



# The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Volume 39    Number 7    July, 2006

*This special edition is brought to you by*

## West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest

*John McFerrin, beloved West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Secretary and Highlands Voice Editor, is currently recuperating from an illness. Therefore, this special edition, focused on the Monongahela National Forest, is brought to you by We're Friends of the Mon!, an outreach program of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.*

*Our thoughts and best wishes are with John and his loved ones during this difficult time. We wish him a speedy recovery.*

*Dee Quaranto  
Coordinator  
We're Friends of the Mon!*



### BOB HANDLEY RECOGNIZED AS WILDERNESS HERO

Highlands Conservancy and West Virginia Wilderness Coalition member Bob Handley has been named a Wilderness Hero by The Campaign for America's Wilderness, a national organization dedicated to protecting our "last, best wild places for those who will come after us."

An avid spelunker, Bob has discovered many caves and passages in West Virginia. He received the Lew Bicking award from the National Speleological Society in 1994 in recognition of his numerous important contributions.

A life-long activist, Bob was instrumental in passing the Strip Mining Act of 1977. He began his work with the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition two years ago, when Beth Little invited him to a meeting. His focus is the southern end of the Monongahela National Forest and he is working to protect proposed Wilderness areas in the Greenbrier Watershed, including Spice Run, Big Draft, East Fork of Greenbrier, Middle Mountain, Laurel Run and Little Allegheny Mountain.

Bob's many accomplishments and interests are too vast to cover here. For more details about the illustrious history and current work of our own Wilderness Hero, see [www.leaveitwild.org](http://www.leaveitwild.org).

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## ***From the Heart of the Highlands***

by Hugh Rogers

### **Yes, Humanure**

Twenty-five years ago this month, our family moved into the house we had built from Ruth's graph paper sketch. Since our water came from a spring that tended to run dry in late summer, we never considered installing a flush toilet. We'd have to turn poop into fertilizer. Our composting toilet has two waterproofed block chambers with take-out doors. We move the seat every year, and leave the idle side to the benign bacteria that convert our waste into a crumbly, odorless soil improver. Instead of flushing we toss in sawdust and rotted wood chips.

Once during construction the Farm Credit banker came to check on the house, which he'd been told was "non-standard." Our mason looked up from the chamber where he was parging the blocks. Ruth introduced him and said, "He's standing in the compost toilet." The banker spun around, pointed toward the loft, and asked, "What's that?"

I don't know if compost toilets are still unmentionable among lenders. We had given up proselytizing on that subject, but when we became responsible for a larger house used for retreats and other gatherings we had new reasons to think about it.

Since less than 1% of the earth's water is potable—most is either salt water or polar ice—it's estimated that by 2025, the demand for clean drinking water will outstrip the supply by more than 50%. Water is being used as a bargaining chip, for example, by the International Monetary Fund, which since 1997 has demanded that Nicaragua and other countries raise rates and sell off publicly owned water to private firms as a condition for receiving loans. Uncomfortably closer to home, a bottled water company bought land in New Hampshire and proposed to pump 400,000 gallons a day from the water table. The local residents' objections are now before the state supreme court.

Just two years ago, West Virginia declared that all of our waters belong to the state. Senate Bill 163 (now Code Section 22-5-1) provided, "The state shall manage the quantity of its waters effectively for present and future use and enjoyment and for the protection of the environment."

Rick Eades, the Citizen Action Group's driving force behind this legislation, had been saying for years that water is our state's most valuable natural resource. The operative part of the law directed a three-year study of water use and self-registration by the largest users. We may not be ready for serious reconsideration of the way we deal with our sewage, but the public policy is in place. Slowly, slowly, the conventional wisdom will approach a tipping point, and then it will be obvious that drinkable water is too precious to shit in.

In the 1970's when we first contemplated the "dry" toilet of course we looked in *The Whole Earth Catalog*, but we didn't find much. Insomniacs could rely on "Excreta Disposal for Rural Areas and Small Communities," prescribed by the American Public Health Association. Upscale country folk could buy the Clivus Multrum, a sophisticated invention that converted American poop to Swedish profit. By the 1980's, *The Next Whole Earth Catalog* would feature titles such as *The Toilet Papers* and *Goodbye to the Flush Toilet*. Compost was becoming cool.

It was our old friend Chuck Merritt who gave us the truly useful *Humanure Handbook*, by Joe Jenkins, which had first appeared, unnoticed by us, in 1994. The author's interests ranged from history to biology to comparative religion and he never skipped a pun, but in fewer than 200 pages he delivered on his subtitle: "A Guide to Composting Human Manure (Emphasizing Minimum Technology and Maximum Hygienic Safety)."

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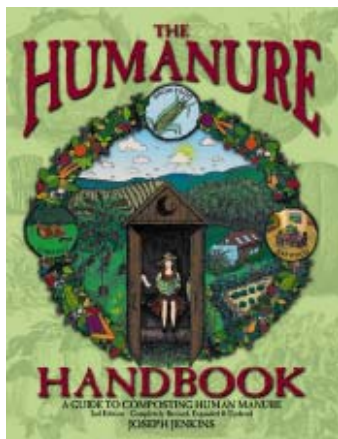
Compared to our owner-built home, the house now in question had the opposite problem: not how little clean water came in, but how much dirty water went out, how much would percolate. A neighbor had warned us about leaching from the septic tank, which had happened when only two people lived there. We would have to accommodate a weeklong influx of twenty or twenty-five. The house had three flush toilets. It was easy to imagine them all going at once.

So we built a two-room outhouse, but not over a pit. Beneath the seats are five-gallon buckets; users scoop wood mulch from another container to cover their waste. Our first group of twenty made emptying the buckets a daily chore. The outhouse is actually a collection point for the compost site, where deposits are again covered with rough organic carboniferous material such as straw or leaves. Kitchen garbage goes there as well. The handbook recommends a simple two-part bin where one side can compost for a year while the other is building up.

We've had no problems with smell or flies. If we did, we'd follow the simple rule: add more cover. We rinse the bucket after dumping (and pour that water on the pile). As for risk of disease, I urge you to read the handbook on the beneficial effects of thermophilic microorganisms on human pathogens. There too you'll discover that your current septic system or municipal waste facility isn't very safe for you or the planet.

This time around, we're taking a positive approach. My slogan is "Pro Clean Water" instead of "Anti Sewage Sludge." Jenkins says he's promoting resource recovery, not waste disposal. We both know that most people don't want to pay attention to what happens after they close the lid. We all start out having our diapers changed by someone else and we go on putting our poop where we don't have to think about it. But think about it.

*The Humanure Handbook*, by J.C. Jenkins, self-published by Jenkins Publishing, P.O. Box 607, Grove City PA 16127. Find out more at [joseph-jenkins.com](http://joseph-jenkins.com). Now available in Korean!



## AUGUST 5, 8 AM - 3 PM Spruce Street Parking Garage, Morgantown

**The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition will have a booth at Morgantown's 16th annual Greatest Garage Sale on Earth. We're seeking garage sale item donations from Morgantown area members, and volunteers to help us staff the booth. We hope to raise some much needed funds for our Wilderness Campaign. If you have some items to donate, or can help out at the event, please call Dave Saville at 304-284-9548. We can make arrangements to pick up your items, or you can bring them down to the Spruce Street Parking Garage.**

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](http://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.*



# Cranberry Wilderness Trail Maintenance

By Dee Quaranto

On June 17th, a crew of eight hit the road to do trail maintenance on the North-South Trail in the Cranberry Wilderness. Our group included three Forest Service personnel from the Gauley Ranger District: WJ Cober, Recreation Technician; Aaron Barkhurst, Seasonal Wilderness Ranger; and Michelle May, Youth Conservation Corps Crew Leader. Volunteers included Highlands Conservancy members Catherine Kelleher, Ed Phelps, and Greg Rollins, as well as Dave Roddy, a friend of Aaron's who is a Reclamation Inspector for the WV Department of Environmental Protection.



The crew fills in one of the muddy stretches of the North-South Trail. Left to right: Dave Roddy, Greg Rollins, Ed Phelps and WJ Cober.

We gathered at the Gauley Ranger Station and car-pooled to the trailhead, a drive of about 35 minutes. The task at hand involved draining and filling a nasty bit of trail. Armed with Forest Service-issued pulaskis and shovels, we set off on a beautiful day custom-made for trail work. Dave came in from Summersville, Ed from Durbin, and Dee and Greg from Morgantown, but the long-distance prize for the day went to Catherine "Rock Girl" Kelleher, who drove all the way from Bethesda to tame the boot-sucking beast. Displaying an almost supernatural knack for locating and mining rocks, Catherine provided much of the material that we used to fill in this particularly wet and muddy stretch of the trail.

I hadn't worked with the Forest Service before, and didn't know what to expect. WJ, Aaron and Michelle are a great bunch of folks who take their stewardship of the Mon seriously, and it was really enjoyable to talk and work with them. They were fun to be with and made us feel comfortable and appreciated. This was the first official trail maintenance event for *We're*

## MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST HIKING GUIDE

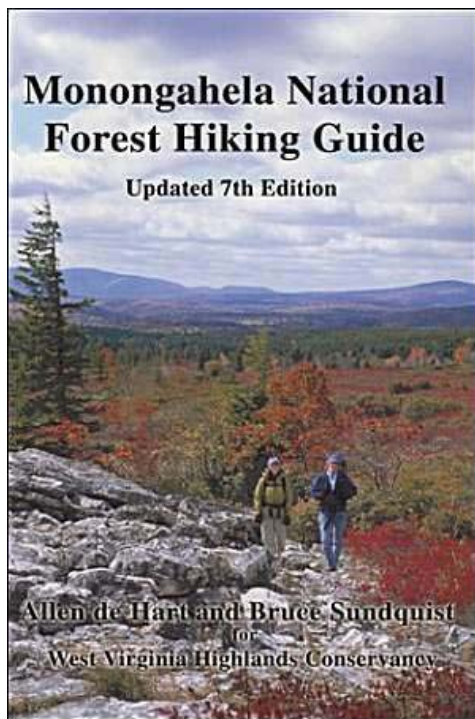
by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

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### COMPACT DISC EDITION

WV Highlands Conservancy continues to bring its publications into the computer era with its latest innovation- the publication of the Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, **Allen Dehart, Bruce Sundquist**, 7th Edition, with maps and many other enhancements by WVHC contributor **Jim Solley**

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

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P.O. Box 306



*Friends of the Mon!*, and I had a great time. I'd like to thank everyone who participated. Special thanks go to Bob Henry Baber, Mayor of Richwood, who generously hosted Greg and I over the weekend on his beautiful farm.

Next month, I'll tell you all about the July 8th Seneca Creek trail maintenance led by Dave Saville, including the further adventures of Rock Girl (AKA "The Tool"), and Ed Phelps, who threatened to put rocks in my pack if I didn't stop taking pictures of him. Please enjoy the photo of him, below, as it is the only one I'm likely to ever publish.

We'll be doing lots more trail maintenance in the future. Please contact me at (304) 296-3196 or dee.quaranto@gmail.com if you'd like to receive special notice of upcoming volunteer opportunities.

If there is a particular Wilderness or proposed Wilderness area you'd like to work in, please let me know and I will try to make arrangements for a trail maintenance date in the area of your choice.



Aaron Barkhurst and Michelle May take a load off after a hard day's work on the trail, above. Below, Ed Phelps does the same. This was one of the only times anybody stopped moving long enough to get a good picture of them!



# Wilderness Pioneer Doug Scott to Tour West Virginia

By Harrison Case and Rachel Bocchino

Mr. Scott has been involved in the wilderness protection movement since his college days, and has worked on every major piece of Wilderness legislation since the late 1970s, including the landmark Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 that created the beloved Dolly Sods and Otter Creek Wilderness Areas. He also was a member of the original Earth Day committee and a leader in the fight to protect the great untamed lands of northern Alaska.

Today, Mr. Scott is public policy director at the Campaign for America's Wilderness, which supports citizen-driven efforts in many states to protect roadless, wild lands as Congressionally-designated Wilderness. His book, *The Enduring Wilderness*, chronicles the evolution of the wilderness movement from its early days as an idea born of conservation-minded adventurers and forward-thinking public officials to the continuing effort to preserve the last remaining wild places in America.

Mr. Scott's visit to West Virginia comes at a critical time for those dedicated to forest protection in the state. The United States Forest Service is expected to release, later this summer, a final management plan for the Monongahela National Forest. This plan will contain the agency's opinion regarding suitable new Wilderness Areas on the Mon.

However, as Mr. Scott points out, it is the people and their elected representatives, not the Forest Service, who ultimately secure permanent Wilderness protection for their beloved backcountry areas.

"The wilderness areas of West Virginia are among the wildest, most enchanting sanctuaries of nature I know," says Mr. Scott. "Spectacular wild sanctuaries such as Seneca Creek still are unprotected, so there is work to be done by West Virginians to preserve these most precious, most vulnerable parts of wild, wonderful West Virginia. Getting involved with the citizen campaign to protect these treasures is a great way for ordinary people to take part in our democracy."

Mr. Scott's presentations will include selections from *The Enduring Wilderness* and discussions about how citizens across the country have worked with their representatives in Congress to protect over 100 million acres of Wilderness in the past four decades.

At each event, Mr. Scott and volunteers and staff from the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition will be on hand to help those who wish to see the Mon's wild areas protected get more involved. Upon the release of the final forest management plan, members of Congress will be looking to their constituents for guidance in creating a West Virginia Wilderness bill. A sustained, strong and growing voice for more Wilderness on the Mon will ensure that this bill forever preserves places like Seneca Creek, Spice Run, Roaring Plains and many more.



Doug Scott, author of *The Enduring Wilderness*, will be nearby in July. Photo courtesy of Campaign for America's Wilderness

## TOUR DATES

**Shepherdstown**  
**Monday, July 17, 6 PM**  
**Shepherd University Student Center,**  
**Cumberland Room**

**Elkins**  
**Tuesday, July 18, 6 PM**  
**Elkins Depot Welcome Center**

**Lewisburg**  
**Wednesday, July 19, 6 PM**  
**Harmony Ridge Gallery**  
**209 W. Washington Street**

**Charleston**  
**Thursday, July 20, 5:30 PM**  
**Taylor Books, 226 Capitol Street**

**Morgantown**  
**Friday, July 21, 6 PM**  
**WVU College of Law, Room 157**





# West Virginia Highlands Conservancy: We're Friends of the Mon!

Protecting and enjoying our Monongahela National Forest



## Mountain Odyssey - Outings, Education and Beyond

If you'd like to join us for an outing, please sign up with the hike leader, who can give you more information on where to meet and what to bring. Their initials appear after each listing; contact information is at the bottom of the listings. If you'd like to lead an outing, please send an e-mail with description to: [dee.quaranto@gmail.com](mailto:dee.quaranto@gmail.com). We may update our outings list before your next issue of the *Highlands Voice* arrives, so be sure to see [www.friendsofthemon.org](http://www.friendsofthemon.org) for up-to-the-minute information.

**Open Dates: Visit Kayford Mountain South of Charleston** 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 ahead to schedule. JM, LG

**July 22: Day Hike in Dolly Sods** Easy to moderate loop hike, to include several stops for conversation, observation and cooling dips in the streams. Meet hike leader Mary Wimmer at Red Creek Trailhead in Laneville at 9:30 AM. Hike approx. 1.5 miles into Dolly Sods Wilderness; turn onto Big Stonecoal Trail, cross Red Creek, uphill approx. 2 miles to Dunkenbarger Trail, then 1.7 miles to Little Stonecoal Trail; 1.5 miles back downhill to Red Creek Trail for an easy hike back to our cars. Ending in early evening; optional supper at Sirianni's Pizza in Davis. KC

**July 30: Sinks of Gandy Caving Trip** A beginners spelunking trip where Gandy Creek plunges for a mile-long meander beneath Yokum Knob. We'll also visit nearby Stillhouse Cave. Helmets and 3 light sources required. DS

**August 5: Flatwater Float on 6-Mile Pool in Buckhannon River** Bring canoe, life jacket and lunch. Meet at Sheetz in Buckhannon at 11 AM, take out at 4 PM. Just show up, or call if you wish. DG

**August 19-20: Big Run Waterfall Hike/Bushwhack, MNF Olson Tower Area** Explore a stream closeup and personal: hike and "streamwhack" along Big Run's waterfalls, cascades and dunking holes. Moderate/strenuous: 7 miles Saturday, 5 miles Sunday. Previous bushwhacking experience a must. Basecamp in MNF. SB

**August 26: Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Brown Mountain Overlook Hike** Experience seldom-seen northern portions of the Refuge on a fairly easy 7 mile hike. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has adopted part of this route; we may do some light trail maintenance as we hike. DS

**August 26-28: Otter Creek Wilderness, MNF Backpack** Moderate. Day 1: Backpack in on Otter Creek, Yellow Creek, McGowan Mt and Moore's Run Trails, visiting bogs before descending to camp. Day 2: Slack pack on Possession Camp, Green Mt. and Otter Creek Trails, exploring falls and pools on return. Day 3: An easy 5 miles out. MJ

**September 16 & 17: Roaring Plains, MNF Backpack** Tour one of the most spectacular areas of the Mon, the proposed Roaring Plains Wilderness area. A serious overnight trip covering many miles. DS

**September 16-18: Dolly Sods North and Dolly Sods Wilderness, MNF Backpack** Approximately 30 miles of hiking through Dolly Sods: Raven Ridge, Cabin Mountain, The Falls of Red Creek, Big and Little Stonecoal, The Lion's Head, The Forks and Dobbin Grade. MJ

**September 29-October 1: Seneca Creek Backcountry, MNF Backpack** Day 1: Arrive early if you like and car camp at primitive Spruce Knob Lake Campground. Day 2: Explore seldom-mentioned trails on the western flank of Allegheny Mountain before descending to camp below Seneca Falls. Day 3: Backpack up Seneca Creek. MJ

**September (dates to be announced): Tree Planting in Canaan Valley** We'll be planting Red Spruce on the Wildlife Refuge. DS

**October 7-9: Cranberry Backcountry, MNF Backpack** Hike approximately 30 miles through this scenic area. MJ

**October 14 & 15: Red Spruce Cone Collecting** Volunteer to collect red spruce cones for red spruce ecosystem restoration project. DS

**October 19-26: Highlands Conservancy's 41st Annual Fall Review** We'll be at the historic Cheat Mountain Club for a whole week! Outings, workshops, music, special speakers, and more. Stay tuned!

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**SB:** Susan Bly (304) 876-5177 (day); (304) 258-3319 (7 - 9 PM); [sbly@shepherd.edu](mailto:sbly@shepherd.edu)

# TIMBERRRRRR!

By Dave Saville

One of the "multiple uses" of National Forests is logging. The Mon is no exception. Here is a quick summary of some of the logging activities happening on YOUR National Forest.

**Desert Branch** near Richwood sold the end of 2005, so all 882 acres (includes 382 acres of helicopter-specified harvest) remain uncut except for specified road work. 69 of the 882 acres are regeneration cuts...the balance are thinnings. This contract runs until December 31, 2011, so will be in operation over several seasons.

**Shock Run** near Frost started the last two-aged unit of 19 acres the end of May, so is almost finished up now.

**Smoke Camp** near Bartow has about 25 acres of shelterwood remaining. It isn't in operation now, but will be completed this summer.

**Hobson-Laurel** near Montrose has about 60 acres in four regeneration units remaining. This sale should finish operations this year.

**Lower Clover** near Parsons was sold the beginning of 2006. 74 of 471 acres have been harvested already (the sale includes 326 acres of

helicopter-specified harvest). 353 of the 471 acres are shelterwood cuts. The sale expires September 30, 2010, so will be in operation for several seasons.

**Limestone** near Saint George has 25 acres of shelterwood and 207 acres of thinning, all by helicopter, remaining. Current termination date of the contract is May 14, 2007.

**Day South and Friel-Laurel** in the Upper Williams River watershed are currently advertised. Day South includes 432 acres of thinning. Friel-Laurel is all helicopter, and includes 117 acres of regeneration cuts and 338 acres of thinning.

**Big & Little** Timber Sale, the last sale from the Upper Williams area, will be advertised later this summer.

**Little Beech Mountain**, on the Glady Fork, includes approximately 2,000 acres of logging, public comment period has closed, decision yet to be announced.

**Cherry River**, north of Richwood, proposed 1,700 acres of logging, comment period closed, decision pending

**Ram's Horn** near Greenbank proposes 1,675 acres of logging and nearly 5,000 acres of prescribed burning. The 30-day public comment period began June 26. Contact Kristine Vollmer at 304-257-4488 x 24 for more information or to make comments.



## Forest Land Sale Proposal Dead - For Now...

Like its counterpart in the House, the Senate Appropriations Committee has refused to include the proposed sale of 300,000 acres of National Forests in its \$26 billion Interior Department spending bill. The proposal to fund rural schools by selling off National Forests and other public lands is the work of Mark Rey, former timber lobbyist, whose post as Agriculture Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment for the Bush Administration puts management of those lands in his hands. Rey has publicly stated that most of the 130,000 public comments received opposed the sale. However, he has indicated that it may rear its head again next year. The proposal encompasses 35 states, and includes over 4800 acres in West Virginia.

At this point, the proposed land sale is the only option the Bush Administration has put forth for funding the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, which expires at the end of this year.

## UPCOMING LOCAL WILDERNESS GROUP MEETINGS

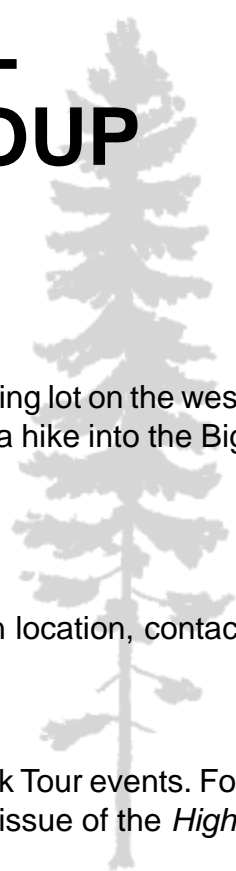
### THE SOUTHERN MON GROUP

will meet on August 6, at 2 PM. Rendezvous at parking lot on the west side of the Greenbrier River on Anthony Road, for a hike into the Big Draft proposed Wilderness

### THE NORTH-CENTRAL MON GROUP

will meet on August 8, at 7 PM. For information on location, contact Dee: (304) 296-3196; dee.quaranto@gmail.com.

We hope to see all members at the Doug Scott Book Tour events. For more information, see the article on page 5 in this issue of the *Highlands Voice*.



# The Spiritual Mon

*The following originally appeared as a Letter to the Editor in the Elkins Inter-Mountain. Many thanks to author Carol Warren for granting us the permission to re-publish it here:*

Editor:

In Scripture, the Psalmists ascribed surpassing value to wild mountains and deserts as places for spiritual renewal. The greatest seers and prophets of many religious traditions sought retreats in wilderness and on mountaintops to find their purest communion with God.

It is the same for me and perhaps for you, too. As the 10th generation of my family to live among these hills, I inherited an abiding love of wild forests and mountains rooted deep in that heritage. This love of nature is, in part, inspired by my faith. Wild mountains are my cathedral and my sanctuary.

fic, or the fly fisherman practicing his stealth on a wily trout, or the wilderness hunter, photographer, bird watcher, or snowshoer - these West Virginians are harvesting the wilderness, too.

Sojourning in a wild forest, we harvest serenity and respite from the hectic pace of modern life, gaining the truest form of re-creation. These increasingly popular uses of our forest are endlessly sustainable, offering a reliable and growing source of revenue to rural communities.

I trust that Forest Service officials will not minimize these larger, deeper values as they weigh the public comments they have received concerning alternative visions for the future of the Mon. Those who will make this decision are only human, so they come to the task with their own preconceptions. I simply ask them to stand back and take the long, long view of what is best for the land and people of West Virginia in terms that leave ample room for the human spirit.

**“In wilderness I find a revelation of the holy...”**

In West Virginia's wilderness, more than anywhere else, I am in direct touch with creation and feel God's majesty all around me. The profusion of buds and flowers at this time of year sings out resurrection.

Have you ever wandered along a trail in the Monongahela National Forest, leaving roads and mechanical things behind? If so, I believe you will understand when I say that in wilderness I find a revelation of the holy. The magenta hues of the rhododendron whisper love; the green fullness of summer shouts abundance. You glimpse glory in the blazing red and orange of fall foliage. Strolling beneath a silent forest canopy or beside a fog-shrouded mountain bog is a blessed sojourn, a feast of peace, experiencing the natural world in its own unique beauty. Sit quietly along a stream tumbling over ancient rocks in a wild glen and you are in touch with the eternal.

By meeting the wilderness on its own terms, we can better appreciate our deep connection with creation: the trees, plants, birds and creatures whose stewardship we are charged with. In giving us this fruitful earth, I believe God gave us also a sacred obligation to care for all it contains and to pass it on as a blessing for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

There has been much discussion in recent months about alternatives identified by the U.S Forest Service for future management of the Monongahela National Forest. Some participants in this discussion appear to evaluate these public lands only in terms of dollars and cents, calculating how they may wring out the most profit. To see no larger vision of the value of these lands is, to me, a sacrilege.

Of course, we want to have the multiple benefits of these lands and the products of their soils and forests, and we do. But surely we must measure the natural resources we harvest in these hills in more than just the dimensions of a log headed for a sawmill. Undeveloped watersheds are fountains of clean water for our communities and lessen danger of flooding. A young family picnicking beyond the sound of traf-

While I hope to see the Forest Service recommend more lands for wilderness protection than was their initial preference, I know that only Congress makes the decisions about what wilderness we will save. So, while I lift my eyes to the hills, I am also keeping a sharp eye on those public servants to whom we temporarily entrust our national forest.

I am counting on our senators and representatives to understand the larger truths about the multiple uses spiritual people like me want to see our great-grandchildren enjoy in the wilderness cathedrals of the Monongahela.

Carol Warren  
Potato Knob

## **MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL BROCHURES**

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

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

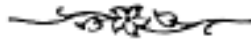


# 2006 Garden Party

Saturday, August 19

1 - 6 PM

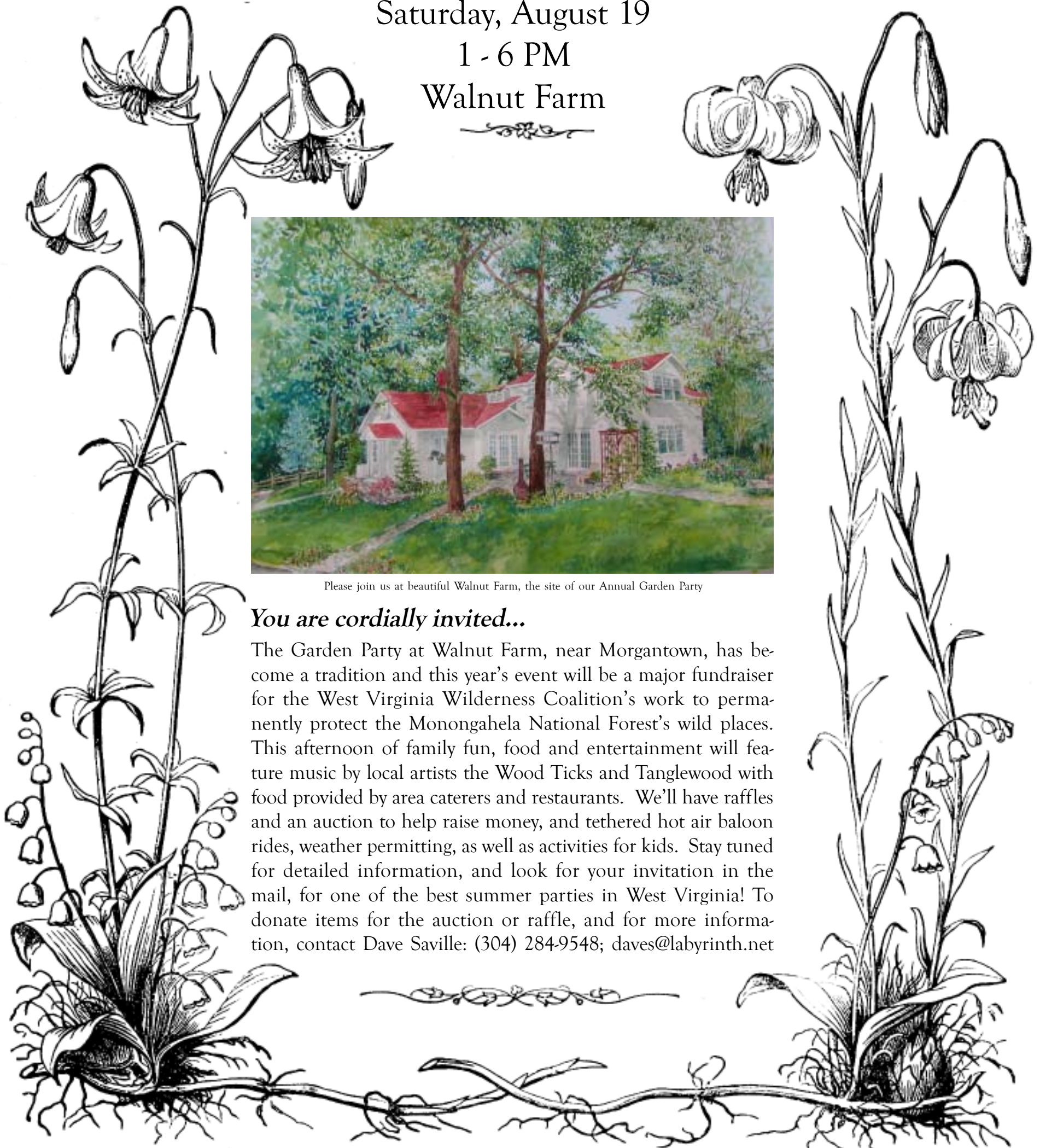
Walnut Farm



Please join us at beautiful Walnut Farm, the site of our Annual Garden Party

***You are cordially invited...***

The Garden Party at Walnut Farm, near Morgantown, has become a tradition and this year's event will be a major fundraiser for the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's work to permanently protect the Monongahela National Forest's wild places. This afternoon of family fun, food and entertainment will feature music by local artists the Wood Ticks and Tanglewood with food provided by area caterers and restaurants. We'll have raffles and an auction to help raise money, and tethered hot air balloon rides, weather permitting, as well as activities for kids. Stay tuned for detailed information, and look for your invitation in the mail, for one of the best summer parties in West Virginia! To donate items for the auction or raffle, and for more information, contact Dave Saville: (304) 284-9548; [daves@labyrinth.net](mailto:daves@labyrinth.net)





# Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

West Virginia University and Davis & Elkins College students plant over 6,000 red spruce and balsam fir trees

By Dave Saville

As part of the Highlands Conservancy's program to restore the red spruce ecosystem in the Highlands, an outing was planned to plant seedlings on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. West Virginia University and Davis and Elkins College Students collaborated on this project to plant seedlings of red spruce and balsam fir that were grown from seeds we collected in Canaan Valley. Now in its 4th year, this program has already returned tens of thousands of red spruce trees to their original native locales. Through the cooperation of many agencies, organizations and individuals, the importance of this unique ecosystem is being recognized, and more is being done to protect and restore it.

Quickly written recollections:

Friday afternoon, April 7th, I drove to Canaan with a truckload of trees, tools and food. I visited the Wildlife Refuge, where last-minute details were worked out, then on to Whitegrass Cafe where I picked up more food, mainly Saturday evening's dinner. On to the Lanesville Cabin where soon carloads of WVU students, many armed with guitars, banjos, mandolins etc. began to arrive. Corey Bonasso even brought his stand-up bass! As you might imagine, a bunch of students, a cabin, music, bonfire, Dolly Sods Wilderness at hand..... the students had a great time! Dancing outside, staying up late etc. etc.

Saturday morning, I got up early to get down to the Seneca Rocks Visitor Center to pick up a bunch of tree planting bars we borrowed from the Forest Service, and then on to the Wildlife Refuge where I set up a lunch-making, buffet. I had made a big batch of hummus, and fried up 6 lbs of tofu the night before for vegetarians to make sandwiches with, along with the usual meat and cheese fare. Believe it or not, the partiers, I mean students, from the night before all showed up on time (9am) (thanks Jim) and more were arriving from every direction. Soon Russ McClain showed up with a van-load of D&E College students and by the time we were ready to leave for the planting site we had almost 50 people (maybe more)! Dan Friend, the official WVU photographer, was there too, to document the weekend's events on film.

OH, I forgot to mention the weather. It was still raining, and had been all night long. No worries. On to the site we went. We had over 30 planting bars and dozens of buckets and bags to haul trees in. Although it was still raining, as it would all day long, we set out in groups of 2 to get the trees in the ground. The site was about a mile-long area along

the eastern banks of the Blackwater River. A few stands of fir and spruce were there, and we were expanding and connecting them with seedlings. By 3pm we had put 1600 balsam fir trees and 3200 red spruce trees in the ground! Everyone was wet and tired, so we headed back to the cabin where hot showers and naps for many revived the group.

A repeat of Friday night was about to happen, minus the rain. A feast, prepared by Whitegrass Cafe, ensued and everyone had their fill of vegetarian chili, baked potatoes, salad and cornbread. Oh yeah, and of course brownies. A clear sky (finally) meant cold temps (teens). A group of 5 U of Maryland students showed up. They'd had a bad experience wilderness camping in the rain the night before, and were

wet and tired, so we took them in. Eric, from Sweden, got a card game going on the kitchen table.

Sunday morning I was again up early, this time to get the buckwheat cakes and sausage cooking. As the cakes were coming off the griddles, the students were there with plates ready to put them on. Out with the lunch fixins, and off to the planting site for Sunday's effort. A change in plans had us up on Cabin Knob planting trees on this highest point of the Wildlife Refuge. There, two stands of spruce, both known sites for endangered species (squirrels) were expanded and connected with the spruce and fir seedlings. The group

was somewhat smaller, but 23 of us planted about 1200 seedlings up there on a beautiful blue-sky day with spectacular vistas of Canaan Valley accompanying us. We finished up the day's work by 2 PM and people began to head home, but a few D&E students decided to enjoy a bit more of the sunshine and hiked on for the afternoon. A few WVU students also decided they weren't ready to leave and headed back to the cabin in Lanesville for another night after an afternoon hike in Dolly Sods Wilderness.

Many thanks to: Russ McClain for helping to organize and supervise all this, and for bringing a whole gang of great folks from D&E College to work with the WVU students; Jim Kotcon, faculty advisor of the WVU Student Sierra Coalition who spent the whole weekend with us and was a great help in pulling it all together; Ken Sturm, Biologist at the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and Stan Skutek, Refuge Manager, for joining us, and making it all happen on their end; Laurie Little at Whitegrass Cafe for helping so much with the food; Corey Bonasso for rallying and organizing so many WVU students to participate; Thomas Minney and Amy Cimarolli from The Nature Conservancy for their (and their family's) help and dedication to restoring the red



Spectacular weather awaited the tree planters on Sunday as the crew went to Cabin Knob, the highest point of the refuge, to expand and connect 2 disconnected areas of red spruce. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE SAVILLE





Cory Chase, WVU Student and Canaan Valley native is right at home planting spruce in the Valley.

severed and revealed in the weather and elements to make this weekend a memorable, rewarding and productive experience. Dozens of WVU photographer Dan Friend's pictures can be seen at <http://www.ia.wvu.edu/photo/photo/2006/42006/24075/>



Armed with planting bar and red spruce seedlings, Bobby Mitchell is also prepared for the wet weather endured by the nearly 50 volunteers from West Virginia University and Davis & Elkins College.

spruce ecosystem; Melissa Thomas VanGundy, Forest Ecologist at the Monongahela National Forest; Chip and the Chase boys - Cory, Adam and Morgan - for their help and never-ending nurturing and soul sustenance; the WVU Plant & Soil Science Club; Society of American Foresters; Student Sierra Coalition; Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and Rec students; the D&E College students (and Pete), and everyone who per-

## Join Now !!!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

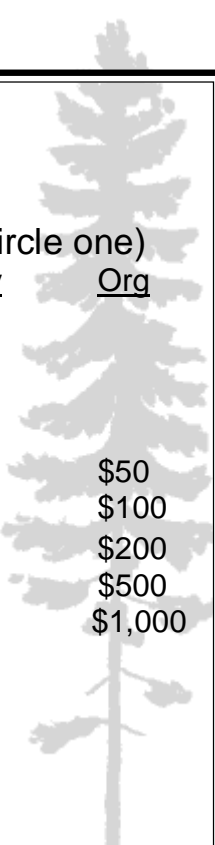
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### 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	\$250	\$500
Mountaineer	\$500	\$750	\$1,000

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

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





# Spruce Knob Explorations

June 24 – 25, 2006

By Susan Bly

Our goal for this backpack was to explore the old Spruce Mountain trail in the Seneca Rocks-Spruce Knob Recreation Area. Those accompanying me on this mission were Dave and Jennifer Paxton, Jeongin Lee (J), Judy Smoot, Doug and Marcy Schubert and Cleo – the black wonder dog.

After assembling at the Lumberjack trailhead, we headed north on the trail. The Spruce Knob area had been a little low on water, less than its normal flow as we have had a dry year thus far. This would all change later on today.

The Lumberjack trail follows an old logging railroad and is nearly as flat as a pancake until it reaches Camp 4 Low Place. The length of this section is listed as 4.25 miles – 3.25 of which is from the trailhead to Huckleberry. The remainder of the trail, between Huckleberry and High Meadows, is a distance of 1 mile, according to brochures and an early edition of the Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide. After walking this section, and timing our rate of progress on it, an average pace of 1.75 miles per hour with backpacks, we feel it is actually 1.5 miles in length.

The High Meadows trail is next to Camp 4 Low Place which is where we would set up base camp for explorations. We arrived at Camp 4 at one-ish and set up our tents and tarps. As we ate lunch, we heard the approaching thunder and finished our lunches under tarps as the rains came tumbling down. The rains came down and the “floods” came up as the song goes but the tents all held firm – except Marcy and Doug’s REI tent which Marcy says has leaked from day one.

Explorations were out of the question while lightning flashed so we took siestas and lounged in our tents or under tarps, overcome by the pitter patter of raindrops. We did have hypothermic concerns for J as she had not brought her sleeping bag, thinking of summer heat. One lesson I have learned while camping in the Mon is to never leave your bag at home. It’s always cooler here than in the mountains around DC. She made it through the night with the help of two emergency blankets and lived to tell her tale which is “No more camping in the rain for me!”

At five-ish the rain let up enough to go in search of water. Having camped here before I felt sure that a rock-walled spring was on the old railroad grade. After whacking around in ferns, this was proved false. Memory must be failing...now where was I? Oh yes, so having read a description of the Spruce Mountain trail from the old guide, we headed for the north pasture in search of a spring there. Whacking through some spruce, we emptied out onto the pasture and enjoyed some misty vistas. The mountains were slightly socked in and so we didn’t see much but the terrain looks exciting and is just asking to be explored. We searched around the meadow in vain for the spring. (Turns out we didn’t look in the correct spot. Ah well, next time.) We did find two enormous 6 foot rock cairns on the edge of the spruce, just like the old hiking guide said.

We shuffled back to camp on the old railroad grade and back down the trail to find water. Sometimes God gives you what you need before you even ask. Our request was for water which was provided by the recent rains. We didn’t like the rains but they saved us a long jaunt back to a proper stream. We scooped out basins for the water to col-



Reflection on Spruce Knob Lake © 2005 Jonathan Jessup  
[www.jonathanjessup.com](http://www.jonathanjessup.com)

lect into and waited till they cleared of silt, then filtered away. Amazing that one can get a gallon of water out of a little pool 5 inches deep and 7 inches wide.

After supper we enjoyed a brief pink sunset composed of pink fog in the south pasture. Then to bed to listen to more rain.

We awoke Sunday morning to rain. During breakfast we discussed the best option. Some wanted to go down High Meadows to Seneca Creek and back out to the vehicles. This would be a lovely option and much more scenic than the muck on the Lumberjack, but since it had been raining all night, creek levels would be high. Plus, we would have to either walk barefoot through stream crossings or slog through as our boots were squishing anyhow. Others just wanted to get back to the cars and dry out. So, knowing how heavy wet backpacks are, I voted for the easy, Lumberjack way out. We’ll hit Seneca Creek and High Meadows on a lovelier weekend guys.

So back out the way we came, dodging sporadic showers. Of course, right when we reached the cars the heavens opened wide. Nothing to do but wait for the rain to calm down before we opened our trunks. We dried off both there and at the Spruce Knob Lake campground. On to Seneca Rocks where we had lupper (lunch/supper) at Harper’s General Store, watching the rain pour down drain spouts. There is hardly ever a bad trip to the Mon and this was another good one.