



# The Highlands Voice

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## The 1998 West Virginia Legislature – the People's Choice? Blackwater Canyon, and the Political Process

By Vivian Stockman

While a handful of legislators managed to thwart the Blackwater Canyon Resolution, we have to declare victory on several fronts. First, we accomplished our goal of making the plight of the Canyon better known statewide. Second, we have rekindled public debate on land use issues. Even some loggers are privately saying that all lands cannot and should not be logged. Some places must be saved as sacred, food for the soul, as well as habitat for endangered species.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, we have further confirmation of who we must toss out of power in the legislature and who we must support, publicly and financially, in upcoming races.

Senator Jon Blair Hunter and Delegate Mike Buchanan are true public servants, not inclined to bend to intense political pressure that does not reflect the will of the people. If these are your representatives, please write a letter-to-the-editor publicly thanking them for their efforts to protect a spectacular place that is dear to the hearts of so many West Virginians. We can only speculate on how much pressure they were under by way of the Governor's office, from timber baron Buck Harless and from Allegheny Wood Products. Yet, Hunter and Buchanan heard the voices of the people, and they recognized that this is not a private property rights issue, but a case where a public utility and a corporation are treading on the rights of the people. These legislators will need your support. In addition to writing them and letters-to-the-editors of local papers, consider donating to their campaigns, as you can bet the Big Bucks of Timber will be propping up their opponents.

Senator Oshel Craigo, too, deserves public praise. He signed on as lead sponsor of the Senate Resolution, thus angering certain powerful Timber-influenced Senators. He was



The Spectacular Blackwater Canyon  
(Photo credit: Kenneth Garrett - All Rights Reserved)

unwavering in his support until the very end.

If any of the following are your legislators, please consider thanking them in a letter to the editor. Thanks to Senate Judiciary Committee members who voted for the Resolution: Senators Bowman, Ball, Hunter, Kessler, and White. Thanks, too, to Senators Macnaughtan, White and Jackson. Its hard to say whether we should thank Senators Synder and Wooton. Their voting absence on the Resolution was very strange – one can only suspect that their absence may have been intentionally orchestrated by those who would hope to see the Resolution defeated.

On the House side, many public thanks need to go to Delegates Buchanan, Butcher, Caputo, Claypole, Compton, Damron, Davis, Dempsey, Flanigan, Fleischauer, Fragale, Kuhn, Leach, Linch, Louisos, Mahan, Manuel, McGraw, Rowe, Spencer, Thomas, Tucker, Underwood and Williams.

Now, to those who deserve public scolding for their behavior in regards to this Resolution. Senators Minear and Plymale were so full of misinformation, they damaged their reputations every time they spoke. Toward the end, other Senators left the chamber when they rose to speak on the matter. Senators Buckalew, Deem, Fanning, Ross, and Scott have such a disdain for the democratic process, they really ought to move to their own small island, and save us all the trouble of having to publicly discredit them. Senator Dittmar needs to be called to task about his wishy-washiness. At least Senator Oliverio said from the very beginning that he would not support the Canyon's protection.

See **BLACKWATER** on page 13



--- from the heart of the plateau ---

By John McFerrin

## The Prison of Property Rights

It's a terrible thing to be imprisoned, particularly when one is imprisoned by his or her own ideology.

It was an ideology--the inherent inferiority of black people--that led this country down a disastrous path that took us through the Civil War and left us with a pernicious legacy that still troubles us. It wasn't that the adherents to this ideology were necessarily evil. They just took the assumptions of their belief system so much for granted that they were incapable of thinking about African Americans in any other way. Having made those assumptions, they followed them to their logical conclusion with disastrous results.

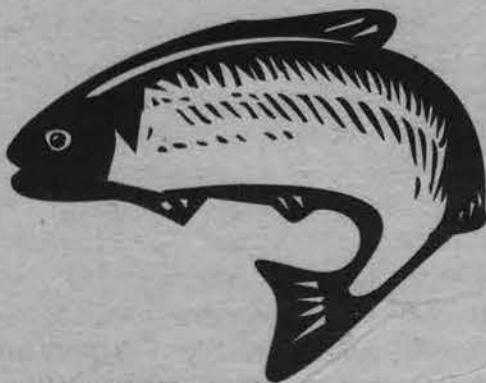
Americans' approach to health care is another prisoner of ideology. Many who think about health care make the assumption that the free market is the best (or only) system for determining who gets health care. The result is the most expensive health care system in the world, a system that rations care in an unfair and irrational way. Lots of modern countries have health care systems that result in healthier people with less expense.

The main reason we don't have such a system is that we are imprisoned by our free market ideology. While the free market does a wonderful job of producing and distributing some kinds of consumer goods, it is not effective in distributing health care. Yet we are so enamored of the free market ideology that we cannot conceive of a health care system that does not depend upon it. Our ideology prevents us from thinking of alternatives.

In an example closer to home, consider Blackwater Canyon.

Running through the debate on the future of Blackwater Canyon is a strong current of private property ideology. Adherents to this faith are incapable of thinking about the question beyond whether the Canyon is to be public or private property. They are so imprisoned by their ideology of the inherent superiority of the private ownership of property that they are incapable of thinking beyond the question of whether the land should be publicly or privately owned. Given their faith in private property, they choose private ownership with all the eagerness that a Baptist chooses salvation over sin.

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on page 13



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# Earth's Forests and their Role in the Natural Regulation of Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide

From the NPR Program, *Living on Earth*, January 1998

Forests play an important role in regulating the earth's climate. They suck heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO2) out of the atmosphere, so much CO2 that governments are counting on better forest management to help slow down climate change that's been set in motion by use of carbon-based fuels. But little is known about what specific types of forests in specific areas interact with the atmosphere. Exactly how much carbon they absorb and hold, how much carbon is released when they are cut or destroyed by fire, or how the forests, themselves, respond to changes in climate. [NPR reporter] Orlando de Guzmán traveled to the old growth forest research labs of the Pacific Northwest to talk with scientists looking for answers to these crucial questions.

Deep in the shadows of an old growth forest in Washington's Cascade Mountains, a team of scientists boards the yellow steel cage of a construction crane which rises from a concrete base and disappears into an umbrella of deep green needles and heavy branches. The cage shakes and then slowly rises up a narrow canyon of massive Douglas firs, passing silvery snags and ancient gothic spires that jut into the crisp autumn sky. At 250 feet the canopy is a delicate web of lichen draped branches.

"You notice that the forest here is a very rough upper service topography. There's a lot of

dead wood in the upper tree crowns here, and you also notice that the foliage on the tree is very much vertically oriented – it's not like the flat tropical forest where you tend to get what's called a canopy roof. Here the roof has an awful lot of holes in it." David Shaw is the site manager for the canopy crane which is run by the University of Washington.

There's been a lot of research on the ecosystems of forest canopies in recent years, but Dr. Shaw says this is the first to study the exchange of gases between the atmosphere and the forest. In this suspended world of emerald needles photosynthesis converts vast amounts of CO2 from the air into carbohydrates which are stored in the tree's wood and foliage, and oxygen which is released back into the atmosphere. It's a basic biochemical process that every green plant performs, and that has a profound impact on global and local climate, but in many ways scientists are only beginning to understand it.

"What we'd like to do, Bill, is to have the jib pointed right over the top of the tree." The cage inches forward to the top of the tallest Douglas fir on the site where forest ecologist, Bill Winter, has been conducting a Department of Energy study on leaf photosynthesis. "We have basically two tripods here – one tripod has a chamber attached to it which allows us to measure

photosynthesis, and the other physiological properties of needles, so we are going to put the branches, the branch tip into the chamber."

Dr. Winter's instruments measure exactly how much CO2 the needles are absorbing every second, providing a detailed transcript about how this branch is interacting with the atmosphere. He can then extrapolate how much CO2 this whole tree, with, perhaps, 60 million needles, might be drawing out of the air. "If we understand the carbon use of an individual tree. We can begin to think about how the trees aggregated together could represent a stand, and how that stand or system could handle carbon, and begin to think about how the forest as a whole plays into the global carbon cycle."

Scientists need to know how much carbon is being cycled through earth's vegetation because CO2 in the atmosphere traps heat from the sun, and increased levels of the gas from fossil fuel burning are causing the earth to heat up slightly and disrupting global weather systems. We know roughly how much of the gas is being put into the atmosphere, but have only the vaguest estimate of how much is being drawn out. Dr. Winter hopes this project will fill in at least a small part of the picture.

See CO2 on page 14

## Hope for the Potomac

### EPA Plans To Regulate Livestock Waste.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has announced a plan to begin regulating large livestock farms. The draft plan includes a program of permitting and inspections that would apply to large feedlots of chickens, hogs and cattle. Currently, only a fraction of large livestock operations is regulated, although the Clean Water Act gives EPA and the states authority for much broader regulation.

In West Virginia, it is unlikely that any hog or cattle feedlots would be affected. The poultry industry in West Virginia could be affected, however. Although the draft plan only addresses large operations, the larger operations in West Virginia may be affected.

Animal feeding operations are livestock-raising operations, such as hog, cattle and poultry farms, that confine and

concentrate animal populations and their wastes. Animal waste, if not managed properly, can run off to nearby water bodies, and cause serious water pollution and public health risks.

Manure from large farms is often used as fertilizer on crops, and can be washed from the land into nearby streams, rivers and lakes. The nutrients in the manure, such as phosphorus, can cause algae blooms in the water, which cut off sunlight and oxygen to aquatic ecosystems. Many scientists also link polluted runoff to blooms of toxic microorganisms, such as the *paramecium* that caused Maryland Governor Parris Glendening (D) to close sections of affected rivers last summer.

Under the plan, any farm with more than 1000 "animal units" would have to obtain a permit to produce waste, develop a plan for waste disposal, and submit to facility inspections. 1000 animal units is equal to 1000 cattle, 2500 pigs, or 100,000 hens, according to EPA's definition.

Copies of the draft strategy are available from EPA's Water Resource Center at 202-260-7786, or on the Internet at [www.epa.gov/owm](http://www.epa.gov/owm). Written comments will be accepted until May 1, 1998, and may be submitted to Ruby Cooper-Ford, U.S. EPA, Mail Code 4203, Washington, D. C. 20460, or by e-mail to: [Ford.Ruby@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:Ford.Ruby@epamail.epa.gov).

## VICTORY!

Congratulations to all WV Organizing Project members and friends who worked to get the Senate to pass a Resolution calling for a study of blasting and its effect on the environment. The Resolution calls for a comprehensive examination of the state's laws regulating blasting to determine their adequacy in protecting homes and wells from damage and in controlling noise pollution from blasting. Help WVOP keep the pressure on. The study Resolution is only the first step toward better regulating the mining industry. For more info: WVOP, P.O. Box 1921, Logan WV 25601. ✦



## EDITORIAL

**Lucy Braun Bombshell**

It's like tobacco. When I was a teen, more than fifty years ago, and first inhaled the smoke of a cigarette, I was intuitively aware of two things instantly. First, that I was hooked, and second that in no way could this be other than a disaster for my lungs. We all know by now how addicted persons will use the psychological mechanism of denial to allow themselves to keep on doing what is bad for them.

My intuition subsequently has proved to be right on. But that proof, something which is a certain part of scientific methodology, was a long time in coming. *Ex post facto* research is dogged with being outside of experimental methodology. It is open to attacks along all of its route – we have seen that quite clearly as we have followed the saga of Phillip Morris and company (even today, there are die-hards, who claim in the name of science, that there is no proof that smoking cigarettes can cause lung cancer).

Were it not for becoming hooked on inhaling tobacco smoke, I would have listened to the admonition from my intuition *re* bad health, and put down that cigarette for good. It took a lot of struggle and an intervening twenty-four years before I kicked the habit (fortunately, I am not one to make much use of the denial mechanism -- I feel I'm pretty well tuned into reality). Had I not done so, I would probably still be around, albeit with greater medical problems. Also there is a more than remote possibility that I would not be in the land of the living to write this article.

I am giving you this personal report because I see parallels between my situation with tobacco, and that of human beings and their addiction to the use of energy. Our society in a very real sense is hooked on the use of lots of energy. Energy for cars; for household, decorative, street, and huge burners for evening athletic events – lights; air conditioners; refrigerators; cooking. Energy for utility sports vehicle, four-wheelers, snowmobiles and power boats. Energy for air flights and ship cruises. At present nearly all of our energy comes from fossil fuels -- oil, gas and

**Frogs, Alligators and Pesticides**

(Adapted from Rachel's Weekly)

Since 1993, scientists worldwide have been trying to understand why frog populations are reported to be steeply declining in relatively unspoiled environments on several continents. And since 1995 scientists have been struggling to explain why deformed frogs are being observed in large numbers in a broad swath across the mid-northern region of the U.S.

In both cases, the first problem has been to determine whether the observed changes represent natural fluctuations, or whether they represent unusual events that might signal something important about declining environmental quality. A consensus now seems to be emerging:

\*\* worldwide, many frog populations ARE declining to unusually low levels (including, in some instances, extinction); and  
 \*\* frog deformities are definitely occurring in unusually high numbers in some locales.

Many factors have been identified as contributing to declines in frog populations. They include:

\*\* introduction of exotic predatory fish; stocked populations of bass, for example, can clear a stream of all frog eggs and tadpoles in short order.

coal. And the most commonly used fossil fuels, oil and coal, give off bad stuff in the process of converting the potential energy locked up in these substances to the kinetic energy that we use and are hooked on.

Most of us, if we'd taken the time to notice, have intuitively known that the burning of these substances, oil and coal, was environmentally harmful. The consequences of the emissions from such burning have been gradually making themselves more or less evident, consequences we've heard a bit much of these days, like global warming, ill-health effects on humans from breathing air particulates, and last, but hardly least, the dying of the forests.

We've heard of whole forests in central Europe dying. Closer to home, a high mortality rate of trees on the summits of Vermont mountains has been reported. There has been devastation and wide-spread death among the Fraser firs on the higher elevations of the Southern Appalachians (the "official" cause for these deaths has been given by the bureaucrats as death from the attacks of the balsam woolly adelgid. So then, why these deaths now? The balsam woolly adelgid has been around in these parts since the early 1900s. It just couldn't be that the Fraser firs have damaged immune systems, or could it?). Even closer to home, observers such as Charles Little, and West Virginians, Joe Aliff and the late John Flynn, have been reporting undue tree mortality for years only to be disregarded by the "official" spokespersons.

Well folks, I tell you the noose is tightening around the neck of the deniers of reality, just as it has been tightening around the neck of the American Tobacco Institute.

I just returned from two days in Huntington at the Lucy Braun Association for the Mixed Mesophytic Forest annual meeting. (The mixed mesophytic forest covers a slice of eastern Tennessee, most of West Virginia, much of eastern Ohio and southwestern Pennsylvania.) What was raised was the multiple nature of the threats to our forests in this region – strip mining, clearcutting and air pollution being the most evident threats. The evidence is becoming more clear that ozone, sulfate and nitrate depositions from the burning of fossil fuels, most notably coal, are creating an increasing mortality in these forests with some species being more severely affected than others.

I will not attempt to go into specific studies that point to this conclusion. This will take place in subsequent issues of the Voice. We do need to begin now (if we haven't already) to educate the politicians (at least those who are "educable") and the public on the nature of this grave threat to our very special forests. †

- \*\* habitat destruction (draining wetlands, for example);
- \*\* landscape changes (clearing woods, building roads, etc.) that isolate particular frog populations;
- \*\* increased ultraviolet radiation, caused by industrial chemicals that have thinned the stratospheric ozone layer;
- \*\* clearing wild lands for agriculture;
- \*\* acid rain;
- \*\* humans eating frogs' legs;
- \*\* global warming, causing elevated temperatures and drought;
- \*\* pesticides;

See FROGS on page 19



## Electric Utilities Selling off Land Holdings to Tighten Up for the Impending Deregulation

From NPR Program *Living on Earth* of January 18, 1998

One place where timber companies may find trees ready to harvest is on land owned by electric companies. Thousands of acres of electric utility properties are expected to be sold off as power companies get lean and mean as they get ready for the deregulation of their industry. From the Sierra Mountains of California [NPR reporter] explains:

The south fork of the Stanislaus River flows gently through the Sierra Mountains, through Yosemite Park on its way to a hydro-electric station. The power plant is owned by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG & E) as are hundreds of acres of a nearby forest. Thousands of old growth trees here help hold water and prevent silt from flowing into the hydro-electric turbines.

Environmentalists like John Buckley of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, say PG & E has been a good steward of the forest. "We've been pleased the way PG & E has managed their lands. They have had some logging that has taken place, but they have not done extensive clearcutting or aggressive logging." But this era of benign forest management may be ending, at least for some PG & E land. California is deregulating its electricity market and PG & E will no longer be able to pass on to rate payers all the costs of maintaining the forests.

"PG & E is getting ready for a competitive era by cutting our costs, and reducing our assets"--

Bill S. is a PG & E spokesperson -- "one of the ways we can make ourselves more competitive is focusing on the main line of business which is to deliver electricity and gas, and selling off assets that don't directly help us in that business."

And that could mean selling off a lot of land. PG & E is the second largest landowner in California. In 1995, the latest years for which there are figures, the company sold off 10,000 acres of prime timberland, a pace likely to continue for several years. Environmentalists worry that new owners won't take as good care of it as PG & E.

Environmentalist John Buckley walks on to a parcel of land owned by Sierra Pacific Industries, California's largest timber company. The tract has been clear cut. It's completely barren except for five small trees. Sierra Pacific has bought some PG & E forest land and is expected to buy more. This isn't one of those plots, but Mr. Buckley says it is representative of SPI's approach to its new acquisitions.

"They have done more clearcutting than was ever done by the private lumber companies, and they have also taken trees that were left intentionally by the previous companies, so from the environmental community's perspective, SPI is very aggressive and in many cases has less sensitivity to the needs of wild life and watersheds."

SPI officials failed to return several requests for an interviews about their acquisition of

electric company lands, but PG & E's Bill Cessa says that SPI or any other buyer cannot just cut down trees willy-nilly.

"They clearly also have a responsibility to balance the finances on one hand so it makes economic sense to buy it with environmental stewardship. They still have restrictions imposed on them by the same government regulators who governed us when we owned it, and that's where I think the safeguards are."

"The government regulations definitely don't go far enough to protect these forest lands," [a scientist] with the National Resources Defense Council doesn't accept PG & E's assurances. He says that forests around hydro-electric dams are especially sensitive and that's where there's a particular public interest in ensuring that they are well managed.

"These lands are crucial areas that protect watersheds. This is a special circumstance which requires a special level of protection. The roots of these trees provide sort of a natural sponge which filters and regulates the amount of water that flows. This serves as a natural faucet so you don't have flooding, and again, you remove these forests at a rate that's too high you encourage flooding."

See UTILITIES on page 15

## The People Speak through their Time and Dollars

Donations Illustrate Popular Support for Saving the Blackwater Canyon

by Judy Rodd

All members of West Virginia Highlands Conservancy recently received a letter outlining the work of the WVHC's Blackwater Canyon Committee. In that letter we said we would call to ask for your financial support of the Blackwater Canyon Campaign. Through three different phone-a-thons we've raised about \$7000 of our \$31,000 Blackwater Canyon project budget.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who made the phone-a-thon calls, and asked friends and strangers for money. Richard Klein, of Community & Environmental Defense Services, donated over \$1000 worth of his services to train us in the fine art of phone-a-thons. We held these fund-raisers at Charleston-area law firms. Our hearty thanks to Perry McDaniel, Carter Zerbe, Roger Forman, Jason Huber, and D.L. Hamilton of

di Trapano and Jackson for the use of their phone lines.

We cannot thank those we reached on phone-a-thon enough for their understanding and support of saving the Blackwater Canyon. Everyone who could afford to do so contributed something, even those who have already given so much. Almost everyone was extremely kind to the phone-a-thon volunteers, even though a few professed a sincere dislike of "telemarketers."

Why is this issue so important? Why do we have to raise all this money for one project, especially in light of the fact that this amount is close to WVHC's annual operating budget for *all* programs? If the majesty of the Canyon itself isn't reason enough, consider this: publicly held utilities hold thousands of forested acres in West Virginia.

As the push for deregulation of power companies intensifies, we could see these areas sold for development and timbering. A dangerous precedent could be set if we sit idly by and let the Canyon be logged and turned into a housing development.

Furthermore, the so called Wise Use movement is using this issue as a clarion call for private property rights extremists who would have us divest ourselves of all publicly owned lands. We must counteract their public statements. That is one of the main thrusts behind the Blackwater Canyon project, as well as saving the Canyon from any further logging and getting it into public ownership. +





## EPA Urges Veto of Bill Making Valley Fills Easier

By Ken Ward Jr.

(This article appeared in the Charleston Gazette on March 28, 1998. Ken Ward, Jr. is a staff writer for the Gazette)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has officially urged Gov. Cecil Underwood to veto a bill that would make it easier for coal companies to bury streams in strip-mine waste piles called valley fills.

EPA Regional Administrator W. Michael McCabe wrote Underwood on Thursday about the legislation, which relaxes requirements for companies to compensate the state for the loss of streams covered by valley fills.

McCabe said the bill, if it becomes law, could force EPA to take over issuing of water-pollution permits for coal mines from the state Division of Environmental Protection.

"It is difficult to understand why Senate Bill No. 145 should be considered, since the mining industry is producing more coal than ever in West Virginia while complying with current DEP mitigation requirements," McCabe wrote.

McCabe wrote that EPA "has serious reservations about valley fills in general, a practice which violates the nondegradation policy of the West Virginia water-quality standards."

The nondegradation, or anti-degradation, policy states that no activities can be allowed that would pollute water so much that it interferes with existing uses of rivers and streams.

"However, due to limited alternatives for spoil disposal in steep terrain, we have not been objecting to water pollution permits involving valley fills under certain conditions," McCabe wrote.

"A key condition has been the providing of adequate mitigation to compensate for the permanent elimination of natural headwater streams.

"The current mitigation policy of the Division of Environmental Protection DEP provides mitigation which we have determined will be adequate for most fills.

"We, however, have concerns that even the current policy may not adequately address stream and other impacts from the increasing number of very large fills and, as a result, we are assessing the overall valley fill situation, including mitigation, in the Eastern U.S. with other federal agencies."

Currently, DEP requires coal operators to pay money to build recreational waters - lakes, streams or ponds - to compensate for the loss of streams to valley fills.

Some in the coal industry, especially A.T. Massey Coal, pushed for legislation that would relax the mitigation requirements. The bill, also pushed by House Speaker Bob Kiss, D-Raleigh, was approved on the last night of the session March 14.

Some top officials within DEP want agency Director John E. Caffrey to

recommend that Underwood veto the bill. The governor must make a decision by April 8.

Coal industry lobbyists have been urging companies to call the governor's office to urge that the bill be signed. Dan Page, spokesman for Underwood, said the governor's staff is reviewing McCabe's letter and would brief the governor on it early next week. The governor has not read the letter, Page said.

In a letter released Friday, McCabe outlined a number of provisions of the bill which he said will not provide adequate mitigation for valley fills. Among them:

It raises the threshold size of watersheds that can be filled in without any type of mitigation from 250-acre drainage areas to 480-acre drainage areas. "This would allow streams about 1 mile long to be filled without compensation," McCabe wrote. "The increased watershed is also significantly larger than the 200-acre threshold in EPA's 1988 valley fill policy requiring mitigation. The policy was unsuccessfully challenged in federal court by the coal industry."

It does not specify a specific monetary mitigation option, but only an upper limit of \$225,000 per flowing stream acre - not drainage acre - disturbed. "This would allow monetary mitigation to be assessed at levels much lower than the current \$200,000 per acre, a level which EPA feels can provide adequate mitigation measures for most stream filling," McCabe wrote.

It requires legislative appropriation for expenditures of mitigation funds and does not specify that such projects necessarily involve enhancement of water quality or aquatic life. "This would impede DEP's ability for securing funds for appropriate environmental projects," McCabe wrote. "The short-term gain of extracting coal by large-scale surface mining in mountainous areas leaves a lasting legacy of valley fills where natural productive streams once existed," McCabe wrote. "At a minimum, adequate mitigation must be provided where there are no feasible options for spoil disposal."

McCabe noted that EPA has authority under the federal Clean Water Act to review all water-pollution permits for coal mines in the state. "If the bill is signed, we would regretfully have little choice but to increase our reviews of individual draft permits and to object to those permits determined to have inadequate mitigation," he wrote. "This could result in the necessity of coal mining companies negotiating with both DEP and EPA, delays in issuance, and possible takeover of issuance authority by EPA for specific permits if our objections are not satisfied." †



(Photo credit: Penny Loeb and U. S. News and World Report)

"Coal has always cursed the land in which it lies. When men begin to wrest it from the earth it leaves a legacy of foul streams, hideous slag heaps and polluted air. It cripples this transformed land with blind and crippled men and with widows and orphans. It is an

extractive industry which takes all away and restores nothing. It mars but never beautifies. It corrupts but never purifies."

— Harry Caudill, in  
*Night Comes to the Cumberland* (1962)



## Coffee and the Demise of Songbirds

By Bill Reed

Biologists report a severe decline in the northeastern U. S. and Canada in the numbers of some songbirds in recent years. Thoreau's favorite songbird, the wood thrush, has taken an extensive hit. In my area of Raleigh county in 1990 I was enthralled by distinctly hearing four or even five wood thrushes doing evening vespers in late May. I am of a like mind with Thoreau on lots of things, and we share a mutual disposition in finding the wood thrush song to have some very special powers.

At dusk it gives me a much needed infusion of both awe and joy, especially after having been tuned in to the facts of the material and political works of humankind for too many daytime hours. The wood thrush song provides a massage for the soul that is needed to complete the day and prepare for the next one.

In the past few years I've noticed that these daily evening quartet or quintet concerts no longer occur. I feel fortunate now to hear a solo, and especially so to hear an uncommon evening duet in late May and June. Besides having a love for wood thrushes and other songbirds, I share with my fellow Americans a fondness for coffee. So how, you may be asking, is this relevant to songbirds and their decline?

Scott Shalaway in his Charleston Gazette columns opened my eyes on this issue. There is a direct relationship with the big coffee boom that is going on to songbird decline. The multinational corporations, smelling big profits, have jumped in with both

feet into the production of coffee. They are clearcutting huge areas of tropical forests to grow coffee in the way they best know to maximize profits – through growing specially developed strains of coffee that require full sun, and by using heavy doses of agrichemicals in their cultivation. Native peoples who have depended on the growing of coffee in an earth-friendly way are being squeezed out of their traditional economies.

The traditional way to grow coffee does not depend on the destruction of the forest canopy. The coffee plant evolved in the deep shade of the African rain forests, and for centuries was cultivated under a canopy of tall trees. According to Shalaway, science has now proved what is obvious to any tropical birdwatcher – traditional, shade coffee farms are havens for wildlife. The old way of growing coffee not only saves the winter homes of migratory songbirds, but provides a better tasting coffee that is grown free of dangerous chemicals. The disadvantage is that it is more expensive than the agribusiness coffee.

I am a person who has to watch my budget pretty carefully, but I made the decision a few years ago after Scott Shalaway's admonition that if I was to continue to drink coffee, I was going to invest in the shade grown organic kind. If I am going to call myself an environmentalist and not be hypocritical about it, I cannot proceed to involve myself in a commodity that is destroying songbirds and making life difficult

for native peoples.

Organic (if it is truly organically grown, it is invariably also shade grown) shade grown coffee is not something you can easily find in supermarkets, at least not in the ones around here in the Beckley area. One needs to do a little shopping around to find a supplier. Usually food coops and some health food stores carry the shade grown coffee. You might have to buy a grinder to grind up the beans, but this will give you better tasting cup of coffee anyway.

One of the chief American suppliers of organic shade grown coffee is Frontier from Norway, IA. They have been a seller of organic spices and herbs since 1982. They claim to buy their coffee directly from small organic farms "to ensure that the families who grow it earn a fair price for their crops" and they certify that their coffee is 100% organic.

What you can do besides finding your own source for eco-friendly coffee is, (1) to lean on your local supermarkets to carry shade grown, organic coffee in their stores, and (2) to pass the word around to your fellow coffee lovers. After all, what kind of environmentalists are we, anyway, if we and our eco-friends are going to be killing songbirds with every cup of coffee consumed!

+



*"Nearly half the world's species of plants, animals and microorganisms will be destroyed or severely threatened over the next quarter century."*

– Peter H. Raven (quoted in E. O. Wilson [ed.], *Biodiversity*)

*"Tropical forests form part of the global heritage. We all find our daily lives enhanced by virtue of their existence. We shall all lose if they disappear ... they belong to us all."*

– Norman Myers (from *The Primary Source* [New York: Norton, 1984], p. 133)

*"The rainforests are being destroyed, not out of ignorance or stupidity, but largely because of poverty and greed."*

– Michael H. Robinson, Director, National Zoological Park

## E-DAY Elevates Canyon Issue

E-Day, the West Virginia Environmental Council's (WVEC) annual program to show of support for the environment, was held at the State Capitol rotunda on February 26, 1998. Enthusiastic crowds lined up to sign petitions asking our legislators to start in motion some actions leading to the saving of the Blackwater Canyon.

A giant version of the Canyon's endangered Northern Flying Squirrel flitted about the rotunda area, and appeared in a colorful Blackwater Canyon skit written and costumed by WVHC member Carol Jackson. Folks clamored for Jackson's flying squirrel pins to wear alongside their "Save the Blackwater Canyon" buttons. Legislators would have to have been deaf and blind not to notice the throngs chanting "Save the Canyon!"

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) had a table promoting WVHC issues in general. There was also a Blackwater Canyon table where WVHC members collected signatures and donations. The WV Chapter of the Sierra Club also collected signatures asking for public ownership of the Canyon. At the end of E-day, we photocopied these petitions and delivered them directly to House and Senate members.

During E Day festivities, WVHC's treasurer, attorney Tom Michael, and attorney Stuart Caldwell both received WVEC's highest honor, the Mother Jones Award. The award acknowledges both men's long years of service to West Virginia's people and its environment. Norm Steenstra of WVEC said Mother Jones would have counted Tom as a colleague and a friend. A special award for his unfailing volunteer service was awarded to Larry Gibson.

Congratulations to Tom, and thanks to everyone who participated in WVHC's part of E-Day. And extra special thanks to Denise Poole of WVEC who organized the whole event. Through efforts like these we remind our legislators for whom they work. +



## Blackwater Canyon -- Campaign on Many Fronts

By Jim Sconyers

The Blackwater Canyon campaign moves ahead on many fronts. We dig in for the long haul, as we knew all along we would need to do. All too often in America in 1998 we go for the quick fix, and attention spans reduce to the five-minute infomercial or the politician's ten-second sound bite. But serious conservation work can take months or years, and the Blackwater Canyon is proving itself no exception to this rule.

On the legislative front, it seemed at times that Blackwater Canyon was the hottest issue in the just-ended legislative session -- and there wasn't even a bill! Rather, we worked with numerous allies to advance a resolution. The resolution would ask the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to convene a task force to determine the best way for the Blackwater Canyon to come into public ownership. Lobbying was furious. Phone calls, letters, and faxes flew.

Before the session began, most observers expected any Blackwater votes to be the proverbial 1-to-something....or less. Amazingly, this didn't happen. Supporters popped up all over the place, with the resolution introduced into both the Senate and the House. In the final analysis parliamentary manipulation and political chicanery prevailed. The resolution was defeated in committee, while making quite a respectable showing.

Nobody was surprised that the resolution didn't pass. The surprise was the strong showing and intense interest generated.

Supporters both inside and outside the legislature were heartened by the result. On the judicial front the West Virginia Supreme Court agreed to hear the joint appeal brought by a coalition of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Sierra Club and other interested parties on April 28, 1998. By the time some readers see this article a decision may have been reached on this appeal.

Briefly, this is an appeal of a decision earlier by the WV Public Service Commission (PSC). West Virginia law requires that the PSC must give approval whenever a public utility sells property. Nevertheless, Allegheny Power sold the Blackwater Canyon, neither asking for nor receiving approval from the PSC. The PSC refused to enforce the law despite our formal complaint. This appeal has to do with that decision.

The Supreme Court makes decisions in a two-step process. First, the Court decides whether to even accept the suit. Then the actual case is heard with a decision based on the merits. Thus far we have passed the first hurdle since the Court did choose to hear the appeal, setting the April 28 date.

On the public front the real battle is in the hearts and minds of the people and their elected representatives. We will renew efforts on this front, particularly focusing at the grassroots level. Old tactics will be continued, and new tactics will be pursued. These tactics will include, (1) meetings, (2) petitions, (3) outings, (4) working through the press, (5)

making videos, and (6) ads for radio and newspaper, as well as other tactics.

To be considered also is the Lindy Point front. Lindy Point is the rock promontory where people have gone for generations for the truly awesome and inspiring panoramic scenic vista. The Lindy Point Overlook has been the place where countless snapshots have been taken. This spectacular view has served well the promotion of the best of Wild Wonderful West Virginia through many brochures and television pitches.

For decades hikers, mountain bikers, photographers, tourists, and picnickers have flocked to Lindy Point, believing that it was part of the Monongahela National Forest or Blackwater Falls State Park. Indeed, the Park included trips to Lindy Point as part of its regular recreation program for many years.

No more! Lindy Point, like most of Blackwater Canyon, is now POSTED NO TRESPASSING. You are not welcome there.

We expect to focus more closely on Lindy Point, as a veritable icon of West Virginia's beautiful wildlands - a public resource far too valuable to keep from the people.

As ever, the objective of our campaign is to let the people know what is at stake. The goal is to encourage the present owner to grasp the value of the Canyon to the public, and to work with agencies that are ready and able to act by paying full market value. †

## Cougar in Appalachia?

(From *ARC Update*, Feb/Mar 1998)

Setting a regional precedent, the National Park Service has begun a monitoring program for the eastern cougar, *Felis concolor*, in the Shenandoah National Park. The cats have been listed as a Federally Endangered Species since the early 1970's, and are written off as "expected extinct" by most natural resource agencies in Appalachia. Traditionally, cougar sightings are attributed to escaped pets or circus runaways. However, the Park Service's new cougar program recognizes that this may not be the case.

Across Appalachia, cougar habitat is increasing. With the net migration of people out of the region, the increasing forest cover, and booming deer populations, Appalachia is ripe for a cougar resurgence. As a Federally listed species, the confirmed presence of *F. concolor* would send a shock-wave through public land management in the eastern United States.

It's only a matter of time," said Jim Atkinson, a wildlife biologist for the Park, in a recent article by the Associated Press. He continued, "if cougars are present on the mountain -- and we really have no doubt that they are -- then I think we'll eventually capture one on film." †

## Jobs & the Environment: Federal Funds Needed for Mine Reclamation in Appalachia

(From *ARC Update*, Feb/Mar 1998)

According to the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), over 2.5 billion dollars are currently needed to help reclaim over 5000 abandoned mines in Appalachia. This money would support many restoration jobs, often utilizing the same machinery and skills that originally created the mines.

Unfortunately, however, billions of dollars already allocated at this effort are being withheld to artificially balance the national budget. Clearly, a balanced budget on paper means nothing for us: instead, we need those jobs and the reclaimed habitat.

The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee [are in the process of] determining funds for abandoned mine land reclamation. Representative Ralph Regula, the Committee Chairperson, needs to understand that these jobs are essential for the region and that reclamation of these abandoned lands are part of a long-term strategy for Appalachia. You can reach Congressman Regula at (202) 225-3876. †





## None Dare Call it Democracy

by Vivian Stockman

The final day of the session, all day, a volunteer dogged the blow-dried legislative lawyer, as he rushed feverishly about the Capitol, arranging where Senate and House representatives would meet in committee to hash out their differences on SB 145. Both Houses had passed slightly different versions of SB 145, the valley "mitigation" bill, which would give the coal industry a green light on mountain top removal and valley fill. If the lawyer could just ditch our dad-burned member of the public, who followed him hoping to find out where the committee would convene, then the coal lobbyists and the legislators could meet without pesky public scrutiny.

As our lady-in-off-red trailed the lawyer, K.O. Damron, a coal industry lobbyist, sat at the Capitol Information Desk, pecking at his laptop. Was he typing up the changes the committee members would adopt in order to pass the bill into law? Was the coal industry writing its own bill? And was that the very same gentleman who said the streams coal companies fill with former mountain tops contain "no significant forms of life."

Finally, our heroine, Mary Wildfire, learned where the gathering of minds would be. She alerted the lobby team and other volunteers. We assembled around a conference table and watched, stunned and disgusted, as our lawmakers and coal lobbyists joked, laughed, and gave a thumbs up sign to the devastating practice of mountaintop removal.

During this meeting, Senator Ross told one member of the flabbergasted public that good citizens should be home cooking dinner, taking care of their families, not out attempting to participate in the democratic process. Best we little folk leave that to the industry lobbyists. Ross didn't realize he was talking to Dot Henry, WVEC's volunteer extraordinaire. She dared to tell him she understood democratic government required citizen participation. Senators Sprouse, Anderson and Fanning found the whole interaction worth a chuckle.

The Delegates and Senators couldn't quite figure out what to do, so they had a little caucus with the coal lobbyists. So now a mining operation will have to affect 480 acres, instead of the former 250, before coal companies begin to pay mitigation fees for the damages, that is, if Underwood signs the bill. Of course, your guess is as good as mine, as to how one can ever calculate fees for destroying an ecosystem, but don't worry, K.O. has that figured out. This little meeting, where we saw legislators snuggle up with coal lobbyists, may have saved the coal companies millions and millions of dollars.

At the meeting, Larry Gibson, another dedicated WVEC volunteer, held up a sign so the legislators could see how much money coal companies donated to political campaigns. Bill Rainey, a coal industry lobbyist told the delegates he was sorry he didn't give more. Another funny joke. Aren't you glad there's so much humor in the

One recent analysis calculated the total cost of ecosystem services provided by a clean environment world wide as equal to twice the gross global product of all economic activity. In other words, sacrificing environmental protection to create jobs is a net loser for society. A clean environment provides more benefits to us than we can possibly hope to create by ignoring and degrading it. When economic developers take off their blinders and look at the big picture, economic development will begin to move in a more sustainable direction. †

Send the name and address of a friend or friends who may be prospective members to Dave Saville at POB 569, Morgantown, WV 26507, or call him at 594-2276. He'll give them a 3-month trial subscription to the Highlands Voice.

Capitol? I wonder who's laughing in the coal fields of West Virginia?

*The House Speaker received \$12,300 as a political contribution from the Coal industry.*

*Moreover, the Senate President received \$30,200 from the coal industry.*

*Other significant contributions from King Coal to our lawmakers: All House members who won their respective elections, \$109,250*

*All Senate members who won their respective elections, \$83,300.*

*Underwood received a whopping better than half a million from Coal if you add his inaugural with his campaign contributions*

*Is it any wonder the voting went as it did?*

+

### A Forest Supervisor with the Right Perspective

(From PEER Perspective, Winter 1998)

Taking over one of the most hammered forests in the Northwest, Oregon's Siuslaw, where a severe storm two years ago triggered over 1000 major landslides caused by clearcuts and roads, supervisor Jim Furnish decided to reverse course - he started to close roads. Overcoming industry opposition, Furnish has closed two-thirds of the forest's roads, saying "[I]f you look at the problems we're having with steelhead and salmon, and at the number of streams that we have in the Siuslaw National Forest, we have a moral obligation to take this approach." Who let this guy into the Forest Service?

PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility) will defend, with considerable clout I may add, those public employees who choose to go public with environmental decisions made by their respective agency heads that are illegal, wrong-headed, or just plain sleazy and harmful to the public good.. You my contact them at PEER, 2001 S St., NW, Suite 570, Washington, DC 20009. †

"Lord knows West Virginia has enough valleys. What we need is some more flat land ... we should be paying the coal companies to do mountain top removal instead of them paying us." - Senator Frank Deem (R. Wood)

+

### Environmental Protection Is a Plus for the Economy

(Excerpted from a posting on WISE by Professor James Kotcon)

States with the most stringent environmental enforcement have the strongest economic performance. West Virginia, which regularly ranks near the bottom in per capita spending on environmental enforcement, also ranks near the bottom on economic performance. While no one denies that environmental regulations cost jobs for polluters, the net balance between jobs lost and new jobs created is quite favorable. Unfortunately, it is always easier to trot out the guy who lost his job than to demonstrate that robust economic growth is "caused" by strong environmental enforcement. Yes there may someday come a time when investment in environmental protection is no longer cost effective, but we are still a very long way from break even on that score.



## Optimism for the Future from the Worldwatch President

From the NPR program *Living on Earth*, broadcast in January 1998

NPR Reporter, Laura Canoy, interviews Lester Brown.

L. C. For fifteen years, Worldwatch Institute has been publishing "State of the World." It's the group annual report card on the health of the planet, noting some of the most pressing global problems and suggesting solutions. In this year's edition, Worldwatch President, Lester Brown, describes a global economy that's strong, but also straining the earth's natural systems. He calls for a new kind of economy that's both vibrant and sustainable, the antithesis, he says, of the current Western business model.

L. B. We look at the growth in this economy, since mid this century – it has increased nearly sixfold, and in the process the demands of the economy have begun to outstrip the natural support systems on which it depends. For example, we see the demand for sea food exceeding the sustainable yield of oceanic fisheries, and as a result fisheries collapsing. We see the demand for forest products exceeding the sustainable yield of forests so forests are shrinking. In addition to the environmental trends, we can now see in looking at China that a country with 1.3 billion people simply will not be able to adopt the Western industrial development model, the fossil-fuel based, automobile-centered, throw-away economy is not going to work for 1.3 billion people in China, even though it has worked in the U. S. I know in the long run it won't work for India, either, and the other developing countries, and, indeed, the industrial countries, themselves, over the long term.

L. C. In the report you call for a new, different type of economic growth. What would that new economy look like?

L. B. A sustainable economy would get most of its energy from renewable sources. That could be wind, solar cells, solar thermal power plants, hydro power, biomass [and/or] geothermal energy, a number of sources of energy that are beginning to develop very rapidly. It would also be a re-use, recycle economy. It would not be a throw-away economy. It would be an economy that would take advantage of the latest technologies to reduce the use of materials. For example, some developing countries in developing phone systems are bypassing the traditional telephone poles and lines, wires to carry phone messages, and going directly to cellular phones and satellites, saving a enormous

amount of material. There are many new opportunities now for technological leapfrogging that will permit us to do things far more efficiently in the developing countries than we did during the earlier stages of development in the now industrialized societies.

L. C. As you say in your report, you're optimistic. You mention new technologies, big companies that are taking a turn in that direction. Give us some of your favorite examples, and describe the philosophies that these companies are adopting.

L. B. Well, one recent example was a speech given by John Brown, the CEO of British Petroleum, one of the world's largest oil companies. He said, "We at British Petroleum now take the risk of global warming seriously. We think we've got to do something about it." He said, in effect, British Petroleum is no longer an oil company, it is now an energy company. "We are committing," he said, "a billion dollars to the development of wind and solar energy resources." And, incidentally, shortly after that Shell followed with a major announcement of committing half a billion dollars to renewable energy resource development. So we're seeing some interesting changes here – we're seeing some exciting new technologies coming on in the field. Advances in wind power, for example, are becoming quite attractive to oil companies because, whereas the market for oil has been growing one to two percent a year, and the market for coal at less than one percent a year during the nineties, wind power has been growing at 25 % a year, and the market for solar cells at 15 % a year, and that's going to accelerate sharply in the years immediately ahead, *and if a company in the energy business, in the oil or coal business wants to grow rapidly in the future, it will not be doing it in coal or oil [Editor's italics]*. It has to move into these new areas, so we're seeing a lot of things happening that promise rapid changes in the years ahead. Societies tend to cross thresholds and suddenly change becomes not only possible but very rapidly at times, and I sense that we could be on the edge of that in the environmental field based in part on some of these recent examples.

L. C. Why do you think it is important that corporate leadership is there? Certainly environmentalists have been talking about these problems for a long time.

L. B. They make the important investment decisions. You or I, or the US Government may *wish* we were investing more in wind power, for example, or in solar cells, but it's the corporations that control the capital and make the investments. The bottom line is that converting our existing fossil-fuel based, automobile-centered, throw-away economy into an environmentally sustainable economy; one based on renewable energy, efficient public transportation; one based on a reuse, recycle economic system represents the greatest investment opportunity in history, and at least some corporate leaders are beginning to sense that, and this I find very exciting.

*Editor's comments: I find some solace in Lester Brown's optimism. Unfortunately, in West Virginia, the "energy" companies, and their lackeys, the politicians, have usually been the last to see the light. Too often the leaders in the coal industry have been long on ruthlessness, being willing to take risks and skirt the edge of the law (if not going over it), and short on brains and vision. I just wonder if in my lifetime I will see the monster machines, which are lopping off the mountain tops dangerously near to my dwelling place, go the way of the horse and buggy. †*

### FROGS continued from page 18

harm frog populations by delaying their growth, which would allow more time for predators to eat them.

\*\* Another class of industrial compounds called retinoids has been implicated in frog deformities.[11] Retinoids are a class of molecules including vitamin A and similar compounds, including retinoic acid, which is a potent hormone. Exposure to excessive amounts of retinoids can cause birth defects in all vertebrates, from fish to humans. (The retinoid-based acne treatment Accutane has caused birth defects in humans.) At least one pesticide, methoprene, acts like a retinoid. Methoprene is an insect growth regulator that prevents young insects from maturing.

\*\* Researchers some years ago identified a pesticide spill into Lake Apopka as the cause of mature alligators with penises so small that they could not reproduce. Scientists assumed the trouble was confined to that one lake. But recently alligator problems have come to light all across southern Florida. In the Everglades, which are contaminated with numerous pesticides, full-grown alligators weigh hundreds of pounds less than alligators elsewhere in Florida. †



## Letters

(The following letter appeared in the Charleston Gazette on March 22, 1998)

Dear Editor,

I was astounded at the self serving commentary that forester and politicians Breshock and Perkey wrote in the Gazette on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Thousands of West Virginians have stood up to be counted in the wood wars over the Blackwater basin. These citizens of our state have seen the destruction brought on by the poorly regulated wood industry, and have drawn their line in the mountains.

NO Breshock and Perkey, we don't want to wait another two generations to view again the Blackwater as it is today after Allegheny wood products has finished logging it off. Just because it was cut several times is NO justification for it to be destroyed once more for the sake of boards and dollars.

Yes, the timber business creates jobs and tax revenues but it will have to find those (and they will) in other wood lots. The Blackwater is ripe for the saw and like a bitch in heat, the big money comes to pay their respects and collect their share. It's time to say NO.

Water quality, fish habitat, wildlife shelter would all be disrupted for decades to come if the Blackwater were logged. What price can you place on that? What price is a tourist industry worth? There are many other places for those saws to be used!

Yes, this is a very emotional issue, and I'm just another one of thousands of West Virginians to stand up and yell "Save the Blackwater."

Mark Blumenstein  
Alderson WV

(The following two letters appeared in the Charleston Gazette)

To Voice Editor:

Many years ago when I was young and innocent, I thought of being a forester. The very name "forester" made me think of national parks, wilderness areas and beautiful tree filled mountains. What a descent to eventually learn that foresters view trees as money.

The other day in the Charleston Gazette a couple of "foresters" defined the whole issue of saving the Blackwater Canyon as one of money versus money. They defined those of us who don't want that beautiful canyon destroyed as being in favor of recreational use of the canyon to bring money into the area as opposed to logging. Logging

will bring more money, better jobs than recreation, they say. They even tried to link people who love our mountains with the environmental damage caused by four wheelers--that was a stretch.

Saving the Blackwater Canyon is not an issue between money and money. How about an issue of beauty versus money? Is beauty not allowed because it doesn't generate money.? Do we have to destroy West Virginia's beauty for money? Would these same foresters be in favor of logging all of West Virginia's greatness for money? Should the other great beauty spots of America be destroyed for money? Is money all that matters?

Some of us love these wonderful hills and valleys of West Virginia and we can't really offer a logical, bottom-line money oriented argument for their preservation. We really can't tell you that you will make more money if you leave our mountains alone and let them just sit in grandeur. We can tell you the difference between viewing the hell waged on the land by logging and strip mining, and the joy of sitting on a mountain top sighing at the heavenly wonder.

The foresters' attitude and the strip-mine attitude seem similar to that of the major in the Viet Nam war who observed that they had to destroy the village to save it. If you want to see beauty destroyed for money go to southwestern West Virginia--you will find neither beauty nor money.

Julian Martin

*[I know what you mean. I, too, thought the word "forester" was magic when I was a kid. I even carried it so far as to attend the New York State College of Forestry for 2-1/2 years before disillusionment set in. I had a prof who did nothing but show slides of various logging and sawmill operations. His favorite saying was "there's gold in them thar hills," the hills being the trees of the forest. There was an overriding emphasis on that philosophy which can best be described by the words, "get out the cut." Ed.]*

Editor:

In West Virginia we promote our mountains for tourism, yet we have mountain top removal, valley fills, strip mining and blasting. We don't know the extent of damage this does.

So far we have flooding, mud and rock slides, disturbed watersheds and damage to our roads and property.

Another concern: mountains in the coal fields are honeycombed with abandoned deep mines that have been filling with water over a

period of 40-plus years. What happens when mountaintop removal reaches this water?

Some permits have already been approved that say this is in the plans for some coal companies.

Mother Jones said, "When I get to the other side, I shall tell God Almighty about West Virginia." What a story she would have today.

Freda Williams, Whitesville +

## Big Time Congrats

Belated congratulations to Bill Ragette, the former editor *par excellence* of the *Highlands Voice*, for the distinction of becoming Graffiti's "Eer of the Year." This has been the closest thing to Time magazine's "Man of the Year," and for earnest West Virginians, the official naming by the Graffiti honchos being awaited with the same kind of suspenseful excitement as that of the "Man of the Year" awarding. Other than this superficial comparison, I would not wish on Bill any further editorial affiliation with Time magazine, that unrepentant purveyor of misinformation.

Gracing the cover of the January 1998 issue of Graffiti was the picture of a Bill that makes him such a loveable and disarming hell raiser. He is quoted in Graffiti as saying, "I wanted to live in harmony with the planet. It was a moral issue for me. In the back-to-the-land movement ... people were looking for some sort of alternative. It was all about making your own house and making your own entertainment and teaching your own kids."

Would that others had this kind of moral commitment to the planet. *Current Voice Editor.* +

## Mitigation Not a Solution

*From Environmental News, a weekly broadcast on January 18, 1998 from public radio station, WETS, Johnson City, TN*

The December issue of National Wildlife reports that the provisions of the Clean Water Act which permit destruction of natural wetlands may not be as effective as once thought.

Restored and created wetlands are significantly less effective at controlling floods, filtering water and providing wildlife habitat. Only time will show if mitigation wetlands will improve but even if they do, there has still been a temporary loss of wetland functional ability from the landscape. +



## Pfiesteria Scientist Wins Award

(From PEER News, Winter 1998)

With each summer bringing growing waves of seemingly unexplained but massive fish kills, the public is becoming aware of the latest, and perhaps deadliest, byproduct of pollution – *Pfiesteria piscidia*. *Pfiesteria* was unknown until 1990 when a North Carolina State associate professor of aquatic ecology, Dr. JoAnn Burkholder, discovered the strange and horrible species. At the time, a rash of unexplained fish kills were occurring in North Carolina waterways. Her investigative research pointed to a new cause, a strange microbe which could transform itself from benign bacteria into a flesh eating killer. PEER nominated Dr. Burkholder this fall for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) "Scientific Freedom And Responsibility Award." On February 16, AAAS will present the award to her in a special ceremony in Philadelphia during their annual meeting.

"JoAnn Burkholder's struggle is emblematic of the ethic of PEER-public employees who, in the face of intense political pressure and at great peril to their own careers, pursue scientific truth and maintain their integrity," stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch.

### Science, Politics and the "Cell from Hell"

Under the right conditions, *Pfiesteria* rises from the sediment to attack fish or anything else in the water. This mysterious killer unleashes a poison one thousand times as toxic as cyanide – strong enough to kill humans -- and is responsible for the deaths of billions of fish from Delaware to the Gulf of Mexico. Dubbed "the cell from hell," Dr. Burkholder traced its transformation to high level riverine pollution due to excessive nutrient loads from a variety of sources, including human sewage, soil erosion from development, fertilizer runoff from farms and, most notably, massive amounts of waste generated by industrial livestock operations.

Dr. Burkholder was the first to recognize the human health risks posed by the microbe. During the course of lab and field work, both she and her assistant were exposed to the potent neurotoxins emitted by the organism. They suffered severe nausea, memory loss, disorientation and other debilitating ailments. Her associate was hospitalized and forced to retire, but Burkholder continued her work and is now the pre-eminent expert on the microbe and its morphology.

Burkholder encountered much resistance to her research, not just from industries with a vested interest in fighting pollution controls,



Dr. JoAnn Burkholder.  
Winner of the AAAS Scientific  
Freedom and Responsibility

such as the state's hog factory farms, but also from politically-controlled regulatory agencies. State health and environmental officials, worried about the harm to the North Carolina economy and tourism, launched a vicious "shoot the messenger" campaign. Among other tactics, they tried to cut her research funding and to discredit Burkholder's findings.

Undeterred by the smear campaign, Burkholder continued to alert scientists and citizens to the *Pfiesteria* threat. Driven by genuine concern for public health and the environment, she pointedly told the truth at public hearings and conferences, and backed it up with scientific evidence. Dr. Burkholder's work has drawn praise from colleagues, fishermen, environmentalists and rank-and-file public employees. The AAAS award adds the validation of the scientific community.

*[It continually amazes me how often people in responsible positions of power will risk the health and lives of others to protect either their turf or earnings or combination of both. It is especially disconcerting to see how often political or bureaucratic leaders will violate their mandate to protect the body public that they have taken an oath to protect. And have any of those clear violators ever been impeached or fired for such outrageous betrayal? I can't think of one case. It is usually the whistle blowers and people like Dr. Burkholder who get fired. Ed.] +*



## Finally, a Choice for a Change

Voters in State Senate District 15 (Randolph, Pocahontas, Upshur, Pendleton, Hardy, Hampshire, and portions of Grant and Mineral Counties) will finally have a reasonable choice in the May primary. Leslee McCarty has filed to run for against incumbent Walt Helmick.

Helmick has one of the worst environmental records of any legislator in recent years, and receives his major campaign contributions from the timber, oil and gas, and coal industries.

Leslee is founder and Coordinator of the Greenbrier River Watershed Assoc, founder of the Greenbrier Land Conservation Trust, Vice President of the Greenbrier River Trail Assoc, member of the board and past President of the Pocahontas Tourism Board, and a founder of the WV Rails to Trails Council.

Leslee's decision to run was based on her concern about Helmick's track record. In Pocahontas County we have seen first hand the results of his administration which was involved in coordinating an environmental cleanup project. Serious problems remain at the Howes Leather tannery site – all the cleanup money has been spent; there is no accountability; and a \$10,000 fine was levied against the county by DEP after continued disregard of their orders.

"We need someone in state office who will provide leadership with an open and inclusive planning process for making decisions about our future," says Leslee. "My home phone number is 304-653-4722, and my email address is: [current@inetone.net](mailto:current@inetone.net)."

For more information, or to help with her campaign, contact Leslee or Beth Little at 304-653-4277, email: [beth\\_little@wvwise.org](mailto:beth_little@wvwise.org)

Besides Leslie McCarty, two other members of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy have thrown their respective hats into the ring for political office. They are:

--Carroll Jett, who is running for House of Delegates from Jackson County. Conservancy Vice President Frank Young is Carroll's treasurer.

--Roger Forman, who is running for Circuit Judge in Kanawha County.

+



McFERRIN from page 2

A typical acolyte in the private property faith is Bill Maxey, head of the West Virginia Division of Forestry. From all my dealings with Mr. Maxey, he is an intelligent, sincere, and well meaning man. Yet he refers to the public ownership of property as a "cancer." He is too imprisoned by his private property ideology to see that private ownership of property is not a universally wise and good system. He is incapable of seeing that public ownership can be appropriate.

It is true, of course, that private ownership of property is an American institution, an institution that in most situations has served us well. Blackwater Canyon is not one of those situations.

Private property ideology assumes that each person has the right to do with property as he or she will. It also assumes that the overall public good will be served if each person seeks his or her own private gain.

If our only societal goal is the production of board feet of lumber, then we should allow private ownership of Blackwater Canyon. Timber companies know how to grow trees to produce lumber. Given free rein they will keep the sawmills humming, churning out board after board, slab after slab of pressboard. They will pursue their own economic interest and, in doing so, provide society with all the lumber it needs.

They will not, however, provide us with anything like Blackwater Canyon. Blackwater Canyon is a public good. It is a unique and spectacular treasure. People travel from all over the east to hike there. It is home to world class whitewater rafting. For good reason West Virginia features it on its tourism brochures. It is one of the engines that pulls the West Virginia tourism industry.

It is not, as some believe, a warehouse for a bunch of two by fours and toilet paper, temporarily masquerading as trees while they wait to assume their ultimate, beneficial use. Were it just that, we could leave it in private ownership, let it be timbered, and that would be that. Timber companies know how to take land, grow trees, and use the wood. If Blackwater Canyon were an ordinary place, then we could let them cut the trees, sell the wood, and be done with it.

But Blackwater Canyon isn't just a bunch of two by fours and toilet paper. It is a special place that needs special treatment. There are lots of trees, more than enough for all the two by fours and toilet paper we will ever need. There is only one Blackwater Canyon.

Private ownership is not suitable to the preservation of places like Blackwater Canyon. Private owners would tend to do what private owners always do: maximize their economic gain. Allowing this in Blackwater Canyon would result in the end of Blackwater Canyon as we know it. It would cease to be a special place and become just another tree farm.

In America we have a system of paying private landowners for land that serves a public good. From all indications, the United States Forest Service stands willing to do this in Blackwater Canyon. Although the indications are less clear, it appears there is interest on the part of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources in doing the same.

This is the solution to the controversy over Blackwater Canyon. It is such a clear public good that we cannot allow it to remain in private ownership, subject to the whims of a private owner seeking his private gain. We cannot remain so imprisoned by private property ideology that we sit silent and allow the Blackwater Canyon that we know and love to pass from the earth. +

## "Organic" Foodstuffs?

By Bill Reed

Leave it to the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), overseer of the U. S. Forest Service, to commandeer the growing organic food market, and shape it to suit the ends of Agribusiness. The USDA has bypassed the recommendations of long term organic growers, and even ignored many of the recommendations of its own advisory board. The USDA bureaucrats have fallen over themselves in a scramble to bow to the demands of so-called "conventional" agriculture.

What they propose as "organic" would be laughable if it weren't so outrageous. Just as they made it illegal to label milk free of "Bovine Growth Hormone" (the extremely controversial chemical manufactured by Monsanto that is fed to cows to turn them into veritable milk factories), now under the new proposed guidelines it would be illegal to label organic foodstuffs in ways that one would expect would be necessary for that food to have organic qualities. An example: it would

be illegal to affix a label on your food product which would say "produced without synthetic pesticides."

Also part of these proposed "organic" standards would be the producers right to zap your food with radioactivity (they've got to find a market for all that nuclear waste, right?), use genetically engineered crops, and make use of antibiotics. Leave it to the USDA to wreck the growing organic food industry with such blatant Orwellian tactics.

I suspect that the agri-chemical and agribusiness industries, in a move to protect their respective turfs (and profits) wrote the rules. Unfortunately, the USDA will adopt these rules if they don't get a significant amount of feedback from the public.

It is still not too late to get the word to the USDA that these so-called "organic" standards are totally unacceptable. April 30 is the deadline for comments. Write Eileen S. Stommes, Deputy Administrator, USDA-AMS-TM-NOP, Room 4007-So., Ag Stop 0275, PO Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090, or via the web at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop). +



## BLACKWATER concl. from page 1

If Delegates Collins, Douglas, or Martin are your representatives, please write a letter to the editor questioning their negative stances on the Blackwater Canyon Resolution.

Your letters of praise, where due, and condemnation, where appropriate, will help keep the Blackwater issue before the public, and will, perhaps, help keep our friends in office, while weeding out those who put their own short-sighted self interest above the public good. +



## CO2 from page 3

"One of the questions, then, for this old forest stand is 'Is it a sink for CO2 which would mean it's helping prevent further increases in atmospheric CO2, or is this forest stand a source of CO2, that is, is it aggravating the problem of increasing CO2 in Earth's atmosphere?'. This forest could be a source of CO2, for although trees absorb carbon when they're growing, they release it when they die and start to decay. Dr. Winter's initial measurements suggest that this particular old growth forest may be a sink for CO2, locking carbon away in logs, branches, roots and soil.

While Dr. Winter is looking up at Northwest forest canopies, other scientists are looking down at the forest floor. "Well, the thing about a forest is, of all types of ecosystems around Earth, they store the most carbon." About two-hundred miles southeast in the Cascades, ecologist Mark Harmon climbs over the remnants of gigantic, moss-covered trees of Oregon's H. G. Andrews Experimental Forest. Dr. Harmon's research on dead wood has helped establish just how significant a sink for carbon trees old growth forests are.

"They store both in their living parts, and the soil, and in the detrital litter. That's what's bizarre – not only is the living tissue of these forests gigantic – superlative on a world scale – but also the dead parts are just incredible." In fact, Dr. Harmon has found the ancient Douglas fir forest of the Pacific Northwest can store five times as much carbon per hectare as a tropical forest, but because they hold so much carbon, these forests also pose a danger. *When they're removed or altered, a massive amount of CO2 is released back into the atmosphere.*

*Dr. Harmon says intensive clearcutting in the Pacific Northwest has turned the region from a carbon sink into a carbon source. "Yes, it has been a source of carbon for probably well over fifty years, and a major source, because the forests are so large and store so much carbon. When you disturb them, the consequences are quite large when it comes to CO2." Dr. Harmon says that if you want to keep the largest amount of carbon out of the atmosphere, the best thing to do with at least these old growth forests is to leave them alone [Italics added. Ed.]*

He says his research contradicts the arguments of some timber industry supporters that cutting and then replanting these forests would suck up more CO2. "While it is true that young trees generally do grow faster than older trees, it isn't necessarily relevant to the issue. The issue really depends on which system stores

more carbon on average. Then you look at a younger forest – some of them can accumulate carbon at fairly high rates but the store is much lower."

But the ability of these forests to hold on to carbon and help regulate the climate, is complicated by the fact that forests also respond to changes in the climate. That's where our third researcher comes in. In her laboratory at the University of Oregon, paleo-ecologist Kathy Whitlock is hoping to get a handle on how forests might respond to the warming temperatures of the present by looking at the past, specifically at 21,000 year old mud. "We bring the cores here. We slice them open and we take samples of them." At the end of the last ice age, Pacific Northwest forests moved north with the warming climate. Along the way each tree species left distinct grains of pollen which fossilized in lake bed sediments. Following this trail of pollen Dr. Whitlock has calculated the ability of forests to move with the changing climate.

"When you look at any of these records, they suggest that species are able to move across the landscape at a rate of 300 to 900 meters a year, something just under a kilometer per year, to go from glacial conditions to the [more recent] warm conditions of the [region]." But temperatures are predicted to rise faster in the near future than they did then, and Dr. Whitlock fears forests may not be able to keep up with these changes. "You're asking species to move at rates that are, maybe, fifty times that fast [to keep up with] the climate. We really have no evidence that species will be in equilibrium with the sorts of climate changes which are predicted for the future."

Finally, while the past is providing some clues about the fate of forests in the changing climate, computer projections of the future are providing others. At the US Forest Service Research Station in Corvallis, OR, bioclimatologist Ron Neilson is using a sophisticated computer model as a sort of crystal ball to see the future of forests, and the picture isn't entirely bleak. While some forest might shrink, others might grow.

"The world could get greener and we could see more vegetation growing and forests potentially expanding into savannahs and grass lands." That's because along with temperatures trees also respond to CO2 itself which is essentially a sort of fertilizer. One possible result of more CO2 in the atmosphere would be more and bigger trees, but it's not that simple because along with higher temperatures, more CO2 in the atmosphere will bring more volatility to the climate – more precipitation and droughts, hotter heat waves and colder freezes.

Dr. Neilson's computer model shows that warmer temperatures will put forests under stress. "When trees get stressed, then bugs come in introducing infestations that produce an overkill of vegetation, so perhaps the drought would only have killed a fraction of the trees in there – the bugs will kill much more than that. And then you have the setup for potentially for large, catastrophic fires because you've produced a huge fuel load." And more dying forests and forest fires, Dr. Neilson models predict, will only release more CO2 into the atmosphere and increase the volatility of the climate still more in what's called a "positive feedback loop." "The hotter the average simulated temperature increase for planet Earth is, the larger is the area of simulated forest dieback, so we're in a bit of concern with regard to how hot we can actually let the planet get. The hotter it gets, the greater is the likelihood for these positive feedback mechanisms to kick in and make it even hotter." And Dr. Neilson worries that there's a frightening imbalance between the rate which forests can help suck up more CO2 on the one hand, and the rate at which they will be damaged by the effects of rising CO2 on the other. "You can kill off forests and burn them up and have what remains decompose and emit carbon into the atmosphere much faster that you can pull that carbon back out of the atmosphere by regrowing new forests somewhere else."

Dr. Neilson's computer models together with the research being done in the forests, themselves, present a vexing dilemma – the more we learn about the importance of forests in regulating the global climate, the more we also learn about the forest's vulnerability to a changing climate. Governments are hoping that preserving and planting forests may help us regulate CO2 levels without having to drastically reduce fossil fuel use, but scientists seem to be suggesting that the only way to ensure that forests are vibrant and healthy may be to reduce fossil fuel use first. +



One-quarter of a million acres of forest land has been lost to strip mining in West Virginia. Information source – Bill Maxey, Chief of the West Virginia Division of Forestry +



## UTILITIES from page 5

The challenge presented by PG & E's land sales are likely to crop up in other states as deregulation sweeps across the country [italics added by editor]. Figures on exactly just how much forest land utilities own are hard to come by, but PG & E's large holdings are not unique. Environmentalists worry that utilities will sell off large tracts of forest to timber companies and developers. Lew Milford is an attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation of New England. "We have lands that have been generally unused for many many years because the utilities have been essentially absentee landlords of thousands of acres of forest land, but as the utilities sell off assets, there probably will be increasing pressure to use those lands for other development purposes."

But Mr. Milford says there are good models for handling these transfers including one in which his own organization played a role. Several years ago, a New England utility agreed to significant protection for forest land surrounding one of its hydro-electric plants. Now the company is selling both the dam and the forest to another utility. Mr Milford says those restrictions on the land use are binding on the new owner and any future owners. "We've got limitations on use of lands near waterways. We've got limitations on clearcutting on these lands. We have prohibition of timber cutting in protective soils. We really have efforts to control the way these lands will be used to try to keep them essentially in the state they have been in for decades."

Mr. Milford says this shows that the prospective buyer will accept restrictions on the use of land surrounding hydro-electric plants. [Sounds like it might be a good idea to contact Mr. Milford on the Blackwater Canyon situation. Ed.]

Ironically, the new owner in this case is none other than PG & E. "Perhaps, if PG & E is reminded for what it did in the East, maybe it will take a closer look at the same issue in the West."

Editor's comments: Public agencies charged with a duty to protect the public, as is the West Virginia Public Service Commission, appear to be only too willing to be "duped" by corporations that have been cozening up to them for years. Unfortunately, in most cases these days large corporations are merciless in their quest for profits. If they can reorganize the structure of their organization in some manner in an attempt to change appearances, and thereby lull the watchdog agencies into

not applying the appropriate laws to their business activities, they will certainly do so. It is eminently reasonable to assume that they pay lawyers and related business professionals large sums to leave no stone unturned in seeking actions which will maximize profits. Often it would follow that these actions are designed to circumvent laws by rendering "harmless" their overseeing watchdog agencies.

Let me hazard a guess as to what transpired in the mind or minds of top Allegheny Power executives.

"Now let's see, we need to get approval for any sale of land. If we sell to the Forest Service or to a state agency, no problem. However, we won't get as much money as we would if we sell to a big timber company. So if we re-structure our organization so that our ownership of the land seems to be independent of our utility, then perhaps we can get away with this."

"On the other hand, if we sell directly to the timber company, this will raise a lot of eyebrows and perhaps instigate a closer look at what we will have done here. So let's sacrifice some profit by dealing with an intermediary, a 'good ol' boy,' who'll make a bundle on the deal, and then he can sell off to the timber company."

Based on my observations in recent years, this would be a standard kind of scenario for the corporate mind. What do you think, folks? ✚

### Blackwater Canyon Resolution in Legislature Squashed by Special Interests and Political Machinations

(excerpted from press release of March 17)

Despite strongly favorable public opinion, efforts to enlist Legislative support to protect the Blackwater Canyon failed last week. "We presented over fifteen hundred signatures on petitions asking Legislators to save the Blackwater Canyon," said Vivian Stockman, coordinator of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's (WVHC) Blackwater Canyon project. "Dozens of Legislators I talked to received a flood of phone calls, faxes, and e-mail messages asking them to pass the Resolution. But democratic principles were not in evidence on this issue," Stockman added.

"On the House side, Delegate Joe Martin (D-Randolph) killed the Resolution by insisting it go into the Rules Committee, where the Chair, Bob Kiss (D-Raleigh), refused to bring it up for a vote," Stockman said. "Martin has strong ties to the timber industry, and wasn't about to loose timber's financial support."

On the Senate side, in a move termed by an environmental leader as "the dirtiest politics I have ever seen," opponents of saving the Canyon effectively prevented debate and killed the Resolution.

The Resolution called for the Division of Natural Resources (DNR), the state agency charged with protecting natural areas, to assemble a task force of affected parties to develop a comprehensive plan for acquiring the Canyon as public property, and for reimbursing the Canyon's current owner.

"I find it amazing that a hand-full of special-interest influenced Senators would object so fiercely to such a modest resolution," said Norm Steenstra, Executive Director of West Virginia Citizens Action Group. "The area is so well known and important to the state's tourist economy that everyone, except a few Legislators indebted to Big Timber, wants to see the Canyon protected for all West Virginia citizens to enjoy," Steenstra said.

Controversy has surrounded the resolution because Allegheny Wood Products owner, John Crites, has repeatedly threatened to refrain from negotiations with Senator Rockefeller, the DNR, and the U.S. Forest Service for the swap of 750 acres of the Blackwater Canyon, for an unknown amount of land in the Monongahela Forest, if public attention is drawn to him or his actions. The proposed exchange is for less than a quarter of the acreage involved and provides no protection for the famous viewsheds of the Canyon.

"Last year Crites succeeded in preventing movement of a similar Resolution by saying he would only negotiate if that Resolution was tabled. But logging continues, and the Canyon is still not protected," Stockman said, "... every time Crites threatens to withdraw from negotiations, he's holding public opinion hostage. His supporters keep telling me he's a reasonable man. If that is the case, he will admit he made a mistake. He should not have purchased the Canyon in the first place," she added.

"The Resolution sought to acquire the Canyon and in no way violates his private property rights. He would lose nothing, make a profit and avoid the bad publicity."

Supporters of the Resolution vow to continue their efforts to save the Blackwater Canyon. This includes an Earth Week 1998 Festival focusing on the Canyon.

"It appears the Senate is unwilling to take any kind of leadership position on this issue for fear of losing Buck Harless' campaign money.

Whenever a huge hammer is used to kill such a little Resolution, it indicates political influence at its ugliest," said Steenstra. ✚



## An Essential Fast Transition from Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy

Ross Gelbspan - Winter 98 Amicus Journal.

*From Environmental News, a weekly broadcast on January 18, 1998 from public radio station, WETS, Johnson City, TN*

We need to mount an energy Manhattan Project. A full scale program enforced by the world's governments and implemented largely by the world's energy giants to de-fossilize our energy. This is a case of the onset of global warming, and a time when economically and environmentally whole steps work better than half steps.

We need to require the economies of the world to make the switch, and to do so on a set time table. A deliberately managed, ten-year global energy transition would create jobs here and all over the rest of the globe. It would provide unlimited development resources for the developing nations. It would reverse the widening economic gap between the northern and the southern hemisphere.

Technology is not at issue. The array of renewable energies at hand is capable of filling virtually all of our energy needs today. Once they attain the economies of scale through their mass production of photovoltaics, windfarms, fuel cells and hydrogen gas, they will provide power as cheaply as coal or oil. Moreover, for each unit of energy, solar, wind and photovoltaic production will employ four to ten times more workers than coal or oil according to the solar energy industry's association.

The real challenge is how to finance a global energy transition. In the United States we might begin with a change in subsidizing policies. Today the Federal Government spends around \$25 billion a year to subsidize fossil fuels. If all those tax credits and subsidies were diverted to the development of

climate friendly energy sources, it would provide the lift-off boost to propel renewable energy from its present boutique status into the big league of global industry.

To involve the rest of the world we need to divert part of the two trillion dollar a year revenue stream from big coal and big oil to fund the production and installation of renewable and energy efficiency technologies all over the globe. Those revenues would provide far more than enough funding to educate millions of people in how to build and deploy and install the systems. There would be more than enough funds to retrain coal and oil workers, and to aid those countries and industries most dependent on the fossil fuel trade, and most heavily affected by its phase out.

At the same time, in order to avert a stock market panic, the tax of a few cents on fossil fuels might be used to repay at a fair market price all the coal and oil company stockholders as well as lenders who have underwritten power plants that will be retired before their backers can be paid off.

But it can only succeed, this capitalization of a global energy transition, as a direct transfer of renewable energy technologies to the developing world. If it is structured as yet another form of global economic commerce, it will fail and so will we all. This is not a soft-hearted liberal giveaway, rather it represents a critical investment in our own national security.

*Editor's comment: I clearly recall that all forces were mobilized in World War II to head off the calamity of a possible victory of the Axis Powers over the Allies. Roosevelt was granted nearly dictatorial powers by the Congress as a means to ensure that all resources were totally committed to the defeat of the Axis. The war effort was the top priority over any other consideration including Constitutional Rights. The*

*American people went without, sacrificing in ways unheard of in today's society, and they did this without grumbling. It can be assumed that they had a mental attitude that such sacrifice as this was necessary for their survival, so they pitched in and followed the dictates of the leaders of the nation.*

*Today we live in a much more serious crisis than that which existed in those days of World War II. The whole world is at risk, and is in the process of piecemeal destruction. This destruction, not only has begun, but has been accelerating in recent years. Our leaders should be completely aware of this - they have more thorough information than any society in history about what is happening in the world, and the scientific research certainly points to a much greater threat to "the American way of life" than any war ever could. Our leaders should be educating the public and mobilizing our energies to head off this unfolding catastrophe.*

*The article above proposes a focus of resources on something akin to the Manhattan Project that developed the atomic bomb. Yet, as did Nero over 2000 years ago, our President, the members of the Congress of the United States, and in West Virginia, our Governor and elected delegates "fiddle while Rome burns." +*



### Join the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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

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

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

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

Make checks payable to: the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
Mail to: P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321

#### Membership Benefits

- ★ 1 Year subscription to the Highlands Voice
- ★ Special meetings with workshops and speakers
- ★ Representation through WVHC efforts to monitor legislative and agency activity

The WVHC, at age 31, is the oldest environmental group in West Virginia. The Conservancy has been influential in protecting and preserving WV's natural heritage. Your support will help WVHC to continue its efforts.



## Some Tips on Energy Saving

### Help Preserve That WV Mountain Top!

From the NPR program, *Living on Earth*, January 1998

Some advice on what to do about that electric meter that won't stop spinning.

Saving electricity around the home helps reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, and it also helps bring down your energy bill. But sometimes saving energy isn't as obvious as turning out the lights when you leave the room. Many appliances, including TVs and VCRs, draw electricity even when they're turned off. Recently, major TV and VCR makers and the EPA announced plans to design energy efficient units that will cut this waste in half. Alex Wilson, editor of "Environmental Building News" and author of *The Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings*, suggests.

✓ TV still uses 10 watts or so when turned off. This adds up over a 24 hour period. You could unplug it after each use, but then you'd have to reprogram it every time you turned it back on. If it doesn't need that reprogramming, you can operate it off a power strip.

✓ Compact fluorescent bulbs are much more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs because they give a lot of light and very little heat, relatively speaking. Halogen bulbs are

one of the low points of the energy efficient movements in the last ten years.

✓ Computers don't use electricity unless actually on. A lot of people have the mistaken impression that it's better to leave the computer on – they feel it's going to result in less wear and tear on the disk drive, and somehow less damage to the monitor. That's not the case – it should be turned off if you're not going to be using it within the next half hour or so. New computers are mostly energy star compliant, and what an energy star computer does is to go into a "sleep" mode after a certain period of time. It will continue to use some electricity even though the screen has blacked out, but it's a lot less electricity than if the computer is left on.

✓ Microwave ovens and breadmakers are energy saving appliances. When you use a microwave oven in place of a conventional oven, you'll be using, maybe, 700 watts instead of two to three thousand watts to cook your casserole or whatever. So you can

save a significant amount of energy by using that microwave oven. Same with the breadmaker – its small, you're not having to heat up an entire oven to bake bread, so it's an energy saving appliance. A crockpot is a tremendous energy saver because you're using a very small flow of electricity over six or eight hours, and cooking that food with only about twenty percent of the energy you'd otherwise be using.

✓ When purchasing appliances, make sure to examine the energy guide labels to compare for choosing the more efficient model. +

*"Of all environmental ills, contaminated water is the most devastating in consequences. Each year ten million deaths are directly attributable to waterborne intestinal diseases. One-third of humanity labors in a perpetual state of illness or debility as a result of impure water; another third is threatened by the release into water of chemical substances whose long-term effects are unknown."*

– Phillip Quigg, (from *Water: The Essential Resource*, International Series #2 of the National Audubon Society)

## Correction!

(In reference to several recent Voice articles by Don Gasper. The author comments as follows)

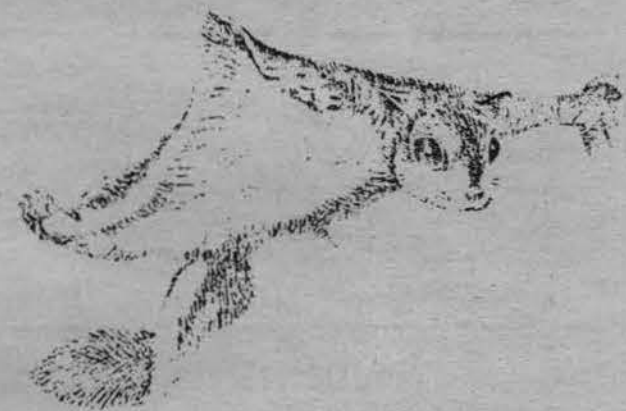
The December 1997 and the most recent issue carried reports on the WV Conference on the Environment and the second on the National Clean Air Network's address there. It is with a respect for "good science" that this correction is made, and with an apology for misleading anyone. It must be acknowledged that WV DEP's Air Office is not violating "good science," perhaps only violating good sense, in not participating fully in this opportunity to clean up our air.

The error made is that nitrogen oxides from the smokestacks of coal burning electricity generating plants will only travel 150 miles, not 300 to 500 miles as was stated as a comment.

The northeast states are not then affected by nitrogen from West Virginia. (This produces smog or ozone.) The OTAG ozone study of eastern nitrogen sources and transport did not

make this mistake and is very sound. The WV DEP Air Office's claim that the EPA did not follow the OTAG recommendation is then true in this respect. It is reassuring to know that some agencies deal honestly with facts and "good science." In fact, only a few West Virginia power plant sources would affect neighboring Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. That is the extent and consequence of this error.

Sulfate does carry 300 to 500 miles, even to Canada. These would be reduced if nitrogen emissions were reduced. Acid rain problems would be reduced throughout the eastern forest. For forest ecosystem health we need these reductions, and more. The present clean-up increment is based on human health, and under the old standard for air quality West Virginia's few sampling stations indicated our air is OK. Under the new standard that would improve our air. Not all stations would be in compliance. We really should take this opportunity to improve our air. West Virginia needs more sampling stations, and needs more good responsible agencies. West Virginia needs "good science" and good sense. +



*"How to handle society's toxic chemical waste now ranks among the top environmental issues in most industrialized countries. Without concerted efforts to reduce, recycle, and reuse more industrial waste, the quantities produced will overwhelm even the best treatment and disposal systems."*

– Sandra Postel in *Defusing the Toxic Threat*, *Worldwatch Paper 79* (Washington, Worldwatch Institute, Sept. 1987), p. 36-37



## What in the World Is a Lawn Good For?

From the NPR program, *Living on Earth*, January 18, 1998

There are about thirty million acres of lawn in the U. S., an area roughly the size of Alabama. How did this insanity ever come about? A report by Andy Wasowski, co-author of *Gardening with Native Plants of the South*, tells us.

In 1875 Frank J. Scott wrote a book called *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds*. It quickly became the landscaping Bible for American homeowners. In it he said, "A smooth, closely shaven surface of grass is by far the most essential element of beauty on the grounds for a suburban home."

Today, we're still feeling the impact of Mr. Scott's book. The typical American landscape is mowed, pruned, raked, weeded and shaved to an inch of its life. The dominant weekend sound in a typical suburban neighborhood is not kids playing, but the ear-drum-shattering noise of power mowers, power pruners, power leaf edgers, and perhaps the most diabolical of all, power leaf blowers. And yet, how does this overly manicured landscape really benefit us. It forces us to work long hours keeping it alive. For this kind of landscape is on an artificial life support system - it can't exist without us.

For one thing, lawns have a drinking problem. On average they guzzle between 40% and 60% of our household water which is crazy when you realize that most parts of the country have serious water shortages. We want our lawns

to be perfect in every way, so we anoint them with an incredible array of chemicals that kill weeds and garden pests. Trouble is, these toxics also kill the soil itself, then get into the groundwater. The typical lawn-centered landscape is also, frankly, boring. It's a clone of every other landscape from coast-to-coast. There's no sense of place, no celebration of the uniqueness and beauty of your own part of the country. So maybe after all these decades we should take a hard, critical look at our lawns, and finally figure out life is a lot easier and better all around when we stop fighting Mother Nature and start working with her. A more natural-looking landscape, filled with plants native to your area, will not only help our environment, but will also let you put that mower away in the garage and let it rust. After all, what has it ever done for you except to give you blisters.

### Editor's Comment:

*The human critter, known as the "rational animal," is usually only rational in a microcosm. A guy or a gal can be clever at tinkering with a lawnmower. An engineer can do a pretty good job of designing and building such. Salespersons can build up the hype very cleverly to get homeowners to realize that they cannot do without this lawnmower or that one. These folks never have to tax their rationality by applying it to a larger picture. Sadly, it is only a small minority of persons who question the very existence of a lawnmower.*

in the St. Lawrence River valley in Quebec, Canada in 1992 and 1993. Of 854 individual amphibians (among 3 species of frogs and one species of toad examined in 14 agricultural habitats), 106 (12%) had hind limb malformations. The authors hypothesize that the main cause of the deformities was exposure to pesticides. They say that such leg deformities are "virtually unknown" among frogs and toads in the wild.

\*\* A population of leopard frogs (RANA PIPENS) exploded on a western Michigan farm after the farm converted to organic (pesticide-free) growing techniques. In 1988, a survey of the farm had revealed that leopard frogs were nearly absent, but the population rebounded quickly as soon as pesticide use ceased. Researchers reported that the number of different frog species on the farm also increased after 1988.

\*\* The Australian government in 1997 took an unprecedented action, banning 84 herbicide products for use near water because

of their harmful effects on tadpoles and frogs.

All of the 84 banned products contain Monsanto's glyphosate as the active ingredient. However, the harmful component appears to be not the glyphosate itself but an "inert" ingredient -- a detergent or wetting agent added to the herbicides so that droplets of liquid spread out and cover the target leaves.

Detergents interfere with the ability of frogs to breathe through their skin, and tadpoles to breathe through their gills. Michael J. Tyler of the Department of Zoology at the University of Adelaide, Australia, says, "Although the herbicide [glyphosate] is claimed to be 'environmentally friendly,' it is clear that users have been lulled into a false sense of security."

\*\* Researchers in Sri Lanka report that frogs are nearly absent from tea plantations where herbicides are heavily sprayed, but their populations rebound shortly after spraying stops.

*Apparently, only a few people can apply a bird's eye view to what should be an obvious manifestation of human madness - the suburban lawn.*

*Your editor can write these words with impunity since he lives in a remote part of West Virginia where there are none of those suburban social pressures to manicure either oneself, or one's landscape. At home in my yard I go freely with dirt under my nails, and am quite slatternly about my "lawn" without having any imposition of socially induced anxiety. I sympathize with tree huggers who must struggle each lawn-mowing week with the discordance implicit in trying to make concessions to the neighborhood Joneses while giving a guilt-inspiring jab to Mother Earth. In suburbia I would be certainly ostracized by allowing weeds to grow unrestrained around my dwelling place. Here I can look at the full glory of natural species more or less living out their life cycles unmolested. ✚*

### Buddhist Monk Activist "Tree Huggers" in Thailand

(From "Colors" of the NRU-UF, March 98)

Sacred Trees Buddhists in Thailand are making a desperate bid to save the country's northern forests from illegal logging. An alliance of lowland Thai villagers and northern hill tribes are working to protect about 800,000 acres of forests.

The Northern Farmer's Network during a two-day celebration earlier this month consecrated 50 million trees by wrapping them in orange robes usually worn by Buddhist monks. The monks hope the orange wraps will make marauding loggers think twice before axing the sacred trees. ✚

"Conversion to organic [pesticide-free] tea production in this region has contributed greatly to the re-establishment of populations of local frogs," they say.

\*\* According to the MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE, Swiss researchers reported earlier this year that a fungicide used heavily in Minnesota can stunt the growth of tadpoles and retard the sexual development of frogs. The Swiss researchers have not produced the kinds of deformities seen in Minnesota frogs, but they say the fungicide triphenyltin could

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CALENDAR *concluded*

Sprawl in Appalachia, Central Appalachian Reserve Design, Applying Geographic Information System Mapping to Conservation Problems, Conservation Easement Programs in Appalachia and Ecoforestry and Timber Certification Issues. Field Trips will be scheduled for Otter Creek Wilderness, Shaver's Fork and the Blackwater Canyon (within the Mon Forest). Contact Than Hitt at POB 5541, Athens OH 45701, (740) 592-3968, [arc@frognet.net](mailto:arc@frognet.net). This program is sponsored by Heartwood.

**July 11** - WVHC Summer Board Meeting

**July 18 and 19** - Blackwater Canyon Backpack. We'll take our time on this leisure trip down the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail, and it's downhill all the way! With an overnight along the way we have time to explore and enjoy the Blackwater Canyon. And it should be hot enough to appreciate a dip in one or more of the gorgeous falls and pools of the side streams. Listen to the river below all night as we camp deep in the Canyon. This is an excellent "starter" outing for those new to backpacking. Call Jim Sconyers at 789-6277.

**September 6** - Bike the Blackwater Canyon. We'll go the whole 9 yards (actually a bit

more). Start in Thomas, a charming little West Virginia mountain town. From there we ride the entire Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail, passing through Thomas, Coketon, Douglas, Big Run, Lime Rock, and Hendricks, where we finish. Fourteen miles of level or downhill on a good trail surface - with lots to see along the way. Waterfalls, coke ovens, wildflowers, the wild Blackwater Canyon - come see what all the fuss has been about! Shuttle back to Thomas from Hendricks. Bring your bike, or rent one in Thomas or Davis. (Note: the rail trail guide rates the trail II on a difficulty scale of I - IV, because of some bumpiness due to the ballast stones left in the trail when the tracks were removed.) Call Jim Sconyers at 789-6277.

**September 7** - Bike the Blackwater Canyon. This is a repeat of the September 6 trip. See it for description.

**October 9 thru 11** - WVHC Fall Review

FROGS *from page 4*

The identified causes of deformed frogs include these:

\*\* increased numbers of amphibian surveys, thus more and better reporting;

\*\* parasite infestations; a parasite called a trematode may be involved in some frog deformities. Trematodes burrow into the limb buds of tadpoles and can, in fact, cause at least one of the deformities seen in Minnesota frogs.

\*\* toxic contamination (pesticides, heavy metals, acidification);

\*\* predation (partially-successful predators may remove parts of frogs, which may then grow back incorrectly);

\*\* ultraviolet radiation;

\*\* pesticides.

As we review recent scientific literature and press reports of scientific studies and meetings, what seems to stand out is a growing awareness that industrial toxins --especially agricultural biocides --are implicated in frog population declines and in frog deformities.

FROGLOG is a publication of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force of the World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission. In recent issues, FROGLOG has reported the following:

\*\* The 1996 RED LIST OF THREATENED ANIMALS, published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists 156 amphibian species as extinct, critical, endangered, or vulnerable to extinction. This represents 25% of all the amphibians on Earth.

The Nature Conservancy, a U.S. organization, in 1996 surveyed the status of 20,481 species of plants and animals in the U.S. and reported that 37.9% of amphibians are in danger of becoming extinct.

\*\* Researchers at Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania, and at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, have shown that acid rain can stress frog populations by harming their immune systems. Frogs raised in water with a pH of 5.5 had significantly more bacteria in their spleens, and a significantly higher death rate, than frogs raised in waters with a pH of 7.0. The researchers attribute the increased numbers of bacteria to reduced efficiency of bacteria removal by white blood cells --part of the frogs' immune defenses.

\*\* Researchers at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, have correlated high levels of organochlorine pesticides with reduced frog populations in several parks and wildlife reserves along the northern edge of Lake Erie. At Point Pelee National Park in Canada, only 5 frog species remain, and DDT residues in these frogs average 5000 to 47,000 micrograms of DDT per kilogram of body weight. At the Holiday Beach Conservation Area 40 kilometers [24 miles] east of

## Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, 6th edition, is bigger and better than ever, with 368 pages, 96 pages of maps, 49 photographs, 177 trails totalling 812 miles, and a full color cover. West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is the publisher. Authors are Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist (same as edition 5). Allen has hiked all the trails of the Monongahela N.F. over the past few years. Bruce was the editor for the first four editions. The hiking community and the U.S. Forest Service provided trail reports and photographs. The Guide also provides information for ski-touring and backpacking.

The growing throngs of visitors and the public at large regard the Monongahela National Forest as a 'Special Place'. And indeed it is. The hiking, backpacking, and ski-touring opportunities it provides are among the best in the eastern U.S. The more outstanding areas are becoming known far and wide - Otter Creek Wilderness, Dolly Sods Wilderness, Flatrock Plains, Roaring Plains, Blackwater Canyon, Spruce Knob, North Fork Mountain, Shaver's Mountain, Laurel Fork Wilderness, Cranberry Back Country, Cranberry Wilderness, among others.

Profits from the sale of these guides support a wide variety of worthy environmental projects in the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. To order your copy of Edition 6 of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, send \$12.95 (this includes \$3.00 first class shipping) to

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
PO Box 306  
Charleston, WV 25321

I have included a  check or  money order for the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to WVHC for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide.

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

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

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Point Pelee, a dozen species of frogs thrive and the DDT in their flesh averages only 6 micrograms per kilogram. This study doesn't prove that DDT has killed off the frogs in Point Pelee, but it certainly points in that direction.

\*\* Researchers discovered numerous frogs and toads with missing back legs in ponds and ditches exposed to pesticide runoff in

*See FROGS on page 18*



## Calendar

**April 11** - Wildflower hike at the New River Gorge. Meet at the Thurmond-Minden Trail parking lot at 1 PM. This is five miles down WV 25 from Glen Jean. For more information, call 574-2115.

**April 17 thru 19** - Annual Spring Nature Tour at North Bend State Park near Cairo in Ritchie County. This will include a guided canoe trip, a night hike, a deer-watching stroll and a "Snakes Alive" presentation. A package price for a couple is \$186.90 which includes two nights lodging, two breakfasts, lunch, dinner, refreshments and all activities. Other packages are available. Call 643-2931 or 1-800-CALLWVA and ask for North Bend.

**April 17** - "Spring has Sprung" nature walks along rim of New River Gorge. Meet at Hawks Nest Lodge lobby at 6:30 AM for a bird walk and then a wildflower walk. Breakfast and lunch buffets available for \$5.95 each. For more information call 658-5212.

**April 22** - Earth Day.

**April 25** - Blackwater Canyon Earth Day Awareness. Sponsored by The West Virginia Environmental Council. Come join us....hike....bike....or anything ya like!!! Walk & bike ride through the canyon: at 12:00 noon. Meet at: One World Concepts in Thomas (at the mouth of the canyon rail trail). Wine & Cheese Reception: The Art Company, in Davis at 5:00 p.m. Music in the evening to be announced Questions?? Call WVEC (Denise) at 346-5891. // Also, the annual Osbra Eye Memorial wildflower hikes at Kanawha State Forest. For more information, call 558-3500. // Also, Old Mill Wildflower Walk at Babcock State Park. This will include a descent into the gorge. The length of the hike is about six miles. Vehicles will be available to carry hikers who wish it out of the Gorge. For more information call 1-800-CALLWVA and ask for Babcock State Park. // Also, National Park service one hour wildflower stroll along Kaymoor Trail. Meet at 2 PM at the Kaymoor Trailhead parking lot on Fayette Station Road near Fayetteville. Call 574-2115 for more information.

**April 26** - Two hour spring nature hike at Twin Falls State Park. For information call 1-800-CALLWVA and ask for Twin Falls State Park.

**May 2 and 3** - "Show Me" spring wildflower weekend at Greenbrier State Forest. For information call 1-800-CALLWVA and ask for The Greenbrier State Forest.

**May 7 thru 10** - Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater State Park. Call 1-800-CALLWVA and ask for Blackwater State Park.

**May 8 thru 10** - Spring Bird Weekend (Sponsored by Forest Watch Coalition). Come for a full weekend of birds, birds, and more birds. Help observe International Migratory Bird Day Saturday. The Spring Bird Weekend is a workshop for people who are interested in birds, or just think they might be.... Everybody is welcome, from those who aren't sure they'd know a bird if they saw one to bird lovers of all feathers. No prior knowledge is necessary!

The Spring Bird Weekend begins Friday evening, May 8, with registration at 6:00 PM and a reception with workshop leaders at 8:00 PM. All Weekend activities are held at Watoga State Park. Workshop sessions will give you the opportunity to learn more

about birds, to see birds up close and personal, and to hear from bird experts who love birds. Leaders will be: Wendy and Ron Perrone, Dolly Stover and Ron Canterbury, all from the Three Rivers Raptor Center; Tom DeMeo and Jo Wargo, US Forest Service Ecologists; Drew Jones from Partners in Flight; and Al Manville, Chief, Migratory Bird Section, U S Fish and Wildlife Service.

The workshop will feature a mix of formats, from hands-on sessions to outdoor bird walks, from bird banding demonstrations to slide shows, from panel discussions to LIVE birds of prey! The pace will be varied, with time to relax and socialize. Saturday workshops include: Bird banding, Birds of West Virginia, Bird habitat requirements, "Ornithology 101" (What makes birds tick? Hands-on), a bird walk, Birds of Prey (with live birds!), and in the evening, an "Owl prow!" On Sunday there will be a morning bird walk, Threats to bird populations (workshop), and a general discussion.

Activities will be scheduled in either the Park Rec Hall and/or the Park grounds. The fee is \$80 for the lodging in the park cabins (which are reserved for this purpose), Friday reception, and Saturday dinner. Other meals will be available in the Park dining room, or on-your-own. All cabins have cooking facilities. If you wish to come for the program only, the fee is \$30.

For more information, call (304)789-6277. To register in advance, send name, address, and phone number with a check made out to Forest Watch Coalition, P.O. Box 2750, Elkins, WV 26241.

**May 15 thru 17** - WVHC Spring Review at a location yet to be announced. The focus will be on the Blackwater Canyon with a night hike to see the Cheat salamander. A brochure with details will be sent out shortly to all members.

// also same dates as above, Citizen's Coal Council meets in Zanesville, OH. Contact person: Jason Tockman at (740)594-6400.

**May 16** - Blackwater Canyon Spring Wildflowers. Take an easy stroll into the famous Blackwater Canyon. We'll see spring wildflowers galore, plus lots more -- the wild canyon, waterfalls, historic remains. Bring a camera on this easy-paced dayhike. Call Jim Sconyers at 789-6277.

**June 14 thru 20** - Service Outing, Blackwater Area. Join in for a day or more! We'll be relocating the beginning part of Mountainside Trail near the south rim of Blackwater Canyon, and working to clear and restore the historic coke ovens along the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail beside the North Fork of the Blackwater River near Thomas. No previous experience required. Call Jim Sconyers at 789-6277.

**June 22 thru July 19** - Mon Trail Assessment Project, a cooperative project sponsored by the Mon Nat Forest and the Forest Watch Coalition. Call the FWC for info at 637-4082

**June 26 thru 28** - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecological Integrity Conference will be held at Davis and Elkins College in Elkins. The theme, *Defining Problems and Solutions for Appalachian Restoration*. Keynote speakers will be Orie Loucks of Miami U. and John Cairns of VPI. Workshops will include Central Appalachian Forest Mortality, Soil Nutrient Losses and Forest Health, National Forest Management Issues, Urban

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