



The Highlands Voice

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A QUARRY ON POND FORK? THE BATTLE CONTINUES

By Hugh Rogers and Ruth Blackwell Rogers

Just east of Elkins, a six-mile-long water gap is flanked by the Monongahela National Forest on the north and east and privately-owned Pond Lick Mountain on the south. People have been coming to cabins and campgrounds along the Shavers Fork River here for more than sixty years. Some of them retire here. The two largest campgrounds host around 15,000 families each year. From the DNR's Bowden Fish Hatchery, trout are stocked from January to May, and this stretch of the Shavers Fork is nearly always accessible to fishermen when many other stocked rivers and lakes are not. Caving, hiking, wildflower viewing, horseback riding, swimming and boating are also popular activities in the Bowden-Faulkner area. Several restaurants and lodges offer fine dining with exceptional views of the river and mountains.

The Highlands Voice has previously reported (August 2004, January 2005) on the threat of a new limestone quarry on the north face of Pond Lick Mountain. The beauty and tranquility of this place could be broken by the sounds of blasting, stone crushing, engine brakes, and 150 more trucks a day on US 33, and by the sight of a 400-foot highwall.

In January, the Department Of Environmental Protection granted a surface mining permit to J.F. Allen Co. over objections that the area was unsuitable for quarrying. Department Of Environmental Protection's staff concluded it was not "pristine." There have been two smaller quarries here, though both are idle, one since the mid-1970's. Two quarries



currently in operation on the west slope of Pond Lick Mountain are out of sight and sound of the valley. The proposed quarry would be more than six times larger than the idle quarries. Opponents believe it would tip the balance and turn the area into an industrial sacrifice zone.

The mining permit was appealed to the Quarry Board, which heard testimony on May 10th and 11th. No decision is expected before August. The major issues include: (1) loss of an historically and currently important recreation and residential area; (2) negative economic impact on property values and businesses; (3) traffic and road safety; (4) damage to the river, a tributary stream, and public water supplies, including the spring that supplies the fish hatchery; and (5) noise and air pollution from blasting.

Three other applications are pending. The NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit was granted immediately after the quarry permit, then withdrawn in late March. The Department Of Environmental Protection conceded on appeal that it lacked adequate pre-mining water quality data. More water sampling will be done during the next six months.

The state's 401 certification is a prerequisite for the Corps of Engineers 404 permit (the numbers refer to sections of the Clean Water Act). The Corps may not consider the proposed valley fill and sediment pond until the Department Of Environmental Protection certifies

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that they will not harm water quality. The valley fill would bury 2150 feet of an unnamed tributary of the Shavers Fork. In its comments on behalf of Shavers Fork Coalition and Bowden-Faulkner CPR, the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment spelled out how West Virginia law and regulations prohibit filling a stream with quarry waste. A public hearing on the 401 certification was scheduled for May 31st in Elkins.

Meanwhile, the Corps' preliminary response to the company's 404 permit application requested that J.F. Allen "reconcile" issues that the company had inadequately covered and the public had raised in comment letters. These included: (1) long-term maintenance of the sediment pond; (2) traffic; (3) a mitigation plan; and (4) impacts to the numerous productive springs that, because of the porous karst geology of Pond Lick Mountain, would be put at risk by the quarry. Four months after the Corps' January 31st letter, the company had not formally replied.

[To contact Bowden-Faulkner CPR, call (304) 636-9220.
To contact Shavers Fork Coalition, go to www.shaversfork.org.]

ROAD SHOW KEEPS ON ROLLING

In the last few months the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy has provided Dave Cooper with some money for travel expenses to help him continue his mountaintop removal road show. Operating on a shoestring, Mr. Cooper has loaded his slides of mountaintop removal into an old car and headed out. He has managed to speak to a wide variety of audiences all over Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee with occasional forays into other states.

Along the way he has managed to speak to Kiwanis Clubs, environmental groups, colleges and university groups and classes, high schools, Rotary Clubs, churches, and garden clubs. He has shared the stage on a radio program with the head of the Kentucky Coal Association.

Everywhere he goes, he shares a message about mountaintop removal mining and shows his jaw-dropping slides of the practice. His goal is to educate America about mountaintop removal. He is particularly pleased to have an opportunity to speak with people who would not usually be at an environmental meeting.

In an interview with the *Huntington Herald Dispatch*, Mr. Cooper described his work. "I get up there and talk a little bit and at first they don't believe me," Cooper said. "When they see the pictures that Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition took of the mountains it just blows them away,"

Mr. Cooper is still on the road, still doing his road show. For a volunteer presentation in your community, contact:

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BLAIR MOUNTAIN NOMINATED FOR HISTORICAL REGISTER

By Ken Ward, Jr.

State officials have agreed to recommend the site of the country's largest labor insurrection for the National Register of Historic Places, despite protests from landowners and members of the coal industry.

The West Virginia Archives and History Commission unanimously approved the nomination of the 10-mile Spruce Fork Ridge that was the site of the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the culmination of a bloody struggle to unionize the state's southern coalfields.

Thousands of union coal miners fought Logan County Sheriff Don Chafin's forces, who were trying to block the miners from entering nonunion territory. Federal troops eventually were called in to turn the miners back.

Logan County remained largely unorganized until 1933 when Congress gave legal protection to unions.

Preservationist Frank Unger said Blair Mountain would become the first nationally recognized battlefield related to labor unrest if it is approved at the next level.

Greg Whooten, vice president of landowner Dingess Rum Properties Inc., argued that permitting and coal extraction could be hampered by the national designation.

"For all of those out there who are wearing 'Save the Mountains' T-shirts, I want to see all of you that are wearing 'Save my Job' T-shirts," he said. Several dozen miners stood and cheered.

Owners of properties added to the National Register of Historic Places are given the opportunity to apply for tax credits and matching grants for restoration. The register does not restrict the use of property or require public access.

But opponents noted that the designation has affected mine permitting.

A subsidiary of Massey Energy Co. had planned to begin work on a strip mine on Blair Mountain by this year, said Eric Salyer of Logan County Mine Services. The company has spent more than \$1 million on permits and was ready to employ 94 miners, Salyer said.

"I have a real hard time explaining to them why our livelihood is being held up by this," he said.

The Arch Coal, Inc.-owned Hobet also has permits for surface mines within the 1600 acre boundary.

"There's been no tourism activity around Blair Mountain for 80-plus years," said Whooten. "What's going to change now?"

The Blair Mountain standoff was the largest insurrection in American history other than the Civil War. Previous efforts to get recognition for the battlefield have been rebuffed since 1981.

"Why has this taken 25 years, when Matewan — which was a precursor to Blair Mountain and was really just a skirmish — was given national landmark status in 1994?" Unger said.

Pro-union forces led by Matewan police Chief Sid Hatfield earlier in 1921 battled a trainload of Baldwin-Felt detectives hired to halt the unionization of the coalfields. Hatfield was later gunned down by private guards on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse in Welch. The incidents inspired the 1987 John Sayles movie "Matewan."

State officials have 90 days to prepare their recommendation for the national registry.

Editor's note: This story originally appeared in The Charleston Gazette.



Mountaintop removal mine near Blair, WV.
Photo by Lyntha Scott Eiler

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

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

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Environmental Issues in the 2005 WV Legislature**HOW THE SAUSAGE GOT GROUND THIS YEAR**

By Donald S. Garvin, Jr. WV Environmental Council Legislative Coordinator

When new Governor Joe Manchin proclaimed in his "State of the State" address that the state was "open for business," you might have guessed that environmental issues were in for a rocky road this past legislative session. You would have guessed correctly.

You may have assumed that it was going to be a "rough go" when the only specific new job-creating project the Governor proposed in that same speech was for the state to finance the building of more coal burning power plants. You would have assumed correctly.

And while the Governor spent much of the special session that preceded the 2005 regular legislative session convincing legislators to raise the severance taxes on coal, timber, and oil and gas in order to make up a \$3 billion deficit in the Workers' Compensation fund, legislators spent most of the regular session trying to give the money back.

That's the kind of session served up to us. It was a session dominated in large part by extremely "anti-environment" bills, with few positive changes offered for clean air and water. However, having said all that, only one really terrible piece of legislation made it all the way through the process.

Here's a rundown on how the environment fared in the 2005 session of the West Virginia Legislature.

Water Quality Standards

This session the WV Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, legislation that transfers water quality rulemaking authority from the Environmental Quality Board to the Department of Environmental Protection.

So Department of Environmental Protection will now be the agency that determines just how clean, or how dirty, our state waters will be on all fronts – it will set the standards, issue the permits to pollute, and be responsible for compliance enforcement.

Given DEP's tradition of promulgating other environmental rules in back-room discussions with the polluters, coupled with the agency's past performance record of issuing questionable permits and lax or non-existent enforcement of permit provisions, this can only be viewed as a major setback for clean water in this state.

Amazingly, even though DEP had sought this change for the last two years, according to press reports DEP officials now say "that they never sat down to figure out how they would do the job." The agency has finally appointed an "internal team" to discuss "how much money and how many employees are needed to write water quality standards," among other issues to implement the rulemaking change, such as evaluating "state open meetings requirements and federal public participation regulations."

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the July 1 changeover date, EQB has put several industry variance requests on hold, and DEP has released a document that shows that even *preliminary* plans

for handling rulemaking duties will not be ready until July 1.

During the debate on this bill Senator Jon Blair Hunter (D – Monongalia) was asked by a television reporter if his efforts to save the Environmental Quality Board weren't "kind of like swimming up stream?"

Senator Hunter replied, "Yes, and I will continue to swim up stream as long as there is clean water to swim in." Unfortunately, there are very few Jon Blair Hunter's in the legislature.

**Air Quality Rules**

DEP regularly promulgates a list of air quality rules that contain no significant changes, but merely update the state rules to reflect recent changes in federal EPA rules. Well, it should be no surprise that under the Bush administration's EPA minor changes aren't necessarily insignificant.

That was the case this year, when DEP proposed two rules (45CSR14 and 45CSR19) that replaced current WV air emissions limits with weaker, controversial federal standards that are currently in litigation.

The WVEC lobby team helped delegates orchestrate a serious discussion in the House Judiciary Committee about air quality. When asked by delegates on at least three occasions if the proposed rules were *weaker than current WV regulations*, DEP officials would only reply, "Not in the opinion of the EPA."

However, in the end we lost and these rules were adopted.

In other air related matters, DEP and the Governor backed off on legislation that would require industry to measure and report their "greenhouse gas" emissions. DEP had proposed such legislation last year, under the Wise administration.

The Legislature also passed a bill to loan money, through the issuance of bonds, to Allegheny Power to finance the installation of scrubbers at the Fort Martin power plant. The also passed a

bill that "streamlines" and shortens the Public Service Commission process for power companies filing for "certificates of public convenience and necessity" for new coal burning power plants. Both these bills were considered "governor's" bills.

Lastly, the WVEC lobby team worked hard to get legislators' support for establishing a "renewable energy portfolio" for the state. Our resolution would have established a goal of having 20% of the energy produced in the state come from renewable sources by the year 2020. But our proposal fell victim to the Governor's desire to build more power plants.

Department of Environmental Protection Advisory Council

This session the WV Legislature also passed a terrible bill that added numerous members to the DEP Advisory Council, and removed one of the two existing environmental members on the Council.

This was the third year the WVEC lobby team had to battle these proposed changes. Even DEP said they were against the bill because it gave the Advisory Council dangerous new powers to call meetings, appoint technical advisory committees, and "offer suggestions to the secretary for proposed new or amended legislative rules" – all by a majority vote of the newly "stacked" Council membership.

Thankfully, Governor Manchin vetoed the bill.

The Advisory Council as currently constituted is fairly well-balanced between the stakeholders members, and only serves in an advisory capacity, rather like a sounding board for DEP to discuss agency rules and operations.

On one level, this bill was being pushed by the Farm Bureau and other agricultural interests who felt they have not had a voice in decisions regarding water quality rules and regulations either at Environmental Quality Board or DEP.

The farming community can make a valid case when it comes to DEP. There is currently no representative on the Advisory Council from the



"non-point source" community. The federal Environmental Protection Agency, and therefore DEP, is finally moving to regulate "non-point source" pollution under the federal Clean Water Act.

However, as soon as agriculture made its pitch for Advisory Council membership then the piling on began and *everyone* wanted a seat. Next came the timber boys, then the oil and gas guys, and finally the United Mine Workers decided they needed a place at the table, too.

On another level, this bill was being pushed by the coal industry as their vehicle to control the setting of water quality standards in the state, once rulemaking was in the hands of DEP. Why else would the Advisory Council need new powers to call meetings, appoint technical advisory committees, and "offer suggestions to the secretary for proposed new or amended legislative rules"?

Thankfully, the Governor's veto means we won't have to seek an answer to that question, at least for another year.

Valley Fill Legalization

Ranking right up there at the top of the mountain of bad environmental bills this session was a coal industry bill that I have dubbed "the coal industry's mountaintop removal legalization bill."

This was the second year the coal industry had attempted to get this piece of garbage passed. We had managed to keep the bill bottled up in committee last session. But this year DEP indicated they supported the bill, and lobbied hard for its passage.

This legislation would have changed state law by inserting the federal definition of "fill material" into state statute. Even worse, this bill would have changed the state law that currently forbids waste materials "extracted" during mining operations from being dumped into state waters and streams.

In effect, SB 289 would have given the state's official blessing to mountaintop removal mining, huge valley fills, and the burial of hundreds of miles of pristine West Virginia streams.

What coal, and apparently DEP, wants is a way around Judge Hayden's decision that the massive valley fills involved in mountaintop removal mining are a violation of the federal Clean Water Act. Even though the Hayden decision has been thrown out on appeal for technical reasons, there has never been a ruling on the merits of the decision.

A spokesman for DEP even told the House Judiciary Committee that they wanted to change the state law so they could issue more mining permits, free of the threat of future law suits.

Late in the evening on the final day of the session the House passed this bill and sent it to the Senate. It is likely that at 11:59:59 p.m. this was the next bill up for consideration by the Senate.

But the gavel came down and the session was over. In the final minute of the final hour of the final night "the coal industry's mountaintop removal legalization bill" died a well-deserved death — at least for another year.

Tier 2.5 Stream Nomination

The good news is that the Legislature approved one of the native brook trout streams nominated for Tier 2.5 designation in the EQB Water Quality Standards Rule. The bad news is that the Legislature removed that protective designation for the second stream nominated in the rule.

Under the state's antidegradation plan, the presence of native brook trout is one of the main criteria in qualifying a stream for Tier 2.5 protection as a "water of special concern." The antideg plan passed by the Legislature four years ago contained a "presumptive list" of Tier 2.5 streams, primarily com-

prised of streams identified by the Division of Natural Resources as containing native brook trout populations. The plan also contained a provision allowing citizens to nominate streams not on the presumptive list for the higher protections afforded under Tier 2.5 designation.

So two years ago landowners in Preston County went before the Environmental Quality Board and nominated two native brook trout streams running through their property for Tier 2.5 status. Over a period of almost 18 months, the EQB conducted a complex and thorough review of the nomination. They held numerous meetings on the nomination, including an official public hearing and site visit in Preston County. They also considered testimony on the impact of Tier 2.5 protection from other landowners who opposed the designation.

There was no doubt that the streams were native trout streams – DNR stream surveys showed that the streams do in fact contain reproducing populations of Eastern brook trout. And after thorough consideration and lengthy public discussion, EQB unanimously voted to accept the nomination and designate the two streams, Watkins Run and Fill Hollow Creek, as Tier 2.5 streams in the water quality standards rule sent to the Legislature this session.

However, when the rule was taken up by the House Judiciary Committee, Fill Hollow Creek was amended out, primarily because this little stream also runs through the property of an influential timber company.

The battle in the Senate to restore Tier 2.5 designation for Fill Hollow Creek became one of the most fiercely debated issues of the session. The battle ended in a 17-17 tie vote, which meant the House version prevailed.

So while Fill Hollow Creek didn't "make the cut" – this time — the really good news is that Watkins Run remained in the rule and became the first stream ever successfully designated for higher protection through the new antidegradation nomination process.

Precedence for Tier 2.5 protection and the antideg nomination process has now been established.

Other Bills

The Governor vetoed legislation that would have greatly reduced severance taxes on timber and natural gas production. This was a good veto. The timber severance tax rate has historically been just a mere pittance and it is the main source of revenue for funding the State Division of Forestry. It seems only logical that extractive industries should pay the full bill for policing their activities, and the natural resources they extract should never be undervalued.

Absolutely outrageous resolutions were introduced in both houses urging the U.S. Forest Service to establish no new wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest. The House resolution actually passed on the next to last day of the session, but with the help of WVEC member groups such as the WV Wilderness Coalition the resolution was prevented from coming to the floor in the Senate.

Finally, the Legislature passed the "Environmental Good Samaritan Act," which limits liability for landowners and watershed associations in order to encourage voluntary reclamation of lands adversely affected by mining activities. While the intent of this bill is beneficial, it remains to be seen if its implementation will be beneficial as well.

That's the wrap-up for the 2005 session of the West Virginia Legislature.

Don't get too complacent now, however. The schedule and topics for the monthly Legislative Interim meetings has been announced.

There's just no rest for the weary.



ANOTHER WILDERNESS UNDER THE FOREST FLOOR

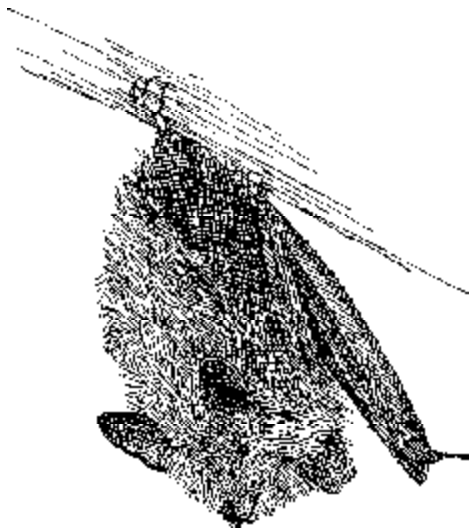
By Bob Handley

Most known caves are relatively untrammeled. The majority of existing caves have no known human entrances and are yet to be discovered - so are unseen and untouched by man (except by surface pollution).

Caves are found in West Virginia where limestone strata are exposed on the surface. Caves are formed by rain water which picks up acid as it percolates through decaying surface vegetation. The water penetrates cracks in the limestone to form conduits that eventually develop into cavities that are large enough for humans to enter.

The initial dissolution process is usually below the water table (phreatic development). When the water table is lowered by erosion, free flowing water in the air filled passage continues the enlargement (vadose development). During the vadose stage the limestone is removed by erosion and continued chemical action, passage walls are undercut and become unstable and fall (breakdown). Breakdown is eroded by the flowing stream and the enlargement continues.

There have been periods of flooding when whole cave systems have been filled with clay sediments. Eventually these sediments were washed out to allow the enlargement to continue. In places some of the clay deposits



were left on ledges on the passage walls. Studies of the deposits in northern Greenbrier County caves have found that magnetic particles in the clay are oriented 180 degrees from what the magnetic orientation is today. The last magnetic reversal occurred 288 thousand years ago. This means that these large passages have to be a least 300,000 years old

(our version of humankind originated 50,000 years ago).

This clay is the only positive evidence of the age of these caves. Many of our caves became too large for the rock structure to remain stable and roof collapse occurs. Fragments of some of these old caves remain as natural bridges.

Human cave dwellers of old are called troglodytes. Today, those who are seriously involved in exploration and/or study of caves are called cavers. Strictly recreation types or Sunday afternoon adventurers are called spelunkers. Cavers rescue spelunkers.

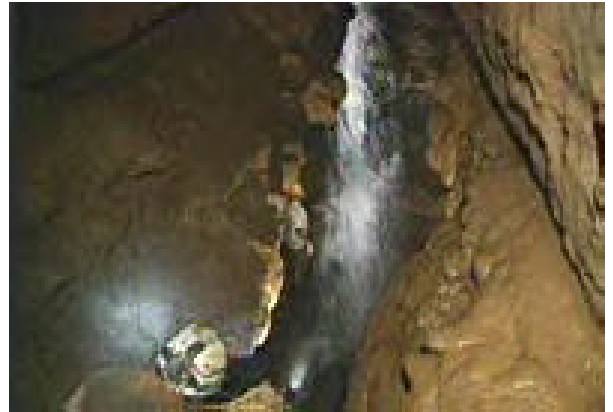
Humans have used caves for shelter, food storage, water sources, dance halls, sanitariums, churches, hide outs, rock climbing training areas, recreation, et cetera. With the exception of cave water courses (which are subject to fluctuation – flood events) and areas close to entrances, cave environment is stable. There is no light and very little, if any, variation in temperature or humidity. One Pfizer scientist likened these cave areas to a deep sea bottom.

At one time it was thought that the constant temperature and clean cave air would be beneficial for tuberculosis sufferers. Such an experiment was conducted in Mammoth Cave in Kentucky but was stopped when the patient's condition worsened. The cave air was too cool and damp – normally around 52 degrees Fahrenheit and 98% humidity (cave temperature is the average mean yearly surface temperature).

All species of cave life have developed special characteristics that allow them to exist in total darkness. Their existence is much more fragile than that of surface dwellers. Bats, rats, salamanders, and some insects use caves for shelter but forage on the surface for sustenance (they are called trilobites). Other cave dwellers (which you don't see unless you get very close to them) are not so mobile. Amphipods (very small fresh water shrimp), Gastropods (snails), Isopods (long bodied creatures with 14 legs) live in cracks, crevices, in mud banks, in pools, and in streams (they are called stygobites). They sustain themselves with nutrients that are carried into the cave by water or from refuse brought in by the trilobites. They are trapped. In total darkness, they don't have the ability to move from place to place unless they are in flowing water and even then some

species stay put. These critters have no means of inbreeding with other groups of their kind, so are generally unique to their specific location.

Talk about threatened or endangered species – these are in a class by themselves. Surface pollution (silt or chemical) can wipe



them out. Even the intrusion of humans, no matter how careful, can be detrimental to their existence.

Many different facets of science are involved in the study of caves. Geologists get to observe rock structure from inside. They are the ones that studied the magnetic orientation of cave clays noted earlier. Another interesting study is of silt deposits in river caves to evaluate paleofloods and also the effects of floods in caves. Hydrologists have done considerable work tracing underground water. Archeologists, working recently in a Greenbrier County cave (leased by WVCC) that had previously been inhabited by Indians, have determined that the remains of a reed torch had been there since about 100AD.

Biologists study all the different live critters that are found in caves – thousands of them. Paleologists have found remains of saber tooth tigers, mastodons, grizzly bear, armadillos, peccaries, and many other animals, but no buffalos.

Cave surveyors have mapped hundreds of miles of cave passages and rooms. Their maps are used for many purposes. A great amount of effort has gone into the development of modern rope and climbing hardware and the techniques for using it. Even more specialized equipment has been developed for under water caving. The development of some of this gear has been funded by NASA and is used in

(Continued on p. 7)

MORE ABOUT CAVES (Continued from p. 6)

space exploration. Safety and concern for the environment are highly stressed. An old caver's motto: Leave nothing but foot prints, take nothing but pictures, spend nothing but time – cave softly. As much as possible this has been merged into LNT.

West Virginia's largest known cave is the Friars Hole System (which lies below the Greenbrier/Pocahontas County line) at last report has 45 miles of passages; Organ Cave (in southern Greenbrier) is second with 40 miles. Scott Hollow Cave, in Monroe County, is 26 miles (and growing), Hell Hole in Pendleton County, at last report, is 23 miles (the only entrance is a 170 foot pit).

Exploration of big caves is never really finished. The late development of miniature (legal) rock removal techniques has enabled cavers to widen passages and open entrances that could not be negotiated in the past.

We know the caves are there by surface indications such as sink holes, disappearing streams, and springs. There will be new caves found and old caves extended for many years to come. It is very possible for West Virginia to have a 100 mile long cave. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky is the worlds longest at 360 miles. NOTE: the stated length of a cave is the total surveyed length of all its passages. It may have several different levels and many interconnecting passages (a maze). Only very short caves in limestone have one strait passage. Also, cave data pertaining to entrance locations is normally restricted to cavers and scientists conducting cave research. Vandals are numerous and dedicated to destruction of all things good. Also "Cave for Pay" outfitters and adventure clubs run hordes of people through caves they know about. Cavers in general and the national society (NSS) in particular discourage "Cave for Pay" and geocaching targets located in caves (geocaching puts cave locations on the internet).

There are 4275 caves recorded in West Virginia. Greenbrier, Monroe, and Pocahontas counties, with large exposures of the Greenbrier Limestone, have the most. Greenbrier County alone has over 1000 caves recorded – ten caves 10 miles or more in length (but none in its portion of the Monongahela National Forest.). The Forest has just over 200 known caves, in Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph, and Tucker Counties.

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) (a member of the WVHC) has started a project to locate the known caves in the proposed Monongahela National Forest Wilderness Areas. West Virginia Cave Conservancy is working with the MNF, the WV Wilderness Coalition (WVWC), and the WV Speleological Survey (WVASS) to accomplish this project. Later the current Wilderness areas will be included - and then the rest of the forest. Eventually, mapping and scientific studies of many sorts will follow (some of this work is on going by cavers).

WVCC was chartered in West Virginia in 1998 as a Non-Profit Corporation and quickly received 501-C3 status from the IRS. Their Mission is to Protect, Study, and Maintain Caver Access to the caves of West Virginia. The group at present owns four caves, leases two, and manages two others. Their web site is [www: wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net).

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy raised funds to engaged Archeologists from the University of Kentucky and the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) to study Indian habitation of one of their leased caves. The surface area surrounding the Persinger's Cave entrance (a cave that WVCC owns near Lewisburg), has been turned into a nature preserve with the enhancement of a wetland area that feeds water into the cave and by planting over 700 pine and spruce trees - a wildlife food plot is planned. WVCC will accept cave management rights in many ways – as property donations, leases, purchases, easements, or management agreements. When property is purchased, WVCC seriously needs cash donations. Most caves are not suitable for tourist development and the established tourist caves in most cases are not money makers. Hence all the other activities that are associated with them – camp grounds, canoe liveries, bottled water, et cetera.

Please help WVCC protect our underground Wilderness. You can help by becoming a member, by offering information about any potential cave acquisition you may know about, or by tax deductible donations.



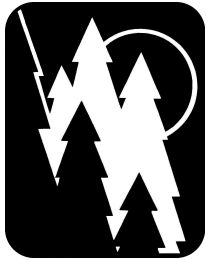
ON WILDERNESS

We need the tonic of wildness, to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only the wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder cloud, and the rain which lasts weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

Henry David Thoreau, "Walden"



Join Now !!!



**West
Virginia
Highlands
Conservancy**
www.wvhighlands.org

Yes! Sign me up.

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership categories (circle one)

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Org</u>
Senior	\$15		
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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!

WILDERNESS COALITION SPONSORS WORKSHOP

The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition cordially invites you to join us for the West Virginia Wilderness Workshop, a weekend of learning, strategy and fun. We have a great opportunity to protect special places on the Mon and many of you are responsible for the progress we've made so far! We'll be gathering atop Spruce Mountain on the campus of the Mountain Institute for workshops on grassroots organizing, working with the media and more as well as conducting strategy sessions to plan the coming months of our Wilderness Campaign which we hope will lead to the introduction of legislation that will protect special places on the Monongahela National Forest.

Date and Location

When: June 18th and 19th 2005
Where: The Mountain Institute (on Spruce Mountain near Spruce Knob)

The Agenda

You are welcome to come out Friday evening and join us for socializing, a slideshow on West Virginia Wilderness and other fun. We'll get started Saturday morning at 10 am with a series of speakers who will provide some background info on WV Wilderness and bring us right up to the present. We'll break up into groups and have

some focused workshops on different skills that are crucial for being an effective activist in protecting wilderness. We'll end the session by working together to develop strategies for the coming months of our campaign which will have increased focus on making sure the Mon forest plan protects lots of new wilderness. Saturday night will be fun with a delicious Mountain Institute dinner followed by live music and socializing. On Sunday, we'll take some time to bring things to a close and plan actions for the coming months. The rest of the day will be spent exploring the beautiful proposed Seneca Creek Wilderness Area, which is right up the road.

Reservations

Since the Mountain Institute will be cooking up yummy meals for us, and because there is limited space, we'll need you to fill out a brief registration form if you are interested in joining us. You can register on line at www.wvild.org or print the form and mail it. There is a registration fee of \$15 that will help defray the cost of meals and lodging at the Mountain Institute. Please do not let this fee stop you from participating! If it would be a hardship, arrangements can be made! Since the \$15 only covers part of meals and lodging, additional donations are welcome! The **deadline for**

registration is June 8, 2005 (although I'd appreciate you doing it sooner!). To register after this deadline, you'll need to call Matt at 304-864-5530

Please send your registration form (if you fill out a hard copy instead of the web form) and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to Matt Keller, West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, PO BOX 6, Masontown, WV 26542

There is much information about the work we've done to date on our website: <http://www.wvild.org>. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the workshop or the campaign in general, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Keller, West Virginia Wilderness Coordinator, Phone/Fax: (304)864-5530, mattk@twc.org or visit the website at www.wvild.org.



Mr. Gates Goes to Hollywood

“MUCKED” AND THE ARTVIST FILM FESTIVAL

By Bob Gates

The 2nd annual Artivist Film Festival was going to screen my video “Mucked: man made disasters - flash floods in the coalfields” on Earth Day. I decided to fly out to Hollywood and join other activist filmmakers for a couple of days of the festival.

It was great to be part of the Artivist Film Festival. The Egyptian Theater has a wonderful palm tree lined courtyard where filmmakers got to hang out and talk. Really good free organic wine in the evenings too, donated by a local winery. We had a very good screening of “Mucked” in the smaller but really nice Spielberg Theater. The trip was just right, two solid days of watching some really excellent films dealing with truly important subjects.

Most of the films were documentaries, with a few exceptions. “The Box” is a nicely filmed short Black and White satire on Corporate ethics where two businessmen meet in secret to try to figure out a scheme to dispose of a mysterious by-product of their company which is a permanent legacy for the planet.

“SUV City” is a lighthearted animation looking at the psychology behind America’s cultural fascination with Sport Utility Vehicles. As the soccer moms, cigar smoking businessmen and machoguyos roared down the roads of their “SUV friendly community” pedestrians and bicyclists scattered so they would not be mowed down.

Possibly the saddest and most moving film I saw was “Esmeraldas: Petroleum and Poverty”. A short film made from grainy consumer video in Black and White, it told the story of third world people who live near refineries. This one in Ecuador blew up killing many. The survivors live along an oil infested river with the remains of their houses and nobody has come to help. Doubt this film can easily be found.

An amazing expose’ about Monsanto, “the Future of Food” was a very well produced documentary that explores the ramifications of a Supreme Court ruling in the 1960’s that allows the Patent Office to issue patents for LIFE. Genetically Modified Rapeseed (Roundup tolerant) invades farmers’ fields in Canada and North Dakota and they lose in the courts for Patent violations every time. I knew about many of these issues but this film puts it together very well, including animation sequences to show the amazing techniques using viruses, and bacteria from cabbage cankers, to splice and alter DNA so that it can be shot into corn cells. Potentially dangerous technology. And then there is the Terminator Gene, sold by Monsanto but developed in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Monsanto is out to control the world’s entire food supply, and all the government regulators are now, or have been, part of Monsanto or its subsidiaries. <http://www.thefutureoffood.com/>

In the context of these two films we come to a better understanding of the fast paced, highly layered, blockbuster film “Venequela Bolivariana people and struggle of the Fourth World War”.

“This documentary examines the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and its links to the world-wide movement against capitalist globalization. The film shows the evolution of the popular movement in Venezuela from the “Caracazo” riots of 1989 to the massive actions that brought revolutionary president Hugo Chavez back to power, 48 hours after a U.S.-led military coup in 2002. The main theme is how the Bolivarian Revolution, thanks to its incredible grassroots and networking power, is a revolution that transcends the national frontiers of Venezuela and contributes with concrete alternatives to the fight against neoliberal capitalism.”

I now understand why our government is not too happy about Venezuela, but we do need their oil. <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/08/296319.html>

It was a great weekend for “Mucked” as well. It was shown at an adult Sunday school class, at the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy spring review, a Shepherd College Earth Day celebration, and at the Artivist Film Festival. Being part of the Artivist Festival was a valuable dose of inspiration. This is what the Artivist Festival is about.

MUCKED WHAT’S IT ABOUT?

Mucked: Man-Made Disasters—Flash Flooding in the Coalfields, by Charleston filmmaker Bob Gates, is a documentary film featuring southern West Virginians’ first-hand accounts of coalfield flooding. It examines flooding in the context of mining and timbering practices.

Mucked premiered in November 2003 at the American Conservation Film Festival. It won an honorable mention in the investigative reporting category at EarthVision, an international environmental film festival in California. Regional screenings have included the 2004 Appalachian Studies Conference and the West Virginia State Library Conference, as well as several colleges and universities. It has also been televised in Pittsburgh, Pa., and Santa Cruz, Calif.



OUR READERS WRITE

Please allow me to respond to the April, 2005, issue's letter from Linda Cooper which claims to shed light on the effects of high mountain windpower facilities on local residents.

A West Virginian by choice for over a quarter century, I've raised two sons in southern Calhoun County, approximately 50 miles down wind from Nitro's famous Amos coal-fired power facility. Not to mention all the other Ohio River coal-based facilities. This region has the highest average pH rain in the country, over 10 times more acid than average. Not to mention the particulates (mercury, selenium, etc.) And volatile organic carbons precipitated by that rain.

I should not have to familiarize this Voice's readers with the huge environmental ecosystem costs of coal exploitation. I can not help but juxtapose Ms. Cooper's wind complaints with the experience of many thousands of coal field residents. I wouldn't mind visiting

Ms. Cooper to experience what she claims are such horrors of wind power generation. In return, I would suggest that Ms. Cooper trade homes for a month with a coal field resident so that she might get a bit of perspective. At the moment she comes across to me as very similar to all the Cape Cod and island yacht owners who fought so hard against a 10-mile offshore wind system which would have impinged upon their pristine view. Without, of course, looking back at their gluttonous boats.

Certainly conservation and self-reliance are far preferable to generating more electricity. But I have to wonder how many of the anti-wind folk are generating their own power. I very strongly suspect that they are sucking up the electricity generated by the coal plants destroying West Virginia's hills and raining down pollution on me. Sorry, but this is a hypocritical as Bush II and his buddies. Can you seriously

compare the ravages of coal to those of wind? They are orders of magnitude apart. When you anti-wind folk have your own clean electrical systems in place, then I'll listen to your concerns.

The ecosystem destruction wrought by coal totally dwarfs the negative effects of wind. And, as wind becomes more wide spread, many of its problems can and are being ameliorated as opposed to a clean coal euphemisms. While we're at it, kindly send some of these wind developers down my way. I've got some hilltops on which a couple wind towers would look great. Then I could a little feel like I'm helping take the pressure off coal field folk.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Bob Hamburg
Orma, WV 25268

Speakers Available!!!!

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

GOOD STUFF FOR FREE

BUMPER STICKERS

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

BROCHURES

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

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



Happy Fathers' Day to you and yours from the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Dear Editor,

I read with interest, the letters in the May issue of The Highlands Voice concerning public land recreation fees along with the article reporting that the Conservancy Board opposes access fees on public land, and the resolution against recreation fees, yet "advocating sufficient funding for public land recreation."

It might be well to remind readers, and Board members, that hunters and fishers have paid user fees to pursue their forms of recreation, for many years...a goodly portion of these funds being used to purchase lands, not only for hunting and fishing, but for the use of other recreation as well. A case in point...just this spring, I used my Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (required of all waterfowl hunters annually) to access a national wildlife refuge in Florida, for the purpose of bird watching. For those who may not be aware, funds derived from the sale of such stamps are earmarked for the purchase of national wildlife refuge lands.

Walt Lesser, wildlife biologist, retired
Elkins, WV

MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST HIKING GUIDE

Which Version to get?

New Electronic Version

Compact Disc version of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

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

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

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

- All pages and maps, or even a single page in the new Interactive CD version of the Mon hiking guide can easily be printed and carried along with you on your hike
- 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.
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- Printable, full color, 24K scale topographic maps of many of the popular hiking areas, including Cranberry, Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and many more

Introductory free shipping & postage offer:

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To receive the latest in printable hiking trail descriptions and printable topographic trail maps send \$20.00 to:

Hiking Guide CD
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
P.O. Box 306
Charleston WV 25321

Print version

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

*Published by the
West Virginia*

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The new 7th edition covers:

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trail scenery, difficulty, condition, distance, elevation, ac-
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detailed topographic maps

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700 miles of streams stocked with bass and trout

send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

Or, visit our website at

www.wvhighlands.org

CANOE TRIP DOWN THE POTOMAC

The Interstate Commission on the Potomac and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay are co-sponsoring the 2005 Potomac River Sojourn July 8-16. The Sojourn is a week-long canoeing and kayaking expedition with visits to key sites along the "Nation's River," shoreline camping, ecological restoration projects, festive meals, meetings with elected officials, and much more. Sites included are Shepardstown to Great Falls, Antietam Battlefield, Harper's Ferry, Tarara Winery, and White's Ferry.

Both novice and experienced paddlers are welcome to join. All will enjoy a unique on-the-water experience that builds a strong environmental ethic, while having a lot of fun in the process. Per day registration fees (covers three meals and other supplies) are \$45/adults, and \$25 for children under \$18. Reduced rental rates for kayaks and canoes are available to registered participants **Registration deadline is June 11.** Participants may come for a few days or the whole week

For more info and registration: <http://www.acb-online.org>



West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



Outings, Education and Beyond

June 11th-12th, Dolly Sods North/Dolly Sods Backpack, MNF, WV: 14 mile moderate Backpack with sweeping views, vistas, streams and waterfalls. Will try to hike 7 miles each day. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

June 10th-12th, Fri. – Sun. Unrated. GPS Backpack: Crawford Mtn. – Wild Oak NRT – Trimble Mtn. + Natural Chimneys. The area is not far away from Staunton, VA, near Ramsey's Draft. If you like the word "challenge", this backpack is for you – about 15 miles 4,000 ft. elevation gain per day with possible 2 stream wadings. Few sources of water. Warning: this backpack has NOT scouted by the trip leader. There will be one waterfall and numerous overlooks (lots of ridge walking). Leader: Dimitri Tundra 301/770-9639, tarakd@hotmail.com

June 18th, Otter Creek Wilderness Day Hike. One stream crossing along the beautiful Otter Creek. We will take our time and enjoy the sights and sounds. Should be done by 5pm. Contact Don Gasper (304) 472-3704 or just show up at 11am at the Sheetz in Parsons. No e-mail address for trip leader.

June 25th-27th, Seneca Shadows Car Camping/Rohrbaugh Plains day hike, MNF, WV: Camp at modern Seneca Shadows with all facilities. Day 1: Set up camp and hike to the top of Seneca Rocks. Day 2: Moderate 10 mile shuttle hike in Dolly Sods featuring a spectacular vista, views, waterfalls and a few challenging creek crossings. Day 3: Break camp and head home. Reservations recommended. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 2nd, Pond Run/Racer Camp Hollow, Great North Mountain, VA-WV: 9 mile strenuous circuit hikes with multiple stream crossings and a visit to White Rocks vista. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 2nd-4th, Sat.-Mon. Roaring Plains – Canyon Rim Backpack. Explore and witness spectacular, remote, rocky and rarely visited high elevation country. Be prepared for cool temps and weather extremes. Despite high elevation, climbs are gradual. ~16-18 miles plus some exploring/water gathering mileage. Experienced backpackers only please. See photos at <http://www.jonathanjessup.com/rpset1.html> Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740)676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10

July 9th-11th, Otter Creek Wilderness 2 night Backpack, MNF, WV: Hike 14+ miles with several wide stream crossings. Camp near beautiful waterfalls and swimming holes. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Mike Juskelis at 410-439-4964 or Email at mjuskelis@cablespeed.com.

July 23rd, Flat-water float on the Buckhannon River. Six miles long float with some paddling and some current too. Bring fishing rod if you'd like to. Meet at the Sheetz in Buckhannon at 11am and we should be back at 4 or 5pm. Contact Don Gasper (304) 472-3704. No e-mail address for trip leader.

August 6th-7th, Canaan Fir Cone collecting volunteer opportunity. The Highlands Conservancy has been been working for many years conserving West Virginia's unique Balsam fir nicknamed "Canaan Fir." Threatened by overbrowsing by white-tailed deer, and an exotic insect pest, the Balsam Woolly Adelgid, this special member of the forest community needs our help. These trees are not reliable cone producers, and only bear cones once every 3-6 years, last time in 2001. This outing is dependant on a cone crop this year. Contact Dave Saville 304-284-9548 daves@labyrinth.net.

August 12th-14th, Fri.-Sun. Mount Rogers High Country Backpack (VA): Enjoy a 21-mile backpack with spectacular views of open highlands and surrounding mountains. Open areas are similar to a hilly Dolly Sods but with better views and a more remote feel. Hike is mostly above 4000' elevation and about half exposed meadows. Please bring appropriate rain gear and equipment. Trails can be rocky and wet and weather can be unpredictable at times. Prior backpacking experience required. Hopefully, the highbush blueberries will be ripe. Contact Eric at backpacker@1st.net, (740) 676-4468 for more info or to reserve your spot. Limit 10.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARDY HIKERS VISIT PROPOSED WILDERNESS

By Beth Little

Despite the rain and cold, on Saturday of the Spring Review an outing to the proposed Cranberry Expansion wilderness was enjoyed by a handful of hardy hikers. Pictured from left to right are Jeff Petrick, aide to Congressman Rahall, Mary Wimmer, Chair of the WV Wilderness Coalition, Brent Rowley, Wilderness Coalition volunteer, and Hugh Rogers, President of WVHC. (Beth Little, WV Wilderness Committee, is behind the camera). The lovely stream to the left is Lick Branch. Not pictured are acres of ramps that glowed like emerald satin in the wet.



Vandalia

By Renae Bonnett

We hauled our loads across your ancient mountains
and hewed cabins from your virgin timber
before we knew we stood on the edge of time,
like the hour before sunrise,
in the moment God decides,
to paint morning against a background of blue heaven.

We sat down softly on your stout back,
and cradled your twilight's purple lullaby;
a night filled with the chants of a thousand mystics:
whippoorwills sing from their thickets
and orchestras of fine tuned crickets
serenade us from hues of violet to velvet black.

But the treasures you held drew greedy guests,
their eyes filmed green with dollar signs
and in a pen stroke we surrendered
noble mountains and pristine waters
to a legacy of hard labor below the hills and hollows
and let strangers write the script of our existence.

After centuries of forfeiture, we arrive at the day
when not much more than a memory of Vandalia remains.
Regardless of the sacrifice, the deal's sealed and we pay the price
for rich men in tailored suits
to carve their fortunes with silver spoons,
and gobble down Vandalia from a thousand miles away.



Where Are the Wild Things?

By Renae Bonnett

Through the bramble we walked slowly, with caution for the thorns,
no rabbit scurried, no dove cooed or spreads wings
- a little voice asks, where are the wild things?

Up the hill to the soft high meadow, a springtime fancy for does and fawns,
but no deer takes flight, no bird flutters or sings
- a little voice asks, where are the wild things?

Familiar chorus of spring and summer, gentle opus through September,
traded for the scream and crash the mountain eater brings
- a little voice asks, where are the wild things?

In the bone chill of December, the leveled mountain gives up the ghost;
the over burden buries the meadow far below, but in dead quiet an echo rings
- a little voice asks, where are the wild things?

About the Author

Renae Bonnett is the wife of Bobby Bonnett who wrote an article for the voice in 1999. They are dynamos behind the Heizer-Manila Watershed Association. The Voice article can be located at <http://www.wvhighlands.org/VoiceOct99/Wetlands.Bonnet.Oct99Voice.htm>
_ Their websites are
http://manila_wetland.tripod.com/manila_and_wetland.htm
<http://swampman.onlyfreehosting.com/>

The Forest Primeval: What It Was and Where It Went

WHERE THERE ARE MOUNTAINS By Donald E. Davis (University of Georgia Press 2000 214 pages)

Reviewed by Donald Gasper

Don Davis writes of the Original Southern Appalachian Forest from 1540 and the time of Desoto's explorations to its first logging in 1900. He details many changes in these just 400 years in this forest and its inhabitants. At only 214 pages of text the book should be read, for it is full of information, and he lists over 1000 references - and this review by Don Gasper is daunting.

"Where There Are Mountains" you have the large, little penetrated, and even less altered, vast, incredibly old forest of the unglaciated southern Appalachians. It is and was a mixed mesophytic hardwood forest; in Desoto's time it was in climax state.

In 1540 there were big chestnuts that comprised often one fifth of the upland forest, in some large areas they were one third. Oaks and rhododendron made a thick understory in west North Carolina, north of Asheville along the French Broad River, where they found lofty mountains and rough going. There were groves of American chestnut, red oak, chestnut oak, hemlock. Above 5,000 feet were mature stands of towering fir and red spruce. Sugar maples, many 4' thick, were plentiful in mountain coves. Where the occasional openings occurred, there were wild strawberries and pea vines. There were sphagnum and cranberry bogs.

In eastern Tennessee, oak and hickory were common with sycamore in the flood plains. In dryer areas the forest yielded to huckle berries, mountain wild azalea and mountain laurel replaced rhododendron. In the Cumberland Plateau in the 1500's they would find large chestnut, beech poplar, hickory, oak, black gum and sugar maple. Many were 4' - 6' in diameter. In places walnut and cherry dominated. There were 130 tree species and 200 flowers recorded.

The Spaniards introduced smallpox and flu into Florida in the 1520's. It spread to the interior like wildfire. In 1550 Desoto found deserted villages throughout South Carolina. The southern Appalachian natives suffered a depopulation of perhaps 95%. In 20 years large cities were gone.

As the native population died off woodland buffalo (bison) came into the abandoned clearings as early as 1600 from swelling herds in the west. Bison grazed down open fields and meadows and left trails; but few were present in the 1700's, as noted by Bartram in the 1800's, and by 1775 they were gone. Pollen evidence indicates the abandoned clearings were taken over by ragweed and pines.

The Spanish introduced cattle, hogs, horses, mules, donkeys, burros, sheep, goats and chickens - peaches, oranges, figs, watermelons, musk melons, pears, wheat, barley, yams and sweet potatoes and cowpeas.

Through the 1600s the recovering Cherokee and such maintained some of their clearings near their settlements. Clearings



were not large or frequent. They raised river cane (a bamboo) along creeks and rivers for forage for cattle and hogs. They had persimmon, plums, grapes, maize, squash, beans and crabapples, pawpaw, red mulberry, wild cherry, nuts from oaks, hazels, beech. They kept wild turkeys. Oak, beech and chestnut dominated the landscape. Fire was used to make clearings for blackberries, strawberries, and huckleberries.

Near their expanding settlements Indians burned two times per year. River cane, an important forage and used for baskets and on their houses, grew if streamside shade could be eliminated and they used fire to maintain it. Peach trees obtained from the Spaniards by 1600 were carefully tended by the Cherokee. With clearing and care they were an important improved food through the 1600's and the 1700's.

By 1750 the Cherokee had apples and they kept bee hives for pollination. Through the 1600's, Spanish trade provided cloth, and metal knives, hoes, and axes in exchange for furs. Beaver could have been over harvested increasing floods and droughts.

The English displaced the Spanish along the east coast in the early 1700's, but the trade for fur was only increased. The English introduced the apple, onion, turnips and cabbage. From 1700 to 1715 one million deer hides were shipped to England. From 1739 to 1761 over one million deer hides were shipped from Charleston alone. From 1750 to 1800 Cherokee in southeast Tennessee burned cultivated fields and produced maize, sweet potatoes, and beans. In the ridge and valley region there was even more agriculture.

Fire, however, may not have been widespread. Desoto does not mention it. Settlements were composed of only 1000 to 10,000 people and distant. Fires then were local, and less likely in the mountains. Large unintentional fires were unlikely. In all, Davis notes, "great disturbance of the eastern forest by natives is not proven as some present land managers claim."

The Cherokee through the 1700's consisted of 2000 to 4000 families (30,000) people in 70,000 square miles. They settled about half of this; the rest was forest hunting ground. Cherokee and early settlers trapped and success fell by 1760. In 1740 only 600 beaver pelts were shipped from Charleston. (By 1800 beaver were scarcely found in the east.) In 1769 a South Carolina law limited the kill of doe deer and fauns. Trade records show two years earlier professional hunters killed 700 Buffalo in 2 months.

Beaver, gone by 1800, had helped prevent wide spread flooding. Cattle and hogs were grazed from 1750 to 1800 without confinement. River cane was gone by 1800, and in the forest hogs competed with deer, squirrels and turkey for nuts and many plants. They compacted the forest floor as much as they disturbed it. They prevented tree regeneration, and contributed to flooding.

About 1800 the Cherokee nation themselves were across 70,000 sq. miles (today, 6 states) and had about 20,000 cattle, 7600 horses and up to 40,000 hogs. Half this area could be called settled but they were surrounded by vast forests and they herded cattle into the forest - even mountain tops. Near the clearings the large trees stood wide apart; and grass, wild pea-vine growing 6' tall, and flowers covered the forest floor. These reportedly occupied the place of bushes and young forest growth in a number of places for a long time. All downed wood was gathered for firewood.

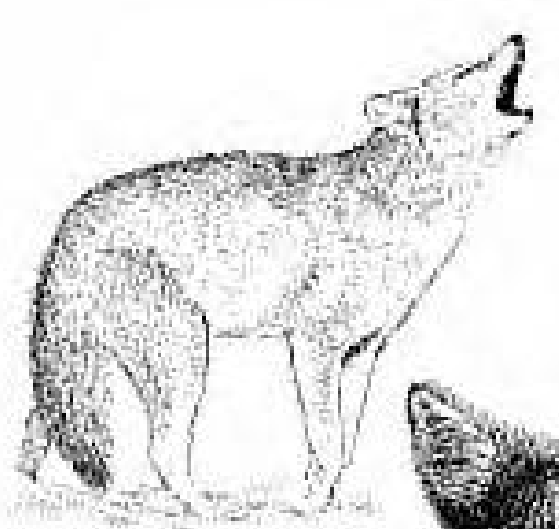
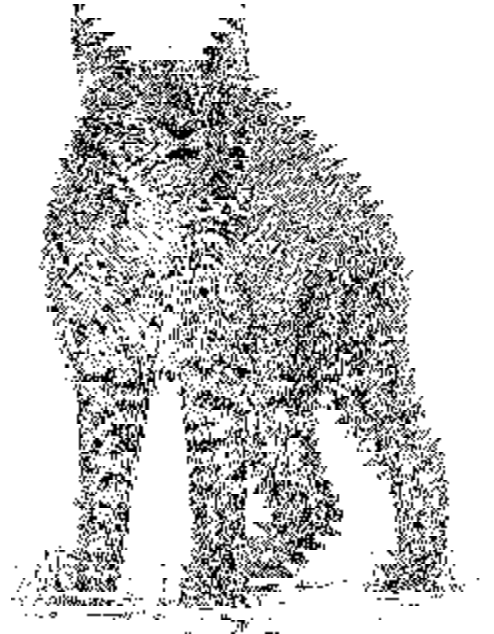
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By this time white settlers brought in grass seed: timothy, orchard, bermuda and red and white clover. Cane breaks and adjoining woodlands were turned into pasture. The crow appeared with the whites after 1800. There were a few wolves and mountain lions. Sheep rearing began.

Modern history tells us much more - next is the Civil War. Yellow pines, sweet gum and sassafras grew up in untended fields where corn and wheat had grown. The Cherokee were moved off their lands. Destructive farming for food, tobacco, etc. for several generations of poor white farmers resulted in soil erosion and exhaustion. Logging began, and in 1880 two-thirds of West Virginia was still covered with this dynamic old growth forest. At this time it was composed of large (some 8' in diameter) yellow poplar, chestnut, hemlock, red oak, basswood, beech, maple and spruce. This clearcut logging and fires caused a destruction of the forest floor and great flood adjustments followed. It must be added that the remaining chestnut, as much as 30% of this original forest in the mountains, was killed in the 1920's by the chestnut blight.

Less than one tenth of one per cent of this magnificent old forest remains due to the actions around 1900 of another blight on the landscape of the eastern mountains - called man.



**Volunteers Needed—
Wind Energy Committee.**

The Wind Energy Committee of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy needs your help. The Highlands Conservancy is committed to protecting "special places," such as our pristine Allegheny ridges, but does not oppose all projects everywhere.

We need help in carrying out this commitment. This requires research, writing, coordination with community groups, and contact with regulators and developers. If you have interest in this issue and have (or are willing to learn) any of these skills, contact: Peter Shoenfeld, (304)866-3484, peter@mountain.net

TSHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-Shirts with the I [heart] Mountains slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, and XXXL. \$8 total by mail. Send sizes wanted and check made out to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to:

Julian Martin
WVHC
Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321-0306

HATS FOR SALE

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy caps for sale. The cap is khaki and the pre-curved visor is forest green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy in gold above the I [Heart] Mountains. The heart is red; we and mountains are black. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. \$8 by mail. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to

Julian Martin
P.O. Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321-0306.

**SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE IN
LONG SLEEVE MODEL**

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

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

The Warbler in the Coal Mine**MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL THREATENS THE CERULEAN WARBLER**

By: Cathy A. Weakland and Petra Bohall Wood

Abstract: The Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulean*) is a species of conservation concern in eastern North America, where declines in its population have been documented over the past several decades. A high proportion of the population occurs in forested areas of southern West Virginia, where it may be threatened by loss and degradation of forested habitat from mountaintop mining and valley fill (MTMVF).

We examined, from a landscape perspective, the effects of forest fragmentation (in particular, effects of fragment size and response to edges) on Cerulean Warblers, using territory mapping techniques and geographic information system (GIS) technology in portions of four counties in southwestern West Virginia. We quantified landscape characteristics from digitized aerial photographs and measures microhabitat characteristics on spot-mapping plots.

Territory density of Cerulean Warblers was 4.6 territories per 10 hectares in intact forest and 0.7 territories per 10 hectares in fragmented forest. The best habitat model included both landscape and microhabitat variables and indicated that territory density increased with increasing snag density, percentage of canopy cover >6-12 m and >24 m in height, and distance from mine edge. Models for predicting microhabitat use at the territory level were weak, indicating that microhabitat characteristics of territories were similar to habitat available on spot-mapping plots.

The species did not appear to avoid internal edges, such as

natural canopy gaps and open-canopy or partially open-canopy roads. Territory placement on ridges was greater than expected, and in bottomlands (ravines) and midslopes less than expected, given availability.

Fifty percent of all territories were on ridges. Preference for ridges suggests that MTMVF may have a greater effect on Cerulean Warbler populations than other sources of forest fragmentation, given that ridges are removed in MTMVF. Our data indicate that Cerulean Warblers are negatively affected by mountaintop mining from loss of forested habitat, particularly ridgetops, and from degradation for remaining forests, as evidenced by lower territory density in fragmented forests and lower territory density closer to mine edges.



Editor's note: This is the abstract of a study of the Cerulean Warbler in West Virginia which appears in the TheAuk (Journal of the American Ornithologists' Union), vol. 123, no.2, April 2005, pp. 497-508. The article documents the negative effects of mining practices and loss of habitat on Cerulean Warbler populations. The authors (Cathy A. Weakland and Petra Bohall Wood) are attached to the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Division of Forestry at West Virginia University. Ms. Wood also worked on the Environmental Impact Study of Mountaintop Removal Mining.

If You're Still in Need of Something to Read**COMMENTS ON THE MOUNTAINTOP MINING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT NOW AVAILABLE**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has finally posted the comments received on the draft Mountaintop Mining Environmental Impact Statement. According to the agency website, "During the comment period, which closed on January 21, 2004, approximately 83,500 comments were received. A large portion of these comments were composed of form e-mails, postcards, and letters while others were substantive and very detailed. Electronic processing and categorizing these comments are completed for all but some of the form e-mails."

The agency also received unique comments, comments which were other than a submission of a form letter, e-mail, etc. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy submitted unique comments, as did many of its members. Both the form and unique comments may now be viewed on the Environmental Protection Agency's website at www.epa.gov/region3/mnttop/index.

Prominent among the criticisms of the draft is that it identifies adverse environmental effects of mountaintop removal but then makes no recommendations other than shuffling agency responsibilities:

What is the point of that? Why go through the entire NEPA process if all you can come out with is a reshuffling of agency responsibilities. There are no alternatives suggesting how we could do mountaintop removal in a more environmentally sound manner. There is no alternative that we not do it at all. The only alternatives proposed are that we

keep doing it in the same way we always have, causing the same damage the Draft documents. The pseudo-alternatives offered are that we choose among different agencies to preside over the environmental devastation.

If the agencies involved are not embarrassed by this then I can only conclude that they have reached the point where they are beyond embarrassment.

The only way the agencies can fix this Draft is to shred it. Having done that, they can try again, including proposing specific actions that would minimize the environmental effects of mountaintop removal mining. The alternatives should include not doing it at all. By "actions" I do not mean more suggestions for paper shuffling or pondering on which agency should preside over the present course of environmental devastation. I mean real, on the ground, actions that change the way we mine, including whether we mine by this method at all.

So far as when the agencies involved will complete evaluation of the comments and respond, they say no more that the process will extend "well into 2005."