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# the Highlands Voice

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## Weekend Review to Emphasize Cranberry Back Country

The Conservancy's annual Weekend Review will be held during the weekend of October 17-18-19 in Richwood on the edge of the Cranberry Back Country. Several tours have been arranged which will completely cover the assets and the problems of the Back Country.

Registration for the weekend will begin at 5:00 P.M. Friday, October 17, at the Canby Ranger District headquarters, one mile north of Richwood on Rt. 39. The Canby District offices will be open for stocktaking and supply needs.

Saturday, October 18, is reserved for tours of the Back Country area led by Conservancy members. All registered tours will leave from the Canby Ranger District headquarters between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Tour #1 is a hike on the Comptons Trail led by Conservancy President Charles Carlson. The Comptons Trail is a seven mile loop trail around the Cranberry Glades. This route ventures into sections of the Glades seldom seen by most visitors to this unique natural area.

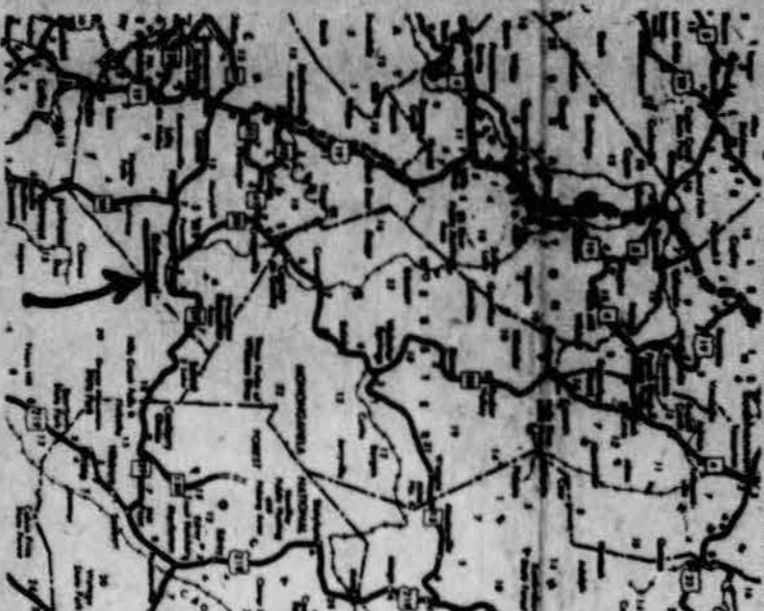
Tour #2 is a motor tour with selected stops at points of interest. First stop is a visit to the Falls of Hills Creek, a spectacular waterfall area adjacent to Rt. 30. A short but strenuous hike is necessary to get down to the falls. Second stop will be at the Cranberry Mammoth Wildlife Center, a Mammoth National Forest facility located at the entrance to the Highland Somatic Highway. After examining the many exhibits in the Visitors Center, the tour will continue to Hillshero and visit the home of noted author Pearl S. Buck. Leaving the Back house the tour will cross spectacular Droop Mountain to Roarers State Park, a highly unusual area of huge rocks with passageways between them.

Tour #3 is a short hike from Summit Lake down to Cranberry River via the Pheasant Hollow Trail. Walking distance is about 2.5 miles for the round trip. This hike will combine clearing with an on-spot investigation of a large clearing near Summit Lake. They will give participants the opportunity to wander along the beautiful Cranberry River at their leisure, taking photographs, trout fishing or just soaking up the views.

Tour #4 is another motor trip with extended stops on the perimeter of the Back Country. This tour will travel over Rt. 39 along the scenic North Fork of Cherry River to the Cranberry Mammoth Wildlife Center. The Conservancy will set camp at the Visitors Center, but will continue on to the Highland Somatic Highway to the northeast of the Falls of Cranberry Trail. Here participants will disembark for a short hike to a magnificent viewpoint of the Cranberry Glades, then continue for a short distance along the rugged summit of the West Mammoth. This tour will then continue on the Somatic Highway down to Williams River. For the last two miles the route follows the twisting curves of

RESERVATION FORM FOR SATURDAY  
EVENING DINNERS ON PAGE 8.

Forest Service Rt. 86 which parallels Williams River, a spectacular mountain stream. At Three Forks of Williams River, site of an abandoned logging town, the tour will again leave the automobiles behind and



## Backpacking Into the Back Country

The Cranberry Back Country is a recreational area which requires a great deal of walking to absorb the essence of the thing. The best way to walk in the Back Country and profit from the experience is to walk in as far as you can and camp for the night, then walk out the next day over a different route. There are many entrances into the Back Country where cars may be parked overnight. If you are with a group which has two cars available it is possible to park one car at one end of the CBC, and the other car at the other end of the CBC, and backpack completely across the Back Country in two days.

Two good trips which would could utilize the two car method are these:

1. Park one car at the Red Oak Knob fire tower. Everyone pile into the second car and drive to the Highland Somatic Highway. Park at the trailhead of the North-South Trail, east, begin your hike from there, and spend the first day getting to the Little Fork-Trell (about 11 miles). When you find the trail hike down it until you reach the creek. There are several good places to pitch tents, but you'll have to look for them. The next day return to the North-South Trail and continue on to Red Oak Knob (about 8 miles). You will come out about 10:00 miles west of the fire tower.

explore the surrounding area. There will be opportunity here to see first-hand the effects of core drilling in the Back Country, to explore Three Forks itself, to examine a clear-cut, and to wade the frigid water of the Middle Fork of Williams River. From Three Forks the trippers will drive to the top of Red Oak Knob. The National Forest Fire Tower there provides awesome panoramas of the entire Back Country area. The tour will then return to Richwood on Forest Service roads.

Saturday evening at 6:00 P.M. all Conservancy members and friends are invited to attend a steak dinner at the Richwood Elementary School. Cost of the dinner is \$4.00 per person. Following dinner a special program on management problems of the Cranberry Back Country will be presented beginning at 7:30. The weekend's activities will close at 10:00 A.M. Sunday morning with a meeting of the Conservancy Board of Directors. The meeting is open to all Conservancy members and friends.

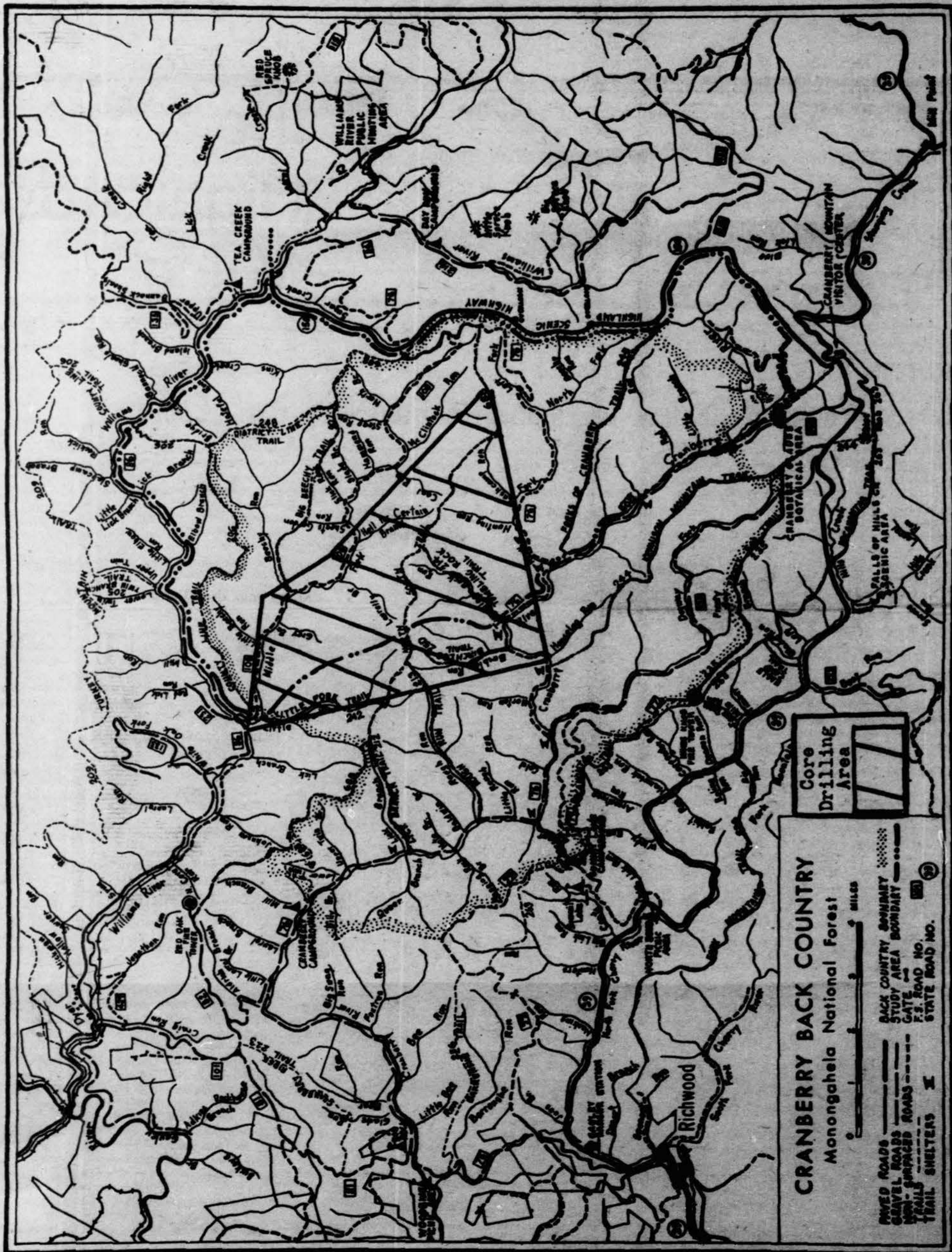
**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to prohibitive printing and postage costs the Conservancy is not issuing a special brochure describing the Weekend Review as we have done in the past. All necessary reservation forms and information are printed on this page of THE VOICE. Please read it carefully.

Follow the road back up the hill to the tower and your car.

2. Park the first car at Summit Lake Campground. Everyone pile into the second car and drive up to the Highland Somatic Highway. Park the second car at the trailhead of the Forks of Cranberry Trail, #245, and begin your hike from here. Spend the first day getting down to Cranberry River. There are dozens of superb camping sites along the river. On the second day continue down Cranberry on PS Rt. 76 to the Pheasant Hollow Trail (fisherman's Trail, #231). You must ford the river at this point, then continue uphill on the trail and into the Summit Lake Campground. Total distance for this route is about fifteen miles.

If these two trips are longer than you wish to take for a pack trip, use the map on page 2 to plot your own courses. This area in the middle of the map marked with crossed lines is the section of the Back Country where core drilling roads have been built recently. Watch closely for trail blazes while you're in this area. If you should get lost in this area remember this: if you turn to the north and backtrack down the mountainside you will eventually reach Rt. 102. If you turn south through the bushes you will reach Rt. 76. From either road you can retrace yourself on the map and find the quickest way back to your car.

# MAP TO THE WEEKEND REVIEW



## CRANBERRY BACK COUNTRY

Monongahela National Forest

- PAVED ROADS
- GRAVEL ROADS
- NON-SURFACED ROADS
- TRAILS
- TRAIL SHELTERS
- BACK COUNTRY BOUNDARY
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- GATE
- F.S. ROAD NO.
- STATE ROAD NO.

Core Drilling Area

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

# The Two Faces of the Cranberry Back Country



THREE FORKS OF WILLIAMS



NORTH FORK OF CRANBERRY



BIG BEECHY RUN



MIDDLE FORK OF WILLIAMS



JOHNSON BRANCH



COVE RUN

# The McDowell County Autumn Olive Festival

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources is a great organization for patting itself on the back. Of course, if it is going to receive any pats at all, it must administer them itself.

The biggest self-congratulatory fete of them all was held this past August in southern West Virginia. This one is an annual tour of strip mines, past and present, whose purpose is to demonstrate to everyone in the DNR and the strip mining industry that they're all a pretty decent bunch of fellows who are trying like hell to do a socially acceptable job in a business that has no redeeming social value. To avoid probable embarrassment the general public, while not prohibited from attending, is not encouraged to attend.

Nevertheless representatives of the press do tag along to observe

and record the bacchanalian toasts. Occasionally a private citizen manages to sneak in and drop a thorn or two among the pond of lilies.

What the VOICE is presenting here is a reprint from the RALEIGH REGISTER concerning the 1975 stripping tour, and a series of provoking letters from and to Ric McDowell, Secretary of the stripping abolition society called Save Our Mountains (SOM). We must do it this way because the VOICE was not invited to attend the tour, and we did not know it had occurred until reports after the fact found their way into print in other newspapers.

All things considered our coverage of this event is probably better than it would have been had we attended the festival. We have access to some behind-the-scenes maneuvering as well as an eye-witness account of the tour, neither of which is sarcastic.

## DNR Hosts Annual Strip Tour

by Deborah Baker  
Register Reporter

This year's interagency tour of state strip mines was "bigger and better than ever." So, the experts said, was the stripping.

Some of the non-experts weren't quite so impressed.

As Consolidation Coal Co. officials extolled the virtues of using the valleyfill method to rearrange 20 million cubic yards of dirt that used to be two mountain-tops, Judy Roach looked around and sighed.

"Twenty-five men did this much damage since October of 1974," said Ms. Roach, head of Rep. Ken Hechler's Huntington office.

Consol officials failed to note that their job at Eureka hollow in McDowell County visited Thursday by the state Department of Natural Resources-sponsored tour had generated considerable publicity last year when the company forced a dozen families out of their homes to make way for the stripping.

But it was not human cost being figured this week by nearly a hundred representatives of state and federal agencies, coal companies, engineering firms, and the like.

This week-long tour of 20 sites was to provide "an excellent crosssection of surface mining and reclamation activity in West Virginia," according to a pre-tour memorandum from state reclamation chief Ben Greene.

"More people, more interest, more participation," was the way Greene summed it up at tour's end.

But representatives of anti-stripping groups were not so sure it was the right people.

"We wish that the tour had been more of a public thing," complained Putnam Countian Rick McDowell, an officer of the statewide Save Our Mountains. "We had to pressure before we were allowed to come."

The tour was not publicized, and McDowell said when he found out about it last week he called DNR and was told the registration deadline had passed.

"It's up to you to get your registration in on time," he was told.

McDowell says it was not until DNR was contacted by State Senator Warren McGraw (D.-Wyo.) and Rep. Ken Hechler (D.-W.Va.) that he was given an okay. He was McGraw's official representative on the trip.

"DNR is part of the state government, part of the people. Why is there such a secrecy thing?"

Asked why Save Our Mountains and other environmental organizations were not invited, Greene responded: "We don't want it to be a tourist attraction - we're not promoting a cause."

He claimed that the group "knew about the tour but never made their wishes known till last Wednesday."

Anyway, he concluded, Save Our Mountains is a "political" rather than a technical group.

Greene insisted that the focus of the week was technical: participants were divided into 11 committees according to their fields of expertise to take a look at some facets of stripping including

drainage, haul roads, slope stability, vegetation, and future land use.

But the tour had much more the aura of a sightseeing trip.

At the three southern West Virginia sites the Register visited a few tour members were busily testing soil and water or checking the progress of vegetation growth reclaimed land.

But most tour members milled around talking with one another and watching activity on the working jobs.

The air of camaraderie was another concern of the few anti-stripping representatives.

McDowell and Ms. Roach noted the apparent coziness between operators and the inspectors for DNR charged with making sure the sites comply with the law.

"It's obvious the relationship between DNR and the (strip mine) owners is an advocacy situation - I think that's appalling," said Ms. Roach.

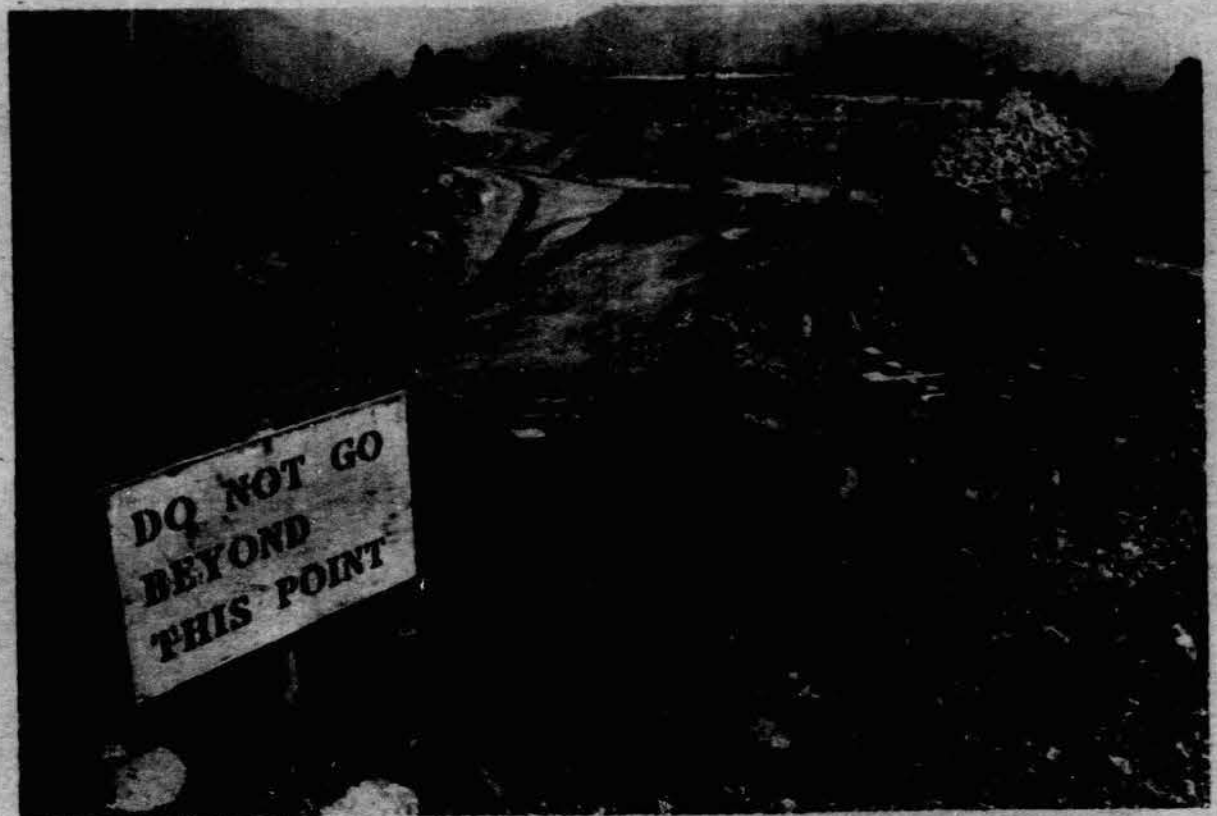
"There were too many inspectors defending what was happening on the sites," McDowell agreed.

They plan to submit a written report to DNR suggesting that inspectors rotate strip jobs to which they're assigned, rather than overseeing the same job for a long period of time.

They will also suggest the DNR solicit more participation from citizens' groups on next year's tour. "And next year we'll bring along some technical people so we can analyze those pretty ponds," McDowell vowed.

The southern portion of the tour included two showcase strip jobs: Vecellio and Grogan's Piney Creek site off Sullivan Road, and Perry and Hylton's job for Cannelton Coal Co. near Welch.

The mammoth mountain-top removal job near



Sullivan is only a small part of the Vecellio construction empire, but it features the latest in techniques and machinery and some of the best roads around.

Tour participants watched the ceaseless activity of trucks and dozers while one state helicopter and three company choppers whirred overhead. "That's a million dollars worth of helicopters," noted one DNR inspector.

The first coal was hauled from the job in March, and it's slated to produce for four years.

Jim White, who is in charge of the job, was asked the future plans for the site owned by Beaver Land Co.

"I like to think it's a housing development, but it's difficult to get Beaver Land to say what they'll do with it," he replied. A golf course has also been mentioned.

The Piney Creek job was the one chosen by DNR to show high school students when the agency sponsored a weekend in April for conservation clubs throughout the state.

Perry and Hylton's job in McDowell sported ducks on a drainage pond and a field full of baled hay on flat land where a mountain-top had been.

Donuts, coffee and soft drinks were provided, and Tracy Jr., called Warren, talked about the job he is in charge of.

Noting that there is "more level land here than anywhere in McDowell County," young Hylton boasted that the reclaimed strip job is referred to by some local residents as the "eighth wonder of the world."

That particular field has been given to the county Board of Education by Pocahontas Land Co., Cannelton, and Perry and Hylton, for construction of a consolidated high school for Welch and Gary.

DNR inspector Emory Cantrell noted enthusiastically that when the operation is finished, there will be a considerable amount of flat land as a result.

"Probably the majority of the town of Welch will set up here some day" he predicted.

Reclamation work was in progress at part of the site, where a hydroseeder spread a mixture of seed, fertilizer and mulch for the spectators.

The week-long tour drew profuse praise from participants for stripping in the state and for the DNR's role in putting the tour together.

Dr. David Maneval, a mining engineer and science advisor for the Appalachian Regional Commission and former reclamation director for the state of Pennsylvania, said that of the eight foremost coal producing states, "West Virginia does one of the better jobs of reclamation."

He said the reclamation he saw here was better than reclamation he looked at recently in Alabama.

"Apparently the companies are being able to meet the regulations and still make money," he observed.

Maneval led a team of ARC staffers consisting of four economists and a summer intern, and said the tour would serve as a training exercise for new staff members to familiarize them with stripping.

Robert Mallary, a teacher of computer graphics at the University of Massachusetts and a sculptor, said the strippers "are doing better than I anticipated. They have the environmental side pretty well down."

Mallary and some colleagues have a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for "visual design resources for surface mine rehabilitation" - finding ways to improve the appearance of reclaimed jobs. He thinks computers and landscape architects could have input into the job of reclaiming stripped land.

The Register asked Mallary if the Consol job surrounding him - acre after acre of disturbed earth - offended his aesthetic sense.

He denied it. "It's kind of an earth sculpture," he enthused, "an image of disruption. It's exciting violent," and "has drama."

Drama aside, tour members undoubtedly appreciated the amenities. Trucks sprinkled water to keep down the dust as the caravan of 4-wheel drive vehicles wound up the strip roads. Law enforcement officers of all descriptions stopped traffic in several spots so the tour could move through quickly.

And the night that participants stayed at the Tracy Hylton - owned Ramada Inn in Beckley, The West Virginia Surface Mining and Reclamation Association hosted a cocktail party for them.

It was billed as a "technical session."

August 12, 1975

Dennis Boyles  
Department of Natural Resources  
1800 Washington St. East  
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Dennis:

Here are a few thoughts I've mullied over about the interagency tour.

(1) I feel that the socio-economic impact of surface mining is a very important area, but agree with you that it is quite difficult to cover in any depth while on the tour. My recommendation would be that the committee to cover this area would meet 3 or 4 weeks before the tour to design a questionnaire. This would be sent to surface mine operators in advance and would be picked up when the tour came through. I also think that citizens living close to the areas being mined ought to be interviewed for input into this.

(2) I would like to see the tour open up more to citizens, while still including the experts it does. People who are critical of surface mining sometimes speak out of ignorance. By allowing them to be a part of the tour they could be educated.

(3) Those few times at our final sessions in Charleston when controversial issues were raised, discussion was squelched. I realize that there was a time element involved, but failure to talk about these issues made it look like DNR was attempting to gloss over things.

(4) Finally I feel that inspectors should rotate around surface mining areas rather than staying on one site. Too often they seemed to defend the job and

work done with a loyalty too close to the operators. I hope these ideas will be helpful to you. Please let me know if I can offer any more assistance.

Sincerely,  
Ric MacDowell, Secretary  
Save Our Mountains, Inc.  
Box 573  
Hamlin, WV 25523

Ric MacDowell, Secretary  
Save Our Mountains  
Box 573  
Hamlin, WV 25523

Dear Ric:

Thank you for your views regarding the socio-economic impact of surface mining in West Virginia. I discussed similar views with Ben Greene during and after the tour and he assured me that he would take them into consideration when planning next year's tour.

Enclosed is our committee's report, "Surface Mining in West Virginia: An Overall Perspective."

I will forward a copy of your letter to Ben for further attention.

Cordially yours,  
Dennis L. Boyles  
Administrative Assistant

#### COMMITTEE PERSONS:

Dennis Boyles, chairman, Ira S. Latimer,  
Raymond Eye, Al Curry, Kines Boling, Jeff  
Herholdt, Dave Maneval, and Ben Lusk

#### Surface Mining in West Virginia: An Overall Perspective

This committee was to evaluate the overall perspectives of surface mining in West Virginia from a socio-economic viewpoint.

In West Virginia, the surface mining of coal has become an efficient method for procuring an energy resource that has not been, nor need it be justified on an economic or social basis.

In 1974, surface and auger mining accounted for 19.2 percent of West Virginia's total coal production of 101,713,580 tons. In comparison, surface and auger mining accounted for 54.4 percent of the nation's total coal production, or 9.4 percent of our nation's energy supply. Given our energy supply-demand balance, this is an essential component of our energy diet.

Although surface mining is capital intensive, its direct labor requirements are less than those of deep mining. In West Virginia, the surface mining industry directly employs 4,562 men compared to 41,613 in deep mines.

The efficiency of the surface mining industry is evidenced by the fact that in 1974, this industry produced 25.5 tons of coal per man day compared to the 9.3 tons per man day produced from deep mines.

In general from the seventeen sites we visited, our committee noted the following:

.....Each strip site employed an average of thirty persons.

.....Employees earned between \$6.25 and \$7.00 an hour, averaging \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually.

.....All employees were local, living within an estimated thirty mile radius of their job.

.....Based on West Virginia's average price per ton of coal (\$21.50), for every ton of stripped coal, approximately 75 cents goes to the State as a Business and Occupation Tax (21.50 x 3.5% = .75) and approximately 7.5 cents goes to the County Producing and Municipal Funds (21.50 x .35 = 7.5) 75% County Producing Fund, 25% County Municipal Fund.

(In 1974, the West Virginia surface mining industry paid the State approximately \$14,645,000 (19,527,391 x .75) as a Business and Occupation Tax and approximately \$732,000 (19,527,391 x .075) went to the County Producing and Municipal Funds - only in effect for six months - for an approximate total of \$15,378,000. Excludes Consumer Sales Tax.)

.....Surface operators sold the coal for between \$17 and \$25 per ton.

.....Markets: The northern "steam" coal was marketed to local utilities on a "spot-market basis"; whereas, the southern "metallurgical" coal was exported to Japan, Canada, and Bethlehem Steel under long-term contracts.

.....Equipment, parts, fuel, and supplies were purchased from surrounding communities.

.....Many workers received on the job training or in one instance, were recruited from a discontinued highway construction project.

.....Some surface operations blended their coal with deep mined coal, so utilities could burn it and be in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

Due to the temporary environmental disruption caused by surface mining, it is difficult to perceive any immediate aesthetic benefits derived from the industry. However, a majority of the sites which we visited had been restripped and utilized up-to-date reclamation techniques making them more aesthetically pleasing than the once abandoned strip operations.

Due to insufficient time, the committee had no chance to talk to area residents; however, according to coal officials, protest letters regarding surface mine operations ranged from one to thirty per site. After coal operations had convened, the one site that created much public controversy was Consolidation Coal Company's Coalbank Operation, located approximately one mile southeast of Eckman, West Virginia. One Consol official noted, that this operation was delayed six months due to public protest. According to this official, the Company had to use a more powerful explosive which forced them to evacuate the hollow of all of the inhabitants, some of whom had been living on Consol land while leasing homes from the Northfork Land Company for \$20.00 per year.

Farming, like surface mining, employs a limited number of persons to develop a resource which is used by a vast majority of our citizens. Yet no one disputes the fact that farming is necessary. Given more effective regulations, continued enforcement of these regulations, and greater emphasis on preplanning (considering possible future productive use), surface mining could also become an accepted social endeavor. Since reclamation is a commitment to the future, the surface mining industry needs to absolve the intergenerational inequity that has been representative of this industry in the past. Future generations must not be confronted with the abandoned strip sites and "gob" piles that our generation faces. By bringing intergenerational fairness into the decision-making process, future generations could view surface mining as an environmentally acceptable method of procuring coal.

August 20th, 1975

Dennis Boyles  
Administrative Assistant  
Department of Natural Resources  
Charleston, W.Va. 25305

Dear Dennis:

Thank you for your letter and copy of the final report. I am a bit puzzled over a few things. My comments about the need to take care of much of the research about socio-economic aspects of surface mining before the tour begins were not included in the report. Nor were suggestions for rotation of inspectors and more citizen participation in the tour. You mentioned that you discussed these ideas with Ben Greene. However, I do feel that they would have more impact if they were included in the "official findings" rather than submitted as a letter from me. I was under the impression that there were more people on the committee. I was assigned to it while on the tour, yet am not listed as one of the members.

Most bewildering of all to me is the third page of the report. It seems so blatantly a defense of strip mining. By comparing surface mining to farming, you open yourself up to all sorts of further possible comparisons. For example: farming does not contribute carcinogenic materials to water supplies anywhere near the degree that surface mining does. I agree with your comments on the need for more effective regulations, continued enforcement and preplanning. I would stress enforcement much more. I'd also omit much of the final part of the paragraph on "intergenerational fairness."

I am looking forward to seeing the total evaluation for the tour and will be interested in Mr. Greene's implementation of suggestions coming out of this year's tour.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ric MacDowell, Secretary  
Save Our Mountains, Inc.  
Box 573  
Hamlin, W.Va. 25523



## Corridor H Not the Only Threat to Shavers Fork

Although no conservationist ever wants to count their chickens before they are hatched, it does appear that the Corridor H controversy has been resolved. The highways people have finally agreed to do an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the entire alignment, including alternatives such as the Parsons route. They had no choice. They simply had to obey the law and take cognizance of the weight of opposition from Federal agencies. The Conservancy's efforts to keep Corridor H in the limelight resulted in more people and organizations becoming actively involved in seeing that these laws were obeyed.

Unfortunately, when victory such as this is realized, the best intentioned people tend to relax their guards and take up other pursuits. But remember in this coming Bicentennial Year: "The price of liberty is vigilance" and so it must also be in conservation work. Actually the Corridor H victory was easy because almost every agency involved was a public one that must be responsive to the public that pays its bills. As much as these agencies might like to, they can not ignore you and if you are correct, the proper solution will eventually come out.

Now of course, don't start applauding yourself yet. The EIS could possibly conclude that the way Corridor H is now going is the best way and the cheapest (thanks to an already wasted \$20 million). So what would have been accomplished besides delaying the project a few years and making it more expensive? The worst part of this is that it would tend to prove Highway Commissioner Ritchie correct who stated earlier this summer that this is all an EIS accomplishes anyway. The Conservancy has always tried to bet with some excellent cards in the hole and we are currently working quietly on two in case the EIS opener gets trumped.

But what concerns this overlooker most is not the damage to Shavers Fork that would be brought about by Corridor H because it would be miniscule compared to the other damage currently being done to Shavers Fork. Last summer when we secured a field hearing by the EPA on the coal mining operation near Bemis, the small family controlled company asked us why in the hell we weren't doing something about a far bigger river ruiner than themselves, the Department of Highways. We informed them that indeed we were, but we just don't advertise it in the newspapers. The DOH might well ask us now why we aren't doing something about a persons who is doing more damage than their collective bulldozers. Our answer to them is still the same. It's just that when you are trying to protect Shavers Fork, your enemies have to stand in line and wait their turn. First Linan, then T and J, then the Dept. of Highways, and now we must turn our attention to a source of degradation greater than all the others put together and to a much more powerful polluter, J. Peter Grace

In essence, one man has controlled the destiny of this once magnificent river, he has apparently influenced those directly or indirectly who would be in position to enforce controls on his activities, and he has thwarted the interests of a vast number of West Virginians. His method is to set up a number of smaller companies to do his bidding or else lease parts of his vast holdings to such small companies. The combined effects of all of these operations is disastrous. The companies' names appear in the papers, but never the name of the one ultimately responsible.

DNR fish biologist Don Phares gives the Shavers Fork another ten years at the current rate of degradation. I seldom disagree with Don and I know better than to disagree with an expert, but I think Don was much too charitable in his estimate. I don't think it will last half that time. Take a gander at the following activities between Snowshoe and U.S. Route 250:

1. Two logging operations by separate firms.
2. Lang Brothers strip mine near Black Run. Original appeal denied, later overturned by Reclamation Board. New permit approved, but subject to new requirements. Doubt exists if final approval has been made, but three truckloads of coal have recently come from there.
3. Construction of RR siding at same site.
4. Thermo-fossil Industries strip mine between First Fork and Fish Hatchery Run.
5. Joe Burford strip mine application. Has this lapsed and what is its status?
6. Energy Enterprises strip mine permit originally denied. Later granted by DNR Director Latimer because of "lack of evidence for denial."
7. A new road is being cut in this area into a level not covered by the permit. Extends almost to river level.
8. Head of Red Run. Lang Bros. are supposed to be finishing up a reclamation mess left by the hop, skip, and jump firm of Kelly Creek Fuel Co.
9. New Era Resources is building a coal washer. They were given a cease and desist order by DNR, but they kept building (pouring foundations, etc.) anyway. No permits applied for. Four acres leveled, drainage a mess.
10. Same outfit is supposed to be moving a state road at their own expense. On the spot observation shows the road to be poorly surfaced and not in keeping with currently acceptable forestry standards.

Now add to the entire collective mess the remains of over 30 years of unreclaimed strip mines on Grace property, the secretive operations of the Gamble deep mines, the utter desecration of Fort Milroy, and similar activities and we begin to get a picture of how a great river is being slowly strangled.

I will be the first to admit that there may be minor errors in the above list, but in total substance it is correct. We need more monitors for this area and we need members living in the Charleston area to extract information from Reclamation Division files. We also need Elkins area people to obtain information from Court House files. If you would like to participate actively in saving Shavers Fork from this ruin please contact the overlooker.

Why don't the governmental agencies help us? When violations occur they are not prosecuted. Water Resources Division of DNR claims that they do not have any of their own lawyers and get poor cooperation from the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General's office claims that when they have to back up a DNR decision, they are given very little information from DNR. The biggest enemy of the river, siltation, is a very grey area not covered well by state law. We have been pointing out this to the Director ever since the current strip mine regulations were passed around for comment, but we have never been acknowledged. Water quality is being monitored by DNR, but the results of the tests simply go into a file and nobody is taking a look at them. Instead of entering the data into a computerized data base accessible by other agencies such as the USGS or the Forest Service, they simply go into a closed, in-house file where they will probably reside forever unless some nosy outfit like the Highlands Conservancy demands their release.

Morale is low in the Water Resources Division and the resignations of key inspectors, engineers, chemist, geologist, and planners have become epidemic during the past few months. They have simply thrown up their hands at the bureaucratic inertia of what should be the strongest regulatory arm of state government. Some awfully good and conscientious people have become so frustrated at watching great rivers like Back Fork and Shavers Fork go down the drain that they have all sought employment elsewhere, usually with a coal company. Now that isn't so bad if it is for one of the largest outfits that at least try to do a good job (Like the Ohio Power Company's new plant on the Tygart), but these little shoe string companies that are ruining Shavers Fork aren't about to hire a quality control man. What is absolutely criminal is the number of years of experience lost to the state from these men who have worked so long for Water Resources.

## Highway Builders Now Strippers

by Skip Johnson  
Charleston Gazette

A combination of the booming coal business and a dip in highway construction in West Virginia has sent the biggest saws in road building in the state into strip mining.

At least 10 large construction companies, including S. J. Groves and Sons Co., Nello Teer Co. and Vecellio & Grogan Inc., are now in the striping business under subsidiary names.

"FRANKLY, WE'RE GLAD to have them," commented Paul Pisenberger, assistant chief of the reclamation division of the Department of Natural Resources, (DNR). "They are giving us some excellent work in road building and earth moving."

Pisenberger said the contractors' move into the strip mining field has generally occurred within the past year. "There are probably more that we don't know about," he added.

S. J. Groves, a Minneapolis-based firm which until recently was heavily involved in Interstate 79 construction, is in the striping business under the subsidiary name of Gopher Mining Co. The Gopher Mining name has not appeared on a striping permit; however, the firm is doing contract mining for Buffalo Mining Co. on a 1,000-acre mountaintop removal job on Buffalo Creek in Logan County.

Nello Teer, a Durham, N.C., company that held a few interstate and Appalachian highway contracts in West Virginia, just recently started into striping under the name of Webster County Coal Co. They will be striping on Island Creek Coal Co. property.

Vecellio & Grogan, Beckley firm that has the Fort Hill Corridor G. Project in Charleston as well as other interstate and Appalachian contracts, is striping in

Raleigh County under the names of Piney Creek Coal Co. and Pioneer Coal Co.

PINEY CREEK, which is engaged in a large mountaintop removal operation in Raleigh County, was ranked No. 1 in reclamation in Southern West Virginia by participants on a recent DNR-sponsored tour of strip mining.

Ranked a close second in reclamation was Princess Susan Coal Co., which is striping on steep slopes in Kanawha County and is practicing virtual highwall elimination. Princess Susan is a subsidiary of Butler Bros., a contracting firm from Pennsylvania.

C.M. Geupel Construction Co., which has the 1-64 contract at the State Capitol and on U.S. 60 east of Charleston, has recently gotten into strip mining in McDowell County under a subsidiary company named Victory Coal Co.

Other contractors who have gotten into the coal striping business include: Savin Brothers and Bloomfield, Conn. (Southern Construction Co., striping in Webster County).

C.J. Langenfelder and Sons of Baltimore (striping under same name in Preston County).

L.R. Skelton and Co. of Columbus (Cardinal Coal Co., striping in Preston County).

Dunn and Day, Inc., South Charleston (Sangamore Coal Co., striping in Clay County).

Roadway Builders, Inc., Nashville (J.M. Turner and Co., Inc., striping in McDowell County).

Willford Excavating Co., Baltimore (striping under same name in Preston County).

Despite the number of highway builders who have gotten into the coal business, Pisenberger said the DNR hasn't detected a big surge in striping in the state.

But we are not here to raise hell with a governmental agency. Rather we are disgusted with a system that can permit the business practices of one man to thwart the regional interests of our state. Currently, the Forest Service is preparing a Unit Plan for Shavers Fork, but it will be of little worth because they can not control the ravages permitted by this one man. Ironically, people in the area affected take umbrage when someone like the Conservancy criticizes these degrading activities, but they fail to realize that this irreversible damage conducted for short range profit is creating conditions which will only make worse the declining economic conditions of the Durbin-Frank-Bartow area. The land becomes progressively poorer and so do the people used to work in the operations bringing about their own impoverishment.

The Conservancy welcomes with open arms the entry of new organizations to the Corridor H controversy (West Virginia Chapter of the National Wildlife Federation and the Elkins Citizens' Caucus Group) and invites them to join with us in slaying a bigger dragon.

## An Idea Whose Time Has Come

by Lowell Markey

Probably every Conservancy member who has hiked in West Virginia has cursed the ubiquitous pull-tabs from metal beverage containers discarded by negligent hikers, campers and other outdoorsfolk. The obvious solution to the problem is to ban throw-away containers, but this seems to be politically infeasible in West Virginia because the beverage container industry, while employing few people, does a tremendous job of lobbying every time the "Bottle Bill" comes under consideration.

One western state has adopted a half-way measure (which is better than no measure at all) by banning the pull-tabs. When separated from the container the pull-tabs are much more difficult to handle than other forms of litter.

As pictured, the top of a can without a tab has two circles which bend into the can when pressed. The smaller circle is pushed first to relieve pressure. The larger circle is then depressed to open the can for pouring or drinking.

by Don Markey

### ALPHABETIZING THE ENVIRONMENT

The ABC of a Summer Pond by Judi Friedman, Published by Johnny Reads, Inc., Box 12837, St. Petersburg, FL 33733 Hardcover, \$9.97 Paperback, \$4.97

Environmentalists have long contended that education will help solve the environmental. There is no address available to prove or disprove that theory.

but should anyone wish to test it, a book has come our way which would make an interesting starting point. *The ABC of a Summer Pond* by Judi Friedman just might get some of our primary school types thinking about this nature thing. The book is designed not so much to instruct as it is to light a creative spark in its readers. Mrs. Friedman has taken the letters of the alphabet and applied them to the elements of a pond in summer. She has composed catchy couplets which connect the element with one of its daily activities in and around the pond. Each couplet is illustrated with either a sketch or a photograph of the subject in action. For instance, "C is for the small brown crayfish in a dark, rocky place, (sketch of a lurking crayfish) D is for the young dragonfly as he breaks from his case." (sketch of a motting dragonfly).

The purpose of the book is not necessarily to instruct the child about life in a summer pond. Rather the book exists as an example of what the child can do with his own neighborhood environment. Readers are encouraged to write their own ABC book about an area close to their own home.

One can teach a young dog many new tricks, and education can do likewise for the nation's youth. Unfortunately most environmental education books for children are penny affairs, easily seen through for the tear-jerking romances they are by today's worldly-wise little tykes. When I was in grade school Thornton Burgess was my hero. *Lightfoot the Deer* turned me against deer hunting forever, and *Paddy the Beaver* similarly shaped my attitude towards trapping. But for a generation which has been nurtured on Watts, Watergate, Vietnam and 1001 Police Nights *Lightfoot* and *Paddy* are so unreal as to be incomprehensible.

*The ABC of a Summer Pond* may put it back together for some of these deprived little people. But to make certain the book was as effective as I thought it was, I put it to the ultimate test. I substituted it to the critical perusal of a seven year old second grader. She looked through the book in silence for a few minutes, then leafed through the first few pages again, studying intently the pictures. At length she looked up and said, "I believe when you're through with this book you're going to give it to me, aren't you?" Well, yes, as a matter of fact, I am.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION AND BANQUET RESERVATION

Name .....

Address .....  
Street City State Zip

- I will be taking one of the tours on Saturday, October 18, and I wish to reserve..... place(s) at the banquet, Oct. 18, at 6:00 P.M. at the Richwood Elementary School. (\$5.00 per person).
- I will not be taking a tour, but please reserve..... place(s) for me at the banquet. (\$4.00 per person)
- I will be taking a tour, but I will not be at the banquet. (\$1.00 per person)

Make checks or money orders payable to The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Mail your check and the coupon to Charles Carlson, Box 131, Charleston, WV 25321, BEFORE OCTOBER 13, 1975.

Conservancy to Release  
Back Country Trail Guide

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is revising for release its trail guide and management proposal for the Cranberry Back Country. Conservancy members with trail experience in the Back Country are invited to review the trail descriptions in old editions of the CBC guide, and the current Monongahela National Forest guide Back Country section, for possible updating.

The routes of some trails and the condition of others have altered considerably since the last edition of the Back Country guide. Anyone familiar with present conditions of Back Country trails is urged to submit trail scouting reports to Bruce Sundquist, 210 College Park Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146, not later than September 30, 1975.



Editor  
The Highlands Voice  
206 Union St.  
Webster Springs, WV 26288

Dear Friends,

I just got around to reaching Nicholas Zvegintzov's piece on Sugar Lane in the July issue of THE VOICE. It was an excellent description of our local fight against the strippers--really the very best thing I have seen in print on it. I expect that the court battles will take a long time. Both sides intend (I believe) to take it to the Supreme Court. Your readers will have a good

understanding of it from the July article, and I hope you continue to cover it.  
Enclosed is \$3.00 for a copy of the "Hiking Guide to

the Monongahela National Forest." The piece on North Fork Mountain was a real turn-on.

Peace,  
Bob Cohen

EDITORS NOTE: Bob Cohen is one of the attorneys representing the community of Sugar Lane in its suit against the State of West Virginia to prevent strip mining in the community.

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

- \$5.00 Individual regular
- \$10.00 Individual associate
- \$25.00 Individual sustaining
- \$20.00 Organization regular
- \$30.00 Organizational associate
- \$50.00 Organizational sustaining

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Box 711  
Webster Springs, WV 26288

CONSERVANCY HAS NEW ADDRESS

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has adopted a post office box for its headquarters. All correspondence, inquiries, address changes, membership applications and trail guide orders should be directed to:

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Box 711  
Webster Springs, WV 26288

Correspondence intended for individual Conservancy officers may be directed to the above address, or sent directly to the officers at the addresses listed below:

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 Grosecup Ave.; Dunbar, WV 25064  
Pittsburgh: Jean Rodman; 32 Crystal Dr. Oakmont, PA 15139

Washington: Nick Zvegintzov; 1800 Connecticut Ave. N.W. No. 3  
Washington, DC 20009

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.

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 1/2" x 9". It costs \$3 and can be ordered from the address below.

"The Otter Creek Guide and the Cranberry Back Country Management Proposal are now out-of-print and unavailable."

1. Dolly Soda Trail Guide & Management Plan - \$3.00. "Available Mid-April"

2. Hiking Guide to the Monongahela National Forest \$3.00

These may be ordered from:  
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Box 711  
Webster Springs, WV 26288

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