



The Highlands Voice

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Corridor H Alternate Route is Back on the Table

By Hugh Rogers

Last month, the Go North Alliance, an informal organization of state-wide, regional, and local nonprofits, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, as well as Tucker County businesses and individuals, formally requested a scoping process on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Parsons to Davis Project.

Scoping determines the range of analysis necessary for an informed decision on a proposed action and sets out how the agency will go about that process. Crucially, it includes public involvement. It is supposed to aid in the development of alternatives. It is not



Overlooking the Blackwater Canyon upstream of the north fork entrance of the Blackwater River. (Photo by Frank Gebhard)

supposed to define the project's scope so narrowly that only one alternative could work.

We contended that a new scoping process should take into account the substantial changes that have occurred within the area and take advantage of the dramatic improvements in digital mapping techniques and access to information.

The original scoping for the Appalachian Corridor H project was done in the early 1990's. Back then, its purpose and need assumed it would connect to I-81 in Virginia. That terminus has been foreclosed by Virginia's

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Thoughts From Our President

By Marilyn Shoenfeld

Another month has flown by, and we are heading into fall. We have all been busy. The Legislative Committee is developing a set of legislative priorities for the West Virginia Environmental Council in preparation for the next session of the legislature. These priorities will include the protection of West Virginia's public lands, keeping Off-Road Vehicle's out of state parks and other public lands, protecting our water, and commemorating the ten-year anniversary of the Elk River disaster in Charleston with other environmental groups. We would appreciate any suggestions from our members.

Our Fall Review at Canaan Resort State Park is coming up soon October 13-15! The theme is Water; there will be speakers and panels on all things water, including legislative updates, panel sessions with local water officials, a tour of the CVSP water treatment facility, sedimentation and the candy darter, PFAS and lead contamination, and much more. Our keynote

address will be given by Dr. Nicolas Zegre, associate professor of forest hydrology at West Virginia University and the director of the Mountain Hydrology Lab on Water Justice.

On Saturday, there will also be an opportunity to network with other environmental groups in West Virginia and learn about the important issues we are facing in the pursuit of conservation and preserving our public lands for generations to come.

A bird walk is scheduled for Saturday morning, and a mindfulness walk on Sunday to start your day. Our Annual Meeting of Membership and Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting will take place on Sunday morning as well. You can view the full schedule of events and RSVP at bit.ly/FallReview2023

In other news, we are working in partnership with the Friends of Blackwater, who are sponsoring a "Go North" campaign to advocate for a re-route of the Parsons to Davis section of

Corridor H.

There has been good news lately in that the proposed "Go North" route, advocated by the Go North Alliance, will be included in upcoming highway studies. On the front page of this issue, Hugh Rogers expands on the recent developments that put the alternate route back on the table.

The Go North Alliance, of which the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a part, is an alliance of environmental groups, business owners, and residents in Hardy, Tucker, Randolph, and nearby counties advocating for a route that best serves our communities and imparts the least harm on these environmentally sensitive and unique areas of West Virginia.

While this is good news concerning the consideration of the northern route, the issue is far from resolved, and Friends of Blackwater are hosting the Go North House Party Fundraiser at the home of Bruce and Andrea Dalton, at 333 Buck Run in Timberline. The

house party will take place from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 9.

We invite you to come enjoy food, drinks and live music from David and Cindy Proudfoot! There will also be a range of silent auction items, including bike rentals from Blackwater Bikes, a four-night stay in a Canaan Valley house, a basket from Wild Ginger & Spice, local art and a lot more. For more information and to RSVP visit the Go North website: go-northcorridorh.org

If you cannot attend but would still like to support the cause, you can still donate on the Go North website. Funds from the event will contribute to legal fees and an independent engineering report on the routes studied by the West Virginia Division of Highways and help the Go North Alliance reach their goal of \$50,000.

Thank you all for reading and remember that suggestions and comments are always welcome.

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decision not to build a four-lane parallel to Rt. 55. More generally, Corridor H was intended to "improve east-west transportation" through the region. Almost any highway upgrade might achieve that vague prescription.

The other two elements of purpose and need were to "promote economic development" and "preserve or improve the quality of life in the region."

We argued that scoping should be sensitive to the economic developments that have already occurred and the special quality of life here. Both would suffer from a badly planned project.

Among other notable changes, severe population loss (more than 20% from 1990 to 2000) has been reversed, and the number of businesses has dou-

bled in Thomas and Davis. New analysis should focus on an alignment that will be most compatible with a thriving tourist economy. The natural beauty and many activities this area provides draw ever more people. The environment we are blessed with is vulnerable. "One size fits all" highway projects are inappropriate here. Poor placement, by itself, would be ruinous.

Not surprisingly, during the lengthy period since the previous SEIS (2007), there have been significant changes in other relevant circumstances. The original Northern alternatives (officially "Blackwater Avoidance Alternatives") were distorted by a vain effort to achieve protection for an endangered species, the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, which has since been de-listed. The study area

for alternatives was expanded into environmentally vulnerable territory. We asked for a renewed focus on the study area for the Thomas-Davis section of the project, as specified in the Settlement Agreement.

For the Council on Environmental Quality, which coordinates environmental protection throughout the federal government, examination of alternatives is "the heart of the NEPA process." A Northern route is the obvious alternative, we said, and it should be examined at the same level of detail as the Revised Original Preferred Alternative (ROPA).

We acknowledged that scoping is not automatically required for a supplemental EIS, but in this case, there were a number of reasons why it would be beneficial to do so, and it

would lead to a better final decision on the remaining Corridor H Parsons-to-Davis section.

None of this was a surprise to Jason Workman, Director of Program Development at the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Charleston office. He quickly got to the point: FHWA and the West Virginia Division of Highways are developing a notice of intent (NOI) for Parsons to Davis supplemental EIS. The NOI is expected to be published in the Federal Register later this year and will provide additional scoping information. However, I wanted to let you know that the SEIS will include study of a Blackwater Avoidance Alternative.

So that's the good news, for which we are grateful. Now, what can

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we expect?

I anticipate a straight-up comparison of the ROPA with a Northern alternative will result in a decision to choose the latter. Such a result was forecast 20 ago when the Division of Highways (DOH) released its first Preferred Alternative Report. The Environmental Protection Agency recognized that the ROPA had “considerably more environmental impacts,” and it urged the DOH to reconsider. Our state Division of Natural Resources concurred.

Since then, the DOH has worked on tweaking the ROPA to make it more acceptable. To us, these changes have seemed relatively minor, and the ROPA’s predicted effects on streams, wetlands, floodplains, and public lands continue to be worse than the Northern alternative. But DOH has insisted that the ROPA has one great advantage: its lower cost.

Friends of Blackwater has commissioned a report by an engineering firm that has been involved in other Appalachian Development Highway System projects. We’ll have more to say in the future about the local implications of its work on North Carolina’s

Corridor K. The report was not complete at this writing, but the draft I have seen has serious questions about the ROPA’s cost estimations.

A final argument in favor of any Northern alternative is Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, which mandates that FHWA “cannot approve the use of land from . . . historical sites” unless either (a) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land, or (b) the use of the property will have a de minimis impact.

Based on DOH’s previous exploration of Blackwater Avoidance Alternatives in the 2002 Draft and 2007 Final SEIS, as well as work done so far by the engineering firm mentioned above, it seems obvious that a “feasible and prudent alternative” will be found.

Up to now, DOH has avoided that issue, relying on the State Historic Preservation Officer’s increasing willingness during the 1990’s to define the Blackwater Industrial Complex as a “discontinuous” historic district. That interpretation would allow encroachments, even a four-lane highway bridge, as long as they didn’t affect “contribut-

ing elements” such as the original coke ovens.

Meanwhile, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, an office within the federal Department of Interior, was engaged in its own determination of eligibility for the Register and thus for protection by Section 4(f). That effort came to a head in 2001. The Keeper’s staff visited the district and conferred with the relevant parties, including the Forest Service, owner of the property. John Calabrese, the Forest Archaeologist, wrote, “The notion that Coketon is part of a discontinuous historic district is, from our point of view, inconsistent with previous opinions expressed by the Forest Service, the WVSHPO, and your office.”

The Keeper agreed. In its Determination of Eligibility Notification, it stated, “Post-mining reclamation of a relatively small area has not significantly disturbed the Coketon resources in a manner that would necessitate Coketon’s evaluation as a discontinuous district, nor does it support the evaluation of the Blackwater Industrial Complex as a discontinuous district.”

Subsequent negotiations be-

tween DOH and the Forest Service on mitigation of the highway’s impacts have muddied the waters. To be clear: if there is a “feasible and prudent alternative”, Section 4(f) requires its selection. No mitigation is necessary. Nor could the ROPA be approved under the other exception, “de minimis impact.” Clyde Thompson, then Forest Supervisor, made that clear in a 2002 letter to the DOH: “whatever the final design of the piers and span, a bridge of the proportions necessary for this project cannot fail to have an adverse effect on the integrity of setting, feeling, and, possibly, association of the site.”

What is true of the historic site is also true of our community now: putting a four-lane divided highway and a separate new truck route between the towns and close to our premier state park cannot fail to have an adverse effect on the integrity of their setting, feeling, and association.

We look forward to the outcome as our federal and state highway agencies devise and seriously consider an alternative route to preserve this special place.

Blending Recreation, History and Culture along the Blackwater Industrial Complex

The Blackwater Industrial Complex Archaeological and Historic District contains a ten-mile stretch of the 1888 West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway grade with bridges and culverts, the abandoned community of Limerock along with the historic mining towns of Thomas, Coketon and Douglas, including numerous historic buildings, mine portals, stone foundations of the Coketon power house, several mine buildings and two mine tipples, many other unidentified structure foundations, and the standing remains of approximately 300 (out of the original 1,235) bee hive style coke ovens.

Beginning immediately west of Hambleton, continuing to Thomas, the grade “the steepest in the east . . . climbs 1,236 feet in 10 miles.” The first train ran along the tracks in April of 1889 to the town of Parsons.

Today, residents and visitors enjoy the railroad grade for hiking, running, and biking, while taking a step back in time to the area’s industrial past. The railroad grade offers stunning views of the Blackwater Canyon with numerous waterfalls before connecting with the 26-mile Allegheny Highlands Trail just north of Hendricks.



The Highlands Voice: It's Not Just for Reading Any More

The Highlands Voice is the main way that the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy communicates with its members. But we would like to communicate with more than our members. We have a valuable perspective and information; we would like to communicate with everybody. We still offer electronic delivery. If you would prefer to receive it electronically instead of the paper copy please contact Crys Bauer at membership@wvhighlands.org. With electronic delivery, you will receive a link to a pdf of the Voice several days before the paper copy would have arrived.

No matter how you receive it, please pass it along. If electronically, share the link. If paper, hand it off to a friend, leave it around the house, leave it around the workplace. It's not just for reading. It's for reading and passing along.

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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 two 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.)



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

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

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Part Two: Wilderness Trails

By Dave Johnston

In the first part of this discussion, we explored the fact that while Wilderness is supposed to be “untrammelled” by humans and evidence of our temporary presence is to be minimized, purposely constructed and maintained trails can still be compatible with Wilderness, despite being a permanent development.

One of the key goals of the Wilderness Act is to make the experience of Wilderness available for the enjoyment, education, and enlightenment of people. Trails provide access for people but do so in a way that can minimize disturbances that would otherwise occur and make it more likely that human traffic does not degrade the environment or the wilderness experience itself.

It is also an unavoidable fact that if trails were not provided, they would occur anyway. People are drawn to natural areas and designated Wilderness holds special appeal to those looking for a more primitive experience. Unmanaged social trails would inevitably develop as visitors try to follow a “route of least resistance.”

Such trails are notorious for resulting in scarring, erosion, and other environmental damage and often targeting sensitive areas. In contrast, carefully planned and executed intentional trails can provide the same access but be more compatible with the environment and wilderness character.

Ideally, a system of trails in designated Wilderness would be planned from scratch, following contours to avoid erosion, avoiding wetlands and sensitive areas, yet providing access to the scenic and special natural features of the area. In reality, a network of trails almost always exists, which



may have been officially planned and constructed at some point by the land manager or may have been derived from previous roads, hunter paths, and social trails.

In extreme cases where logging, mining, or other industrial or commercial activities are part of the history of the Wilderness, the trail system may follow roads, railroad beds, or jeep trails carved out of the landscape. This is the case in Dolly Sods and most of the Wilderness areas in West Virginia. Most of the current system trails follow old railroad beds related to the lumber era of the early 20th century.

Railroad trails have the advantage of gentle grades and contouring around steep hillsides. However, they were designed to expediently get out the cut and operate over a short time frame rather than for long-term compatibility with the environment.

Railroad trails and similar roads tend to cut deeply into hillsides, intercepting the flow of water and not allowing for drainage. They often route through sensitive areas and interface poorly with riparian and aquatic zones, leading to potential conflicts with native flora and fauna and contributing to increased sedimentation of streams.

So, not all trails in Wilderness meet the vision of a simple footpath allowing visitor access to the wonders of Wilderness with minimal impact. But we need to make the best of what we’ve got, and that means working with existing trails to make them as compatible with Wilderness as possible.

Not surprisingly, the agencies that manage wilderness lands have extensive standards for trail construction and maintenance. Where applicable, they have specific provisions for trails in Wilderness. As expected, the standards for wilderness trails to be relatively primitive.

The United States Department of Agriculture National Forest’s trail standards categorize trails into five classes based on their intended use and the nature of their location. The upper end, classes four and five, represent paved or gravel trails that may be accessible, are intended for heavy use by casual walkers, and are often found in or adjacent to developed attractions.

At the other end of the spectrum, trails in wilderness are generally class one or two; the least developed and most challenging trails. These trails have uneven or even intermittent tread, protrusions and obstacles

are common, scrambling over obstructions may be necessary, the tread is narrow, vegetation is not cleared outside of the path and may impinge on the trail. Trail structures, such as water bars, rock work, bridges, and turnpikes, are minimal to non-existent.

Trails are generally not blazed or marked except when the route is not evident, and staying on the trail is critical. Signs may be used at junctions, but information signs or those for destinations, regulations or resource protection are infrequent.

Note that, as with many things in Wilderness, exceptions to these standards can be made to advance the general goals of Wilderness. For instance, minimally constructed bridges, boardwalks, or puncheons (log spans) can be used for crossing streams or wetlands when rerouting is not practical and potential damage to the environment or user safety outweigh the intrusion of a structure. Decisions about such departures are made using a Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA), a tool for determining the least intrusive management actions to be consistent with the intent of the Wilderness Act.

So, we have trails, and we have particular expectations for trails in Wilderness. In the final part of this series next month, we’ll look at the realities of maintaining Wilderness trails to both meet the goals of safety and environmentally responsible access but also retain the qualities of wilderness character that we come to Wilderness to experience.

The Scourge of Eagles: Lead Shot

By Cindy Ellis

“Have you seen the Bald Eagle?”

That is the question posed more and more often to me as I’ve birded for decades across West Virginia and the Kanawha Valley. People see someone with binoculars and are keen to share sightings of our nation’s symbolic highflyer.

This was not true forty years ago. Eagle populations in the United States dipped quite precipitously as the notorious insecticide DDT (dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane) use proliferated. But a ban on the substance was enacted in 1972. Eagles were classified as threatened or endangered in 1978 (depending on location), putting America’s symbol back on track. They were beginning to rebound in the 80’s, and a nest was found in our highlands in the Trough of the Potomac.

According to Department of Natural Resources staff, nests could total between one and two hundred in West Virginia. They monitor 75 of those nests.

So, it is no wonder that there are more and more sightings by more and more folks outdoors here. While more sightings are a joy, there remains a serious threat to their populations: lead poisoning.

Those of us who follow information from raptor rehabilitation centers see this frequently. We see increasingly more photos of distressed and disabled birds in conditions far from representative of a proud and noble symbol.

The helpful staff members at two West Virginia avian rehabilitation centers were able to provide some statistics on the mortality of eagles and other birds in recent years. While they are in a position to see it, lead poisoning research is not their primary mission.

[The Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia](#) in Morgantown, looked back for three plus years and found



Photo 1: A pair of Common Mergansers (photo by Brian Peterson)

the following birds with lead poisoning as the primary reason for admission. These do not include those with slightly high or moderately elevated levels of lead.]

- **In 2020, a Bald Eagle was admitted from Pocahontas County; it died.**
- **In 2021, a Bald Eagle was admitted from Pocahontas County and was able to be released after treatment.**
- **In 2023, a Bald Eagle from Braxton County was admitted; it died, and a Turkey Vulture from Monongalia County was admitted. Its status was currently pending, with release anticipated.**

- **In 2022, a Common Merganser, a diving duck, was admitted. It died and had eaten fishing tackle, which was recovered from its digestive tract.**

The Common Merganser is a beautiful bird of special interest in our West Virginia mountains. (see photo 1)

The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in West Virginia says, “The Common Merganser, a large circumboreal diving duck, was an unexpected species among West Virginia breeding birds in this Atlas,” and “The second Atlas documents the broad recolonization of West Virginia’s river corridors by Common Mergansers; the first breeding record in more than a century was obtained on the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River in Randolph County on June 1, 2009.” Also, “Dependence on aquatic biota



Photo 2: An American Avocet (photo by Josh Holland)

makes the species an important indicator of the health of riparian ecosystems...”

[On another matter, the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia added, “Over the same 3 plus year period, we admitted 244 birds that were confirmed attacked by domestic cats.” So...that is a story for another time.]

Three Rivers Avian Center, in Hinton (tracwv.org), founded in 1990, sent quite a list of lead-affected Bald Eagles and other raptors. Once again, it can be pointed out that lead poisoning research is not their chief focus. They are not making surveys calculated to find all the birds dead and dying from lead poisoning. These are just the birds who happened to come to their center. Many factors impact data collection.

A few records were from earlier years, but most were gathered from 2013 to the present. Three Rivers Avian Center treated 42 total eagles; 22 were positively diagnosed with high levels

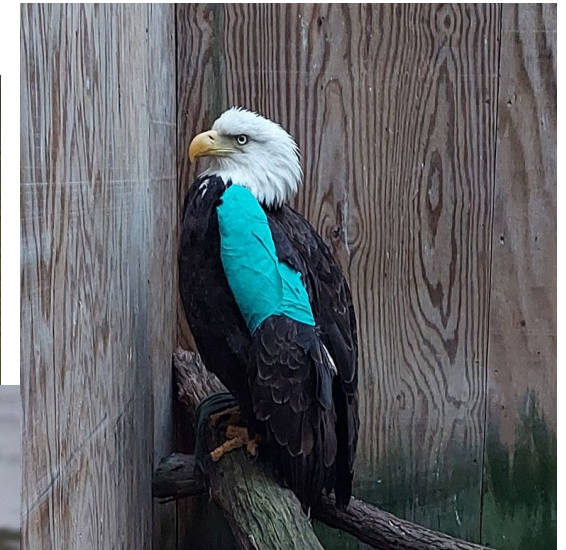


Photo 3: A Bald Eagle whose wing underwent amputation at Three Rivers Aviation Center. (photo courtesy Three Rivers Aviation Center)

of lead. Of the 22, nine were able to be released.

Records for other birds of prey show lead treatment for:

- **18 Red-tailed Hawks; three had to be euthanized, one died.**
- **Two Red-shouldered Hawks; one euthanized, one died.**
- **One Black Vulture was treated, and seven Turkey Vultures. Of the latter, three were euthanized.**

Of course, everyone is gratified when the extensive, expensive treatment is successful and results in release.

As with the other center, Three Rivers Avian Center handled a special and especially handsome water bird. A lead-poisoned American Avocet was released in November 2011. (see photo 2) Birders enjoy glimpses of this migrant and look closely to see the elegant up-curved bill, which is longer and more upturned in the female.

Eagles and other affected raptors and waterfowl suffer from lead poisoning in severe and tragic ways. Their entire system, including internal organs, is debilitated and compromised. They may linger and waste away, with full or partial paralysis and disorientation for several weeks, or rapidly deteriorate and quickly perish. Most are referred to rehabilitation centers when found weak or injured due to their de-

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The Scourge of Eagles: Lead Shot *continued from page 4*

By Cindy Ellis



Photo 4: A Bald Eagle found in Pendleton County by Larry Thomas, who appeared to suffer from symptoms of lead poisoning.

clining ability to function.

Pictured here is one Bald Eagle whose wing had to be amputated. (*see photo 3*) The bird was feeding on a roadside carcass; it clipped the edge of an oncoming truck as it tried to gain altitude to fly away. Rehabilitators face a long treatment process for avian patients if a bird is not too gravely impacted and can be saved.

For one of our WVHC board members, this issue was personal. Immediate past president Larry Thomas found an adult Bald Eagle in a ditch near his Pendleton County home. The bird, demonstrating symptoms of lead poisoning, was emaciated and struggling to stand but could not. Larry removed his light jacket and wrapped the eagle, hoping to calm and warm it. He carried it to his house and called a rehab center in Pennsylvania, but the eagle died in his arms while he did. (*see photo 4*) WVDNR sent the remains to a lab while warning that results are not always found or released. They were not.

Birds and other wildlife are contaminated by lead in several ways. Lead components of ammunition are a direct source when the birds are illegally targeted and, more often, indirectly as a result of ingestion of prey containing lead shot. Lead in fishing tackle is also a cause. Gut piles are a source, as are fish and other water-dwelling prey

found in a lead-contaminated pond or stream.

Mortality and injury in wildlife from lead poisonings are rising. Agencies charged with protection of animals and habitat are taking steps to address the problem. However, the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources notes, “Although lead shot was banned for waterfowl hunting in 1991, its use in ammunition for upland hunting, shooting sports, and in fishing tackle remains widespread.”

In 2013, California passed a total lead ammunition ban. On January 19, 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an order to phase out lead-based ammunition and fishing tackle on all 568 million acres of agency-managed lands and waters—this includes National Wildlife Refuges.

Efforts to eliminate lead in shot and tackle have faced resistance. Although the costs of alternatives continue to be reduced, some who hunt and fish still cite price as a reason not to change.

As with many issues these days, outdoors or not, incorrect statements and allegations are made about the consequences of lead and the motives for restricting use. Countering those are testimonials and supporting pleas for elimination. A former member of our WVHC board is LeJay Grafious, one of the directors of the Old

Hemlock Foundation, which is dedicated to preservation and education in Preston County and also focuses on a special breed of hunting dogs. He says, “I am all for banning lead ammo, especially lead rifle ammo. At Old Hemlock, we require non-lead shot to control the deer herd.”

And in 2018, the Gazette Mail’s Outdoor columnist, John McCoy made his pitch in “[Why Don’t We All Switch to Non-Lead Ammunition?](#)” He describes the grisly deaths of eagles, hawks, and vultures and then speaks frankly of the costs of hunting and fishing supplies. For him, the matter boils down to “responsibility.” He does not want to be an outdoorsman who, while hunting for turkey, deer, and squirrels, causes raptors to die.

You may agree with John and LeJay. There are helpful sources for more information. In West Virginia, see the websites and Facebook pages of the [Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia](#) and the [Three Rivers Avian Center](#). The website of the latter features a page devoted to Lead Poisoning Lead Poisoning in Birds (tracwv.org).

There is another website devoted to the issue, www.huntingwithnonlead.org. “We are hunters and wildlife biologists who recognize the common ground between hunting and wildlife conservation. It is our mission to promote the positive contributions of hunting and the use of non-lead ammunition by providing accurate information and resources to hunters and wildlife managers.”

So, we can return to the question, “Have you seen the Bald Eagle?” I have. Recently, I saw one a few miles from my home, in a tree on the banks of the small stream that I survey monthly as a volunteer for Trout Unlimited and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. Without lead ammunition, we would probably be answering “yes” more often.

Here’s hoping that healthy eagles, raptors, waterfowl, and all the birds you wish to see will come your way, too. We will continue to provide the information needed to keep them flying!

Conservationists Challenge Led Ammo Ban Exemption for Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

On July 31, 2023, three conservation groups filed a suit in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia challenging a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision to cancel its plans to phase out lead ammunition at the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The Biden Administration proposed a plan to phase out lead ammunition at ten specific refuges in June 2022, including Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, but then abandoned that plan for Canaan Valley when West Virginia officials objected. The Wildlife Resources Section contended that non-lead ammo is often unavailable and far more expensive than lead ammunition and is incompatible with some firearms. Banning lead ammo, the state agency contended, would diminish its ability to manage wildlife by reducing the number of hunters seeking game from the refuge.

The phase out was implemented at nine other refuges and is scheduled to be fully implemented by 2026.

The federal court suit filed by the Friends of Blackwater, the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, contends that the Fish and Wildlife Service’s decision not to include Canaan Valley in the ammo ban ignores the evidence of well-known risks to both human health and wildlife from lead ammunition.

Meet the Recipients of the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards Service Awards

By Olivia Miller

In May, seven volunteers were recognized for their dedication and participation in all of the main projects conducted by the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards in 2022. **Frank and Judy O'Hara, Chris Longe and Elizabeth Olmo, David Mong, Jill Watkins, and Marjorie McDiarmid** distinguished themselves by contributing at least 40 hours of volunteer time to the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area.

The recipients of the service awards were recognized at a training and picnic held at Seneca Rocks earlier this summer, with each receiving a West Virginia Highlands Conservancy HydroFlask. The Highlands Conservancy and United States Forest Service thank them and all of the Wilderness Stewards for their commitment to preserving Dolly Sods Wilderness and adjacent areas.



Frank O'Hara

Frank O'Hara lives nearly an hour from Dolly Sods in Keyser, West Virginia. This will be his third season with the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards. During his many hours out traversing the wilderness, O'Hara has been involved with every team of the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards: trailhead stewards, crosscut sawyer, solitude monitoring, campsite inventory,

and trail maintenance.

"I believe community service is crucial to supporting and maintaining public lands," O'Hara said. "The United States Forest Service motto is 'caring for the land and serving people,' and this partnership between the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and Forest Service certainly fits the motto. The stewardship program upholds service, practicing conservation, strengthening wilderness safety, and welcoming community and diversity. We have a responsibility to protect these public lands because it benefits everyone.

"I often think if it wasn't for the Highlands Conservancy, and other leaders, Dolly Sods may not be here for us to enjoy," he continued. "When I was in college, there were two important Highlands Conservancy leaders, Bob Burrell and Helen McGinnis, that were strong advocates for seeking wilderness status across the Mon National Forest. Each generation owes it to the next to pay it forward."

O'Hara has spent a great deal of time volunteering on the trailhead steward team, which he likes to call the 'meet and greet' team—offering a map, answering questions about trail conditions, distances, water sources, campsites, etc.

"The most fun part is offering to take a picture of the groups either entering or exiting a trailhead," he said. "There is always a mix, first-time backpacking, family day hikers, and others that are experienced and wishing to test their wilderness spirit."

O'Hara has also participated in the crosscut sawyer and trail maintenance workshop with the Forest Service.

"It was excellent for the take-home skills, but also for understanding the complexity of trail construction and maintenance," O'Hara said. "It's a hands-on experience, but you do feel a sense of accomplishment and hard

work. I gained a real sense of respect for the young boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Roosevelt Tree Amy, who built so many trails and conservation efforts on our public lands."



Judy O'Hara

Also from Keyser, West Virginia, Judy O'Hara is in her third year volunteering for the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards. She has been a part of the trailhead stewards, crosscut sawyer, solitude monitoring, campsite inventory, and trail maintenance teams.

"I love the outdoors," O'Hara said. "Being a Dolly Sods Wilderness Steward is a way to volunteer and do what I love. I love meeting new people and hearing about where they are from and their experiences in Dolly Sods."

Elizabeth Olmo and Chris Longe

From Mt. Storm, West Virginia, Elizabeth Olmo and Chris Longe have been volunteering with the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards since the program's inception in 2021 and have been engaged with almost every team.

"It is part of the mission of my 'fourth life,' retired twice, once from the military and once from the civil service," Olmo said. "I am dedicating my retirement years to conservation and saving our planet, one garden, trail and



refuge at a time.

"It isn't hard to stay motivated," she continued. "Saving the planet, protecting our sacred wild spaces is a passion. Plus, trying to expose people to the beauty and fragility of nature and our wild places and what we can do to preserve them is something I've always done."

When asked to share a personal highlight from her time volunteering for the program, she recounted talking to a family who wanted to go for a 'stroll' in the wilderness area but were unprepared for the experience.

"We gave recommendations for other parts of the valley that might be a better option for that particular day for them," Olmo said. "We also made fun suggestions on how to better prepare themselves and their children for a fun experience in the Sods. A month later, they came back! With their maps, better clothing, a good idea of what they wanted to do and where they wanted to go, and with the remembered safety equipment.

"It was awesome, and they remembered us and thanked us for making sure they would have a safe and en-

continued on page 9

Meet the Recipients of the Dolly Sods Wilderness Stewards Service Awards *continued from page 8*

joyable visit," she continued.



David Mong

From Clarksburg, West Virginia, David Mong has been a Dolly Sods Wilderness Steward since February 2022. He has been engaged with nearly every team, including assisting with a new training opportunity for trailhead stewards by leading current Stewards along short, guided hikes through different areas of Dolly Sods.

"I am a long-time volunteer backpacking leader for the Appala-

chian Mountain Club and the Adirondack Mountain Club, and I have been leading backpacking trips to Dolly Sods, among other places, since the 1970s," Mong said. "I am happy to have a chance to help others experience Dolly Sods by having more fun on their first trip and reducing impact and to support this program to make it successful."

When asked to share a personal highlight or favorite memory from his time as a Steward, Mong recounted following a social trail to the top of Blackbird Knob with fellow Steward Jill Watkins and confirming there was nothing but woods and "a good reason never to go up there again." While checking out the social trails, though, he came across interesting campsites he was previously unaware of and plans to return to camp at them in the future.

Jill Watkins

From Charleston, West Virginia, Jill Watkins has been a Dolly Sods Wilderness Steward since August 2022 as part of the campsite inventory team.

"I've been hiking in Dolly Sods and the Canaan Valley area since I was little," Watkins said. "As an environmentalist at heart, I felt it was important for me to give back to one of the



too."

Marjorie McDiarmid

Marjorie McDiarmid lives in Morgantown, West Virginia, and has been a Dolly Sods Wilderness Steward for two years. She has been a part of the trailhead steward, solitude monitoring and campsite inventory teams.

"I have come to the Sods for many years," McDiarmid said. "Mostly, I do night photography because it is one of the best dark sky locations on the East Coast. I became concerned about overuse and wanted to help. I really enjoy the solitude hikes and figuring out campsite locations."

most beautiful parts of the state. I hope what we are doing helps show visitors how to better care for the environment and to understand what their impact truly is. I also hope that the more people visit wilderness areas like Dolly Sods, the more they will want to protect the natural world we all share."

During her time as a Steward, Watkins recounts coming upon smoldering campfires that people have left behind more often over the last few years. "The thought of closing down some of the more problematic campsites makes me feel good about the work," she said. "It was really disheartening to see how many live trees had been cut down at several campsites,



Become a Dolly Sods Wilderness Steward!

Sign up today at bit.ly/DollySodsWildernessStewards

Leave a legacy of hope for the future

Remember the Highlands Conservancy in your will. Plan now to provide a wild and wonderful future for your children and future generations. Bequests keep our organization strong and will allow your voice to continue to be heard.

Your thoughtful planning now will allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness, wildlife, clean air and water and our way of life.

The Highlands Conservancy's Contributions to Wilderness

By George E Beetham Jr

Before the coming of European explorers and settlers, all of the land in what is now West Virginia was wilderness. Much of the land defied travel. Mountain slopes, laurel thickets (called laurel hells by later settlers), bogs, and forests of red spruce growing so thick a person could scarcely squeeze through all tested the mettle and determination of the hardest explorer.

One such explorer was Thomas Lewis, who, along with Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas), set out to establish the Fairfax Line in 1746. Lewis noted in his journal:

"The laurel, ivy and spruce pines so extremely thick in the swamp through which the river runs that one cannot have the least prospect except he look upwards. The water of the river of a dark brownish color, and its motion so slow that it can hardly be said to move."

That reality notwithstanding, settlers came and farmed the land, slowly eating away at the wilderness. In the late 19th Century, timber and coal companies came. The virgin forest was cut from the mountains. They left behind virtually total destruction. Forest fires finished off the work. One small parcel was left untouched through a surveyor's error: now the Gaudineer Scenic Area near 250.

The environment havoc complete, the federal government acquired much of the land and established the Monongahela National Forest. Under its protection, the land recovered. By the mid-20th Century, a lot of the forest had returned to wilderness conditions. About the same time, recreational use of the forest began to increase. A movement to protect newly established wilderness resulted in the Wilderness Act of 1965.

The fact that much of the Monongahela National Forest is designated as federal wilderness is due in large part to the Highlands Conservancy's leadership and partnerships with other environmental groups, businesses, faith organizations and others. Many of our members also participated

in one way or another in the recent efforts for more wilderness in West Virginia—efforts that paid off with the enactment of the Wild Monongahela Act passed in 2009 and signed into law by President Barack Obama.

Until passage of that act, West Virginia's wilderness areas came in two distinct efforts. Dolly Sods (embracing the Red Creek area on the south of Dolly Sods) and Otter Creek were designated in 1975 as part of the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act. Laurel Fork North and South, and Cranberry were designated in a separate piece of legislation in 1983.

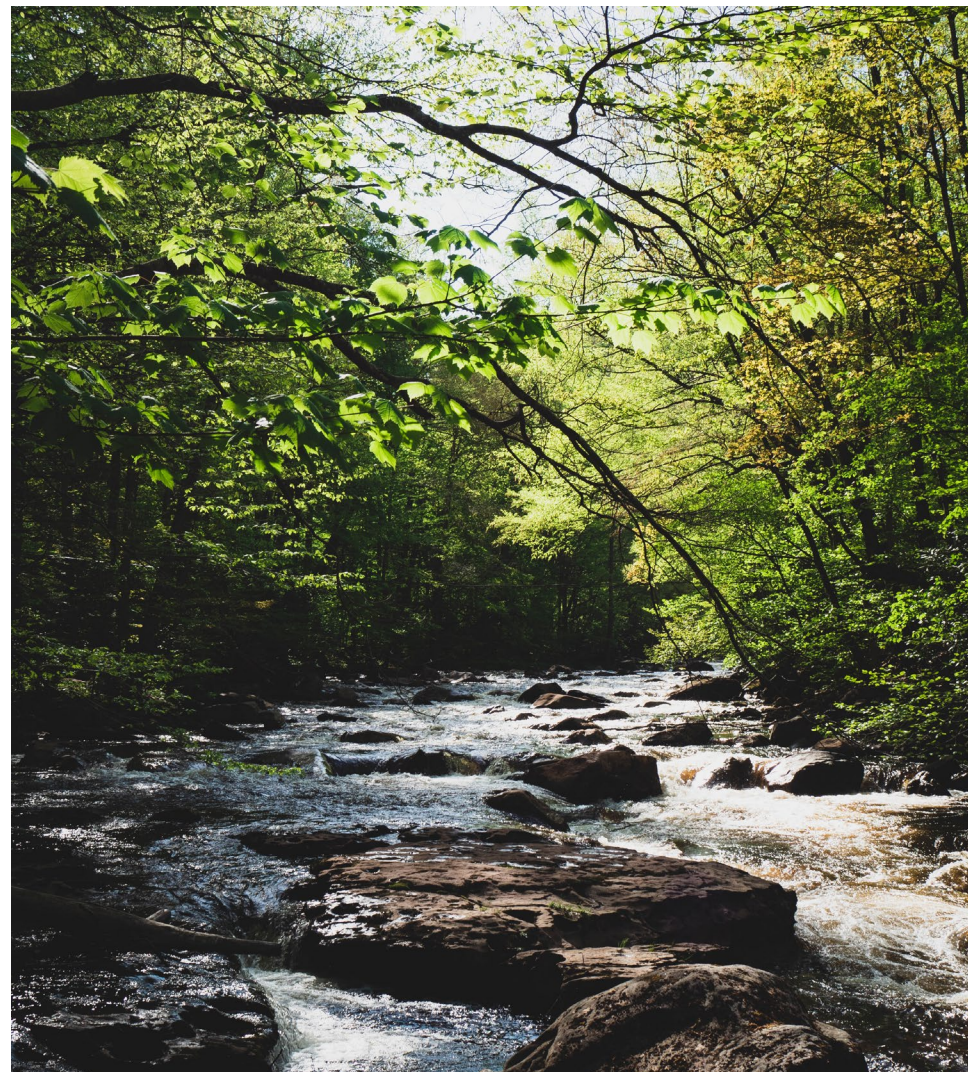
Conservancy members were active in documenting the areas proposed for wilderness, lobbying, and working toward wilderness.

After a 26-year drought in new Wilderness designations, the Wild Monongahela Act expanded three existing Wilderness Areas; Dolly Sods, Cranberry, and Otter Creek, and it also created three new Areas; Roaring Plains West, Big Draft, and Spice Run, totaling nearly 40,000 acres.

Highlands Conservancy members participated in field surveys and inventories to gather information to form a citizen's Wilderness proposal called A Vision for a Wild Mon. It was a successful result of a strategic campaign coordinated by the Wilderness Coalition.

This was a loosely knit coalition made up of the Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society. Supporters lobbied lawmakers, responded to challenges in the press and in governmental proceedings, and participated in public information meetings. The Highlands Conservancy's Fall Reviews often served as Campaign promotional events at such legendary locations as the Elk River Inn at Slaty Fork, or at the historic Cheat Mountain Club.

The newly designated Areas provided by the Wild Mon Act were sorely needed, both to preserve ecologically unique areas and also to pro-



Otter Creek in Otter Creek Wilderness Area (Photo by Olivia Miller)

vide more wilderness recreational opportunities. The fact was, parts of the existing wilderness areas were being loved to death by hikers and backpackers. The new Wilderness Areas cover a wealth of ecosystems from the broad plains of Dolly Sods and Roaring Plains to the biologically unique areas of Spice Run and Big Draft. Much of the new wilderness will get visited infrequently. Other areas will quickly draw recreational use.

Dolly Sods North, for example, was drawing visitors long before it was acquired by the National Forest Service. Roaring Plains was another popular hiking destination all the way out to Mount Porte Crayon, a trailless peak

named after David Hunter Strother's nom de plume for articles and artwork published in 19th Century periodicals (Porte crayon is French for pencil case).

The Wilderness Areas of the Monongahela National Forest offer hiking, hunting, fishing, berry picking and more. People can stay multiple nights or take day hikes. There are peaks, forest cover, open plains, unique bogs, and more. Photographers find open vistas and the opportunity to capture both plant and animal life up close. Besides trails, hikers can strike out cross-country if they are experienced in land navigation and map reading.

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The Highlands Conservancy's Contribution to Wilderness *continued from page 10*

There are historically rich logging areas where geared steam locomotives once pulled long trains down to lumber mills. Dolly Sods North was used for mortar practice during World War II, and old mortar shells are still sometimes found there (anyone discovering such a shell should leave it there without touching it, leave a flag nearby, and report the location to the district ranger in Petersburg). In some places, homesteads and other ruins can be found, evidence that our eastern wilderness has been recycled.

Highlands Conservancy members can feel proud that they provided much of the leadership, perseverance, and hard work necessary to bring this wilderness into being. In many ways, it was a model of collaboration with other organizations, the Monongahela National Forest staff, and the Mountain State's representatives in Congress. The act is a tangible accomplishment that will last long into the future, protecting watersheds, forests, and habitats for wildlife and plants. It embraces unique geological features and climate zones. At times, the Monongahela makes its own weather as fronts move

from northwest to southeast, and wind currents are compressed as they pass up the western slopes of mountains. The Monongahela is classified as a temperate rainforest because of this.

Thanks to the protection afforded by the Wilderness Act and the hard work of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, it is possible to find places where the conditions described by Thomas Lewis have returned.

Conservancy members can explore and find the conditions by visiting the Wilderness Areas of the Mon. Your best source of information is the Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, published by the Highlands Conservancy, now in its ninth edition. You can obtain maps and other information at district ranger centers, visi-



Dolly Sods Wilderness Area (Photo by Olivia Miller)

tor centers at Seneca Rocks and near the Cranberry Glades, or from the forest headquarters in Elkins. Rangers will be happy to answer questions and help make your trip a success.

Dave Saville, who was among the leaders in bringing the Wild Monongahela Act of 2009, contributed to this article. This article first appeared in the September 2017 issue of The Highlands Voice.

Follow us on social media!   @wvhighlandsconservancy

THE WAY THE VOICE WORKS

The Highlands Voice is the official publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. While it is the official publication, every story in it does not represent an official position of the Conservancy. While all of our members share the general goal “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,” our members often have differing views upon the best way to do that.

As a result, stories in The Voice often reflect different points of view. The Conservancy itself, however, only speaks through its Board. The only stories that reflect the official policies of the Conservancy are those reporting Board actions, including litigation positions we have taken, comments on proposed regulations, etc.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

West Virginia's public lands offer something for everyone. With 35 state parks, 116,090 acres of wilderness areas, and hundreds of miles of trails, the public lands surrounding us offer everyone the chance to connect with the natural environment.

This year, National Public Lands Day falls on September 23. It's the nation's largest single-day volunteer effort organized and led by the National Environmental Education Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service and other federal agencies. Nearly 40% of the United States is public land, supported by taxpayers and managed by federal, state or local governments.

National Public Lands Day aims to celebrate the connection between people and their community's natural spaces and encourage the use of those spaces for education, recreation and health. The theme for this year—30 Years of Care and Community—celebrates the 30th year of National Public Lands Day. You can get involved in many ways; on September 23, entry to all National Parks will be free. If you haven't visited New River Gorge National Park & Preserve, it will be a great day to visit!

The National Environmental Education Foundation encourages you to share your park story on your social media channels with the hashtag #NPLD, #NPSVolunteer, and #MyParkStory. To find a volunteer opportunity and learn more about how to be involved with National Public Lands Day, visit neefusa.org

Get outdoors and have fun. We'll see you on the trails!

Fourth Circuit and the MVP: That's the Ballgame

Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals Gives Up Jurisdiction of Mountain Valley Pipeline Cases

By John McFerrin

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has dismissed the last challenges to the Mountain Valley Pipeline that were pending before it. It did so on the basis of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, passed by Congress in June of 2023.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 300-mile plus natural gas pipeline that would carry natural gas from northern West Virginia into Virginia. Its legal history began in 2017 when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the pipeline. Since that time, it has been subject of considerable litigation, not to mention public controversy.

It is hard to summarize a years-long history of litigation in a few sentences. At the same time, it is safe to say that the litigation pattern has been that a federal agency has approved some aspect of the pipeline, whether it be how it protects waters when it crosses streams, how it protects endangered species, its effects upon the National Forest, or something else. The approvals have been followed by Court decisions that the agency's work was slipshod, that corners were cut, etc. The result was that the Courts sent cases back to agencies to try again.

At the time of the dismissal, there were two pending cases. One challenged the authorization of the pipeline to cross the Jefferson National Forest. The other contended that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service had not adequately evaluated the effect of the pipeline on endangered species.

The ruling does not say that the challenges have no merit. For all the Court knows, the agency decisions being challenged could be just as slipshod and corner-cutting as those in the past. Instead of saying that the challenges have no merit, the Court recognized that Congress directed the Court to treat them as if they have no merit.

We're heading into the legal weeds here; follow at your own risk

The larger purpose, the head-

liner, of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 was to avoid default by the United States. Most big, must-pass legislation has a few barnacles that are attached, something that is necessary to please some Senator or secure a vote. One of the barnacles on the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 was the approval of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, included to please Senator Joe Manchin (D, WV).

So far as the pipeline was concerned, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 did two things. First, it ratified all decisions of federal agencies approving any aspect of the Mountain Valley Pipeline and directed that federal agencies continue to approve it. Second, it gave jurisdiction of all challenges to agency decisions to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

The Petitioners in this case (citizen groups, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy) contended that directing the Court to approve all decisions of the federal agencies was unconstitutional. Then contended that the Constitution assigns different functions to different branches of government, the doctrine known as separation of powers. While Congress makes the law and is free to change it, it does not have the power to decide particular cases. That is the function of the judicial branch, meaning—in this case—the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

It is clear that Congress has the power to change the law. It also has the power to declare which Court has jurisdiction over proceedings. It gets onto shaky constitutional grounds when it tries to direct a court on how to decide a particular case. Such a result would probably be a violation of separation of powers principles.

While Congress has a clear right to decide what courts have jurisdiction over which cases, there is some indication in the law that using its powers to dictate jurisdiction to control the outcome in a particular case violates the separation of powers principles.

The Court of Appeals for the

Fourth Circuit left open the possibility that, in the case of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, Congress had impermissibly used its powers to dictate jurisdiction to control the outcome of a particular case. It did not resolve that issue because of the second thing that the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 did.

The second thing that the Act did was to give jurisdiction of all Mountain Valley Pipeline cases to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. There is not any doubt, under the United States Constitution, that Congress has the right to dictate the jurisdiction of federal courts. Because of this, Congress could declare that challenges to the Mountain Valley Pipeline could only occur in the District of Columbia.

Since Congress had the authority to give jurisdiction over challenges to the Mountain Valley Pipeline to only the District of Columbia court, the Court for the Fourth Circuit had no choice but to dismiss the challenges to the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Back out of the weeds; safe to start reading again

So, is it over? In Court, probably, but not certainly. The Court left

open the possibility that the groups could go to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to pursue their claim that the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 is unconstitutional on separation of powers grounds. To date, the groups have not announced any action to do that.

On the ground, maybe not. Court cases are argued by people in suits and decided by people in robes on the basis of abstractions like jurisdiction and separation of powers. People on the ground are looking at a 42-inch pipeline running through their property, installed by a company with a poor record of environmental compliance. People on the ground are looking at a decades-long commitment to continuing the use of fossil fuels. Many people have strong feelings about this. It is not clear what protests there will be in the future or what form they will take. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is not involved in any protests, although—with its large and diverse membership—some of its members may be.

Thoughts on MVP

By Cindy Rank

Anyone who has ever played board games with two-year-olds realize the rules of the game change at the whim of the kids – especially when they realize that winning is slipping through their fingers.

One would – or should be able to – expect more of our elected officials in Congress.

But the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and others could list many examples of how this works in West Virginia. i.e., When the rules don't suit, just change them by any means possible.

I suppose we should have expected no less with regard to permitting the ill-conceived Mountain Valley Pipeline, but it sure rankles to see our Congressional delegation stoop so low as to play that game with regard to a pipeline that has already caused great pain to landowners and continues to pollute valuable headwater streams along its path.

Local Residents Raise Alarm Over Aging and Deteriorating Pipes Along Mountain Valley Pipeline

By Olivia Miller

Pipes that have been sitting exposed to the elements since the early days of construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline have caused residents and environmental groups to raise alarm bells as construction of the 303-mile pipeline has swiftly resumed. If completed, the pipeline will carry gas under 1,400 pounds of pressure across 75 miles of the steepest slopes in Appalachia and more than 200 miles with high landslide susceptibility.

At a particular site in Franklin, Virginia, landowners say unburied pipe has been submerged in standing water, spending years rising and falling with water levels.

The many legal battles Mountain Valley Pipeline has faced since construction began in 2018 have led to significant construction delays. As the seasons have passed over the last five years, landowners have watched unburied pipes bear the brunt of Appalachian weather.

Environmental groups and advocates have been urging the Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to hold Equitrans Midstream Corp., developers of Mountain Valley Pipeline, accountable to meet the latest pipeline safety standards.

PHMSA, an agency under the Department of Transportation, was created in 2004 to oversee 3.4 million miles of pipeline in the United States and regulate the shipment of hazardous materials.

On Jun. 22, 2023, 26 environmental groups sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, and PHMSA urging the agencies to impose “the highest possible safety and environmental standards available to your agencies for construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline before any ground operations resume.”

The letter states, “We believe most, if not all, of these pipes were coated between six and seven years ago,

and without other corrosion control processes and inspections at different junctures.”

PHMSA also noted that previous inspection data from MVP was being recorded on an outdated form that does not represent current processes and procedures governing coating and remediation work. PHMSA stated, “These delays have resulted in the fusion bonded epoxy (FBE) coating on much of the of the pipe left staged on the project

and without other corrosion control processes and inspections at different junctures.”

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right-of-way (ROW) exposed to potential maleffects (solar oxidation) from the sun’s UV radiation. FBE coating on pipe is not intended to be left exposed to UV radiation for extended periods of time prior to being buried. (National Association of Pipe Coating Applicators (NAPCA) Bulletin 12-78-04.)”

As construction carries on, developers of Mountain Valley Pipeline have yet to respond to the order.

WATER BODIES THREATENED BY THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE

WEST VIRGINIA

WETZEL COUNTY: MOBLEY RUN, NORTH FORK FISHING CREEK, FALLEN TIMBER RUN, PRICE RUN, STOUT RUN, SAMS RUN, MANION RUN. **HARRISON COUNTY:** RIGHT FORK BIG ELK CREEK, GOOSE RUN, BIG ELK CREEK, LITTLE TENMILE CREEK, JAKE RUN, LITTLE ROCKCAMP RUN, ROCKCAMP RUN, GRASS RUN GRASS RUN, INDIAN RUN, SALEM FORK, HALLS RUN, COBURN FORK, UNTTO COBURN FORK. **DODDRIDGE COUNTY:** TRAUGH FORK, TURTLE TREE FORK. **HARRISON COUNTY:** BIG ISSAC CREEK, LAURAL RUN, KINCHELOE CREEK. **LEWIS COUNTY:** KINCHELOE CREEK, SMOKE CAMP RUN, RIGHT FORK FREEMANS CREEK, FINK CREEK, LEFT FORK FREEMANS CREEK, LEADING CREEK, LAUREL RUN, COVE LICK, SAND FORK, INDIAN FORK, SUGAR CAMP RUN, THREELICK RUN, SECOND BIG RUN, OIL CREEK, CROOKED RUN, CLOVER FORK. **BRAXTON COUNTY:** CLOVER FORK, BARBECUE RUN, KNAWL CREEK, LITTLE KNAWL CREEK, KEITH RUN, FALLS RUN, HEMP PATCH RUN, ELLIOTT RUN, LITTLE KANAWHA RIVER, ELLIOTT RUN, COPLIN RUN, STONECOAL RUN, LAUREL RUN, GRANNY CREEK, MUDLICK RUN. **WEBSTER COUNTY:** LEFT FORK HOLLY RIVER, MUDLICK RUN, OLDLICK CREEK, RIGHT FORK HOLLY RIVER, RIGHT FORK HOLLY RIVER, NARROWS RUN, ELK RIVER, HOUSTON RUN, CAMP CREEK, AMOS RUN, LOST RUN, LAUREL CREEK, LITTLE GLADE RUN, WILLIAMS BRANCH, BIRCH RIVER, MEADOW FORK, GAULEY RIVER. **NICHOLAS COUNTY:** STROUDS CREEK, BARN RUN, CHERRY RUN, BIG BEAVER CREEK, GRANNY RUN, BIG RUN, GAULEY RIVER, LITTLE LAUREL CREEK, SKELT RUN, JIMS CREEK, RILEY BRANCH, HOMINY CREEK, SUGAR BRANCH. **GREENBRIER COUNTY:** MEADOW CREEK, MEADOW RIVER, LITTLE SEWELL CREEK, BOGGS CREEK, BUFFALO CREEK, MORRIS FORK. **SUMMERS COUNTY:** RED SPRING BRANCH, PATTERSON CREEK, LICK CREEK, HUNGARD CREEK, RIGHT FORK HUNGARD CREEK, GREENBRIER RIVER, KELLY CREEK, WIND CREEK. **MONROE COUNTY:** BLUE LICK, WIND CREEK, STONEY CREEK, SLATE RUN, INDIAN CREEK, HANS CREEK, DRY CREEK, PAINTER RUN.

VIRGINIA

GILES COUNTY: KIMBALLTON BRANCH, CURVE BRANCH, CLENDENNIN CREEK, STONY CREEK, DRY BRANCH, DOE CREEK, GREENBRIAR BRANCH, SINKING CREEK, CRAIG CREEK. **MONTGOMERY COUNTY:** MILL CREEK, DRY RUN, BRADSHAW CREEK, NORTH FORK ROANOKE RIVER, INDIAN RUN, FLATWOODS BRANCH. **ROANOKE COUNTY:** BOTTOM CREEK, MILL CREEK, UNNAMED WETLAND. **FRANKLIN COUNTY:** GREEN CREEK, BLACKWATER RIVER, LITTLE CREEK, TEELS CREEK, MAGGODEE CREEK, MAPLE BRANCH, FOUL GROUND CREEK, POPLAR CAMP CREEK, LITTLE JACKS CREEK, TURKEY CREEK, DINNER CREEK, POLECAT CREEK, OWENS CREEK, STRAWFIELD CREEK, PARROT BRANCH. **PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY:** JONNIKIN CREEK, ROCKY CREEK, PIGG RIVER, HARPEN CREEK, CHERRYSTONE CREEK, POLE BRIDGE BRANCH, MILL CREEK, LITTLE CHERRYSTONE CREEK.

WVHC Fall Review

What's Up With Your Water?

Our bodies average about 60% water. The exact amount varies with age, gender, and fat content, but that's the average: 40% other stuff and 60% water. So, what we do to our water, we do to ourselves, and to our children and grandchildren. So, yes, water matters a great deal.

Please join us for this year's Fall Review, where we will look at today's water issues, Friday, October 13th through Sunday, October 15th at Canaan Valley Resort State Park. Topics covered will include sedimentation, the threatened candy darter, acid mine drainage, sewage treatment, small-town water issues, PFAS, water laws and water justice.

We'll also enjoy a bird walk, a square dance, a mindfulness walk, and networking with friends, including those we haven't yet met.

Registration is open now, and a block of rooms at the park lodge will give you a room discount until September 13th. Want to learn more about our water and be more involved? Join us.

The earth has a limited supply of clean, fresh water. 97% of the earth's water is salty, and most of our water systems don't remove salt, so we vie for 3% of the earth's water with every other living thing on this planet. So, yes, water matters a great deal. Come learn how we care for it, and what we can do better.

Tentative Schedule of Events

Friday, Oct. 13

6-9 p.m. Networking and Hors D'oeuvres. The adjacent bar will also be available. Come meet friends, new and old.

Saturday, Oct. 14

7:15 a.m. Bird Walk – carpool meets at main lodge entrance and leaves promptly. Led by Laura Ceperley, Volunteer

8:20 – 9:20 a.m. Breakfast

9:20 a.m. Welcome – President Marilyn Shoenfeld, WVHC

9:30 a.m. Panel – Sedimentation and the Candy Darter led by Pam Edwards, Big Hat Spider Hoe; Rick Webb, Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance; and Professor Amy Welsh Ph.D., WVU.

11 a.m. Break

11:15 a.m. Acid Mine Drainage speaker – Madison Ball, Friends of Cheat

Noon Lunch Buffet

1 p.m. Outing: CVSP Water Treatment Plant – Don McFarlan, Canaan Valley Resort SP; and Mike Hawranick, WV DHHR – walk or carpool from main lodge entrance.

2 p.m. Panel: Small Town Water/PFAS – led by Mike Hawranick; Jay Kennard, Davis Water Operator; and Cory Weese, WV Rural Water Association.

3:30 p.m. Water Warrior Award and networking break

4 p.m. Water Legislation Updates by Angie Rosser, WV Rivers Coalition

5 p.m. Dinner

6 p.m. Keynote Address, Water Justice by WVU Professor Nicolas Zegre

7:15 p.m. Square Dance and Live Music

Sunday, Oct. 15

8:30 a.m. Mindfulness Walk: carpool meets at the main lodge entrance and leaves promptly.

10 a.m. Annual Membership Meeting, Annual Committee Reports and Election of Officers. Followed by Quarterly Board of Director's Meeting

Water Data Collection Efforts by Citizen Scientists Already Paying Dividends

By Susan Rosenblum



Taking water samples at left fork of Big Run.

Stream water quality data that has been collected by a dozen dedicated citizen scientists over the past 12 months will soon be added to the Conservation Hub GIS maps maintained by the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance.

The data is collected on a bi-weekly or monthly basis on streams that are, or may be, affected by construction of Corridor H, particularly along the route proposed by the West Virginia Division of Highways between Parsons and Davis.

Measurements are taken of temperature, pH, turbidity, and conductivity, and the training, equipment, and ongoing technical support for this project are provided by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's partner organizations, Friends of Cheat and West Virginia Rivers Coalition.

The data being gathered now

will be used as a baseline prior to the start of any road construction and will continue to be collected throughout construction to help identify any detrimental effects on the watersheds along the Corridor H route.

Water testing locations, dates, and results will be added as a layer on the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance's Conservation Hub mapping tool and will provide a clear indicator to the West Virginia Division of Highways that citizens and organizations are closely watching the environmental effects of Corridor H.

Check out the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance's Conservation Hub and the wealth of information that it contains regarding Corridor H and other environmental issues at www.abralliance.org

A No-Cost Service To Help Control Erosion



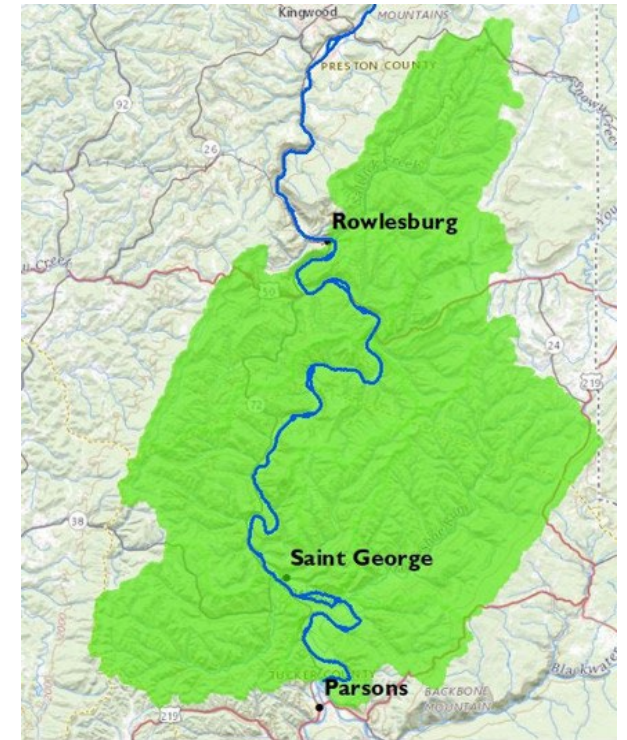
Friends of the Cheat is seeking property owners interested in complimentary tree plantings in riparian areas (the areas directly next to a stream or river) of their property. By planting

trees in these areas, Friends of Cheat hopes to help reduce stream bank erosion, sedimentation, bank instability, and bank loss in the Cheat River watershed.

The targeted project area, which is shaded green on the map, includes a large portion of the Cheat River watershed. Relevant property locations include the Cheat River mainstream from Parsons to Rowlesburg, Clover Run, Horseshoe Run, Minear Run, Licking Creek, Buffalo Creek, Wolf Creek, Saltlick Creek, and their tributaries.

All interested landowners with land in the project area are encouraged to set up a consultation by contacting Madison Ball, Conservation Program Director with Friends of the Cheat, at madison@cheat.org or by calling 304-329-3621 ext. 7.

Friends of the Cheat is a non-profit watershed group, formed in 1994 whose mission is to restore, preserve and pro-



mote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River Watershed.

Become a Member!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership categories (circle one)

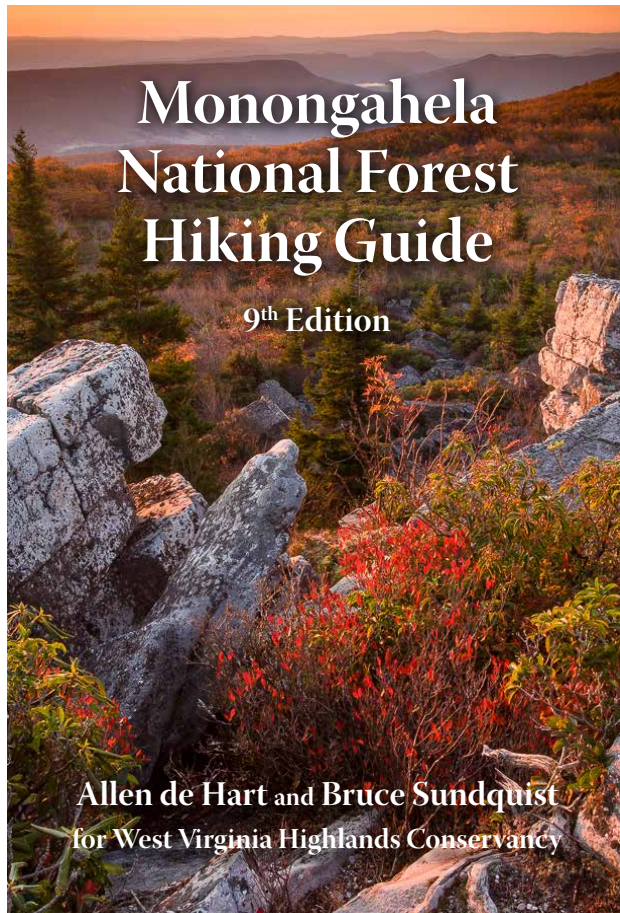
	Individual	Family	Org.
Senior	\$15		
Student	\$15		
Introductory	\$15		
Other	\$15		
Regular	\$25	\$35	\$50
Associate	\$50	\$75	\$100
Sustaining	\$100	\$150	\$200
Patron	\$250	\$500	\$500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$750	\$1000

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 online at www.wvhighlands.org

Hit the trails with our 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

Get your I ❤️ MOUNTAINS and WVHC gear at our online store!

Show your love for the mountains with our range of bumper stickers, cotton tees, hats, onesies, toddler tees and Hydro Flasks. Shop now at wvhighlands.org



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