



# THE HIGHLANDS VOICE

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## Election Results May Enhance Prospects Of WV Conservationists

The 1986 general election in West Virginia focused almost entirely on the Legislature with all 100 House seats and 17 Senate seats at stake. No statewide offices are subject to the off-year elections and the state's Congressional delegation was easily returned to Capitol Hill.

U.S. Rep. Harley Staggers [D-W.Va. 4th District] was challenged by state Republican Party Treasurer Michelle Golden in the state's only interesting Congressional race. But Congressman Staggers easily defeated Golden. U.S. Representatives Rahall, Mollohan and Wise were all re-elected by 2 to 1 margins over lackluster Republican opposition and hardly had to campaign for re-election.

This was good news for the Conservancy and West Virginia conservationists who continue to have good working relationships with the state's four Congressmen and U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and John D. Rockefeller.

The most significant Congressional development for West Virginia's conservation groups was the return of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd as Senate Majority Leader with the establishment of a Democratic majority. He is generally moderate on economic and resource development issues and has not often been an outspoken advocate on environmental issues.

However, Senator Byrd has frequently used both his mastery of legislative procedure and clout as Democratic leader to overcome difficult obstacles to secure conser-

vation related appropriations and legislation for West Virginia. The Cranberry Wilderness bill, U.S. Forest Service acquisition of the 23,000 acre Shavers Fork tract, and funding for land acquisition in the New River Gorge National River are recent examples.

Byrd's elevation to Majority Leader allows him to control the Senate floor agenda and increases his influence with the Senate committees which address conservation legislation and appropriations for West Virginia. Byrd is expected to invoke his prerogative to assume one of the most crucial Senate leadership posts for conservation issues: chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior. Byrd was previously the Subcommittee's ranking minority member and has dominated its agenda for many years.

While somewhat obscure, the Subcommittee controls all appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Forest Services and Army Corps of Engineers — the federal agencies of most importance to West Virginia's conservationists. From this post Byrd has exercised tremendous influence over the policies of these agencies by controlling their budgets. Regulation of surface mining, management of National Forest lands, protection of scenic rivers and construction of federal dams all fall in the Subcommittee's domain.

Senator Byrd's promotion will only enhance the effectiveness of his low profile support for the state's conservationists.

Back at the State Capitol, the election has disrupted the balance of power in the Legislature. The conservative to moderate bent of the Senate remains unchanged. The House of Delegates membership continues to be relatively liberal with the generally conservative House Republicans losing five seats.

But the House of Delegates is now in turmoil with the surprising defeat of House Speaker Joe Albright [D-Wood] at the hands of Wood County citizen groups infuriated by his support for the state's property tax reappraisal program.

Speaker Albright was a committed friend of conservationists and sustained considerable political damage in his unsuccessful 1985 battle to ameliorate Governor Moore's Department of Energy bill. The Speaker, like the President of the Senate, essentially controls the House legislative agenda and appoints the chairmen and members of all committees.

The official election for Speaker will be held in January on the first day of the 1987 regular session. However, the Democrats now have a 78-22 majority and the Speaker's race will effectively be decided on December 7th when the House Democrats caucus to select their candidate for Speaker. Their decision will be critical for conservationists since the state Senate has grown increasingly indifferent to the protection of the state's natural resources.

This shift began in 1984 when Senator Dan Tonkovich [D-Marshall], historically a liberal, sought and received the support of

business interests in his successful campaign to become Senate President. The 1984 elections had also brought a Senate membership less sympathetic to environmental protection than was true under previous Senate President Warren McGraw.

The result has been that business interests, particularly the coal industry, often hold a veto in the Senate over environmental legislation. The last two years have seen the House of Delegates become the only forum in which conservationists have received a fair hearing and exerted much influence.

Therefore, the outcome of the Speaker's race will have a tremendous impact on the influence of the Conservancy and other conservation groups in the Legislature.

The two announced candidates are Morgantown businessman Larry Schifano and Huntington attorney Robert C. "Chuck" Chambers. Schifano is a conservative supported by coal, liquor, banking and other business interests. During the past two years, he often joined with Republican Governor Arch Moore to lead the opposition to Speaker Albright's initiatives in environmental, tax, labor and budget issues.

Chambers has been House Judiciary Committee Chairman since 1985 and is generally acknowledged as Legislature's most effective advocate in conservation issues. He has been a Conservancy member for several years. Chambers was Speaker Albright's point man on conservation issues with Albright referring most major environmental legislation to the Judiciary Committee.

## EPA and State Supreme Court Overrules WVDNR and DOE

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has overruled WVDNR's second attempt to issue a water-pollution control permit to a major new surface mine development in the acid-drainage plagued central West Virginia kitting coal fields. Also, the state Supreme Court has overturned on procedural grounds West Virginia's Department of Energy's issuance of a surface mining permit for the same site.

Enoxy Coal Company, which operates in southern Upshur County, had applied in 1985 to both the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources and West Virginia Department of Energy for permits to open a new "Job 11" surface mining operation of approximately 700 acres on the Right Fork of Tenmile Creek of the Buckhannon River. Citing the 10 year-long history of uncontrollable acid drainage from the nearby DLM site and similar ongoing problems from the Enoxy operation, the Conservancy, Trout Unlimited and concerned landowners opposed both permits.

In response to these objections, EPA notified WVDNR in late 1985 that the DNR permit was inadequate. After significant revisions, DNR submitted a second draft permit to EPA on May 27, 1986. Again, the same groups and individuals objected, on the basis that the second draft permit failed to recognize and protect the Right Fork as native trout waters. In its latest decision, conveyed by a letter from Alvin Morris of EPA's Region III office in Philadelphia to DNR director Ron Potesta, EPA "determined the

streams to be subject to trout stream standards" and notified Potesta that "exclusive authority to issue this permit now passes to EPA." EPA has taken no further action on the permit, and a full environmental review will be required as part of their decisionmaking process.

"We won this round," stated John Richard, environmental chair of the West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited. Richard, who commented to EPA on the need to protect these trout waters, said that EPA's recognition that "trout waters" include tributaries which can support trout, even though they may not be found year-round, was essential, and can be used as a precedent in other situations.

The state Supreme Court overturned on October 28, 1986 Enoxy's surface mining permit issued in May of 1986 because DOE did not afford the public an opportunity to comment on the application after it had been significantly revised.

## Ski Trail Near Dolly Sods Approved

The U.S. Forest Service has approved the construction of a 3142-foot trail by Timberline Four Seasons Resort within the Monongahela National Forest. Forest Supervisor Jim Page said the trail "will assist the state of West Virginia to achieve its objectives for enhancing tourism and complementing operations in and near Canaan Valley."

Since the trail will run near to the Dolly Sods Wilderness

## Winter Meetings January 25

The Conservancy Winter Board Meeting will be held Sunday, January 25, 1987, at 9:00 a.m. at the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources Elkins Operation Center. (Take U.S. 219 S. from Elkins, right on Ward Road-WVDNR is on the hill overlooking the airport.) Although no formal Saturday program is planned, there will be an informal gathering of those interested in cross-country skiing at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, January 24, 1987, at the Blackwater Nordic Center, at Blackwater Falls State Park near Davis in Tucker County. All board members will be mailed a reminder notice and a tentative agenda in early January. Accommodations and meals are on your own. There are many motels in the Elkins area; two inns which many members use are the Alpine Inn (636-1470) at Alpena and the Cheat River Inn (636-6265) between Stuart Park and Bowden, both on U.S. 33 east of Elkins.

area, the resort agreed to a long list of mitigation measures. These include: new planting and drainage structures to control erosion; noise abatement standards; limiting operations during hunting seasons; standards for screening, color and design; controlling vehicle use; limitations on snow-making additives to assure water quality; and posting of a performance bond.

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SPECIALS DEPT

## — Mountain View — Canaan

by John Purbaugh

After a brief absence from the front pages of the *Voice* and from the forefront of environmental issues in the state, Canaan Valley has returned as perhaps the most important and enduring fight of two decades. Although this column won't review the history or complexities of the issues, I want to give you my personal perspective on two recent developments.

The first is Governor Moore's journey to Washington, D.C., and his much-publicized remark that he anticipates the support of Interior Secretary Donald Hodel for his proposal that the paper West Virginia Electric Power Authority take over Allegheny Power's proposed pump-storage hydroelectric power plant in Canaan Valley. Because the project as conceived by Allegheny would burn no additional coal, but would use only existing power from other plants, state ownership seems somewhat contrary to the Authority's stated purpose of generating new coal-fired power for sale to other markets in the northeast.

Perhaps the Governor, in an effort to appear to "get the state moving again," has just spied a dusty power plant proposal on the shelf, dusted it off, and attached his new label.

A second development is that the Conservancy and Linda Elkington, Canaan Valley Committee Chair, were sued for \$25,000 by Canaan Village, one of several condo developments that dot the valley. The Conservancy and Elkington opposed a sewage discharge permit for this development and filed an administrative appeal when West Virginia Department of Natural Resources did not respond to our concerns. When we did not win the appeal, Canaan Village sued for "abuse of process" and claimed damages from lost business. Since our appeal didn't stay the permit issued by WVDNR, I have a hard time understanding how they have been damaged.

The suit is an effort to scare us into silence on such issues and has consequences far beyond Canaan. We have hired an attorney and are defending on the basis that our activities were constitutionally protected as efforts by citizens to petition their government for redress of grievances.

Neither of these recent developments should divert our attention and efforts from the real issue at Canaan: the valley is worth saving.

## Mountain State Visitor Writes Governor About Canaan

Governor:

For the past 20 years I have been hiking, camping, fishing, hunting and touring in the Mountain State. Several of these excursions have been to the Dolly Sods-Canaan Valley area for back-packing with the Boy Scouts and for hunting grouse and woodcock.

I am well aware of the "battle for power" in this precious wildlife area of Tucker County. It appears to me most unreasonable to sacrifice this unusual area of our country to the pretense of progress.

Please, Governor, put on your hiking boots and observe the natural beauty.

Paul A. Reeder, M.D.,  
Oxford, North Carolina

## No Need for New Power Plant Says Letterwriter

To The Highlands Voice Editor:

While I usually struggle to find common ground between antagonists (business and environmentalists, for example) in an effort to play the peace-maker, there is enough of the imp in me to pounce now and again. Therefore, I can't resist writing in response to the November '86 *Voice* article by my good friend, Larry George.

George started off right by finding common ground, applauding the Conservancy Board for opposing the Davis Power Project in Canaan Valley. However, you go too far, says George, to say that the plant is unneeded. I disagree.

Why, we must be sensitive to economic concerns and not get in over our heads in areas we know little about, like demand projections, says George. But George knows enough to add that we will soon need more power plants, more pumped storage hydro facilities — but please not in precious areas like Canaan. Balderdash, I say.

Every environmentalist worth his or her hiking boots knows about Amory Lovins and soft path energy futures. Energy conservation has already "produced" enough energy to avoid having to build hundreds of power plants. Although Reagan vetoed the Appliance Efficiency Act on October 21, 1986, which would have gone a long way in assisting the energy conservation movement, smart homeowners and businesspeople continue to buy energy saving devices at a record pace.

All power plants planned or under construction and 80% of current central power plants are uncompetitive compared to energy efficiency improvements now available at one-tenth the capital costs of big power plants. It is ludicrous for us as a state and nation to even think about building more power plants to meet our energy needs. Plus, George forgot to mention that AEP, which owns Apco, serving much of West Virginia, has a 50% surplus generating capacity over and above peak demand. Other power companies are similarly way overbuilt. So, even if we build no plants and retire several old ones, we will not have a shortage of spinning generators for decades to come.

I would hope that George would join most environmentalists who agree that we should take all reasonable steps to phase out nuclear, oil and coal power, yes even coal. Treason, you say? You perhaps would rather generate more greenhouses effects, warming the polar ice-caps and flooding our coastal areas? Or maybe you want more acid rain, which will continue even with new scrubbers, just at a slower pace?

We should not lose sight of the future which will have solar, wind and other benign energy sources providing all of our energy. West Virginia's economy should be aimed in the smart direction, not using dumb technologies like pumped storage hydro, which takes 3 units of energy to pump water up hill, to obtain only 2 units of energy when it comes back down. Poor old West Virginia can not afford to waste its money on such inefficient technologies.

Charlie Garlow, Charleston, West Virginia

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## Nature Notes On West Virginia Public Radio

Each Monday and Thursday at 7:03 p.m., First Lady Shelley Moore narrates a 90-second feature, "West Virginia Nature Notes," on West Virginia Public Radio.

Prepared by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, the features are intended to help listeners learn more about the state's animal and plant life and how to enjoy them without degrading the environment.

West Virginia Public Radio may be heard over FM at 88.5 in Charleston; 89.9, Huntington; 90.3, Parkersburg; 91.7, Beckley; 88.9, Buckhannon; 90.9, Morgantown; and 89.9, Wheeling.

West Virginia Public Radio

# West Virginia's National Interest Rivers

By U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall

It was during the autumn of 1978. Earlier that year I along with Representative Harley Staggers senior had introduced in the House of Representatives legislation to establish the New River Gorge National River. In the Senate, West Virginia's Jennings Randolph and Robert C. Byrd were sponsoring an identical bill. And now, in October, we sat in a joint House-Senate committee hearing on our proposal. Testifying was James H. Watkins III of Beckley, chairman of the Coalition To Save The New River.

"By passing this legislation the Congress has a unique opportunity: no new free flowing streams are being created while more and more streams are being inundated with impoundments," he stated. "You have the opportunity to protect one of God's most unique and increasingly rare creations, a free flowing stream."

This statement lodged itself deep into my mind and has remained there during the intervening years. Our New River legislation was enacted into law and the park established. But the unique opportunity James Watkins had described

had not been, in my view, completely fulfilled. For deep in the bowels of our New River bill we had planted a small seedling of an idea — the study of the Gauley and Bluestone Rivers for protective status. That seedling has sprouted. It has been nourished. And now it is time for the harvest.

Early next year I will introduce into the 100th Congress the "West Virginia National Interest River Conservation Act of 1987." Under this legislation, the Gauley River National Recreation Area would be created and West Virginia's first national wild and scenic rivers would be established on the lower Bluestone and Meadow Rivers.

This will be a historic legislative initiative for our State. These tributaries of the New River possess outstanding features of national significance and should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations. Enactment of this legislation will also complete a system of protected river units in southern West Virginia that will compliment the region's existing state parks as well as the New River Gorge National River. We will, in fact, have

created a network of natural, cultural, scenic and recreational wonders unsurpassed in their raw beauty anywhere in the East.

As with any serious legislative effort, one of the keys to success is to formulate a consensus bill. We are still fine-tuning the proposal and will probably continue doing so after its introduction. The process is just beginning and it will take a great deal of dedication to gain final enactment of this initiative. But the ultimate goal is well worth having.

T.S. Eliot, in "The Dry Salvages," wrote: "I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river is a strong brown god—sullen, untamed and intractable, patient to some degree . . ." He was right. The river is patient only to some degree. It is unlikely it will remain "untamed" forever without our help. In this endeavor your active support during the legislative process is important. As for myself, I will continue to bear in mind James Watkins' words of wisdom. "You have the opportunity to protect one of God's most unique and increasingly rare creations, a free flowing stream."

## Rafters, Kayakers Ride Gauley's Rapids In Record Numbers



**A Gauley River guide takes his boat and crew through Pillow Rock, one of the four Class VI rapids on the upper section of the river. This year during the fall drawdown period, visitation on the Gauley was up nearly 25% from that of a year ago and up over 60% from that of 1984.**

Photo by Kyle Anderson for Class VI River Runners

The Army Corps of Engineers estimated that 32,806 private and commercial whitewater enthusiasts challenged the rapids on the Gauley River during the 20-day drawdown period of Summersville Lake this fall. The figure is based on a tally taken at the tailwaters of the dam where commercial outfitters begin their upper Gauley trips. A coefficient of 1.33 is then applied to the actual count to determine visitation on the entire river since some commercial trips and private boaters run only the lower section of the river.

Using a daily expenditure figure of \$243. per commercial visitation and \$135. per private visitation, the Corps estimated a direct impact of \$7,526,790 on the local economy during the entire period. The total impact, direct plus indirect economic benefits, was estimated to be \$16,835,462.

The Corps, recognizing the economic value of the fall releases to the local economy, began cooperating with whitewater interest groups in 1985 by announcing water release dates in January, making it easier for companies to schedule fall trips. However, on October 17, 1986, Congress passed a bill which made whitewater recreation an official project purpose of the Summersville Dam and prescribed a minimum of 20 days of releases during the fall flood-control drawdown.

The bill also included the statement, "Except in cases of emergency, no suspension of or modification of such releases may be made solely for reasons associated with the generation of hydroelectric power at Summersville Dam." This statement gives whitewater releases precedence during the fall drawdown period over any future hydropower generation and is important since the city of Summersville and NOAH Corporation are interested in establishing a hydro-power plant at the Summersville Dam.

Earlier, Congress had passed legislation requiring the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to give recreation interests groups consideration if they intervene in the license application process of hydroelectric plants.

## Bottle Bill Supporters Get Ready

By Charlie Garlow

Members of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, representatives of WV-Citizen Action Group, Audubon, and the Sierra Club met at Blackwater Falls November 14, 1986, for a steering/planning session. The goal: pass the bottle bill!

This year presented a unique opportunity. Many of the lead environmental groups have chosen the bottle bill as their top priority. The WV Farm Bureau, as it has for the last 5 years, has also endorsed the concept. This year, for the first time, a labor union, AFSCME (government employees), has endorsed the bottle bill. League of Women Voters, WV-PIRG, West Virginia Planners Association are among other groups who are supporting the bill.

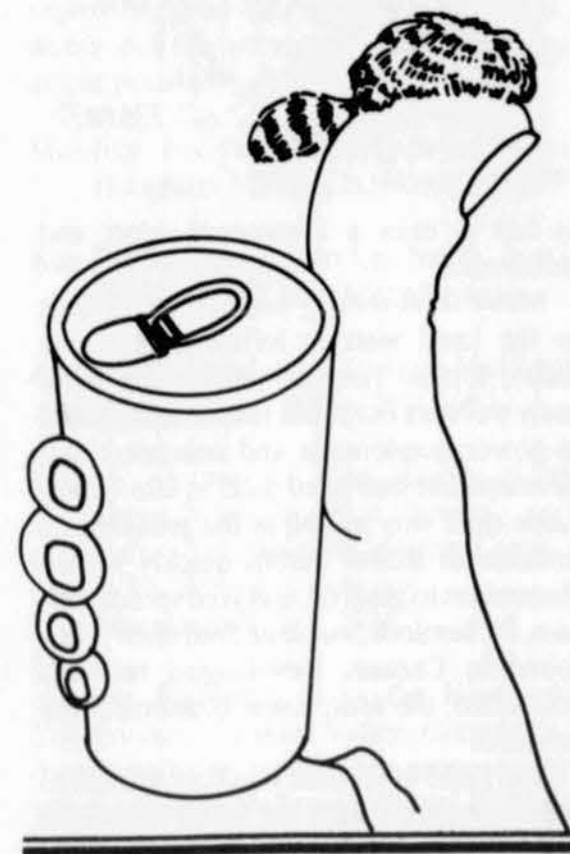
**How You Can Help:** If you are a member of a group that might care about the bottle bill you can encourage your organ-

ization to endorse the bottle bill, so we can add that group to the list. We hope to have a list of 100 groups and to run an ad in the papers listing all the organizational supporters. Then ask your group to do more. Start a letter writing campaign to your delegates and state senators. Approach other groups, like garden clubs, women's groups, PTAs, in your area and ask them to endorse. Inquire about a radio talk show with stations in your area. Sell bumper stickers and buttons. Circulate petitions. Write letters to the editor of your newspapers. Call or contact Mary Moore Rieffenberger, Route 1, Box 523, Elkins, WV or Charlie Garlow, c/o WV-CAG office, 1324 Virginia Street, E., Charleston, WV 25301, 346-5891, for more things you can do, or for more materials.

**Why do we think we can win:** The beauty of the bottle bill is that it requires next to no tax dollars or bureaucrats to enforce it.

It is self-enforcing. With a state budget that is real broke, this is a great way to do something good for West Virginia that doesn't cost. It helps West Virginia's second largest and fastest growing industry, the tourist industry, so we hope to have their help. Plus, most of the glass plants that make the affected glass bottles have already shut down, so the job blackmail argument will not hold water this year.

In the nine other states that have a bottle bill, it has worked like a charm to reduce roadside litter, increase recycling, reduce the volume of garbage going to landfills, save energy, create more jobs than are displaced, reduce lacerations of children from broken glass, cut down on damage to farm equipment and animals and encourage an anti-littering attitude among the population. How can you beat that?



Although numerous lay people, poets and students of the natural sciences have, over the decades, searched for the right words to describe what they know of a high mountain valley situated on the extreme north-eastern border of what is now Tucker County, West Virginia, perhaps few have surpassed the words credited to the one who saw it first. This was George Casey Harness, the Bible-carrying hunter and explorer who stumbled to its eastern rim in 1753 while pursuing an unusually large black bear that had alluded him for many days.

Upon viewing the 35,000 acre, well-watered, variously grassy and densely forested valley below, excitement overcame him and he exclaimed: "Behold, the Land of Canaan!"

Although the pronunciation somehow changed in the years that followed (to kanaan', with the accent strong on the second syllable, as opposed to the way the same combination of letters is pronounced when read from the Bible), an intense impression of beauty and awe has remained.

Harness, after tracking down and finally getting the bear, found the Land so irresistible that he returned many times to explore it in detail. His descriptions were different in element but not in substance from what still exists today. They were of a true paradise for hunters and explorers: "carpeted with delicious grasses and canopied with massive trees, cold streams teeming with speckled trout and enough wild game in the form of panthers, bears, elk, deer, otter and raccoon

was shortly laid completely bare. Lumber companies from Pennsylvania, New York, Maine and Canada took 80-100,000 board feet of timber per acre from this Land, more than five times the amount harvested per acre in other parts of the East. And when they finished, they proudly boasted they had left "not even a stick standing."

But with this harvest, however, timber was not all that disappeared. The massive disturbance exposed the deep, moist humus and wet sphagnum bogs to the sun and wind. Along with the logging debris, this dry tender provided ample fuel for uncontrolled fires. Among the most renowned were the fires of 1914. They burned far into the ground



and continued to burn for six months until the snows of winter finally extinguished them. By 1924, most of the primitive ecosystem of the famed Land had been destroyed.

But time and the restorative forces of nature combine to work a wondrous magic. Before long, lichen and mosses covered the exposed rocks and stubborn stumps, charred remains of which can still be found on the valley floor today. Great expanses of bracken fern followed to give the ground a poor kind of cover. Soil accumulated bit by bit, seed plants — goldenrod, fire cherry, gentians, asters, fireweed, club mosses — appeared and little pockets of spruce and balsam, protected by swampy soils too wet to burn, pushed through and slowly began a still continuing reforestation.

While human activity destroyed much of what that first explorer saw and so eloquently described, it did not alter the basic elements that define the area: its climate, geology, elevation and boreal character. The interplay of sun, wind, rain and snow with these elements is its essence. And, indeed, while it is different today than it was 200 years ago, it remains a land amazing to behold. Left to its own evolution, 1,000 years from now, it will still be unusual, different from its surroundings and distinct in its similarity to tundra regions much further to the north in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Canada.

The floor of Canaan Valley sits at 3,200 feet elevation. It is the highest valley of its size east of the Mississippi River, and today it is perhaps the most intensely studied natural area in the Nation.

The entire 6,000 acre wetlands complex of marshes, bogs, swamps and beaver dam habitat in this valley comprises the largest shrub-swamp wetlands in the eastern United States. Both the size of its wetland acreage and the great diversity of the plant and animal life they support make it different from all other wetlands in West Virginia. Cranberry Glades is 10,000 acres in size with 750 wetland acres; Cranesville Swamp is 4,500 acres with 295 acres of wetlands. All wetland vegetation in West Virginia is uncommon since, with prevailing mountainous topography, steep slopes and "V"-

shaped valleys, few wet areas of any size have ever developed. The total area of wetlands in the State is probably not more than 18,000 acres. Of this some 40% are found in Canaan Valley and on Cabin Mountain.

Canaan Valley maintains the largest beaver population in West Virginia. Their ponds (numbering 107 in 1978) support varied plant communities and are habitat for many wildlife species — fish, waterfowl, and furbearers like mink and muskrat.

Canaan Valley contains most of the wildlife species found in West Virginia and, in addition, many others that are rare to West Virginia. Black bear, bobcat, white-tailed deer, beaver, mink, grouse, wild turkey, woodcock, snipe, herons, fisher, snowshoe hare are all found here.

Over 580 different plant species have been identified in Canaan Valley so far; forty of these are listed on the WV Department of Natural Resources proposed List of Rare and Endangered Species. Five of these species—three sedges and two healths—are found in West Virginia only in Canaan Valley.

Two of the Valley's rarest birds are the northern goshawk and the american bittern. The southern-most known nesting sites for these two species in the east have existed in Canaan Valley. In all, 162 species of birds have been identified in Canaan Valley including black duck, mallard, Canada geese, many owl, rail, warbler and woodpecker species, boblink, hermit thrush, veery, kinglet, kingbird and bluebird.

The Blackwater River in Canaan Valley has over 54 miles of very popular trout fishery habitat. It is the only known self-sustaining brown trout population in Tucker County and 62% of what is known to exist in



West Virginia. Brook, rainbow and golden trout are also found in Canaan's rivers and the beaver ponds provide 70 acres of pond habitat for both bass and trout.

The type, abundance and variety of plant and animal life in Canaan Valley are interdependent and exist in delicate balance. With drainage occurring from the south to the north, what takes place on privately-held, generally higher elevation lands in the southern end impacts water quality and life in the lower wetland acres of the northern end.

Recognizing these facts and the value of the entire natural complex here, many individuals, conservation organizations and natural resource agencies, both State and federal, have contemplated various methods for protecting Canaan Valley. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Interior in connection with its designation as a National Natural Landmark noted:

"It's hard to characterize Canaan Valley by any list of 'unusuals'. Canaan Valley is what it is by virtue of its location, a high, large, northern valley far south of its vegetational range . . . the total valley is a thing to be experienced. It ranks with Yosemite and Yellowstone Valleys, though not, of course, of quite their size. In the east

however, there are very few areas of its grandeur and magnificence."

In the 1960's, the State acquired 6,000 acres in Canaan and established what is now one of West Virginia's most beautiful and highly-prized State Parks. In the process some small-acreage wetlands, have been protected but others altered and seriously impacted with resort-style ski and golf developments.



But there seemed to be little reason for actively pursuing means for further protection of Valley lands until plans for an ultimate form of destruction for most, if not all, of its resources came in 1970 with plans by the Allegheny Power System (APS) for construction of a huge pumped-storage power generating plant. (APS, headquartered in New York City, is the parent company of the Monongahela Power Company, Potomac Edison Company and West Penn Power Company.)

Given the required license from the Federal Power Commission (FPC), APS planned to construct in Canaan Valley a 1,000 megawatt pumped-storage hydroelectric facility they named the "Davis Power Project." The Project calls for the flooding of some 7,200 acres on the northern Valley floor and another 600 acres atop Cabin Mountain in a wetland called "Dobbin Slashings." Water was to be released from the upper reservoir, turn turbines located in the power works on the side of Cabin Mountain, generate electricity and then be released into the reservoir below. The water was then to be pumped back up to fall again in response to peak power demands of the northeastern power grid where APS sells much of its power.

The two reservoirs would inundate 7,800 acres of wildlife habitat including 4,600 acres of wetlands. The lower reservoir of the Project, consuming one-third of the Valley floor, was a body of water larger than the total combined acreage of the three largest lakes in the State. The Project's power house, 30 foot-wide water conduits, high tension wires, turbines and other works would be visible from Route 32 as it crosses the southern-end of the Valley, and the massive recreational development planned in conjunction with the Project would effectively change Canaan Valley from what a power company expert referred to as a "biological treasurehouse" into a mudflat-encircled industrial pond with intensive-use recreational facilities and housing developments.

Before applying for a license the power company launched a broad-based public relations campaign in Tucker County and across the State to convince all who would listen that the power from this Project was critically needed and the economic benefits far-reaching and massive. With charts, graphs and slides they illustrated the 7% annual growth rate that justified it; the black-outs that would occur in the next decade without it; the tremendous economic prosperity and the outstandingly beautiful and bountiful mountain lake with its associated recreational developments to accompany it and be savior to the depressed local economy.



1985 - Donna J. Barr

to last a man a lifetime of sport and subsistence."

Many thrill-seeking and adventure trips to the Land were to follow. Not unlike today, fortune hunters were among those early travelers but it was timber, as opposed to power, condominiums, and associated land development that lured them in late 1800s. Little time was wasted in the amassing of fortunes as timber barons quickly helped themselves to giant (climax) red spruce, balsam, fir, hemlock, maple and red cherry they found in Canaan. New-fangled railroads connected, the area, towns blossomed and boomed.

The Land of Canaan was holy ground to the lumberman and the forest, the most magnificent of its kind in the eastern U.S.,

# CANAAN

ington

Behold, the Land of Canaan! Holy ground to the utility company, the land developer and the county court house!

The power company's depictions of the wetlands of Canaan Valley as commonplace and merely "worthless swampland" that would better serve humankind as a bottom for a massive industrial pond shocked and angered those who had conducted extensive plant, wildlife and other scientific research in Canaan as well as the thousands who had hunted, hiked, photographed, watched birds and wildlife or written about memorable encounters with the unparalleled natural features of the Land. But what was to be done? This was, after all, the powerful electric utility industry speaking; good, old Reddy Kilowatt, the one who brightens the dark and warms the frigid the new world over! Surely, many felt, they are sincere and have more than their own best and vested interest in mind.

Time did not stop so the matters could be sorted out however. Absent other details, decisions based on the "facts" presented by the power company would be made. Despite the futility envisioned in such an undertaking and still, in many ways, trustful that the good will that was being communicated in the frequent "information sessions" local power company representatives were conducting with civic and conservation groups and governmental agencies, some found it

page 8 of the APS's application.

Following this 1970 application for licensure, the preparation of a document assessing the environmental factors associated with the proposed project was required. This was filed by the power company in July 1971. This document and the power company's "information" campaign explained that the higher (forested) lands surrounding the "industrial pond" would accommodate the plant and animal species that existed in the wetlands of the Valley (inaccurately assuming that beaver not only feed on trees but may also delight in building their huts in them as well!); that a significant feeding ground for migratory birds would develop in the water pool and that since the fluctuating water levels of the reservoir would occur on a more or less regular basis, an interesting new natural area, a "fresh water tidal zone" (the only one of its kind ever!) would develop to enhance wildlife values in the area. They alleged that the water quality in the "lake" would be good, and the game species in Valley rivers and ponds would be available in a large body of water to provide an outstanding sports fishery.

To counter the questioning and confident of an eventual license for the dam project, the power company intensified its public relations campaign and continued to acquire acreage in Canaan that the Project would require. In so doing, power company land buyers appeared to exercise little discretion in pointing out the inevitable "right of eminent domain" they and all utility companies possess and can evoke when landowners may hesitate in agreeing to sell to them. They did not note however that an FPC license was required before this right could be legally exercised. Following as it did the land condemnation court battles just being completed for establishment of the Canaan Valley State Park, when some 26 families were made to leave their homes, they succeeded in purchasing all but one tract of land required for the project.

The land ownership issue played an important role in power company public relations. The message of this-land-is-ours-and-we-have-the-right-to-do-with-it-as-we-please was exactly what free-spirited mountaineers with whom they spoke loved to hear. Coupled with their desire to help so many with the thousands of temporary jobs they projected and the tremendously high tax revenues and desperately needed power they claimed, most of the groups with whom they spoke felt a strong civic duty to sign on the dotted line in support of the Project. And so they did by scores, in letters and petitions



impossible to sit idly by and let the matter be decided without at least some questions. Avenues for formal objection were sought and hurried "motions to intervene" filed with the FPC, the federal body that licenses all hydro-electric dams. Motions were filed by local citizens, individually and as a part of the Canaan Valley Association, by the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, by the State of West Virginia (to protect the interest of the State and its people), and, shortly thereafter, by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the Washington-based Environmental Defense Fund.

The motions raised questions and argued that the Project should not be accepted as proposed because the information presented by the power company was inaccurate and inadequate particularly in regard to the nature of the natural area involved: the wildlife and plant resources to be impacted; the quality of the water envisioned in such a large reservoir; the drawdown to occur; the design and character of the proposed recreational developments. The effect of the project on local social-economic conditions was pointed out, as was the lack of adequate study of alternatives and the nature of future development planned in association with the large body of cold water, namely, the "future thermal generating station" referred to on



sent to political leaders and government agencies. And, in so doing, effectively elevated the controversy to even higher levels.

With these further testaments to the true yet still unbelievable intentions of our friendly local utility, legal motions and information presented by the opposing parties changed from raising questions to actually challenging the validity of each and every point in the power company's cursory environmental assessment as well as many other related matters the power company failed or neglected to mention.

With the Sierra Club shortly joining the environmental interveners and providing lead counsel, provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were invoked, the "statement of environmental factors" rejected and the FPC itself required to formally evaluate the environmental impact of the proposed Project.

The Staff of the FPC with their experts in many related fields of study diligently researched the proposal and the existing environment of Canaan Valley. It appeared to be the case, as with others who had taken the time to explore the area in detail, that the more they studied, the more they found to study further. With information provided from many sources they analyzed and reviewed facts for a full year and in early



1974 issued an Environmental Impact Statement. Later that spring, ten long and arduous weeks of hearings were conducted before an Administrative Hearing Judge of the FPC in Washington, D.C.

An incredible amount of information had already been amassed but the hearings brought more, including testimony from State DNR officials who, due to then Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr.'s support for the Project, appeared under subpoena. The hearing judge, in a rather uncommon move, made a personal site visit to the Valley and, although dignified, stately and composed throughout, found it impossible to contain his excitement when he reported having viewed a soaring bald eagle above the Valley floor during his helicopter tour.

Finally, at the conclusion of their exhaustive study, the FPC staff recommended against licensure of the Davis Power Project, and, many months later, the Administrative Hearing Judge followed suit. On June 10, 1976, he also recommended against licensure, indicating, in his findings that:

The specific adverse environmental consequences resulting from construction of the Davis Power Project will not be overcome by the benefits which may be derived from the lake, from the recreational areas and from the wildlife preserve proposed by Applicants, with or without any or all of the further suggestions put forward by those essentially favoring the proposed project.

But this was not to end the matter. The Commissioners of the FPC are the ones charged with making final decisions on power project licenses. Before that was to come, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans for the study of the Valley for designation as a National Wildlife Refuge; the power company sought a 404 Wetlands Permit from the Corps of Engineers; more hearings; more letters; more political maneuvering; court suits and pleadings were to follow in what seemed a non-stop and endless struggle to prevent imminent destruction of the Promised Land.

As is turned out, protection for Canaan Valley was to become as allusive as George Casey Harness's hunt for that enormous bear.

The course of events that followed will be the subject of a subsequent article.



Acknowledgement and appreciation is expressed to the following for information, words and inspiration that have made this article possible:

- Maurice Brooks, *The Appalachians*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1965.
- Ron Fortney and Robert Leo Smith, many published and unpublished articles.
- J. Preble. *Land of Canaan*. McClain Printing Co., Parsons, WV 1965.
- Lysle S. Sherwin, "A Case History of the Davis Power Project in Canaan Valley," unpublished Masters Thesis, WVU School of Forestry, Morgantown, WV 1976.

Linda Elkington chairs the Highlands Conservancy Canaan Valley Committee. Next month she explores the proposals for making Canaan Valley a National Wildlife Refuge.

# Proposal for New Wilderness Area in George Washington National Forest

by R. F. Mueller, Hawkeye,  
& John Hutchinson

Wilderness activists in Virginia have identified one of the largest potential wilderness tracts in the eastern US. The proposed 65,000 acre "Shenandoah Mountain on the Virginia-West Virginia line in the George Washington National Forest. This wilderness would unite the already-designated Ramseys Draft Wilderness and the Little River RARE II area by including the upper valley of the North River which lies between them. To accomplish this, several minor Forest Service roads (FR 95 in part, 95A and 85), some of which were almost destroyed in the November 1985 flood would need to be closed and allowed to revert to forest. These roads don't differ from those which were allowed to revert in other Virginia Wilderness Areas. The northeast and southeast boundaries would be defined by part of FR 95 and other Forest Service and public roads.

The Shenandoah Wilderness would protect the beautiful riparian zone of the upper North River. Too often—as in this case—roads disturb the richest and most diverse habitats along streams, denying shy wilderness wildlife the use of the best parts of their range. In this case a clear, rapidly-flowing trout stream courses over its bouldery bed shaded by a diverse flora of large, almost virgin white pine, hemlock and cove hardwoods. Along the valley, mountains rise steeply in broken sandstone cliffs and talus slopes covered by picturesque by commercially unproductive forests of stunted oaks and yellow pines. The upper North River Valley is the catchment basin for the water supply of the city of Staunton, another argument for its preservation as Wilderness.

The Little River watershed, now being administered by the Forest Service essentially as Wilderness because of its unstable soils, is graced by a number of beautiful little trout streams flowing through a wild forest. Ramseys Draft is famous for its picturesque valley and virgin forests of giant hemlock, pine and hardwoods.

Establishing big Wilderness in the East is important for several reasons. First, this area is part of one of the most biologically diverse regions of the temperate zone, the eastern North American deciduous forest biome. While existing Wildernesses in the East serve a vital function in protecting outstand-

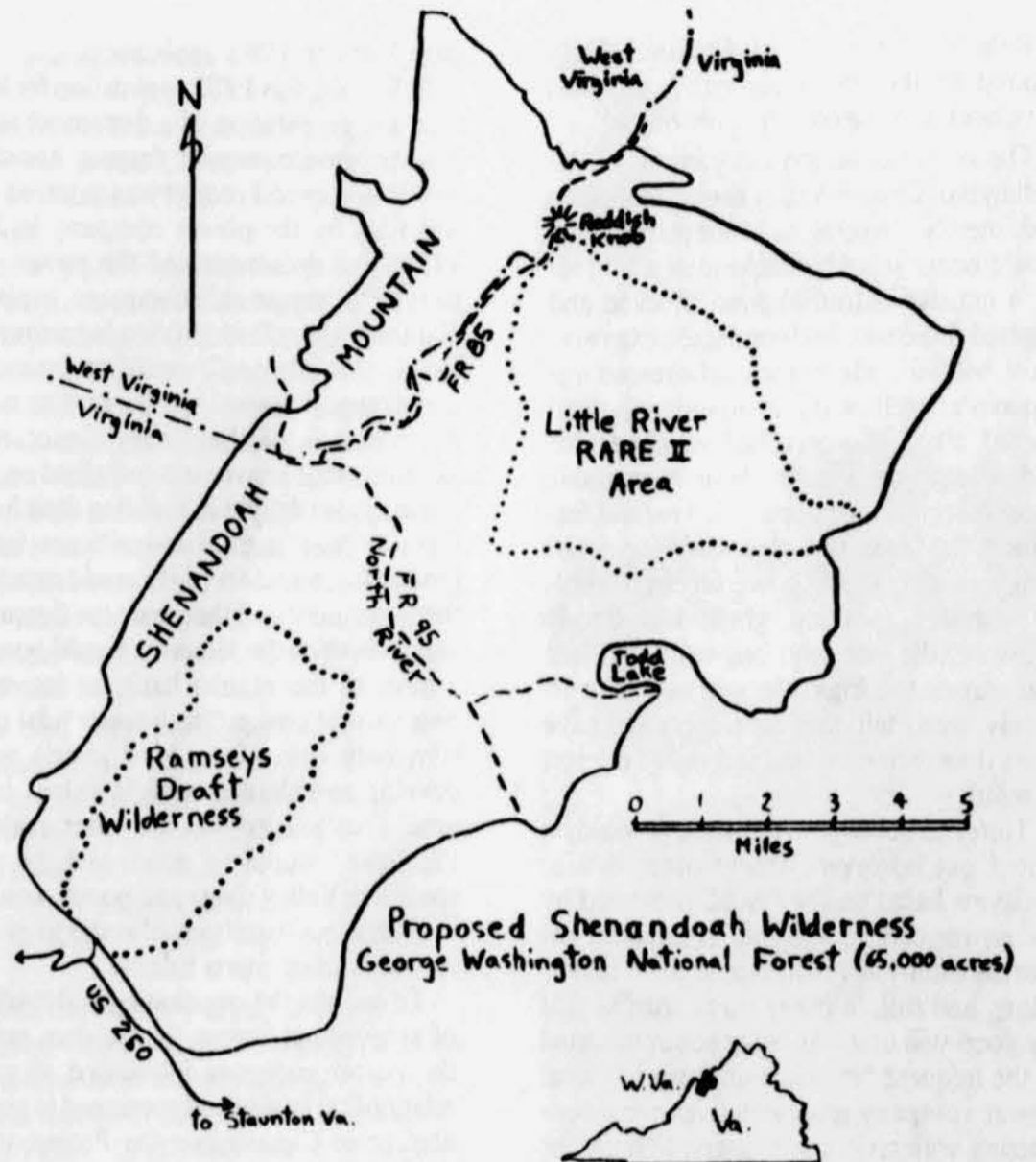
ing biological treasures, they are too small—averaging much less than 10,000 acres—to be ecologically viable units. They are concentrated in the rocky and least biologically productive mountain cores and seldom incorporate enough of the deep soil and moisture-rich areas. Their small sizes make them vulnerable to noisome human activities which occur near their boundaries.

Second, wilderness has a global aspect that connects remote areas as different as tropical rainforests and Arctic tundra to the Appalachian forests. The accelerating loss of rainforests endangers bird species that depend on old growth temperate forests for breeding range, which—being concentrated in Wilderness—gives Wilderness great importance. These Wilderness Areas also provide the necessary range for large raptors that can't hunt or nest in human-dominated terrain. For example, it is likely that the Golden Eagle would breed in the Appalachians if it could find the isolated nesting sites it requires.

Finally, designated Wilderness amounts to only 1.7% of the George Washington National Forest and less than 4% of the total National Forest area in Virginia. Compare this with the more than 17% for the National Forests of the entire US. Given the proximity of large population centers, simply as a matter of fairness much more Wilderness should be designated in Virginia.

This proposal presents a rare opportunity in Wilderness creation in the East since it would utilize what is virtually the only area in Virginia in which contiguous public lands of such large acreage and few roads occur. Nowhere else in the State—and in few other eastern states—could a comparable Wilderness be designated. The Wilderness would offer great scientific opportunities in the whole spectrum of environmental monitoring and baseline studies as well as in ecosystem recovery. In recreational terms, uniting these three beautiful watersheds would make possible a wilderness experience not known since our ancestors first crossed these mountains.

A justification given by the Forest Service for keeping open the road (FR 95) along the North River is that it provides a transportation link between Virginia and West Virginia. But this argument is clearly invalid given the presence of US 250 running parallel to it less than ten miles to the southwest.



US 250 accomplishes this linkage more effectively than FR 95, which is a rough gravel road subject to flood damage. Closing such unneeded roads would save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in repair and maintenance costs.

In summary, the Shenandoah Wilderness is an idea whose time has come. It only needs the support of citizens to make it a reality.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write the US Forest Service, George Washington National Forest, Harrison Plaza, POB 233, Harrisonburg, VA 22801; Congressman Jim Olin and Senators John Warner and Paul Trible of Virginia, and Congressman Harley Staggers and Senators John D. Rockefeller and Robert Byrd of West Virginia (representatives: House of Representatives, Wash., DC 20515; senators: Senate, Wash., DC

20510). Tell them it's important that the proposed Shenandoah Wilderness be designated to preserve this significant tract of Appalachian ecology.

The authors are Earth Firsters and members of Virginians for Wilderness. They are grateful to the Wilderness Society for providing information on the National Wilderness Preservation System.

(This article is reprinted from *Earth First!*. Approximately 7,000 acres of the proposal are located in the West Virginia section of the George Washington National Forest. In an article in the *Washington Post*, Mueller pointed out that the Forest Service and Westvaco and opposed to the proposal. Senator John Warner (Va.), who introduced legislation in 1984 designating 56,000 acres of Virginia national forest land as part of the Wilderness system, said the proposal "merits attention." — Editor)

## National Park Service Assesses New River Black Flies

An environmental assessment on the control of the black fly population in the New River Gorge National River was released on December 3 by the National Park Service for a 30 day public comment period. The assessment was prepared as a requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act in response to a request from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to spray 22 miles of the New River within the park boundary with the pesticide bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis (Bti) to reduce the black fly population in the area.

The DNR has already sprayed areas near the park, and at a monitoring site within the park boundary, it was determined that black fly larvae had been killed by Bti sprayed by the DNR. Governor Moore had ordered the DNR to begin spraying Bti to control the flies on the grounds that the bite of the black fly constitutes a health problem in the New River area.

The park service assessment agrees with the governor and nearly everyone else that the black flies are a nuisance and that their bite can cause an allergic reaction. But the assessment points out that only 37 suspected cases of allergic reactions were reported in a Raleigh County Health Department survey in 1983. This is only 0.1 percent of the population exposed to the black flies in the area. The direc-

tor of the Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects said, "The black fly is not known to transmit disease to humans in the eastern United States and it is not considered to be a public health problem in West Virginia for any other reason."

The assessment also points out that a DNR study done from Bluestone Dam to Prince indicated that black flies are an important source of food for fish, primarily minnows, in the New River. Minnows, in turn, are fed upon by many of the sport fishes in the river.

If the black fly is eliminated or severely reduced, predatory insects, such as the damselfly, may be affected. Hellgrammites, a popular bait for fishermen and a source of food for sport fishes, may also be reduced since they are a primary and secondary predator of black fly larvae.

One alternative, discussed in the assessment, is to continue the current status, that of taking no action and not allowing the DNR to spray Bti. The population of black flies would probably remain at current levels. The report suggests that individuals who are bothered by black flies could wear protective clothing and use insect repellents. Communities could use adulticides to kill black flies outside the park boundaries.

Another alternative, one suggested by the U.S. Depart-

ment of the Interior in a Working Group Paper, to spraying within the park boundaries is to use an integrated Pest management approach. This is a process for determining if a pest suppression is needed, when the treatment should be applied, where it should be applied, and what strategies should be used.

In the case of the New River black flies, this would involve, among other actions, monitoring black fly population fluctuations, conducting studies on black fly migration and dispersal, and continuing research on the role of black flies in the New River ecosystem. In addition, nuisance and economic thresholds should be determined, and annual quantitative studies on the number of persons having allergic reactions to black fly bites should be taken.

Acting Superintendent Bob Whitman indicated that the public review process does not seek a vote for or against any of the alternatives. "It is a solicitation of other facts, studies or information that was not surfaced during the preparation of the document which would assist in the decision making process," he said.

At the end of the public comment period, the park will compile any comments received and forward them and the assessment to the NPS Regional Office in Philadelphia for a decision.

**NEWS BRIEFS**

(Editor's Note: If you regularly read a local newspaper, including the Charleston ones, and would be willing to clip out articles about environmental issues or other topics of interest to Conservancy members, I would like to hear from you.

Please send any contributions or questions to me at the address listed in the roster. Be sure to write the date and name of the newspaper on the clipping. Thanks!!!)

**Moving Towns Above Flood Plains**

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are moving towns along the Tug Fork Valley above the flood plain. Some homes and small businesses will be relocated to higher ground and others will be elevated one or more feet. The project doesn't include large commercial buildings or public buildings such as schools. The cost of the project will be at least \$23 million and take from five to seven years to complete.

Joe Hatfield, the housing fund's executive director, reported that work has begun on 24 units in the Williamson area and that hopefully by next year the housing fund will be able to move on to the next community, Matewan. Eventually the project will stretch from Marrowbone in Wayne County to Yeager in McDowell County. The Corps is working with the Kentucky Housing Development Fund to do the same on the Kentucky side of the river.

The Corps is using the project as a model, Hatfield said. If the project works, the Corps may use the concept to protect other towns from floods instead of building dams and locks.

The Charleston Gazette, November 14, 1986

**"Poster Child" Animals Publicize Campaign To Save Animals**

The black-footed ferret is one of the "poster child" animals selected by the Defenders of Wildlife to publicize their campaign on the threat of extinction to wildlife. In most cases, animals designated by advocacy groups for such campaigns are "charismatic vertebrates"—furry and appealing creatures like the grizzly bear and the giant panda.



"Just because they're more appealing doesn't mean they're more important than the thousands of insects, reptiles and plants whose future is also in doubt. It's the plants and the invertebrates that run the world," Thomas Lovejoy, vice president of the Wildlife Fund-U.S., pointed out. The widespread threat to plants and species that generally are considered lower forms of animal life—insects, reptiles, birds and others—is what makes the current wave of extinctions especially frightening.

A survey published by National Wildlife in May, pointed out that humans are falling behind in their efforts to protect endangered species, largely because of

continued land development in sensitive areas, especially the tropical forests that are home to half the animal and plant species on Earth.

Edward Wolf, senior researcher with Worldwatch, said, "Extinctions are a natural process," but mass extinctions of the past have been different than the current wave.

Until recent times, extinctions were caused by natural forces — not by man. "The planet is losing its living diversity at unprecedented rates," Wolf wrote in a 1985 Worldwatch report, "As human populations grow and as societies modernize, land degradation, forest cutting, coastal development and environmental stresses such as acid rain are accelerating the extinction of plant and animal species."

Singling out certain endangered species for special protection is difficult, Wolf said, because "in the grand scheme of things there's not a way of saying this species should survive because it's of more intrinsic value than five others."

For the black-footed ferret, time may be running out. All 17 ferrets have been removed from the last known colony in Wyoming and taken to a state Game and Fish facility. Early breeding efforts failed, but the ferrets still have a chance.

The Charleston Gazette, November 20, 1986

**Reasons to join WVHC**

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a private, non-profit environmental organization started in 1967. Its objectives are "to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation - including both preservation and wise use - and appreciation of the scenic, historic, open space, wilderness, and outdoor recreation resources of and related to West Virginia, and especially the Highlands Region . . ."

Members include people and organizations diverse in their personal interests and professions but united by a common interest. Most WVHC members are West Virginians but many live outside the state.

The Highlands Voice, a monthly 8-page

newspaper, is sent to all Conservancy members. It is filled with environmental news on topics of interest and concern to members as well as articles about trips and outings.

The Conservancy sponsors two special weekends each year. These are usually at some scenic spot in the highlands and feature speakers, outings and board meetings.

Your contribution to WVHC is tax deductible and joining is as simple as filling out this form and returning it to the office in Charleston.

Join today and become part of an active organization dedicated to preserving West Virginia's natural resource.

**Coal Executive Says Acid Rain Law Inevitable**

E. Morgan Massey, president of the A.T. Massey Coal Company, said at a Tug Valley Mining Institute meeting that the coal industry should work to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions before Congress intervenes.

Although no scientific study has clearly pointed to sulfur dioxide as causing acid rain, Massey stated that public opinion and environmental pressures have made acid rain "a political reality." Although Congress has as yet to pass legislation concerning sulfur dioxide emissions, Massey said that the industry would be better off regulating itself rather than waiting for "poor or punitive legislation" from Congress.

He proposed freedom for utilities to choose the most appropriate method of reducing sulfur dioxide emissions; a requirement that utilities burning clean, low-sulfur coal would not be forced to subsidize the cost of technology to permit the burning of high sulfur coal by others; and flexibility to adjust emission standards as future developments in scientific knowledge and technology permit.

Sunday, Gazette-Mail, November 23, 1986

**Dioxins Found In Poca River And Armour Creek**

The Department of Natural Resources reported the unusually high dioxin levels found in sediment taken from Armour Creek to be 1,898 parts per trillion and 3,044 parts per trillion in Poca River. In addition, tests on channel catfish taken from Poca River revealed levels ranging from 6 to 45 parts per trillion.

DNR personnel collected the sediment and fish samples in April and May. The Poca River samples were collected at the town of Poca where West Virginia 62 crosses the stream. The Armour Creek samples were taken between Nitro and Rock Branch near West Virginia 25.

Dioxin is a waste product associated with the production of certain pesticides and is highly toxic. Despite the high readings in the two tributaries of the Kanawha, DNR officials aren't sure whether the levels are above those generally considered safe.

Sediment and fish samples were also gathered in the Kanawha River from the Capitol to Point Pleasant. The highest dioxin level detected was 100 parts per trillion near Nitro.

The Charleston Gazette, December 5, 1986

**Let The People Choose**

"This highly important issue [to build a power plant or create a wildlife refuge], which in one way or another, will affect every man, woman and child in Tucker County, has been again put in the forefront of local opinion . . ."

"It should be of everyone's concern to be as educated as possible on both the pro and con points at issue here. Either the power company or the environmentalists stand to gain or lose, but it is the people of Tucker County who must ultimately live with whatever decision is reached.

"If the power plant is indeed the answer we seek, then let's get it built. If saving the valley is the important step, then let's do it now. Who will ultimately gain by this long, drawn-out court battle? The majority of the people of Tucker County should ultimately make the decision; it is we who must live here. Rather it is we who must choose to live here. Present the people with the real facts; then an educated decision can be reached. This is a rather unique concept; it is called democracy.

"We would like to have the ability to make an intelligent decision based on fact. Any comments by any party are welcomed. Any information that will help to shed more light on the subject will be of benefit to the entire community."

John Bruyninckx, Upper Tucker Times, November 17, 1986

Yes, I'd like to support the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and receive **The Highlands Voice**. Please accept my membership in the category I have checked.

<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15 regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 regular
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 associate
<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 associate	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200 sustaining
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 sustaining	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$12 senior citizen/student	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Mail to: Suite 201, 1206 Virginia St., E., Charleston, WV 25301

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**Membership Benefits**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-year subscription to <b>The Highlands Voice</b></li> <li>• Special meetings with workshops and speakers</li> <li>• representation through WVHC's efforts to monitor legislative activity.</li> </ul>	<p>The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible. Please keep this for your records.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Amount _____</p> <p>Check number _____</p>
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# Nature Guide for Babcock State Park

This past summer I took on the self assigned task of compiling a nature guide for Babcock State Park. The main goal is to provide a source of information for the park visitors about the plants, birds and other animals they might encounter on an individual trail. The guide will provide specific seasonal information as to what flowers are in bloom during a specific month and what birds and other animals are active at the same month on each trail. Overall, the guide will be designed to increase the interest and awareness for every individual using it, especially those with just a casual interest in nature. There will be a section at the back on unusual plant communities and birds for the more serious naturalist. My second objective (perhaps first) is to give myself an opportunity to spend a lot of time in this park learning more about it. If I happen to wander off the trails into each and every hollow just to see what's there, then all the better.

The park is located in Fayette County; the main streams flowing through it empty into the New River. It consists of 4127 acres of second growth vegetation crisscrossed by old narrow gauge RR grades which hauled coal and timber down to the main line along New River. The landscape is that of a plateau bisected very steeply by the Glade Creek-Manns Creek Gorge. The gorge is rugged and steep, but the vegetation is beautiful and creates an enchanting effect in some places. The microclimate created on the north slope allows quite a few more northerly species to occur here to the great interest of several botanists. The south slope on the other hand is drier; more rocks and ledges are exposed, thus providing a habitat for a very healthy population of rattlesnakes and copperheads for the delight of the adventuresome zoologist. The canyon overall supports quite a few deer, chipmunks, songbirds

and even a few bobcats. It's a great place to scout for fossils, salamanders and, most importantly, to escape from civilization while walking a road carved into millions of years of natural history. In the spring this place is absolutely alive with songbirds; vireos, canada warblers, black throated blue warblers, black throated green warblers, redstarts, black and white warblers, and more!

From atop the rocky ledges overlooking the gorge you can witness balance and peacefulness while taking in the full sweep of the landscape. However, the calls of ravens and hawks bring instant reminders of the unseen dynamics and day to day struggles going on here. The trees up here are mostly pines, oaks, and heaths. Some are gnarled and bent and roots are seen extending in every direction, into every crack and crevice to gain a foothold. There is not a great profusion of

wildlife here, but several hours of quietly walking along the trails will reveal several interesting species of birds, and a snake or two. In the summer yellow throated warblers, solitary vireos, broadwing hawks and ravens can be heard and seen. In the fall and winter these are replaced by golden crown kinglets, hermit thrushes and wild turkey.

Boley Lake provides the only other distinctly different habitat. Throughout the year several species of birds and animals can be seen around the lake, particularly deer, beaver, kingfishers, and a few hawks. The edges of the lake are choked with vegetation and support quite a few species of frogs, salamanders and snakes. There are a few interesting plants as well. So, come to Babcock and share in the discovery of its beauty and ecology. There really is a lot to see and find here in this seemingly quiet and ordinary place.



Photo courtesy of White Grass Ski Touring Center

## Skiing The Allegheny Trail

by Chip Chase

Well worth exploring at any season is West Virginia's high country hiking route, The Allegheny Trail. The 225 mile trail cuts through the state from near the Mason-Dixon Line north of U.S. 48 in Preston County, goes along the lofty eastern continental divide, and ends near Lindsie in Monroe County on the Virginia border where it aptly leads into Appalachian Trail.

The elevation extremes range from 2200 feet to over 4100 feet and average well above 3000 feet. The ridges along the trail catch somewhere between 100 and 200 inches of snow annually, and sections of the trail make for superb cross-country skiing. The treadways are for the most part recycled shay railroad grades, running straight, long and true.

Highlights along this wilderness route include a large virgin red spruce forest and close proximity to four federal wilderness areas. Much of the trek is within the million acre Monongahelia National Forest and along the upper tributaries of the Cheat and Greenbrier drainages. In addition there are four nordic centers and three bed and breakfast inns nearby, several overnight shelters along the trail, and a hiking hostel at trail's end.

For more information contact the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association, P.O. Box 4042, Charleston, WV 25304, or the White Grass Ski Touring Center, Canaan Valley, Davis, WV 26260.

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