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Now More Than Ever, the Mon Needs Your Help

DRAFT PLAN FOR MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST HITS THE STREETS

This month is the launch of one of the biggest conservation efforts in the history of West Virginia to help protect the Monongahela National Forest and we need your help

After years of speculation and endless hours of debate the U.S. Forest Service is expected to come out with its revised management plan for the Monongahela National Forest this month – in fact, by the time you read this the plan will likely have already been announced. Once this draft plan is released, the public will have only 90 days to submit comments. We hope you will take the time to comment and inform your friends and neighbors about this important issue and encourage them to let their voices be heard.

This issue of the *Highlands Voice* is focused on the Forest Service's draft Management Plan and our efforts to launch one of the largest conservation efforts in the state's history. There are articles analyzing the Forest Plan, the plan's impact on wilderness and the wilderness proposal and other special places and values we cherish, a history of forest planning on the Mon, and numerous articles on all the outreach efforts we will be launching in the coming weeks and months.



This ambitious conservation campaign will not be an easy goal to reach. Forest planning nationwide started right here on the Mon thanks in part to concerned West Virginians. In the last round of planning, in the mid 80's, conservationists generated an enormous public outcry. In what became the largest public response to any forest plan in the eastern U.S., and one of the largest in the nation, almost 4000 substantive comments were generated in support of protecting the Mon as a refuge for wildlands, backcountry recreation and wildlife habitat and nearly 18,000 signatures in support of protecting the Mon were sent to the Forest Service in Elkins. *Over 90% of those comments were from West Virginians.*

With your help and the help of other concerned West Virginians we hope to eclipse this record and let the Forest Service and our lawmakers know that West Virginians want to continue our proud history and protect the Mon as we did nearly two decades ago.

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From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

Keeping Lights On the DEP

The rescinded permit for a new coal storage silo near Marsh Fork Elementary School in Boone County was a well-publicized embarrassment for the Department of Environmental Protection.

According to the official press release, "When DEP discovered discrepancies between the permit maps and the permit boundaries, it immediately suspended the permit, halting construction on the silo." Sounds like speedy action based on thorough research! So why was the agency embarrassed?

The inconsistent maps were found in DEP's own files, but it wasn't the agency that "discovered" them. Credit for that goes to Ken Ward, Jr., of the Charleston Gazette. He dug out the maps and asked the questions that led the agency to withdraw the permit.

The Marsh Fork case, which involves much more than bogus maps, had been a focus of Mountain Justice Summer and a long-running concern of Coal River Mountain Watch and allied groups including the Highlands Conservancy. Local residents and their friends were willing to go to jail or sit on the Capitol steps as long as it took to get the attention of the Governor, the agency, the news media, and the public. To use Big Coal's slogan, they "kept the lights on." Good reporting followed.

Still, most permits slide through in the dark.

One we have been watching shows the effects and the limits of public attention. Over the past year, Shavers Fork Coalition and Bowden-Faulkner Citizens Protective Response have actively opposed a new quarry above the river just east of Elkins. When that effort began, DEP had basically declared its work done and advertised the public comment period. Since then:

- As in the Marsh Fork case, the department had to rescind a permit, conceding that relevant and necessary data had not been obtained.
- The department used coal mining rules instead of quarry rules to figure the bond for mitigation and compensation. Opponents discovered that the company's bond was less than one-fifth the amount required by law.
- Although it agreed to hold a rare public hearing on the Section 401 water quality permit, the department left the meeting room's main doors locked and sent staff who were unprepared. At the make-up hearing, officials could not answer relevant questions because the final drainage plan was unavailable.
- On appeal of the quarry permit, the agency's testimony before the Quarry Board was inconsistent with the post-mining reclamation plan filed by the company. Those differences still haven't been reconciled.
- On the crucial issue of damage to nearby springs used as a water source by the public and the Bowden Fish Hatchery, the department has resisted dye testing, the best means to discover connections between the quarry zone and the springs. The karst terrain of Pond Lick Mountain is riddled with underground streams. First, the department claimed there was no opening where the dye could be introduced. Later, it found two appropriate places but said it would not do the test anyway.

More recently, the Division of Natural Resources, which owns the fish hatchery, has agreed with quarry opponents that dye testing should be done.

Under this scrutiny, the DEP has had to demand from the company page after page of corrections. It's not business as usual. Last December, Randy Moore, who was in charge of the permit review at the Philippi office, sent an email to Scott Eggerud, who wanted further corrections to the post-mining land use plan. Moore wrote, "J.F. Allen [the company] has been through a lot and may not be real receptive to corrections . . ." Eggerud dropped his request.

Just in case you thought the DEP was unsympathetic.

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CITIZENS RALLY AGAINST MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL STRIP MINING

It was a mixture of religion, oratory, singing and street theater as several hundred Friends of the Mountains gathered at the West Virginia State Capitol in a rally against mountaintop removal strip mining. Friends of the Mountains is a coalition environmental and community groups, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, working to end mountaintop removal.

The religion and a goodly measure of the oratory came from The Rev. Jim Lewis. The reverend Mr. Lewis offered the crowd oratory against mountaintop removal freely larded with Biblical references reminding the crowd of our duty to protect the earth and the folly of a society based upon

greed. There were also testimonials, statements by people from the coal fields who told what mountaintop removal mining had done to them and their homes.

The serious stuff was interspersed with fun, but fun with a message. The cheers of the Radical Cheer Leaders who specialized in anti-industry chants and humor at the coal industry's expense got the crowd going. There were singers and songwriters.

There was also a mock beauty contest. Contestants dressed themselves as aspects of the coal industry—Miss Overweight Coal Truck,

Miss Sludge Pond, etc.—and strutted for the crowd.

Among those milling about was Vivian Stockman of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. She was dressed up as “King Coal” in a dark suit and top hat festooned with stickers that mocked coal companies. She carried a marionette puppet in the likeness of Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Stephanie Timmermeyer, whose agency is in charge of the regulating mining. A sign on the puppet read, “I Obey King Coal.”



Dave Saville, Peter Shoenfeld, Hugh Rogers, Ruth Rogers and lots of other people at the anti-mountaintop removal rally. Photo by George Beetham, Jr.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as a tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Its bylaws describe its purpose:

The purposes of the Conservancy shall be to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation—including both preservation and wise use—and appreciation of the natural resources of West Virginia and the Nation, and especially of the Highlands Region of West Virginia, for the cultural, social, educational, physical, health, spiritual, and economic benefit of present and future generations of West Virginians and Americans.

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The *Highlands Voice* is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer use 100% post consumer recycled paper when available.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy web page is www.wvhighlands.org.

MINING MATTERS**THE FEDERAL OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING CALLS FOR A STUDY OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE STREAM BUFFER ZONE RULE**

By Cindy Rank

Background

The stream buffer zone rule was at the heart of major litigation on behalf of West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and coal field residents that challenged mountaintop removal coal mining in the late 1990's. The rule says that there can be mining within one hundred feet of a stream only in very limited circumstances. Lawyers for citizens have argued that if mining within one hundred feet of a stream is prohibited, mining in the stream by filling it must be illegal as well.

Conflicting interpretations of the rule have been a lingering threat to the communities near the mining operations and to the coal industry as well. State and federal agencies have basically overlooked the rule and allowed valley fills in perennial and intermittent streams. Lawyers for citizen groups continue to

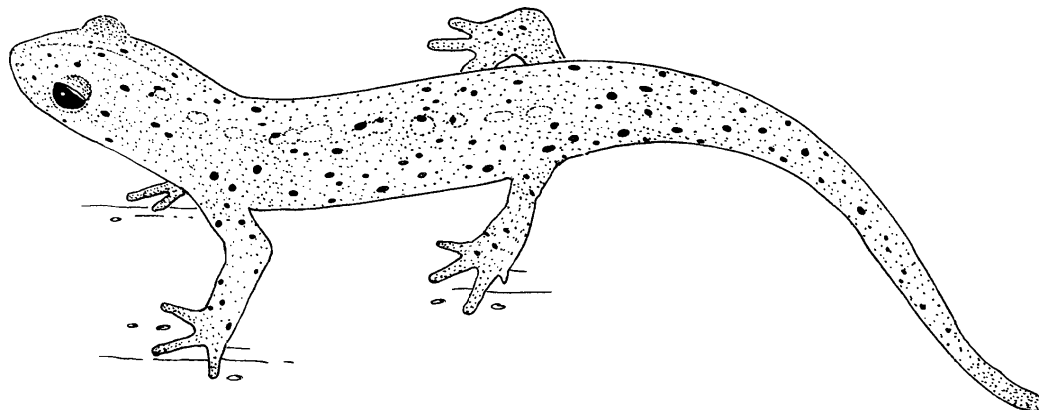
interpret the rule as banning those fills. Because of this conflict, the Bush Administration has taken action to change the rule – to bring it in line with past state and federal agency interpretations.

Last year many citizens and groups submitted comments on the Bush Administration's proposed change. Recently, however, the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) determined it couldn't make the proposed change without preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) related to the proposed change. Federal law requires federal agencies to prepare a detailed environmental statement regarding all "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. . . ." The move to prepare an EIS is an important change from OSM's past stance that the rule change was merely a clarification of the existing rule. In preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, the Office of Surface Mining has admitted the change will significantly affect that environment.

We are now early in the EIS process. OSM's first task is to determine the "scope" of the EIS. Federal law requires an early and open process to determine the issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the rule change. In this phase it is most important to comment on two things 1) on issues related to valley fills that you would like to see addressed in the EIS and 2) on possible alternatives to what OSM has proposed. We will have another opportunity to comment on the change once a draft EIS is prepared. Below are some basic points you may want to include in your comments.

Preliminary considerations:

- OSM's decision to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) is an admission that proposed changes to the stream buffer zone rule would have significant adverse effects on the environment despite prior claims by OSM that the



- proposed changes were just clarifications. At a minimum the proposed Stream Buffer Zone Rule should be withdrawn and the existing Stream Buffer Zone Rule should be enforced. (Federal Court decisions by the late Judge Haden in two similar legal actions brought in WV and KY clearly state that valley fills extended beyond the uppermost reaches of streams violate federal law.)
- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must also consider alternatives for strengthening the Stream Buffer Zone Rule because the mountaintop removal draft EIS shows significant degradation of streams downstream from valley fills.
- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must consider the cumulative environmental impacts of valley fills including but not limited to water quality, overall watershed physical, biological and chemical health, terrestrial impacts including deforestation and impacts on interior forest bird species such as the Cerulean Warbler, and air quality impacts and toxic run off caused by the burning of coal.
- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must assess the impacts of increased selenium downstream from valley fills by commissioning in-depth biological and chemical studies in areas high in selenium.

- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must fully analyze the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of mitigation approved by the Army Corps of Engineers to offset harm caused by valley fills.
- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must analyze the need for new biological water quality standards and monitoring to help protect against adverse downstream impacts of valley fills.
- The Stream Buffer Zone Environmental Impact Statement must analyze the socio-economic and cultural importance of maintaining stream buffer zones.

Why is this so important ?

Taking apart whole mountains hundreds of feet deep – as is done at mountaintop removal and steep slope mining operations across southern West Virginia and neighboring areas of Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee – is possible only if millions of tons of waste rock can be dumped into the rich stream valleys below. The larger these fills, the larger and deeper the mining. The larger the operation, the larger and more severe is the impact on the water, forest and human resources where mining is taking place. Had the Stream Buffer Zone Rule been enforced a major portion of the devastation that has occurred across the region would not have happened. A proper and thorough EIS should promote enforcement of the current rule and prevent the enactment of a change that threatens to legitimize the destruction of thousands more miles of headwater streams, hundreds more square miles of hardwood forest and untold greater numbers of communities.

Send written scoping comments by 4 pm eastern time, August 15, 2005 to:

"EIS Scoping SBZ Rulemaking Comments"
c/o OSM Appalachian Region 3
3 Parkway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Or email your written comments to: SBZ-EIS@osmre.gov

HIGHLAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA, SUPERVISORS APPROVE WINDFARM

By a 2-1 vote the Highland County, Virginia, supervisors have granted a permit for 22 electric-generating wind turbines atop Allegheny Mountain. The decision cited a bigger tax base, more jobs, no pollution and no damage to tourism or nearby properties.

Opponents of the windfarm had contended that the presence of the 400 foot turbines would damage the rural environment or the mountain beauty that are Highland County's most valuable and cherished assets - by tourists and as well as many landowners. They also contended that the windfarm would diminish property values. Wind-turbine projects elsewhere have inflicted documented harm on bird, bat and other wildlife populations.

A larger issue is the exploitation of Highland County in the name of meeting the nation's energy needs. Wind energy is not the "free lunch" that many (including the Supervisors) argue it is. All industrialization has a social cost, including building windmills in Highland County. Opponents of the wind farm contend that the Supervisors' decision allows large commercial interests to impose these costs upon the citizens of Highland County.

Legal action challenging the Supervisors' decision is anticipated.

WINDFARM IN GREENBRIER COUNTY?

Beech Ridge Wind Farm has announced it will bring a "\$200 million state-of-the-art wind energy project" to Greenbrier County. The project will create 200 megawatts of electricity from large wind turbines. The Beech Ridge Wind Farm expects to initially create approximately 200 jobs during the construction phase of between 50 to 133 wind turbine generators and 20 full-time jobs after completion.

The turbines are expected to reach up to 495 feet high with the average height being about 400 feet. They will have blade lengths up to 165 feet across.

The turbines will be constructed on mountain ridges owned primarily by Mead Westvaco. The 15-mile stretch of ridge lines in the northwestern section of the county include Beech Ridge, Big Ridge, Ellis Knob, Old Field, Nunly Mountain, Rockcamp Ridge, Shellcamp Ridge and parts of Cold Knob.

Invenergy, the developer of the project, expects to submit an application to the West Virginia Public Service Commission this fall. If approved, construction could begin as soon as next summer and be completed by winter of 2006.

Peter Shoenfeld, chair of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Wind Energy Committee, has visited the proposed site. He reports that the site is remote and is on land that has been significantly abused by mining and timbering in the past. He does not know if there is local support or opposition to the project. Presumably this project would share the difficulty of massive bat kills that has plagued other windfarms. There is no indication that Invenergy has been able to solve this problem any better than have other developers of wind energy in West Virginia.

For more information on the Highland Wind Project Approval go to:

Article: <http://therecorderonline.com/news/181/wind-permit-approved>

Perspective: <http://www.therecorderonline.com/index.php?id=179>

Editorial: <http://therecorderonline.com/opinion/176/sold-out-but-not-for-sale>

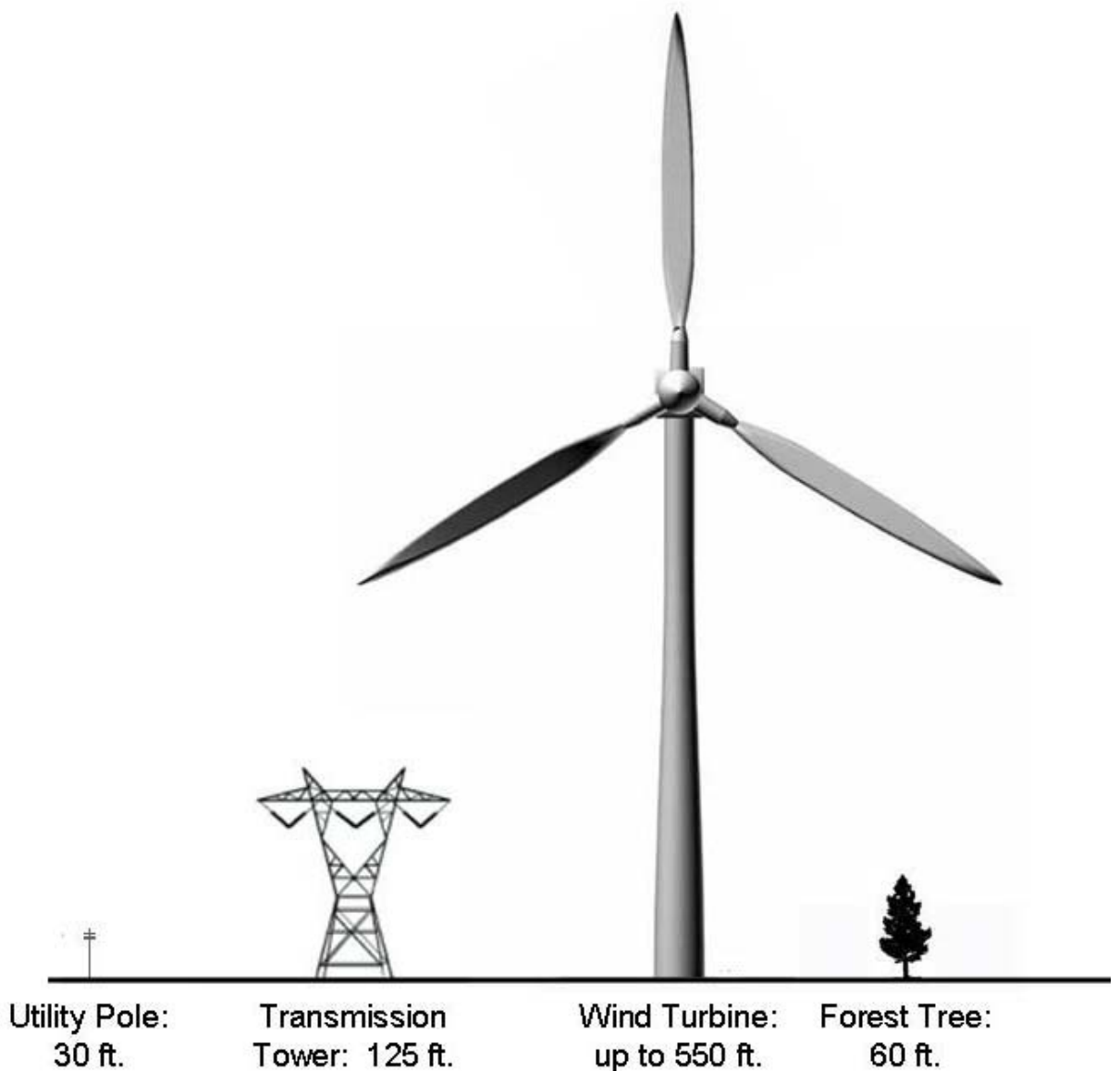
Anti Letter: <http://therecorderonline.com/opinion/175/first-do-no-harm-forgotten-by-highland-board>

Pro Letter: <http://therecorderonline.com/opinion/174/supervisors-based-vote-on-whats-best>

BIG SUCKERS!

This is a diagram of a wind turbine and some other tall stuff. It is offered only to show perspective and does not represent any particular tree, wind turbine, etc. It also shows the newer model 550 foot turbines. The ones which have been installed to date are about four hundred feet tall.

Thanks to Rick Webb for forwarding this drawing although he did not originally prepare it.



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By John McFerrin

It was a Board meeting full of issue updates and housekeeping spiced up with a discussion of when it is appropriate for the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to give awards.

In issue updates, President Hugh told us about the continuing attempt by Allegheny Wood Products to convert what had been a hiking trail in Blackwater Canyon into a haul road. The Forest Service owns part of the road/trail and is going to do a full Environmental Impact Study on the effects of this conversion. Before they begin, they have to figure out what they are going to study (known as the scoping process). We, along with the Wilderness Society have made comments with suggestions of things the Forest Service ought to look at.

Cindy reported on what is known as the buffer zone rule. The law prohibits mining within 100 feet of a stream. We had always assumed that if you can't mine within 100 feet of a stream you can't fill it in either. Now the Office of Surface Mining wants to "clarify" the rule right out of existence. Before they can do that they area going to do an Environmental Impact Study on the effects of this "clarification." They are not taking suggestions on what all they should study as part of this Environmental Impact Study.

Dave reported on the long anticipated draft management plan for the Monongahela National Forest which is coming out very soon. We are loaded for bear. The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition (the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and the Sierra Club–West Virginia Chapter) has done all sorts of analysis of the draft plan, etc. and has suggestions on how people can get involved.

Peter Shoenfeld reported on the status of the various wind energy projects in West Virginia, including his visit to Trout, West Virginia, to check out a proposed site. It sounds as if these are not turning out to be the gold mine that their developers may have hoped for. Some may be moving forward as ideas but nobody seems willing to pony up the money to actually build any more.

Bat mortality is still a problem. There has been research done and nobody can figure out how to keep bats from getting killed other than turning off the windmills. The developers are not too keen on this idea. Peter also reports that Trout, W.Va. is not visible with the naked eye; a visitor must verify with a resident that he has actually reached Trout.

The Board considered and approved a plan for spending money we got from the estate of Drew Forrester. We are going to divide some of it among the work of the Public Lands, Mining, Wind Energy, and Outreach committees. We are going to put some in reserve for the next printing of the Hiking Guide and dedicate some to provide a reserve to meet our regular expenses. While we would not anticipate spending that reserve, we can't keep spending as close to the financial edge without our treasurer tearing his hair out, a result we wish to avoid.

The Board also passed a resolution that we could not give any awards without the authorization of the Board. While the resolution passed, its consideration sparked a lively discussion on the circumstances under which an award would be appropriate. Some thought that awards were never appropriate since there would always be people doing valuable work who did not get an award. Others thought that awards get to be a habit and that we will start giving them to anybody

At a break from the meeting to attend the anti-mountaintop removal rally, President Hugh Rogers and Board Member for the Day Ruth Rogers speak with an innocent bystander while



have been in the business of giving based upon awards to political leaders public lives to advance our interest which we would vigorously disagree. It could distinguish among positions or that our recognition for service in led or endorsed actions in other ar-

Still in Need of Something to Read

Shirley Louise Stewart Burns has successfully defended her F studies at West Virginia University. The dissertation, "Bringing Down the Mountains: the Impact of Mountaintop Removal Surface Coal Mining on Southern West Virginia Communities, 1970-2004." , is available for download at the following link:https://etd.wvu.edu/etd/controller.jsp?moduleName=documentdata&jsp_etdId=4047

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Membership categories (circle one)

| | <u>Individual</u> | <u>Family</u> | <u>Org</u> |
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| Senior | \$15 | | |
| Student/ | \$15 | | |
| Introductory/ | | | |
| Other | \$15 | | |
| Regular | \$25 | \$35 | \$50 |
| Associate | \$50 | \$75 | \$100 |
| Sustaining | \$100 | \$150 | \$200 |
| Patron | \$250 | \$250 | \$500 |
| Mountaineer | \$500 | \$750 | \$1,000 |

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West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Working to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful!

MORE ABOUT PLANNING IN MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST (Continued from p. 1)

This planning process and comment period is deeply important because the Forest Service will be evaluating all potential uses of the land, including wilderness. While we have yet to learn all the specific details of each alternative, nor the Forest Service's preferred alternative, it is clear that only draft Alternative #3, which recommends 11 new Wilderness areas, would enable protection of a significant amount of the Mon's remaining wild lands. Other alternatives would open up many of these special roadless areas and other important backcountry areas, protected in the current plan, to logging and road building. Overall, the plan would also fall short of adequately protecting the Mon's wonderful rivers and streams, and the drinking water and fisheries they provide our state, and leave many communities more prone to flooding.

This new plan and its impact on special landscapes in the forest is an important issue that affects us all. America's public lands are there for everyone to enjoy, and millions of

people visit our wilderness areas each year to hike, hunt, fish, camp, and explore. In fact, a new study released last week by the West Virginia Department of Tourism showed that the travel industry in West Virginia is a growing sector of our state's economy, bringing in \$3.4 billion in 2004 alone. Most notably, the study reports an 11.4% growth rate in this industry *each year since 2000*.

Unparalleled outdoor recreation found in the Mon's beautiful wild lands plays an important role in ensuring a stable economy for our communities. In addition to recreation dollars, tourists support related industries, from hotels and restaurants to transportation, arts and entertainment. Last year alone, visitors directly supported more than 40,000 jobs with earnings above \$760 million, and this number is growing.

The Mon is also called "the birthplace of rivers." Among the fForest's rivers are the Potomac, Cheat, Greenbrier, Gauley, and the Elk. Protecting the Mon will safeguard the

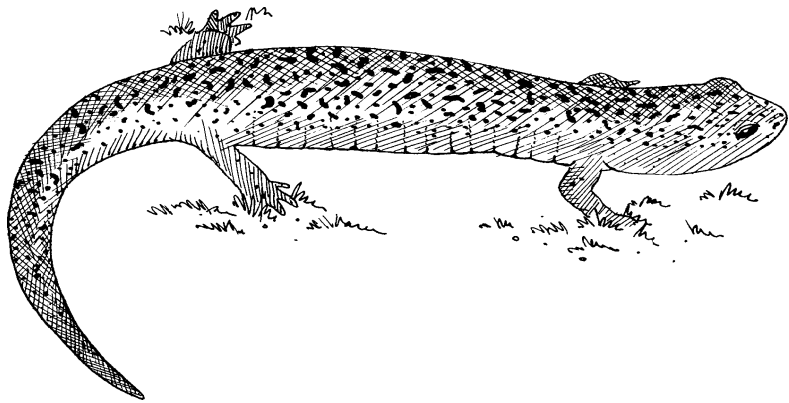
headwaters of these and other important streams and rivers and provide clean drinking water for local communities including Richwood, Lewisburg, Craigsville, Marlinton, Webster Springs, Parsons, Rowlesburg, and many other West Virginia towns whose drinking water flows from within the fForest. And equally important, protecting the Mon's forest canopy and soils, these same communities will be better protected from flooding.

We hope that you will join our efforts to create the largest conservation effort in the history of West Virginia. Please read through this issue of the *Highlands Voice* to find out how you and your friends and family can help. This effort is about more than a simple forest plan – it's about our way-of-life, our local economies and our future. Please join the effort and help us protect the Mon for the next two decades and beyond.

THE FIGHT OVER FEDERAL JUDGES: SHOULD WE CARE?

Commentary by John McFerrin

Do we have a dog in this fight? For months the news has been full of wrangling over the appointments of federal judges. There have been all the usual suspects: discussions of filibusters, threats, posturing, etc. Senators have been scrapping about the tradition of the Senate, the role of the



Senate in approving judicial nominees, and even the rights of a minority party in a democracy.

It is widely assumed that the real fight is about gay marriage, abortion, the Ten Commandments, prayer in schools, civil liberties, affirmative action, the rights of the accused, etc.—all those volatile social issues that get people all riled up.

Since the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy doesn't deal with that kind of issue, at first glance it appears that our organization has only a passing interest in the controversy. While many of our members may feel passionately about posting the Ten Commandments, civil liberties, etc., as an institution we appear to have little at stake in this particular controversy.

Literally speaking, we don't have a dog in this fight. We do, however, have a snail, a salamander, and a couple of bats. What is at stake is the future of the Endangered Species Act.

The United States was originally just that, a collection of sovereign states that was more or less united. Unlike today, when states are often little more than administrative divisions of the federal government, the states were genuine sovereigns with real powers. The federal government was supposed to do only such things as provide for the common defense that states couldn't very well do on their own.

The United States Constitution reflects this thinking. It lists the things that the federal government could do and assumes states would do everything else. The federal government could deliver the mail, declare war, issue patents, and do some other listed things. If anything else got done, state or local government would have to do it.

The death knell of limited federal power came in the early part of the twentieth century when Congress discovered that one of its powers was regulating "commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States."

The evil that the founders intended to prevent was states charging tariffs when goods were imported from one state to another. The founders didn't want the states to develop a system of trade restrictions that would hamper trade among states. There were some other things as well but Congress got to regulate interstate commerce largely because the founders didn't want states to get in the business of restricting trade.

In the early part of the twentieth century, Congress began asserting that this "commerce clause" justified all manner of laws as regulating interstate commerce. It is still routine for Congress to put in the text of statutes a finding that whatever it wants to do is authorized as a regulation of interstate commerce.

Such findings have become so routine over the last century that for the most part nobody even questions whether something Congress wants to do really is a regulation of interstate commerce or if this is the kind of regulation that the founders included in the designation of Congress's authority.

But what if somebody did? What if federal courts started dusting off the commerce clause and asking if the laws coming before it really had anything to do with interstate commerce?

To lawyers this sounds far fetched. In Constitutional law classes in law school, we pause at the commerce clause, learn that there was this controversy, learn that it was resolved, and go on. We don't routinely consider whether Congressional statutes that are supposed to regulate interstate commerce actually do.

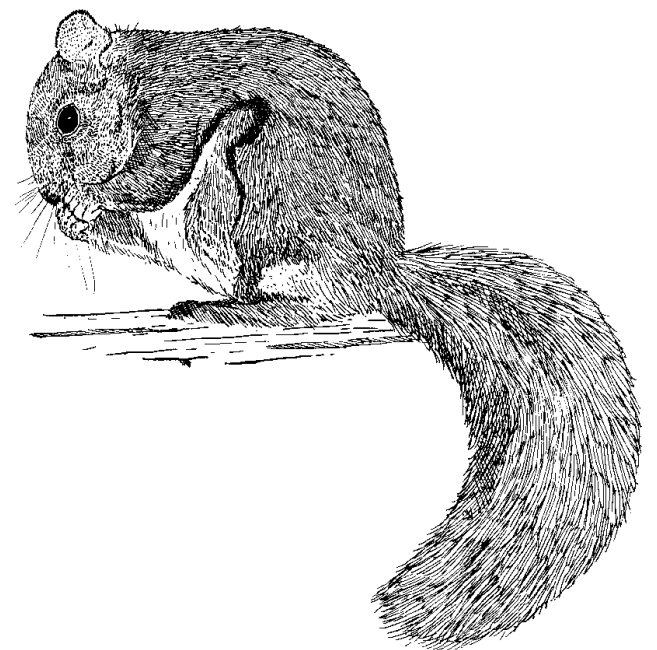
But the idea that such statutes as the Endangered Species Act are unconstitutional is not so far fetched as it seems. Within the last decade the United States Supreme Court has decided that Congress could not regulate possession of guns near a school because it did not affect interstate commerce. Neither the defendant nor anyone else involved in the case was involved in a commercial transaction and there was nothing to indicate that taking a gun to school affected interstate commerce one way or the other.

Once the Courts start doing that, is it really that hard to imagine questioning whether protecting endangered species is a regulation of interstate commerce?

Endangered species most often get to be endangered species because they have specialized habitat needs. When their habitats are eaten away and they are pushed back to smaller and smaller areas, their survival is threatened and they end up as endangered species. For some the habitat is so specialized that it only exists at a few isolated spots in a few states.

We may all understand about the web of life, that when any species becomes extinct it affects all. But is this "commerce" in the Constitutional sense of the term? Does the continued existence of a salamander whose entire life is spent within a yard or two of where he was born affect interstate commerce?

In the federal courts as they existed for most of the last century, these connections to interstate commerce would be enough. In some general way the continued existence of isolated species affects interstate commerce sufficiently to allow Congress to regulate it.



If we had a new crop of judges, would that still be true? Were we to have a crop of judges who were hostile either to federal power in general or the restriction on development that can result from the Endangered Species Act, would it still be true? And do we have a dog in this fight?

Editor's Note: This was written and submitted before President Bush nominated John Roberts to a position as a justice of the United States Supreme Court. While his representation of large corporate interest, including defending the legality of mountaintop removal mining has given some pause, there is nothing to indicate that the Endangered Species Act is any safer now than before he was nominated. Even were he neutral on the question, President Bush will still have many more opportunities to nominate judges to lower federal courts.

A PLEA FOR MORE WILDERNESS

By Don Gasper

There are about fifteen new Wilderness Areas proposed for the Monongahela National Forest. This is truly a watershed moment in the recovery of this forest because if these areas become congressionally protected Wilderness Areas they will be little disturbed and become more and more anchors of ecological integrity. In West Virginia, designated Wilderness Areas can only be created on this forest. They are distributed throughout this forest and the Monongahela everywhere will resonate wild and big, unlike other lesser forests.

The fifteen proposals are distributed in virtually every land-type, every geology, every elevation, and vary in precipitation from 60 to 35 inches. These would be ideal areas to study recovery in undisturbed watersheds. Note also that these nearly roadless areas today are so much smaller than the areas that became Wilderness Areas twenty years ago. Today the big areas are roaded, and our opportunity has been considerably diminished. We have seen an enormous amount of road building and forest fragmentation in the last twenty years. Imagine what will be left twenty years from now if we do not reserve these remaining areas now.

We have to consider the desired future condition of This Forest - now. Our young people, the next generation, will have little opportunity left for Wilderness. This decision will not only show what we think of This Forest, but what we think of ourselves. Are we foresighted and caring enough to reverse watershed management than has resulted in so much roading?

This Forest can become so much different than other lesser forests. Its influence

would be extended in every respect. It is more likely to be recovering while all others are being diminished - settled or roaded and logged.

We are learning how fragile this recovery is. About half the soils on the Monongahela

future nearly all of them may be restricted to the Monongahela National Forest, and even here, restricted further to the undisturbed watersheds of these Wilderness Areas. If now citizens supported this Wilderness proposal, as



Dolly Sods North
Photo by
Jonathan Jessup

are so deficient in nutrients that contemplated harvests can not be allowed. Our best water quality comes from undisturbed watersheds. Native Brook Trout requires undisturbed watersheds. Their eggs must spend the entire winter under the stream gravel. They are easily smothered then by accumulating sediment from just a few muddy water events. (All other fish eggs hatch in a couple of weeks in summer.) Today over 80% of West Virginia's Brook Trout populations find refuge on This Forest. In the

these areas recovered, these Brook Trout populations should become better and better and become strongholds in West Virginia's high Mid-Appalachians - though they disappear elsewhere in the state.

This should be recognized today as one of the prime purposes of the Monongahela National Forest. Citizens should speak now, to all, for all of these proposed Wildernesses.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get a free **I (heart) Mountains** bumper sticker(s), send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314

BROCHURES

The Sierra Club, Citizens Coal Council, Coal River Mountain Watch, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Appalachian Focus(Kentucky), Big Sandy Environmental Coalition(Kentucky), Kentuckians For The Commonwealth and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy have put together a new brochure entitled "Mountaintop Removal Destroys Our Homeplace STOP THE DEVASTATION!" For a copy send a self addressed stamped envelope to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314.

Quantities are available for teachers, civic and religious groups and anyone who can get them distributed.

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE !!!!!

Does your school, church or civic group need a speaker or program presentation on a variety of environmental issues? Contact Julian Martin 1525 Hampton road, Charleston WV 25314 or imaginemew@aol.com or 304-342-8989.

OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

By Eric Shereda

With ominous clouds and rain, our intrepid group of nine set out over Memorial Day Weekend to explore some of the hidden treasures of Otter Creek Wilderness. The group comprised of a mix of people mostly from the DC area but also from Pittsburgh and Clarksburg as well as Wheeling. We set out in the rain from Condon Run trailhead for the Yellow Creek Bog. Upon arrival we stashed our packs and set out exploring. Since it was still raining, we headed down the old Baker Sods



Hard-won overlook. Yellow Creek Bog below. No human impact seen from this location.

Trail that runs along the Little Black Fork. Along the way, we identified several types of flowers and trees. After a short ways, we stopped to enjoy the small waterfall. We decided to turn around as the weather was starting to clear and since the trail had significant washouts.

By the time we got to camp and grabbed a bite, the sun was starting to peek through. Because of our good fortune, we decided to tackle the hard-fought overlook that our group found last year. The uphill approach was much easier this year since I now know the back way to the top. However, the last 200 feet to the overlook still takes about a half an hour to squirm though. But WOW! What a view. I still believe that this is one of the few spots in West Virginia where the impact of man cannot be readily seen. We spent a good bit of time soaking up the view and enjoying the sun and cool temperatures from this vantage point before heading back to camp before the rain hit us again.

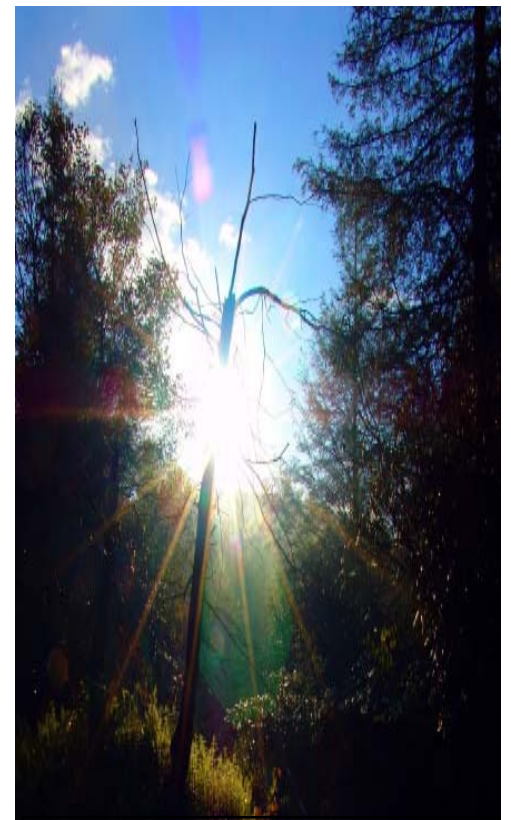
The next day, we headed up and over McGowan Mountain. While on top of McGowan, we found another overlook that I was unaware of. It is near the location of some sort of research area. There were several large birdhouses, tree id/survey tags and tons of colored flagging. If anyone knows what was or is being studied here, please contact me. The spot we found looks west over a good portion of the Shavers Fork Drainage. There is very little human impact to be seen from this spot as well.

From the vista we descended to Moore Run and followed it to the large bog to explore and have lunch. This old bog is very slowly starting to recover from the beaver that created it. Most of the beaver dams are now broken and do not hold any water back. A few old beaver lodges even peek from beneath hay-scented fern. With the clouds and blue

sky, this was a perfect spot for lunch as well as for pictures.

After lunch we continued on Moore Run Trail towards our intended campsite near the mouth of Devil's Gulch. We set up camp quickly and forded Otter Creek to go see the large falls on Otter Creek before dark. We spent some time relaxing at the falls before heading back for a peaceful evening at camp.

On Memorial Day, we broke camp and headed up Otter Creek Trail to complete our adventure. Along the way, we ran across a group of re-enactors dressed in gear authentic to the late 1700's. I couldn't believe that they were doing the same trails as us with only moccasins. They did confide in me that their feet were killing them. We got back to the car early as planned so we could beat the holiday traffic. Once again, I am amazed at the beauty and splendor of the Otter Creek Wilderness and am eager to explore and learn of additional hidden treasures. If you know of any other vistas, waterfalls or other interesting locations within the wilderness, please contact me at backpacker@1st.net. Hope to see you on my next trip to Otter Creek.



Sunrise in Yellow Creek



Overlook from McGowan Mountain. Little human impact from this spot.

ROARING PLAINS AND CANYON RIM BACKPACK

By Eric Shereda

For the July 4th Holiday Weekend, seven other intrepid adventurers and I set out to explore the Roaring Plains and the Rim of Long Run. As with my Otter Creek Hike, people from the DC and Pittsburgh areas joined up with Wheeling, Clarksburg and a couple from Columbus. The forecast for the weekend was perfect. No rain, lower humidity and not too hot; all too important when exposed and above 4000' for much of the trip. The only downside was how dry it had been. Good water sources would be a premium this weekend.

We set out from the upper South Prong Trailhead on Saturday with a goal to reach the south-eastern point of the Canyon Rim. There were several types of wildflowers blooming along the boggy area near the trailhead including Cranberry and Sundew. About a mile in, we took



a short side trip to our first overlook of the hike. From this vantage point, we could see down the South Prong Red Creek Valley and around the Plains which we would be exploring over the weekend.

After soaking up the first view, we continued out South Prong to the overlook just past the only real hill on the upper trail. From this view, we could see Dolly Sods, the Bell Knob Tower, and the rocks where we just were a mile back. We pressed on to the shortcut called the Hidden Passage. The mountain laurel was peak this weekend and the beginning of the hidden passage through the old meadow was spectacular. Mountain Laurel everywhere! Ultimately, we popped out on top of the Plains near the Seneca Meadows campsite to take lunch and enjoy another view. Unfortunately, this site is used frequently by many, including 4-wheelers, as evidenced by the trail leading from the pipeline.

We took the pipeline down to the tip of Roaring Creek Canyon for one of the better overlooks of the trip. From this spot, we could see the path we were to take for the rest of the day. We could also see the high meadow of Smith Mountain as well as Seneca Rocks (so small from up here). We could also hear Roaring Creek as it tumbled toward the former location of the town of Roaring, namesake of the plains that shadow it each evening.

Leaving this view behind, we headed back to the pipeline to pick up our packs and bushwhack around the top of Roaring Canyon. We followed the Forest Service boundary for a good part of this segment until we reached Roaring Creek. We gathered enough water for the evening and all of the next day, just in case,

before heading for our campsite.

As we rounded the point on the Canyon Rim, we stopped for yet another overlook. Unfortunately, we could see evidence of some logging and road building on the opposite side of Long Run. It would be a shame if a housing development sprang to life at the bottom of such a remote and beautiful area. We didn't linger for long as I knew our campsite had its own vista from which we witnessed a pretty good sunset before turning in for the evening.

The next morning, we broke camp and headed out along the Canyon Rim. Unfortunately for us, it was hazy but at least it was comfortably cool. As we made our way along the rim, we stopped to soak in the many hazy views. We negotiated the boulder field without any real problems. By lunch, we had made it to the nice spruce campsite where the Canyon Rim Trail intersects the Roaring Plains Trail and dropped our packs to explore. We headed out to the unofficial trail that connects RP Trail to the Radio Tower and Helicopter Pad. This surprisingly well maintained trail has several large vistas overlooking the Flat Rock Run drainage. We could see Porte Crayon, Roaring Plains, and Weiss Knob among other features.

Once we had our fill of views for the weekend, we had to gather water. This ended up being more difficult than planned as most of the "reliable" sources were dry. We ended up finding water about 1.6 miles down the Flat Rock Run Trail. After gathering water, we made it back to camp just before the bottom dropped out of a thunderstorm on our "perfectly forecasted" weekend. A reminder of why you need to prepare for the worst when on the plains. You never know what Mother Nature will throw at you.

Compared to the past two days, our return journey down Flat Rock Run Trail was rather uneventful. We did find some ramps that were in bloom. The bulbs were a lot bigger and stronger than in the spring when only the leaves are up. We slowly descended through a lush hardwood forest. Steep at times, the Flat Rock Run Trail has the most net elevation change for any trail in West Virginia. Our legs were feeling it at the bottom, but it was worth it. What an awesome weekend.

If you haven't been to the Roaring Plains before, I strongly encourage you to make it a priority. After visiting, write your Senators and Representatives and tell them why you personally think this area should be a designated wilderness.



Pancake Rocks off South Prong Trail.

MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST HIKING GUIDE

Which Version to Get?

Print Version

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

Published by the
West Virginia
Highlands Conservancy

The 7th edition covers:

more than 200 trails for over 700 miles

trail scenery, difficulty, condition, distance, elevation, access points, streams and skiing potential.

detailed topographic maps

over 50 photographs

5 wilderness Areas totaling 77,965 acres

700 miles of streams stocked with bass and trout

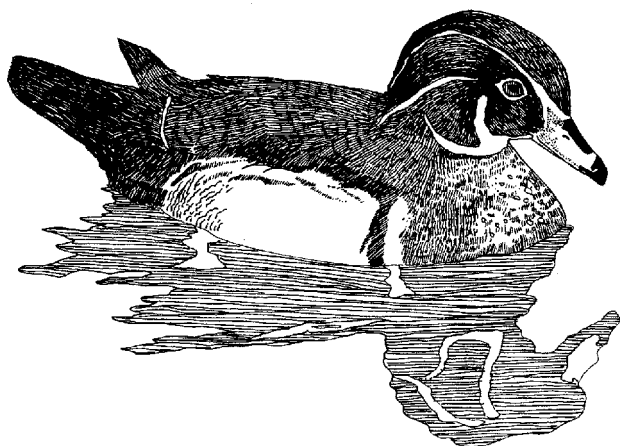
send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

Or, visit our website at

www.wvhighlands.org



Compact Disc version

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen Dehart, Bruce Sundquist, with maps and many other enhancements by WVHC contributor Jim Solley

WV Highlands Conservancy continues to bring its publications into the computer era with its latest innovation- the publication of the Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, 7th Edition, with many added features

This premier edition of MNF7, on computer disc, includes the text pages as they appear in the printed version of the 7th edition in an interactive pdf format. It also includes the following ancillary features, developed by a WVHC dedicated volunteer, and **not available anywhere else:**

- All pages and maps, or even a single page in the new Interactive CD version of the Mon hiking guide can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
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West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

August 12th-14th, Fri.-Sun. Mount Rogers High Country Backpack

(VA): Enjoy a 21-mile backpack with spectacular views of open highlands and surrounding mountains. Open areas are similar to a hilly Dolly Sods but with better views and a more remote feel. Hike is mostly above 4000' elevation and about half exposed meadows. Please bring appropriate rain gear and equipment. Trails can be rocky and wet and weather can be unpredictable at times. Prior backpacking experience required. Hopefully, the high-bush blueberries will be ripe. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

September 3rd-5th, Roaring Plains, Hidden Passage, Canyon, Rim 2 night Backpack, MNF, WV: 13+ miles with packs plus an optional side trip w/o packs along Long Run Canyon Rim. Night # 2 may be dry. Loads of fantastic views! Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

September 3rd-5th, Fri.-Sun Seneca Creek/Spruce Knob Area or Tea Creek Area: Still Planning - - Information forthcoming. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

September 23rd-25th, High Meadows/Seneca Creek Backpack, MNF, WV: Car Camp at primitive Spruce Knob Campground on Friday night. Backpack 13 miles from Spruce Knob to the headwaters of Seneca Creek on Saturday/Sunday. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

Late September/Early October TBA. Dolly Sods North: Still Planning. Information Forthcoming. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

October 8th-10th, Great North Mountain Backpack, GWNF, VA/WV: 21+ mile strenuous backpack featuring 4 fantastic overlooks. Will hike 7 miles on day 1, 10 miles on day 2 and approximately 5 miles on day 3. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

October 8th and 9th Trip into Roaring Plains, when the fall colors are at max. Trip leader: Susan Bly. Outing and details still tentative.

October 8th-9th and October 15 & 16: Red Spruce cone collecting volunteer opportunity: (two weekends!) As part of the Highlands Conservancy's Red Spruce Restoration efforts, we will be collecting cones from various areas in the Highlands including Snowshoe Mountain Resort, Monongahela National Forest, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley State Parks. Contact Dave Saville 304-284-9548 daves@labyrinth.net.

October 15th-17th, Cranberry Wilderness Backpack, MNF, WV: Approximately 24 mile circuit mostly along the drainages of North Fork of Cranberry River, Cranberry River, Beechlog Run, Laurelly Run and Middle Fork of Williams River. Mileage breakdown: 7 - 10 - 7. Should still have good fall colors this far south! Experienced Backpackers only. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

Visit Kayford Mountain south of Charleston to see mountain top removal (MTR) up close and hear Larry Gibson's story about how he saved his mountain, now almost totally surrounded by MTR. Bring a lunch— there is a picnic area on Larry's mountain. Just call Larry or Julian Martin. Leaders: Julian Martin, (304)342-8989, imaginemew@aol.com and Larry Gibson, (304) 586-3287 or (304) 549-3287 cellular. Contact in advance to schedule a time and date.

Monongahela: New Wilderness

A Photography Exhibition

Dolly Sods. Otter Creek. Cranberry. Laurel Fork. It has been over twenty years since the last of these wilderness areas was designated. The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition has proposed fifteen outstanding new areas and extensions to existing areas in the Monongahela National Forest.

Wilderness designation can occur only as an act of Congress. These areas, with the protection of wilderness designation, will preserve some of the most outstanding and truly wild lands of West Virginia. These lands are the heart and soul of wild West Virginia.

Monongahela: New Wilderness is an exhibit of photographs of some of these proposed additions to the wilderness system in West Virginia. The photographs are color giclée prints from view camera film or digital cameras. The images do not present a travelog or pictorial overview, but rather draw on the wilderness areas for subject matter from which to create introspective and personal views.

The exhibit opens in Berkeley Springs at Bath Bookworks on July 30, and will be there through September 4. It is free and open to the public.

The photographer, Mark Muse, is a color prepress and publishing professional. He is currently employed by the U.S. National Park Service at Harpers Ferry Center. Mark Muse is an active member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition.

Bath Bookworks, No. 15 North Washington Street, Town of Bath, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. (304) 258.7970.

There will be another show coming up in Davis in September or October.

OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS

By Mike Juskelis

July 11-13, 2005: The Elkins area was woefully short of its normal amount of precipitation for this time of the year. Who would have thought that a group of backpackers would be praying for rain. A trek through the Otter Creek Wilderness, although always beautiful and awe inspiring, would not be quite as intense if the water level remained low. Then, as if on cue, Tropical Storm Cindy dropped about 2 inches of rain in a twenty-four hour period into the drainage. The front moved out



Lesser purple fringed orchid (Habenaria psycodes)

on Friday and the weekend weather was to be sunny with moderate temperatures. What luck!

Fast Eddy, Doc, "Believe It or Not", The Pathfinder (to be explained later), Rookie-1 and -2, Sue and I all assembled at the Mylius trail head by 12:00 and began walking up to the ridge of Shaver Mt by 12:20. Although it was mid-day the climb didn't seem that bad. We took a nice break at the intersection with Shavers Mt. Trail and then another at the site of the old shelter which had been removed by the Forest Service in keeping with Wilderness policy.

The sudden downpour of rain from Cindy made the upper reaches of the Green Mountain Trail a bit "wetter (to be kind)" than usual but we still made pretty good time considering we weren't rushing it. We reached the junction with Possession Camp Tr by 4:30. We had originally planned to camp there for the night but we still had a lot of daylight left. After a long break, we decided to continue down Green Mt. Trail to the creek.

The descent was uneventful except for a tedious negotiation of a blowdown along a steep hill. We found ourselves walking along the creek by 6:30.

The next day we were all up by 7:00. As we ate and tore-down camp we noticed that

the creek had dropped several inches overnight. Creek crossings would be fun and mildly challenging but not hazardous on this trip. Since we hiked the extra 3 miles yesterday, today's backpacking mileage would only amount to a bit more than 3 miles.

We took our time hiking up Otter Creek, visiting every waterfall and set of rapids along the way. We stumbled across some Lesser Purple Fringed Orchids along the trail between stops.

As usual, we took a long refreshing break at the confluence of Moore Run. I was surprised that we had the place to ourselves. Some eased themselves into the chilly water while others basked in the sun like so many turtles. After about a half hour we put our packs back on and continued on, stopping at a picturesque waterfall along the way for a photo op.

We made Possession Camp by 1:00 and set up our tents. Six of us opted to slack pack to the bogs at the top of Moore Run. I had directions from the MNF Trail Guide but I believe there had been a scheduled reroute of the trail since it was last published. It was supposed to be about 3 miles up Moore Run Tr. We crossed the creek and proceeded up the railroad grade. At about 2 miles and after crossing 2 branches of the Run as described in the guide, the trail jumped up onto a footpath and climbed steeply to yet another RR grade.

Soon we passed the junction with Turkey Ridge Trail. Right at 3 miles we could look east and see parts of the bog down in a shallow valley but couldn't find a way through the impenetrable rhododendron. We sat down at a clear spot along the trail to take a brief break before returning to camp, happy that we had found the bogs but a bit disappointed that we couldn't quite make it all the way.

Catherine continued to look around and came back telling us that she had found an old trail. We walked up the trail a few yards and saw a pile of branches blocking the path to an old campsite that hadn't been used in quite some time. We proceeded obliquely down the hill, pushed through a weak spot in the Rhodos and soon found ourselves standing on the western-most part of the bogs. It was pretty impressive and definitely worth the extra effort to add another wilderness environment to our

trip. We encountered mountain top forest, the beautiful watershed of Otter Creek and finally a highlands bog. Like the commercial says "It doesn't get any better than this!" By now it was 4:30 and we still had to hike 3 miles back to camp. Our visit to the bog had to be brief but for sure next time we'll allow more time to explore this unique area.

The walk down Moore Run Trail was fast to say the least. At times I felt like a runaway train. On the way I decided that "Pathfinder" would be an appropriate trail name for Catherine. (I don't think I'll ever lose the fondness for giving my new hiking companions trail names. I hope they don't mind.) We made it back to camp in plenty of time to take a refreshing dip in the mother of all swimming holes just below the junction of Moore Run Tr. The water was crisp and cool and over Pathfinder's head.

We sat around the fire ring and cooked our food. We discussed the usual camp topics as we soaked in everything the OCW had to give to us. We could tell another cool and comfortable night was in store for us.

The next day we broke camp and headed back to our cars. Even with the 2 crossings of Otter Creek and the climb up and over Mylius Gap, the final leg was short and relatively easy. The long weekend was over too soon. Rookie-1 and -2 had to get going but the rest of us met at the Alpine Restaurant and Motel for a final lunch together. On the way home I showed my new hiking companions how to get to the southern terminus of Otter Creek Trail so that they may bring others to visit this magical place. We then did the usually difficult hugs and handshakes and parted company, promising to get together for even more fun in the wilds of West Virginia.



Confluence of Moore Run and Otter Creek.

HIKING THE GREAT NORTH MOUNTAIN

By Mike Juskelis

07-02-05: This was a scheduled Sierra Club/WVHC outing. Being a holiday weekend we were expecting a very small turnout. Surprisingly there were seven of us that wanted to take advantage of the sudden moderation in the weather conditions. I was joined by Debra, Cave Man, Clark Kent, The Mad Hatter, Cognac Jack and Everybody Loves Raymond (a recent Long Island transplant).

We arrived at the trail head on Waites Run Road at 10:30. The sky was blue, temps were in the mid-70s (never to go above 85) and the humidity was low. This was a combination of two hikes: Pond Run/ Racer Camp Hollow and the White Rocks Loop. We connected the two, removing the Racer Camp Hollow Trail from both loops. I knew the original hike was about 10 miles long. We weren't sure how much the modification would add.

It had been several years since I've hiked up Pond Run. I

remember it being a difficult climb near the top and that hadn't changed a bit. We were all ready for a break when we reached the top. We were all amazed to find new boardwalks covering seeps that had previously made this area difficult to negotiate. Also added were white blazes marking a short route to a pretty nice view of Halfmoon Lookout, Long Mountain and the northern end of Trout Run Valley. I'm pretty sure this wasn't here in 2000 when I last hiked this trail.

After a short break we continued on the Tuscarora Trail to the White Rocks vista. The view and breeze were quite pleasant although there was a persistent haze over the valley. We had a late lunch there and retraced our steps to the main trail. The descent down to the cars using the Old Mail Trail as the main route was pretty rapid. The total distance for this new hike was 11.6 miles.



A view of Half Moon Lookout from Pond Run vista.

STATE ACQUIRES DOBBINS SLASHINGS AS MITIGATION

By Ken Ward Jr.

Nearly 1,000 acres of land near the Dolly Sods Wilderness will be protected as a public wildlife management area, state officials announced. Land for the Dobbins Slashing Bog Wildlife Area was given to the state by Buffalo Coal Co. and Western Pocahontas Properties to compensate for damage from a new strip mine proposed for Grant County.

DEP Secretary Stephanie Timmermeyer said the event was an opportunity to highlight the environmental stewardship of the state's extractive industries.

One of West Virginia's treasures is protected, Timmermeyer said.

Under the agreement, the DNR will manage the 965-acre tract in the headwaters of Red Creek, a native trout stream. The property is northwest from Bear Rocks in Dolly Sods and southeast of Canaan Valley. The area is primarily a bog, and is home to at least five rare plant species and one rare animal, according to the

DNR.

According to a West Virginia University report, the area is named for the Dobbins family. The word Slashing is in the name because the area was at one time a red spruce forest. In some places, the stumps of burned out red spruce protrude, blackened and ghostly looking, according to the WVU report.

Bayard-based Buffalo Coal agreed to donate the land to win DEP approval of a permit for its proposed C-1 North strip mine.

In June 2003, Buffalo proposed to strip more than 300 acres between Stony River Dam and Mount Storm Lake in Grant County. The company dropped part of the permit to cut in half the acres of wetlands that would be damaged, to about 33 acres.

To mitigate those impacts, the company will build 12 acres of wetlands on its mine site and another acre of wetlands along an access road that leads to Dobbins Slashing Bog, according to the two-page agreement signed July 13.

Along with donating the bog property, Buffalo Coal will also pay up to \$55,000 to fund lime treatments to cure acid mine drainage in Red Creek, the agreement says.

The treatment will help clean up the stream, which is on the DEP's list of West Virginia's most polluted waterways.

Editor's note: This is an abbreviated version of a story that first appeared in The Charleston Gazette.

FLY IN THE OINTMENT

As of press time, the United States Environmental Protection Agency had filed objections to the permit. Unless the objections are resolved, they may result in the permit not being issued. The impact of this on the donation of Dobbins Slashings is unclear although it would presumably keep the transfer from going forward.

HIKING IN OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS

Bo Don Gasper

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's scheduled trek into Otter Creek Wilderness on June 18, 2005 was attended by Fred Meyer from Charleston, Susan Moore of Davis, Grace Lynch of Rock Cave, Bob Thompson of Terra Alta, John Harris of Buckhannon, and Don Gasper. It was a wonderful Saturday and not at all hot on the forest downslope or in the deep shade among the lower 3 miles of Otter Creek.

As the Big Spring trail entered the Otter Creek valley floor, we noted a healthy grove of 10" diameter conifers on a well drained slope we identified as Balsam Fir. (The spruce-like needles were almost 1" long and the bark smooth.) Its needled floor littered with many 6"

long "pine cones" (some chewed by rodents) would be one of many great place to camp. We saw no one camping however. Otter Creek was moderately low, and we easily waded bare-foot the cool flow at the single crossing. Otter Creek, as a whole was a world-class beautiful stream-bed. We saw some reaches with huge boulders. For about a mile lesser boulders from above covered the top of the Greenbrier Limestone before it emerged as ledges. We met some through hikers and some trout anglers. The path here to its mouth at the foot bridge high above Dry Fork, is wide and smooth.

We took our time, and talked some. We were a diverse group. We reached our shuttle car (yes, just one car) about 5 P.M.

T SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-Shirts with the I [heart] Mountains slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. Sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL. \$10 total by mail. Send sizes wanted and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to:

Julian Martin
WVHC
Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321-0306

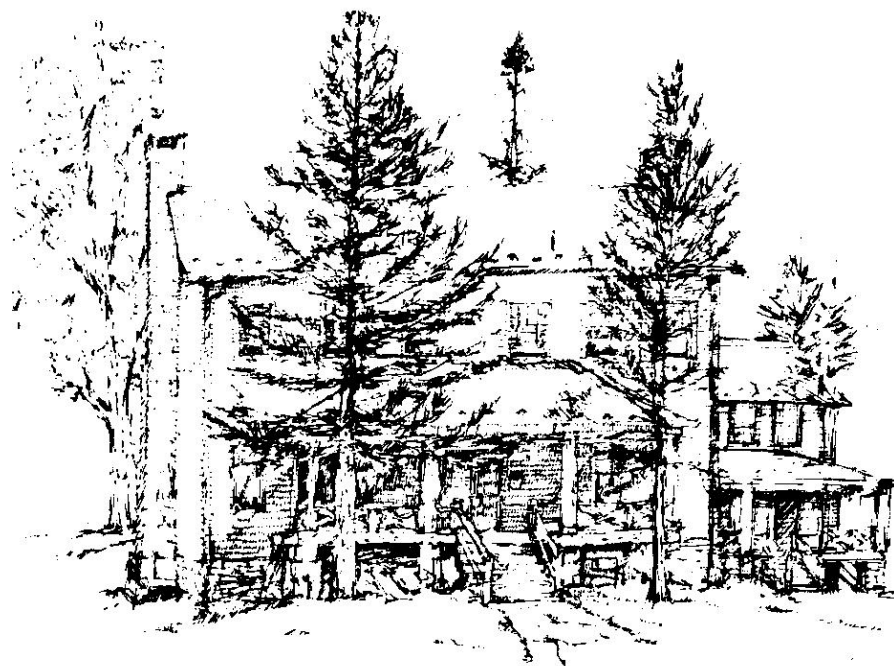
HATS FOR SALE

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy caps for sale. The cap is khaki and the pre-curved visor is forest green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in gold above the I [Heart] Mountains. The heart is red; we and mountains are black. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. \$10 by mail. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to Julian Martin, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE IN LONG SLEEVE MODEL

We now have I [heart] Mountains long sleeve shirts in sizes M,L, XL. The shirt is heavy cotton and white with blue lettering. The heart is red. \$15 total by mail. Send sizes wanted and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to:

Julian Martin,
WVHC, Box 306,
Charleston, WV 25321-0306



The We

For over
fishing a
is a s
quiet, comfortable lodge that fosters contemplation, good talk, and natural beauty

This year we will again dedicate an entire week to our 40th anniversary celebration on Mountain, on the shores of the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River, with art, projects, dignitaries, music, and a whole lot of fun. Details are still being finalized for the greatest Fall Review ever! Contact Dave Saville for more information.

304-284-9548

WEST VIRGINIANS HAVE A PROUD HISTORY OF PROTECTING THE MON

By Mary Wimmer, WV Sierra Club and WV Wilderness Coalition



Since lands comprising the Monongahela National Forest recovered [albeit in altered form] from massive clearcutting in the early 1900's, West Virginians have had a long and proud history of protecting these forested public highlands from further exploitation. The first major action involved halting clearcutting which had reared its ugly face yet again, this time by the U.S. Forest Service land managers. Legal action was taken by the WV Izaak Walton League and the WV Highlands Conservancy, and the U.S. Forest Service lost, greatly restricting the size of future clearcuts on the Mon.

Furthermore, the impact of this lawsuit was felt nationwide as Congress, in response, passed several laws that dictated how our public National Forests should be managed, including development of Forest Management Plans with NEPA-guided public involvement. The Wilderness Act was also passed in 1964 establishing a federal system for permanently protecting special wild federal lands.

The next major protection efforts came with the citizen's bills that resulted in designation of our five current Wilderness areas, permanently protecting them from logging and road building. Through the leadership

of the WV Highlands Conservancy and The Wilderness Society, Dolly Sods and Otter Creek were designated in 1975, and Cranberry and Laurel Fork North and South in 1983.

Soon after, the West Virginia public, with leadership in part from the newly formed WV Chapter of the Sierra Club, became fully engaged in the development of the Mon's current forest plan following the process laid out in the new laws. A draft Plan developed by the Forest Service was released for public comment in late 1984. It called for increased logging, road building and mining on the Forest, along with conversion of some hardwood forest into pine.

This draft plan was met with an enormous public outcry against commercial development of the Mon, *in what became the largest public response to any forest plan in the eastern U.S., and one of the highest in the nation.* 3,600 replies, mainly letters, with nearly 18,000 signatures reached the Forest Service in Elkins. *Over 90% of those comments were from West Virginians. Fewer than 3% supported the draft plan!* (The public responses are documented in Appendix F of the 1986 Final Plan.)

As a result of this public input, the Draft Plan was dramatically changed into one that would emphasize remote wildlife habitat and primitive, non-motorized recreation on the Forest, not commercial development. There would still be some logging, but with long rotations to feature large, veneer-type trees to complement shorter rotation hardwoods on private land. No pine conversion would be done. *Importantly, some of the most wild lands left in the Mon would be protected from logging and road building in a new management called "6.2."* Since the final plan was signed in 1986, there has been *no* major public conflict in the direction it laid out.

Now, twenty years later, with new Forest Service personnel who lack this history, and a new administration in Washington, the Forest Service is proposing to revise the current forest plan. The fate of the Mon's special remaining wild places that have not been permanently protected will rest with this new plan. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, some draft alternatives would actually open up some 6.2 areas to logging and road-building. It will be up to the West Virginia public yet again to get involved to protect the Mon's wild places.

"My home State of West Virginia has certainly benefited from the creation of Wilderness areas. Our Nation's 662 Wilderness areas have given Americans a freedom to explore. This freedom has been secured and protected so that future generations also may enjoy the beauty of God's creation." --

Senator Robert C. Byrd



Draft Forest Plan Should Prompt Citizen Involvement

By the time you read this, the Forest Service will have released its Draft forest management plan for the Monongahela National Forest. This means that the public will have only a few short weeks left during the public comment period to tell the Forest Service that it should carefully protect the Mon and its special places to safeguard West Virginia's valuable natural heritage.

Once the Draft forest plan is finalized, it will determine the future of wilderness and wildlands protection, backcountry recreation, and the conservation of wildlife, watersheds, rivers and fisheries on the Mon far into the future. As a result, citizens who care about the future of wilderness, backcountry recreation opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat conservation and the protection of clean streams and rivers on the Mon are urged to take action and comment on this Draft plan.

Critical Timing

Even as these critical decisions are being made for the Mon, wild lands, forests and wilderness are under assault at a national level. On May 5, the Administration announced the repeal of the popular and scientifically sound Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Put in place by the Forest Service in 2001 after an extensive national process of hearings and public comment, the rule had previously protected 58.5 million acres of special and pristine roadless areas, including over 180,000 acres on the Mon, from further logging, mining and road construction.

Against such an alarming national backdrop, the Forest Service is poised to determine the future of the Monongahela National Forest for the next 20 years and beyond. Will it opt for more logging or continue to emphasize conservation? Will it choose to build more roads that it cannot afford financially and which may threaten the Mon's fish, rivers and watersheds or will it focus investments on recreation opportunities and conservation? Even as the Voice goes to press and conservationists anxiously await the release of the Draft plan, a review of the agency's material available to date indicates that the Forest Service may indeed be backing away from the goals of backcountry recreation and wildlife habitat conservation that West Virginians supported 20 years ago and which have been the hallmark of the Mon since that time.

Changing Directions?

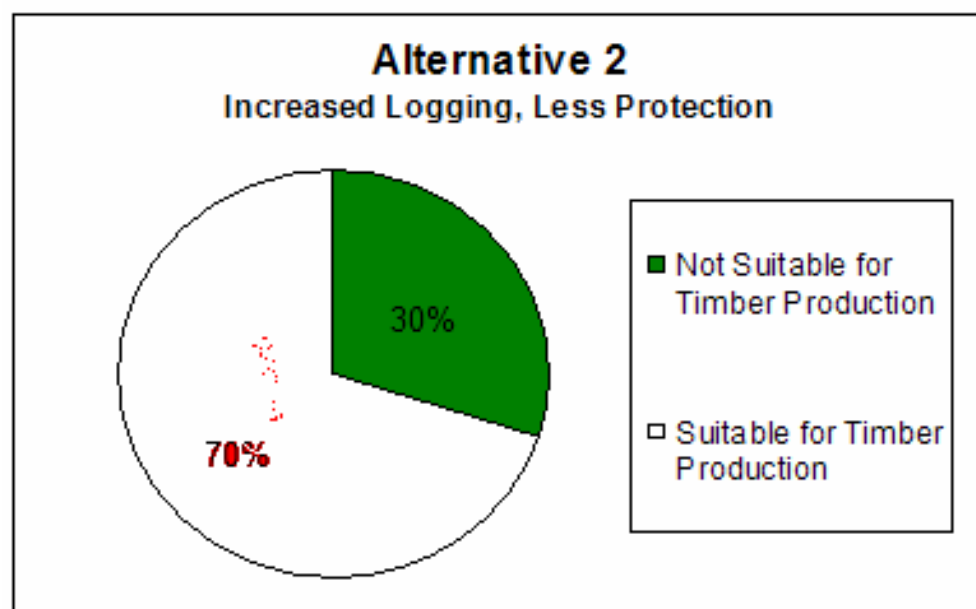
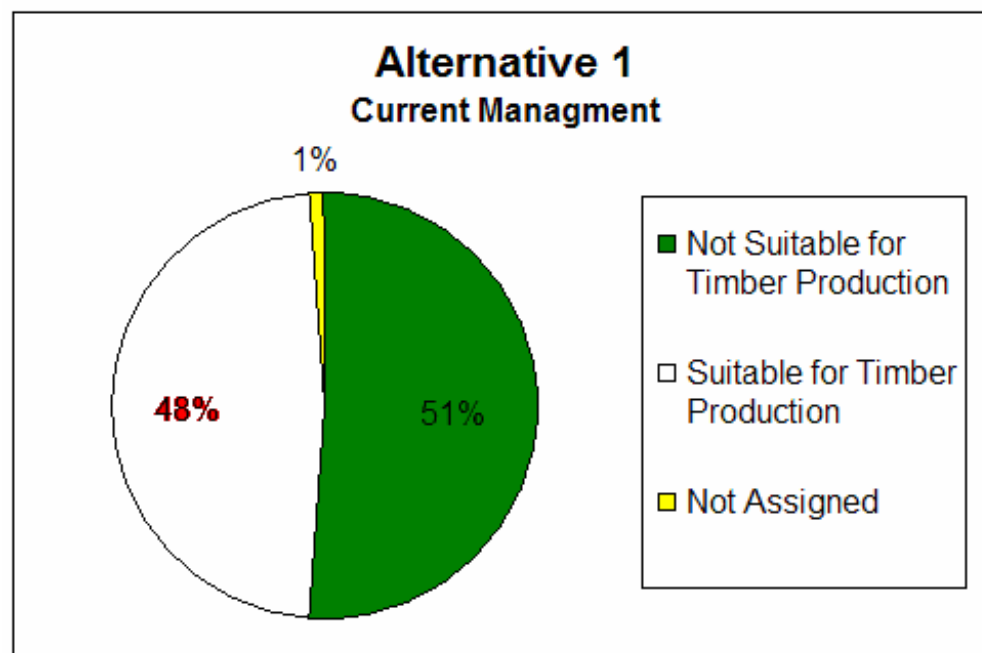
Even as the Administration works to open up important roadless lands and wildlife habitats to logging and development on national forest across the country, the Forest Service is considering 4 alternative futures (identified with numbers, not names) specifically for the Mon, only one of which, Alternative 3, comes close to presenting a balanced vision for forest use and conservation. These 4 alternatives will be the basis of the Draft forest plan when it is released.

Alternative 1. Referred to as the "no action" alternative required by law, it represents management as it now stands on the Mon. Specifically, Alternative 1 reflects the ways in which the original 1986 plan, which marked a decision by the Forest Service to emphasize backcountry recreation and wildlife protection on this special forest, has been amended several times since it was finalized, most recently to provide additional habitat protection for various threatened and endangered species including the Indiana Bat, Cheat Mountain Salamander, and Northern Flying Squirrel. While it will not be chosen by the Forest Service as the forest management approach for coming years, it serves as a useful comparison of how the other 3 alternatives would differ from current management.

For example, planning materials previously released by the Forest Service describing this alternative indicate that approximately 48% of the Mon is currently considered to be "suitable" for timber production. Almost 14% of the Mon is currently managed for backcountry recreation in popular areas such as Seneca Creek, Canaan Mountain, Tea Creek and Big Draft. The Mon's 5 existing congressionally designated Wilderness Areas, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek, Cranberry and Laurel Fork North and South account for less than 9 percent of the forest. [Note, because this alternative represents "current" management on the Mon, it does not recommend any new Wilderness or other "new" management directions.]

Alternative 2. This alternative would increase the emphasis on logging and timber management over current levels. At present, it is assumed that this is the alternative "preferred" -- and most likely to be chosen by -- the Forest Service. This approach signals that the Forest Service is apparently moving away from the current and popular vision for the Mon which emphasizes wildlife habitat protection and backcountry recreation. According to Forest Service documents, the agency is recommending that roughly 70% of the forest be placed in prescriptions that allow logging and road construction -- a sharp increase from current levels.

Under this alternative, popular protections currently in place for several important backcountry wildlife and recreation areas would be abandoned. As a result, a number of well-loved and currently protected areas (MP 6.2), including Canaan Mountain, Little Mountain, Lower Laurel Forest, Laurel Run and others would be open to potential logging and road construction. Roughly 10 percent of the Mon would be managed as backcountry under Alternative 2.



Today's towering Oak is yesterday's nut that held its ground.

Your Input Will Help Shape the Future of the Mon

Continued from previous page

Alternative 2 recommends only a small amount (an additional 3% of the Mon) as proposed Wilderness (only Congress can designate Wilderness; the Forest Service makes recommendations for new Wilderness to Congress via the revised Forest Plan). Of the 15 special wild areas that the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition has carefully studied and is advocating for congressional Wilderness designation, the Forest Service is only recommending the Cranberry Expansion, and portions of Cheat Mountain and Roaring Plains area for Wilderness. In addition this alternative recommends a small addition to Otter Creek Wilderness. Worse still, this alternative would allow logging in 7 of these 15 special wild places, including all or parts of Roaring Plains, Cheat Mountain, Spice Run, Upper Shavers Fork and Little Allegheny (as well as Laurel Run and Lower Laurel Fork as mentioned above.)

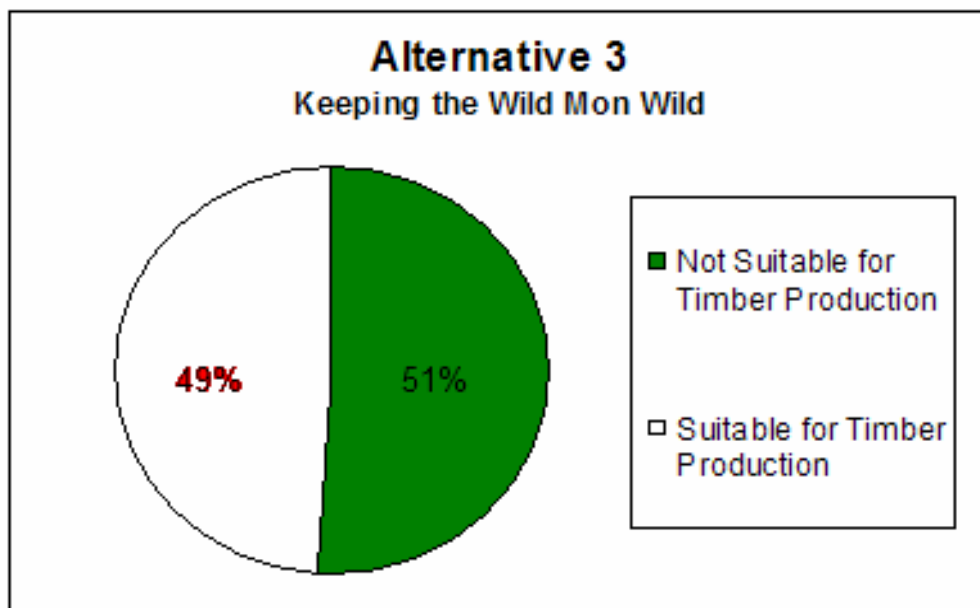
Finally, this alternative also appears to roll-back current protections for the Indiana Bat and other threatened and endangered species and fails to provide adequate protections for rivers, streams, fisheries and drinking water by allowing logging and road construction to degrade sensitive areas. At a time when recreation is an increasingly strong component of the West Virginia economy and private forestlands across the state are increasingly being affected by development, logging and mining, the emphasis of this alternative is as difficult to understand as it is troubling. The Mon is a unique forest that deserves careful management; the Forest Service can do better than Alternative 2.

Alternative 3. This is the most balanced approach to forest management that the Forest Service is proposing. Alternative 3 goes the furthest in keeping the Mon the way it is now -- wild and wonderful. Currently available Forest Service documents indicate that this alternative would place some 49% of the forest in prescriptions that allow logging and road construction, roughly maintaining the current balance on the Forest while also expanding important backcountry habitat protection and recreation opportunities across the Mon.

Alternative 3 recommends the most new Wilderness (approximately 99,000 new acres, an additional 11% of the Mon) including all or parts of 9 of the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's 15 areas: Cranberry Expansion, Seneca Creek, East Fork Greenbrier, Turkey Mountain, Middle Mountain, Spice Run, Bit Draft and parts, but not all, of Roaring Plains and Cheat Mountain. Nevertheless, this alternative does not recommend congressional Wilderness protection of Dolly Sods Expansion, North Fork Mountain, Upper Shavers Fork, Lower Laurel Fork, Little Allegheny Mountain, and Laurel Run

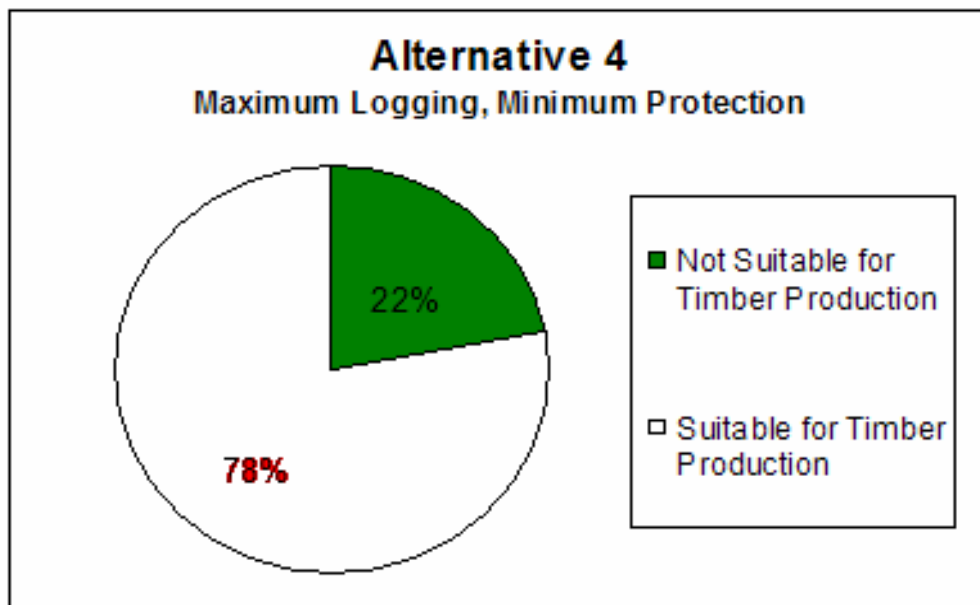


Photo Jonathanjessup.com



Under this alternative, an additional 11% of the Mon would be managed for backcountry wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. Some of these proposed backcountry additions, however, contain roads that currently provide public access to the forest, in which case these areas will not be appropriate for backcountry management. The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition is not proposing any road closures in the Mon as part of either its current Wilderness campaign or its forest plan revision comments.

Alternative 3 is the only option the agency is considering which would provide balance between conservation and extractive use, and it would give people the opportunity to continue enjoying the forest while ensuring that the Mon is protected for generations to come. Because it does the most to protect the Mon's special roadless areas, watersheds and backcountry habitats, Alternative 3 also would provide the best protection for the Mon's unique and special areas as well as its fish and wildlife habitats, local drinking water, and wildland-based economic opportunities.



Alternative 4. Alternative 4, while not thought to be the Forest Service's preferred alternative for future management of the Mon, nevertheless signals just how far the agency might be willing to diverge from the Mon's current management direction – and from the expectations of West Virginia's conservation community. This alternative would maximize logging and expand the discretion of the Forest Service to manage the Forest with a minimum of conservation guidelines and safeguards. Nearly 80% of the forest would be placed in management prescriptions that would allow logging and road construction – including several proposed wilderness areas and other popular backcountry wildlife and recreation areas that are currently protected from logging and road construction. Alternative 4 also appears to roll-back current protections for threatened and endangered species and fails to provide adequate protections for rivers, streams, fisheries and drinking water by allowing logging and road construction in sensitive areas. Alternative 4 recommends NO new wilderness.

-We've got our work cut out for us if we don't want the Mon to become a tree farm.-

How you can Get Engaged

West Virginia is by some measures one of the most rapidly developing states in the nation and our wild land base shrinks daily to development. Urban sprawl and second home development are consuming our farm and forest lands at an ever accelerating pace. There are other threats as well: mining by mountain top removal; pollution of our air and water; and, still today, ill-advised logging on both public and private lands.

In the face of these changes, many West Virginians see the Mon as an oasis which should be left just as it is. The forest provides clean drinking water to nearby communities and holds some of the best places the state offers to camp, hike, fish, and hunt. The Administration's decision to roll-back protections for roadless areas nationally defies common sense. The Forest Service has all the roads it needs to manage its lands and more than it can afford to maintain. On the Mon alone, the Agency is responsible for the management of several thousands miles of roads and has a maintenance backlog of nearly \$50 million that has been accumulating for years.

The Forest Service would serve West Virginia better if it spent its limited budget on protecting clean water, protecting our communities from flooding, conserving recreation opportunities and protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitats. While not perfect, Alternative 3 offers the best framework the Forest Service is proposing to achieve these goals.

Please tell the forest service how you feel! Your comments can be sent to:

**Forest Plan Revision
Monongahela National Forest
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241**



New Bush Administration Forest Planning Regulations require "Substantive Comments" to be counted as legitimate. This means that many previously used methods of garnering the public's participation such as petitions, post cards and form letters will no longer be accepted.

When you make your comments, use your own words, and be sure to tell the Forest Service not only that you want more wilderness and backcountry areas protected, as well as the other items discussed here, and which you are concerned about, but also ***why*** these things are important for you and for the health of our forest.

To request a copy of the Draft Plan;

Visit the Forest Service website
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf/plan_revision/Information/fpr_mailing_update20050505.pdf

Or write:
Monongahela National Forest
Attn: Forest Plan Revision
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241

Or Call 304-636-1800

Protecting West Virginia's Wilderness is Important to West Virginia's Economy

A new study commissioned by the West Virginia Division of Tourism shows that the state's travel and tourism industry continues to have a positive and growing economic impact on earnings, employment and tax revenue.

The study was completed by Dean Runyan Associates for the years 2000 through 2004 and shows that:

--- Travel spending by all overnight and day visitors in West Virginia was more than \$3.4 billion in the 2004 calendar year.

--- Travel spending in West Virginia has increased by 11.4 percent per year since 2000.

--- Visitors who stayed overnight in commercial lodging facilities spent \$1.2 billion on their trips in 2004.

--- Day travelers spent \$1.7 billion.

--- During 2004, visitor spending in West Virginia directly supported more than 40,000 jobs with earnings of \$766 million. Travel spending generated the greatest number of jobs in accommodations and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation, such as performing arts, outdoor recreation and sightseeing.

--- Local and state tax revenues generated by travel spending were \$536 million in 2004.

Without these travel generated tax revenues, each household in West Virginia would have had to pay an additional \$730 in state and local taxes to maintain current service levels.

"This study is important for the tourism industry because it reaffirms that tourism is growing in West Virginia," said Betty Carver, Tourism Commissioner. "We used the same type of data that other industries use when they estimate their economic impact," Carver said. "With this research, we can look at the direct impact tourism has, using existing statistics from county, state and federal reports."

"This is the type of study that helps us in our strategic planning efforts with regard to tourism in our state," said Commerce Secretary Tom Bulla. "Studies that accurately reflect direct benefits and economic impact provide us with the information we need to determine how we can best support this industry."

"I am most impressed with the growth of West Virginia's travel industry," said Dean Runyan, principal, Dean Runyan Associates. "To maintain a growth rate of this magnitude -- 11 percent per year -- is quite notable."

This study demonstrates why diversifying West Virginia's economy is important. Protecting the *Wild and Wonderful* aspects of our state will provide a reliable, sustainable source of economic activity and allow our state to wean itself from the destruction and devastation caused by the extractive industries. By protecting our special resources like Wilderness that bring visitors to our state, a stable economy will be created, which is in sharp contrast to the boom and bust cycles of the logging and mining industries.

a **Vision**
for a
**Wild
Mon**

"Strange that so few ever came to the woods, to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light, -- to see its perfect success; but most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem that its true success! But the pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into boards and houses is no more its true and highest use than the truest use of man is to be cut down and made into manure. There is a higher law affecting our relation to pines as well as to men.

A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man.... Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it...

It is the living spirit of the tree, not its spirit of turpentine, with which I sympathize, and which heals my cuts. It is as immortal as I am and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still."

Henry David Thoreau 1864.

Business Support for a Wild Mon!

Many business owners throughout the state and region understand the importance of protected land for a strong outdoor recreation economy. They realize that designated Wilderness can enhance quality of life for local residents, increase private property values and attract new businesses and residents to locate nearby. The adjacent list shows businesses who have formally endorsed the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's proposal for additional wilderness designations on the Mon. If these are businesses in your community, or if you're visiting or traveling nearby, I encourage you to give them your business and thank them for supporting our state's wild heritage!

We are always trying hard to build the list of Wilderness supporting businesses across the state and region. If your business, or a friend or relatives, would be willing to endorse the work of the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, simply fill out the endorsement form below and send it back to the address listed. Or visit the Wilderness Coalition's website for more information about becoming an endorser and fill out the simple "online" form there. www.wvwild.org or call Matt at 304-864-5530.



What does a *Wild Mon* mean to your business?

**Chip Chase, owner
Whitegrass Ski Touring Center**

The Mon. National Forest is the very backbone, fiber and foundation of our local West Virginia outdoor industry. It provides not only depth and meaning to our day to day businesses; it is the background for fueling our imaginations and cleansing our soul. The Forest provides many resources including trails, rivers, wilderness, as well as a place of unequalled beauty for every person to enjoy in their own personal way. Whether or not one spends much time in the Forest just knowing it is there in its vastness provides an essential daily comfort.

Our love and appreciation will grow with every step in our outdoor journey. We discover and share with our children, our neighbors and family, as well as our fortunate customers and visitors. There is so much more yet to be enjoyed as we learn to appreciate and focus. Provide protection and it will grow and prosper a thousand times more than imagined. The Mon is one of those very special places that make dreams come to real life.

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BUSINESS ENDORSEMENT FORM

YES! We support the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's proposal to designate more Wilderness on the Mon! Please add our name to the list!

Name of Business: _____ Type of Business _____

Contact Person/ Title _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please put a link to my business on the WVWC website! My business web site address: _____

- YOUR BUSINESS HERE!**
- The Current Bed & Breakfast**, Hillsboro, WV
 - White Grass Touring Center**, Davis, WV
 - Adventure's Edge**, Morgantown, WV
 - Amanda's Cottage**, Hillsboro, WV
 - Eight Rivers Web Design**, Hillsboro, WV
 - Plants Etc.**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Dave's Garage**, Dunmore, WV
 - All About Beauty**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Mountaineer Photo Art**, Morgantown, WV
 - Black Bear Burritos**, Morgantown, WV
 - Ehrhardt Organic Farm**, Charles Town, WV
 - The Art Company of Davis**, Davis, WV
 - Outdoor Adventures**, White Sulphur Springs, WV
 - Edith's Store**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Mountain Quest Institute**, Marlinton, WV
 - Hidden River Farm**, Montersville, WV
 - Harvest Market and Grill**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Cooper Gallery**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Wolf Creek Gallery**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Open Book**, Lewisburg, WV
 - The Rock House**, Marlinton, WV
 - The General Lewis Inn**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Gallery 102**, Lewisburg, WV
 - The Bakery**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Historic Roofing Company Inc.**, Lothian, MD
 - Pathfinder of West Virginia**, Morgantown, WV
 - Whitetail Cycle and Fitness**, Morgantown WV
 - Wamsley Cycles**, Morgantown, WV
 - Oasis Behavioral Health Services**, Barboursville, WV
 - Schrader Environmental Education Center**, Wheeling, WV
 - Blue Quill Design and Consulting**, Williamstown, WV
 - Joseph Henry Photography**, Davis, WV
 - Charleston Bicycle Center, Inc**, Charleston, WV
 - Shepherdstown Outback Basics**, Shepherdstown, WV
 - Main Line Books LLC**, Elkins, WV
 - Mountain State Outfitters**, Charleston, WV
 - The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy**, Elkins, WV
 - Mother Wit**, Charleston, WV
 - The Wilderrest Inn**, Upper Tract, WV
 - Passages to Adventure**, Fayetteville, WV
 - Greenbrier Integrated Medical Services**, Covington, VA
 - Walnut Farms Flowers**, Morgantown, WV
 - The Outfitter at Harpers Ferry**, Harpers Ferry, WV
 - Valley Scuba and Sports**, Lewisburg, WV
 - Riverbend Designs**, Shepherdstown, WV
 - Backcountry Ski and Sport**, Fayetteville, WV
 - Antietam Creek Canoe Co.**, Boonsboro, MD
 - Adventurous Seasonal Pursuits, llc**, Harpers Ferry, WV
 - Appalachian Wooden Ware**, Williamsburg, WV

Thank you for your support of the Coalition. Please fax or mail this form back to 304-864-5530 (fax)
West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, PO Box 6 Masontown, WV 26542 Phone: 304-864-5530 Email: mattk@tw.org <http://www.wvwild.org>

Wilderness Coalition Hires New Outreach Coordinator!



The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition recently hired an Outreach Coordinator to assist in our efforts to protect additional wilderness areas on the Mon. Harrison Case, a Morgantown native will be starting in this position August 5th and I'm sure many of you will be hearing from him.

Harrison will be organizing for the Wilderness Coalition and will reach out to citizens and community leaders across the state and interacting with diverse groups of West Virginians.

Harrison will work with Matt Keller, our Wilderness Campaign Coordinator, and the Coalition's steering committee to build even more public support for additional Wilderness designations on the Monongahela National Forest. Harrison will work to ensure that appropriate leaders in West Virginia such as elected officials, scientists and business leaders are educated about Wilderness with the goal of procuring their support for the campaign in various ways. The Coalition is extremely excited about Harrison joining our team and is looking forward to great things from him. Contact information for him will be forthcoming, but for now, he can be emailed at Harrison_case@wvwild.org. Please make him feel welcome!

Welcome Harrison Case!

Harrison Case has never quite felt comfortable too far from the West Virginia forests and mountains. His formative early years were spent on the banks of Sandy Creek in Preston County and on a wooded hilltop outside of Charleston. At the age of five, however, his family moved to Morgantown, making him, by Mountain State standards, a city kid.

Home schooled, along with a younger sister and brother, by his mother, Harrison devoured books and tinkered endlessly with Legos, but each summer took to roaming the patches of woods that dotted his Wiles Hill neighborhood.

In ninth grade Harrison entered public school for the first time, attending University High School. About this same time he discovered the beauty of Dolly Sods, and has been a

Wilderness advocate ever since.

After one year at a midwestern liberal arts school (flat land didn't agree with his constitution) Harrison returned to West Virginia just prior to the 2000 elections and joined then-Congressman Bob Wise's gubernatorial campaign. The characters, strategizing and excitement of field-level politics remain an addiction to this day.

The Wise administration brought Harrison on as assistant to the legislative director in 2001, and here Harrison became acquainted with the nuts and bolts of policymaking and the individuals and groups that shape West Virginia.

The next three years were a combination of study at West Virginia University and continued service on Governor Wise's team. Eventually, Harrison moved from the legislative staff to the press office. He also met a nice girl from Fairmont.

In 2005, Harrison completed his bachelor's degree through WVU's Board of Regents program, after studying history, journalism and Spanish. After graduation Harrison took a position with Caritas, a Morgantown-based non-profit organization serving West Virginians with HIV and AIDS.

Harrison comes to the Wilderness Coalition with a great enthusiasm for organizing, education and promotion of his beloved Monongahela National Forest. His greatest hope is that the beauty of the forest can be preserved for many generations to come.

Today, Harrison lives steps away from his boyhood home in Morgantown with his wife Alyson and two-year-old son Miles, whose environmental credentials include portraying, respectively, Mama and Baby Flying Squirrel.

The WV Wilderness Coalition

Formed in 2002, the WV Wilderness Coalition is composed of the WV Highlands Conservancy, WV Chapter of Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society. Its Working Group that has set strategy, and organized and carried out campaign action plans, consists of the following individuals: Dave Saville and Bob Marshall representing the Highlands Conservancy; Beth Little and Mary Wimmer from West Virginia Sierra Club; Fran Hunt and Michael Carroll from The Wilderness Society. The Coalition also has a dedicated team of volunteers including wilderness veteran Helen McGuiness; mapping expert and photographer Jim Solley; Brent Rowley from the Shepherd Student Environmental Organization and many others. Additional support from Campaign for America's Wilderness is also crucial to our work. Matt Keller, the WV Wilderness Coordinator, was hired by the Coalition in February 2003 to coordinate the campaign, and he has done a fabulous job. Supporting the Coalition's work are numerous businesses, organizations and individuals around the state and region.

West Virginia's Wild Mountain Treasure: The Monongahela National Forest

None of us can recall a time when there was not a Monongahela National Forest whose beauty beckoned us to recreation and renewal. This splendid place has been part of our National Forest System for almost a century, and those years have marked an ecological journey from near-ruin to restored richness. This recovery was no accident. Throughout its history, West Virginians have loved and fought to protect the wild forests and mountains of the Mon.

Such dedication is once again essential. The fate of the Mon and its wildlands will be determined by decisions soon to be made by Congress and the Forest Service. A new publication recently released the Highlands Conservancy in cooperation with other concerned organizations celebrates the Mon and its history, natural values, and special and threatened wild places.

West Virginia's Wild Mountain Treasure: The Monongahela National Forest illustrates the many threats and uncertainties affecting the future of West Virginia's unique national forest and explains how we can all play a role in protecting the Mon's future. In making this booklet, we found that generations of hunters, anglers, boaters, wilderness activists, and people of faith alike share a love of the wild Mon. Highlands Conservancy members should look for this booklet in the mail soon. We hope you will ask your neighbors and fellow citizens to join you in working to protect the wilderness and wildlands we have left, before it is too late. If you are not a Highlands Conservancy member, but would like a copy of this special, 20 page full color book, contact Dave Saville at our administrative offices and ask for a copy.

Go Wild Mon!

Get Involved - Host a Wild Mon Party!

This summer and fall you can play a vital role in helping to protect the Mon's wildest places. Once the plan has been released (estimated for Aug. 12th at the time of this printing), it is critical for West Virginians to send their comments to the Forest Service and tell them to keep the Mon wild.

That's where you come in – and help spread the word by hosting a **Wild Mon Party**. Here's what to do:

1. **Get a Wild Mon Party Pack** from the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition. The Party Pack includes a wilderness video, fact sheets, brochures, and other helpful information. Call or e-mail Matt Keller at 304-864-5530 or mattk@twc.org.
2. **Set a date** and get your neighbors, friends, coworkers, relatives, children, church members, business owners, and any other people who love the Mon together at your house or convenient community location.
3. **Watch the newly released "A Vision for a Wild Mon" video** produced by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition to educate and inspire your group about our proud tradition of protecting our natural heritage. This exciting new video features some of West Virginia's most wild landscapes, located in the Monongahela National Forest, including areas deserving of wilderness protection. The video also highlights threats to these primitive places, as well as ways you can help.

If you care about the future of the Mon be sure to comment on the Draft Forest Plan.

The Forest Service will only send the Draft Forest Plan and related information to those that specifically request it.

You can download a form to order copies at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf/plan_rev/ision/Information/fpr_mailing_update20050505.pdf

Or write:
Monongahela National Forest
Attn: Forest Plan Revision
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, WV 26241

Or call 304-636-1800

Narrated by West Virginia's own **Larry Groce**, famed voice, host and Artistic Director of Mountain Stage, "A Vision for a Wild Mon" shows a side of West Virginia that we cannot afford to lose: breathtaking, unique, irreplaceable wilderness that deserves to be protected forever. The video also features the music of **Wolf Creek Session** and **Keith and Joan Pitzer**, and remarkable photography by **Jonathan Jessup**, **Mark Muse** and others. The video is available in both DVD and VHS format.

4. **Talk about your favorite wilderness areas.** This is a party to celebrate the Mon and why we love it and must protect it. Remember that time you camped in Dolly Sods? What about the great fishing trip you took to Cheat Mountain? And, don't forget the stories about hikes to breathtaking overlooks in Roaring Plains and Seneca Creek. Share your stories and experiences with everyone.
5. **Write the Forest Service and ask them to keep the Mon wild.** Your party pack includes the address of the Forest Service and suggested talking points for writing your letters. Get everyone at your party to write a letter. Encourage them to write about their favorite places and special experiences in the Mon's wild places and tell why wilderness is important to them. We need to send the Forest Service as many comments as possible before the 90-day comment period ends (by the end of October).
6. **Recruit two people at your party to host the next Wild Mon Party.** We need to spread the word about the Forest Service's draft management plan for the Mon and make sure our beloved forest is not opened up to more commercial logging, road building and development. What better way than by hosting a Wild Mon Party?

The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition is available to answer any questions and to help you host a successful Wild Mon Party – possibly even including speaking at your event. To request a Wild Mon Party Pack or learn more about the Mon management plan and our Wilderness proposal, contact Matt Keller at 304-864-5530 or mattk@twc.org.

