



THE HIGHLANDS VOICE

Library
West Virginia University

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

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

Published monthly by the W. Va. Highlands Conservancy

VOL. 21, NO. 1, JANUARY 1988

The Mason County Incinerator Story

by Kim Taylor

From a theoretical standpoint, destruction of hazardous materials by incineration is one of the best ways to dispose of the waste because it doesn't come back to haunt you. Practically, incineration is only a good alternative if the facility is operated with exceptional care.

The yardstick of an incinerator's performance is the destruction and removal efficiency (DRE). The efficiency is measured by comparing the mass of each hazardous compound fed into the kiln versus the mass of that compound in stack gases. Since each chemical has its own level of heat tolerance, the removal efficiencies for different compounds can vary — even if they are fed into the kiln at the same time. RCRA currently requires incinerators to operate at 99.99% removal for each different hazardous compound in the waste stream.

Current regulations allow the removal efficiency to be based on test burns and **probable** hydrocarbons in the exhaust, not actual performance standards.

This problem is a minor one for the proposed Pyrochem facility near Point Pleasant.

As a Mason County citizen group (MACE) describes them, here are some of the basic problems with Pyrochem's proposed incinerator.

First, it is located in the state's third largest wetland, above the Teays aquifer. The exhaust stacks would be located in a long valley, and subject to a valley's atmospheric conditions which can exacerbate air quality problems. In its permit application, Pyrochem left open the possibility of on-site disposal of the residual ash (in a wetland?!) and did not submit the required environmental analysis of the facility.

The McClintock Wildlife refuge is within a few miles of the site. The county fair, which drew 40,000 people last year, is held two miles from the proposed facility, and commercial dairy and vegetable farms surround the general area. Local farmers worry that crop buyers would pass up vegetables grown near a hazardous waste incinerator, thereby hurting an important part of the local economy.

The people of Mason County have chosen to promote tourism as a means of developing business in the area, but they also welcome other types of incoming business. They believe an incinerator would be a disincinerator to any business which might consider locating there.

Emergency services are staffed by volunteers, a situation which makes it difficult to provide the training and equipment neces-

sary to respond effectively to accidents involving hazardous wastes. Accidents on the road through Point Pleasant, on which all the tanker trucks carrying waste to the facility must travel, are common. There were 85 accidents along that road within the city limits last year.

If you talk to a member of MACE, the one comment you will hear first about Pyrochem and the proposed incinerator is not any of the points listed above, but the citizens' disappointment and rage over the undemocratic site selection process.

In mid-December, the Mason Association for a Clean Environment (MACE) presented its case against the proposed Pyrochem facility at a DNR Hazardous Waste Advisory meeting. This was the **first time the citizens had been given equal time to express their position in a public meeting.** Once the incinerator issue began drawing opposition from Mason Countians, Pyrochem's "informational" meetings became invitation and company officials started seeing county commissioners on an individual basis — so the meetings would not be considered public.

For 16 months, Pyrochem and state officials secretly scouted around the state for a place to locate the incinerator. Once the field

of potential sites had been narrowed down, Governor Moore chose land which was owned by a prominent Republican lawyer in Mason County.

Pyrochem officials moved quickly and obtained approval from the County Commission within one week after they announced plans to build the facility.

From all appearances, Pyrochem made a full-fledged effort to grease the skids for its controversial incinerator in the smoke-filled back rooms of state politicians. The people of Mason County feel that such negotiations must occur in full view and include full public participation. Because Pyrochem blatantly ignored their right to self-determination and for many practical reasons, MACE has sworn to prevent the Pyrochem facility from being built.

West Virginia is in dire need of a fair and democratic site selection process. The Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee has decided to try and start hammering out a site selection policy which would prevent future Pyrochem surprises. The Committee is at the "throw all ideas on the table stage," and I invite any Highlands member to send criticisms or comments about procedures in other states and what should be developed in West Virginia. (See Roster, page 2, for Ms. Taylor's address.)

Update: Militarization of Our MNF: Is Senator Byrd Giving Away Our National Forest ?

by Mary Wimmer

Senator Byrd is obtaining millions of dollars of Dept. of Defense funding in order to expand military training facilities in West Virginia. I am not opposed to the economic benefits to the people of our state that such activity can bring if the public supports it. Nor am I opposed to the training of the military that our country currently requires. **However**, some parts of West Virginia are simply not appropriate to turn into part of a military training base, especially those areas on which our 2nd largest industry, tourism, strongly depends. Our National Forest is one of these special areas.

Yet the major site of training expansion in West Virginia is Camp Dawson, a mere 20 miles from the Monongahela National Forest boundary. The military has already made it very clear that they are extremely interested in expanding use of our National Forest for training maneuvers of many types. We saw only the tip of the iceberg this past year.

When I asked if any consideration had been given to the **long-term effects of this expansion on the MNF**, I was told no. When I asked how Camp Dawson was decided upon rather than other lands in WV not as important to our travel and tourism industry, I was told that other areas had been looked at and people talked to. But, curiously, the Forest Service was not consulted, nor was the WV Highlands Conservancy, the WV Sierra Club, or other outdoor recreation groups who make extensive use of the Forest. I

don't imagine too many private landowners in the MNF area were contacted either and presented the full story of what lay ahead. I have written Senator Byrd for the entire study of the Camp Dawson siting for expanded military training facilities in West Virginia. You who are concerned about future military impacts on our National Forest might also wish to write for this info as well.

Issue 1: Land acquisition near Dolly Sods

The good news is the WV National Guard has ceased talking about an air strip, but the bad news is they still want the land for "training" purposes. That training can include simulated artillery and grenades, flares and fireworks, blank ammunition firing, helicopters, low-flying jets, and military vehicles — only 3 miles from Bear Rocks and 6 miles from the Wilderness boundary. (Severely disruptive noise knows no barriers, but the military refuses to recognize it as a negative impact that should be prevented. It is too much a part of their training.) Roughly 300 letters have been received thus far in Ken Hechler's office, many from out-of-state visitors who support our tourism industry, and at least 90% oppose the land acquisition.

One must seriously question why the military feels a need to actually acquire this land. After all, the military use agreement already provides full training use of this private Quintana-owned land (formerly CSX-owned). If they

acquired the land, what would prevent them from constructing the landing strip and permanent latrine facilities as they originally had in mind?

Senator Byrd is now playing with the idea of obtaining Department of Defense funds to acquire the last portion of the Shavers Fork headwaters for the MNF. Most of this 40,000-acre parcel has already been purchased by Forest Service appropriations. Why not complete it in the same way? **And what "military training strings" would be attached for this area right in the middle of the MNF?** I have heard an anti-terrorist training ground mentioned.

Please write to Senator Byrd (U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510) and indicate strong opposition to the use of military funds of any kind to purchase land for or within or near the MNF. Expand with your feelings about potential militarization of the Forest's remote environment.

Issue 2: Fort Bragg units set MNF forest fire in unauthorized maneuvers at Bartow

Green beret units from Fort Bragg North Carolina created havoc in the Bartow area of the Greenbrier Ranger District in November in unauthorized and uncoordinated training maneuvers on our National Forest as well as on private land. With **no** notification to local citizens or the Forest Service, these people shot flares and fireworks from

(continued on page 3)

Mountain View

TOXICS 'R US

by John Purbaugh

After the death of thousands in Bhopal, India, and the hospitalization of over 100 persons in Charleston, West Virginia, due to escapes of toxic chemical emissions, air toxics have joined hazardous waste as the "hot" environmental topics of the 1980's. The Conservancy's historical focus has been on the highlands of West Virginia, rather than on the industrialized lowlands and major river valleys where these issues first arise in our state. However, a number of factors have combined to draw us into these areas.

WVHC has long been involved in both air and water pollution issues, primarily acid rain and acid mine drainage destroying highland forests and streams. Air and water are the pathways by which toxic and hazardous substances affect human health and the environment, and effective advocacy on air and water issues requires that we deal with the "spectrum" of such pollution, rather than just the "color" (orange?) that most affects the highlands. The same failures of corporate responsibility and political will need to be rectified before effective regulation of both areas is possible. Most importantly, the Conservancy has been asked by citizens to become involved, both as a resource to local groups and in our own right.

In January of 1987, I appointed Kim Taylor as Chair of our new Air/Water Toxics Committee, and the past year of this Committee's work has produced significant results. WVHC will administer a small grant to fund publication and other expenses of local citizens working on Kanawha Valley toxics issues. We lead the fight for strong groundwater standards language in state law, and for a lab certification program to ensure that test results used to measure compliance are reliable.

A recent EPA "Kanawha Valley Toxics Screening Study" found that concentrations of cancer-causing chemicals in the air at several sites were high enough to cause up to 8 persons out of 1,000 to die due to such exposure. In this new year, both the West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission (APCC) and the United States Congress will be considering new regulatory approaches to this critical issue. If you live in any of the cities or towns along the Kanawha, Monongahela or Ohio Rivers' industrial complex, you have a personal stake in the future of air toxics regulation. The Conservancy will continue to be involved through its officers and committee structure, but we need you to participate directly, either by writing to the APCC (see Mike Harman's article in this issue) or by contacting Kim to help her committee's work. (Kim's address is in the Roster of Officers, page 2.)

A General Appeal To All Readers Of The Highlands Voice

I wish to ask the consideration of each of you for the conservation of West Virginia's natural resources with a gift to the Endowment Fund of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

As many of you know, the Conservancy has worked since 1967 for the wise management of West Virginia's scenic rivers, natural areas, National Forests lands, historical sites and environmental quality. We established the Endowment Fund in 1985 to accept 501 (c) (3) tax-deductible gifts in support of these conservation projects.

The Conservancy and the Fund would greatly appreciate your support in meeting our 1987 campaign goal of \$50,000. Even further, such a gift will contribute to the Endowment's five-year goal to become the most significant source of financial support for the work of West Virginia's conservationists.

You may find the Endowment a particularly appealing gift due to your concern and commitment to the preservation of West Virginia parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

Having just recently taken over the Chairmanship of the Fund, I am especially eager to see that it prosper and grow. Should you want more information, please feel free to contact me at my office at (304) 348-8986.

Thank you for considering a unique and lasting gift to the conservation of West Virginia's natural resources.

Very truly yours,

Ann A. Spaner, Chairwoman
Endowment Fund

Input Needed On Management Of Upper Williams Area In MNF

Dear Editor:

The 1986 Monongahela Forest Plan has been in practice for over one year. The Forest has been using, what we call, the Integrated Resource Management (IRM) on 5,000-7,000 acre opportunity areas across the Forest to implement the objectives of the Forest Plan. Last year the analysis stage of implementation was completed on the Marlin Mountain and Crooked Fork Opportunity Areas.

We will be starting the analysis stage on the Upper Williams Opportunity Area in January 1988. This area is composed of roughly 6,400 acres of National Forest. It is bordered on the east by the Williams River Road (FR #216), the Highland Scenic Highway on the west, and the Williams

River on the north.

Upper Williams is designated in the Forest Plan for management under Prescription 3 — Big Tree. The objectives for management are:

- 1) The Forest will be composed of large, high quality hardwood trees for lumber, veneer, hard mast, and scenic value.
- 2) Scenic values will be important and will emphasize a variety of Forest views.
- 3) The prescription will promote wildlife species tolerant of disturbances such as deer, grouse, and squirrel.
- 4) A system of roads and trails will be completed to provide access within the area for

(continued on page 4)

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: Ron Shipley
1126 Hickory Rd., Charleston, WV 25314 (346-6971)
VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Skip Deegans
2112 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Apt. 615, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202/265-9337)
SECRETARY: Mary Lou Newberger
Box 89, Looneyville, WV 25259 (565-4415)
TREASURER: Tom Michael
Route 2, Box 217, Lost Creek, WV 26385 (623-3447)
PAST PRESIDENT: Larry George
1033 Quarrier Street, Suite 715, Charleston, WV 25301 (346-3706)

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

(Terms expires October 1989)

Richard diPreto: 264 High Street, Morgantown, WV 26505 (296-8963)
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: 2112 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Apt. 615, Washington, D.C. 20009 (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)
Kim Taylor: 1420 Lee St., Charleston, WV 25301
John McFerrin: 1105 Tinder Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302 (345-5646)
Donna Borders: 924 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954

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)
KVCTU: Doug Lepparo
819 Orchard Street, Charleston, WV 25302 (344-0467)
W. VA. MOUNTAIN STREAM MONITORS PROJECT: Milton Zelermyer
723 College Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505 (296-6289)
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)
SAVE OUR MOUNTAINS: Andrew Maier
P.O. Box 1286, Hinton, WV 25951

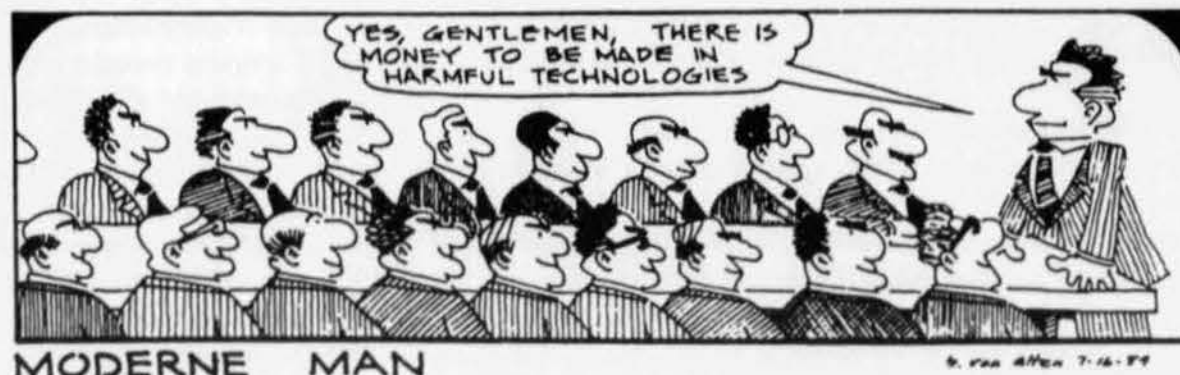
COMMITTEE CHAIRS

WVHC ENDOWMENT FUND: Ann Spaner
23 Seneca Hills Drive, Elkview, WV 25071 (965-7631)
CANAA 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 (412/838-8983)
and Donna Borders, 924 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: W. E. "Skip" Deegans
2112 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Apt. 615, Washington, 20009 (202/265-9337)
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Adrienne Worthy
316 Skyline Drive, Charleston, WV 25302 (343-2767)
AIR/WATER TOXICS: Kim Taylor
1420 Lee St., Charleston, WV 25301

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Chuck Hamsher, **Membership Secretary**
Suite 201, 1206 Virginia Street, East
Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 766-6172

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



MODERNE MAN

Mysterious Malady Destroying Red Spruce An Ecological Puzzle

by Ralph Haurwitz

PARSONS, WV — High on a windswept ridge in the Appalachian Mountains, the evergreen trees aren't as green as they used to be. Many have yellow or red needles, bare branches and crowns with missing branches — symptoms of poor health. Some are dead.

These particular trees — red spruce — have in recent years undergone a dramatic and mysterious decline, not only atop McGowan Mountain, 12 miles south of Parsons, but throughout much of their range in the Eastern United States. No one knows the precise cause, but many scientists suspect that it may be a complex combination of natural and man-made factors, including air pollution. "There have been forest puzzles before, but I don't think there's been one quite so complicated before," said Gerard Hertel, manager of the U.S. Forest Service's spruce research project, based in Broomall, Delaware County. The afflicted trees are found primarily at high elevations and are a minor component of the commercial timber industry. But foresters and other scientists are nonetheless concerned.

An upset in one part of the forest ecosystem could be an early sign of a problem that could affect other trees, they say. Red spruce found at lower elevations and used commercially for pulp and paper so far remain healthy. In addition, there are aesthetic and wildlife concerns. In West Virginia, for example, the northern flying squirrel nests only in red spruce.

The \$4 million study coordinated by Hertel is funded by the Forest Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and three coal companies. It's part of an \$18 million national research program on the effects of acid rain on forests. But researchers are not focusing solely on acid rain. They are also studying ozone pollution, winter stress, wind, insects, disease and fungi as possible causes of the red spruce decline. They are sharing findings with scientists in West Germany, where the problem of forest decline was first noted.

Although there is considerable debate about the cause, there seems to be little doubt that high-elevation red spruce are in trouble in much of their range from Tennessee to Maine. Pennsylvania has only a small stand of red spruce, in

the Poconos, and it is healthy. Some of the worst declines are on Whiteface Mountain in New York's Adirondacks, where more than 60 percent of the red spruce are dead, and on Camel's Hump in Vermont.

In West Virginia, which has 110,000 acres of red spruce forest, 40 percent of the trees are dead or display symptoms of declining health, according to the Forest Service. On McGowan Mountain, in a remote section of the Monongahela National Forest, 20 percent of the trees are dead and 36 percent are declining. The harsh environment offers a partial explanation. At 3,720 feet, the ridge is home to red spruce, rhododendron, bears — judging by fresh prints in the snow — and not much else. The soil is thin and rocky, and winter temperatures dip to 20 below zero. Winds continually lash the red spruce, which grow 60-70 feet tall with trunks 1 to 2 feet wide. But these stresses alone do not account for the species' decline, said William Jackson, a plant pathologist with the Forest Service, who has been studying the problem.

Jackson suspects that a type of fungus has weakened the trees. He subscribes to the theory that such natural factors probably go a long way in explaining the decline. "Each tree is unique with its own symptoms," Jackson said while hiking through 6-inch-deep snow to inspect the trees. "But there are some common symptoms — branch dieback (where the branches die from the tips back), exposed roots, reddening or yellowing of the needles, missing branches, cracks in the trees and root rot."

Other scientists consider man-made air pollution to be the most likely culprit. Their concerns focus on acid rain and ozone or a combination of these and other pollutants. Scientists know that ozone drifting as smog from Los Angeles has damaged pine trees in the San Bernardino Mountains. Ozone has also damaged white pine and hardwoods such as black cherry in Pennsylvania, although it's unclear whether those trees are growing slower as a result, said John Skelly, a professor of plant pathology at Pennsylvania State University.

Ozone results when nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons, emitted by cars and factories, mix in the presence of sunlight.

Mountains often have much higher ozone levels than lower elevations. Some scientists say ozone is destroying cellular membranes on leaves, allowing nutrients to leak out.

Acid rain is suspected because many mountains are bathed in highly acidic clouds. The water droplets could be attacking waxy needle coatings or causing indirect damage by leaching away soil nutrients.

Michael Oppenheimer, an atmospheric physicist with the Environmental Defense Fund, a conservation group, suspects air pollution in the spruce decline because he sees no widespread climate, insect or disease problem. "There is, however, a regionwide air pollution problem — excess levels of ozone, intense levels of acid fog at high elevations and high levels of metal deposition," he said.

Some scientists have discarded the acid rain theory, in part because young red spruce trees seem to be doing fine. Richard Kerch, director of air quality for the Consolidation Coal Co., agrees. Consol and two other coal companies are funding \$250,000 of the \$4 million research program, which is also examining declines in Southern Fraser fir and Northern balsam fir. The fir declines have been attributed largely to insects and climate.

The coal industry and the forest product industry oppose legislative proposals that would require sharp reductions in emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and other air pollutants. Sulfur dioxide, emitted mainly by coal-fired power plants, is in acid rain. Wayne Haines, manager of research for International Paper Co., wrote recently in "American Forests," a trade journal, that pollution controls "could cost consumers billions of dollars but produce nothing in terms of forest health."

The American Forestry Association, a citizens' conservation group, disagrees. It recently joined environmental groups in calling for a 10 million ton annual reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions, as well as cutbacks in nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. Frances Hunt, the association's legislative assistant, said that such cutbacks are needed to protect forest and aquatic resources. (*Ralph Haurwitz is the ecology writer for The Pittsburgh Press. This article is reprinted with the permission of The Pittsburgh Press.*)

West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission

by Mike Harman

ACTION NEEDED!

The West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission (APCC) is currently drafting a rule to require "best available control technology" to reduce or eliminate about 13 cancer-causing air emissions in the state. This is especially important here in the Kanawha Valley.

WHY?

A study entitled "Kanawha Valley Toxics Screening Study," released in July 1987, found that the concentrations of these chemicals in the air at several sites were high enough to cause a significant increase in cancer deaths, based on known health effects.

As many as **8 persons out of every 1000** at one site could die due to these exposures. These "hot spots" of chemical concentrations were found at Belle, South Charleston, Institute, and St. Albans. All Valley areas are obviously "at risk."

WHAT IS "BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY?"

This means what it says — the chemical industry would be required to install whatever equipment is currently available to achieve the **greatest possible reductions** in emissions of these chemicals, without regard to the cost.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Write a letter to the Air Pollution Control Commission in support of this proposal. It is important to support the **concept**, although the actual draft rule is not yet available. There should be a public hearing and public comment period later on so that individual comments on the actual rule can be made.

If public support is not voiced, then the APCC is subject to intense opposition from the chemical industry. Thad Epps of Union Carbide has already indicated their opposition to this rule. This makes no sense, as their position has always been "we're doing everything we can to operate safely." Apparently,

they're not and they don't want to.

You may want to write, or call the APCC and ask to be notified of the public hearing. You may want to ask them to mail you a copy of the proposed rule. Or ask to be notified of the next APCC meeting on this issue. It's **your** air.

WRITE: West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission, 1558 Washington St., East, Charleston, WV 25311
Phone: 348-3286

For more information, contact Mike Harman — 722-4731 (evenings and weekends).

Giving Away the MNF (cont. from page 1)

the Hermitage Motel, shook houses and farms with their low hovering helicopters after dark, set a Thornwood woman's backyard on fire, and before they left, had set **40-acre forest fire** on the MNF at Abe's Run near the East Fork Greenbrier 6.2 Area.

This unauthorized use of pyrotechnics during fire season occurred only one week after over 150,000 acres of dry southern WV forests were destroyed. According to the Forest Service, if it had not been for the rain and snow of that week, the fire would have been much worse.

The Forest Service and the military are currently investigating this incident, as well as unauthorized military use in the White Sulphur District and adjacent private land by more Fort Bragg units. Forest Supervisor Jim Page has written Fort Bragg specifying no more use of the MNF by their units until he can be guaranteed the training will

proceed according to the guidelines established this past year. He should be thanked for taking a strong stand on this abuse of the Forest and abuse of West Virginians and their land.

Issue 3: New Memorandum of Understanding and upcoming annual review meeting

In mid February a public meeting will be held for the following purposes: a) to discuss the past year's military activities in and around the MNF and problems to be ironed out; b) to make any necessary changes in the guidelines for military training use of the MNF; c) to discuss the upcoming year's PROPOSED training activities in and around the National Forest; d) to evaluate the new, updated Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and the military which formalizes the guidelines for their training use of the MNF; and e) other items of concern. **This will be an**

important meeting for MNF supporters to attend. To receive notification of time and place, contact me or LTC Everett Barnes, Camp Dawson, Rt. 2, Box 1, Kingwood, WV 26537 or phone him at 329-3350.

If you belong to other environmental or recreation groups, please ask them to get involved. They can contact me for more information. My address is 361 Laurel St., Morgantown, WV 26505 (Phone: 304-598-0136). As usual, blind development proponents are quick to talk of values gained while ignoring the values to be lost. Disappointingly, the military has now begun to lecture opponents on "patriotism." I would have to ask what kind of "patriot" would choose to spoil some of the most beautiful remote land remaining in the Eastern U.S., **against the wishes of the public they are charged to protect**, during a time of peace when training opportunities exist aplenty elsewhere?

Exploring Brush Creek, Mercer County

by Jim Phillips

Brush Creek Preserve, located near Athens in Mercer County, is a recent addition to the system of preserves owned by the Nature Conservancy. Occupying a little over 100 acres, the preserve area has long been a familiar place for residents of Mercer and Summers counties. Early in our history, the area was a source of employment. Now, it is a source of recreation and nature study. If your interest is in human or natural history, or just beautiful scenery, then you should visit the preserve. Be prepared for a ride on a West Virginia country road, even though the preserve is within easy access of WV Route 20, U.S. Route 19 and the West Virginia Turnpike (I-77).



Members of the Bibbee Nature Club explore Brush Creek Preserve. Photograph by Jim Phillips.

How to get there: 2.7 miles north of Athens or 4.6 miles south of the Pipestem State Park entrance, turn west from WV Rt. 20 onto the Camp Creek Road. After 2.8 miles from Rt. 20, turn left onto the dirt and gravel road. At the bottom of the hill (.7 mile) there is a bridge across Brush Creek. Park here and walk the hiking trail downstream (to your right if you face the bridge). Be sure to lock your car.

The beginning of the walk takes you through a good stand of rhododendron and some hemlock. As you emerge from the evergreen stand, you will notice that the creek is making more noise than it was at the parking area. Once you are clear of the laurel thicket, you will get a gorgeous view of Brush Creek Falls. The water cascades some 40-50 feet into a deep pool and then heads through a beautifully wooded, narrow ravine for about a mile to where the creek joins the Bluestone River.

Evidence of former residents rests atop the falls in the form of a section of stone wall that once served as the foundation for a mill. Below the falls, another wall may be seen. According to Janice Bell of the Mercer County Historical Society, both grist and woolen mills have been operated at the site. There was even a shanty town of sorts located in the vicinity of the falls. Z. R. Tracy operated a woolen mill here as early as 1851. John W. Johnston and George Sturdivant were co-owners of a woolen mill at Brush Creek Falls from 1904-1909. This mill cleaned, carded and prepared the wool for cloth. The owners were said to have bought up

surplus wool in the surrounding county and made it into blankets and linsey-woolsey for dresses. In addition, they sold bales of rolled wool for home use and made coarse linen cloth from flax for shirts and towels. Blankets made at Brush Creek Falls may still be found in some of the homes in the county.

Just past the falls there is a trail which will deliver you to the base of the falls. While Brush Creek Falls is sure to capture your attention, the Brush Creek Preserve actually begins at the base of the falls and continues to the mouth of the creek and along a small section of the Bluestone River. During certain seasons there are other small falls formed on the right side of the trail where feeder streams add to Brush Creek. Sometimes, these mini-falls are even prettier than the big falls. This especially happens in the winter when great ice columns may form.

You may notice the trail through the preserve is fairly straight and mostly level to the point above the junction of Brush Creek and the Bluestone River. Just before the turn of this century, this area was logged. Cut trees were skidded, splash dams were built and even a narrow-gauge railroad was constructed to transport the lumber. The tracks for the railroad were taken up about 1916 after all of the wood had been removed. Today, you can still find an occasional spike, tie or clinker left from those early days.

The naturalist can also find items of interest in the area of the preserve. In May, the colorful hillsides show off the blooms of trilliums, violets and columbines. Look a little closer and find the less showy flowers of wild ginger, jack-in-the-pulpit and Dutchman's pipe. Canby's mountain-lover, a rare evergreen, Canada yew and other uncommon plants have also chosen this area as their home. Fall colors are spectacular in the preserve. Witch hazel blooms are abundant in October.

In summer, birds found along the creek include several of the wood warblers, such as Louisiana waterthrushes, ovenbirds, worm-eating, black-and-white and hooded warblers. Red-eyed vireos, scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks and ravens may also be added to the list. In winter and during migration, winter wrens, golden-crowned kinglets and red-breasted nuthatches may become fairly common.



The box turtle is the most common reptile seen in the preserve. Photograph by Jim Phillips.



A raccoon looks down on Brush Creek Preserve. Photograph by Jim Phillips.

The small streams feeding into Brush Creek serve as home to dusk and seal salamanders, and the lucky herpetologist may find a green salamander in the cliffs. Although several types of snakes may be found on the preserve, the box turtle is probably the most common reptile. Mammals are represented by the grey squirrel, white-tailed deer, raccoon and beavers at the mouth of the creek.

At the mouth of the creek you are about two miles downstream from where the West Virginia Turnpike crosses the Bluestone River and about 12-14 miles upstream from the Mt. Creek Lodge at Pipestem State Park. While you may want to explore along some more of the old railroad grade, keep in mind that you will eventually end up on private property. This area of the Bluestone River is encased in a spectacularly beautiful canyon.

During your visit to the preserve you will view some of the most beautiful country in southern West Virginia. However, you will also be exposed to one of the blemishes of not just the southern part of the state but a problem found in nearly every county. The eyesore, of course, is litter. The area from where you parked to the falls is a favored "party" spot. At times, especially weekends, there may be a trail of beer bottles and cans to distract you. Members of the Brush Creek Preserve stewardship committee, scout groups and various other interested parties try to conduct occasional cleanups but we can't be there all of the time. A bottle bill would help tremendously but doesn't seem likely at this time. So, maybe if we encourage non-littering folk to use the preserve, we will also discourage thoughtless party animals at the same time. In fact, this seems to be happening already. There doesn't seem to be as much trash since early pickup attempts.

When you return to your car, you can return to Athens the way you came or you can cross the bridge and go up the hill. At the top of the hill a left turn takes you to the Athens exit of I-77 via the Ead's Mill Road. A right turn will take you to the point where I-77 crosses the Bluestone River. You may want to park at the bridge and explore some of the area. Then continue up the other side of the canyon and join U.S. 19 across from the entrance to Camp Creek State Park. Enjoy your visit to southern West Virginia!

Upper Williams Area (cont. from page 2)

recreation, general land management activities, and transporting Forest products.

5) Motorized recreation opportunities will be emphasized.

6) There will be considerable human activity resulting from many different uses, including recreation use and facilities, wildlife habitat improvements, timber management, mineral exploration, forage management, and special uses. Development activi-

ties will be compatible with environmental considerations, particularly the visual and water resources.

The previous list of items are referred to as the Desired Future Condition of Management Prescription 3 Areas; this is what we would like to achieve through management of Upper Williams.

Through public involvement, the Forest Plan determined what management activi-

ties are permissible in the management area.

The next step is to determine how to achieve the Desired Future Condition through designing and scheduling these activities throughout the area. This is where we need your help. We would like to hear your comments and concerns for management of the Upper Williams Area. What are your concerns related to timber, wildlife, recreation, visual, or any other resources that

Upper Williams provides?

The telephone number at the Marlinton Ranger District Office is (304) 799-4334. The mailing address is USDA — Forest Service, P.O. Box 210, Marlinton, WV 24954. Please try to respond [as soon as possible.]

Sincerely,
Robert R. Burt
Team Leader