

The

Highlands Voice

SENECA ROCKS

Vol. 1, No. 3

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

June 1969

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

I want to point out to our membership what I believe is West Virginia's most critical need in the field of conservation today. It is simply people involvement. Our State badly needs more people who are concerned about their outdoor heritage to the point where they will spend some of their money and time in an effort to correct the many abuses which are evident even to the uninvolved layman.

As a conservationist, it is obvious to me that I can best serve the cause at this time by seeking to involve my friends, my acquaintances, and anyone else who will listen, to become involved in West Virginia's conservation effort.

I point out to anyone who will listen the advantages of a membership in the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. I tell them of the outstanding job that is being done by the Nature Conservancy in this State. I received a Founder's pin from the Izaak Walton League several months ago for founding the Harrison County Chapter of that outstanding organization.

Let me ask that each of our members consider himself a recruiter for the Conservancy. We have a very attractive Membership Brochure which is available in quantity from our membership Chairman, Carolyn Killoran, 1605-D, Quarrier St., Charleston, W.Va. 25311. Carolyn is doing a great job in bringing in new members but she is just one person, she needs your help. Don't ask what the Conservancy is doing for conservation in West Virginia, ask what YOU are doing!

Membership in our organization offers several advantages which are listed in our Brochure. A full year's subscription in the Highlands Voice, which is growing rapidly, is well worth the dues. Bob Burrell, our editor, is a dedicated conservationist and a man who is skilled in putting his thoughts on paper in a clear and interesting manner; he does far more than his share for West Virginia conservation.

Ask your friends to "join up", most of these people like to keep in touch with what is going on in the Mountain State. I have recruited several persons who simply want to receive the latest information on our Highland Week-End Review.

West Virginia needs conservationists, the Conservancy needs members, we both need your help! How about it?

TOM KING

CAN SHAVER'S FORK BE SAVED?

Among the more depressing news this spring have been the events concerning Shaver's Fork. The first blow was dealt by the State Legislature when the Scenic Rivers bill was killed in committee by, we are told, powerful timber and mineral interests. Next there was a large trout kill on Shaver's Fork this spring which strangely did not get reported in many newspapers. No official explanation of this kill has been made.

Biologists have viewed Shaver's Fork as a marginal stream with a fragile ecology. The soils of the watershed are very shallow and the pH of the water tends to be naturally low. The presence of pyrites rather than limestone contributes to this condition. The Mower Lumber Company owns over 60,000 acres of surface and mineral rights at the headwaters of Shaver's Fork south of U.S. 250. There have been extensive logging operations in this area and there does not appear to be any respite in view. The same company plans to reactivate strip mining in this area, as well as even deep mining activity on these holdings. Haul trucks have been seen right in the stream gouging out the banks and dredging for gravel has even occurred. The installation of a coal washer, if allowed, would be the final blow.

It is no wonder that large fish kills have occurred and will continue. It is also no wonder that fish production at the Bowden Federal Fish Hatchery which depends on Shaver's Fork water is down from normal. Siltation is a great enemy of trout as is low pH. According to wildlife biologist and writer Robert L. Smith, a pH only as low as 5.8 will kill 20 per cent of rainbow trout in 3 days and 5.5 will get all of the rest. Hundreds of West Virginia anglers are as mad as hornets, but how mad do they have to get before they will sting?

The Department of Natural Resources can control some aspects of the mining operations, e.g. strip miners must be able to show and carry out reclamation procedures and a discharge permit will be necessary after July 1 for any new deep mine, but is powerless to do anything about the other land-disturbing activities that lead to the siltation problems. If a Federal Fish Hatchery can't do anything about loss of production resulting from these operations, what can be done? Is it too late already? The State Legislature crippled its own recently passed anti-pollution law by refusing to appropriate money to the DNR for this purpose. The Water Resources Division is grossly understaffed, and laboratory facilities are inadequate to provide services the public demands from this division alone.

Bald Knob above Cass and the headwaters of Shaver's Fork not too long ago was considered a wilderness. The only people that could get into this area were backpackers and anglers willing to walk several miles. Native brook trout abounded in the pools only last summer. Now you can drive all of the way up on Lumber Company Roads for 25¢ a car. On Memorial Day pleasure automobiles and Hondas were all over the place. Any body want to take bets on whether

there will be any native brook trout by the end of the summer?

We pour money into state and federal governments who in turn pour trout in at one end while powerful, private interests pour mud and acid in from the other. Just who is in charge here anyway? Shaver's Fork? Oh, its a nice stream to canoe, but I wouldn't want to fall in it.

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NATIONAL TIMBER SUPPLY ACT

An item received too late for the May newsletter and another reason for getting this one out sooner than scheduled concerned H.R. 10688 or "National Timber Supply Act". Pushed by the ever growing demand for wood and wood products, this bill gives prime importance to timber harvesting in the National Forest System and subordinates watershed protection, recreation, and wildlife values.

If passed, logging and road building could conceivably take place on areas now under consideration for wilderness management status such as Dolly Sods. The act would double or triple the removal of old growth saw timber thus removing this supply in 15 years as opposed to the 60 or 80 year supply estimated by knowledgeable foresters on the basis of present rotational practices.

It is estimated that 1 out of every 5 acres of commercial forest land is out of production due to bad practices, recent harvest, etc. Only 3 per cent of the nation's forest lands are "locked-up" in national parks, wilderness areas, and the like. The timber industries hold only 25 per cent less land than the National Forest System and is considered to be of higher site quality, hence should be producing more timber. Conservationists are asking why the industries don't manage their own land better, why raid with covetous eyes the old growth supplies in the National Forest, and if wood is in such short supply, why does this nation permit the outrageous practice of exporting 2.5 billion board feet of logs to Japan each year?

In summation, H.R. 10688 appears to be an industry sponsored bill to supply logs from public forests by an industry that has over-cut its own lands. A better proposal would be a national timber management bill that would recognize short and long term demand problems, and work out a cooperative private, state and federal creative forest program that is a part of our nation's multiple use program. Creative and cooperative financing tax credits and appropriations should be an integral part of such legislation. The nation's 112 million acres of non-productive commercial forest land must also be placed back into sound management practices for the best sustained yield.

As of June 24, 1969 this bill met with such strong opposition that the committee of its sponsors introduced two new bills H.R. 12025 and H.R. 12006. The first five sections of the former are

identical to a proposal by the U.S. Forest Service while the latter is identical in its entirety. Apparently economic pressures have eased up, cooler heads have prevailed, and conservation sources are in general agreement with the Forest Service proposal. Interested members should write for copies of these latter bills for examination. From material supplied by Anson Courter, the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Federation.

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ROBERT S. McNEILL - IN MEMORIAM

The Conservancy lost a good friend and strong supporter June 9, 1969 when Robert S. McNeill of Moorefield passed away suddenly at the WVU Medical Center. Mr. McNeill was a progressive farmer and community leader in the South Branch Valley for many years. His family cared for the famous Willow Hall home on Rt. 220, an historic landmark predating the Civil War.

Mr. McNeill was quite interested in promoting tourism in the Potomac Highlands region and was executive secretary of Potomac Highlands, Inc. He developed and maintained one of the most attractive private camp grounds in the state. The Conservancy's annual float trip in the Trough held in conjunction with the Highlands Weekend Review used this camp ground as a point of departure for the last two years. Mr. McNeill was quite interested in the Conservancy and often participated in our activities.

Those of us who knew Mr. McNeill, feel a deep loss in his passing, while those of us who never got to meet him feel the loss equally since we have missed knowing a great man. Conservancy members caring to remember Mr. McNeill may wish to make donations to the Love Memorial Clinic in Moorefield.

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ISN'T THERE SOMETHING ELSE FOR THE CORPS
OF ENGINEERS TO DO?

Representative Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis) has introduced H.R. 10316 into the House which states:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, is authorized and directed to include in its civil works program projects for research, development, demonstration, and construction of works for the collection, purification, storage, and/or reuse of storm waters, sanitary sewage, waterborne industrial wastes, and other liquid wastes. Its civil works program shall give priority to those projects which reflect the most favorable ratio of environmental benefits to costs. The projects authorized by this Act shall be governed by the provisions of title 33, United States Code, sections 701-701 C, relating to flood control projects."

I need not tell you that such an act would be of great help to West Virginia. Instead of building unwanted dams everywhere, the Corps could be of great help to many municipalities that lack adequate sewage treatment facilities and are hard pressed to come up with the money to install them. Recently approved water quality control standards will force these communities to install such works. The Corps, instead of hording water behind Federal Reserve dams, could contribute more to improving our environment by helping us clean it up.

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THE YELLOW PERIL

May 30, 1969 - It is 5:30 a.m. on a beautiful Memorial Day morning at a primitive camp site deep in the Monongahela National Forest. Some campers are taking birdwalks, some are trying their luck in the nearby trout stream, while some are still cozily enconced in their sleeping bags. Enter 5 Hondas beginning an endurance race up and down the Forest Service road. Exit many campers muttering something about Pearl Harbor.

Nov. 29, 1970 - Bradley F. Miscue was arrested three weeks ago in Parsons for second degree murder. He had backpacked six miles into the head of Otter Creek for deer hunting. First vacation Brad had for 3 years. Spent 4 hours stalking a 10-point buck (Brad's a bow hunter). Dudley Q. Clodmind suddenly appeared on his Yamaha 500, spooked the deer, and threw Miscue into a rage. Miscue is alleged to have arched his hunting arrow straight through Clodmind's skull. Trial has been delayed because they can't find 12 men in Tucker County willing to try Miscue.

April 17, 1971 - Another day of bitter fighting broke out between the Suzuki Trail Bikers and forces of the Audubon Society. Forty-seven birdwatchers were killed in the bloody battle of Bear Rocks while 6 Suzukis were destroyed by Audubon mortar fire. Three regiments of Hondas and 7 platoons of Minibikes were thrown in to take possession of the whole Dolly Sods area.

May 30, 1984 - Outdoor lovers gathered on Spruce Mountain for the annual Memorial Day Motorbike races. The 35,000 seat stadium perched atop Spruce Knob was packed for the event. The day was climaxed by a new feature - the torture track trials held on Seneca Creek. The weekend was marred when an unfortunate accident occurred to a speed boat on Spruce Lake. A very large fish got caught in the propeller and caused the boat to veer suddenly into the path of a landing seaplane. Oldtimers who operate the local Amusement Park identified the ugly, slimey culprit as something their grandfathers used to call a trout.

WE'VE FINALLY COME OF AGE

We have achieved one of the earmarks of a long standing organization - the first issue of our newsletter to a brand new member was returned stamped "MOVED, NO ADDRESS." Anyone knowing of the whereabouts of a D. J. Conn formerly of 129 N. Arlington Ave., East Orange, N.J., please contact the editor.

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DON'T THROW THIS NEWSLETTER AWAY!

The editor needs help. Help him further the Conservancy's efforts by passing this newsletter on to your local newspaper. Help us inform concerned West Virginians about the many vital conservation problems taking place today. If you don't have any pull with the members of the fourth estate, pass the newsletter on to a friend. Tell him the Conservancy wants his help. Tell him to write Carolyn Killoran in Charleston about a membership. Or better yet, get his dues and YOU send his name and address to Carolyn (with the dues).

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UDALL SAYS THIS WILL BE CALLED "GENERATION OF DUMPERS"

Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said in the future this will be referred to as the "dumper generation" because of the way we are fouling our environment as he testified before the Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation Subcommittee.

Former Secretary Udall commented about the interrelationship of natural resources and observed that: "Despite our affluence, our living standards have declined." He said this nation is losing the fight and our cities and countrysides are becoming less liveable. "Although we have passed significant legislation on water and air pollution, we still haven't launched the type of program that is necessary to conquer the problems," he declared. He also observed that, "We can't preach population control to other countries if we do not practice it here at home."

Mr. Udall endorsed the concept of a Council of Environmental Advisers to counter-balance the Council of Economic Advisers. He also pointed out that the President has advisers on science and marine sciences.

From National Wildlife Federation Reports

WILDERNESS COMMITTEE TO MAKE PLANS FOR OTTER CREEK

On the weekend of June 21-22, an ad hoc Wilderness Preservation Committee met at the Roaring Creek Cultural Center, a most imposing edifice not described in any of the tour books or found on any road map. The committee met to initiate the formulation of plans for preserving wilderness areas in the Highlands region. Otter Creek, Cranberry Back Country, and the proposed location of Corridor H were the prime topics of conversation. Plans were made for holding a general membership meeting-workshop July 19-20 on Cabin Mountain.

The purpose of this meeting will be to form groups of interested members to - 1) set up an inventory of other wilderness areas in the Highlands, 2) begin work on Otter Creek, 3) begin work on Cranberry Back Country, 4) Dolly Sods, and 5) develop machinery for effective information exchange and liason.

Anyone having special knowledge of these areas and/or who want to help us in these Conservancy projects and have a good weekend outing at the same time should plan to come. Other than the directions and schedule which appear below, more information can be obtained from George Langford, 1535 Sylvan Terrace, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15221. Interested persons are requested to fill out the enclosed form even if you can't make it, and mail it to George.

Place: Cabin Mountain in West Virginia near the end of Forest Service Road No. 37. If you are not able to come on the hike, you are most welcome to join us camping and in the discussions Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Our campsite, at the end of Route 37 opposite the sign marking the Big Stonecoal Trail, is not a developed campground, but has level places for pitching tents and a small spring. To reach it by car, turn east off Route 32 in the Canaan Valley onto Rt. 37, a gravel road that begins beside the Buena Chapel, a small wooden church, and follow it about 4 miles to the point where it becomes impassable to passenger cars. For those who will be coming from the south, the intersection is about 3 miles from the junction of Routes 32 & 72 and about 2 miles from the junction of Route 45 (Dolly Sods-Laneville Road). If you are driving in from the north, watch for the church along Rt. 32 about 9 miles south of Davis.

Purpose: To begin to prepare wilderness proposals for the Otter Creek Watershed and the Cranberry Back Country and to organize for effective communication about wilderness areas and the Wilderness Act.

Schedule: Saturday July 19, 1969

9:30 a.m. Hikers meet at the lower end of the Red Creek Trail on Forest Route No. 19 just east of the bridge over Red

Creek. They should bring a sack lunch, suitable foot gear, and a swimming suit and small canteen if desired. Cars and drivers will be available to carry camping gear belonging to the hikers to the campsite. The 5 1/2 mile hike (1200' elevation gain) will take us through the heart of the area that the Forest Service is considering for special management, including possible wilderness classification.

- 4:00 p.m. Registration
- 7:00 p.m. Meeting begins with short talks on the Wilderness Act, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek, Cranberry Back Country, and Proposed Road Intrusions, followed by discussion.
- 8:30 p.m. Committees form
- 9-11 p.m. Committees organize themselves
- Sunday, July 20, 1969
- 9-11 a.m. Informal discussion
- 12 Noon Reports of committees
- 1:00 p.m. Adjournment

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H.R. 11943--ESTABLISHMENT OF POTOMAC NATIONAL RIVER. Mr. Gilbert Gude (Md.). Establishes the Potomac National River in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia, to preserve unusual natural, scenic, historic, fish and wildlife and recreational values, including the historic and scenic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The total land acres would not exceed 68,200 acres, of which title to not more than 41,000 acres shall be acquired and retained in fee simple. States and local governments would be encouraged by the Secretary of the Interior, administering official, to plan, acquire, develop, and manage lands within and adjacent to the national river for recreation, fish and wildlife conservation, or similar purposes. Other sections relate to right of occupancy of improved property, hunting and fishing, easements to private lands, and the establishment of a 12-person Potomac National River Advisory Commission composed of two members from both Virginia and West Virginia, four from Maryland, one from the District of Columbia, and three designated by the Secretary from the general public. See S.624 (Report No. 5, page 62). Referred 6/9/69 to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

COMING EVENTS

August 2-3 (Sat.-Sun) Cheat Canyon Trail cleaning. The spectacular and beautiful Cheat Canyon is currently accessible only to the daring few in covered boats and rafts and to the most rugged of hikers. By cleaning up a few of the old logging roads at the bottom of the canyon we will make this outstanding de facto wilderness area known to far more people. Come either day or both days as you wish. No experience is necessary. Equipment will be provided if you don't have your own. Write to Bruce Sundquist, 210 College Park Drive, Monroeville, Pa., 15146, for complete plans and instructions. More trips will be planned for later in the year so if you can't come on this one, but want to come later contact Bruce now.

October 11-12 (Sat.-Sun) Highlands Weekend Review.

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MORE ON THE CRANBERRY

Recent information provided by Zip Little, Executive Director of the West Virginia Izaak Walton League revealed that a meeting was held last winter between conservation leaders and Mr. David Francis, president of the Princess Coal Company (the one that is planning coal mining operations in the Cranberry Back Country). In addition to Zip, Tom King, Bob Dennis, E. M. Olliver (then superintendent of the Monongahela National Forest), Gerald Chafin (IWLA state president), and H. G. Woodrum of the DNR attended the meeting.

Mr. Francis confirmed reports of the mining plans in the Back Country. Protests stemming from the IWLA newsletter reporting the company's intention of dredging the Williams River for road bedding material together with support of the Forest Service forced the Princess Coal Company to abandon such plans. Following the meeting in which Mr. Francis answered questions regarding the mining operation, the IWLA set up a "watch dog backcountry committee" for the purposes of keeping close watch on actions of the mining interests. The committee has reported that gob pile material is being used for road bedding in opposition to their announced plans. This unacceptable practice has been protested by the IWLA, the U.S. Forest Service, and the West Virginia DNR.

The conservationists who attended the meeting and questioned Mr. Francis also suggested to him that they would like to have more such meetings with him as his operations progressed, to which he agreed. The mine is a deep mine, the coal is of a low-sulfur variety, and the Forest Service has no formal classification of this area. These reasons together with the multiple use concept of the Forest Service makes it extremely difficult to do something about it through ordinary channels. From information supplied by Zip Little July 2, 1969.

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FROM THE CONSERVATIONIST'S BOOKSHELF

"Having said their farewells the night before, Simon [Kenton] was pleased when the miller did not rouse in the dawn to see them off. . . . He met Daniel in front of the mill . . . and they set off."

"They headed just a little north of due west and soon had forded both [Jackson River and Back Creek]. That night they camped in a pleasant valley and next morning found the trail turning north. It ran parallel to the east bank of the beautiful Greenbrier River [near the present town of Cass] which, by evening, had become a narrow, rapidly moving brook. From one high point they could see an especially prominent hill ahead - Spruce Knob - and here they camped for the night. Daniel's informant had told him that the headwaters of the Cheat River [Shaver's Fork] began on the other side of the knob, that it soon joined with the Monongahela which would lead them to Fort Pitt."

"The trip up Spruce Knob and north through the Allegheny wilderness along the ever growing Cheat River was uneventful if rough going. It was near noon the ninth day . . . that the pair found themselves approaching a small settlement, Ice's Ford . . . [near Morgantown where Rt. 73 crosses Cheat Lake]."

From The Frontiersman, by Allan W. Eckert, Little Brown and Co., the narrative biography of Simon Kenton. Emphasis is that of the editor.

Ed.: So you think you have tromped around W. Va.! The next time you drive from the Highlands area to Pittsburgh, instead of cursing the roads, just think of old Simon. I wonder what Simon would say if he could see the headwaters of Shaver's Fork today.

Bob Burrell, Editor
1412 Western Ave.
Morgantown, W. Va. 26505

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Wilderness
Committee Workshop Registration

Please fill in this form to aid us in organizing the workshop.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State & Zip Code _____

Check off areas below in which you are informed or interested and which you would like to help propose as wilderness under the Wilderness Act.

Dolly Sods/Red Creek Plains
Otter Creek Watershed
Cranberry Back Country
Other

Check off the various ways in which you can help the Conservancy, and circle the main role you would like to assume within your workshop committee.

<input type="checkbox"/> legal	<input type="checkbox"/> photography	<input type="checkbox"/> land appraising
<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> trip leading	<input type="checkbox"/> report writing
<input type="checkbox"/> speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> geology	<input type="checkbox"/> document research
<input type="checkbox"/> printing	<input type="checkbox"/> forestry	<input type="checkbox"/> field investigation
<input type="checkbox"/> typing	<input type="checkbox"/> ecology	<input type="checkbox"/> other
<input type="checkbox"/> liason	<input type="checkbox"/> publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> yet another

Send this form to the address below or bring it with you to the meeting in July.

George Langford
1535 Sylvan Terrace
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15221

The

Highlands Voice

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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.