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The Highlands Voice

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Volume 33 Number 8

Wind Power

By Frank Young

Part I - the Meeting

(Note: Frank's experiences with an actual working wind farm in Pennsylvania, and his thoughts about these "wind" experiences, will be in Part II of Wind Power in the October issue of the Highlands Voice.)

Background

In June of this year I learned about a proposal to install a "wind farm" along the ridge of Backbone Mountain in Tucker County. The company behind the project is called Atlantic Renewable Energy (AER).

I have long been fascinated with the concept of windmills generating power.

Early in the history of America windmills were used to directly pump water or to sometimes

drive grain mills or other equipment. The problem with using wind power for direct mechanical propulsion of most equipment is that the wind blows hardest on mountain tops but the water to be pumped or other equipment to be powered is located in valleys and other lower elevation places.

Placing windmills in valleys where the wind blows little or sometimes not at all isn't very productive of energy.

Generation and transmission of power in the form of electricity makes possible the location of windmills on mountains where the wind blows more, and the use of that power at far away locations.

Very little interest in harvesting the power of wind to generate electricity has been shown by traditional fossil fuel electricity producers.

Two social circumstances have driven the

fossil fuel (mostly coal) burning method of generating electricity.

(1) As long as the environmental costs of extracting and burning fossil fuels (mainly coal) to produce electricity can be externalized away from the producer, steam turbine electricity generation is by far the "cheapest" to the power generator (usually a power company).

(2) As long as the power companies producing the power had a monopoly on selling electrical power to consumers, there was no incentive for the power producer to invest in other than the "cheapest" electrical generation technology.

Only where regulating authorities have mandated that power producing companies include

See WIND on page 8

State Agency Taking Protests on Windpower Project

By Frank Young

A large windmill facility (wind farm) is proposed for Backbone Mountain in Tucker County. The permitting process for the project appears to be on the fast track. The West Virginia Public Service Commission (P.S.C.) is accepting protests about this proposed facility until September 15th.

The President of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is asking the P.S.C. to conduct an independent Environmental Impact Study and to conduct a formal hearing on the project before approving the application.

This wind generation facility is proposed along a major route to the tourist regions of the Potomac Highlands. It is projected to have giant wind turbines along a seven mile corridor on a ridgetop just a few miles north and west of Blackwater Falls State Park, Blackwater Canyon (nominated for National Park status), and Canaan Valley State Park.

This windmill farm has the potential to produce a significant visual blight on a large part of Tucker County. The large blades and supporting tower assemblies will loom over 100 yards (the length of a football field) in height. They would be seen for miles.

If you want more public inquiry into this proposed facility, you may write to: Sandra Squire, Executive Secretary, West Virginia Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 812, Charleston WV 25323, before September 15th.

Refer to Case number 00-1209-E-CN, the Backbone Mountain Windpower Project.

You can ask for a public hearing, an independent Environmental Impact Study by the P.S.C., or make any other comments.

It is important, however, to style your comments as a PROTEST of the application, whether or not you actually oppose the project. Otherwise, unless protests are received by the P.S.C., the commission may waive formal hearing and grant the application without study.

For further information you may contact Frank Young at (304) 372-3945 or e-mail frankly@mtparty.org. ❖

Check the middle part of this issue of the Voice for all you need to know about the Fall Review. Dave has artfully fashioned a four-page insert in two colors no less, one of which is – you got it – green!

From the Western Slope of the Mountains

By Frank Young

Conservancy's Committees Do Us Proud

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) is governed by its officers and a Board of Directors.

The "issue" work of the Conservancy is performed mostly by volunteers who serve on various committees appointed by the President.

In addition to various organizational committees which attend to the administration of keeping the organization functional, the issue committees are: Mining Committee, Public Lands Management Committee, Blackwater Canyon Committee, Rivers Committee and the Highways Committee.

Recently the publication G.R.E.E.N., produced by the West Virginia Environmental Council (E-council), had an article about the Conservancy's Blackwater Canyon Committee and the content of some of its television advertising. Apparently even the President of E-council was caught off guard by this snipe in its newsletter.

All the committees of the Conservancy deserve recognition for their efforts toward a good environment. And I herein resolve to highlight these committees' accomplishments in future VOICE articles. Since the WVHC Blackwater Canyon (BWC) Committee was singled out by the G.R.E.E.N. commentator, this column is mostly about this committee.

Despite the G.R.E.E.N. article implications, the BWC Committee consists of many volunteers. Two consecutive Presidents of the Conservancy have recognized Linda Cooper and Judy Rodd as co-chairs of the BWC Committee. From time to time Linda and Judy have recruited a dozen or so Conservancy members for BWC Committee related activities.

The Conservancy's Blackwater Canyon Committee was formed nearly three years ago to confront the new challenges to the forest, the river, the related ecology of the 3000 acre or so tract known as Blackwater Canyon, and the areas adjacent to the Blackwater Canyon. Major threats to the magnificent Canyon include timbering of the Canyon's canopy of "second growth" maturing trees and accompanying viewshed destruction, road building, skid trails, destruction of the habitats of several endangered species, "posting" of long recognized public access trails. Even permit applications were filed that could lead to commercial development of Canyon properties near the State Park, and related political agreements were made for the use of the State Park for access roads and utility easements.

See YOUNG on page 9

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Strip Mine & Power Plant Threaten Buckhannon, Middle Fork Rivers

Wilderness Waterways Could Be Hit by More Acid Precipitation

By Nathan Fetty

A proposal for a strip mine, combined with a 225-megawatt power plant, could adversely impact the Buckhannon River and Middle Fork River in north-central West Virginia. In addition, particulates from the power plant could create problems for streams in the Dolly Sods and Otter Creek wilderness areas of the Monongahela National Forest.

The project would be at Anker Energy's Upshur Property site in Upshur County, where Island Creek Coal mined in the 1980's with devastating acid mine drainage (AMD) as a result.

Anker's plan would utilize circulating fluidized bed (CFB) technology for the power plant, allowing the company to burn coal and acid-producing shale on-site with crushed limestone to neutralize the acid. The resulting by-product, a highly alkaline flyash, would be used as backfill to reclaim the land to its approximate original contour. Also, Anker claims that it can burn a large pile of acid-producing waste material left behind by previous mining operations.

In addition, the power plant would be a "co-generation" facility, where the excess steam would be used to power an adjacent manufacturing facility. However, the plan could still go forward even if no manufacturing plant opens on the site. Otherwise, the steam may simply be released into the atmosphere, like that of a conventional power plant.

Last fall, Anker approached several environmental groups to share the company's plan and solicit feedback. While Anker's openness about the proposal was refreshing, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, along with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Mountaineer

Chaper-Trout Unlimited and local citizens spoke in opposition to the strip mine permit at a public hearing in Buckhannon on March 22, 2000.

Among our questions and concerns:

★ Although the mining and power generation plans are said to be new technology, this is more experimentation on a site that is highly susceptible to AMD problems. This is unacceptable, especially when trout streams like Tenmile Creek of Buckhannon and Right Fork of the Middle Fork are likely to be impacted.

★ Although the flyash used to negate AMD would be highly alkaline, that doesn't mean it is without problems. Precise calculations for flyash application are difficult. If the flyash leaks or is over-applied, that could spell trouble for downstream drinking water supplies. We don't know the public's cost to pay for treating increased iron, manganese and hardness in drinking water supplies. The City of Buckhannon is already paying additionally to treat water for problems stemming from the Upshur Property.

★ EPA recently considered regulating flyash and other coal combustion wastes as hazardous. These wastes can cause fish kills and amphibian deformities. Also, such waste materials contain concentrated levels of heavy metals like arsenic, lead and cadmium; radioactive elements; cancer causing organic compounds and other contaminants. The Hoosier Environmental Council (Indiana) has found 63 cases of power plant wastes contaminating ground and surface water supplies beyond any use. Over 38 research studies have documented deformities, hormonal problems, genetic damage, and death in plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles and/or mammals from power plant wastes.

★ There are special concerns with mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that contaminates food supplies, especially fish. Such a poisonous substance will likely become a bigger issue with coal-fired power plants as regulators begin to recognize problems beyond acid deposition.

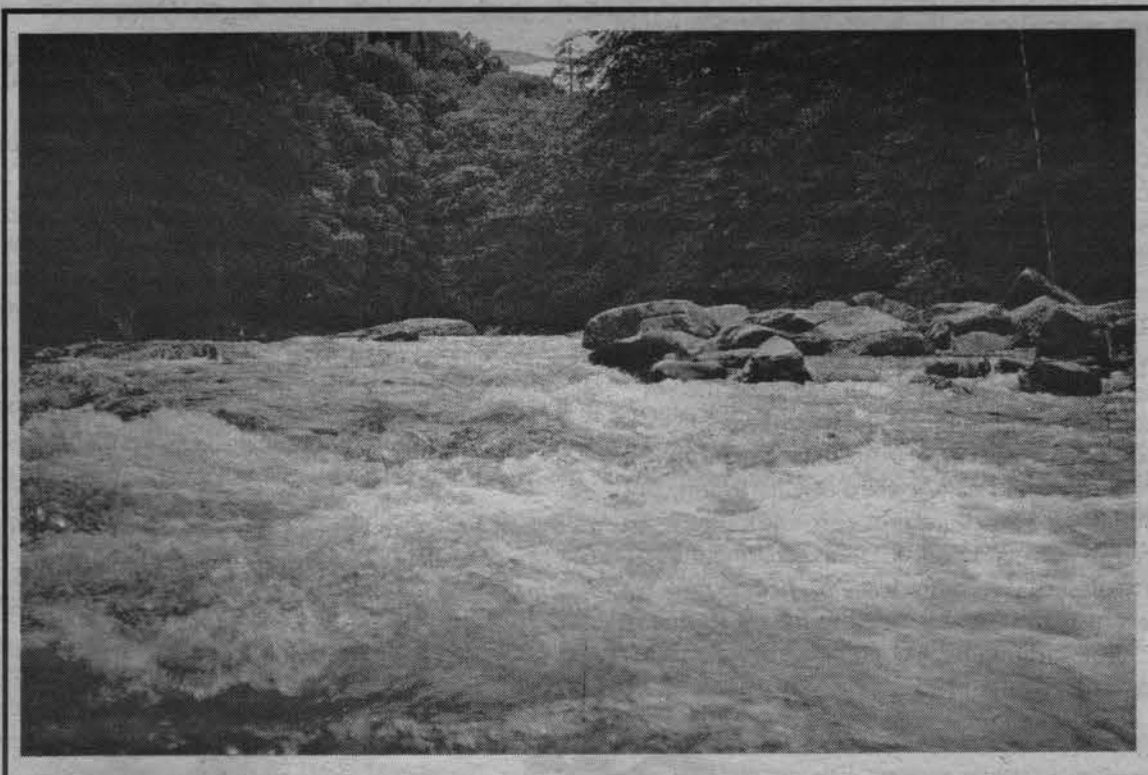
★ The power plant would require two and a half tons of limestone for every ton of fuel. That limestone will likely come from quarries in eastern West Virginia, where such extraction can be intensely damaging to land, groundwater supplies and surface water. This encourages extraction of one non-renewable resource to enable extraction of another non-renewable resource. Additionally, an upgraded highway has been proposed along the Middle Fork River to truck in the limestone, impacting a popular whitewater boating and angling waterway.

★ The Dolly Sods and Otter Creek wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest are already at acid precipitation thresholds. The Upshur County plant, which is in the wind path of these sensitive areas, could push the health of these streams over the edge.

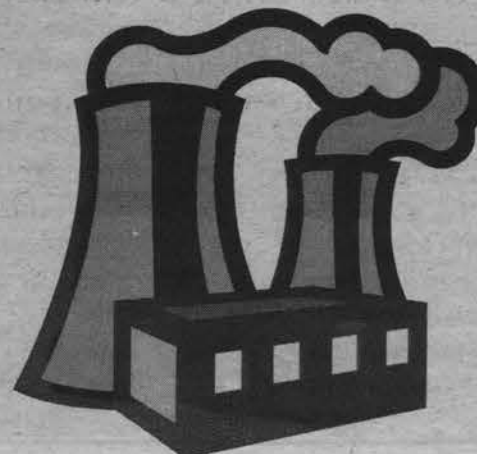
★ Anker officials have noted that the manufacturing facility could provide upwards of 500 jobs, which is a key factor in local officials' support of the plan. The company has noted that the jobs would, ideally, be high-paying, high-skilled, and that the manufacturing facility would be environmentally friendly. But there is no guarantee that any of these goals will be realized.

Currently, Anker has hired an independent consultant selected by the environmental community to evaluate the strip mining proposal, before the mining permit is granted or denied. Similar studies of the air pollution permit and the economic feasibility of Anker's plan to sell electricity to the power grid are being looked into. We'll be tracking developments in the coming months and calling on YOU to speak up for these wonderful rivers and streams, and the communities and recreation they support.

Nathan Fetty is a program associate with West Virginia Rivers Coalition. ❀



Middle Fork River
Photo: Nathan Fetty



Notes on the Creation of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Recalling the First Highlands Review atop Spruce Knob

By Rupert Cutler

In the late 1960s, as an outcome of the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, skepticism ran high regarding the possibility of Congress making tracts of roadless back country in the eastern national forests official units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. After all, so the theory ran, ninety-nine percent of the eastern national forests is second- or third-growth timber (classic wilderness is "virgin" old growth), and the remnant roadless areas in the eastern forests are relatively tiny compared to the typical western wilderness areas like the Bob Marshall (so it is hard to get completely away from the sights, sounds, and smells of civilization in them).

Even the executive director of The Wilderness Society at that time, Stuart Brandborg, tacitly agreed with U.S. Forest Service wilderness staff director Bill Worf (a fellow westerner) that such little eastern areas as Rich Hole on the George Washington National Forest were not comparable with the "real" wilderness in their minds' eyes. This despite the fact that the "instant" wilderness system created by passage of the Wilderness Act included the relatively small, second-growth Great Gulf (NH) and Shining Rock and Linville Gorge (NC) areas, setting a precedent for the inclusion of such areas in the system. [Item: When, as a Wilderness Society staff member, I submitted a request for reimbursement of my expenses for a wilderness reconnaissance trip into the George Washington National Forest in northern Virginia to Brandborg, he rejected my reimbursement request with the comment that The Wilderness Society had no interest in that forest because it would never have designated wilderness areas. Now

Virginia boasts 16 wilderness areas totaling 166,641 acres in its national park and national forests, and a bill creating two more areas is pending before Congress.]

It was against this background and despite this prevailing negative attitude in high places that a campaign to protect the "de facto" wilderness areas of the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia was initiated in the late 1960s. This grassroots movement soon led to the formation of an organization to mobilize the troops and carry the message: the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

There was urgency to this campaign because many forces were at work to degrade the natural environment and ecological uniqueness of the West Virginia Highlands and the West Virginia tributaries of the Potomac River. Among them were the construction by the Forest Service of a very long Highlands Scenic Highway (seen by some as West Virginia's answer to Virginia's Skyline Drive/Blue Ridge Parkway), construction of Royal Gorge Dam on the headwaters of the Potomac by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, construction by the Appalachian Regional Commission of a network of new highways to be reamed through that steep mountain country and a stepped-up program of timber sales on the Monongahela National Forest. (The objections by sportsmen to the clear-cutting of large tracts of hardwood habitat on the Monongahela Forest eventually led to the litigation filed by the Izaak Walton League that stopped eastern national forest timber sales until the National Forest Management Act introduced by Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia passed the Congress in 1976.)

That a new organized voice of outspoken citizen opposition to the wholesale degradation of the West Virginia Highlands, with political clout, was needed was the conclusion arrived at in 1967 by a small group of backpacking and whitewater canoeing buddies from a Highlands recreational user region that included Richmond, VA, Washington, DC, and Pittsburgh, PA as well as Charleston, Bridgeport and other communities in West Virginia. They met accidentally, initially, at trailhead parking lots and high country overlook lunch clearings in places like Spruce Knob, Seneca Creek, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek, the Cranberry Back Country, and the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River. These enthusiasts including Lou Greathouse and Lee Maynard of Charleston, Bob Broughton of Pittsburgh, Lucille and Bob Harrigan of Glen Echo, MD, myself, and others whose names I've forgotten. We decided to create a new organization dedicated to the protection of the West Virginia back country we loved. Dr. Thomas E. King of Bridgeport, WV, was elected the new group's first president.

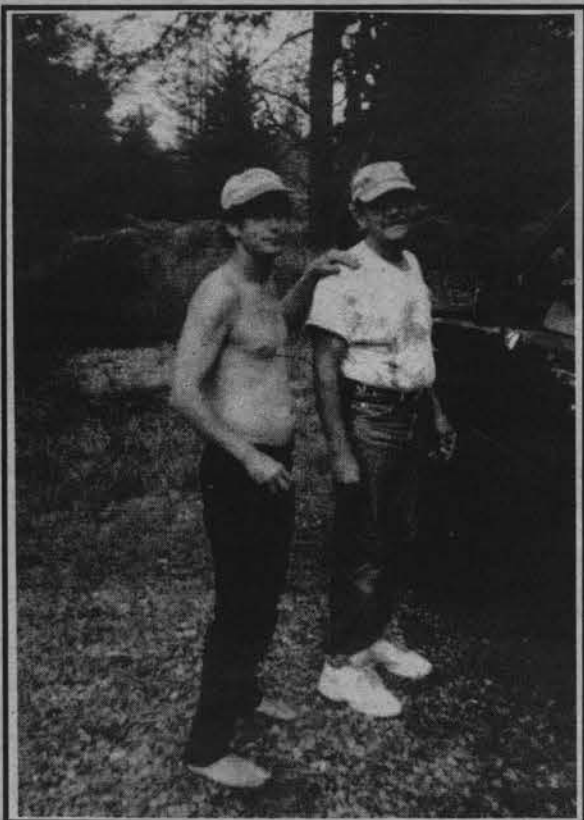
I have no record now, 32 years later, of the details of the process of organizational establishment. However, I do recall with great clarity the high points of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's first annual Highlands Weekend Review on Spruce Knob, which I believe took place in July of 1968. Then as now, we created a diverse weekend program of outdoor recreational events ranging from rock-climbing and whitewater canoeing to hiking, photography, and nature study, with everyone involved expected to assemble on Saturday evening on Spruce Knob for a chicken barbecue dinner and a "come-to-Jesus" meeting in a church revival tent on the mountaintop that night.

Several hundred tired but enthusiastic conservationists packed the old tent as a light rain pattered on the canvas. Arrayed across the back of the speakers' platform were a panel of special guests — our target audience — that included the Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest Supervisor, Ephe Oliver; the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Stewart Udall; and the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. Senate, Robert Byrd. Looking them in the face were hundreds of angry constituents. As the program of several speakers, representing various interests and localities, slowly but surely built the case for the protection of the region's unique natural values, the audience warmed to the opportunity to send those leaders a message.

I was honored to serve as anchorman for the panel of speakers. I was asked to represent the non-West Virginians who came hundreds of miles from far-away cities to partake of the wilderness experience offered by the West Virginia Highlands. As I enumerated one proposed construction horror after another, in a call-and-response manner modeled after the speeches of the late Hubert Humphrey, the tent rocked with an enthusiastic response. The intended audience of people in high places could not have missed the message: Save our Highlands!

That day was long ago but will remain evergreen in my memory as one of the high points in my conservation career. I am very pleased that our successors at the helm of and in the membership of, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy are carrying on the good fight and winning important battles! Keep up the good work!

Rupert Cutler has worn many hats in his lifetime, most of which were directly involving environmental protection. He currently lives in Roanoke, VA. ❖



← Balsam cone pickers



Mine Rule Change Gets Little Attention

By Ken Ward, Jr

(This article appeared in the Charleston Gazette on August 22, 2000)

Over the last year, talk among coal industry officials and environmentalists has revolved around the state's stream buffer zone rule.

But Monday night, a proposal to weaken that rule drew no comments during a Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) public hearing.

Two coal industry lobbyists were the only speakers at the hearing on DEP's plan to review several state strip mine regulations.

Among those proposals is one that would eliminate from the buffer zone rule specific stream protections cited by a federal judge who issued a ruling to limit mountaintop removal mining. Neither industry lobbyist mentioned the buffer zone rule in their oral remarks. Written comments from the West Virginia Coal Association said, "No comment," next to that proposed change.

"I'm surprised there wasn't any opposition view," said John Ailes, deputy chief for DEP's Office of Mining and Reclamation. "There hasn't been a whole lot of feedback here."

Under federal strip mine rules, no mining activity is allowed within 100 feet of perennial and intermittent streams.

Mine operators can be exempted from this buffer zone rule if they show that mining will not adversely affect water quantity and quality or cause water pollution violations.

Currently, the state's version also limits buffer zone exemptions to when DEP finds that mining will not adversely affect "normal flow or gradient of the stream, adversely affect fish migration or related environmental values, [and] materially damage ... the stream."

In October 1999, Chief U.S. District Judge Charles H. Haden II cited these specific stream protections when he ruled that coal operators could no longer dump waste rock and dirt into perennial and intermittent streams.

DEP Director Michael Castle proposed to eliminate the specific protections, but said the move

had nothing to do with Haden's ruling.

After Monday's hearing, coal lobbyist Ben Greene of the West Virginia Mining and Reclamation Association, said he supports Castle's proposal.

"It just brings it back to the federal regulation," Greene said. "I don't know where we got all that other stuff, anyway."

During the hearing, Greene criticized several other DEP proposals to tighten restrictions on releasing reclamation bonds. "This just needs to stay the same," Greene said.

Also Monday night, another DEP hearing on new rules to regulate limestone and other quarries drew only one speaker. Mike Clowser, a lobbyist for quarry companies, said the industry looks forward to negotiating details of rules with DEP before they are approved by the Legislature. "We would like to work with DEP to the point that these are agreed-to regulations," Clowser said. ♣

Report Says State Park in Danger

Blackwater Falls Rated One of Most Threatened Parks

By Karin Fischer

(This article appeared in the Charleston Daily Mail on August 25, 2000)

Blackwater Falls State Park is among the most threatened state parks in the country, according to a report released today by the National Park Trust, a national conservation organization.

And West Virginia ranks No. 5 on the list of the 10 states with the most severely threatened parks, the report says. About 1,690 acres are threatened in the state.

"It's eye-opening," said National Park Trust spokeswoman Susan Hawley.

The report, released on the 84th anniversary of the national park system, identifies the most severely threatened state parks, based on questionnaires filled out by the states themselves. The questions sought information like state park acreage, the amount of privately owned acres in the state park system and the threats to state parks.

The Tucker County park, which includes some of the most photographed wild spaces in the state, is threatened by development, Hawley said.

While Gov. Cecil Underwood signed a legal agreement earlier this month to block the construction of a road through Blackwater Canyon, environmentalists are concerned the park is still threatened by a proposal by Allegheny Wood Products chief John Crites to build condominiums near the canyon. Logging on private land near the park also continues.

"It's nothing new for West Virginia,"

Hawley said. "It's an ongoing battle."

Hawley praised a deal proposed by Underwood to transfer some of Allegheny Wood Products' land to the park -- some would be donated and some purchased by the state -- but said there needs to be a guarantee the nearby land won't turn into a development.

One solution could be to bring the land under public ownership, Hawley said. Local preservation groups, particularly the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, have advocated making the area a national park, an idea supported by the state's congressional delegation. Members of the conservancy weren't immediately available this morning.

West Virginia's high ranking "isn't a bad thing," Hawley said. Instead, it might help often-underfunded parks' agencies, such as the Division of Natural Resources in West Virginia, by drawing attention to their problems and challenges.

"Our main focus is to bring attention to the needs of state parks," Hawley said.

The Division of Natural Resources' Doug Baker has not seen the report, but says his agency is concerned about preserving areas like Blackwater Falls. He praised the governor's proposal as "a positive step."

"It's one of the more pristine areas in the state," Baker said. "Whenever anything is that

beautiful, you want to protect it."

At a news conference here this morning, Hawley praised the state parks directors for the candor and willingness to discuss their concerns. The list reflects information received from the directors themselves, she said.

The National Park Trust lists sprawl and underfunding as the biggest threats to state parks across the country.

"It used to be that people would go and visit state parks for the day," Hawley said. "Now they're moving in."

The nonprofit group urges concerned citizens to support the following solutions: bond referenda to buy up land for preservation, buffer zones of private agricultural, forest or visual land around parks, beautification funds for public lands and public access and mandate public agencies to protect parks.

The 379 national parks and 3,266 state parks need to be "finished" by identifying key properties around the park and purchasing them from willing sellers, said Park Trust Director Paul Pritchard. "The key is to finish the dream," he said.

Other states on the 10 most threatened list are Georgia, North Carolina, Minnesota, Nevada, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Montana.

♣

The Weedy Kingdom Come

An Essay by Jack Slocomb

Summertime. And the livin' is nice and easy.

And, in case you haven't noticed already, it's also gagging all over the place with weeds again.

Yes, the wretched things are now poking their cantankerous way up through every crack and cranny in the pavement, cramming every uncultivated, unwooded, abandoned bald in the temperate Northern Hemisphere it seems. A prickly, poisonous, twining, wiry, insect-snake-and-vermin ridden snarl. Grottesque lepers, little nectar drenched whores, invaders from Godless places, unrestrained demoniacs, all of them, in the blanched, broiling, buzzing heat of the afternoon.

Our hate for these wastrel chronic despoilers of scenery does often seem to warrant such Biblical monikers. And especially, in this region, for the most Unholy Four - Garlic Mustard, Multiflora Rose, Japanese Honeysuckle, and *Alanthus*.

But I'm a little odd, I guess. The sight of weeds usually does something different for me. My pulse quickens. I get stirred up. And sometimes, these irreverent blotches interrupting the calculated geometry of streets and pavement seem to draw me into a kind of comforting Zen of nowhere places - in-between marls, hummocks of purposelessness in a too hardened world.

As one might expect, I didn't always sport this attitude about weeds. For a good part of my life, like most other folks, I tried to ignore their obnoxious presence. Sort of like avoiding eye contact with the homeless. But I reacted to weeds like this not because I believed that manicured lawns and golf courses are the best scenery the planet had to offer. No, my dislike for this noisome stubble was based upon what I believed was a much more purist and morally superior view than that of bland suburban aesthetics. It was because I liked to have my great outdoors served up in man sized portions of untrammelled forest, raging rapids and exploding waterfalls. Anything less than this would not pass muster. And I guess weeds were just about the lowest form of beings imaginable in my cosmology of robust American scenery.

I don't think, however, that I am by any means alone in looking at things this way. I have a notion that for most Americans, at least on some level, dramatic landscapes function as the signature of our vision of ourselves as the Alpha culture on the planet. Sweeping vistas of cloud shrouded mountains, cascading rivers, and tall timber have become ingrained into our consciousness as symbols of the unlimited human possibility and manifest destiny associated with the American experiment.

This obsession perhaps reached its expressive apogee in the paintings of 18th and 19th century mythscape artists like Durand, Moran, Bingham, Cole, and Frederick Church. You cannot walk away from viewing one of these works - many of them on a gigantic scale - without feeling that our republic is literally the embodiment of new heaven and earth.

And so I didn't exactly pick up my revulsion of weeds independently. There is a big historical precedent for this posture. Weeds don't much fit into the dream.

But there came a time recently when I revisited the whole ethos that surrounds weeds. And now I can say with some conviction that I believe weeds have really gotten a bum rap. I've taken a real fancy to the little bastards. Tender feelings even.

Hmmmm -- I guess I'd better watch it here. Better play the pipe very lowly on this one. For I realize that such a stance could be construed as real agricultural and silvacultural heresy - if not just downright unpatriotic. And, to make matters worse, I should know better from experience. What with being a novice grower of cooking herbs and having to contend with, among other irritations (drought, insects, and slugs - to name a few), the Mongol Horde of herbaceous debauchers which seem to have nothing better to do than to wage guerrilla war on my precious cultivars, seizing every unguarded moment, every Achilles heel, any sign of weakness, to gain the advantage.

But, nevertheless, my intimacy with this outcast herbivory continues to grow. I can't seem to help it. It's a schizy posture, I know. And at first, I did have a real uneasiness about this fascination. In fact, I think I felt a little akin to the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, the disquieted village minister in *The Scarlet Letter*, slithering out of the civilized enclosure into the festering wild outside the walls to enjoy the roguish pleasures of Hester Prynne, the adulteress. And also, like Dimmesdale, once I got a taste for it, I became bolder and bolder and less inhibited, and kept on taking my sin again and again. Submitting by slow, inexorable degrees to the forbidden charm, the sweet unsavored juices which started to drip into my veins and run rampant whenever I would catch sight of a clump of those seductive weeds punching their way up through the joints in the concrete or spreading wildfire-like in some desiccated landscape. Sends chills up and down my spine just to think about it. And now I'm simply perverted beyond hope.

Now this awakening (which is the Bhuddist spin I like to lay on it) came about as the result of forced circumstances (as

most awakenings do) - and not through any kind of intellectual reconsideration of my first mindset about weeds. It was a matter of a change in perspective, the "task of seeing", as the shamans say, having been reduced in scope because the larger sweep was temporarily not accessible. Let me explain:

About two years ago, I was ambushed out of the blue by a nasty syndrome called Paroxysmal Postural Vertigo - as a result, I was told, of footloose calcium carbonate particles - "otoliths" - floating around willy-nilly in one of my semicircular canals. Although not a very serious condition, a prognosis about how long it would take for the symptoms to be resolved could not be made, although I was told that things should gradually better "over time". Anyway, the lingering effects of this malady were disappointingly slow to let go. And, worst of all, my long treks in the highlands came to a immediate halt, because hiking for too long a time made me uncomfortably dizzy the whole rest of the time I was out there.

A godawful emotional crisis ensued. I mean for a person like myself, whose life has become pretty much woven into the warp and woof of wilderness, this was really a kind of death sentence. Or so I thought.

But, life went on. And gradually I evolved a new frame of mind. The take on things I finally came up with was to just keep walking no matter what. And so I began to routinely walk a six mile route around my hilly Cumberland neighborhood, shouldering a half loaded backpack. I found I could do this without becoming too dizzy. The specialist I had been seeing told me that it certainly wouldn't do me any harm, and in fact, might even help. And besides, I could at least keep myself in shape in the event that the symptoms actually did clear up.

But it wasn't long before another problem emerged. I drifted helplessly into fantasy when I was walking. It was all the places in the highlands where, if it weren't for this #%!!* dizzy feeling, I could be now. I even longed for those cursed times of freezing rain and blasting snow and having no idea where in hell I was going and if I was ever going to get back to my car.

I began to wonder if maybe this walking idea of mine was such a good one after all. Maybe I was even worse off - because it was so scaled down. It was really more the motion of a thing, a listless mimicry, like the reflex twitching of an animal who has just died, the neural

Next page, please

algorithms of its wild country habits still pathetically firing away. Something like that.

It was in one of these bereft states that my revisionist history of weeds took root.

I was sweating it out at a pretty good clip one day by an open stretch about halfway through my route. A place that I ordinarily had given no more than a passing glance. But this time, for some reason, my attention got riveted by a thickly entangled, bloated, chaotic splay of greenbrier, chokeberry, black raspberry, black cherry, poison ivy, multiflora rose, black locust seedlings, cowthistle, dangling tendrils of honeysuckle, milkweed, wild grape leaves, and God knows what else, all bursting there in the hot beating three o'clock sun. A melting pot of indigenous plants and rampaging exotics. A tsunami of unbridled, luxuriant growth surging against the sidewalk, despite the worst drought in these parts in 100 years, and also despite rather clear evidence of recent efforts by Street Maintenance (or maybe the summer Job Corps kids) to hack away at the edges licking at my feet.

It was actually a kind of, what should I say, glory, that I saw there. My flesh was in goose bumps, impulsive, on the ready, responding to a parcel of the most reviled nature. The weeds were working a spell on me, working their way in. Revealing themselves to me, it seems, in all their diversity, subtle associations, and throbbing, dissident fury.

I was standing in the presence of an unrestrained vigor which insects could not chew to the ground, spare nutrient availability could not restrict, drought could not kill off. And so significant for me, I suddenly had a realization, was that this weed jammed sliver of unused landscape was an early successional phase, the rambunctious, awkward and long childhood, of the kind of Appalachian mesic forest I had been hankering to return to with my backpack.

It passed through me like a bullet, and then I went back to my walk.

But this little Epiphany must have left its mark. Because, after this, on these home-based walkabouts, I started to pay much closer attention to the weeds everywhere along my route - trying to sort out the different assemblages of species types, trying to connect these variations to the kinds of insects scurrying over the leaves and stems or hovering and fluttering near the flowers, and to the types of birds I could see bouncing around insouciantly in the knotted density of the thickets. The whole idea of wilderness now seemed to me to be more of a relative notion. For these creatures, this was the middle of it, the full blown climax growth. It was all there was or ever would be.

My mind continued to ramble on, as peripatetic as the weeds. I segued back to my cooking herb plot and then, in one enormous leap, to the whole 10,000 year old experiment in agriculture.

How it, and not weeds, is expeditiously doing in the only hospitable habitat that we know. And how, ironically, this is all happening by means of the very keys to agriculture's own success - hybridization, cultivation, irrigation, chemical fertilization, crop specialization, mechanization, and, now, bioengineering. A great lurking 21st century question then got called up from a back burner somewhere in my mind: is there enough of imagination and practical wisdom around to pull off something different when it comes to our agrarian heritage? Something that fits in with, or even perhaps takes advantage of, the obviously successful evolutionary model of



those very pesky weeds desecrating our lawns?

As it turned out, I realized soon after that I already knew part of the answer to this question. There were a lot of shards of very pertinent information floating around in my brain (like the otoliths in my semicircular canals) - gathered from reading, TV, workshops, and a lot of other places - that just hadn't settled in anywhere in particular yet. Like odd collector pieces kept randomly strewn in an attic because they might come in handy someday. Now, I had a context.

One of these fragments that I very quickly retrieved was that ethnobotanists, herbalists, and traditional healer types have been niggling at us for years now that run-of-the-mill backyard weeds contain an incredibly rich arsenal of benefits. And even some of the invasives are time honored medicinals. A prime example is the dreaded Kudzu, which is strangling southern forests. Yes, you heard right, Kudzu. In Japan (from where it was originally imported as an ornamental) it is used to treat a variety of ailments. It also fertilizes the soil, and has a whole variety of other beneficial uses, as well. And is this stuff really doing any more harm to those forests than the timber companies that clear away Kudzu and then create

ecological catastrophe, anyway, with their get-rich-quick harvesting methods?

Maybe they should harvest the Kudzu and leave the forests alone for a while. Kudzu is a lot easier to grow. It doesn't require much TLC. Just plant it. No, come to think of it, you don't even have to plant it. Just sit there and drink mint juleps until you're ready to cut it and cash in.

Just a thought. Stupid maybe. But a thought.

I also recalled that, in another bioregion, Wes Jackson at the Land Institute in Salinas, Kansas, has been experimenting for many years now with concocting varieties of prairie grass which produces harvestable, edible grain. Being more akin to the nutrient efficient, insect and disease resistant, water-retaining, perennial polyculture of their Great Plains relatives, these plants would never need to be plowed, fertilized, pesticided, insecticided, or watered. A kind of have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too approach to agronomy.

And then there is the case of Hemp - sometimes called "ditch weed". And weed it is, with all the tough, rugged characteristics that are associated with the critters. And for thousands of years has been used to make everything from paper to sailcloth. Unfortunately, Hemp cannot be legally grown in the United States because it happens to be a close relative of Marijuana, and its leaves contain THC - the psychoactive ingredient that is responsible for the nice little buzz which users crave. Yet there is hardly enough THC in Hemp to make a nematode high, much less a human being. (In fact, Hemp actually contains a preponderance of Cannabinol which effectively neutralizes the effect of THC.) If citizen groups are successful in their initiative now to have Hemp removed from the FDA schedule of controlled substances, then we will have a weed par excellence - acre for acre capable of producing twice a much fiber as trees!

Well, none of this ruminating may be worth much in the way of comfort to gardeners, farmers, and loggers, I'm sure. But, nevertheless, I think the story told by weeds can convey a form of hope for a more balanced future, not only because of their many practical uses, but also, as I have come to believe, because they remind us, if only fleetingly and from the furthest corner of our eye, of the integrity and viability of the ecological architecture of the not too distant past. Seen this way, maybe the "wild" might be viewed more expansively, less bounded and fragmented, more available to us than we were aware. The built landscape is really no more than a palimpsest, anyway - masking the underlying text of the original, the first manuscript. And maybe weeds are the

WEEDS concluded on page 9

WIND from page 1

"renewable," alternative electricity production sources into their production mixes (in California, for example) have renewable sources such as wind or solar power been tested for power grid use.

But recently alternative power sources, mostly wind at this time, are receiving more consideration. This is driven by:

(1) The break-up of power production and sale monopolies, and

(2) [a.] increasing public and government pressures for fossil fuel electricity producers to clean up their production techniques and significantly lower the polluting emissions of fossil fuel combustion, and

[b] increasing pressures to change the earth destructive mining practices in extracting fossil fuels (mostly coal) from the earth.

The break-up of electrical production and sales monopolies opens the door for customers to demand "greener" electricity. And that demand is now encouraged by regulatory changes.

The increased pressures for more benign and less polluting fuel extraction and combustion techniques portends higher costs for "traditional" electrical power generation.

Thus we have several existing or proposed wind power projects, including the Backbone Mountain proposal.

So when I learned that a meeting was proposed about the Tucker County project, and that the project's proponents wanted to "touch base with the environmental community," as they put it, I decided to be a part of that meeting. Early on I sensed that the project managers, through a company called Atlantic Renewable Energy, wanted my (our) blessings, not our money.

The Meeting

With some trepidation, realizing that I could become an unwitting tool in the company's promotion of the project, I did attend their meeting at Blackwater Falls State Park on July 15th.

It appears from information gained from the company's attorney, Robert Rodecker of Charleston, that 12 or 15 West Virginia environmental "leaders" were invited and that the company thought they would be attending. In actuality only four invitees attended. They were Jim Kotcon with West Virginia Environmental Council, Jim Sconyers with Sierra Club, Paul Rawson with the Canaan Valley Institute, and myself.

I went to this meeting armed with several pages of concerns some of our Conservancy members and Directors had about wind power. The concerns were about threats to birds, sight pollution and effects on esthetically sensitive landscapes, noise pollution, new roads for construction and maintenance of wind turbines, forest destruction during construction, oil and grease pollution during maintenance, and effects of power lines used to conduct electricity from the wind turbines to existing power grid input points.

The project's promoters anticipated almost all our concerns. Their prepared presentation addressed most of the concerns before we even asked about them.

Forest Impacts

They said that trees are cut back only about 200 feet from the wind tower construction site and that "second growth" trees are allowed to grow up to the tower's concrete pad, within about 20 feet of the tower.

The towers are to be about 220 feet tall, with blades 90 feet in length from center, causing the tower and blades together to extend upward about 310 feet – about same height as a football field is long.

Avian (Bird) Impacts

Dr. Paul Kerlinger, the company's reportedly respected avian expert, reported on his studies of effects of the project on bird populations.

Bird impact incidences with the proposed Backbone Mountain project were said to be greatly reduced from 1970's and 1980's era wind turbines levels, primarily because

(1) the towers and turbines mounted on the tower tops have no perches for birds (these would be round towers without external ladders as opposed to earlier era lattice type towers), and

(2) the blades turn at much lower speeds— 13 to 20 revolutions per minute (RPMs) with current technology, as opposed to more than 40 RPMs with the older wind turbines, and

(3) towers are to be spaced out further apart, about two and one quarter times rotor diameters (about 400 feet) apart, and

(4) this project will have a lower concentration of towers (less than 100, compared to thousands in some California wind farms), and

(5) the absence of a large number of species of birds susceptible to collisions with towers and blades at the Backbone Mountain site.

Kerlinger reported on bird mortality at some "modern" wind tower and turbine sites. He reported mortality at sites ranging from 2 to 200 turbines ranging from zero to about 24 bird fatalities over two years.

Dr. Kerlinger has yet to determine fall migration flight paths of susceptible birds species and their proximity to the Backbone Mountain project's location.

Kerlinger's report says that his Phase I Avian Risk Assessment shows:

* Sufficient information on the birds and habitat at the Backbone project site exists to permit a thorough risk assessment;

* The Backbone project does not represent a significant risk to birds;

* No further study is indicated (except for the fall migration study).

Visual Impacts

The proposed project would be along a 4400 acre corridor, about 7 miles long and 200 feet wide. It would have between 60 and 90 towers, with turbines on top of each tower. The towers and blades together will each be about 30 stories (the length of a football field) tall.

The towers, turbines and / or blades are expected be most visible from

(1) eastern Thomas (it s highest point),and

(2) on Route 219, about a mile or so north of Olsen Fire Tower, where that route crosses Backbone Mountain, and

(3) at the Fairfax Sand and Gravel quarry at the north end of the site.

We toured part of the proposed site after the meeting. We stopped at the Rt. 219 crossing point, near Tucker County High School. It appears that 7 to 10 towers and turbines will be visible to traffic coming north on Rt. 219 at that point, perhaps fewer for traffic coming south. But coming north they will be very visible, very noticeable.

In addition, about every third tower will have either white or red flashing strobe lights, 24 hours a day.

During the daytime the towers and blades have visual impact for 4 or 5 miles. After that they "fade into the haze" the company said.

Noise

The company says that the lower blade speeds (from 13 to 20 RPMs) will result in significantly lower noise than older wind driven generators that turned 40 or more RPMs.

It says that, from a distance of 750 feet, the decibel level is about 50 and that at that distance the sound of the wind in the trees masks the sound of the turbines. "Beyond 750 feet ambient noise will typically predominate" said ARE's Vice-President, Samuel Enfield.

Economic Impacts

Atlantic Renewable Energy says it has 8 projects under way – 4 in New York, 3 in Pennsylvania and 1 (Backbone Mountain) in West Virginia.

It says the company plans a \$1.5 billion "potential investment" in West Virginia.

About 200 local workers will be employed for construction, which will take about 8 months, says the company.

After that, 5 to 7 full-time workers, mostly electricians, will be required to maintain the turbines.

Royalties are paid to the landowner. All of the land in this project is owned by Western Pocahontas Land Co. except for a part at the north end is owned by Fairfax Sand and Gravel, Inc.

Royalties are about two percent of the value of the electricity generated at the turbine site; that amounts to about \$2,000 annually for each turbine, the company says. So, based on those figures, royalties would amount to between \$120,000 and \$ 180,000 per year.

If the fall migration avian studies are satisfactory, and the necessary permits are granted -- a building permit from Tucker County Commission, a certificate of need from the Public Service Commission (now a mostly perfunctory process) and a light installation permit from the Federal Aviation Administration – the company plans to begin construction next April and finish the project the following November.

Concluded on next page



Other General Information

Miscellaneous points by company representatives:

It will "meet later" with local residents, perhaps in August.

That with current technology, solar power is about three (3) times as costly as wind power.

Samuel E. Enfield, the company's Vice President of Development said that "Aesthetics is a subjective judgment." He added that, from an aesthetics standpoint, "There are better and worse places to put them."

They chose West Virginia as a site because

(1) of the good wind source on high ground, and

(2) wind towers and turbines are compatible with existing land uses (farming, growing trees, etc., and

(3) it is cost effective. He said the north-south orientation of Backbone Mountain, perpendicular to the prevailing winds, is ideal.

The only transmission lines necessary will be a small line from about the middle of the turbine project to the Monongahela Power's William sub-station near Thomas - a distance of four or five miles.

A small access road will be maintained along the ridge of Backbone Mountain to provide access for turbine maintenance.

Turbine maintenance takes place two to four times annually. Workers are careful to not spill oil and grease in the course of maintenance.

The company says it must be careful to maintain good stewardship of resources in order to maintain its standing as a producer of "green" energy.

Other's Concerns

In addition to the concerns discussed above:

Jim Kotcon expressed concerns about the project's impact on remote, semi-primitive recreational opportunities and the break-up of the forest canopy that construction and access road maintenance would cause. His comments were not addressed directly.

Jim Sconyers pointed out that the project's impacts go beyond property borders. He also observed that "Natural view sheds are becoming rarer." His comments were not addressed directly.

YOUNG from page 2

To confront and thwart these threats, the WVHC Blackwater Canyon Committee has successfully used public information campaigns, a petition drive, pleas to public officials, and a lawsuit against the governor and other state officials. In addition, it helped organize a direct and successful challenge to an attempt by Allegheny Wood Products Co. (AWP) to close the public Blackwater Canyon Trail, a Monongahela National Forest hiking trail. And WVHC's Endangered Species Act lawsuit, managed by the BWC Committee and attorneys retained by it, has been successful in affecting the management of AWP's timbering operation in the Canyon.

The work of the BWC Committee has been costly. But, except for some start-up funds from the Conservancy's general fund, the BWC Committee has raised the funds to support its activities on its own. Through direct mail appeals to Conservancy members and others who have indicated interest, through fund-raisers held at near and far locations, and through generous gifts, some large and some small from various benefactors, the BWC Committee has financed the campaign that has created a strong public and media awareness of threats to the Canyon, has created a political climate that recognizes the plight of the Canyon in the minds of office holders and office seekers, and has caused state and federal courts and several state and federal agencies to focus on better management of

Conclusion

I have not drawn conclusions about the project's proponent's candor in all their presentation and responses to our concerns. Generally, I feel that they were open and receptive to our comments and questions.

But I did have two observations about the project promoters:

(1) They do have a timetable for permit approvals and for construction to begin. My hunch is that, while they'd like to have the blessing of environmental leaders and Tucker countians, they will aim to keep that time schedule and aren't going to let a bunch of "local" or "outside" dissent deter them.

(2) They do want to try to blunt potential environmental objections before they become problems - either legal problems or public relations problems. +

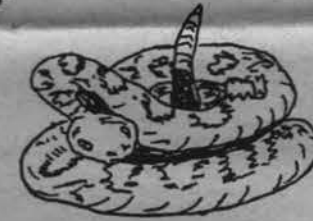
Blackwater Canyon as a resource in which the public has a recognizably strong interest.

Has all this been happening in a vacuum, and without controversy? No, of course not. Our members, officers and directors have let our committees know that we expect accountability and responsibility for activities done in the name of the Conservancy. And the BWC Committee has responded to those expectations.

We thank the Blackwater Canyon Committee and all the other Conservancy committees for their hard work. Hardly ever have so few accomplished so much with so little as do our hard working committee volunteers.

Our committee volunteers don't need the sniping from other organizations. They need our help, sometimes our dollars, and, perhaps most of all sometimes, a sincere "Thank you" for persevering in the face of almost overwhelming adversity and odds.

THANK YOU, WVHC committees! +



WEEDS from page 7

dimly visible tracings, whorls and lines, of a stubborn and not easily gotten rid of mother tongue straining to reveal itself. A metaphor for the kind of life waiting within us to be rediscovered and reinvested at the dawn of this new millennium.

For undeniably here is a story of boundless diversity, mutualism, and permanency. The presence, perhaps, of a creative, redemptive intelligence, and not just an absence of civility. The ecos that we long to inhabit and articulate with again.

And, if nothing else, a story of just pure exuberant being.

So let the weedy kingdom come! Colt's Foot, Ox Eye Daisy, Joe Pye Weed, Chickory, Mullein, Golden Rod, Queen Anne's Lace, and all those spiking racemed things growing straight up out of the baking shale. Let them come and give in to them. Let their earthy zest for living colonize our minds. For in the end (who knows?), these exiled may yet save us from ourselves.

Or, at least, soften up our edges a bit. +

MON-ATHON 2000



Celebrating Our **MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST** 
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Hey Gang!! Join a Mon-Athon 2000 Outing in Your Wonder-full Monongahela National Forest! Get Those Calendars Out, Pick Your Trips, and Call the Outing Leaders Today! This is YOUR Year to Get Out Into YOUR National Forest!

This is a list of "everyone invited" public outings in the Monongahela National Forest, sponsored by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and cooperating groups. Please contact the listed

outing leader directly for more information on participating in an outing. Outings can be canceled due to weather, etc., so be sure to do a last-minute check! This list is updated every few weeks. This version of the list is as of August 26, 2000. You can visit <http://www.wvhighlands.org> for the current list. See the end of this list for more information on Mon-Athon 2000, including how you can win fabulous outdoor recreation prizes when you recreate in the Mon!

Saturday, September 30, 2000 -- "The Great Greenbrier Trail Connection," starting at Hosterman in Pocahontas County. Join Frank Proud and others from the Greenbrier River Trail Association to explore a beautiful, moderate exertion trail, for 5-7 miles. This hike will draw attention to ongoing work to connect Durbin to Cass by trail -- that is, to connect the Greenbrier River Trail with the West Fork Trail. A box lunch will be available for a modest charge. Some of this trail overlooks the radio astronomy site. There is also a beaver dam and a huge beaver pond on this trail. This is a beauty. Leader: Frank Proud, PO Box 76, Durbin WV 26264; 304-456-5469; fproud@meer.net; or see !! <<http://www.durbinoutfitters.com>>

Saturday and Sunday, October 7-8, 2000 -- Roaring Plains Overnighter, Red Creek Plains, overnight backpack trip. This trip will be a moderate level trip to some spectacular scenery, including a spot where you look

DOWN on Seneca Rocks! Contact leader Jack Slocomb to arrange to borrow a pack, sleeping bag, or tent -- if you don't have one. Campfire under the stars! Leader: Jack Slocomb, 301-777-8810; e-mail: <JSLOCOMB@prodigy>

Saturday, October 15, 2000 -- Several cool outings at the Conservancy's Fall Review, based at the Elk River Touring Center. Want to try an easy canoe trip? If there's enough water, we'll do the Elk or the Greenbrier. Rental and loaner boats available. For boating, contact Tom Rodd, 304-265-0018; or e-mail <thomasrodd@hotmail.com>. Of course, plenty of mountain biking, the Touring Center's specialty, and hiking, too. To reserve a place to stay or for a non-boating outing, contact Dave Saville, 304-284-9548; PO Box 569, Morgantown WV 26507; <daves@labs.net>

Mon-Athon 2000 is a West Virginia Highlands Conservancy project (cooperating with others) to celebrate and enjoy our wonder-full Monongahela National Forest. Mon-Athon 2000 includes all types of outdoor recreational activity -- hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, birding, hunting, boating, skiing, etc. -- in or adjoining the Monongahela National Forest Proclamation Area (green on state road maps.) Join a Mon-Athon 2000 -- everyone invited -- public outing in the Mon, like the ones listed above -- and/or report on your own private outing in the Mon. (It's easy to make an outing report at <<http://www.wvhighlands.org>>). All outing participants, public and private, will be entered in drawings for fabulous outdoor recreation prizes. We send a free MON-ATHON 2000 T-SHIRT to everyone who submits a report! (They are cool shirts!) If you're looking for a good excuse -- heck, any excuse -- to get out and enjoy an excursion in the Mon this year, we'd love to have YOU lead an outing. It's easy -- call, write, or e-mail for more information. Looking for ideas about recreational activities in your Monongahela National Forest? We can connect you with an experienced volunteer to talk about trip planning, destinations, gear, accommodations, etc. For more info, contact: Tom Rodd, c/o WVHC, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV, 25321. E-mail: <thomasrodd@hotmail.com>. Phone: 304-345-7663 (WVHC Charleston Office); 304-265-0018 (Rodd home). Or go to <<http://www.wvhighlands.org>> ❖



Brennan and Sara Zerbe, Brad Frye, Maureen O'Connell, Andrew Shoenfeld, Ruth Blackwell Rogers, Joe Collins, Carter Zerbe, Marilyn Shoenfeld, Judy Schoyer Rodd, Peter Shoenfeld -- Celebrating their ascent of Phares Knob in Pendleton County, in the heart of the Mon National Forest. Photo: Thomas Rodd

Big Prize Drawing on Oct. 15!

By Tom Rodd

The idea behind Mon-Athon 2000 was to promote outdoor recreation in the Monongahela National Forest – and to have fun! My goodness, we have succeeded both in the nicest way. For example,

what could be more fun than a bevy of Charleston beauties – like Tom Zerbe, for example – soaked to the skin in the Sinks of Gandy! Talk about your wet T-shirt contest!

Or how about a clamber to the top of North Fork Mountain with a gaggle of geologists from the National Speleological Society, to learn about Germany Valley. These caver folks (never say “spelunkers” – they just hate it) talk about 300 million years ago like it was 1956!

Anyhow, at the Conservancy’s Fall Review on October 15, 2000, at the Elk River Touring Center in Pocahontas County, during dessert we will have a drawing for fabulous prizes for folks who participated in some kind on Mon-Athon 2000 outing. We are talking cool stuff – like hiking staffs, flashlights, fanny packs, and more! You need not be present to win. So submit your Mon-Athon 2000 outing report at www.wvhighlands.org!



Hasty with Accolades!

Voice Columnist Honored by WV Press Association (Will it go to his head?)

The West Virginia Press Association, an organization of 57 of the state’s daily and weekly newspapers, this year named Highlands Voice columnist Michael Hasty a “best columnist” in the association’s annual Better Newspaper Contest. The award was announced in August.

Hasty, whose “Holy Earth!” column has been appearing in the Voice since February of last year, was cited for “Thinking Locally,” the weekly column he writes for the Hampshire Review. The Review also won a number of other prizes in its “large-circulation weekly” division.

With a circulation of 6500, the Hampshire Review is published in Romney, and is the oldest newspaper in the state. It was purchased early last century by West Virginia governor John Cornwell, whose descendants still own the paper. There is little doubt that the late governor, who called for federal troops to quell striking coal miners and established a national reputation for his anti-union views, would have looked with some disfavor on Hasty’s pro-labor populism.

Two of the three columns Hasty submitted for consideration have also appeared in the Voice. “Blackwater Biz,” whose opening line “It must feel ridiculous to be sued by a squirrel” became a cartoon caption, was reprinted in the April 99 issue. A longer adaptation of “The Drought” was published in the August 99 Voice.

In written comments accompanying the award, the judges said Hasty “explores timely issues with common sense and perception. His writing style is clear, effective and sharp.”

“Holy Earth!” will return in next month’s Highlands Voice.



The Man himself!

Note our new masthead! Many thanks to Susan Reed Design of Minneapolis who diligently and with competence made the design *pro bono* for the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. In case you may have thought I twisted my daughter’s arm to do this, guess again. She twisted MY arm to get a chance to do it!

The exploiters of West Virginia’s natural world are rich and powerful. They have no qualms about destroying our beautiful state in the name of greed. To save as much as we can of West Virginia, we need your help. Won’t you become a member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and do YOUR part to help us? Please take time right now to write your membership check and send it to us

Category	Individual	Family	Organizational
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: _____

Membership Benefits

- ★ The Highlands Voice each month
- ★ Special weekend programs held around the state -- days filled with field trips, hikes, workshops and just plain fun.
- ★ Representation through WVHC efforts to monitor legislative and agency activity
- ★ A chance to make new friends with values you share.
- ★ Knowing you are doing your part to protect West Virginia’s natural heritage.

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

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Working since 1967 to protect our lands, our waters and the rich natural heritage of West Virginia.

Canaan Cone Collecting - Part I

Or, Watch Them Thunderbolts When on Them Ladders!

(Part II of the Adventures of the dedicated Coneheads will appear in the October Highlands Voice)

By Dave Saville

We had a great, somewhat wet, bountiful, fun, enlightening weekend (July 29 & 30) in Canaan. Overall, a huge success! We had about 20 volunteer balsam fir cone gatherers on Saturday and about 12 on Sunday. We spread out with as many as eight ladders -- 4-40 foot, 1-32 foot, and 3-20 foot ladders up on the trees with climbers on each one. We collected data on each tree, tagged them, and kept cones from each stand separate. We have collected several bushels of cones from over 100 trees in 4 stands on the Canaan Valley State Park, 3 stands on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and 2 sites on private property in the Valley. Some collectors were so engaged as to stay over until Monday to pick up a couple stands we were not able to get to during the weekend.

This morning I will spread the cones out on racks to cure. In a few weeks, when they are good and dry, we will tumble them, to break them apart, then use a "windmill" to separate the seeds from the rest of the cone parts. The Natural Resource Conservation Service's Plant Materials Center in Alderson will then begin stratification of some seeds to germinate, and put the rest into storage.

All the seeds will remain the property of the land managing agency, or property owner, of where the seeds were collected. In the near future we will begin a cooperative restoration planning process with everyone involved.

The tenacious volunteers need to be thanked, not only for the success of their efforts, but also for braving frequent afternoon thunderstorms. Nobody moved so fast as the climbers scurrying down the aluminum ladders (dubbed "lightning rods") when the thunder began to roll in. There was more than enough work for the rest of us, who don't care for heights, to keep track of the data, the cones, tags and getting the ladders up into and out of the trees. We even succeeded in getting Jeff Young from West Virginia Public Radio up into a couple trees. (He aired his story on his experience on the radio a few days later).

On Saturday, Siriannis Restaurant in Davis provided some great pizzas for lunch,

including a couple of Wally's vegetarian specials. Um, Um good!! On Sunday, Laurie and Chip Chase, of the Whitegrass Ski Touring Center and Cafe fame, (well known folks to Highlands Conservancy members and Canaan Valley locals as well), hosted us for lunch at their beautiful new home. We also had mascots "Scout," the black lab, and "Belle" (Ding Ding), the Champion, and working, Bloodhound to help with the entertainment, if not the work.

From forty feet up, atop a spiring balsam tree, the view is incredible. Once over the unease caused by a shaky, swaying ladder, you could enjoy the view of the surrounding treetops and landscape. Although almost breathtaking, the splendor of the vista was somewhat dampened by the site of so many gray, dead skeletons of once lush, dense, blue-green balsam fir treetops. The extent of the devastation brought by the exotic balsam woolly adelgid is very saddening indeed. Many stands we had considered for collection were so far gone as to not have any trees left healthy enough to produce any seed. The plague seems to spread through a stand like a wave, where one portion of a stand is completely decimated, and another still healthy, and just beginning to become infested.

Our collective thoughts during the weekend seemed to lead to what seems like another logical human intervention -- protecting some of the remaining naturally existing fir trees.

The adelgid is very easily controlled by several means. Perhaps the safest, and most environmentally friendly, is by spraying the trees with dormant horticultural oil spray during the winter months. This is an insect control method long used by organic gardeners (which includes use apple orchards). The adelgid does not fly -- they live their entire lives on the host tree. In the winter, only the immature nymphs of the adelgid are present. Our next step in sub-species conservation may be to identify accessible, isolated, compact stands throughout the state, and implement a treatment program.

We will be back at our cone collecting duties on Saturday, August 19. We will meet at the Greenbrier Ranger District Headquarters in

Bartow at 8:30 AM, and proceed to Blister Run of Shavers Fork to spend the day with our ladders and burlap sacks. On Sunday August 20, The Mountain Institute's Appalachian Program will lead a team of Cone Collectors to Blister Swamp to collect cones from the few trees left there. I will be on a badly needed vacation much of the time between now and then, but do hope to check my e-mail occasionally. Anyone interested in helping on August 19, should drop me a line at <daves@labs.net> or (304) 284-9548. I'll be home on the 15th and will get back to you then. [note: this article was written prior to the August dates mentioned above.] ❀



Don Gasper beginning the ascent on the "lightning rod" Photo: Dave Saville



The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy would like to thank the following for their help, involvement and contributions to the balsam fir conservation project.

Julian Martin
Larry Morse
John Merriam
Anne Dillaman
Frank & Barb Slider
Mike & Betsy Breiding
Bill Grauer
Matt Mongin
Bill Hitt
Peter Shoenfeld
Kevin Campbell
Christopher Gatens

Gene & Betty Jean Saville
Mike Donley
Jeff Young
Scott Finn
Jim Rockis
Bob & Bobby Churby
Bobby Verbus
Lisa & John Anderson
Jeff Simmons
Don & Brett Gasper
John & Petra Wood

Mary Ann & Alex Honcharik
Katie Russell
Jane Coffman
Dale Porter
Chip & Laurie Chase
Barry Baumgartner
The Dalen Family
Bill & Emily Grafton
Dave Saville
Rob Gilligan, Superintendent,
Canaan Valley State Park

Ken Rago, Greenbrier District Ranger,
USDA Forest Service
Ken Sturm, Wildlife Biologist, Canaan
Valley National Wildlife Refuge
John Vandevender, NRCS Plant
Material Center
Canaan Valley Institute
Quarter Pine Christmas Tree Farm
Alton Byers, and Ryan & Marcie
Bidwell from The Mountain
Institute
Rod Bartgis, The Nature Conservancy

Comments from Readers on the Balsam Rescue Operation

Dear WVHC,

I read your article in the July 2000 Highlands Voice on re-establishing a viable stand of Canaan Fir in the Canaan Valley and adjacent areas. I want to help. I planned on vacationing in the Canaan Valley with my family during the last week in August. I could adjust my plans to arrive a few days earlier and help you on Aug. 19th and 20th.

Your effort is an important one. The Canaan fir is a valuable tree and should be preserved in its native environment. As you know, millions of these trees are growing in other states as the Christmas tree industry has found them to be promising. Unfortunately, most of these trees were grown from the same small seed orchard on Red Cooper's farm. The gene pool is much larger and should be sustained for future generations. I want to help "save the pieces."

Please share any particulars you may have regarding where and when to meet and what equipment you may need if any, such as extension ladders and pitch remover. I can bring some of what you may need.

Please apply my small contribution (sent separately) to this worthy effort.

Matt Mongin

Matt grows Christmas trees in Ohio +

I very much enjoyed your article on Balsam Fir var. "phanerolepis" in the July 2000 "Highlands Voice." Living as I do in northern Ohio, and with two boys to watch, I cannot assist you on the weekend of 19-20 August, but I will send in a check. Also, I am backpacking with my boys in the Seneca Creek/Spruce Knob area next week, and I will keep an eye out for Balsam. (I know it's unlikely that I'll find anything. However, I've found all sorts of unexpected things by following my boys on their adventures.)

Aldo Leopold wrote that "to keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering" in his essay "Conservation." This essay appeared in *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*, edited by Luna B. Leopold (Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1953) page 147. It was reprinted in the expanded printing of *Sand County Almanac*, namely *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* (Sierra Club/Ballantine, San Francisco, 1966) page 190.

Sincerely,

Dan Styer +

I had a great time on Saturday. Count me in for the Aug 19th "Gathering of the Coneheads"

Mike Breiding

Mike is a "naturalist extraordinaire" and a trails advocate +

Dave,

Sounds like y'all had a productive and fun weekend. We're supporting your admirable efforts as best we can. I've been following the e-mails on the subject of Wilderness collection and as you know, we're still concerned. But, I know we'll come to a mutually acceptable solution. Keep up the great work and work safely.

Chuck Myers

Chuck is the Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest +

Dave -

Thanks for the fir update. I'm glad the cone-collecting project went well. Wish I could join in, but I always work weekends in my store. The reason I am a little familiar with the firs on Black Mountain is because I spend large amounts of time up in the national forest - - I think of it as my "second home."

Eric Domboski +



Dave,

The weekend of Aug. 19-20 was a wonderful experience that I will not soon forget. It was inspiring on many levels. The land, and mountains still retain a sense of the natural processes that cannot be duplicated in an intensively managed area. I felt like I made a bunch of good friends and really enjoyed everyone's company and their shared interest in the natural world. Also I would like to give you a lot of credit for the way you crafted the partnerships on this project and made each person feel like they played an important role in preserving a beautiful tree species.

The Mountain Institute was really interesting and I had wished to hear more about their projects. It would be great to spend some more time there.

This week I will be meeting with people at the National Plant Material Center here in Greenbelt, looking at a contractual arrangement to do seed collections for them and getting ready for a new academic year here at the college.

I really hope to work with the WVHC again and am already thinking of a reason to come back to West Virginia.

Bill Grauer

Mr. Saville,

Thank you for doing so much for helping to save our forests. Keep up the good work.

Walter Bosley +

Great article in the Gazette, and great move all around!

Viv Stockman

Viv is with the Ohio Valley Coalition +

Dave,

Bill and I will help on the 19th. Daniel will probably help as well. Great Job!

Emily Grafton

Emily is the newsletter editor of the West Virginia Native Plant Society +

Good luck with the balsam project, Dave.....but a better solution would be for the DNR [West Virginia Department of Natural Resources] to stop "raising deer"!! I read somewhere that only 8% of the population hunts, and the DNR spends bunches of \$ and time increasing the deer herd that threatens the flora of West Virginia. I've not heard about the balsam, but I'm not surprised, either. About ten years ago, I heard some old-timer bemoan the fact that whole communities of wildflowers were being extirpated in the woods of WV because of deer eating every one in sight!

Jean Neely +

Noticed the article and calendar information in the Highlands Voice. I would like to be involved. Also wanted to let you know that the Mountain Retreat Lodge at Harman is open that weekend if your group would need lodging in the area. Check out our web site at <www.neumedia.net/~lmlind>

In front of the lodge is a large balsam fir which came from the Thompson farm in Canaan Valley. We would like to collect the seeds and would consider planting young balsams on the retreat property if and when available. Please advise us of how to be a part of the project.

Thanks,

Mary Beth Lind +

Hi Dave,

If you're still looking for help, me [sic] and Petra are volunteering for Saturday, July 29th. I can climb, carry and/or haul -- whatever works best. Petra won't want to climb, but I think she is game for the other options.

Please let us know where and when to meet, and what if anything besides personal items that we should bring with us. See ya!

John Wood +

More comments on page 15

A Proposal for Endorsements of Green Industries

Increasing our validity, expanding our knowledge, improving our vision, and turning a deeper shade of green through making official statements of endorsement of green industries.

By Dianne Burnham

"The Buckeye Forest Council supports and promotes the transition from heavily polluting energy sources, namely coal and nuclear power, to renewable, green energy. Wind and solar energy generators offer the best opportunities to improve environmental quality, while providing jobs and income to the areas that they serve. Ohio's rural communities can benefit from this era of deregulation by pursuing the production and sale of green energy." — from the BFC Constitution

Over the past few decades, many Americans discovered our government's and industry's thoughtless disrespect for our air, our land, our water, and our wildlife. This has triggered the formation of hundreds of grassroots organizations — people banding together to protect their land or try to save a little piece of something clean and right — a drama that has been playing out across America. These agonizing, angry, exhausting battles have been called America's "dire national story." All over America politicians and regulators have turned a deaf ear to the citizens in order to benefit corporate interest. Our innocence died when we discovered our own Uncle Sam is only responsive to big money.

After battling as individual groups we realized that forming network organizations were better able to meet the tasks on hand, e.g., Tri-State Citizens Mining Network, Citizens Coal Council, Pennsylvania Environmental Network and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. By coming together under a bigger umbrella, we were not simply improving our communication and drawing strength and courage from each other, but we were demonstrating a concern that extends beyond our own backyards. In addition to forming a pool of experience and skills, we became more fully aware of the extent of the problem. This was an important step to gain strength, personal growth, and a larger sense of responsibility.

Now, we need to go one step further to help defend our environment. As an extension of our concerns, we might become more aware of the consumer driven causes of environmental damage. In fact, there should be a special relationship between the commodity that has caused the destruction and how we view the use of it. If global warming is your focus, then fossil fuel use either in the form of gasoline or coal would be your associated consumer issue. You might even become very conscious of how much fossil fuel your family uses and take steps to reduce their use.

Consumerism is an important factor in our issues. Voting with our dollars has become as powerful as voting. To win this war we must both VOTE WISELY and PURCHASE THOUGHTFULLY. We break the bonds of corporate control over our lives, when we make conscious decisions about how we spend our money. But, when we

purchase something SIMPLY because it is cheaper, or when we discount anything that does not make a profit, we fall in line with the corporate mindset. This is the mindset that controls our lawmakers and is destroying our environment. It is our purchases that give them the profit to make those outrageous campaign contributions and hire the advertising staff to keep us convinced that we need more and more despite the fact that we already consume more than any other nation on earth in the history of the world.

Our own brand of consumerism is an important ingredient of our image. If you saw a bumper sticker that read "Think globally, act locally" on a gigantic SUV, that sucks gas and spews pollution, wouldn't you suspect the owner hadn't thought his position through and was certainly not practicing what he preached? Would you believe that his/her dedication or even his sticker very serious? The bumper sticker, the owner, and the cause would lose validity.

Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute has pointed out that we have all the technologies now to grow in ways that do not compromise our air, our water, our planet. But we must support those non-polluting green industries through our purchases. For example, if we purchased non-polluting products in recyclable containers, organic foods in-season, and clean green energy, we would be supporting the growth of environmentally sensitive industries. And, yes, they are more expensive to the consumer (about 10-20% in my experience), but I consider these decisions to be moral issues and a gift to my precious earth—a small sacrifice with great returns. Gandhi said that anything we do will seem insignificant, but it is most important that we do it.

Perhaps by now we are beginning to recognize the connection between environmental issues and consumerism and even recognize the need for validity and consistency, but currently do not have the knowledge, the energy, or the means to make any changes that would reflect our new consciousness. I propose we take this important initial step toward establishing this important connection by making an official statement of endorsement that we share with our members and each other. An endorsement could begin to get us where we need to go. There is no doubt that Americans living a sustainable lifestyle is the ultimate answer to most of our problems. Let's take a step towards that goal and increase our validity while we do it. I urge you to expand your knowledge, improve your vision, and grow into a deeper shade of green. Once we make our endorsements let's bridge that with technology and green industry.

Below is an abbreviated list of endorsement possibilities:

- ◆ Campaign Finance Reform (an endorsement of highest priority)
- ◆ Clean Green Renewable Energy
- ◆ Alternative Non-polluting Autos (Hybrids and Fuel Cell Autos)
- ◆ County wide Recycling and Composting Programs
- ◆ Organic Produce

I would add a word of caution. Start your endorsement with stated ideals as the Buckeye Forest Council has done in the opening paragraph. There are many scam companies that would have you believe they are green when in fact they are not. If you stick to wording ideals, you will avoid endorsements of any particular company until you have had time to thoroughly do your homework.

If your group has difficulty writing an official looking endorsement, check the website of Friends of the Earth at <www.foe.org> or Sierra Club at <www.sierraclub.org> and type in "endorsements" into the search engine. Many examples will appear with formats to follow. Or you may contact me at <BurnhamD@cs.com> or (304) 232-0590.

Dianne Burnham is involved with the Wheeling Environmentalists and Friends of Dysart Woods



Sayre Rodman Health

(Keep those get well cards a-comin' for Sayre! Send 'em to: 23 Crystal Drive, Oakmont, PA 15139)

"At the August meeting, we learned that Sayre had been in the hospital for several days, the proximate cause being very low blood pressure. After he came home, he fell and broke several ribs. He managed to attend the Corn roast where, with the help of pain killers, he managed to appear his usual self.

Since then, he has been to the emergency room several times and hospitalized once. He's home as I write this and in bed, and not a happy camper. He's very bored.

Visits will be appreciated."
(From the "Social Climber" of August 2000) ✦



Calendar

September 10 - Raven Rocks Community tour organized by the Wheeling Environmentalists. Tour begins at 9 AM. See details on page 16.

September 29 thru October 1 - West Virginia Environmental Council 12th Annual Convention at Appalachian Folk Life Center, Pipestem, WV. Registration \$10 (\$5 student). Tent camping \$7/night/site; dorm bunks \$12/night/person (bring linens or sleeping bags). Breakfasts for Sat & Sun \$5 each. Saturday supper is covered dish so bring something to share. Sat. lunch is on your own. Call 346-5891 for details.

September 29 - Deadline for submissions for presentations at the 24th Annual Conference of the Appalachian Studies Association to be held at Shoeshoe, Pocahontas County, WV, March 30- April 1, 2001. See details on page 16.

Saturday, September 30 - Greenbrier Trail starting at Hosterman in Pocahontas County. A box lunch will be available for a modest charge. Leader: Frank Proud,

456-5469; fproud@meer.net. See page 10 for details.

Saturday, September 30 - "A Day in the Country" a West Virginia Rivers Coalition benefit happening. Come enjoy Appalachian activities, mountain dulcimer, pony rides nature walks, fly fishing, lunch at rim rock, and wild, wonderful West Virginia.

Camp Rim Rock, Yellow Spring, WV. Joe Lovett, attorney in the MTR case, guest speaker. \$60 family, \$35 couple, \$25 individual. Call (304) 637-7201 for details.

October 7 & 8 - Roaring Plains overnight backpack trip with Jack Slocomb. For details see page 10.

October 13th, 14th, & 15th, 2000 - WVHC Fall Review (Board of Directors meeting on Sunday the 15th). Slaty Fork in Pocahontas County. See special insert giving all details in the center of this issue. ✦

Dave,

My wife and I enjoyed working with your group. Nice people all. Saturday night Trout Unlimited held their first meeting of our newest chapter in West Virginia, The Blackwater Chapter. We are always looking to shade trout streams in the area to maintain the coolest temperatures that are possible. This of course in a desire to mimic stream conditions before the logging boom when they ran shaded. Stream banks back then were stable, able to take a good rain without sediment pouring in from road ditches and their culverts.

I mentioned the work you were doing at our meeting and also read in your Conservancy newsletter that parts of Shaver Fork were being re-seeded with Red Spruce and Fir seedlings from collections made in that area. Our chapter as well as the Timberline Homeowners would like to collect cones from stands in Timberline and have them professionally raised in hopes of replanting in Timberline with 8' deer fencing. We in Timberline plan to erect around a few groves after Board approval Sept. 9th. We should be able to collect cones before then since Bruce Stennit (a member of TU and in charge of the Timberline Conservancy) expressed interest in collecting cones right away. Our Trout Unlimited would also like to plant some of these Firs in hopes of furthering the species and helping to restore stream bank conditions. These seedlings would be planted with fencing around the individual plants and placed in similar conditions to where they seem to propagate best naturally. In the future these plantings could hopefully be fully fenced off by groves also in hopes of allowing the natural reproduction to continue unharmed by the growing deer pop.

Question:

1. Is it possible accomplish some or all of these goals?

2. For your next collection date in Aug. could you come to Timberline for a day to collect? If you think you could I will be happy to scour our area for sufficient stands to make it worth our while. Let me know your views and I will send you a tree count of this area with a cone crop report included now that I know what to look for.

John Anderson

John is a member of the Annapolis, MD, Chapter of Trout Unlimited ✦

The Canaan Valley National Wildlife

Refuge was pleased to cooperate with the recent request to partner with the Highlands Conservancy and the NRCS in an effort to conserve balsam fir trees in West Virginia. Volunteers for the Highlands Conservancy spent many long hours in tall ladders collecting seeds from two locations on the Refuge. This effort will provide a safety net for the genetic stock of balsam fir trees on the refuge as they are slowly disappearing from Canaan Valley and much of West Virginia.

Between the balsam wooly adelgid and heavy deer browse pressure, balsam fir trees are facing a grim future without any intervention by land managers. The Refuge hopes that seed collected by the Highlands Conservancy can be used as replacement stock in future years for the dying trees today. This subspecies of balsam fir is unique for West Virginia and is part of the Canaan Valley's ecological heritage. The US Fish & Wildlife Service will work to protect this rare subspecies of fir to maintain the biological diversity of the Refuge and the Canaan Valley as a whole. The seed collection project is an important step to conserve this rare tree species. The Canaan Valley NWR will continue to work with partners to prevent the loss of balsam fir from West Virginia.

Ken Strum,

Ken is a Wildlife Biologist with the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge ✦

Dave,

I was glad to hear that your collection efforts of Balsam Fir cones were successful, not only at Canaan Valley State Park, but elsewhere as well.

This project is sizeable in scope and we are very appreciative of the efforts of the Highlands Conservancy, yourself and the numerous volunteers who make it work. The collection process is a difficult, time-consuming task and if it were not for the efforts of the Conservancy, we might someday not have stands of Balsam Fir for future generations to enjoy.

Thank you for your efforts. Please contact us if there is anyway we can assist.

Rob Gilligan

Rob is the Superintendent of the Canaan Valley State Park ✦

Dave,

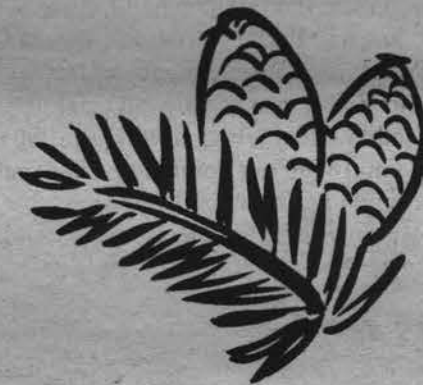
Bill Grafton told me of the Balsam Fir seed collection on the weekend of July 29 and 30 at our West Virginia Native Plant Society meeting, held this past Saturday. I'll be up to Franklin attending a dinner with the Dalen family on the evening of the 29th. I have to be back to work that Sunday at 7:00 p.m. in Mason County. So, perhaps I could volunteer a few hours on Saturday morning. Maybe at the Blister Swamp area as I've botanized in there many times over the years?

Contact me with more information.

Oh yeah. I work for American Electric Power. I may be able to get a couple dozen gloves for the seed collection. These are the leather/cloth combination type glove. Would you like for me to see if I can get them?

Steve Mace

Steve Mace is a past president of the West Virginia Native Plant Society ✦



"USA Sludge Researchers from Cornell University and the American Civil Engineers have found more than 60,000 toxic substances and chemical compounds in US sewage sludge, and report that 700 to 1000 new substances are developed every year, some of which also enter the sewage stream. These substances include PCBs, pesticides, dioxins, heavy metals, asbestos, petroleum products, and industrial solvents, many of which are linked to ailments ranging from cancer to reproductive abnormalities. They are also a threat to soils: once introduced to cropland, for example, heavy metals persist for decades (as in the case of cadmium) or even centuries (as in the case of lead)."

-- from "Recycling Organic Waste: From Urban Pollutant to Farm Resource" by Gary Gardner in Worldwatch Paper #135, August 1997.

Please Note

Proposals are due for participation in the Appalachian Studies Association 24th Annual Conference from March 30 thru April 1, 2001. **Deadline for submissions is September 29, 2000.** To submit proposals send your information to Sandra Barney, ASA Program Committee Chair; 213 Raub Hall; Department of History, Political Science, Economics and Management; Lock Haven University; Lock Haven, PA 17745 according to the following guidelines.

1) Cover sheet

Title of Presentation or activity

Identify all participants, their roles, and how to contact each (mailing and e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers)

Who you are (brief biographical sketch of each participant)

2) What you propose

One page abstract of your paper, session, panel, or activity

12 copies of abstract

3) Special needs

Audio-visual, telecommunications, sound, space, tables, and the like.

Participants presenting scholarly research papers are allowed one such presentation, but can be involved in other kinds of sessions or activities. Most sessions will last one and one-half hours. Individual presenters will be limited to 15 minutes. The *Journal of Appalachian Studies* invites you to submit scholarly papers presented at the conference for consideration.

Late or incomplete, e-mailed or faxed submissions will not be accepted.

For complete details contact Sandra Barney at (570) 893-2161, e-mail. <sbarney@eagle.lhup.edu>



Raven Rocks Tour

The Wheeling Environmentalists, are organizing a tour of the Raven Rocks Community for Sunday, Sept 10, 9AM. The Raven Rocks Community, are a group of Ohioans, who have dedicated their lives to preserve approximately 1000 acres of forest and ravine land while living sustainably. They are strongly committed to walking lightly on the earth through growing and preserving much of their own food organically, making use of passive solar mechanisms, using composting toilets and eco-friendly products. You will also see solar and wind energy being produced, visit underground construction, and demonstrations of the most energy efficient appliances. As they are beginning a fuel cell project, you will get to observe some of the fuel cell principles and hear explanations of how these exciting technologies work. The Raven Rocks Community has been featured by Malcolm Wells in his book, *Recovering America*.

One final note of interest, their property is in the middle of a huge long wall mining permit application in Belmont County. While they are opposed to the damage of the current coal mining techniques, they are even more opposed to the use of fossil fuel and have spent their lives finding alternatives. They have an interesting point of view to share.

The tour will begin at 9 AM and end at noon for a bag lunch and discussion (please plan to bring your own bag lunch). Raven Rocks is located about 40 minutes from Wheeling, WV in Belmont County, Ohio very near Beallsville. Carpooling from Wheeling can be arranged. If you are interested in the tour, contact Dianne Burnham at [HYPERLINK mailto:BurnhamD@cs.com](mailto:BurnhamD@cs.com) BurnhamD@cs.com or 304-232-0590 (evening and weekend) for more information and directions. Maps will be sent upon request.



What's Inside

- Page 1 ... Frank Young – two articles on wind power
- Page 2 ... Young column “Conservancy’s Committees Do Us Proud”// roster
- Page 3 ... Fetty – Mining and power company threat to rivers
- Page 4 ... Cutler – 1968 beginning of the WVHC, a personal account
- Page 5 ... Ward – Mine rule change gets little attention// Fischer – BWSP in danger
- Page 6 ... Slocumb essay, “The Weedy Kingdom Come”
- Page 10 .. Mon-Athon 2000 hikes
- Page 11 .. Prize drawing// Hasty award// new masthead// enrolment form
- Page 12 .. Saville “Canaan cone collecting”
- Page 13 .. Comments on balsam operation
- Page 14 .. Burnham – proposal on green industries// Rodman health
- Page 15 .. Calendar
- Page 16 .. Notice of deadline for presenters at App. Studies Prog. Conf// Raven rocks Tour// Guidebook ordering form

The New Mon Forest Hiking Guide

The New Improved Edition of the Conservancy's Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, by Alan deHart and Bruce Sundquist. All new photos, a number of new trails, an updated format, and more!

To order : Send \$12.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping to Conservancy Administrative

Assistant Dave Saville, at PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. For multiple copies, call Dave at 304-594-2276 for a shipping price. You can also pay with a credit card.

Please charge my Mastercard Visa.

Cardholders Name _____

card number _____ Expiration date _____