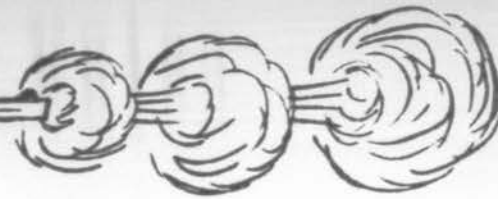


The

Highlands Voice



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The Highlands Voice

This newsletter inaugurates an attempt to keep members of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy as to the status of, action on, and trends in matters pertaining to conservation in West Virginia particularly in the Highlands region. It shall be our intent to broaden lines of communication on these matters among members and other interested parties. The quarterly newsletter will inform as fully as possible, it will relate items of interest from other sources, and it will provoke. It is intended to provoke discussion, constructive criticism, and action by offering opinions at times designed solely for this purpose. Unless otherwise indicated, the opinions will be those of the editor. It is hoped that these opinions will invite correspondence and discussion. A vigorous newsletter can then be the result of the collective effort by all of the members. The newsletter will act as a crossroads for such correspondence. Please send any material for the newsletter to 1412 Western Ave., Morgantown, W. Va. 26505.

1969 State Legislature

The West Virginia Legislature recently ended one of its most controversial sessions. Local and regional newspapers did not report much of the Legislature's activity in the field of conservation. The news media and the Legislature were mostly concerned about three other matters of great voter appeal: black lung compensation, teacher pay raises, and reorganization of higher education. Nevertheless certain items did get enacted that will be of interest to Conservancy members. The black bear finally received the protection it deserves and is no longer considered a predator. Similarly, protection has been extended to feathered predators. This is interpreted as a recognition by more and more people of the total ecological balance of wildlife. As most of you know, scenic rivers legislation was killed in committee and the public at large never even got a chance to express their views on the subject. Scenic rivers seems to be the kiss of death to many people. Many now feel that any proposed legislation in the future that even mentions these two words is doomed. The legislature passed an anti-water pollution bill (the final form of which most of us haven't seen yet) that while not as strong as some of us might have wanted, is supposed to be a good bill and one that the Director of Natural Resources can live with. A companion bill dealing with oil and gas drilling operations was also passed. Finally, a free-flowing river act was passed, but only the Greenbrier below Marlinton, Anthony's Creek, and the Cranberry made it. One important stream after another was removed from the final version. Veteran Capitol observers were repeatedly frustrated in their attempts to follow or find out about the status of the respective bills. Never had they encountered so much trouble in talking to our state representatives. More of this later.

THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE AT RICHWOOD

Residents of Richwood and Nicholas County are having a disagreement with the U.S. Forest Service. Foresters in recent years have changed their thinking on timber management methods. Many feel that the practice of clear cutting (as opposed to selective cutting) is in certain instances a valuable tool in forest management. The West Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America has been on record as favoring use of even-aged management as tool. The controversy has arisen in that many feel that the Forest Service has adopted the practice without regards to esthetic, watershed, or wildlife values. Although the practice does look like hell for awhile, the Forest Service has definitely taken watershed and wildlife management into consideration. Many misunderstand the Forest Service's intentions and believe that large (100-300 acre) tracts will be clear cut when in fact such tracts will be limited to widely separated smaller tracts of about 25 acres each. Another misunderstanding or point of difference is concerned with what some observers have reported as poor woodlot sanitation on the part of the contractors. The Forest Service has been accused of making the statement that they didn't have enough manpower or funds to police these contractors. Two Forest Service authorities expressed complete surprise at this when I questioned them about it which all serves to indicate to me at least that neither side possesses all of the facts, but that the whole situation might be resolved if both would continue their productive hearings and discussions on the matter. The new Monahela Forest Supervisor, Tony Dorrell of Elkins, or the Forester in charge of timber tract sales for the Gauley District, Norm Arsenault at Richwood, should be able to provide Conservancy members with more information on the matter. It is of course hard to re-educate the public to new practices when they have been taught for so many years that there was one right way to do things (selective cutting), but the fact that so many ordinary citizens are so concerned and well-informed about such vital matters is an extremely healthy sign for conservationists.

ERASURE OF THE GAULEY RIVER

Our friends in the Southeastern Power Administration have proposed a dam on the Gauley River at Swiss. The proposed dam would be over 800' high and create a pool back to the new dam at Summersville thus making it the highest in the U.S. At the present the U.S. Corps of Engineers is making a preliminary appraisal of this questionable edifice and will supposedly hold hearings in the Kanawha Basin. Questions being asked by conservationists include: Why another dam back-to-back with a new one on the same river? Why more power for the already over-committed, Kanawha Valley? Is this a "trade" for public opposition to dams on the Greenbrier? Note: The Greenbrier flows through a more populated area, is more accessible to the public, and is protected by fierce conservationists. The Gauley, clean and beautiful, flows through an unpopulated, wilderness-like area. Who will protect the Gauley? If you would like to be notified of hearings, write Mr. B. Ballengee, Chief Planning Branch, Engineering Division, Huntington District Office of Engineers, P.O. Box 2127, Huntington, W.Va. 25721.

WILL CHARLESTON AND WHEELING BECOME THE SEAPORTS OF THE FUTURE?

Yes, if certain private interests have their dreams come true. They have persuaded upon Senator Robert Byrd to introduce S. 292 which authorizes the U.S. Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study on connecting the James River of Virginia with the Kanawha of W.Va. by means of canals (Honest! I don't dream them up, I just report on them). You might be interested in looking at a map of the eastern U.S. to see what this

entails. As one observer opined, "It would be about as expensive to do as putting a man on the moon and just about as useful". Right now the bill is in the Senate Committee on Public Works chaired by Senator Jennings Randolph.

STREAM DISTURBANCE TASK FORCE

A task force group to study all aspects of stream disturbances which may result in destruction of fish and wildlife and recreational resources was appointed recently at a Stream Disturbance Workshop in Charleston. Representatives of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, the State Road Commission, U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, Soil Conservation Service, and the Agricultural Stabilization Service have been named to the committee.

The responsibility of proposing methods whereby West Virginia streams will be adequately protected and/or enhanced was assigned to this committee. A memorandum of agreement will be developed between state and federal agencies involved to review all stream disturbance projects. Through this coordinated effort, it is hoped that the rivers and streams of West Virginia will be adequately protected. From DNR News Release 2/19/69.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION CREATED - 2/26/69

The House Government Operations Committee established the above-named sub-committee with overall jurisdiction over "the continued deterioration of the land, water, air, fish and wildlife, growing things, esthetics, and other important features of the nation's environment". The committee will oversee Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Army (the Corps), the Federal Power Commission, and the Water Resources Council on these matters. Chairing the committee is Rep. Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis). Conservationists view the above as a very healthy sign, one in which a sub-committee has been created solely with conservation activities in mind. From Bob Waldrop, Sierra Club.

WEST VIRGINIA NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL, INC.

Representatives of the major conservation groups in West Virginia met on the evening of March 15 in Charleston to consider the establishment of a clearing house for information related to the status or action on legislative matters pertaining to conservation in Charleston. The group discussed a constitution that had been proposed and made many suggestions. The discussion centered mainly around three points. The first pertained to the question of whether the organization should function mainly as a communication source or whether it should be an action-centered organization. The second point was made to be sure there was no misunderstanding about the possibility of an individual conservation group being subservient or at odds to the council. This is definitely not the intent. The final point was how the organization would be funded. There will be no dues so money will have to be obtained from contributions. Discussion was concerned about the advisability of obtaining funds from industrial sources.

FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Senators Frank Moss (Utah), Thomas J. Dodd (Conn.), Phillip A. Hart (Mich.), Lee Metcalf (Mont.), and Ralph Yarborough (Texas) have introduced a bill (S.1446) into Congress that would establish a Department of Natural Resources. The bill provides for a Secretary of Natural Resources, a Deputy, and two Under Secretaries, one for water and one for land. The Under Secretary for Water would have jurisdiction over functions of the Bureau of Reclamation, civil works projects of the Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation Service, and Water Pollution Control Administration, plus coordination of river basin plans and all water resource matters presently in the Interior Department. The Under Secretary for Land would have jurisdiction over the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Bureau of Mines, Geological Survey, Air Pollution Administration, and offices dealing with minerals and fuels. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Government Operations. (From Report No. 10, National Wildlife Federation Conservation Reports)

WITH THE AFFILIATES

SIERRA CLUB- Lou Codispoti and Helen McGinnis traveled to West Virginia University Morgantown on March 2 to help local Sierra Club members Armand Singer and Herbert to establish a new section of the Southeast Chapter in West Virginia.

A- Under National Director Paul Cyphert's leadership, a new Izaak Walton League chapter was formally chartered in Harrison County with the help of Tom King and Max Smith. At least 41 charter members were obtained for this new group.

a. WILDWATER ASSOCIATION- The WVWWA has bitten off a big bite of a task for itself. Members are collecting data on the whitewater streams in the central and western parts of the state that are not well known among Eastern canoeists. Randy Carter has explored the streams in the Potomac drainage of the eastern part of the state pretty well, but there is not too much reliable information on the rest of the state's fine streams. The group intends to publish their own guide book for these streams by late summer or early fall.

- By the time you read this the Canoe Cruisers will have held their March 27 meeting at the American Red Cross Headquarters in D.C. with conservation chairman Jim Johnston having put on a program concerning the preservation of scenic rivers in the state. On the same day Lucille Harrigan is to represent CCA's views on the Potomac River Compact at an all day workshop at Airlie House, Warrenton, Va. Jim reports that CCA raised a total of \$278.50 for conservation work so far this year!

DOLLY SODS RESOLUTION - BLACKWATER FALLS WORKSHOP

Among the most important work to come out of the annual midwinter workshop held at the Conservancy at Blackwater Falls was the formulation of a resolution to be directed to the Forest Service with regards to Dolly Sods. Due to the untiring and very thorough work of Helen McGinnis who has devoted so much of her time to a study and inventory of this area, a resolution was formulated and adopted which reads:

RESOLVED, we commend the Forest Service for its decision to create a Red Creek Backwoods Area to protect the scenic, wilderness, and natural values of the Red Creek and immediately adjacent areas of the Allegheny Plateau. We urge the following;

1. That all land owned by the Federal Government in the drainage of the north fork of Red Creek and some immediately adjacent areas be included in the Red Creek Backwoods Area.
2. That privately held land in the above area be purchased by the Federal Government and added to the Monongahela National Forest as part of the Backwoods.
3. That all portions of the Backwoods within the area designated (more than 500' from the roads designated as F.S. #19, #75, and #37, with the exception of a 200' wide corridor leading to the aircraft beacon on the Rohrbaugh Plains) be managed as a Wilderness Area, making possible its eventual inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
4. That all steps necessary to insure that the Red Creek drainage is never strip mined be taken. Ideally, mineral rights to threatened areas should be acquired by the Federal Government.
5. That the Allegheny Parkway be re-routed to completely avoid the Red Creek drainage, preferably by a wide margin. Alternative routes should be given serious study.

W.Va. Anti-WATER POLLUTION BILLS

Late notice: I have just received copies of the recently passed bills S.23 and of the State Legislature which are designed to control water pollution. Should anybody care to examine them, please contact me. They are technically complicated from legal point of view so I will not attempt an exegesis of them.

CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

This Newsletter is being sent to three groups of people: (1) members, (2) people who would like to see interested in the Conservancy, and (3) people who already are interested in the Conservancy. For those who would like to become members, we have enclosed an application blank. Please make checks payable to the W.Va. Highlands Conservancy. I send together with the application to Stephen Moler, 12 West Fern Road, Charleston.

COMING EVENTS

- 11-13 6th Annual Whitewater Weekend, Petersburg, North Fork South Branch of the Potomac. CCA and the residents of Petersburg.
- 13 Whitewater float trip on one of W.Va.'s most beautiful rivers- Shaver's Fork. Shuttle will be set up promptly at 10:00 A.M. at Rt 33 bridge. Suitable for beginners. Contact Bob Burrell, 1412 Western, Morgantown.
- 25-27 3rd Annual Tygart's Valley River Nature Tours. Tours, field trips, bird-walks, and other interpretive activities in surrounding areas of natural interest including Tygart Lake State Park, Audra State Park, Tygart River at Arden Falls, Pleasant Creek and Laurel Mountain. Contact Mrs. Kyle Bush, 5 Bush Ave., Philippi, W.Va. for details.
- 30-June 1 Hikes, camping, and interpretive tours through Dolly Sods. Contact Helen McGinnis, 1511 Madison St., Hyattsville, Md. 20782 for details.
- 30-June 1 Backpacking and hiking into Cranberry Back Country. A full weekend has been planned by Charles Carlson and the Kanawha Trails Club. Contact him at P.O. Box 131, Charleston, W.Va. 25321 for reservations and details.

Oct 11-12

Highlands Weekend Review. Bob Harrigan, 5113 Wehawken Rd., Washington, D.C. is the chairman for this event. Participating affiliates are invited to place exhibits at a place to be decided during the event. Mrs. Victor Schmidt, 5336 5th Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. will be the exhibit chairman.

FROM THE CONSERVATIONIST'S BOOKSHELF

"To me camped down in Bass's little bay, the river's point of view was almost as real as my own; but when you are thoroughly meshed with the outside world it is by no means easy to see things that way. Two days after I had come out of the (Grand) Canyon I visited Hoover Dam. Our guide solemnly announced in the course of his otherwise excellent patter that the dam was "built to last indefinitely." Afterward, on the side, I suggested that perhaps his remark was a little misleading. "Oh" he said, not really comprehending, "it is just that I didn't want to make it too complicated. People only get confused."

"He had not, apparently, heard tell of Ozymandias, or considered that in the flicker of time since Hoover Dam was built in 1933 the Colorado has silted up the top forty miles of Lake Mead, the temporary reservoir created behind the dam.

"Fresh from the Canyon, I found myself sadly unimpressed by Hoover Dam. All I could think of as the guide herded us through shining labyrinths of turbines and elevators was: "What a ball this is going to be for archeologists in three or four thousand years!" I tried the thought on one co-visitor, but drew a stony blank." Colin Claver from The Man Who Walked Through Time, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1967.

A NOTE ON PRODUCTION

Please send criticisms or suggestions for future Newsletters to Bob Burrell, 1412 Fern Ave., Morgantown, W.Va. 26505. Special thanks are due to Carolyn Killoran, Halton, and Bruce Sundquist for their excellent technical assistance in producing this newsletter. May the Tribe of Benefactors and Volunteers increase!

Bob Burrell
Morgantown