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The Highlands Voice

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CONSERVANCY STANDS UP FOR EPA

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, along with the Sierra Club, Coal River Mountain Watch, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, and Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment have stepped forward in defense of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's guidance that would require more reliance upon scientific evidence in evaluating surface mining permits.

This controversy began in April 2010, when EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson issued guidance to field staff after finding significant problems in the past permitting process. The guidance strengthens the role of science in issuing mountaintop removal mining permits and ensures that all Clean Water Act requirements are met during the mine permitting process. The guidance also details a range of benchmarks for pollution and other scientific information relevant to proposed permits. This would help staff measure and prevent significant and irreversible damage to Appalachian watersheds at risk from mining activity. This is what the law requires.

At about the same time, the EPA, Department of Interior, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued policy documents



to coordinate between the three agencies, which are all involved in the permitting and review of mountaintop removal mine projects. The agencies committed to ensure coordinated and stringent environmental reviews of mine permit applications under applicable

law, including the Clean Water Act. They also agreed to inform the public through outreach events in the Appalachian region to help develop federal policy, and to help diversify and strengthen the Appalachian regional economy and promote the health and welfare of Appalachian communities. This is part of what was described as EPA's "war on coal" in the recent unpleasantness (aka the election

campaign).

The agencies aim to improve compliance with legal protections for mining communities in Appalachia, where waterways have already suffered extensive damage from mountaintop removal coal mining.

The National Mining Association would have none of that. It filed suit against the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineer. It is challenging the EPA guidance and the agencies' joint permit review process. Through this suit, filed in federal court in Washington, D.C.,

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From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

Who Uses the C-word?

An old friend once came upon a middle-aged woman and her daughter dumping trash beside the road. “Hey! Pick that up!” she yelled. They spun around and yelled back at her. When they got in their car and drove away, she followed and wrote down their plate number.

She might have been a little bit crazy. Recently divorced, she was raising three sons by herself—the youngest was in his car seat. The dumpers had a baby with them as well. Disposable diapers had been conspicuous in their trash. I don’t know their state of mind, but I have always thought of the scene as a desperate woman pursuing two other desperate women along a winding road.

Already she’d gone further than most of us would have. And she didn’t let go. She called the sheriff, was summoned to court, testified, and after they’d been convicted, braved a gauntlet of the extended family, who elaborated on the remarks the mother and daughter had yelled at her.

I remembered that old story after our discussion of energy policy at a board retreat last month.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy butts into other people’s business when it’s everybody’s business; we act as “private attorney generals” to enforce environmental laws. (Defendants have other names for us.) But that wasn’t what made me think of her stubborn pursuit. Rather, it was a question about whether we can change other people’s habits.

To prepare for the conversation, a number of us had read a book by Robert Bryce, *Power Hungry* (Public Affairs, 2010). Its chief virtue was its compilation of charts, tables, and figures on energy production and use. To begin, Bryce offered definitions of basic concepts, e.g., distinguishing between energy (a sum, a quantity) and power (a flow, a rate of use). What we really want, he maintained, was useable energy, or power—hence the title of his book.

Bryce thought it was ridiculous for Americans to feel guilty about their energy consumption. First, a higher standard of living demanded greater use of energy—and the drive toward a higher standard of living was universal. Second, guilt, like fear and anger, clouded people’s thinking. Most “green energy” projects would make power scarce and expensive. Instead, “Cheap energy must be the priority. Cheap energy will help us adapt to changes in the climate—regardless of why those changes are occurring.”

The bulk of the book was devoted to debunking “myths” about alternatives to fossil fuels and nuclear power. Wind and solar power were “incurably intermittent.” He quoted Stewart Brand, whom older folks will know as the creator of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, to the effect that they can’t really help us on the scale we require “because we don’t have a way to store that energy.”

Look at Texas. If it were (as many wish) an independent country, it would rank 6th in the world in terms of total wind power production capacity. In West Texas there are thousands of turbines—and few people mind, because there’s nothing else out there besides oil wells and a sparse population of cattle. (A friend who lives in Austin calls it “The Big Stupid.”) But Texas’s Electric Reliability Council, which manages most of the state’s electric load, rates wind’s capacity factor at less than 9%. All those turbines, supposedly capable of generating 8,203 MW, produce roughly 1%

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VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Marilyn Shoenfeld, HC 70 Box 553, 23 Sands Springs Lane, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, marilyn.shoenfeld@gmail.com

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

TREASURER: Bob Marshall, 886-Z Divide Ridge Road, Kenna WV 25248 (304)545-6817, woodhavenwva@aim.com

PAST PRESIDENT: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945, fyoung@mountain.net

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2012)

Don Gasper, 4 Ritchie St., Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304)472-3704

Bob Gates, Box 5130, Charleston, WV 25361; photonzx@ntelos.net.

George Beetham, 2819 Mt. Carmel Avenue, Glenside, PA 19038, (267) 252-3748, geobeet@hotmail.com

Bill McNeel, 1118 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954, (304)799-4369; wpmcneel@gmail.com

Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; PShoenfeld@gmail.com

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2011)

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

Larry Thomas P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larryvthomas@aol.com

Carter Zerbe, 16 Arlington Ct., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)343-3175; scz3667@aol.com

Mike Withers, Rt 2, Box 328, Grafton WV 26354, 304-265-3750, 1nastynash@comcast.net

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY: Robert (Bob) Handley, HC 67 Box 508 Renick, WV, 24966 497-2266; leatherwing@frontiernet.net

PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS: Buff Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139; (412) 828-8983; buffrodman@hotmail.com

BROOKS BIRD CLUB: Cindy Ellis, RR 1, Box 163, Red House, WV 25168 (304) 586-4135; cdellis@wildblue.net

MOUNTAINEER CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED: Chris Byrd, 292 Magnolia Ave., Clarksburg, WV 26301 Tel. (304) 622-3023 <cbyrd@ma.rr.com>

WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION: Don Garvin, P.O. Box 666, Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304) 472-8716; DSGJR@aol.com

FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE KANAWHA: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802; clrank@hughes.net

TEAM (Taylor Environmental Advocacy Membership): Beth Baldwin, Grafton, WV 26354, 304-265-3029, elbrn6e21@msn.com

ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS ALLIANCE: Wayne C. Spiggle, RR 2 Box 97, Keyser WV 26726, 304-726-4868, wspiggle@mac.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Marilyn Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; Marilyn.Shoenfeld@gmail.com

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ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733; johnmcferrin@aol.com

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OUTINGS COMMITTEE: Dave Saville, PO Box 569, Morgantown, WV 26507, (304)284-9548; daves@labyrinth.net

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, jamecsolley@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

STANDING UP FOR THE EPA (Continued from p. 1)

the mining industry is trying to block the EPA from exercising its basic Clean Water Act authority to ensure the consideration of important scientific information during the permitting process.

Now the groups, including The Highlands Conservancy, have filed a motion to intervene. They contend that the mining industry should not be able to prevent government agencies from doing their jobs: to follow the Clean Water Act, consider the key scientific information discussed in the guidance, and protect America's waters from destruction. The groups seek to allow the agencies to follow its guidance document (strengthening the role of science in issuing mountaintop removal mining permits and ensuring that all Clean Water Act requirements are met) and coordinate the efforts of agencies.

The scientific evidence of aquatic and ecological harm caused by mountaintop removal mining and valley fills, pursuant to the types of permits addressed in the interagency review process, is well-documented in recent peer-reviewed scientific literature and is the subject of ongoing study. For example, see Palmer et al., Mountaintop Removal Mining Consequences, 327 SCI. MAG. 148 (Jan. 8, 2010). Valley fills destroy headwater streams, including the life they support and the services they provide, at the upper reaches of Appalachian waterways, and cause impacts downstream throughout the affected watersheds due to harm from pollutants discharged from the fills, including sulfates and selenium, among others.

The federal courts have noticed this problem. In a different proceeding, a judge of the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, said, "West Virginia is witnessing in the Appalachian headwaters the long, sad decline that Virginia and Maryland have seen with the Chesapeake Bay. Once the ecologies of streams and rivers and bays and oceans turn, they cannot be easily reclaimed. More often than not, the waterway is simply gone for good."

In commenting upon the filing of the groups' motion to intervene, Cindy Rank, chair of the Mining Committee of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, said, "It would be a tragedy to let industry sidetrack the government from trying to understand the full extent of the problem of mountaintop removal mining that we have been living with for so long,"

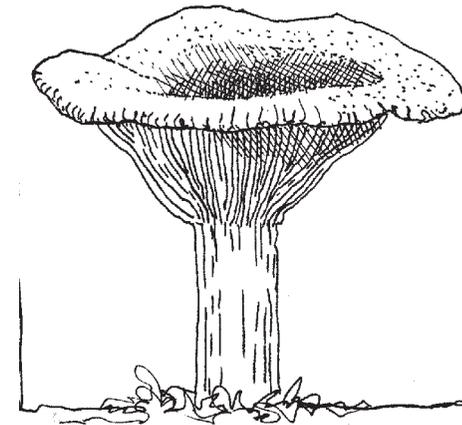
The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has upheld the Circuit Court of Logan County's decision to allow the drilling of gas wells in Chief Logan State Park.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Friends of Blackwater, and Cordie Hudkins (a retired Chief of the West Virginia State Park System in the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources) had all appealed the Circuit Court's ruling, as had the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources and the West Virginia Department of Energy.

There is a statute that prohibits drilling for gas in state parks. The appellants (the Conservancy, Friends of Blackwater, etc.) had argued that the statute prohibited the proposed drilling.

While it did not expressly say so, the Supreme Court apparently agreed that the statute would, under some circumstances, prohibit the drilling. In this case, however, the Court held that the statute did not apply. The minerals were severed from the surface when the landowners conveyed the surface to the state and kept the minerals. The Court ruled that, since this conveyance took place before the statute prohibiting drilling in parks was passed, the statute did not apply here and could not prohibit the drilling.

What effect this ruling would have at other state parks is unclear. The ruling would appear to uphold the statute prohibiting drilling for gas in parks only when the minerals were severed from the surface after the statute became effective. While the statute has been modified, the earliest version was in 1961.



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The Highlands Voice is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer uses 100% post consumer recycled paper when available.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy web page is www.wvhighlands.org.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as a tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Its bylaws describe its purpose:

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

POWER CONSUMPTION: TIME FOR A DIET?

By Beth Little

“The United States should forget about trying to cut carbon dioxide emissions, forget about carbon capture and sequestration, and focus on adapting to the ever-changing global climate.”

“People in the United States and around the world are hungry for power. They want it for their cars, motorcycles, and lawnmowers, and they want it for their flat-screen TVs, mobile phones, computers and Cuisinarts. They want power because power drives those devices and in doing so creates wealth and increases personal happiness.”

“My energy policy is simple: I’m in favor of air conditioning and cold beer.”

“If you are anti-carbon dioxide and anti-nuclear, you are pro-blackout.”

These are quotes from *Power Hungry* by Robert Bryce, an energy journalist. The quote that illustrates the message of the book is: “the smartest, most forward-looking U.S. energy policy can be summed up in one acronym: “N2N” – natural gas to nuclear.”

The book is full of statistics meant to disprove myths of those proposing efficiency and renewable energy for solving energy problems. I am not going to attempt a comprehensive review of the book; you can raise your own blood pressure by reading it. Or, depending on your life style, you might find vindication for various indulgences in energy consumption that you don’t think you should have to give up. I mean, which is more important: polar bears or a flat screen TV in the living room, the den and the bedroom? the homes and rice production of 30 million people in Bangladesh or a Dixie Chopper zero-turn 4WD lawn mower?

Pardon my sarcasm, but Bryce’s debunk of efficiency consists of statistics showing that the U.S. is becoming more energy efficient and has reduced our per capita energy usage as much or more than other developed countries. He does admit that the U.S. per capita energy consumption is several times higher than the world average, and he further admits that most of the reduction is because the U.S. economy has moved toward more service-based production while significant segments of our heavy industry have moved overseas where labor and raw materials are cheaper (which has also meant loss of jobs). Since we still consume the products of that heavy industry, the fact that we are still responsible for the energy consumed seems to have escaped him.

My personal position regarding energy efficiency, or how much we could reduce our energy consumption, comes from personal experience that most reading this have shared. How many houses have you seen (maybe even those of some good friends) with all the lights on – lights in 7 or 8 rooms when there are only 2 people at home; with a TV or several TVs going that no one is watching? How many skyscrapers all lit up at 2:00 am. How many schools and office buildings have you entered that were heated to 80 degrees in the winter and cooled to 65 degrees in the summer?

This is just my personal experience. There are also lots of statistics about wasted energy.

- The amount of food wasted each year by Americans represents the energy equivalent of 350 million barrels of oil, or about 2 % of the nation’s annual energy consumption.
- Heavy industries like steel mills, paper mills and cement mills have by far the largest untapped potential for energy generation in the wasted heat they generate but do not tap to make electricity.
- Industry figures suggest that around 80% of pump motors are overspecified by as much as 10% or 15% by engineers wanting to

be ‘on the safe side. Pumps typically account for around 30% of an industrial country’s energy usage.

- I decided this list has taken up enough space (paper, ink, etc. = energy), but there is much much more we could do to save energy - like all the stuff we send to the landfill instead of recycling. We buy stuff from China and then throw it away and buy more.

My major objection to Bryce’s thesis has to do with his priorities regarding “personal happiness.” He mentions air conditioning and cold beer. My personal happiness runs more to hearing the wood thrush in the morning, seeing the milky way at night and having fresh clean drinking water, although I must admit that many West Virginians would put cold beer high on the list.

The picture below shows a gas field in Wyoming with a gas well on every 40 acres. The gas development in the Marcellus shale so far seems to be based on a well per every 80 acres.. So look at the picture and remove half of the wells. That still means West Virginia will look very different in 10 to 30 years if the projections of natural gas proponents are realized.



Bryce says that because minerals in the U.S. are privately owned, landowners will be compensated by sharing the profits of the development. But in WV, most mineral rights were separated years ago, and the surface owners get nothing while they watch several acres of good hayfield, prime timber, scenic view, and favorite trout streams disappear. There is also the loss of the benefits of those natural resources – farmland and forest - which are used to feed and house us all.

(More on p. 5)

Editor’s Note: The evening before the October Board meeting, many members of the Board met to discuss general energy policy. While we have never opposed all coal mining, we have consistently opposed poorly regulated coal mining. We had never addressed or taken a position on what we would rely upon were coal less prominent. We had discussed such issues briefly at several Board meetings but had never had the time to give it a thorough airing.

Much of the discussion centered around the book *Power Hungry* by Robert Bryce. There was no resolution of the question but the discussion helped people think about the issue. Some of the thoughts appear in the adjoining article as well as another article on page 2.

MORE ON ENERGY CONSUMPTION

(Continued from p. 4)

People who live near gas well development can also suffer health problems from air emissions and contaminated water, as well as severe distress from noise and lights 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for what is estimated to be years as more wells are drilled and have to be refracked numerous times.

It appears that many, if not most, people are not willing to voluntarily decrease their energy consumption. Does it follow that we must cause suffering to those who happen to live where there is more energy to be found? Many ways to reduce energy consumption require an up front capital investment that many, if not most, people cannot afford, while industry invests billions in extracting more fossil fuels. Does that mean we will just keep using up fossil fuels until they are gone? Are we going to destroy rural America for the comfort of the majority who live in the city? Maybe we should all just move to the city and stop worrying about the countryside. But then who will grow our food and harvest the lumber we need? Where will we go to canoe, camp and hike, fish and hunt? Will we just play video games and go to urban aquariums for recreation?

I can think of several government programs that could address this situation, starting with (nonpoliticized) education, but the combination of industry lobbying our legislators to enhance their profits, industry advertising and public relations misleading voters, and the natural resistance of humans to change, makes this an unlikely solution. So, while I am not an advocate of blackouts, I am an advocate of limiting the production of more and more energy. Bryce would add the word "cheap" to energy, and argue that coal, natural gas and petroleum are cheap; but I argue that they are only cheap because we are deferring costs to our grandchildren. If blackouts are the only thing that will curb our profligate energy use, so be it. At least it would spread the suffering around more fairly.

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.

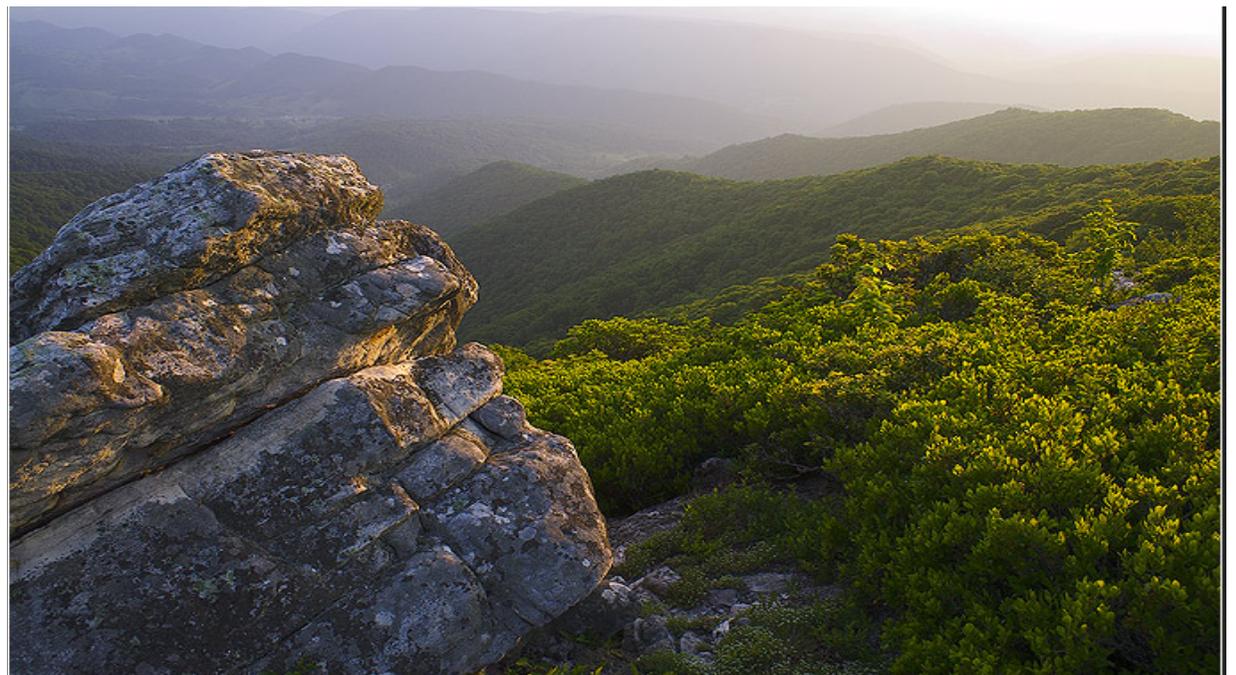


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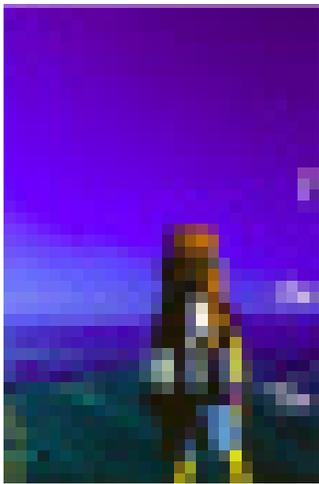
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Patron	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$ 750	\$ 1000

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



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.

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.

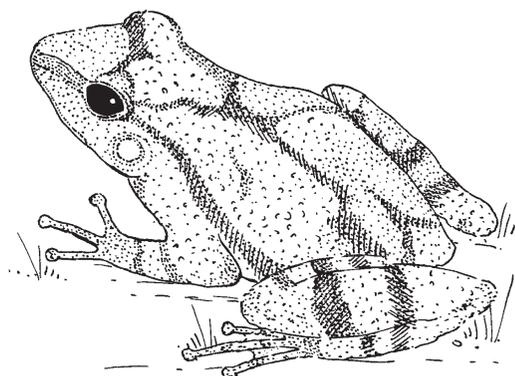
SUCH A DEAL! Book Premium With Membership

Although *Fighting to Protect the Highlands, the First 40 Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy* normally sells for \$24.95, we are offering it as a premium to our members. Anyone who adds \$10 to the membership dues listed on the How to Join membership form (right up there) will receive the history book for free. Just note on the membership form that you wish to take advantage of this offer.

This offer is available to current members as well as new members. Current members may add \$10.00 to the amount they pay when they renew their memberships and receive a book as well.

Send us a post card, drop us a line, stating point of view

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



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

By John McFerrin

It was a day of many reports on things we are working on. We also had the usual stuff—report on the finances and a report on our membership. Tossed in was a chance to win a piece of sculpture by West Virginia artist Mark Blumenstein.

Frank Young reported that there is a working group on Marcellus shale regulations; Don Garvin is a part of it, as are a coal guy and a couple of gas guys. The governor says that he wants effective regulations on Marcellus shale drilling. One obvious need is more inspectors; there are only seventeen inspectors for the whole state.

The West Virginia Environmental Council has set its legislative agenda. The focus will be on the Marcellus shale. Other issues will be severance tax, timberland tax, and defending against whatever the coal industry proposes.

Frank described the importance of interim lobbying. We decided to spend an additional \$2,500 on interim lobbying.

The mining committee reported on a new sticker with a heart with the words “water is life” cuddling up with a drop of water with the words “keep it clean.” Beth Little had the idea; Colleen Anderson carried it out for her.

In litigation matters, Cindy Rank reported that we have joined with other groups in opposition to the National Mining Association’s challenge to EPA’s assertion of its authority. We have reached an agreement with Patriot Mining in the selenium litigation. It has been ordered to fix its selenium problem by 2013. In exchange for its promising not to appeal, we agreed to not complain about selenium discharges between now and the time the selenium solution is supposed to be in place. Litigation over discharges near Ansted has been settled. We are not directly in the Ansted case but have been monitoring it closely. In Spruce (Pigeon Roost), mid-level officials at EPA have said that they think the company will have to do a lot better. The company is challenging this, suggesting that EPA has “overstepped its bounds.”

Cindy also displayed a map showing big mines in southern West Virginia (Logan, Boone), particularly where selenium problems exist. Selenium is everywhere.

Frank Young reported on PATH, the proposed electrical line stretching from West Virginia to the east. The companies seeking

to build the line do not have the evidence that there is sufficient demand to justify building it. The application and hearing process is a year behind schedule. The companies keep extending it because the evidence of need is not yet there.

On wind, Peter Shoenfeld presented a report on the status of different projects around the state.

In public lands, Mike Costello reported that the bill to establish wilderness protection for North Fork Mountain has been introduced in the House. Thanks in large part to a show of support for the project from the public, Senator Rockefeller introduced a companion bill in the Senate. There will be no action on it before the election and probably none afterwards. With Congressman Alan Mollahan leaving there will be nothing this Congress but Senator Rockefeller’s action keeps it alive for future Congresses. The Wilderness Coalition is considering other areas in West Virginia that may be suitable for wilderness protection.

In other matters of public lands, Marilyn reported on various Forest Service Summaries of Proposed Action that we are monitoring or commenting upon. There are proposals on Cheat Mountain, Upper Greenbrier North, liming the Lower Williams River watershed, as well as others.

Treasurer Bob Marshall reported that we were working on an audit, a legal requirement for organizations such as ours. The auditors are very thorough. This is the source of some short term unpleasantness since it makes the audit more difficult but it is good in the long term to know we have been thoroughly audited and are squeaky clean.

He also noted that we now have embezzlement insurance even though we don’t need it. On the report itself, he said that this had been a quiet quarter with not much activity. We remain financially stable.

Membership Secretary Beth Little reported that total membership has declined slightly but paid up membership is increasing. This is a result of her efforts to weed people who have not been active from the mailing list.

Finally, we learned that Mark Blumenstein had offered to donate a sculpture to the Highlands Conservancy so that we could raffle it off. We will be selling tickets through *The Highlands Voice* and on the website.



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Board

Photo by Board Member Emeritus Jean Rodman

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH E. GORDON GEE

By Dave Cooper

The first time I ever saw his name, it was on the sports page. E. Gordon Gee was the Chancellor of my alma mater, Vanderbilt University. As Chancellor, Gee eliminated the VU Athletics Department, and reorganized so that the sports people at the university all reported to the Division of Student Life.

I thought this was a very bold action that required a great deal of courage on Gee's part. Vanderbilt is in the nation's premiere athletic conference, the Southeastern Conference, home to collegiate sporting leviathans such as Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida. Vanderbilt, as most people know, is often at the bottom of the SEC ranks in football, and so adding a further hurdle to VU Athletics was surely unpopular with some wealthy Vandy alumni.

I was once naïve enough to believe that other universities in the SEC would follow suit, but of course they didn't. Still, Chancellor Gee has to be considered a great man in my mind for daring to challenge the prevailing national system of higher education, in which sports and big money have become increasingly part of most big universities' mission and focus.

The next time I saw Gee's name was when I was researching the mountaintop removal coal mining company Massey Energy. To my great surprise, Gee was listed on the Board of Directors of Massey Energy, serving as head of Massey's Safety, Environmental and Public Policy Committee.

How could this be? I wondered why a man so highly respected as a Chancellor at Vanderbilt – and by all indications, a man beloved by his students – would serve a corporation as disreputable and ugly as Massey, which spilled 300 million gallons of coal sludge in Martin County Kentucky in October, 2000. Massey is perhaps best known for the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in April, in which 29 miners were killed in West Virginia, and for the antics of its CEO, Don Blankenship, who once attacked an ABC News cameraman on a national news broadcast. You can watch this encounter on You Tube by searching "Don Blankenship Shows His Hand."

I was on the Vanderbilt campus about three years ago when I chanced to walk into President Gee, who was strolling across the Nashville campus about 8:00 one night. Gee is easily recognizable because he always wears a bow tie. Personally, I think a bow tie is a rather silly affectation, but it does make you more recognizable and perhaps more marketable if you are in the self-promotion business. Orville Redenbacher comes to mind.

After passing him on the walkway it took me a few seconds to recognize him. Then it took me a few more seconds to think of something to say to him. By that time, Chancellor Gee was far down the walkway and I would have to run to catch him. This seemed improper to me, and I didn't want to startle him, so I let the opportunity fall. I thought, if I ever bump into this man again, next

time I will say something!

Gee moved to Columbus, Ohio in 2007 to take the job of President of The Ohio State University (and yes, they want you to say "The" every time you say the university name. Another silly affectation...) As the President of TOSU, he is now America's highest paid university president with an annual compensation package of \$1.6 million, and he is highly respected. The students at TOSU love him.

However, last year a spunky group called Ohio Citizen Action decided to target President Gee in a campaign against mountaintop removal, and President Gee was showered with approximately 3,000 letters from angry Ohioans demanding that he resign from Massey's Board of Directors. The campaign, which lasted over a year, was successful and Gee finally stepped down to "devote his attention to Ohio," according to a Massey press release.

So on October 8, when I saw President Gee standing next to my Mountain Justice table at The Ohio State "Scarlet, Gray and Green Fair" I jumped at the chance to congratulate him. "Thanks for stepping down from the Board of Massey," I said to him.

He looked up from the table at me and didn't smile. He has kind of a funny, scrunched-up face.

"Your organization," he said, waving his finger at some Mountain Justice paraphernalia on our table, "used a lot of inaccurate information."

"Really? About what?" I asked. Mountain Justice was not involved in the Ohio Citizen Action letter-writing campaign, but I did speak to some of their canvassers groups in Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus over the past few years. In my educational work on mountaintop removal I have tried greatly to remain credible by being as accurate as possible. I don't exaggerate, and I take pains to document everything that I say in my slide show presentation.

"Massey does a good job reclaiming the land on the mines," said Gee. "You just show these pictures that aren't true."

Well. I asked him where he had seen reclaimed mine sites, and he told me that he – not company representatives – had chosen some Massey reclamation sites to visit in West Virginia, he had personally visited them, and that they were filled with beautiful forests.

How can this be, I wondered. Here is this highly intelligent and educated man claiming to see something that I had never seen in ten solid years of work on this MTR issue and countless visits to reclaimed mine sites. I listened to him and after a while I believed that he had indeed seen some satisfactorily reclaimed Massey MTR



Dave Cooper



E. Gordon Gee

(More on page 9)

GORDON GEE: The Rest of the Story (Continued from p. 8)

mine sites. But I know what I have seen – he and I are apparently looking at two completely different things. I asked President Gee if he had ever studied forest ecology - and I should have asked if he knew the difference between Autumn Olive and Pawlonia trees and a proper Mixed-Mesophytic Forest. He said he understood forestry. I showed him the cover of my DVD, which shows an active mine site in Virginia and he airily dismissed it saying “That’s not a Massey mine.”

Well, yeah, it wasn’t, but I countered “Are you saying that Massey doesn’t do mining like this?”

We talked about the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative program to replant native hardwood trees on ripped mine sites, and how the SMCRA law’s current requirement that coal companies compact the land is the reason why trees cannot grow on reclaimed mine lands. We talked about economic development on reclaimed mine lands (I talked about prisons and airstrips and golf courses, he talked about housing developments.) We agreed on almost nothing.

By this time, a small crowd of TOSU students had gathered around us. Gee held a black vinyl notebook tightly to his chest in a defensive posture while we talked. It was a confrontation between a bow-tied powerful man - the beloved and powerful University President - and some guy in work boots wearing a ball cap and a T Shirt. Neither of us really raised our voices, but we were clearly in disagreement, and President Gee moved to defuse the situation by sliding down to the next table and gazing intently at the contents of that table, which included stainless steel water bottles and some T Shirts.

I knew that our conversation, which lasted a good 5 minutes, had ended rather badly, so I tried to extend an olive branch to President Gee. “You know,” I said, “one thing I think that has been a successful economic development effort in southern West Virginia is the ATV trails – the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System.” I nodded and tried to be positive about something. “It’s really brought a few towns in Mingo, Logan and McDowell Counties back from the brink. There’s new bed and breakfasts opening up, and the towns like Delbarton are coming back and”

“Ah, I hate those things,” he growled. “They tear everything up.”

I was dumbfounded. I was incredulous. My brain froze, and sparks flew out of my nose.

“You ... you don’t like ...” I sputtered. “You hate four-wheelers because they ... and ... and you’re defending strip mining?!”

Not very eloquent, but good enough. A grin spread across my face.

Well, there will be some follow-up to all this. I’m going to find out where I can see some of these good-looking reclaimed Massey mines. I suspect strongly that these are pre-SMCRA mine sites, meaning that the trees have grown for over 30 years on un-compacted mining spoil. It will be interesting to solve this mystery – and I will report back on what I’ve learned in a future column.

Note: When not needling university presidents, Mr. Cooper presents The Mountaintop Removal Road Show, <http://www.mountainroadshow.com/>, an educational presentation on mountaintop removal. To arrange for a presentation contact him at 608 Allen Ct., Lexington KY 40505, (859) 299 5669 (home)

HOME-GROWN POWER

By Ian Bowles, briefed by Don Gasper

Ian Bowles is the secretary of energy and environmental affairs for Massachusetts. He has written an article “Home Grown Power” that was in the New York Times on March 6, 2009. His perspective contradicts the position that new big power lines are automatically progressive. Here is some of what he had to say:

“President Obama has laid out an ambitious agenda for dealing with our energy needs and climate change. He would reduce carbon emissions by using federal stimulus dollars to help homes, businesses and governments use energy more efficiently and convert to green energy. This is the right blueprint for increasing the number of green jobs, encouraging economic growth, and reducing the risk of global warming. But as Congress translates this grand plan into legislation, lawmakers should resist calls to add an extensive and costly new transmission system that would carry electricity from remote areas to places with high energy demands (the east).

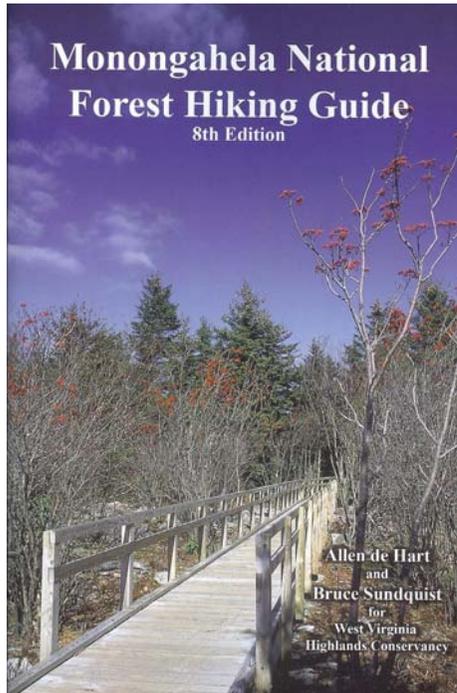
This idea is being promoted by energy companies and by elected officials who see it as an economic development opportunity for their particular state or region. Long-distance transmission lines are needed they argue to ensure that the president’s energy goals are met.” Not so! “There are better- and cheaper more secure ways to power the Eastern big cities.”

“Renewable energy resources are found all across the country; they don’t need to be harnessed from just one place. In the Northwest, the largest amount of green power comes from hydroelectricity. In the Northeast, the best source may be the wind over the ocean, because it blows harder and more consistently there than on land. Offshore wind farms have been proposed for Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island. In the Southwest, solar energy can be tapped on a large scale. And in the Southeast, biomass from forests may one day be a major source of sustainable power. In each area, developing these power sources would be cheaper than piping in clean energy from thousands of miles away.”

“Unlike our federal highway system, which is needed to transport goods across the country, or the “information superhighway” of the internet, which is the fastest way to carry information around the world, long-distance transmission lines have no inherent value. On the contrary, the farther electricity is transported, the more of it is dissipated. “Line loss”, as this is called, gobbles up an estimated 2 to 3 percent of electricity nationally. And of course, the longer the power line, the more expensive it is to build. In New England, the estimated cost per mile is \$2 million to \$10 million. The closer electricity is generated to where it is used, the better.”

“Another component of President Obama’s clean vision is the creation of a smarter power grid. But that has little to do with high capacity transmission lines that carry electricity in bulk over hundreds of miles. Building a “smart grid” means upgrading the local grid from a simple delivery system to an information system that can let consumers know the times when power is cheapest, thus enabling them to adjust their use to save money. This flattens out electricity loads and minimizes periods of peak demand. Smart grids will also be able to identify and fix power failures instantly, and someday may even send signals to specific household appliances like thermostats, washing machines and refrigerators to switch them on when demand is low or turn them off during times of peak energy use.”

“For a clean energy future, we need a smart grid and we need more renewable energy. The Obama administration is offering welcome support for both.”



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:
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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
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Price: \$20.00 from the same address.

Voice Available Electronically

The Highlands Voice is now available for electronic delivery. You may, of course, continue to receive the paper copy. Unless you request otherwise, you will continue to receive it in paper form. If, however, you would prefer to receive it electronically instead of the paper copy please contact Beth Little at blittle@citynet.net. Electronic copies arrive as e-mail attachments a few days before the paper copy would have arrived.

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.

A FIELD TRIP TO KAYFORD MOUNTAIN

By Cindy Ellis



On October 13, three vanloads of students from Glenville State College traveled to Kayford Mountain to see mountaintop removal mining firsthand. Julian Martin explained the process, issues, and history behind what they saw, Larry Gibson spoke to the group of his personal and family history involvement, and Cindy Ellis briefly told of bird populations on the "oasis" site and surrounding disturbed lands. The speakers and many members of the group exchanged thanks to each other for coming.



ARRANGE YOUR OWN FIELD TRIP

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

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.

I ♥ MOUNTAINS

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY, PO BOX 306, CHARLESTON, WV 25321-0306 • www.wvhighlands.org





IT'S WREATHMAKING TIME!

This is how much fun people had last year. Now it is time for the **2010 Wreath Making Workshop**. Join us on **November 28 2010** for an afternoon of fun at White Grass Ski Touring Center in Canaan Valley learning how to make your own holiday wreath. Bring a hand pruner and any decorations or adornments you'd like to add to your wreath. We'll have all the materials you'll need including a variety of firs to construct your very own piece of artwork. We'll get started at 1pm and be around all afternoon. Contact Dave Saville daves@labyrinth.net



HUGH STILL TALKING ABOUT CONSERVATION (Continued from p. 2)

of the state's power needs. And since every MW of wind capacity must be backed up by a MW of quickly dispatchable capacity, Texas has more gas-powered plants than ever. You see why Texas gas producers don't worry about wind power.

Bryce's ultimate criticism of wind and solar had to do with land use—their weak power density (for wind, about 6.4 horsepower per acre, or 1.2 watts per square meter) resulted in “energy sprawl.” Add to that the need for miles of new power lines. In a move that should get some attention, Bryce lumped wind together with mountaintop removal mining as energy sources that disturbed excessive amounts of real estate.

Anticipating the Saturday discussion, George Beetham, our board member from the city, had written, “My concern is using what is left of our natural lands for industrial purposes. The highlands should not be sacrificed so people in the city can squander electric power . . .”

That's a different way to put it. Bryce wouldn't use the word “squander.” He insisted “the deluge of criticism about how Americans ‘use too much energy’ is off base.” But his figures showed that our energy consumption is out of kilter.

It's right there in a graph titled, “Electricity Consumption and the Human Development Index: A Near-Perfect Correlation.” The Index combines life expectancy, nutrition, health, poverty, education, safe water, etc., to assess countries' relative development. The poorest nations use the least electricity per capita. As they develop, inevitably they require more—at least 4,000 kilowatt-hours per person per year to reach the top of the Index.

But Bryce only read the graph up and down; he didn't comment on the spread from left to right, the huge difference in power consumption between countries at the top. The British, Germans, and French use half as much electricity per capita as Americans do for an equivalent quality of life; the Japanese use more than the top Europeans, but still only 7,000 kilowatt-hours per person compared with our 12,000.

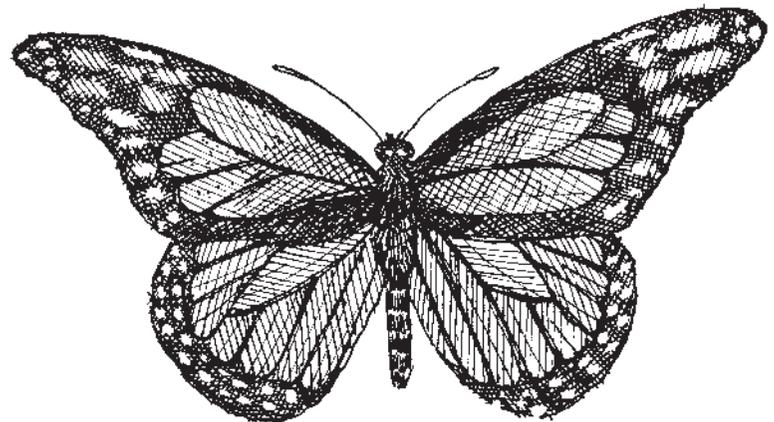
There would seem to be enormous room for energy savings here. However, conservation is another word that Bryce wouldn't

use. Efficiency, yes—that's driven by corporations' imperative to make and save money. Engineers are constantly working to make our products more efficient. Recently, more than half the growth in demand for energy has been met by increased efficiency.

Conservation, though, would require a change in habits and attitudes. Don't expect that from a guy who wrote, “My energy policy is simple: I'm in favor of air conditioning and cold beer.” The C-word was too Al Gore-ish.

Nevertheless, we wrestled with the topic on that Saturday afternoon. We'd seen how Bryce followed current facts and historical trends to a position he shorthanded “N2N,” that is, natural gas as a transition to nuclear. He even urged us to emulate France, which generates most of its electricity by nuclear power. I had my say on that last June.

We didn't want to go down that road. We didn't think we had to adopt any broad policy on energy. Our mission is to conserve the highlands. Still it was good to educate ourselves and raise questions: Are we crazy to seek conservation? Could a significant number of ordinary households become energy producers as well as consumers? And where do you suppose that grandmother and her daughter put their trash now?



CAMPING AT COOPERS ROCK STATE FOREST; DAY HIKING IN PENNSYLVANIA

By Michael Juskelis

Coopers Rock is the largest State Forest in WV. Its 12,713 acres are bisected by Interstate 68. While the vista from whence it gets its name is a real tourist magnet, much of the trail system is much less visited except in the general vicinity of the parking lots. Janet, the dogs and I were joined at the small but well maintained campground (Thanks to Ranger Matt and his staff!) by Cognac Jack (back from touring the U.S.), The Mad Hatter and Alan. Ann (AKA Doc), a good friend and hiking companion from Morgantown, along with Tracy and her husband, visited our campfire that night to discuss the route she would be leading us on the next day. She had spent the day searching for something special for us and man did she find a good one.

The next day Paula joined the crew as we set out on a 11.2 mile trek. The first stop was Raven Rock. Although the vista is shared by a high power line the view is at least equal in beauty to that as seen at the main overlook. Add to it a greater amount of solitude I consider it even better.

We backtracked on the Raven Rock Road/Trail for about a mile to a small cairn Ann had built the day before. An unofficial footpath led us to an old grade which shortly led us to an unofficial extension of the Sunset Wall Trail. I don't think I have walked along side such a long length of massive rocks in my entire hiking career.

We wove through a labyrinth of rocks which I immediately named Ann's Hall and soon hooked up with the official trail. We bypassed a short hike to Haystack Rock and ascended to the main vista. After taking in the view and discussing the origin of the name of the rock we descended to follow the Underlook and Rattlesnake trails to a giant shelter constructed by the C.C.C. of American Chestnut for lunch.

From there we visited an extension of the Sunset Wall called Rock City. This place has got to be the region's heaven for Boulderers.

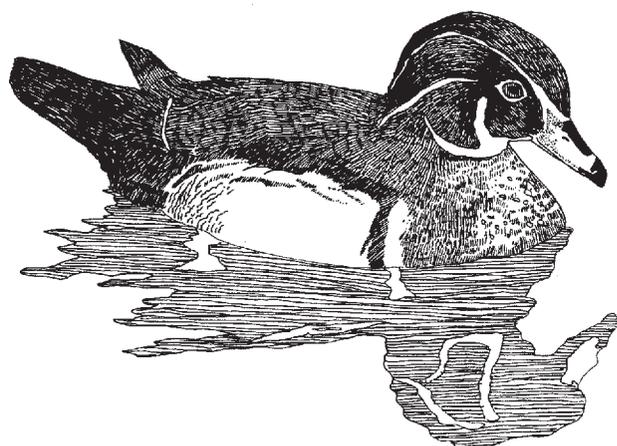
One could spend days exploring it! From there we descended on the Ridge Trail and then an un-named but maintained trail down to Cheat Lake.

The view was nice but a bit narrow. I don't know if I would do the descent and subsequent climb back up again. After a snack we climbed back up and followed pretty Clay Run to the Henry Clay Iron Furnace. From there it was a casual walk of about three miles on the Clay Run Road and Laurel Run Trail back to camp. It didn't feel like it we had gained and lost 2100 feet in elevation.

The next day Cognac, the Hatter, Precious and I drove 35 minutes to the southern trailhead of the Quebec Run Wild Area in Pennsylvania. This was a totally different hike from yesterday's. There were a few interesting rock outcrops that in their own context were quite nice but when compared to Sunset Wall, Rattle Snake trail and Rock City they were mere marbles.

This hike was more about pretty streams and dark Hemlock Groves ... and too many nice campsites to mark on a map. We were surprised by the number of bridges over the streams. We weren't expecting to see them in a wild area. The route we followed included Quebec Run Road, Tebolt Trail, West Road, Mill Run Trail, Rankin Trail and Hess trail. We closed the loop with the western segment of the Tebolt trail. In all we hiked a bit over 10 miles and gained and lost about 1400 feet of elevation. My original plans called for hiking more of this venue but after seeing the first Hemlock grove on Mill Run I decided to save some for a backpacking trip next year. We will be back!

The next morning found us breaking camp and heading to Little Sandy's in Bruceton Mills for a down home breakfast before the three hour drive back to our home. I must say I was pleasantly surprised by both hiking venues and plan to return.



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.

Our Readers Write

The Hamburg Challenge.

In the October 2010 *Highlands Voice* Bob Hamburg asks for one example where the negative impacts of wind are greater than those of coal. I suppose I should start with the impotency of wind fueled electricity. Earlier this year, a Nature Conservancy study stated that it takes seven times as much land for wind turbines to generate as much electricity as coal (including powerplants and mines) and thirty times more land than nuclear. It is well understood that wind fueled electricity is fluctuating and weather dependant, requiring backup usually from a quick starting fossil fueled source. In addition to the low expectation grid managers have for wind's sporadic power production, wind facilities that have been operating for several years can be expected to have 5% or more of their turbines out of service at any given time.

Actually it is a complete mystery to me why wind developers come to West Virginia in the first place since, according to U.S. Government studies, we have mediocre to poor wind resources. I just returned from an eight week, eleven thousand mile trip which was, in part, a non-scientific, private citizen's study of wind energy sites across the northwestern half of the country and Canada. I visited wind installations in eight states, many in the windiest parts of the U.S. several of which were becalmed, on the days of my visit. The majority of these installations are located in areas with minimal population on flat land. In most locations, the homes are five miles and more apart.

The last stop before my return to West Virginia was in Illinois at a wind energy facility under construction. Neatly laid out across hundreds of acres of dead-flat farm fields, were tower sections, nacelles and blades. The excavating necessary was minimal here. All that was required was to scrape off the topsoil for roads, dig foundations and trench for the connecting transmission lines. Contrast that with the blasting and massive earthmoving that is ongoing, as I write, on Laurel Mountain where the equivalent of a modern super highway is being gouged through the forest to allow the heavy steel tower sections and long blades to cross the ridges and filled valleys between them.

The small amount of coal that was in Laurel Mountain was mined decades ago. There is no question here of whether to mine coal or set up turbines. And there should be no such question in West Virginia and the rest of the Allegheny Highlands either. It is not a matter of coal versus wind. No one I know in the anti-wind community is in favor of mountaintop removal. Large scale wind energy development in a region that is poorly suited for it is not in anybody's best interest.

John Terry, Montrose, WV

Poetry Blind-sided

By E.R.

Oh bride of yesteryear
Your freckles yet unfaded
Faced with relinquishing your family and home
Surname and freedom
Your sun-burned girlhood
Soon to give birth in ghastly pain
Risk a sweat-soaked death to delivery gone wrong
Spared that, to nurse your babies exhausted
Wanting nothing more than one night of dreamless sleep
In your narrow childhood bed
Beneath a dome of quilts.

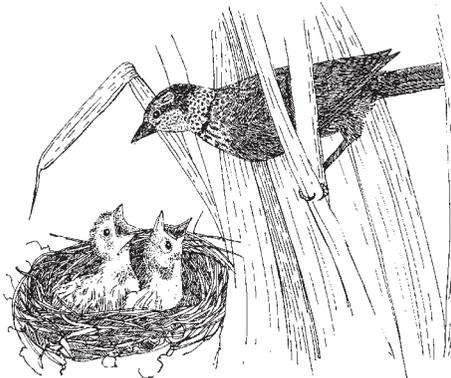
You bought happily ever after?
Your man can beat or rape you without breaking a single law.

You understand why ponies had to be blinded to enter the mines.

Still, there's a chance of landing a gem
Of kind and tender glances
Children that thrive
Of decades passing before your labors wear you down.

Yet handsome groom beware!
Lest your bride seduce with winsome wages
Her eyes flecked with mercury
Her breath scented with sulfur
Her husky voice calling
Come to my dark bedchamber and be mine
I'll break your strong, athletic form
Breathe gas and dust into your lungs
Sink my savage teeth into the hills you love
Poison the waters you fish and drink
Set even the air on fire like Hades risen up
Until you tell yourself a thousand lies
Betray God's very Creation—
As if neither you nor Earth has worth.

Let it be known, coal miner,
The risks are real enough,
The promises
entirely empty.



THE PASSING OF THE TORCH

The annual meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was, for the most part, uneventful. The at large Board members (Don Gasper, Bob Gates, George Beetham, Bill McNeel, and Peter Shoenfeld) were all re-elected.

There was some movement among the officers and organizational representatives. Cindy Ellis was elected as Senior Vice President, replacing Buff Rodman. The other officers remained the same.

The most momentous event of the meeting came in the organizational representatives. Buff Rodman announced that she was assuming the position of organizational representative for the Pittsburgh Climbers, replacing Jean Rodman.

After many years of service on the Board, Jean Rodman assumed senior status as board member emeritus. The only duties of a board member emeritus are to look wise and offer occasional trenchant comments and other wisdom. A board member emeritus may not vote but may attend Board meetings where she may speak but not vote.



T- SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the **I ♥ Mountains** slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" in smaller blue letters is included below the slogan. Short sleeve in sizes: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Long sleeve in sizes S, M, L, and XL. **Short sleeve** model is \$12 total by mail; **long sleeve** is \$15. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax. Send sizes wanted and check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy ATTN: James Solley, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.



FOLA ON THE FIRING LINE

By Cindy Rank

Prompted by stream pollution from the Fola Coal Company's Surface Mine No. 3 in Nicholas and Clay counties, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the Sierra Club and have filed an enforcement action against the company in federal court.

Water quality tests conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, and the company itself have shown that the waters immediately below the mine are significantly degraded. These studies reveal that Twentymile Creek and Boardtree Branch, both of which receive waste discharges from the 1700-acre surface mine, are biologically impaired and toxic to aquatic life.

Known for our concern for the high quality of streams like the headwaters of the Gauley (including the Williams and Cherry) that rise in the Monongahela National Forest, there is every reason the Highlands Conservancy should also be concerned about the impacts of mining on the Gauley mainstem and its tributaries further downstream.

Earlier this year WV Highlands Conservancy joined American Rivers in nominating the Gauley as the one of the 2010 "Most Endangered Rivers" precisely because of the pollution from these mining operations (and others in the area).

Part of the reason American Rivers creates such a list is to encourage actions to reverse the situations that 'endanger' the rivers in the first place. This new legal challenge, is one of those actions.

It alleges violations of both the Clean Water Act and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, seeks to enforce water quality standards, which prohibit discharges that are "harmful, hazardous or toxic to man, animal or aquatic life" or that cause "significant adverse impacts to the chemical, physical, hydrologic, or biological components of aquatic ecosystems."

Scientists have measured the toxicity of the water at more than eleven times the EPA standard. In addition, experts found levels of conductivity – another scientific measurement that indicates harmful pollution – almost seven times higher than the point at which EPA predicts harm to water quality.

Neither Sierra Club nor the Conservancy wants to see mining operations continue to pollute and destroy streams like Boardtree and Twentymile. The more we learn about these areas, the clearer it becomes that mountaintop removal coal mining is incompatible with healthy streams, and with the people and animals that rely on them.

WV Highlands Conservancy and the Sierra Club are represented in this action by Jim Hecker of Public Justice and Joe Lovett and Derek Teaney of the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment.

JAY TURNED IN FAVOR OF BIG COAL

By Julian Martin

People were charmed when John D. Rockefeller IV came to Emmons. He was a tall, handsome young man from a rich and famous family. From all that I heard, Rockefeller fit in and was well liked by most of the people in Emmons. My uncle, who owns the Emmons farm of my birthplace, describes Jay as a good man.

In 1972 I lived with my Grandma in Emmons and tried to make a go of raising organic tomatoes. I put Rockefeller's bumper sticker on my truck when he ran for governor the first time. I supported him because of his statement of Dec. 20, 1970, that he would, "... fight for the abolition of strip mining completely and forever." And in his campaign of 1972, he got my hopes up with, "Strip-mining must be abolished because of its effect on those who have given most to the cause - the many West Virginians who have suffered actual destruction of their homes; those who have put up with flooding, mud slides, cracked foundations, destruction of neighborhoods, decreases in property values, the loss of fishing and hunting, and the beauty of the hills. ..."

In his Gazette op-ed of Nov. 8, 2009, Rockefeller wrote that he is concerned by the "... disturbing number of Republicans and Democrats in Congress who oppose surface mining altogether." Perhaps they understand the horror of strip mining as did Rockefeller when he also said in 1972 that, "We know that strip mining is tearing up the beauty of our state. We know that strip mining is not a good economic future for West Virginia and not a good economic future for our children. And we know that, whatever advantage it has now, the damage that it leaves is a permanent damage."

Rockefeller betrayed those of us who trusted him to stick by his principles and fight for the abolition of strip mining "completely and forever." In his second try at governor, he cast aside his idealism and as he recommends in his op-ed, embraced coal.

As governor on March 12, 1977, Rockefeller told the U.S.

Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Natural Resources that "... mountaintop removal should certainly be encouraged, if not specifically dictated." That was quite a flip-flop from his 1972 stance for the abolition of strip mining.

The irony of Rockefeller getting his start in Emmons is on display there now. The ridge from Ashford to Emmons is being destroyed by mountaintop removal strip mining. I fear it won't be long until that destruction will blow right on past Emmons. Emmons might well cease to exist, thanks in part to Rockefeller's loss of what he called, in his op-ed, his central core principles.

Rockefeller does some good work in the U.S. Senate. He advocates for the elderly, children, veterans and universal health care. None of Rockefeller's many good works can mitigate or withstand the blast from the destruction of our mountains, streams and homes. He abandoned them to the coal companies without a fight. Would that he had donated to the pro-mountain environmental organizations the 30 or so million dollars he spent on elections and lavish homes. Instead he chose a political career over the beauty of the hills. He chose to be pro-mountaintop removal rather than pro-mountain.

In his commentary, Rockefeller said nothing about the destructive nature of mountaintop removal strip mining. He offered no relief to people whose homes and communities are being destroyed. Rockefeller didn't mention the loss to strip mining of fishing and hunting and the beauty of the hills that so enamored him in 1972.

Rockefeller's op-ed was a transparent attempt to keep the good favor of the coal companies. Those folks don't need to worry about Rockefeller; he is their boy.

Note: This commentary previously appeared in *The Charleston Gazette*.

HATS FOR SALE

We have West Virginia Highlands Conservancy baseball style hats for sale as well as I ❤️ Mountains caps.

The WVHC cap is beige with green woven into the twill and the pre-curved visor is light green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy logo and the words West Virginia Highlands Conservancy on the front and I ❤️ Mountains on the back. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure.

The I (heart) Mountains The colors are stone, black and red.. The front of the cap has I ❤️ MOUNTAINS. The heart is red. The red and black hats are soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. The stone has a stiff front crown with a velcro strap on the back. All hats have West Virginia Highlands Conservancy printed on the back. Cost is \$15 by mail. West Virginia residents add 6% tax. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to James Solley, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306

