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The Highlands Voice

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

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United States Environmental Protection Agency Narrows Protections for Clean Water

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has announced the repeal of the regulation defining the “waters of the United States.” In doing so, it has removed protection for millions of miles of streams and many wetlands. The streams affected are largely headwater streams or streams which do not have water in them year round.

The federal Clean Water Act requires protection of the “waters of the United States.” While everybody agrees that major waterways are protected, there has always been some dispute over how far the protection extends. In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency did extensive rulemaking and came up with a rule that protected headwater streams and all wetlands that are connected to streams.

This action repeals the 2015 rule and makes way for a narrower definition of “waters of the United States.” The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy opposed these changes and filed public comments, as did thousands of others.

For a more extensive version of this history, see the January, 2019, and May, 2019, issues of *The Highlands Voice*.

Many of the initiatives of any administration are undertaken without direct involvement by the President. With cabinet appointments the President sets the direction but he may have little direct role in the details of policy.

The waters of the United States rule is an exception. Mr. Trump occasionally campaigned against the 2015 version of the rule. Soon after his election he signed an executive order that it be repealed, complete with a signing ceremony and an assurance that this action would “create millions of jobs, so many jobs are delayed for so many years.” Even as the Environmental Protection Agency solicited public comments, went through the motions of listening to the public, etc. its fate was sealed.

Every other change to the definition of “waters of the United States” in the past few years has resulted in litigation. There is no reason to believe that this time will be any different. Stay tuned.

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Thoughts from our President

By Larry Thomas

October and Mother Nature has started her annual coloring of the leaves. Conversations always drift to the annual question, how is the weather going to affect how brilliant the colors will be this year? No matter what, Mother Nature's magnificent show will draw hundreds of thousands to West Virginia. Traveling to Dolly Sods, Blackwater Falls, Canaan Valley and the Mower Tract last week, I saw evidence that people are already coming.

September was another month of activities possibly having negative effects on the Highlands.

W.Va. Legislators Say, Give Spring turkey Hunters More Access to Monongahela National Forest

Release from the [W.Va. House of Delegates](#):

CHARLESTON, [W.Va.](#) – Delegate Eric Porterfield, R-Mercer, and Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman Mark Maynard, R-Wayne, today announced they have asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service to consider opening up portions of the Monongahela National Forest in Pocahontas County to hunters and vehicular traffic during spring gobbler season.

Delegate Porterfield and Senator Maynard recently met with officials representing the Forest Service's Marlinton-White Sulphur Ranger District to request the gates that close off about 45 miles of road in the district be opened during spring turkey hunting season.

The Forest Service closes the roads from March 1 to Aug. 31, in part to allow for the turkeys' natural nesting season, but opens the gates for fall hunting seasons. Delegate Porterfield said constituents in his district brought the issue to his attention and asked for state help in convincing federal officials to open the area during the spring.

"Senator Maynard and I are in lock-step agreement that there is a lack of equality for our spring gobbler hunters with these strategic gates being locked, blocking off nearly 25 percent of the Monongahela National Forest in the White Sulphur District during this spring hunting season," Delegate Porterfield said. "If these gates are unlocked during fall deer hunting season, it only makes sense to allow our hunters to hunt these good areas during spring gobbler season. We're just asking for equality and non-discriminatory treatment for our turkey hunters."

Senator Maynard said this land belongs to the American people, so they should have the right to use it year-round.

"I am a huge advocate for taxpayers having the right to access their state and federally owned land," Senator Maynard said. "This access would not only give spring gobbler hunters the ability to arrive at a much closer location to their spot but would allow better access for older or physically challenged hunters that do not have their Class Q hunting license."

Delegate Porterfield and Senator Maynard also said opening these roads could provide an economic boost for the area during the spring.

"This could potentially open up tourism revenue in these good areas, following the winter ski season, so that our hunters and others could come in and enjoy our great West Virginia forests and wildlife," Delegate Porterfield said.

Senator Maynard said opening the roads could also boost tourism with off-road vehicle enthusiasts.

"I am very passionate about motorized trail recreation," Senator Maynard said. "This state is very lacking when it comes

to off-highway vehicle trail access, and the more trails that officials leave gated and closed off means fewer trails that are accessible for off-highway vehicle use."

Delegate Porterfield and Senator Maynard are awaiting a decision from USDA officials, and encouraged hunters to contact the local offices of the Forest Service to encourage them to consider opening these areas next spring.

Some thoughts from the WVHC Board:

"I'd like to know what the rank-and-file DNR game folks think about this (the biologists and area managers, not the brass in Charleston). The main reason for the spring closure is to protect turkeys from too much hunting mortality and other disturbance during the spring nesting season, as well as the summer poult-rearing season. I don't know the ground in that area well enough to have an informed opinion about whether opening the roads in the spring would have a negative impact on turkeys and other spring nesters.

I'm not sure what Cindy and other district staff will think about this proposal. But I'm pretty sure the engineering staff and watershed staff will be opposed to it. Opening roads during the spring wet season will cause a lot of damage, and the Forest Service already does not have anywhere near sufficient funding to maintain roads to standard.

Senator Maynard appears to be misinformed about the status of "off road" vehicles on the Forest. Simply opening the roads does not mean they are (legally) accessible to off-road vehicles. They would be open only to properly registered street-legal vehicles. Opening the roads and/or trails to off road vehicles would be a whole 'nother can of worms. I don't know how the new Forest Supervisor feels about that, but I suspect most of the people who work for him would be opposed to it.

What a bucket of worms that would open up. There's already an issue with illegal ATVs tearing up meadows on Dolly Sods North. It would bring noise, scare wildlife, open backcountry areas to beer parties, pollute streams, tear up roads and trails, and scatter human waste through the forest.

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy will send a letter in opposition to this proposal.

[North America Has Lost More Than 1 in 4 Birds in Last 50 Years, New Study Says](#)

For the first time, researchers have estimated the volume of total avian loss in the Western Hemisphere—and it's not just threatened species that are declining. Many backyard favorites are also losing ground. See <https://www.3billionbirds.org/> and YouTube at <https://abcbirds.org/donate/3-billion-birds/>

October is the WVHC Fall Review. Please come and join us October 18th through the 20th. The Committee has assembled a great program and more information is included elsewhere.

Antero Clearwater Temporarily Closed

The Antero-Clearwater facility has been temporarily idled while the company considers its “cost effectiveness.” In public statements the company has said that the closure is not permanent but only while it evaluates the facility. The facility is located near the Doddridge/Richie County line on Route 50 about midway between Clarksburg and Parkersburg, near West Union, WV.

The big picture problem

The role of water in fracking cannot be overstated. To do it takes millions of gallons of fresh water. The water comes from streams and wells and public water supplies as well as water that has been used at other wells. Then the companies mix in chemicals to facilitate the drilling and fracturing of rock deep in the earth. Then the water comes back up out of the ground, bringing with it all the chemicals added as well as whatever pollutants it picked up in the ground.

The water that comes out of the wells is way too polluted to dump in streams. The industry must find a way to dispose of it.

The Antero Clearwater solution

The Antero Clearwater facility is one attempt to solve this problem. It is 486 acre site meant to house a frack and processed water treatment plant and solid waste/salt residue landfill that is designed to accommodate some 2,000 tons/day of waste salt for a possible 26 years, and hold 200 tons/day of TENORM (technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material) until it can be shipped to appropriate waste facilities out west. It covers what were once 5 miles of headwater streams and 11 wetland areas.

As the facility name implies, the multilayered treatment system is meant to receive and treat millions of gallons of gas drilling wastewater from the various Marcellus shale gas wells from hither and yon and render that toxic goop into water ‘clear’ enough to be trucked to and reused for further fracking at well sites in the area.

The residue from the treatment process is mainly salt – not your ordinary table salt, though reference has been made for the eventual possibility that future beneficial uses haven’t been ruled out – and other questionable solids that will contain concentrated NORM (naturally occurring radioactive material) that has been sucked out of the depths of the earth along with various other constituents.

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’s History with the Project

In late 2017 the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy joined West Virginia Rivers Coalition and local residents in an appeal of the permit before the Environmental Quality Board. The permit appeal was based on lack of evaluation and monitoring for the potential for radioactivity and other harmful pollutants from waste disposed at this site.

The appeal was later settled with an agreement which modifies the landfill permit to include new enforceable monitoring requirements.

What has happened now

The facility is temporarily idle. While companies must get rid of the water somehow, this type of facility is not the only option. Injecting used water into a disposal well or reusing water in depletion operations are other industry alternatives. According to its public statements, the company wants to stop, take a breath, and decide which of the alternatives is cheaper.

The company insists that the idling is not permanent



While we offer these items as “bumper stickers” that is only a suggestion. If one is small (and pegs the cute-o-meter) they can also serve as a rally sign. This is from the climate change strike in Huntington. Photo by Cindy Ellis.

Hiking Hawks Ridge in “Mine-tana”

By Hugh Rogers

Long-anticipated trails on the Mower Tract, 40,000+ acres on the western edge of Cheat Mountain that came into the Monongahela National Forest in the 1980's, are welcoming hikers at last. On the Lambert Ponds and Lambert Overlook trails, see the *Voice*, July 2019. Now we have Hawks Ridge Loop Trail on the southern flank of a ridge that was strip-mined before Forest Service acquisition. The trail offers long views over nearly 360 degrees, as well as patches of old red spruce that show what we might expect in a future beyond our lifetimes.

In the 1970's, before turning the land over to the Forest Service, Mower Lumber Company's successors took what coal they could get by “shoot and shove” mining: they dynamited the overburden, extracted the coal seam, then pushed the thin soil and broken rock back to “approximate original contour” and planted grasses and Norway spruce to control runoff. Slopes were stabilized, but the degraded, compacted soil could not support true reforestation. The high, wide-open landscape has been nicknamed “Mine-tana.”

Now the grassy slopes have been ripped by bulldozers with three-foot shanks and replanted with native red spruce seedlings obtained from the Highlands Conservancy's Administrator, Dave Saville. Kiosks along FR 227 explain the process. On Hawks Ridge, you can see the little spruce establishing footholds amongst the jumble of soil, rock, and knocked-down trees that had failed to thrive over the past thirty-five years.

Thanks to Greenbrier District Ranger Jack Tribble, Biologist Shane Jones, and Recreation Specialist John Wheeler for their help.

Here's the trail description in Hiking Guide format:

HAWKS RIDGE LOOP TRAIL

2.5 mi.

SCENERY: exceptional

DIFFICULTY: moderate

CONDITION: good

ELEVATION: 4400/4260

MAPS: Snyder Knob, and Forest Service topo accompanying this description

Access: At Cromer Top, where US 250 south of Huttonsville reaches the top of Cheat Mountain, turn right on FR 227. Drive south 5.7 mi. to a left turn on FR 227C. From this junction, it is one-half mile to the trailhead. FR 227 is a graded and graveled road in good condition, although washboarded on hills; FR 227C is hardpacked dirt, designed for high clearance vehicles, but can be negotiated, slowly, by street-clearance models.

Two trailheads, a stone's throw apart, are found on opposite sides of the road. Look for parking space on your right at the top of a rise a half mile from FR 227; a sign, “Hawks Ridge Loop 2 ½,” is on your left—the sign faces SE so it's easy to miss as you approach.

Just beyond is a large open area with a campfire ring. A sign at the edge of the woods credits funding for the project that will encompass four trails by September 2020; Hawks Ridge was the first to be completed. American Conservation Experience trainees (“Ace” on the map) finished a still-to-be-named south loop here in September 2019.

Segment 1: Hawks Ridge Loop begins as a vehicle track up a spine between two old strip mines. You can see the effects of deep ripping on the slopes, the skeletons of Norway spruce, and the new red spruce sprouts. Wire cages protect young quaking aspen. There are spectacular views to the east, across the Lambert Basin and the Shavers Fork to Allegheny Mountain, as well as south and southwest along Cheat Mountain. Crouch Knob (4529') is in the foreground. (In ten years or so, the maturing red spruce will grow tall enough to obstruct some views, so get 'em while you can.)

Once the trail reaches the top of the old mine, it stays on the 4400' contour. At a signed junction, leave the vehicle track and turn N into woods. Shortly, at another sign, the loop begins. Heading W, the trail soon re-emerges into the mined and restored area, where blazes appear on rocks. As the trail rounds the first point, views extend to the west. The trail then climbs to a higher bench.

At a tricky intersection, where blazes seem to point in two directions, straight ahead and sharply back SE, continue NNW and keep alert for the trail bearing off to the right—the blue blaze is on a rock partway up the slope. The trail continues just above and parallel with the vehicle track, at the toe of the reshaped highwall.

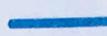
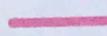
The bench narrows as it rounds the N point, and the trail peels off to the right and enters a pine plantation. Here, mature red spruce is regaining its old range; however, depending on the soil, some of the trees are chlorotic, yellowing, and may not survive. As the trail heads NE, there are intermittent openings between the trees. Barton Knob (4434') dominates the view; on its southern flanks, note the different generations of mineland reclamation.

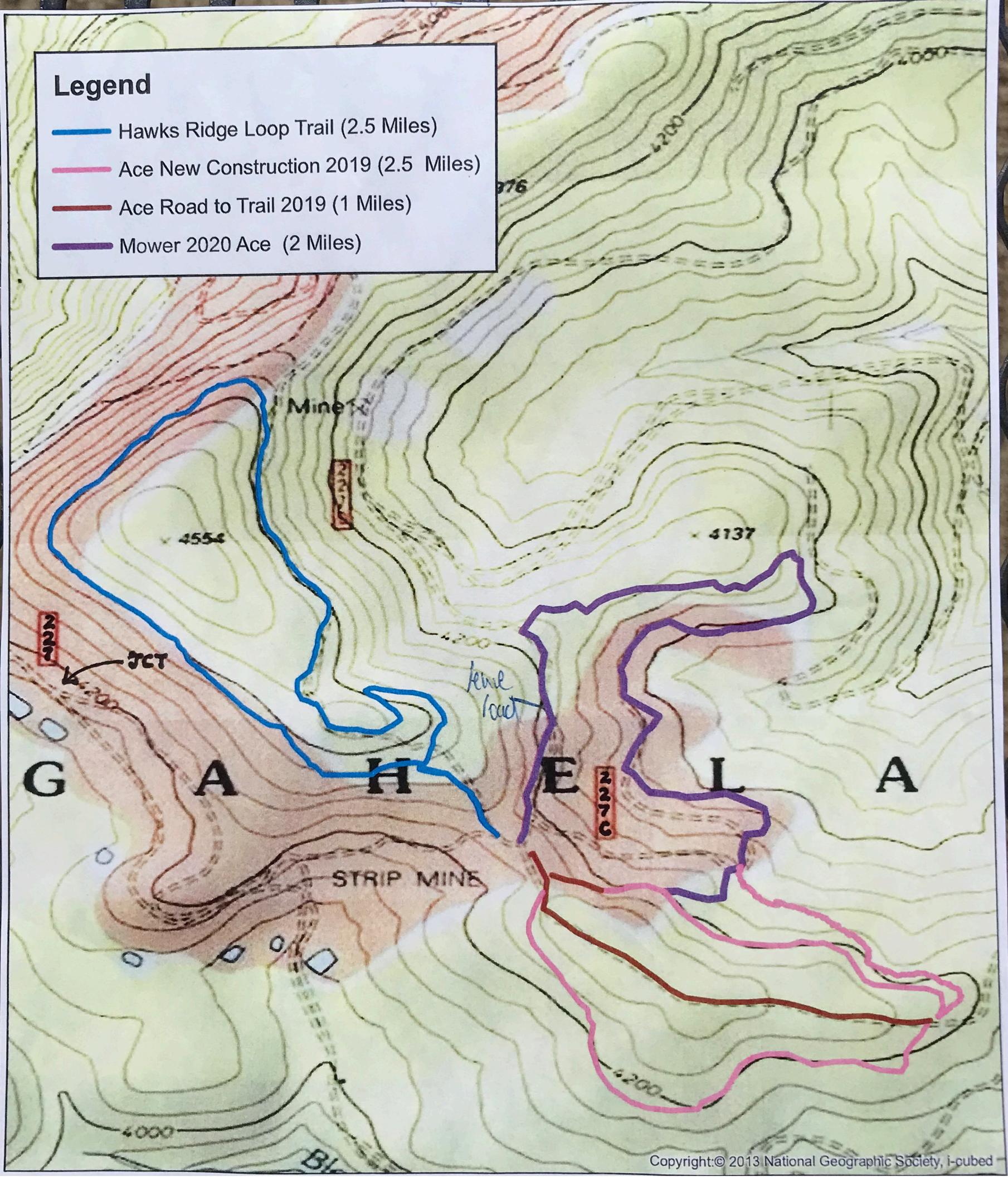
For a final contrast, the trail enters dense forest on the unmined east slope. Beech and birch are scattered among full-size (some very large indeed) red spruce. As the trail trends S, it joins an old woods road. Stay on the contour as a logging road plunges down on the left. At a clearing where the trail leaves the old road, the trail-builders have left their mark: a stack of three large rocks. The trail winds around through a spruce grove, then briefly rejoins the road, which narrows to a single track. In the next clearing, two low flat rocks have been placed as benches. The trail re-enters the woods on the left, heading north, and then at a switchback, descends to the east. One more turn toward the south closes the loop.

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.

Legend

-  Hawks Ridge Loop Trail (2.5 Miles)
-  Ace New Construction 2019 (2.5 Miles)
-  Ace Road to Trail 2019 (1 Miles)
-  Mower 2020 Ace (2 Miles)



Groups Sue to Enforce Endangered Species Act

By John McFerrin

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has joined with the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition to sue the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to protect endangered species from coal mining. The groups contend that the agencies are in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

Background

Congress enacted the Endangered Species Act in 1973 to provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened fish, wildlife, plants and their natural habitats. Under the Act, agencies are required to insure that any action “is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined ... to be critical.”

The “actions” which the agencies have to make sure do not threaten or endanger species include permitting of, in this case, coal mines. When the agencies make decisions on, in this case, coal mining permits, it must meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act.

The law assumes that most agencies, including the Office of Surface Mining, don’t know enough about protecting endangered species to do it adequately. When there are endangered or threatened species which could be affected by its decision, it is required to ask the Fish and Wildlife Service what to do. The jargon for this is that it must do a “consultation” which will lead to the Fish and Wildlife Service issuing a “Biological Opinion.”

What happened here

In 1995, the Office of Surface Mining initiated a formal “consultation” with the Fish and Wildlife Service about the impact of surface mining on endangered species. The result was that, in 1996, the Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion, setting out what the Office of Surface Mining should do to protect endangered species which might be threatened by mining.

In the Biological Opinion the Fish and Wildlife Service responded to the question of what the Office of Surface Mining should do to protect endangered species with a document that could be summarized as “not much.” It said that the Office of Surface Mining just had to make sure that its permitting required that companies follow the Surface Mining Coal and Reclamation Act requirements and that would be sufficient to protect endangered species.

As time passed, it became clear that the 1996 Biological Opinion was not enough. The Fish and Wildlife Service, the Plaintiffs, and everybody else now agrees that it is inadequate. Even if permitting agencies and companies do everything it requires, it still will not prevent jeopardy to listed species or adverse modification of critical habitat. In addition, since the 1996 Biological Opinion there have been two new species—the Big Sandy crayfish and the Guyandotte River crayfish—listed as endangered. Since they had not yet been listed, the 1996 Biological Opinion could not have accounted for them.

In 2017, the Office of Surface Mining asked the Fish and Wildlife Service for another opinion. It sought to find out what it should be doing to protect endangered species.

Then everything stopped. Permitting of mining operations went on, of course, but the Fish and Wildlife Service did not do another Biological Opinion. Instead, the Office of Surface Mining

and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection continued to rely upon and follow the 1996 Biological Opinion, the one everybody agrees is inadequate to protect endangered species.

The goal of this litigation is to make the Office of Surface Mining and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection stop relying upon the 1996 Biological Opinion. The litigation also seeks to require the Fish and Wildlife Service to do a new Biological Opinion, in response to the 2017 request and updated to adequately protect all endangered species. These are, of course, interim steps on the road to the overall goal of protecting endangered species.

Lurking not so far in the background of this controversy is the role of political influence. Although the entire story has some twists and turns, the short version is that in 2017 federal agencies became more enthusiastic about approving mining permits and less enthusiastic about protecting endangered species. To see some details, see *How the West Virginia coal industry changed federal endangered species policy*, [washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd_story.html).

This filing is the same one that was discussed in the June, 2019, issue of *The Highlands Voice*. That story announced that the plaintiffs believed that the Office of Surface Mining and the Fish and Wildlife Service were failing in their duties to protect endangered species. It said that if the agencies did not correct their policies the groups would sue. The agencies didn’t; the groups did. For more information, see that story.



Captain Renault is shocked to discover that there is political influence in permitting decisions

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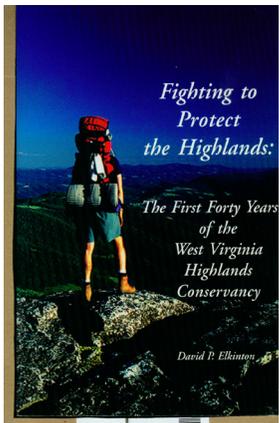
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Working to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful

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.

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 Dave Saville at WVHC50@gmail.com.

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.

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.

48th

That's West Virginia's ranking among states for energy efficiency, as determined by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. We are actually tied with Louisiana for this spot. This represents an improvement of one spot from the 2018 rankings; we achieved this by sitting still while North Dakota fell back by one spot. The District of Columbia has its own ranking so it is possible to finish 51st.

The report recognized Massachusetts for being the most energy efficient for the ninth year in a row. It also recognized Maryland as the most improved. Kentucky dropped the largest number of spots although it still managed to finish ten spots above West Virginia.

On canaries and logperch

As a professional biologist, I am appalled at what's happening to our river.

Not just scientists studying rare species, but those who enjoy fishing for trout, smallmouth bass, and catfish on the Roanoke River have a right to be concerned. We're talking here about the survival of the ecological pride of the Roanoke River Basin, the Roanoke Logperch. Eighty percent of the world's population of Roanoke Logperch lives in the upper Roanoke River and its tributaries. Badly handled Mountain Valley Pipeline construction work on the watershed is threatening their existence.

Logperch require a strong flow of clean water to keep silt off their nests, eggs, and larvae. It helps these little guys flip pebbles to find the bugs they eat. Excessive fine sediment smothers fish eggs and the insects the fish feed on. And a continuous flow of pipeline-caused sediment will lodge along the river, be moved along with the next high flow, and continue to cover the fish's nests and food supply, leaving the species vulnerable not just this year but in years to come. The newly listed Candy Darter in the New River watershed is similarly vulnerable to siltation. Popular game fish such as bass and catfish require clean water as well.

I know some question the logic of stopping a multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline project to save a little fish. "The canary in the coal mine" is the role endangered species play in our society. Their loss weakens the web of life on earth of which humans are a part. The founder of the science of wildlife management, Aldo Leopold, has expressed this relationship as follows:

The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, 'What good is it?' If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of eons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.

Note: This is an excerpt from the remarks of Rupe Cutler at a for press conference in Roanoke County, Virginia, on the impact of the Mountain Valley Pipeline construction on endangered species.

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DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2020)
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 Kent Karriker, 344 Harpertown Road, Elkins, WV 26241 (304) 636-8651, bykarriker@suddenlink.net
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 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: Jeff Witten, President, PO Box 2777, Elkins, WV 26241, (304) 362-5330, shaversforkcoalition@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; WVHC50@gmail.com; 304-692-8118

HIGHLANDS VOICE EDITOR: John McFerrin, 202 Van Tassel Court, Morgantown, WV 26508, (304) 291-8305, johnmcferrin@aol.com

Mon 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.

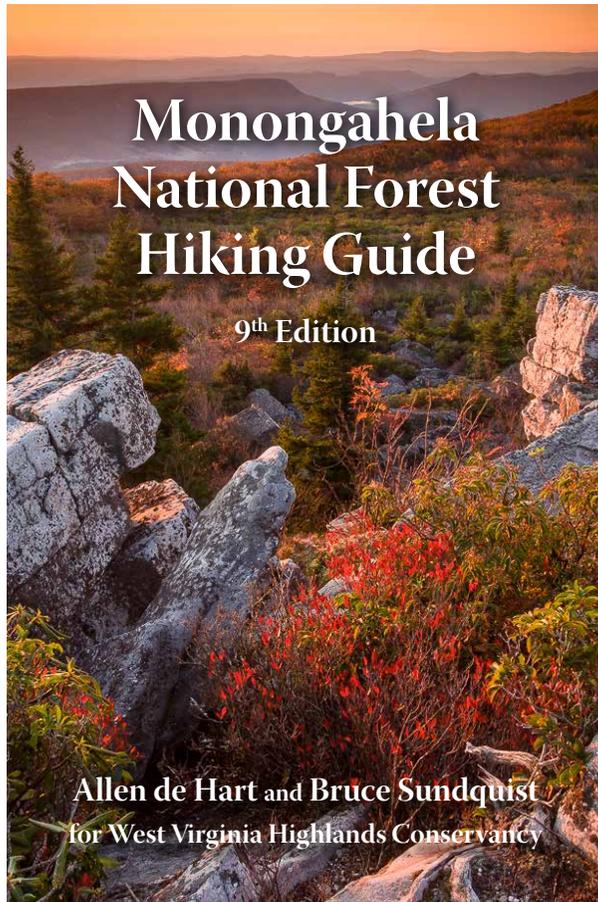
**Send \$18.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**

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 Dave Saville at WVHC50@gmail.com. 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 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 us know which (or both) you want.



Conifer Conservation and Ecology in the Central Appalachians

Fall 2019 CASRI Conifer Health Colloquium, and Field Tours

October 16 – 17, 2019 - Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge

Wednesday, October 16 - Conifer Health Colloquium	
2:45 – 3:30p	<i>Hemlock Forest Health Monitoring, Treatment and Ecology</i> John Perez, Biologist, New River Gorge National River & Gauley River National Recreation Area
3:30 – 3:45p	<i>Update on Hemlock Health and Treatment in the Central Appalachians</i> Amy Hill, Forest Stewardship Coordinator, State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service
3:45 – 4:00p	Break
4:00 – 4:30p	<i>Balsam/Canaan Fir Research Updates</i> Hessl Lab, Geography, West Virginia University
4:30 – 5:15p	<i>Balsam Fir Woolly Adelgid Resistance and Management</i> Ben Smith, Research Scientist, Forest Restoration Alliance
5:15 – 6:00p	Speaker panel discussion on conifer conservation in the Central Appalachian Highlands

FIELD TOURS Thursday, October 17, 2019

Gathering: 9AM, Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge, we are targeting our ending time to 3:30PM in Canaan Valley
Morning site visits in the Blackwater Falls State Park will focus on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid research and treatment plots. For lunch we will stop at Davis local restaurants before traveling to Canaan Valley for the afternoon site visits. In Canaan Valley we will visit the balsam (Canaan) fir research and restoration sites undertaken by The Nature Conservancy, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, West Virginia University, and Canaan Valley State Park. At the end of the afternoon we plan to take a chairlift ride to the top of Weiss Knob for views of a mature spruce forest, as well as topography of the Canaan Valley area that enables fir trees to thrive. Site visits will be led by the workshop presenters and CASRI partners and are free and open to the public. Please plan to carpool.

Please visit www.restoreredspruce.org to RSVP.

There is no cost to register but we would like a head count for room set-up and logistical planning.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is proud to work with a collaborative called the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative, or CASRI. Together with the support of The Nature Conservancy, and the Blackwater Falls State Park, The Highlands Conservancy invites you to join us at our Conifer Health Colloquium in learning more about some of the challenges facing our Hemlocks and Balsam Fir Trees.

CASRI is a partnership of diverse interests with a common goal of restoring historic red spruce-northern hardwood ecosystems across the high elevation landscapes of Central Appalachia. It is comprised of private, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations which recognize the importance of this ecosystem for its ecological, aesthetic, recreational, economic, and cultural values.

Red spruce and red spruce-northern hard-wood forests once dominated the highest elevations of West Virginia, covering over one million acres. Extensive logging in the late 1800s and early 1900s reduced much of the mature forest in the Appalachians, including the red spruce-dominated stands. Today less than 50,000 acres of high elevation red spruce forests remain in the State.

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact; Dave Saville at wvhc50@gmail.com, or 304-692-8118.

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review

October 18-20, 2019

Elk River Inn and Restaurant, Slatyfork, WV

The Schedule

Friday night

7:00 Meet and Greet: we will have light refreshments and the bar will be open. Good time for networking

Saturday

7:00 am Birdwalk led by Jackie Burns. Join Jackie for an early morning look at the sights and sounds of nature, particularly birds.

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 am Field trip to pipeline led by Rick Webb and his Compliance Surveillance Initiative (CSI) team. We will meet at the Linwood Library for a short pretrip briefing, then tour pipeline construction activity and impact areas.

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Restoration of Native Trout with Randy Kesling, Trout Unlimited.

Trout Unlimited has worked with various partners to restore brook trout in area streams.

1:45 pm Local Environmental Issues with Mary Willis. She is co-owner of the Elk River Inn. She and her husband manage their local business and work on local environmental issues.

2:30 pm Break

2:45 pm When, why, where and how of Spruce Restoration with Ben Rhodes, Ecological Restoration Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy. He will present an overview of the past, present and future of spruce restoration work.

3:30 pm Going Solar with Autumn Long, Solar United Neighbors. Autumn will discuss how to go solar on your home as well as the lifetime environmental cost of solar panels.

4:15 pm Woodcock project--Jackie Burns will the start of the research project and management for early successional habitat.

4:45 pm Break

5:00 pm The Clean Air Act and Climate Change Leave their Fingerprints on Forest Health in West Virginia by Dr. Richard Thomas, Chair of the Biology Department, WVU. Forests store carbon and therefore play a critical role in moderating climate change. Through analysis of hundreds of red oak, tulip poplar, red cedar and red spruce trees, his team has documented the complex interactions between warmer growing season temperatures, increases in precipitation, and increases in atmospheric CO₂ on the long-term growth and physiology of the trees. He will discuss his research findings.

6:00 pm Dinner

7:30 pm A Legislator Speaks: Environment and Energy by Delegate Evan Hansen, District 51, West Virginia House of Delegates. Evan is a member of the Energy and the Environment Subcommittees.

Sunday

9:30 am West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Annual Meeting

Immediately following Annual Meeting West Virginia Highlands Conservancy quarterly Board Meeting

Accommodations

For housing information: call Elk River Inn, 304-572-3741. The address is 34037 Seneca Trail, Slatyfork, WV 26291

Rooms with private bath \$89 per night single, \$99 double.

Rooms with shared bath \$63 single, \$68 double. Add 12% taxes. Includes breakfast.

Information

For more information call: Marilyn Shoenfeld 304-866-3484 or marilyn.shoenfeld@gmail.com. Marilyn is not handling reservations. You should call the Inn directly. The innkeeper of the Elk River Inn and Restaurant has sent us the menu. It looks good. We have been there before; the food was as good as it looks.

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