

Planned Wind Energy Project on Rich
Mountain, Randolph County, West
Virginia, in the Heart of the
Monongahela National Forest

*West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Wind Energy Committee
September, 2004*

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Wind Energy Committee

- Formed in response to Backbone Mountain permit application in 2000
- Supported Backbone Mountain project after negotiating changes in layout. Now participates in Technical Review Committee.
- Supported PSC decision on Nedpower project
- Has good working relationships with all WV wind energy developers
- Adopted policy of opposition to projects that would degrade “special places.”

Rich Mountain Wind Farm

- **Nov. 2002– Highlands Conservancy members learned that Guascor Group was seeking leases for a 65 unit wind farm on Rich Mountain, in eastern Randolph County, on private land at the heart of the Monongahela National Forest. We had brief telephone and e-mail contact with Guascor over the next few months.**
- **Jan. 2003– The Conservancy announced opposition to the proposed project because of severe scenic impact on “special places.” These include Spruce Knob; Laurel Fork, Otter Creek and Dolly Sods Wilderness areas, Roaring Plains and Canaan Valley**
- **Nov. 2003– Guascor notified the Highlands Conservancy that they have secured their leases, are moving forward, and wish to meet with us to discuss “preservation of natural resources.”**
- **2004**
 - **Guascor sells this business to Greenwind Corp**
 - **Meteorological test towers erected on Rich Mountain**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 27, 2003

NEW WIND POWER PROJECT IN CENTER OF NATIONAL FOREST OPPOSED BY HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

CHARLESTON, WV. In November 2002, members of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy learned that the Guascor Group, a Spanish company with offices in Miami, Florida was considering development of a wind energy project that would include 65 turbines atop Rich Mountain near Harman, WV. Guascor had approached some landowners to negotiate leases. On January 25, 2003, the Board of Directors of the Highlands Conservancy voted to publicly oppose this project. The text of our letter to Guascor follows:

On January 25, 2003, the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy voted to publicly oppose the construction of an extensive wind energy facility on Rich Mountain, near Harman, WV. We respectfully suggest that GUASCOR discontinue efforts to develop such a project.

This decision is in line with a policy decided at our October 20, 2002 board meeting: "The Highlands Conservancy does not support permits for wind power projects that would degrade scenic vistas from Canaan Valley, Dolly Sods, Seneca Rocks, Spruce Knob and other special places in West Virginia."

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is among the state's best-known environmental advocacy organizations. We have a special concern and institutional role in protection of the Monongahela National Forest, which surrounds Rich Mountain. We do our best to take a balanced view regarding wind energy. We applaud its contribution of clean, renewable energy but must also consider issues regarding visual impact, endangered species, and avian impacts.

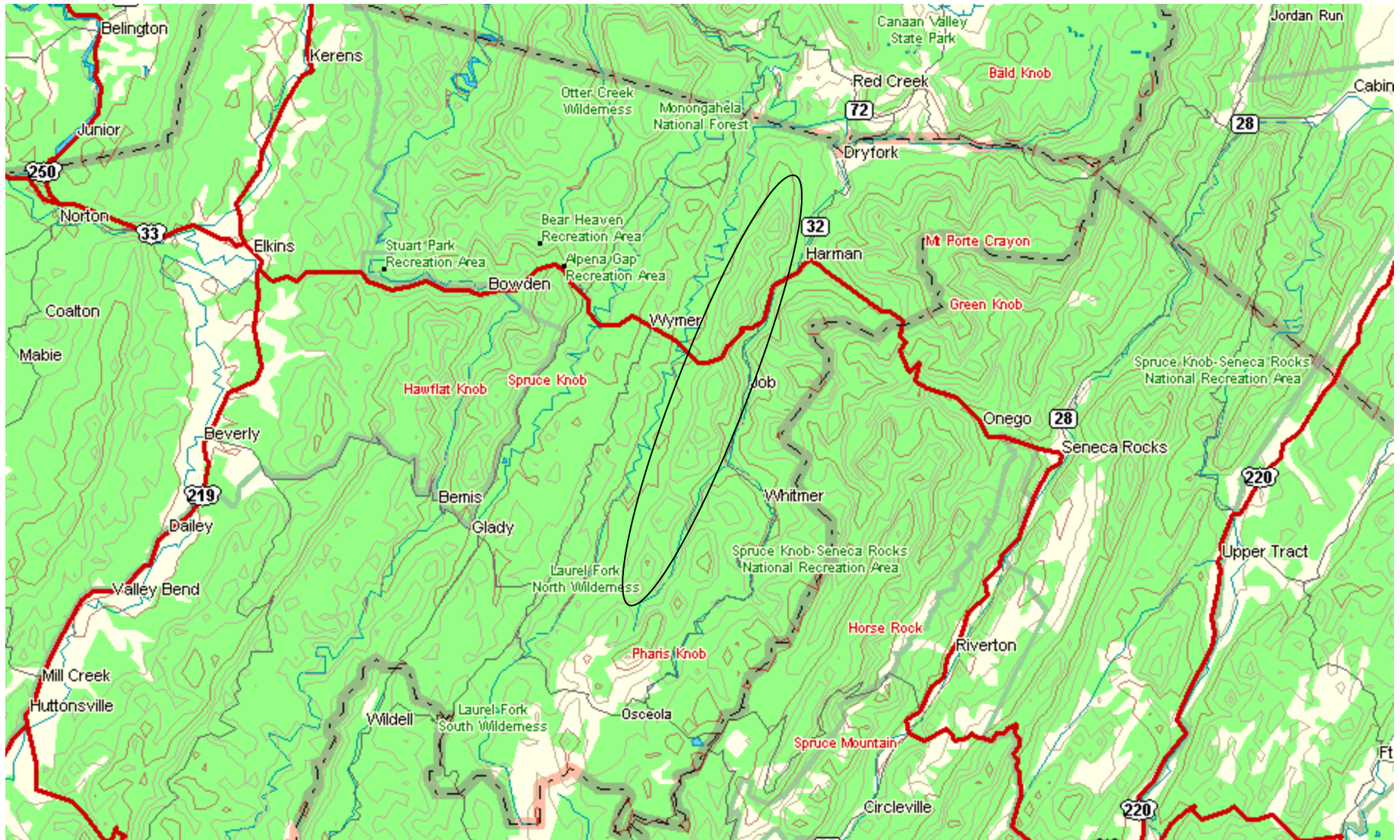
In this case, our assessment indicates that the impact on the scenic splendors of the Monongahela National Forest, including the Spruce Knob/Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area and two Wilderness Areas, would just be too great. The turbines would be clearly visible from many points on Spruce Mountain, including the observation platform at Spruce Knob. They would also be clearly visible from other special places including Mt. Porte Crayon, Haystack Knob, Shavers Mountain, Middle Mountain, and Roaring Plains, as well as the Gandy Creek, Dry Fork and Laurel Fork Valleys. The changes in vista would be particularly disturbing on clear, star-filled nights, and at sunrise and sunset.

In our discussions with other developers, we have sometimes recommended changes to mitigate visual impact while maintaining the main thrust of their projects. Unfortunately, in this case, the impact appears so extensive that we don't think this is possible.

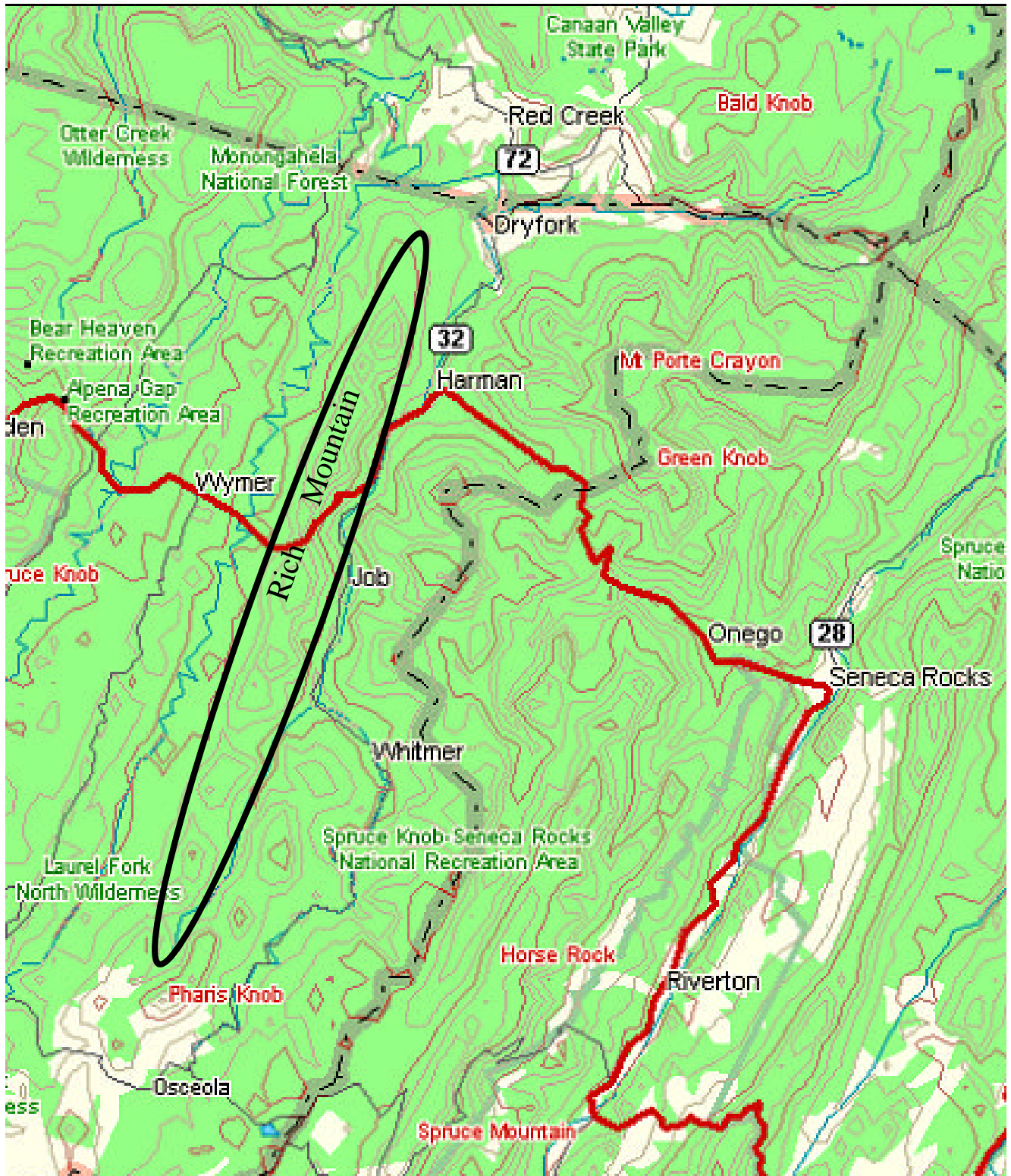
We wish you the best of luck in your efforts to develop projects that will contribute to the world's need for renewable energy without degrading the resources we need to protect.

Please feel free to contact us at any time for further discussion.

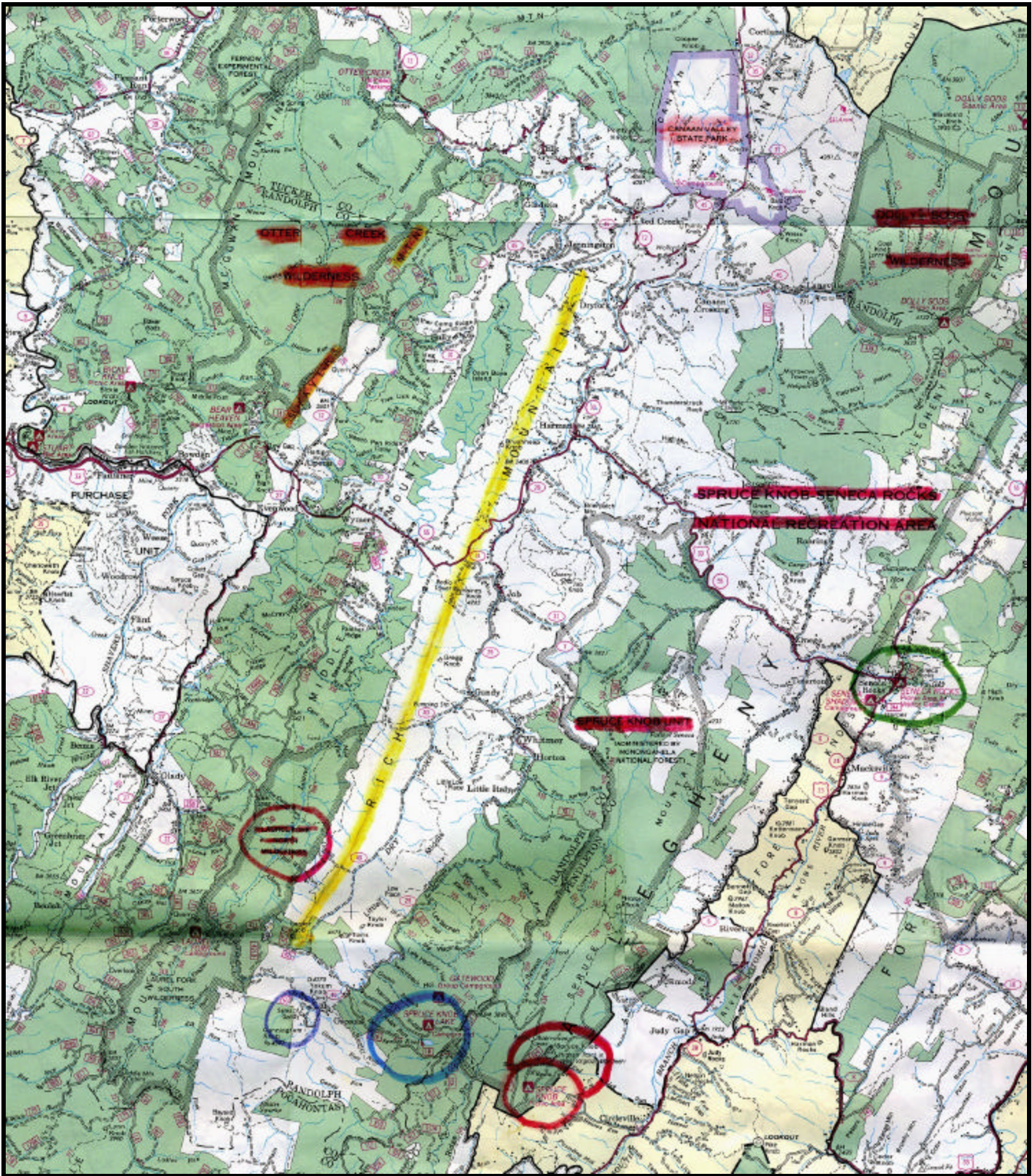
Rich Mountain-- Geographic Context



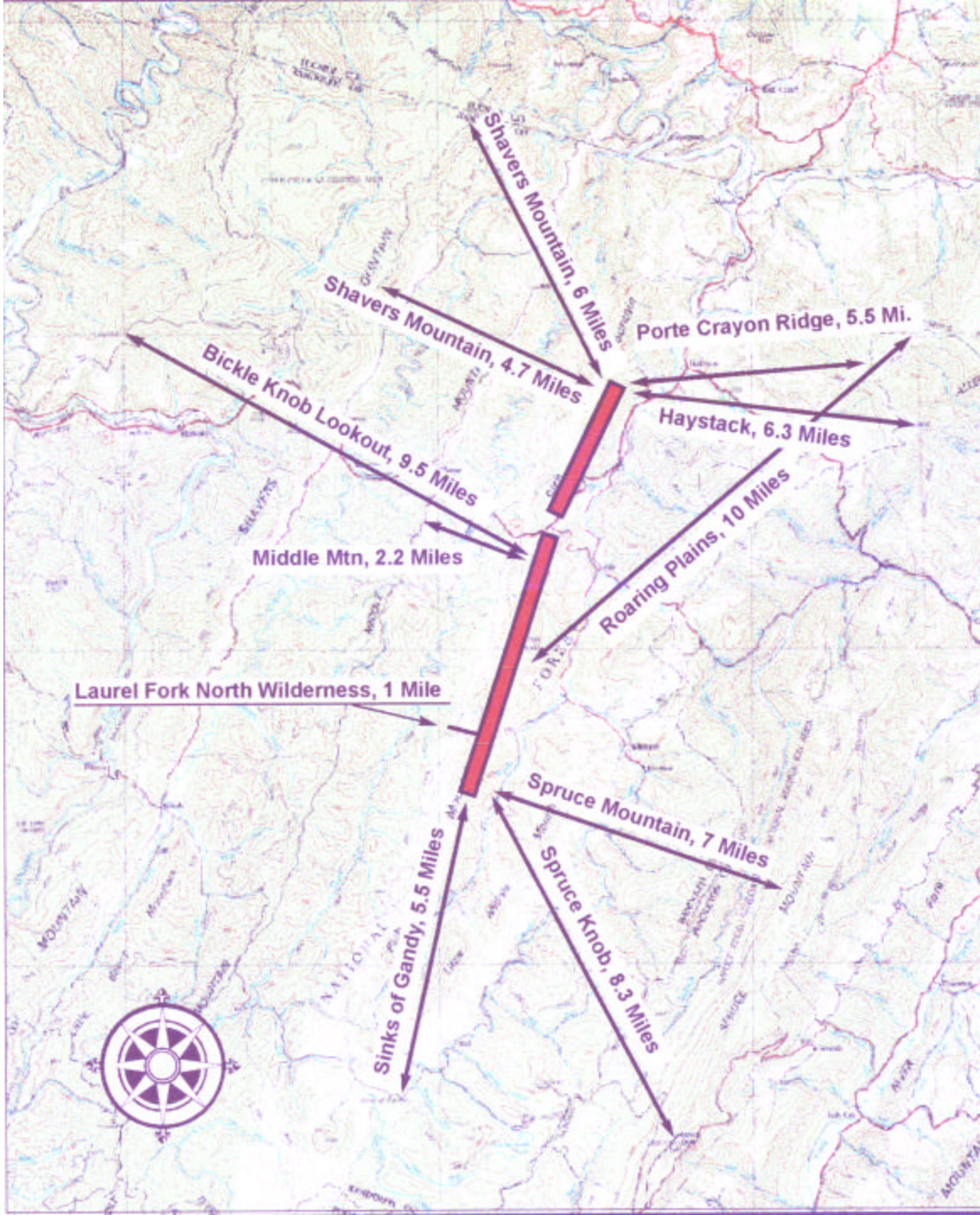
Rich Mountain-- Geographic Context



Rich Mountain Wind Farm Planned at Heart of West Virginia's Golden Triangle



Visual Impact On Special Places



Impact is often severe at distances of 10 miles or less

Surrounding Area

- Monongahela National Forest
 - Spruce Knob/Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area
 - Seneca Creek Backcountry
 - Laurel Fork, Otter Creek and Dolly Sods Wilderness
 - Roaring Plains Special Management Area
- Historic Gandy Creek/Dry Fork Valley
 - Includes Sinks of Gandy, the Hackings; communities of Job, Whitmer and Horton
 - Unique and beautiful, sparsely settled and farmed, little changed by time, “country roads”
- Town of Harman
- Canaan Valley



ENTRANCE TO THE TUNNEL OF GANDY.

Rich Mountain from Spruce Knob



Southern Rich Mountain from Spruce Knob



Spruce Knob Sunset



Rich Mountain from Mt. Porte Crayon



Rich Mountain from Canaan Valley



Rich Mountain from Middle Mountain



Rich Mountain from Laurel Fork Wilderness



South End of Rich Mountain from the Hackings, near Sinks of Gandy



Rich Mountain, between Whitmer and Job



Rich Mountain from Harman

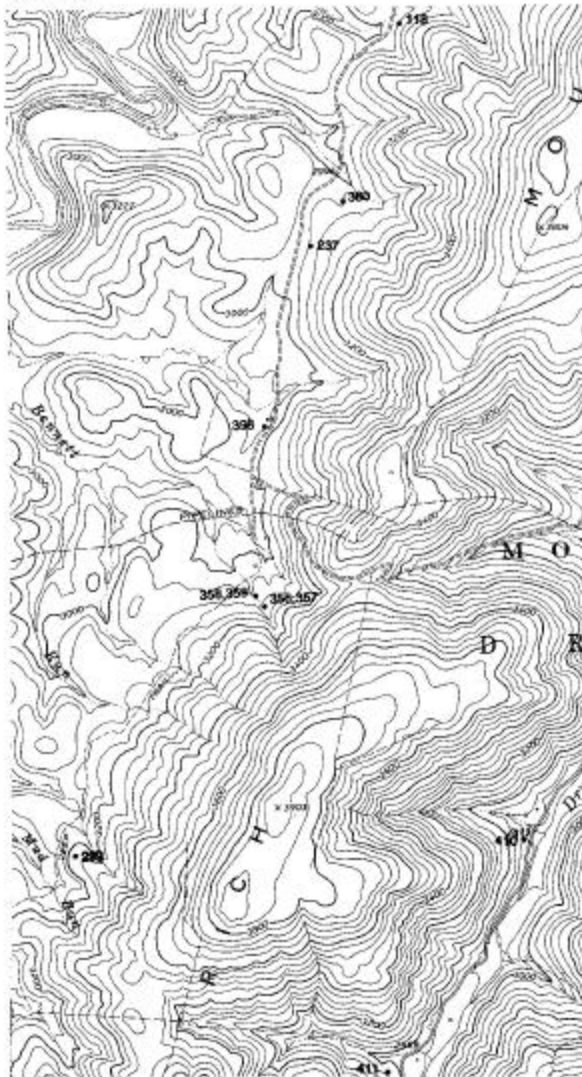


MAP 24 **

Rich Mountain Caves

- Over 100** caves in immediate vicinity
- Many unexplored
- Virginia Big-eared Bats in Showalter's Cave near Gladwin
- Indiana Bats?

** *Caves and Karsts of Randolph County, WV*
Speleological Society Bulletin 13, 1995



Gregg Knob Cave (FRO)	118	Trash Sink Cave	380
Matress Hole	237	Virgin Cave	398
Red Shale Pit	299	Wet Cave #1	410
Streambed Cave #1, #2	356, 357	Wet Cave #2	411
Streambed Cave #3, #4	358, 359		

What Next?

- Project has moved at leisurely pace in recent months
- Federal tax credit of 1.5cents/kwh restored in September 2004
- To qualify, projects must be putting electricity on the grid by Dec. 31, 2005
- Expect Greenwind to soon apply for a PSC permit. Once that happens, time available to challenge or oppose is short.

Contact Information

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