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The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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THE SELENIUM MESS FLOWS ON

By Cindy Rank

High levels of selenium have been known to exist downstream from mining operations since at least 2002 when studies done in conjunction with the Mountaintop Removal Environmental Impact Statement found high levels of selenium downstream of some valley fills.

Represented by the public interest law and policy group the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, WV Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) has since engaged in several actions meant to reduce the risk of selenium pollution from mining operations in West Virginia.

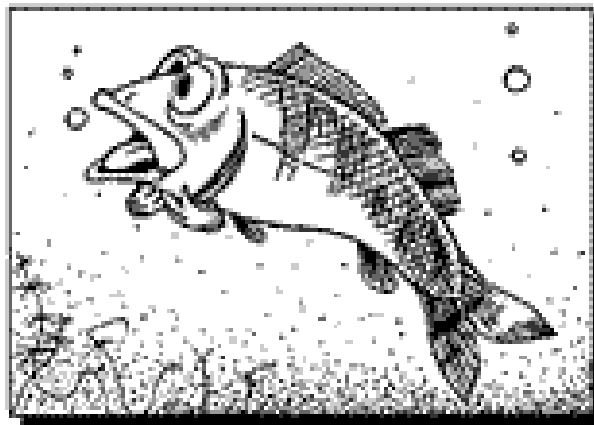
ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL BEFORE THE EQB

An administrative appeal by WVHC, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) and Coal River Mountain Watch is pending before the West Virginia Environmental Quality Board (EQB). That appeal challenges the WV Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) issuance of compliance orders to extend the time when companies must meet selenium standards in water discharges.

Located mostly in the central to southern most part of the state these are operations whose permits never included specific selenium limits, but only a "monitor and report" requirement for an initial period of

time. However, DEP continues to extend the time that companies are given, thereby allowing unnecessary and harmful delays in complying with water quality standards for selenium.

WVHC and OVEC have also filed two additional actions in federal court against Apogee and Hobet Mining for failure to comply with selenium limits that ARE included in water discharge permits for their mine sites in the Guyandotte and Mud River watersheds.



VICTORY ON THE GUYANDOTTE

On May 27, 2008 federal judge Robert C. Chambers issued a ruling in our favor in one of those actions that focused primarily on Apogee Coal Company operations in the Rum and Buffalo Creek area of Logan County.

Judge Chambers ruled that Apogee Coal Company is to be held liable for violating selenium limits and ordered them to comply within a set number of days.

DEP had included selenium limits when reissuing Apogee's water discharge permit for the area. Then, well after the fact, maintained that the agency had *mistakenly* given Apogee those limits and

(More on P. 3)

What's inside:

Thoughts from President Hugh	2	Birds, bats, and windmills	9
Roster of officers	2	Our readers write	10
Special Reclamation update	3	How to join	11
Big power line	4	Get a Hiking Guide	11
Sewer plant in Pocahontas County.	5	Forest Service regulations	12
Outings	6	Get a history book	12
Birds and windmills	8		

From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

How Saudi Can We Get?

Campaigning last month in South Dakota, Senator Hillary Clinton pledged to turn the Plains states into “the Saudi Arabia of wind farming.”

You could tell she was serious about energy issues. But still—you might wince at the image.

About the same time, a newspaper in a neighboring state published this letter:

Editor:

The Wilderness Society’s Peter Aengst, from his Bozeman, Montana office, writes us and suggests that wind energy development is just the ticket for the state of Wyoming.

I have a better idea. Instead of trashing Wyoming’s beautiful landscapes with miles and miles of ugly wind generators, let’s scatter these huge machines along 1-90 in Montana. They would do well in the Livingston/Bozeman areas and would be an attractive addition to Montana’s viewscape.

Heck, since he thinks they are so great, several dozen of these behemoths could be set up on the outskirts of Bozeman and Mr. Aengst could view them at will from his office. . . .

Thanks go to Mr. Aengst for thinking of us, but if wind generators and wind farms are such a good idea, they will work just as well in Montana as in Wyoming and I, for one, would rather see them there.

TRAVIS MOFFAT, Lander

It seems NIMBY’s are everywhere and their (our) back yards are always beautiful in their (our) eyes. Politicians passing through tend to be so distracted by “resources” and “programs” (if not “contributions”), they don’t see the landscape at all. Certainly that’s true in our state, where the politicians can’t possibly have looked, really looked, at mountaintop removal mining. Saudi Arabia was a desert already when they went after the oil. Southern West Virginia is being turned into a manmade desert. We are the Saudi Arabia of coal mining.

By these detours I return to the Highlands Conservancy’s policy on wind energy projects on our Appalachian ridges. I meant to take a month off from the topic. After all, John McFerrin’s and Peter Shoenfeld’s front page article in last month’s *Voice* thoroughly explained our new policy. My column offered further support for the position that wind power should not get a free ride, and we should continue to examine its costs and benefits as well as we’re able to. And George Beetham’s YIMBY piece argued in favor of our policy from a refreshingly different point of view.

Subsequent media coverage got it wrong—so what else is new?

My purpose here is not to restate our arguments or complain about reporters. Rather, I want to say that the issue will be on the agenda at our next board meeting, on July 19. I agree with those members, critical and otherwise, who think we have more work to do.

The current version doesn’t allow for any further balancing of costs and benefits; it simply assumes that unless wind replaces coal, its cost is too high.

More on p. 7

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MORE ABOUT SELENIUM (Continued from p. 1)

reversed itself by merely eliminating the numeric selenium limits and changing the permit requirements for selenium to “monitor and report only”.

Judge Chambers basically agreed with us, saying DEP can't ‘fix mistakes’ like that - at least not in that manner. The correct way of making such substantive changes would have been through a major permit modification with the requisite public notice, and time for review and comment.

There having been no legal change in the permit (and selenium limits), Apogee must now move forward, i.e. put forth a plan in 30 days showing how the company will bring their discharges into compliance and to implement that plan in 90 days.

I cringe to imagine the tanks of steel wool that will most likely be moved onto the Rum Creek and Buffalo Creek discharge points.

Nevertheless, it seems fairly certain that will be the treatment method employed. a) The company's original plans called for using steel wool if selenium treatment was needed. And b) presentations at the Mine Drainage Task Force Symposium I attended two months ago indicated that the relatively experimental method of running selenium tainted discharge through steel wool is the treatment of choice at this point in time, not the more effective - and more expensive - reverse osmosis.

HOBET 21/ MUD RIVER

Litigation against Hobet 21 for failure to bring its discharges into compliance with federal Clean Water Act requirements, ignoring selenium limits listed in its NPDES water permits and causing ongoing harm to the Mud River is still pending in Judge Chambers' court.

In November 2006 we notified Hobet Mining of our intent to sue over the companies unlawful discharges of selenium at the Hobet 21 complex in Boone and Lincoln Counties. In an apparent attempt to prevent citizen enforcement by OVEC and WVHC, in January 2007 DEP filed a complaint in Boone County Circuit Court for the same selenium violations, but has since taken no action to move that complaint along.

Finally, on April 18, 2008, we filed a motion asking the Judge to schedule a hearing and requesting that he issue a preliminary injunction and order Hobet Mining to begin immediately preparing to bring its discharges of selenium into compliance with federal environmental laws.

The recent DEP Water Resources research documenting fish abnormalities in the Upper Mud River Reservoir and the subsequent report Dennis Lemly wrote in support of this Hobet 21 litigation have got to be a real eye-openers for any of the selenium doubters out there. The condition of the fish in the Upper Mud River Reservoir *should be* difficult to ignore.

Future of Special Reclamation Fund Still Uncertain

By Cindy Rank

An article entitled WHO WILL PAY? in the April 2008 issue of *The Highlands Voice* summarized state legislation that increased funding for the Special Reclamation Fund/bond pool meant to fund reclamation at mine sites forfeited after 1977.

The article ended with a series of questions about the short-term “fix” this year's Senate Bill 751 legislation offered.

That same series of questions was presented to federal judge John Copenhaver in WV Highlands Conservancy's ongoing litigation originally filed in 1999 to address the inadequacies of the Special Reclamation Fund.

On May 15, 2008 Judge Copenhaver issued an order agreeing with our position that it's inappropriate to dismiss our litigation in view of the unsettled nature of the remaining questions of future funding, adequate assessment of liability, etc.

Intervening in the litigation, the West Virginia Coal Association had advocated dismissing the action because the legislature had acted to fix the fund by increasing the existing 7-cent tax by adding 7.4 cents. (The Office of Surface Mining was the defendant in the case and also sought dismissal of the action, but was not opposed to deferring action.)

Citing the fact that the increase was only legislated for one year and that it could lapse after that one year if the legislature does not continue it next year, Judge Copenhaver granted our request to defer ruling and to retain the action on the inactive docket pending future action.

And so it goes on. Some forward motion has occurred over the past 10 years, but the solvency of the Special Reclamation Fund is still in question. With less than adequate funding to take care of toxic mine drainage and unreclaimed lands, mountains of liabilities will one day pass on to the shoulders of our grandchildren and future taxpayers of West Virginia.

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.

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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.

The TrAIL Controversy Continues

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION HOLDS HEARING ON PROPOSED POWER LINE

By Ken Ward Jr.

Opponents of a new power line across northern West Virginia tried on Friday to chip away at a settlement they worry may have paved the way for the \$1.3 billion project.

Environmentalists and area residents quizzed developers during a state Public Service Commission hearing on the settlement between Allegheny Energy and the PSC's staff and consumer advocate division.

Sierra Club lawyer Bill DePaulo acknowledged there are an "increasingly smaller number" of opponents, but said questions remain about the need for and possible impacts of the transmission line.

Commissioners are considering how much - if any - weight to give the settlement when deciding whether to approve construction of the Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line, or TrAIL. While PSC staff agreed to the settlement, as did the agency's consumer advocate, the settlement does not bind the commissioners themselves.

Allegheny Energy is seeking PSC approval to build the 500-kilovolt line that would carry electricity from southwestern Pennsylvania through West Virginia and into northern Virginia.

Power company officials say the line is needed to provide cheap and reliable power to big Eastern cities and their growing suburbs. But the project has drawn intense opposition from hundreds of West Virginians, who fear it will mar scenic views, lower their property values, and continue what they say is an environmentally damaging reliance on coal-fired power.

As originally proposed, the West Virginia portion of the transmission line would run about 114 miles through six counties, from north of Morgantown, through Monongalia, Preston and Tucker counties, and then across Grant, Hardy and Hampshire counties into Virginia.

Commissioners have set Aug. 2 as the deadline for issuing a ruling in the case.

In mid-April, Allegheny delivered a major blow to its opponents when it convinced the PSC staff and agency consumer advocate Byron Harris to drop their opposition and criticism of the project.

Under the settlement, Allegheny agreed to use an alternate route proposed by the consumer advocate, avoiding areas southwest of Morgantown where opposition has been concentrated. Allegheny also promised to move a transmission operations center in West Virginia and save customers more than \$40 million in industry rate reductions, low-income assistance and conservation plans, and deferments of rate hikes to fund transmission line construction.

At the start of Friday's hearing, a lawyer for a natural-gas power plant developer announced that his company was dropping its opposition to PSC approval for TrAIL.

Competitive Power Ventures Inc. lawyer Bob Rodecker did not explain the move, and PSC hearing chairman Jon McKinney refused to allow questions about the issue.

In March, CPV also dropped its opposition to Virginia's approval of that state's portion of the TrAIL project. The move came just before Dominion Resources, one of Allegheny's partners in TrAIL, bought CPV's proposed gas-fired plant in Warren County, Va.

One project opponent, Thomas Hildebrand, questioned whether Allegheny plans to use about \$5 million in new federal grant money the company received for the \$5 million in energy conservation program assistance promised under the settlement.

The amounts were nearly identical, Hildebrand said, and descriptions of the grant and the settlement sounded similar.

David Flitman, president of TrAIL, insisted there was no connection.

"They are separate projects," Flitman testified. "We have a lot of

projects. We fund a lot of things."

A lawyer for the Bhavana Society Forest Monastery and Retreat Center said Allegheny's plans to route the transmission line around his group's facility is not satisfactory. Justin St. Clair said the Bhavana Society prefers its proposal for the company to instead use existing power line rights-of-way for that portion of the project.

Opposition has also surfaced to the settlement's plan to reroute the project so that it runs along existing power lines farther south and from Pruntytown and Mount Storm.

Brad Swiger of Fairmont said that route would place his family's property - and that of his neighbors' - between two high-voltage transmission lines.

That Sinking Feeling

Cindy Rank

Ever wonder about the never-ending road construction on Interstate 79 north of Morgantown?

Having grown up in the Pittsburgh - Wheeling area and with friends and relatives still living in that area, I often have occasion to travel that road. And sections of I-70 both east and west as well.

At first puzzled by the repeated road repair that began several years ago, I now travel those roads *expecting* to find single lane traffic at some point or another.

What puzzles me these days is a haunting question about how many people driving through those repair areas know or understand what causes the road to crack and sink somewhat significantly in one stretch after another.

Through reading and talking with friends in that part of WV and PA I've come to realize that it's due to the longwall coal mining machines chewing their way under the road, removing thick seams of coal and allowing the earth to sink. Hence the need for nearly continuous care by the department of highways as what is known as "planned subsidence" stresses and cracks the road.

I now drive slowly through the single lane stretches, watching intently as the road crews raise and repave and build up the shoulders of the road even as we are driving through. I can only marvel when, on my next trip through, one section has been finished and the gauges along the sides and median strip of the road have been moved further on down in preparation for the next longwall panel to be worked.

For those of you driving I-79 north of Mount Morris and the PA-WV line in the near future I include the following notice from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette newspaper.

Mining forces I-79 lane closings in Greene County

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A short stretch of Interstate 79 in Greene County is down to a single lane in each direction because of surface cracking blamed on longwall coal mining beneath the highway.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation cautioned motorists to be aware of the restriction just north of the Kirby Exit between Mileposts 7 and 8.

A BATTLE WON, BUT THE WAR RAGES ON

By Tom Shipley

The historic Sharp farm in Pocahontas County, West Virginia has been saved thanks, in part, to the efforts of the Highlands Conservancy and the Sierra Club. Glorious springs, caves and trout streams, early 1800's log home, early 1900's farmhouse, country store, pioneer cemetery....all saved!

Three years ago, members of the Highlands Conservancy and Sierra Club were among the first to express an interest in a curious sewer project that proposed to take my family's farm via Eminent Domain to allow the Snowshoe Mountain Ski Resort, some miles away, to transfer millions of gallons a day of their sewage 'downstream' into this bucolic valley.

The \$20 million project, billed as 'regional' and financed with taxpayer dollars, added fewer than 40 new customers to the 1800+ already being provided service, mostly by the utility owned and operated by Snowshoe.

Since those early days we were told that we poor folk in the valley would never get sewerage because the second home buyers from out of state raised our median income to a level that disqualified us from 100% free (not to be paid back) grants. The only way to help us was to expand the Public Service District (previously only responsible for public water in the tiny, far away town of Durbin...now they are in charge of a multi-million dollar sewer project) to incorporate the resort so that we would have enough customers to pay off the loans required to get service into the valley.

Only recently, through the Freedom of Information Act, were documents obtained that painted a clearer picture. Inter-office memos and e-mails reveal that Snowshoe Resort told the DEP they wanted "out of the sewer business" and as early as June 5, 2003, Mike Johnson of the DEP remarks, "Some things have changed. Snowshoe wants out of the sewer business and wants Thrasher (Engineering) to include the elimination of the Silver Creek WWTP in their report. The flow will be pumped into the regional system. He said Snowshoe also wants the PSD to take over their collection system....in other words everything...they want out of the business."

Then, Allyn Turner, head of the DEP department in charge of this project replies, "One issue with Silver Creek in an intra-basin transfer. Do we need to speak now on that – alert Snowshoe and Thrasher that including Silver Creek could create permit and water quantity issues?"

So, it seems the \$20 million project may

not have been to help out us poor folk in the valley after all. In fact, the Snowshoe demands increased the project cost that initially was to require only \$7.5 million. Also, this intra-basin transfer is troubling. Almost the entire project requires water from a completely different watershed (Shavers Fork) to be flushed down the wrong side of the mountain into the Elk River watershed...thus the caution by Ms. Turner. Indeed, Ms. Turner, then head of the Department of Environmental Protection's Water and Wastewater Division, sued Snowshoe Water and Sewer, Inc. for gross violations of their NPDES discharge permits. Ms. Turner was fired by the new, incoming Cabinet Secretary



of the DEP, Stephanie Timmermeyer. This was Ms. Timmermeyer's first official act as Secretary of the DEP. Ken Ward of the Charleston Gazette reported that he received no response from his inquiry about this action from the DEP.

This lawsuit lay dormant for several years in Circuit Court until just recently, when the judge approved a Consent Decree settlement between the resort and the DEP. This settlement lessened the effluent limits to, according to the attorney for Snowshoe, "what was actually flowing out of the pipes". Additionally, the language proposes that Snowshoe pay its almost \$3 million fine with a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) that suggests Snowshoe donate their failing infrastructure and equipment to the regional project and transfer their utility to the county. The judge remarked that he did not know what those figures meant, but since no council appeared to contest the issue of the revised NPDES discharge limits and since this was an issue of water quality, he approved the Consent Decree.

Since 2003, we have learned quite a bit about geology, hydrology, waste treatment, politics and so on. A major factor in heightening the concern of those affected, beyond the issue of Eminent Domain, is the karst. Karst is

limestone that breaks down over time to create underground river systems, caves, springs and sinkholes. The proposed project requires millions of gallons a day of raw sewage to be pumped up, over and down Cheat Mountain through this fragile karst ecosystem. One pipe joint break or pump failure would mean immediate inundation of raw sewage into the underground aquifers due to their close proximity and relationship to the karst....all of this risk to serve the less than 40 extra customers in the valley.

On March 4, 2008, the County Commission voted, unanimously, on a resolution and directed the PSD that the use of Eminent Domain on the Sharp farm was prohibited. Indeed, a joyous occasion. Three years of financial and emotional strain were over! The heavens above put an exclamation mark on that decision, ironically, for later that afternoon the rains came and the Big Spring Fork flowed right through the very spot they had proposed to build the plant. It would have been an ecological nightmare had they earlier succeeded in taking the Sharp farm property.

A major battle won, we were exuberant. This weight lifted from our shoulders was short lived, however, when we learned that the resort had purchased land just up the road and right along the highway at Split Rock. Yes, that's right, Split Rock...named for a prominent karst feature right smack dab in the middle of the river. Here is one of the many places the Big Spring Fork disappears and resurges, ever forming new and unknown pathways beneath the surface.

Split Rock is to be one of three newly considered sites. Sadly, one of the other sites is at the confluence of Big Spring Fork and Old Field Fork just next to our farm. This is the beginning of the Elk River and is the home to a blue-ribbon trout fishery, one of the east coast's finest! It is also, completely in the 100-year flood zone.

The third site is at the base of Cheat Mountain on the resort property. It may be off the karst, but it still requires the huge volumes of water to be siphoned from Shavers Fork into the Elk watershed. . It seems the lessons that three years of expert analysis, study and community concern were not learned'.

The Elk Headwaters Watershed Association approached the County Commission with two requests recently. One, that the Commission require their Public Service District board to consider a fourth alternative...to retrofit the

(Continued on p. 7)

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond 🇺🇸

Thursday to Sunday, 06/05 B 08/08 B 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 B 14/08 B 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 or 410-439-4964.

Weekend of 7/12&13 - Cabins at Babcock State Park: The West Virginia Wilderness coalition has reserved a couple cabins at Babcock State Park and invite folks to join us and learn more about the Wilderness opportunities within the New River Gorge National River. The National Park Service is undergoing Park Planning and is considering areas to recommend for Wilderness designation. We'll have a **cook-out Saturday evening**, join us for that, or spend the weekend and explore areas of the Gorge with us. Contact Mike Costello at michael.costello@wvwild.org

Saturday, 07/12 - Dowdy Creek area of New River Gorge National River: This stunningly beautiful area is being considered by the National Park Service as a potential Wilderness Area in their ongoing planning process. Because there are no "official" trails in the area, this hike will involve extensive cross country travel and explorations. Map and compass skills or GPS savvy recommended. The area consists of a very steep tributary watershed of the New River and some of the plateau areas which it drains. Lush forests and understory contain a diverse mix of species. The hike will be long and strenuous. We'll meet at the Park Headquarters in Glen Jean and carpool to the mouth of Dowdy Creek south of Thayer. Contact Dave Saville at dave.saville@wvwild.org

Sunday, 7/13 - Glade Creek area of New River Gorge National River: As a large tributary of the New River, Glade Creek cuts a small side canyon into the earth as it tumbles into the River. One of the largest contiguous areas of Federal ownership within the National River, this area is a prime Wilderness candidate area. It is one of 3 areas being considered by the National Park Service for Wilderness recommendation. We will hike trails in this area including the Glade Creek Trail along this beautiful trout stream. Moderate difficulty. We'll meet at the Sandstone Visitor Center. Contact Mike Costello at michael.costello@wvwild.org

Monday to Friday, July 28—August 1 Augusta Heritage Workshop on Herbs. Davis & Elkins College. 31st year with Marion Harless. Make take home salves, lotions, liquers, vinegars and more. Daily walks, herbal snacks, Friday dinner at instructor's home. Excursion to Dolly Sods (Weather dependent, probably 8-4:30 on Tuesday), lunch provided. Plaants, etc. along the way and out to Bear Rocks with side ventures. Information at www.augustaheritage.com (summer workshops, folklore, herbs) or (304) 637-1209.

Friday to Sunday, 08/08 B 10/08 B 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 or 410-439-4964.

Saturday to Monday B 08/30 B 09/01-08 B 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 or 410-439-4964.

More Outings (Continued from p. 6)

Saturday to Tuesday, 09/13 B 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 B 22/08 B 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 or 410-439-4964.

October 11-14, 2008 Backpacking in Cranberry Wilderness
Come join us for festive fall colors on this 20+ mile backpack. For more information contact Susan Bly at susanbly32@yahoo.com or 910-495-3820.

Saturday to Monday B 10/25 B 27/08 B 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 or 410-439-4964.

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.

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.

Saturday to Monday B 11/01-03/08 B 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 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.



MORE ABOUT THE SEWER (Continued from p. 5)

existing treatment plant on the resort mountain with state of the art membrane technology, allowing them to return the much more cleanly treated water and recharge the Shavers Fork watershed.

Additionally the EHWA asked the Commission's endorsement for a Comprehensive Watershed Plan process that would allow us to study the watershed, bring engineers in to design solutions for the actual needs based on scientific fact, then allow all the stakeholders in the community in on deciding our county's future.

Several meetings since rallied the community with packed houses, expressing much disapproval with the new sites and the proposed project. Almost unanimous support for the CWP and a true regional solution resulted but the officials are going full steam ahead despite the wishes of the community.

The County Commission passed a unanimous letter calling for a "halt to all pending litigation, court and administrative proceedings pending a full and robust community discussion to formulate a cooperative and comprehensive plan for the Elk River Watershed and its environs."

Sadly, the resort, the Public Service District, Public Service Commission and the DEP continue on completely ignoring the Commission letter. The war rages on....

ONE OF THE COSTS OF WIND POWER

By Casey Rucker

Nearly all species of North American birds are in decline. More bluntly, they are currently on the path to extinction. The litany of causes is familiar: habitat loss, housecats and other exotic predators, towerkill, the list goes on.

Our Appalachian highlands are under another, brand-new threat to our birds' continued existence. If not challenged, all of the ridgetops in our formerly unbroken forests will very soon be covered in wind turbines, fragmenting the habitats of birds and bats and causing their deaths by collision.

At least four applications are currently under consideration for windmill installations, all on ridgetops in unfragmented forest in our area: (1) George Washington National Forest, 131 wind turbines on Shenandoah Mountain; (2) Randolph and Barbour Counties, 65 turbines on Laurel Mountain; (3) Garrett County, Maryland, 40 turbines on Backbone Mountain and (4) Mineral County, 30 turbines on Green Mountain. Another proposal to put 44 turbines on Jack Mountain in Pendleton County was rejected last year by the West Virginia Public Service Commission amid strong local opposition.

Anyone venturing near Mt. Storm recently has seen the installation now in progress of another 132 turbines in that area. How many of us knew in advance that they were going up?

Of course, Tucker County already has its 44 wind turbines. The line of windmills on Backbone Mountain has permanently altered our landscape. A study in 2003 found that more than 200 birds and 2,000 bats were killed by the turbines' blades that year, and many believe that those numbers represent an undercount. That mortality is in addition to the loss of habitat on the Backbone Mountain ridge and the damage from forest fragmentation to migratory and breeding areas.

Wind power, in the abstract, is neither good nor bad: the problem is the siting. Recent projects in Denmark have found that large wind turbines placed in deep water in the North Sea have not caused a problem for the local seabirds. Researchers using heat-triggered cameras only recorded one collision with the 80 turbines over 2400 hours, and only fifteen instances of birds or bats coming near to the blades.

The current drive to site windmills on our local mountaintops is driven by federal tax credits. Without those tax credits, none of these projects would make a profit. The companies that are building the windmills are typically based elsewhere, with no ties to the communities whose landscapes the windmills would permanently affect. These companies have no incentive to apply proper siting criteria; they are only intent on erecting as many turbines as quickly as possible, before the tax credits run out.

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.

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.

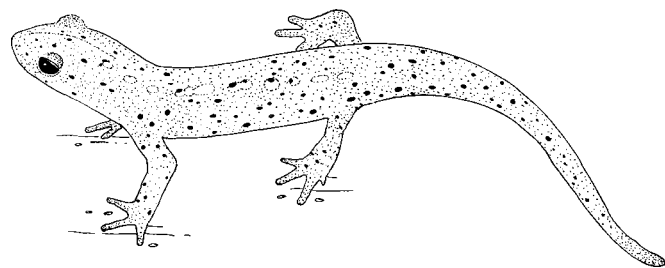
The American Bird Conservancy has taken the position that no windmills should be approved without site analysis that includes bird and bat abundance, timing and magnitude of migration, and habitat use patterns. Besides mortality from collisions, the ABC also cites habitat fragmentation, disturbance and site avoidance as potential effects of windmills. The ABC states its preference for siting on areas with poor habitat.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Forest Service has proposed rules that would not even require an environmental impact statement for a windmill project.

We have a national treasure in the unfragmented forests of the central Appalachians. These unbroken forests are crucial to the survival of dozens, if not hundreds, of species of migratory birds. At a time when North American birds are suffering serious declines, it would be tragic to rush into a new, and permanent, way to kill more.

If we do nothing, we will also find that we ourselves have lost access to our ridgetops: they will have become private truck routes. Once the windmills are in, they will be there to stay. Now is the time to demand that sensible siting criteria be applied to windmills in the Appalachians: it will soon be too late.

Ms. Rucker leads bird walks at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Canaan Valley Resort State Park, and Cathedral State Park, as well as the coming Second Annual Boreal Bird Festival in Canaan Valley. She also serves on the WV State Bird Records Committee. She lives in Dry Fork, West Virginia.



MORE FROM PRESIDENT HUGH (Continued from p. 2)

First, we ought to be more specific about the costs. Here's our opportunity to say what we consider worth conserving and to show that wind farms damage more than "viewsapes."

Second, we should acknowledge that electric power generation by other fossil fuels (i.e., natural gas) can be offset by wind—these are the smaller power plants that can "ramp up and down" much more quickly and efficiently than the coal plants. In West Virginia, we tend to think about coal to the exclusion of other fuels—but if we're concerned about global warming, we need to take all fuels into account, if only to make our balancing act more realistic and defensible.

Third, we ought to put the question of how to generate ever more power in a broader perspective. We all assume that conservation must be a significant part of our energy policy—let's say it. And let's remind interested parties how little could be generated even if every proposed project were approved. In West Virginia, unlike the Plains states, wind power is on the margin of the margin.

We welcome your comments.

GROUP ALERTS TO DANGERS TO BIRDS AND BATS

By Paul J. Nyden

Eleven citizen and environmental groups in West Virginia and Maryland have filed a 60-day notice about their intent to sue a wind power project.

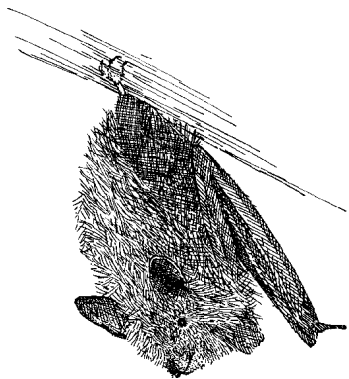
They say the huge turbines from the NedPower Mount Storm project would kill endangered bats and squirrels near the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area.

The groups also will sue corporate owners Dominion Resources and Shell Wind Energy for violating the Endangered Species Act, according to Judy Rodd, director of Friends of Blackwater Canyon, based in Charleston.

Rodd said wind power companies are ignoring the "huge number of birds and bats that will be killed each year by the project," including eagles that will be "decapitated as they try to return to their winter homes near Mount Storm Lake."

Threatened species include the West Virginia northern flying squirrel, Indiana bat and Virginia big-eared bat.

In their 60-day notice, the 11 groups ask NedPower to provide them with a formal Habitat Conservation Plan evaluating and predicting threats to endangered species.



cies.

The groups also sent letters expressing their concerns to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the West Virginia Public Service Commission about threats to bald eagles, golden eagles and other migrating birds protected by existing federal legislation.

Scientific researchers, Rodd added, recently estimated 4,000 bats were killed in one year at the Mountaineer Wind Project, located less

MEET JOHN FICHTNER

By Julian Martin

Conservancy member John Fichtner teaches forestry at the Roane-Jackson Technical Center located halfway between Ripley and Spencer. He is a chainsaw sculptor and has several pieces on display and for sale at Tamarack. He makes, and teaches his students to make, Native American flutes. I am the happy owner of one of his flutes, a gift he gave me for presenting programs on mountain top removal to his students. He has a CD of flute music some of which he composed himself. John is also a painter and makes his own greeting cards with Native American themes.

Over the years John's classes have developed a narrative nature trail on fifty acres behind the school. On May 20 I attended his dedication ceremony for the trails. The trails are named for people who had a positive influence on John's love of nature and Native American lore as he was growing up in Morgantown. The trails are named for well-remembered naturalist George Breiding, A.R Bryant, Stacy Groscup and George Davisson. I asked John if it was true what I had heard that Methodist minister Stacy Groscup could shoot an aspirin out of the air with a bow and arrow. It is true, John witnessed it.

A gas well road cuts across the trail on top of the hill behind the school. John got the gas company to agree not to seed the section on school property with the usual non-native plants. Instead, John's students planted native seeds on the road just before a weeklong deluge, which brought the seeds to sprout; they are well on their way now.

than 14 miles from the proposed NedPower facility.

"That project operates 44 turbines, while NedPower in Grant County is certified to build 200 turbines that could kill more than 20,000 bats annually," she stated.

West Virginia University Professor Emeritus Robert Leo Smith prepared a scientific analysis accompanying the groups' notice of intent to sue, warning that babies of the endangered Virginia northern flying squirrels could be killed when mountainous lands are cleared for roads, power lines and turbines.

NedPower's wind turbine project is being built on the Allegheny Front along a 14-mile stretch between Mt. Pisgah to Bear Rocks near Dolly Sods.

Landowners who live near the project also have filed a nuisance suit against NedPower citing concerns about their health and safety, as well as reductions in their property values. Richard Neely, a Charleston lawyer and former Supreme Court justice, represents them.

Other groups in the coalition issuing the 60-day notice include: Friends of the Allegheny Front, Highlanders for Responsible Development, the Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation and Stewards of the Potomac Highlands.

Editor's Note: This is an abbreviated version of a story that first appeared in the Charleston Gazette.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was not one of the groups serving the sixty day notice, etc.



The two and one half miles of trails have eleven sites showing creek bank stabilization, vernal pools, wetlands, shaded intermittent wetland, a small pond, a West Virginia Save Our Streams sampling station, the native grass planting in an open canopy area and a WVU Forestry School medicinal plant study area where research plots are used to evaluate the effect of different levels of shade on medicinal plants such as ginseng, black cohosh and golden seal.

Getting the nature trail to reality has involved working with students, the gas company, the WVU Forestry School, DNR and DEP staff and Local Operating Engineers 132 union.

After the dedication ceremony James and Randy, two of John's students, took me on a tour of the trails. These boys taught me some stuff, such as a box turtle has thirteen large sections on its shell and 28 small sections around the edge of the shell. Is there a connection here with thirteen lunar months in a year and twenty-eight days in a lunar month? And I now know how to tell a male box turtle from a female; the difference is very sexy.

To top it all John is a friend of Wendell Berry, having once bought a ram sheep from him.

John Fichtner may be contacted at Spirit Hunter Creations, Route 1 Box 57, Elizabeth, WV 26143 or at 304-474-3899.

Our Readers Write

On Yimbys, powerlines, and windmills

Editor and members:

On May 15, as I was taking some seed-laden stems of spent purple dead nettle to a spot where I want the annual plant to grow next year, good thoughts of the Highlands Conservancy were bouncing around in my head. Had I first met June and Glen Davis and Linda (Cooper) and Dave Elkinton on that day? The day I first saw purple dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*)..

There it was—a planter in front of the DNR Operations Center jam-packed with pagoda-layered leaves in shades of mauve, lilac and lavender. Beautiful—I was with Karen Bird walking into the building for, as I recall, the spring 1978 Highlands Conservancy meeting. After the meeting, I asked a couple of DNR people if I might take a plant home. I knew Mary Moore Rieffenberger from our Mountain Weavers Guild, but it was my introduction to Joe. His response was, “That? It’s a damned weed!” He did identify it. So I took a start of the alien home and over the years sang its praises as ornamental, bee forage, cover crop, food and medicine, sent seeds up to Richters Herbs and moved some to my “new” house in 1998.

Back to May 15th. I spread the plants around, picked up the Highlands Voice and the rest of the mail and came in for lunch. “Good,” I said, “I’ll read part of this now. Great! They’ve changed their minds! And there’s Yimby! Finally. What?? Energy hog?? Hunh?”

Some years ago, I and, no doubt, many others began saying “Yes! In my backyard” to focus on energy independence. Back on September 11, 2007, I began calling and writing Conservancy members requesting, asking, imploring, begging (etc.) you to come to the AAUW Dodds-talk, the Randolph County Commission’s public forum, and The AES presentations in Elkins and Belington and then later to write the Public Service Commission to protest the AES siting certificate application for the proposed Laurel Mountain giant wind turbines. I made up a little quiz which some of you and hundreds of others have received.

On September 13, I began pushing for a positive, affirmative position to foil the big energy companies. The world has the conservation, design, and construction knowledge and application skills to survive very nicely with a “Yes! In my backyard ...” approach. We do not need giant wind turbines or giant solar arrays or nuclear and their requisite giant high voltage power transmission lines. We don’t need mountain top removal mining or giant gas line roads and right of ways through every square mile of the Mountain State. We have Yimby!

Please look at the PSC website AES Laurel Mountain LLC entries for March 13 Sandy Fisher protest and March 14 Marion Harless protest for some of my multitudinous comments. It’s strictly whipped-out, first-draft writing, like this. Don’t look for polished prose, but do look for many points to ponder and pursue.

On October 29, I, like many of you, I hope, spoke in protest of Allegheny Power’s proposed high voltage power transmission line. If you have the time and eyepower, read everybody’s entries on both sides for both proposals. Please do some learning and send in your own comments. They must be mailed or hand-delivered to 291 Brooks Street, Charleston 25323.

Letters to editors, other environmental groups and local, state and federal officials, e-mails and conversation may yet sway the Supreme Court on the 23-mile line of giant wind turbines in Greenbrier County. Don’t forget that the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) has thousands of giant wind turbine sites pinpointed in the Appalachians. Does AWEA really believe bird and bat—forest interactions, watershed disruptions and the water cycle are “pseudoscience?”

I’ve spoken with and left messages for hundreds of people, sent more than 300 letters, 80 information packets, and many hundreds of postcards all over the country, but mostly in-state. The “address side” is usually embellished with a crude water cycle drawing, a sleazy Cap’n Trade quote or a Yes! In my backyard ... slogan. I figure at least the mailman is getting the message.

Please start learning and pleasequit fighting. The big energy companies love the infighting. Divide and conquer. Look at these www.org

websites: responsible wind wind-watch windaction stopillwind There are many more. Locally we have www.laurelmountainpreservationassociation.org and www.windtoons.com with John Terry’s copyright-free cartoons. Check the websites for all the Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County, of the Allegheny Front, Friends of Blackwater, etc. Watch the slideshows of the Allegheny Highlands, of the Altamont bird kills (I quit part way through that one.) and the burning, crumbling, toppled giant wind turbines (My favorite. Where was West Virginia news coverage on the Mt. Storm and Backbone Mountain turbine fires?) GoogleEarth Search ‘Mount Storm, Grant County, WV’ and ‘Meyersdale, PA’ and look down at the damage. Google NewsSearch for companies involved and check their activities around the world.; check their litigation involvement.

Please. Do something, Fast.

When your economic stimulus dollars arrive, why not put them towards further weatherizing your house to save energy. (Yes! In my backyard, the wise owl says, “Every watt saved is another watt earned.”) If that’s finished, why not buy an automated roof-top or gable solar attic fan. And reduce the area you mow, plant bird-feeding and sheltering perennials, shrubs and trees, and cut what’s left with a small batter-powered electric mower, preferably solar-charged. (True, all equipment has a carbon footprint.) If every Conservancy member did these things and served as a role model for the neighborhood ... Yimby!

And please support the Allegheny Front lawsuit.


While I’m beseeching—about 20 years ago, I asked why the t-shirts weren’t made from organic cotton. Why do “environmental” groups support oil companies by selling chemically fertilized, herbicided, pesticided, boll-released, chlorine-bleached (etc.) cotton t-shirts? Well?


Sincerely

Marion Harless

HATS FOR SALE


West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has two models of caps for sale.

One is khaki and the pre-curved visor is forest green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in gold above  *Mountains*. The heart is red; and lettering is black.

The other model is tan with a muted green pre-curved visor. The front sports the lovely, in color, logo that appears on the VOICE masthead. Beside the logo is “West Virginia Highlands Conservancy” in green. The lower back of the hat has the *We*  *Mountains* slogan.

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

T- SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the  *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: Julian Martin, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

Join Now !!!

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Address _____

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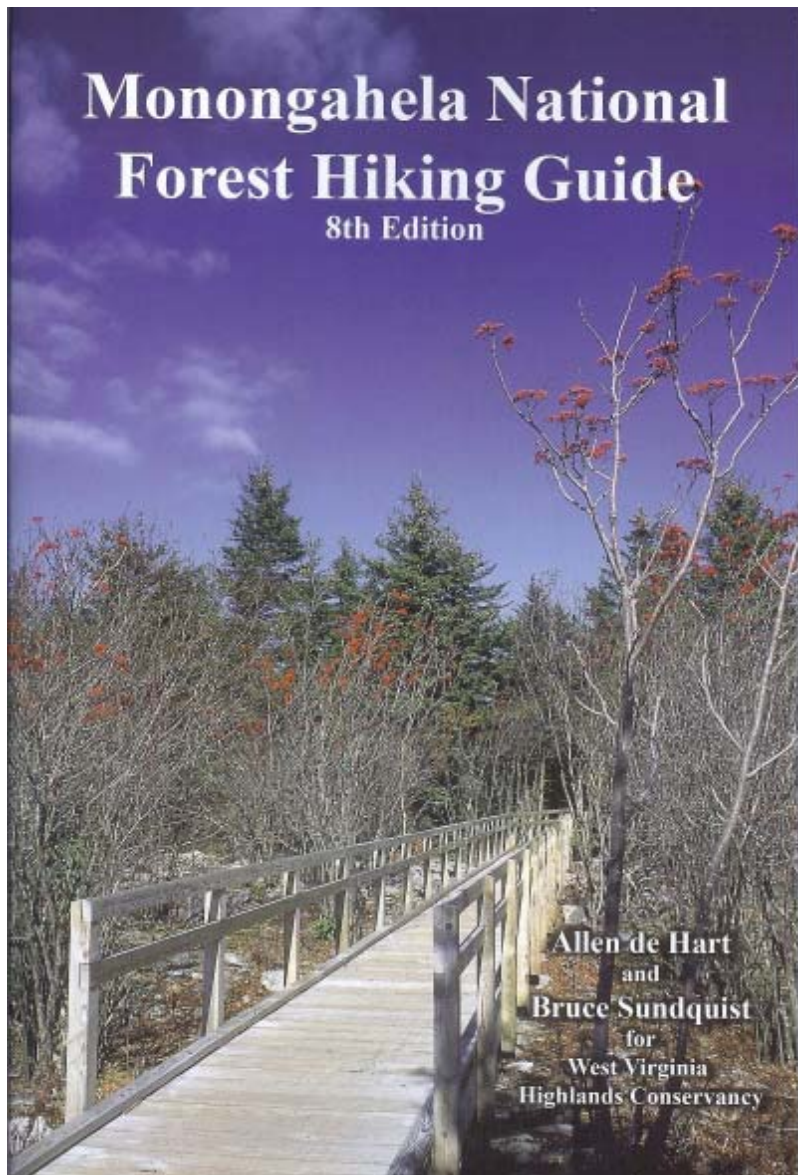
Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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.
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- 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.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE REGULATIONS

By Don Gasper

For over 20 years the old National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has required environmental and public review of the major actions of federal agencies. It's first implementation required careful thorough review of the proposed action – either an "Environmental Assessments" or an "Environmental Impact Statement" with three levels of review. There were limited "categorical exclusions" for minor actions. In recent attempts to "streamline" and improve efficiency the U.S. Forest Service has increased the use of categorical exclusions by considering many proposals as minor, and reducing public comment opportunity. Many citizen appeals were considered "frivolous" and the USFS dropped the administrative appeals all together.

Congress addressed citizen concerns and in 1992 new regulations were supposed to continue public comment and appeals on projects that were in the individual Forest Plans. Still "streamlining", there was only one level of re-

view, and the use of even more categorical exclusions was in the new administrative rules. It was clear with administrative appeals gone the only citizen recourse was to go to court.

Believing that the United States Forest Service regulations were not the intent of Congress, Heartwood took them to court. Heartwood won, and some logging, burning and ORV trail projects were put on hold. (They had been exempted), A new rule had to be written. These still did not reflect the will of Congress, and this time Heartwood was joined by the Sierra Club and others who took it to District Court. The United States Forest Service was told this regulation did not reflect the will of Congress, and the U.S.F.S. was forced to apply the comment and appeal procedures to many of the excluded actions. The U.S.F.S. appealed the ruling to the Circuit Court of Appeals, but they lost again.

This means presently the U.S.F.S. is required to provide a comment period and appeals process for many of its actions. Pres-

ently, also, the U.S.F.S. is appealing this Ninth Circuit Court decision to the Supreme Court, that has agreed to hear the case.

The individual national forests had the difficulty to implement the varying regulations. It should be clear to citizens that the continuing attempts to weaken environmental protections is not their initiative, but is forced upon them from above.

Many U.S.F.S. personnel want to be less impeded and more efficient, believing they know what is best. Further citizen review implies some U.S.F.S. professional incompetency and lack of respect – a lack of trust. Yet citizens who do review their work are impressed. Citizens and most outdoor resource professionals share much the same vision for our National Forests. It is not the exploitive vision of the top-level United States Department of Agriculture and Forest Service appointees.

GREAT HISTORY BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

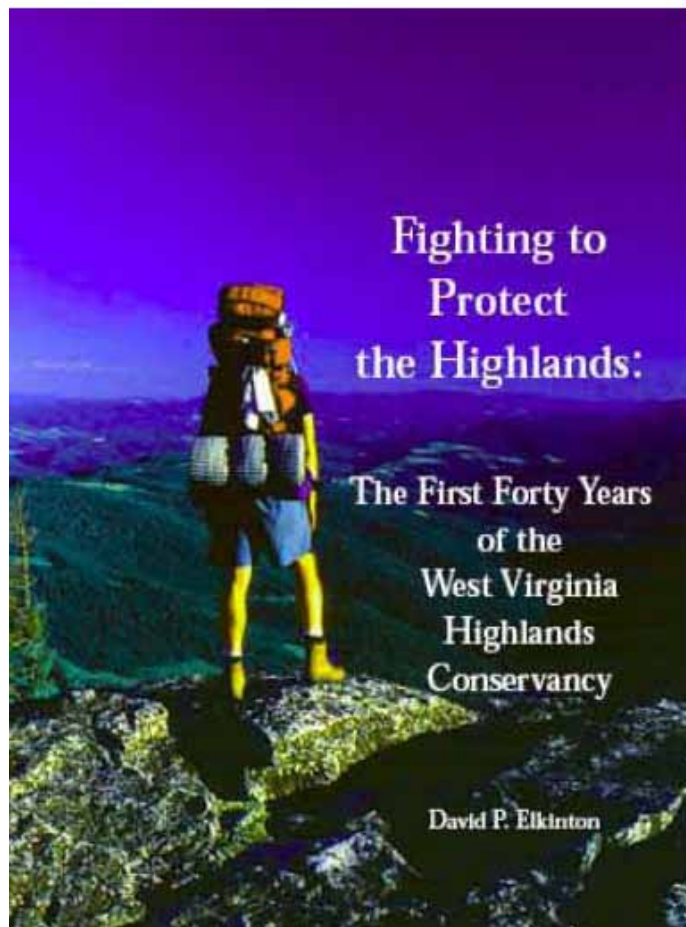
For the first time, a comprehensive history of West Virginia's most influential activist environmental organization. Author Dave Elkinton, the Conservancy's third president, and a twenty-year board member, not only traces the major issues that have occupied the Conservancy's energy, but profiles more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

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