



THE HIGHLANDS VOICE



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Fall Board Meeting

By Sayre Rodman

John Purbaugh got the Annual Meeting started almost on time Sunday morning in the Cass Community Center, with a little help from the threat of rain outside.

Cindy Rank, the Nominating Committee chair, submitted this slate:

Directors-at-Large, terms expiring October 1989: Perry Bryant, Richard diPre-
toro, Geoff Green, Sayre Rodman, Jim
Van Gundy.

Directors-at-Large, terms expiring Octo-
ber 1988: Donna Borders, Kim Taylor.

Vice President for State Affairs: Ron
ShIPLEY.

Vice President for Federal Affairs: Skip
Deegans.

Secretary: Mary Lou Newberger.

In the absence of any other nominations,
the slate was affirmed without dissent.

Seventeen Board Members were present
for the Fall Meeting, but the records show
that Dave Elkinton was stirring apple butter
at Prickett's Fort.

The Board was pleased that Larry George,
who had resigned as Past President, has re-
claimed that position, ending the uncertainty
about Joe Rieffenberger's appointment as a
replacement.

The Conservancy's endowment fund, with
a cash value of \$25,000 or more, will be
chaired by Ann Spaner, a lawyer in the
Charleston Attorney General's office. Now
drawing interest in a bank account, the
fund may move into Ginnie Mae's, govern-
ment-backed pools of small mortgages widely
used for conservative investment. Members
talked of investing in mutual funds aimed
specifically toward "companies we'd like,"
but also of risks. This question was deferred,
as was the older issue of possible unaccepta-
ble donors.

Canaan Valley news was good. The
Supreme court had just let stand the Corps
of Engineers ban on a pumped storage lake,
on top of the valley's immense wetlands.
Linda Elkinton, who has been our effective
Canaan Valley chair from the start, said,
"The Power Project may be dead forever,"
to a round of applause. The board moved to
support wetland protection by permanent
EPA 404 (c) status. The WVHC will need
new people and funding to go on, and the
Board may hire someone to organize help.

Greenbrier River protection is seeing little
action, since its withdrawal from the Rivers

Bill (HR 900). The Forest Service will use a
consultant to study ways to protect the River
at local and state levels. The Board moved to
ask Senator Rockefeller to find ways to help
fund this work. Anne Gentry has withdrawn
as the chair of the Rivers Conservation
Committee.

Stonewall Jackson Dam issues, reported
in the September *Voice*, produced indigna-
tion. The Board passed a resolution object-
ing to "the resale of land, condemned from
its owners, to private interests, and also
objecting to any further condemnation.

The next edition of the Monongahela
National Forest Hiking Guide was covered
by Alan de Hart, the writer who is working
on it. He expects that a much updated 5th
edition will be ready later this winter. A com-
pletely revised and reformatted work, a 6th
edition, will also be started soon. Skip De-
gans will work out a royalty agreement with
Alan to cover his expenses.

Andrew Maier and Carol Osgood attend-
ed to represent Save Our Mountains and
discuss the MRS (nuclear waste concentra-
tion plant) rejected by Tennessee. The pos-
sibility of building such a facility might re-
surface in southern West Virginia.

Jim Van Gundy will chair a new Educa-
tion Committee, helped by Mary Moore
Rieffenberger and Donna Borders. They're
working with the Forest Service in Elkins to
set up some training sessions.

On other matters the Board renewed
WVHC support for the Buckhannon-Tygart
River Coalition concerning Enoxy Coal's
operations on the Buckhannon and opposed
the proposed permanent military airstrip
near the old Stony River damsite, just north
of Dolly Sods. State groundwater problems,
acid rain, and hunters carrying loaded guns
on the Greenbrier River Trail were also
discussed.

Adrienne Worthy, membership secre-
tary, reports about 650 members. She would
like to be replaced, preferably by someone
also near Charleston, soon.

The Board thanked Mary Moore Rief-
fenberger, Jim Van Gundy, and Jean Rod-
man for a successful Fall Review. Everyone
liked Cass enough to encourage having
the Spring Review there too. Hopefully
conditions will be better for canoeing in the
spring. The committee this time will be
Donna Borders, Martin DiLeggi, and Bill
McNeel, with Mary Moore helping again.

FALL REVIEW

By Jean Rodman

If you didn't get to this year's Fall Review, you missed a
good one. Many people stayed in the State Park cottages in
Cass, close to the building where we met. They provided, by
WVHC standards, elegant shelter.

The trees were in full color; there was a light dusting of
snow up on Bald Knob; the trains ran on time and were very
full.

The Shay Inn staff did the honors with our food. Nobody
could go away hungry. Even the vegetable-oriented had rice,
black beans, herbal tea, and honey. Alternates were chicken,
coffee cake, cheese cake, carrot cake, bacon, eggs - and on
and on. Even the brownbag lunch was given a lot of thought.
We couldn't have been more pleased.

There wasn't enough water in the Greenbrier to run a
canoe trip, but we hadn't really counted on that. We'd just
hoped. The sun didn't shine all the time, but then only a few
drops of rain fell, and those during the Sunday board
meeting.

Pail Wiegman, a WVU graduate and now Naturalist with
the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, gave the main Sat-
urday evening program: "Rare and Endangered Species." Although he works for a Pennsylvania group, we share lots
of species, and he titled his slides and talk down across the
state line. We didn't just see pretty flowers and habitats with
names. We heard careful discussion of why these species live
where they do, and not elsewhere; of what the future may
hold for them, and what might be done.

With a November election looming, it was a departure for
the WVHC to have not a political speaker, but instead a
technical man with whom we could relax and agree. People
smiled. (more on the Fall Review on page 3.)



**Jim VanGundy, Mary Moore Rieffenberger, and
Jean Rodman were in charge of making the
arrangements to have the Fall Review at Cass.
They did an excellent job.**

Conservancy Education Committee Appointed

By Jim Van Gundy

As a result of discussions held during and following the
summer Board meeting, President John Purbaugh has
appointed an Education Committee of the Conservancy.
While the Committee has not yet developed a formal
agenda, it will be meeting within the next month to begin to
define its mission and to assess the needs of the organization
in this area.

Several suggestions have arisen from the preliminary dis-
cussions that have been held. The Committee is currently
considering the possibility of a workshop for members of the
Public Lands Committee involving staff members of the
Monongahela National Forest and West Virginia Depart-
ment of Natural Resources. If successful, this type of activity
might be extended to other Committees as appropriate or to
other interested members of the Conservancy during the
Spring and Fall review weekends.

Another suggestion that is currently under consideration
is to produce a series of briefing papers on issues of concern
to the Conservancy which could be distributed upon request
to interested citizens, government officials, or newspapers.

The Committee solicits suggestions from the readers of
the *VOICE* as to how it might help to better inform our own
membership as well as others as to the significant issues
dealing with the quality of the West Virginia environment.
Comments or suggestions may be sent to Jim Van Gundy,
Mary Moore Rieffenberger, or Donna Borders.

Mountain View

State Parks, Commerce, and The Private \$

By John Purbaugh

Emotions are at a near-fever pitch in Morgantown, where the state Department of Commerce has proposed allowing a private developer to build a cable car, restaurant and amusement park complex in nearby Coopers Rock State Forest. This is the first big project by private recreational developers on state lands, under a new statute passed last year by the legislature, and it well illustrates the old maxim that you can't legislate taste, morality or common sense.

There's nothing inherently wrong in the basic concept of allowing controlled private investment at state recreational facilities. Concessions for food service and souvenir shops have long been a part of the parks scene, and privately financed lodges are relatively common even in some of the bigger national parks. Private investment is one way to improve park facilities while helping the drain on the state's finances. However, it's just plain stupid to have the first big public test of this concept occur on a proposal including the words "amusement park" and "water slides."

A review of the proposal for this development discloses that the private developer's offer to finance this project is contingent on the State acquiring twenty-five acres of private land across from Coopers Rock, on which the developer would have the exclusive option to develop "other" attraction, recreation and amusement facilities, such as water slides, theme parks . . ." The State would also be required to advertise these facilities on highway signs and in brochures. I can see it now: a new brochure, probably printed in Ohio, featuring a lime green, seven track, five story water slide against the scenic backdrop of autumn colors. This would probably be enough to cause some to suffer willingly the hairpin curves of US 50 east as a more pleasant alternative to route 48.

Contrast with this garish scenario another major hope for private development in state parks: the completion of Cass as a restored lumber company town. There, the theme for development is clearly defined by the existing context of forestry, logging, and historical preservation. DNR has already restored several company houses for use as recreational cabins, and the board sidewalks and white picket fences, the wail of the steam locomotive's whistle, the fall colors and the Greenbrier river provide a perfectly harmonious family recreational experience. This picture can only be helped by privately-financed restoration of more houses and the old school and church, all done to state specifications to preserve the historical setting. As is apparent by now, I'm a big fan of Cass, and don't want that project stymied by a bad-taste reaction to the Coopers Rock proposal.

Though taste or common sense can't be legislated, legislation can relocate the control of such decisions back in DNR, where the traditional focus on family recreation in an essentially natural environment would be exercised. Commerce seems in danger of applying beach boardwalk, lounge lizard judgment to private development in state parks and forests. Also, DNR has a more developed sense of the need for meaningful public involvement in such decisions, especially after they were discovered two years ago, pants around their ankles, in secret decisions to trade Mont Chateau State Park for a parcel needed to complete Holy River State Park. Commerce has done a good job in enhanced promotion of the state's recreational beauty. Maybe we should expect that the good salesman values his commission over the quality of the product, and know to let the DNR professionals control decisions on the design of our "product," outdoor recreation.

Christmas Bird Counts - A Personal View

by Gary Worthington

This year the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count will be held between December 19, 1987, and January 3, 1988. Even though the fee for participating in each count has gone up to \$4, I'll probably play on four or five counts. I use the term "play" because for me that is the appeal of the Christmas censuses: they are as highly organized a sport as a baseball, basketball, or football game and to play on one or more is as exciting as participating in any other contest.

The census area is a circle with a 7 and 1/2 mile radius, nearly 177 square miles. The participants are divided into teams, called parties, to cover one section of the total area. To play on a census count team, one does not have to be an all-star bird watcher. Mainly what the player needs to have is an interest in birds and a willingness to play by the rules. On most counts, there are enough skilled watchers to place one or more with less skillful players in order to assure that the birds reported at the end of the day were actually seen.

The Audubon Society maintains that these censuses can provide the raw scientific data for any number of bird studies. The informa-

tion gathered is printed in the 500-page Christmas Bird Count issue of **American Birds** published by the Audubon Society. Robert Arbib, for years the editor of the Christmas count issue, listed some of the possibilities:

studies revealing population increases, decreases, or shifts for many species, the effects of severe winters or weather-related phenomena, early winter incursions or irruptions, the boundaries of winter ranges and the distribution of populations, trends in half-hardy lingerers and late migrants, the long-range effects of habitat changes such as marsh drainage, plant succession, or industrial development on the numbers and variety of species.

All of that may be true, but even Arbib referred to the scientific data as a byproduct of the friendly competition.

The birder on a Christmas count has a chance to show off his or her skills or to sharpen them in the company of a better birder. What impresses most observers is another's quick yet accurate identification.

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Occasionally the quest for being the first to identify a bird can be embarrassing. On a Charleston count, one of the observers shushed the group and said, "Listen. Off in the distance. A screech owl." Immediately the rest of us quieted down and faced the direction the first-to-identify was pointing. And sure enough, with hands cupped behind ears, we caught a high-pitched sound, but as the sound became more distinct, the redder became the face of the first-to-identify, for what we heard was a, by then, clear "cock-a-doodle-do."

Owls not only produce weird sounds, but they can take on fantastic disguises. While zipping along a four-lane section of Route 19 on an Oak Hill count, one of our party

members shouted, "Stop. There's an owl up that hollow." We went from 55 to 0 in 12 seconds and backed up along the shoulder to catch not a glimpse of a fleeing owl, but of a somewhat tattered wasp's nest swaying over the opening. Cankers, conks, and mushrooms have also caused many a near miss.

My favorite misidentification belongs in the hawk family however. We were winding our way slowly along through farm country when the observer cried out, "There's a hawk in the pasture to the left." Giving detailed directions so others can sight the elusive prey is also a welcome skill. "Where is it?" we all asked. "There. It's down on the ground and it has something in its talons."

(continued on page 8)

"Rare and Endangered Species" - Pennsylvania's Approach

The Saturday evening meeting of the WVHC Fall Review opened with John Purbaugh's giving a brief report on the West Virginia Ground Water Conference he attended. He pointed out that 90% of non-municipal water comes from well and that the State has no standards for ground water. Banks, he said, are beginning to require evidence of safe drinking water as a condition for granting a house buyer a loan.

Paul Wiegman, Director of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and a botanist, was the evening's main speaker. He presented a slide talk on "Rare and Endangered Species" along with a discussion of what the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is doing to protect Pennsylvania's land and plants.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has a program, the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI), similar to the West Virginia Heritage Program. The PNDI program is designed to locate and protect Pennsylvania's endangered, threatened, and rare native plants, animals, natural communities, and geologic features. Since 1980, PNDI researchers have gathered valuable data on 421 species of plants, 50 birds, 37 mammals, 13 reptiles, 5 amphibians, 68 fish, and 197 invertebrates of special concern in Pennsylvania. This information has been supplemented with data on 70 natural communities and 13 geologic features. The researchers even look up old (50, 100, 200-year old) records of plant sightings and then go out to try to find their present status.

In all, over 6,000 records have been entered into a computerized central data-

base for storage and rapid retrieval. Through a network of terminals, this information is available to Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Bureaus in Harrisburg and at the regional offices. State agencies like the DER can use the database when reviewing permit applications for surface mining, artificial lakes, oil and gas drilling, or other developments that could impact species or sites of special concern. The information is available for agencies to make a decision at the time of the application, not after a bulldozer is already on the ground.

Another benefit of the database is that it helps the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in determining acquisition priorities for important natural areas. Private industry too can use the data to determine sites to avoid in making development plans. PNDI is also a valuable tool for alerting public and private land managers to the presence of rare species on their properties.

In his slide show, Wiegman concentrated on plants that are common to the two states. He also mentioned that some of the rarest plants in the world are found in West Virginia. Among them are *Marshallia grandiflora* or *Barbar's Buttons* and *Spirea virginiana*, which are found along the Gauley River. Another is *Euphorbia purpurea* or *Glade Spurge* found in a cow pasture in Randolph County, West Virginia.

West Virginia and Virginia have the finest shale barrens in the world. There is an interesting group of plants which grow only here. The surface temperature reaches 140 degrees



Paul Wiegman, director of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, sets up the slides for his "Endangered Species" talk.

in the summer and prevents most seedlings of the surrounding vegetation from developing and resulting in limited plant diversity.

Wiegman also pointed out that the introduction and re-introduction of plants is a problem. A gene pool is being spread where it never was before. This may create aggressive plants, such as the multiflora rose, Japa-

nese honeysuckle, and phragmites.

As a society, Wiegman said, we are not recognizing plants as being important to save. The Federal government is holding back on proclaiming plants endangered. Perhaps the reason is that we, as a society, see animals as belonging to the government but plants as belonging to individuals.

Fall Review Features Train Excursion

by Jim VanGundy

For a number of the participants at the recent Fall Review held at the Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, the traditional fall hike was replaced by a train trip up Back Allegheny mountain to view the fall foliage from the relative comfort of a converted log car pulled by a pair of gear-driven Shay locomotives.

The eleven miles of track that are currently in use are part of a far more extensive system, constructed in 1902, that was used to haul over two billion board feet of timber out of the Shavers Fork and Greenbrier Valleys to the mill at Cass. The line is now used to haul tourists from the village of Cass to the top of Bald Knob, at 4842 feet elevation the highest point on Back Allegheny mountain and the second highest point in the state.

The four-hour trip to the top affords some spectacular views of both the upper Shavers Fork valley and the

Greenbrier River and Deer Creek valleys, and passes through dense mixed hardwoods on the lower slopes giving way to yellow Birch, Mountain Holly, Mountain Ash, and finally to Red Spruce stands at the higher elevations.

For those interested in geology, there is a fine view of incipient stream capture where the railroad passes along the saddle between the Shavers Fork and Leatherbark Creek drainages. Leatherbark Creek passes within 1200 feet of Shavers Fork but is nearly 300 feet lower at the point of closest approach. With its far steeper gradient, Leatherbark Creek is sure to eat back into the Shavers Fork valley and capture the headwater tributaries of that river in the not too far distant geological future.

For those who have less time to spend, the Railroad offers a shorter trip to Whittaker Station that only takes 2 hours. While this trip is less time consuming and somewhat less

expensive, it never gets you off of the lower slopes and so does not offer some of the fine higher views that are the highlight of the longer trip.

While the trip is a delight in most respects, two caveats are perhaps in order. First, cinders in the eye are a real hazard for those in the cars nearest to the locomotives and secondly, the trip is probably best avoided on peak fall foliage weekends when 600 people or more may be crowded onto the train. On the Fall Review weekend the train was sufficiently full that you had the choice of a seat or a view, but having both was not an option.

Overall, the trip is well worth the modest cost and in spite of the airborne particulates and the sulfur oxides, a Shay engine building up a head of steam for a run at a 10 percent rail grade is a thing of beauty.

Forest Loses Familiar Rock Formation

The Gendarme, a well known rock formation on the ridge of Seneca Rocks, fell at 3:27 PM on Thursday, October 22. It had a very narrow base and several cracks in the main formation, but had stood in place through high winds and frost until now.

Three Forest Service employees and two school children in the Seneca Rocks Elementary School yard witnessed the crash. Two climbers on a parallel route to the Gendarme also saw the fall. They said 90% of the column fell forward, while 10% went on the back side of Seneca Rocks. Apparently the Gendarme column stayed intact until it hit the second of two rock ledges. A large crash was reported as the rock fell and scraped against the rocks below it, followed by a dust cloud which lingered for five minutes or so. Trees were sheared off as the 25-foot high rock fell down the main face of Seneca

Rocks. The Gendarme broke into many pieces, none of which reached the West Side Trail at the base of the rocks.

While there were a number of climbers on the face of Seneca Rocks at the time of the fall, no one was reported missing or injured. Monongahela National Forest Supervisor Jim Page stresses the need for climbers to check in with the climbing shop in the town of Seneca Rocks before attempting to climb the rocks themselves. A large amount of rubble from the fragmented Gendarme is lying loose on climbing routes, so climbers need to use the utmost caution.

Page emphasized that the rock fall appears to have been a natural phenomenon, and that there is no evidence at all of any explosion. "We're sad to lose a distinctive rock formation, but very happy that there are no reported injuries," said Page.

Mark Your Calendar

The Winter Meeting of the
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Is Set For

January 17, 1988
at West Virginia Wesleyan College
in Buckhannon



From "RE-SOURCES"

Peters Mountain — Butterflies, Birds, and Other Beasts

by
Doug Wood

The Kanawha Trail Club (KTC) maintains a 20.7 mile section of the Appalachian Trail (AT) from New River near Pearisburg north to Stony Creek. The major portion of this section travels the rugged crest of Peters Mtn. where it passes through oak-hickory, northern hardwood, and cove hardwood forest types and through two magnificent balds. One of these balds, Wills Field, is the subject of biological research being conducted by members of the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association (WVSTA) and the KTC.

In the summer of 1986 Professor Mary Etta Hight of Marshall University brought her students to Sugar Camp Farm (see companion article for information on the farm) along with employees of the Mammalogy Department of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to survey the mammals of Monroe County in the vicinity of the farm. From this effort grew interest among the two Trail Clubs' members in conducting a similar survey of Wills Field, also known as Symms Gap Meadow. At the same time, members were planning to assist the Insect Migration Foundation in its research of the migration of monarch butterflies between eastern North America and the Sierra Transvolcanica (Transvolcanic Mtns.) of Mexico.

As plans were being made for surveying the mammals and tagging butterflies at Wills Field, other volunteers with interest and expertise in botany and birds offered their assistance. Before long a handful of volunteers were conducting a first-effort biological survey of the bald. Information gained from this ongoing effort will assist the KTC in making management decisions regarding the open areas through which the AT passes on Peters Mtn. Additionally this information may be useful to other AT maintaining clubs which must deal with the open-areas management issue.



John Northeimer, geologist by training, traditional furniture maker by avocation, and butterfly enthusiast, volunteers his time to catalog the butterflies that use Wills Field.



Wills Field, atop Peters Mountain, is a good place to pause and enjoy the view.

Peters Mtn. is an interesting place. Politically, it serves as much of the boundary between Monroe Co., WV and Giles and Craig Cos., VA. Geologically, it is the part of the St. Clair thrust-fault capped by the resistant Tuscarora Sandstone (the same formation which makes up Seneca Rocks). Historically, it is the mountain from which many historians believe the Batts and Fallam South-Sea-discovery-expedition sent out by Col. Abraham Wood for the British crown in 1671 caught their first glimpse of the New River Valley. Topographically it is a prominent ridge running almost 50 miles northeastward from New River to Jackson River and rising almost 2000 feet in less than 1 mile of horizontal distance from the valley floor at its base on the northwestern side of the mountain.

It is this abrupt rise of the mountain's northwestern slope which causes the summer's westerly winds to rocket skyward in powerful updrafts. Add to this the fast-rising, heated air boiling up from the sun-baked fields on the valley floor in August and September and you have all the elements necessary to provide winged creatures with easy soaring during the day from late morning until early evening. Throw in a defunct fire observation tower at Hanging Rock atop of the mountain and you have a great place to observe hawk migrations.

The Handlan Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club realized this, so with some assistance from the Blacksburg District of Jefferson National Forest, their volunteers refurbished the tower to facilitate their raptor migration studies. Add to this mix the open areas scattered along the crest of Peters Mtn. sprinkled with milkweeds and wildflowers and you have a fine recipe for the observation of breeding and migrating monarch butterflies.

At Wills Field in August, breeding is at a frenzied pitch. On warm mornings, coupled butterflies clumsily flit all about, sometimes colliding with unwary backpackers. Later, from mid-September through October, breeding is rare and most monarchs seen are progeny of the August-breeders or migrants headed south over thousands of miles to a place they know only instinctively, since not one of them has ever set foot on Mexican soil.

Wills Field is an old hay field created by early cattle farmers in the area to supplement their feed-producing acreage in the valley. Old fencing found in the forest along the southeastern edge of the field indicates that

the farmers may have allowed cattle to graze in the field at one time. Apple and plum trees were planted throughout the field and subsequent succession by fruit-producing hawthornes and wildflowers have made the field attractive to various species of wildlife and insects.

Turkeys bring their broods to the field to feast on the protein-rich insect hordes that live among the grasses and forbs. Woodland jumping mice are abundant along the forest edge and in the dense growth around an old water course. Coopers hawks have been seen chasing smaller birds into the forest around the field. Black bears enjoy the sweet apples and fat-rich hickory nuts which are often produced in abundance. A healthy population of Diana Fritillary butterflies, like the monarchs, draws sustenance from various wildflowers which bloom at different times from spring to late summer throughout Wills Field.

Currently the KTC and the WVSTA are working on a management plan for Wills Field which must be approved by the Appalachian Trail Conference and the Blacksburg District of Jefferson National Forest. Cooperation from both organizations has been good and the Forest Service at



The Groundhog Trail providing southern West Virginia's only access to the Appalachian Trail was opened on October 24. John Giacalone (left), President of the Kanawha Trail Club, holds the tape for Charlie Carson to cut while Newt Harmon and Bob Taber assist. (See story on page 5.)

the Club's request has already begun mowing dense blackberry patches which threaten to choke out many of the other wildflowers and grasses that are attractive to butterflies.

Blackberries are an important food and shelter source for various species, but some of the patches are so large and dense that the benefits are not being reaped over large portions of the patches. Control rather than eradication is the goal of the mowing effort.

Other habitat management decisions will be made with maintenance and improvement upon hiker enjoyment as the main goals. Increased wildlife use of the field will increase hiker enjoyment as will maintenance of the vista seen from the field. The very wide view takes in southeastern West Virginia with prominent features such as the New River Valley, Flat Top Mountain and the Big Levels visible at distances of 10 to 40 miles away. A view southward into Virginia exposes the majestic termini of Pearis and Butt Mountains.

The quickest way to reach Wills Field via public access is to hike the 1.8 mile Groundhog Trail at Sugar Camp Farm to the crest of Peters Mountain and turn right headed southward on the Appalachian Trail for about 1 mile to the field. The Groundhog Trail is also a good access point for hikers who wish to backpack on the disjunct southern section of the Allegheny Trail. Just turn left headed northward on the Appalachian Trail at its junction with the Groundhog Trail. Follow the Appalachian Trail for about 3.9 miles to the Allegheny Trail on the left. At this point the Appalachian Trail begins to descend Peters Mountain while the Allegheny Trail continues on its crest for another 13 miles or so to the Limestone Hill Rd. (Co. Rt. 15) which runs from Gap Mills to Waitesville.

On this section of the Allegheny Trail you will pass through or skirt four open areas and you will pass by the Hanging Rock Raptor Migration Observation Tower mentioned previously. Sod covered parking areas at Co. Rt. 15 and at Sugar Camp Farm make good trail heads for a remote two or three night backpack trip on Peters Mountain. The Mountain is truly an interesting place; rugged, beautiful, and the subject of many volunteer efforts to provide the American people with recreation benefits (mental, physical and spiritual) along the Appalachian and Allegheny Trails. It is worth exploration.

"Turn Right and Head to Georgia"



A Kanawha Trail Club member stops to read the Appalachian Trail sign at the junction with the Groundhog Trail. From this point she can turn right and hike all the way to Georgia or turn left and head to Maine.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Appalachian Trail, on Saturday, October 24, Charlie Carlson, "Mr. Kanawha State Forest," cut the ribbon across the Groundhog Trail and officially opened access to the Appalachian Trail from Sugar Camp Farm near Lindsides, West Virginia.

Newt Harman, president of the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association (WVSTA), said the trail was the result of the efforts of several hiking organizations and federal agencies. In addition to WVSTA, the Kanawha Trail Club (KTC), the Appalachian Trail Conference, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service had a hand in developing the trail and the Sugar Camp Farm trail head. "Now," Harman said, "hikers can climb Peters Mountain and at the junction with the Appalachian Trail, they can turn right and head to Georgia or turn left and head to Maine."

The Department of the Interior purchased Sugar Camp Farm, through which the Groundhog trail passes, in 1980 to provide access to the Appalachian Trail. Winding its way up the side of Peters Mountain for 1.8 miles, the Groundhog Trail now provides the only public access to the Appalachian Trail in southern West Virginia. The total climb from the parking lot at Sugar Camp Farm to the ridge top is 1240 feet. Several switchbacks, dug in on the rocky soil by the Konnarock Crew of the Jefferson National Forest and volunteers from WVSTA and KTC, make the steep climb easier on the lungs and legs.

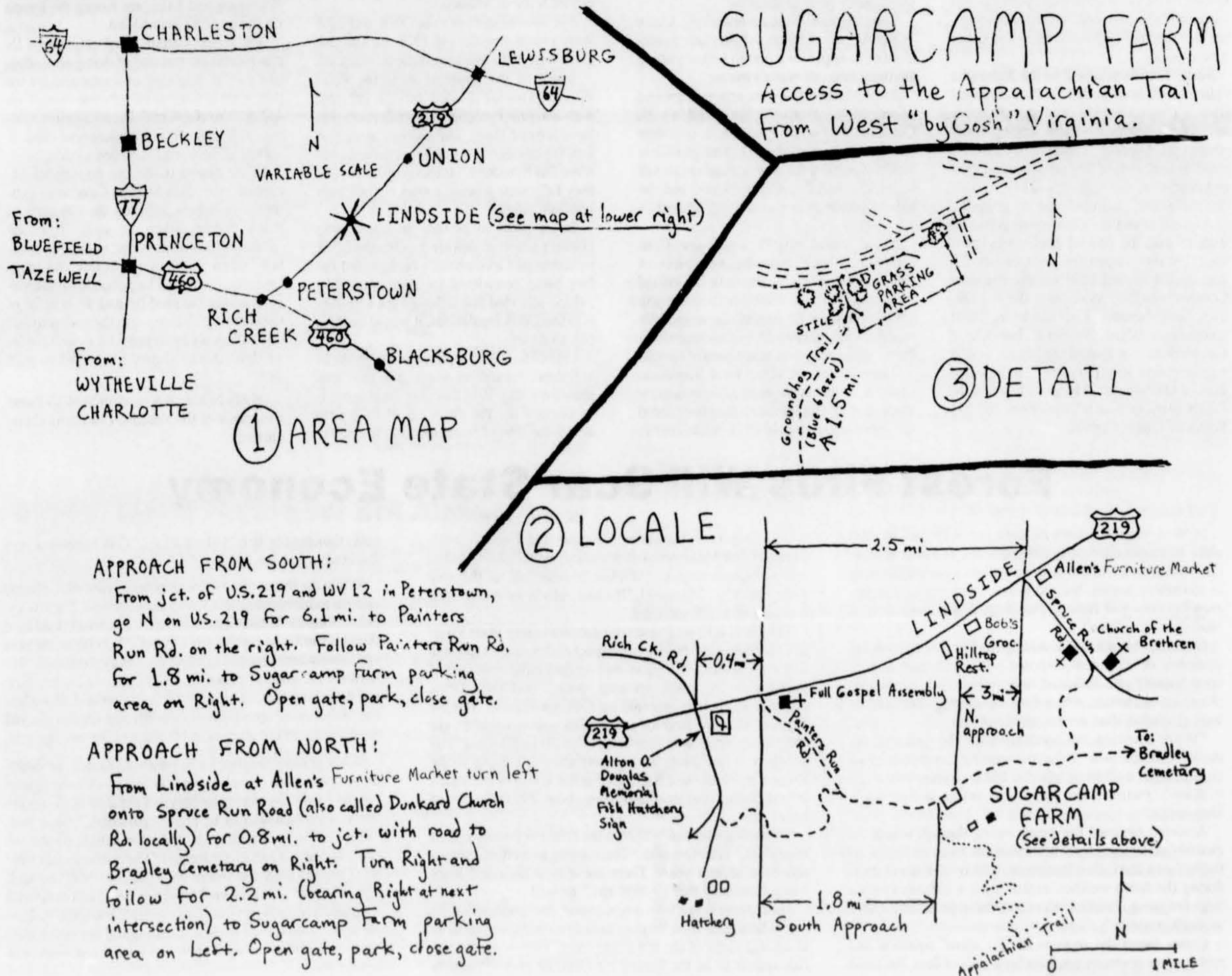
After the ribbon cutting, approximately 30 WVSTA and KTC members and guests hiked the Groundhog Trail to the Appalachian Trail and then south for a mile to Wills Field. Wills Field offers a spectacular vista of the broad valley just north of Peterstown, and from the southwestern end of the clearing, the Pearis Mountain escarpment in Virginia can be seen.

The Kanawha Trail Club is responsible for maintaining this section of the Appalachian Trail. In all, its members maintain approximately 20 miles of the Trail. The major portion of their section lies on the crest of Peters Mountain and includes 5.5 miles within the Peter Mountain Wilderness of the Jefferson National Forest.

WVSTA has the responsibility for the management of the 159-acre Sugar Camp Farm which includes an old farmhouse and barn. The primary management purpose is to maintain the access trail, but members have also made improvements on the farmhouse to provide sleeping quarters for those who are working on the trail and a place for equipment storage.

The farm is operated by a 10-member committee, the Appalachian Trail Committee of WVSTA. Bob Tabor, chairman of the committee, refers to its members as "the 10 key people" for only those people have a key to the gate to the farmhouse and to the equipment room. Access to the farmhouse is allowed for the maintenance of the farm or the Appalachian Trail and not for personal recreational use. The farm is not open to public camping; however, groups (nature study groups, scouts, etc.) may apply to the trail committee for farm use privileges. Donations or work contributions for farm and trail maintenance may be made for use of the farm.

The farm itself is subleased to a local farmer who grazes cattle on it and who watches over the place when trail members are not present. None of the organizations involved has the personnel to operate public camping facilities; consequently, the farm will be managed as a wildlife study area. Hunting and trapping are not permitted on the farm.



If you have ever wondered how the white plumes of smoke billowing out of the local chemical plant affect the air you breathe or how the murky waste from that same plant alters the quality of your drinking water, you now have easier access to the answers. The 1986 Superfund bill, signed into law last October, gives local officials and citizens the right to know what toxic substances the facility uses or manufactures and how those substances endanger local inhabitants.

The "right-to-know" provisions of Superfund, and similar actions in Europe and Canada, come in direct response to the 1984 disaster in Bhopal, India, where a toxic gas leak from a chemical plant killed over 2,000 people and injured 200,000 more. The recent toxic spills into the Rhine River, which destroyed large numbers of fish in Switzerland, France and West Germany, underscored the need for closer scrutiny of the chemical industry.

To reduce the risk of similar industrial accidents in the United States, Superfund now provides for careful local monitoring of potentially dangerous chemical plants. Beginning in 1988, facilities which manufacture over 75,000 tons or use over 10,000 tons of toxic substances must supply state and local officials with lists of the substances they emit into the air, water, and ground. These annual reports will cover over 300 substances the EPA considers dangerous to human health and harmful to the environment.

The Factory Next Door: Disclosing Chemical Hazards to the Public

The "right-to-know" provisions of Superfund, and similar actions in Europe and Canada, come in direct response to the 1984 disaster in Bhopal, India, where a toxic gas leak from a chemical plant killed over 2,000 people and injured 200,000 more.

Superfund also directs state and local governments to draw up emergency training plans to respond to chemical spills or toxic gas leaks. As part of this program, chemical plants handling any of more than 2,300 toxic chemicals must provide detailed information to the public. For the first

time, local officials will have the right to know what the plant manufacturers, where in the plant dangerous chemicals are kept, and what the risk is if a leak occurs.

The Superfund amendment is only one initiative in the international community to avert major industrial disasters. In Canada, Environment Minister Tom McMillan has introduced new environmental protection legislation to monitor the Canadian chemical industry. The decision follows a 1986 government-industry report recommending improvements in safety management systems and emergency planning. As in the Superfund bill, Canadian legislation would call for improved federal and provincial efforts in tracking the production and emission of toxic chemicals.

The European Economic Community (EEC) is urging member countries to enforce the provisions of its 1982 Directive on Major Accident Hazards of Certain Industrial Activities. That agreement outlined a comprehensive program for regulating the production, storage and usage of toxic chemicals. However, the Rhine River spills in Basel, Switzerland, in 1986, have driven several EEC countries, particularly those victimized by the accident—France, West Germany, and the Netherlands—to demand still better early warning systems and information exchanges among EEC nations.

(Reprinted from *Environmental Perspectives*, a newsletter of the Canadian Embassy.)

WVIT Students Host Panel On Chemical Industry Hazards

By Kelly Neeley

A student public awareness group, the Student Concerns Committee, has recently formed at West Virginia Institute of Technology to focus on economic, political and social issues that not only affect the students, but the surrounding communities and entire state as well.

Since Tech is situated in the Kanawha Valley which hosts Belle's DuPont chemical plant, a Union Carbide facility in Institute, and Nitro's Monsanto plant among many others, the Student Concerns Committee voted to concentrate first on educating itself and others on the very real safety hazards that the nearby chemical industry poses.

A question and answer session open to all students and the general public was sponsored by the Committee on October 23. Among the invited panelists present were Congressman Bob Wise from the 3rd District, State Senator Tod Kaufman, DNR spokesman Jalacic, National Institute of Chemical Studies spokesman Bissett, OSHA representative Ray Douglass, Mr. R. Sherman of DuPont, Mr. Morgan French of the OLIN plant in South Charleston, and Mr. Foster of Union Carbide.

The information from the panelists served to dispel some of the anxieties held by the students and by the audience that represented many parts of the state.

Congressman Wise reviewed the Clean Water Act which forces industry and municipalities to apply for a permit before putting anything into our water systems.

As of March's five-year renewal, ground water is now covered by the Act. Also, the Construction Grants Program, a provision of the act, was explained. The provision makes it possible for new sewage systems to be built to handle ordinary waste, and the federal government pays for 55 percent of the cost.

Not all the information was review. Congressman Wise explained a new piece of legislation: an amendment to the Superfund program. Title 3 mandates that beginning in 1988 producers of hazardous wastes file reports with stipulated information about those wastes with the Department of Health.

The enormity of some West Virginians concerns about our chemical industry became evident as several audience members posed questions about the old TNT waste area in

Point Pleasant that already exists near the proposed Pyrochem storage site, and as another from the audience asked about the old PCB site at Minden.

Mr. Jalacic said both the DNR and EPA were monitoring the old TNT site and that plans were underway to have the area cleaned.

Many of the residents from the Point Pleasant area are divided into the informal anti- and pro- Pyrochem citizens groups that have formed there. The citizens agree that jobs are desperately needed in the area, but some feel Pyrochem's track record is not one they fully trust when it comes to their own personal safety.

In an effort to protect the state, some citizen's action groups are pressing the DNR to investigate a company's background before being considered for state entry. Mr. Jalacic admitted that although the authority is in the DNR regulations, it would be difficult to do so.

One of the panel representatives spoke of a federal hazardous waste bill that was passed on May 20 of this year. Its purpose is to provide for the clean up of PCB sites across the United States identical to the one

located at Minden. Ironically, those states least able to pay for the clean up on their own, such as West Virginia, Mississippi, Wyoming and Utah, are among the lowest on the project's priority list.

The Union Carbide, DuPont, and OLIN representatives boasted of doing very effective jobs at disposing of wastes and for the treatment of same. If any chemicals at all are spilled into the Kanawha, said Union Carbide's Foster, it is unintentional and is almost all recoverable or degradable.

In the closing of the two-hour panel discussion, one of the Student Concerns Committee members reflected the thoughts of many present when he said, "It is the 'almost' that worries most people—particularly when it comes to nuclear and other hazardous wastes. The people of West Virginia realize the need for and the benefits of the chemical industry, but they want to feel safe and secure by its presence as well. So far we don't think industry has helped us with that."

(Kelly Neeley is a student at WVIT and a member of the Student Concerns Committee.)

Forest Fires Will Scar State Economy

In West Virginia a week of forest fires scorched 340,000 acres and caused property loss estimated at 104.6 million. On November 11, about three dozen fires were smoldering in southern counties, but the heavy, acrid smoke that fingered its way into New York City was gone and forestry officials were relieved.

Governor Moore, while touring the Far East to promote economic development, imposed a statewide ban on outdoor burning. He followed that by ordering the woods closed in 14 counties where fires were raging. Both orders were rescinded after the abundance of rain.

"We're thanking the good Lord for the rain and the snow," Gillespie said. "If the cool weather stays another two or three days, we'll be on top of it. For the next several days, it doesn't matter what you burn, unless you've got a blow-torch."

Arsonists harassed fire crews, racing through woods on motorbikes and in four-wheel-drive trucks to set fires with traffic flares. But Gillespie expected little trouble out of them during the damp weather, explaining it is difficult to get a large fire going, "and I don't expect that type of fellow likes to work, anyway."

Crews found the remains of "far more" squirrels and rabbits than normally are left after a rash of fires, but these

were in larger conflagrations, Gillespie said. Even so, wildlife chief Bob Miles doubted that game would be affected to any significant degree. "Wildlife moves out of the way pretty quickly," Miles said. "If it had been in the spring time, it would be a little different."

Officials said it will be several decades before West Virginia's timber industry feels the impact of this year's explosive forest fire season. "You can take an immediate estimate of damage on the small, growing stock," said Dick Grist, Appalachian group manager for Georgia-Pacific. "But the big trees that are used for pole timber and saw timber, the ultimate damage won't be known for 30 to 50 years. The problem is not going to be short-term, it's going to be long-term," Grist said. Georgia-Pacific is one of the state's largest timber operators and owns about 290,000 acres of land.

"It's going to create a hole in the state's economy one of these days," Gillespie said. "This is going to set them (industry) back several years. There are several thousand acres worth less today than 10 days ago," he said.

Gillespie said the fires might reduce the unemployment rate in Southern West Virginia as timber companies move in to salvage some of the remaining trees. Yellow poplar and oak appear to be the hardest hit trees, he said. "Poplar is

easily damaged by fire," Gillespie said. "Oak has been a very marketable tree for 20 years."

While the threat of new fires has been reduced, Gillespie said the industry must now worry about disease. Dick Waybright with the West Virginia Forestry Association said the threat is similar to cutting one's finger. "You break the skin and that's where you get the infection," Waybright said. "It's hard for the general public to see that because everything will be green again next spring," Waybright said. But when the timber is harvested, fungus growth and fire scars could have destroyed the most valuable parts of the tree, he said.

While praising the state for its efforts, Grist said the forests should have been closed earlier. "When you see the figures put out by the division of forestry, it's not difficult to realize this is a substantial loss to property owners," Grist said. "There has to be a mechanism that when certain conditions exist, it triggers a ban on the forests. 'The public should have been banned from the woods three days earlier,' he said. The order was not given until November 6. "I feel badly that we couldn't do a better job of protecting the woods," Gillespie said. "This was an explosive season and our best efforts just weren't good enough when you have arson coming in behind you."

NEWS BRIEFS

Bids For New Park To Be Opened

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will open bids next week for a contract to transform Lewis County farmland into West Virginia's newest state park.

"This is really the big one everybody's been waiting for," said John Reed, a spokesman for the corps' Pittsburgh office, of the contract for Stonewall Jackson Lake.

Corps officials will open bids on Tuesday. Reed said a contract could be awarded within 10 days "depending on how complicated the bids are."

At stake is \$8 million to \$12 million worth of work.

The contract calls for a recreation area with a marina, campgrounds, picnic areas, hiking trails, multi-purpose building and access roads. It also involves for the building of a superintendent's house and water and sewage facilities.

"This is the hub contract for the state park but it will be a while before anything is done because we have to wait for the next construction season," Reed said.

Even with the delay, Reed said the park should be open by 1989.

The corps will dedicate the dam and recreation area next May 27, but the lake may not be filled when the ceremony occurs, he said.

"We hope to start impounding the water in January, but we have not reached a final decision on that yet," Reed said. "We may go with incremental increase to see how the dam works then drop it back down again."

Reed said the corps is talking with state fisheries officials over concerns that a slow impoundment could allow "undesirable" fish to populate the lake.

"The state is afraid undesirable fish will establish themselves and the stocked fingerlings will be eliminated," Reed said. "Their preference is not to fill the lake until a straight incremental plan is established."

"We have a problem with that because it might not allow sufficient time to determine if the dam is functioning the way it is supposed to," he said.

The Charleston Gazette, 11/7/87

Proposed Water Quality Legislation A Compromise

Department of Natural Resources Director Ron Potesta says legislation proposed to regulate West Virginia's ground water is a compromise between environmentalists and industry.

The legislation says the state's public policy is "to protect its ground water resources to the highest degree of quality and purity necessary to protect human health and the environment."

The statute says the state should maintain ground water standards "consistent with protection, where appropriate, (a) for present and future beneficial uses thereof and (b) existing quality thereof."

Environmentalists have protested the first clause, which allows increased pollution in certain cases as long as it does not damage the environment, saying not enough is known about the state's ground water to feel safe.

On the other hand, Postesta said, some business representatives would rather not have had the statement about "existing quality" included.

"This statute is, if nothing else, a framework for establishing a regulatory program," Potesta said. "I want to build a consensus so we can establish a regulatory program, which we do not have right now."

The legislation sets a broad policy statement but leaves regulations to be set by the state Water Resources Board, whose members serve staggered five-year terms. "We didn't have enough time to deal with both statute and regulations," Potesta said.

The legislation, Potesta said, would place West Virginia regulations "probably somewhere in the middle" among states.

The critics of the proposal charged that citizens who believe their ground water is contaminated will face the burden of proving that before the Water Resources Board.

Postesta said, "That it is still to be determined when the regulations are written."

Sunday Gazette-Mail, 10/18/87

Rockefeller's Methanol Bill Almost Law

U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller's proposal to help convert up to 20 percent of the cars in the United States to coal-based methanol fuel has no major opposition and appears to be headed toward law, a spokesman says.

At the same time, a Wayne County delegate is working on a bill that would require West Virginians to drive methanol-powered cars, and says he wants to have a methanol plant built in the county.

"It's going to happen in West Virginia," Del. Walter "Lefty" Rollins of a methanol plant. Rockefeller, D-W. Va., has introduced a bill into the Senate that would give U.S. automakers relief from a federal fuel-standards law if they start producing a certain percentage of cars capable of running on methanol.

The federal government has mandated that cars produced beginning in 1989 average 27.5 miles per gallon of gas—a regulation that the big auto companies will have trouble meeting, according to Rockefeller. Test cars using a fuel that is 85 percent methanol and 15 percent gasoline get 93 miles per gallon, he said.

In addition, the move to methanol would lessen the country's support on imported oil and bolster the slumping coal industry—particularly in West Virginia, according to Rockefeller.

According to estimates by Rockefeller and others, if two out of every 10 cars in the country ran on methanol instead of gasoline, the methanol and coal industries would experience a boom to the point where 45,000 out-of-work coal miners could return to their jobs.

So far, no major opposition has sprung up to Rockefeller's bill, spokesman Tim Gay said. The bill has 21 co-sponsors, including a majority of the Senate Commerce Committee, and already has been moved out of a House subcommittee, Gay said.

Daily Mail, 10/19/87

State Ground Water Battle To Be Vigorous

The battle in the 1988 Legislature over protecting the state's underground water supplies promises to be vigorous.

"It will probably be the most difficult program we're going to come up with," House Speaker Chuck Chambers said Wednesday, during the Third Annual West Virginia Conference on the Environment.

Indeed, just after Gov. Arch Moore told the conference that "broad community participation" contributed to the Department of Natural Resources' new bill on ground water, a representative of several citizens groups called the proposal "grossly inadequate."

The proposed Groundwater Quality Act "does not give adequate guidance to regulatory agencies . . . and therefore leaves significant decisions to political whims," said Kristi Treadway, lawyer with the Environmental Defense Fund.

The DNR's bill states the state's policy is "to protect its ground water resources to the highest degree of quality and purity necessary to protect human health and the environment."

That's not good enough, argued Treadway, representing the Groundwater Coalition, which includes eight groups. The bill does not specify that the existing quality of the state's ground water should be protected—a policy known as "non-degradation."

Also, she said, the bill would require citizens to prove their ground water source is contaminated.

"In the end DNR's approach sided completely with polluters and turned a deaf ear to all the suggestions made by conservation and citizen groups," Treadway said. The bill would be worse than the state's current common-law approach toward ground water, she said.

Industry representatives, during remarks on a conference panel said they believe ground water could be managed without a non-degradation policy.

"The release of chemicals into the environment is not a new phenomenon," said Keith Miller of Monsanto, representing the West Virginia Manufacturers Association. "There are levels of chemicals not harmful to the environment."

"Each site is individual," Miller said. "We must identify the risk, assess whether it is acceptable, then manage and control those risks."

Bruce Leavitt, representing Consolidation Coal, said, "A non-degradation approach to ground water is impossible to achieve. We must manage the resource to minimize the effects of man's activities."

However, scientists disagree on whether there are safe levels of cancer-causing chemicals. Mary Davis, representing the Sierra Club, said, "If there is a chemical that causes cancer, we must proceed very cautiously because there is no safe level of exposure."

The Charleston Gazette, 10/16/87

New River Scenic Highway Planned

The New River Parkway Authority envisions a two-lane scenic highway stretching about 35 miles from Sandstone Falls to a place known as Healing Springs in Mercer County.

Along that route, the parkway theoretically would parlay the region's history, three rivers and two falls into a major tourist mecca, says Jim Dillon, the authority's president.

"We think we're going to get an increase in the tourism dollars, and an increase in our economy in general," Dillon said Wednesday.

"There are lots of historical and cultural sites. we can offer the old railroad days, the old train station in Hinton. I think sites like that will become attractions. We're planning on picnic areas, visitor facilities, an interpretive center where brochures on history are given out."

Dillon said the parkway would begin from Interstate 64 near Sandstone to Interstate 77 near Athens. In a north-south direction, travelers would actually start on W. Va. 26 in Raleigh County, drive past Hinton, get on W. Va. 20 and wind up in Mercer County.

The region is blessed with the New, Greenbrier and Bluestone rivers, Sandstone and Brooks falls, and mountain scenery.

The authority is working with an initial outlay of \$17.6 million which would cover the road from I-64 to Hinton. The group then will seek more money to upgrade the rest of the highway.

Ballpark figures from the Department of Highways put the balance from a low of \$6.7 million to \$52 million, depending on what attractions the authority envisions.

No surveying has been done but a concept plan has been prepared by the National Park Service, the DOH, and other federal and state agencies.

The Charleston Gazette, 10/22/87

House Approves Bill Designating Forests

The House agreed to create wilderness areas out of an additional 27,700 acres of national forest along the border of Virginia and West Virginia.

On a voice vote, the House agreed to set aside the forest land in the George Washington and Jefferson national forests. The two forests run along the common border of the states.

According to congressional budget research, it will cost \$265,000 to survey and plan the wilderness areas over what roads and other changes can be made to the land.

The new protected areas would be:

- Rough Mountain Wilderness Area, containing 9,300 acres in the George Washington forest.

- Barbour's Creek Wilderness Area, containing 5,700 acres. It is located on the border between the two national forests near Peters Mountain.

- Rich Hole Wilderness, containing 6,450 acres of land in the Washington forest.

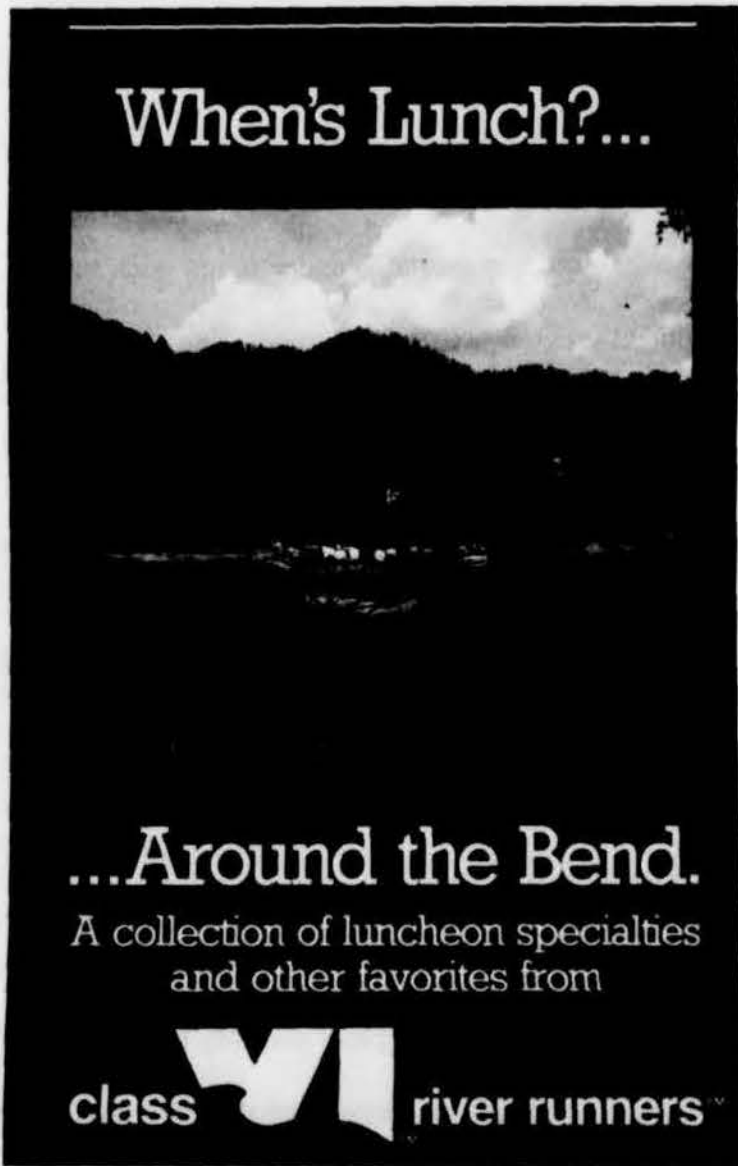
- Shawvers Run Wilderness Area, containing 3,665 acres of land in the Jefferson forest near Brushy Mountain.

- A 72-acre addition to the Lewis Fork Wilderness Area in the Jefferson forest.

- A 2,500-acre addition to the Mountain Lake Wilderness area, which is also in Jefferson forest.

The Register/Herald, 10/15/87

Rafters Produce Cookbook



On a whitewater raft trip on New River, the most frequently asked question is "How deep is the water?" The clever guide immediately grabs a paddle, shoves the blade deep into the water, puts his ear down on the handle, and gives the shaft a few taps: "It's 11 and 3/4 feet." The second most frequently asked question cannot be handled so precisely: "When's lunch?" On the river, lunch is a place not a time. The place, however, may change with each trip; hence the answer "Around the bend." Hence the title of Class VI River Runners' cookbook **When's Lunch? Around the Bend**.

The kitchen workers at Class VI have grappled with the problem of how to serve an eye-appealing, appetizing, and nutritious lunch, and yet be able to carry the food down the river in rafts, and they have won. The recipes, collected and commented upon by Janet Proctor, the chief chef at Class VI, are a response to the many requests the company has had from the customers who when they finally arrived around the bend, were pleasantly surprised at the riverside deli-style lunch served to them: a variety of sliced meats, Amish cheeses, fresh fruits and vegetables, and freshly made salads, dips, and desserts.

When's Lunch? Around the Bend is a slim volume, 96 pages, that contains many of the recipes used to prepare those riverside appetizers, salads and desserts. Much of the food can be put together with little trouble and packed along on an outing, picnic, or a potluck dinner. The recipes can, of course, be used for meals to be eaten at home too; many of them provide for excellent light suppers.

With the holiday season around the bend, many cooks will find themselves entertaining friends and family. The following recipe, right out of the book, is perfect to have on hand for light meals or drop-in guests.

Chicken Salad with Grapes and Almonds

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 1/2 cups cooked chicken, chopped | 2 cups mayonnaise |
| 1 cup scallions, sliced | 1 teaspoon basil |
| 1 cup celery, thinly sliced | 1/2 teaspoon thyme |
| 1 cup sliced almonds, lightly toasted | 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder |
| 2 tablespoons pimento | 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning |
| | 2 cups seedless grapes, halved |

In a large bowl, combine the chicken, scallions, celery, almonds and pimento. Combine the mayonnaise, basil, thyme, garlic powder, and poultry seasoning. Pour over chicken mixture and mix well. Gently fold in the grapes. Serve chilled on a bed of lettuce or stuffed into a pita pocket. Yield: 6 servings.

Class VI serves Charcoal-roasted turkey as part of their dinner buffet and have found that this salad is especially good when leftover cooked turkey is substituted for the chicken. Try using your leftover Holiday turkey in this salad for lunch or a light supper.

When's Lunch? Around the Bend is available by mail through Class VI River Runners, P. O. Box 78, Lansing, WV 25862 (Phone: 304/574-0704), for \$6.95 plus \$1.25 for shipping and handling. West Virginia residents add 35 cents sales tax. It is also available from the shop in the Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

Christmas Bird Counts (cont. from pg. 2)

By standing behind him and following his pointed arm, the rest of us managed to focus in on his hawk: a stump, maybe a foot high that had a short curved sprout hanging out over an enormous and unusually sculptured cow pat.

The competitiveness often goes beyond just being the first to identify. On the Pipestem count a few years ago, Jim Phillips, now the naturalist at Pipestem State Park, and I decided to save some time by scrambling down a steep slope above Bluestone Lake. As we were skidding and sliding, more out of control than we wanted to be, we slammed into a hollow stub. We both caught just a second's glimpse of the small bird that popped out of a hole. "Screech-owl," Phillips shouted first. "Yeah," I responded, plunging on to a broken bone or at best a muddy halt at the edge of the water, "red phase." A little late, but still in the game.

Occasionally the newcomer can be overwhelmed. I coerced a friend who was interested but didn't know many birds to accompany me on a Christmas count. He ended up being the tally man as I ticked off names and

numbers of birds seen and heard. At the end of the day, as we were all gathered to put the team lists together, he turned in our bird list and then reported on private observations: 2 jeeps, 4 blazers, 2 ramchargers, 6 Broncos, 1 ORV-species unknown, heard only, definitely not a chain saw, and 2 cessnas—one overhead; 1 in a pasture.

Exactly what team gets to play in what section of the count area is also a factor. Everyone wants to go where the greatest variety of birds is. Unfortunately if the total count circle is to be done or at least all the habitats represented, some team is going to have to cover a less than ideal area. For the Oak Hill count, the one I compile, this means sending a team to Thurmond. Thurmond, in and of itself, isn't a bad place to go. It's just that it's a long way down to Thurmond and there aren't many birds that winter there. Most of the parties on the Oak Hill count average 30-35 species; the Thurmond party averages 15-20. It is river habitat that isn't present anywhere else in the circle, but no team ever wants to go back the next year.

Appropriately enough the first published West Virginia Christmas count was taken by

a Brooks—Earle A. His findings were printed in **Bird Lore**, an earlier Audubon Society publication. On December 26, 1904 (the fifth Christmas Bird census), he sloshed through 6 and 1/2 hours of rainy weather to record 18 species and 133 individual birds near Waverly. He was the sole participant on the count, and his census was the only one recorded in the state.

By contrast the Parkersburg count of

WEST VIRGINIA'S FIRST OFFICIAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Waverly, W. Va.—December 26; time, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.; 4 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Cloudy, rain falling heavily after 3 P.M.; wind east, light; ground bare; temp., 45°. Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Horned Lark, 6; American Crow, 4; Goldfinch, 4; Tree Sparrow, 14; Field Sparrow, 11; Slate-colored Junco, 15; Song Sparrow, 7; Cardinal, 7; Carolina Wren, 7; Brown Creeper, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Tufted Titmouse, 14; Carolina Chickadee, 23; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 2; Bluebird, 3. Total, 18 species, 133 individuals. — Earle A. Brooks.

1985, which may include part of Brooks' territory or at least be close to it, had 40 observers including people who just watched at their feeders. Collectively they spent 53.25 party hours in the field and 89 hours feeder watching and tallied 65 species and 11,813 birds.

Throughout West Virginia in 1985 (the data for 1986 counts haven't been published yet) there were 13 counts involving 275 participants. These census takers recorded over 100 species and about 81,257 individual birds and spent 680.5 hours in the field, 171.25 hours feeder watching and 20.3 hours owling.

The locations for the 1985 counts were Charleston, Charles Town, Hampshire County, Huntington, Inwood, Lewisburg, Morgantown, Oak Hill, Ona, Parkersburg, Pipestem, and Wheeling. If anyone is interested in participating in a count, the names and addresses of the compilers are included in the Christmas Bird issue of **American Birds**. Many counts are sponsored by local Audubon groups or other nature study societies, and they will frequently advertise for participants in local papers. The Oak Hill Count is open to anyone who wants to play. We can always use a new team to send to Thurmond.

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 an 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 resources.

WVHC Membership Categories (Circle One)

Category	Individual	Family	Organization
Senior/Student	\$ 12	\$ ---	\$ ---
Regular	15	25	50
Associate	30	50	100
Sustaining	50	100	200
Patron	100	200	400
Mountaineer	200	300	600

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

Membership Benefits

- 1-year subscription to **The Highlands Voice**
- Special meetings with workshops and speakers
- representation through WVHC's efforts to monitor legislative activity.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible. Please keep this for your records.

Date _____

Amount _____

Check number _____