



the Highlands Voice

Vol. II, No. 8

December 1970

AN OPEN LETTER TO DAVID FRANCIS

Dear Mr. Francis:

During the past months we have received numerous newsletters, press releases, and newspaper reprints from people representing your interests. This information is widely quoted in the area newspapers and reprints of these are again sent to us in a sort of self-consuming process. Your side of the story has received an unprecedented amount of dissemination and public attention and your entire campaign represents a new mining technique by combining the Madison Avenue advertising approach with your attempt to influence those charged with the public trust of protecting our natural resources.

The substance of your news releases, in addition to telling your side of the story, is to question the reliability and, even worse the integrity of our Department of Natural Resources. The effect of your campaign is to undermine the public's confidence in a state agency that all West Virginians admire, one that not only protects our fantastic woods, waters, and parks, but also sees to it that we have a virtually limitless amount of fish, game, and other wildlife for our enjoyment. Most West Virginians are proud of our strip mine laws, our uncounted miles of pure whitewater streams, our verdant mountains, our golden trout, our liberal fishing and hunting regulations, and, most importantly of all, the people charged with the protection of all of these things, the Department of Natural Resources. I would remind you that these people are dedicated professionals and not political hacks. Unlike many state and federal agencies, the people working for the DNR have been specially trained to do their specific jobs.

By the very nature of what you propose to do on Shaver's Fork (as well as many other places in West Virginia) and your implication that political motivations are the reasons for the denial of your permits, you not only have threatened these things many West Virginians value so greatly, but you have turned West Virginian against West Virginian. You have created doubt where there should be no doubt. And you have created a smokescreen so dense that the concerned West Virginian is having an extremely difficult time evaluating your proposal objectively. You should remember that you are

not merely proposing to mine just anywhere, but rather in at least two very special places, Shaver's Fork and the Cranberry Backcountry.

Lest you or others accuse us as being only unrealistic recreationists who think only in terms of playgrounds rather than in wages and prosperity for underprivileged areas, we must point out that although we are not unmindful of such extremely important matters, we will consider all of the economics of the situation not just that you have set before us. We will also consider such things as the cost to the public, a possible severance tax on such operations, the temporary nature of your project (in our view 25 or 50 or even 100 years are mere drops in the bucketful of time), and your proposal to export this coal to Japan at a time all our information tells us we should be looking for ways to conserve our dwindling supply of fossil fuels. Such coal would be used to make Japanese steel which has been underselling that made in the U.S., so we are understandably confused when you talk about the economic benefits.

Neither I nor the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy can at this time reject or endorse your proposal. We can not evaluate the technical aspects of your proposal only on the basis of your press releases and many similar demands on our environment have prevented our personal inspection thus far. All we know is what we read in the newspapers and the Highlands Conservancy doesn't formulate positions on this basis. We will be observing you objectively in the months to come. We will form a field study team to look into the matter, deeply. Sportsmen familiar with the area have already contacted us. This winter our hikers and backpackers will familiarize themselves intimately with the area. This spring when the water is high and beautiful, expert whitewater boaters will be in the area. We will be consulting civil engineers, water treatment experts, wildlife biologists, and others with expertise on the matter. If things are as you say, you have nothing to worry about. If your plans are compatible with other things of equal or greater value in the area, we will publicly say so. After gathering as much information as possible, we will attempt to present what we believe would be the public's view of your project, for we do not believe the public view should be molded and shaped by a one-sided public relations campaign. In the meantime we would suggest that other West Virginians do likewise and you can help them, Mr. Francis, by discontinuing your present journalistic campaign lest people conclude, "Methinks he doeth protesteth too much!"

Bob Burrell, Editor
The Highlands Voice

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CONSERVANCY MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

George Breiding of Morgantown and Chuck Conrad of Wheeling were recently honored by Governor Moore for conservation efforts in increasing public interest in preserving and restoring West Virginia wildlife and out of doors. May we add our belated congratulations gentlemen.

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CORRECTION OF A BOO-BOO

The September issue erroneously reported that the Forest Service's intention of selling a timber lot around Little Stonecoal Run was located in Otter Creek. Of course it is not, but in the Dolly Sods area instead. It is, however, related to one of the areas in the wilderness bill before Congress for study.

CHEAT RIVER CONSERVANCY, INC.

What determination! What spunk! What progress! This organization which started out in a small church meeting last summer has quickly grown to almost 400 members, has been on WBOY-TV, paid two visits to Governor Moore, made a couple of Senators and one Congressman awfully nervous, been responsible for generating a tremendous amount of public information concerning the Rowlesburg dam fiasco, and has attracted a great deal of support from local, state, and national organizations. The dam hasn't been stopped yet, but the organization doesn't have anywhere to go but up. Governor Moore has been extremely hopeful by indicating his displeasure with the project, his sympathy with the group's intentions, and has urged them on in their efforts. He stated that he could possibly use his influence nationally to see what he could do, although he has no legal authority to stop it. If he raised a big enough stink, it would be unlikely that even the Corps would bulldoze in against state's rights. Perhaps a letter to the Governor on this point from you all . . .

Senator Byrd has been a champion of this project for many years so understandably his communications are unenthusiastic about the Conservancy's purposes. Congressman Staggers and Senator Randolph attempt to avoid the whole issue by not even bothering to respond to letters from the group. Mr. Phil McGance, Senator Randolph's legislative assistant, provided a brief glimmer of hope by being in contact with the group and promising a meeting among the Senator, the Corps of Engineers, and the people in the St. George-Parsons area. A meeting time and place was set up at Mr. McGance's suggestion and announced in the newspapers. The meeting was to be held on the Saturday after the election, but the first Senator Randolph heard of it was when he read about it in the Elkins Intermountain when he went home to vote. Obviously, the group didn't get their meeting.

The Senator has not answered lengthy letters from the Highlands Conservancy dated August 3 and October 1. Many important questions were asked in the first letter which urgently are in need of being answered.

Since the group can not get any help from any elected official (Tucker County is one of the least populated counties in the state and hence doesn't have much voter pull), the Cheat Valley Conservancy has no other choice but to go to court. Greatly aiding them will be the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund as well as local attorneys, but the court costs and other legal expenses will be high. Right now support, both financial and otherwise, is being solicited from any state or national group or agency or any individual who is tired of dam foolishness, the continued exploitation of Appalachian resources and people, and the apathy of our elected officials and who believe that the people who live in the Cheat Valley have as much right to live in dignity and in pursuit of their livelihoods as do the dam boosters in Pittsburgh. Financial contributions may be sent to the Treasurer of the Cheat Valley Conservancy, Inc., Route 1, Box 22, Hambleton, W.Va. 26269. Groups or individuals with specialized archeological, geological, hydrological, or biological knowledge of the area may get in contact with the Cheat Valley Conservancy at Rt. 2, Box 54, Parsons, W.Va. 26287 or Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, & John Boettner, 1116-B Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, W.Va. 25301.

A WILLIAMS RIVER PERSPECTIVE
AN ADDENDUM

Here's another issue. Or rather, it concerns the direction of the interest in coal mining the Conservancy has already demonstrated. "The Voice" has described the threat to Otter Creek, the Cranberry, Shavers Fork and most recently to the Williams. One aspect, the most important, has not been brought out. The Cranberry, Shavers Fork and Otter Creek (without its DNR enrichment station) contain almost no alkalinity to buffer any acid that might enter these streams. Consequently absolutely no acid must be produced on these watersheds or there will be virtually no fish present. The production of this acid may very well be irreversible, because the most massive of seals and backfills may not work completely. These disturbances of geological strata must be measured on the geological time scale, and it is very likely no one alive today will see any improvement in water quality - no matter what the effort - short of perpetual enrichment with limestone.

The Williams can take some acid pollution. The others mentioned (and quite a few more in the Cheat, Tygart, Gauley, Little Kanawha and Elk drainages) can not. The critical ones are known. To be specific, on the Williams in the area mentioned in the last issue of "The Voice:" the Middle Fork, Little Fork and Lick Branch can not - (neither, not incidentally at all, can Tea Creek or North Fork of Cranberry). The Middle Fork has a substantial summer native brook trout population that extends up to "Big" Beechy Run. It is so pure, sterile, and naturally acid (without any disturbance on its watershed) that only in summer when it is naturally least acid can it support native brook. Little Fork and Lick Branch are ever so slightly more sterile so the same amount of acid presents their ever having any fish in them. In setting priorities on this section of the Williams only the Middle Fork need be of concern to Conservationists - critical concern, that is.

In the face of this threat of acid pollution to many of our prettiest and most important trout streams, I find concern with logging siltation, the building of a washery instead of a campground, even the acid pollution of the main Williams, distracting if not rather petty concerns. Siltation seldom persists after the disturbance ends. Many of the effects of logging are gone after 5 years; others after 20 years; most after 50 years; few persist after 100 years. A campsite, even a washery can be obliterated (as was the old logging camp that was once at the "Three Forks of Williams" if the public demands it. However, if any more acid is formed on the Middle Fork it will become like Little Fork and Lick Branch, devoid of fish life virtually forever.

[Ed. NOTE: As so often happens when we receive expert testimony like this, the source must remain confidential for reasons of that person's job security.]

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THE DAVIS POWER PROJECT
AS SEEN BY A CANAAN VALLEY NATIVE

There are many reasons why I am opposed to the construction of the proposed Davis Power Project by the Allegheny Power System. These range from sentimental attachment to the injustices that have been and will be rendered

to the people of the immediate area if the project is carried out as proposed. Having grown up there, I have through the years desparingly watched it be consumed by gas wells, pipelines, power lines, road ways, ski ways and a golf course. Some of the scenic landscape and magnificent wildlife still remain in the Valley, but what will be left after it is further consumed by W.Va.'s largest lake?

While it is true that at present the power interests own or have options to buy all but less than a half dozen small tracts of land necessary for the construction of the lake and power plant in Canaan, and therefore, as most people would say, should be allowed to do with it as they please, I think it is very important to be aware of how they came about acquiring some of this land and what their plans are for the Valley and the surrounding area.

This is a history that extends over almost half a century connected with the purchase of land for the proposed project. About every 10 years or so the rumors would spread that a lake was going to be built and the land would be condemned, and if you want to stay out of court and get a good price for what you own, you'd better sell now. Few people ever really knew the purpose of the lake, its size, etc., but they always knew there was a willing buyer in the power companies if for some reason, money was needed.

The people desired to stay out of court, which would have involved high costs they could not afford and embarrassment and ridicule from supposed friends. Relentless pressure was ever present, from every conceivable angle, on those residents who continued to resist. This type of duress has kept these residents from improving their property or even from planning ahead more than one year at a time. In addition, if an accident or an improvement was contemplated, a power company representative always seemed to be nearby. Close friends, employers, creditors, and lending agencies have also been tools in the process. One resident remarked: "I thought a corporation was the same as an individual under the law. However, I see this one difference - a corporation has no heart, soul, or conscience." Land buyers from huge lucrative interests, whether a power company or the U.S. Government never seem to understand that no amount of condemnation money can pay for a life time of joys, hard work, and troubles invested in the land one owns.

This is one reason for my opposition. There can be no justification for such outrageous dealings. Another lies in the fact that adequate studies have not been done on the effects such development would have on the entire ecological balance of the beautiful and unique valley. The wildlife that lives in the area to be flooded by the dam afford outdoorsmen many hours of recreational pleasure. These types of wildlife just could not exist in the State Park - the only remaining large area of land left in the Valley, after the flood comes. That area already maintains all the wildlife it can, and in addition, the terrain is now much altered from its natural state.

I know as well as anyone that Tucker County is in desperate need of funds to maintain itself and I am aware of the fact that this project would certainly be of financial benefit to the county. But there are alternatives. One is the course of action recommended by the Highlands Conservancy that the legislature address itself to the question of forming a zoning commission to study resources and needs of our wild lands. A second is the

formation of public utility cooperatives wherein if natural resource alterations must take place, the control is in local hands as are the profits.

I feel that this project will be of questionable value to Tucker County and West Virginia. We might get some of the power at a time when Governor Moore says our state is not producing enough for its own consumption, let alone furnishing everyone else with it. And maybe we will get a few jobs while the thing is being constructed, but not much afterwards. The Voice has already indicated some of the undesirable effects that could arise from the project. The big question is will the economic benefits outweigh such effects?

Your valley or stream may be the next one to experience the effects of total electric living.

Linda Cooper Elkinton

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APPALACHIAN RESEARCH AND DEFENSE FUND, INC.

The above organization, one that we should all be aware of and cooperate with is a group of lawyers, community organizers and education and training specialists based and working mainly in W.Va. and Ky. It is hoped that this organization will be to the mountain people of Appalachia what the Civil Rights movement has been to the Blacks in the South. For the first time, a concerted effort of both legal and social action will be directed toward ending discrimination, human and environmental exploitation, and most importantly, the apathy of government and industry toward Appalachia and her poor.

Headed by former State Senator Paul J. Kauffman, the young organization has made an impressive dent in the noggins of the landscape lechers, but could use more help from all of us. They have made an impressive showing in the Blue Ridge proceedings, have intervened in the Davis Power project, and will help the Cheat River Conservancy in preventing a flood of the beautiful Cheat Valley by the Rowlesburg Dam(n) crowd. Keep up the good work - our eye is on you. To do this they need support from all of us. Is your organization interested in doing something more than talking about the Rowlesburg Dam? Contact John C. Boettner, Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, 1116-B Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston 25301. Phone (304) 344-9687.

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SEVERANCE TAX

Governor Arch Moore, Jr. has been talking about a severance tax on all coal leaving the state. He is getting tired as are we all of so much of our natural resources leaving the state with no local return. This seems to be a laudable goal, but trouble could be encountered if nearby states did not do likewise thus putting West Virginia coal in an unfavorable competitive position on the market.

But while we are at it, let's give the outdoors ne'er-do-wells something to really steam up their board meeting rooms in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, etc. As long as we are stuck with the air pollution, landscape

The number of intervenors continues to grow with a couple of North Carolina counties taking different positions on this from the State of North Carolina. Mr. Levy seems to think there is still a long way to go before this case is disposed of.

I . . . am looking forward to working with you and other West Virginia conservationists during the next two years. I made the clean-up of environmental pollution the major thesis of this year's campaign.

I understand the Interior Department has modified its position somewhat on the Blue Ridge project. It supported a motion by the company to get a license based on conditions agreeable to all parties with the FPC to set the modifications and changes later. The company agreed to be bound by any FPC decisions in the future on the modifications. Interior earlier had insisted on an initial dam storage capacity of 400,000 acre feet which would automatically be increased to 650,000 acre feet. Now Interior agreed to go along with the company's request that the storage capacity be held at 400,000 acre feet which would only be increased by the FPC issuing an order to that effect."

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YOU WON'T BE HEARING QUITE SO MUCH FROM ME FOR AWHILE

This marks my last issue of The Highlands Voice for awhile. Now before you go into a fit of euphoria, hysteria, or melancholia depending on your nature, let me be quick to state that it will be just for awhile. I'll still be around raising my particular brand of hell, particularly with the river-rapers, but it is time for new people to learn the ropes and become involved in our affairs. There is no better way to learn than to edit the Voice for a few issues.

As of the next issue which will be published after the Midwinter Workshop, your new editor will be Ernie Nester, Box 298, Alloy, W.Va. 25002. Ernie has been most helpful to me and has had a few contributions published in Voice. Particularly good was his status report of the Cranberry Backcountry in the June issue. Ernie claims he doesn't know much about the job, but if it is any comfort to him, I didn't know anything either. (This may or may not have been painfully obvious from time to time.) I would ask that you give Ernie your ear, your support, and your contributions. Ernie will speak out freely on what ever he wishes. Like me, his opinions will not be censored, but of course do not necessarily reflect those of the Conservancy. However, Ernie will be our conscience as well as our eyes and ears. Good luck, Ernie.

All editorial matters including your gripes should be sent to Ernie. The Voice will continue to be mailed from our Morgantown address. The machinery for producing the Voice is so well oiled in Morgantown that this will remain necessary. Change of addresses will be accepted in Morgantown, but we would prefer you sent them to Carolyn Killoran, 1605-D Quarrier St., Charleston, W.Va. 25311. DON'T send them to the new editor.

MIDWINTER WORKSHOP

BLACKWATER FALLS

JANUARY 30-31

Plan now to attend our annual Highlands Conservancy Midwinter Workshop the last weekend in January. This is the only announcement you will get, so make your reservations now by writing Blackwater Falls Lodge, Davis, W.Va. 26260. Singles run about \$8.00 and doubles \$10-12. Your reservation should include a deposit for the first night's lodging. We would like to have a good turnout because it is at these meetings that Conservancy policy is formulated.

PROGRAM - Although the program is not firmed up yet it will be of interest to all Conservancy members. It is hoped that DNR Director Sandy Latimer will be our guest. In addition, we may have time to take some short hikes in the beautiful country side. Plenty of snow has been ordered. Be sure to send in reservations as early as possible.

RESOLUTIONS - To facilitate orderly discussion, it is urgently requested that anyone having resolutions or policy statements they would like to see adopted to send them to Sayre Rodman, 32 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, Pa. 15139. Sayre's committee will prepare resolutions so that they may be distributed to the Board members. If you have an idea, but don't know how to say it, contact Sayre anyway and he will try to draft a statement for you.

HELP WANTED - The Conservancy needs all kinds of help, but we especially need to have a typist present at the Board meeting to handle various procedural details. Electric typewriter and paper furnished, no pay, but pleasant employers. Contact Bob Burrell or Tom King.

ELECTIONS - Eleanor Bush and Max and Sona Smith have served as the nominating committee for next year's officers and have prepared a slate of candidates. Of course additional nominations will be accepted from the floor, but here is the committee's effort:

President - Bob Burrell, Morgantown
Secretary - Eleanor Bush, Philippi
Treasurer - Charles Carlson, Charleston
Vice Presidents:
Herb Eckert, Morgantown
Tom King, Bridgeport
Anson Courter, Washington, D.C.
Carolyn Killoran, Charleston
George Ours, Petersburg
Ron Hardway, Webster Springs
Directors-At-Large:
Charles Conrad, Wheeling
Marie Wallace, Fairmont
Fred Anderson, Washington, D.C.
Howard Barb, Parsons
Bruce Sundquist, Pittsburgh, Pa.

MORE ON THE CRANBERRY

Ron Hardway forwards the following information. Early in October the Fox Rotary Drilling Co., (Fox and Son, Inc., Washington, Pa.) set up a gas drilling rig on the southern slope of Redoak Knob about one mile southeast of the Redoak fire tower. There was some initial concern that the operation was actually in the Backcountry proper, but further inquiry indicated it was not, but uncomfortably close. It was also learned that the Backcountry needs better definition and firmer protection. It is understood that gas has been discovered. What next?

Meanwhile it has become increasingly apparent that there is considerable question concerning the exact location of BackCountry boundaries, especially those of the proposed wilderness study area before Congress. In an attempt to clear the air The Voice asked George Langford's Wilderness Committee to define that part of the Backcountry precisely. The following is their report.

CRANBERRY-WILLIAMS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

The Cranberry Back Country comprises 53,000 acres; because of popular acclaim, all of it was included in the Wilderness Bills now before Congress. However, a substantial part of this area has fallen into use as woodlot: timber sales have taken place on 21,900 acres since 1946. The most recent disturbances discourage consideration of roughly half of the Back Country as statutory wilderness; man's touch is all too evident.

We are considering essentially the other half of the Back Country, plus contiguous undesignated National Forest land, for inclusion in the Conservancy's proposal for a Cranberry-Williams Wilderness. Explicitly, the periphery of the area for study begins at Three Forks of Williams River, runs east along the Williams River on Forest Service Rt. 86 to the Highland Scenic Highway, then along the Scenic Highway to its junction with state Rt. 39, then along Forest Service Rt. 102 past the Cranberry Glades to Forest Service Rt. 76, then down the Cranberry River a short distance past Tumbling Rock Run, and then north-northwest back to Three Forks along ridge lines. This study area contains 37,000 acres; the complete watersheds of the Middle Fork of the Williams River and the North Fork of the Cranberry River are included, as is the mountainside south of the Williams River itself. The Cranberry Glades are also included in the study area, as are the Forest Service's Middle Fork and Little Branch Pioneer Study Units. Some other form of special management may be more appropriate for the Glades and immediately adjacent slopes, however.

Our proposal for wilderness designation will not jeopardize the state's trout stocking program; Forest Service Rt. 102 would remain open for official use only (as should all the other roads not included in the wilderness but still within the original Back Country).

The watersheds of Birchlog Run (cut in 1956), Norton Run, Cold Run, Rough Run (presently undergoing timber access road construction by Georgia-Pacific) are contiguous with our study area but are within the area currently committed by sale to timber production by the Forest Service. The fight to protect the other Multiple Uses in these areas will have to be waged directly with that agency. This is already occurring on a nationwide basis. Write your Congressmen; they control the purse strings. The same goes for the Dogway Fork of the Cranberry River; wilderness designation is probably not the answer here either. The northeast faces of Mikes

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Knob and Kennison Mtn. have timber sales on them which endanger the watersheds of the Dogway Fork and the Cranberry River. They deserve careful treatment to preserve the good fishing in the Cranberry.

The area of study was chosen without regard to minerals; this is an acute problem for the entire Back Country which must be dealt with firmly (by the Forest Service, in the courts if necessary), responsibly (by the mineral owners), and soon (by us!). It may be prohibitively expensive for Congress to condemn the minerals underlying recreational-use areas in the National Forest; I suggest that the people of West Virginia may have the power to prevent the taking of coal from above drainage until such time as it has been demonstrated not to cause surface damage (lowered water table, acid drainage, precipitation of chemicals insoluble in subsequently neutralized water). It simply requires a sufficiently aroused electorate. Write your Congressmen and Governor Moore. Meanwhile, we will have to keep a close watch on the coal miners, too.

George Langford, Chairman
Wilderness Preservation Committee

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LEGISLATORS TAKE NOTICE!
(AND CONSERVATIONISTS, TOO)

Recently four of us in Pittsburgh met with a Mr. Fahringer, a member of a landscape firm (Fahringer, McCarty, Grey & Associates) that recently completed a four year study of recreational development in Pennsylvania. Their recommendations were reviewed by relevant government agencies, and now has been printed in the form of an inch thick spirally bound color book. In it Pennsylvania is divided into broad zones, apparently based mainly on population density. . . Mr. Fahringer is a member of a team studying potential recreation sites, and in this capacity recently toured the Canaan Valley and vicinity. He came away with the impression that the state has no overall plan for recreational development--that each issue is fought out one by one as it comes up. He also felt that there was certainly no concensus among state officials as to whether or not the eastern part of the state should be developed for tourism--or at least the degree to which it should be developed. Apparently Pa. state officials are taking his recommendations into consideration when making decisions regarding roads etc. I couldn't say how good his report is, or whether it would be something that would be good for W.Va., but we might consider being for such an overall plan.

Helen McGinnis

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HOW GREEN IS YOUR VALLEY?

Unique as we may think we are, it seems likely that we are genetically programmed to a natural habitat of clean air and a varied green landscape, like any other mammal. To be relaxed and feel healthy usually means simply allowing our bodies to react as evolution has equipped them to do for 100 million years. Physically and genetically we appear best adapted to a tropical savanna, but as a civilized animal we adapt culturally to

cities and towns. For scores of centuries in the temperate zones we have tried to imitate in our houses not only the climate, but the setting of our evolutionary past: warm humid air, green plants, and even animal companions. Today those of us who can afford it may even build a greenhouse or swimming pool next to our living room, buy a place in the country, or at least take our children vacationing at the seashore. The specific physiological reactions to natural beauty and diversity, to the shapes and color of nature, especially to green, to the motions and sounds of other animals, we do not comprehend and are reluctant to include in studies of environmental quality. Yet it is evident that nature in our daily lives must be thought of, not as a luxury to be made available if possible, but as part of our inherent indispensable biological need. It must be included in studies of resource policies for man.

From: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Science and Public Affairs, "Criteria for an Optimum Human Environment," Hugh H. Iltis, Orie L. Loucks, and Peter Andrews, January 1970, p. 3-4.

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PUBLICITY

We received the following comments from Gordon Hamrick concerning the questionnaire we sent out last month (which by the way we are still accepting from our members): "In your questionnaire you asked 'What sort of things do you think the Conservancy ought to do to increase public interest in conservation in West Virginia?' . . . While the Conservancy can hardly afford a slick magazine like the Sierra Club Bulletin, why can't we send out a few news releases and/or photographs of interest to newspapers? I think you would have little trouble in getting photographs of interest to conservationists from members of the Conservancy."

"Why not a slide show, or series of slide shows, to show some of the areas being threatened by mining or lumber operations. Lee Crislip and I did a slide show on Shaver's Fork of Cheat River, in connection with D.P. "Sheriff" Givens proposed Webster-Randolph Scenic Railroad. This show is currently being shown to various interested groups. Write to G. Leroy Crislip, PO Box 87, Webster Springs, W. Va. 26288, for further information on availability."

"Lee and I also have a slide show on the effects and probable causes of the flash floods at Bergoo last July 16th. These shows have been used quite effectively by Lee in his classes at Webster Springs High School."

"I'm sure that any number of Conservancy members have slides which they would be willing to loan and which could be used to prepare a slide show of a given area or project. For a relatively small expense, such a show could be loaned and duplicated for use in schools with conservation education programs. And I frankly feel that we will have to start with the young people to achieve any lasting effects in conservation."

(Ed. Note: Amen and thanks for the extension of an idea already begun in a small way. We would like to remind members that Herb Eckert of 24 Bates Rd. in Morgantown has an excellent slide show and talk on Otter Creek. The good folks in Saint George are getting one together on the Rowlesburg fiasco and will gladly talk to anyone who will listen. I have one for the New River and the Blue Ridge project and I am sure many other members could come up with other such talks just from your own collections. Many others would be glad to take such pictures on an assignment basis. Get in the habit of including a camera in your gear for all outings. It is still the best way to take an inventory of what we still have before its gone.)

TO MINE OR NOT TO MINE

Several interesting developments have appeared in recent months that warrant a closer look at the coal mining scene. There has been an increase of 33% in strip mine permit applications and a 60% increase in acreage during the past year and there is no end in sight. The coal rush is on and every one is after it particularly that in the Monongahela National Forest. The Princess Coal Company and/or the Linan Smokeless Coal Company has been waging a particularly vigorous PR campaign concerning their twice denied application to mine in the Shaver's Fork headwater area. Together with regional editors of the area's newspapers, they have pointed out all of the good points of their project, undermined (no pun intended) the public's faith in the Department of Natural Resources, and have created the impression that the reasons for the denial were politically motivated. Judging by the number of newspapers supporting this campaign and the letters-to-the-editors, the campaign has been very successful.

Meanwhile a backlash has developed against strip mining in general. One organization has been formed whose sole purpose is to outlaw strip mining. The Highlands Conservancy Board of Directors rejected this approach inasmuch as there are many areas within the state that are amenable to strip mining and the operators in these areas have done a good job on the whole in holding up their end of the bargain. The complete outlawing of strip mining seems reactionary and doesn't face a more serious problem, that of any kind of coal mining in the National Forest. Congressman Ken Hechler has called for a statewide, non-partisan drive to protect the entire Monongahela National Forest from coal mining of any kind. Although the Conservancy has not dealt with the problem in this light, this editor supports Mr. Hechler's plea to the fullest. It is my feeling that coal mining is incompatible with the multiple use concept. You can't have mining and any other currently recognized legitimate forest use.

Another group has been formed to deal with strip mining in a more realistic way and hence is deserving of your attention. A non-profit organization called Concerned West Virginians, Inc., is seeking public interest and support in correcting certain undesirable features in strip mining. The organization is concerned about the increased demand for coal stripping, the unrealistic permission to strip on slopes greater than 20%, unrealistic methods of determining slope, acid mine pollution, stream sedimentation, and inspection. The main selling point of the group is that these changes may be brought about without additional legislation. The DNR Reclamation Commission has the authority to change the rules and regulations if enough public support can be gathered to request it.

The group is distributing the questionnaire found on the back of this page and is requesting that all interested citizens fill these out and mail them to the address indicated. If you think they are all wet, by all means say so, but please turn it in. We would hope that you would support them, however. They will then forward all comments and forms over to the Governor.

We believe this to be a worthwhile project and are cooperating with them in this regard, but would like to go them one better by stating that certain of their concerns should not be unfairly applied to only strip mines but to all mining activities.

Concerned West Virginians, Inc.
P. O. Box 286
Charleston, West Virginia 25321

I am in favor of the following proposals designed to more strictly regulate the strip mining industry in West Virginia:

1. Change the maximum allowable slope which can be stripped from the present 33 degrees to 20 degrees.
2. Require "sightings" of the slope every 100 feet instead of every 500 feet.
3. Establish standards to determine allowable sedimentation of streams due to strip mining.
4. Establish the stricter regulations needed to prevent the acid pollution of streams by strip mining.
5. Urge the Governor and the legislature to increase the budget of the Reclamation Division of the Department of Natural Resources in order to provide positively for the men and equipment necessary to assure rigid inspection of strip mines.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ Zip _____

The return of this questionnaire will be a giant step forward for West Virginia. Mail it today to:

Concerned West Virginians, Inc.
P. O. Box 286
Charleston, West Virginia 25321

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THE SWISS DAM

The Department of Natural Resources is distributing a slick pamphlet describing the proposed Swiss Dam. Although the DNR says that the purpose of the pamphlet is for information only and does not imply DNR sanction, we note that the production is of the "Go on and buy" type what with all sorts of groovy figures on the cover enjoying all sorts of boons granted to us by that giver from whom all wondrous things flow, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Swiss Dam, if built will be the nation's highest dam and fourth highest in the world. It will be placed on the wildest river in West Virginia, the Gauley. This river unites with the New at Gauley Bridge to form the Greater Kanawha. It controls a drainage of 1420 square miles. The high dam would back water up clear back to the Summersville Dam. The brochure is very careful not to say anything negative concerning the project, but the dam would flood out a 20 mile wilderness canyon and almost 8 miles of another, that containing the almost equally wild Meadow River. The acre feet of storage will be 600,000, but nothing is said about drawdown. If the DNR is putting this out to answer the many questions received from the public, it is strange that these important statistics are not in the brochure.

Most of the blurb reads like something the Corps would put out because the bulk of it is given over to "benefits". The usual garbage about recreation and wildlife and flood control and low-flow augmentation and outstanding scenic attraction. One facet that hasn't reached the public eye yet: "The electricity produced at the Swiss-Summersville pumped storage system would require the burning of more than 2,000,000 tons of coal per year to return water to the upper lakes, which will help the coal industry in this state. As a pumping development the Swiss-Summersville project will be rather unusual in that there will be three reservoirs involved and two pump-generator plants. Operation will be something like this: Water will pass from the existing Summersville Lake through turbines into Swiss Lake producing electricity, and then again water will be passed through Swiss Dam turbines to a (lower) regulator lake and thus producing power once again. Then during low-power demand pump turbines are reversed to return the water to Swiss and Summersville Lakes, and this water will be used again and again to supplement the generation from natural stream flow."

The affair will have a total 2,550 megawatts of installed capacity. Total energy is estimated at 4,800 million kilowatt hors annually.

Opposition towards this dam will be pretty slim, mainly because there are so few people anyplace who know anything at all about what is in the Gauley Canyon. It is so wild and rugged in most parts that few people ever get in there. It has replaced the Cheat and the New River Gorge as the supreme eastern whitewater river to test the mettle of the expert paddler.

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THE SST BOONDOGGLE

It may be too late by the time you get this, but write to your Senators immediately about a possible floor fight in the Senate regarding appropriations for the SST. We have outlined some of the environmental consequences and matters of priorities regarding this in a past newsletter. Of the millions of dollars to be spent, much by West Virginia taxpayers, return to the state would be less than \$50,000 in sub-contracts. Obviously no West Virginia airport could accomodate this grotesque monster. West Virginia will probably be on the route chosen to fly the noisy pork barrel over in order to not disturb those sleeping in the larger cities.