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The Highlands Voice

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STREAM PROTECTIONS IN DEEP WATER AT LEGISLATURE

By Donald S. Garvin, Jr.

With hordes of industry lobbyists working the halls of the Capitol building the week after Thanksgiving, the joint Legislative Rule-Making Review Committee tabled two important water rules that would provide protection from pollution for hundreds of West Virginia's highest quality rivers and streams.

Instead, Committee Co-Chairman Senator Joe Minard (D-Harrison County) announced that he was scheduling a meeting between the "interested parties" to try to "work out a compromise" before December's Legislative Interim meetings.

According to press reports, Minard said, "The interested parties are still trying to negotiate . . . There are some loose ends that we think they might be able to compromise on."

The two agency rules at issue here are the same rules proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection that the Legislature decided not to act on during its 2007 regular session earlier this year because some lawmakers were threatening to gut the lists of streams that would be protected if the rules were adopted.

The more controversial of the two rules is 60CSR5, the Antidegradation Implementation Procedures Rule. The streams proposed for protection under this rule are among the highest quality rivers

and streams in the state, and most of them are headwater streams in West Virginia's highlands. DEP is proposing to slash dramatically the list of streams that would be protected by this rule.

The antidegradation provisions of the federal Clean Water Act require states to protect their clean waters from becoming dirty. In order to accomplish this, the Act created a "tier" system, requiring states to place rivers and streams into different categories, or tiers, based on how polluted they are. Higher quality streams are placed into higher tiers that require increased protections. Three levels of protection are provided under the Act – Tier 3, Tier 2, and Tier 1 – with Tier 3 streams being the highest category.

Prior to 2001 – in the early 1990's – West Virginia had adopted an antidegradation policy, but without an implementation plan. It was during the negotiations over the antidegradation policy that West Virginia created a fourth category of stream protection – Tier 2.5.

The Tier 2.5 concept was created as a compromise with industry to avoid having to list all reproducing trout streams in the Tier 3 category, which would allow no degradation. Up until that time it was the state's policy that reproducing trout streams and waters in state and national forests were afforded Tier 3 protection. Streams in the com-

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From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

How Long the Struggle, How Short the Life

Our annual fundraising appeal letter asks, “Do you ever wonder when it will end?—this seemingly endless struggle to protect the natural world around us?”

Well, come to think of it, my wonder has ceased. No, it will never end, and we might as well get used to it.

Benjamin Franklin, asked what kind of government the Constitutional Convention had created, is supposed to have replied, “A republic, if you can keep it.” We have a livable planet, if we can keep it.

Many who returned for our 40th Anniversary Fall Review shook their heads about specific struggles, such as: What’s the status of Corridor H? I can’t believe that’s still going on. You mean the new Mon Forest plan calls for clearcutting AGAIN? Hey, I heard that McDowell County landfill could become a megadump after all. And coal, always coal: the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, now thirty years old, is still subject to “interpretation” that would render it worthless, the Clean Water Act is even older and treated as ditto, acid mine drainage is perennial, etc., etc.

The long-running campaign to achieve wilderness status for special places in the Monongahela National Forest meets the same resistance from the same interests as our work on behalf of Dolly Sods, Otter Creek, and the Cranberry did, nearly forty years ago. And as we reported in last month’s Voice, old accomplishments such as the Otter Creek Wilderness must be defended against new threats such as gas well drilling.

It is enough to make you wonder if we could ever close the books on a single issue. Recently, though, I don’t think so much about how long the battles go on; I’m more impressed by how short the lives we have to give to them last.

It’s not as if we’re asked to sacrifice a chunk of our lives to the struggle. Our lives are all one thing, and to live fully in this beautiful and ever-threatened state we have to understand how defending it and enjoying it are inseparable.

I can’t deny that sometimes we get bogged down in minutiae. However, I’ve never gone into a bog, or been led out again, with better companions. Before the year ends, I want to note the recent turnover on our board of directors. Of the five directors-at-large whose terms expired in October, three decided to retire for three different reasons. While the rest of us understood and respected their decisions, and knew they would continue to play important roles in the life of our state and beyond, still we had to say how much we would miss Perry Bryant, Barbara Weaner, and George Beetham.

Afterwards, George sent this farewell:

I certainly appreciate my four years on the board. I learned much; unfortunately not all of it was good, and I’m speaking here of what Larry Gibson and Julian showed me at Kayford Mountain.

It was also a pleasure working with all of you on

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TAYLOR COUNTY LONGWALL MINE STOPPED

By Beth Baldwin

A quiet but major victory for Taylor County residents was won November 14th, in Charleston by Taylor County Environmental Advocacy Membership (TEAM).

The International Coal Group (ICG) Tygart No. 1 long wall mine permit was reversed by the West Virginia Surface Mine Board. The permit, which was initially issued by the Department of Environmental Protection, would have allowed mining of 6,000 acres on the east side of the Tygart Lake

TEAM was represented at the November 13th & 14th appeal by environmental lawyer Joe Lovett from the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, expert hydrogeologist Charles Norris, and Evan Hansen from Downstream Strategies.

This group, along with the members of TEAM, had done an extensive review of the mining permit and had many serious concerns about the potentially devastating impacts on Taylor County land and water resources. Some of these issues had previously been addressed at public forums but International Coal Group (ICG) never resolved the permit problems to prevent the surface subsidence and toxic water pollution likely to occur during and after the long wall mining of the region.

During the hearing, testimony was presented concerning the de-watering of streams, wells and springs during the mining. After the mine is closed, it will be allowed to fill with water. TEAM hydrogeologist Norris, testified that the sandstone strata layer above the coal would likely be disrupted by the mining activity, causing fractures, which will then allow the toxic iron laden water to seep out into many streams and surface areas. If this is allowed to happen, the water will be all but impossible to treat.

Mr. Norris pointed out that the Kittanning seams of coal to be mined by ICG are known as sources of water pollution. It has been reported that treatment of water pollution at the Martinka Mine in Marion and Taylor Counties costs over a million dollars a year, even though the mine has been closed for several years now. ICG's permit did not address how it would treat the likely high iron waters after mining is complete.

Another major concern was the accuracy of old Cecil mining maps. The maps obtained by the ICG Company were made before mining was complete. If the mine comes too close to the old Cecil Mine, more polluted water could flow from the ICG mine into the Cecil mine, and then into Tygart Lake.

Considering that Tygart Lake is the source of potable water for Taylor and surrounding counties, the effects on the quality, quantity and human health effects would be dramatic, as would the effect upon West Virginia. According to a TEAM spokesperson, it only takes attention to national news to be aware of how devastating the lack of good quality water can be on a community. Taylor county and all of Northern West Virginia are no exception and cannot afford the high priced neglect and serious consequences that the proposed ICG Tygart No. 1 long wall mining permit would have inflicted.

West Virginia cannot afford to be raped of its valuable resources without a responsible plan to protect the long-term legacy of her god given water and lands. It is the goal of the Surface Mine Board to insure that when mining is permitted in West Virginia that mining is done respectfully and responsibly. Because the Department of Environmental Protection did not act to prevent this mining, it was up to our small community to protect these life sustaining resources for our children's health and future by the appealing this dangerous mining permit.

In its decision the Board reversed the DEP's decision to grant the ICG Tygart No. 1 permit. We are grateful to the insight of the West Virginia Surface Mine Board. They undoubtedly determined that the most basic and valuable commodity of Taylor County was indeed seriously jeopardized by the permit as proposed and that this was and is unacceptable.

So a quiet and unprecedented victory was won November 14th. By and for the people of Taylor County, the concerned citizens were heard. In spite of the best efforts of the corporate lawyers of ICG and the indifference of the Department of Environmental Protection, justice was fought for and won.

Sound like a David and Goliath story? Remember, as the great president JFK stated "Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings." John Kennedy, 35th president of US 1961-1963 (1917 - 1963) speech at The American University, Washington, D.C., June 10, 1963.

Editor's note: Ms. Baldwin is the Vice President of the Taylor Environmental Advocacy Membership, a community group consisting of almost 100 families in Taylor County, as well as a member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.



Your comments and opinions are important to us.

Please email any poems, letters, commentaries to the VOICE editor at johnmcferrin@aol.com or real, honest to goodness, mentioned in the United States Constitution mail to John McFerrin, WV Highlands Conservancy, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

CINDY TELLS IT LIKE IT IS TO SENATE COMMITTEE

By Cindy Rank

Both houses of the United States Congress held oversight hearings about the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) on its 30th anniversary.

In July 2007 Congressman Nick J. Rahall presided over a hearing in his House Committee on Natural Resources. Our friends Joe Lovett and Walt Morris testified on behalf of citizens, as did Ellen Pfister of Montana and Brian Wright of Indiana.

On November 13th I was privileged to be the citizen witness at a similar hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Bingaman. Joan Mulhern of Earthjustice accompanied me and also submitted substantive testimony for the record.

The following is an abbreviated version of my testimony.

SURFACE MINE CONTROL and RECLAMATION ACT and the OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING

In writing the opening sections of the Surface Mine Act, Congress recognized that achieving the necessary balance of protecting the environment while providing for the Nation's need for coal would require strong oversight and effective enforcement.

For the law to successfully assure that society would be protected from the adverse effects of strip mining, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) would have to remain firm and exercise strong oversight in the face of great pressures.

When OSM first came to town in the late 1970's it was that powerful force . . . intent on reining in the abuses of the coal industry. Then, as enforcement was handed over to the states, funding and staffing cuts imposed on OSM, and weakening regulatory changes made – mostly at the urging of industry year after year – the Office has become an empty shell of its former self.

Despite the good intentions of many dedicated staff members, OSM has seen to the dilution of standards and the weakening of enforcement.

All too often, the “balance” intended under the act no longer exists. . . . The scales of justice are once again tipped in favor of coal at any cost over people and the environment.

Citizens in the Midwest, Great Plains and as far north as Alaska are experiencing the same disappointment with the agency. Their stories reflect suffering and similar harms as those felt by people throughout Appalachia.

OSM's failure to enforce the law has allowed mining operations to permanently damage streams, forests, and generations old communities. As citizens, we find ourselves embroiled in difficult and lengthy administrative and legal efforts to hold state and federal regulatory agencies accountable.

The same problems that spawned the Surface Mine Act in the first place have risen from the ashes with a vengeance — just in different, more modern day attire and supported by public relations campaigns that shine the most favorable light on some of the most despicable, horrendous crimes against nature.

CONCERNS

Citizen Participation is a key component of SMCRA. Congress intended for citizens to be watchdogs to keep regulators on their toes and ensure implementation of the requirements of the Surface Mining Act.

Today, ordinary citizens are hard pressed to live up to those expectations. When mining is proposed near their homes, individuals are faced with the nearly impossible task of jumping into a maze of regulatory process and learning the fine points of complex technical aspect of the regulations. At great personal and financial expense they must often hire independent hydrologists, biologists, and other legal and technical experts. — All this to protect their lives, homes and communities — protection that SMCRA assured would be provided by OSM.

For us in Appalachia today the situation is particularly explosive — literally. Not only are thousands of pounds of explosives used EVERY DAY to blast apart our mountains, but communities near these mines are becoming tinderboxes. Emotions run high as dust, blasting, water pollution, and flooding force people out of their homes and hollows. Those who stay suffer constant barrage of problems large and small. And for those brave enough to challenge illegally granted permits in the courts, threats against home and family are now rampant.

Just like the bad old days when SMCRA was first enacted, neighbor is pitted against neighbor. One family's livelihood against another family's home and heritage.

Acid Mine Drainage from mines in operation both before and after the passage of SMCRA has killed hundreds of miles of streams and left thousands of others polluted with metals and too acidic to support life.

Bonding mechanisms required by SMCRA were to assure that enough money would be available to reclaim any mines abandoned after 1977. Nonetheless, WV's bond program was never adequate, and, by all recent estimates, millions of dollars are needed to prevent the fund from going broke by the middle of the decade.

Toxic underground mine pools have formed where interconnected deep mine workings in acid producing coal seams are filling with metal and acid laden water that is now finding its way to

the surface, pushing up into wells, yards and streams through cracks and fissures in the surrounding rock.

Subsidence due to longwall mining is causing permanent damage to ponds, streams and homes. In response to longwall mining along the WV-PA border, interstate I-79 rises and falls, nearby communities are damaged, and water polluted. At the same time Taylor County WV residents are appealing a permit for a new 6,000-acre longwall mine next to Tygart Lake.

Blasting regulations are insufficient to protect traditional structures in rural WV and in tribal lands in the west and citizens must go to great lengths to prove damage and beg and plead for remuneration.

Sludge ponds and slurry injection to dispose of coal waste threaten the health of citizens in places like Mingo County WV where water from indoor faucets runs black and brown and children develop blisters and unidentified rashes after bathing in that water.

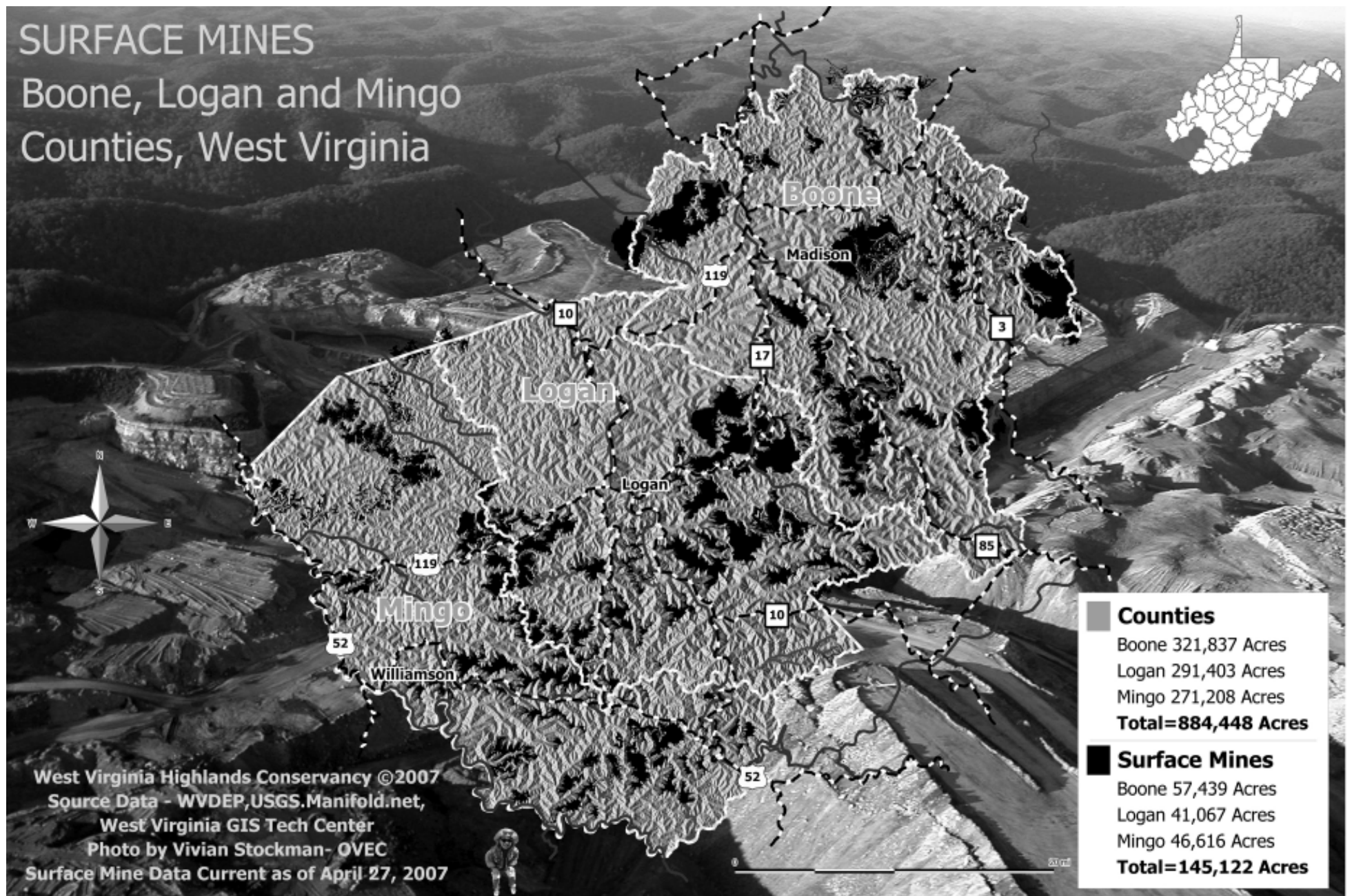
And, lastly, the mother of all atrocities: Mountaintop removal strip mining

Mountaintop removal has become the scourge of southern WV and adjacent portions of KY, and southwestern VA where entire mountains are being blown apart to allow easy access to 6,10 or more seams of coal that lie within our steep mountains like frosting in a layer cake.

Every part of the human and natural environment is suffering as this strip mining on steroids looms over communities and extends into lightly populated mountain hollows forcing small communities to seek safer ground in unfamiliar cities and towns far from their roots that have nurtured generations of their families before them. The very heart and soul of our mountain way of life is being ripped apart with hardly a whimper out of OSM except to adjust one regulation after another to further aid industry in its destruction of our forests, water and communities that depend on those resources.

Despite scientific documentation that “valley fills” have buried or otherwise damaged over 1,200 miles of irreplaceable headwater streams and are likely to impact another 1,000 miles of streams within the decade, no action has been taken to limit or curtail the practice.

No one has studied the cumulative impact



Mine permits for Boone, Logan and Mingo show that mountaintop removal already impacts 15% - 17% of some WV counties where that type of mining is taking place.

to groundwater resources in these areas. No one has predicted what, or where – or even IF – groundwater and hillside springs might redevelop. Ancient geologic formations of steep mountains and narrow valleys are replaced with rubble-filled valleys and sculpted mounds of rock a couple hundred feet lower than the mountains they replace.

Land and forest resources are decimated as our ancient mountains are turned inside out. Blasting hundreds of feet deep, thousands of acres at a time, mining has caused the loss of hundreds of square miles of the most productive and diverse temperate hardwood forests and ecosystems in the world.

Contrary to the clear intent and purpose of SMCRA, a whole host of environmental standards including Approximate Original Contour, saving topsoil, the proper use of topsoil substitutes, Post Mining Land Use, Cumulative Hydrologic Impact Assessment have all been bastardized in order to allow this destructive mining to continue.

And now, OSM is proposing to eliminate the standing prohibition against mining within 100 feet of streams. The proposed rule is a violation

of both SMCRA itself and the Clean Water Act, which SMCRA purports to uphold.

Industry would have us believe that mountaintop removal mining is causing only minimal damage and is only impacting about 1 or 2% of the state of West Virginia. However, if you look at the 13 or so counties where mountaintop removal mining is concentrated, those numbers skyrocket to as much as 15% or more. [See Jim Solley's map that accompanies this article.]

It took nearly 20 years for OSM to recognize and begin to address the costly legacy of acid mine drainage from careless permitting in the '80's. If it takes another decade for the agency to recognize the long-term cost of mountaintop removal mining, we may have precious few mountains and clear headwater streams left to worry about.

—As the late Judge Charles Haden recognized in ruling on the Bragg v Robertson case in 1999, this is a bell that once rung, can't be unring. ...Many of our human mistakes can be corrected, even polluted streams might be restored over long periods of time, but we will never get our mountains and headwater streams and high mountain

springs back again.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We hope that today's hearing will lead to additional oversight by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, particularly on the enormous damage being caused in my region by Mountaintop Removal mining. There are many other citizens and coalfield residents as well as scientists and mining experts who could provide the Committee with valuable and compelling information to demonstrate that this practice must be ended.

LASTLY, let me extend an invitation to members and staff of the Committee to come to West Virginia and see for yourself the profound and irreversible harm that is being done as a result OSM's failure to enforce the law. We will be happy to provide you with the opportunity to flyover mountaintop removal areas and to meet and talk with citizens who are directly and painfully impacted by this mining.

STATE-WIDE ORGANIZATION FORMED TO PROTECT LANDOWNER'S RIGHTS

By Gary Zuckett

West Virginia landowners now have a new organization focused on protecting them from abuses by oil and gas drillers – the WV Surface Owner's Rights Organization (WV-SORO). The group was formed this summer by several state land owners and public interest lawyer Dave McMahon.

"Drilling permits in WV have skyrocketed from 900 per year to over 3,000 so we're hearing from lots more furious landowners who believe they've been run over," commented McMahon. "Recent court rulings on royalty shortages to mineral owners indicate that both groups are being abused by operators."

Another founding member, Roane County landowner John Snyder, took local driller Stalnaker Energy to court over damages to his wooded property. "This used to be my kids' hundred acre wood. Cool, peaceful, the sun was filtered by the trees. It literally drove my daughter to tears when she saw what they were doing to what she wanted for a house site," cited Snyder when describing his disappointment and anger over the location of a new gas well drilled by the company last year.

"When it comes to protecting your property rights against the abuses of the oil & gas drillers, the playing field is tilted about as far as it can go in favor of the drillers," noted Gary Zuckett, an organizer for the group and Executive Director of WV Citizen Action. "As it now stands, landowners get a notice in the mail only 15 days before a permit to drill is approved on their property. The landowner can then send in comments to the WV Office of Oil & Gas. What the notice doesn't say is that under current WV code there is very little the State can do to make changes in the locations of roads, well sites and gas lines," Zuckett added, "These are some of the problems that WV-SORO wants to tackle."

The organization is in the middle of a fall membership drive with the goal of recruiting additional members before the legislature comes to Charleston in January. Its goal is to get state lawmakers to pass a "Surface Owners Bill of Rights" to help "level the playing field" and give landowners more say in the location of wells and access roads and other matters dealing with oil & gas exploration on private property.

Since its formation this summer, WV-SORO now lists members from 44 of West Virginia's counties and members living in 14 other states that are still caring for their home places. "We'll be calling on our members from all over to come to Charleston during the legislative session to tell their stories, make sure their lawmakers are informed of the seriousness of this problem, and get them to fix it," said Zuckett.

Mr. Zuckett recalls several personal horror stories in dealing with different oil & gas drillers that sank wells on his 50 acre farm in Ritchie County over the years. "My best hay meadow was used against my vocal protests for a well location. It's now useless to me, but every year I have to pay taxes on it with out ever getting a lick of damages or any hay since then," explained Zuckett. "One year another outfit tore up the road into our hollow so badly we could hardly get in and out that winter. That's the time we had a foot of gray soap suds floating down our little stream from where they breeched their drilling pit and let it out into the run," he added.

The group contends that the WV Division of Oil & Gas is understaffed to do the job that's required of it. "West Virginia has only 14 Oil & Gas Inspectors to handle 45,000 active wells, and that number is increasing by 3,000

new well permits per year, added McMahon, "Even the laws dealing with surface & water protection now on the books can't be effectively enforced with such a lack of inspection."

WV-SORO is building a resource center and clearing house for issues that affect surface and small mineral owners. Their most popular resource (available for download on their web page or through the mail) is the 166 page "Surface Owner's Guide to Oil & Gas" written by McMahon to advise WV landowners of their rights according to current WV law when drillers come on their property. Other sections of their site link to topographical maps and can show actual satellite pictures of individual farms and properties. The group is also developing a list of lawyers who are willing to represent landowners on oil & gas issues. The newest addition to SORO's web page is a slide show that explains potential problems that oil & gas drilling can cause to springs and water wells. They'll be posting comments from landowners about their personal experiences with specific companies in the near future.

WV-SORO can be reached on the web at www.wvsoro.org or by phone at 304-346-8928.



Leave a Legacy of hope for the future

Remember the Highlands Conservancy in your will. Plan now to provide a wild and wonderful future for your children and future generations. Bequests keep our organization strong and will allow your voice to continue to be heard. Your thoughtful planning now will allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness, wildlife, clean air and water and our way of life.

Speakers Available !!!!!

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

NET METERING- IT'S HERE- FINALLY!

By Frank Young

Would you like to have your electric meter run backwards- legally? Well, now you can.

Electric utility companies in West Virginia recently started offering **Net Metering** service for their Residential and General Service customers who generate part of their own electricity needs.

"Net metering" basically means that a customer of an electric utility company can install his or her own electricity generating apparatus (wind turbine or solar panels, for example), in conjunction with the power company's meter connection to their home or small business. And when that apparatus produces more electricity than the owner consumes, then that excess electricity is fed "backwards" into the power company's system, and the customer's account is credited for that excess amount.

Recent History of Net Metering:

After languishing for years at the WV Public Service Commission (PSC), and prodded by the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005, Net Metering was finally brought to the forefront of that state agency's agenda in 2006.

The PSC, in case Number 06-0708-E-GI, invited individual citizens, electric utility companies and citizen groups to submit comments about Net Metering to the Commission. The PSC, realizing from the public comments that some common ground existed among the various parties to its Net Metering case, formed a stakeholders group to deliberate toward a possible consensus agreement for recommendation to the Commission.

Parties to the case (called interveners) included the state's several commercial electric utility companies, the Commission's engineering and legal division staff, WV Citizen Action Group, WV Environmental Council, and the Consumer Advocate Division (CAD) of the PSC, and a dozen or so individual interveners, including this writer.

And the process worked. The stakeholders group did indeed arrive at a consensus recommendation about Net Metering. And the PSC adopted that joint recommendation as its official order on the matter. And the PSC directed West Virginia electricity utility companies to adjust their tariff on file with the Commission to reflect the Net Metering customer credits as recommended by the stakeholders consensus agreement.

Basic terms of Net Metering service:

* Net metering will be available to **Residential and General Service** customers

* Net metering will be limited to **renewable energy generating sources (solar, wind, biomass, landfill gas, hydropower, or other renewable energy sources)**

* Net metering units allowed up to 25 KW (25,000 watts) generating capacity

* **Full retail credit** for all net metered kilowatts hours of energy returned to the grid

* **Credits carried forward** on a rolling 12 month balance

* Net Metering participating customer to provide \$100,000 liability

insurance (available as standard terms of homeowner's insurance policies)

Net metering is an important piece of the renewable energy puzzle in West Virginia. With net metering there is a bigger incentive for residents to invest in solar and wind power equipment, and other renewable energy sources.

How to Get Started:

To apply for Net Metering electricity service, simply contact your local electrical utility company. The non-refundable application fee cost is \$ 30.00

For more information regarding Net Metering Service, call:

WV Public Service Commission, Utilities Division: 1-800-344-5113

Each customer installing an eligible generating facility will be required to comply with the Net Metering Service technical and other standards approved by the West Virginia Public Service Commission for interconnection.

Finding Generating Equipment and Installation:

There are many regional both long established as well as new business offering renewable energy generation apparatus and installation service, including:

Power In My Back Yard (PIMBY)
Thomas WV 26292
<http://www.getpimby.com/>
(304) 704-5943

Dovetail Solar
Athens, Ohio
www.dovetailsolar.com
(740) 592-1800

"Smart Metering":

"Smart metering", sometimes called "time of day" usage rates, means that the cost of electricity from a power company is based on the time of day it is used. This usually means that electricity consumed from the power company costs more at the power company's "peak load" (usually daytime weekdays) demand times, and less at certain "off-peak" load times (usually nights and weekends).

Time of use rates can be more economical in areas where electric power is more expensive. Some high population density east coast cities use time of day "smart metering" as a customer incentive to help "even out" the highly variable 24 hour demands for electricity.

The West Virginia Public Service Commission has determined that "time of day" pricing of electricity would be of little to no value to West Virginia ratepayers. And so the PSC does not require power companies to incorporate it into its electricity tariff structure.

But time of day usage "smart metering" is available on a consumer voluntary basis to American Electric (Appalachian) Power Co. customers in West Virginia.

VICTORY GARDENS AND ENERGY

By Don Gasper

Some commentators say that to solve our energy problems we need an intense project like when President John Kennedy challenged us to put a man on the moon, like our Manhattan Project in World War II. Projects as big as the Marshall Plan to re-build Europe - and another to build a cultural and economic system in Japan. We need a project like the W.W. II effort itself.

During W.W. II our country pulled together. Gas was rationed. We got one pair of shoes per year. It was the nation's war effort. Every family that could planted a Victory Garden. In mid-city, back-yard after back-yard had one-third of it devoted to a Victory Garden. In some blocks every yard had one. This went on throughout the U.S. as the U.S. Government made it a part of the war effort. The idea was to increase the food available to feed the troops by reducing local needs. Can you imagine that these individual Victory Gardens produced 40% of our vegetables through those years?

We were at war. Sixty years later are we any less in a war today - a war for sustainable planetary food and energy supplies? In fact at no time in our nation's history is there greater need for us all to pull together, perhaps even

greater than W.W.II, to lead the world to reduce global warming - to reduce our individual "Ecological Foot Print". Is there any better visible way for each family to involve itself in the rest of our society's necessary changes?

Every citizen can physically involve themselves in this war effort. (A previous generation remembers this valuable lesson.) This war effort is to save the planet. Recycling has been called the families' gateway to environmental awareness and care. Victory Gardens are also. They are the citizens that conserve electricity. They car-pool, etc. They conserve

water, protect its quality, and insist that it and our air is clean, and our entire environment is globally protected.

By growing a portion of your own food you cut down on transportation and packaging, and then the demand for oil. In 2003 the produce consumed in Chicago and St. Louis traveled an

average of 1,500 miles to get to the markets. Your surplus may be taken to a local farmer's market. In supporting it. there are spin-off advantages to others and yourself. The Victory Garden can become part of the cement holding our society together - and moving it in the right direction. It should again be a vital part of our government's energy policy - a growing part.



HATS FOR SALE

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has two models of caps for sale.

One is khaki and the pre-curved visor is forest green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in gold above We ? Mountains. The heart is red; and lettering is black.

The other model is tan with a muted green pre-curved visor. The front sports the lovely, in color, logo that appears on the VOICE masthead. Beside the logo is "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" in green. The lower back of the hat has the We ? Mountains slogan.

Pictures of both appear on our website www.wvhighlands.org. Both are soft twill, unstructured, low profile with sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. Cost is \$12 by mail. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to James Solley, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306



The *Highlands Voice* is published monthly by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Articles, letters to the editor, graphics, photos, poetry, or other information for publication should be sent to the editor via the internet or by the U.S. Mail by the last Friday of each month. You may submit material for publication either to the address listed above or to the address listed for Highlands Voice Editor on the previous page. Submissions by internet or on a floppy disk are preferred.

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

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

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.

Join Now !!!

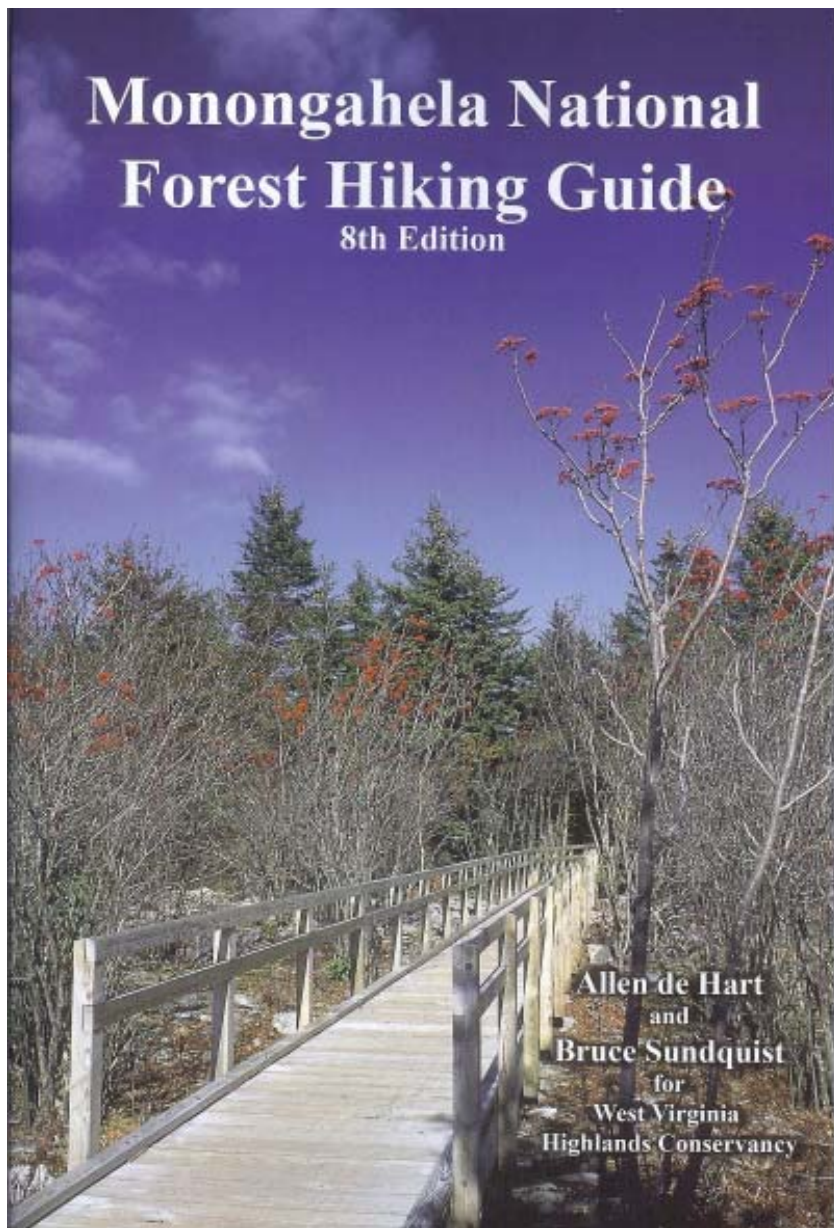
Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership categories (circle one)

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Org</u>
Senior	\$ 15		
Student	\$ 15		
Introductory			
Other	\$ 15		
Regular	\$ 25	\$ 35	\$ 50
Associate	\$ 50	\$ 75	\$ 100
Sustaining	\$100	\$ 150	\$ 200
Patron	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$ 750	\$ 1000

Mail to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

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



The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

By Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist

Describes 180 U.S. Forest Service trails (847 miles total) in one of the best (and most popular) areas for hiking, back-packing and ski-touring in this part of the country (1436 sq. miles of national forest in West Virginia's highlands). 6x9" soft cover, 368 pages, 86 pages of maps, 57 photos, full-color cover, Ed.8 (2006)

Send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:
 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
 P.O. Box 306
 Charleston, WV 25321
 OR

Order from our website at
www.wvhighlands.org

New 8TH Edition Now Available on CD

WV Highlands Conservancy proudly offers an Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide (8th Edition), with many added features.

This new CD edition includes the text pages as they appear in the printed version by Allen deHart and Bruce Sundquist in an interactive pdf format. It also includes the following mapping features, developed by WVHC volunteer Jim Solley, and not available anywhere else:

- All pages and maps in the new Interactive CD version of the Mon hiking guide can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
- All new, full color topographic maps have been created and are included on this CD. They include all points referenced in the text.
- Special Features not found in the printed version of the Hiking Guide: Interactive pdf format allows you to click on a map reference in the text, and that map centered on that reference comes up.
- Trail mileages between waypoints have been added to the maps.
- ALL NEW Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of many of the popular hiking areas, including Cranberry, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and many more

Price: \$20.00 from the same address.

IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO SEE A SQUIRREL FROM AN AIRPLANE

By Judy Rodd, Director, Friends of Blackwater

Several years ago, Friends of Blackwater hired one of the nation's top mammal ecologists to study populations of "Ginny", the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, on the rim of the Blackwater Canyon.

It was a remarkable experience to trudge through the deep, snowy woods with a field biologist, visiting the baited (peanut butter, I think) boxes that attracted these tiny, furry creatures

Based on these important field studies that followed scientific protocols first developed by the official Species Recovery Team for the squirrel, we were able to keep hundreds of acres free from habitat-destructive logging.

But if the right-wing DC politicians who want to defeat the Endangered Species Act in the West Virginia Highlands have their way, such studies will come to an end.

Instead, government airplanes will fly over the mountains and take pictures of the trees! No, the airplanes aren't looking for squirrels hiding in the trees. They will be "estimating" the number of red spruce trees. That will give them an estimate of the number of squirrels, they say.

It's hard to know where to start in criticizing this goofy idea. Every single independent scientist who has studied the squirrel says it won't work. It is contrary to the Division of Natural Resource's recommendations. Squirrels are no fonder of red spruce than of any other high mountain forest species.

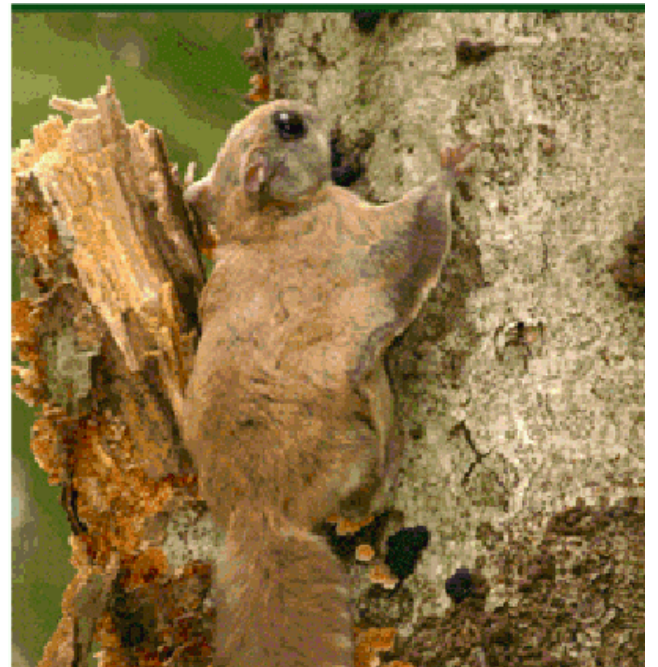
Moreover, tree populations take decades to change noticeably, and squirrels are far more sensitive to micro-habitat changes. Threats to squirrel habitat like climate change are left out of the equation, as is road-building. The only scientific way to measure squirrel populations is to do field work on the ground.

It's obvious why the Beltway insider wise-use extremists really want to keep scientists out of the woods. They want to hide the truth until it's too late, and Ginny and her family lose their mountain home.

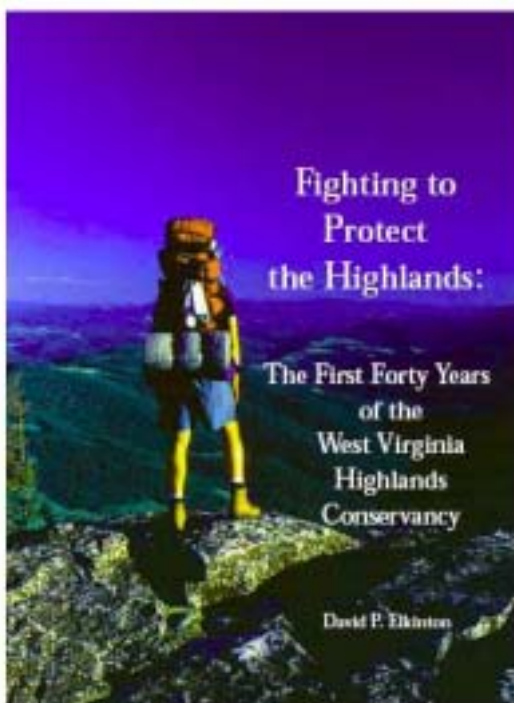
But it ain't a-gonna happen!

The "SOS! – Save Our Squirrel" Coalition now has many member groups from across the region – including, of course, the Highlands Conservancy. We have assembled a crack legal and scientific team to defeat the "de-listing" plan. And they need your support.

"Ginny" the Flying Squirrel is a "poster child" species for the incredible "little bit of Canada in Appalachia" island ecosystem that dots the high mountain ridges of West Virginia. To learn more about how you can help save Ginny and her mountain home, go to www.saveoursquirrel.org, or call 1-877-WVA-LAND.



GREAT HISTORY BOOK NOW AVAILABLE



For the first time, a comprehensive history of West Virginia's most influential activist environmental organization. Author Dave Elkinton, the Conservancy's third president, and a twenty-year board member, not only traces the major issues that have occupied the Conservancy's energy, but profiles more than twenty of its volunteer leaders.

Learn about how the Conservancy stopped road building in Otter Creek, how a Corps of Engineers wetland permit denial saved Canaan Valley, and why Judge Haden restricted mountaintop removal mining. Also read Sayre Rodman's account of the first running of the Gauley, how college students helped save the Cranberry Wilderness, and why the highlands are under threat as never before. With a foreword by former congressman Ken Hechler, the book's chapters follow the battle for wilderness preservation, efforts to stop many proposed dams and protect free-flowing rivers, the 25-year struggle to save the Canaan Valley, how the Corridor H highway was successfully re-routed around key environmental landmarks, and concluding with the current controversy over wind farm development. One-third of the text tells the story of the Conservancy's never-ending fight to control the abuses of coal mining, especially mountaintop removal mining. The final chapter examines what makes this small, volunteer-driven organization so successful.

From the cover by photographer Jonathan Jessup to the 48-page index, this book will appeal both to Conservancy members and friends and to anyone interested in the story of how West Virginia's mountains have been protected against the forces of over-development, mismanagement by government, and even greed.

518 pages, 6x9, color cover, published by Pocahontas Press

To order your copy for \$24.95, plus \$3.00 shipping, visit the Conservancy's website, wvhighlands.org, where payment is accepted by credit card and PayPal.

Or write: WVHC, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Proceeds support the Conservancy's ongoing environmental projects.

SUSTAINABILITY FAIR COMING UP

It's not too early to start planning to attend the annual Sustainability Fair, scheduled for April 18 - 20, 2008 at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, WV. There will be workshops on Recycling, Green Business, Sustainable Tourism, Goat Farming in West Virginia, Slow Food USA, and Collaborative Century 21: An Earth to Table Initiative. There will also be an environmental art exhibit and children's program and music. Sunday features an edible wild plant walk and a tour of a wind/solar powered house. Saturday evening there will be a Sustainable "Epicurious" Dinner.

Keynote speaker for the Fair will be Deborah Koon Garcia, writer and director of the film *The Future of Food*. *The Future of Food* is a 2004 documentary film which makes an in-depth investigation into unlabelled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly made their way onto grocery store shelves in the United States for the past decade.

It gives farmers in disagreement with the food industry a voice to express how their lives and livelihoods have been negatively impacted by this new technology, and shines a light on the market and political forces that are changing what we eat.

The film decries the cost of a globalized food industry on human lives around the world, and highlights how international companies are gradually driving farmers off the land in many countries. Potential global dependence of the human race on a limited number of global food corporations is discussed, as is the increased risk of ecological disasters (such as the Irish Potato Famine (1845–1849) resulting from the reduction of biological diversity due to the promotion of corporate sponsored monoculture farming.

The Fair is basically open and free to the public, with a nominal fee for attending the workshops and keynote address. The gourmet dinner planned for Saturday evening will be by reservations only.

There will also be booths available for displays by various groups, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. There will also be opportunities for organizations and individuals to sponsor the Fair.

Fair. Please visit www.lapaixherbfarmproducts.com which has a link to the most updated Sustainable Fair Agenda.

MORE FROM PRESIDENT HUGH (Continued from p. 2)

the board. The commitment and energy all of you have for the West Virginia highlands is tremendous. I have seen some positive developments along the way, so don't get upset over setbacks. If we do nothing, think what it would be like then.

When I told Frank about my decision, I remarked about the passion that all of us feel. It is inevitable that when people feel strong passion toward their goals that differences of opinion become heated. We have seen that happen, but I urge all of you to accept those differences and continue to work together. The good the Conservancy achieves is greater by far than individual differences of opinion. Only by working together will those achievements continue.

We'll keep that in mind as we continue our work with new directors Dave Fouts, Roger Forman, and Larry Thomas—and with all of our members.

WATER REGULATIONS (Continued from p. 1)

promise Tier 2.5 category, on the other hand, could receive a "minimal" amount of new pollution.

The state has enshrined this compromise into law by creating the Tier 2.5 category of protection, the second-highest level of protection, in both the antidegradation policy and the antidegradation implementation plan.

When the implementation plan rule was originated by the Legislature way back in 2001 it contained a "presumptive" Tier 2.5 list of 444 streams. After a massive six-year misinformation campaign by industry's "dirty water coalition" – a powerful group of polluters including agriculture, timber, coal, oil and gas, manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce – last year DEP proposed cutting the list to 309 streams. This year DEP has proposed cutting that list again, to just 156 streams, in spite of the fact that the agency repeatedly told the Legislature last session that all 309 streams qualified for Tier 2.5 protection according to sound science and the law.

And once again the "dirty water coalition" is objecting even to this reduced stream list.

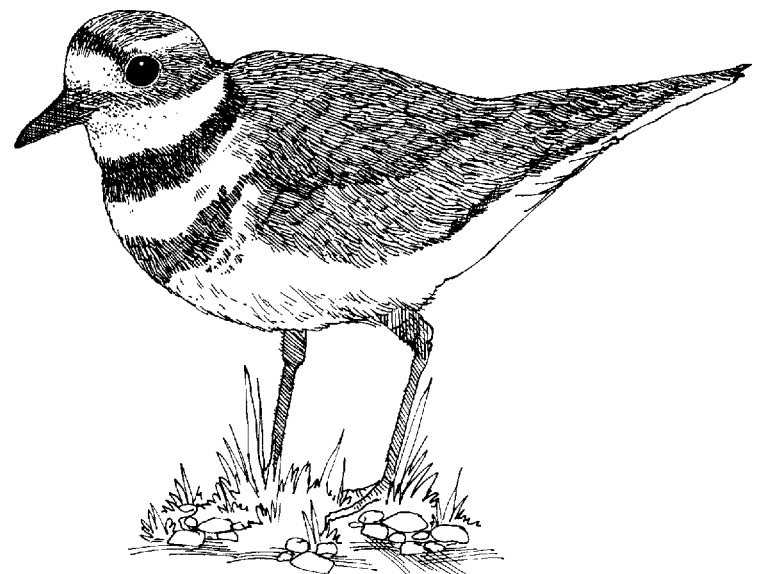
The second of the two rules in contention in the Legislative Rule-Making Review Committee is 47CSR2, the Water Quality Standards Rule. This rule contains a list of trout streams – called the "B2" list – which qualify for water quality standards that are higher than drinking water standards.

To its credit, the Department of Environmental Protection last year proposed greatly expanding the B2 list of streams. This year's proposed rule is exactly the same as last year's. However, the coal industry is strongly opposed to this rule because they cannot appeal a permit decision once a stream is officially placed on this list of streams by the Legislature.

So what is the likely outcome for these two important water rules? One way or the other they are destined to be dealt with during the 2008 regular session of the Legislature which begins on January 9.

If you care about water quality and keeping streams and rivers clean, now is the time to let your legislators hear from you.

Don Garvin is Legislative Coordinator for the West Virginia Environmental Council.



OUR READERS WRITE:

Congratulations on the Fall Review

Dear Editor:

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's 2007 Fall Review Meeting at the Cheat Mountain Club on the Shavers Fork River was like a big Homecoming & Family Reunion.

The Conservancy's primary business is to promote and work for both the preservation and wise uses of the natural resources of West Virginia especially in the West Virginia Highlands Region.

A new book **FIGHTING TO PROTECT THE HIGHLANDS: THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY**-517 pages by author David P. Elkinton was presented to the attendees. This book summarizes and in part details the battles and efforts over the past 40 years to protect and maintain the special natural resources and the character and quality of the environment of West Virginia, particularly its Highlands Region in and around the Monongahela National Forest.

As a founder of the organization I would like to personally thank all of this organization's presidents, boards of directors, members, and the other organizations associated in the efforts described in this book.

All conservancy members, all West Virginia Outdoor Recreation Organizations and all college students of the environment in West Virginia should read and have a copy of Fighting to Protect the Highlands. It is a great piece of historical work to help understand the facts, effort and tenacity required to protect special natural areas and to maintain the quality of our regional environments.

Sincerely,
LOU GREATHOUSE,
Roswell, Ga.

WV Land & Water Conservation Fund Planner 1965/1968

Georgia Land and Water Conservation Fund Planner 1969/1979

Leave the Buffer Zone Rule Alone

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

It is a shame that a U. S. citizen must feel like a convict or some other disadvantaged person in writing to their government to protest a horrendous end run around a regulation that has been a part of the fabric of the "Great" compromise about the surface mining law I have heard praised time and again by Coal Industry Officials, at none other than meetings of the Eastern Mineral Law Foundation (when it was still a viable entity). The nasty little secret that the deep mine boys got included and did not know what was happening when S.MRCA was initially passed has always caused a lot of background noise in implementing this act. The coal industry does not want to deal with the compromise they mistakenly made. I can understand why - But! This rulemaking is one of the little aberrations that occur from time to time. Trouble is this is a big deal in terms of being able to continue to run coal in southern WV & Eastern K.Y. The State of WV regulatory structure, now totally ensconced in the WVDEP has a rule - unrecorded and that is they will not stop the mining of coal in WV. They might condition permits, even to a relatively high degree, but they will not STOP the issuance of permits. If it happens, it is, indeed, a rare occurrence. By abrogating the existing rule you are being a party to the same mind set.

Over the year I have dealt with many environmental issues. The legalities of all of it are extremely fascinating. Most who deal with it become environmental groupies. The fabric of these rules and regulations becomes their battleground. Aside from allowing the continual devastation of Southern WV and Eastern KY, with the attendant floods and personal disaster, what is really going on here is a little reverse game of gotcha!

The citizen activists have fought long and hard and have eventually prevailed in the Federal Court system by virtue of a ruling by Haden and now Chambers. This has been a hard fought battle for many, many years. Now you are attempting in the ultimate stakes of gotcha!, to take this hard fought victory away. After all of the history behind this event, all of the dirty little tricks on giving notice that is not notice, camouflaging statutes and rules and regulations written by industry lawyers and lobbyists in the dark of night and thrown over the transom for

acceptance and adoption by some bureaucrat, sneaky little permits by rules and general permits that are so arcane only a very, very few understand their impact until faced with the on the ground results, you are just coming out in the open and doing this right in the face of all, - AND daring anybody to stop this phalanx.

I know this one feeble little letter will not stop you, whoever 'ol "OSMRE" might happen to be. In a really lame duck administration that has given new meaning to "lame," you should at least be ashamed of what you are doing to the poor people of Southern WV and Eastern KY.

The very least you can do is let this rule stand, and have it addressed in the next administration. It should remain, if nothing else, as a monument to the perseverance of the few and a lesson to the coal industry minions, that they can be outwitted. It is such a rare occurrence.

Sincerely,
Rex Burford
Wilmington, NC

This is a copy of Mr. Burford's comments upon the proposed change to the buffer zone rule.



THE PROMISE OF WILDERNESS

By Don Gasper, Fish Biologist, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, Retired

Recently the Elkins Inter-Mountain carried a full front page and more, noting that West Virginia of Natural Resources does not favor more Wilderness Areas on the Monongahela National Forest. A very good color map was included showing existing and proposed Wilderness Areas. The article explained wilderness designation and states that the present four areas with 27,694 acres of officially designated wilderness could be increased as much as 143,231 acres in seven new areas.

Now is the time for us citizens to set this forest on a course for less fragmentation and for recovery. Wilderness designation would eliminate the fragmentation of the forest that results from road building and would eliminate timber removal all together from these designated Wilderness areas located throughout The Forest. This is particularly true in light of a new 15-year Monongahela Management Plan that would use "clearcutting" as their "preferred" method of harvest.

It is not surprising that professional Game Biologists and Foresters have influenced the Director of the Department of Natural Resources and then even the Governor to formally write in favor of fewer Wilderness Areas for the Monongahela National Forest. These specialists were influential, and policy makers should listen to them. They are after all responsible for the game management, particularly, on the D.N.R.'s over 50 Wildlife Management Areas scattered throughout the state, and they have a traditional presence on the Monongahela, integrating with other multi-uses.

These scientists do not, however, paint a complete picture. They represent mostly the narrower interest of hunters and some anglers. Since hunting and fishing are allowed in designated Wilderness areas, hunters and anglers are important users of Wilderness.

While the interests of hunters and anglers are significant, they are not the only interests. The Director of the Department of Natural Resources and certainly the Governor should represent broad, outdoor citizen's interest. The Monongahela itself should also.

Most citizens today want this National Forest to be first "natural appearing" (as polls show): with little-disturbed recovering watersheds; a unique Big Forest unlike lesser forests common in the landscape of the East. Many hunters may want to retain the unique option of hunting or camping in this great wild forest as well. Creation of designated Wilderness Areas is our opportunity to characterize it so. The Monongahela itself has not chosen to go as far as it could in doing so.

Wilderness designation means no more timbering in those designated areas. Because the Management Plan for the forest appears to favor clear cuts, this means no more clearcutting. Clearcuts cause flooding and stream channel destruction. Stream channels immediately below a clearcut must carry twice the annual flow that they have carried in the last 100 years. Higher peak flows occur more often and scour the banks and bottom producing sand, gravel and rubble sediment. "Headcutting", as channels extend themselves up slope toward the ridge tops, also occurs, and is the third source of sediment.

Sediment is pushed along downstream, as gravel bars deflect current into the bank and cause more sediment generation, perhaps even tree-topple, causing more sediment. Sediment will fill pools. It can raise riffles as well, and at these points, if the bank is low, out-of-bank flooding can occur. This can produce even more sediment. All together, cascading destabilizing impacts occur far downstream. Roads additionally impose an added drainage system that further can increase flows.

I've been working on this Forest for fifty years. In my view, all the stream channels on the Forest are still destabilized since the first logging. Some, in the least disturbed watersheds are just recovering (clearly in some reaches). Even these are considerably destabilized still but recovering from a very bad state. All are fragile. There has been just enough disturbance on most to prevent recovery: a new access road, logging of 20% of a small watershed with another 20% in 20 years, development on private land within a watershed, etc.

In contrast to these destabilizing processes, consider the little disturbed watersheds of Wilderness Areas where they are at a minimum. There, stream channels can begin to heal. Recovery must be "top-down"; first through brook trout reaches, then stocked trout reaches, finally reducing flooding in the communities below. With Wilderness designation, famous brook trout streams of inestimable value would never again be threatened.

Most citizens, surely anglers, would support this unique opportunity Wilderness offers. Trout Unlimited unequivocally supports Wilderness.

Reduction of flood damage is a charter purpose of the Monongahela. (Flooding is barely mentioned in the new Forest Plan, and Wilderness addresses this important deficiency.) Near-by, often flooded communities should support Wilderness designation for the contribution it can make to natural flood control.

These are but two of the benefits of Wilderness Areas. "Natural appearance" is the citizen's most appreciated attribute in all the opinion polls on the management of our National Forests.

According to game biologists at the Department of Natural Resources, Wilderness designation "would prohibit the creation of any new early successional habitat such as linear wildlife openings or seeded logging roads, wildlife openings, cut-back edge borders, savannahs, brushy areas, old fields, or watering holes". These are thought to be good things by a Game Biologist. They are all, however, the result of clearcutting in the Forest. Many citizens would think of them as bad things. These are all unnatural, an inappropriate unexpected intrusion, greatly marring the naturalness and remoteness value of the area. There is "edge" in this Forest already, along its roads and private lands, and in its bogs, balds and beaver areas. These attempts and the continually clearcut patches that grow up to produce a patch work of uneven age forest do conflict. Their substrate diversity, with their "edge", does produce artificially high levels of game and non-game species. This, however, is at the expense of the Great Natural Appearing Forest, with its unbroken view of a vast even-age, natural canopy, without noting a mark of man, without the uneven patches of disturbance. How very rare this is today, how valuable! In Wilderness Areas this is preserved, and even more enhanced and appreciated in the future.

Although the United States Forest Service chose not to do so for the Monongahela National Forest, it polled citizens about their "desired future condition" as part of the planning for the nearby Jefferson and George Washington National Forests. Those near-by citizen polls confirm "natural appearance" and "watershed recovery" to be the highest values. Citizens today recognize the unique opportunity a "Great Forest" presents, surely they do not want fragmentation of wild forest habitat. They recognize, surrounded by a sea of "edge" and lesser

(Continued on p. 14)

CLOSING OUT THE SEASON AT BIG SCHLOSS

By Mike Juskelis

As most of you know I'm strictly a 3-season backpacker. Still I try to extend the season as long as possible and I usually choose something relatively close to home and shorter than the usual summer hike. This year we did Big Schloss as an over-nighter. I was joined by Hardcore, Shortstack, TreebeardIM, Ted E. Bear, Skywalker, Rocky, Good Golly Miss Molly, Everybody Loves Ramon, The Koyote Kid and Jack and Jill. Richard started with us but had a deteriorating cold. After two miles he decided (probably wisely) to pack it in and returned to his car.

I have hiked this 12 mile route several times before; it was the first backpack of my life back on April 3/4, 2004. The climb up the Little Stony Run Trail was substantially easier now than the first time. I think losing about 10

pounds of pack weight and lighter clothing had a lot to do with it.

We took an extended break at the Sugar Knob Cabin before completing the final segment of the 1500 foot elevation gain. We pretty much coasted into camp by 3:00.

Although Sandstone Spring was not flowing over the trail as usual we found plenty of water at the springhead some 150 yards back in the woods behind a hidden campsite that, until now, I wasn't aware of. We set up camp and tried to hold off from cooking our dinner.

The entire forest was under a fire ban so there would be no camp fire. We ate and hung the bear bag and chatted in the glow of Treebeard's mini-candle lantern for a bit. I and others were in the rack by 7:00 while the rest managed to stay up a little beyond 8:00.

With the changing of the time overnight we were up and about by 6:15 the next morning. We quickly ate and broke camp, getting on the trail before 8:30. A brisk hike soon found us at a nice un-named vista. We checked it out and then continued on to the Big Schloss Connector Trail. Here we dropped our packs and did the out-and-back hike to Big Schloss without our heavy packs.

Even though the skies were overcast the views and fall colors were still pretty impressive. After taking it all in we returned to our packs and quickly finished the 2.5 mile descent back to our cars. We finished up about 11:45, plenty of time to make it home to watch the two unbeaten National Football League teams have at it.



MORE ABOUT THE PROMISE OF WILDERNESS (Continued from p. 13)

forests, what is missing from the landscape, is the Great Forest. It is clearly implied that the aggressive artificial substrate manipulation for increased wildlife populations is in conflict with the desired future condition of citizens today.

Moreover, it is arrogant to assume that a natural system requires incessant "management." Specialists, each with their own fascinating concepts and their technology, cannot presume to understand much of the working of the Eastern Forest. It is not even clear that disease is bad. We must learn more about The Forest. We may know a lot about what an aggressively managed forest is like. We don't know as much about what a forest would be

like were it to be left alone to allow natural processes to work themselves out. Wilderness designation would make that possible. Little undisturbed Wilderness Areas scattered throughout The Forest would become study/research areas, ecological anchors and strongholds of recovery.

Only arrogance and ignorance would propose aggressive forest management implied by Game Biologists and Foresters and in this new Forest Plan. These forces proposed to enslave this Forest with its forest life woven together in a seamless tapestry, still rooted in old mountains producing clean air and clean water in moderated flows, with structure and

process in balance and harmony far beyond human understanding. Free these natural processes from imagined human control and domination, and give this wild forest the space and time it needs to recover.

In the designation of Wilderness areas, we have the opportunity to allow at least those parts of the Forest be free from intrusive management. Only citizens and Congress can create new Wilderness Areas throughout this forest of ours. The time to do it is now.

CLIMBING AROUND COLE MOUNTAIN

By Mike Juskelis

I was joined by Hard Core, The Coca Cola Kid, Indiana Moser, Treebeard, Cognac Jack and Waffles. We all arrived at the Long Mountain Wayside on U.S. Route 60 by noon. It was a 4.4 mile hike with extra water on our backs since recent reports said the springs were drying up. Each of us was carrying between 6 and 10 extra pounds of water weight. We climbed a little over 2100 feet over the first three miles. 1000 feet of the elevation gain came in the first 1.2 miles. It was pretty tough.

Once we got beyond that point the grade moderated substantially making the remainder of the climb easier for us. Hard Core took a nasty fall and bruised her knee badly on the way up but insisted on continuing to camp. (Now you know why she bears that trail name.) Once at the top of Bald Knob (which is no longer bald) we were met with a rewarding westward view. We could easily see into West Virginia! After walking the crest of the ridge we descended quickly to our base camp at Cowcamp Gap, dropping 800 feet over 1.5 miles. (We would have to climb back up it on our return leg.)

There was water at camp but the crew decided not to string me up since I had the GPS, maps and car keys. We had plenty of time to set up camp and explore the area. There is a fire ban on until the middle of December so there would be no campfire. Some amused themselves with a tea candle until it went out.

Others turned in early in preparation for the long hike the next day. The night was a bit brisk but just right for sleeping outside. A herd of deer ran through camp and the owls hooted all night. We even heard a dog barking in the distance. That was a bit strange since there are no homes in the general vicinity.

We arose the next day to another day of blue skies. Hard Core's knee was feeling better although it displayed interesting shades of purple and brown. She opted to stay at camp even though she was dying to visit the Cole Mountain Bald. The Kid lent her a book on the French and Indian War and Diane lent her some

reading glasses. After hanging our food again we set off on a strenuous but rewarding hike.

The hike was nothing short of spectacular. We visited a couple of nice vistas on the way up to the bald but they were mere teasers. As we climbed the last few yards to the top we could see that the crest was treeless. Reaching the summit was a real "Wow!" moment. We were presented with a nearly 360 degree view with hardly any haze. Needless to say we took our time climbing down to Hogcamp Gap.

From there we began a steady climb up Pompey Mountain. Tony Van Vugt of www.Hikingupward.com mentions a side trail to a minor vista on his site but we must have walked by it. We explored what appeared to be a couple of sketchy trails but they ended in disappointment.

The trail itself and the surroundings were still worth the effort. We then climbed up to the West vista of Mount Pleasant, shimmied up a rock formation and enjoyed a 300 degree view while we took our lunch break.

Reluctantly we climbed down off of our perch and paid a quick visit to the East vista before descending to Hogcamp Gap once again. There, waiting for us, was a beautiful white and tan hound. This was probably the dog we heard during the night. She lead the way back to camp where we gave her food, water and shelter for the night.

Hard Core was doing pretty good upon our return. She had read the entire book on the

French and Indian War but refused to give us a synopsis over Indiana's Cranberry Tea Candle saying that is was way more complicated than what she was originally taught.

The next day we broke camp and began the long climb back over Bald Knob. Near the junction of the Hotel Trail and the AT we heard someone calling and Pleasant (the name we began to call our new canine friend) took



off running. As we rounded a bend in the trail there stood the owners of the lost dog. We talked to them for a while and they thanked us for taking care of their dog for them.

We said goodbye to our friend and continued the climb to the top of Bald Knob. Once at the top we took a brief break and continued on, each at their own pace. The last hiker came out of the woods at 11:30. We freshened up and said our farewells, all agreeing that this adventure was a keeper and should be repeated next year.

We must come to terms with nature. What is needed is man's mastery not of nature but over himself.

Rachel Carson

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

Open Dates: 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 lunch for a picnic on Larry's mountain. Call in advance to schedule. Julian Martin (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com or Larry Gibson (304) 542-1134; (304) 549-3287



OUTINGS PROGRAM IN HIBERNATION

As happens most years, the hikers have holed up for the winter. You can always visit a strip mine. They are with us always. Although some years there are snowshoe trips, trips to someplace beautiful may have to wait until the spring.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get free **I ♥ Mountains** bumper sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in with the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to provide bumper stickers to their customers/members may have them free. (Of course if they can afford a donation that will be gratefully accepted.)

Also available are the new green-on-white oval Friends of the Mountains stickers. Let Julian know which (or both) you want.



BROCHURES

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has joined with the Sierra Club, Coal River Mountain Watch, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Appalachian Voices, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Keeper of the Mountains Foundation and Christians for the Mountains 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 distribute them.

T-SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the **I ♥ Mountains** slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" in smaller blue letters is included below the slogan. Short sleeve in sizes: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Long sleeve in sizes S, M, L, and XL. **Short sleeve** model is \$10 total by mail; **long sleeve** is \$15. Send sizes wanted and check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy ATTN: James Solley, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

