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THE HIGHLANDS VOICE

Published monthly by the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy

Vol. 14, No. 7 — August, 1982

THE MONONGAHELA

Pied Piper

The U. S. Forest Service decides it is unable to stop gas pipelines from being laid across the national forest.

U.S. Forest Service officials in Elkins have already decided they do not have the power to control the placement of oil and gas well corridors in the Monongahela National Forest — despite the impending, multi-million dollar exploration program about to be mounted by the Houston-based Cabot Oil and Gas of Charleston.

That statement of forest policy

was outlined during a late-July meeting of a forest inter-disciplinary team held in Elkins.

"The Forest Service does not have the privilege to say 'No, you can't put a pipeline in,' because the mineral rights are not owned by the United States," explained Gil Churchill of the Monongahela's staff in Elkins. He noted that the mineral rights which Cabot hopes to develop

are owned by private individuals and companies who have paid taxes on them for years and have the right to the minerals. Cabot has planned a five-year-long, \$32 million exploration of 110,000 acres of the Monongahela and some surrounding private lands (See VOICE, April 1982) The meeting in Elkins at the Monongahela's headquarters was designed to pull together all available information for Cabot's first 11 wells. Expected by the middle of August is a decision by Monongahela supervisor Ralph Mumme about what constraints Cabot should be placed under as it begins its exploration efforts.

The inter-disciplinary team that met in Elkins was not of a single mind about what controls Cabot should be straddled with. While few objections were raised to the proposed operating plans for the individual wells, a biologist for the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, Bill Tolin, said he believed that the Forest Service's refusal to deal directly with the problem of future gas well corridors was clearly a circumvention of the legal process.

"Our job is to reduce the impact on the forest's environment and other resources," said Churchill, who asked Cabot if it had a distribution plan to market the gas they hope to find. "You have to know where you are going to sell the gas — we have no purchase contract, so we can't address that," replied a spokesman for Cabot. He said Cabot could develop several generalized corridors, but couldn't be more specific because the distance to major pipelines is considerable and the success rate for drilling is only 10 to 15 percent.

Likening Cabot's procedure to "building cars with no roads," Fish and Wildlife's Tolin said, "you must

have a general idea of where the corridors may go. We should iron this thing out way ahead of time, so if there is no way to get the gas out, somebody could save a lot of money by not drilling some of those holes."

"We want a modified Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)," said Tolin, who stated that he considered it a circumvention of the legal process not to do the whole process.

But district ranger Bob Bodine of Webster Springs said he "would object to spending a bunch of money to analyze a bunch of corridors that might never come to pass, considering the low success rate of drilling."

Cabot concurred, saying, "We'd like to come in and tell you we have this gas buyer, and we will put this pipeline in, but we don't know who we will be selling to or if the drill will be successful."

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THE SHAVERS FORK

Gob Forest

The Conservancy registers its objections to gob along the banks of the Shavers Fork

The proposal by Ingram Coal Company to cover approximately 43 acres of the Shavers Fork watershed with approximately three million tons of coal refuse presents a substantial threat of long-term acid mine drainage to the Shavers Fork, according to Rick Webb, Mining Committee chairman for the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy.

Webb outlined 10 points of concern in a letter, representing the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy, requesting denial of application to the coal company from the Department of Natural Resources, which overviews all proposals for disposal of coal preparation plant waste (gob).

Ingram's application contains only two unidentified coal samples to determine acid potential from five differently named coal seams, according to Webb, whose second point was that one of the two samples showed a net acid potential of 32.21 tons per thousand — CaCO₃ deficiency, which is acid potential according to Webb.

Webb questions whether one foot of soil from nearby strip mines covering the gob pile will be sufficient to prevent infiltration by rainfall and snowmelt.

Ingram's application indicates that pine and spruce trees will be planted upon the soil-covered gob pile upon abandonment. Webb questions not only whether the trees can grow in 12-inches of soil, but supposing they grow, whether the roots will open up channels for expedited infiltration into the gob pile.

Webb says the permit application indicates that groundwater seeps will be monitored for groundwater control and that water level, infiltration rates, subsurface flow and seepage characteristics will be monitored. Webb asks, "How will groundwater control be achieved and this information be determined by monitoring seeps?" and "What seeps will be monitored?"

Though the application indicates that several small seeps occur in the

(Please turn to page 2)

WATOGA

Fall Review

A Conservancy meeting is set for October.

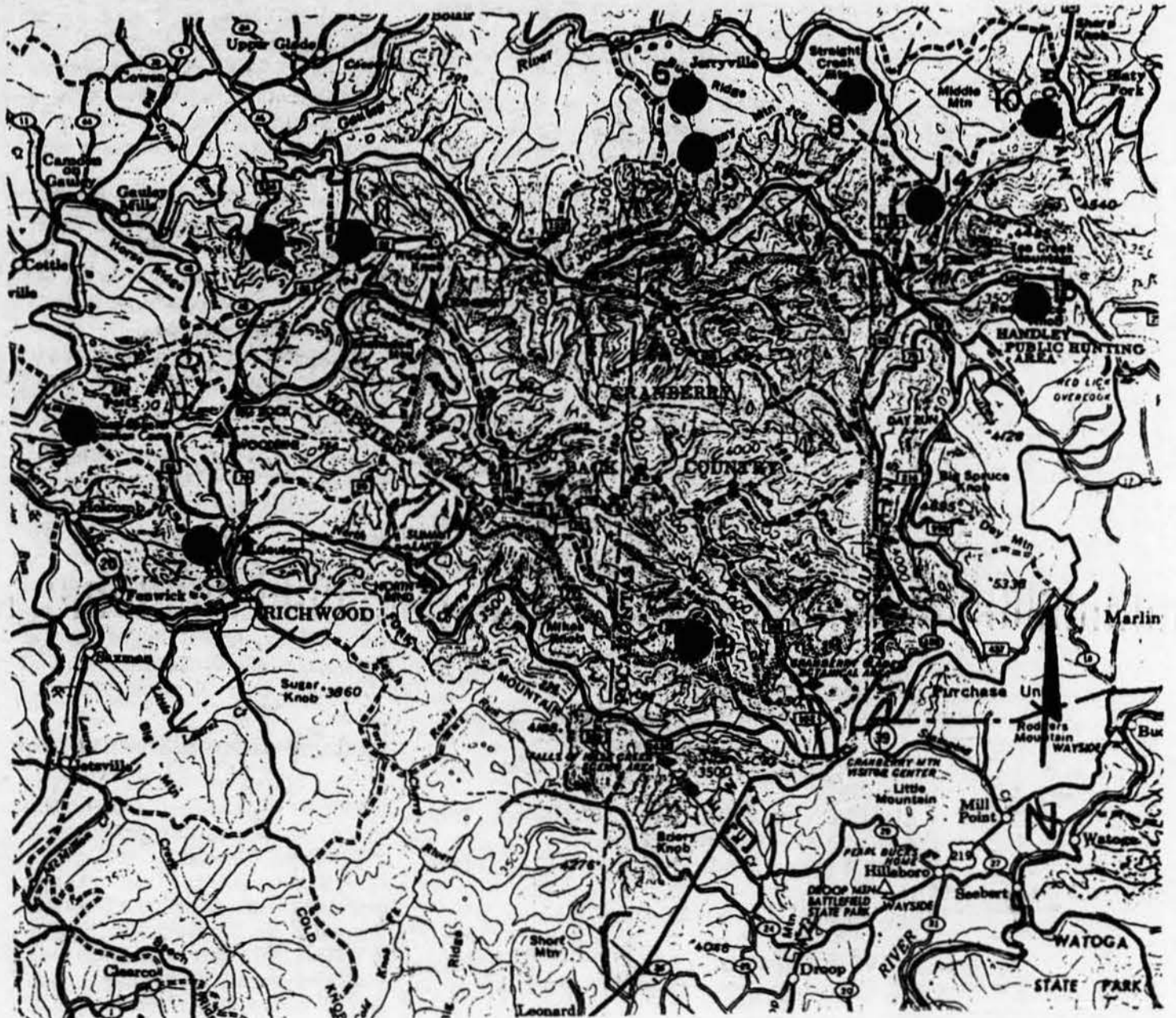
The annual fall review weekend of the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy will be held the first weekend in October at Watoga State Park in Pocahontas County.

The two-day event is being planned by the Conservancy's highlands vice-president, George Warrick of Elkins. Plans for the weekend are still tentative, Warrick said, pending confirmation of the weekend's featured speaker.

Conservancy president Jeanetta

Petras of Fairmont asked that registration for the conference be made immediately. Child care will be available, and a form to indicate members' needs for child care is included on page seven of this issue of the Voice.

Also available is a form for those who may want to help with child care. Either form should be returned to the Conservancy's Fairmont headquarters as soon as possible, Petras urged.



Gas Wells Proposed by Cabot Oil and Gas

Promises, Promises

(Continued from page 7)

pany, much the same as it did for the snail darter — with the shoe on the other foot this time, hopefully.

But if Allegheny Power System (APS), who has been trying for years to start a power project in Canaan Valley, wanted to quibble further, we reckon they could. We know they have a great deal of power with their current 48 percent energy reserve margin; but last we heard, Congress did have more.

While we're on the subject of what Congress can and can't do, since when does that body get its marching orders from James Watt? This year's crop of letters indicates Watt powers Congress; shouldn't it be the other way around?

Despite our meetings, our letters, our work and our words; our Senators, let along our Congressman, for whatever reasons,

Gob Forest

(Continued from page 1)

proposed area, information on the size, location and water quality of these seeps was not provided, nor was the proposed drainage system presented which will prevent these seeps from infiltrating the gob.

The application had no provision for long-term maintenance of diversion ditches, which will be constructed around the perimeter of the gob pile to prevent surface water from running across and eroding the face of the fills.

Webb questioned whether the Sodium Hydroxide or Soda Ash treatments for acidic discharges from the gob piles could be controlled well-enough during varying flow extremes to maintain an acceptable discharge to a lightly buffered stream, such as the Shavers Fork.

The application in Webb's words "provides no clear answer to the question of who will be responsible for maintaining and developing a treatment system if the pile becomes a long-term source of acid mine drainage."

In addition, Webb notes that Ingram Coal has not received a Water Pollution Control Permit from the Division of Water Resources for the construction and operation of their proposed disposal area.

Webb asks the DNR if they plan to enforce upon Ingram the State Water Pollution Control Act, which prohibits construction and operation of a refuse disposal area without a permit.

Climaxing his letter, Webb requested an informal, on-site conference with representation of the Conservancy Mining Committee, notification if the application or permits are in anyway modified, and the opportunity to submit additional comments prior to issuance of the permit.

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are not exercising their considerable combined, or even singular, influence to protect Canaan Valley.

The 30,000 W. Va. constituents (the combined membership of the organizations represented by only the signatures on the joint letter to Senator Byrd) and the expertise of innumerable public agencies are not wrong. One way or another, our political leaders will be made aware of this fact, even though demise by Congressional default is not all that Canaan has going against it right now.

Stay tuned for the next exciting chapter as Democratic hopeful, Chauncey Browning, cashes in Canaan for political hay now sprouting on the back forty.

May 3, 1982

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
The United State Senate
Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Byrd:

We very much appreciate your March 11th response to the several communications with Ms. Linda Elkinton regarding our desire to meet with you and discuss the immediate need for establishment of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. We appreciate the high degree of concern for protection of this most unusual natural area reflected in your letter.

While each of us could personally write to you on behalf of our respective organizations we hope this joint letter will better serve our purpose of impressing upon you these important factors:

1. Your letter refers to "a" refuge in Canaan Valley. As such, it does not address our concern for creation of the federal refuge as proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — the one for which we request your assistance. As you are no doubt aware, there is now more than one "refuge" proposal for Canaan Valley. The Allegheny Power System proposed one in conjunction with the Davis Power Project. Since the very resources for which we seek protection would, under that plan, already have been destroyed by the power project, such a refuge is unacceptable. Your reference to and support for "a" refuge in Canaan does not exclude this possibility. It is essential that we discuss this matter with you.

2. In your letter you make reference to consultation with the Department of Interior and the Allegheny Power System. This is most admirable since surely protection of Canaan Valley will require cooperation with many public and private bodies. However, Senator Byrd, you did not at all address the very purpose of our communication: the matter of meeting with us.

3. We are most concerned by your continued reference to the Davis Power Project as a necessary and viable method of generating needed electrical peaking power for West Virginia, which itself,

does not have peaking power problems. We are concerned that the continue to address this matter after all the work done at taxpayer's expense by the Department of Energy on the very topics of APS's power needs and alternatives for meeting them; after the detailed research and documentation of many viable and reasonable alternatives to the Canaan dam specifically; after the presentation of evidence confirming declining energy demand and ever rapidly accelerating energy conservation.

4. We agree that there is little chance for action on the federal refuge in Canaan without Secretary Watt's cooperation. We are also painfully aware of the Reagan administration and Secretary Watt's position in regard to additional federal land acquisition as well as the fact that Secretary Watt himself was instrumental in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's licensure of the Davis Power Project during his tenure with that body.

These factors weigh heavily against any DOI action on the federal refuge in Canaan and we feel strongly that without your help and that of Congress there is no way it will happen. Time is of the essence however: Canaan Valley needs protection now. With second-home construction up 400 percent in the last five years along, unplanned development expanding so very rapidly and ground and other water resources, in particular, receiving little special consideration, in another five years, many of the Valley's unique features may well be jeopardized.

Without your help we are convinced that Secretary Watt will either not move favorably on this matter, or, equally as tragic, continue to base delay of action on such excuses as pending litigation, litigation that has been in progress for many years now and that will no doubt continue for many more years.

The letter was signed by the following people:

- (s) Jeannetta Petras, President W. Va. Highlands Conservancy
- (s) James E. Westfall, President W. Va. Wildlife Federation
- (s) John Ostrowski, Chairman The Sierra Club in W. Va.
- (s) Linda Cooper Elkinton, Assistant Regional Representative Mid-Atlantic Region National Audubon Society
- (s) Robert Burrell, President Mountaineer Chapter National Audubon Society
- (s) Catherine C. Knight, President Cheat Mountain Audubon Chapter
- (s) Max Robertson, Chairman W. Va. Council Trout Unlimited
- (s) Charles L. Conrad, Ex. Sec. The Brooks Bird Club, Inc.
- (s) Kate Long, President W. Va. Citizens Action Group
- (s) Perry Bryant, President W. Va. Rivers Coalition
- (s) Albert R. Buckelew, Jr. Conservation Chairman George C. Sutton Audubon Society
- (s) Gary O. Rankin, President Huntington Tri-State Audubon Society

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CRANBERRY WILDERNESS?

Cranberry Bill Faces Uphill Fight in Senate

By C. Stark Biddle

For the second time in two years a Cranberry wilderness bill has passed the House of Representatives. The bill, if passed by the Senate and later enacted by the congress, would protect 35,600 acres of the Cranberry back country located in Pocahontas and Webster counties plus 12,000 acres along the Laurel Fork river in Randolph county.

The Cranberry bill implements the bulk of the Forest Service's RARE II wilderness proposals for the State. Passage in the House was a major victory for environmentalists since the bill raised a number of issues of national significance and it was unclear until the final vote whether the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, working with other national organizations could avoid a destructive floor debate that might have led to defeat.

The Cranberry Bill was crafted and introduced by freshman congressman Cleve Benedict who had promised support for the Cranberry

during his campaign. The Benedict bill is similar in basic respects to a bill that had passed the House two years ago but Benedict, working with various interest groups and the CSX Corporation made a number of important changes designed to remove a several of the more con-

troversial elements.

The new Cranberry bill is the culmination of ten years of work by the Conservancy and friends of the Cranberry in West Virginia and elsewhere. In addition to placing the Cranberry area and the Laurel Fork areas under the protection of the

Now that the Cranberry bill has passed the House, the bill automatically will be referred to the Senate, where Sen. Robert Byrd has promised to expedite the hearing process. Neither Sen. Byrd nor Sen. Randolph has as yet pledged support for the bill, and unless their support is gained, it is certain that the Cranberry will not receive wilderness designation this year. The process of getting the area declared wilderness would have to begin all over again.

Everyone interested in seeing the area receive wilderness designation should write to both Senators Randolph and Byrd urging them to support the Cranberry bill. The current

climate in the Senate is not generally favorable towards wilderness, and lukewarm support from West Virginia's senators will not protect the Cranberry. Constituents who want to see the Cranberry preserved should act now to let them know how they feel about this important bill. Two years ago a bill which would have created a smaller wilderness passed the House and died in the Senate. Only a concerted effort by people who are in favor of the wilderness proposal will insure that our elected representatives respond to our wishes.

The time to write is now. The fate of the Cranberry could be decided within the next few weeks.

Eastern Wilderness Act, the bill contains a series of provisions that are intended to provide equitable compensation to the CSX Corporation for the coal and gas rights that they own in the area. This has been a particularly hard issue to resolve since the true market value of the coal is not known and a federal cash payment was opposed by the Administration on budgetary grounds. The final compromise involves an exchange of CSX mineral rights for Federally owned mineral rights elsewhere. Negotiations over the exchange must start three months after the bill is passed and the government must identify suitable exchange sites within six months. Should negotiations break-down, the bill provides for binding arbitration.

A second major issue involved the so called "release" language. (See story on page 3) For some time, opponents of wilderness designation

have tried to attach language to individual bills that would have the effect of preventing any further consideration of wilderness in that state. This has become a national issue since if the so called "hard" release language was attached to the West Virginia bill it would set an unfortunate precedent for all other wilderness bills. Congressman Don Young from Alaska had taken the lead in trying to attach the "hard" language. He has failed in Committee but opposition from the floor of the House was a distinct possibility and a floor fight would have seriously endangered passage of the bill. The "release" issue is a fundamental emotional issue with far reaching implications and Young had chosen the West Virginia bill for tactical reasons in the hopes that it might be a successful vehicle to carry the anti-wilderness language. To counter Young's efforts, the Conservancy was joined by several national environmental groups including the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, the National Audobon Society and the National Wildlife Federation. For the final vote, Young was not present and the bill passed under the so called Suspension procedures whereby amendments are not allowed and the vote is not recorded.

Cranberry Bill Resolves Controversy

Though the Cranberry has long been considered a prime candidate for wilderness designation, the issue has long been controversial. Underlying the publicly-owned surface resource are privately-owned mineral rights, including rights to a major coal deposit. If the area is to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System, the owner of the coal, the CSX Corporation, must be compensated for the loss of access to its subsurface resources.

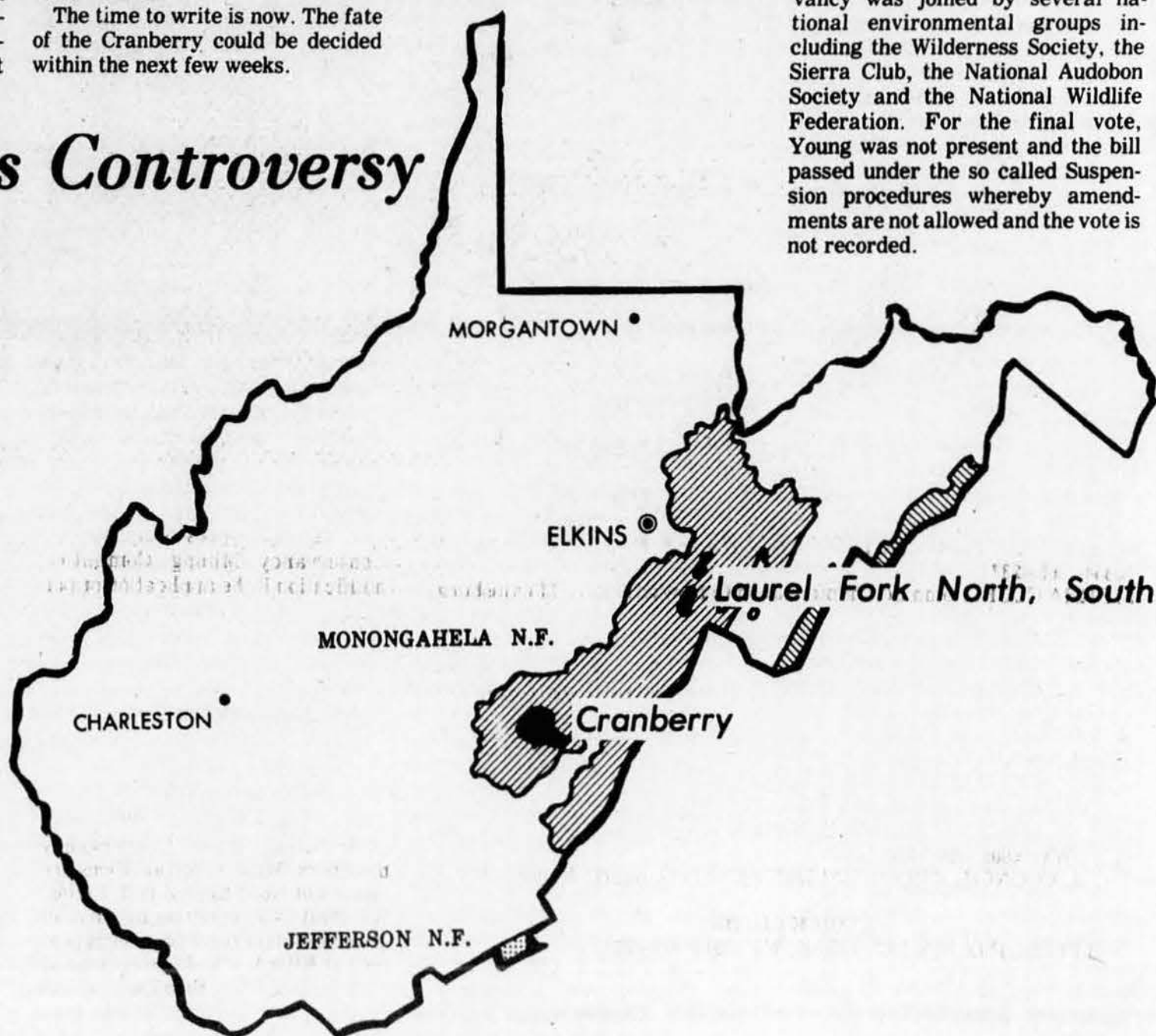
HRS161 would resolve the controversy through an exchange of these resources for federally-owned mineral resources of comparable value elsewhere. The CSX Corporation would have access to an alternative mineral deposit, and the Cranberry would provide the ecological and recreational benefits of a large undeveloped area. However, the benefits of developing the Cranberry's coal deposit would be lost.

A recent study by Gloria Hefland and Kenneth Erikson of the Wilderness Society analyzes the tradeoffs between allowing development of the coal resource and preserving the Cranberry for the benefits of its wilderness values, especially for recreation. The

methodology focuses on the relative scarcity of wilderness recreation versus coal. If the supply of one of the resources is low relative to demand, while supplies of the other resource are ample to meet demand, then provision of the scarcer resource would provide greater benefits to society. The study aims to identify the more valuable use of the Cranberry.

Recreation in the Cranberry Wilderness in the densely-populated eastern U.S. is a scarce commodity. Only one eastern national forest wilderness area is larger than the Cranberry — the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota — and only one is of comparable size, the Cohutta in Georgia and Tennessee. Only four roadless areas identified in the Forest Service's second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation are larger than the Cranberry — three in New Hampshire, one in Georgia. No national forest wilderness of comparable size lies within a 300-mile radius. Thus, the Cranberry is unique for its size alone. In addition, it provides habitat for species dependent on large undeveloped areas — black bear and wild turkey, for example — in addition to many other

(Please turn to page 4)



Wilderness Spawns Many Myths -- Few Are True

By Judith King Norgaard with Tom Kovalicky and George Stankey of the Region One Offices, U.S. Forest Service

Have you ever heard someone say, "Wilderness locks up the land?" It is just one of the myriad of myths concerning wilderness which are perpetrated — and perpetuated — year after year.

How about "locking up the land?" We have all heard this is what happens when an area becomes a wilderness. While it's true that activities such as logging or snowmobiling for pleasure are not permitted in wilderness, does their absence really "lock up" the land? Isn't it also true that where these activities are permitted, the option of wilderness is "locked out?"

Some claim that the areas designated as wilderness could be improved by timber management practices. Obviously, since some areas in wilderness are — by design — of forest lands with timber productivity potential, timber management practices could possibly improve them for the production of commercial wood fiber, but the attendant facilities, roads, machinery and structures are simply not compatible with the basic concept of wilderness.

It is the intention of the Wilderness Act to preserve a wide variety of land for wilderness: wildernesses are designed to contain a representative slice of landforms, ecosystems, habitat types and timber productivity classes.

We all know, of course, that wildernesses are primarily for wealthy people from the big cities. Another myth! Many visitors do come from urban areas, because an outdoor vacation of this type offers such a marked contrast to their everyday environment. However, most visitors come from small- to medium-sized towns.

Clearly, some level of income is

necessary for people to visit wilderness, just as it is for them to bowl, drink beer or ski; but it is not only the wealthy who indulge in these activities any more than it is only the wealthy who visit wildernesses.

For example, in 1970, a study of visitors to wilderness and primitive areas in Idaho and Montana showed that in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, about six percent earned less than \$5,000 annually; 30 percent earned from \$5,000 to \$9,999; 23 percent earned between \$10,000 and \$14,999; 29 percent were in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 bracket, and 14 percent earned \$25,000 or more.

Studies of national forest wilderness use have shown that wilderness visits can be summarized as usually of short duration, involving small groups of family and friends, traveling afoot and participating in a variety of activities. Contrary to another myth, lengthy trips are quite rare.

More fiction which is deserving of oblivion is that wildernesses are only for the young. Studies show that all ages are fairly well represented. Older citizens do visit wildernesses; these areas are far from being the turf of only the young.

The same study mentioned above showed that in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, 13 percent of the visitors were aged 1-15, 17 percent aged 16-25, 21 percent aged 26-35, 25 percent aged 36-45, 13 percent aged 46-55 and 10 percent 56 and over.

It has been shown that physical ability has no relation to whether people visit the wilderness. Lack of interest is of more importance than lack of ability as a barrier to participation.

Some people have asserted that wilderness is not a resource — another myth. The Wilderness Act of 1964 employs the very words, "enduring resource of wilderness." (Emphasis added) A natural

resource has certain definable characteristics and has the potential to satisfy specific needs of individuals and of society as a whole.

The Wilderness Act was the first document in world history to accord statutory protection specifically for the wilderness resource. The legislation also provided for a primitive type of recreation in this resource as well as a multitude of other uses.

Once the resource is secured by act of Congress, it must be maintained, and certain prohibitions were established to insure the perpetuity of these wild lands. These prohibitions include construction of roads or structures and use of motor vehicles or motorized equipment.

Exceptions include existing private rights, administrative activities, emergencies involving people within the area, fire control activities, insect and disease control, mining, grazing domestic livestock, access to surrounded private land, commercial operations by outfitters and guides, and continued use of motorboats and aircraft where such use had been established prior to wilderness classification.

Myths abound as to what is permissible and what is not in classified wilderness.

For example: Myth — Fire must be immediately put out when it occurs in wilderness. Fact — Natural fire is permitted in National Forest wildernesses under certain conditions in prescribed areas. The basic objective of allowing natural fire is the preservation or enhancement of the wilderness resource. Natural fires are being allowed to play their role more fully in shaping and maintaining the ecology of the wilderness area.

It is true, however, that prescribed burning (that is, burning by other than naturally caused fire) is prohibited except in certain instances as part of approved prospecting or mining operations plans.

Another fable is that trapping is not permitted in wildernesses. In actuality, not only is trapping allowed, but also hunting and fishing. Harvesting of all wilderness game is in keeping with management objectives of state fish and game departments. It is, however, a Forest Service as well as a state obligation to direct special emphasis to the preservation of threatened or endangered species and their habitats.

Another myth is the idea the wilderness has no economic value. This completely ignores the value of watershed for agriculture, the sale or rental of recreational equipment and the livelihood of outfitters and guides, in addition to the commodities previously discussed.

Wilderness include some of the highest water-yielding lands of any in the national forest system. Large acreages are located in high mountain areas that receive heavy precipitation, much of it snow. Melting at these higher altitudes normally begins later in the season than at lower elevations, and therefore contributes to a continuing flow late in the summer.

The lure of hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding and camping contributes to the expenditure of ever-increasing amounts of money for equipment with which to carry out these activities. One widely known outdoor supply company increased its sales 22 percent between 1974 and 1975. Sales of camping equipment in the nation in 1977 amounted to a whopping \$517 million, an increase of seven percent over the previous years. When the statistics on wilderness visitors are reviewed, there is no reason to believe that this is declining.

Besides contributing to the economy of the purveyors and manufacturers of recreational equipment wildernesses provide a

livelihood for local outfitters and guides, who have one of the few options in America to furnish their guests with a taste of wilderness living.

All this points to the fact that wilderness is one of the multiple uses, along with forage, timber, water, minerals, wildlife and fish, and recreation.

As can be seen, commodity products, such as forage, water, minerals and game, which are located in wilderness, can be utilized as long as it is not at the expense of wilderness values.

The wilderness resource means different things to people who hold different values for using this resource. Wilderness management policies are delineated by a Code of Federal Regulations established by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Forest Service is responsible for a management direction that protects the wilderness "naturalness" and allows people to use the wilderness with a minimum of restrictions or regulations. It is a challenge involving management of people rather than altering the wilderness resource to accommodate users.

Some people argue against wilderness designation for Cranberry, saying that the current back country management would leave it unchanged. Unfortunately, the back country designation is much different from having an area included in the national wilderness system. The term back country is just a handy way the Forest Service refers to the combination of management practices it uses in the study area. There are no Congressional dictates regarding what may or may not be done in an area managed as a back country. If the Cranberry is to receive full protection, no other status except wilderness exists which will guarantee that this resource will remain unchanged.

(Continued from page 3)
species. Its rivers provide large quantities of clear water. Finally, if left in a natural condition, the Cranberry could provide an important baseline for studying the effects of human activities on the rest of the Monongahela. It would serve as an undisturbed area against which the results of management could be measured.

The Cranberry also serves an important role as a wilderness recreation area. In 1980, there were 30,400 "recreation visitor-days" (12 hours of use by one or more persons) in the Cranberry. Hiking accounted for roughly half the use, camping for another third, and hunting and fishing for most of the remainder. Nationally, the Forest Service projects at least a 2 percent per year increase in the use of wilderness areas in coming years. Thus, well into the future the Cranberry can be an important source of relatively nearby wilderness opportunities for the eastern U.S.

If the Cranberry is not designated

wilderness, then it will be available for mining and discretionary Forest Service management. Mining activities may lead to a half-dozen mine openings of up to 10 acres each at any given time, plus improvement of two low-grade roads. Both roads and mine openings would run through the middle of the Cranberry. The choice for management of the surface resource by the Forest Service depends purely on agency priorities and therefore cannot be predicted with certainty. It will, however, probably lead to relatively increased management — perhaps some timber harvesting and wildlife habitat manipulation. These activities probably will not alter the Cranberry irreversibly, but they will change its character during the period that they occur.

If this course is taken for the Cranberry, overall recreational use probably would be reduced. Hiking and camping use are likely to decrease. People would not come from as far to visit the area, since it would no longer be as unique.

Moreover, greater human intrusion would reduce the desirability of taking a several-days trip in the area. Hunting and fishing use might increase because of the possibility of wildlife habitat manipulation; however, with hikers and campers the dominant users of the area, overall use levels probably would drop. Additionally, nonwilderness uses are not predicted to increase as rapidly as wilderness use in coming years. Dispersed camping is projected to increase at about 1.4 percent per year, while hiking and hunting will each increase at less than 1 percent per year. In sum, the Cranberry is more valuable for recreational purposes, and will provide other important values (such as water-shed protection, providing for genetic diversity, and wildlife habitat), if it remains a wilderness.

Coal Resources and the Cranberry. The U.S. has an estimated demonstrated reserve base (DRB) of 163 billion tons of coking coal. The DRB represents coking coal that is presently judged to be

economically and legally minable. About 19 billion tons are considered to be premium coking coal, the most desirable grade for producing metallurgical coke. Based on recent consumption and recovery rates, if only premium coking coal went to coke plants and if coking coal is used for no other purpose, premium coking coal supplies would not be exhausted for at least 80 years. Thus, present coking coal grows, technological advances in coal production and coke making may further extend the life of the DRB of premium coking coal by making currently marginal coal deposits economical.

The Cranberry is estimated to contain a DRB of about 38 million tons of premium coking coal. This amount is about 0.2 percent of the U.S. demonstrated reserve base of premium coking coal, and about 0.02 percent of total U.S. coking coal supplies. It thus represents but a very small part of the current reserve base for coking coal. Its development or non-development will not

measurably affect either price or supply.

Demand for premium coking coal is not likely to increase significantly in the next 20 years. Currently, demand from the U.S. steel industry (a major coke consumer) is weak, in part reflecting the slowdown in the U.S. economy. Coking coal may also be used for electricity generation, but demand is not expected to increase substantially. Export demand is expected to be moderate; in coming years, it will be further dampened by the availability of cheaper coking coal from elsewhere in the world and by improvements in the steel making process which reduce the need for coking coal. Thus, with supplies of coking coal ample, and demand moderate, the losses to the nation from not mining the Cranberry coal deposit would be negligible.

Local social and economic impacts from not mining the coal are measurable but not large. Removing the Cranberry coal deposit from the tax base of Pocahontas County - a

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The Right to Write

Surprisingly few people ever write their Congressman. Perhaps 90 percent of our citizens live and die without ever taking pen in hand and expressing a single opinion to the person who represents them in Congress — a person whose vote may decide what price they will pay for the acts of government, either in dollars or in human lives.

Mail to modern-day Congressperson is more important than ever before. In the days of Calhoun, Clay, Webster and Lincoln, Congressmen lived among their people for perhaps nine months of the year. Through daily contacts in a constituency of less than 50,000 people (Congresspeople now represent ten times that many) they could feel rather completely informed on their constituents' beliefs and feelings. Today, with the staggering problems of government and increasingly long sessions, Congresspeople must not only vote on many more issues than their early-day colleagues, but they rarely get to spend more than 60 days of a year in their home states. Thus the mailbag is the best "hot line" to the people back home.

Some suggestions that apply to all congressional mail:

- 1) Address it properly. "Hon.

House Office Bldg.,
Washington, D.C. 20515" or
"Senator

Senate Office Bldg.,
Washington, D.C. 20510."

- 2) Identify the bill or issue. The Cranberry Bill is HR S161.
- 3) The letter should be timely. Letters about Cranberry to our senators are timely right now!
- 4) Concentrate on your own delegation. All letters written by residents of one district to a Congressman from another district will simply be referred to the proper Congressman for reply.
- 5) Be reasonably brief.

phraseology and grammar are completely unimportant.

- 6) Ask for a response. If your elected official is equivocal in his response, write again and request clarification. Don't hesitate to ask questions (don't sound demanding or threatening however) since your elected official works for you.
- 7) Student letters are welcome. Their opinions are important.
- 8) Write your own views, not someone else's. A personal letter is far better than a form letter or signature on a petition. Your Congressman usually knows what the major lobbying groups are saying, but often does not know of your experiences and observations, or what the proposed bill will do to and for you.
- 9) Give your reasons for taking a stand. He may not know all the effects of the bill and what it may mean to an important segment of his constituency.
- 10) Show understanding. Try to show an awareness of how the proposed legislation would affect not just the environment, but your community and other people's health and jobs.
- 11) Be constructive. If a bill deals with a problem you admit exists, but you believe the bill is the wrong approach, tell him what the right approach is.
- 12) Ask specific questions. If your questions or concerns are general (i.e. "I hope you are for clean air") you will most likely receive a form letter. The more specific you are with examples and concerns, the better. It will have more of an impact and you will be more likely to receive a specific and personal response.
- 13) If you have an expert knowledge, share it with your Congressman. One can't possibly be an expert in all fields; many constituents are experts in some of them. Congressmen welcome their advice and counsel.
- 14) Use personal or business letterhead whenever possible. Be sure to include a complete return address on the letter and envelope.
- 15) Say "well done" when it is deserved. Congressmen are human too, and they appreciate an occasional "well done" from people who believe they have done the right thing. But even if you think they went wrong on an issue, a non-threatening letter would be welcome stating your disagreement; it may help on another issue later.

Some don'ts:

- 1) Don't make threats or promises.
- 2) Don't berate your Congressman.
- 3) Don't pretend to wield vast political influence.
- 4) Don't try to instruct your Congressmen on every issue that comes up. (Don't be a pen pal.)

Hard V. Soft Release Is Critical Issue For Cranberry Wilderness

By C. Stark Biddle

Hard Release vs. Soft Release?
No, it's not a new way to throw a curve ball. It's the single most important national issue affecting passage of the West Virginia Cranberry bill. To put it simply, when National Forest lands are "released" they are made available for non-wilderness designation and for development. The Cranberry bill currently contains so-called "soft" release language, but the "hard" language might have been attached, and there is still a real threat that those who oppose further wilderness will succeed in writing in some version of the hard language. What is the difference, and why should supporters of the Cranberry bill care?

First, the similarities. Both versions apply to non-wilderness areas within a state — that is lands not designated as wilderness, plus areas specified for further planning. Both versions release these lands to uses other than wilderness and to development which in many cases means that the areas would lose the characteristics which make them eligible for future wilderness classification. But there the similarity ends.

"Soft" language releases National Forest land for just the present

forest planning cycle — that is until 1992-1994. At that time, these lands could again become eligible for wilderness. "Hard" language permanently excludes a state's National Forest lands from wilderness consideration.

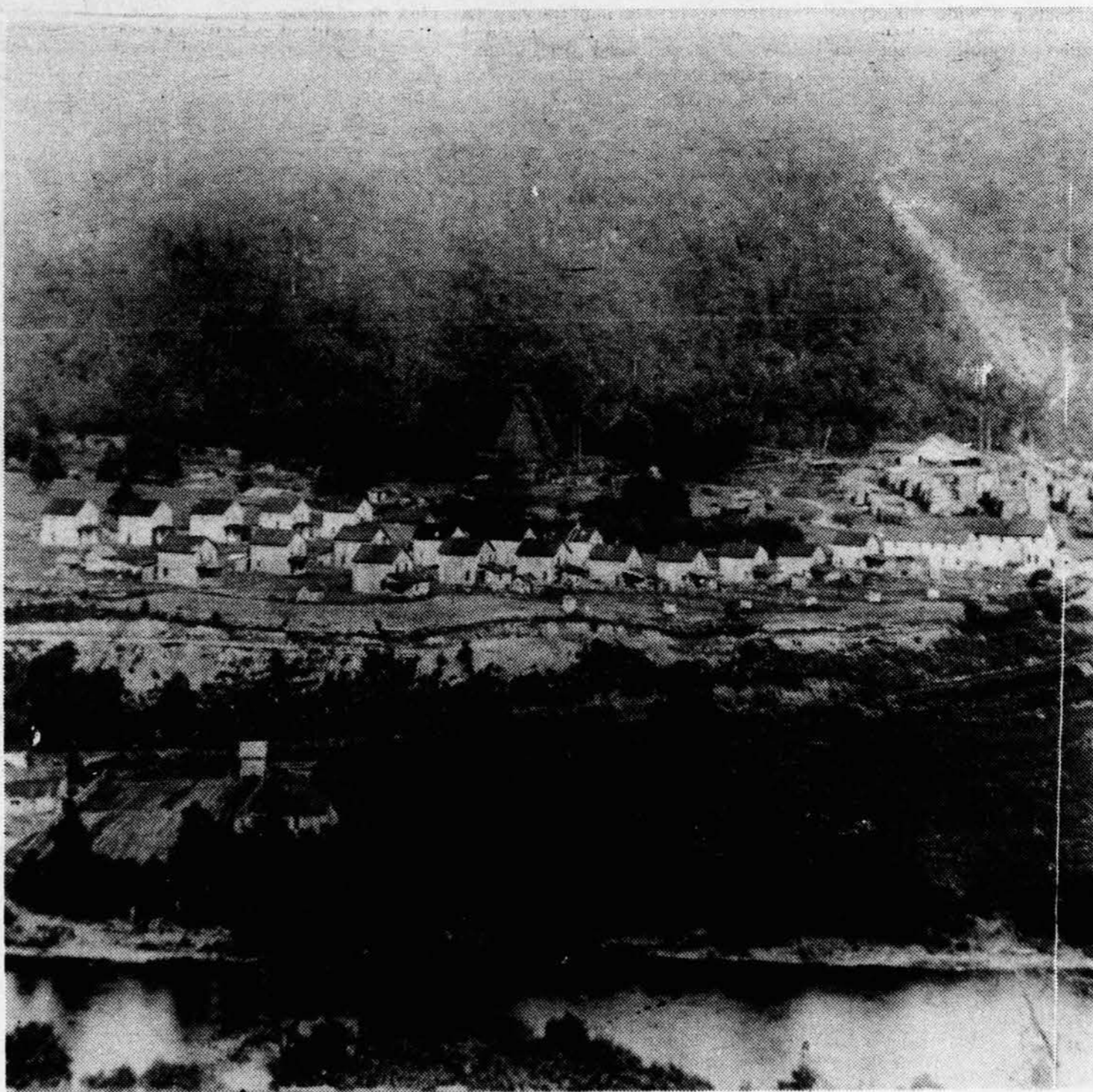
The "Soft" language is basically consistent with established forest management law and practice which recognizes that wilderness is one of a variety of legitimate uses, and establishes a planning process to periodically evaluate alternative uses. By removing wilderness as one option under multiple use management, and further, making it impossible to study an area for possible wilderness classification, the "hard" language would tie the hands of professional forest managers and exclude from the wilderness system deserving areas and ecosystems not yet discovered.

In sum, the "hard" language makes a decision regarding wilderness classification for all time, while the "soft" language allows the planning process under the National Forest Management Act to proceed in due course.

The issue has national significance because NO bill has ever passed with the hard language, and if a bill did pass with the hard

language, it would create a national precedent which would affect all other states with pending wilderness bills. It is for this reason that the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy unanimously passed a resolution endorsing soft release language.

It is hoped the issue will be resolved, or lie dormant. The "soft" language already represents a substantial compromise and has been used in several wilderness bills which have already been enacted, so there is a precedent for soft release. However, the matter is controversial and emotional, and there are those — like Congressman Don Young from Alaska — who have threatened to block passage of any wilderness bill with "soft" language. The anti-wilderness faction has an insidious advantage — they can argue that the people of West Virginia shouldn't care about hard release, since they will get the wilderness they want. Why worry about other states? The National Forests belong to all of us, regardless of our home state, and we all have a stake in their careful management. So when you sit down and let your Senators know where you stand, tell them you're a hard-liner on SOFT release!



Turn-of-the-century logging town

loss of about \$17,000 - would have minimal effect, since that figure represents less than 1 percent of current county revenues. No current coal mining jobs would be lost if the Cranberry is designated as wilderness, but mining the coal deposit could create up to 370 jobs. In an area with chronically high unemployment, these jobs could boost the economy. However, some of these jobs may not be stable, and they will end as soon as the mines are exhausted. Nevertheless, wilderness designation probably would result in fewer new jobs.

In sum, the study concludes, the Cranberry area would better meet national needs if it is allocated to wilderness than if it is left available for coal mining. If national needs change in the future, and development of this coal deposit becomes important, then it will still be available. The effect of wilderness designation will be to make coal development a deliberate Congressional decision, rather than the decision of a private firm or government agency.

Laurel Fork North, South Have Unique Character Are Part of Cranberry Wilderness Bill

By Fred Bird

The Laurel Fork North (6100 acres) and Laurel Fork South (6100 acres) proposed wilderness areas have survived the long and arduous route of wilderness review to remain as two of West Virginia's three areas now being considered by the Congress for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

When the RARE II process began several years ago, the Laurel Fork Areas were not included in the U.S. Forest Service original study areas. However, concerned outdoors people suggested that the USFS include the areas in the study. In the final analysis the Laurel Fork Areas ranked among the highest in their potential for designation as wilderness.

In the USFS final determination for recommending wilderness designation, several factors contributed to the Laurel Fork areas' success as wilderness potential. Some of these factors were that the areas have no major economic development (particularly minerals), have very little grazing land, have excellent low-impact recreational opportunities, have outstanding natural features, and have limited motorized access to the entire area.

It is this limited access (Country Road 40) which created the boundary between the North and South areas.

Laurel Fork North and South are entirely within Randolph County and all on the Greenbrier District of the

Monongahela National Forest. Each of the two areas is approximately two miles east to west and seven miles north to south.

The northern boundary of Laurel Fork North is a major east to west gas pipeline (approximately 6.5 miles south of Wymer on US Rt. 33).

The boundary between the North and South Areas is County Road 40 which passes by the very popular Laurel Fork Campground, and the southern boundary of Laurel Fork South is the Randolph County/Pocahontas County line.

The western boundary of both areas is FS 14 along the top of Middle Mountain, and the eastern boundary of both areas is approximately one mile east of Laurel Fork River where National Forest lands join

private ownership.

It is the unique character of Laurel Fork which makes these areas particularly fascinating. Laurel Fork of the Cheat River is a rather sluggish stream when compared to other major streams in this part of West Virginia. The wide bottomlands have an abundance of deer and bear and are ideal habitat for beaver. Laurel Fork has some of the longest segments of bottomland in this part of the Monongahela National Forest.

The stream is an excellent brown and brook trout fisher, and the area may have the largest concentration of turkey in the state. The U.S. Forest Service's wildlife study for

the two areas identified 17 species of fish, 3 types of turtles, 13 different snakes (including rattlesnakes), 17 varieties of salamanders, seven species of frogs and toads, 30 different mammals, and 91 different birds (including an occasional golden eagle).

Several hiking trails run west to east from the top of Middle Mountain along FS 14 (western boundary of both areas) offering splendid access to Laurel Fork River. The Laurel Fork River Trail (FS #306) runs north to south through the entire length of both areas and is truly a spectacular hiking trail with a gentle grade, beautiful vistas, abundant wildlife, and total serenity.



Cranberry Boasts Lush Forests

By Roy Moose

The Cranberry Wilderness Study Area boasts majestic old growth spruce and northern hardwood forests that rival those described by early botanists and explorers to our state. Tragically reduced from its former grandeur, the red spruce growth on ridges approaching 4,000 feet in elevation along the Highland Scenic Highway stand so close together that they are almost impenetrable. Standing among these spruce reminds one of early descriptions of a forest which virtually closed off light and made it too dark to read beneath this dense canopy — a forest where squirrels could travel for miles from bough to bough without touching the ground below. An occasional fallen spruce exposes its shallow root system: mute evidence of the severity of weather

and soil conditions which it had endured during its tenacious stand.

A hike along one of the more than 100 miles of trails in the study area at these high elevations reveals a carpeted forest floor cushioned by various mosses, liverworts, ground-pines, clubmosses, ferns, and thick layers of hemlock, pine and spruce needles which cover virtually everything beneath the evergreen canopy. An occasional painted trillium, Canada Mayflower, or wood sorrel may have found enough light to grow, disrupting the continuous green and brown background so characteristic in the shade of this forest. The red berries of winterberry, teaberry, and partridgeberry add color and serve as food for small animals of this biome.

Scenic trails descend from Black Mountain through open areas filled

with jutting rocks exposed in the 1937 Black Mountain Fire. Mountain ash, aspen, fire-cherry, stunted spruce, high bush cranberry, blueberry, hawthorn, and rhododendron have established themselves in the soil from the weathered rocks.

Trails, through thick growths of Rhododendron maximum that seems to continue for miles, are marked by the antler-like appearance of the reindeer lichen. As suddenly as it began, the rhododendron ends, opening up into the drastically different vegetation of the mixed northern hardwood forest and its diverse ground cover. A narrow belt of various species of birch, maple, and beech comprise this area. Black cherry, yellow birch, sugar maple, eastern hemlock, and beech undergo a gradual transition at lower elevations to yellow poplar,

various oaks and maples, basswood, black locust, the magnolias, white ash, hickories and elm. The Forest Service estimate about 4,000 acres of old growth northern hardwoods and spruce are scattered throughout the proposed wilderness area.

Beneath the towering hardwoods in the spring, a wide array of wildflowers may be found. As many as five species of trillium cover areas as far as the eye can see. Acres of spring beauties with their tiny white and pink blooms, interspersed with the beautiful yellow flowers and mottled leaves of the yellow fawn lilies, present a panorama which is a spring tonic to the observer. Probably the most widely known and earliest sought plants which appear at winter's end is the wild leek, *Allium tricoccum*, known locally as the "ramp." The lacy stalk of the dead top is used to

locate the ramp even before the lily-like green leaves appear above ground. Eating this strong smelling wild onion imparts a foul odor to the breath that lasts for days, even after using the most potent of mouthwashes.

A trip through the book *Spring Wild Flowers* by Dr. Earl L. Core, shows a myriad of plant life rivaled by few areas of our state. The avid enthusiast often finds treasures such as the pink lady's slipper, white clintonia, showy orchis, purple fringed orchis, and long-bracted orchis at various times of the year.

The wilderness character of the area and its rich diversity of trees, plants, and shrubs attract 50 - 80,000 visitors each year and has been studied by such famous naturalists as Earl L. Core, Roy B. Clarkson, Maurice Brooks, P.D. Strausbaugh, and H.C. Darlington.

Contributions

Contributions to help defray expenses incurred by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Cranberry committee are needed. Make checks payable to: Treasurer, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P.O. Box 506, Fairmont, W.V. 26554. Your donation could help gain permanent protection for the Cranberry.

Volunteers

To insure a landslide of pro-Cranberry wilderness mail to our senators, we need your help. Not only do we need your letters, but we also need people to talk to friends and neighbors to get them to write also. And, if you are really interested and have time, we need volunteers in all areas of West Virginia to do the following:

Talk to local groups

Show a brief slide show

Set up phone trees

Talk to newspaper editors

For more information, contact

Leslee McCarty
Rt. 1, Box 21
Buckeye, W.V. 24924
(304 - 799-6097)

Larry George
9 Crestridge Drive
Huntington, W.V. 25705
(304 - 736-1325)

CANAAN

Promises, Promises

Conservationists weary of promises of 'a' wildlife refuge 'sometime.'

Mrs. Elkinton is the assistant regional representative for the mid-atlantic region of the National Audubon Society and has been active in the movement to save the Canaan Valley for well over a decade.

By LINDA COOPER ELKINTON
We've made a concerted effort in the last few months to make our Congressional delegation more fully aware of what is at stake with the delay in action (by default or otherwise) on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The position paper reprinted below characterizes the seriousness of the out-of-control development situation there at present. If the valley were added to the National Wildlife Refuge System as proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1979, the Valley's unusual plant and animal life would be protected and the unwise developments and other abusive activities that are new compromising its natural character would be prevented.

The count down goes something like this:
Senator Byrd has left us out in the cold. His support for "a" refuge "sometimes" is about as helpful as another cloud on a rainy day. And

February 17, 1982

Ms. Linda Cooper Elkinton
Assistant Regional Representative
National Audubon Society
Rt. 5, Box 228-A
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505

Dear Ms. Elkinton:

Thank you for your follow-up letter to my meeting with you and other West Virginians concerned with the Davis Power Project. I, too, feel the meeting was very beneficial.

As I mentioned during our meeting, I intend to keep an open mind regarding the various options for the Canaan Valley. Litigation continues to block progress on the power project. Correspondingly, the Department of Interior will not make any decision on the refuge proposal until the litigation is settled. The Department of Interior has expressed this view to me and, more recently, to Mr. Don Hollen, President of Monongahela Power Company. The W. Va. Attorney General, Mr. Chauncey Browning, has made no push to get the "404" case reviewed, and the eventual review may proceed all the way to the Supreme Court.

I am always happy to work with you to resolve this issue. Your continued comments and help will be invaluable to this effort.

Kind regards,

Cleve Benedict
Member of Congress

his refusal to even sit down and talk with state conservation leaders about that might be done comes as a real slap in the face. Our efforts to meet with him extend back to the first of the year; and the joint letter, also reprinted below, with his sing-song response really makes one wonder anew about his concern for the interests of his West Virginia constituents.

On May 14, Senator Randolph met with a small delegation (representatives from WVHC, WV Wildlife Federation, League of Women Voters of WV and the National Audubon Society) to discuss our concerns. The tete-a-tete was a bit-tersweet one however. The Senator, exhausted from the previous all-

May 27, 1982

Mrs. Linda Cooper Elkinton
Assistant Regional Representative
Mid-Atlantic Region
National Audubon Society
Route 5, Box 228-A
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505

Dear Mrs. Elkinton:

This will acknowledge receipt of the recent letter, signed by you and others, urging the establishment of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

I well understand your concern over the future development of the Canaan Valley and the need to preserve unique wildlife forms presently in existence there. Also, I well understand and share your concern over the need for assuring the proper development of the area.

However, given the position taken by the Department of the Interior, as reflected in a letter of April 7, 1982 (which I sent to you earlier), the present Administration's position with regard to additional Federal land acquisition (as mentioned in your letter) the mood of the Congress for budget cutting, as well as pending litigation, it would appear that there is no action which could be taken at this time which would bring about the results you desire.

Further, I must point out once again that the decision to proceed with the development of the wildlife refuge you seek, the Davis Power Project, or some other alternative, is not one which is mine to make.

Given these considerations, it would appear that a meeting in West Virginia at this time would be premature.

I share your concern and frustration over encountered delay in resolving vital issues and questions relative to the future of the Canaan Valley. However, as I have pointed out so many times in the past, it would appear that these matters — and in particular the matters of pending litigation — must be finally resolved before a decision can be made.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely yours,
(s) Robert C. Byrd

night Senate session on the budget, said he would find out what happened to the final report on the \$400,000 Department of Energy study on alternatives to the Canaan power dam, that he must claim some responsibility for in the first place. Randolph also dispatched an aide to meet with us in short order so he could be made more fully aware of our concerns regarding uncontrolled development in the Valley, but he then chided us with the fact that he had "many more important things" to spend his time on.

Suffice it to say, we are still waiting to hear from either the Senator or his aide, but we've always known him to be a man of his word.

Allegheny Power System's proposed Canaan power dam was argued in the D.C. District Court of Appeals (the court on step below the U.S. Supreme Court) on June 18th. This makes unnecessary a proposed appeal by conservationists of the District Court decision, which was in favor of APS.

In the June 18 proceedings, the three-judge panel raised so many questions about the validity of issues decided by the lower district court, that the APS attorney was unable to argue his case as he had planned.

The conservation and state attorneys in the case argued that the case raised significant implications for a nationwide wetlands protection. Moreover, the attorneys argued that Congress never intended for the (FERC) to have exclusive review authority in every single area — a hotly contested point.

When the D.C. court will issue its decision on the case is not known, but the next step in the legal process will be the filing of another round of legal documents. Attorneys involved say a decision could come as early as this fall or as late as two years hence.

The deep hold this administration has placed on new land acquisition and the deep, deep hold the Department of the Interior (DOI) has put on the Canaan Refuge (again, see DOI's position, compliments of Senator Byrd) is the last thing we need with Canaan now having truly been "discovered." With all the worst, that work connotes slowly but surely on the way Canaan needs protection now more than ever.

It is interesting that the red herring of last year, the "we must wait until the DOE study is completed," has now been replaced with a new one, "we must wait until the law suits are settled" (which incidentally, as Congressman Benedict more accurately notes could well be many moons from now).

No doubt the phrase has gotten its ghost authors off the hook with the constituents, who are unaware that Congressional action on the Refuge, would, in itself, put an end to both of lawsuits and any lingering questions about the Canaan power dam. It would say, once and for all, that the highest and best use of the Valley is with its protection, and that would end the matter for the power com- (Please turn to page 2)

Make Arrangements Now for the Fall Review

MAKE THIS YEAR'S

W. Va. HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY'S FALL REVIEW

A FAMILY EVENT

REGISTER NOW FOR CHILD CARE

Maximum fee \$1.00/hr, but dependent upon final arrangements and number of children.

I'm coming. Please reserve the following child care hours for my child/children.

- FRIDAY, 6-11 p.m. _____ Name(s) and age(s)
- SATURDAY, 6-11 p.m. _____
- SUNDAY, 9-noon _____
- SUNDAY, 1-end of meeting _____

Parent(s) Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

If plans change and cancellation is necessary, I'll let you know immediately.

Parent(s) Signature _____

Form must be received by SEPTEMBER 15th to insure arrangements.

Mail to: WVHC,
P.O. Box 506,
Fairmont, WV 26554

I WANT TO HELP WITH CHILD CARE

On a voluntary basis (with at least one other person also on duty at all times)

For an hourly fee (\$2-3) and/or mileage to site.

I will take a group of 3-5 children, ages 6 and above on an hours hike/field trip at the following time (specify day and hour):

In the following manner _____

Attach separate explanation if necessary.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

WASHINGTON

New Definitions

Sweeping changes in federal strip mining regulations could open a million acres of protected lands to mining.

Proposed changes in the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) Regulations "would make it nearly impossible for a citizens group to demonstrate that an area is unsuitable for mining," said National Wildlife Federation (NWF) attorney Norman Dean, commenting after an environmental impact statement concerning the new regulations and prepared by the Interior Department (DOI) was released.

The new rules, which would make it more difficult to petition to have a site protected from mining, could eliminate the petition process entirely for mining on federal lands.

Currently, any citizen may peti-

tion a state or the federal government to have an area protected from mining. But the new proposals would allow rejection of "frivolous" petitions, requiring a petitioner to have property interests that would be adversely affected by mining.

The revisions would affect 28 percent (270,000 acres) of the national forest land in West Virginia, according to Robert Lever of the States News Service.

In addition, some publicly owned parks and historic lands, where mining currently is prohibited, would be opened to development along with as much as 1 million acres in other Appalachian areas.

Though the Interior report said

that the majority of the proposals would have no significant impact on the environment, "it concludes," says Dean, "that the potential for environmental damage is massive" because several of the proposed revisions could cause potentially significant impacts on water, wildlife and other natural resources.

"It reinforces what has been our concern all along: that the Interior is making sweeping changes that in effect gut the federal strip mining act," said Dean.

Until the passage of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, spoil disposal practices of coal operators caused serious erosion, water pollution and destruction

of vegetation, the Interior Department stated in a notice published in the Federal Register.

Regan administration officials contend, however, that the rules based on that law are too rigid and discourage mining.

The principal revision would eliminate design standards for containment of mining wastes. Coal operators would be allowed greater discretion in designing fills, as long as they accomplish the same environmental goals, said Francis Kelly, spokesperson for the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining.

Yet one of the proposals is to add the term "irreparably" to the cur-

rent rules defining an area as fragile if it would be damaged by surface mining.

The study also concluded:

+ Mining companies would be required to restore land to make it fit for some type of use, but not necessarily its original use. Thus a company could mine on a forest area, then make the land suitable for residential housing, even if there were no demand for housing.

+ More than 20,000 privately owned sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places would no longer be protected from mining. The report estimated that several hundred or possibly several thousand would be likely to be mined, unless local authorities intervened.

+ Wildlife, especially migratory birds, could be affected by the proposed elimination of the requirement that power lines at mine sites be designed to prevent the electrocution of birds that use them as perches. This could cause increased deaths of large birds such as eagles, hawks and falcons, the report said.

+ Relaxation of requirements for ground water monitoring could result in increased seepage of toxic or acid mine wastes, with possible effects on public water supplies. "The impact would be potentially significant because it would probably have local, but long lasting effects on wildlife and aquatic vegetation and on public water supplies," the report said.

+ Current rules restrict mining in national forests and wildlife refuges except where a company possessed "valid existing rights" prior to the enactment of the 1977 Surface Mining Act. By liberalizing the definition of valid existing rights, the report said 870,000 to 1,263,000 acres of national forest — nearly all of it in the East — would be open to mining.

Most of the national forest land in question was acquired from private landowners, and in many cases the coal or mineral rights were retained by the owner or a third party, whose rights to those minerals cannot be abridged by the forest service (see front page story on Cabot Oil).

The DOI must accept public comment on their EIS, which was published in two parts for 60 days from publication in the Federal Register. The first part of the EIS, which dealt with valid existing rights was published June.

The DOI must accept public comment on their EIS, which was issued June 18, for 60 days. The deadline for comments is 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, August 25, 1982. Comments may be mailed to:

Administrative Record (EIS-1 Supp.)
Office of Surface Mining
Room 5315-L
1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420
or hand delivered to:
Administrative Record (EIS)
Office of Surface Mining
Room 5315
1100 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

SANDY CREEK

Discouragement

A community begins monitoring its streams following an onslaught by drillers.

Residents along Sandy Creek in Barbour and Preston Counties are discouraged by the lack of concern shown by oil and gas well drillers concerning their pollution of the area's streams.

"Bulldozers 'reclaiming' a well site pushed mud, drilling fluids and chemicals into a tributary of the stream," according to Sandy Creek resident, Tom Rodd, who said, "A second spill occurred when the wall of a pond collapsed following moderate rains, allowing thousands of gallons of silty, polluted gunk to flow into another tributary."

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), whose Technical Resource Advisory Group will be meeting on August 11 at 10 a.m. in

Charleston to consider the recurring problem of disposal of wastes from oil and gas pits, had water quality inspectors gather samples and take photographs to be used as evidence of violations of state regulations issued by the DNR.

These inspectors were called in after downstream residents noticed the discoloration of the stream said Rodd, a resident of Sandy Creek for the past five years, who says plans by Sandy Creek residents include a possible law suit against the offending drillers.

In addition to calling the DNR for help, Sandy Creek residents contacted Mountain Stream Monitors (MSM) in January 1982 for assistance in establishing baseline stream quality data for future water

quality monitoring. MSM will also present a workshop to local Girl Scouts, whose theme this year is "Clean Water."

Rodd says a deeper harm than the pollution is the "devil-may-care" attitude of the gas and oil extraction industry. "It kills the spirit to see huge trucks rumbling up the road, not knowing what sort of garbage will be floating down through your front yard the next day," said Rodd, who explained that some of the area's farmers "have been stewards of their land for over a hundred

years."

"We see this water quality monitoring as more than numbers and samples — it's an activity that can serve as a focus for community action and consciousness," said Rodd. The DNR group meeting, which will be in the Division of Water Resources conference room at 1201 Greenbrier Street in Charleston, welcomes the input of citizens. More information can be obtained by contacting Bill Brannon, Division of Water Resources, 1-348-5902.

Tell'm Bard Sent Ya'

THANKS TO GULF OIL

For Honoring

RICK WEBB

West Virginia's Outstanding Conservationist

Bard Montgomery has started a campaign to praise Gulf Oil Company for its conservation award to Rick Webb, in the face of mounting opposition to Gulf from the state coal industry newsletter "Coal Bell."

Montgomery, chairman of the Highland Conservancy's Shavers Fork sub-committee, wants conservationists to shed their industry appearance as "nattering negativists," and write Gulf polite thank you notes — one line on a postcard would be adequate — to: Mr. James E. Lee, Chairman of the Board, Gulf Oil Corporation, 435 Seventh Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Another Montgomery tactic calls for conservationists to let their Gulf dealer know their feelings by giving them "thank you cards" (see illustration above). The cards are available by writing Bard Montgomery, 512 Kanawha Blvd. W., Charleston, WV 25302. A donation of forty cents per ten cards is requested, but not required, for reprinting. Montgomery asks that well-wishers please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE MONONGAHELA

Pied Piper

(Continued from page 1)

Tolin asserted, however, that "we are not addressing the cumulative impacts as set out by the National Environmental Policy Act; somewhere down the road we're going to say, 'How in the world did we ever get into this situation? — if we had done good, long range planning when we bought the surface, the mineral rights would have been purchased by the U.S., too."

"What I want to know is when will you (Cabot) stop and say, "This looks like a valuable resource, now we have to do an EIS?"

The only respondents to the 60 letters sent out by the Forest Service concerning Cabot's drilling were the State's Soil Conservation Service and the Sierra Club, both of which shared Tolin's concerns about the pipelines that will be used to remove the gas.

Churchill's notation that response

was minimal, was countered by Tolin's assertion that "the forests are the best managed piece of property in the state — the people trust us to look after their interests, and that's why the response was so low."

One suggestion from the interdisciplinary team came from landscape architect Sara Ungrodt, who said a check list for kinds of things that should be done for winter closure on these sites should be drawn up by the Forest Service. This list would ensure that sedimentation ponds would be pumped clean before winter sets in, and regularly pumped during the winter to prevent overflow.

Forest officials said that they expected a final approval of Cabot's operating plans by the middle of August. Cabot officials said they hoped to begin drilling by mid-September. Drilling operations are expected to continue late into the fall, and resume into the spring.