



The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Volume 41, Number 9 September, 2008

NORTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL KICKED OFF ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has decided to “delist” the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel. This means that the squirrel has been removed from the list of animals which receive protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Whether this is good news or bad news depends upon one’s perspective. To the cheerfully optimistic this is an indication that the species is no longer on the brink of extinction, that its presence on the list of endangered animals for thirty five years has resulted in recovery for the species.

To the more cynical (or more realistic) the delisting may not mean that at all. It may mean that the Fish and Wildlife Service is pretending that the squirrel has recovered when it has not and is abdicated its duty to protect it. This view holds that by withdrawing the protection provided by the Endangered Species Act the Fish and Wildlife Service is pushing it toward extinction. (See related story on p. 20 of this issue of the Highlands Voice).

The squirrel has been the center of controversy in West Virginia in recent years because of its potential effect upon logging and other human activities. Continuing it on the list of endangered species would have the effect of impeding these

activities. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, it currently exists in seven West Virginia counties as well as Highland County, Virginia. Its preferred habitat is old growth red spruce and northern hardwoods.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) first placed the West Virginia northern flying squirrel on the endangered species list as an endangered species on July 1, 1985. At the time, the threats identified included: species rarity; habitat loss; human disturbance; and competition with, and transfer of, a lethal parasite from the more common southern flying squirrel.

In 1990, the Fish and Wildlife Service did a recovery plan covering both the West Virginia northern flying squirrel. It now says that the recovery plan has been sufficiently successful that the squirrel can be removed from the list. The squirrel will, however, have to continue to survive as best it can without the special protections available to species which are on the endangered species list.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will monitor the squirrel for the next ten years. If it begins to decline, the Service would consider putting it back on the list of endangered species.



What’s Inside

Thoughts from President Hugh	2	Letters	10	Fall review coming up	15
Roster of officers	2	Get stuff	10	Outings	16
Citizens fight big mine	3	How to join	11	Hiking Otter Creek	17
Trouble on Mud River	4	Speakers available	11	Dam for Richwood?	18
Wilderness	6	Forum on Mon Forest	12	Wind power	19
A friend remembered	7	Balsam fir	12	Book review	20
Powerline news	8	Wilderness advocacy training	13	Squirrel news	20
Notice of annual meeting	8	Books to order	14		
A loss remembered	9	Clean coal	15		

From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

Hoagland, Penobscot, Squirrel, Sturgeon & Glee

“Becoming a committed conservationist, one also becomes—unfortunately—a pessimist because you start paying attention to the destruction of habitat wherever you are.” Edward Hoagland, a favorite writer about the natural world, describes his and our plight. He’s now in his 70’s, and must dig in his heels against the slide from pessimism to depression to “what’s the use?”

A few years ago, in his introduction to the Library of America edition of *Walden*, Hoagland wrote: “[W]e don’t read Thoreau simply for his pronouncement that the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation, or as a protoconservationist either, or as an eremitical Tom Paine. It is his glee that wins us over. Glee is rarer than outrage, at least in books, and whether he is house-building, boiling hasty pudding, going a-chestnutting, a-berrying, a-fishing, or looking into a partridge chick’s intelligent eye . . . his happiness is catching. ‘I rejoice that there are owls,’ he tells us . . .”

Glee wins us over. If only we could infuse our fellow-citizens with joy that there are owls, and flying squirrels, and short-nose sturgeon!

As expected, in August the Department of Interior’s Fish and Wildlife Service de-listed the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel. Officially, it’s no longer endangered. Since we know so well the motives of those who pressed for the decision, our glee is somewhat muted. Dirk Kempthorne, the Interior Secretary with a swashbuckler’s name, was more concerned about the squirrels’ endangering federal and commercial projects than he was about dangers to the squirrels themselves.

Two of the three independent scientists who were asked to review the evidence said it was premature to take the squirrel off the list. The Service’s public presentations exaggerated the current population. Nevertheless, it’s clear that there are many more flying squirrels today than there were in 1985, when they were first put on the list.

The Highlands Conservancy’s red spruce restoration project, led by Dave Saville, continues to work with the Forest Service, the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the Division of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy and other partners to augment the squirrels’ high-elevation habitat.

As for the sturgeon, it’s still endangered, but help is on the way. In August, an environmental coalition announced that sufficient funds had been raised to buy three dams on Maine’s Penobscot River. When two of the dams are taken out and a third is decommissioned, a thousand miles of main stem and tributaries will be opened to the Atlantic, and a major ecosystem restored.

The Atlantic salmon is the best-known species that will benefit from a return to its historic spawning grounds, but just as the red spruce forest is home to many creatures besides the squirrel, so this aquatic tide will also include American shad, blueback herring, alewife, eel, sea lamprey, striped bass, tomcod, rainbow smelt, and Atlantic sturgeon as well as the short-nose sturgeon.

The Penobscot project models the complications involved in cleaning up our industrial past—and present. The original agreement, announced in 2004, was brokered among several local and national environmental groups, the federal government, the State of Maine, the Penobscot (Native) Nation, and the PPL Corporation, the power company that owns the dams. To compensate for lost energy from

(Continued on p. 5)

Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662, hugh.rogers@gmail.com
 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Buff Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139; (412) 828-8983; buffrodman@hotmail.com
 VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE AFFAIRS: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com
 VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Marilyn Shoenfeld, HC 70 Box 553, 23 Sands Springs Lane, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, marilyn.shoenfeld@gmail.com
 SECRETARY: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733, johnmcferrin@aol.com
 TREASURER: Bob Marshall, 886-Z Divide Ridge Road, Kenna WV 25248 (304)HC 64, Box 281, Hillsboro, WV, 24946 (304) 653-4277
 545-6817, woodhavenwva@netscape.net
 PAST PRESIDENT: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945, fyoung@mountain.net

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2009)

Bob Henry Baber, 207 Howard St., Glenville, WV 26351, (304) 462-0320, mayorbobhenrybaber@yahoo.com
 Dave Fouts, HC 80, Box 993, Maysville, WV 26833, (304) 749-8172, foutsberg@citlink.net
 Roger Forman 100 Capitol Street Suite 400, Charleston WV 25301, rdr@citynet.net; (304) 346-6300 work (304) 389-4748 cell.
 Larry Thomas P.O. Box 194, Circleville, WV 26804, (304) 567-2602, larrythomas@aol.com
 Carter Zerbe, 16 Arlington Ct., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)343-3175; scz3667@aol.com

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2008)

Don Gasper, 4 Ritchie St., Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304)472-3704
 Bob Gates, 1117 Virginia St.E., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)342-2624; photonzx@ntelos.net
 Russ McClain, 104 Guy St. Elkins, WV 26241, (304)637-2201; mcclainw@davisandelkins.edu
 Bill McNeel, 1118 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954, (304)799-4369; wpmcneel@gmail.com
 Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; peter.shoenfeld@gmail.com

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY: Robert (Bob) Handley, HC 67 Box 508 Renick, WV, 24966 497-2266; grbat@ntelos.net
 PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS: Jean Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139, (412)828-8983; jeanrodman@verizon.net
 BROOKS BIRD CLUB: Cindy Ellis, RR 1, Box 163, Red House, WV 25168 (304) 586-4135; ellis_6511@msn.com
 MOUNTAINEER CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED: Frank Slider, Rt 1, Box 163-A2, Middlebourne, WV 26149, (304) 758-2500; sliderf@ovis.net
 WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION: Don Garvin, P.O. Box 666, Buckhannon, WV 26201; (304) 472-8716; DSGJR@aol.com
 DOWNSTREAM ALLIANCE: Craig Mains, 137 Hoffman Ave., Morgantown WV 26505; cmains@wvu.edu
 FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE KANAWHA: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802; clrank@hughes.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MINING COMMITTEE: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802; clrank@hughes.net
 PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Bob Marshall, 201 Virginia St.W., Charleston, WV 25302, (304)545-6817; woodhavenwva@netscape.net
 OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com
 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945; fyoung@mountain.net
 WIND ENERGY COMMITTEE: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820; PShoenfeld@gmail.com
 ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733; johnmcferrin@aol.com
 RIVERS COMMITTEE: vacant
 HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662; hugh.rogers@gmail.com
 OUTINGS COMMITTEE: Jonathan Jessup, 8225 Adenlee Ave. #40, Fairfax, VA 22031, (703) 204-1372; jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS OFFICES

SPEAKERS BUREAU: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989; martinjul@aol.com
 WEB PAGE: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820 PShoenfeld@gmail.com and Jim Solley, jamessolley@comcast.net

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Beth Little HC 64, Box 281, Hillsboro, WV, 24946 (304) 653-4277; blittle@citynet.net
 HIGHLANDS VOICE EDITOR: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733; johnmcferrin@aol.com

CITIZENS OPPOSE NICHOLAS COUNTY MINE

126 people in the vicinity of Jones Branch, Hutchinson Branch and Twentymile Creek in Nicholas County signed the following letter to the Army Corps of Engineers objecting to a 404 valley fill permit. West Virginia Highlands Conservancy intern James Tawney went door to door with Tom Mullins, who lives on Jones Branch next door to the proposed mine, to collect the signatures on the letter. Tawney is also a community organizer for the Sludge Safety Project, a joint effort of Coal River Mountain Watch, Concerned Citizens in Mingo County and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

Intern Tawney, who lives on a farm not far from the proposed mine, is looking forward to the coming ginseng season and Tom Mullins is an avid coon hunter. Both know that ginseng and raccoon habitat will be destroyed by the Massey subsidiary's destructive business.

Here is the letter:

Dear Ms. Spagna:

We are writing to comment on Public Notice No. 2007-285-GAU issued on August 12, 2008. We object to the approval of this permit due to the following reasons:

- 1) These valley fills will be close to communities and would increase the danger of flooding along the floodplains of Jones Branch, Hutchinson Branch and Twentymile Creek where most of the residents live.*
- 2) This mine will create an unsightly view and will add to the continuing devaluing of area residents' property due to strip mining. Residents of Jones Branch and other communities in this area deal with dust from loadouts, truck and equipment traffic, supply traffic,*

and any increase in any type of traffic would be a health and safety concern for these residents.

- 3) Native American cemeteries are known to be in this area by the residents and the old trails used by Native Americans and founders of the county are also known to be in this area.*
- 4) Many people hunt game and dig ginseng and other roots in this area and depend on these valleys to sustain this culture.*
- 5) Land use as select-cut timberland is more valuable in the long run than the mining of the thin seams of coal in this permit and the value of the timber as a sequester of carbon is lost with this type of mining. Many herbs and the use of the land for recreation are also lost.*
- 6) Residents of Jones Branch and others do not have public water and are dependent upon personal water wells. They cannot take a chance at having their wells dropped or lowered by blasting and water quality is a concern in this community. The owners of property along this stream face the risk of leeching pollutants on their shorelines. These residents' water rights should be acknowledged. We should be allowed to assert our right to use the water under our land. We also have a right to safe, drinkable water and not have to worry about it being polluted or our supply drained.*
- 7) As citizens of this area we believe the approval of this permit would be a detriment to the needs, health and general welfare of the people.*

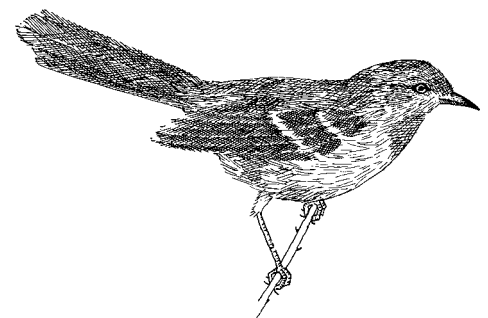
James Tawney's farm borders on the Gauley River National Recreation Area. He sent a similar letter to the Army Corps of Engineers with this to add:

"Peters Creek is a direct tributary of the Gauley River in the Gauley River National Recreation Area – not a tributary of Twentymile Creek as stated in the Public Notice on page 3 under "Location." The Gauley River National Recreation Area is used by thousands of white water enthusiasts and other tourists every year. I am greatly concerned about the cumulative effects of the many mines that discharge into the Gauley River National Recreation Area via Peters Creek."

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you would like to write a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers concerning this permit send it to:

Mrs. Teresa Spagna, Project Manager
South Regulatory Section, CELRH-OR-
FS
USACE Huntington District
502 Eighth Street
Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2070



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 use 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.

ANOTHER SAD DAY FOR THE MUD RIVER

By Cindy Rank

The nearly 20 square mile Hobet mine complex in Lincoln County is expanding yet again.

The dragline has moved back across the Mud River and is working above the Miller-Caudill homeplace on the north side of the watershed.

The newest permit, known as Hobet #22, is now to extend into the Berry Branch headwaters with another ~600 acre permit to follow down the west side of Berry Branch.

The Hobet #22 Fiasco

With Hobet #22, our friends at the Army Corps of Engineers continue to evade public involvement in the permitting process.

The same company that brought us boulder laced streams at Apogee late in 2007 pulled the same quick maneuver at the head of Berry Branch in early August 2008.

Within a few days time of being notified of the Corps approval of their Clean Water Act 404 fill permit the company had dumped rock into the 4.2 miles of streams in the permit area. With the streams already covered with boulders, our request that the court save those streams while we assessed the permit was moot.

A Bit of Background

Back in November of 2006 we had signed on to comments by the Appalachian Center along with the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and Coal River Mountain Watch raising concerns about Hobet #22 similar to those we have voiced about Corps actions in regard to other mountaintop removal/valley fill permits.

The public notices we receive consist of a couple of pages of boiler plate language with only a few brief paragraphs describing the location of the proposed activity, the names and lengths of streams to be filled and a couple of general maps.

In days gone by we rarely knew when permits we had commented on were actually issued without submitting weekly Freedom of Information Act requests. Or waiting for the Corps irregular – sometimes monthly - summaries of permitting actions. In response to previous litigation, the court said that was insufficient and ordered the Corps to notify us at the same time it notified the company that a permit had been approved.

Well, now the corps is notifying us. But lo and behold, unlike the sparse information in the public notice for the Hobet #22 proposal that we commented on nearly two years ago (November 2006), the permit issued to Hobet on August 1st contained some 650 pages of additional information and a 117 page single spaced decision document.

Those documents were not available at the time of the public comment period. We weren't notified of their existence when Hobet

first submitted them over a year after the public comment period ended, nor did the Corps share them with us in March of 2008 when the agency circulated those same documents to other Federal and State agencies for review and comment.

[And in it's response to public comments, the Corps had the nerve to criticize our lengthy comments as being "very general in form" and containing "little specific content" about the Hobet #22 project. — Well, DUUUH!]

When notified that the permit had been approved and that substantial amounts of new information were part of the final permit, our lawyers quickly (i.e. on Friday August 8th) filed a request for Temporary Restraining Order. We wanted to prevent destruction of the streams until our experts had a chance to review and comment on the new documents. The following Monday (August 11th) the Judge Chambers agreed to grant the Restraining Order and set a hearing date of August 20th.

... Never let it be said that the coal industry isn't industrious. ... On August 13th, a mere eleven days after the permit was issued, 5 days after we filed for a Restraining Order and two days after the Temporary Restraining Order was approved, Hobet's lawyer gave Joe Lovett pictures that showed streams on the site were already filled with rock and boulders. [— My, my how quickly those dozers can move !]

Joe and I met with company lawyers and representatives on the 15th to verify the information and to discuss what could be done about the hearing scheduled for the 20th.



Cindy Ellis ponders where the cerulean warbler (and other species) will find to land when it arrives next spring.

(Continued on p. 5)

MORE ABOUT THE MUD (Continued from p. 4)

A lot of criticism has ensued because it appeared that pressure from the Governor and the United Mine Workers of America and the threatened job loss and a rally of angry miners forced us to “settle”. Truth is, we were boxed in by the Corps and company actions that left us with no streams to protect.

Moving Forward

We’ve now filed an amended complaint that deletes all claims against the company’s mining activities pursuant to the Corps permit at Hobet #22, but selenium limits have been included in discharge permits for the site and we retain the right to challenge excursions of those limits. Most notably, the amended complaint continues the single remaining claim against the Corps for its procedural violations.

We have asked to court to remedy this situation that thwarts our ability to realistically comment on the permit before stream filling begins. To quote from the Memorandum in support of our motion for summary judgement:

“The prejudice to Plaintiffs from the Corps’ procedural violation is enormous. Plaintiffs have to prepare their public comments in the dark, raising general objections in anticipation of what they believe the Corps will do based on past experience. Then the Corps sits back and prepares a mountain of undisclosed information, which it releases only when the permit is issued, accompanied by a massive decision document running over a hundred single-spaced pages. Plaintiffs have to scramble to digest this information and prepare their legal papers in a few days while the mining companies scramble to assemble their bulldozers to destroy the streams as quickly as possible to try to moot the case. If Plaintiffs succeed, as here, in obtaining a TRO [Temporary Restraining Order], they have to prepare their witnesses for a preliminary injunction hearing in ten days or less, while at the same time drafting the public comments that they should have had at least thirty days to prepare before the Corps issued its decision. This makes a mockery of the public participation requirements of the CWA and NEPA. It resembles trial by ambush, where one side resists all discovery and then unleashes all of its material on the eve of trial.”

The Cerulean Warbler winters in northern South America and migrates to the forests of the eastern United States where it summers and breeds. It is one of the species of highest concern in the eastern United States because of a small total population size and significant declines throughout its range. It has been under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Listed on the Audubon Watchlist. To impress your friends with your urbane sophistication, call it by its French name, paruline azurée.



More from President Hugh (Continued from p. 2)

those dams, PPL was allowed to increase power generation at six other dams. Major funds had to be raised. About \$15 million to buy the dams came from federal grants, while the rest of the \$25 million was privately donated. More money will be needed to remove the dams and build a fish bypass around the deactivated one. All that will probably be completed by 2012.

Meanwhile, the state and environmental groups have spent years cleaning up the river, once heavily polluted by the paper mills and other factories that lined its banks. Maine, like West Virginia, has long abused significant parts of its spectacular natural heritage. The first dam that blocked fish on their way upstream has been there, in one form or another, since 1800. The Penobscot that flowed down from Mt Katahdin, the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, served as a sewer for towns such as Bangor and Millinocket. Now, many of the old mills have closed. State officials hope towns along the river will prosper from a greener economy. For the Penobscot Nation, bringing

the fish back will restore a crucial part of native culture that had been lost for two hundred years.

Ed Abbey used to say to Ed Hoagland, “Let’s keep things the way they were,” and chuckle. Well, sometimes we are able to recover what was lost or even better, prevent its loss in the first place. That takes persistence—and partners. In addition to the red spruce project, the Highlands Conservancy has worked with local and national partners on securing new wilderness areas, blocking illegal mountaintop removal/valley fill mines, bringing environmental concerns to the legislature, keeping highways and proliferating energy projects out of special areas, protecting state parks, national forests, and wildlife refuges from incompatible uses, and other issues we have taken on. Some pessimists make good company.

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.



Last chance to pass legislation before Congress adjourns**URGE WV SENATORS TO PUSH FOR WILD MON ACT PASSAGE!**

In the halls of the United States Congress, the first legislation to permanently protect West Virginia's wild places in over a quarter-century awaits its last steps to becoming law. With a passing vote on the Senate Floor, six areas containing pristine watersheds, threatened wildlife habitat and unparalleled recreational opportunities in the West Virginia Highlands will remain forever wild.

The 2008 Public Lands Management Omnibus Act (S. 3213) was introduced to the Senate Floor by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) on June 26. With a total of 96 lands bills, the legislative package includes seven wilderness bills, protecting nearly 2 million acres of

wild lands across the U.S. Among those is the Wild Monongahela Act, which provides protective status to around 37,000 acres over six areas on the Monongahela National Forest.

Under this historic legislation, three existing Wilderness areas, Dolly Sods, Cranberry and Otter Creek will be expanded. Additionally, three areas, Big Draft, Spice Run and Roaring Plains West, will be protected in perpetuity as newly designated Wilderness.

The Wild Mon Act was introduced in January, and was co-sponsored by all five members of West Virginia's Congressional Delegation. In April, the bipartisan initiative passed the House of Representatives by a margin of 368-

17 and now has only a floor vote in the Senate left to send it to the President's desk to be signed into law.

When Congress returns from its August recess, there will be less than a month for them to pass the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2008. With minimal time left to act, Senators Byrd and Rockefeller need to hear from their constituents, urging them to do what they can to push for the legislation's passage on Senate floor. This is truly the last chance for this important package of public land bills to become law!

Areas included in the latest version of the Wild Monongahela Act

Big Draft
Cranberry Expansion
Spice Run
Roaring Plains West
Dolly Sods Expansion

Otter Creek Expansion



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.



Take Action!

Ask our Senators to work with other Senate leaders to pass the bipartisan package of public lands legislation that contains this important measure before Congress adjourns for the year!

Senator Robert C. Byrd
(202)-224-3954

Senator Jay Rockefeller
(202) 224-6472

-I'm calling to thank the Senator for his leadership and support for the Wild Monongahela Act.

-This measure is part of an omnibus package of public lands bills (S. 3213) pending in the Senate. I'd like to urge the Senator to work to ensure that the Wild Mon Act is enacted this year by working with other leaders in the Senate to pass the omnibus public lands package without delay.

VOICE NOW AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY

The *Highlands Voice* is now available electronically. The electronic version would be the same publication as you now receive by mail. The difference would be that it would come as an e-mail attachment rather than in the mail. It would probably arrive a few days earlier than you are accustomed to receiving your paper copy.

If you choose this option, please contact Beth Little at blittle@citynet.com.

If you choose this option, your membership status would not change. You would still receive any special mailings and enjoy all the rights and privileges you do now.

MORE THAN AN OBITUARY

By Lovell Greathouse

This is more than an obituary. It gives a summary of "Joe" Hutchison's involvement in the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Joseph McKee Hutchison III, 76 of Morgantown died on July 26, 2008 at his home.

Joe was one of the original six leaders for the West Virginia Highlands Coalition in 1964 through 1966. These original six were:

— Joseph Hutchison, Professor of Recreation at WV University;

— Lovell R. Greathouse, State Planner Natural Resources & Commerce;

— A. Lee Maynard, Chief Communications Dept of Natural Resources;

— Robert Harrigan, Canoe Cruisers Association of America;

— M. Rupert Cutler, Assistant Director the Wilderness Society;

— Robert Broughton, Duquesne University Law Professor.

Their leadership provided the basic future concept for the West Virginia Highlands Region and involved many other leaders from West Virginia and the surrounding states outdoor organizations. In 1967 the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was originally formed with Tom King as first President, and has now been ongoing for forty one years.

Robert Broughton preceded Joe Hutchison in death. On the bottom of page 7 of the book *Fighting to Protect the Highlands* by David Elkinton is the defined value and meaning of wilderness by the Psalmist that the original six coalition members all shared.

Joseph Hutchison was an unusually good professor of recreation. His concept of recreation ranged from neighborhood "tot lots" in cities to wilderness in our national forests and parks. He was a graduate of Muskingum College in Ohio in 1953. He received a masters degree from West Virginia University in 1957. He taught Recreation and Parks Administration at West Virginia University for 40 years, first in the School of Physical Education, and later in the Division of Forestry within the School of Agriculture. He twice served as President of the West Virginia Parks and Recreation Association. He consulted on the first WV Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Highlands Region.

He was a member and past president of both Phi Kappa Phi and Gama Sigma Delta agriculture honor societies. Joe was also treasurer of the West Virginia Botanic Garden and was active in that organization from its beginning.

Here are summaries of Joe's leadership in the first Highland Weekend Review with Senator Byrd; his teaching in the out of doors; and, his leadership in the National Youth Science Camp:

The first Highlands Weekend Review

Older Highlands Conservancy Members will

remember Joe as one of the original planners of first WV Highlands Weekend Review in October 1965. This special event included approximately 500 registered guests in all day outdoor activities on Spruce Knob, Huckleberry Trail and Seneca Creek. (Ref. page 11 of *Fighting to Protect The Highlands*.)

After dinner that evening above Spruce Knob Lake, Senator Robert Byrd spoke to a group of about 400 in what became known as the "The Sermon on The Mount." Senator Byrd was the special speaker, but he followed five conservation speakers. Joe Hutchison, calm and thoughtful was preselected to chair this meeting. His students had helped set up the large circus tent and manned the generator and the light, that temporally failed, after the senator started speaking.

Senator Byrd's good humor at this event made friends with all those present, and he later abandoned the Allegheny Parkway Bill he had introduced in Congress. This outcome was greatly appreciated by outdoor loving people of WV and the surrounding eastern states. It greatly increased the confidence of the WV Highlands Conservancy Members. They now extend throughout the nation, even in Alaska.

Teaching His Students In the Outdoors

Joe was experienced in camping, hiking and canoeing. He canoed with Robert Harrigan on the Yougiheny and with the Lou Greathouse on the South Branch.

He taught his students in the out of doors basic knowledge and skills for the protection and enjoyment of the natural environment. These primary learning areas were at the Sinks of Gandy, Spruce Mountain and Seneca Creek. They learned and taught others the "Leave No Trace Ethic".

Joe taught his students of Camping Administration and Camp Counseling—in the out of doors what could only best be learned there. He took a new group each year to a base camp site at the mouth of the Sinks of Gandy. They never left evidence anyone camped there.

On the second day they would go to Spruce Knob for an overnight on Seneca Creek, they traveled North on the Huckleberry Trail then west and descended into Seneca Creek below Judy Springs. As they descended the high steep, open meadow down the mountainside you could hear shouts of joy. The students were elated with their Seneca Creek experiences.

After an outdoor cook out dinner, campfire discussions were held on: What are the natural characteristics of this resource? What is its best use for management? What did the experience mean to them, and how did they recommend it be managed? (These questions were typed on a one page outline and given to each student for later response.) The discussion extended to the topic of Wilderness. Lou Greathouse often acted as the

resource person, but Joe Rieffenberger and Don Gasper each acted on separate trips. The students would ask questions until 10 p.m.

By 1966 Professor Hutchison had a notebook 1 ½ inches thick filled with one page Student Evaluations and Recommendations for Wilderness Management of Seneca Creek. It is unfortunate these student evaluations, over a period of a dozen years, were not printed in book form so that every WV Congress person and Senator could realize why the Seneca Creek drainage basin should be designated wilderness.

The National Youth Science Camp

Joe became assistant director and later director, of the National Youth Science Camp which he helped start as a part of West Virginia's Centennial Celebration in 1963. The camp is still operating today, in its 45th year. Joe later became chairman of the National Youth Science Foundation and held the post until recently.

The 50 states selected their top high school science seniors who base camped at the 4-H Camp on the East Fork of the Greenbrier River north of Durbin. They had a full camp program, a computer in camp, and they studied at the "Big Ear" National Observatory.

Several remote natural area and wilderness trips were planned in the WV Highlands Monongahela National Forest. About every two weeks, small groups of the science campers selected overnight trips into these wild areas. It was very interesting to see the positive reactions of campers from states like Alaska, Washington, Montana and Wyoming. They had not realized West Virginia had areas like this.

Joseph McKee Hutchison III's parents and his immediate family:

He was born December 4, 1931 in Cambridge, Ohio but spent most of his early years in Charleston, WV. He was the son of the late Joseph McKee and Gladys Oliver Hutchison.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years Ann R., Hutchison. Their children are Suzanne; Joseph "Jay" McK-ee Hutchison IV, a petroleum oceanographer; and Mary Katherine "Kate". All three of their children are married; Joe has six grandchildren.

Joe served as a trustee and ruling elder for the First Presbyterian Church of Morgantown where he has been a member for fifty years. In memory of Joe, his family suggests donations be made to the National Youth Science Foundation, P.O. Box 3387, Charlestown, WV 25333.

WV PSC APPROVES TRAIL LINE; LEGAL CHALLENGES FILED

By Frank Young

On August 1st the WV Public Service Commission (WV PSC) approved the application for the Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Co. electricity transmission line, aka TrAIL. This 500 Kilovolt power line would run through northern and eastern West Virginia.

The WV PSC order said that a need had been shown for the additional transmission capacity TrAIL would enable. It also said that granting the TrAIL permit was accomplished through balancing the interests of the TrAIL applicant, the general public and the supporting and opposing interveners to the case.

But Sierra Club attorney and Executive Committee member Bill DePaulo commented that, "Does anyone seriously believe that the "balance" the WV legislature intended in its 1978 legislation was giving all benefits to persons outside WV, and all costs to citizens inside WV? I don't think so."

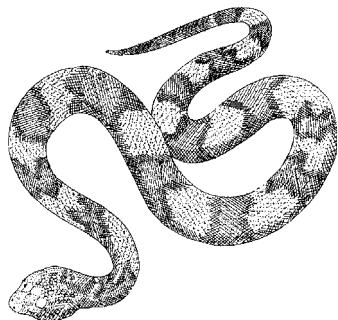
The opposition to granting the permit for TrAIL has been lead by, among others, the WV Chapter of Sierra Club. Almost immediately following the PSC's ruling on TrAIL, Sierra Club filed a Petition for Reconsideration of the PSC's TrAIL ruling. Filing of this Petition effectively keeps the company from commencement of rights-of-way acquisition through eminent domain proceedings until the PSC rules on the Sierra Club's Petition.

In its Petition, Sierra Club argues that: (1) The ruling on TrAIL was arbitrary and based on matters not made a part of the record (2) The Decision Is Not Supported by Substantial Evidence, (3) The Ruling Misapplied the Balancing Test of W. Va. Code § 22-4-11., (4) The Decision Failed to Address Controlling Issues of Fact and Law., (5) The Ruling Failed to Consider the Environmental and Economic Impact of Increased Green House Gases Generated by the Increased Infrastructure for the Use of Coal, and (6) that The PSC's Approval of re-routing the line in the Grafton Area Was Arbitrary and Capricious.

In a news release, the Sierra Club said that it will pursue all legal remedies in an effort to halt this environmentally destructive, electrically unnecessary and economically unfeasible electric line.

Sierra Club and its allied supporters opposing TrAIL contend that the actual purpose of TrAIL is to transport cheaper, coal-fired electricity from the Ohio Valley to eastern high population areas and to encourage the siting of new coal-fired generation in rural areas where it may be more palatable. The TrAIL application case has been ongoing at the WV PSC since last year.

It is expected that an application for yet another even longer and larger capacity power transmission line, to be known as PATH (for Potomac Allegheny Transmission Highline) will be filed with the WV PSC later this year. The PATH promoter, American Electric Power Company, held a series of "informational" meetings across western, central and eastern West Virginia in July and August. But these meetings do not substitute for the more formal PSC public hearings that will be scheduled along the route of the proposed power line after the PATH application is filed.



PENNSYLVANIA JUDGES OPPOSE TrAIL

On August 21st two Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) administrative law judges (ALJ) issued a decision that could disable Allegheny Power's plan to build a high-voltage power line, known as TrAIL, through Greene and Washington counties.

The 500-kilovolt transmission line would run 240 miles from Washington County and Greene counties in PA, cross into Monongalia County, West Virginia and traverse eastward across northern West Virginia and into Loudoun County, Virginia.

The PA ALJ's recommendation could ultimately, if upheld by that state's PUC, void the approval of TrAIL recently issued in West Virginia. The WV Public Service Commission (PSC) made its approval contingent upon TrAILCo obtaining approval from all jurisdictions through which TrAIL is projected to pass.

The PA recommendation is not final. Allegheny Energy, which would build the portion of the line in Pennsylvania, will have a chance to respond to it before the full PA PUC issues a final ruling on the matter.

Alternatives that do not include building the transmission line were not considered, and the line's construction could pave the way for the construction of more power plants in western Pennsylvania, the judges said.

The ALJ report said that TrAILCo and PJM Interconnection, which operates the regional power grid, selected the TrAIL project because "the true impetus for the 502-Loudoun segment is to transport cheaper coal-fired generation from western PJM to eastern PJM and to encourage the siting of new generation in western PJM where it may be more palatable."

But in their decision, judges Michael A. Nemec and Mark A. Hoyer said approving such a line would reward a lack of foresight and substandard maintenance of existing lines, while serving only to move cheap coal power from Appalachia to the eastern seaboard.

Hey! Listen Up!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Fall Review will include the annual meeting of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. The annual meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 26, at the Opera House in Marlinton. All members are encouraged to attend.

Traditionally the main item of business is the election of officers. All of the officers as well as one half of the at-large members of the Board of Directors will be reelected or replaced by someone else.

We have a nomination committee (Cindy Ellis, Cindy Rank, and John McFerrin) which will present a slate of candidates. There will also be an opportunity for nominations from the floor. If you know of someone who would be a good officer or Board member, please either contact a member of the committee (addresses on p. 2) or come to the meeting and nominate him or her. No time to be modest; nominate yourself if you like.

The Annual Meeting will also have a time when any member may bring issues before the membership.

The quarterly meeting of the WVHC Board of Directors will immediately follow the Annual Meeting. By tradition, all members are free to attend and participate in the discussion although they may not vote or make motions.

MY BELOVED, LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

By Patricia Bragg, April 4, 2008

As I sit here, my thoughts turn to all of those who have loved and lost. The tears fall silently down my cheeks, falling as the rain fell down a once beautiful mountain slope. No one hears the pain as they fall but the grief is there never the less. A pain so deep it will be felt by my seed many years in the future; long after my body has returned unto the mountain soil.

What! Are you speaking of love and romance, you say? Yes, of love and a romance no man can hope to match with mere physical touch. A spiritual love of the land and place in which the Mountaineers feel to the soul and beyond time.

I fell in love with the mountains at the ripe old age of fifteen and three-quarters. That was an important time for me. A time of awakening, a time of learning and grasping what life really means. I can still remember standing on an old rugged back porch and thinking, "Ah! These may not be the largest mountains in the world, but their closeness to me makes me feel strangely safe and loved."

I had come home without ever being here before; I had come to a realization of God's love and a gentle breeze kissed my face. I was entranced by the sheer beauty of god's magical land - Appalachia. The word slips off of my tongue as if an endearment so sacred one whispers it to the air so it is carried to the land, the stream and the mountain nearby.

Not wishing to disturb the scene before me, I tiptoed close to the big oak near the stream and watched a doe and a young fawn quenching their thirst. The slightest movement from me drew the deer back into the thicket; but not before I saw the buck, proud and strong on the edge of the woods with a watchful eye in my direction. Awesome, this new land I had ventured into. Wonderfully protective of it's own and yet gently inviting me to be a part of all that the land entailed.

As the wind caressed my hair I felt free, unencumbered by the cares of youth and the decisions awaiting me in the future. I had never known such joy, laughter spring up within me that I could not have predicted and did not try to restrain. I laughed out loud, a bountiful laugh to the flowers and the trees surrounding me. The echoes of my laughter returned to me in answer to my happiness, lovingly receiving my emotional expression of adoration.

I had been received here. I could be myself here, unafraid, somehow stronger just by standing next to my newly discovered love.

A love of a lifetime is what every young woman longs for and I had found mind in the land and the people here in the foothills of West Virginia.

For nineteen years I lived as one with my beloved: my land, my family and my Appalachian way of life.

Then came the time I would come to call Growth! I was no longer a young woman just flourishing in the light of my beloved but I had to become a warrior fighting for the land and people which had given me so much thorough the years. I had the strength with so many gathering with in the fight. Surely, the Appalachians could stop this invasion of our hearts and peace of mind, but not so.

It was not meant to be. My beloved was trodden down and murdered a little at a time, piece by piece the aliens came and destroyed my beloved. Raping away our comfortable relationship and replacing it with a mere morsel of what we once had.

How could one wish to tear away its essence, its beauty?

Ripped away are the hardwoods, medicines and streams leaving a void in the heart as a lover's departure. So final, so certain as the death of my beloved has become reality, my soul cries out, "Come back, come back! Oh, return to me. My majestic one, my strong and

upright one, whisper once more your secrets to me. Tell again how my ancestors once walked for miles in the snow to their one-room school houses; of the streams full of water and life flowing through our lives void of pipes and slurry; and of the days of carefree living without fear of destruction and pain.

Oh beloved! Leave me not, I will miss you greatly and I will mourn with all those whom have loved and lost you."

Still my tears fall silently and no sound is made to stop them.

Congratulations Penny !

By Cindy Rank

In July 2008 ForeWord Magazine, which promotes books released by university and independent publishers, gave a Bronze Award in its 2007 environmental category to Penny Loeb's "Moving Mountains" about mountaintop removal coal mining in West Virginia.

Penny spent nearly ten years compiling information, sitting through meetings and hearings, visiting local citizens, interviewing people and checking and double checking facts and quotes to complete her account of the activities surrounding the first major legal challenge of the extreme form of strip mining method known as mountaintop removal.

Moving Mountains documents many of the stories and behind the scenes meetings and discussions that took place during the time of the Bragg litigation that WV Highlands Conservancy was intimately involved with.

Much has transpired since Penny's time in West Virginia and many individuals and organizations who were mentioned only in passing in Penny's book have since taken the lead in the never ending struggle to stop the destructive practice of mountaintop removal and valley fills. You've read their stories here in the Highlands Voice and elsewhere online, in other books and articles and documentary films, but Patricia Bragg and her life and her view of the times were front and center in Penny's book.

Penny became friends with Patricia, and "Moving Mountains" is as much a story about Patricia and her family as it is about the intrigues of the legal and political battles of 1990's and early 2000's.

About the same time I learned of Penny's award, she sent me the accompanying essay Patricia wrote this past April.

It is bittersweet to read the rather hopeful subtitle of Penny's book – i.e. "How one woman and her community won justice from big coal". Then read Patricia's poignant essay. Her lament is the lament of so many living in the shadow of mountaintop removal, so many who find the solace and comfort of the mountains wrenched from their lives. The Maria Gunnoes, the Vicki Moores, Judy Bonds, Larry Gibson, the Weekleys, the Haltems, Seboks, Millers, and ever so many others that I won't even attempt to name.

Our Readers Write Back

In July, 2008, Carlton R. Taft of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, wrote to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy criticizing the Conservancy's earlier position on wind power. That letter was published in the August, 2008, issue of The Highlands Voice. It is available for review at our website, www.wvhighlands.org. Peter Shoenfeld, Chair of the Wind Committee of the Conservancy replied. His response appears below.

Dear Carlton,

Thank you for your letter of July 2. Thank you also for making me aware of the Bath Co. Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Station. I read the material on the Dominion Web Site, checked and went a bit further with your "energy arithmetic," and agree with your contention that such a facility could be used to provide a copious reserve for wind power facilities in the area served by the PJM grid.

By recent Board resolution: ***The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy opposes all large, utility scale wind energy projects in West Virginia unless it is demonstrated that the power to be produced by the project would replace power which otherwise would be generated through the burning of coal.*** This policy has thus far been applied mainly in opposing the Laurel Mountain wind facility currently before the state Public Service Commission. The main point of your letter was to let us know that and to explain why you considered our resolution to be "foolish, counterproductive, and poorly thought out."

The fallacy in your argument is that we do not know how much of the Bath facility's quoted capacity is available for a reserve to accompany wind generation, both currently and in the future. Nor do we know if the Laurel Mountain developer, among others, including PJM, has any intention of using it this way. Our resolution can be answered by detailed, credible assurances from developers that these pieces of the plan are in place, and will be adequate.

I'd like also to point out the source of the energy used for the pumping half of the cycle in a pumped storage facility. I assume that this comes from the grid, and hence, indirectly, mostly from coal generators. Pumped storage and recovery is, by itself, an inefficient process.

You object to our requirement that coal use be demonstrated upfront. Perhaps *demonstrated* is too strong a word. What I would like to

see is *demonstration* through the use of a pessimistic model, to contain a simulation of control and allocation processes, and in which the wind, load and equipment failures were drawn from statistical characterizations of those processes. That does seem to be about the most that could reasonably be required.

I reject your suggestion that, because of the coal industry's power, we should continue our states' sad tradition of intimidation by, and capitulation to, big coal. Our history of doing the opposite has shown at least limited progress and success.

I agree with your "additional related thoughts." I was particularly impressed by your suggestion regarding the advent of "plug-in" electric cars.

I selected Boone and Adams as references simply because they were handy and our letter needed references. Further sympathy with them is not to be assumed. As to the other letters and articles on similar topics that have appeared in the Voice, I had nothing to do with them. The Voice is somewhat non-discriminating regarding the material it publishes.

I've enjoyed analyzing and responding to your recent thoughtful letter. We do seem to have common interests, and I'd like to invite you to membership in the West Virginia Conservancy so that such dialogue could continue and be usefully applied to the terrible energy-related problems facing our society.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Shoenfeld, Ph.D.

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.

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

T- SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the **We ♥ 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 ATTEN: James Solley, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

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!

Another Letter

Dear Mr. McFerrin,

This is in response to the letter from Phillip G. and Karin B. Nelson on wind power that appeared in last month's Voice.

Concerning "the bird blender problem" :

The Nelson's state that "It is true that turbines can kill birds and bats, but there is no good evidence as to how many." The second clause is absolutely untrue. I will assume that the Nelson's are sufficiently computer literate to conduct their own Google searches, and suggest only that they start off by looking at the sites operated by Curry & Kerlinger, Western Ecosystems, Technology, and the Bat and Wind Energy Co-operative. They can make their own way through the large accumulation of evidence if their interest is sincere.

Concerning "Wind is unreliable":

Yes, it is true that an omniscient planner could reduce the relative variance in the combined power output from a number of wind farms by geographic diversity in their locations, and that this is pursued somewhat seriously in Europe. But nothing like that is going on in the US, that I know of, nor is it likely to any time soon. The developers are independent operators, each concerned mainly with his own profit. The regulators don't show much sign of awareness that this issue even exists.

In fact, in West Virginia, which is our main concern, the trend is to do the opposite—to put most of the wind farms in the same place, the "High Alleghenies" in the northeastern part of the state. The two that are operating are near both each other and my home. A bunch of additional "wannabes" are knocking at the regulatory door close by.

Concerning "Responsible opposition"

Well, I've opposed some specific wind farm sites and I believe most of those who know me consider me responsible. However, I have no training or experience in picking sites for wind farms. Yet the Nelsons think that I'm the man for that job. OK, but let me ask some questions first—When do I start?, What will my salary be?, Who will pay me?

A specific site recommendation is requested. I'll try. How about a system consisting of thousands of stand-alone, battery-buffered wind turbines located in the residential backyards of Bethesda, Md., each

serving a single home? Also, bigger ones atop the office buildings, as New York Mayor Bloomberg has suggested, They would all have to be very high, since the ground is low, and certainly would be an expensive source of juice.. But, what the heck, we can handle that problem simply by big rate increases for local power consumers. This may seem a facetious notion, but it makes as much sense as the Nelson's suggestion that the opposition take on responsibility for wind farm siting.

Sincerely yours
 Peter Shoenfeld
 Davis, WV

To see the letter to which Mr. Shoenfeld is replying in its entirety, see the August, 2008, issue of the Highlands Voice. It is available on line at www.wvhighlands.org.

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.



FORUM ON MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST PLAN FORUM BEING ORGANIZED

By Marilyn Shoenfeld

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has had a long history of collaboration with the United States Forest Service on the Monongahela National Forest. Over the years, our public lands committees have done outings programs, trail work and tree plantings, have commented on many proposed actions and provided input to the new Forest Management Plan which was finalized in September 2006.

That Plan made primary decisions in the following areas:

Forest-wide multiple-use desired conditions, goals and objectives.

Forest-wide management requirements (standards and guidelines).

Management Prescriptions and associated direction.

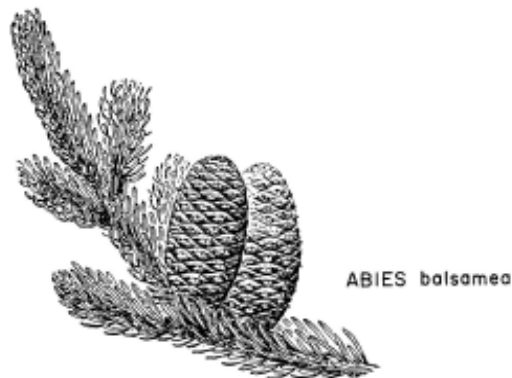
Identification of lands suited for timber production.

Monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Since changes in any of the above areas are important to the Highlands Conservancy and its members, we have asked the Forest Service to partner with us in presenting a public forum to take a closer look at the new Plan. The forum will be designed to help us understand changes made in land use and land use categories and how they are being implemented by the Agency. It will also provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to the Forest Service.

Still in the early planning stages, more details about the forum, including time, date and location, will be in the October issue of the *Highlands Voice* and on our website at www.wvhighlands.org as they come together.

See you on the Mon.



BALSAM FIR CONSERVATION EFFORTS CONTINUE

Its been just 10 years since our first concerted effort to conserve and protect the last remaining stands of balsam fir in West Virginia. In August 1998, dozens of volunteers organized to collect cones from all the major stands of fir in West Virginia. The seeds from these cones have been seed banked at the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Alderson, WV.

West Virginia's fir has a unique genetic composition. It is very similar in many aspects to its southern cousin, Fraser fir, but closer genetically to its northern relatives, balsam fir. Isolated for centuries high in the West Virginia mountains, these trees have developed their own genetic qualities, or ecotype.



Photo ©
Jonathan

Jessup

Our West Virginia balsam fir trees are under attack from an exotic insect pest. The balsam wholly adelgid, from central Europe, has decimated the native fir in the eastern US. Attacking the most mature trees, which are also the best seed producers, natural regeneration has been negatively impacted.

Since balsam fir trees only produce cones every 5 years or so, this year's abundant cone crop was an important opportunity to harvest some cones to process into seeds for conservation purposes. This year we were able to collect several bushels of cones in Canaan Valley and also a significant amount from Blister Run in Randolph County and Blister Swamp in Pocahontas County. These are the southern most stands of balsam fir on the continent.

The NRCS has been growing some seedlings from these seed sources to be used for restoration projects in the areas where the seed was collected from. We have planted thousands of seedlings over the past 10 years and our efforts are paying off. We are seeing vigorous growth on our young trees. In places where deer browse is heavy, we have constructed enclosure fences to protect the seedlings.

Because the adelgid doesn't infect the trees until they are 30-40 years old, we hope we can keep the stands growing strong with younger trees which will grow old enough to produce more cones of their own. Progress over the past ten years has been very encouraging.

This fall, for the first time, we have some Canaan Valley Balsam Fir and Red Spruce trees in one gallon containers and will be offering them for sale at some of the mountain festivals this fall. Look for our Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration display at the Leaf Peepers Festival in Davis on September 27, and at the Forest Festival in Elkins October 1-4. For more information contact Dave Saville at daves@labyrinth.net.

WEST VIRGINIA WILDERNESS COALITION VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP

October 10 - 12; Lynn's Pond House near Fayetteville

The spacious and comfortable Lynn's Pond House in a beautiful remote setting near Fayetteville, WV will be the location for the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's 7th Annual Volunteer Workshop.

Participants may arrive on the evening of October 10 for some socializing and ice breaking activities. We'll have interesting speakers and presenters from around the nation and from right here in West Virginia.

A range of informative workshops will be held for those interested in being part of the ever-growing grassroots movement to protect West Virginia's federal public lands. Workshops include communications, citizen lobbying, and other topics related to effective grassroots organizing.

Previously held at the Mountain Institute near Spruce Knob, this year's workshop will have a particular focus on protecting the nearby lands in and around the New River Gorge. Attention will also be paid to Federal Public Lands such as the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, where special wild places remain unprotected.

Again this year the event will include Sierra Club Outings leadership training and a first aid certification course for those who wish to become outings leaders.

Join us to learn about grassroots organizing to protect our special places.

To cover costs of lodging, meals etc., a registration fee of \$25 per person is suggested. Several scholarships are available to cover this amount. For more information contact Outreach Coordinator Mike Costello at michael.costello@wwild.org.

WEST VIRGINIA WILDERNESS WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out this form and send it back as soon as possible to confirm your registration. Please send your \$25 conference fee (to help cover food and lodging), along with your registration form, to: (please make checks out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy)

West Virginia Wilderness Coalition
P.O. Box 568
Morgantown, WV 26507

Please do not let the \$25 fee stop you from participating. Arrangements can be made if you this fee would be a hardship. This fee will only cover part of your food and lodging so additional donations are very much welcome. **The deadline for registration is October 5, 2008. Thank You!**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Fax _____ E-mail Address _____
What organization(s) are you affiliated with? _____
Are you a vegetarian or do you have any other special dietary needs? _____
In case of emergency please contact
Name _____ phone number _____ relation _____

I'LL CAMP Friday Saturday OR: I PREFER INDOOR LODGING Friday Saturday

Please check all meals you will eat during the workshop (we need a count before the event)
Saturday, October 11: _____ **Sunday, October 12** _____

Breakfast breakfast
lunch lunch
Dinner

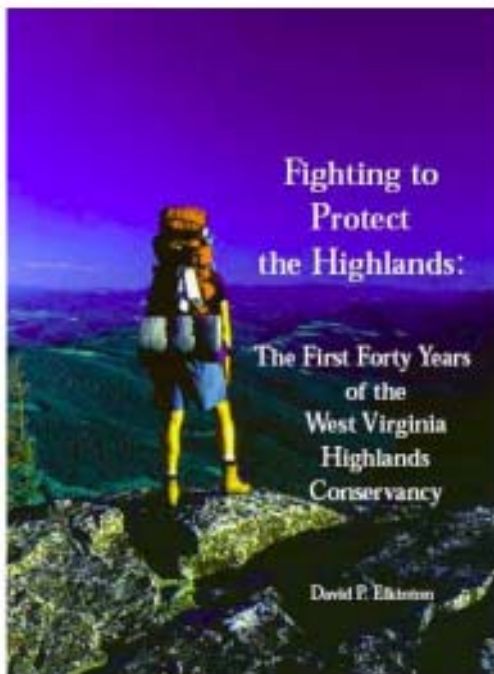
The following is just to get an assessment of participants' level of knowledge and experience

Have you seen the West Virginia Wilderness slide show? _____
Have you worked on West Virginia Wilderness issues before? _____
If so, how long, and in what capacity have you worked on this issue? _____

Registration Confirmation

By signing this form and returning it you pledge to attend the West Virginia Wilderness Workshop, August 10-12 unless a personal or family emergency should arise. Please realize that a spot will be reserved for you and meals and lodging paid for in advance. If a situation arises and you need to cancel your registration, please notify us as soon as possible.

Signature _____ Date _____



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.

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

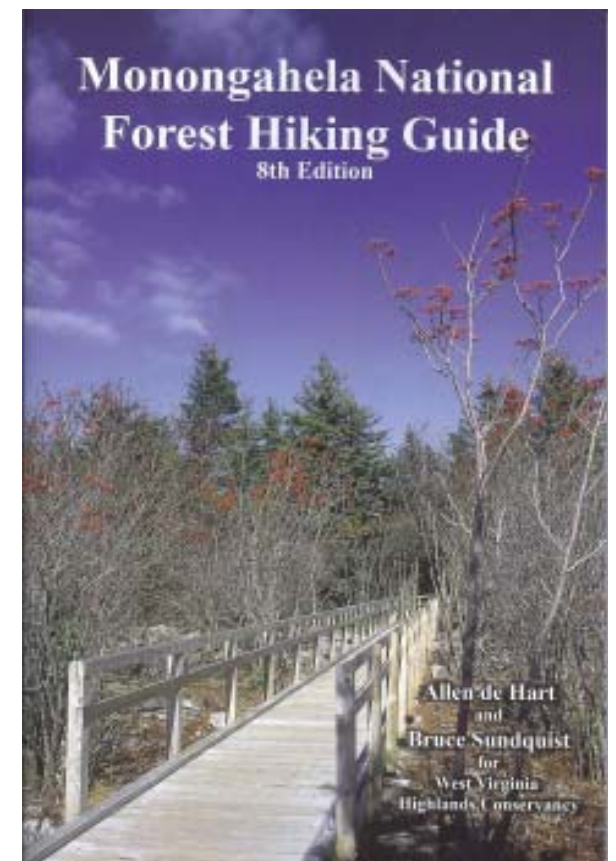
New 8TH Edition Now Available on CD

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.



FALL REVIEW COMING UP

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review will be held October 24-26, 2008, at the AFC Retreat and Conference Center. The AFC Retreat and Conference Center is located in the heart of the West Virginia Mountains just 6 miles east of Marlinton. Pristine pines and a quiet trout stream is the backdrop for this beautiful retreat center.

Surrounded by the Monongahela National Forest, the Center is also minutes from Seneca State Forest, Watoga State Park, the Greenbrier River Trail and within walking distance of the Allegheny Trail. Cranberry is not far and bike rentals are available in Marlinton.

Saturday outings will take advantage of these opportunities and our evening program Saturday will be an informative presentation and discussion about the new rush to drill the Marcellus Shale gas formation that lies deep beneath the surface all across West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York. The size of the well sites and depth of the drilling and the hydrofracing has raised questions across the region about everything from leasing to water use and withdrawal.

Lee Avary, Petroleum Geologist and Manager, Oil and Gas Program, West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey) and Dave

McMahon (WV Surface Owners Rights and Mountain State Justice) will be joined by other knowledgeable presenters who have yet to be confirmed.



There are 36 hotel/motel type rooms with bath for \$35/night that sleep two - some with twins, some with double bed, and some with queens. There are also three cabins that sleep various numbers - one with a full kitchen and TV. There are also RV hookups and tent sites with a bathhouse. Bed linens and towels are not provided so bring your own. Dogs are welcome on the grounds, but not in the rooms and cabins.

Snacks, breakfast and lunch time meals will be at the Retreat Center. Saturday's catered dinner (and evening discussion) will take place in the Pocahontas Opera House in downtown Marlinton.

For more information about specific costs and/or to make your reservations now, contact Cindy Rank (304-924-5802, clrank@hughes.net) or Beth Little (304-653-4277, blittle@citynet.net). Be sure to ask for confirmation to assure we've received your message.

See you there !

THE DIRTY TRUTH ABOUT "CLEAN COAL"

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy member Paul Salstrom of Indiana called our attention to an article in Business Week magazine on the selling of 'clean coal.' Among the points made in the article were:

No coal plant can control its emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide. When the coal industry talks about "clean coal" it is talking about a system of separating the carbon dioxide from the coal burning process and putting it back in the ground.

Corporations and the federal government have tried for years to accomplish "carbon capture and sequestration." So far they haven't had much luck. The method is widely viewed as being decades away from commercial viability. Even then, the cost could be prohibitive: by a conservative estimate, several trillion dollars to switch to clean coal in the U.S. alone.

There are the safety questions involved with "clean coal." One large, coal-fired plant generates the equivalent of 3 billion barrels of

CO2 over a 60-year lifetime. That would require a space the size of a major oil field to contain. The pressure could cause leaks or earthquakes, says Curt M. White, who ran the U.S. Energy Dept.'s carbon sequestration group until 2005 and served as an adviser until earlier this year. "Red flags should be going up everywhere when you talk about this amount of liquid being put underground."

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, a Washington-area group funded by coal and power companies, has undertaken a \$40 million campaign designed to influence public opinion on "clean coal." The industry marketing offensive has included advertisements on CNN during the primary debates as well as newspaper and billboard promotions. In one television ad, folksy guitar strumming accompanies images of families waving. "We have to continue to advance new clean coal technologies," the narrator says. "If we don't, we may have to say goodbye to the American way of life we all know and love."

Companies seeking to build dozens of coal-

fueled power plants across the country use the term "clean coal" liberally in trying to persuade regulators and voters. Power giant Dominion (D) describes a proposed plant near St. Paul, Va., expected to generate electricity by 2012, as having "the very latest in clean-coal technology." What the unbuilt facility actually possesses to address global warming is a plot of land set aside for CO2-removal technology—once it is invented and becomes commercially feasible. capture and sequestration."

The top ten coal producing states have a total of 118 electoral votes, 44% of the 270 needed to win the election. This makes coal policy, including "clean coal" an issue in the Presidential election.

The entire article appeared in the June 30, 2008, issue of Business Week. It is available at www.businessweek.com.

West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

Saturday to Tuesday, 09/13-16/08 - Car Camping and 2 day hikes, Loft Mountain Campground, Shenandoah National Park, VA: Four day trip. Possible short hike on the first day for early arrivals. Featured hikes are the Rip-Rap Hollow Loop (9.5 miles) and the Turk Branch/Moorman's River Circuit (9.7 miles). Both hikes are rated strenuous. Join us for one or both. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com or 410-439-4964.

Saturday to Monday, 09/20-22/08 Roaring Plains Backpack and Base Camp with Day Hike: Day 1 hike in 2.5 miles and set up camp at the entrance to the Hidden Passage. Day 2 features a 12 mile day hike along the Canyon Rim with possible side trips. Day 3 backpack out the way we came in. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 10:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com or 410-439-4964.

Saturday to Monday 10/25-27/08 Cold Mountain/Mount Pleasant Backpack Base Camp w/Day Hike, George Washington National Forest, VA: Easy 3 mile backpack into and out of camp with a sensational moderate 12 mile day hike in between with some of the most breathtaking views in central VA. Suitable for experienced hikers who wish to move up to backpacking. Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 10:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com or 410-439-4964.

October 24-25 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review Near Marlinton, Pocahontas County. Varied activities and outings. For details see the announcement elsewhere in this issue.

Saturday to Monday 11/01-03/08 Hog Camp Gap to Spy Rock Backpack/Base Camp: Strenuous rating but with low daily mileage. We will hike 7 miles over scenic Tar Jacket Ridge and set up a base camp at the Seeley-Woodworth shelter. The next day we will hike packless to Spy Rock. The round trip will only be about 6 miles. If the weather is good we will linger a bit at Spy Rock, enjoying its 360 degree view for as long as we can. On the hike out we will add Lovington Spring Tr to add some variety to the third day. . Leave from the Broken Land Parkway/Rt 32 Park and Ride (West Side) at 7:00. Pre-registration required. Contact Mike Juskelis at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com or 410-439-4964.

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.

"FLAME" CHANGES FUNDING FOR FIRE FIGHTING

By Marilyn Shoenfeld

We have all been horrified by the frequency and strength of the forest fires in our Western states. One question that comes to mind: How are the fire fighting costs paid? The answer has been that funds are taken, at least in part, from the budget of the United States Forest Service. The Forest Service does not have a "segregated" budget that protects funds from being used for purposes other than those for which they were allocated. United States Forest Service funds have been taken from National Forests all over the country (including our own Monongohela National Forest) to fight the fires in the West.

On July 9, 2008, the US House of Representatives passed H.R. 5541, known as "The Flame Act." Its purpose is "To provide a supplemental funding source for catastrophic

emergency wildland fire suppression activities on Department of the Interior and National Forest System lands."

This will create a fund separate from these agencies' normal budget that will be used to fight forest fires on federal lands. The bill can be seen at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

On July 11, 2008, Sen. Barbara Boxer (CA) introduced this bill in the Senate where it was assigned number S.3256. It has been referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, chaired by Senator Pete V. Domenici (NM). The Ranking Minority Member is Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM). This seems to be a worthwhile and much-needed piece of legislation.

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.

BACKPACKING OTTER CREEK

By Betty Steil and Craig Ross

With Mike Juskelis' (aka MRHyker) trusty trail notes and waypoints loaded, Betty (aka Hardcore), Craig (aka Treebeard), Andy (aka Indiana Moser), Theresa (aka Judging Amy) set off for Otter Creek in Monongahela National Forest. The plan was to backpack 5-6 miles out from the Otter Creek Trailhead and make camp

Facing the first fork in the trail, we relied on Mike's notes to guide us to the Otter Creek Trail, and we were on our way. We passed the Yellow Creek Trail on the left, the path we would have originally taken on a longer first day, and continued up the Otter Creek Trail for several more miles.

The water level was low so the creek crossings were easy. We passed the Possession Camp site where a church group was camping with a large turkey roasting on a handmade spit. Turns out, one of this group is a chef and was fixing a feast in the woods complete with mushroom risotto. We drooled. The group showed us an easy rock-hop back over the creek to the right of the main crossing. The water seemed less deep here too. We were all harboring thoughts of maybe being invited for dinner, but knew better. There are many small campsites along this section of Otter Creek, but we wanted to go 5 or 6 miles, so we did, and settled into the campsite right along Moore's Run and Otter Creek. The rock is nice and flat out into Otter Creek here and made a wonderful location to sit in the sun and fix our meals. We watched the birds and the sun over Green Mountain and enjoyed soaking our feet in the rushing water.

On Saturday we hiked back towards Possession Camp towards the turkey party to see if they had any leftovers – and they did but offered us grits and eggs instead, which we graciously declined. We arrived at the trail junction described in the write-up and, after a discussion over whether we had actually found the right large rock marking the trail, we headed up Possession Camp Trail. The Rhododen-

drons were still quite lovely, and at times it seemed as if flower petals were paving our path up the hill. This is a long uphill, but it is railroad grade, and the climb is hardly noticed. The bushes made a thick canopy and although very lush and green, we were ready to see the sun again.

At the top of the hill, we found a clearing where several trails come together at a campsite. The trail goes through this clearing and then bends to the northwest (left) after passing through a clump of trees. We were now on the Green Mountain Trail. Andy was determined to find a view he had heard about and poked at a number of false leads off the main trail. Finally, about half way across the Green Mountain Trail and just before the descent to Otter Creek Trail, there is a cairn marking a clear trail to the right. We explored and about ¼ mile in, found a great overlook that made the 9.7 mile loop hike complete.

The descent down Green Mountain Trail was a bit rocky and very steep, but the rocks were small and the descent was relatively short. At the bottom, as the trail leveled out, it intersected with the Otter Creek Trail. We followed Otter Creek Trail south past two campsites before fording Otter Creek again. This was the only crossing on Otter Creek Trail where the water was sufficiently high and there were no easy rock hops, where you either took your boots off or got them wet to get across.

We returned to our campsite following Otter Creek Trail on the west bank. There are several places in this section of Otter Creek Trail where the trail is substantially damaged by trees that have fallen and slid down the em-

bankments. Further erosion may result in the loss of the trail there.

After returning to our campsite, we dropped everything for a little sunbathing, feet soaking, and wading in the cold water of Otter Creek. It felt good while the sun was warm. A bee stung Theresa though while she was sunbathing. The bee must have thought her bright



Otter Creek Photo by Craig Ross

yellow t-shirt was a flower. We had dinner again on the rocks in Otter Creek, and Andy got a fire going back at camp, after collecting dry wood along the creek for a couple of hours.

At daybreak on Sunday there was the unwelcome sound of light rain. When it stopped, we quickly packed up gear, got some breakfast, and got back down Otter Creek Trail to our car. We were within a quarter mile of the car when it started to rain, this time for real, but we were there with our packs in the car, and our fresh clothes on by 10:30. Temperatures ranged from mid to upper 70's during the day to very low 50's at night.



Otter Creek Valley from Green Mountain Photo by Betty Steil

MORE ABOUT RICHWOOD

Commentary by Bob Henry Baber

The July issue of the Highlands Voice ended with a short and objective informational piece on the Army Corps of Engineers nearly completed 18-month “reconnaissance” study that could justify a full feasibility study for “South Fork Lake.” *If* the full study is justified economically (it’s unclear if the city will meet the required cost-benefit ratio required by Congress...because the value of what can be “saved” has declined so drastically that the cost of intervention may prove to be too high), and *if* the full study recommended it, the creation of a dam or a series of dams **on tributaries only** of the Cherry River could happen sometime 5 years or more in the future.

Given the projected costs of creating a new lake and the current financial condition of the federal government, it seems unlikely that such a project would be accomplished without significant support from various agencies, the State of West Virginia, and private developers.

Nonetheless, as the former Mayor of Richwood, I wish to strongly advocate for the support of this project by environmentalists throughout the State.

South Fork Lake would serve many positive ecologically purposes: 1) It would provide flood protection for Richwood—which suffered its worst flood in 2003 in fifty years and remains in peril 2) It would provide water for the town when the Cherry River goes nearly dry in late summer 3) It would create a new whitewater river in West Virginia, thereby bolstering the tourist trade and offering yet another counter-balance to the overbearing “extraction mentality” that continues to plague the State 4) It would provide water recreation to the public, combined with private development of lake frontage homes and an adjoining ski resort that would overlook the lake 5) It would provide hydro-electric power 6) It would enhance fishing in both the South Fork and the Cherry River, and 7) It would generate enormous economic development activity in and around Richwood’s historic district and the town itself, which, short of both major and minor interventions, will continue to slowly wither.

Richwood must transition towards becoming an arts and tourist town. The South Fork Lake Project would be yet another jewel in the State’s crown of tourism—the ultimate counter-balance to winner-take-all extraction realities.

I think it is important to note that there is **no plan to dam the Cherry River itself** and that virtually every person and agency within a hundred mile radius supports this project. I think it’s also important for us to remember that without the Bluestone and Summersville dams there would be little commercial white-watering in West Virginia today—an industry all of us are pleased to brag about.

Of course, it’s true that in the old days the Corps built far too many dams on far too many rivers with little, if any, local say. But this is **not** the case on the South Fork Lake project. In fact, the exact opposite is true: It was the community which got organized after the flood and called upon the Corps for help. According to the Corps, they’ve never witnessed the depth of support for a project from any community in the huge Ohio district—even a community as small as Richwood. As a result of community efforts Congressman Nick Joe Rahall and Senator

Robert Byrd secured the initial \$300,000 to begin the research process.

South Fork Lake, if built, would almost certainly be built on Plum Creek on Mead-Westvaco property—about 300,000 acres south of Richwood that is within the proclamation boundary of the Monongahela National Forest (but is falsely represented on most Forest Service maps as actually being a part of the forest.) This land, unfortunately, has never been publicly purchased. As a result, some of this land has been strip-mined in the past and much of it is currently being heavily clear-cut. As environmentalists we can lament that this purchase never transpired, but more importantly, we can also strongly advocate that someday (sooner rather than later) this orphan parcel will be joined with the whole of the Monongahela.



Meanwhile, it appears that as per the recent Supreme Court ruling, the wind project in this same region is now “a go.” I know this will cost consternation with the good-willed opponents (whom I deeply respect) of the wind farm, but frankly, I’m for it. I am aware that the “green credits/tax credits” complexities are convoluted, that the company foolishly placed fewer than 10 turbines along the rim of the Greenbrier Valley—thereby buying themselves the righteous ire of the inhabitants of the eastern part of the county, and I know that not enough energy will be produced to “turn down the dial” a whit on even one coal-fired plant. But we’ve got to start allowing wind generation

someplace if it’s ever to reach even a small critical mass of meaningful production. We can no longer allow ourselves to be skewered on our bar-b-que pit of being against everything! I mean we’ve beat the drum long and hard against mountain-topped coal and for alternatives—and then when the alternative comes along—well, we’re against that, too? Is it any wonder we’re labeled as hypocrites or extremists? How pure can we be, consumers that we are?

The beat writer Lawrence Ferlinghetti wrote a long poem, the title of which I believe is ‘Her.’ The second to last line of the poem is, “Who stole America?” The poem ends thusly: “Myself... I saw reflected in the train window.” In my opinion, we must acknowledge that to live is to consume and that we too are part of the problem. To ignore that reality can only result in the undermining of our credibility and our overall objective of promoting sustainability and reducing everyone’s consumption—including our own.

So, this project is in as good a place as any: remote land that has already been environmentally impacted and that is far away from residential areas. I do hope the company has the good sense to forego the placement of turbines within ear and eyeshot of the Greenbrier valley and limits itself to 100+ turbines in this remote timbered-over region. I can tell you that it’s quite likely I will see the tops of some turbines from my ancestral farm, which is five miles from Richwood but is also in west-

(Continued on the next page)

EVEN MORE ABOUT RICHWOOD (Continued from previous page)

ern Greenbrier County. I may be one of the few high-elevation residents to do so. While I'm not anxious to see them, I'll admit I'd much prefer to see windmills as to see the area mountain-topped—which is always a distinct possibility, windmills or not.

On a less contentious and happier note, it seems more and more likely with each passing day that the near-doubling in size of the Cranberry Wilderness is about to be authorized by Congress. This is a development about which we can all be proud. It further positions Richwood to be the “front porch” to the Forest and to become a part of an area that I believe will eventually be likened to the Colorado of the east—a respite to the Kanawha Valley, the coalfields region, and the growing congestion coagulating along the entire mid-Atlantic east coast region. Because of its economic woes, Richwood has become the bargain city of West Virginia, with houses selling for as little as ten and twenty thou-

sand dollars in an authentic “wild” east town. Come down and visit as my guest. I'd be happy to show you around. mayorbobhenrybaber@yahoo.com

Editor's Note: Mr. Baber is the former mayor of Richwood and a current member of the Board of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has not taken a position on the prudence of a “South Fork Lake” or any other option that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has considered for the Richwood area. Historically the Conservancy has opposed damming free flowing streams. For details, see Elkinton, David: *Fighting to Protect the Highlands, The First Forty Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy*, pp. 75-126.

BEWARE THE WIND ENERGY HOT AIR

By Rick Webb

Oil billionaire T. Boone Pickens is being disingenuous, telling one thing to the American people and another to Congress.

He has repeatedly said that no government help is needed to pursue his plan to build the world's largest wind farm in the Texas Panhandle. Yet he is lobbying hard for extension of the Production Tax Credit and National Renewable Energy Zones — essentially a huge tax shelter for wind industry investors and expedited eminent domain for transmission corridors.

The real innovation here is the well-coordinated manipulation of public perception. The Pickens media campaign focuses on independence from foreign oil, and he is just one among many who have tried to convince the public and policymakers that there is a connection between windgenerated electricity and oil, which is hardly used for electricity.

The nation has seemingly not reached the point where we can look at this issue in a rational manner. Real analysis, however, makes it clear that commercial wind energy is but a small part of the solution to our energy problems and, moreover, it makes far less sense in some areas than in others.

Pickens advocates development of what he calls “the” wind corridor, the swath of open country from Texas to the Dakotas. The push here in the East is for wind development on forested Appalachian mountain ridges. The Appalachian wind corridor may be a first-rate tax shelter, but it's definitely not a first-rate energy resource. It comes in a distant third behind both

the Texas-to-Dakotas corridor and the Atlantic offshore corridor. It's a loser in terms of energy benefits and environmental trade-offs.

The Pickens argument for freeing up natural gas for transportation, and thereby reducing U.S. demand for oil, depends on a tenuous string of assumptions and propositions. He assumes that wind power, although intermittent and unreliable, will be available somewhere in large supply all of the time.

His answer is to build enough turbines over a wide enough geographic area — hundreds of thousands of turbines over a thousand miles of latitude — and to build the vast array of new transmission lines required to get the electricity where it's needed. In the meantime, until this fantastic investment and landscape transformation takes place, the Pickens plan will introduce unprecedented variability into the generation side of our national electricity system.

I predict that the Pickens plan will backfire. It will run up demand for natural gas as a fuel source for the new levels of rapidly dispatchable generation that will be needed to maintain the electricity system in a manageable state of balance.

The National Research Council released a report to Congress in 2007 based on what was then considered the most ambitious, yet still reasonable, estimate for growth in the wind industry. It was estimated that by 2020, the U.S. would have the equivalent of 36,000 wind turbines providing 4.5 percent of our electricity supply, not the 20 percent now promoted. Even

at 4.5 percent the predicted environmental costs are stunning. In the Appalachian region, where I focus my research, this scale of development will require extensive industrialization of our mountain ridges. In other words, the trade-off involves much of our remaining wild landscape.

Indiscriminate national investment in commercial wind energy will involve a huge commitment of public resources and the neglect of serious responses to serious problems. The public will get smart about this before long, but perhaps not before real damage has been done and real opportunities are lost.

We do need solutions for our energy problems. For now, though, most of the political traction is going to those who propose implausible solutions that stand to make them a lot of money. The concept of green energy is at risk of losing currency.

Mr. Webb is a senior scientist with the University of Virginia's Department of Environmental Sciences. His Web site, www.VaWind.org, addresses environmental issues associated with commercial wind energy development. This commentary first appeared in The Roanoke Times.

Still in Need of Something to Read?

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE By Barbara Kingsolver

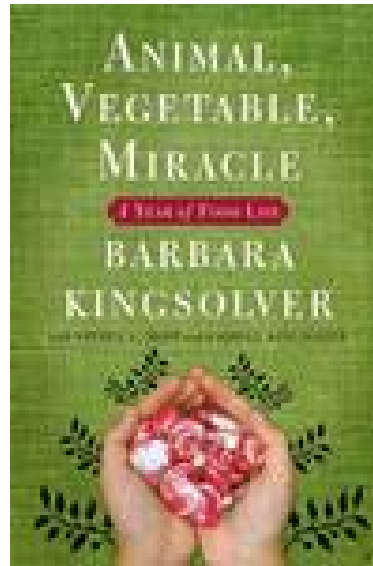
Reviewed by David Elkinton

Call me slow. But reading this journal of gardening in southern Appalachia during the month of August is timely, even if the book was released a year ago.

But it is so much more than a gardening journal. Kingsolver, her husband, and two daughters consciously chose to move back East, after living some years in Tucson. Both adults had rural Appalachian roots, and wanted to try to live on what they raised themselves, or what their neighbors raised. Settling near Roanoke, they began their experiment, counting one of spring's first blessings, the harvesting of fresh asparagus, as their day one. As the book unfolds, each month another chapter, we work the garden, we visit the local farmers market, and we learn to make cheese. Delightfully, we enjoy the first signs of entrepreneurship by daughter Lily, as she unpacks the chicks, raises the brood, and peddles eggs to the neighbors to make enough money to buy a horse.

But the big message of the book is that our society must purge itself from a transnational, energy-consuming agribusiness food system and return to more dependence on home-grown, locally-raised and seasonally-appropriate food. Kingsolver helps every reader do his or her part. The city dwellers can rely on farmer markets, community gardens and a new understanding. Rural residents can do more themselves. Even institutions like school systems, can buy locally and avoid dependence on heavily-processed food that required massive energy to ship thousands of miles.

This is a family book, too. While Kingsolver provides the majority of the narrative, husband Steven Hopp, a biology professor at Emory and Henry College, offers sidebars with additional commentary and



many references to organizations that specialize in the ideas under discussion. Elder daughter Camille, now a college student with a strong interest in nutrition and good health, shares both her reflections on this disruptive yearlong experiment that changed the family eating habits forever, and some of her favorite recipes. She even offers four different potato salad recipes, one for each season of the year.

In vain, however, I waited for the transition from the power grid to a more sustainable power system on their farm. It just seemed to be the next step. (Maybe the next book.) Aside from a brief reference to strip mined coal needed to produce electricity, there was no acknowledgement that living in southwestern Virginia was living with mountaintop removal mining. Others have and will continue to educate readers on that.

Kingsolver is a prize-winning author of both fiction and non-fiction, in the mold of her mentor, and one of my favorites, Wendell Berry. I look forward to reading more

of her writings.

Now I have to go pick the zucchini, and then think who I can push them off on.

ZUCCHINI ANYONE?

Zucchini by the cord. Pick up only; no deliveries. Contact dave elkinton@hotmail.com

GINNY IS HEADING FOR COURT – BLACKWATER CANYON PURCHASE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER!

By Judith Rodd, Director, Friends of Blackwater

"Ginny," the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, is the "poster child" of the 10,000 acre Blackwater Canyon — in Tucker County, West Virginia. Ginny's high mountain habitat faces severe threats from climate change, logging, and development.

On August 25, 2008, Bush administration extremists at the U. S. Department of the Interior disregarded the opinion of top wildlife scientists, and stripped Ginny of all federal endangered species protection. And now it is "open season!" on this tiny nocturnal mammal, which lives in only eight high Appalachian mountain counties.

The "SOS! – Save Our Squirrel" Coalition, of which the Highlands Conservancy is an active member, will soon be filing a lawsuit seeking to overturn the Fish and Wildlife decision. Lawyers from the celebrated Center for

Biological Diversity will lead the charge, making this the Center's first endangered species litigation on the East Coast.

These new threats to Ginny and her species make it all the more important to move forward on the full public ownership of the Blackwater Canyon, where 3,000 wild and scenic acres remain in private ownership, and where Ginny's very survival is at grave risk.

The West Virginia Legislature, at Governor Joe Manchin's request, just appropriated five million dollars for land purchase in the Canyon. That's great news, but more funding is needed — and soon!

Here's how you can help save Ginny's home in the Blackwater Canyon — today:

Phone, write, or fax the offices of United States Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-WV, and ask him to get federal funding to complete the Black-

water Canyon land purchase. Senator Byrd's phone numbers are 202-224-3954, or 304-342-5855. His fax number is 202-228-0002. His mailing address is: Senator Robert C Byrd, U.S. Court House, Virginia St. East, Charleston, WV 25301. Or you can send an e-mail directly to Senator Byrd's office by going to www.saveblackwater.org.

Please act today to protect Ginny and her mountain home!

Editor's Note: The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has not made a decision on whether it will join in litigation over the delisting of the Northern Flying Squirrel. The Conservancy Board has not discussed the issue and the Conservancy will take no action until it does so.