



The Highlands Voice

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

Volume 52 No. 2 February, 2019

Too little, too late

DEP Does “Enforcement” at Mountaineer Xpress Pipeline

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has taken enforcement action against the Mountaineer Xpress Pipeline. In a letter to the Department, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has joined with eleven other groups (Led by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition) to say that the action was too little, too late.

Columbia, the pipeline developer, was a serial violator. It was repeatedly cited for the same violations. Specifically, Columbia created conditions not allowable in state waters approximately 37 times. They were cited for failing to prevent sediment-laden water from leaving the site approximately 13 times at numerous locations each time.

They were cited for failing to comply with their approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Silt fences, filter socks, water bars, water bar outlets and other erosion control devices were either not installed at all, not installed properly, or not maintained as required. They did not protect fill slopes, allowing earthen slips to occur. On three separate occasions, they failed to report the non-compliant slips endangering health and the environment.

For these violations, Columbia was fined \$122,350. Were this penalty imposed upon ordinary West Virginian, it would be

substantial. For an entity the size of Columbia it is trivial. This is a \$2 billion project. The \$122,350 penalty is 0.006% of Columbia’s costs. A penalty that small is not an effective deterrent to a company that big. Rather than comply with laws designed to protect West Virginia, it is too easy to accept a fine of that size as just a small part of the cost of doing business in West Virginia.

The groups who joined in the letter see this as part of a pattern. While the larger Mountain Valley Pipeline was not part of this enforcement action, it has already established a pattern of violations. DEP had to issue consent orders for Dominion’s G-150, the Stonewall Gathering Line, and most recently the Rover Pipeline. In each case, numerous violations were issued, a consent order and fine was agreed upon and a corrective action plan was approved. Pipeline construction activities in our state have created a culture on non-compliance that must be reversed

The groups offer two suggestions for fixing the problem: make the fines big enough that they act as a real deterrent or order companies to stop operating until they can consistently comply with the law.

What’s inside:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| Thoughts from our President | 2 | Roster of officers | 10 |
| Matters legislative | 3 | Rumor mongering | 10 |
| Pump storage project | 4 | Get a hiking guide | 11 |
| Dueling Grinches | 5 | Eye in the sky | 12 |
| How to join | 7 | Saying goodbye | 14 |
| Climate change | 8 | Great, great picture | 14 |
| Get some baby trees | 9 | Board highlights | 15 |
| Readers write | 10 | Get stuff | 16 |



Thoughts from our President

By Larry Thomas

What we are up to

Watching it snow here on the mountain, I realized that old man winter certainly has a strong grip on the highlands and will for some time. Mixed in were thoughts of the many issues that WVHC addressed during 2018, mountaintop removal mining and valley fills, numerous gas pipelines proposed or under construction, the proposed pump storage hydro project in Tucker County and its negative environmental impacts, the proposal to log in the state parks and what was considered bad legislation affecting the highlands through our participation as a member of the West Virginia Environmental Council. The list continues to grow.

WVHC and its committees will continue to work, as it has for over 51 years, on the continuing issues above, plus important issues and initiatives affecting the highlands currently and for the future.

WVHC will continue to participate in the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative, (CASRI), (see the article by David Saville in the November 2018 Highlands Voice). CASRI is comprised of private, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations which recognize the importance of the red spruce ecosystem for its ecological, aesthetic, recreational, economic, and cultural values that have planted nearly 1,000,000 trees and released over 2,000 acres of red spruce. In West Virginia alone, the range of spruce-influenced forests has shrunk by between 450,000 acres and 1,350,000 acres since the late 1800's. With rapid landscape changes encroaching from climate change, we need to act quickly and effectively to restore our forests on a wider scale.

The Public Lands Committee continues to monitor the Forest Service projects in the Monongahela National Forest for which WVHC has submitted comments concerning what are considered major flaws in terms of protecting sensitive resources and potentially conflict with the Forest Plan. Those projects are:

Spruce Mountain Grouse Management Area <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51058&exp=overview>

Panther Ridge Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=53685>

Big Rock Project

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=44762>

Grassy Ridge Project

During November we were invited to participate in the initial planning meeting and to tour the early planning for the new project. WVHC submitted informal comments and suggestions and has been told that the forest service would include our comments in their pre-planning scoping conversations.

WVHC is also monitoring other issues that could have negative impacts on the highlands. These issues are:

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans, using zero taxpayer dollars. The fund invested earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help strengthen communities. LWCF supports outdoor recreation and public lands essential to the quality of life for every West Virginian. LWCF was allowed to expire on September 30, 2018. WVHC along with other environmental organizations is a part of efforts to have LWCF reauthorized and appropriation of permanent funding for the future.

Roadless Areas

There are efforts to eliminate roadless areas in Alaska that could have negative impacts for West Virginia. WVHC along with other environmental organizations are monitoring those activities and will determine appropriate actions if that should occur.

2019 promises to be another busy year for the Conservancy and we will keep you informed, as events occur, through the Voice.

The Highlands Voice is published monthly by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Articles, letters to the editor, graphics, photos, poetry, or other information for publication should be sent to the editor via the internet or by the U.S. Mail by the last Friday of each month. You may submit material for publication either to the address listed above or to the address listed for Highlands Voice Editor elsewhere in this issue. Electronic submissions are preferred.

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.

Environmental Council at the State Legislature

By Frank Young

The West Virginia state legislature convened its 60 day regular session on January 9th. And so the WV Environmental Council (WVEC) is trudging along in its 29th year of lobbying the legislature in an effort to bring sensible environmental legislation to the table- and hopefully to the governor's desk for a signature of approval. WV Highlands Conservancy continues to be a significant fiscal contributor in support of the WVEC lobbying campaign.

WVEC started setting its 2019 legislative agenda back in August by surveying its members (including WV Highlands Conservancy) and supporters for their highest priority environmental lobbying issues for 2019.

Those priorities include:

1. Water protection including updating state water quality standards with EPA recommended human health criteria;
2. Advance renewable energy options including Power Purchase Agreements (PPA);
3. Protecting public lands, including prohibiting commercial logging in State Parks to preserve the integrity and intent of State Parks;
4. Promote the WV Future Fund; ensure that extractive industries pay severance tax into the fund;
5. Election law updates: working with the WV Clean Elections Coalition and others. It is often suggested that nothing much will change until we change the way election campaigns for public office are financed;
6. Oil and gas issues including the Appalachian Storage Trading Hub, orphaned wells, and health study of fracking regions.

Plus, our lobbyists have been making the rounds on the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection rules bills since those are being run through the Senate early in the session.

And WVEC lobbyists are always on the lookout for all manner of "bad" bills- usually offered by energy industry and manufacturing industry lobbyists- that would further degrade the environmental quality of West Virginia streams, air and land.

A bit of good news as it relates to our priorities: we have every reason to believe that the terrible idea of logging in state parks is NOT something we are going to be dealing with this session. Word in the halls is that the Governor wants nothing to do with it, Department of Natural Resources doesn't want to bring it back, and likewise for legislators. We'll let you know if that changes!

The issues of most current interest (and this changes almost daily) to our lobbyists are listed in the weekly WVEC Legislative Update. You can see the more current edition of the Update at www.wvecouncil.org. But those issues change almost daily. So that list will be updated every Friday evening. And there will be a 1 page handout of immediate issues for lobbying at the WV Environmental Council table on E-day (environmental lobby day, February 7th) at the Capitol rotunda. Parking there is at a premium. But there is free parking at

Laidley Field on Elizabeth Street near the Interstate (3 blocks from the Capitol). And there is free shuttle bus service from there to the door of the Capitol building. Also FYI, there is a restaurant in the basement of the Capitol.

You can sign up for the weekly Legislative Update and almost daily alerts (during the legislation session) by a simple request to info@wvecouncil.org.

Meet our lobbyists:

Karan Ireland is back for her second year as the WVEC lobby team coordinator. Prior to her work for the Environmental Council, Karan was the executive director of WV Solar United Neighbors, a non-profit working to advance the deployment of solar energy in West Virginia. Karan worked for West Virginia Citizen Action Group where she was the lead on projects related to safe drinking water. She was one of the original organizers of the local citizen response to the 2014 Elk River Chemical Leak and resulting water crisis, and is a steering committee member of Advocates for a Safe Water System. Karan just finished a term as a member of the Charleston City Council, having been elected to an at-large seat in May of 2015. She also serves as a member of the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority's board of commissioners.

Kayla Young is a new part of the E-Council lobbying team. Kayla is a community organizer with Boss Babes WV, an organization working for women's empowerment and gender equity. She runs the Eggs Will Roll food truck and co-hosts the I Reckon Podcast. She graduated from West Virginia University in 2009 with degrees in Political Science, Communication Studies, and Public Relations. Kayla has worked on municipal, state, and federal campaigns.

Ben Kessler is a recent graduate from West Virginia University and part of the new lobbying team. As a student, he took on the Office of Sustainability as WVU's Sierra Student Coalition Conservation Campaign Coordinator to cultivate development of Greenhouse Gas Inventory and a 50kw Solar Pilot Program. Ben also has years of experience working political campaigns including local, state, and national candidates. Ben brings his technical skills of political theory and regulations combined with his skills from advocacy and policy analysis, as well as scientific knowledge on geological and geographical processes and applications. Working with multiple NGOs and political campaigns, he has developed the means to effectively reach people across the aisle, recruit advisors and supporters, and train volunteers on advocacy and grassroots campaigning.

Lobby team coordinator Karan Ireland tells us, "It's great to be back under the dome—except there is no dome- at least not one we can see from inside the building. There is no standing around the well, eavesdropping on conversations between committee meetings this year, as the dome and rotunda undergo repairs. But, your new lobby team is carving out our space as we work in pursuit of the 2019 WVEC legislative priorities."

Update on Proposed Pump Storage Project in Tucker County

By Kent Karriker

In the December 2018 Voice, we first alerted you to the pump storage project that has been proposed by FreedomWorks, LLC for a site in Tucker County. After publication of that article, the Highlands Conservancy Public Lands Committee studied the available information and concluded that the project would have unacceptable impacts on the environment and should be opposed. The Executive Committee of the board agreed, and the Conservancy filed for official intervenor status.

The Conservancy also filed two comment letters during December and early January that outlined our concerns and stated our opposition. Reasons given for our opposition included impacts to protected species, impacts to scenic resources, impacts to restored mine lands, impacts to the Big Run Bog National Natural Landmark, and impacts of the proposed power line. Several federal and state government agencies (WV DNR, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Interior) and other environmental groups (WV Rivers Coalition, Friends of Blackwater, Sierra Club) raised similar issues. The President's column in the January 2019 Voice updated you on these happenings.

Since publication of the January Voice, several developments have occurred that warrant another update to our membership. Although the official comment period for the preliminary Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) permit ended on December 28, 2018, public meetings were held by Tucker County officials on January 9, 2019, and several state and federal government agency officials met with the applicant and representatives of the Highlands Conservancy and Friends of Blackwater on January 11, 2019. Also, FreedomWorks and Friends of Blackwater filed additional clarifying information into the project docket.

Perhaps the biggest development relates to potential impacts on Big Run Bog. The project application depicted the penstocks that would connect the two reservoirs as crossing the Big Run Bog National Natural Landmark, and it depicted the upper reservoir spillways draining toward the Big Run Bog. The application materials did not provide any clarifying information on the proposed design and construction of these facilities. Based on this information, the Conservancy (and all of the aforementioned government agencies

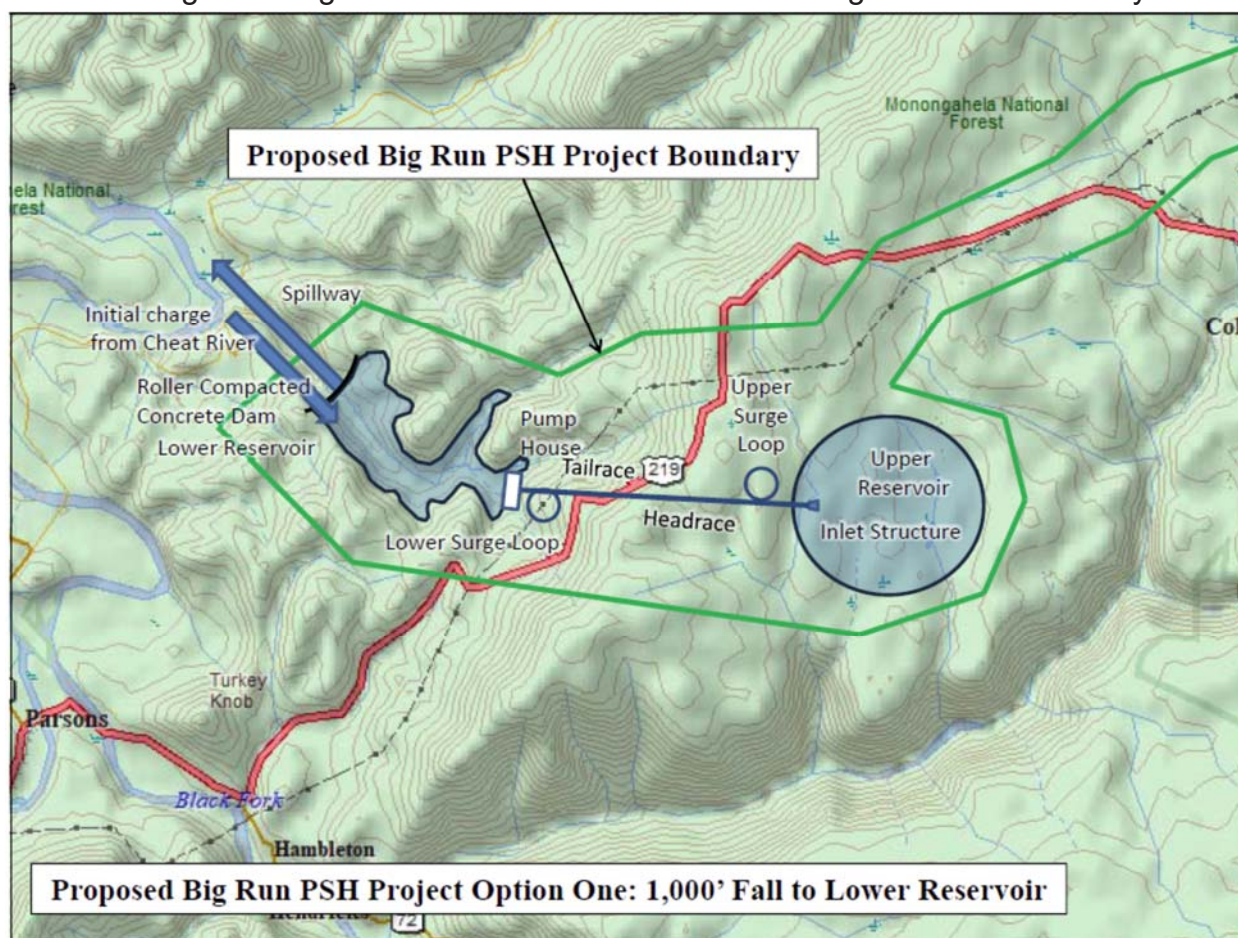
and environmental groups) concluded that the project would have unacceptable impacts on Big Run Bog, which is a widely recognized ecological treasure.

FreedomWorks insisted that the project would not affect the bog, which caused both the Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service to file letters pointing out the fact that the applicant's own maps appeared to show that the project would affect the bog.

Eventually the confusion was cleared up when FreedomWorks filed additional information pertaining to the design of the penstocks. According to this information, the penstocks would angle down from the upper reservoir such that they would pass under the bog at a depth of more than 400 feet.

The filing did not include any details on construction, but in

response to questions that I asked at the meetings on January 9 and January 11, FreedomWorks CEO Tim Williamson stated that the design, construction, and eventual decommissioning of the penstocks would not require any activity at the surface. Williamson also stated that the proposed spillway locations have been moved such that they would not drain toward the bog. He presented maps showing new spillway locations draining northward and southward, although these maps have not yet been filed in the



Big Run Pump Storage Hydro Project Detailed Facility Area

project record. He has also dropped "Big Run" from the name of the project in an attempt to eliminate the project being associated with impacts to an iconic ecological preserve.

So what does all this mean for Big Run Bog? This author's assessment is that, if all of Williamson's information checks out, it appears that the project would not impact Big Run Bog. We will, of course, want to make absolutely certain that the information does indeed check out, should the project proceed to the feasibility study phase. At this point, not enough detail has been provided to confirm lack of an impact.

Other consequential developments have occurred pertaining to the potential for old mine tunnels to exist under the proposed upper reservoir site. Mr. Williamson has said multiple times

(More on the next page)

More on the Pump Storage Project (Continued from previous page)

that the presence of such tunnels would kill the project. At the agency/stakeholder meeting on January 11, he further stated that FreedomWorks would assess this issue before proceeding with any other studies.

At the meetings on January 9 and January 11 and in a docket filing a few days later, Friends of Blackwater presented a map that depicted the upper reservoir site as lying over undocumented mine tunnels. This map was based on information that Friends of Blackwater obtained from WV DEP's Abandoned Mine Lands program. "Undocumented" means that the tunnels are not depicted on the official maps of known mine works, but they are suspected to occur based on the location of the coal seam.

FreedomWorks responded with a filing that depicted only the "documented" official maps of the old mine works, none of which are known to occur under the upper reservoir site. From this FreedomWorks concluded that old mine works likely are not a problem. My sense is that FreedomWorks is sidestepping the issue in an attempt to keep the project alive. Friends of Blackwater's information appears to have come from a reputable source, so it needs to be addressed prior to proceeding any further with this project.

FreedomWorks and Friends of Blackwater also engaged in dueling filings over the issue of visual impacts. Friends of Blackwater filed a map showing that project facilities would be visible from several key viewpoints, including Olsen fire tower, the Blackwater Falls lodge overlook, and the iconic overlook at Lindy Point. However, the filing did not include an explanation of the data sources or methodology used.

FreedomWorks responded with a filing that appears to show that topography would prevent the upper reservoir from being seen from the Blackwater Falls lodge and Lindy Point. (Everyone seems to agree that the upper reservoir would be visible from Olsen fire tower, which is very close to the proposed reservoir site.) FreedomWorks' filing was created using Google Earth, but it, too, does not include an explanation of data and methodology. Given the lack of information on the methods used to generate the conflicting filings, my assessment is that the jury is still out on this issue.

Other changes relate to the proposed new power line, which would connect the facility to the larger electric grid. The application showed the proposed new line running through the Coketon historic site, crossing the north fork of Blackwater Canyon, and crossing the Little Canaan Wildlife Management Area on its way over to an existing substation at Mt. Storm. The Conservancy and others pointed out the likelihood of major environmental impacts along this route.

Therefore, FreedomWorks presented maps at the January 9 and January 11 meetings that depict the new line in a completely different location. To my knowledge, these maps have not been filed into the project docket. As envisioned on the revised maps, the new line would be co-located with an existing line that runs

along Highway 219 to a connection with the grid located northwest of the town of Thomas. Presumably this route would involve far fewer environmental impacts, although no one has presented any specific information to confirm or refute this presumption. Should the project proceed to the feasibility study stage, we will need to see such information.

Another issue of major importance is the impact that the project's lower reservoir would have on Mill Run, which is a native brook trout stream flowing through National Forest land. Because of these characteristics, it is designated as a Tier 3 stream by the state. Tier 3 streams are "outstanding national resource waters" that are supposed to receive the state's highest level of protection from impacts.

The state regulations that govern Tier 3 streams state: "In all cases, waters which constitute an outstanding national resource shall be maintained and protected and improved where necessary." In this case, the project would drown a large portion of Mill Run under the lower reservoir, and the DNR has already determined that the native brook trout population likely would not be sustained.

On the surface, it would appear that these facts should kill the project, at least at its current proposed location. During

the January 11 meeting, the state representatives noted that the regulation does not allow any degradation of Tier 3 streams. However, they encouraged further talks between FreedomWorks and the state to determine how to approach the anti-degradation review of the project. We will need to stay alert for any indications that the state might be inclined to allow the impact in spite of the language of the regulation.

One final issue to cover involves the source of the power that would be stored by the facility. Several environmental groups raised concerns that the project could be used store energy produced by coal-fired power plants, thereby prolonging society's dependence on that dirty source. FreedomWorks maintains that the facility would only store electricity that is produced by renewable sources, such as wind and solar. Williamson presented information at the January 9 meeting that purported to show the electricity coming from a variety of wind and solar sources across the eastern U.S.

Ominously, he also stated that the project would purchase electricity from Highland New Wind. That facility in Highland County, Virginia, was permitted, more than ten years ago but never built because of a lack of financing. It has been vigorously opposed by citizens in Highland County and neighboring Pendleton County, West Virginia. A power purchase agreement might attract the investment it has lacked so far. The environmental community has reason to fear that two questionable projects, not viable separately, could facilitate each other's construction.

As the dust begins to settle on some of these issues, the

(The end is near--on the next page)

More on the Pump Storage Project (Continued from previous page)

Highlands Conservancy remains officially opposed to the proposed pump storage project. Although the nature of the issues is changing as more information comes to light, it is clear at this point that the project would cause the loss of 1,000 acres of National Forest land, as well as the loss of a Tier 3 native brook trout stream. These losses are too much for us to swallow, not only because of the direct impacts, but also because of the bad precedent they would set for other project proponents who seek to exploit the public domain for their own financial gain. As we stated in our initial comment letter to FERC, the Conservancy believes that a shift to renewable energy sources is critical to the long-term health of the Earth, but we also believe that renewable energy must be produced in a way that does not negatively impact sensitive environmental resources, and it must not result in the construction of industrial-scale infrastructure in natural areas.

So what happens next? Right now we are awaiting FERC's decision on the preliminary permit application. Mr. Williamson said that FERC has told him they will not render a decision until after the government shutdown has ended. Although FERC is not affected by the shutdown due to their non-appropriated funding source, they

do not want to issue a decision while other federal agencies are unable to complete their coordination on the permit application.

The Highlands Conservancy remains convinced that the preliminary permit should not be issued due the unacceptable impacts that the project likely would cause, if constructed. Although the preliminary permit would not authorize any construction, it would be the first step in the process toward construction of a project that we already know should not be built.

Should the preliminary permit be issued, it would enable FreedomWorks to (1) essentially stake its claim on the site so that no other company can propose a similar project there, and (2) proceed with studies of project feasibility and environmental impacts. At that stage they would need to apply for a special use permit from the Forest Service to authorize studies on National Forest land. A National Environmental Policy Act analysis would be required, although it is unclear at this point which federal agency would take the lead on that analysis.

Opportunities for public input would occur at several points in the process. The Conservancy will remain engaged in the process and will alert you when opportunities for input arise.

'Grinches' not those of us living in pipeline's path

This is a piece of astounding falsehoods. Gas pipelines are not safe, clean, nor quiet. They hold the potential to leak to air, water, and land. Remember the explosion at Sissonville and the destruction there. The attendant compressor stations for pipelines are relentlessly noisy and hold the same potential for leaks and ruptures.

Also amazingly untrue is the characterization of opponents as "small local grinches". The growing and many groups of opposition range in membership from farmers to university professors to blue collar working landowners to black church congregations and more.

It is ridiculous to say that pipeline opponents do not want others to have jobs. How could the joblessness of others possibly be of benefit to any of us? Furthermore, it is totally false to say that clean energy is not wanted...it is just that the most moderate of research will find that natural gas is not clean, indeed it is only very marginally less polluting than coal. Plenty of communities in other places and other countries are thriving without gas and coal. Here in WV and the US, news of such successes is scarce, due to the outsized influence of fuel industries on print and television reporting. Repeatedly, in court, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline has been shown to have falsely inflated its statements of "need". Its promoters have demonstrated their own callousness toward people of modest means through their attempts to squash public input.

The Chamber of Commerce is hardly a credible source. It is, however, backed by long-entrenched corporate interests whose agenda is not the welfare of working men and women, but rather that of greed and gain for the moneyed few.

This "Grinch" piece ends by urging streamlined permitting, which would allow even fewer local landowners and concerned citizens to research project plans and try to determine impacts upon their own properties and communities.

Joe Manchin, and anyone truly interested in the wellbeing of workers and the stability of energy, would do well to seek out those of us who have a well-founded skepticism of the megapipelines and the rush to ram them through. Listen to our stories. Listen to those who stand to lose their family farm, their community church, their chance for long-term and not short-term employment, their peace of mind, and a future for their grandchildren. We who live in the "Who-ville"-type locations that are in the path of the unwarranted pipelines know who the Grinches are. It is not us.

Cindy Ellis



Note: This originally appeared in the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*. It was provoked by an editorial in the *Charleston Daily Mail*. That editorial said, in a nutshell, that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline was a good idea and that the small number of "Grinches" who opposed it should shut up and quit preventing jobs, energy, and prosperity from coming to West Virginia.

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

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.

Welcome Back, Dave!

Now that Beth Little has moved on (see story on p. 14) we are fortunate to have Dave Saville returning to his old position as Membership Secretary/Administrative Assistant. He previously held that position for nine years, ending in 2007. He left the first time to take a full time position with the Wilderness Society. In the twelve years he has been gone he has both finished shepherding through the Wild Monongahela Act (creating three new wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest, and adds acreage to three existing wilderness areas) and planted trees and created relationships in Kenya. As it happens, you can see him doing some Wild Mon Act shepherding in the picture on p. 14.
Many West Virginia Highlands Conservancy members will know him (and have planted trees with him) as part of his work with the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative.
So, welcome back, Dave. It's great to have you aboard again.

Climate Change Updates

By Hugh Rogers

The end-of-year National Energy Conference at WVU Law School, “Climate Change Issues Update,” offered too much to cover in one *Voice*. Last month, we reviewed issues, communication and education, that are especially important in the state with the largest percentage of climate change deniers. (See climatecommunication.yale.edu. Thanks to Than Hitt for the cite.) Here, we’ll address updates.

Methane was considered from three angles: present danger, achievable limits, and the legal landscape.

Kenneth Davis, Professor of Atmospheric and Climate Science at Penn State, began with the basics: energy produced by burning natural gas produces about half as much carbon dioxide as the same energy produced by burning coal. At the same time, it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. In the last 200 years, atmospheric methane concentration has more than doubled.

Why are Penn State researchers studying West Virginia methane? Because it floats their way, overwhelming the data from local sources. We looked at graphics of this baleful cloud.

There is a **striking difference in methane emissions** between “conventional” and “unconventional” gas wells: The older, low-production, vertical wells put out 20 times as much methane as the deep wells with horizontal drilling. (Davis doesn’t use the term “fracked” because many older wells were and are being fracked. However, “unconventional” seems misleading now that the big new ones have become standard.)

Derek Johnson, of the Center for Alternative Fuels, Engines, and Emissions in the College of Engineering and Mineral Resources at WVU, described mechanical fixes for the problem. Equipment is important! Age of equipment is important! Design of equipment—and so on. A lot of methane leakage is due to simple irresponsibility.

Is there a legislative fix? WVU Law Professor Josh Fershee said we have always been better at making rules than enforcing them, or paying for them. The problem is particularly acute when dealing with “legacy” and abandoned wells.

Some statistics: In West Virginia, we have 144,000 permitted wells. New wells (Davis’s “unconventional” wells) are only 5% of the total. The Department of Environmental Protection has identified more than 12,000 abandoned wells—probably less than a quarter of the actual total. These wells leak, and occasionally explode. Pennsylvania has estimated that they are responsible for 5-8% of greenhouse gas emissions. It costs roughly \$50,000 to plug a well. Currently, our state’s fund for this purpose is \$385,000.

Both states depend on permit fees from the few new wells to plug the many old ones. Ohio directs up to 30% of severance taxes to plug abandoned wells. That raises more money, but nowhere near enough.

Besides the dirty active wells that might be fixed and the leaky orphan wells that must be plugged are a set of old wells that limp along, putting out methane and a trickle of gas, postponing the day when the drilling companies must pay (or forfeit their bond) to have them plugged. This is the so-called “free gas” problem. As long as the well supplies gas to the landowner, the lease is kept open. The driller waits to see if the price of gas will go up, or if the well can be sold to another company, or if it can avoid its responsibility via bankruptcy.

By the way, Professor Fershee mentioned this startling statistic: the highest-pressure wells in the world are in Doddridge County.

Andrew Williams, who directs regulatory and legislative affairs on climate and energy for the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), gave us **the view from the capital**. Methane, he said, is causing 25% of global warming. A large proportion of the emissions are due to “abnormal operating conditions,” which could be reduced by better reporting requirements and aggressive enforcement. As we know, the Trump EPA is more interested in rolling back, not increasing, its work. In 2016, before the election, EPA announced New Source Performance Standards that would have lowered methane emissions by 40-45% over five years. Those standards have been shelved. EPA’s current proposal would reduce methane by 3% over the same period. It should be emphasized that the standards address *new* sources, doing nothing about existing wells.

EDF is encouraging “cooperative federalism,” i.e., states will have to take up the slack. But the states have a long way to go, beginning with boosting their low bonding requirements.

Williams pointed out a trend of companies buying old wells either to use for injection of produced (byproduct) fluids, or to prevent communication with new wells, or to refrack them.

On legislation at the federal level, Williams acknowledged that **while a fee on carbon production has many supporters**, EDF is going in a different direction, working on a “hard” carbon limit.

The Citizens Climate Lobby continues to press for a fee. Their proposal, introduced as HR 7173, the Energy Investment and Carbon Dividend Act, sets a rate of \$15 per ton of carbon dioxide. Jim Probst, the CCL’s West Virginia state coordinator, explained that it’s revenue-neutral: 100% of fees would be “refunded” to U.S. households. In theory, this would offset higher costs of consumer goods.

Probst remarked that “the poor are more carbon virtuous.” The wealthiest 1% generate six times more carbon dioxide than the bottom 10%. Wouldn’t fairness require some adjustment of the “carbon dividend”?

At last, we came to a feel-good topic, **solar power in coal country**. However, as presented by the ever-realistic Evan Hansen, president of Downstream Strategies, the transition felt less abrupt, seeing how far West Virginia trails our neighbors. Compare solar-generated megawatts: North Carolina, 4,431; Virginia, 631; Pennsylvania, 373; Ohio, 176; West Virginia, under 7.

95% of our electricity continues to be generated by coal. Our statutory and regulatory environment is hostile to any change in that situation. In fact, much like the current federal government, we’re going backward. In 2014, the Republicans, who had gained control of the Legislature, repealed the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

West Virginia is a disproportionate contributor to climate change. For example, one coal car, carrying 100 tons, will generate 275 tons of carbon dioxide.

At the same time, West Virginia is demonstrably harmed by climate change—especially, in recent years, by catastrophic flooding.

(More on the next page)

More Climate Change (Continued from previous page)

There are plenty of opportunities for solar energy production on abandoned mine lands and other degraded lands where mining ended post-1977, the year the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act passed. Downstream Strategies found 158 square miles potentially viable—in terms of slope, proximity to the electric grid, etc.—for large-scale solar development. It makes sense to use these sites rather than logging and leveling more forest.

To get there, though, will require cooperation among many interests, especially mining companies, that should welcome this form of reclamation, and utilities, that could attract more forward-looking corporations bound by their own renewable-energy standards. More and more corporations, including the five largest companies in the world, require 100% of their power sourced from renewables. These are the employers we want.

Finally, on **solar power at a household and community scale**, we heard from Autumn Long, program director for WV Solar United Neighbors. SUN now operates in nine states, with three more coming on soon. They assist individuals and community groups to go solar and they lobby for legislation to encourage renewable energy. Long said they hope to see West Virginia join more than half the other states in enabling third-party power purchase agreements (PPAs).

PPAs are contracts between a developer, who installs, owns, and operates a solar array on a customer's property, and the customer, who agrees to purchase electricity produced by the array. The arrangement enables solar installation with no upfront cost to the customer. The customer pays a fixed rate to the developer that is generally lower than the local utility would charge. PPAs also enable tax-exempt organizations to take advantage of the federal solar tax credit. The developer takes the credit and passes the savings along to the organization.

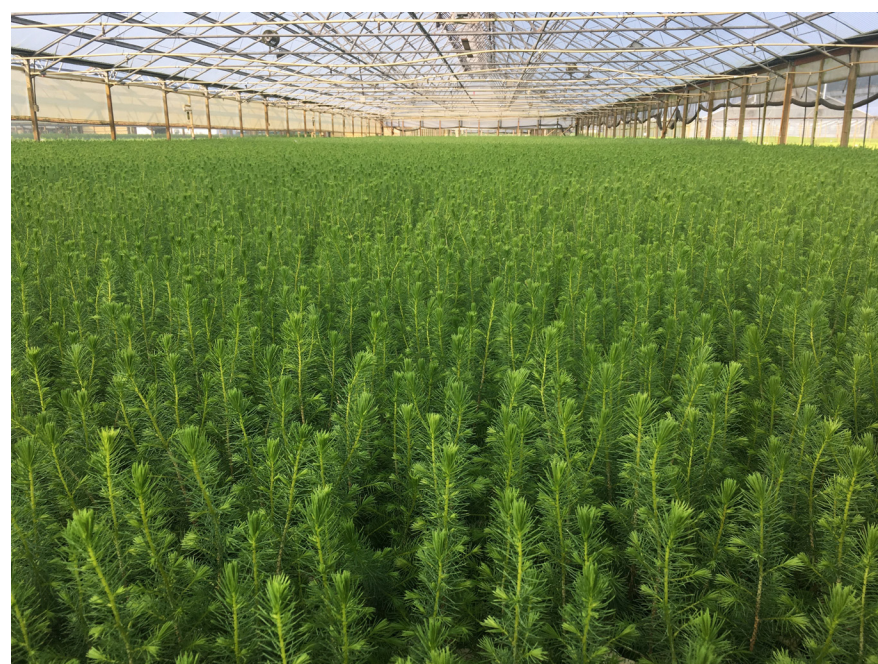
SUN has fostered a dozen solar co-ops in the state. We now have a half-dozen installers. Nationally, it's the fastest-growing occupation, up to 250,000 jobs last year (coal mining employed 53,000). In the past ten years, the cost of solar panels and related equipment has dropped 80%. But hurry! 2019 is the last year for the 30% federal tax credit.

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.



Seedlings Available

West Virginia Native Red Spruce

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy organizes volunteers to collect seeds from our native plant species in West Virginia. We have the seed processed, and seedlings grown, for use in ecosystem restoration and reclamation projects. When we have a surplus of plants or seeds, we make them available to the public.

Proceeds support red spruce ecosystem restoration in West Virginia.

To learn more visit www.restoreredspruce.org

Spring 2019 Red Spruce - Picea rubens

Spruce Knob, West Virginia seed source.

Red Spruce plugs

- 10-15 inches tall seedlings.
 - Plugs – 2" in diameter and 6" deep.
- 100 - \$250.00; 1,000 - \$1,250.00**

Limited Quantities, Available April 1, 2019, FOB Morgantown, WV

Trees may be purchased on the Highlands Conservancy's website, at;

www.wvhighlands.org, or you can send a check to;
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

For more information contact;
Dave Saville, Program Coordinator
david.saville12@gmail.com

Our Readers Write

Editor:

Regarding a recent article on so-called global waning, a number of points should be considered.

I understand the myth of so-called global warning is based on computer simulations. In an article which I read 30-years ago in *Natural History* an attempt was made to include factors which might help our understanding. It was stated that it is impossible to include all factors of climate. There are too many. There are too many variables. Climate is too complicated.

From the above, we can deduce the idea is a matter of faith, not science fed into a simulation. What may happen if we do not shut down power plants along the Ohio River and coal fields in southern West Virginia? This certainly requires a great deal of faith. Are we willing to tax gasoline in order to force folks to ride bicycles to workplaces? Al Gore said taxes are an excellent way to force humans to behave in certain ways.

Our planet must be warming because there was a glacier 100 miles north in Ohio while our ancestors lived at the Meadowcroft Rock Shelter 15000-years ago. We know of no automobiles and carbon threats at that time.

And at how many parts per million must we begin sequestration of carbon? Ours is not the atmosphere of Venus. Every time we read a report of global warming we are told it's almost "too late" for our survival. 20-years ago I read we can do nothing. So-called global warming cannot be stopped regardless of our activities.

Finally, have we considered the possibility that our nearest star might influence our warmth? There has been a paucity of sunspots in recent years. I hope the teacher who wrote the article has told "why" some in the population do not accept without proof the concept of "global warming" man-made or not.

I am glad *The Highlands Voice* provides many sides of issues of our environment.

Carl M. Patsche
Weirton, WV

Legislative Scuttlebutt

The rumor around the West Virginia Legislature is that there will be no bill authorizing timbering in State Parks this year. Rumor has it that the public uproar at such a proposal was sufficient to dissuade the Legislature from any attempt this year.

Late at night, around the camp fire, long time Legislative observers have told tales of someone with enough power and pockets of favors to redeem who was able to take some idea that nobody saw coming and turn it into law. Nothing is certain until the Legislature goes home. From today's rumor, however, the Parks are safe.

Note: "Scuttlebutt" originated as a nautical term. It was a cask in which a hole had been drilled and was the source of the crew's drinking water. Because that was where sailors would gather, it was where rumors were passed along.

Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs, and Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Larry Thomas, P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larryvthomas@aol.com
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Marilyn Shoenfeld, 167 Balsam Way, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, marilyn.shoenfeld@gmail.com
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE AFFAIRS: Frank Young, 33 Carnian Ford Road, Ripley, WV 25271, (304) 372-3945, fyoung@mountain.net
SECRETARY: John McFerrin, 202 Van Tassel Court, Morgantown, WV 26508, (304) 291-8305, johnmcferrin@aol.com
TREASURER: Bob Marshall, 2108 Emma Road, Kenna, WV 25248, (304) 545-6817, woodhavenwva@aim.com
PAST PRESIDENT: Cynthia D. Ellis, 3114 Steel Ridge Road, Red House, WV 25168, (304) 586-4135, cdellis@wildblue.net

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2018)
George E. Beetham Jr., 2819 Mt. Carmel Avenue, Glenside, PA 19038, (267) 252-3748, geobeet@hotmail.com
Jackie Burns jackie.burns@frontier.com. 304 866 4093
Randy Kesling, 116 Farm Meadow Drive, Bridgeport, WV 26330; (304) 622-5982; rkesling@MA.RR.com
Kent Karriker, 344 Harpertown Road, Elkins, WV 26241 (304) 636-8651, bykarriker@suddenlink.net
Patrica Gundrum, Charleston, WV gundrum2@gmail.com

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2019)
Adam Casseday, 212 Davis and Elkins St, Elkins, WV 26241, 304-636-4944, dr_casseday@yahoo.com
George Hack; 510 HANNA RD; Bel Air, MD 21014; 443 742-0463 george.hack@db.com
LeJay Graffious, P.O. Box 69, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525, lejay@oldhemlock.org
Rick Webb, 481 Ravens Run Road, Monterey, VA 24465, (540) 468-2881, rwebb@virginia.edu
Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304) 636-2662, hugh.rogers@gmail.com

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS
WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY: Randy Rumer; 295 Caraway Lane Renick, WV 24966; (304) 497-2657; rrumer@frontiernet.net
PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS: Buff Rodman, 32 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, PA 15139, (412) 828-8983, buffrodman@hotmail.com
BROOKS BIRD CLUB: Cynthia D. Ellis, 3114 Steel Ridge Road, Red House, WV 25168, (304) 586-4135, cdellis@wildblue.net
WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION: Turner Sharp, Box 4751, Parkersburg, WV 26104 Tsharp@suddenlink.net
MOUNTAINEER CHAATER TROUT UNLIMITED Randy Kesling, 116 Farm Meadow Drive, Bridgeport, WV 26330; (304) 622-5982; rkesling@MA.RR.com
FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE KANAWHA: Cindy Rank, 4401 Eden Road, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304) 924-5802, clrank2@gmail.com
TEAM (Taylor Environmental Advocacy Membership): Beth Baldwin, 222 Westwood Ave Bridgeport, WV 26330; elbrn6e21@msn.com
ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS ALLIANCE: Dr. Wayne C. Spiggle, 3987 Knobley Road, Keyser, WV 26762, 304-726-4868, wspiggle@mac.com
SHAVERS FORK COALITION: Jim Van Gundy, 210 Buffalo Street, Elkins, WV 26241, (304) 636-4736, jjvg01@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE: Cindy Rank, 4401 Eden Road, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304) 924-5802, clrank2@gmail.com
PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Kent Karriker, 344 Harpertown Road, Elkins, WV 26241 (304) 636-8651, bykarriker@suddenlink.net
RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE: Larry Thomas, P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larryvthomas@aol.com
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Frank Young, 33 Carnian Ford Road, Ripley, WV 25271, (304) 372-3945, fyoung@mountain.net
ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE: Larry Thomas, P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larryvthomas@aol.com
RIVERS COMMITTEE: Vacant
HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE: Hugh Rogers, 531 Moon Run Road, Kerens, WV 26276, (304) 636-2662, hugh.rogers@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS OFFICES
WEB PAGE – DIGITAL PUBLISHING: Dan Radmacher, (540) 798-6683, dan.radmacher@writingleft.com

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Dave Saville, PO Box 569, Morgantown, WV 26507, 304-692-8118; WVHC50@gmail.com
HIGHLANDS VOICE EDITOR: John McFerrin, 202 Van Tassel Court, Morgantown, WV 26508, (304) 291-8305, johnmcferrin@aol.com

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the new edition of the treasured guide to every trail in the Monongahela National Forest features brand-new topographic maps and Kent Mason's gorgeous photos, all in color.

The Guide has been updated with the cooperation of National Forest District Rangers and Recreation Specialists to reflect changes in the past ten years:

- * newly designated wilderness areas
- * new trails near campgrounds and sites of special significance
- * a new complex of interconnected trails on Cheat Mountain
- * rerouted and discontinued trails
- * ratings for difficulty, scenery, access to water, and much else

The definitive guide to the Mon adds a wealth of information about history, wildlife, and botany; safety, preparation, and weather; horseback and mountain bike riding and cross-country skiing; as well as sources of further information on the Forest and its environs.

The Monongahela National Forest has long been known as a 'Special Place'. The hiking, backpacking, and cross-country skiing opportunities it provides are among the best in the eastern U.S. New wilderness and backcountry trails have been added to the outstanding areas we have appreciated for decades – Otter Creek Wilderness, Dolly Sods Wilderness, Flatrock Plains, Roaring Plains, Blackwater Canyon, Spruce Knob, North Fork Mountain, Shaver's Mountain, Laurel Fork Wilderness, Cranberry Wilderness -- and there are lesser-known gems to be found in between.

Profits from the sale of these guides support a wide variety of worthy environmental projects for the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

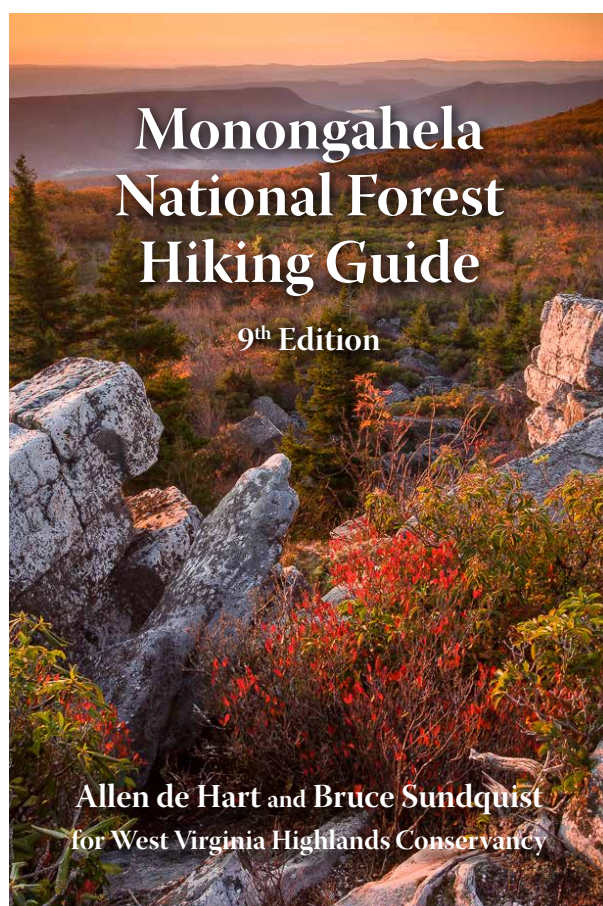
**Send \$18.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**

P.O. Box 306

Charleston, WV 25321

OR

**Order from our website at
www.wvhighlands.org**



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

**Surveillance
Report
1/24/19**

**Pipeline
Compliance
Surveillance
Initiative (CSI)**

The CSI is a program of the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA) and its member groups.



abralliance.org
pipelineupdate.org/csi

Pipeline CSI
On the Ground & In the Air

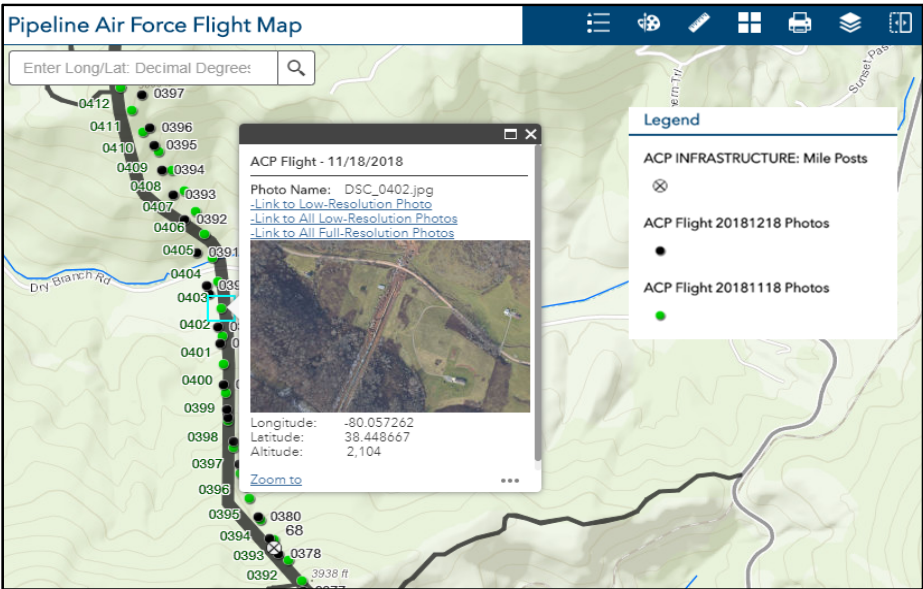
The Pipeline Air Force conducted three ACP surveillance flights over the 200-mile CSI focus area in November and December of 2018.

Flights on November 18 and December 12 covered the pipeline corridor in West Virginia, from Harrison to Pocahontas Counties, where about 45 miles of construction activity has occurred and about 10 miles of pipeline have been deployed (installed or strung on the ground). A flight on December 23 covered the pipeline corridor in Virginia, from Highland to Buckingham Counties, where about 40 miles of trees have been felled, but no earth-disturbing construction activity has occurred.

Aerial photos include both:

- 1) Nadir images (straight down) obtained at 3-second intervals at 3,000 feet above ground level with a camera mounted in the bottom of the plane.
- 2) Oblique images (angled/side-view) obtained for areas of particular interest with a hand-held camera.

Additional photos are collected by ground-based citizen volunteers.



AERIAL PHOTOS OBTAINED BY THE PIPELINE AIR FORCE, AS WELL AS OTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING ACP COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS, CAN BE ACCESSED ON THE CSI ONLINE MAPPING SYSTEM.

[CSI Mapping System](#)

Complaint Submission

Based on analysis of the November and December 2018 flight photos by CSI Aerial Image Reviewers, 22 separate complaints concerning regulatory non-compliance were submitted by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition to the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

These complaints concerned:

- Failure to install, or delayed installation of, erosion and sediment control measures. (5 incidents)
- Deviation from approved erosion and sediment control and construction plans. (1 incident)
- Missing, failed, damaged, or improperly installed or maintained silt fences, filter socks, or other perimeter control devices. (13 incidents)
- Missing, failed, damaged, or improperly constructed right-of-way diversions (water bars or slope breakers) and outlet structures. (2 incidents)

Complaint Response

Following a December 10, 2018 inspection conducted in response to some of these complaints, WVDEP issued a Notice of Violation to Dominion Energy Transportation, Inc. for noncompliance with permit terms and conditions and failure to comply with the project's approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Cited deficiencies included:

- Erosion control devices not in place
- Water bars not installed
- Perimeter controls not in place

Click [here](#) to access the WVDEP Inspection Report and Notice of Violation.

The CSI will continue to track agency response to complaints and to maintain observation of the complaint locations.



ATLANTIC COAST PIPELINE STREAM CROSSING IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY. THE CROSSING DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE METHOD SPECIFIED IN APPROVED PLANS.



ATLANTIC COAST PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY. WATER BARS ARE NOT INSTALLED AS REQUIRED FOR STEEP SLOPE CONSTRUCTION.



ATLANTIC COAST PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY. WATER BARS ARE NOT INSTALLED AS REQUIRED FOR STEEP SLOPE

Saying Goodbye: Beth Little Starts a New Chapter

By John McFerrin

As of the beginning of 2019, Beth Little has left her position as Membership Secretary/Administrative Assistant. We are sad to see her go. She had wanted to leave for a couple of years; we kept saying, "OK, OK, we understand. Just stay until we can find somebody to replace you."

Finally, we realized that we could not keep this up forever. We were fortunate that Dave Saville was available and willing to take over her position so now Beth is able to retire, at least from that position.

Beth leaves behind a record of almost twelve years of service. During all that time she has kept up with our membership, sent out renewal notices, managed fund raising letters, and generally done all the day to day work that is necessary to maintain the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy as a functioning organization. In her time on the job she began our on-line store, the on-line place where people can join, buy our hats and shirts, hiking guides, etc. Beth's job expanded from keeping track of members to include keeping track of inventory, filling orders, etc.

Beth's role in the behind the scenes, nuts and bolts work of keeping the Highlands Conservancy running comes after a long history of more public activism. In 2009 she won the Laura Forman Grassroots Activist presented by the West Virginia Environmental Council. The announcement of the award offered this mini-biography:

Beth came to Pocahontas County from Philadelphia over thirty years ago, and has fought to protect the mountains that drew her here since she arrived. Her selfless devotion, attention to detail and leadership ability make her a sought-after member of many community and state boards. She has worked tirelessly to protect the Monongahela National Forest, promote wilderness, helped defeat more than one proposed coal burning electric plant—including the recently proposed Western Greenbrier co-generation plant—and is now actively fighting to control Marcellus shale gas drilling.

In 2012 she won the Sierra Club Award. The work for which she was recognized reflected the times. Horizontal drilling for gas in the Marcellus Shale in West Virginia began in 2008. The biography that accompanied her 2012 award emphasized her work in dealing with the problems that arose from that:

Beginning in 2009, Beth began raising the alarm over unrestricted drilling statewide. Brine disposal in MNF sites had resulted in dead trees and polluted streams and there were leases being proposed for State Parks, but the horror stories on private lands were substantially worse. Beth began researching cases and compiled a multi-media slide show to illustrate the scale of the impacts.

For two years, Beth was the primary contact for citizens concerned about gas development. She became expert in gas leasing and property



Beth and family when they came to West Virginia

rights issues. In addition, with frequent talks to local groups statewide, she helped raise awareness to the lack of adequate regulation of the industry, the Halliburton loopholes, and the problems with the lack of inspectors and the inadequate enforcement. She identified the need to further refine Sierra Club policy on natural gas at a time when there was a tendency to ignore the adverse impacts.

In an issue that is near to the Highlands Conservancy's heart, Beth was a leader in the multi-year effort that resulted in the Wild Monongahela Act. Passed in 2009, the Wild Monongahela Act, created three new wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest, and adds acreage to three existing wilderness areas. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the Wilderness Hero Award.

Beth got to West Virginia as part of the wave of educated, urban homesteaders

(More on the next page)



Mary Wimmer, Dave Saville, and Beth visit Senator Byrd to discuss Wilderness

Still Saying Goodbye to Beth (Continued from previous page)

who made their way to Pocahontas and Greenbrier Counties in the 1970s, seeking cheap land and a different way of life. Legends of their blundering, trying to live off the land without the skills necessary to do it, are legion. Yet many of them persisted, learned, and became permanent parts of the community.

Beth's own journey took her from life as a computer programmer. In the early 70's, she left that life in Los Angeles to travel around the country with her kids, her then husband and their dog, all in a truck with a camper on top. They landed in Pocahontas County. There followed a seven year stint in Philadelphia before she was drawn back to Pocahontas County for good in 1980. By this time she was a single mother with two young children. She gravitated to her local extension agent and quickly became renowned as an organic gardener.

Beth still lives in an energy efficient house she built on her land in Lobelia. She says "I have a sense of home and place and community that I didn't expect to have before this. In a city, I just didn't have the sense we have here. It's really special."

She's always the same good company and better informed about proposed depredations than just about anyone else. Unlike many of us, she doesn't get too distracted by saving the world to remember to enjoy the world. She has her favorite hikes, as we all have. It's always a pleasure to explore them with her.

The place and community are not the only things that are special. We all know that Beth is special and wish her well wherever the next chapter of her life takes her.

Board Highlights

By John McFerrin

It was not a fit night out for man nor beast as the Board gathered in Charleston for the winter meeting. Any impulse towards soliloquy, rambling, exhortation, declamation, long discussion, etc. was tempered by our mutual desire to be home before dark.

We did have some things to take care. The Executive Committee had been active since the last meeting. Decisions of the Executive Committee are not final until ratified by the Board. We ratified these decisions:

- That we hire Dave Saville as Membership Secretary, replacing Beth Little.
- That we buy a new computer for the use of the Membership Secretary
- That we intervene before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in the proceedings over the Big Run Pump Storage Hydroproject and to file comments on that project.

Cindy Ellis talked about her tabling activity. It is very often fun, very occasionally not especially interesting. Regardless, she is going to have to dramatically reduce her tabling. Nobody stepped forward to take the opportunity. Jackie Burns mentioned the possibility that we should consider paying expenses for those who have to go a long way to the tabling location.

Beth Little presented the Membership Report. It showed that we are maintaining a consistent membership.

Treasurer Bob Marshall presented matters financial. First, there was the financial report for 2018, showing the income and expenses for 2018. In the official terminology of the Telling It Like It Is Department, it was boring. It was money coming in, money going out. We have enough to cover our expenses with enough of a cushion to operate.

Next, we considered a budget for 2019. It was largely the same as in the past. It did show the substantial contribution that we agreed to make to the Citizen Surveillance Initiative. That was new. For more on what the Citizen Surveillance Initiative is up to, see the story on p. 12.

Frank Young reported on matters legislative. For what he said, and more, see the story on p. 3.

The Environmental Council feels chronically outgunned. It has three lobbyists who seek to advance its ideas in the face of

many times that many industry lobbyists who oppose those ideas. The Environmental Council has a lobbying budget of \$23,000, of which the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy provides \$6,000.

On matters of public lands, Kent Karriker talked about the proposed Big Run Pump Storage Hydroproject. For what he said (and more) see the story on p. 4.

We discussed briefly whether we would categorically oppose pump storage facilities such as the one proposed for Big Run. While there was no vote or extensive discussion, it was the general sense of the meeting that we would not. This one was in an unsuitable location so we would oppose it but we would not categorically oppose such facilities.

Larry Thomas plans to attend the meeting of the West Virginians for Public Lands Committee this week. The rumor is that the proposal to timber in State Parks will not be brought up at the Legislature this year. If this rumor proves to be true, then the West Virginians for Public Lands will have time to devote to other efforts.

In matters of outreach, we discussed whether we wanted to have a Fall Review. Jackie Burns, Jim VanGundy, Cindy Ellis, and Marilyn Shoenfeld are on the committee to plan it. They will be considering possible music, a speaker, location, etc.

In matters of extractive industries, Cindy Ellis reported on the Mountaineer Express Pipeline (MXP). The developers, Columbia/TransCanada recently requested and received permission for "partial" operation of much of the line and its compressor stations in 14 western WV counties. "Winterization" and "reclamation" continue to be in progress on some portions. West Virginia Highlands Conservancy did participate in a comment letter opposing the minimal nature of fines by WV DEP for violations during construction. Some of those violations occurred in Putnam and Jackson counties, but the majority were in beleaguered Doddridge. The volunteer stream monitoring (which WVHC helped sponsor) will continue for at least a year after initial operation of the line.

Hugh Rogers reported on the status of Corridor H. Construction is still subject to the Cease and Desist Order that was issued in very late September, 2018. Activity is limited to efforts to correct the problems that led to the Order.

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