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The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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A step forward, but not the last one

Blair Mountain Battlefield Protected (Maybe)

By John McFerrin

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia has determined that the United States Department of the Interior was mistaken when it removed the site of the Battle of Blair Mountain from the National Register of Historic Places. The Court sent the controversy back to the Department of the Interior to reconsider its decision. The decision was in response to an appeal by Sierra Club; Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition; Friends of Blair Mountain, Inc.; West Virginia Labor History Association; National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States; and West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

The real history

Blair Mountain is a significant historical site. It was the site of the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain that ended an unsuccessful three-year struggle to unionize the coal miners of Logan, Mingo, McDowell, and Mercer counties.

In late August and early September 1921, Blair Mountain, located in Logan County, West Virginia, played host to an armed conflict between coal miners and strikebreakers. This battle, known as the Battle of Blair Mountain, is the largest armed labor conflict



in United States history. The Battle of Blair Mountain was the culmination of a labor union’s unsuccessful years-long struggle to unionize miners in southwestern West Virginia coalfields, as well as to liberate miners living under martial law. As the miners marched toward Mingo County, they encountered 3,000 strikebreakers forming a miles-long defensive front across Spruce Fork Ridge on Blair Mountain. The strikebreakers entrenched themselves, dropped homemade bombs, and opened fire from mounted machineguns. The miners returned fire and the battle raged on for several days, causing numerous casualties. The miners surrendered upon the arrival of federal troops. The site of the battle is known as Blair Mountain Battlefield (“Blair Mountain”).

“With the exception of the Civil War, the Blair battle is the largest insurrection in U.S. history,” said Regina Hendrix of the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club. “We cannot let this rich, undisturbed, site be wiped away forever. The area is a vital part of U.S. labor history. The archaeological record waiting to be explored will clearly show the places where the battle occurred, as well as the intensity of the battle at different sites. The archaeological record

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Ramblin' the Ridges

By Cynthia D. Ellis

Leave it, Beaver

Some people were horrified recently. Deep clefts were hewn from several ornamental trees that had graced the banks of the Kanawha River; piles of wood chips lay beneath the scarred trunk. Other small trees had been severed...and towed away through the water to the smaller Elk River and upstream.

A number of people were surprised. When the culprits were identified as beaver [*Castor Canadensis*], the folks who had planted the trees were not pleased.

Other people were charmed. Most had not known beavers were nearby, and that they are thriving in West Virginia. These people are impressed by the lumberjacking and engineering skills of the water-centered critters, and would hope to get a glimpse of the furry dam builders in action.

Beavers have an up and down history here. In colonial times and before 1825, beaver could be found in the waters of our state, but by that year they were gone. They had been eliminated by impacts from the progression of humans--- establishing towns and cities--- and by the desirability of beaver fur for hats. A hundred years would pass before officials would re-establish the beaver community with imported stock from Wisconsin and Michigan. Those imports marked the first attempts here to bring any extirpated species back.

Beavers have plenty of fascinating particulars. That broad flat tail is a primary storage area for the fat for winter. Their sturdy teeth never stop growing and have so much iron in the enamel that incisors appear orange! They may weigh 30 – 60 pounds

and can stay underwater for 15 minutes. While submerged, valves close off the ears and nose, and they can chew on vegetation while immersed because their lips can seal in place behind the front teeth. Beavers den in river banks or make stick lodges, and the young may be born this month [May]. Vocalizations they produce include snuffing, growling, whining, and mewling. [Here's a link to an audio recording by famed sound researcher, Lang Elliot <http://musicofnature.com/beaver-moanings/>]

People took action in Charleston after seeing beaver damage. Trappers were called in; barriers were put around surviving trees. And the local newspaper assigned a Frownie Face to beavers on its opinion page. But not everyone was upset.

One eloquent letter protested the frown and the writer pointed out that scientists feel there is plenty of evidence of the benefits of beavers, particularly in ecosystem restoration.

Since many in our organization make special efforts to be outdoors, we may have seen this firsthand. We may have seen the treasures of plant and animal life that accompany a beaver's best construction--- the beaver pond.

A beaver pond can produce food for fish and other animals, support biodiversity, and maintain stream and river flow. It can provide opportunities for quiet relaxation, as well as for canoeing, hunting and trapping, birding, photography, and fishing. Other benefits are drought, flood, and erosion protection, and the removal of pollutants as well as the recharging of water aquifers.

Problems with these super builders include, of course, destruction of trees, and flooding in areas

perceived as troublesome for humans. It was once thought that beavers had an association with the disease giardiasis, but that has been found to have other causes. Most information on dealing with beavers favor becoming informed on their habits and planning humane options. "Learn to Live With Them," is a theme.

We realize that human and wildlife interactions may sometimes be contentious and few could be unsympathetic to the hard working volunteers who see young trees



vanish. Still, we hope that newspapers could make more efforts to educate readers. Such situations can be challenging in trying to accommodate people and nature. But it is increasingly important--- in the preservation of water and the wild--- to try.



Chomped tree near Charleston



It was spotted by hikers in the Amherst-Plymouth Wildlife Management Area in Putnam County. But what is it?

(Hint: you bait it with catnip. Answer on p. 15) Photo by Vivian Stockman.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

By Cindy Ellis

Lively groups commandeered the Student Center at Marshall University on a hot, sunny Wednesday just before Earth Day. Our Highlands Conservancy booth was part of the action. We were two spaces down from the fellow with a collection of live snakes, which proved to be a great draw for us.

As for me, this booth host met even more than the usual contingent of enthusiastic, interesting people, and I really enjoyed sharing information about our organization. In addition to the snakes, we were flanked by the WV Native Plant Society and the Fourpole Creek Watershed Association.

Among those who stopped to chat were a young woman who was just back from a World Health Organization meeting, a young man who noted the fine reputation of our trail maps, a spelunker, someone sporting a shirt from my high school, and a new staff person with the Alliance for Appalachia. Quantities of our buttons, bumper stickers, and copies of *The Voice* were quickly scooped up. One girl remarked, "I had a button but Mom took mine for herself." Lots of folks signed up for trial memberships. MU's Sustainability Department had once again done a great job of organizing this event.

As the day was winding down, an animated gaggle of students gathered around exclaiming over the "I ♥ Mountains" stickers. A slender girl at the edge of the group shyly asked me if I had heard of Larry Gibson. She was his granddaughter. "Yes, I knew him!" I was glad to say, and we talked some more.

And that was a happy ending to a happy day.



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.

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

Blair Mountain Battlefield (Continued from p. 1)

has lain dormant for 90 years along the Spruce Fork Ridge from Blair Mountain to Mill Creek and it cries out for our protection.”

“Blair Mountain stands as a centerpiece of American labor history and West Virginia culture,” said Kenny King, a lifelong resident of Blair and member of the Board of Friends of Blair Mountain. “The courageous resistance of ten thousand striking coal miners in 1921 was an outcry for basic human rights. Blair Mountain must not fall to the insatiable greed of the coal industry but rather stand as a monument that honors the gains for which those miners sacrificed their lives and livelihoods. Never before, nor since have so many American workers taken up arms to fight for their constitutional rights. Blair Mountain, West Virginia stands not only as a reminder of our proud history, but also as a living symbol of hope for all who seek justice.”

“Blair Mountain is an important part of my family’s history,” said Julian Martin of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. “My grandfather and great uncle fought at Blair Mountain in 1921 on the side of the United Mine Workers of America. It would be a huge loss for Blair Mountain to be unprotected from mountain top removal strip mining.”

With this history, there is not much doubt that Blair Mountain meets the standards set forth in the standards set forth in the federal National Historic Preservation Act. Under that Act, the United States Department of the Interior maintains “a National Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.” Because of what happened there, no one involved in the case seriously denies that it meets that standard.

What the fight is about

The controversy, instead, is over ownership of the land. A site cannot be placed on the Register of Historic Places over the objections of a majority of the landowners. This fight is about how many landowners there are, how many objected, and whether the Keeper of the Register of Historical Places and the West Virginia Department of Culture and History counted the landowners and objectors correctly.

What happened

Although there had been efforts to

have the Blair Mountain Battlefield placed on the Register of Historical Places before, the efforts were finally successful in 2009 when the West Virginia Department of Cultural and History determined both that it met the standard in the National Historic Preservation Act and that a majority of landowners had not objected. It had placed a notice in the newspaper inviting anyone to express their objections. It had also had an Assistant West Virginia Attorney General research the records in Logan County to determine the landowners. The Department counted the landowners, counted the objectors, and determined that fewer than half of the landowners had objected. On this basis, the Keeper of the Registry of Historical Places placed the Blair Mountain Battlefield on the Register of Historical Places.

Almost immediately after the listing, an attorney for a coal company submitted a different list of landowners and objectors. With this new calculation, more than half of the landowners had objected. Based upon this new calculation, the Keeper took the Blair Mountain Battlefield off the Register of Historical Places.

Also in the mix is another list of landowners. Harvard Ayers and Appalachian Voices had an attorney search the landowner records. This search resulted in yet another list of landowners. If that list is accurate, then fewer than half of the landowners have objected and the Blair Mountain Battlefield and it should remain on the Register of Historical Places.

After a small detour (see box), the District Court recently decided that the Keeper had acted improperly in taking the Blair Mountain Battlefield off the Register of Historical Places.

What didn’t happen

The Court did not decide whether or not the Battlefield belongs on the Register or not. The Court decision is a tremendous step forward for those who want the Battlefield protected. Had the decision gone the other way, the case would have been over and they would have lost. While this is a step forward, it is not the final step toward protection.

Even if courts are supposed to decide questions, in cases involving federal agencies and their decisions they often do not. Instead, they look at whether or not agencies have looked at all the relevant

evidence, applied the right standard, and considered all the arguments put forth. If the agency has done all that, the court will conclude that the agency has engaged in reasoned decision making. If the court is satisfied that the agency has engaged in reasoned decision making, it will approve whatever the agency decided.

Here there were instances of assertions taken as fact without any effort to verify them, contradictory facts not resolved, confusion over who was supposed to make certain decisions, etc. With all this, the Court concluded that there could not have been any reasoned decision-making. It sent the matter back to the Keeper to try again. That decision, and any appeals that follow, will decide the fate of the Battlefield.

The Detour Or Why This Case is Taking So Long

This case was filed in 2010; now it is 2016 and it is still not over. Litigation can take a long time but usually not this long. This one is taking this long because of the “standing” detour.

In October 2012 the United States District Court in Washington DC ruled that the plaintiffs had no standing. “Standing” is the legal principle that cases can only be brought by someone who stands to gain or lose something as a result of the litigation. In 2012 the Court decided that the plaintiffs had no interests that would be harmed, that mining was not imminent and that a favorable ruling would not provide remedy. Thus, the Court concluded that the plaintiffs had no standing.

There was an appeal and, in 2014, the Circuit Court of Appeals said, “yes, they do” and sent the case back to the District Court to decide. The recent decision in the accompanying story is the result.

What is this new Battle of Blair Mountain (pp 1,4) all about?

Like almost everything else in southern West Virginia, this is about coal. Blair Mountain has coal; if it did not, this site would probably have already been listed on the Register of Historical Places without controversy. But it does have coal so several companies have expressed an interest in mining that coal and permits to mine have been issued on some of the Mountain.

Whether or not it is on the National Register of Historic Places would carry great weight in determining whether or not it is mined. Being on the Register is not an absolute ban to the mining. Under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, listing in the National Register "require[s] consideration of a property's historic values in the determination on issuance of a surface coal mining permit." The Act prohibits surface coal mining operations "which will adversely affect any publicly owned park or places included in the National Register of Historic Sites unless approved jointly by the regulatory authority and the Federal, State, or local agency with jurisdiction over the park or the historic site."

In the case of Blair Mountain, mining would be allowed only if (a) it didn't adversely affect Blair Mountain (something it's hard to say with a straight face, much less determine it to be true); (b) it is approved by the "regulatory authority" (no problem since West Virginia's "regulatory authority" is the Department of Environmental Protection which never met a mine it didn't like); and (c) it is approved by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places whose duty it is to preserve and protect those places. Were Blair Mountain placed on the National Register, it would only be mined if the mining were approved by the person whose duty is to protect it.

Prothonotary Warbler.

The conventional wisdom is that its name comes from the resemblance of its plumage to the coloring of the robes worn by papal clerks, known as prothonotaries. There is, however,



an alternative theory. At one time Louisiana had a system in which a notary was required to oversee various legal transactions. A prothonotary was required to record these transactions. These minor officials were known for their pointless and repetitive speaking which, to many ears, reminded them of the monotonous tweet-tweet-tweet call of a bird, the bird which they then called the prothonotary warbler. In any event, if you want to see one you could try the Core Arboretum in Morgantown..

New Pipeline Study Confirms: ACP and MVP Are Not Needed

By Lewis Freeman, Chair and Executive Director, Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance

The newly released study on proposed natural gas pipelines in West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina confirms what the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA) and its members have previously questioned as to the need and the safety of the projects.

Risks Associated With Natural Gas Pipeline Expansion in Appalachia, released April 27 by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (ieefa.org), concludes that the proposed Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines are indicative of a rush toward industry overbuilding and pose risks to ratepayers, communities and investors. The study strongly refutes claims made by the sponsoring companies of both proposed pipelines that the projects are needed to assure continued delivery of natural gas from the Marcellus and Utica shale fields to markets in Virginia and North Carolina.

ABRA has sponsored previous studies that pointed to the exaggeration of economic claims to justify new pipelines. We welcome the findings of the IEEFA study that the natural gas industry is overbuilding infrastructure and doing so at excessive costs to utility ratepayers. ABRA is also deeply concerned about growing failure rate of recently-built pipelines, as highlighted by the study. Any pipeline project should be proved to be needed and safe before it is approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). So far, neither criteria have been met by the proposed ACP and MVP projects.

ABRA endorses the study's recommendations that:

- That the applications for the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines be suspended until a regional planning process can be developed for pipeline infrastructure;
- That FERC lower the returns on equity granted to pipeline developers; and
- That an investigation be conducted into the relatively high failure rate of new pipelines.

The 30-page IEEFA study is available at: <http://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Risks-Associated-With-Natural-Gas-Pipeline-Expansion-in-Appalachia-April-2016.pdf>.

The Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance is a coalition of 50 organizations in Virginia and West Virginia (including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy) opposed to the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Economic impact studies of the ACP previously released by ABRA can be found at <http://www.abralliance.org/home/news-updates/economic-studies/>.

Recycling Champions

Two long time friends of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy received "Recycling Champion" awards from the Recycling Coalition of West Virginia, in collaboration with the West Virginia Solid Waste Management Board and the state's 50 solid waste authorities.



Frank Young

Frank Young (Jackson County) and Paul Richter (Upshur County) were honored for efforts that reach beyond their normal responsibilities and provide recycling leadership across the state making a significant contribution to the recycling community.

Jackson County's Frank Young has dedicated over 20 years of service toward the development and continuation of a recycling program in his county. Largely a volunteer, Young has been the primary person to oversee and manage the day-to-day recycling operations to ensure conscientious Jackson County residents have and will continue to have the opportunity to recycle a large portion of their waste products.

In the early 1990s, when the program was just starting and funding was very limited, Young loaned the program trucks from his wrecker service to transport materials from the various recycle drop-off locations to the recycling center. This went on for an extended time before the Jackson County Solid Waste Authority was able to purchase a truck for that task.

Among many other things, Young has assembled countless grant applications to secure funding for the county recycling program. Young also reached out to the adjacent counties of Mason and Roane to assist their recycling efforts by helping process and market materials. Young has made presentations at schools, clubs, and other events about the Jackson County program and the importance of recycling. Young's son David recently jokingly commented that his dad had never really taken a vacation because he was afraid he would miss a piece of cardboard that didn't get recycled in Jackson County.

Frank is a longtime member and board member of the Highlands Conservancy and served as its President from 1998-2004. He currently serves as Vice President for State Affairs.

Upshur County's Dr. G. Paul Richter, is a retired professor of chemistry from West Virginia Wesleyan College. Dr. Richter's career was associated with the sciences which enabled him to pursue his passion for the care of the environment, including exploring, studying, and removing trash from caves.

Richter noted that his interest in the environment began prior to his teaching career in the sciences. He began caving in college and became interested in the problems created when other cavers left trash behind. "When party-goers or careless cavers leave garbage behind, that affects the environment and ecology of the cave. For instance, slaked lime (moist, solid Ca(OH)_2) is formed as a by-product when cavers use calcium carbide lights to generate acetylene, which is ignited to give light [uncommon in recent years because of better, and probably more environmentally friendly, lights]. People were known to dump that in the cave rather than packing it out, which requires some care and planning ahead."

Remarking on the recycling he remembers everyone was doing during World War II, Richter recalls his family composting and recycling since coming to Buckhannon in 1965. Teaching chemistry and the environment at Wesleyan opened opportunities to talk about not just recycling, but the chemistry and physics behind it, the

effects of not recycling, and the problems caused when plastics and other disposables get into streams and pose problems for organisms.

Upon his retirement, he immediately took up causes associated with litter control and recycling as a member of the Upshur County Litter Control Committee and then as a member of the Upshur County Solid Waste Authority (UCSWA). Dr. Richter also was a co-founder of the Buckhannon River Watershed Association, which has a mission of preserving and protecting the watershed. Dr. Richter continues to lead and participate in the activities, promotions and educational conferences of the UCSWA.

The unique awards consist of plaques mounted on repurposed computer motherboards.



Paul Richter

Photo by Amanda Hayes/The Buckhannon Record Delta

The Recycling Coalition of West Virginia is a non-profit environmental organization whose mission is to promote the effective and sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling of materials otherwise destined for disposal. The Recycling Coalition pursues these goals through the promotion of purchasing products made with recycled content material; by coordinating and facilitating activities relative to recycling; and by fostering communication among organizations, government agencies and individuals through the sharing of ideas and resources.

Join Now !!!

Name _____

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Membership categories (circle one)			
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Student	\$15		
Introductory	\$15		
Other	\$15		
Regular	\$25	\$35	\$50
Associate	\$50	\$75	\$100
Sustaining	\$100	\$150	\$200
Patron	\$250	\$500	\$500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$750	\$1000

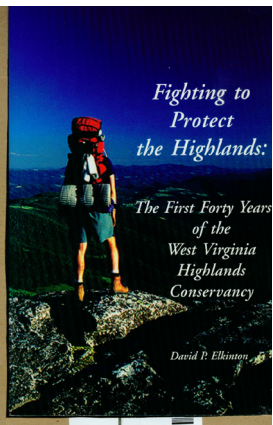
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You may also join on-line at www.wvhighlands.org

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To order your copy for \$15.95, 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 \$15.95 plus \$3.00 postage. We are offering it as a premium to new members. New members receive it free with membership.

Existing members may have one for \$10.00. Anyone who adds \$10 to the membership dues listed on the How to Join membership or on the renewal form will receive the history book. Just note on the membership form that you wish to take advantage of this offer.

Tell a Friend!

If you have a friend you would like to invite to join the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy just fill out this form and send it to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Person you wish to refer: _____

Address: _____

Email _____

Your name: _____

Filling out the form, etc. is, of course, the old school way of doing things. If you prefer, just email the information to Beth Little at blittle@citynet.net.

The way it works: Anyone you refer gets *The Highlands Voice* for six months. At the end of the six months, they get a letter asking if they want to join. If they join, we're happy. If not, then maybe next time.

Our readers write

To the Editor:

In the March issue of The Highlands Voice your lead article dealt with Dominion Energy’s Atlantic Coast natural gas pipeline project. In addition to discussing possible pressure on the Cheat Mountain and Cow Knob salamanders as well as the West Virginia flying squirrel, your article suggested, “there remains a serious question of whether or not it is wise to invest . . . in a natural gas pipeline that supports what many see as a dying technology.”

Why did you not mention that natural gas demand soared over 38% in Virginia and North Carolina over the past five years. Nor was there any discussion of how natural gas is displacing the coal used in many Virginia and North Carolina power plants.

Your “serious question” is symptomatic of today’s “antigrowth” and “sustainable growth” arguments which, if successful, will keep poor people poorer than they otherwise would be. You can’t stop the clock on 99% of natural evolutionary trends, whether it involves plants, animals or the way we humans adjust to the challenges of everyday living.

That includes the challenge of providing energy for daily activities. Here we have a major corporation with a multitude of investors, including all manner of pension funds and individuals, willing to put up \$900 million to provide millions of customers with relatively low cost heating, light, and energy for everyday living and business. Then there is the matter of three years of employment for 1,500 well-paid construction workers.

Having a public review of the pipeline’s route to avoid egregious damage to the environment surely makes sense, especially when Dominion can call upon eminent domain to dislodge recalcitrant landowners. But in the final analysis, I would much rather trust Dominion Resources management to choose the most sensible energy sources and delivery systems for several million customers than the staff of The Highlands Voice.

Healthy societies don’t stifle investment that changes the way we do things nor should it subsidize feel-good alternatives, like ethanol. Let corporations and investors take the risks – and the losses if the investments don’t work out. True, the act of investing can disrupt communities and the environment, as Titusville, PA and neighboring communities found out in 1860 with Colonel Drake’s oil well. But would we really have wanted the EPA in existence at that time?

Sincerely,
James B. Burnham
Pittsburgh, PA
Dryfork, WV

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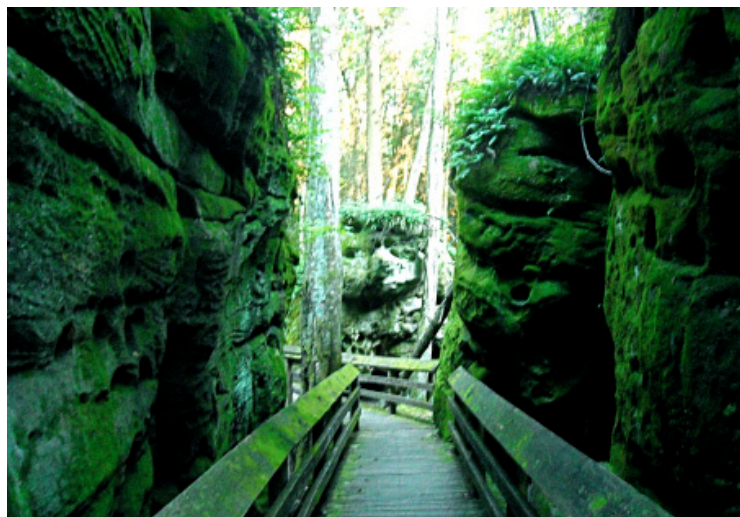
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No bears but way cool rocks

A Trip to Beartown

By John McFerrin

Even if the name Beartown makes it seem as if it will be something like Walt Disney's Country Bear Jamboree, the two are about as different as you can get (thank goodness). Beartown State Park is all rock formations and crevices. It is mostly undeveloped, a place where you see what you look for and whatever your imagination conjures up.



The geology of the area is a thirty foot sandstone cap with shales underneath. Over time the shales weather away. Lacking support, the sandstone breaks off and slides down the mountain. Another piece of the sandstone breaks off and follows the first. The result is a series of huge rock formations separated by crevices. There are also crevices crossing at right angles. With enough imagination, the place resembles a small town with streets and cross streets.

Even if the park is only 107 acres,

there is a lot to see there. You can see geologic forces at work. With the help of the numerous interpretive signs, it is easy to see the geology in action, or as much action as geology gets. It is not as if you stand there, watch a rock formation break off, wait a few minutes and there goes another one. You can, however, see how the upper sandstone layers could be undermined, a big chunk breaks off and moves away. Many, many millennia later another breaks off and follows it.

The boardwalks make it possible to get very close to the rocks. You can look for irregularities in the sandstone, pits that have eroded out of it. You can see the lichens, ferns, and mosses that cling to the rocks. You can marvel at the trees that have somehow managed to get started and grow in some tiny crack in the rocks.

You can see what the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has done to the hemlock trees. You can see evidence of forest succession where young black birches are replacing the hemlocks.

Or, if it is your temperament, you can skip the natural history lesson and just let your imagination run wild. It was misty the day we were there, a common occurrence at that elevation (3400 feet), which gives the place an eerie atmosphere. The trees growing on the top of the rocks ensure that all the light is filtered. There are lots of cracks and holes where it is easy to imagine bears holing up for the winter. It is a good place for imagining.

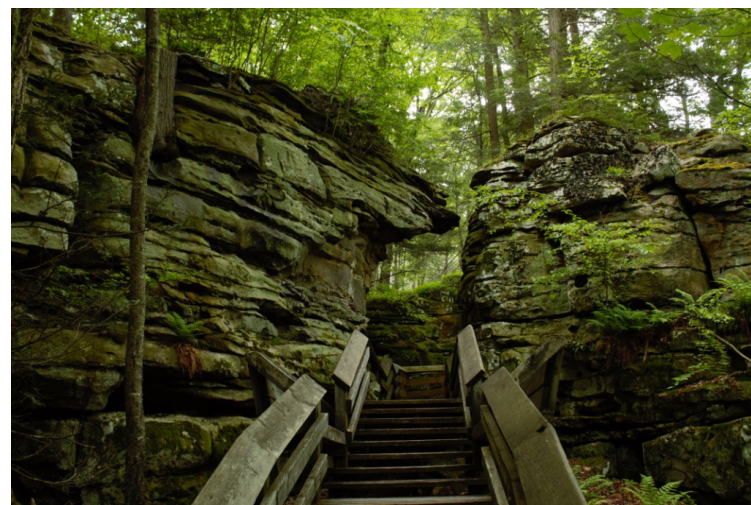
There are bears in the area, including in the park, although not as many since the Department of Natural Resources installed bear proof trash cans. We didn't see any.

The day we were there we had

the place to ourselves. The Department of Natural Resources estimates 30,000 visitors per year so it must not always be as deserted as it was the day we were there but you can reasonably hope for a good deal of solitude.

There is not much development. There is a parking lot, a small picnic area, and a bathroom. There is no park office, visitor's center, etc. It shares a superintendent with nearby Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park. The principal man made feature is a 2300 foot boardwalk that winds through the rocks.

There is a viewing platform for people with disabilities. There are no long



flights of stairs on the boardwalk but there are enough spots where there are a few stairs to make it rough going for someone who uses a wheelchair.

The park is seven miles southwest of Hillsboro. Turn off Rt. 219 onto Beartown Road (219/11). It is open April through October. During the months it is not open you can park at the locked gate and walk up. The Department of Natural Resources suggests this on its website; it is not as if you are trespassing, etc.



Country Bear Jamboree

Bankruptcy Court -The Beat Goes On

By Cindy Rank

When our local community group FOLK (aka Friends of the Little Kanawha) organized back in 1977 we quickly learned how complex and often convoluted the permitting process for coal mines can be.

Reading the Surface Mine and Clean Water Acts one could easily assume the words on the pages were meant to protect the rights and lives of citizens and the land and water we depend on, while at the same time permitting a temporary disturbance of the land by a company intent on extracting other resources valuable for sale on the public market, supposedly striking a fair balance of needs and wants and protecting everyone’s right to healthy and profitable lives.

As we immersed ourselves in the entanglements of legalese contained in those pages and in the even more mind-boggling regulations meant to implement those laws, we came to realize that all is not as it first appears to be, that interpretations of the law were not always as we believed them to be, and that every step in the process requires constant vigilance and seemingly unending attention to detail by following and responding to every twist and turn if any measure of fairness is to be achieved or even possible.

The same appears to be true with regard to bankruptcy law and the hierarchy

of concerns those laws are meant to protect. I.e. while dividing up the corporate pie of profits for the likes of Patriot, Peabody, Alpha and Arch, company CEOs are given large bonuses while workers in their mines must fight for mere scraps of what might be left of health and retirement benefits promised to them decades ago.

Throughout the process fairness is difficult if not impossible to come by despite constant vigilance and intense scrutiny by the union and individual workers.

In matters environmental our hard won court challenges that resulted in requirements that several companies now in bankruptcy clean up pollution emanating from their mines are now at risk. Each step in the current bankruptcy proceedings requires that same constant vigilance and attention to detail. And each step along the way is fraught with bumps and treacherous turns.

That said, we are fortunate to have caring and careful attorneys representing West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and Sierra Club in the bankruptcy proceedings of Alpha Natural Resources.

Included in bankruptcy process is a requirement that a company obtain court approval for the procedures it will use to sell certain assets. Our legal representatives

recently filed documents related to Alpha’s efforts to get approval from the bankruptcy court for the procedures it will use to sell certain assets. As part of that process, Alpha has proposed boilerplate language to be used in the “sale orders” it would use to complete any sales.

Word from Peter Morgan, staff attorney with Sierra Club who has been helping protect our court settlements in these bankruptcy efforts, indicates there are both some good and some potentially bad outcomes in this phase of the process.

“First, the good news: We pushed Alpha to include a specific statement acknowledging our water treatment settlements in West Virginia and making clear that any buyer will be bound by those settlements, and Alpha agreed.

“Unfortunately, Alpha also included language that could be read to limit future enforcement under the CWA and SMCRA to only government regulators. Our limited objection [entitled a Limited Objection and Reservation of Rights] seeks to clarify that citizen groups like our own will also be able to pursue these enforcement actions.

“The next big developments in the bankruptcy should come in early to mid-May. May 9th is the deadline for companies to submit bids to buy all or part of Alpha’s assets. We’ll be keeping a close eye on that, and will keep you all posted.”

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 \$18 by mail; **long sleeve** is \$22. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax. Send sizes wanted and check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy ATTN: Online Store, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

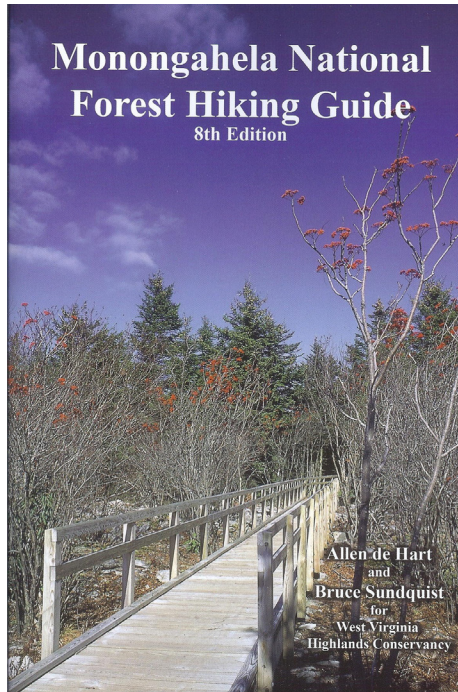


HATS FOR SALE

We have West Virginia Highlands Conservancy baseball style caps 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 (heart) Mountains on the back. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure.

The **I ♥ 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 \$20 by mail. West Virginia residents add 6% tax. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Atten: Online Store, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306



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 \$15.95 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

8TH Edition Now Available on CD

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

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

- ☐ All pages and maps in the new Interactive CD version of the Mon hiking guide can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
- ☐ All new, full color topographic maps have been created and are included on this CD. They include all points referenced in the text.
- ☐ Special Features not found in the printed version of the Hiking Guide: Interactive pdf format allows you to click on a map reference in the text, and that map centered on that reference comes up.
- ☐ Trail mileages between waypoints have been added to the maps.
- ☐ ALL NEW Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of many of the popular hiking areas, including Cranberry, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and many more

Price: \$20.00 from the same address.

All items advertised in The Highlands Voice are also available at our on-line store: www.wvhighlands.org

BUMPER STICKERS

To get free **I ♥ Mountains** bumper sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in with the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to provide bumper stickers to their customers/members may have them free. (Of course if they can afford a donation that will be gratefully accepted.)

Also available are the new green-on-white oval **Friends of the Mountains** stickers. Let Julian know which (or both) you want.



West Virginia Sued to Require Mine Cleanup

By John McFerrin

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and Sierra Club have sued the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. They seek to require the Department to stop pollution from two groups of deserted mines. Five of the mines are in Preston County; two are in Nicholas County.

How the Clean Water Act Works

The federal and West Virginia Clean Water Acts prohibit discharges pollutants into the waters of the United States without a permit. Companies are given permits, called National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits which allow them to discharge to streams small amounts of pollution. The amounts of the pollution that the permits allow are supposed to be small enough that the stream remains fishable, swimmable, drinkable, etc.

Once the permit is issued, the holder of the permit is required to test the water leaving its property to make sure the pollution in that water does not exceed the amounts allowed by the permit.

What is going on here

There are two groups of mines here. In both sets, the water that leaves the mine site is in violation of the limits set in the permits. In one group, the water is routinely too acid to be allowed into state waters. In the other group, the water is routinely too acid to be allowed in the state waters. It also regularly contains excessive iron, aluminum, nitrogen, and ammonia.

Although right now these are only allegations of permit violations that have not been proven, there is little doubt that they are true. The NPDES system operates on self reporting. The holders of the permit do their own testing and report the results. While this does present an opportunity to fudge the results, when, as here, the reports show violations of the permit then it is difficult for the permit holder to say the results are not accurate.

Why is West Virginia holding the bag?

The State of West Virginia is the responsible party because it holds the permits. It holds the permits because the companies which did the mining have forfeited the performance bonds that they posted to assure reclamation. This leaves responsibility in the hands of the West

Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

The 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) included provisions that required companies to post a bond sufficient to complete reclamation if the company couldn't or wouldn't meet reclamation obligations.

West Virginia met this requirement through an 'alternative bonding system.' Under this system, companies would post a flat per acre fee which was designed to be relatively low. The bonds were designed to be inadequate to do the reclamation. At least in theory, these inadequate bonds would be sufficient because West Virginia had its Special Reclamation Fund. All coal companies would pay into this fund based upon the tons of coal they produced. If a



company went under or disappeared, the Department of Environmental Protection could forfeit the inadequate bond and then take whatever it needed from the Special Reclamation Fund to pay the rest of the cost of reclamation.

That is what happened here. The companies went under or disappeared. Now the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has forfeited the bond, used that up, and is now using the Special Reclamation Fund to prevent the discharge of pollution from the site. From the tests on the water leaving the site, it is apparent that it is not doing the job.

What do the plaintiffs want?

The Plaintiffs have asked that the Courts order the Department of Environmental Protection to comply with the terms of the permits. This would involve treating the water so that it is clean when it leaves the mine property.

Why this matters

Locally it matters because streams are being impaired. Pollution from these closed mines makes local waters less fishable, swimmable, drinkable, etc.

As a matter of public policy, it matters because it points up the inadequacy of the Special Reclamation Fund. Although all active mines pay into it, the rate has never been adequate to ensure that there is enough in the pay for all of the reclamation that would be necessary if mines were forsaken before the reclamation was complete. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, along with others, has made a formal request to the federal Office of Surface Mining to step in and require that West Virginia correct the problem. See the March, 2016, issue of *The Highlands Voice*.

West Virginia has been papering over the inadequacy of the Fund by (as here) doing less than adequate reclamation. The bankruptcies in the coal industry also have the potential to strain, if not swamp, the Fund. Unless West Virginia requires larger contributions to the Fund, it is unlikely that there will be enough money available to do complete reclamation on the mines that are forsaken, either in bankruptcy or for other reasons.

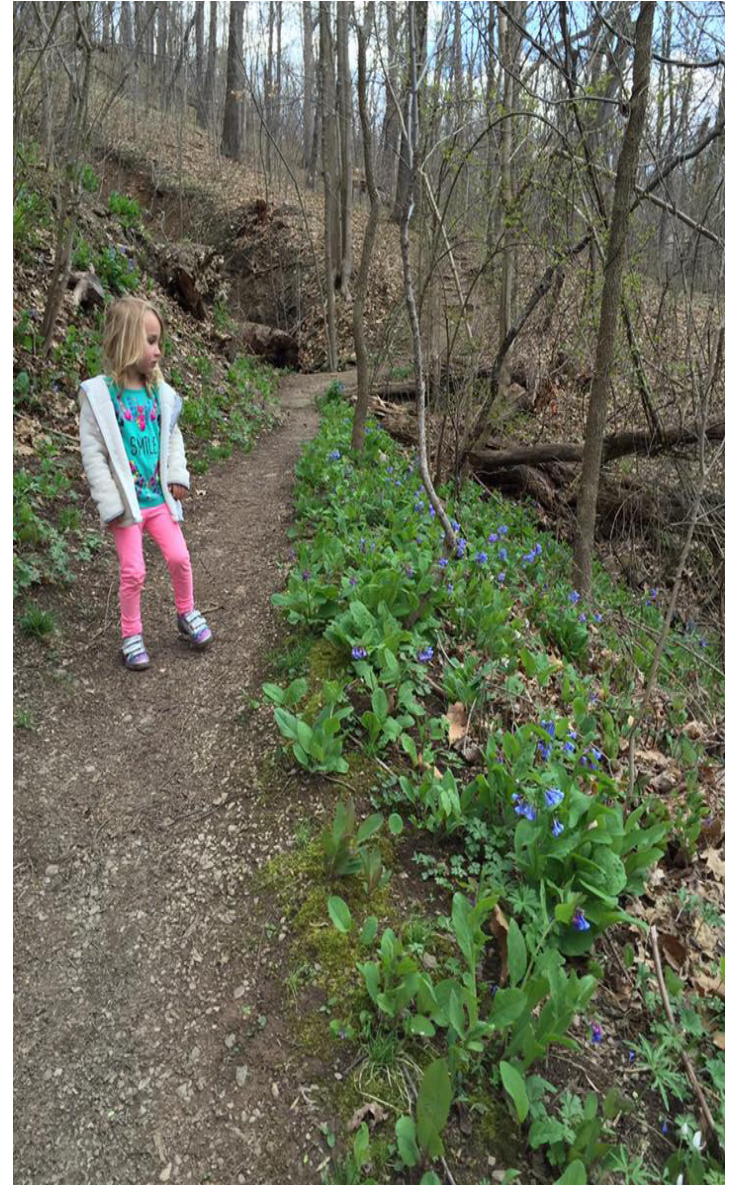
Cindy Rank, mining chairwoman for the Highlands Conservancy, puts it this way, "By burying their heads in the sand these past two decades and ignoring how the looming crisis of bankrupt coal companies would further deplete the state's inadequate Special Reclamation Fund, West Virginia lawmakers have virtually guaranteed that citizens and taxpayers will be the ones responsible for cleaning up these coal company messes."

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. With electronic delivery, you will receive a link to a pdf of the Voice several days before the paper copy would have arrived. The electronic Voice is in color rather than in black and white as the paper version is.

A Day at the Arboretum

Laurel (right) and Cora Fallon (below) check out wildflowers at the Core Arboretum in Morgantown. Now is prime time for wildflowers. The strategy of most wildflowers is early to bed, early to rise and you can grab some sunlight before the big trees start blocking it all out. The pictures were taken by their mom and *Cerulean Blues* author Katie Fallon.



► The baby shirts are certified organic cotton and are offered in one infant and several toddler sizes and an infant onesie. Slogan is “I ♥ Mountains Save One for Me!” Onesie [18 mo.]---\$25, Infant tee [18 mo.]---\$20, Toddler tee, 2T,3T,4T, 5/6---\$20

► Soft pima cotton adult polo shirts are a handsome earthtone light brown and feature the spruce tree logo. Sizes S-XL [Shirts run large for stated size.] \$ 25.00, 2XL \$26.50

To order by mail [WV residents add 6 % sales tax] make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Online Store, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306

Board Meeting Highlights

By John McFerrin

The spring Board meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was the usual blend of the mundane business of the organization (with one bombshell thrown in), some general discussion, and reports on issues we are pursuing.

The general discussion was of solar energy. There were no motions, etc. and nothing specific before us to decide. It was the sense of the discussion that we would enthusiastically support site based solar (rooftops and the like) but that grid scale solar energy installations could potentially have adverse consequences. If ever confronted with a specific proposal for a grid scale solar installation we would have to consider all aspects of it before taking a position.

We decided to donate \$500 to Morgantown Area Paddlers to support kayak and canoe launch site near Morgantown. The Paddlers (whose membership includes Highlands Conservancy members) have not yet completed the launch site. When they do we will be acknowledged on a sign at the site.

Frank Young presented the treasurer's report. There was nothing out of the ordinary about the expenses. The revenue was out of the ordinary because we received a bequest that we had not budgeted for.

Then came the bombshell: President Ellis announced that long time treasurer Bob Marshall has tendered his resignation although it has not been accepted. He has agreed to continue to serve until we find a replacement. We recognized his service and how difficult it will be to replace him. We recognized that he has, however, been treasurer for fourteen years and deserves a break.

We talked about the smaller size of *The Highlands Voice*. At our printer's suggestion, we printed the April issue on slightly smaller paper. Doing it this way saves over \$200 each month but it makes the print a tiny bit smaller. The editor offered the possibility that we could start making the type a little larger but it was the sense of the Board that we should continue with the new smaller paper with slightly smaller print.

Hugh Rogers reported that we continue to make progress on the 9th edition of the Hiking Guide. There are still

questions about maps, photos, etc. but it is coming along.

Our Administrative Assistant Beth Little reported that membership is up slightly since the last report.

With the business (aka the boring, or semi-boring) part over with, we moved on to reports about issues we were working on. Two reports just referred to *The Highlands Voice*. Frank Young reported that, in a nutshell, nothing that we wanted to happen at the legislature actually did happen. For elaboration, he referred to the April issue of *The Highlands Voice*. Hugh Rogers reported that he had said all there was to say about highways in the March issue of *The Highlands Voice*.

There was a presentation by Brandon Richardson of Headwaters Defense. Headwaters Defense is a recently organized group in Fayette County that is concerned about the impact of the disposal of gas well drilling waste water into old gas wells and the effect that has upon water quality. He has been working to get people involved with some success. They have worked at supporting ordinances which ban the disposal of this waste water. The Fayette County Commission passed such an ordinance although it is the subject of a court challenge.

Cindy Rank talked briefly about our legal efforts to hold accountable coal companies and land owners discharging pollution from current and past mine sites. She mentioned recent developments in the efforts to list the site of the Battle of Blair Mountain on the National Registry of Historical Places (see story on p. 1), the bankruptcy of Alpha Natural Resources (story on p. 10), and actions to encourage West Virginia to be do its duty in performing reclamation on old mines (story on p. 12).

We noted that the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition has produced a booklet on water testing in advance of the construction, if any, of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. It also has a booklet on the permitting that is necessary.

Larry Thomas reported on a meeting of the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance. Among the things that he learned were the findings of a report evaluating the consequences of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission policies in approving pipelines. FERC does not assess the need for pipelines properly,

resulting in the approval of more pipelines than are truly needed. The group also took a position of opposing all proposed new pipelines. By doing this, the Alliance avoids the possibility of friction between different groups who oppose different pipelines as well as when a new route is proposed.

Beth Little reported on a meeting she had attended with the Forest Service about the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. She reported that the Forest Service realizes that the proposed pipelines are controversial and politically charged. The Forest Service's plan to deal with this is a scrupulous adherence to the law in all respects.

Jackie Burns reported on planning for the fiftieth anniversary of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in 2017. The celebration will be September 15 through 17, 2017, at Canaan Valley. Since that is still pretty far away, all the plans are not yet in place but we hope for field trips, speakers, exhibits, music, celebration, and unending fun.

The door prize had these three themes:

1. April is the time to eat ramps in West Virginia (bottle of ramp dressing)
2. Coal is not dead (bag of coal candy)
3. You too can grow vegetables and attract hummingbirds at the same time (seeds for scarlet runner beans) (Their blossoms attract hummingbirds)

Beth Little won.

We were glad to see an old friend in Jean Rodman, member since forever and Board Member Emerita and meet new friends Brandon Richardson, George Hack, and Eric Autenreith who are not on the Board but came just because they were interested

We had the meeting in the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Building in Fayetteville. It has been the host of various civic gatherings and recreational activities since it opened in 1952. It has been nominated for listing on the National Registry of Historic Places.

The Passing of a Friend

Long time West Virginia Highlands Conservancy member, leader, supporter, and friend Bruce Sundquist died quietly at his home near Pittsburgh on April 15, 2016, at the age of 79. He is survived by family members, Joyce Lanford, sister, Glori (Jerry) Robison, sister, and several nieces and nephews. He is also survived by a dear friend, Monika Dalrymple.

Bruce is probably best known to Highlands Conservancy members as the co-editor (with Alan DeHart) of The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide. His co-editor referred to him as “a dear personal friend and a remarkable co-editor for our guidebook.” He not only served as its co-editor but up until the last few years he had a major role in distributing it. He maintained our inventory of hiking guide books at his home near Pittsburgh. He sent books to our wholesale distributors and handled it all except for retail sales.

Bruce lived frugally, abhorred waste, and insisted on strict accounting for every single book in a typical print run of 4,000 Hiking Guides.

It is no exaggeration to say that Bruce and his generous sharing of revenues from the various editions of the Hiking Guide have kept the Conservancy financially stable for decades, not to mention that thousands of people have come to love the Monongahela Forest as a result of his careful work. In appreciation of his work he was made a lifetime member of the Conservancy. Beyond his work with the Hiking Guide, he was active in getting the Dolly Sods designated as a federal wilderness area in 1975.

His work in West Virginia and with the Conservancy overlapped and complemented his work in Pennsylvania. He was active in the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club. It recently honored him with this remembrance:

Immediately after obtaining his Ph.D from Illinois Inst. of Technology in 1960 Bruce Sundquist accepted a job at U.S. Steel's research laboratory in Monroeville, PA. The young man from Minnesota soon enjoyed hiking in the Appalachian mountains and when he joined the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy he began a long career of voluntary conservationism.

When the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club was formed in 1970 Bruce was one of its first members, becoming a regular outings leader and eventually chair of the Outings Committee. In the late 70s he joined Sam Hays and Dick Pratt as they explored areas on Allegheny National Forest for potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, leading to designation of the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area in 1984.

To help the public enjoy and protect the natural areas around Pittsburgh, Bruce began the production of guides, first with the American Youth Hostels of Pittsburgh, and then with the Allegheny Group and the Keystone Trails Association. He organized volunteers to scout and map the trail systems in various areas and over a period of thirty years he authored or co-authored a series of guides. He started in 1974 with “Allegheny National Forest Hiking Guide”, followed by “Hiker's Guide to Laurel Highlands Trail”, “Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide”, “Ski-Touring in Western Pennsylvania”, “Hiking Guide to Western Pennsylvania”, “Canoeing Guide to Western Pennsylvania”, and “Laurel Highlands Hiking Guide (sixth edition Part 2, 2004).

Initially Bruce printed the guides using a mimeographing machine in his basement. And that same machine he used to print the early editions of the Allegheny Group's newsletter. His home was a combination office and storehouse.

Bruce was a year-round outdoorsman. For many years he led the annual January cross-country skiing trip to West Virginia, and he introduced to Sierra Club members the joy of tube floating on the Youghiogheny.

When he retired from Westinghouse's Blairsville lab in 1991 Bruce was able to devote more of his scientific training to the topic that had attracted his interest in the mid-eighties – the Earth's carrying capacity. The scope of this interest is reflected in the list of his writings at the Website he created. Not only did he cover the topics of the degradation of soils and crop lands, forests, gaming lands and fisheries, but he did research on globalization and Third World issues. Population growth was a major concern, and as recently as 2008 he wrote a paper titled “Could Family Planning Cure Terrorism”.

It is not often that a person like Bruce Sundquist comes along, but when they do, the world is better for it.



West Virginia Department of Natural Resources is Studying Bobcats

The survival and reproduction of West Virginia bobcats were last studied in the 1970's. Now the Department of Natural Resources wants to find out how they are doing. From what they have found out so far, it appears that they are fairly abundant and widely distributed throughout West Virginia.

The researchers have been dissecting the carcasses of bobcats donated by hunters and trappers. From this work, they can learn about how many kittens they have as well as gain information about their health, nutrition, and if they have parasites.

And the blue tent-like thing (picture on p. 2)? It is a hair-snare. It is baited with catnip. When a bobcat goes sniffing about, it leaves some of its hair on the brushes fixed to the snare. The researchers do DNA analysis, determine that it is bobcat hair, and use that information to determine how many individual bobcat there are. The researchers put out hair traps at 600 different sites in 30 counties. Roughly one-third of the brushes came back with hair on them although it was not always bobcat hair.

The DNR's long term goal is to find out if the state's bobcat population could tolerate an increase in bag limits for hunting and trapping. The bag limit currently is three cats a year.

The Birthplace of Rivers: time to create it!

Join West Virginians from all backgrounds in calling on President Obama to create the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. The monument will preserve recreation access to a renowned landscape in the southern Monongahela National Forest, and bring national recognition to the headwaters supplying drinking water to millions of Americans.

If our Congressional members won't act, President Obama can! Ask him to use the Antiquities Act to designate the East's first landscape-scale national monument.

To learn more about Birthplace of Rivers or to send a message to the President, go to <http://www.birthplaceofrivers.org/> or to <http://www.wvrivers.org/ProtectingHeadwaters/BirthplaceOfRivers>

A national monument is a unique designation that gives stronger protection to federal public lands with unique natural, scenic and historic features. National monuments can be designated either by Congress or by the President of the United States. The U.S. Forest Service manages nine national monuments, which are vast, wild landscapes, similar in many ways to the Monongahela National Forest. Common activities in national monuments include hunting, fishing, gathering of wild plants, mountain biking, hiking, camping — the very activities enjoyed on the Monongahela National Forest.

Public lands are managed temporarily, meaning the future of special places in the Monongahela National Forest is uncertain. Current proposals in Congress call for drastic increases in industrial development on National Forest lands across the country. Recently proposed legislation would severely limit public input in National Forest management decisions, and some members of Congress have even proposed selling National Forest lands. The Birthplace of Rivers National Monument would more permanently protect this area from threats that could change the way we use the land or stymie our ability to influence future management.

The best part about a national monument is that the additional protections the designation gives to the area are entirely compatible with existing recreational uses, active forest management and outdoor sporting traditions. In fact, hunters and anglers have been strong supporters of national monuments in places like New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho and California. Put simply, a national monument is not intended to change the area or the way we use it, but rather to make sure it always stays just as special as it is today.

The proposed Birthplace of Rivers National Monument will:

- Be managed by the U.S. Forest Service
- Ensure the permanent viability of quality outdoor recreation, pristine headwaters and rich backcountry
- Preserve access for hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering of wild edible plants
- Encourage active management, including restoration of streams and forests
- Guarantee local communities and stakeholders have a say in future management
- Maintain a role for the timber industry in the area's management
- Protect all currently-allowed access for sportsmen and the area's many recreation activities



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.

Send Us a Post Card, Drop Us a Line, Stating Point Of View

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