

The

Highlands Voice



SENECA ROCKS

Vol. 1, No. 4

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

August 1969

PRESIDENT'S COMMENT

The Ad Hoc committee on Dolly Sods held their review meeting on August 15, and 16 under the chairmanship of Mr. Frederick Dorrell, Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest.

Friday evening was devoted to a slide review of the area and talks by various experts from the Forest Service. Early Saturday morning the Committee left by bus for an on-the-spot inspection of the highlands which lasted all day. That evening was devoted to discussion and the forming of several recommendations to the Forest Service.

Mr. Dorrell prefaced this discussion meeting by saying that the Forest Service has already decided not to allow strip mining activity in the Dolly Sods area and that the Staff recognized that some special management of this area was needed beyond this. He asked for the Committee's thoughts on the direction that this management should take. He pointed out that the mineral rights under this land were bought before strip mining was a recognized form of coal removal. It was felt by various experts on the committee that the coal in the area was not of commercial value though there has been no test drilling to date to back up this judgement. Deep mining into the Sewel coal at lower elevations is outside the committee's area of study and permits for this activity would of course have to be cleared through the Forest Service and the proper state authorities.

The area to receive this special management was identified as all the land under Forest Service ownership which is drained by the North Fork of Red Creek and its tributaries. This is roughly the Forest Service land on Allegheny Mountain from F.S. Route 19 north to Bear Rocks.

It was recommended at the meeting that the aquisition of private inholdings in this area be explored.

It was further recommended that the open, heath-like character of the high country be maintained by whatever Forest Service management procedures which are necessary to prevent its reverting to a dense spruce forest. It was recognized by the committee that controlled burning might be necessary from time to time to accomplish this objective.

The committee also felt that some attractions should be provided for the casual visitor on a brief driving tour of the area. Things mentioned in this respect were a historical marker at the site of the original "Sods"; a short interpretive trail, (1/3 mile), possibly with a boardwalk to prevent damage from foot traffic; several scenic overlooks on the Allegheny Front with short foot trail connections to the existing road.

The committee consisted of twenty-five members from all of the industries involved in the management of this area and from hiking, conservation, and botanical interests. Twenty-two were in attendance.

TOM KING

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COMING EVENTS

September 5-7 - Monongahela-Cheat District, West Virginia Garden Club outing at Watoga State Park. Conservation programs, field trips to Hills Creek Falls and Cranberry Glades, a corn roast, and a conservation contest are planned. Contact Sona Smith, 314 Center St., Bridgeport, W. Va. 26330 for further information.

September 25-28 - Preston County Buckwheat Festival, Kingwood. Features stacks of homemade buckwheat pancakes and fresh sausage and fair-type activities.

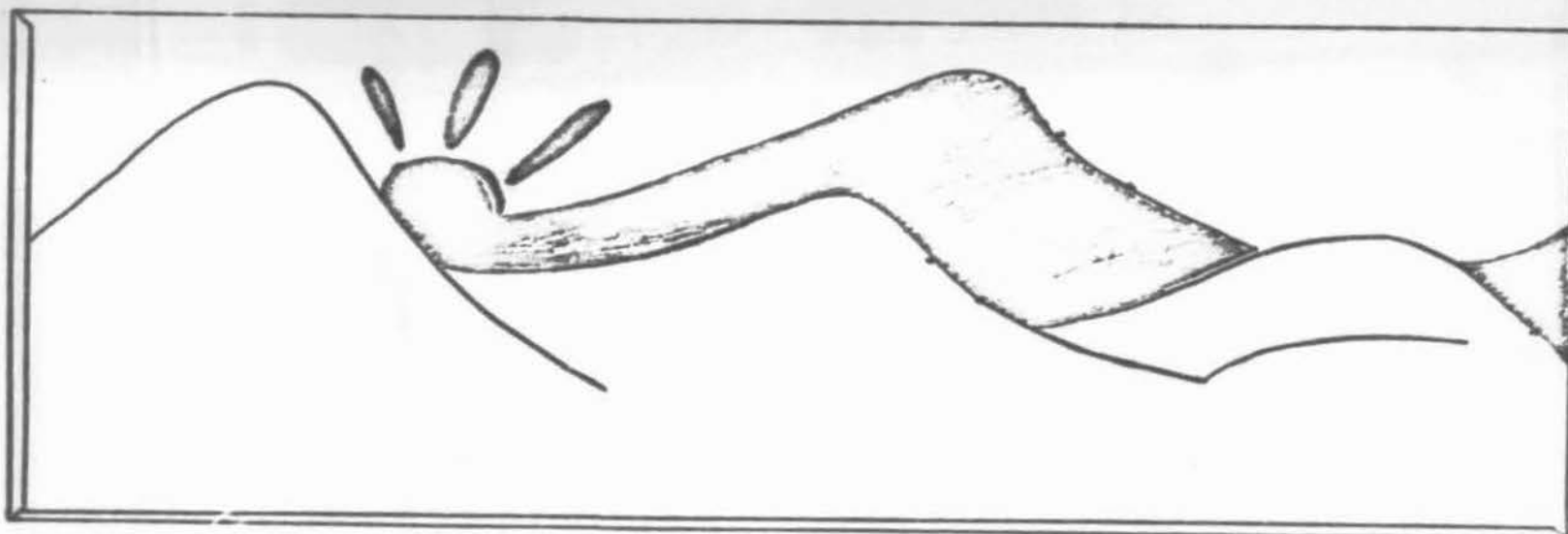
October 2-5 - Mountain State Forest Festival, Elkins. A week long program focusing on the many varied aspects of the central West Virginia forests. Features Shay steam locomotive RR rides into the surrounding area.

October 11-12 - Highlands Conservancy Weekend Review. New members will not want to miss one of our main annual events. Centered around Mouth-of-Seneca, the varied schedule will feature outdoor activities such as hiking, caving, bird watching, rock climbing, and whitewater rafting. Exhibits, a Saturday night program, and a Sunday morning workshop are also planned. Jim Moorman, coordinator of the workshop, has lined up the following discussion groups:

1. Wildlands
 - a) Wilderness qualities in W. Va.
 - b) Wilderness experience in the highlands.
 - c) The threat of development.

2. Wild Rivers
 - a) Wild river qualities in W. Va.
 - b) Wild river experiences in the highlands.
 - c) The threat of development.

3. Legislative action
 - a) Federal
 - b) State



West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

This year, the Highlands Review Weekend -- scheduled for October 11-12, -- will include a

MEMBER'S EXHIBIT

The purpose of this exhibit will be to display artwork, photography, literature, posters, needlework, and other crafts -- all of which should depict your activities in the West Virginia Highlands.

You may, if you please, include handout literature about your organization. (Handout literature also may be left at the registration area in the Mouth of Seneca Triangle.)

The Members' Exhibit will be another special way of indicating HOW we enjoy West Virginia. So we urge you to participate.

Exhibit material will be placed in the nearby school auditorium. If you plan to participate in this exhibit, please complete the form below and mail it to: Mrs. Marji Schmidt, Exhibit Chairman, 5336 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232. Or call: Area Code 412, 683-9416. The form is designed to help Marji plan available floor space and facilities for as an attractive exhibit as possible.

NAMES of organization and representative _____

ADDRESS _____

WHAT WILL YOU EXHIBIT? _____

SIZE OF EXHIBIT _____

WILL YOU NEED ELECTRICITY? _____

(a small fee may have to be charged)

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR OWN EXHIBIT TABLES THANK YOU

THE STRIP MINES AND ESTHETICS

Just a little over two years ago the West Virginia Legislature passed a strong law establishing strict controls on strip mining. Then, through a three man - commission created by the law detailed regulations were drafted and put into force to implement the law and to establish reclamation standards.

You may recall that in the spring of 1968 the limitations section of the West Virginia Act, which includes protection for esthetic values, was contested by a coal company on the basis that they were being denied the right to recover the mineral and without compensation. The land in question lies across from the scenic overlook located at Grandview State Park near Beckley. The Department of Natural Resources had refused a permit on grounds that the stripping operation would destroy the esthetic value of the scenic view, the reason for constructing the park at the site in the first place. The coal company appealed to the State Supreme Court for a ruling and the Court threw out the appeal on a technicality, that being that the party claiming to be aggrieved had not exhausted all the steps of procedure and appeal before appealing to the Court. So now the coal company is initiating, once again, legal action which they hope will lead to a Court decision that will declare the limitations section unconstitutional. Please keep in mind that while this one company is acting as the appellant in the case the entire surface mining industry has much at stake and their use of a "stalking horse" has been expected. From the moment the Surface Mining Act passed the Legislature the industry vowed to get the limitations section destroyed either by the courts or by future action in the Legislature.

On August 8 the West Virginia Reclamation Review Board conducted a hearing on the appeal in Beckley, West Virginia. While some time was allowed for public statements, the hearing mainly was conducted in a quasi-court manner--that is, witnesses for the appellant and the appellee took the witness stand and were questioned by the members of the reclamation review board and by counsel representing both parties.

We have been told by a state assistant attorney general, the counsel for DNR, and by attorneys outside West Virginia that the hearing in Beckley on August 8 and any subsequent court action will have national significance. Inasmuch as any court decision will be a first in this respect and a precedent established, it follows that the surface mining industry state or nationwide will fight hard to win. They feel that an unfavorable court decision in West Virginia will jeopardize their future rights to strip mine when and where they please. They cannot afford to lose--but then neither can you or I, for we know that a loss here means that the stripper will feel free to ravage, pollute, plunder and destroy where and when he chooses.

ZIP LITTLE, IWLA.

(Ed. note: Although as of this writing the Reclamation Board of Review is not expected to make a decision until after September 1, Zip felt that the hearing presented the conservationist side of things in a good light and that a good case was made for keeping the "esthetics clause" intact. There was a general feeling among conservationists and the DNR people that things went real well.)

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MORE ABOUT THE SWISS DAM OR WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO THE RIVERS?

The Kanawha River Basin Comprehensive Study Coordinating Committee, headed by Col. M. D. Roush of the U.S. Corps of Engineers has released some of the plans for the proposed 875' monument to man's inhumanity to geography at Swiss. The dam to be constructed circa 1985 (c'mon fellas, don't we even go through the formality of a hearing any more?) is only one of 14 proposed for Kanawha tributaries. Based on some clairvoyant sage's prophecy that the Basin will need a 10,000 cfs flow by the year 2000, the dam will only yield 25% of this total.

Apparently the Swiss Dam is only a small part of the power play. The total project involves the acquisition of 175,000 acres of land.

<u>River</u>	<u>Miles Erased</u>	<u>Acres Axed</u>
Gauley River	20	16,000+
Pocatalico (Old Salty)	29	31,000
Big Sandy Creek	3.5	16,000
Birch River	1.3	10,700
Meadow River	7.6	12,500
Bluestone River	25.8	16,600
E. Fork of Greenbrier (Native brook trout good-by)	5	4,200
Buffalo Creek	0.8	14,300
Indian Creek	13.1	9,500
Knapp Creek	4.4	8,800
Deer Creek	2.9	3,900
Little River	32.0	13,500
Walker Creek	4.5	18,000

If this keeps up, Minnesota will not be the only state in the Union whose license plate reads "Land of 10,000 Lakes." -- Facts from Charleston Daily Mail, July 9, 1969.

The Conservancy does not want to be unalterably opposed to the building of any dam as there are certainly going to be times when they will be needed. According to the Daily Mail article from which the above material was taken, DNR Director Pete Samsell seems to favor the Gauley River Dam since the alternatives would be to

either dam the Greenbrier where there is much strong opposition and where such a dam would destroy much scenic beauty that is seen and used by many people or to produce a faster flow rate on the New which would be deleterious to the fantastic fish production of the New. (The Gauley's beauty is remote and seldom seen by human eyes. There are probably not more than a dozen canoeists in the eastern U.S. who are capable and willing to run 26 miles of continuous Class 4-5 water in a roadless, peopleless wilderness.)

The trouble with Director Samsell's reasoning is that it assumes that the Kanawha Basin needs this power and flow rate. It seems to be an article of faith among the dam planners that this is true. Many feel that the narrow Kanawha Valley is already over-extended with industry now. More industry here could very well mean more air and water pollution in an area that can not stand any more. We certainly need more industry in the state, but does it have to be all in the same place? How was the figure of 10,000 cfs and the year 2000 calculated? This bothers many people - some pronouncement like this could have a profound effect not only on the geography of our state, but also on the destinies of many generations of unborn West Virginians. Conservationists should demand reasoning and accounting for the Swiss Dam as well as any others. People are tired of being told - "This is good for you. You need it. We, the Big Government, will give it to you and you will pay for it cheerfully."

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WHAT'S NEW FOR THE HIKERS?

Bruce Sundquist reports that a very light turnout showed up for his Cheat Canyon trail cleaning party. The eager beavers who did show got a lot of work done though as they completed a trail from Jenkintown to the head of Cheat Lake. Bruce wants to clear more trail up the canyon and possibly up the Big Sandy to Rockville, but it will take a lot more than only 3 people to do it. (Ed. note: Why don't some people with Boy Scout connections in the Morgantown Area get their troops out and give Bruce a hand? You had plenty of notice the last time, but in case you forgot, his address is 210 College Park Drive, Monroeville, Pa. 15146. Get in touch with him soon.)

Wilderness Committee members have suggested that when you use Forest Service trails, drop the district ranger a line and let him know of your experience. The word is that these men feel that no one uses the trails and thus understandably question the value of keeping them up.

Put a new Adirondack shelter location on your National Forest map. A brand new shelter has been installed on the Round Mountain trail beginning and ending at the Blue Bend Recreation Area. It is located about half-way around the 5 mile trail and looks as if it hasn't even been slept in yet, although some slob has already seen fit to gouge his name in the wall. Let us know if there are any other such shelters not on the map and we will distribute the word.

SPECIAL WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS SCENIC EXCURSION FROM CHARLESTON ANNOUNCED

A special bus and railroad excursion through some of the Mountain State's most spectacular fall foliage will be the theme of the "Highlands Special II" tour September 13 and 14 between Charleston and Elkins.

The tour, sponsored by the Collis P. Huntington Chapter of the traditional "New River Train" to Hinton, which will not be operated in 1969 because of a lack of passenger coaches on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

Special chartered tour buses will leave Charleston's Greyhound depot at 7:30 a.m., September 13, and travel via Summersville and Richwood to the new Cranberry Mountain Visitor Center operated by the United States Forest Service. A tour of this facility, including special exhibits interpreting the famed West Virginia Highlands, will set the stage for an intensive two-day look at the beautiful fall coloration in the Appalachians.

From Cranberry Mountain, the tour will travel to Cass for a two-hour trip up the slopes of Bald Knob on the Cass Scenic Railroad behind steam locomotives. The Cass itinerary will also feature two local museums and the spacious Cass Country Store.

A late afternoon drive over Cheat Mountain to Elkins will complete the day's activities. The group will stay overnight in hotels and motels at Elkins.

On Sunday, the tour will begin at 7:30 a.m. with the departure of a special Western Maryland Railway train for the ghost town of Spruce. The railway travels through a remote wilderness including the Shavers Fork River Canyon, accessible only by train. The Western Maryland is normally a freight-only line. Shavers Fork is the highest stream in eastern America, and is nationally rated for its wilderness character.

Equipment for the special train will include open top observation cars, several cabooses, a kitchen/snack car, and a rare World War II troop sleeper now used as a work car by the railway. A diesel locomotive will pull the special.

A thirty-minute photo stop will be made at the remote High Falls of Shavers Fork, ten miles from the nearest road. The falls, higher and wider than Blackwater, are among the most spectacular in the country.

A lunch stop is scheduled at the town site of Spruce, high in the headwaters of the river near the mountain-top line of the Cass Scenic Railroad. Spruce, once the highest town east of the Rockies, has experienced winter cold as low as minus 42 degrees. For years a woods camp of the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, the town was and is accessible only by train. From a population of over 2,000 in

1940, Spruce dwindled to ghost town status about 1950, with the cessation of logging and the conversion of the Western Maryland to diesel locomotive operations.

Fall tree colors, normally at their height in Charleston about mid-October, will be at the peak of dazzling beauty at the time of the tour due to the extremely high elevations.

Returning to the U.S. Highway 250 crossing at Cheat Bridge in mid-afternoon, the tour participants will board their buses for a return by way of Webster Springs over the Point Mountain Scenic Highway. The return to Charleston is set for about 9:00 p.m.

Tour Chairman John P. Killoran said this is the second such tour operated by his organization since 1967. The first trip accommodated 300 passengers, the capacity of Elkins lodging, and sold out in fourteen days, he noted.

Fare for the excursion from Charleston is \$40.00. This includes bus transportation, the special tours on the Western Maryland and the Cass Scenic Railroad, overnight lodging in Elkins, and lunch Saturday. Reservations may be made by writing the sponsor at P.O. Box 271, Huntington, W.Va. 25707; or by contacting the Charleston ticket office at the Fountain Hobby Center, Washington Street West at Bigley Avenue. A reduced rate of \$30.00 for children under the age of twelve is also offered.

"This rare opportunity might not be repeated again," Chairman Killoran said, "We thought we were out of business after the last Elkins special when smaller railway coaches became unavailable. Now, the combination bus and rail tour is practical, at a time of maximum beauty in the Mountain State. It'll be a great show!"

John P. Killoran

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A PLEA FOR HELP

Now that we have Conservancy members in most major cities in West Virginia we want to know who among you would be willing to give more than your dues to the Conservancy in the form of some of your time helping us. President Tom King in the last Newsletter called for more "people involvement" in West Virginia. Often hearings are held in cities like Beckley or Petersburg and we need someone to attend and represent the Conservancy. One man can't be expected to be at all of these places, especially on short notice. We would like to know who we can count on to "deliver the message to Garcia" when and if it becomes necessary for such an assignment.

Also, two wilderness committees have formed and need help from interested West Virginians. One is dealing with Dolly Sods and Otter Creek while the other is primarily concerned with the Cranberry Back Country. Please write the editor of your willingness to help in these matters and he will take it from there.

PROGRESS BY THE WEST VIRGINIA NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

Since our meeting in March, individual groups have been studying and, in some instances, taking action regarding participation in the West Virginia Natural Resources Council, and more specifically in regard to the constitution and by-laws, which were presented to those who attended the Council's first meeting.

I am listing here some of the action taken by specific groups:

(A) The West Virginia Division of the Isaak Walton League of America has adopted the constitution and by-laws of the Council and has voted unanimously to participate in the Council. The significance of this action by the IWLA is that we now have 26 individual chapters of this organization prepared to give "grass-roots" support to Council action.

(B) The West Virginia League of Women Voters has requested permission from the steering committee to participate in matters pertaining to water resources in West Virginia. This decision by the League of Women Voters parallels similar action by the League of Women Voters in other state-wide councils.

(C) The National Campers and Hikers Association has received copies of the constitution and by-laws and are presently acting on the same.

We have heard from various groups in West Virginia in addition to the twelve represented at our first meeting who praise our efforts and have expressed a desire to participate. We are at present communicating with these groups.

We have made arrangements to print 1000 copies of the constitution and by-laws of the Council to be sent to these groups and to other groups and individuals interested in the Council. As soon as all groups are heard from we will call another meeting of the steering committee and guests ... probably in August.

We are well pleased with the enthusiasm with which the Council has been received in West Virginia. Because of this it now appears the Council will be able to hold a state-wide meeting in the fall. It can now be said that the West Virginia Natural Resources Council is a "going concern" and its future assured. It should be remembered in your contacts with interested groups that it is essential to emphasize that absolute group identity and their will to support or not support any council action is provided for in the constitution and by-laws of the Council. Our primary purpose is to provide a conservation service center that will inform and unite the conservation effort in our State.

Carolyn Killoran

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LAND ACQUISITION AT SPRUCE KNOB - SENECA ROCKS

A communication was received from Merwyn Reed of the U.S. Forest Service relating progress of the Forest Service in acquiring land for

the proposed National Recreation Area.

Payment has been made to nine landowners for nine tracts containing 755 acres in fee and 445 acres of minerals under National Forest surface since the passage of the Spruce Knob - Seneca Rocks legislation. Options have been taken from an additional 16 willing sellers for 17 tracts containing 2,778 acres. These Declarations of Taking were filed in 1968. Court action on compensation is tentatively set for October 1969.

Mr. Reed reports trouble in that some lands needed for the development of the NRA are being subdivided. The fragmentation of ownership is making the land purchase more difficult and costly. The owners and real estate agents who are subdividing and selling these lands are knowledgeable about the Forest Service's land purchase plan. Fiscal year 1969 funds could not be used for condemnation and Congressional action on 1970 funds is incomplete. This practice is highly profitable to the real estate agents and the buyers of the subdivided parcels are apparently not being told of the Forest Service's plans. In one instance the real estate firm took advantage of a recent Forest Service survey on the land in helping make the subdivision.

Of course such shabby real estate tactics are deplorable, but, as with the clear-cutting controversy, the issue isn't all black or all white. Still unanswered are Vice President's Creed Sions' questions at the Workshop at Blackwater last winter: Why did the Grant County Board of Education have to pay more for a smaller parcel of land of poorer quality than the amount offered Mr. Harper for a better and larger piece of bottom land and Seneca Rocks?

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ROYAL GLEN DAM HEARING

The Office of Appalachian Studies and the Corps of Engineers resurrected plans for a Royal Glen Dam and held a hearing in Petersburg August 25. The modification of the 1963 plan was touted as being only 148' high, as opposed to the earlier 218' one, and would not destroy the significant scenic aspects of the area. No draw down, no low flow augmentation, just flood protection and economic growth through the recreation facilities provided for Petersburg, or so the prospectus said.

There were a significant number of people at the hearing, well-acquainted with the Corps and Royal Glen, who did not buy this rosy plan judging from the statements made. DNR Director Pete Samsell called attention to the undesirable aspects of the plan, but pointed out the DNR would back what is best for most of West Virginia and would announce a formal position later. The U.S. Forest Service agreed with the proposal per se, but only if certain conditions were met, notably a lower storage pool. Other than a couple of local politicians, no one else made a statement in favor of the dam. One

gentleman, speaking for himself, stated he didn't care how it was done, but he wanted flood protection and wished the Corps and the conservation people would get together and do something. He suggested that the people should be presented with several plans at once. Probably the most sensible statement made.

Delegate Larkin Ours made a beautiful statement, but nobody could tell whether he was for or against it. A very amusing exchange took place between another local politico and our Veep in Petersburg, Creed Sions. The former mayor, very much in favor of the dam, tugged at the heartstrings of the crowd by reminding them of the 9 lives lost in the freak flood of 1949 and opined that that was reason enough for building the dam. Creed, in the next statement, reminded the crowd of the cause of one of the most serious floods in history regarding human lives lost, the day the dam broke at Johnstown!

All of the many other statements were against the dam. Other than your's truly presenting the Conservancy's statement (and those of the W.Va. Wildwater Association and the Canoe Cruiser's), other Conservancy members presenting statements were Keith Taylor for the W.Va. Division of the Izaak Walton League, Helen McGinnis for the Sierra Club, and Pres Harper for the Monongalia County Chapter, I.W.L.A. Creed Sions in his statement repeatedly stressed that he was neither for nor against the dam, but somehow the impartial observer was not left with this impression as Creed listed and documented the many indictments against the Corps.

Other individuals or groups are invited to submit statements in quadruplicate to Colonel W. J. Love, District Engineer, Baltimore District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, Md. 21203, before September 8.

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MORE ON WILDERNESS

At a meeting at Zip Little's Camp August 21-22, a committee met to study needs of the Cranberry Back Country. Discussions were centered mainly around the clear cutting controversy particularly in the Gauley District. Dr. Jim Johnston wrote a statement based on the consensus of the group calling in general for a moratorium on clear cutting general and an elimination of this practice specifically in the Back Country.

Meanwhile another group met August 23-24 on Gladly Fork under George Langford's leadership. Plans for dealing with Otter Creek. It was learned that the Forest Service has committed some timbering rights to a Parsons lumbering firm. Alternative plans for dealing with this problem were discussed involving focusing public attention on the Otter Creek area by various means including having publicized hikes and speaker's materials available. The theme would be to approach the Otter Creek area as a Scenic rather than a Wilderness Area.

From an earlier Otter Creek meeting held in July, Vic Schmidt was appointed chairman of a Task Force some of whose objectives would be:

- (1) to find out owners of mineral rights.
- (2) to work up publicity on nature of Otter Creek.
- (3) to work up a trail guide and management plan in time for Highlands Review.

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GUIDE BOOKS AVAILABLE

Two guidebooks applicable to our area are available. Bruce Sundquist informs us that his A.Y.H. Canoeing Guide to Western Pa., and Northern W. Va. is really ready now. Send 75¢ to Pittsburgh Council, A.Y.H., 6300 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232.

Also, Dr. Ray Weiss' Scenic Guide to the Monongahela National Forest is being well-received by W. Va. Highlanders. Ray has moved back into the state and copies may be obtained from him at his new address: 1230 Eastern Ave., Apt. 2, Morgantown, W.Va. 26505. Send \$3.00 per copy (W.Va. residents add 3 per cent sales tax).

Christmas shop early - buy West Virginian!

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WHERE IS MR. SLACK'S NAME?

According to the latest National Wildlife Federation Reports, most of the members of the House have committed themselves to a clean water drive. This drive is aimed at securing appropriations for 1 billion for water pollution control and construction grants for fiscal 1970. This is a Congressional counterpart of the "Citizens' Crusade for Clean Waters," initiated by 38 private groups.

As of August 12, 1969, four of our five Congressmen had joined the drive: Mr. Ken Hechler, Mr. James Kee, Mr. Robert H. Mollahan, and Mr. Harley O. Staggers.

Where, oh where is Mr. John Slack's name (3rd district, Charleston and environs)? So far 160 members have signed of the 218 needed. Why hasn't Mr. Slack signed? Congress is adjourned right now, but the proposal is expected on the House floor by September 10. We trust Mr. Slack's name will have been added by then. O.K. Mr. Slack? The Senate will await House action before moving after which time we trust that Senators Byrd and Randolph will be among the leaders for this drive. Would't it be nice if all of our Congressmen would be on this bandwagon?

FROM THE CONSERVATIONIST'S BOOKSHELF

"Wilderness is the raw material out of which man has hammered the artifact called civilization.

Wilderness was never a homogeneous raw material. It was very diverse, and the resulting artifacts are very diverse. These differences in the end-product are known as cultures. The rich diversity of the world's cultures reflects a corresponding diversity in the wilds that gave them birth.

For the first time in the history of the human species, two changes are now impending. One is the exhaustion of wilderness in the more habitable portions of the globe. The other is the worldwide hybridization of cultures through modern transport and industrialization. Neither can be prevented, and perhaps should not be, but the question arises whether, by some slight amelioration of the impending changes, certain values can be preserved that would otherwise be lost.

To the laborer in the sweat of his labor, the raw stuff on his anvil is an adversary to be conquered. So was wilderness an adversary to the pioneer.

But to the laborer in repose, able for the moment to cast a philosophical eye on his world, that same raw stuff is something to be loved and cherished, because it gives definition and meaning to his life. This is a plea for the preservation of some tag-ends of wilderness, as museum pieces, for the edification of those who may one day wish to see, feel, or study the origins of their cultural inheritance.

Public wilderness areas are, first of all, a means of perpetuating, in sport form, the more virile and primitive skills in pioneering travel and subsistence.

"Some of these skills are of generalized distribution; the details have been adapted to the American scene, but the skill is world-wide. Hunting, fishing, and foot travel by pack are examples.

"Two of them, however, are as American as a hickory tree; they have been copied elsewhere, but they were developed to their full perfection only on this continent. One of these is canoe travel, and the other is travel by pack-train. Both are shrinking rapidly. Your Hudson Bay Indian now has a put-put, and your mountaineer a Ford. If I had to make a living by canoe or packhorse, I should likely do likewise, for both are grueling labor. But we who seek wilderness travel for sport are foiled when we are forced to compete with mechanized substitutes. It is footless to excute a portage to the tune of motor launches, or to turn out your bellmare in the pasture of a summer hotel. It is better to stay home.

"I suppose some will wish to debate whether it is important to keep these primitive arts alive. I shall not debate it. Either you know it in your bones, or you are very, very old.

"There are those who decry wilderness sports as 'undemocratic' because the recreational carrying capacity of a wilderness is small, as compared with a golf links [DNR, please note] or a tourist camp. The basic error in such argument is that it applies the philosophy of mass-production to what is intended to counteract mass-production. The value of recreation is not a matter of ciphers. Recreation is valuable in proportion to the intensity of its experiences, and to the degree to which it differs from and contrasts with workaday life. By these criteria, mechanized outings are at best a milk-and-water affair.

"Mechanized recreation already has seized nine-tenths of the woods and mountains; a decent respect for minorities should dedicate the other tenth to wilderness."

. . .

"Wilderness is a resource which can shrink but not grow. Invasions can be arrested or modified in a manner to keep an area usable either for recreation, or for science, or for wildlife, but the creation of new wilderness in the full sense of the word is impossible.

. . .

"It does not suffice, however, to have such a [Wilderness] society. Unless there be wilderness-minded men scattered through all the conservation bureaus, the society may never learn of new invasions until the time for action has passed. Furthermore a militant minority of wilderness-minded citizens must be on watch throughout the nation, and available for action in a pinch.

. . .

"Ability to see the cultural value of wilderness boils down, in the last analysis, to a question of intellectual humility. The shallow-minded modern who has lost his rootage in the land assumes that he has already discovered what is important; it is such who prate of empires, political or economic, that will last a thousand years."

From: A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold; Oxford University Press, 1949.

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ABOUT THE "VOICE"

All unsigned articles in the Highlands Voice are those of the editor and represent his views which are not necessarily those of the Conservancy. Sources of other material are credited where known. Anyone caring to have articles placed in the Voice are invited to contribute.

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The

Highlands Voice

SENECA ROCKS

Vol. 1, No. 5

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

October 1969

PRESIDENT'S COMMENT

The Fifth Annual Highlands Weekend Review is past history and two things impressed me while I was enjoying the activities and the beautiful autumn weather in the mountains.

First: The Conservancy is growing. We are growing not alone in numbers but in concern, in cooperation. I have people asking me now: How can my talents be used to accomplish the Conservancy's goals? Biologists, writers, photographers, attorneys at law, all are now contributing their professional skills to make our program work, and to preserve something of the pristine beauty of this state for future generations.

I urge that each of our members consider themselves a one man membership committee. Recruit your friends, send their address to our membership chairman; Mrs. John Killoran 1605-D Quarrier St., Charleston, W. Va., and they will receive our beautiful brochure describing our program and the benefits of belonging to our organization.

Secondly: I was almost overwhelmed by the wilderness beauty of the Otter Creek valley, it is an area to which I will return many times in the coming years. Our hike, which was led by Sayre Rodman, attracted one-hundred-nineteen people including our Secretary of State, John D. Rockefeller, IV and his wife. Also in attendance was Angus Peyton, former Commissioner of Commerce, and Mrs. Peyton. Everyone I talked to including the two leaders just mentioned agreed that Otter Creek was easily the most beautiful natural area in the State.

The Conservancy is preparing a program to meet the problems and threats in this lovely 18,000 acre retreat and you will be hearing more about it elsewhere in the Highlands Voice. I hope that every member will lend his hand to help us save the "Valley of Opportunity."

Tom King