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The Highlands Voice

Since 1967, The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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Forest Service Approves (almost) Atlantic Coast Pipeline

United States Forest Service has made a draft decision to allow the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to cross the Monongahela National Forest and the George Washington National Forest. That it is only a draft decision means that this is what the Forest Service has pretty much made up its mind to do. It will receive objections to the decision until September 5, 2017, and will address any objections. Then it will issue a final decision, a decision that will almost certainly be almost identical to the draft.

The Forest Service has also announced that it will make amendments to the Forest Plans for the two Forests. Every ten to fifteen years, each National Forest must make Forest Plans that serve as guides for the management of the Forest. The Plans for the Monongahela National Forest and the George Washington National Forest do not allow a big pipeline through the Forests so the Forest Service will amend the Plans so that they are compatible with a pipeline crossing the Forests. It will modify Plan standards for Utility Corridors, Soil and Riparian, Threatened and Endangered Species, Old Growth Management Area, Eligible Recreational River Access, Appalachian National Scenic Trail Area, and Scenic Integrity Objectives.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission was the lead agency in preparing the Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project. Because of this, the Forest Service

did not do its own analysis of the effects of the Pipeline, whether alternatives (including not building the pipeline at all) would be more environmentally sound, etc.

The Forest Service ends up reaching largely the same conclusion as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission did. It concluded that there would be some environmental damage including the potential for: project-induced landslides on steep slopes; long term impacts related to slope instability adjacent to waterbodies (impacting water quality, stream channel geometry, and downstream aquatic biota); creation of additional forest edge habitat through fragmentation; and significant impacts associated with karst, cave, subterranean habitat, and the species associated with subterranean habitat.

It said that these damages would mostly occur during construction and if Dominion was careful it could avoid the worst of it. It also said that there would be damage to the Forests but concluded that not building the pipeline would result in economic and social costs. If not building the pipeline resulted in companies in North Carolina burning more coal or fuel oil to make electricity then the result might be more environmental damage.

The decision was not made by our local Forest Service staff but by Regional Foresters in Atlanta and Milwaukee.

What's inside:

Thoughts from President Cynthia	2	Celebration program	8	Another anniversary	14
Board highlights	3	Celebration registration	9	Roster of officers	15
FERC brings out rubber stamp	4	Poetry	10	Video worth watching	15
Hearing on ACP and water	5	Get a Hiking Guide	11	Stuff	16
Tree huggers take a hike	6	Take a hike, win a prize	12		
Annual meeting coming up	6	GREAT!!! Picture	12		
How to join	7	Get some baby trees	13		
Get a history book	7	Pipeline fight goes on	13		

Ramblin' the Ridges

By Cynthia D. Ellis

Glancing back, just once more

This will be one last look back at fifty years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy; this time decade by decade. What were we doing 10 years ago, 20 years ago, and earlier? In addition to our wonderful 40-year history book by Dave Elkinton ---mine's getting pretty tattered--- another great resource for memories is our online archive copies of *The Highlands Voice*. <https://wvhighlands.org/highlands-voice-mag/>

Thanks to all involved in the archiving, most editions of The Voice are easy to access. Perhaps you'll be inspired to look back too. It is fascinating to read and find recurring subjects. Some stand out for singularity; others make us shake our heads and think, "Gee, we are STILL dealing with that!"

We would begin with **1977**, our ten-year mark, but that year happens to have escaped archiving. So, we can look at '76. Here's some snippets of headlines and topics:

"Beleaguered Kumbrabow Faces Another Assault" --- state forests do not own mineral rights

Our canoeing trip on the Cheat River had 19 participants from OH, MD, PA, WV, but---"Every lunch eaten at that rocky bend may be the last meal time there. Whether that bend and many others become submerged under the proposed Rowlesburg Lake..."

We published our survey of gubernatorial candidates. Ken Hechler said, "I favor abolition of strip mining."

Hubert Humphrey sponsored a federal bill to reverse gains of our group in the Mon forest which preventing certain kinds of clearcutting. Senator Jennings Randolph aided us in opposing the bill.

We were selling trail guides. Dues were \$5. A WVHC patch cost \$1.10 and Jean Rodman was a regional Vice President. We promoted voter registration.

The next decade begins with **1987**. We saw stories [photographs now!] about:

Acid rain, rock climbing and [separately] Peregrine Falcons in the New River Gorge, establishment of the Mary Ingles Hiking Trail, the proposal for a Wildlife Refuge in Canaan Valley, safeguarding our drinking water, the "Bottle Bill", and seeking

volunteers for the *first* WV Breeding Bird Atlas.

We also read a grieving letter about the Stonewall Jackson Dam and articles titled "A Dam on the Greenbrier?" and "There is No Such Thing as Clean Coal".

Jim Van Gundy led a caving trip in the Laneville area "suitable for novices but not children," and Judy Rodd led "Nature Skool" at our Reviews.

The "Gendarme" rock formation tumbled down from Seneca Rocks at 3:27 p.m., Thursday Oct. 22. Three Forest Service employees and two school children in the Seneca Rocks Elementary School yard witnessed the crash.

In **1997**, the Highlands Conservancy was interested in:

Corridor H, solar energy, mountain biking, "TMDL", and Blackwater Canyon. We reprinted an article by Ken Ward Jr., not for the first or last time. Dues were \$15, and Margaret Janes and Pamela Moe-Merritt talking about chicken s**t and the Potomac River.

We sponsored a meeting in Beckley with staff of the National Park Service and citizens. In October, at our 30th anniversary, Rick Webb spoke on "The Water Quality and Fishery Status of Otter Creek and Dolly Sods Wilderness Areas".

We enjoyed reading a poem by Mary Wildfire and the line "...with dogwoods and fringetrees wearing birdhouses like earrings ...".

We had critics. One letter to the editor said, "I further wish to note that some of the language in "The Voice" is inflammatory, hyperbolic and unwise."

And we featured a prescient book review "THE BETRAYAL OF SCIENCE AND REASON: How Environmental Anti-Science Threatens Our Future".

Then, in **2007**, our members were reading about:

Selenium, MTR, water rules, TrAil [a mega power line], global warming, wind turbine facilities, net metering, WV SORO, wilderness, Kates Mountain, a sustainability fair, and Dave Cooper's "Mountaintop Removal Road Shows".

Julian Martin hosted our Speakers Bureau.

We published a photo of Larry

Gibson's arrest in a protest over the coal slurry impoundment near Marsh Fork Elementary.

Our history book debuted, to acclaim; the bottle bill was discussed again, and Bob Handley wrote "Help Save Caves."

Backpacking trips were chronicled by Mike Juskelis and Susan Bly.

This was the 7th year of our partnership with allies in the spruce restoration effort. Beth Little wrote of the efforts against the Greenbrier Cogen "clean coal" power plant, and we pressed for treatment of water from abandoned mines.

This is a very piecemeal list. But I hope you've had fun with it, even in its brevity. And I have an extra measure of gratitude for the online archives. I put my old "Voice" copies in my compost bin. Editor John does not mind, in fact he rather likes that his words and all of ours go toward making "new dirt". Next month we will look ahead for the Highlands Conservancy... and try to see what could be new for us.



All 4 foot 11 3/4 inches of Larry Gibson gets toted off to the hoosegow.

Photo by Dave Cooper.

This photo originally appeared in the April, 2007, issue of *The Highlands Voice*.

Board Highlights

We had the usual business stuff: treasurer's report (keeping our head above water, paying our bills), membership report (a few more members than at the last report), Voice Editor's report (we need more stories) and webmaster's report (we are almost entirely recovered from the hack of our site).

One of the best parts was the request from the West Virginia Cave Conservancy for an organizational seat on the Board seat. Our bylaws allow for individual and organizational members. Organizational members may ask the Board for a Board seat. The West Virginia asked; the Board said YES!!! and we recognized Randy Rumer as the group's representative.

We decided to hold the annual membership meeting and elections at the Board Sunday morning of the 50th anniversary celebration at Canaan Valley (September 17th). We will decide later whether or not to convene a fall board meeting at some later time in October and/or by conference call. President Cindy appointed Bill McNeel, Cindy Rank, and Marilyn Shoenfeld as a nominating committee.

Cindy Ellis reported on her visit to Marietta College for the presentation of Mary Moore and Joe Rieffenberger's bequests to Marietta, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy. She related several stories family and friends told at that gathering and that led to Board members at the Yew meeting to share more memories of the Rieffenbergers for some newer board members who didn't know Joe or Mary – good laughs all around. Cindy E will make a presentation at the 50th anniversary celebration, recognizing some of the major donors that have graced the Conservancy and elaborate on this most recent and overwhelming gift of the Rieffenberger bequest.

Since the spring board meeting the Executive Committee approved spending \$1,000 to support the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition and their efforts as part of the statewide Public Lands Coalition. Frank also explained more about the activities of the coalition and its financial needs while waiting for grants expected

from the Pew Foundation and Patagonia. WV Sierra Club and WV Rivers Coalition are both helping with finances in the interim and we decided to spend an additional \$3,000 to participate via our membership in the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition in support of the Public Lands Coalition.

Hugh reported on progress on Hiking Guide. We may be ready to print the 9th edition late this year; Kent Mason has offered some of his great color photos which could be included in the middle of the new edition. If we run out of books before we get the 9th edition finished we will do a limited reprint of the 8th edition.



The Board at Yew Mountain Center
Photo by Erica Marks

The 50th Anniversary Celebration is September 15-17 at Canaan Valley State Park and Conference Center. Cindy Rank reported that Dave Saville has been working as the event planner and coordinating with the Marilyn, Jackie, Adam, Bill and Cindy in putting flesh on the bones of the outlines we've previously talked about at Board meetings. She reminded the board that we all need to reach out to the people and organizations that we agreed to contact, to search our archives for any pictures to bring to the weekend, to offer ideas and assistance in arranging and conducting roundtable discussions or outings during the weekend. All Board members are asked to write a brief bio to send to John along with a picture for the September Voice which may double as the program for the 50th weekend. Randy Kesling offered to scan pictures if needed; Hugh is waiting

for contact information from Dave for Marc Harshman for the poet's roundtable. Cindy Ellis will do a presentation about the many generous donors and in particular elaborate on Mary Moore and Joe Rieffenberger's lifelong commitment to the Conservancy including their recent incredible bequest. She will also share birding responsibilities with LeJay and Jackie at the weekend. Jim VanGundy agreed to do anything the planning committee wanted him to do – from registration duties to leading roundtable discussion on topics he's knowledgeable about. Jim, Cindy R, Randy K and others agreed to reach out to local papers with an invitation to the 50th.... Rick suggested a press release – with photos if possible. Cindy said she'd contact Vivian about putting it out and urged everyone to refer people to the website for information about registration and additional program details as they develop.

In addition to our business and organizational matters we had issue reports. We had reports on what we are doing on gas (mostly pipelines), coal, renewable energy, and the legislature.

During lunch Yew Center Director Erica told us about the Center, and how an informal community groups (now a 501c3 organization) sought and found a conservation minded company – one that shared the community's vision of conservation, education, and place-based prosperity -- which bought the 500 acre property and is leasing it to the community for a small fee. We had nothing but praise and appreciation for the food, friendly atmosphere and accommodations both for the meeting and for overnight lodging a few of us took advantage of. Our thanks to Director Erica Marks, Innkeeper Marilyn McClendon, Hospitality Coordinator Robin Tywoniw, and Caretaker Clay Condon, --- and little LuElla for her charming baby smiles and happy cooing. Learn about the Center at: <http://www.yewmountain.org/>

The door prize was a porcelain coaster from Lewisburg. Bill McNeel won.

FERC says (almost) that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is a go

FERC Issues Final Environmental Impact Statement for Atlantic Coast Pipeline

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has prepared the final Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the related Supply Header Project. While this is not the final approval of the project, it is a big step forward toward final approval.

The Environmental Impact Statement was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The National Environmental Policy Act requires that any federal agency consider the environmental consequences before taking any major action.

In its final Environmental Impact Statement, FERC concluded that, while the pipeline would inflict environmental damage, its developers could avoid the worst of that damage if it took the proper precautions. In its press release announcing the final Environmental Impact Statement it said:

The FERC staff concludes that construction and operation of ACP and SHP would result in some adverse effects, such as impacts on steep slopes and adjacent waterbodies and associated aquatic resources; forested vegetation; Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, Roanoke logperch, Madison cave isopod, clubshell mussel, small whorled pogonia, and running buffalo clover; and karst, cave, subterranean habitat and the species associated with these habitats. Implementation of Atlantic and DETI's respective impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, as well as their adherence to staff's recommendations in the EIS would further avoid, minimize, and mitigate these impacts. Most, but not all of these impacts, would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. These determinations are based on a review of the information provided by Atlantic and DETI in their applications to the FERC and supplemental filings in response to staff's environmental information requests; field investigations; scoping; literature research; alternatives analyses; and consultations with federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders.

While the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may think that the pipeline would have minor environmental impacts which can, with proper care, be avoided, the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance would beg to differ. In a response to the FERC decision, the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance said:

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relies solely on the project developer's claims of need for the 600-mile, \$5.2 billion pipeline, which would yield substantial profit for Dominion Energy and the other private companies behind the project, while the public would be saddled with the financial, environmental and health risks.

"FERC's action is an affront to American democracy, ignoring the thousands of citizens who participated in the public comment process and handing over the private property rights of hundreds of families to corporate interests. As landowners and business leaders, as ratepayers and conservationists, as parents and grandparents, we insist that the state agencies serve the public trust and rigorously examine the impacts of this pipeline in full view of the public," says Lew Freeman, a Highland County resident and executive director of the

Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance. The coalition comprises 52 local community groups and other organizations in Virginia and West Virginia.

FERC has authority to grant the power of eminent domain for interstate projects, but by law must first determine that the projects serve the public interest. The agency's Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline fails to do so, says the alliance, whose member groups represent thousands of citizens, including hundreds of families along the pipeline route who are facing the taking of their land against their will.

The alliance points to numerous studies in recent years showing that the gas and utility sector is overbuilding natural gas infrastructure and that electricity demand is projected to grow much less than the pipeline developer's inflated projections. These analyses are ignored in the impact statement.

The coalition also condemns the agency for glossing over the profound and permanent harm to water resources and drinking water supplies, forest ecosystems, wildlife and endangered species habitat, historic sites, agricultural resources, public lands including the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway, and local economies. The pipeline would also significantly worsen climate change impacts in the region due to the greenhouse gas emissions of drilling, producing, transporting and burning natural gas.

A significant red flag for the coalition is FERC's reliance on Dominion's pledges to mitigate harm to water resources rather than requiring the company to provide upfront detailed plans to be shared with the public prior to granting federal certification and the power of eminent domain. The coalition has repeatedly expressed concerns that the standard control measures are insufficient to protect water resources given the scale of the pipeline proposal and the steep and highly erodible mountainsides that must be excavated during construction.

The Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance also pointed to these key points from the Final Environmental Impact Statement:

- Need: FERC fails to make an independent assessment of the need for the ACP, instead relying on the developer's claims that the project should be built. In doing so, it short circuits any meaningful consideration of the alternatives that could avoid or minimize the harm caused by this project.
- Public lands. The ACP would cross 21 miles of national forest, destroying 430 acres and threatening the survival of seven federally listed species and native brook trout. The project would be a disaster for the mountain and forest headwaters of the Potomac and James rivers.
- Public process. The FEIS fails to correct or address the numerous, substantial defects in the draft EIS that government

FERC DOES FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (Continued from previous page)

agencies and citizens alike pointed out during the public comment period. In addition, the final document fails to incorporate significant new information that has come to light since the end of the public comment period on April 6, including more than 400 pages submitted in May.

- **Climate:** The FEIS continues to ignore the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of the project. It entirely fails to consider emissions from fracking that this massive pipeline would trigger and seriously discounts the emissions from burning the natural gas.

- **Environmental justice:** The FEIS notes that the Buckingham Compressor Station #2 could have serious health and safety impacts on three census tracts within one mile with predominantly low-income, minority populations, yet claims the impacts would be temporary or mitigated without adequately detailing the mitigation plans or considering any impact to safety or property values in those communities.

- **Forests:** Operation of the ACP (and the companion "Supply Header Project") would have long-term or permanent effects on about 3,456 acres, including about 2,744 acres of upland forest (deciduous, coniferous and mixed). The recovery time for a closed canopy of mature forest and wildlife habitat could take up to a century or more.

- **Mountain slopes:** The project would cross more than 100 miles of slopes greater than 20 percent. Constructing the pipeline and access roads in steep terrain or areas prone to landslide increases the potential for landslides to occur.


- **Ridgetop removal:** The FEIS does not require Dominion to make any changes to minimize ridgetop removal, which would impact approximately 38 miles of ridgetop and result in 247,000 trips by large dump trucks to remove the overburden.

- **Alternatives:** The FEIS completely fails to even consider renewable energy as an alternative to this project.

What comes next

With the issuance of this final Environmental Impact Statement, FERC's decision on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is largely over. This should be no surprise since FERC almost never refuses an application for its approval.

This does not mean that everything is settled and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline will certainly go ahead. If constructed, the pipeline would cross many waterways. These crossings require permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Instead of evaluating each crossing individually, the Corps of Engineers intends to allow all crossings through what is called a General Permit. This is what the Corps uses when there are multiple, relatively minor actions which are similar and which result in only minor disturbance.

While the Corps will allow the pipeline to proceed under a General Permit, states still have a role. Before the pipeline may go ahead each state must issue a certificate finding that the project will not cause a violation of water quality standards. Proceedings to determine whether states will issue such certificates are ongoing in the states which the pipeline will potentially pass through. See the picture of West Virginia's proceedings on this page. Right over there. 

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a member of the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance.

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.



Cindy Rank speaks at one of the public hearings on whether West Virginia should issue a certificate that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline will not violate water quality standards.

Hiking the Hemlocks at Cathedral State Park

By John McFerrin

For big trees, or at least big Hemlock trees, it's Cathedral State Park. It is the largest virgin timber tract remaining in West Virginia. Although there were some other species, it is dominated by Hemlock trees, big ones up to 120 feet tall and 21 feet in circumference. They are also old; the biggest ones are routinely 350 years old while the oldest tree in the park is estimated at about 500 years.

We were there on a sunny afternoon, or at least a sunny afternoon outside the forest. On the trails, it is the perpetual twilight found where trees are that big. The trail was a pleasant walk, winding through these enormous trees. It wasn't the right time for wildflowers although we did see jack-in-the-pulpits. There were a lot of mushrooms. There were birds, although not as many as on the edges. We saw a Downy Woodpecker and flushed a Ruffed Grouse (we think; we had no real bird brains with us to make a positive identification).

There were a few maple seedlings sprouting along the trail, hoping against hope that they will be able to find enough sunlight. In the long run, the sun loving maples will probably discover that they fell off the bus in the wrong part of town. It's a climax forest;

one of the characteristics of a climax forest is that its dominant species creates only the conditions that benefit itself. It's a tree eat tree world out there.

The wildflowers, the birds, and the mushrooms are, however, sideshows. The main attraction is the trees. They are so big and stretch up and up. It is a wonder to behold.

The park is only 132 acres so the trails are necessarily short. The longest is a little over a mile. There are intersecting or side trails someone could take to stretch out the hike but it is still not going to be very long. The hiking surface is, for the most part, good. It is not sidewalk smooth and there are a few places where hikers have to watch their feet but it is generally good. The trails are largely flat. There are places where they go up and down but, on our trail at least, there was no spot where it felt as if we were climbing a real hill. There is only 160 feet of elevation difference between the highest and lowest points in the park so there can't be big hills.

The park is located along Highway 50 near Aurora in Preston County. Highway 50 winds around some but there is not much traffic so it is not a bad drive.



A couple of tree huggers (John McFerrin and Katherine McFerrin) at Cathedral State Park. Photos by each other.

Annual Meeting!

Among the activities that will take place during the 50th Anniversary Celebration is the Annual Membership Meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. The Annual Membership Meeting will be held at 9:30 AM on Sunday, September 17, 2017, at Canaan Valley State Resort Park.

The main item of business at the Annual Membership Meeting will be the election of at large board members.

If you wish to suggest someone for the Board, please contact a member of the nominating committee: Marilyn Shoenfeld, Bill McNeel, John McFerrin, and Cindy Rank. Contact information is on page 15. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

If you would like to serve on the Board, feel free to suggest or nominate yourself. This is no time to be modest. The only requirements are membership in the organization and enthusiasm.

Join Now !!!

Name

Address

CityStateZip

PhoneEmail

Membership categories (circle one)

	Individual	Family	Org.
Senior	\$15		
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

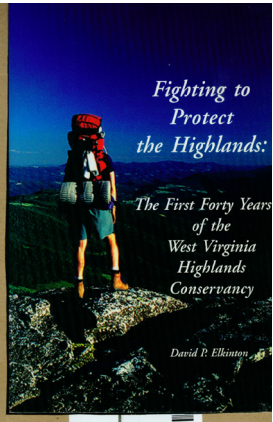
Mail to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321

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

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

GET A GREAT HISTORY BOOK

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



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 \$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.

Planting the Seeds & Helping Them Grow

50 Years of Tending the Environment in West Virginia

Honoring the Partnerships that formed the Highlands Conservancy in the first place and the ever expanding network of new citizen and environmental partners we've worked with through the past 5 decades.

Program

Friday, September 15, 2017

Noon – Registration, set-up begins

1:00pm – Afternoon Outings

3:00pm - Displays, Silent Auction, Photo-sharing, Workshops, presentations and Round Table Discussions

4:30pm - Reception Begins

✓ **Conservation Leaders,**

Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow The past meets the future as conservation leaders from all generations gather to reflect on our work, and our love and appreciation for this special place. In lieu of a sit-down dinner, we'll have a reception with plenty of fare.

5:30pm – Welcome, from Diane Hinkle, Tucker County Commissioner and Development Director of the Tucker Community Foundation.

5:45pm - Panel Discussions

✓ **Canaan Valley –Promised Land**

Winning the nearly 40 year battle against the Davis Power Project allowed for the creation of Canaan Valley, our 500th National Wildlife Refuge.

✓ **Monongahela National Forest, Wild & Wonderful!**

Strong Forest Management Plans and Wilderness protection help to keep the "Mon," Wild and Wonderful. This panel, Moderated by **Mary Wimmer**, will recall citizen involvement with Forest planning and Wilderness designation. We'll look back at the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act with **Rupert Cutler**, Former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources, Forest Planning, Wilderness Designation all the way to current issues with Mon Forest Supervisor, **Clyde Thompson**.



"Celebrating 50 Years"

Canaan Valley State Park

September 15-17, 2017

Friday, September 15, 2017

(continued)

8:30pm - Keynote Speaker

✓ **Alan B. Mollohan,**
Former Congressman

9:00pm

✓ **Music**

✓ **Stars & Salamanders**
with Frank Slider

Join Master Naturalist, Frank Slider, for a night time hike on Cabin Mountain to observe the autumn constellations from a dark sky site with little ambient light. While up in this high elevation habitat, we will discuss the threatened Cheat Mountain Salamander and how fragmentation of the red spruce forests has exacerbated their decline.

Saturday, September 16, 2017

7:00am - Bird walk with Cindy Ellis

7-8:30am - continental Breakfast

8:00am – Fieldtrips/outings

-Join the Morgantown Area Paddlers with **Mary Wimmer** and White Grass' **Chip Chase** for a canoe, or kayak on the Blackwater River in Canaan Valley.

-Join **LeJay Graffious** on a visit to the Allegheny Front Migratory Observatory at Dolly Sods. The oldest bird banding station in North America, now in its 60th year of operation.

11:00am - Round Table Discussions

✓ Poet's Round Table

1:00pm - Afternoon Outings Organize

1:30pm - Workshops,

✓ Partner's Roundtables

✓ What about those PIPELINES?

✓ Fracking

4:30pm - Reception, - A Celebration of the Highlands Conservancy

A celebratory reception honoring and recognizing our History, our Founders as well as our accomplishments.

6:00pm, Dinner

6:45pm - Almost Heaven caught on Film

✓ Photo Safari with Kent Mason

7:00pm - Toxic Soup or a Hearty Broth?

A panel Discussion Moderated by **Dr. Margaret Palmer**. Where Science, Litigation, Activism and Public Interest Intersect.

9:00pm - Square Dance

Featuring Born Old

Born Old is Paul Gartner and Doug Van Gundy. Making music together for over 19 years, they perform regularly throughout West Virginia and surrounding states, and are regularly featured at both the Appalachian String Band Festival (Clifftop) and Vandalia Gathering.

Celebrating 50 Years!

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was officially founded in 1967 but the people and groups that came together to form the organization actually began to meet in 1965 while the first issue of The Highlands Voice appeared in 1969. For many years the Highlands Conservancy was THE environmental organization in the state and tackled issues as diverse in topics as in geography. Protecting rivers, Canaan Valley, Otter Creek, Dolly Sods, the Monongahela National Forest, wilderness and other public lands, and opposing illegal coal mining, unwise highway development, and misguided laws and regulations all have deep roots that permeate our history. We will be highlighting some of these issues, the places, and the people involved as we celebrate our past at the Canaan Valley Resort State Park, September 15-17, 2017. JOIN US

Sunday, September 17, 2017

7:00am, Bird walk with LeJay Graffious

7-8:30am, Continental Breakfast

8:00am, Field Trips/outings

-We'll join Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (CASRI) members to plant red spruce saplings, and tour a Red Spruce forest, discuss its importance and our efforts to restore it.

9:00am, Membership Meeting

A brief meeting where the membership will elect new Board of Directors Members.

9:30am Panel Discussion

✓ **Maintaining Sanity In An Uncertain Future**

A panel discussion about Climate Change, renewable energy, and sustainability. What does tomorrow hold?

11:00am Box lunches, afternoon outings

-Sinks of Gandy – This easy cave follows Gandy Creek for about 1.5 miles under Yokum Knob. Hard hat and 3 sources of light required.

-Roaring Plains hike on the South Prong Trail with **Perry Bryant**. A beautiful trail through "blueberry patches, small bogs, spruce, mountain laurel, and good views."

Program Highlights

Silent Auction –bring an item!

Displays/Posters - Share what you're working on!

Round Table Discussions - structured and impromptu discussions - various topics.

Lodging

Canaan Valley State Park 800-622-4121

-WVHC 50th special rate of \$119/night.

-Cabin Rentals available to sleep 4-12.

-Campground, with complete hookups.

For a complete listing of accommodations

Tucker County Convention/Visitors Bureau

canaanvalley.org

Contact us for scholarship, volunteer, and low-cost lodging opportunities.

wvhc50@gmail.com

Field Trips

Other outings we are working on include;

-**Scenic Chairlift Rides**, \$7 adults

-**Highlands Car Tour**, a self-guided car tour of regional attractions and destinations.

-**Abe's Run Swamp** hike

-**Canaan Valley & Davis Power Project**

-**Blackwater Canyon Trail** - Bike –

Celebrating 50 Years T-Shirts!



Heavy weight Black t-shirts
with color "Celebrating 50 Years" logo
S, M, L, XL & XXL. \$20 each, postage included

Also Available,
21" square black bandana
with color "Celebrating 50 Years" logo.
\$5.00 postage included.

Visit our website for complete details or to register online. www.wvhighlands.org

Registration

Friday , including outings, workshops, programs, reception and with heavy Hors devours.	\$20.00
Saturday , including outings, workshops, programs, Continental Breakfast, Box Lunch and evening Reception/Dinner.	\$40.00
Sunday , including outings, workshops, Programs, Continental Breakfast and Box Lunch,	\$20.00
All Weekend , including all of the above	\$75.00

Contact us for scholarship, volunteer, and low-cost lodging opportunities. wvhc50@gmail.com

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Send us this form, or visit our website at www.wvhighlands.org for up-to-date information and online registration.

Mail to: WVHC PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

The Mountain

By Teresa Dudley

Look up at the mountain
Its spires reach toward God
Reminding man to pray
Hills swathed in trees,
Green fingers pointing upward
Valleys, rushing streams, roaring waterfalls
Unchanging, lasting forever
Its beauty and power awes
Then came man, his eyes coveted the mountain
His greed bored great chasms in its side
Searching for black diamonds

His feuds covered hillsides with blood
Many innocent lives lost to his pride and greed
The war of blue and gray divided
Brother against brother, Father against son
Families ripped apart
Mothers, daughters, sisters cry
Homes burned, all is lost in hate

Still the mountain remains
Slowly the mountain changes
Trees grow taller, streams change
Trees fall, streams are filled
By man's unwary hand
His greed blinds him to the signs
The signs of the mountain
Its pain, its warning
Still man destroys the mountain
He searches endlessly for coal
His source of wealth and death
The poor take the danger
From the mountains' defenses
They die to be replaced
By others desperate for work
To feed their families

Obsessed with wealth and power
Owners strive for cheap mining
Cutting the workers' wages and safety
The miners rebel, fighting for their rights
More death and pain from mans' greed
Soon machines took their place
But it was not enough
The owners looked to make more
No matter the expense
To the mountain and its people
So they blast the mountain tops
Tearing down the spires
That pointed upward
Filling the valleys
Stopping flowing rivers
And roaring waterfalls
Filling the streams with poison
Trees that tied the land together
For hundreds of years
Fall leaving the mountain bare
With nothing stopping it,
Water rushes down flooding homes
Terrifying the people who made
The mountain their home
Seemingly indestructible, the mountain
Falls to man's greed

Teresa Dudley, a student in Paul Salstrom's Appalachian history class at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana

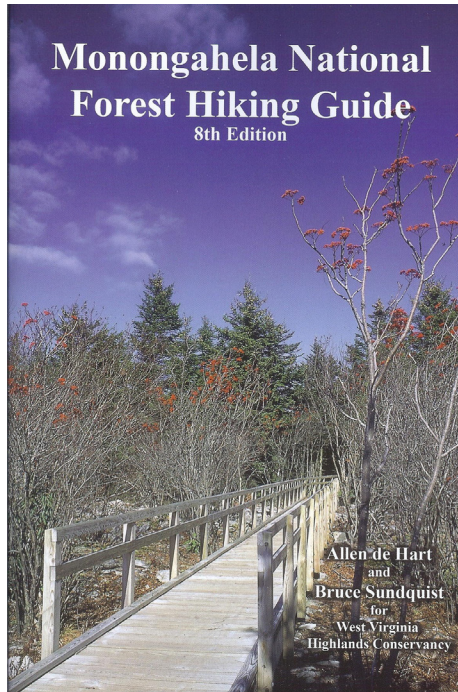
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The Highlands Voice is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer uses 100% post consumer recycled paper when available.

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.



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:

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- ☐ 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.

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.

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.



Help Improve the Hiking Guide!!!! Win a Prize!!!!

We are working on a new edition of The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide. To do it, we need your help. The Guide describes nearly 200 U.S. Forest Service trails (800 miles total). Inevitably, some have changed since our last edition was published ten years ago. Do you know of trail descriptions in the 8th edition that are no longer accurate? (Or, dare we say it, any that weren't completely accurate to begin with?) We have found a few but there are more to be done. We would like to incorporate your observations into the new edition. As a way of thanking you, we are awarding prizes.

Grand Prize: A \$100 Gift Certificate to REI

Semi-Grand Prizes: Five West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Celebrating 50 Years T-Shirts

How to help/enter: Hike a trail in the Monongahela National Forest. Write out your observations about trail conditions, difficulty, interesting features, or anything else you think should be changed in the Hiking Guide's 9th edition. Send your observations to Hugh Rogers, 531 Moon Run Road, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662, hugh.rogers@gmail.com

Deadline: September 1, 2017

We will draw the winners from all the entries during our 50th Anniversary Celebration, September 15-17.

Thanks for your help, and happy hiking!

**Evie lovin' those
big trees in
Doddridge County**

**Photo courtesy of WV
Land Trust**

**(For the rest of the
story, see the front
page of July's High-
lands Voice)**



West Virginia Red Spruce Trees for Sale!

Highlands Conservancy volunteers collect seeds from the Spruce and other restoration species in the West Virginia Highlands. We contract with commercial growers to grow plants for forest restoration projects. All proceeds support red spruce ecosystem restoration efforts in West Virginia.

Containerized Plants

Available now, while supplies last

3" tree bands - \$5 ea., Flat of 25 - \$100.

Red Spruce(18-24"), Winterberry Holly, Arrow Wood Viburnum

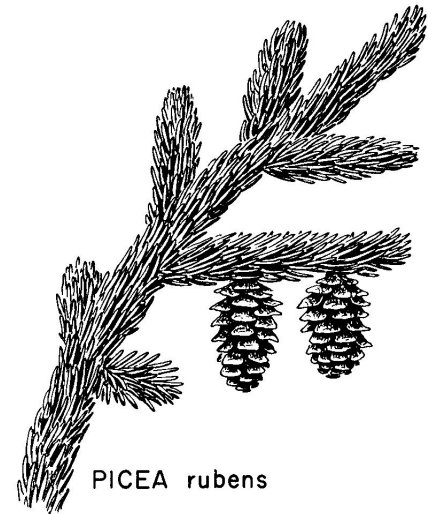
4" tree bands - \$8 ea., Flat of 18 - \$125.

Red Spruce(24-30"), Winterberry Holly, Fraser Magnolia, Canaan Fir, Mt Ash

2 gallon, 30-36 inches - \$12 ea.

Red Spruce(30-36"), Canaan Fir

These Plants are located in Morgantown, WV. We do not ship them. They will also be available at the 50th Celebration in Canaan Valley 9/15-17.



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Available for pick-up in Morgantown during April, 2018.

Red Spruce plugs - 2 yr container-grown seedlings approx. 10-15 inches tall.

Order now with 50% deposit to assure availability

Early Bird Special

100 - \$220.00; 1,000 - \$1,100.00

After September 1, 2017

100 - \$225.00; 1,000 - \$1,150.00

For more information contact: Dave Saville, david.saville12@gmail.com 304 692-8118



On July 27th, WVHC and allies of the Gas Working Group met. We convened again in the historic Oak Hill building that is the home of the Southern Appalachian Labor School. Plans are being completed toward community training sessions for monitoring pipelines before and after FERC approval. Joining us once more were pipeline fighters from Pennsylvania and Ohio; this meeting was primarily hosted by OVEC.

“Celebrating” Another Anniversary

Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act: at best a Mixed Blessing

By John McFerrin

This month is the 40th anniversary of the federal regulation of strip mining. On August 3rd, 1977, in a White House Rose Garden ceremony, President Carter signed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. A round number anniversary is as good a time as any to look at how the Act has worked.

There is no doubt that some good has come from the Act. Before the Act the regulation of strip mining was spotty, to put it mildly. There was next to no reclamation, little water protection, no attention paid to what would happen after the mining was over. Even with all the complaints about lax enforcement, political interference with enforcement, etc. it is still true that the Act brought some beneficial practices to the coal fields.

The Act came largely from the movement to abolish strip mining in the late 60s and early 70s. Even if the term “abolitionist” had lost its national currency with the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery, it was very much alive in West Virginia as West Virginians talked about the abolition of strip mining. Ken Hechler introduced a bill in Congress in 1971 to abolish strip mining. Jay Rockefeller ran for Governor in 1972 on a platform of abolishing strip mining.

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act that reached President Carter’s desk in 1977 was a compromise. Instead of abolition, it legitimized strip mining. It also approved of mountaintop removal. President Carter recognized that it was a compromise. “In many ways,” he told his guests at the signing, “this has been a disappointing effort.” Calling it a “watered down” bill, Carter added, “I’m not completely satisfied with the legislation. I would prefer to have a stricter strip mining bill.”

The Rose Garden signing ceremony was attended by coalfield residents and environmentalists who had waged a campaign to abolish strip-mining. At the same time, many coalfield residents and environmentalists refused to attend the ceremony. They had fought for years to abolish strip mining, not control it. They did not want a law that bill that made strip mining acceptable.

Looking back, the strip mines that we considered an abomination before the 1977 Act seem minor. Although it feels odd to consider it this way, to those of us who are living through the mountaintop removal era, a mine snaking around the hillside, disturbing one hundred acres, feels like the good old days. When mines are routinely blasting off hundreds of feet of mountaintop, disturbing thousands and thousands of acres, it is easy to be nostalgic for a time when two hundred acres of disturbance was considered a big mine.

Looking back, those who opposed the Act look prescient. At the time, trading having to put up with some, by today’s standards, small strip mines in exchange for reasonable reclamation,

protection for off-site areas, water protection, etc. could have looked reasonable. But look at where the Act has led us.

The Act allowed not just strip mining but mountaintop removal strip mining. We have mines that cover thousands of acres. We now have over two million acres of acres of strip mined land. We have whole mountains being blown apart. We have a human alteration of the terrain that is unprecedented in human history.

Trading tolerating mines that snaked around the hillside for better reclamation, etc. may have seemed like a reasonable compromise at the time. Looking back, it looks like a sucker’s bet. Had we known that the Act would unleash mountaintop removal as it is currently practiced, the compromise would look a lot different. From the perspective of 2017, 1977 looks like the time when we

should have crushed the egg from which Godzilla would later emerge.

Even beyond the unleashing of mountaintop removal mining, the big idea of the Act never worked. A strip mine was supposed to be like a pimple on a teenager’s forehead. It pops up and is ugly while it is there but then it is gone. The land is reclaimed, it resumes its former purpose, or a better one, and everything goes forward.

With mining, this never happened. *The Highlands Voice* has had several stories about old mines that were supposedly reclaimed but are still leaking toxic materials. *The Highlands Voice*, December, 2015,

January, 2017. Those sites are by no means little blips in the land use, here today but disappearing soon, the land returned to its original condition. They are the gifts that keep on giving.

How this came to be is a combination of science and politics. The politics shows up in the enforcement. Coal occupies such an exalted place in our political firmament that no law which affects the coal industry could ever be fully enforced. There will always be some slack, and the slack will favor the coal industry. Perhaps if the Act had always been vigorously enforced we would be closer to the Act’s goal of making mining a temporary land use where land returns to what it was before.

The science explains that the incomplete reclamation is a result of the impossibility of the task. These are complex systems. We can’t just jumble it all up, put it all back, and expect the land to be as good as new. It is arrogance on our part to think that making post-mining land as good or better than it was before is even possible.

The other big idea of the Act that never worked out was the idea that we needed to allow mountaintop removal because we needed flat land.



(More on the next page)

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How Has the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Worked? (Continued from p. 14)

The idea of the Act was that mountaintop removal would be rare. Most mined land would be returned to its original contour. Land would be left flat only if there was a specific need for flat land. If we needed a spot for a school or a factory, we could mine the spot and leave the land flat.

In 1977, when the Act passed, this may have seemed like a good idea. Arguments in favor of this made the coal seem like a secondary value. It was the precious flat land that was the real goal.

Maybe this was what Jay Rockefeller thought he was doing when he abandoned his earlier opposition to strip mining and embraced the Act, including mountaintop removal. Maybe it all sounded so good in theory. We would make most mines return the land to the shape they had found it. In a few spots we would let people leave it flat so that we could use the land.

In practice, it has not worked out. Maybe if we had restricted mountaintop removal to spots where there was a specific need with specific plans (including financing) for a school or a factory then the idea would have worked. But we didn't. We allowed mountaintop removal to proceed willy nilly based upon vague notions that flat land in remote locations with no services might be valuable someday. As a result we have well over a million acres of mountaintop removal land. Less than three per cent of it has been used for economic development. If we assume five acres per school, we could build every public school in the entire country on existing mountaintop removal sites and still have over half of the land left over.

So how do things look after forty years? It is undoubtedly true that the Act did some good. Without it the mines would have had no regulation. They might have kept getting bigger and bigger, just as they did under the Act, until we had mountaintop removal strip mining with no regulation. The Act has given us some reclamation, some protection for off-site areas, some protection for water. Had enforcement been better we would have gotten more but what we did get was certainly valuable.

At the same time the Act unleashed and legitimized mountaintop removal mining. Considering what mountaintop removal is doing to the land and people, the Act has been a mixed blessing.

Video Worth Watching

In the June, 2017, issue of *The Highlands Voice*, Beth Little did a story on a project designed to do effective reclamation on an old strip mine that had been poorly reclaimed, if at all. Now there is a mini (6 minutes) movie of the project. You can see what it looks like, hear some of the people who were involved talk about it, etc. Check out "Climate Informed Restoration in the Appalachians" at vimeo.com/145174203.

HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY BOUTIQUE



- 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

The same items are also available at our on-line store: www.wvhighlands.org

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 ATTEN: 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 ♥ 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