

WVC



# THE HIGHLANDS VOICE

WVU LIBRARY  
JUL 14 1987  
SERIALS DEPT.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 2831  
CHAS. WV 25301

Library  
West Virginia University

Periodicals, Main Library  
WVU  
P.O. Box 6069 Morgantown WV 26506

Published monthly by the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy

VOL. 20, NO. 6, JUNE 1987

## Reaction to Rivers Bill Fluctuates

The West Virginia Rivers Bill, HR 900, which involves federal designations for the Gauley, Greenbrier, Meadow, and Bluestone Rivers and makes modifications in the New River National River, passed the House of Representatives on May 27. The vote was 344-49; the bill now goes to the Senate.

### Inclusion of the Greenbrier River

Local reaction to the bill in Pocahontas County has been mixed. The Greenbrier River Hike, Bike and Ski Trail Association sponsored an open meeting at Dunmore so critics and supporters and others interested in the bill could exchange views. About 100 people with concerns about the "Wild and Scenic" designation for the Greenbrier River met with Glenn Eugster of the National Park Service's state and local rivers program.

Many citizens feared that designating the Greenbrier River a wild and scenic river would force them to sell their land or severely restrict what they could do.

Eugster pointed out that no federal acquisition was called for in the Greenbrier legislation, but that the guidelines for wild and scenic status provide that a management plan be drawn up for a river. He also said the federal guidelines are very general and allow for most current activities to continue to be carried out.

Eugster stressed that he has worked in many areas where public officials, landowners, and interested parties, such as fishermen and other users of rivers, have been able to reach a

consensus about goals for their rivers and plans for preservation. He also said that he works with groups and individuals on river proposals on an advisory basis, not necessarily as an advocate of protection.

Nearly 50% of the property along the sections of the Greenbrier River to be included in the wild and scenic designation is already publicly owned. Jim Zoia, staff director of the House Mining and Natural Resources Subcommittee, was quoted in the *Charleston Gazette* (June 4) as saying, "The bill [HR 900] says there will be no public land acquisition above 50%, and I think we're at 50% right now, given federal state, town or political subdivision ownership."

Zoia also said the basic purpose of a Wild and Scenic River Act is to preserve rivers in their free-flowing state, not to buy up private land. Federal designation of rivers as wild and scenic does not give the U.S. Forest Service broad land acquisition authority. He said, "None would be acquired from unwilling sellers, and none by condemnation. If someone wants to sell and the Forest Service believes there is a need to acquire the property and money is available, it might go through."

Current uses of privately owned land along the river corridor, Zoia said, "would be fully protected as long as they aren't harming the river. I wouldn't think someone could do absolutely anything they wanted to, but a river management plan would include plenty of local input."

Some residents living near the Greenbrier River are

worried about the possibility of a dam on the river. At the Dunmore meeting, they expressed concerns about the 22 miles of the river above Marlinton that have been left out of the wild and scenic designation for a three-year period until the Army Corps of Engineers studies flood control measures for Marlinton and other downstream communities. Some of the people from the Marlinton area expressed anger and frustration over not being notified in advance that the Greenbrier River designation was added to HR 900.

Wild and scenic designation does not prohibit flood control activities such as flood walls or levees on a river, but it does prohibit main stem dams.

### New River Fishermen Worried About Possible Flow Changes and BTI

The version of HR 900 that passed the House of Representatives calls for the Army Corps of Engineers to study how changes in the flow from Bluestone Dam could enhance rafting during low-water periods. The New River is well known for its catches of smallmouth bass and channel catfish, and fishermen fear that any more flow changes could seriously affect fishing productivity.

Bill Simms of Whitewater Information, Glen Jean, West Virginia, is in a unique position to comment on HR 900. He is both a whitewater outfitter and a professional fishing guide on New River. "As a commercial rafter," Simms says, "I must be foolish to be opposed to the Rivers Bill, but I'm

(continued on page 4)

## Summer Board Meeting To Include Activities At Pricketts Fort

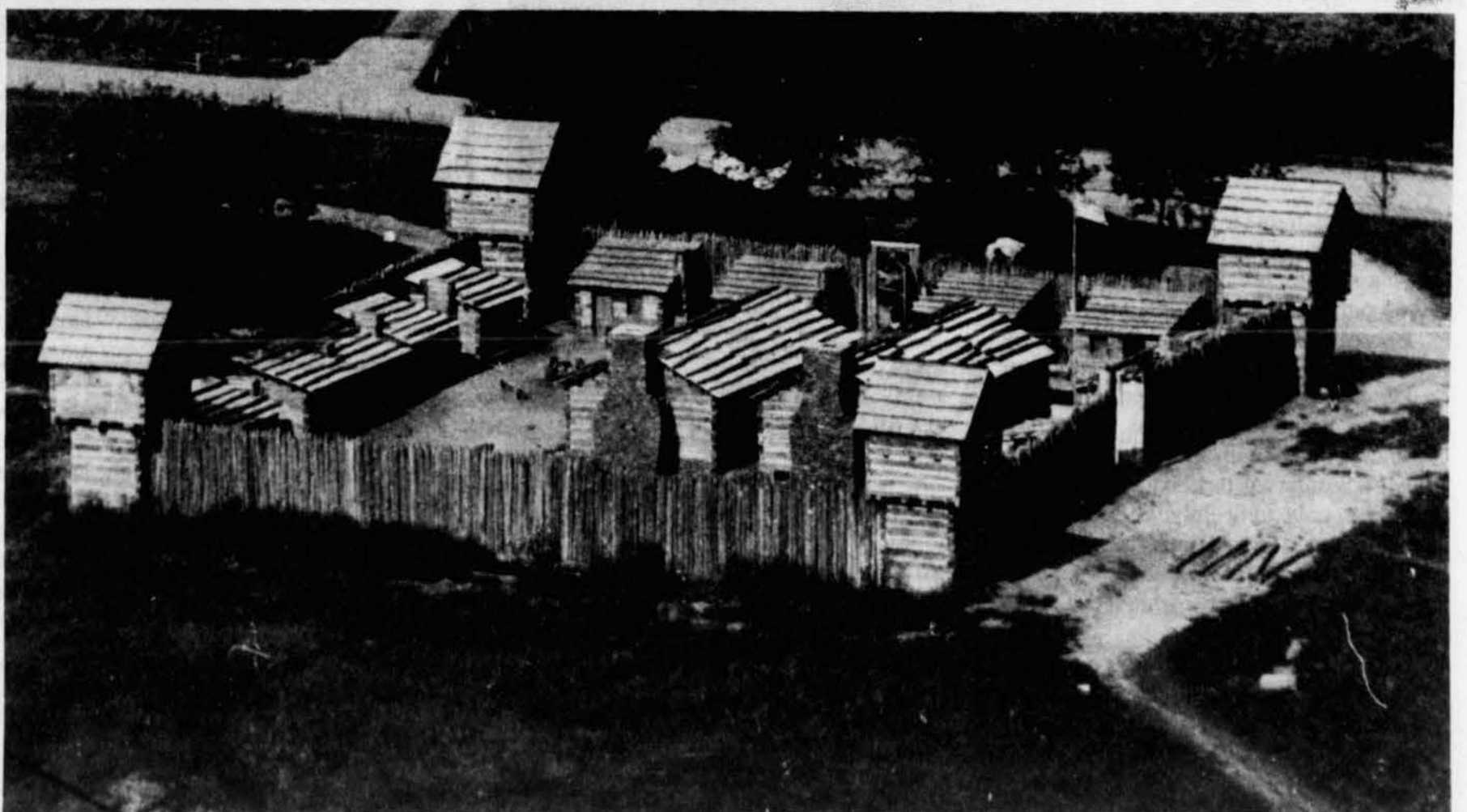
The Summer Board Meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy will be held July 26 at 9 a.m. at the home of Dave and Linda Elkinton. However, WVHC Vice-President Dave Elkinton is also the Executive Director of the Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation, and he has planned several activities for Conservancy members on Saturday, July 25, at Pricketts Fort State Park.

Although known for its environmental activism, the Conservancy's purposes have always included the preservation of the State's historical resources as well. At Pricketts Fort, Conservancy members will have a rare opportunity to focus on an important State historical site under the tutelage of one of its own members.

The reconstructed fort was opened eleven years ago as a "living history" museum, and since that time has received recognition from many quarters. *Southern Living* magazine, for example, has scheduled an article on Pricketts Fort for one of its summer issues.

Pricketts Fort was originally built in 1774 as a refuge from Indian attack for the early settlers. The reconstructed fort takes the visitor back to colonial western Virginia in the late 18th Century. Costumed interpreters

(continued on page 2)



Originally built in 1774 as a refuge from Indian attack for the early settlers, Pricketts Fort has been reconstructed to take the visitor back in time to that period.



# Mountain View

## Goodbye, Charlie

by John Purbaugh

"John, I just came to tell you that I'll be leaving on a trip for six months, maybe a year or longer, so there's no need to send me anything more at my Charleston box." Charlie Carlson had become a frequent visitor at my law office in Charleston as I got more involved in the Conservancy. He had come out to the house to show me "the second largest black oak in the state" in a little cove on the farm two ridges over. Now in his brusque way, he was saying goodbye to me.

Charlie was one of the founders of the Conservancy, and served two terms as president. He was born 80-some years ago on a farm in rural Kanawha County, and worked at a little of everything, including as an industrial electrical equipment installer and troubleshooter. He worked until retirement for the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources at Kanawha State Forest, and bought a bungalow just a step from the forest entrance. In retirement, he was "Mr. Kanawha State Forest," laying out trails, leading hikes for the Kanawha Trail Club and others, and successfully fighting any plans to timber there. Charlie could hike a whole troupe of younger folks into the ground, and he has been a fixture at various nature weekends around the State, including Conservancy meetings.

"Did you get a new truck?" I asked, knowing that his trusty Ford was due. "No, just had some work done on the old one." Charlie's plans include stops at the Big Bend National Park in Texas, maybe Yellowstone or Glacier, and visiting a sister in Seattle. "Might even try Alaska, being that close."

Goodbye, Charlie. I'm honored you took the time to be my friend, and I'll miss you while you're gone. Come back.

## Summer Board Meeting

(continued from page 1)

work at their daily tasks of cleaning muzzleloaders, weaving cloth, forging tools in the blacksmith shop, or cooking over an open fire. At times, they may take a break from their work to do a little fiddling and dancing.

Elkinton has arranged for Conservancy members to participate in activities in the areas of West Virginia history and crafts, to engage in a discussion on the State's future as a center for tourism, to enjoy a frontier meal, and to view the historical drama "Pricketts Fort: An American Frontier Musical." The outdoor drama has been performed for four seasons and has been favorably reviewed by critics throughout the area. The play written by Seseen Francis, is directed this season by Dr. Charles D. Neel, a well-known professor of theater at WVU.

All Conservancy members are invited to join the families of the Board members for any part of the weekend. Discount prices for the activities are as follows:

**Living history tour:** adults \$2.50; senior citizens \$2.50; children \$1.25 (6-12) (under 6, free).

**Frontier dinner:** adults \$6.50; senior citizens \$6.50; children \$3.25 (12 and under).

**Musical drama:** adults \$5.50; senior citizens \$5.00; children \$2.75 (12 and under).

The musical drama is not recommended for children under five, unless they are used to staying up late, because it runs from 8:30-10:45 p.m.

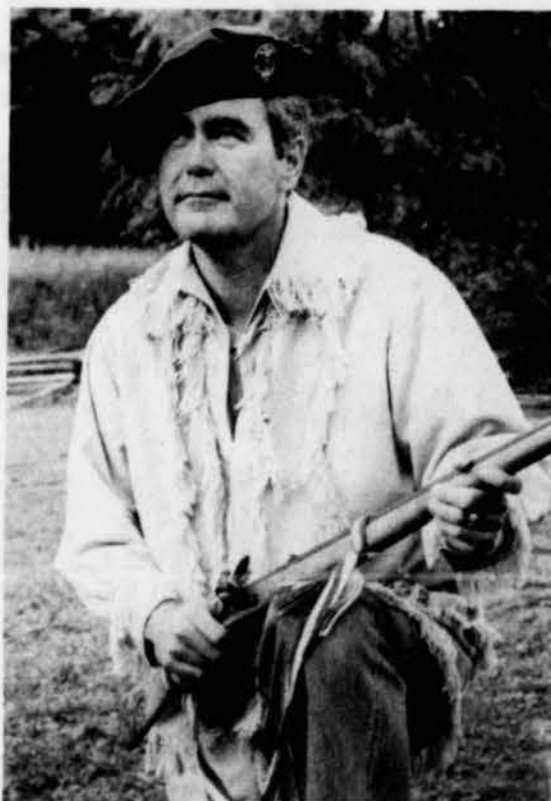
Except for dinner reservations on the evening of July 25, other reservations are recommended but not required. The dining area has limited seating and reservations should be made with Pricketts Fort before July 11. Seating will be held for Conservancy members only until July 11. Those who wish to pack a picnic dinner may eat at 6 p.m. in the Fort's picnic area.

The Sunday agenda is limited to a 9 a.m.

Board Meeting at the Elkinton's farm, half-way between Fairmont and Morgantown. Camping will be available at the Elkinton's, where Sunday breakfast will be provided for a nominal charge. For those requiring more creature comforts, a number of motels are available in the Morgantown-Fairmont area.

Pricketts Fort State Park is located two miles off I-79 at Exit 139, just north of Fairmont. The Elkinton's farm is located on Halleck Rd., off old Rt. 73, between Fairmont and Morgantown. Follow Halleck Rd. 1 and 1/2 miles and watch for signs. From the east, Halleck is found off Rt. 119. Proceed to the junction of Tom's Run Rd. and then watch for the signs.

Additional information on Pricketts Fort may be obtained by calling TOLL FREE 1-800-CALL-WVA and asking for Pricketts Fort. This number is available to both in-state and out-of-state callers.



Jim Doyle is "David Morgan" in Pricketts Fort outdoor musical drama.

## Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT:** John Purbaugh  
Box 2502 Dudden Fork, Kenna, WV 25248 (988-9024)  
**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT:** David Elkinton  
Route 5, Box 228-A, Morgantown, WV 26505 (296-0565)  
**VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE AFFAIRS:** (vacant)  
**VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS:** Scott Martin  
320 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, DC 2002 (202/547-7200 W, 202/543-7173)  
**SECRETARY:** Mary Lou Newberger  
Box 89, Looneyville, WV 25259 (565-4415)  
**TREASURER:** Tom Michael  
Route 2, Box 217, Lost Creek, WV 26385 (623-3447)

### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

(Terms expire October 1987)

Geoff Green: Rt. 1, Box 79-A, Burlington, WV 26710 (289-3565)  
Sayre Rodman: 32 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, PA 15139 (412/828-8983)  
Skip Deegans: Box 564, Lewisburg, WV 24901 (645-6028) Washington, DC (202-265-9337)  
Perry Bryant: 236 South High Street, Morgantown, WV 26505 (291-1465)  
Jim Van Gundy: 240 Boundary Avenue, Elkins, WV 26241 (636-4736)

### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

(Terms expire October 1988)

William P. McNeel: 1118 Second Avenue, Marlinton, WV 24954 (799-4369)  
Cindy Rank: Rt. 1, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234 (924-5802)  
Anne Gentry, 6440-A Starlite Dr., Sissonville, WV 25310 (988-1109, 984-0065(day))  
John McFerrin: 1105 Tinder Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302 (345-5646)

### ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS

**KANAWHA TRAIL CLUB:** Charles Carlson  
Box 131, Charleston, WV 25321 (343-2056)  
**NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY:** Virginia Region: Martin DiLeggi  
Route 1, Box 233-A, Alderson, WV 24910 304-445-7508 (Home)  
**POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB:** Jeannette Fitzwilliams  
13 W. Maple Street, Alexandria, VA 22301 (703/548-7490)  
**PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS:** Jean Rodman  
32 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, PA 15139 (412/828-8983)  
**W. VA. COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED:** Don Brannon  
P.O. Box 38, Charlton Heights, WV 25040 (799-2476)  
**W. VA. MOUNTAIN STREAM MONITORS PROJECT:** Milton Zelermyer  
723 College Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505 (296-6289)  
**KANAWHA VALLEY CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED:** Jim Stout  
P.O. Box 5189, Charleston, WV 25311 (755-9576)  
**BROOKS BIRD CLUB:** Mary Moore Rieffenberger  
Rt. 1, Box 523, Elkins, WV 26241 (636-4559)  
**KYOVA CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED:** Frank Akers  
1601 Sycamore St., Kenova, WV 25530 (453-1494)  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WEST VIRGINIA:** Anne Romance  
Rt. 1, Box 150-F, Bristol, WV 26332 (783-5271)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**WVHC ENDOWMENT FUND:** Vacant  
**CANAAN VALLEY COMMITTEE:** Linda Cooper Elkinton  
Rt. 5, Box 228-A, Morgantown, WV 26505 (296-0565)  
**MINING COMMITTEE:** John McFerrin  
1105 Tinder Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302 (345-5646)  
**PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:** Sayre Rodman  
32 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, PA 15139 (412/828-8983)  
and Donna Borders, 924 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954  
**RIVER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:** Anne Gentry  
6440-A Starlite Drive, Sissonville, WV 25320 (988-1109)  
**PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:** W. E. "Skip" Deegans  
Box 564, Lewisburg, WV 24901 (645-1656)  
**MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** Mary Ratliff  
Suite 201, 1206 Virginia St., East, Charleston, WV 25301  
**AIR/WATER TOXICS:** Kim Taylor, 1420 Lee St., Charleston, WV 25301

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Adrienne Worthy, **Membership Secretary**  
Suite 201, 1206 Virginia Street, East  
Charleston, WV 25301  
(304) 343-2767

Gary Worthington, **Voice Editor**  
118 Clark Avenue  
Fayetteville, WV 25840  
(304) 574-0540

## Guidelines For Articles & Letters To The Editor

The Voice welcomes any well-researched article or editorial on areas of concern, for example, river conservation, public land management, mining, Canaan Valley. General articles on outdoor activities—canoeing, hiking, caving, climbing—or on unusual places or special outdoor events are also needed. All submissions are subject to editing. To assure accuracy in the printing of these articles, the following guidelines have been established:

- 1.) Whenever possible, articles should be typed, double spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper, with at least one-inch margins on each side. If the submission is not typed, the author should use lined paper and write legibly on every other line.
- 2.) Each article should be accompanied by the author's name, address, and telephone number. (Address and telephone numbers will not be printed with the article, but are needed so that the editor may contact the author for additional information, if necessary.) If the article is more than one page, the author's last name should be placed under the page number on each page.
- 3.) Photographs related to the article are greatly appreciated. Black and white photographs reproduce best, but color photos can be used. Photographs will be returned, if the author requests them.
- 4.) The deadline for each issue of the Voice is the last Friday of each month.

The Voice also welcomes letters to the editor expressing views on any of the topics covered in previous issues or on other environmental concerns. Letters to the editor should follow the guidelines for articles.

# JOIN THE WVHC TODAY



# COMMENTARY

## Living With The Land

by Robert Stough

### Authors Preface:

Some of those who peruse this article may quite properly question its relevance to what they, and I as well, consider the principle work of the WVHC, that of reporting and acting upon the various political and economic threats to the natural integrity of the highlands, as they actually manifest themselves. I believe, however, that it should not require any dilution of those efforts to address such problems which are of a primarily personal and cultural nature, for they form the first link in the chain of causality which ends in the degradation of the earth.

Last year I wrote in general philosophical terms of the bioregional movement as it has been developing here in North America, and of the obvious necessity for our culture to strike an ecological balance between our perceived needs and those of this earth which sustains us, so that it may continue to do so in the future. Bioregionalism, however, is not simply an intellectual concept to be thrown into the mill as grist for academicians and moralists. It is a way of living here and now, and open to all, that is based not only on altruism but, as the businessmen say, 'enlightened self-interest'. It is rooted in the belief that those things which are truly important in determining the quality and value of a human life are not the quantity of one's material possessions but the bonds of love and care for one's family, friends and community, and that those relationships are inextricably connected to the ecological health of the bioregion in which we live. Few if any of us have not seen our families

separated, or our friends scattered helter-skelter, or our communities broken down by the hard realities of modern life. Most of us, however much we may have disliked them, have assumed that these were indeed immutable realities, and that no other course was possible other than to be blown about by the capricious winds of our economic system. This assumption has inevitably spawned the apparently widespread feeling that little or nothing can be done, and that therefore one should concentrate all of one's efforts on acquiring the maximum amount of financial and material wealth so as to supposedly make one's life bearable in a hostile world. I realize that there are many heartening exceptions to this general statement, and I would further assert that there are few among us who do not sincerely wish that all people could live in a spirit of cooperation and friendship, but because we do not believe such a thing is possible, or that we could make any significant contribution to it, we then focus our efforts in ever more selfish ways, acquiring ever more material possessions often at the expense of meaningful and satisfying relationships with family, friends, and the land itself.

It is precisely because we have gorged ourselves on materialism and yet found it ultimately un nourishing that bioregionalism has begun to sprout and grow, for it places the highest value on those things which money cannot buy, and yet, because it is rooted in traditional values, it is acutely sensitive to our need to sustain ourselves in reasonable comfort and security. This may

seem to differ little from strictly humanist ideals, but what sets bioregionalism apart is its concern for all living things, and its bedrock conviction that the health of the human resources of the bioregion is fundamentally dependent on the health of the natural resources, and that therefore a balance must be struck to the benefit of both. To those who would contend that such a goal is impossibly idealistic, we need only point to the processes of nature herself, that from a seed the size of your little fingernail a pine tree may grow 150 ft. tall and live for hundreds of years.

We of this time and place, of course, will not live to see, as it were, a climax forest, but it is for us to plant the seeds, not only through our words but by the way we live our lives, by the example we set for others that it is not only possible to have a satisfying life by conservation and cooperation but that it is in fact the best way to do so. Each one of us, no matter who we are or where we live or what we do for a living, can make a contribution to this cause. And the contributions that each responsible person makes, however small and trivial they may seem, are the only way we will ever succeed, for no matter how vital the legal and political work we engage in for the moment, in the long run it is the hearts and minds of our friends and neighbors that will make the difference, because it is not corporate machinations that are leading us to ruin, but our compliance with them. Thus the health of our bioregion does not ultimately depend on any government or business. It depends on us, and it depends most particularly on our

coming to the understanding that a truly good life is not possible by abusing the earth: it is only possible by living our lives, day by day, with attention and devotion to the needs of a healthy ecological community.

I have presumed to list below a few things that virtually all of us can do to help this cause, but the reader should always keep in mind that you yourself must provide the primary initiative. There are very few aspects of modern life, anyone's life, that cannot be held to task in this matter.

\* Buy the smallest, most fuel-efficient vehicle you can use, and maintain it properly. There is no aspect of our urban monoculture that has proven as environmentally destructive and culturally debilitating as our obsession with motor vehicles. And for most of us controlling our wasteful driving habits is the single most useful thing we can do to help our cause, not to mention saving ourselves a great deal of money. Almost all vehicles of decent quality that are driven in a reasonably careful fashion are capable of 150 to 200,000 miles without major drivetrain failure just by doing frequent oil changes and tune-ups and keeping rust under control.

\* If you invest in the stock market take pains to find out whether or not the company or any of its subsidiaries you're investing in is involved in exploiting or polluting the earth for its own (and your) short-term profit. A good example would be any corporation, and there are quite a few, profiting from the

(continued on page 4)

## Acid Rain Control Status

by Don Gasper

It is not expected that the Reagan Administration will do much about controlling acid rain, though the President told the Canadians two years ago, "The U.S. will not export pollution - we are good neighbors."

In January, three bills that have long awaited action, that would reauthorize The Clean-air Act to control sulfur emissions and reduce acid rain were introduced in the U.S. Senate. If enacted the provisions of these bills would cut sulfur emissions in half in ten years. While the House may actually pass such a bill, senate sponsors note that similar legislation has been stalled for five years. In this long interim, additional studies have consistently confirmed that coal burning electric power stations are the main source of sulfur emissions that cause acid rain and that acid rain endangers fisheries, soils, and crops including forests. Clearly it is more important than ever that this act is passed and the clean-up started.

From 1980 to 1984, sulfur emissions were reduced 2%, while power production went up 17%. Nearly 75% of the reduction can be attributed to burning more low sulfur coal and to the use of smoke-stack cleaning units. The remaining 25% reduction is due to the start-up of clean-burning, new plants. In a May 1987 update, the National Coal Association reported that sulfur emissions from 1980-1986 were down 4.5% and coal use was up 26%. Further sulfur reduction can be expected, but a crash clean-up schedule is needed now.

Senator Byrd has been responsible for stalling these needed controls because, for a time, he thought many jobs in the high-sulfur coal fields would be lost. Many of his news releases stated that clean-up action was not warranted because it was too expensive and more studies on acid rain needed to be done before decisive action was taken. More studies were done that provided overwhelming evidence that sulfur emissions cause acid rain, that it was terribly harmful, and that sulfur emission controls would be effective in reducing it.

Senator Byrd, himself, about two years ago told the Coal Association that they had to change their entrenched opposition. It really was no longer respectable. Now Byrd

has revealed a new stalling tactic. He is not likely to permit the Clean-air Act to be brought to a vote in the Senate, but he has obtained a half billion dollar, three year research program to develop new ways to burn coal cleanly, and more economically. The results, he states, would not be in place until after the mid 1990's. The President's \$5 billion program of research on ways to reduce sulfur emissions can be dragged on in the same fashion. In the meantime, Byrd and all those who have delayed a clean-up can hope our watersheds will not be damaged by the enormous amount of acid deposition - building up year after year for 30 to 40 years now. The scientists who know most about it say acidification and nutrient impoverishment are already taking place... that controls are needed now... that we are doing permanent damage now.

There exists proven "scrubbing" devices for smoke-stacks that are 95% effective in removing sulfur emissions. The American Coal Industry has always claimed they were too costly. They inflated the scrubber's real cost. They spent millions on publicity so they would not have to install them. Scrubbers have always been used everywhere in Japan, and the Japanese can surely compete. The citizens of the Eastern United States have always, when polled, said they were willing to pay, over 75% of them did, to clean-up the air and protect our waters and forests - our structures and ourselves.

In order to stall further, opponents of a clean-up now claim this clean-up schedule does not give them time to develop new clean-coal technology. Actually, the passage of The Clean-air Act would ensure that the Coal Industry would pursue vigorously all methods to burn coal cleanly, because of the clean-up schedule, which requires some implementation in three to five years after passage. With the old "more research is needed" argument discredited, opponents are now turning to the argument that the sulfur controls in The Clean-air Act will "block clean-coal technology." The president of American Electric Power said the industry does not have the money to undertake a "crash emission-reduction program" and develop more advanced

clean-coal technology. Yet, this is easily recognized as another delaying tactic, and much of this cost is available from President Reagan's promised Federal Program and from the half-billion that Senator Byrd has secured for it. Additionally, again, citizens of the eastern United States have repeatedly said they will pay for it.

Senator Glenn proposes simply that the coal powered electricity users in the eastern United States be given the opportunity to pay more on their power bill to generate a "super-fund" to be spent as needed on these smoke-stacks. If a stack was burning high sulfur coal and had a great amount of emissions, power companies would just put a bigger cleaner on it. There would be no switching to low sulfur coal and no job dislocations.

The "Crash Emission-Reduction Program" the American Electric Power president referred to is not a crash program. Many scientists have noted that for the most sensitive (easily acidified) areas, this schedule may not be enough. Recent studies suggest this ever more strongly.

In the past, the United States and Canada every four years or so prepared a status report on "Acid Rain." In November 1986, Canada alone put out this report, which further confirms stream and lake acidification in the United States and Canada, and states that watershed nutrient impoverishment should remain a great concern. It links sulfur sources with areas downwind that are deposition areas, and leaves little doubt that sulfur emission controls will reduce acid rain. This report is an important recent summary of all aspects of the problem.

West Virginia, just downwind from 1/3 of the sulfur emission in the entire United States, gets 1/3 more acid rain than the Adirondacks get. West Virginia gets 50 lbs/ac/yr as sulphuric acid - year after year. Over 1/4 of West Virginia's trout fishing heritage is at risk (from permanent loss) from this present enormous level of acid rain. When washed with a reagent, soils now ten times more acid than 40 years ago, are leached of their nutrients, leaving them and waters and forests more impoverished. Prompt and effective sulfur emission reductions are necessary now.



# Mountain Biking



**Back roads with rough surfaces discourage many bicyclists but provide havens for those who enjoy low-g geared, fat-tire mountain bikes.**

"If any place could be described as having been created as a haven for mountain bicycles, that place is Pocahontas County," claims Gil Willis, owner and operator of the Elk River Touring Center.

The mountain bike is a blend of the old fat-tire bicycle and the modern many-g geared, skinny-tire touring bike. The tires on the mountain bike are 2½ inches wide and have nubs on them to provide better traction. Willis says the wider tires act like shock absorbers, giving a more comfortable ride even on a hard-surfaced road. In addition, a heavier frame and a long wheel base give these bikes a greater stability. Willis points out, "They're built for cruising and sight-seeing, not for speed."

A bicycle needs to have a minimum of 15 gears to be classified as a mountain bike.

Many bikes have 18, says Willis, and if the rider shifts into the bottom gear, the "granny" gear, he or she just might be able to ride the bike up a flight of stairs.

The abandoned railroad grades and logging roads left by the timber industry in the Pocahontas County area now make excellent paths for mountain bikes. In addition, the nearby Greenbrier River Trail provides challenges for the beginner. The 75-mile former railroad grade is fairly level and has a surface of packed gravel. "It's not difficult on this trail to peddle along at a 6-mile-per-hour pace and enjoy the countryside," says Willis.

Willis also points out that the Forest Service has acquired an abandoned railroad grade along the West Fork of the Greenbrier River and has plans to pull up the ties and

convert the rail bed to a trail. "This old grade should make a great mountain bike path," says Willis. "It runs along a section of the Greenbrier that has been proposed as a federal wild river and should offer bikers an unusual experience." The Forest Service has begun work on the trail and it should be opened sometime in July.

For the experienced bikers who want to continue to use their narrow-tire multi-speeds, Willis recommends a trip on the Highland Scenic Highway. This federal road is wider than many of West Virginia's highways and has a good surface with flat, smooth shoulders. Trucks are prohibited on this 19-mile route that runs between Cranberry Glades and U.S. 219 north of Edray.

And, Willis says, there are a number of long challenging climbs.

The Elk River Touring Center is also hosting the 5th annual mountain bike festival from July 8-12 in Slatyfork. The festival, formerly called Mountain Bikes in the Mountain State, is now labeled The West Virginia Fat Tire Festival. Activities include informal bike tours through the Highlands; a ride up Bald Knob on the Cass Scenic Railroad and a mountain bike ride back; races, including one for children 12 and under; and live music and camping.

For more information about the festival and mountain biking, the reader may contact the Elk River Touring Center, Slatyfork, WV 26291; phone: (304) 572-3771.



**Mountain biking is making a big splash in West Virginia. Gil Willis of Elk River Touring Center reports that the number of people using bicycles on trails is increasing and that nationwide fat-tire bikes constitute nearly 50% of all bicycle sales.**

## Reaction to Rivers Bill

(continued from page 1)

first of all a fisherman, and I don't want New River flows tampered with. Claytor Lake releases already cause enough of an up-and-down effect on the river."

Claytor Lake, which is backed up by a dam on the New River in Virginia, ponds water for a hydroelectric generating facility. Since it is a peak power generating facility, its releases into the New River are uneven. Bluestone Reservoir is kept at a fairly constant level, and as the releases from Claytor reach Bluestone, they are in turn passed on to the New River below Bluestone Dam. The surges of water from

Claytor may result in daily changes in river levels below Bluestone Dam of up to two feet or more.

Another professional fishing guide, Jim Richmond of Appalachian Outdoor Adventures, says, "Who knows what will happen. Maybe a study will show that a constant release of 2-3000 cubic feet per second will be ideal for fishing. But where is that water going to come from? Then Bluestone Lake will have to be raised to make sure there's enough water for that much of a release and then the lake level will fluctuate drastically." He points out that no matter what happens, some group is going to be unhappy, so why not

leave things as they are. "There are 20 or so whitewater outfitters operating under the current conditions, so they must be doing all right. And the fishing is good now. Why tamper with it?"

Both fishermen agree that the provision for allowing the spraying of Bti for black fly control should be dropped from the bill. The black fly is an important link in the New River food chain, and any reduction in its population may result in a reduction of fish in New River. Simms says, "Sure the flies can be a nuisance, but you just can't go around eliminating everything that bothers you."

## Living with the land (continued from page 3)

destruction of the tropical rain forests. This may take some doing on your part, and you may perhaps have to settle for a more modest return from a more responsible company, but if you are truly a friend of the earth, no other course is possible.

\* If you have even a small plot of arable land, grow some of your own food. This is not only a healthful thing to do but also means you will be that much less dependent on noxious pesticides, profiteering middlemen and government regulators, and perhaps most important you will learn what it really means to give of yourself to the earth, and harvest its bounty in return. Try also to use as much as you can food produced here in the Central Appalachians. This will not only benefit the local economy but will help to discourage the wasting of fuel and pollution of the atmosphere we indulge in by transporting foodstuffs all over the country. One of the primary principals of bioregionalism

is the achievement of the highest possible degree of agricultural self-sufficiency.

\* Nearly all of us could substantially reduce our consumption of generated energy with not only no decrease in the quality of our lives but a considerable improvement in them. This is because we have ourselves become slaves to cheap energy (though in terms of environmental destruction it is proving to be hellishly expensive), and in thinking that so long as we can afford it we may as well use it, we have inundated ourselves with 'labor-saving' devices and electronic amusements that have been subtly eroding our fundamental values of work and responsibility and stifling the creative gifts within us (whose vigorous use has always been the major determinant of spiritual and physical well-being) for an evermore vicarious existence which ultimately becomes mere existence. An interesting and meaning-

ful life is never an easy one.

\* Each of us must define for ourselves what are their true material needs as opposed to their spurious, transient, often sociologically generated 'needs' the fulfillment of which frequently demands that we engage ourselves in work that is not only unsatisfying to us but which is grossly exploitive of our natural resources or obstructive to social harmony. The most important thing to remember is that it is up to you to decide. It is true that in conducting your affairs and defining your needs in terms of ecological responsibility you will find yourself firmly in the minority regarding many of our current political and economic debates. This may be viewed as unfortunate or even tragic but in reality is a matter of little concern, for as we see over and over again those people who concern themselves too much with the dictates of temporal fashion are consistently those who have the most unfulfilling lives.

When you know in your heart what is right and proper, and that doing so is its own reward, you know therefore that you do not act in vain.

\* There are, of course, as I said, a great many things that I have not mentioned (or even know about) that one can do to live in peace with the land, but then discovering those for oneself through active participation is one of the joys of being alive in this world. Nevertheless there is one thing we **must** do, all of us, and that is to defend and promote the cause of ecological harmony anywhere and in any way we can, especially the preservation of wild lands and rivers, for these contain the wisdom of the ages, but always remembering that self-righteousness (however 'right' we may be) invariably causes even greater cultural polarization, and that besides, no one has a lock on the whole truth about anything.