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# the Highlands Voice

Vol. III, No. 5

November, 1971

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Another successful Highlands Weekend Review has been tucked under our belts with great satisfaction, but these events just don't happen. They are made to click by a handful of tireless workers. Our deepest thanks go to this year's Review Committee: David and Linda Elkinton, Don Good, and Nick Barb. You folks did a splendid job and are a real credit to the Conservancy.

Other people in the Conservancy also deserve our recognition and thanks: Helen McGinnis, Bruce Sundquist, Vic Schmidt, and George Langford for their continuing zeal in working with the wilderness issues and with the new edition of the Dolly Sods Guide and the soon to be released new edition of the Otter Creek Guide; Ron Hardway for his tireless and almost single handed efforts at trying to save the beauty and grandeur of Webster County from the spoilers; Craig Moore for his weekly efforts of ferreting out the Shaver's Fork story and his willingness to take the chairmanship of our Shaver's Fork committee; Ernie Nester for his efforts with the "Voice", our primary means of communication; Fred Anderson, Willis Shay, Jim Moorman, Dick Ewing, and Tom Ward, our legal eagles who do so much to protect our rights; to Art Wright and Dick Lahn who keep me posted on the Washington scene and who are often our first and only sources of information; and to Carolyn Killoran who does everything! Of course there are many more of you who help out in so many other ways and I deeply appreciate every one of you.

What I would like to see, however, are more Hardways, Sundquists, Nesters, etc. from our membership. We need more people like Bill McNeel of Marlinton who keeps his eye on certain areas and keeps us posted, like Sandie Lindbert and Carolyn Wilson of Elkins who send in newsclippings and other forms of news respectively from their community, like Turner Sharp who showed up one day and said, "I can't do much, but I would like to donate the equivalent of one afternoon per week in working for the Conservancy," and so on. We could use more help on Rowlesburg and Blue Ridge. There is much to be done on Shaver's Fork. We need more W. Va. based people who are wilderness buffs. We need people with certain degrees of expertise, e.g. geology, economics, rural sociology, and publicity. We are constantly being asked to take action or stands on certain issues for which we just don't have the people to spare. Those who serve the Conservancy now are doing about all they can, so we could use new uncommitted members with interests in some of these new areas where the Conservancy has not yet entered.

Examples of such areas are the Potomac Basin Compact, acquisition of trail rights for the very small portion of the Appalachian Trail that passes through West Virginia, litter, pollution, and strip

THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY  
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mining on the watershed of the upper North Branch of the Potomac, strip mining in general, mineral rights in the Monongahela National Forest, the C and O Canal Historic Park project, the Swiss Dam proposed for the Gauley River, preservation of the black bear in West Virginia, an animal that is certainly doomed to extinction from our midst, and many others. I have received requests for help on all of these projects within the past few months, but have had to decline or at least not be able to give them the time each deserved simply due to lack of people available to work on them. After you have spent a hard day at the office and come home tired and worn out, do you still want a hard job that has few rewards and no pay at all? Do you get tired of reading about all the wonderful things it means to our state when your favorite trout stream is silted up, a highway is built through your favorite State Park, or that very special place you go to relax has been stripped away for 30" of coal? If you are a tired West Virginian, either legally or in spirit, drop me a line. I'll put you to work.

Bob Burrell

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ACQUISITION OF MINERAL RIGHTS IN THE NATIONAL FOREST  
By Bob Burrell

There are two general views of mining in the National Forest. One, which I will call the Slack plan, views the ownership of mineral rights including the right to go in and get the coal out as a constitutional matter. Mr. Slack has obtained some money for the Forest Service to conduct a two year evaluation study of the ownership and extent of coal deposits within the Monongahela National Forest. Most agree that this study is necessary, but opinion is divided as to what to do with the information thus obtained. Some feel that organizations like the Conservancy should be given the responsibility of organizing a fund raising campaign to purchase all of these mineral rights. It is my personal opinion and that of at least one other active Conservancy member that this is a form of extortion.

The other plan by Congressman Hechler is more restrictive, and would prohibit strip mining entirely and would limit any form of mining on certain other key areas (e.g. wilderness). Mr. Hechler points out that some people get hung up on the constitutionality bit, and that restrictions on mineral right owners is a violation of the Constitution. However, he points out there is a great amount of legal precedent regulating private ownership within national forest areas and other forms of federal property. Isn't this what is really the essence of the whole Otter Creek affair, namely - Does the public have any rights? Are not mineral rights, or in fact rights of any kind, not limited by the rights of others? You know - freedom of speech being limited by the shouting "Fire" in the theatre business.

My little 100' x 120' lot in Morgantown is owned by me (well, O.K., the bank still retains partial ownership), but this does not give me carte blanche rights to do with it what I want. For instance, I can not operate a brothel there although it would be good business, encourage tourism, provide taxes, etc. I can not use my garden to cultivate a weed commonly found in West Virginia, Cannabis sativa. All of these things I cannot do at 1412 Western Avenue. I can't put a gas station there or a drug store or a grocery or a bar. I can not even convert my home into a day school for pre-schoolers, a much needed facility in our community. There is a housing shortage among students, yet although there is room, I am not allowed to put a house trailer on my property. I am not complaining, I am only pointing out my limitations which I knew before I bought the place. And why am I not allowed to do these things? Zoning. Planning. Whatever you want to call it, my neighbors and fellow burghers have decided that they would limit certain types of activity to certain areas, keeping other areas free from such activity.



If we townspeople can accept such limitations, why can't we accept certain similar limitations on federal (read "public") property? I invite any strip mine representative, Mr. Slack, or Forest Service official to submit any answer to the "Voice" to this question.

The Forest Service has, however, been acquiring mineral rights when opportunities and funds permit. In recent months, tracts have been purchased or "optioned" (I am not sure what this means) in the Monongahela. They are:

- a) 3,068 acre option on Cheat Mountain, Shaver's Fork just west of Bemis.
- b) 7,940 acre option just east of the Cranberry Back Country boundary and extending from the Williams River Public Hunting Area south to the edge of the Forest near the Cranberry Mountain Visitor Center, in other words roughly along the route of the Highlands Scenic Highway. These rights were obtained with Land and Water Conservation Funds.
- c) 2,283 acre purchase from Mower Lumber Company on Slaty Ridge just east of Slaty Fork and U. S. 219.
- d) 6,037 acre purchase from Mower Lumber Company on Gauley Mountain and the upper Tea Creek headwaters just west of U. S. 219 and south of Slaty Fork.

The last two purchases were also made to protect the Highlands Scenic Highway Corridor. Thus, at least the entire headwaters of the Williams River have been united under one agency, the U. S. Forest Service, for public protection from strip mining.

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#### CONSERVANCY PARTICIPATES IN ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

By Ron Hardway

North Bend State Park was the scene of a unique encounter September 11 between conservationists and the Department of Natural Resources. Devised by the League of Women Voters and the Mid-Appalachian Environmental Service, panels of conservationists and DNR division chiefs met before the public to discuss areas of mutual interest in West Virginia conservation. A series of three panel discussions weighed current status of critical conservation issues such as coal mining in the Monongahela National Forest, wilderness programs, timber management practices, strip mining and electrical power projects.

All three sessions were well attended by the general public. The largest crowd was in attendance for the debate on strip mining, which also happened to be the only discussion which demonstrated a clearly defined hostility between conservationists and the DNR.

Following each panel discussion audience participation was invited. Audience response carried the discussions of strip mining and power projects well beyond the time allotted for the original discussions.

While no one changed his opinions due to anything he heard during the forum, the forum was a valuable experience for those in attendance. Many new acquaintances were made and old friends had ample opportunity to meet and discuss current trends in conservation. The forum amounted to a high-level summit meeting in the final analysis.

Representing the Conservancy on the conservation panels were George Langford, Don Good, Ron Hardway, Dave Elkinton and Bob Burrell. Numerous Conservancy members attended all three sessions and offered questions from the audience to the DNR chiefs.

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### UNIT PLANNING

The Forest Service is in the process of developing new management plans for certain areas in the southern and central Appalachians including the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. The first four units to be considered in the Monongahela are Meadow Creek, Otter Creek, Cranberry-Williams and Shavers Fork. In the process of developing management plans for each of the units, the Forest Service will hold public meetings to discuss the unit with interested parties.

I have reproduced below material from an information sheet received from Supervisor Dorrell:

"THE HEART of the new system for managing the National Forests of the Appalachians is the Unit Plan. A Unit is a part of a National Forest that has common characteristics like vegetation, topography, and use. It may vary in size from a few thousand acres to 80,000 acres or more. Unit boundaries generally follow ridgetops. Units may include parts of two adjacent National Forests or even neighboring states. The location of boundaries is flexible so that the most logical land areas can all be planned at the same time.

The UNIT PLAN tells what, where, how, and when things will be done in the unit. It becomes the basis for everything the Forest Service does in a Unit for the next ten years. The Plan covers the whole environment of the Unit.

YOU CAN HELP the Forest Service write a good Unit Plan. A successful Unit Plan depends primarily on two things: the help of the Public -- people just like you -- and an interdisciplinary Forest Service planning team. By interdisciplinary we mean people with training in many natural resource fields -- not just forestry. (Like wildlife and landscape architecture and soil and water.)

THE WAY YOU CAN HELP most is by telling the Team what you or your group knows about the Unit and how you would like to see the Unit used. Your help is welcome any time during the Unit Planning job, but there are two special times that it will help the most.

THE FIRST TIME is before planning really starts and the Team is gathering information about the Unit. The Team will be getting together with people at Listening Sessions during this time. The Team is there just to listen to people talk about managing the Unit. Your ideas, if both spoken and written, become most valuable to the Team. You'll know about the Listening Sessions through letters, your organization, newspapers, public notices, and word-of-mouth.

THE SECOND TIME the Team especially wants to hear from you is after you look over the rough draft of the Unit Plan. By attending the first Listening Session you'll

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be sure to get a copy, and in plenty of time to look at it closely. When this second Listening Session is held, both your spoken and written thoughts will again be welcome.

THE FINAL UNIT PLAN will be a result of your help. It will combine the needs and ideas of you and others with the ability of the land to provide them. It will become the guide for those whose job it is to manage your National Forest."

The public meeting for the Meadow Creek Unit was held in White Sulphur Springs on August 14. Public Meetings for the Otter Creek and Cranberry-Williams Units have been scheduled and are listed below:

OTTER CREEK:	Parsons	Oct. 30 at 1:00 p.m. County Court House
	Elkins	Nov. 2 at 7:30 p.m. Supervisor's Headquarters
CRANBERRY-WILLIAMS:	Richwood	Nov. 13 at 2:00 p.m. High School Music Room
	Marlington	Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Court House
	Webster Springs	Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m. High School Cafeteria

The management proposals included in the extensive guides to Otter Creek and the Cranberry Backcountry that were prepared by the H. C. Wilderness Committee will be presented at the respective public meetings. Anyone who has an interest in these areas is encouraged to attend the public meetings or send a written statement to Supervisor Dorrell. One point that should not be neglected is the detrimental effects of trail bikes and other motorized vehicles in these units, especially Otter Creek.

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#### DAVIS POWER PROJECT DEBATED

The Saturday evening program for the annual Highlands Weekend Review was a panel discussion concerning the Canaan Valley in general and the Davis Power Project in particular. Participating in the panel were Luther S. Singley, Executive Vice-President of the Monongahela Power Company; Ira S. Latimer, Director of the Department of Natural Resources; and West Virginia University Professor Robert L. Smith. The Highway Commissioner, William Ritchie, was invited to participate but did not accept. The meeting was attended by approximately 100 people including H. C. members from many points and local residents.

The lower reservoir in the Canaan Valley will cover about 7,000 acres or 11 square miles, which is about one third of the total valley floor of approximately 32 square miles. The water level in the lower reservoir will fluctuate about four feet.



The upper reservoir will be on the eastern slope of Cabin Mountain, which is on the western edge of Dolly Sods. The upper reservoir will cover about 600 acres or one square mile when full. The water level will fluctuate 57 feet in this reservoir.

The two reservoirs will be connected by a tunnel through the crest of Cabin Mountain and by penstocks from the tunnel to the powerhouse on the lower reservoir. From the tunnel there will be a 27 foot diameter surface penstock which will branch into two separate penstocks 19 feet in diameter. Each of the 19 foot diameter penstocks will branch into two 14 foot diameter penstocks which will connect to the powerhouse.

The Monongahela Power Company submitted an initial Statement of Environmental Factors to the F.P.C. on June 1, 1971. In the report the existing wildlife is described:

"a. Mammals. The largest mammals in the Valley today are the black bear and Virginia white-tailed deer. The black bear population of the Valley is probably very low. The Division of Wildlife Resources of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources estimates that the entire Valley could accommodate a population of less than 10 black bears but has no evidence that there is a bear population actually residing in the project area. There is hunting for bear in the area.

The Valley presently supports a pre-hunting season population of about 900 white-tailed deer of which about a third are apparently "supported" by habitat below the 3182 contour line which is proposed as the full pond water elevation for the lower reservoir of the Davis Project. The Division of Wildlife Resources estimates the present population of raccoon in the Valley to be 300. The raccoon tend to inhabit the areas along streams and beaver ponds.

Both eastern cottontail and New England cottontail rabbit populations are present, and their combined number has been estimated at about 9,400. While the Valley is within the range of the snowshoe hare, its numbers are limited. Woodchuck are present and some grey squirrels are found but not in large numbers, probably because of the high elevation.

Beaver were introduced into the Valley over 20 years ago and their presence is readily apparent. The large network of ponds provides part of the water cover which has been estimated to be as high as 25% of the Valley floor. It is estimated that there are nearly 400 beaver now residing in the Valley, many in the area which will be inundated by the Davis Project. The beaver dam construction provides a habitat for other animals and birds. Other species of fur bearing animals inhabiting the Valley include muskrats and fishers. The latter were recently introduced.

b. Birds. A small colony of Canadian geese summer in the Valley. These birds were introduced in 1967 and have continued to come back. Black ducks, mallards and wood ducks nest in the Valley.

A population of 1300 woodcock currently exists in the Valley, a number which swells to 2200 during migration periods. Snipe use the Valley for summer nesting and migration

Turkey, appearing primarily along the lower ridges of the mountain, are estimated to have a population of around 300. A grouse population exists, but, apparently, it is declining in numbers.

Other birds known to use the Valley include rails, crow, hermit thrush, veery, bobolink, horned lark, lark, American Bittern, long-eared owl and various species of hawks. Some are not residents but are seen during times of migration.

c. Fish. Above Davis there are approximately 54 miles of cold and warm water fishing waters on the Blackwater River and tributaries. Much of the fish population of these waters is stocked, although some brook trout are reported to reproduce naturally. Large-mouth bass were stocked in beaver ponds of the Valley in 1963 and 1964. Stream surveys indicate standing crops of fish ranging from 46 to 71.6 pounds of fish per acre."

The impact of the project on wildlife according to the report is:

"b. Flora. The new lake will result in the development of an aquatic flora ecology. Some such already exists in the ponds now covering the Valley floor. Bog flora will continue to exist in a number of areas into which lake water will not penetrate. Bog species will be more geographically restricted, but no species will be eliminated from the area. Flora now surrounding the Valley floor will be unaffected by the lake. While the community of plants will obviously be changed by the inundation of a large part of the Valley floor, it may be anticipated that the new ecosystem will continue to support the variety of plants currently in the Valley.

c. Mammals and birds. The project will benefit waterfowl by providing an improved aquatic environment. Inundation of their existing habitat will cause the animal life in the areas inundated to move to adjoining lands. Wildlife is expected to continue to flourish in the area surrounding the reservoir, if it continues to be available for their use.

Efforts to foster and increase game population have been generally directed along three major lines: (1) preservation of breeding stock, (2) artificial stocking, and (3) habitat improvement. It is believed that implementation of plans in connection with the project can result in habitat improvement for much of the wildlife in the area and that, with wildlife management, use of the Valley by hunters can be restored to and maintained at its current level even after the inundation of 7200 acres.

d. Fish. Generally speaking, the streams in the Valley which are stocked provide good fishing for trout and bass. While the lower reservoir will eliminate some streams suitable for fishing, it will substitute a much larger water area (7,200 surface acres) suitable for such activity. The lake is expected to be seeded with the principal game fish species now resident in the stream system above the proposed dam, and it is believed that a considerable fish population can be maintained by proper management techniques. The fluctuations of the impoundment, discussed later, will have an insignificant effect on fish spawning. As noted, additional studies of the water quality of the reservoir are underway which should help determine the extent of the fish population which may be anticipated."

Director Latimer delivered a 6 page paper concerning the history of the Canaan Valley and the position of the D. N. R. Reproduced below are significant portions of his statement:

"The Canaan Valley of West Virginia is a unique area. It is doubtful if there is a similar area with a comparable ecosystem in the eastern United States at this latitude. The Davis Power Project will certainly affect the unique qualities of this ecosystem."

"If the project is licensed, the Department of Natural Resources is anxious to insure that all possible measures are being taken to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the high aesthetic values of Canaan Valley."

"Canaan Valley has undergone three distinct crises during the past century and still harbors a viable society of living things representative of its past. The first of such crises was the massive outbreak of the destructive spruce bark beetle which destroyed hundreds of thousands of spruce trees. Coupled with this was the second crisis, a ruthless lumbering policy of cutting everything, leaving nothing of value, destroying an entire forest "society", and having no regard for the land or its human occupants. The third crisis came after the timber was cut. Fires began to spring up from the dried out forest floor. The fires went underground into the organic layer where they smoldered, burned, and inexorably advanced over thousands of acres of land."

"One wonders that any natural area could survive three such profound crises in a single century, yet nature is persistent and fights back. The peat moss beds were too wet to burn, and so some plants and animals were kept alive. Small spruces and firs, trees so stunted by moisture that they were of no interest to the lumberman, survived to produce seed and began the slow process of reclaiming the land. Somehow most of the characteristic species which we know occurred there before the tragedies were able to survive (Brooks, unpublished). To date, eastern hemlock, red spruce, balsam fir, sugar maple, yellow birch, aspen, alder, hawthorn, and Spiraea are the dominant types of forest growth (Goudy, Kletzly, and Rieffenberger, 1969).

This area is heavily used by hunters, fishermen, naturalists, and general recreationists. In addition, the Department of Natural Resources has sizable investments in two State Parks (Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley) and in wildlife management for hunting, fishing, and non-game species."

"We feel that the land on the east side of the Valley should remain in an essentially undeveloped state. This would provide excellent wildlife habitat and primitive experiences to back-packers, hikers, and wilderness enthusiasts.

The west side of the Valley would then be available for limited development; such things as riding and hiking trails, campgrounds, public recreation, etc. I would emphasize that this does not mean 'overdevelopment' or commercialization.

In this regard, we feel that a land use plan or county-wide zoning commission should be adopted for wise planning and management of the entire region - especially in Canaan Valley."



"The southern end of the Valley should, in our opinion, remain in private ownership, but with wise planning to prevent misuse or over-development. This would keep this land on the tax rolls and reduce the dangers of commercialization. In this plan, it would be 'kept as is'."

"Some speculation exists as to possible future development of a coal-fired or nuclear steam electric generating plant on the shores of the proposed lake, using the lake's waters for cooling.

The Department is not in favor of building such a plant, and favors restriction of this authority so that construction of such a plant in the future is not possible. The thermal effect, plus possible other effects on the Valley, would not be compatible with the present power project proposal, or with recreation uses of the Valley in general. In this respect, I would urge the company to request the Federal Power Commission to include such restrictions in any license issued for the project. This action itself would put many minds at ease.

I believe it has been pointed out that construction of the project will result in a loss of available hunter days in the Valley, but with careful planning and wise management, this can be kept to a minimum.

Preliminary analysis of the fisheries study now being completed shows good prospects for warm-water fishing in the lake, with the possibility of a two-level fishery.

With careful planning for the orderly development and management of Canaan Valley, and with the inclusion of the recommendations of the Department of Natural Resources, I feel the Davis Power Project can serve the needs of man as well as the heritage of nature."

Dr. Robert Smith voiced strong criticism of the Davis Power Project. Dr. Smith pointed out the fact that it is the southernmost breeding area for woodcock and jacksnipe. According to Smith, the Canaan Valley contains the finest stand of balsam fir in West Virginia. Dr. Smith disagreed emphatically with the power company's contention that waterfowl habitat would be improved. Smith questioned the proposed wild area on the eastern side that will be traversed by penstocks, power lines and roads.

My personal feeling is that it is a shame to drastically alter the unique Canaan Valley to air condition more homes when a lot of potential power is being wasted at Summersville, Bluestone, and Sutton reservoirs.

(NOTE: The Highlands Conservancy has not taken a position concerning the Davis Power Project.)

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### WAPPATOMAKA

I assume that this is the Indian name for the South Branch of the Potomac River, and is the title of a new book by Highlands Conservancy member Charles Morrison. The complete title for the 175 page book printed by McClain Printing Company of Parsons is, "Wappatomaka - A Survey of the History and Geography of the South Branch Valley". On the back of the dust jacket is a photograph of the junction of the North and South branches of the Potomac and the following description:

"At this place the Seneca Trail crossed the North Branch and then proceeded up the South Branch, or Wappatomaka, and up the North Fork and Seneca Creek; then across the Alleghenies and down into the Ohio Country.

A few miles above, on the North Branch, Thomas Cresap had his residence and trading post. It was here, in 1748, that young George Washington met the Maryland frontiersman for the first time. Later, on his journeys between Winchester (Fort Loudoun) and the frontier, Washington crossed the South Branch a number of times - probably about seven miles upstream."

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### THE TRAILBIKE PROBLEM

I have extracted the following item from an article that Helen McGinnis wrote for The Mountain Laurel:

"Another serious problem that requires immediate attention is the growing popularity of the Otter Creek area with motorcyclists, who come in truckloads from as far away as Ohio. The Otter Creek Trail is degenerating into a muddy morass, and other trails are eroding under the impact. The Forest Service's 1970 management plan for the basin, which would divide the area into a 7,460 acre "Pioneer Study Area" and two Back-country areas, all closed to public vehicles, has not yet been enforced and apparently as of now the Forest Service has no intention of doing so. Many trails in other national forests have been closed to vehicular use, even if they happen to be outside Wilderness and Primitive Areas. There is evidence that unauthorized use of vehicles is increasing in the Cranberry Backcountry as well; the Forest Service needs to take a more definite stand there, too."

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### PRIVATE WASTE AND DESTRUCTION

The Forest Service has caught a lot of flak during the past few years concerning the use of clear cutting to harvest timber, but I have observed timbering activities on Mower Lumber Company land on Shavers Fork that makes F. S. practices look very good. The first major atrocity that I observed was during September of 1968. At a point about one mile upstream from the old logging town of Spruce, the major logging road into the area crosses Shavers Fork. At that point the logging firm (name unknown) had constructed a secondary logging road straight up the stream bed of Shavers Fork. The stream had been converted into a shallow, sterile channel with no capacity to produce or to hold trout. This section did contain both brook trout and a few stream bred rainbows, which are very rare in West Virginia.

This fall, I visited the section along Shavers Fork between Cheat Bridge and Spruce. During the past few years a new logging road has been constructed up the east side of Shavers Fork to and beyond the First Fork. A logging road was also constructed up the First Fork. At points where the road came close to the stream, the trees had simply been pushed over into the stream and had not been recovered during the following logging operation. Also, at many other places along the road, trees pushed over to build the road were still there - rotting.

#### UPSTREAM

The Mower Lumber Company owns practically all of the watershed from Cheat Bridge. This area is relatively wild and was not disturbed very much from the time that it was heavily logged during the early part of this century and a few years ago, when extensive logging was started again. Upper Shavers Fork is one of the three remaining major black bear areas in West Virginia.

The argument can be made that this 60,000+ acre primitive chunk of West Virginia is private land, and that what the owners do with it is none of my damn business. However, it is sad that the owners of Mower Lumber Company, Grace Steamship Line of New York, do not want to take better care of their wild and beautiful land.

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#### WEEKEND REVIEW TOURS

Several tours and hikes to various points of interest and controversy were conducted during the meeting at Blackwater Falls. The areas covered included Otter Creek, Dolly Sods, Canaan Valley, strip mined areas, and the Blackwater Canyon which, unfortunately, proved to be too rugged for some of the participants. Description of a few of the tours are given below:

HELEN McGINNIS: There were between 20 and 30 people (the number fluctuated, some leaving before the tour was over). We drove to the overlook of the Canaan on Rt. 32, then drove through the tiny community of Cortland and up the dirt road that the power company is using for its current work on Cabin Mountain. This road follows a low ridge that runs up the middle of the valley. We drove as far as it was easy to get cars, then walked about four miles total farther along the road and on a railroad grade that runs east-west across the Canaan Valley. Even though it was Saturday, we could hear the drone of heavy equipment - probably building roads for the power project on the side of Cabin Mountain. Coming and going, we saw future drawdown zones in the lower reservoir marked with surveying tape on the farm of Roscoe Beall, who has been the chief opponent of the project among people who actually live in the Canaan. The fall colors were perfect. Oh yes, we also ran into some woodcock hunters who showed us some of the birds they had bagged. On the way back, some of us climbed up to a superb overlook of the middle part of the Canaan and Davis on the top of Canaan Mountain near the community of Canaan Heights.

DAVID ELKINTON: The trip to strip mined areas in Grant and Tucker Co. began with Douglas Coal Company. They were very proud of a water treatment plant they are installing just off Rt. 93 on Beaver Creek. This creek, where naturally acidic conditions are worsened by stripping, is the primary source of acid water that flows over Blackwater Falls. Their plant is based on European models and use the rotating lime-filled drums, similar to the drums on Otter Creek. Douglas officials also showed



off areas of reclamation and active operations. Next the group had a brief tour of the VEPCO power plant, which burns 10,000 tons of coal per day. This will increase to 15,000 tons with the completion of the third unit. Everyone was impressed by the gigantic size of the plant and its equipment, among other things. The tour ended with Allegheny Mining Company, active members of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Association. By chance, we were told, the Association's executive director and reclamation director, both ex-high officials of the Department of Natural Resources, just happened to be in the area, so joined us on the tour. The local D.N.R. Reclamation Inspector also was present at the request of both stripping companies. Again we observed first-hand active operations and reclaimed land. The trip was quite educational for all concerned, the only complaint was that we tried to cover too much in one day.

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WEST VIRGINIA NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL ACTIVITIES  
(From Oct. Mid-Appalachian Environmental Newsletter)

A proposal to organize a "state desk" in the office of the Mid-Appalachian Environmental Service at 1218 Quarrier Street, Charleston, West Virginia, was adopted by the West Virginia Natural Resources Council in its quarterly meeting at Jackson's Mill, Weston, West Virginia.

George Breiding, Council President, has requested Dr. Carol Wilcox, President of Citizens for Environmental Protection, to contact membership of the Council in the Charleston area to help man the desk, to monitor legislative and commission hearings, and to set up a communication system within the fourteen organizations belonging to the Council. Lobbying will be organized separately.

A variety of urgent environmental matters are up for consideration at the next session of the Legislature. These include the Potomac River Basin Compact, forest management review of the Monongahela National Forest, regulation of forestry practices, strip mining, consolidation of environmental agencies, and water resources. Conservationists interested in assisting in this educational effort are urged to contact Dr. Wilcox at 1564 Virginia Street, E., Charleston, West Virginia 25311.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Starting with this issue the Voice is being printed and mailed by the Mid-Appalachian Environmental Service, 1218 Quarrier Street, Charleston, West Virginia 25301, which is one of the reasons for the lateness of this issue. The gentleman who had so ably assisted Burrell in publishing the Voice has moved to a new location. Norm Williams has agreed to publish the Voice with the Highlands Conservancy still paying for the expenses.

I am sure that we will have a few problems for a couple of issues, so please bear with us. If you have any problems receiving the Voice, or know of any H. C. member who is not receiving the Voice, please contact me.

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Our membership chairman, Carolyn Killoran, has moved to an area where the air is cleaner. Here is her new address:

Carolyn Killoran  
407 Circle Drive  
Hurricane, West Virginia 25526

To join the Highlands Conservancy, all you have to do is send \$5.00 to Carolyn for which you will receive the Voice and other benefits. Also, do not forget to send \$5.00 to Carolyn if your membership has expired or will expire in the next two or three months.

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As Burrell pointed out in his comments, the Highlands Conservancy needs people who are willing to actively work on certain problems. If you are concerned about problems created by highways in general and the "Highland Scenic Highway" in particular, contact Bruce Goodwin, 6708 Thomas Blvd., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15208. If you live in the Charleston area and are willing to work on a legislative committee, write to P. O. Box 131, Charleston, West Virginia 25321.

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**Ranger** McManigle has been very helpful in providing information concerning activities in the Gauley Ranger District. As of September 29, the only active mine in the Three Forks of the Williams River area was mine no. 101 on Lick Branch. All of the mines in the vicinity of the cleaning plant at North Cove have been closed down and plans are under way to seal the mine openings.

The Forest Service did a lot of work on trails in the Backcountry this past summer. Eighty five miles of trails were cleared of brush and marked with blue paint. The trails will now be placed on a three year maintenance schedule.

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Ron Hardway's article about strip mining on the Back Fork of the Elk River that appeared in the August Voice has been widely circulated in West Virginia. Ron was able to get the article, along with several photographs by Bill Blizzard, in the State Magazine that comes with the Charleston Gazette Sunday paper. West Virginia University Professor R. L. Smith used Ron's article for one of his outdoor articles in the Morgantown Sunday paper.

The day after Ron's article on the Back Fork appeared in the Gazette, the strip mine on Sugar Creek closed down and the equipment was moved to a new site on the Gauley River. The exact reasons for the closing of the job are still not clear.

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The membership of the H. C. is composed of approximately 350 individuals and about 18 conservation organizations. I assume that a few of the member organizations publish newsletters, and it would help me in my work if I could be placed on the mailing list for these newsletters.

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