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the Highlands Voice

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Business offices are located at 208 Union Street, Webster Springs, WV 26288. Executive editor, Ron Haraway, 208 Union Street, Webster Springs. Managing editor, Gilmer Graphics, Inc. 209 E.

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Corridor H Construction Problems Discussed at Elkkins

On March 26 a meeting was held at the DNR Operations Center near Elkins to discuss the problems of Corridor H construction. The Conservancy was represented at the meeting by President Charles Carlson, Bill Brundage and Joe Rieffenberger. Also represented were the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Department, the Department of Natural Resources and the Bowden National Fish Hatchery.

Duane Welwright gave a summary of recent developments at Bowden Hatchery resulting from Corridor H construction. He stated that he had observed a direct contribution of turbidity of the South Spring and runoff. He also felt that Corridor H construction was responsible for this condition, and it was his opinion the South Spring would not recover from damage already incurred. One fissure (Station #49), approximately 57 ft. deep, leads to a cavern approximately 1,000 ft. long. Construction was stopped when the fissure was discovered. There are three caverns in the cavern which were traced to the South Spring. Welwright believes that 3 to 7 years are needed to determine whether proposed measures taken to stop siltation in the South Spring will be effective.

Don Culbertson stated that litigation under the Transportation Act (SSC 4-F) was considered due to the effect of highway construction on the South Spring. Culbertson does not know what action will be taken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at this time, but feels they are in a better position to make their interests known because of the recent effects of construction. He stated that Mr. Bowers is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's official spokesman regarding the effects of highway construction on the Bowden Hatchery. A strong policy statement from Director Griffith's office is possible due to damage to the South Spring caused by highway construction. The Fish and Wildlife Service may require certain standards from the Department of Highways, but past promises haven't been kept.

Mr. Bowers stated that removal of rock formations that exposed the fissure was not in proposed plans and that measures presently proposed by DOH may or may not correct the problem. It is Mr. Bowers' personal opinion that the highway should stop at its junction with Route 33 at Bowden.

Mr. Culbertson stated that an EIS will be required for the Bowden to Wymer segment. This will provide time to study probable effects on the North Spring. He also stated that he thought a court order could be requested by a governmental agency, group of private citizens, or individuals to demand an EIS on the initial alignment of Corridor H.

Mr. Terry stated that the Department of Highways has a great history regarding construction on highway projects and the heading of an EIS for the section under construction (e.g. segments of I-79).

Dr. Masbury, a geologist, stated that it is probable that similar problems will arise in connection with the North Spring as they have with the South Spring if highway construction continues as planned. He also stated that some drilling would not be sufficient to

determine the extent or location of cavern systems of the North Spring's recharge area. He stated that a large dynamic charge could destroy the North Spring. He also recommended a geophysical, geological and hydrological study to determine the extent and location of the recharge areas of the North Spring.

Mr. Culbertson recommended that all of the agencies represented at the meeting should clarify their position on Corridor H. He commended the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy on the position they were taking regarding Corridor H routing.

The U.S. Forest Service has initiated a study to monitor water quality on Taylor Run. The Forest Service's reaction is not expected until highway construction reaches their lands.

Charles Carlson stated that the Highlands Conservancy was considering litigation to halt

Forest Service Scraps Eagle Lake by Pete Hower

On March 19, 1975, the Monongahela National Forest staff issued its final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Eagle Lake and Associated Recreation Developments on Hills Creek, Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

Drawing heavily on input from the Conservancy, Isaac Walton League, National Speleological Society, Trout Unlimited and numerous citizens, the Forest Service made a nearly about face on the project which would have caused considerable damage to the famed Falls of Hills Creek, the Pocahontas Trail, and the wild lands south of the proposed Cranberry Wilderness Area. The USFS stated that "The Eagle Lake and Associated Recreation Developments project as originally proposed in the Draft Environmental Statement is no longer being proposed because of potential short term and long term detrimental effects associated with construction of the lake."

The 50-70 unit National Forest Campground, to be known as Blue Knob, is proposed as an alternative to the entire Eagle Lake Project. The proposed campground would be located on the site of an old prison camp near the Cranberry Visitor Center. The

Corridor H construction at an up-coming meeting on April 12 at Jackson's Mill. The primary objective is to stop construction of any eastward extension of Corridor H past the western edge of Elkins until an EIS was prepared on the entire alignment of the highway.

In Attendance: Paul Hooper, USFWS; Les Terry, USFWS; Donald Phares, DNR; Harvey Beall, DNR; William Santonas, DNR; John B. Curries, USFS; Lloyd Strobeck, Bowden NFH; Bill Brundage, WV High. Cons.; Don Culbertson, USFWS; W.L. Stabler, USFWS; Raymond Menzies, DNR; Jim Rawson, DNR; Pete Zurbach, DNR; T.F. Masbury, USFS; Eugene Friel, US Geog. Survey; David Harris, USFWS; H.C. Bever, USFWS; Joe Rieffenberger, DNR & WV High. Cons.; Robert Dayfield, DNR; Donald R. Beightel, DNR; Duane Welwright, Bowden NFH and Charles Carlson, WV High Cons.

Forest Service maintains that this campground is necessary to relieve detrimental camping pressure along the Cranberry and Williams Rivers which border the Cranberry Back Country. Potential sewage problems relative to the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area will be carefully engineered, and approved sewage system plans must be endorsed by the Environmental Protection agency before any contracts are signed. If these safeguards are taken, the campground may be the most practical solution to the overuse problem from both an environmental and administrative standpoint.

The final decision on acceptance or rejection of the final proposal will be made by USFS Regional Forester, Irv Craven, near the end of April.





How to Write to Public Officials

Overlook

By Bob Burrell

This month we are overlooking the citizen's right and duty on how to write to your elected or appointed public officials. After having written hundreds of letters over the past ten years in conservation, I have learned a certain amount of do's, don't's, and what you might expect in the way of reply to enable me to pass on to those of you who would like to help out at home.

The most important thing to remember is to direct your letter to the person who will most likely be able to help you the most. Letters written to the White House for instance never get to the boss, but instead are referred to some other agency for an answer, usually the agency you have written in complaint about. Letters addressed to the head of some agency such as the Chief of the Forest Service or the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service are intercepted by people whose sole job is to answer letters from John Q. Public. They have a number of standard replies to which they plug in a few references about the item you have written. The letter always ends with some congratulatory note on how proud they are that you have taken an interest in their domain and you, you poor sap, have been bought off! Once you get the standard brush off, do NOT consider your job done. You are now ready to mount Phase II.

There is a very old story about the town fool who buys a stubborn mule from the local wags who have gathered to make sport of the poor fellow's vain attempt at getting the beast to move. Instead of the usual "giddy-up" entreaties, our hero picks up a 2 x 4 and whacks the beast with it right across the eyes. He then has no trouble getting the mule to gee or haw. When asked why in the hell he bounced the board off the mule's gourd, our boy replied, "First, you gotta get their attention." Well that's your job, you've got to get their attention and one letter alone almost never does it. You must then follow up your letter with a number of techniques depending on how mad you are and the gravity of the situation. Your next letter must point out the inadequacy of the reply you received and then proceed to point out explicitly what it was you wanted to know. The exchange between Bill Brundage and Ben Greene that appeared in last month's Voice is an excellent example of how citizens are given the brush off and what you have to do to get a satisfactory answer. Don't be insulting, but don't worry about being pushy either because they are getting paid to work for the public, and that is you.

It also helps to direct similar inquiries to other officials who have interest in your comments or complaint and to point out to them the inadequacy of the response to your first effort. For instance, after months of brush offs from the Fish and Wildlife Service brass, we sent letters to the Asst. Sec'y. of the Interior, both Senators, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Department of Transportation, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and the top conservation writers in the country. Eventually the dude in question came to regret that he had even ever heard of the WVHC and the Bowden Fish Hatchery and this is the main point, it is the noisy wheel that gets the oil. It is a sad comment, but an unfortunate one that this is the way it has to be. You must realize that such bureaucrats receive dozens if not hundreds of such letters. Their standard replies probably take care of 95% of the people who write in. But West Virginia has nursed the distal mammary far too long and it is your job to place problems of the Highlands right at the top of the list.

Please do not think I am exaggerating. Every single gain that any member of the Conservancy has achieved has only been achieved by such constant, untiring effort. It took eight years of constant vigil and perseverance to acquire wilderness protection for the areas in the state (and don't you dare think the battle is over-in fact the real one for the Cranberry and Otter Creek hasn't even begun!). It takes Bill Brundage, our most patient and soft spoken member, many phone calls and letters to really accomplish very little. Not that he is inefficient or ineffective, on the contrary! He has to do this in order to overcome the ponderous way in which government works.

Now, what should the letter contain. It should

briefly, but adequately explain the situation you are writing about. Do not use hearsay, but only facts that are capable of being supported by documented evidence. If you have references or copies of such evidence, send them along. If you have questions, itemize them 1, 2, 3, etc. Make all questions short and to the point. Two or three short questions are better than one complicated one. If you are urging action, itemize it and request a response indicating how they feel about such action. Do not under any circumstances be insulting or use sarcasm (at least not right away, be slow to boil) in your first encounter. If you don't find it easy to write or if words come hard for you, don't be afraid to get someone to help you to compose a letter. People who read a lot, high school English teachers, or folks that work on the local newspaper are usually glad to look over your effort and correct mistakes or help in phrasing. Above all, avoid emotionalism.

Don't try to get folksy or too friendly with your addressee. Don't expect him to trade confidences with you. Don't expect one politician to tell you what he thinks of another one's efforts or to answer some personal or philosophical question. These will be correctly ignored.

Now don't be afraid of getting the right address (this is often the excuse I hear when I ask someone if they have written so and so a letter). Actually, you need know only a few. You can reach any Senator simply by writing in care of the U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510 and any Congressman in care of the US House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515. You do not need their office building names or numbers. Any address for state government is easy; simply put the individual's name, department (such as DNR, Commerce, Attorney General, etc.), State Capitol, Charleston WV 25303 and that's all! Other Federal Government officials can be reached usually through their department, such as Department of the Interior. Your problem is a little more complex when dealing with officials from regional offices. Here you need to know more specific addresses. If it's names you want, go to the local library and ask them for the West Virginia Bluebook. They will know what you mean; if not you need a library. They should also be able to provide other needy reference material.

What follows now is sort of a who's who and a rating for each of people you would commonly need to write. In general, most everyone in the DNR is a poor responder. The very worst is Director Latimer. Even if he bothers to answer you at all, his response is usually meaningless. Most Division Chiefs do not like to write letters except possibly for Kermit McKeever. Ben Greene usually responds although his answer may not be thorough. Keep in mind that the answer you get may not be what you like (and this goes for responses from anyone), but if the answer to your question is thorough or if the responder says that this is all he can do under the law, then you must take your case elsewhere.

Your chances of getting a reply from Governor Moore are 50/50, the answer has been prepared by somebody else, and your chances of getting an answer to a follow up are poor. All letters to the Attorney General's office are dealt with expediently and if the answer isn't in their first reply, it invariably is on follow up. State Legislators are very individualistic and it is difficult to generalize. Many don't know how to write and others are not sober long enough, but the rest are pretty good. Seriously, many are not trained or experienced enough in the jobs they do to give you an informative answer. Many are as frustrated as you with our archaic state constitution. People in key positions like Carl Gainer (Senate Natural Resources Chairman) are impossible to deal with. Too many of the state legislators answer only to people in their own district.

Originally getting a reply from the Dept. of Highways was almost impossible, but lately, we have been getting prompt and even courteous replies. Possibly as our organization gets better known, we merit better replies although this sometimes works in reverse.

You will find letters addressed to the Monongahela National Forest people invariably are promptly and thoroughly answered (although it wasn't always this way). Getting a reasonable reply from higher ups in the Forest Service is not as easy though they do better than any other federal agency. The Corps of Engineers in the main are good letter answerers although the contents of what they say are often disagreeable. This is one outfit that doesn't ignore you. EPA folks are mostly new at their jobs, but they are getting better at responding. For one thing they now know how, but a year ago they didn't.

Now for the folks in Congress. All of these people employ aides to go through their mail and frame replies. Very little of it actually is seen by the boss. Some of these aides are quite well informed as for example those in Congressman Hechler's office. You can be sure that although Mr. Hechler may not read your entire letter, he is well briefed on its contents by his aide. He will give you a non-nonsense reply and if he thinks you are wrong he will say so and tell you why. Frankly I admire this kind of answer most of all. From there on, it goes down hill because none of the others can match Hechler's responsiveness.

Next would probably come Congressman Slack (I have had very little contact with Mr. Mollohan). Congressman Slack is opposed to most of the things we in the Conservancy hold dear, but his letters are polite and give reasonable explanations for his positions. He too will be frank to tell you he disagrees with you and you will appreciate such candor after reading some of the trips some of the others try to feed you.

Congressman Staggers' interests do not involve the outdoors. Nor do they include reading letters from his constituents concerning same. All of Mr. Staggers' mail is filtered through his long time assistant, Miss Furfari. In effect, it is she who represents you in Congress, it is she that decides how to act on your requests, and it is she who frames the letters back to you which say nothing more than they got your letter. If you want to get in touch with Mr. Staggers, call him at home on the weekends, at 788-1298.

Next comes Senator Byrd. At the present time, Mr. Byrd prefers to spend more of his time with his duties of being Senate whip, but he has some excellent staff people who deal with his mail. The reply you get is usually meaningless, but his people have noted carefully your points. If you request assistance for information, you will get it. If you desire his position, you may need to write follow up letters. He is approachable. Senator Byrd is rather provincial and probably won't respond to letters from out of states (same is true of Moore and most of the state legislators).

Now we come to Senator Randolph. He feels more responsible for national problems than does Sen. Byrd and may even put them ahead of West Virginia interests. Whether you get an answer from him depends on who you are. I haven't received a single reply or an acknowledgement from him in six years even though much of what I sent him was not asking him. Whether his staff makes notes of what you have to say depends on what the issue is. He is opposed to many of the positions of the Conservancy. There is evidence that some of his staff are highly competent and very bright people, but others are a bit dim.

How any of these people react to me may not be the same in which they will react to you, but by all means keep trying. The biggest mistake you can make is to become overly impressed with your own importance. You must understand that everybody who writes these people think the same way. Your task is to present your case in such a way as to secure an answer. Having a decent answer enables you to take the next step. You are not important because you are a Conservancy member or a wildflower enthusiast. You are not important because you have walked over every mile of trail in Otter Creek. But you are a citizen in a democracy and that is all the importance you need to deserve a prompt, courteous, AND meaningful reply from your public officials.

Good luck and start sendin' them cards 'n letters, friends!

Why the Cranberry Back Country Is Not Otter Creek

by Ron Hardway

A couple of years ago Otter Creek was faced with the unpleasant prospect of extensive core drilling operations within its boundaries. Island Creek Coal Company, owners of the mineral rights in Otter Creek, had decided to find out exactly what it was they owned. Regardless of the fact that Otter Creek was being reviewed by Congress as a potential National Wilderness Area, Island Creek had laid down plans to build a network of roads throughout the area to get to their core-drilling sites. The Forest Service, stewards of the Otter Creek surface, went along with Island Creek's roadbuilding plans because the Forest Service hoped to log the entire watershed anyway and would have to do less roadwork themselves.

It is difficult to think of all that happened in Otter Creek as history, yet history it now is that the Conservancy took offense against both Island Creek and the Forest Service, and sued them jointly to prevent the roadbuilding; that the Conservancy won the suit; that Island Creek was compelled to do their core drilling via horseback; that no logging ever occurred; that no roads were built; and that today the nation owns the Otter Creek National Wilderness Area.

Otter Creek is alive and well. But the core drillers and the road builders never die - they just change their name and move to another proposed wilderness area. Island Creek has become the Mid-Allegheny Corporation, and Otter Creek has become the Cranberry Back Country. But there the resemblance ends, and this time it's going to be much more difficult to stop what is happening.

It would seem that the Otter Creek decision would have set a precedent, and so it did for areas whose minerals are held under the same conditions as were those of Otter Creek. The ownership of Cranberry's minerals is a totally different story, and the Otter Creek decision does not apply in the least.

Conservancy member Don Gasper has spent some time ferreting out the facts of the



from
the
Editor

Cranberry mineral situation and how it differs from that of Otter Creek. In a series of letters exchanged between Don and Monongahela Forest Service Supervisor Ralph Mumme the following facts have been brought to light.

1. The mineral rights in Cranberry were separated from the surface rights sometime before the Federal Government purchased the surface rights. Therefore, the mineral rights are what is called "outstanding," and the government had no opportunity to acquire any control over the exercise of the mineral rights when it bought the surface.

This was not the case in Otter Creek. When Otter Creek was purchased by the government the mineral rights were reserved by the previous surface owners. Nevertheless the mineral owner was placed under the Secretary of Agriculture's Rules and Regulations of 1911. These Rules and Regulations require the mineral owner to file a plan of operations with the Forest Service before doing anything on the surface to get to the minerals. Thus, the Forest Service had a degree of control over mineral owner activities, and the court decision forced the Forest Service to exercise this control by rejecting Island Creek's plan of operations, with the Forest Service before doing anything on the surface to get to the minerals. Thus, the Forest Service had a degree of control over mineral owner activities, and the court decision forced the Forest Service to exercise this control by rejecting Island Creek's plan of operations.

Since the mineral rights in Cranberry are outstanding the Forest Service had no control over Mid-Allegheny's core drilling plans. Mid-Allegheny is not required to file a plan of operations.

2. The seriousness of this deficiency is not apparent until one realizes that Mid-Allegheny holds the Cranberry minerals under a broad form deed. For those unfamiliar with this legal institution, the modern-day equivalent of the Dutch agreement to



... Bulldozers for Cranberry.

purchase Manhattan from the Indians, read Harry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*.

An excerpt from the Cranberry deed will suffice in showing what the Back Country is in for: the mineral owner (Mid-Allegheny Corporation) has the "right to enter upon and under said granted lands and make and construct all necessary structures, railroads, roads, ways, excavations, air shafts, drains, and openings necessary or convenient for mining and removal of the said coal and other minerals. . . without being liable for any injury or damage done thereby to the overlying surface."

And there is not a thing the Forest Service can do about it.

3. The Eastern Wilderness Act signed in January by President Ford (Public Law 93-622) which creates the Cranberry Wilderness Study Area, does not provide any method or funds for acquiring minerals during the study period. Initial estimates indicate that it may be mid-1978 before the Forest Service is ready to recommend Congressional action on Cranberry. During that time, and until Congress acts, no minerals can be purchased under Cranberry unless there is a special appropriation.

In interpreting the wording of Public Law 93-622 the USDA General Counsel's Office decided that since Congress failed to remedy the conflict between privately-owned minerals in publicly held land on Wilderness Study Areas, the only response possible to such conflict was to hope that the mineral owners would not abuse the surface in any way which would harm the wilderness values of the area. Mid-Allegheny has already smashed that hope by continuing its road-building to core drill sites in Cranberry.

4. The USFS has contacted Mid-Allegheny and asked them to voluntarily cease their prospecting operations until the wilderness study is completed. Mid-Allegheny rejected the request, and replied that it would inform the Forest Service in a few months about its mining plans. The Forest Service can do nothing except sit back and wait.

Those are the reasons why the Cranberry Back Country is not Otter Creek.



Pack horses in the proposed Otter Creek Wilderness. The W.Va. Highlands Conservancy had obtained a court order preventing the mineral owner to bulldoze jeep roads in the area to allow rigs to enter Otter Creek to take 5 core samples. Instead, it had to transport the rigs by a method that would not permanently harm the surface before Congress had decided whether or not Otter Creek should be classified as a Wilderness Area. Given the choice between transporting the core sampling rigs by helicopter or pack horses, the mineral owner chose the latter. The "litter" between the two horses was especially designed to transport the rigs, which had to be dismantled and carried in 9 separate pieces. The core sampling took 6 months [Jan.-June, 1972] and showed that the coal under Otter Creek was too thin and erratic to mine profitably. [Photo by Helen McGinnis].



Route 60 flooded by Meadow River, December 1973. (Photo by Jennis Studio, Rainelle.)

Strips, Floods, Politics

by Nick Zvegintzev

Does strip mining increase flooding in this State? If so, why? And is there any remedy?

These are grave questions in a State where strip mining is a major industry and where most people live in narrow valleys which they share with tempestuous mountain creeks. The answers to these questions are:

- * Strip Mining does increase flooding.
- * Because it drains the hills and silts the valleys.
- * We have to assess the costs and charge them to those who cause them.

Research tells the tale

The only reliable test for whether stripping increases flooding is to take two geographically similar watersheds, one stripped and one not, and measure the water draining out of them. What we are looking for is not, in general, a difference in the total flow over the year but a difference in the distribution of the flow. Water enters the watershed in storms and thaws - irregularly. If the land of the watershed acts to smooth out this irregularity there will be few problems downstream, but if it accentuates the irregularity there will be alternating problems of flood and drought.

The hard evidence to date is in studies by Collier and others on Beaver Creek, Ky., Curtis in Breathitt County, Ky., and Corbett in south-west Indiana. Both Kentucky studies show increased irregularity and the Indiana study shows decreased - i.e. in Kentucky stripping increases floods and in Indiana it decreases them. There are as yet no studies in West Virginia, so we have a difficulty of extrapolation - is West Virginia more like Kentucky or more like Indiana?

The most obvious difference is that the Kentucky sites are hilly (an average drop of 1 in 20 in the Collier study) while Indiana is flat (an average drop in 1 in 300 in Corbett's study). On this dimension West Virginia is more like Kentucky - and therefore in this State strips increase flooding.

This interpretation is accepted by Curtis and Corbett, but not, perhaps, by Ben Greene, chief regulator of strip mines for the State of West Virginia, who wrote to me "The generally accepted theory for many areas is based upon work completed by Don M. Corbett" - i.e. the Indiana results.

Drains in the Hills

What in the process of stripping in this State increases floods? The quick answer is: drains in the hills. The natural condition of the West Virginia hills is wet, which is good for the trees and for downstream communities. But strip mines function as if designed to drain them.

Consider the geology of the highlands. They are like a layer cake which has been eaten away by mice and then thinly iced. The layers are the rock strata - sandstone, shale, and coal - which lie roughly flat and are relatively impervious to water; the eaten parts are the valleys formed by creeks; and the icing is the soil, mostly no more than one or two feet deep. The water storage of a West Virginia hill is in the soil. It is eternally wet because the water is slowly but continually percolating in the soil from the top of the hill to the valley. Water that gets through cracks in the underlying rocks collects in the coal and shale seams and runs out at springs or mine openings, or soaks back into the soil.

If you wanted to drain the hills, how would you do it? You would girdle the hillside, trenching the soil in a bank around the mountain top. You could then intercept the water that is seeping in the soil above the trench and channelise it. If you dig the trench at the level of the coal you can also capture the underground watercourses that are in the seams. Thus the methods of stripping that we see in this State - contour and mountaintop removal - are exactly what a drainage engineer would recommend to drain the hills - and thus increase the flood danger of every storm or thaw.

None of the cosmetic retouchings called 'reclamation' do much to correct this drainage. Regrading covers the trench but its preserves its function (just like a tile drain works in a farmer's field even covered with earth). Revegetation makes the trench green again, but the very nature of the species recommended by the State of West Virginia for strip vegetation - crown vetch, sericea lespedeza, tall fescue, black locust, white pine - reveal that the trench has decreased the natural moisture of the West Virginia hills - for these are droughty species.

Mad in the Valley

Having drained the hills, the only hope of reducing floods is to keep the downstream drains unclogged and flush the floods through - but this is made harder by another result of stripping - sedimentation. The Stanford Research Institute report to the West Virginia Legislature revealed that each acre stripped produced 400-600 tons of sediment per year - 70 to 100 times as much as a natural hillside. The State of West Virginia, according to Ben Greene who spoke to me on a tour of Greenbrier County strips, claims that sedimentation

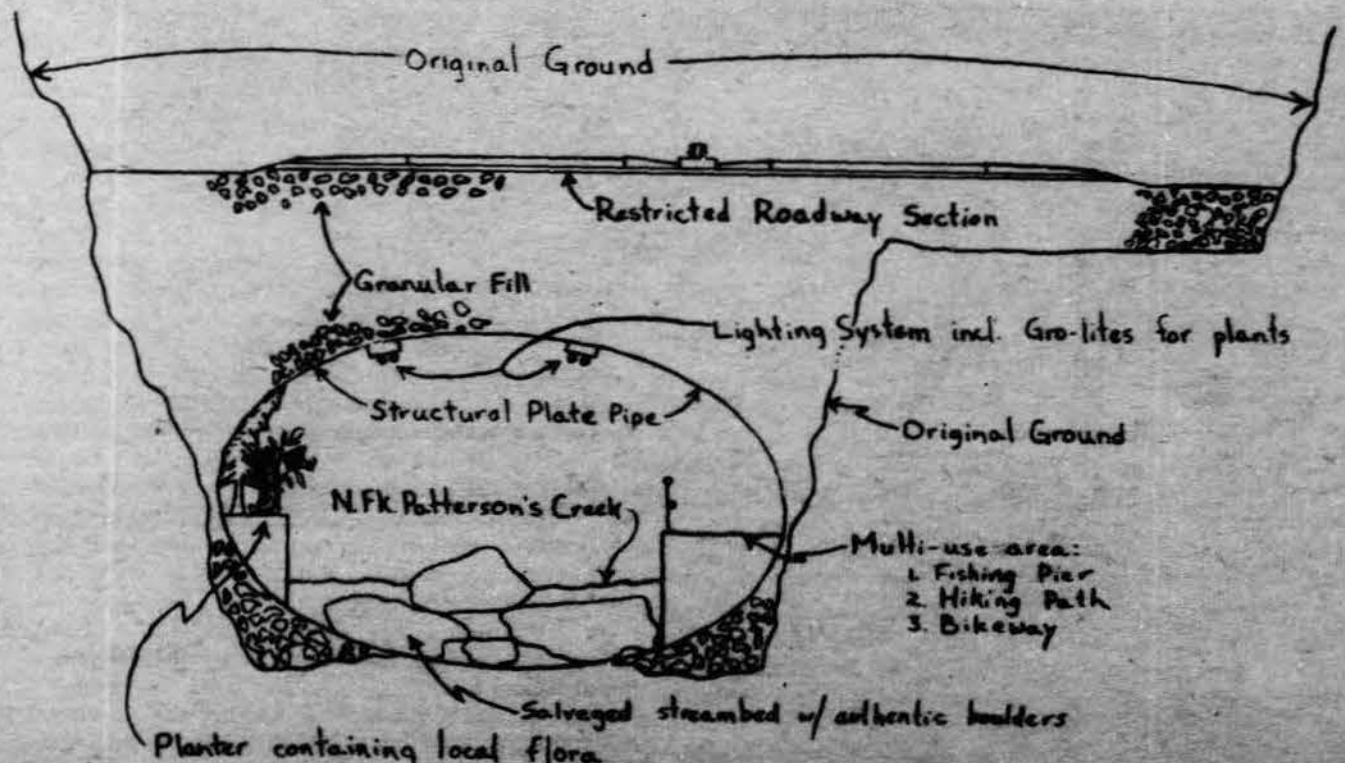
Our man in Charleston was sneaking through a well-known public office a few days ago, on the alert for suspicious looking white papers containing weird drawings. He passed a desk on which rested a hand-printed sign reading "DEAD". Intrigued by the idea our agent paused for a closer look. Atop the desk was a sheet of imprinted stationery headed "Department of Environmental Activities Denatured". The message on the paper was brief - "Dear Bill: This ought to do it to the bastards! Yrs., Sandy."

Our agent picked up the paper with shaking hands, and quickly raised the sheet to see what lay beneath. To his glee a white paper with weird drawing lay exposed to his penetrating glance. He immediately shipped out his Qwik-Shot Environmental Spy Kamera (patent pending) and photographed the weird drawing.

THE HIGHLANDS VOICE has decided to publish, without comment, the fruit of our spy's labor. Readers of

the VOICE can decide for themselves what it is, where it is supposed to be, and whether or not it is for real. If

anyone has positive answers to those queries, the editor would very much like to share them.





Strippling by Lockett Sandstone Coal, Meadow River Watershed, Greenbrier County, October 1973. [Photo by Karen Mitchell.]

ponds have solved the problem, but according to the Polk Creek study of the Soil Conservation Service cited by Campaign Clean Water, 55% of suspended solids pass right through a system of sedimentation ponds.

The mud is carried down the mountain creeks and accumulates in two locations: tranquil lightly sloped sections of river, and in artificial lakes behind dams. In the first case it clogs drainage in the valley bottoms where most people live, and in the second it destroys the 'flood control' function of the dams by filling the space that was designed for water land it hastens the day when the dams are only enormous retaining walls for terraces of mud, the future destiny of all these dams).

Assess the Costs

Action to control strippling and flooding must take two lines: we need to be able to assess the cost of strippling in terms of flood damage for a given watershed in dollars per year per additional acre of strippling; and we need to ensure that any agency that

has responsibility for controlling floods in an area also has authority to tax or manage land use in the watershed above it.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undoubtedly has the data for many watersheds on which a determined analyst could decide the assessment. The Corps is intimately involved with Watershed Improvement Schemes under P.L. 566 - the prediction of costs and benefits, the planning, design, construction, and subsequent annual inspections for maintenance and effectiveness. In addition the Corps has been authorized and funded to study the effect of strippling on several watersheds in West Virginia. The Corps has the data and the skill to interpret it - but at present it is reluctant to jump into this hot spot.

The political line is to ensure that the agency that controls the floods also controls the watershed. It turns out that the Corps has this right and then declines to exercise it. A 1974 report by the House Committee on Government Operations revealed that the Corps and the Department of the Interior land acquisition policy for reservoir projects requires that it 'subordinate'

mineral development rights within the watershed. The report cites several instances (the R.D. Bailey dam in Wyoming County for one) where the Corps has made no effort to exercise this right.

Flood Insurance

Is there any way to prod the Corps out of its do-nothing comfort? I think there is - by recognizing that there is one imperative for a bureaucracy more compelling than comfort - survival. The public work function of the Corps will not survive if it comes to appear irrelevant to the public welfare, and the threat of this is at least larger than a speck on the horizon. A remarkable piece of legislation passed in 1973 - the Flood Disaster Protection Act - implicitly threatens the Corps' traditional concrete attack on flood problems by offering an abstract alternative. It requires communities to institute flood plain zoning (all new buildings in the path of a 100 year flood must be flood resistant), with the carrot of subsidized flood insurance for existing buildings and the stick of withholding all federal real estate building or buying assistance in floodplains in non-complying communities.

The ecological interest of this program is that it emphasizes that ecological questions are not questions of absolute right and wrong but of relative cost of different policies and who will bear them. The program bribes and cajoles flood prone communities to avoid building damageable buildings below the level of past 100-year floods. If floods are higher and more frequent in the future, as they will be if there are bad practices such as mountain strippling upstream, those communities will begin to think of programs that bribe and cajole upstream landowners to mend their ways. Then when the political options of balancing downstream prudence against upstream restraint are carried by the communities themselves, the Corps can be freed from its clumsy preoccupation with dams and ditches to apply its truly fine ecological skills to researching where the options truly are.

Enduring for Truth

In the Conservancy we have the great privilege of searching for the truth without much more self-interest than our love of the mountains. But with this privilege comes an unpleasant burden - that of bearing and exposing unpleasant truths like 'strip mining in this State causes floods' against the natural opposition of all unpleasant truths. We have to endure until the truth becomes so obvious to the community at large that community agencies such as the Corps or the Department of Natural Resources are free to act on it as solidly and righteously as if they had admitted it all along.

Kumbrabow Controversy Surveyed

Recently the Department of Natural Resources announced that plans were being laid to sell 2.4 million board feet of timber on Kumbrabow State Forest. The announcement has caused shock and consternation among environmentalists and legislators. The Highlands Conservancy has decided to investigate the situation thoroughly, and report to the general membership exactly what is going on.

Kumbrabow State Forest, created in 1934 during the administration of Governor H.C. Kump, covers nearly 10,000 acres of choice woodland in Randolph County, 5 miles east of Pickens. The area has been protected from environmental abuses since its creation, while the surrounding area has been strip mined and timbered to excess. Kumbrabow forms an island of innocence, surrounded by the murky waters of the Back Fork of Elk to the west, Elk River to the south, Tygart River and Shavers Fork to the east and southeast, and the Buchanan River to the north. All environmentalists are familiar with the critical environmental situation facing each of those watersheds.

The headwaters of the Back Fork of Elk and the Left Fork of the Buchanan River spring from Kumbrabow. Mill Creek, one of the major tributaries of the upper Tygart River, also comes down out of the mountains of Kumbrabow.

Conservancy member Caroline Brady Wilson is leading the fight against the proposed timber sale. In an open letter to the Conservancy Board of Directors and general membership, delivered at the April 12 WVHC board meeting at Jackson's Mill, Mrs. Wilson stated:

Forest is a betrayal of the purpose for which the Forest was established. . . . It was established, according to Governor Kump, that West Virginians and their children in future years might see the nearest approximation of what West Virginia looked like when covered by great hardwood forests in the time of their ancestors. . . . To cut the 400 acres of forest on Morgan's Run where residual trees measure 40 inches in diameter for some maples and 20 to 30 inches for some cherry trees means that West Virginia has had it again.

Mrs. Wilson has thus far waged a lonely fight against the proposed timber sale in Kumbrabow, but she has waged it with vigor. She wrote a strong letter to Governor Arch Moore protesting the sale, and Moore responded with a lengthy letter on March 13. According to the Governor's letter "All state forests were acquired for the purpose of multiple use management. . . the philosophy of multiple use include the production of wood products, wildlife for the sportsman, water conservation, and public outdoor recreation."

Mrs. Wilson pointed out to the Conservancy Board of Directors that she was present in 1934 when Kumbrabow was established, and that Governor Kump made no mention of a multiple use concept for Kumbrabow. Rather, he envisioned it as a permanent monument of the forests of the past, where West Virginians could see for themselves what a virgin forest looked like.

Only a small fraction of Kumbrabow is virgin forest, and that section is the one now scheduled for timbering by the DNR. The virgin hardwoods grow in

abundance around Morgan's Run, the heart of the proposed 400 acre timber sale. Mrs. Wilson's fears for these unique trees were substantiated in Moore's letter when the Governor pointed out that "The sale will be made on a selection basis which means that every tree to be removed will have been designated by a spot of paint. Only the larger or defective and deformed trees will be removed leaving the medium and small sizes for future harvest." The "larger" trees referred to by Moore are the remaining species of virgin timber on Morgan's Run.

The West Virginia Division of Forestry, managers of the sale, held a meeting in Charleston on February 26 to discuss plans for the Kumbrabow sale. Although the Forestry Division had anticipated no opposition to the proposed sale, they were surprised by the nearly three hours of statements delivered by a variety of conservation groups in opposition to the sale. As a result of that meeting the Forestry Division is now planning to hold public hearings on the sale.

The importance of the resolution of the Kumbrabow question was summarized by Mrs. Wilson in her remarks before the Conservancy Board of Directors: "The issue of cutting the trees in Kumbrabow is by the admittance of the Department of Natural Resources and the Governor only the beginning of harvesting trees in the people's forests. Other sales are being considered in other state forests."

The Kumbrabow timber sale has taken on the character of being a precedent for similar sales proposals which will arise in the future. Conservancy members are put on notice to watch the situation closely.

The proposed spring sale of 2.4 million board feet of timber on the Kumbrabow State

Minutes of Spring Board Meeting

April 12, 1975

Jackson's Mill, WV

1. The meeting was called to order by President Charlie Carlson at 1:15 p.m.

2. In the absence of the Secretary, no minutes were available for the previous meeting.

3. The Treasurers Report was read and approved (enclosed).

4. Communications regarding the seating of new Board members were received. Bruce Bond will henceforth represent the Kanawha Trail Club, and Robert J. Tabor will represent the W.Va. Scenic Trails Conf.

5. Dave Elkinton moved that Bob Burrell be relieved of his position from the Board since Dave had nominated Bob from the floor at the Annual Meeting without Bob's agreement, and Bob wishes that seat to be filled by a previously uninvolved member. Seconded and passed. Joe Rieffenberger and Dave Elkinton were appointed to present a nomination for a replacement at the next meeting. Jeanette Fitzwilliams asked that the Secretary send out with the notice of the next meeting a complete list of names and addresses of current Board members and officers.

Charlie Carlson read two letters from groups who had been notified to replace their Board representatives because of lack of attendance. Both the Audubon Society of W.Pa. and the Mountain Club of Md. apologized for not being more active, but expressed a continuing interest in WVHC activities.

6. Jeanette Fitzwilliams moved that participating organizations that do not wish to stay on the Board, but desire to be kept informed, be sent mailings to Board members such as minutes and other important matters. Seconded and passed.

7. The Board restated its previous policy to allow the Dolly Sods and Otter Creek guides to go out of print when the present supply is exhausted.

Jean Rodman moved that the prices of guides be increased as follows: All guides be increased to \$3.00 retail and wholesale prices raised accordingly. Seconded and passed.

8. Motion to change date of audit from Nov. 31 to Dec. 31 to coincide without fiscal year. Seconded and passed.

9. Our changes in tax status is still pending with the IRS. Dave Elkinton is to contact Tom King to see if he has the charter that cannot be found.

10. Jeanette Fitzwilliams reported that a permit system has been established for Dolly Sods and Otter Creek to

assist in research on who the users are and their interests, and to promote better behavior by the users. It is hoped permits will not have to be used as a mechanism to limit use.

11. Carolyn Brady Wilson read a statement on concern about the proposed timber sale on Kumbrow State Forest. There was a full discussion about the state forest system, its purposes and uses. Several people felt unable to make a decision without more information, and requested a Voice article and pictures. Several felt that we should not go on record against timbering on all state forests, but that the Kumbrow case should be considered on its own merits.

Jeanette Fitzwilliams moved that we oppose the cutting of any stand containing these unique and very unusually large trees in Kumbrow State Forest, and so signify to the authorities. Seconded and passed.

Joe Rieffenberger moved we recommend to the DNR Forestry Division that a minimum of 100 acres in each state forest be declared a preserve and no cutting be allowed. Seconded and passed.

12. Charlie Carlson reported on a meeting with the Dept. of Agriculture concerning the eradication of the multi-flora rose by chemical pellets. Bird lovers are very concerned that the timing will be such that many nesting birds will be killed. No action was taken, but it is hoped an article for the Voice can be prepared.

13. Dave Elkinton reported for Bob Burrell that the WVHC has been asked to endorse a Journey Down the Potomac in August to draw attention to the Potomac River looking toward its becoming a National River through legislation. Motion made, seconded and passed to do so.

14. Dave Elkinton asked for Board reaction to an idea of a special anniversary celebration for the WVHC around its tenth birthday. There was limited support expressed, but no clear-cut date is available to take as our birth. Perhaps a later time is more appropriate.

15. Charlie Carlson asked permission to loan the WVHC's Tom Allen Owl Print, awarded last year by the Audubon Society to the WVHC, to the Kanawha State Forest for safe-keeping. Approved.

16. Nick Lozano reported on the Fall Review which will focus on the Cranberry Area. Tentatively the dates are the third weekend in Oct., but the committee may reconsider.

17. Corridor H. Lowell Markey reported on his economic analysis of Corridor H and the recent trip to Washington to present it to the ARC. Sen. Randolph's staff and others as reported in the April Voice.

Charlie Carlson reported on a meeting March 29 in Elkins in which it was reported that caverns found and water supply for the Bowden Hatchery are endangered. Several agencies, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service, DNR, etc. are very concerned and are moving toward opposition to further work on Corridor H unless and until further study and justification is forthcoming. This has been our position consistently. Charlie also read a very strong letter from the Fish and Wildlife Service Regional office to the DOH threatening court action if the DOH doesn't file an environmental impact statement and provide adequate assurances for protection of the Hatchery.

Jim Hinson suggested an attorney in Philadelphia that has won a series of such cases. Bob Sugarman, be asked to assist our local attorney, Mr. Sweeney, in Grafton.

Nick Lozano moved that we encourage a suit to be filed on our behalf as soon as practicable by Bob Burrell's judgement. Seconded and passed.

18. Nick Zvegintzov introduced Tom Bragg and Kenneth Parker from the Upper West Fork Watershed Association in Lewis County, where we are holding this meeting. This group opposes a Corps of Engineers Dam, Stonewall Jackson Dam, proposed to prevent flooding in Weston. They propose instead a system of Soil Conservation Service small dams. They answered questions and explained their groups work more fully. Nick Lozano moved that we support the Upper West Fork Watershed Asso. in their opposition to the Stonewall Jackson Reservoir. Seconded and passed.

Joe Rieffenberger later moved that we give Upper West Fork Watershed Asso. \$100 for their legal expenses. Seconded and passed.

19. Eagle Lake final EIS is available. The Forest Service has abandoned Eagle Lake, and only proposed the campground in the headwaters of the Cranberry. Our continued resistance even to this part of the project was stressed.

20. Nick Lozano reported on the Scenic Trails Conference's work. A new leaflet was passed out outlining their plans.

21. Joe Rieffenberger moved that we offer any assistance to any group studying Shavers Fork for inclusion as a wild and scenic river. Seconded and passed.

22. Nick Z. reported that we missed Campaign Clean Water's appeal, so our money was not needed or spent.

23. Dave Elkinton reported that he and several members are continuing to work with the Wilderness Society's Leadership Training Program, and hope to bring back some useful ideas.

24. The next board meeting will be in July in the Cranberry area, the exact date to be arranged by the President.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Elkinton, Acting Secretary

USFS Buys Last of Otter Creek

The last inholding on the Otter Creek Watershed has been purchased by the Forest Service, according to Monongahela National Forest Supervisor, Ralph Mumme.

Mumme said that 180 acres of surface land, owned by Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Haynes of McLean, Virginia, had been purchased under the authority of the Eastern Wilderness Act, passed by Congress last January.

The inholding included a 1 1/2 mile section of Otter Creek itself, and 180 acres of surrounding area. The purchase now places the entire 20,000 acres of the Otter Creek watershed under the ownership of the U.S. Forest Service.

CONSERVANCY OFFICERS

President: Charles Carlson, Box 131;
Charleston, WV 25321

Vice President:
Highlands: Lowell Markey; RFD #1, Box
99-A; Keyser, WV 26726
Charleston: Nick Lozano; 1020 Grosscup
Ave.; Dunbar, WV 25064
Pittsburgh: Jean Rodman; 32 Crystal Dr.
Oakmont, PA 15139

Washington: Nick Zvegintzov; 3703 Jenifer
St. NW; Washington, DC 20015

Secretary for Membership: Virginia McTeer;
1026 Sixth St., Apt. 2, Charleston, WV
25302

Treasurer: Arthur Foley; 670 Gordon Dr.;
Charleston, WV 25314

Secretary: Stauffer Miller; Box 568,
Moorefield, WV 26836

Voice Editor: Ron Hardway; 206 Union St.,
Webster Springs, WV 26288

Rivers Chairman: Bob Burrell; 1412 Western
Ave., Morgantown, WV 26505.

Larwin

By Lowell Morley

Want some good news? One county in West Virginia's eastern panhandle is concerned about preservation of unique natural areas and the need for outdoor recreation facilities for nonconsumptive activities. The good good news is that it is doing something about it.

Mineral County, bordered on the north by the Potomac River, has purchased a 303 acre parcel of land which is slowly being developed as a park and as a nature preserve. The idea came about from citizens and conservation groups concerned about the preservation of shale barrens, outcrops of loose stones with patchy vegetation.

Land for the multi-use facility, called "Larwin" (Mineral spelled backward), was acquired by the county in 1973 using Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Appalachian Regional Commission and local funds. The Mineral County Parks and Recreation Commission recommends development, programs, and all expenditures for the area, the County Court being responsible for final decisions.

A master plan for development, emphasizing the protection of most of the acreage in its natural state, was produced by a consulting engineering firm. Management of 65 acres of shale barrens is in the hands of an advisory committee which includes Dr. Charles Bear, professor of biology at West Virginia University (and a Conservancy member); Dr. Melvin Brown, professor of biology at Frostburg State College; Dr. Glenn Workman, Jr., professor of biological science at Allegany Community College, and Chairman of the committee; Porter Hannah, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, and a representative of Potomac State College's Department of Biology. This committee, along with students from the colleges represented, is conducting various studies to determine management policies.

Shale barrens are outcrops of Devonian Shale that fracture at the surface, producing loose chunks. The area is porous, and precipitation, about 45 inches per year in Larwin, quickly drains away. In the summer the surface is exposed to high temperatures. Vegetation is patchy, but mixed. Hardwoods and some varieties of pine are found along with cactus. Outstanding species found in Larwin include prickly-pear cactus, Ketse mountain clover, dwarf hickberry, dwarf hawthorn and skull-cap. About 25 unique species have been identified in the area. Other shale barrens are found in a narrow strip running from Pennsylvania to North Carolina.

Very little research has been conducted on shale barren management, but the advisory committee has recommended several experiments to be conducted in small portions of barrens in Larwin. One part is being taken over by grass, and a small portion is being turned over to determine the effect. A similar area near the park is being watched to see the effect on call-grass. Three acres will be planted with all species unique to shale barrens, and some experimentation with cutting of pine, which provides year-round shade thought to be harmful to cactus growth, will be tried. Aside from hiking trails with plant identification signs, most of the shale barren area within the park will be left untouched.

By Rhyling, Director of Parks and Recreation for Mineral County, is pleased with the purchase of the property for outdoor recreation and education. But the development of recreation facilities in the park has been slower than expected. Total cost of development called for in the overall development plan is \$400,000, and funds from local and federal agencies have been delayed. Eventually, Larwin will provide for hiking, camping, boating (without motors), fishing, picnicking, and field sports.

The park includes two Soil Conservation flood protection lakes which provide excellent habitat for smallmouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. One will be totally devoted to bank fishing, the other will include provision for canoeing and rowboating for fishing purposes. Camping will include an area for 30 drive-in "family" units, and another secluded area for primitive camping. Provisions will be made for picnicking with nearby softball, horseshoe facilities and playgrounds.

The three houses on the property will eventually be used for park offices, maintenance, a country store, an environmental day center for use by school, college and conservation groups, and possibly, a museum.

The Mineral County Court has adopted strict regulations for use of the park. Off-road vehicles are not permitted to venture off designated access roads. Littering is prohibited, and plant samples cannot be taken, etc. At present, the park is only open for fishing, hiking and hunting in season. Hunting will be permitted until the park is developed to a point where it becomes unsafe, or hunters abuse the privileges.

As any student knows, a body of water heats up more slowly and releases heat more slowly than does the surrounding land. And, winter draw-downs from Sutton and Summersville reservoirs are from the bottom of the reservoirs - the coldest portion of the water due to thermal stratification. Therefore, surface water temperatures at the reservoirs should be higher than air temperatures during the late fall, winter, and early spring.

Therefore, the prevailing winds, sweeping across the warm waters of the reservoirs, pickup additional moisture and become unstable. Although warm air normally rises, the moisture laden air off the reservoir defies theory and tends to hang in the river valleys on the journey eastward. An additional complication is that the Gauley River is about 800 feet higher than the Elk River; consequently, air from the Gauley is colder and tends to override the air in the Elk River valley in the vicinity of Webster Springs, creating an unusual type of inversion. This creates conditions of high humidity and fog are often the result. Too, the dew point is raised and the excess moisture tends to cause frosts later into spring than is normal.

As the moisture-laden air flows up the major river valleys, it eventually hits up against the higher mountains in the east-northeastern part of the State, and is forced to rise. In rising, the air is compressed and cooled. Precipitation is the result.

It is interesting to speculate on the hydrological

cycle created by the reservoirs. Precipitation falling on the mountains is returned to the reservoirs by stream flow. Solar energy heats the reservoirs, releasing moisture which is fed into the air and which again falls as precipitation. The cycle would seem to be self-generating; however, because drawn-downs from the bottom of the reservoir, the surface should be gradually getting warmer. This should mean still more precipitation which would go into the reservoirs, necessitating more drawn-down.

It is difficult to separate local conditions caused by Sutton and Summersville reservoirs from the wider pattern of weather. However, it is interesting to note that during the past two winters, overnight temperatures as reported by WHTN-TV, for Webster Springs were the same as those reported for Charleston for about seven out of each ten days. Considering the differences in elevation, this suggests that the reservoirs serve to ameliorate conditions at Webster Springs.

The actual outcome is some interesting weather phenomenon. In the winter, Webster Springs, in the Elk River valley, may be receiving precipitation in the form of rain while, at altitudes of some 300 feet higher, the citizens are enjoying a major snowstorm. Precipitation in all forms is about one-third greater at Bergoo, some six miles or so east of Webster Springs, because the higher mountain ranges start here. Of course, there is the fact that during the winter of 1961-1962, the temperature at Bergoo dropped to minus 22 and failed to rise above freezing for thirty-two consecutive days. Clearly, Sutton Reservoir did not ameliorate this period of the "deep freeze", but, most likely, the reservoir was not full and had not been warmed by the sun. Too, there remains the fact that 1964 was a drought year in the mountains, as well as elsewhere. Serial changes in plant succession have been affected, although whether because of temperature, precipitation pattern, or increased cloud cover is not evident.

Therefore, about all one can conclude is that man's activities do effect, to some extent, the local weather and climate. What the changes are, and the extent of the changes will not be evident for many years to come.

Permits Required for Wilderness Areas

Effective May 23, 1975, an entrance permit will be required of all users of the recently established Dolly Sods and Otter Creek Wildernesses on the Monongahela National Forest.

In announcing the wilderness permit system, Forest Supervisor Ralph Mumme said, "In order to properly manage these wildernesses, we need to gather information on the number of users, where they come from, heavy use periods, length of stay, size of party, and areas of greatest visitor appeal. This data will provide the basis for the development of wilderness management plans.

When the wilderness permit system is implemented in late May, visitors may obtain the free permit by writing, calling or stopping at U.S. Forest Service Ranger offices at Parsons, Richwood, Barlow, Marlinton, Petersburg, or White Sulphur Springs, or the Forest Supervisor's office in Elkins. The permits will be issued for each visit, up to a maximum period of two weeks per visit. A single permit for a group such as Boy Scout backpackers, and similar groups, may be obtained in the name of the group leader. Forest officials state that users who write or telephone for permits should do so at least two weeks in advance of the planned visit so as to allow time for handling the permit application, which requires the applicant to furnish certain data about the planned visit.

Supervisor Mumme said the two West Virginia wildernesses, the 10,215 acre Dolly Sods Area near Petersburg and the 20,000 acre Otter Creek Area east of Elkins and Parsons, were established under Public Law 93-622 which was signed by President Ford on January 4, 1975. Under the terms of this law and the Wilderness Act of 1964, the areas are to be managed so as to protect and enhance their wilderness values. Motorized vehicles and motorized equipment are prohibited as is commercial timber cutting, road building, and similar developments and uses. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are permitted under applicable State and Federal fish and game laws.

Supervisor Mumme stated that an entrance permit system is required on nearly half of the Nation's Wilderness and Primitive Areas. He said that most Wilderness visitors recognize that permit system is desirable and in the interest of a pleasant wilderness experience. It is requested that visitors comply with permit requirements, and rules and regulations governing the use and occupancy of these very special areas.

In addition to the two established Dolly Sods and Otter Creek Wildernesses, a 36,300 acre portion of the Monongahela's Cranberry Back Country Area near Richwood is designated as a Wilderness Study Area under Public Law 93-622. Entrance permits will be not required for this Study Area.

Weather and the Lay of the Land

by Gordon T. Nemrick

The March 1975 issue of the *Voice* carried an article by Reid A. Bryson, entitled "The Lessons of Climatic History." Climate, for practical purposes, may be defined as a matter of average temperatures, prevailing winds, and normal rain and snowfall. Further, for meteorological purposes, a period at least thirty years is the minimum for determining "average" temperatures and "normal" rain and snowfall.

Unfortunately, from the standpoint of the ecologist most of man's large-scale assaults upon the landscape have happened within the past twenty-five years or less. Thus, there are no climatic records for this period which can be compared with earlier periods. For this reason, recent ecological events must be compared in terms of weather. And weather, for all practical purposes, is the state of the atmosphere with regard to heat or cold, wetness or dryness, calm or storm, and clearness or cloudiness.

Man's own works have somewhat altered the weather and climate. Cities, with their concentrations of heat-absorbing structures and heating machinery, are generally warmer both winter and summer than is the surrounding countryside. Both climate and weather vary somewhat within a region because of

local differences in geography and plant life. Valleys tend to be cooler than hilltops, especially at night and in the winter, because cold air flows downhill. Lakesides and riversides generally are more humid than inland areas, have more dew, and often have more late spring frosts.

What are some of man's more recent large-scale landscape alterations? Strip mining has come into vogue since the end of World War II. The Interstate Highway system, with its sister Appalachian Highway system, has been under construction for more than a decade. Urban renewal is taking a heavy toll of older structures in many cities, while the rush to building shopping malls is devastating many once-rural areas. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an organization with an aversion to free-flowing streams, has completed a number of impoundments, has a number of impoundments under construction, and has still more impoundments on the drawing board.

Thus, in West Virginia, three major factors are at work in determining weather changes. First, there are the prevailing westerly winds; second, construction or destruction is largely concentrated to the windward side of the mountains; and, third, warm bodies of water exist, over which the dust-laden west winds must pass.

Coming Attractions

The annual Cheat River Float Trip, sponsored by the Conservancy, is a sure sign of Spring as a budding trillium. This year the river binge will be held the weekend of May 17-18. Those desiring to challenge the moderate current of the Cheat between Parsons and St. George are requested to gather at the St. George bridge, just off WV Rt. 72, no later than 10:00 a.m. Saturday, May 17, and this trip will explore the river downstream from St. George. Primitive camping areas are available for those who wish to stay overnight and take both trips. The Cheat River Float Trip is the best opportunity available to view the watershed which the proposed Rowlesburg dam would inundate. Call Bob Burrell in Morgantown, (304) 599-1446, a few days before the trip to insure that water conditions are adequate.

This is also the season for wildflower viewing, and a plethora of nature tours are coming up.

The Cranberry Mountain Spring Nature Tour, sponsored by the city of Richwood, the U.S. Forest Service and the W.Va. Department of Natural Resources will be held May 9-10.

Advance registration is required for this gathering. \$4.00 is required for the buffet at the Country club on May 9, and \$6.00 is necessary to reserve a place on one of the tours. Reservations should be mailed before May 5 to the Richwood Chamber of Commerce, Box 587, Richwood, WV 26261. NOTE: The brochure mailed out for the Cranberry Mountain Nature Tour lists the Island Creek Coal Company as a "patron."

The 14th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls State Park is also held the weekend of May 8-11. More information on this DNR sponsored tour is available from Maxine Scarbro, W.Va. Dept. of Natural Resources, Charleston, WV 25303 (304) 348-3370 or 348-4004.

In connection with nature tours the University of Georgia Press has announced the forthcoming publication of *Wildflowers of the Southeastern United States* by Wilbur H. Duncan and Leonard E. Foote. The book contains nearly 500 color photographs and identifies some 1,100 species of southeastern wildflowers. It will be available in bookstores after April 28, priced at \$12.00.

For birdwatchers the 1975 Brooks Bird Club Foray is now organizing. There will be two sessions of the Foray, both headquartered at the Raleigh County 4-H Camp, located off W.Va. Rt. 3 near Daniels, five miles southeast of Beckley. The first session will be held for one week, from May 31 to June 7. Reservation to attend this session must be made by May 10. The second session will run from June 28 to July 5, and reservation for this session must be made by June 10. Cost for each session of the BBC Foray is \$65.00, and that includes everything except transportation to and from the 4-H Camp. Reservations should be sent to Brooks Bird Club, Inc., 707 Warwood Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003.

THE HIGHLANDS VOICE does not carry advertising, but now and then we give a little help to our friends, provided they are friendly and Conservancy members. Thomas Ward meets both qualifications, and this is to announce that Tom has a neat piece of property available for short term rental agreement. The property is located on Cheat River in Preston County, near Seven Islands, and more details can be had from Tom by getting in touch with him at 848 West 36th St., Baltimore, MD 21211 (301) 243-4070.

The West Virginia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy will hold a Board of Directors meeting Saturday, May 10, at the Greenland Gap Lodge. Meeting time is 1:30 p.m. The Directors meeting is open to the general membership of TNC.

Dirty Air Coming to the Mountains

by Ed Light

A decision is due to be made soon which will allow either the development or protection of the West Virginia Highlands. This is the result of a national Sierra Club suit over the "significant deterioration" section of the Clean Air Act.

Under new EPA regulations, states may zone areas where air quality standards are currently being met for either practically no deterioration or deterioration up to the highest permissible federal air pollution standards. Polluting power plants, factories, or land developments which would attract many automobiles would not be allowed where the air quality can't deteriorate, but would be encouraged to locate in zones allowing air deterioration.

EPA has given the West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission until June 1 to designate any clean air areas for deterioration or non-deterioration. After that date, EPA will automatically classify all clean areas in a category allowing for "a moderate amount of deterioration."

Industrial and land development groups are probably pushing for dirty air designations to go to West Virginia Highland areas. For example, Monongahela Power has not ruled out a coal-fired power plant in the Canaan Valley area in conjunction with their planned Davis power project, and it would be to their advantage to get that area zoned for dirty air. Along with subtracting from the aesthetic enjoyment of an area, recent research indicates that very low levels of air pollution can have adverse effects on public health, limit visibility, and cause damage to plants. Conservancy members should send letters regarding the protection of clean air in specific areas of West Virginia to: West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission, 1536 Washington Street, East, Charleston, West Virginia 25311.

JOIN THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft. --Adlai Stevenson

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Make checks payable to "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy." Mail membership form and dues to:

Virginia McTeer
1026 Sixth St., Apt. 2
Charleston, WV 25302

CONSERVANCY PUBLICATIONS

A new edition of the Monongahela National Forest trail guide is now available. Users will be pleased to know that the format of the guide has been altered, and it will now fit conveniently in a large pocket or an outside pocket on a pack. The new guide measures 5 3/4" x 9". It costs \$3 and can be ordered from the address below.

"The Otter Creek Guide is now out-of-print and unavailable."

1. Dolly Soda Trail Guide & Management Plan - \$3.00. "Available Mid-April"
2. Cranberry Backcountry Trail Guide & Management Plan - \$3.00 "Supply Limited"
3. Hiking Guide to the Monongahela National Forest \$3.00.

These may be ordered from:
Ron Hardway
205 Union St.
Webster Springs, WV 26206

Copies available at 1-3 discount to stores and clubs. Address inquiries concerning wholesale orders to Bruce Sandquist, 210 College Park Drive, Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146. Prices as of January, 1975.