By Don Gasper

It was good to see The Highlands Voice carrying an article on legislative consideration of more protection of our State Forests from gas well roads, well drilling, well sites, etc. These rules as explained in the article seemed reasonable; further they are proposed by a heads-up, responsible W.V. Division of Natural Resources. They are experts and fairly "balanced" in their recommendations. Hopefully the Legislature will act on them.

What seems to be missing is the specialness of these public lands. Muddy water reduces their appeal and cabin rental and other user fees suffer. The tourist sightseeing citizen is effected by a reduced enjoyment, and regard for these streams. State Forests are important in providing clean, clear water to stream reaches below.

Many of these streams themselves, and the effected stream reaches below are stocked with catchable-size hatchery trout. Muddy water not only reduces fishing opportunity and enjoyment but catchability and survival as well. Sediment from muddy water smothers food items and reduces food habitat. This last, to the extent that over-winter survival of trout is reduced. But perhaps more significance is that many of our State Forests have native brook trout streams. Their eggs must spend the entire winter under the gravel and are smothered by sediment accumulation from just two or three muddy water events. With four or five years of this, these generally isolated populations could disappear.

In contrast our State Forests (Coopers Rock, to Camp Creek, and Watoga/Cal Price, Kumbrabow, Greenbrier, etc.) should be strongholds for native brook trout, our State Fish. Their presence, and the sport fishing associated with them, enhances the natural attributes of our public lands, their watersheds and beyond. It is not only an economic engine but a heritage issue that needs more formal protection.

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 ATTEN: James Solley, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.



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 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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 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 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

More on the next page

WEST VIRGINIA. HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY HELPS WITH TRAIL WORK

By Don Gasper

The "High Sods" or "Dolly Sods North", as it is widely known, is particularly attractive to hikers. The original spruce forest has not much grown back here, and there are vast open vistas of blueberry bushes with scattered wind-flagged spruce. It is quite a different and rare place than the wooded wilderness below and on much of this great nearly 1 million acre National Forest itself. This north-east corner of the Monongahela is much used by hikers from Pittsburgh and D.C. areas.

The W. Va. Highlands Conservancy has for the last two years initiated a trails maintenance program in and near The Dolly Sods Wilderness. The U.S.F.S. land (and people) managers have graciously considered our suggestions and allowed us to work with them as "partners" in mapping and development of this trail-work.

Our hikers have long noted eroding trails and areas of bare soil. Even an old fire lane had been dug with a bulldozer and left open. Reaches of the trail were excessively wet or eroding. New mapping and some trail reorganization, and some trail removal enabled this program of trail maintenance and repair to pro-

ceed in generally smarter and more acceptable fashion.

The W.V. Department of Highways administers federal highway money for trail projects. To access this large fund a 20% match must be available. The W.V.H.C. has come up with \$1,250 from its regular budget as the necessary citizen partner. In recognition of this contribution, a sign was erected near the work area. It was located at roadside in The Dolly Sods area. It's size (8' X 4') and wording was specified by the federal grant of \$5,000.

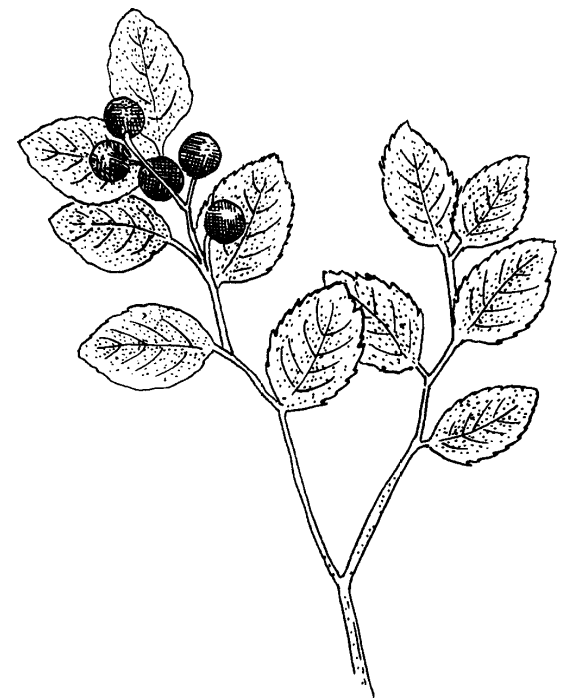
Much good work has been accomplished by the U.S.F.S. While more stabilization and "regular" maintenance is needed there, we have been advised by the U.S.F.S. of a greater opportunity to participate in an almost \$70,000 project that would last two years. This would be spent over a wider area – the northern part of the Monongahela. Trout Unlimited has chosen to participate also as a citizen partner with \$1,000. The W.V.H.C. will continue its support by pledging \$800 more than its regular contribution. The U.S.F.S. will be contributing also in order to access this total federal trail grant.

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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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 or Larry Gibson (304) 542-1134; (304) 549-3287.



The Highlands Conservancy may be in a little way directing the U.S.F.S.'s over all effort, enabling them to do needed work that they might not otherwise be able to do. (We can not be sure, without examining their entire budget which we have no opportunity or ability to do.) This does reflect our long-term interest in Monongahela Trails, as is manifested in our "Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide", updated, now in its eighth edition. It describes over 800 miles of trails. The U.S.F.S. will be reviewing their entire trails system, and in 2009 will statistically sample trail use though out the year. Highlands has set up a new trails committee to keep up with these developments. Readers with interest and some trail knowledge, that would like to help can reach us at P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.



More Outings:

day hike along the Canyon Rim with possible side trips. Day 3 backpack out the way we came in. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at 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

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.

NEW RIVER LIKE IT IS!

By Richard W. Smith

The old battle cry is ringing through the New River Valley once again!

This is particularly true in Summers County, West Virginia. Save Our Mountains, incorporated in 1977, is sounding the alarm to the spraying New River with BTI. This river flows through the New River Gorge National River. BTI is a chemical agent designed to kill gnats or similar small insects. Its application to New River has historically been justified as a way to eliminate the annoyance that people living in the general vicinity of the New River may suffer from these insects. Save Our Mountains has long contended that the spraying is not justified.

Local recreational, commercial fishermen, and bait hunters alike say "The River is dead at Sandstone pool." They also say, "There are no crayfish, hellgrammites, red eye

bass, flathead catfish, or small baitfish" -This is not even considering the lack of insect life.

In the year 2007 alone, over \$630,000 was spent dumping BTI. In a small section of the New River, above Sandstone Falls and Hinton West Virginia, 2695 gallons of BTI bacteria were sprayed by helicopter.

Save Our Mountains is requesting a moratorium of spraying until some specific studies can be completed. We are appealing this to the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior since The New River is a National Treasure. Also the NPS is supposed to protect the natural species in the National River.

Realistically the West Virginia State Legislature should stop the funding for the spraying programs, but they are afraid to vote honorably! Since it will cost votes and feel they can not get elected. Did I hear someone say

"we need a change in government"?

I believe if West Virginians knew the damage being done, they would spend the taxpayer's dollars on a positive, life giving program in instead of throwing money in the water.

The gnats were here when the early settlers came, they bothered them and they bother us. They will always be here no matter how much money we spend on the program.

How much is the New River worth to future generations? When we eradicate nature, how far can we be behind.

Richard W. Smith is an active member of Save Our Mountains. He may be contacted at HenrysKnives60@aol.com.

Bugging the WV Supreme Court ?

The February issue of the VOICE included a letter written by our summer intern James Tawney about the buggy Walker Machinery commercials many have seen on TV.

The version of James' letter printed in the VOICE appeared earlier in the Beckley paper. However, James' original letter also included reference to the blonde interviewer in the commercial. He questioned if the interviewer was the wife of Walker machinery's VP. Ms Walker is a candidate for the West Virginia Supreme Court and James mused about her ability to be impartial if elected to a position on the Court.

Apparently the similarities between the actor and Beth Walker was on the minds of others as well. Shortly after the VOICE went to press last month, George Hohman posed the question in a Daily Mail article:

A colleague in the newsroom asked if Republican State Supreme Court Candidate Elizabeth "Beth" Walker of South Charleston plays the role of a TV news reporter in the Walker Machinery TV commercial that features a woman interviewing an animated bug about mountaintop removal coal mining. Beth Walker's husband, Mike, is executive vice president of Walker Machinery.

I asked Steve Walker.

"The blonde in the bug commercial is not Beth Walker, but I have to admit when I first saw it I said, 'It looks like Beth!' he said. 'Purely coincidence and I have no idea who she is. The talent for the ad was supplied outside of our hiring.'"

Whether or not the blonde in the bug commercial is indeed the same blonde who is a candidate for WV Supreme Court may well be less important than the question James raised about Ms Walker's potential role on the Supreme Court.


The Walker family's sponsorship of the misleading bug commercials, support for the ridiculous brouhaha over the Kroger card/


OVEC issue, erroneous comments at the Buffer Zone Rule hearing last October, and Walker Marketing Manager Roger Lilly's infuriating comments on Public Broadcasting basically sanctioning the sacrifice of Boone county to provide electricity and power "for our urban brothers and sisters" in Manhattan and elsewhere are difficult to ignore.

No doubt Ms Walker is an independent thinker. But her close ties to the Walker family do give one pause.

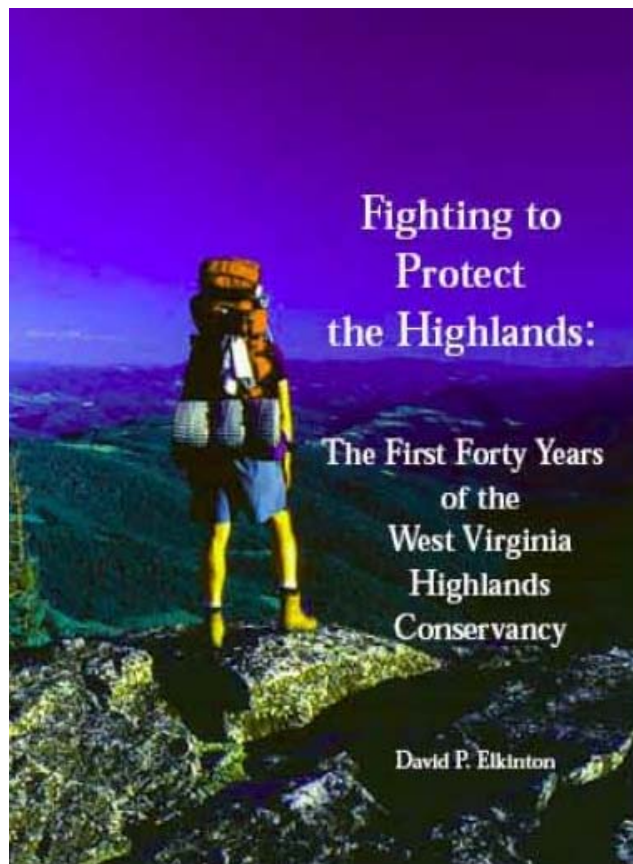
HATS FOR SALE

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. 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



GET A GREAT BOOK!

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.

BETTER YET: Get a Great Book Signed

:Dave Elkinton will be signing copies of ***Fighting to Protect the Highlands: The First Forty Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy*** at Taylor Books on Capitol Street in Charleston, on Thursday, March 27 at 6:00 PM. Conservancy members are encouraged to bring their copies for signing, or attend and purchase copies. There are expected to be other book signings in West Virginia during the Spring.

Leave a Legacy of hope for the future

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

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 John McFerrin, WV Highlands Conservancy, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Sustainable Fair 2008 ~ “Green Makes \$en\$e”

WV Highlands Spring Review
Davis & Elkins College Campus – Elkins, WV
April 18 ~ 20, 2008

Entitled “**Green Makes \$en\$e**”, the fair focuses on sustainable topics including energy, sustainable economic development, food & agriculture, health, architecture, eco tourism, public policy, transportation, small businesses and more.

For updates on the fair, you may currently visit us at: www.lapaixherbfarmproducts.com

Admission is only \$5.00 and includes all workshops, keynote address.

Sustainable Fair Kick Off Celebration: “A Taste of West Virginia” buffet by local gourmet chefs, spearheaded by Chef Dale Hawkins of Stonewall Resort will be featured **Friday evening** (cost: \$25), with **live music by Public Outcry** (admission is free) to follow. **Our Saturday Keynote Speaker:** Deborah Koons Garcia, who will be addressing “The Integrity Of Food”, based on her award winning film.

Saturday Benefit dinner: “Living in Concert, A Sustainable Feast”. Cost: \$40

Workshops are scheduled all day Saturday featuring: Sustainable / Renewable energy; Sustainable economic development & Eco tourism; Food & agriculture; Health; Architecture/ Green Building; Public Policy; Transportation.

Booths: Approximately 40 different booth displays will be set up all day Saturday.

Children’s Activities: Available for ages 5 through 12 all day Saturday.

Art Exhibit: Located in the campus library from April 1, through August 22.

WV Symphony sponsored by D&E College Saturday evening. Tickets: \$12.

Sunday Excursions: Visit sustainable homes and other locations of interest.

Sunday: A play by the Davis & Elkins Theatre Department entitled, “Urinetown” will be presented at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Friday “Taste of WV” Buffet cost: \$25. The buffet begins at 5:30 until 7:30 p.m.

Saturday “Living in Concert: A Sustainable Feast” cost: \$40. The dinner begins at 5:30 until 8:00 p.m. (Symphony goes need to leave by 7:00 to attend the concert).

For Saturday Dinner Reservations: Jan Myers, (304) 269-7019 – 295 Simpson Run Road, Weston, WV 26452 or e-mail Jan at aenjanwv@juno.com

For WV Symphony Tickets: Carol Schuler w/ Davis & Elkins, (304) 637-1338 or schulerc@DavisAndElkins.edu. Cost: \$12. The Symphony begins at 7:30. Refreshments served during intermission.

For Booth Registration: Denise Poole, (304) 617-7073 or deniseap@earthlink.net

WV Highlands Conservancy Members: The Sustainability Fair will be in conjunction with the Highlands Conservancy’s Spring Review and Spring Board Meeting. For additional information about West Virginia Highlands Conservancy special offers and housing possibilities, contact: Cindy Rank, (304) 924-5802 or clrank@hughes.net

COME TO WASHINGTON DC APRIL 5TH – APRIL 9TH, 2008

FOR THE THIRD ANNUAL MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL WEEK IN WASHINGTON

.... Talk with your representatives about the Clean Water Protection Act and how it can help stop the insanity of mountaintop removal mining.....

Join with hundreds of people from across the country to ask Congress to stop the insanity of mountaintop removal strip mining.

A broad coalition of organizations has made this annual event a huge success and a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Last year’s week in Washington was a tremendous success — not to mention a lot of fun. More than 100 people from 19 states came to Washington, holding more than 100 meetings with Congressional offices and 20 face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress.

The result? People like you helped gain new support for the Clean Water Protection Act, which now has 129 co-sponsors.

The Clean Water Protection Act (HR 2169) amends the Clean Water Act to once again redefine “fill material” in such a way as to exclude any pollutant discharged into the water primarily to dispose of

waste. This would effectively reverse EPA’s regressive response to earlier litigation in WV and KY that challenged the Army Corps of Engineers’ authority to grant permits for coal companies to fill streams with waste rock from mining operations (i.e. valley fills).

This year’s week in Washington is more important than ever. The push is on for greater reliance on coal to fuel our perceived future energy needs. And industry has and is willing and able to spend exorbitant amounts of money to spend to greenwash the public and Congress. Our representatives need to hear from you that the time for action on mountaintop removal coal mining is now. .

To learn more about this year’s Week in Washington, or to indicate if you’re interested in attending, please contact Cindy Rank at clrank@hughes.net or 304-924-5802 to find out more about travel, housing and financial assistance. Also stay tuned for updated information at www.wvhighlands.org.