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the Highlands Voice

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JOB KNOB PENDING

by Skip Deegans

Despite thirty-two protests, including those from Save Our Mountains, the Issac Walton League, and Congressman Ken Hechler, and DNR staff recommendations to deny the permit, Greer Steel's application (SMA #1657) to strip mine Randolph County's Job Knob may be approved.

Using the mountain top removal method, Greer plans to decapitate one-half of the top 150 feet of the 4,470' Knob. According to one of the DNR staff, Greer will probably eventually apply for a permit to remove the other half of one of West Virginia's higher mountains.

The stream from the 55 acres which will be disturbed feeds Dry Fork, a habitat of the brown trout. Run-off from this area will travel quickly because of the steep terrain.

According to a DNR internal memorandum (1-15-76) from Don Phares to Dave Robinson, the permit should not be issued because of:

- (1) increased turbidity and siltation.
- (2) increased acid concentration.
- (3) increased heavy metal concentrations.

Operating Permit for New Era Denied

John Hall, chief of the state water resources division of the Department of Natural Resources, has denied a water pollution control permit for New Era Resources to construct and operate coal preparation facilities on the Shavers Fork River in Randolph County.

Elkins attorney John Bush, representing New Era locally, said today that the firm plans to appeal Hall's decision.

Hall, who conducted a hearing in Elkins on Dec. 19 in which 31 people opposed the construction of the plant while just ten favored it, said he denied the permit "after careful review of the application and supporting material."

At the present time New Era can wash some coal since the company was granted permission by the Water Resources Board of the DNR to determine if the plant has been properly constructed by washing and cleaning a "reasonable amount" of coal.

--Elkins Intermountain.

(4) effects of (1), (2) and (3) on the fisheries.

Roger B. Johnson of the U.S. Forest Service notes that a portion of the disturbed area will probably be visible from the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area. Both Rogers and Phares point out that the access road may cause problems because the haul road will run through highly erodable red clay which may create heavy siltation and turbidity.

Time is of the essence to block this permit. It has been denied until a comprehensive plan for the haul road reclamation is prepared. More protests to Ira Latimer, Director of DNR, and to the Legislators from Randolph County, are needed to save this beautiful and historically important area. While West Virginia loses another peak to mountain top removal, the absentee owners of Greer Steel bask in the Palm Beach sun.

1976 Cheat Valley Float Trip

Join us the weekend of May 15-16 for the 7th annual canoe trip sponsored jointly by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the Cheat Valley Conservancy. We plan to canoe from Parsons to Hannahville with overnight camping in Saint George.

The trip covers an historic and scenic river valley which would be flooded if the Rowlesburg Dam were to be built. This year is especially noteworthy, because 1976 is the bicentennial of Saint George, the oldest settlement in Tucker County, West Virginia.

Stretch your arms, patch your craft, and join the fun - both days or either one.

For information please contact Bruce Jarvis, 24 Bates Rd., Morgantown, WV 26505, no earlier than May 12, 1976. The Float Trip is contingent upon adequate water levels.

VOICE DEADLINE

All material submitted for publication in The Highlands Voice must be in the Editor's hands no later than the 15th of the month for that month's issue. No manuscripts, photographs or announcements can be accepted for a particular month's edition after the 15th of that month.

Submit all material to:

Ron Hardway, Editor
The Highlands Voice
Webster Springs, WV 26288

Corps of Engineers Planning for Future

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced the identification of seven sites in the Kanawha River Basin as having potential for hydroelectric development. Site identification was based on a study by a private consulting firm. Conclusions of the study were:

1. Gauley River (involving at least two impoundments downstream from Summersville Dam, but considered as one site.) This site selection includes the previously announced Swiss Dam project.
2. Elk River (one site above Sutton Dam and another above Webster Springs.)
3. Greenbrier River (one site between Marlinton and Cass, and another site above Cass.)
4. Meadow River (on the upper portion above Rupert).
5. Bluestone Lake (development of a pumped storage project in conjunction with Bluestone Dam).

Dan Steiner, head of water resources planning of the Huntington Office of the Corps, said that the study picked these seven sites because they would be the most efficient and would involve less social and environmental disruption than other sites in the basin.

"We particularly want to find out what aspects need to be evaluated more thoroughly," said Steiner. "For example, a project above Webster Springs would displace some residents, but would afford flood protection to Webster Springs." He said Webster Springs is subject to 100-year floods.

"There will be some real pros and cons involved in each of the potential sites," Steiner noted. "It will probably be two years before all studies are finalized and a year to eighteen months before we make a firm recommendation." The preliminary study should be completed early in 1976. The Corps will then announce public meetings for local interests to present their views to the Corps.

Public Hearing New Era Coal Preparation Plant, Shavers Fork River

My name is Bob Burrell and I am representing the West Virginia Highland Conservancy. I am the past president of that organization, the founding editor of the Highlands Voice, and chairman of its rivers committee. I am co-author of WILDWATER WEST VIRGINIA, a book that describes almost every mile of major river and stream in West Virginia. In order to write such a book, it first became necessary to spend several years personally visiting and traveling on each. Thus, the same yardstick was used to measure and compare each river in a state that has many of exceedingly high quality. It also has many that have suffered at the technological and thoughtless activities of man. Shavers Fork is unquestionably a river of the former category that is quickly being converted to one of the latter.

We are here to discuss the feasibility of whether it is correct to add further injury to this once magnificent stream. In doing so it should be remembered that we are not discussing just any river, but one whose excellence has been repeatedly identified in national media. It has served as the only example in the United States of a river to be included in a wonderful issue of Life magazine a few years ago which was devoted to the wild world. It has been written up in many newspapers and sporting magazines.

Officials from state and federal government have repeatedly identified Shavers Fork as an extra special stream. The State Department of Natural Resources once thought this stream so magnificent that they denoted five miles of its length as a Fish for Fun stream. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have placed one of their most important fish hatcheries along its course. The U.S. Forest Service has selected it for one of their largest recreation areas. Today, the activities and interest of all three agencies, funded by public money, are threatened.

I invite your attention to this topographic map of Shavers Fork which has been marked in such a way as to show the activities currently thought to be responsible for the documentable degradation of the water quality of this river. Without exception, every activity on this watershed at the moment occurs on property held by the interests of J. Peter Grace or his lessees. Often, the damage from any one project is temporary although with some it is continuous. However, after the cessation of discharge from one project, there appears an insult from another and another, such that the combined effect or sum total of accumulative discharges are exerting an effect, subject to no one's concern.

Shavers Fork, even when full to its banks or beyond, has a finite carrying capacity for environmental pollution. What is the capacity that such a river can hold? How much is too much? In view of the special nature of this stream, should the public hold still for any? The answer to these questions are unknown, but it is known that the total siltation of Shavers Fork is considerably greater than all of the six other major Cheat River tributaries combined (observation point: Parsons, W.V.).

December 18, 1975

In order for one to decide on whether a permit should be granted to the New Era concern for continued activity, it is necessary to ask several questions. First of all are questions pertaining to the nature of the operations itself.

(1) Will there be any real threat of possibility for damage in the future? It has been determined that there are several other closed loop plants similar to New Era's that are operating throughout the state, many having been designed and built by the same Lively Construction Co. All have encountered problems and have been guilty of causing pollution to nearby receiving waters. Thickener problems, over distention of collection ponds, and clogged filters were common. The greatest problems encountered were with clays clogging up the rakes and filters. When plants process a different type of coal from what they have been used to, new problems invariably result.

Other companies have been required to submit core samples from each operation from which they will be processing coal. New Era has not been required to do such. Knowledge of the contents of such materials is not contained in the New Era application.

(2) What is to be done with the refuse? There seems to be room for great differences of opinion. Just as it is good manners to soften the horror of Aunt Emma's cancer by calling it a tumor, so there seems to be a practice of calling the sedimented gook, sludge, and muck from such a plant simply 'ash'. In any science, ash is what is left over after thorough combustion has taken place and we clearly are not talking about this. We are told of an experiment performed in the lab that purports to show that this refuse will support plant life. Personal inspection of some of the so-called reclaimed strip benches in West Virginia reveal plant life indeed, piddly 5-6 inch saplings that have been in place for ten yeras in many cases. Speaking as a professional laboratory researcher in biological sciences, I must underscore what the scientists who performed this work themselves said, namely that it is a far cry from extrapolating laboratory bench results to the real world. Leaching experiments revealed only water of near neutrality to emanate from the sludge, but the design of the experiments neglected the most important contributors to acid mine wastes. Only one seam, the Gilbert was analyzed, but the application states that other seams, the Sewell and Eagle, well known for their higher acidic productions could be processed as well. To meet an expected 600,000 ton per year, they will undoubtedly have to.

In order to dump refuse anywhere it is first necessary to obtain permit from the DNR. Has such a permit been approved?

The purported source of the coal for this operation, the Gamble mine, has recently moved all of their equipment. Does this mean that the New Era will subsist entirely on strip mined coal in which there is substantially more fine and filter clogging material? From what strip mined coal? How will such coal be brought to New Era? Over more haul roads yet to be gouged in the fragile terrain?

(3) Will there be any discharge? Contrary to company statements, the application does indicate at least a partial discharge into Shavers Fork. The Company's position that they did not need a discharge permit thus is highly questionable. Their discharge figure of suspended solids, 20 mg/1, is unsubstantiated and most likely impossible to achieve.

(4) Will there be any chance of drainage from refuse disposal sites? The Company contends that subsurface investigation is inapplicable. Details on this position are not found in the application and since we are dealing with highly toxic heavy metal pollutants, this position requires much substantiation.

(5) Has there been any damage to the river already? Data from the Division of Water Resources' own sampling program have revealed increased suspended solids, iron, and aluminum as well as periodic, extreme levels of acidity since the New Era construction has started.

So much for the cold facts of documentable data. Anybody who has visited or tried to fish in Shavers Fork this fall can testify to the futility of such activity due to the almost constant siltation. There are those whose very livelihoods connected with providing accommodations for tourists using the river are at stake. Will the Division of Wildlife Resources even be able to stock this spring? They want to, but will conditions let them?

(6) What is the big hurry? The coal isn't going any place. Its value isn't going to decline. We are told that delay beyond Jan. 1, 1976 would be an economic hardship on the company, in fact, they swore to this under testimony, un-crossexamined testimony, before the Water Resources Board. Yet the revised application submitted recently by New Era states that it will be almost March before the company will be ready. Further, who need this coal in such an emergency? To heat homes in West Virginia? To solve America's challenge to become energy selfsufficient within a decade? Hardly. At least half of the New Era production will be exported, most likely to Japan. There is only one reason for rushing a project such as this with a minimum of controls and that is to make an exceedingly high profit. Cannot coal be sold locally to make a profit?

Speaking entirely for myself, I do not intend to sit idly by and watch one of the greatest rivers in the Eastern United States raped so that our major economic rival can undersell us on the international steel market. That is simply unadulterated oompah!

(7) Can we trust the company on good faith that they will do the best possible job? Let us look at another company, on another river, elsewhere in the state. When the Martinka Processing Plant was to begin construction on the Tygart River just downstream from West Virginia's newest state park and upstream from Fairmont, understandable concern was expressed. The parent company first held a public meeting before turning one spade-full of dirt. Their plans were submitted to the DNR for approval before beginning construction. The



The Shavers Fork upstream from the High Falls. [Photo by Bruce Sandquist]

company invited environmentalists to look over the plans and make input. Such input was accepted. Although a much larger plant, to my knowledge not one bit of unacceptable runoff has entered the Tygart. The water supply of Fairmont is of concern to the company as is the years of hard work at establishing a fishery in the Tygart by the DNR. Not one citation has been issued against the company for failing to observe rules and procedures. No one had to force them to obtain all the necessary permits. It so far looks like a model operation. Why can't we have that here?

We need not dwell on New Era's record with the DNR, the EPA, or the Air Pollution Control Board. Suffice it to say that it does not bespeak of evidence of good citizenship or offer hope for better conditions in the future.

Why must we look the other way when coal trucks laden with load far in excess of the approved weight limit repeatedly cross the small bridge at Cheat Bridge? When trucks and bulldozers drive right through the river? When mines associated with the New Era plant have been operating and discharging for months without EPA permits?

Such activities naturally make one doubtful of statements appearing in the revised application.

(8) What about plans for abandonment? According to the West Virginia Water Resources and Pollution Act of 1974:

"It shall be unlawful for any person, unless he holds a permit therefor from the department, which is in full force and effect, to:

...(6) Open, reopen, operate or abandon any...or preparation plant...every application...shall contain a plan for abandonment..."

No such plans are available and we ask why this provision of West Virginia law is not being observed.

But perhaps, such an operation as large as this will not be abandoned in the near future? Neither was Snowshoe.

(9) But what about controls; aren't there regulatory agencies? Well, all right, who would exert such controls?

a) The Water Resources Division? It is difficult to believe that the same Water Resources Division that so aggressively prosecuted the Linan Mines further downstream is the same Water Resources Division that has presided over the debacle of this past fall. Why is New Era any different than Linan? The potential risk of the fate of one of West Virginia's most outstanding streams hangs in the balance. It is well known that the Division has been understaffed and underfunded for years to do its job properly. Moreover, there have been many key personnel who have left state employ in recent months. It is a fact that there has been no inspection report filed since mid-September. We regret that recent past experience does not predict an aggressive role in enforcement from the WRD.

b) EPA? What a laugh. The great hope for West Virginia's great problems has turned out to be nothing more than a triage of letters. Any citizen or group who has tried to work with this Federal agency has been ignored. The agency has admittedly ceased activity in their permits branch; they simply are not issuing them. No mailings of permit activities are sent out anymore and many entreaties on such have been ignored.

It is difficult to believe that the same EPS that conducted field hearings last year on the T and J application is the same EPA that turns its head on Gamble, Satin Sewell, etc., etc. The owners of T and J correctly wanted to know why they were singled out for such prosecution. I was unable to answer them. If the law is to be respected, it should be applied equally to all.

c) The Corps of Engineers? We have recently been told not to expect any help from them until dates variously given as from 2-5 years. Meanwhile the public is continuously expected to pay for dredging operations on

Corps of Engineers silt traps in the Monongahela Basin.

d) What about the courts and other judicial processes? We have had a good taste of that this fall. The combined activities of the Water Resources Board, diffident attorneys, the local court ruling, secret luncheon decisions, and other incredible events of this past fall combine to offer little hope. No thank you. The company has been permitted to pursue their goal, only little inconvenienced by law. No one was concerned about what happened to the river.

In summary, we have asked many questions this evening that must be answered. Perhaps you disagree with the answers we found, but you must agree the questions need asking. Since we have found our answers discomfiting, it was difficult to arrive at a recommendation as to the status of this permit.

Previously, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has agreed to permits or to concessions providing certain limitations were added or certain agreements were kept. Perhaps this was our mistake, for these limitations and agreements have not been kept. It is now time to stand up and be counted. It is time to once and for all put our collective foot down and say "No!"

Until such time as the landlord of the upper Cheat Watershed exercises some public conscience and sees to it that his managers and tenants behave in environmentally and legally acceptable manners, we refuse to agree to anything. Until such time as companies, especially from out-of-state, can set up an operation working with the professional biologists and technicians this state employs and not against them, when these companies can exert reasonable care for what they are doing (and it is possible), and until it is realized that it is in everybody's interest to do a job carefully, then the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy cannot be expected to look with favor on projects such as this. We find little in the company's plans or activities to date to commend it.

Finally, until the administration of our D Department of Natural Resources begins to be more serious in its public charge to protect such outstanding and extraordinary resources as Shavers Fork, we are little interested in giving approval to such activities paraded under the guise of economic advancement. The Department of Natural Resources employs some of the finest biologists and technicians to be found anywhere. These are well trained, conscientious, and extremely dedicated public servants and we feel that it is way past time for the administration to begin listening to what they have to say.

To the Randolph County Court, Chamber of Commerce, and other public leaders, we urge you to act wisely. Marion County has an excellent coal washer plant employing many more people than this one. You can have one too, but you can have a good one, run by citizens you would be proud to have in Randolph County. If you let your fine streams be turned into sewers and let your fantastic mountains be scalped, all in the name of short term prosperity, I can't imagine why anyone would want to come to Randolph County.

It may be J. Peter Grace's coal and property, but fellow Mountaineers, it is our river. We join with many other groups, with other governmental agencies, and with hundreds if not thousands of Randolph County citizens in requesting that the permit be denied without delay and without provision.

by Nick Zvegintzov

Washington

I have little heart to tell of the prosperous politickings of Washington this evening. Nevertheless, very briefly:

*Senator Jennings Randolph and his Senate Public Works Committee did pretty well with the Clean Air Amendments Bill. Tall stacks and intermittent controls are out. Significant deterioration of air in National Wildernesses over 5000 acres is prohibited. (Dolly Sods is our smallest, at a little over 10000 acres.)

*Rep. John Melcher of Montana has re-introduced the strip mine bill vetoes last year, a little weakened ("Again", as Ken Hechler would say). Louise Dunlap and the Environmental Policy Center, tireless lobbyists for some kind of Federal bill, hosted yet another Washington meeting for opponents of stripping from all across the USA and introduced us to key local experts on coal and to friendly congressmen. The only consolation in this long sick battle over stripping is the good people who are in it.

Duo

I have little heart for genteel Washington news because I saw tonight SMA 1833 for 125 acres to strip behind Duo.

Duo is a former coal camp on a natural bench above Big Clear Creek in western Greenbrier County. "Duo" is the Latin for "two". It was named by a family called Williams who ran cattle and slaves around those mountains in the 19th century. They had a house in the Williamsburg Valley called "Unus" or "One", and a tall, drafty, L-shaped mansion, perhaps for summer use, at Duo. On a point above the site of this house are two graves with amateur gravestones, one carved with a single W.

In the first quarter of this century the land was logged with aerial skidders. The gulleys can still be seen. Charley Carlson, our President, refuses to visit Duo because he can remember some of the timber "before".

The land at Duo sits just a few feet below the outcrop of the Sewell seam. In the '30's a father and son called Raine built a railroad (now the Nicholas, Fayette, and Greenbrier) to Duo and opened a deep mine. One of their Shay engines still runs at Cass. They built a church, a store, a club-house, and 21 houses. Six are "foreman's houses" of two stories, the rest are one-story houses which come in mirror-image pairs facing each other on a street and two alleys. These houses once appeared as an illustration in a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Chicago on Greenbrier County captioned "Typical Class II Houses at Duo", and they are fine, sound houses to-day.

During the '40's, for a reason that nobody now can fathom, the Raines let a stripper strip all around the little coal camp of which they were so proud and where they themselves lived during the week. The mud from the haul trucks clogged the main street and streamed down into the basement of the store.

In the '50's the Raines sold out their surface and-mineral holdings to the Gauley Coal Land Company. At the same time they sold to the inhabitants of Duo the houses, surface ownership in the lots, and common ownership of the alleys, the water system, and the sewer. In the '60's Westvaco bought out the Gauley Coal Land holdings.

The households of Duo in 1976 are, in numerical order: deep miners - 6; retired - 5; widows - 3; disabled - 2; unemployed - 2; computer consultant - 1; empty - 1; derelict - 1.

It looks from the smudgy map in the Meadow River Post as if the new stripping is planned for the old deep mine site, which was saved from the former stripping because of the mine buildings and portals. The massive timber tipple caught fire a few years ago on a Sunday in early summer and burned down, watched by delighted kids and reminiscent adults, with a slow relentless flame that thwarted the volunteer fire department of Rupert and buckled the steel of the railroad yard. Perhaps this stripped coal will be loaded on this rail line, or perhaps trucked down the "mine hill" and past the edge of the community and down the pot holed Duo road.



Duo, W. Va., October 19, 1975

Duo has a merry unhurried life chronicled from time to time by Mrs. Wall in her column "Downtown Duo" in the Meadow River Post - Mrs. A visited with Mrs. B. C's father is in hospital, D made a business visit to Rainelle. Entertainment at Duo is talking, drinking coffee, singing, watching TV, eating brown beans or cornbread or strawberry shortcake. The annual events are the ramps, the first blinding green of the leaves, the summer invasion of grandchildren and motorbikes, the last blinding red of the leaves, the first snow, and Christmas.

These strippers will heave our foundations with blasting, they will endanger our community water works, they will crowd the one-lane road. They will not bring prosperity or jobs or new neighbors or community services, nor will they solve the energy crisis, nor even will they themselves pocket one thousandth of the value of the resources that they will destroy. Their names are Homer L. Riley, Charles C. Waller, R. Roy Mitchell, and Billy R. Carter, and they operate under the name of Webster County Coal Company from a Post Office box at Wolf Summit near Clarksburg.

At first I thought of these spoilers as buzzards picking over the scarred carcass of the West Virginia hills. But buzzards have a healthy function in a healthy ecology. Animals die, and buzzards recycle their flesh. Everyone respects the garbage collector, as Hechler once said in Congress.

But our ecology is sick. I look out of my window in Washington and see the sign of Erik's Go Go Deluxe and Massage Parlor flash all night. I see the ultra high intensity streetlamps installed "to combat street crime". I have on my desk thy hyper babblings of the Public Service Commission of West Virginia in their report to our Legislature - "Today, a kilowatt-hour of energy raises everybody's standard of living in several ways - (1) by saving muscle power and eliminating unnecessary sweat and strain, (2) by making more leisure time available and (3) by greater work accomplishments and new inventions shared with the community." I think of Arch Moore's petty conniving, the shambling band of honchos who run his administration, the honest people in the ranks of the state government who swallow their pride and bitterness every day they go to work. It is to serve these perverted appetites that the boys from Wolf Summit will gouge the hills around my friends from Duo.

Once in an asylum I saw a man who was kept shackled day and night for if his hands were free he would pick and tear at his own flesh until he bled or rotted to death. This man was luckier than America. Someone tied his hands.

California Has Chane to Set Precedent in Land Use Planning

by Neal R. Pierce,
for the Charleston Gazette

The California Legislature must vote "yes" or "no" this year on a long-term plan to protect the magnificent 1,100 mile sweep of the Golden State coastline - from the redwood forests of the north to the palmy beaches close by the Mexican border.

At stake is a citizen-commission drawn "constitution" for the California coast. The impetus for the California plan is land-use planning for an Age of Scarcity.

Highlights of the California plan before the Legislature are:

1. preservation of the coastline as a major national resource.
2. demonstrating that thousands of citizens - not just professional planners - can participate in shaping the future of their natural environment.
3. Reaffirming under the rubric of a state plan and guidelines, the essential role of city and county governments in making vital decisions about local land use.
4. Coming to grips with the thorniest issue of land use planning - the public's right to place conditions on the use of land that private owners have always thought they could use as they saw fit.
5. Striking a creative balance between conservationist concern and economic realities by encouraging farming, port development,

clustered urban settlement and a healthy tourist industry.

California has created America's first land use plan for an age of scarcity. The emphasis is on protecting renewable resources - saving land for food production, saving clean waters for fisheries, conserving energy, saving built-up towns and cities where public facilities are already in place and rejecting fast-buck development in favor of a permanent, reliable employment base.

California's "Save Our Coast" movement gathered steam in the early 1970's when environmentalists, upset by haphazard and destructive development along the shoreline and the legislature's refusal to act, won strong voter approval of an initiative mandating orderly coastline planning and growth.

That 1972 initiative, called "Proposition 20", created a statewide coastal zone conservation commission and six regional commissioners, gave them power to regulate all coastal development for three years, and required completion of a comprehensive long-term plan for submission to the legislature by December 1975.

The plan must win legislative approval this year or the coastal commissions will expire December 31, and the coast will revert to its earlier, unprotected condition.

Major battles are likely as utilities, oil companies big landowners and building trades unions worried about jobs try to modify or defeat the plan. Nevertheless, final approval of a strong measure is likely.

Backers of the master plan avoided one major battle by leaving the power to grant building permits in local communities. Still, the state would step in if a locality failed to conform its general development-zoning plan to the state's plan.

The momentous issue - involving perhaps billions of dollars of real or imagined property values - is whether other landowners are being unfairly treated when restrictions are placed on their coastal building plans.

"We believe," Dugald Gillies of the California Association of Realtors said, "that when the state preserves a vista to the sea for the people of California, that in effect is a scenic easement. That's not zoning; that's a taking. And there should be compensation if there's a loss."

The coastal zone commission rejected the compensation argument.

These same property rights issues in land use planning were vigorously discussed by the nation's governors in their New Orleans meeting last summer - without consensus. No state has yet satisfactorily resolved the problem. If California succeeds in doing so a vital issue for our national future may be resolved along the Pacific's shores.

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Board Meeting

January 25, 1976

President Charles Carlson called to order the winter meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy at 9:00 A.M., January 25, 1976, at Jackson's Mill state 4-H camp, Weston, West Virginia.

The mid-winter workshop was held on January 24, 1976 at Jackson's Mill and dealt with Energy Development in the Highlands, and strip mine opposition tactics. In addition, the annual membership meeting was held at 4:00 P.M. on January 24. An election of officers was held and five Directors at Large for 2 year terms were elected (terms expiring in 1978). Those elected were Kathy Lively, Linda Elkinton, Max Smith, Sandy Lindberg, and Bruce Jarvis. Also, during this meeting a discussion of the Cranberry Backcountry issue was held, for the purpose of bringing the membership up-to-date on salient points of the matter. A motion was made by Nick Zvegintzov as follows: The annual meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy resolves unanimously:

[1] We greet the people of the upper New River who wish to preserve its free flow.

[2] We Commend the state of North Carolina in recommending wild and scenic river status for this area.

[3] We urge Interior Secretary Kleppe to accept this recommendation.

The motion was passed unanimously by the group. The meeting adjourned.

In the Board meeting of January 25, the first item of business was a treasurer's report, presented by Treasurer Arthur Foley. His report was accepted.

Jerry Kyle presented the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the WVHC hereby takes the position that no further permits be issued for, nor major expansion of limestone quarrying take place in Germany Valley because such mining would severely damage the natural values of the area.

A motion was made that the resolution be approved. The motion passed.

Nick Zvegintzov moved that \$100.00 per month be given to the membership secretary for work done until the spring board meeting, at which time she would report. The motion passed.

Nick Zvegintzov presented the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the procedure for election to the Board of Directors adopted on January 26, 1974 be amended by deleting the whole of section 2 and substituting following: Section 2 - Executive Positions: [1] these shall be officers of the Conservancy listed in the by-laws section [2] VI-1, plus the Editor of the Voice [3] that the Board take note that under section 4-C-C of the procedures for elections to the Board of Directors, the following organizational positions have ceased to exist: the Mountain Club of Maryland, the Capitol Hiking Club, and the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania.

A motion for passage of the resolution was made. The motion passed.

Ron Hardway made a motion that the Citizens Action Group be given \$300.00 by the WVHC. The motion passed.

Fred Kyle made a motion that the WVHC give \$100.00 to Campaign Clean Water in view of the help received from them by the Conservancy. The motion passed.

Bob Burrell gave a report for the rivers committee and spoke on various river issues.

Linda Elkinton introduced the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Shavers Fork and the Back Fork of the Elk be designated critical environmental areas by the DNR and protected from deep mining, surface mining, and road construction because continuation of such activities would further damage the water quality of these rivers.

A motion for passage of the resolution was made. The motion passed.

Dave Elkinton made a motion that Bob Burrell's recommendation for a budget committee be adopted. The motion passed.

Lowell Markey presented the following resolution:

Whereas, the WVHC finds mining incompatible with the concept of the National Park System, and Whereas no area of a national park, memorial, or monument should be subject to exploration, mining, or purchase of mineral rights, Be it therefore resolved that the WVHC supports Senate Bill 2371 and other legislation to protect the National Park System from mining activity and/or to acquire valid mineral rights which may exist in areas within the National Park system.

Motion was made for passage of the resolution. The motion passed.

Charles Carlson asked the Board for an additional \$500.00 for expenditures of the Wilderness Committee. The motion passed.

Linda Elkinton presented the following resolution:

Whereas, the Corps of Engineers is a highly skilled organization with great technical resources and one of its functions is to deal with the stream and navigational problems of the internal waterways of the United States, and Whereas the major and modern problems of these waterways are siltation, acid mine drainage, and sewage, and these are clear and present threats to the health of our streams and ourselves, Be

it therefore resolved that the Corps of Engineers be requested to address itself to these problems forthwith, giving them priority over building of presently planned dams and other constructions.

Motion was made for passage of the resolution. The motion passed.

Lowell Markey gave a report on new brochures for the Conservancy. Geoff Hechtmen moved that the WVHC purchase 3000 brochures and 1500 for renewals. The motion passed.

Nick Zvegintzov moved that WVHC appoint a sub-committee to consider cost and legal questions of co-operating with Save Our Mountains in a joint public effort, and the sub-committee have authority to set into motion such arrangements. The motion passed.

The following committees were formed by the Board: Fall Weekend Review Committee of Fred Kyle, Bruce Bond, Karen Bird, and Lowell Markey. Budget Committee of Linda Elkinton, Bob Burrell, and Arthur Foley. Co-ordinating Committee with Save Our Mountains of Nick Zvegintzov, Geoff Green, Geoff Hechtmen, and Sayre Rodman.

Joe Rieffenberger made a motion to authorize \$100.00 to the Fall Weekend Review Committee to publish a brochure. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Attendance: Robert Tabor, Nick Zvegintzov, Kathy Lively, Sandra Lindberg, Karen Bird, Jean Rodman, Sayre Rodman, Arthur Foley, Jerry Kyle, Bruce Bond.

Also, Bruce Jarvis, Linda Cooper Elkinton, David Elkinton, Lowell Markey, Maxwell Smith, Joe Rieffenberger, Jeanette Fitzwilliams, Ellen Synder, Fred Kyle, and Charles Carlson.

Power Cut

Resigned, as Chairman of the Board of American Electric Power, Donald C. Cook, 66 (according to the Beckley Post-Herald, January 29).

Cook was the loud-mouthed booster of higher electricity usage, bigger electric companies, more use of coal, and taller smoke-stacks, and bitter opponent of sulfur emission controls and the "destructive, regressive actions of a small minority...the fanatical environmentalists". On April 4, 1974 Cook wrote a barely literate letter to then President Nixon "respectfully requesting" him to "fully investigate both the official and clandestine activities" of Russell Peterson, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, after Peterson had criticized an AEP ad. (Nixon apparently had problems of his own with investigations at the time.)

The AEP ad campaign continues this year, plus the special double-page spread in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and New York Times on the Blue Ridge Dam on the New River reproduced in our last issue.

New AEP Chairman W.S. White Jr., 49, is a graduate of VPI & SU, which is on the watershed of the New River. This might be encouraging, except that White was an executive of Appalachian Power between 1961 and 1972 at the time the notorious dam was planned.

Correction

In the rush to get the January issue of THE HIGHLANDS VOICE to the printer the Editor inadvertently credited all of the photographs of the Mid-Winter Workshop which appeared on Page 2 of the January issue to Conservancy photographer Sayre Rodman. Actually, several of the shots were taken by Pittsburgh environmentalist Richard Perhacs, 700 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Our apologies to Mr. Perhacs.

the Readers' Voice

Back Fork Not Threatened by SMA 1792

Editor
THE HIGHLANDS VOICE
Dear Sir:

I noted the alert notice you printed in the January VOICE entitled "New Assault on Back Fork", expressing concern about the new 275 acre strip in Stony Run of Elkwater Fork of the Tygart by S.S. "Joe" Burford (SMA 1792).

In a world of very many real concerns, I hasten to assure you and your readers that no drainage from this will enter the Back Fork. It will not be visible from the Back Fork drainage.

A very critical check of this proposal was made as native brook trout are in Stony Run and the head of Elkwater Fork, and trout are stocked (10.5" catchables) for about two miles along Elkwater Fork each spring monthly from February to June. It is very clear that this proposal will have no lasting effect on these streams.

The lack of good sediment basins and basin sites may cause excessively muddy water, and the trout stocking may have to be called off for a couple of years. Also, the sediment may cover the streambed, smothering fish food and fish eggs for a period of from 1 to 3 years. Native brook trout are ten times as susceptible to smothering as other fish eggs because they must spend the entire winter under the gravel. After a few years the sediment will stop, the stream will clean itself, and the trout will come back - from Limekiln Run if necessary.

This inconvenience the citizen must evidently bear. I do not know if the law protects the citizen from this or not. Technically, though, sediment could be stopped with true sediment ponds, not now required; muddy water could not be stopped. The D.N.R. and the operator should be urged (and perhaps forced) to use the most effective means of sediment control possible. It is not clear that they are doing so as the sediment basins are now planned.

A major concern was that acid would be produced and the receiving stream(s) would have little alkalinity to neutralize it. It was feared that acid would run forever after the operation was over and reclaimed. However, no acid is likely to be produced in these strata, and the stream has three times the alkalinity of the really threatened streams (nearby Mill Creek is one of these infertile, greatly endangered streams).

The only real objection to this would be the present intent to leave a highwall that would be visible from an area much traveled by tourists. The view of this more than one-half mile long highwall should be of concern to the Dept. of Commerce and to the U.S. Forest Service, the residents of this area and the Randolph County government which may one day depend heavily on an economy of tourism, and finally to any citizen of W. Va. or the United States that does not want to see such a scar on this hillside.

Located at about 3500' on the eastern aspect of Rich Mountain this highwall is visible from most places in an immediate area of 50 square miles to the Crest of Cheat Mountain from the Pocahontas County line to US Highway 250 on the north. It would be visible as one climbed to the Cheat Bridge Recreational Developments on US 250 for about four miles. US 219 cuts through this area for 12 miles from Elkwater Fork Bridge to Mingo. It would also be visible from the high mountain tops beyond Cheat Mountain - from the Cass Scenic Railroad as it neared Bald Knob, Bald Knob and perhaps for five miles along Back Allegheny Mountain northward, and visible again from Gaudineer fire tower.

The final sediment basin plans should be reviewed for adequacy. No comment has been made or received by the DNR concerning the visual degradation of the highwall.

Don Gasper
4 Ritchie St.
Buckhannon, WV

Dam Fighters Conference in Washington, D.C.

April 3 and 4, 1976

A major conference on dams and water resources has been scheduled to coincide with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees' hearings which begin March 29th and run through April 8th. Every spring many individuals and groups come to Washington to testify before the Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Works about bad dam and canal projects in their various areas. The Environmental Policy Center and the American Rivers Conservation Council are planning a get together over the weekend between the hearing dates to discuss common problems we all have with federal water policies.

The conference is being planned with two objectives in mind: (1) to provide helpful information about how to oppose unsound water projects and (2) to afford an opportunity to pool our strength together in order to have an impact on decisionmakers. The conference will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 3rd and 4th and will feature talks and slide shows by expert dam fighters from across the nation who will explain their successful strategies and ideas. Bring displays, slides and maps of your projects and let us know in advance if you would like to present a 10-15 minute slide show.

If all the dam fighters across the country who come to Washington for these annual hearings can get together to discuss joint action, we could have an enormous impact on federal plans for our riverways. The conference location in D.C. will be announced to you soon. Make your plans now! For more information call Brent Blackwelder, Bill Painter, or Pratt Rimmel (202) 547-6500.

SUCCINCTLY NOTED

From the Highlands to the Lowlands

Sold, to Anker Kolen of Rotterdam, The Netherlands, the King Knob Coal Company, West Virginia's largest surface mine firm.

King Knob, which is a contract stripper for Consolidation Coal Co., produced 1.7 million tons in each year 1974 and 1975 from operation in West Virginia and Pennsylvania, according to the Beckley Post-Herald of January 22.

The former owners of King Knob were Charles Brown and C.E. Compton of Fairmont, who will remain associated with the company as consultants. Compton is a member of the W. Va. Reclamation Board of Review which handles appeals from DNR decisions on stripping matter, and he was the Surface Mining and Reclamation Association's "Coal Man of the Year" in 1975.

-Nicholas Zvegintzov.

According to sources the Burford Company does not plan to file an application pending the outcome of the current New Era Shavers Fork controversy. That case is now being appealed to the Water Resources Board after DNR Water Resources chief John Hall turned down New Era's application to build a coal washer on Shavers Fork.

-Ron Hardway

Medbralopegheny System

The Mid-Allegheny Corporation, usually thought of as the company scheduled to do coal mining in the Cranberry Back Country, is the same as:

Brady-Dunlop Engineering
or
Dunlop-Brady Engineering,
Summersville, WV

Brady-cum-Dunlop-cum-Brady is an engineering consulting firm.

The permit application for a deep mine in the Back Country is in the name of Brady-Dunlop Engineering.

Brady-Dunlop, or Mid-Allegheny, has some sort of corporate relationship to the Baltimore & Ohio and Chesapeake and Ohio Railroads, now the Chessie System.

The company which will do the actual mining in the Back Country is:

Powellton Coal Co.
P.O. Box 8
Mallory, WV 25634

The Sewell #1 seam is to be mined. On December 12, 1975 the Division of Mines of the DNR passed the permit application.

As of January 26, 1976, the Water Resources Division was reviewing the permit application.

-Bruce Jarvis

No Super Bowl Here

As evidence of the cozy relationship between the Department of Natural Resources and the strip miners, a football is displayed in the office of the DNR Reclamation Division with the following inscription painted on it:

1975
COAL BOWL
WVSMRA 48
DNR 6

-Skip Deegans

A New Era Dawns

The S.S. "Joe" Burford Company, a stripping outfit operating around the heads of Elk River, Tygart River and the Back Fork of Elk River, has made inquiry to the DNR about forms, applications, requirements, etc. for construction of a coal washing plant on the Back Fork of Elk River.



Whither the Wind?

by Gordon T. Hamrick



The war of the winds starts in the tropics. There, the sun pours down without interruption upon the oceans, heating the atmosphere over the oceans. This air becomes warmer, relatively speaking, than the air over the polar regions. Warm air rises; therefore, as this tropic air rises, the colder air from the polar areas rushes southward to replace the warm air.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the two streams of air do not behave as a giant highway. First, physical obstacles such as mountains, continents, deserts, and cold plateaus disrupt the north-south air currents. Secondly, the inherent characteristics of the tropic air disrupt the flow. As the tropic air, filled with heat, rises, it expands and starts to cool. The further the air moves toward the poles, the cooler it becomes and eventually it sinks back toward the surface of the earth. There, near the surface, it comes in conflict with the colder polar air from the poles and a mobile front is established.

At this point, a third force comes into operation. This effect, caused by the spinning of the earth, is called the Coriolis force, and it causes the two converging forces to glance off and turn to the right in the northern hemisphere. Thus, what starts as a cold river flowing from north to south winds up as a stream of mixed air flowing from west to east.

This stream of air is our well-known westerlies.

In the absence of cyclones - low-pressure areas - or anticyclones - high-pressure areas - the westerlies have an uninterrupted sweep from the Great Plains to the Appalachian Mountains. These winds are somewhat modified by the terrain over which they pass, but, generally speaking, they consist of relatively stable air.

The Appalachian Mountains are well-forested and the air in, over, and around these mountains is quite humid and therefore heavy and relatively unstable. As the westerlies encounter the mountains, they have two ways to proceed; they can go around the mountains or they can go over the mountains. In practice, they do both, although eventually they must rise to cross the mountains somewhere. To go over the mountains, the air must rise and, to do so, it becomes cooled. At the same time, the heavier air on the mountains is pressing down upon the warmer air, restricting mixing and upward movement. Thus, the task of crossing the mountains is somewhat reduced if there is a low gap in the mountain range(s) through which the winds can funnel.

At the top of Cheat Mountain, east of Elkins, there is such a low gap. This gap has recently been enlarged by work connected with construction of Corridor H. An enlarged gap means more winds can pass through (or over) the mountain range; therefore, one can expect that portion of Shavers Fork River lying between Cheat Mountain and Shavers Mountain to be subjected to stronger winds. Heretofore, this area lay in the wind shadow of Cheat Mountain and such winds as existed tended to be valley winds, caused by heating and cooling of the terrain, tempered by winds descending the lee side of Cheat Mountain.

Corridor H construction in Shavers Fork valley has removed most of the trees and terrain irregularities that once modified windflow in the valley. Thus, winds in the valley, which just happens to have an east-west orientation, have a clear sweep up the valley. One can observe this from a point just above Bowden; a squall line approaching up the valley can be seen miles away and progress can be easily traced by observing the dust line in front of the squall line.

Shavers Fork is a narrow valley and that portion along the river is heavily forested. Therefore, the line of construction offers the line of least resistance to winds and they channel up the valley with ever-increasing velocity. Areas disturbed by construction tend to warm faster and reach higher temperatures than do the forested or grass-covered areas. This warm air rises and cool air rushes down from the mountains to replace the warm air. And, this cool mountain air meets with the westerlies flowing east, turns east, and adds to the velocity of the winds.

In winter, of course, the converse is true; the disturbed areas tend to get colder than surrounding areas and warmer and lighter air passes over and above the area. This temperature inversion lasts until the westerlies, aided by a frontal system, gains dominance.

A small ridge at Bowden represents the highest point on the eastern portion of current Corridor H construction. I have, on a number of occasions, measured winds at this point in excess of 60 miles per hour. This, according to the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force, rates as a storm. I might point out, parenthetically, that it is impossible to stand against such a wind. The first time I tried it, I found myself on my back in a ditch some twenty-five feet or so removed from my former position. I have since learned to crawl, like an animal of the field, up a slope to measure winds during thunderstorms. It would be interesting to see what happens the first time a car towing a travel trailer comes off the bridge and meets one of these storm-force winds head-on. One has only to travel a few miles east on US 33 to observe the probable results. Here, on Rich Mountain, during the hot and cloudless days of summer, valley winds are channeled up a small draw and cross US 33 at speeds in excess of

50 miles per hour. Each summer, this area takes a toll of inattentive drivers.

The area between the foot of Cheat Mountain and Shavers Mountain has long been a favorite recreational area. There are five commercial campgrounds within the area, excluding Stuart Recreational Area, which lies at a higher altitude than the area in question. Already, changes in weather are evident; summers are hotter and windier. Storms are much more violent, with damaging winds. Changes in vegetation are evident, with adventive species replacing naturalized species. And, perhaps not so oddly, most of the adventive plants are those whose seeds are borne in or on the winds. No doubt, vehicular traffic associated with Corridor H construction has contributed to distribution of the adventives.

This might be the place to point out that prior to the beginning of construction on Corridor H, on a typical partly-cloudy day, one could distinguish, from Bowden, three distinct sets of clouds, each moving in a different direction. The high, or cirrus, clouds moved steadily from west to east. The middle, or cumulus, clouds moved in the direction dictated by the frontal system with which they were associated. The low, or nimbus, clouds, generally being lower than the mountains to the east, moved west-to-east up the valley and then curved south to follow the valley.

Today, the nimbus clouds no longer turn southward before they butt up against Big Knob of Shavers Mountain. On Big Knob, they lose part of their precipitation before passing over the mountain or before gradually drifting off to the south around the mountain.

Morning fogs in the Bowden area are no longer dissipated by the early sun. Instead, they gradually drift eastward against Big Knob, of Shavers Mountain, where they linger until the late afternoon sun gains enough strength to dissipate them.

All of the foregoing covers only a small segment of the proposed length of Corridor H. Multiply this by the number of mountains to be crossed; interpolate the various types of terrain; and one gets a distinct suggestion that drastic changes in local weather and climate may be in store for areas along Corridor H. The probable effects of changed precipitation patterns and wind patterns are difficult to assess; however, one might look eastward to the Spruce Knob-Dolly Sods areas to observe some probable effects.

"One swallow does not a summer make." And, it would be inadvisable and improper to ascribe to Corridor H the changes in vegetation observed over the course of only two years. However, some of the changes are suggestive, to say the least. Wind-pollinated trees, particularly those in mixed stands or those standing alone along Shavers Fork River, bear fewer fruits than previously and the fruits which reach maturity are chiefly on the lee side of the tree. Grasses on the windward side of a field bear fewer seeds than do those downwind. Annuals, such as Queen Anne's Lace, and small shrubs, such as Elderberry, in exposed locations, are developing the ragged shape normally found where plants are exposed to a prevailing wind from one direction. Trees show a tendency to grow smaller leaves on the windward side. As was mentioned previously, adventive plants whose seeds are distributed by winds are slowly crowding out the naturalized plants; whether this is a normal seral change or an abnormal one brought about by Corridor H construction remains to be seen.

Not measurable is the probable change in vegetation caused by prevailing winds. Will the wind, by excessive drying, cause stunted vegetation? Will widening of the mountain gaps, thereby opening an easier way for winds to cross the mountains, decrease precipitation on the windward side of the mountains? How will snowfall be affected? Will wind-blown snow pile up impassable drifts in the lee of the mountain passes? Only time will tell, but the existing portion of Corridor H might well serve as a study area for the remainder of the proposed route.

WIND SCALE

DESCRIPTIVE TERM	MILES PER HOUR	INDICATIONS
Calm	Less than 1	Smoke rises vertically
Light Air	1-3	Wind direction shown by smoke drift but not by wind vane.
Light Breeze	4-7	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle.
Gentle Breeze	8-12	Wind extends light flag; leaves and small twigs in constant motion.
Moderate Breeze	13-18	Raises dust and loose vapor; small branches are moved.
Fresh Breeze	19-24	Small trees in leaf begin to sway.
Strong Breeze	25-31	Large branches in motion; telegraph and telephone wires whistle.
Near Gale	32-38	Whole trees in motion; inconvenience in walking.
Gale	39-46	Breaks twigs off trees; generally impedes progress in walking.
Strong Gale	47-53	Slight structural damage occurs.
Storm	54-63	Trees uprooted; considerable structural damage occurs.
Violent Storm	64-75	Widespread damage.
Hurricane	Above 75	Devastation occurs.

Adapted from Beaufort Scale of Wind Force.

Conservancy Patch Available

Every member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy needs a Conservancy arm patch as a means of identification while attending strip mine protest rallies, public hearings and meetings of the Water Resources Board. When worn on the sleeve of a khaki or green outdoor shirt and when viewed from a distance, one's resemblance to a forest ranger, conservation officer or reclamation inspector is phenomenal. The patches are multicolored, predominately green and gold, and can be sewn to anything capable of being penetrated by needle and thread. The sketch is actual size.

Conservancy patches cost \$1.10 and may be ordered from the Conservancy at Box 711, Webster Springs, WV 26288.



CONSERVANCY PUBLICATIONS

1. Dolly Sods. Management Proposal and trail guide, includes areas adjacent to the Dolly Sods National Wilderness Area. 1973 edition, 75 pages, 4 maps, 8½ x 11. \$3.25
2. Hiking Guide to the Monongahela National Forest. A survey of hiking and backpacking trails in the Monongahela National Forest. Includes general information on use of the MNF and an essay on winter camping in the Monongahela. 1974 edition, 151 pages, 9 maps. \$3.25.

The Conservancy no longer publishes and no back copies are available of the Otter Creek Trail Guide. For information on use of Otter Creek National Wilderness Area contact the U.S. Forest Service, Cheat District Ranger, Parsons, WV 26287.

A new edition of the Cranberry Back Country trail guide and management proposal is now in preparation. Watch future issues of THE HIGHLANDS VOICE for publication date.

Copies of Dolly Sods and Hiking Guide to the Monongahela National Forest may be obtained at one-third discount to stores and clubs. Address inquiries concerning wholesale orders to Bruce Sundquist, 210 College Park Dr., Monroeville, Pa. 15146.

Address all other trail guide orders to the address below. Make checks and money orders payable to WVHC.

Trail Guides
c/o West Virginia Highlands
Conservancy
Box 711
Webster Springs, WV 26288

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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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