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# the Highlands Voice

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## Baltimore Conservancy Member Receives National Award

Conservation work is so very hard and frustrating that when such work receives important recognition, the Conservancy takes special pride when such recognition is bestowed on one of our own members.

On April 30, 1976, we received word that our own Bill Bristor of 2502 Steele Road, Baltimore, MD, was one of 10 national recipients of the annual American Motors Conservation Awards for 1976 in the non-professional conservationist category. The competition for this award is keen and since it represents a selection made from nominees from all over the country, the stature of the final recipients is indeed most significant.

Tom Cofield, the well known outdoor editor of the "Baltimore News-American" made the primary nomination, with

seconds from several West Virginians. Among Cofield's observations:

"Without reservation or exception, (he) has demonstrated a totally selfless disregard for his own time, money, and often his best interests in his objective and highly effective efforts", and Bill's approach to each problem that arose, coupled with his bulldog refusal to give up, has been the key factor in the success he has achieved and the high regard he has earned from state and federal authorities involved".

Perhaps the extremely high regard for Bristor shown by a man of Cofield's stature is best exemplified by Cofield's opinion that Bill's work constitutes the most significant conservation progress seen in the writer's 35 year experience!

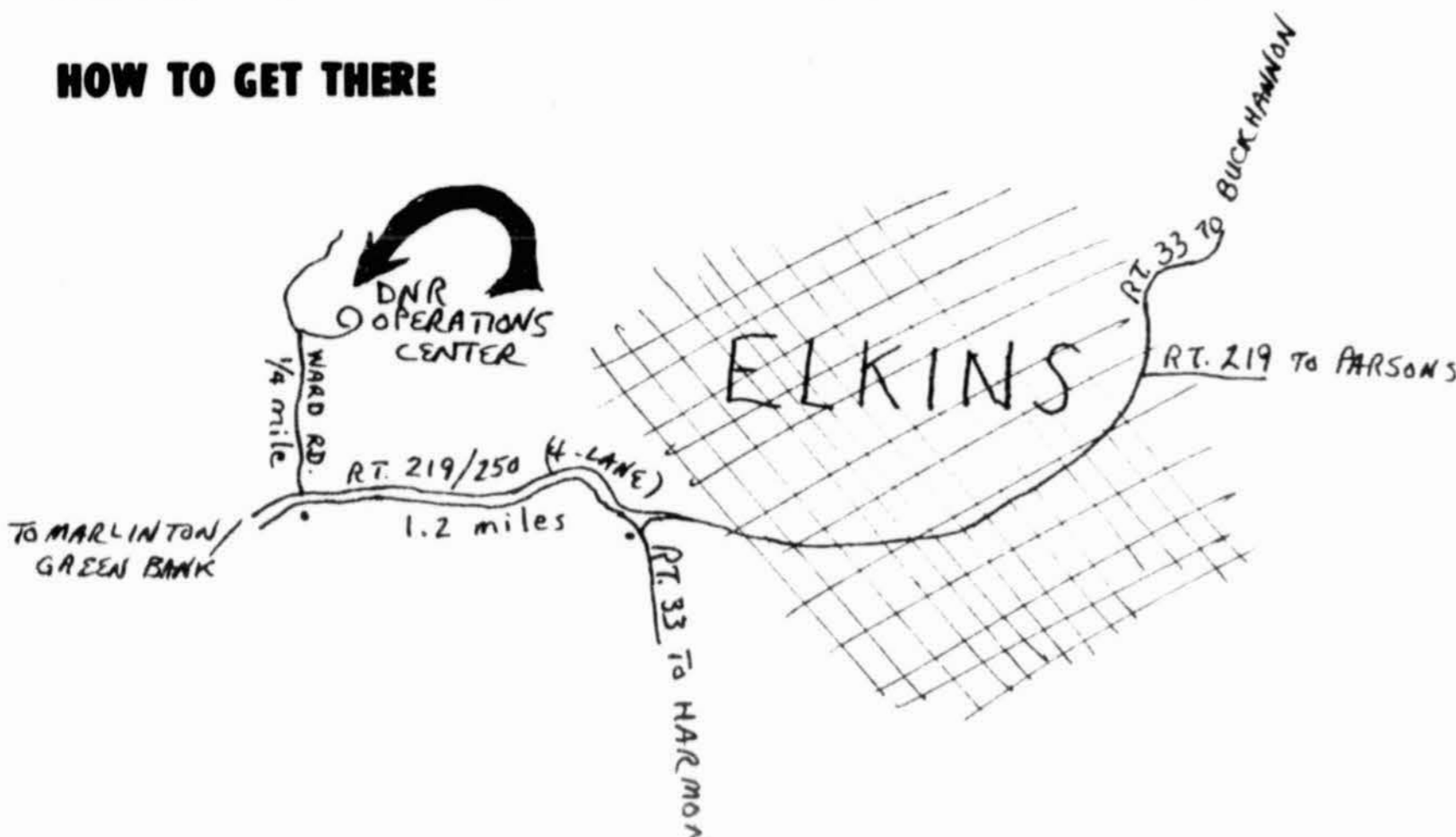
But it is not just the fact that Bill Bristor is a long time member of the Conservancy. He is active in it and although his activities extend far beyond the Highlands, by far the bulk of Bill's efforts have been with regard to his monumental work on Shavers Fork. Thus the honor gives us double pride and satisfaction because the award is also an award to a great West Virginia river. It is unlikely that Mr. J. Peter Grace or his Mower Lumber Company would qualify for any kind of national recognition except what is reflected by a few points on the New York Stock Exchange.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy offers its most sincere congratulations to this great honor of Bill Bristor's and hope that it will serve as a model for the rest of us to become similarly inspired. The actual award will be made later this year at a location of Bill's choosing and will consist of a citation, plaque, and a significant, tax-free honorarium.

### Summer Board Meeting Set for Elkins

The Summer Meeting of the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy will be held at the Department of Natural Resources Operations Center in Elkins on Saturday, July 17. Meeting time is 1 P.M. The meeting is open to the general membership of the Conservancy.

#### HOW TO GET THERE



Bill Bristor



## Beleaguered Kumbrabow Faces Another Assault

Kumbrabow State Forest, an isolated pocket of dense Appalachian forestland in Randolph County, is facing a new assault on its valuable resources. This time the invader is a New Jersey coal company known as Boden Coal Company.

Boden Coal has leased a deposit of coal under Kumbrabow from the original mineral owner. Although Kumbrabow is a state forest, the state owns only the surface of the forest. Mineral rights were reserved by private interests when the forest was sold to the state more than thirty years ago.

Boden plans to open a deep mine on the upper drainage of the Buckhannon River. Preliminary plans call for clearing of four acres of the forest for mine facings, openings and associated structures. The site is near an area just outside the forest boundary which is already occupied by similar developments by Island Creek and Badger coal companies.

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources has met with Boden to discuss planned activities on the forest. The DNR has no control over Boden's activities except to prohibit strip mining on the forest. Boden, however, intends to develop only a deep mine.

DNR director Ira Latimer said that Boden agreed to comply with several suggestions made by the DNR to minimize impact of the coal mining on the forest. One of the suggestions Boden agreed with was to use an existing fire lane in the forest to truck out their coal. This would alleviate the necessity for new haul roads on the 9,400 acre forest surface. Latimer also commented that the mine would "be in an isolated area and will entail very little coal truck traffic on the forest. Most visitors to the forest wouldn't know the mine was there."

The Boden coal mine is the second major threat to Kumbrabow in the last year. In mid-1975 the W.Va. Dept. of Natural Resources announced its intention to sell a large tract of timber on the forest. Public opposition to the sale arose when it was learned that part of the sale would cover an area thought to be virgin hardwood forest. Although the controversy over the virgin forest was not solved to everyone's satisfaction, the point dissolved in importance when no one submitted a bid for the timbering contract.

The Boden mines appears to be a foregone deal. The DNR has already announced that it has no authority to prevent the mine from opening since Boden's deed to the coal is of the broad-form type. A broad form deed gives the mineral owner in a given area exclusive rights to remove the minerals by whatever means necessary regardless of who owns the surface above the mineral deposit.

The DNR has committed itself to oversee the Boden operation, at least to the extent that the company generally obeys state environmental regulations. The Buckhannon River will not turn orange as a result of the Boden mine without the company paying for it. The area around the mine opening will probably be cleaned up before Boden departs in four or five years. Dust will probably be kept to a minimum, and noise probably will not be devastating.

Despite all of these probable circumstances, the Boden mine is all wrong, just as the proposed 1975 timber sale was all wrong. To explain what is wrong with these operations would be a wasted effort on most people. One must know Kumbrabow State Forest to understand what is wrong.

Kumbrabow is a small island of Appalachian jungle tucked away in a sea of unreclaimed strip mines, clearcut forests, smothered streams, clanking coal tipples and rumbling trucks. Within the confines of the forest the world changes. One can walk no more than a few hundred yards into the interior of the forest and the dense vegetation shields one from road noises, from buzz saws and from chatty people.

One could be secure in the knowledge that once in the forest there was nothing to combat but the forest itself and the denizens of the woods. Our memories of Kumbrabow remain sharp, etched clearly in the mind's eye many years after the fact. Nights of screaming bobcats and owl serenades, days of bird watching and wild flower explosions, hours of cool, leafy canopied hiking, and a few moments of breathcatching respite on a bed of pine needles, dry and fragrant.

### "Turnaround Time" in West Virginia

The June issue of "National Geographic" brings you West Virginia, with those inimitable mist-drenched wide angle "National Geographic" photos, an up-beat theme of population growth, and quick visits with (score one point for each name you recognize) Carol Bain, Maggie Ballard, Virgil Cantini, Jon Dragan, John and Michael Fanning, Willis Hatfield, Avis Hill, James Manchin (presiding over a strip-mine reclaimed with junked cars), Joe Lightburn, William Miernyk, and Beth Spence. There is also a page-and-a-half picture of John D. Rockefeller IV being drawn through the streets of Cedar Grove like a grey flannel juggernaut. Your naturally suspicious Washington Vice-President called "National Geographic" to ask when the June issue was mailed to subscribers in West Virginia. The answer: the last week in May.

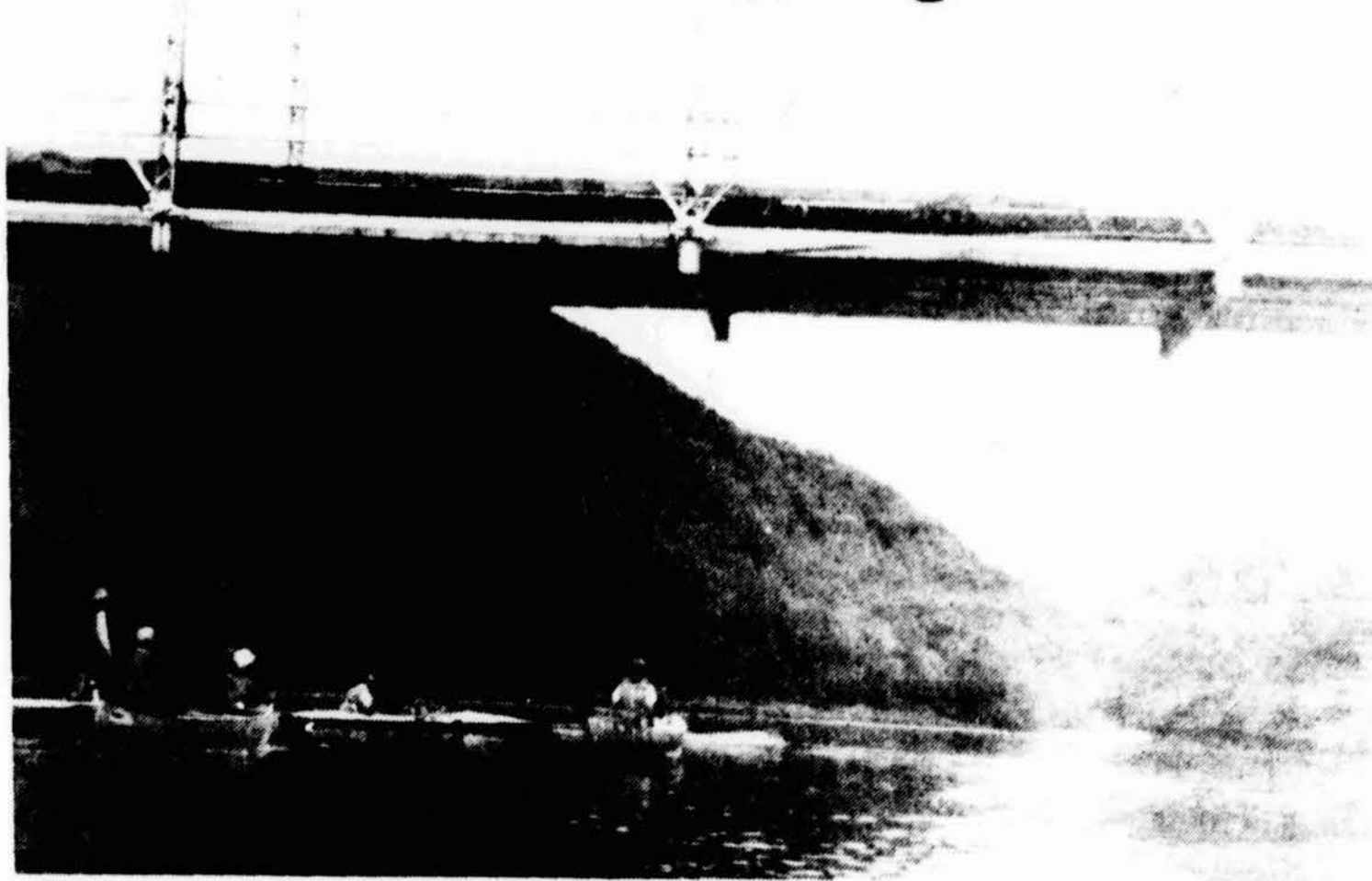
Battles occurred there too. Not the sordid socio-political-economic struggles of progress against ecology, but mind-expanding and heart warming frays with the natives of the region. An entire day spent tracking a bobcat, trying for one good, clear photograph of the tawny beast, and getting nothing but the flick of its stubby tail in a dozen or more photos. A losing battle with raccoons to keep them out of a bag of food hung in an "inaccessible" spot high above the ground. Trying fly after fly to catch an early season brook trout, approximately four inches in length, and seeing the curious blighter dart at every fly, striking at none. Hours spent trying to capture a brilliant blue butterfly in the proper light against a flaming orange tiger lily, all for a photograph which just did not make it.

The marks of man are on Kumbrabow, and it takes no Natty Bumppo to spot them. The forest was logged in the not too distant past. Logging railroads reached into the forest, and today's firelanes are remnants of logging roads. The virgin forest is a small part of this preserve, hardly noticed unless one is looking for it specifically. Despite the signs of past use one could look to the future and imagine with a bursting heart what Kumbrabow would be like in fifty years, or a hundred, or five hundred. Lewis Wetzel, Daniel Boone or Simon Kenton would have been at home there.

But Kumbrabow as the forest primeval will never be. It was never meant to be. All along people who went to the forest for the spiritual uplifting the forest brought them were under the impression that Kumbrabow was to be preserved as a forest for time immemorial. As we found to our sorrow last year, Kumbrabow is just another multiple-use woodlot, nothing more, nothing less. It will be shared by all elements of society, from the Boden Coal Company to the flippant bobcat. That is the democratic way, and Kumbrabow is a child of democracy.

Kumbrabow will die, but no more so than any other place. One will always find a wildflower there. Chipmunks and rabbits will be around. An owl or two will also be there. The bobcat might even stay. But out in the middle of the forest there will be a barren four acres where once stood the might of man, tunneling, digging, shoveling the black diamonds into the furnaces. Logging will come. We cannot expect all sales to be ignored as was last year's.

What will die for Kumbrabow is its spirit. The lord of the forest will depart from there, and what will remain will be a woods where people can hunt, fish and hike. We'll not be going back to Kumbrabow anymore. Perhaps we won't hear the Boden mine at work, but we would rather not risk it.



Nineteen canoes carried some 36 participants down the Cheat River from Hannahville to the Route 50 bridge during the first day of the Cheat Valley Float Trip, May 15. In spite of choosing an alternate route to avoid the low water levels farther upstream, few canoes escaped jarring halts in shallow rapids or unexpected thuds from unseen boulders lying just beneath the surface.

Three brave souls hazarded swims in the deeper pools and pronounced the undertaking "fun, once you get used to it (the temperature)". A few of us spotted a deer in a thicket along the banks. Trained ears picked out the songs of the Baltimore oriole, red-eyed vireo, and the call of the kingfisher.

That evening the predicted rains came, but thanks to Mark and Norva Warner's hospitality, we all enjoyed the pot-luck supper in their home. The bountiful fare included spaghetti, tossed salad, stew, meatloaf, corn bread, and three kinds of cake. At one point during the meal, a canoeist demonstrated boomerang throwing to the amazed onlookers. Yes, they do come back, if there is no air current to divert them.

Participants in this seventh annual trip hailed from: near Columbus, Ohio; Rockville, Md.; Belpre; Morgantown, Pittsburgh, and Weirton. Many of them chose not to remain for the second day of dubious canoeing.

On Sunday eight canoes picked and scraped their way from Saint George to Hannahville, the traditional route. The sun struggled all morning to pierce through the darkening sky. In vain, we ate dessert huddled against a downpour along a bend in the river.

Every lunch eaten at that rocky bend in the Cheat may be the last meal time there. Whether that bend and many others become submerged under the proposed Rowlesburg Lake; whether Saint George continues to exist into the community's third century or it, too, becomes flooded, are questions best asked of Charleston and Washington.

## What West Virginia Conservationists Need Is . . . .

by Bruce Sundquist

### ....A PRINTING PRESS—AND SOMEONE TO OPERATE IT!

That may seem like a silly thing to say but the experiences of this author in recent years has built a strong case for this contention. Below I attempt to argue the Why, the Who, the Where and the How of this issue.

#### WHY

A strip-mining opposition group recently contacted me about printing 1,000 copies of a 100-page booklet on some aspect of strip-mining on a Multilith machine that I have access to. Because my time and the machine's time are both over-committed currently (and for the foreseeable future) the booklet will probably have to be printed commercially at a cost many times larger than the cost I would incur in doing the job for them. I currently print (among other things) the newsletter for the Pennsylvania Alliance for Returnables at a cost of several dollars per issue. Even though it takes only about a half hour of my time, the PAR would have to pay about \$40.00 to get the job done commercially in Harrisburg. The amount of printing work that West Va. conservationists could use is probably huge, but much of it will probably never get done because of the staggering cost of commercial printing these days. The reasons conservationists don't think of doing the printing themselves is the apparent cost of setting up a small printing operation in a corner of their basement. They see the costs looking like:

Multilith machine	\$4,000
Plate "burner"	2,000
Large format camera & darkroom equip.	1,000
Collator (16-station machine)	700
Typewriter, electric, with carbon ribbon	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>about \$8,000</b>

to say nothing of the maintenance costs of the equipment. But let's look at the costs through the eyes of my experience:

Multilith machine (used)	\$ 500 (\$180 + \$320 to repair)
Plate burner (home-made)	30 (mainly 2 sun lamps)

Large-format (8"x10") camera (used) plus misc. darkroom equipment	100 (put an ad in a newspaper)
Collator (homemade machine, 16-station)	40 (almost nothing to it)
Typewriter, electric, carbon ribbon	300 (rebuilt IBM)
<b>Total</b>	<b>about \$1,000</b>

and if you buy the right Multilith machine you can maintain it yourself. The investment can be recovered after the first few big jobs. By training, then paying someone (semi-skilled labor) \$4.00 per hour to run the Multilith machine one can still compete handily with commercial printing operations which charge the equivalent of about \$40. per hour. An environmentalist with a basement operation who buys paper by the ton could save conservation organizations several thousand dollars per year in paper costs along—and much more than that overall.

#### WHO, WHERE?

Why should a housewife looking for extra money hire a baby-sitter at \$1.00 per hour and get a job as a retail clerk at \$2.25 per hour (less social-security, etc.) when she can work her own hours in the comfort of her own basement at \$4.00/hour? An old Multilith machine tends to be a cantankerous beast, but once one gets to know all its idiosyncracies there is nothing to it—just a little experience. Most of the time spent running it involves just sitting there watching it. Lugging 50-lb. boxes of paper around is excellent exercise—something most Americans get so little of that their health is impaired. Got any spoiled brats around? Set up the collator next to the TV and pay them \$2.00 per hour to run it. (Paying them by piece rate is recommended.)

#### HOW?

The how of setting up a Multilith operation is too involved to discuss here. Plans, suggestions, etc. are available from the author (210 College Park Drive, Monroeville, Pa. 15146).