

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
 Post Office Box 306  
 Charleston, WV 25321

address service requested

Non-Profit Org.  
 US Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 2831  
 Charleston, WV



# The Highlands Voice

visit us online at [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org)

November, 2004 Volume 37 Number 11

## Perpetual Acid Mine Drainage a Possibility

# Mettiki Mine Challenged Before Surface Mine Board

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition are continuing to pursue an appeal of decision of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection to approve expansion of the Mettiki mine. The appeal is before the West Virginia Surface Mine Board which began hearings in October.

Mettiki wants the Board to affirm the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's approval of its latest proposal to expand its underground mining operations in Grant and Tucker counties. In this permit application, Mettiki proposes to open what it calls the E Mine at Gatzmer, between Mount Storm and Davis.

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection had originally rejected the permit application for this mine, concluding that the mine would cause a perpetual discharge of acid mine drainage.

In response, Mettiki proposed a previously untried method of preventing acid mine drainage. It would pump water out of the mine, treat that water so that it was no longer acid, and then pump it back in. This method was supposed to keep acid mine water from ever forming in the mine and solve the acid mine drainage problem.

A written analysis of this plan by an engineer in the Department of Environmental Protection's Philippi office said that Mettiki did not provide any evidence that this method would work. The analysis also recommended that the practice be submitted as an

"experimental practice." This would result in review by the federal Office of Surface Mining. Making the technique an experimental practice would keep West Virginia from having to approve it at other sites until it had been shown to work at the Mettiki site.

Mettiki refused to submit the technique as an experimental practice, and the permit was processed as any other mining permit would be. The Department of Environmental Protection headquarters in Nitro overruled the Philippi office and issued the permit.

The result of issuance of the permit is that Mettiki Coal now has a permit which is supposed to control acid mine drainage using a method that has never been tried anywhere. At any mine in an acid producing seam, acid mine drainage is generally controlled during active mining. Since the danger of acid mine drainage comes largely after active mining is complete, there will

be no way to verifying if this completely untried technique works until after mining is complete. If we discover then that the technique does not work, the mine will be a perpetual source of acid mine drainage. That drainage would have to be treated at substantial expense or allowed to severely damage the stream which it enters.

It is the decision to issue the permit, including the possibility of creating a source of perpetual acid mine drainage, that the



**Continued on p. 4)**

### **What's Inside**

Farewell from President Frank	2	Hiking North Mountain	8	Legislative priorities	12
Roster of officers	2	Hikes at the Fall Review	9	Chance to do good work	12
Wind energy news	3	Speakers bureau	9	Trek in Dolly Sods North	13
New president	4	Fashion statements	9	Cheat Mountain during the Civil War	14
Reflections by the departing president	5	Free stuff to send away for	9	Hiking in Laurel Fork Wilderness	15
How to join	6	Board meeting highlights	10	Readers write	16
Early shopping opportunity	6	Signs in Dolly Sods North	11		
Get a Hiking Guide!!!	6	New CD available	12		
Cindy takes her show on the road	7	Chance to visit mountaintop removal site	12		

Passing the Torch

After serving for six years as president of the WV Highlands Conservancy (WVHC), I asked our nominations committee to nominate someone other than me to that office. Dutifully, that committee nominated Hugh Rogers, an experienced environmental leader with the Conservancy, as well as with other groups. And at the annual membership meeting in October, Hugh was unanimously elected president of the Conservancy. I believe that the committee could not have made a better choice.

Hugh has demonstrated success in environmental battle. Several years ago Hugh and the citizen group 'Corridor H Alternatives', along with other allied groups, effected many beneficial changes to the original design route for parts of highway Corridor H through eastern West Virginia. And the WV Department of Transportation is still in a tizzy, and remains confused, about which way to go in routing other controversial sections of that boondoggle highway. It well knows that Hugh and the citizen groups are perched to pounce again if it missteps.

Other WVHC officers recently elected include Julian Martin as Vice-President for State Affairs, Peter Shoenfeld as Sr. Vice-President, John McFerrin as Secretary, and Bob Marshall as Treasurer.

It is indeed an experienced and able slate of officers. I have no qualms whatsoever about their individual and collective ability to lead the organization for years to come. It is an incomplete slate only in that there was no identified candidate for Vice-President for Federal Affairs, as provided for in the organizational by-laws. But the president can temporarily appoint to that vacancy when a suitable person agrees to accept that responsibility.

Next month President Hugh Rogers will likely scribe the words for this page 2 *Highlands Voice* column space. It has become customary, but not required, that the president author a monthly commentary here.

I hope that you will read my longer article, "Reflections on six years at the watch" elsewhere in this months *Highlands Voice*. But as I reflect on six years as your president, it is pure reflection, not some subtle design to keep my personal management style in vogue for my able successors. Your new officers have all been "bathed in the blood" of battle, and need no prodding from me.

But before you all break out in cheer at my departure, I remind you that I haven't really gone away. As Past President of the Conservancy I will still be part of both the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. So if you want to be totally rid of me, you'll have to fire Hugh Rogers.

Seriously though, I love each and every one of you, and it's with considerable weighted heart that I move on to make way for new energy and new ideas. Thank you all for the many kind courtesies you've extended to Becky and me. We will never forget.

Frank Young

**WVHC 2005 Calendar:**

Winter Board of Directors meeting: Sunday, January 30th  
 Spring Review: April 29th, 30th & May 1st- Board meeting Sunday, May 1st  
 Summer Board of Directors meeting: Saturday, July 30th  
 Fall review: October 21st, 22nd & 23rd- Board meeting Sunday, October 23rd

**Roster of Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662, rogers@wvhighlands.org.  
 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820, peter@mountain.net.  
 VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE AFFAIRS: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314,(304) 342-8989, imaginemew@aol.com  
 VICE PRESIDENT FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS: Vacant  
 SECRETARY: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733, johnmcferrin@aol.com  
 TREASURER: Bob Marshall, 886-Z Divide Ridge Road, Kenna WV 25248 (304)372-7501, woodhavenwva@netscape.net  
 PAST PRESIDENT: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945, fyoung@wvhighlands.org.

**DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2005)**

Don Garvin, PO Box 666, Buckhannon, WV 26201, (304)472-8716, DSGJr@aol.com.  
 Carter Zerbe, 16 Arlington Ct., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)343-3175, scz3667@aol.com.  
 George Beetham, 2819 Mt. Carmel Ave. #3, Glenside, PA 19038 (267) 252-3748, geobeet@hotmail.com

Barbara Weaner, Rt. 2, Box 96, Montrose, WV 26283 (304) 478-2123 , sweaner@plantwv.net

Jonathan Jessup, 8225 Adenlee Ave. #40 Fairfax VA 22031 703-204-1372 jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

**DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (Terms expire October 2006)**

Bob Gates, 1117 Virginia St.E., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)342-2624, photonzx@ntelos.net.

Helen McGinnis, P.O. Box 300, Harman, WV 26270 helenmcginnis@meer.net

Don Gasper, 4 Ritchie St., Buckhannon, WV 26201 , (304)472-3704  
 Russ McClain

Bill McNeel, 1118 Second Ave., Marlinton, WV 24954, (304)799-4369

**ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS**

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY—Virginia Region: Judy Fisher, PO Box 276, Berkeley Springs, WV 26411, (304)258-4974.

PITTSBURGH CLIMBERS: Jean Rodman, 32 Crystal Dr., Oakmont, PA 15139, (412)828-8983, 73210.540@compuserve.com.

BROOKS BIRD CLUB: Cindy Ellis, RR 1, Box 163, Red House, WV 25168 (304) 586-4135  
 MOUNTAINEER CHAPTER TROUT UNLIMITED: Frank Slider, Rt 1, Box 163-A2, Middlebourne, WV 26149, (304) 758-2500, sliderf@ovis.net

WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION: Pam Moe, Rt. 1, Box 29B, Kerens, WV 26276, (304) 478-4922, pam\_moe@hotmail.com

DOWNSTREAM ALLIANCE: Craig Mains, 137 Hoffman Ave., Morgantown WV 26505, cmains@wvu.edu

FRIENDS OF THE LITTLE KANAWHA: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

MINING COMMITTEE: Cindy Rank, HC 78, Box 227, Rock Cave, WV 26234, (304)924-5802.

PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: Bob Marshall, 201 Virginia St.W., Charleston, WV 25302, (304)345-5518, woodhavenwva@netscape.net.

OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Julian Martin, , 1525 Hampton Rd., Charleston, WV 25314,(304) 342-8989, imaginemew@aol.com

BLACKWATER CANYON COMMITTEE: co-chairs Linda Cooper, J1 1220 Van Voorhis Road Morgantown, WV 26505 (304)296-0565 lcooper@hsc.wvu.edu, and Judy Rodd, Environmental Services and Education Center 501 Elizabeth St., Charleston, WV 25311, (304)345-7663,roddj@hotmail.com

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Frank Young, Rt. 1, Box 108, Ripley, WV 25271, (304)372-3945, fyoung@wvhighlands.org

WIND ENERGY COMMITTEE: Peter Shoenfeld, HC 70, Box 553, Davis, WV 26260, (304) 866-3484, (301) 642-2820, peter@mountain.net.

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733, johnmcferrin@aol.com

RIVERS COMMITTEE: vacant  
 HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE: Hugh Rogers, Moon Run, Kerens, WV 26276, (304)636-2662, rogers@wvhighlands.org.

OUTINGS COMMITTEE: Jonathan Jessup, 8225 Adenlee Ave. #40, Fairfax, VA 22031, (703) 204-1372 jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

**MISCELLANEOUS OFFICES**

SPEAKERS BUREAU: Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314, (304) 342-8989, imaginemew@aol.com

WEB PAGE: Peter Shoenfeld, 713 Chesapeake Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301)587-6197, peter@mountain.net.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Dave Saville, PO Box 569, Morgantown, WV 26507, (304)284-9548, daves@labyrinth.net.

HIGHLANDS VOICE EDITOR: John McFerrin, 114 Beckley Ave., Beckley, WV 25801, (304)252-8733, johnmcferrin@aol.com

# Wind Energy Update

By Peter Shoenfeld

**Tax Credit**—The 1.8 cent/kwh tax credit for wind-generated electricity producers has been re-instated after a year's hiatus. The credit lasts 10 years, but to get it projects must be in operation by the end of 2005. At this time, there are four major un-built projects in WV that we know of. Efforts to meet this deadline are expected. However, we've been told the Nedpower project is unlikely to begin construction before 2006 and that three more months of wind measurement are needed on Rich Mountain.

**NedPower and US Wind Force Mount Storm Projects**— Both these projects have their permits. The Nedpower developer has completed the studies required by the WVPSC in the terms of his permit.

Nedpower and US Wind Force are "development" companies. Such companies generally initiate these projects, then pick a location, secure the leases, obtain the permits, negotiate the needed agreements with power companies, plan the site, do the engineering, and order the equipment. Then the project is sold to a much larger company, such as FPL Energy, that will actually construct and operate it. Since both these projects have been in development for years, one might expect that this had all been done and that a sale and actual construction were imminent. However, we've heard that construction is still a year or more away in the case of Nedpower.

The US Wind Force project is located in the heart of what is generally considered a "brown fields" area north of WV Route 93, and has attracted little opposition. The Nedpower project, on the other hand, is on the Allegheny Front and is very controversial. There will be dramatic visual impact from private lands to the east. Opponents allege that there will also be severe visual impact on Dolly Sods, but our own fieldwork and analysis does not bear this out.

The Highlands Conservancy has not opposed either of these projects, although there was initial concern about the impact on Dolly Sods. The part of the planned project nearest Dolly Sods was eliminated in the terms of the permit.

**US Wind Force Liberty Gap Project**— This is another large project, planned for Jack Mountain near the eastern edge of Pendleton County. Little interest in opposing this project has surfaced in Highlands Conservancy Board and Committee discussions.. However, the visual impact will be severe at many beautiful locations in Pendleton County. Most of these are on private property, and are not widely known. Visibility from Spruce Knob is an issue we need to analyze.

We expect to see the plans and have opportunity to comment before this project goes to the PSC. However, mitigation of visual impact will probably not be practical.

**Greenwind Corp. Rich Mountain Project**—This large project would be located on Rich Mountain, near Harman, on private land in the heart of the Mon National Forest. It would have devastating visual impact on many special places, including four wilderness areas, Spruce Knob, and the Gandy-Dry Fork valley. The Highlands Conservancy has publicly opposed this project. It is going forward. The developer is doing wind measurements, and tells us these will continue for another three months. We do expect an application fairly soon and are trying to be proactive. In recent weeks we've been lobbying Congressional staff people and the leadership of the state Tourism Commission.

**Actions by Other Groups** — Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall asked the General Accounting Office to investigate the evolution of the wind industry in the US. The stated grounds were the need for a determination as to whether the USFWS "interim guidelines" are adequate to satisfy the government's obligations under the Migratory Bird Act. The

GAO has responded that they will commence this investigation soon.

A group of organizations (Citizens for Responsible Windpower, Friends of Blackwater, Friends of Allegheny Front, and Stewards of the Potomac Highlands) has asked WVPSC for a moratorium on permits for wind facilities until the GAO investigation is finished.

Citizens for Responsible Windpower has recently filed a complaint with the WVPSC saying that Nedpower has not filed required procedures with regard to permitting major new power lines. Nedpower says that the project includes no such lines. The line needed already exists and crosses the site.



**Bird and Bat Mortality**— Last year's Backbone Mountain bird study, projected only a few dead birds but thousands of dead migratory bats, a number large enough to threaten the industry. The result has been a nationally sponsored bat study, aimed both at finding the cause and a cure for this problem. The people in charge are Ed Arnett and Merlin Tuttle, of Bat Conservation International (BCI). There is a large cast of characters—participants, reviewers, overseers, funders from academia, government and industry, organized into the "Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative." The former "Technical Review Committee," in

which the Highlands Conservancy participated in 2003 has been dropped; there was no requirement that it continue beyond one year.

There was a lot of study activity on Backbone Mountain during the August-September bat migration season. Many dead bats were found once again. There were daily ground searches and surveillance of the airspace by radar and infra-red imaging sensors. The radar provides information on the number and spatial distribution of bats in the area; the infra-red shows bats actually flying through the turbines. No data or analysis has yet been released, but there has been a Charleston Gazette article and some communication with us. The Gazette quoted Merlin Tuttle as predicting massive bat kills whenever a wind farm is sited on a "forested ridge." We've also heard that the kills appear not to be evenly distributed in time, but rather are concentrated in short time intervals often correlating with weather events. This would seem to indicate that the problem might be practically mitigated by curtailing operations during predicted high-risk periods.

If the "any forested ridge" thesis stands up, and effective mitigation can not be promised, this would provide a powerful argument against further wind power development at this time on many of our Highlands ridge tops.

The Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative is providing an all-morning presentation, with multiple presenters, at an NWCC sponsored conference on November 3d. A formal research report is expected in February, 2005. We've heard the study is planned to continue for 3 years.

Electronic proceedings are available from a recent conference on the Bird/Bat/Windmill issue sponsored by the American Bird Conservancy and the American Wind Energy Association. These provide a comprehensive review of the entire subject at the national level.

**West Virginia Public Service Commission Siting Rules**—The development of rules for applicants for exempt power plant "Siting Certificates" has been underway over a year. There have been initial comments, draft rules, and comments on the rules. These rules generally cover what a developer is required to include in his application. Prescription of locations where projects may or may not be sited is addressed only by implication. Staff's comments have tended to agree with our own. Industry comments have tended to find the rules overly onerous, and to question the PSC's scope of authority. All of this has been under consideration by the commissioners for quite some time.

*(Continued on p. 5)*

## Mr. Rogers Takes the Reins

At its annual meeting on October 24, 2004, the membership of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy elected Hugh Rogers as president for a two year term. Mr. Rogers was elected by an overwhelming majority; being unopposed was helpful in this regard.

Like many great Presidents (John Adams, John Quincy Adams, John Kennedy, George Bush), Hugh Rogers was born in Massachusetts. He grew up in North Carolina and built a home in West Virginia. He graduated from Williams College and the School of Law of UNC-Chapel Hill.

After serving in the Peace Corps in Korea, he practiced as a trial and appellate lawyer in North Carolina and West Virginia, constantly striving to prevent his legal education from interfering with his common sense. He has taught environmental law at Davis and Elkins College.

In Randolph County, he has served as a commissioner of the housing authority, a director of the arts council, and legal advisor to the rural board of education, which successfully fought school consolidation.

Hugh was a founding director of Corridor H Alternatives. Legend has it that he has actually read all the studies prepared to guide us in our decision to build Corridor H. Since the objective evidence is to the contrary (he still has his eyesight) this may be apocryphal.

He was first elected to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy's board of directors ten years ago and has been its secretary for the past five years. He's also chair of the highways committee. He is married to Ruth Blackwell Rogers, an artist and

activist with the Shavers Fork Coalition. They have three sons, one grandson, and one granddaughter.

Most of the officers who were elected at the annual meeting had served as officers or board members before. The only newcomer was Russ McClain. He teaches biology and environmental science at Davis and Elkins College and previously worked for The Nature Conservancy.



## More About the Mettiki Mine

*(Continued from p. 1)*

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Rivers Coalition, and Trout Unlimited have appealed to the Surface Mine Board.

During the first day of hearings in October, Jim Pierce, the permit reviewer at DEP headquarters in Nitro, testified that top DEP officials did not meet with regional staff or discuss the staff's reasons for recommending that the permit be rejected. "I don't recall talking to anyone," Jim Pierce, the DEP's top permit engineer in Charleston, told the state Surface Mine Board on Tuesday. "I pretty much went off on my own."

"I kind of ignored the fact that a denial had been recommended, because I wanted to look at this with an open mind," Pierce said. "I was looking at it with a fresh set of eyes."

The Surface Mine Board did not finish taking testimony during its October hearing and expects to reconvene in November to take more testimony before deciding.

## More About Wind

*(Continued from p. 3)*

We've heard recently that the rules should be out and ready in time for the January 2005 legislative session. Legislature ratification is required.

**Other Developments**—Frank Young of the Highlands Conservancy attended a recent meeting of the industry-oriented West Virginia Wind Energy Working Group. Among other things, he learned that there is interest in demonstrating technology for small, single-unit, end-user oriented wind generators in the state parks.

**Additional projects are moving forward on our doorstep** in Maryland and Virginia. What is essentially an extension of the Mountaineer project is proposed on Backbone Mountain in Garrett County, Maryland. The Red Oak Knob/Tamarack Ridge project is proposed for Highland County, Virginia. Analysis of visibility for the latter project from West Virginia special places is needed.



# Reflections On Six Years At The "Watch"

By Frank Young

After serving six years (3 terms) as president of WV Highlands Conservancy (WVHC), I have passed the torch to younger blood with new energy and new ideas. New WVHC President Hugh Rogers, as I wrote at more length in my page 2 column in this month's *Highlands Voice* issue, is experienced and has able fellow officers to maintain the organization's structure.

In reflecting on these past six years I have a few thoughts, but many questions about just what part I, or any WVHC president, has in the work we do.

But first, I'd like to review some successes, and perhaps a not so successful item or two.

Our issue work is done through committees. Our mining committee has turned the coal industry and its government regulatory agency cohorts on their heads. They have to try harder and harder to figure out ways to continue to legally violate state and federal mining laws.

The public lands committee plods onward, helping agencies develop better forest management plans. And it promotes Wilderness or other special protective designations for public lands.

And the Conservancy's Blackwater Canyon protection campaign brought growth to the Conservancy, and even "spun off" a new organization, called Friends of Blackwater.

Through aggressive committee campaigns, and aggressive recruitment of member prospects obtained through our outreach committee, we've had membership growth beyond any predictions I would have offered six short years ago. Our membership growth has been nothing short of phenomenal.

And during these six years we've "virtually" completed our journey from "pencil and paper" technology to cyber technology. In his farewell column in 1998, previous president John McFerrin acknowledged our start at merging our horse and buggy age history with the emerging electronic era.

With the help of web master Peter Shoenfeld (and a couple other volunteers who coordinate with Peter), our web site continues to grow and update almost daily.

The *Highlands Voice* has rapidly moved from literally hand placed "paste-ups" of pre-printed "copy", mailed on poster board to the printing company, to production on a single electronic disk weighing only a few ounces, from which the printing company prints out thousands of copies of high quality *Highlands Voices*. And of course the *Highlands Voice* is readily available on our web site.

And we expect that by the time the next edition of our Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide is published, that, thanks to faithful member and computer wizard extraordinaire Jim Solley, that it, too, will be available in electronic format. Yes, 'the times, they are a changin'.

I guess my biggest disappointment as president has been the continuing lengthily and tiring Board of Directors meetings. In my naivety

of October 1998, I swore that by the end of my first term I'd have those Board meetings adjourn by noon. Little did I know .....

But some of you, who have been around the Conservancy longer than I, have said that those six hours or so of Board and committee interactions are actually useful, (and maybe even therapeutic?).

But just as I'm not going to take the blame for long winded Directors who like to hear our-



selves talk (don't we all?), I cannot take the credit for our aggressive issue activities, nor for our growing membership numbers and technological advances. These, and all the other good things we've accomplished along the way, happened in spite of my lack of growth foresight back then, and despite my absolute lack of computer technology skills to offer.

So I ask myself, how important is the WVHC's presidency? Does the president provide much of anything worthwhile? Could we do just as well without a president? Is this president, and the past president, and the next president vital to what the organization does? Or is the president just a nominal caretaker of an office the organization's by-laws calls for?

The president does not pay bills, nor fret when there's not enough money to pay all the bills, nor make quarterly financial reports to the Board of Directors, nor make reports to state and federal government agencies, nor attend to any of the many financial matters an organization the size to which we've grown must keep up with. Treasurer Bob Marshall does that.

The president does not keep meticulous notes about Directors and Executive Committee meetings, nor write and distribute meeting minutes, nor is the President responsible for authenticating official organizational documents and reports. Secretary John McFerrin does this.

The president does not send out member renewal forms, nor send out contribution letters, nor take care of incoming mail, nor answer member and most other inquiries, not per-

form the myriad other mundane and necessary tasks that connect the organization to its members. David Saville, our Administrative Assistant (a glorified title for an underpaid membership secretary and recruiter, clerk, and general director, I sometimes say whimsically) does this, and he does it superbly.

The President does not put out the monthly communication tool, the newsletter called the *Highlands Voice*. The Editor does this.

And the president does not usually work very diligently on the many specific environmental issues the organization addresses. The several issue committees do this.

Well then, what does the president do? Well, the president makes a Board meeting agenda every three months, and presides over Board meetings, directs media inquiries to the appropriate committee chairs, and, and, well, that's about it. Sometimes, as I watched all this activity, I wondered if the president shouldn't be more directly involved in directing all this activity.

But then it occurred to me that I knew little about financial matters, so treasurer Bob Marshall would be better off without my "directing" him. I knew little about writing, editing and publishing, so Editor John McFerrin is better off without my "direction". I knew little about coal mining, about how to organize "special place" protection campaigns, about public lands management, and little about the specifics of most other committee charges. So those committee chairs are better off without my "direction".

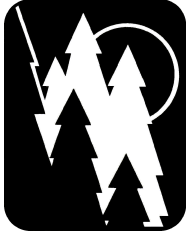
And on the one issue I undertook to learn something significant about and direct our work accordingly (wind energy), I came to realize that the responsibility of the president to have Board of Directors meetings run mostly without ranker, and to have the organization speak with mostly one voice, clashed with my ideas on how to effectively confront wind energy issues while maintaining credibility for the organization. Only then did I realize the wisdom of one of my predecessor's advice to not become overly involved in issue specific work while trying to be president of the organization.

Yes, we do get "too soon old and too late smart."

If I had to describe my most desired goal during my tenure as president, what we'd look back on as my 'legacy', it would be that we successfully and earnestly maintained and grew the **credibility** of the Highlands Conservancy- in the eyes of both our membership, as well as those who see us from the outside- the media, regulatory agencies, and the general public. And I think we've successfully met that goal these past six years. But only history will confirm whether or not we actually have.

Overall, I must admit that I've learned more from you than you learned from me. And I thank you for the learning experience.

## Join Now and get a free gift!!



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

We are now offering a wonderful incentive for new membership applications we receive. We have had a beautiful National Geographic book donated to us. Join now, using the form below, to get your free gift.

**The Emerald Realm, Earth's Precious Rain Forests.** Together, earth's tropical rain forests make up a globe-girdling emerald realm that occupies just 5 percent of the world's land area - yet nurtures half its plant and animal species. From this cornucopia pours an array of foods and herbs, medicines and chemicals, and a variety of construction materials. The magnificence, the fragility, the mystery of "the most diverse, the most complex, and the least understood ecosystem on earth" are yours to experience in this 200 page National Geographic book. A \$20.00 value free to new members. **Premium available to new members only.**

✕  
**Yes! Sign me up.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership categories (circle one)**

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Org</u>
Senior	\$12		
Student	\$12		
Regular	\$15	\$25	\$50
Associate	\$30	\$50	\$100
Sustaining	\$50	\$100	\$200
Patron	\$100	\$200	\$400
Mountaineer	\$200	\$300	\$600

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

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

### Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

Published by the  
West Virginia

Highlands Conservancy

The new 7th edition covers:

- more than 200 trails for over 700 miles
- trail scenery, difficulty, condition, distance, elevation,
- access points, streams and skiing potential.
- detailed topographic maps
- over 50 photographs

5 wilderness Areas totaling 77,965 acres

700 miles of streams stocked with bass and trout

send \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping to:

**West Virginia Highlands Conservancy**  
PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321

Or, visit our website at

**www.wvhighlands.org**

### Support Wilderness

buy a

**Hand Made**

**Evergreen Wreath**

and make a friend (or yourself) very happy!



These wreaths are hand woven from a mixture of fresh cut, long-lasting Highlands grown fir boughs. They are crafted by experienced Highlands Conservancy volunteers using the freshest greens, and all natural decorations. 24 inches in diameter the wreaths are adorned with winterberry holly, silver reindeer moss, pine cones and a red velvet bow.

**\$30 each plus \$5.00 shipping. Order by December 1st**  
Delivery will be during the first week of December.

Gift cards are included, so be sure to let us know how you would like them signed.

Send Orders to: WVHC PO Box 306 Charleston, WV 25321  
or call 284-9548 daves@labs.net



# Environmental Journalists Visit Old King Coal

By Cindy Rank

Old King Coal may be a merry old soul, but citizens throughout his kingdom have a lot to complain about.

Several hundred members of the Society of Environmental Journalists met at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) in Pittsburgh PA in late October. They spent five days discussing everything from the organization's internal operations, to improvements in the Pittsburgh scene, to the wide variety of issues such journalists cover in their professional lives.

Tours on the first day included a trip that began at Consol Energy's longwall mines in southwestern Pennsylvania and concluded with a visit to communities shifting and subsiding as those mines shear wide panels of coal out from under them. Citizens spoke of and showed pictures of homes trussed together with scaffolding with huge trenches dug around them in an attempt to limit structural damage as the longwall machine passes under ground. They also talked of water in wells, springs and streams that disappear and often don't return, and of property values that plummet.

Also scheduled was an overflight of mountaintop removal mine sites in southern West Virginia. Unfortunately the flight was cancelled due to weather conditions and a handful of grounded reporters were denied a first hand look at the vast expanses of altered landscape. Only the first part of the scheduled program took place on the CMU campus. WVHC mining committee chair Cindy Rank, joined Judy Bonds and Maria Gunnoe of Coal River Mountain Watch, Viv Stockman of OVEC and Biology Professor Ben Stout of Wheeling Jesuit University to present *Appalachian Treasures* and to discuss the devastating impacts of and the legal and policy issues surrounding mountaintop removal.

As members of the loose coalition of organizations fighting mountaintop removal known as Friends of the Mountains, Viv, Cindy, Maria and Judy also set up and staffed an information booth at the conference. Literature, pictures and fact sheets filled the small space while videos and power-point presentations ran continuously. [See picture]

A sparsely attended afternoon panel entitled Old King Coal featured Bill Caylor of the Kentucky Coal Association, Tom Hoffman, Vice President Consol Energy, Jeff Skousen of West Virginia University, Ed

Rubin of CMU and Cindy Rank of WVHC. After other panelists presented their views about the wonders of flattened mountains, the efficiency of longwall mining, the ability of substitute soils to grow trees on mountaintop removal mine sites and the best way to burn an increased amount of coal, Cindy and the astute audience challenged the myths posited by the rest of the panel.



Keynote speakers expressed diverse views of the environment and the Bush administration's handling of all things great and small.

Environmental Protection Agency head Mike Leavitt, keenly aware of the election the following week, began his comments Thursday by stressing that he would avoid saying anything "provocative". And that he did — sort of. Governor Leavitt's assurances that all actions of his agency during the Bush administration had been based on sound science and had advanced the environmental health of everyone in the room and the nation and world did raise a few eyebrows and prompted many questions.

In another keynote the previous night senior attorney for the Natural Resources NRDC and President of the Waterkeepers Alliance, Robert Kennedy, expressed a glaringly different view of the Bush administration and its brash disregard for all law and policy having to do with the environment. Echoing many statements from his recent book "Crimes Against Nature" he emphasized his belief that rollbacks of environmental protection by the current administration these past three years have endangered not only the earth but also the health of present

and future generations. He raised a few hackles when he took to task today's journalists for failing their responsibility to search out and present the hard realities of these rollbacks and their unhealthy consequences for our children and our children's children.

A panel of celebrities the first night included Sam Malone of CHEERS fame (Ted Danson) who told of how he uses his celebrity to attract people so that he can then direct those people to the real experts who also have the facts about the serious environmental problems facing us today. Also speaking was the hero of Franco's Army of Pittsburgh Steeler Football fame (Franco Harris), who emphasized the need for more attention to the urban environment and how it affects the health of kids who grow up in urban areas. An unusual looking Michael Keaton showed up in full Batman regalia, with a new logo that read "BATS FOREVER — BRAKE WIND".

Even Teresa Heinz Kerry made a brief appearance — though quite unlike most times in the past when she would often just drop in on such gatherings in her adopted hometown of Pittsburgh without a phalanx of secret service agents surrounding her and watching every movement in the room.

Ken Ward of the Charleston Gazette, Tim Wheeler of the Baltimore Sun, and Don Hopey of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette were some of the organizers responsible for focusing a variety of activities on coal related issues. (Don Hopey also served as conference chair and did a somewhat adequate job as stand-in for Michael Keaton as Batman - complete with what must have been a very hot and heavy rubber mask and cape.)



# HIKING THE FINAL VISTA ON NORTH MOUNTAIN

By Mike Juskelis

This was a scheduled Sierra Club/ West Virginia Highlands Conservancy event co-lead by Jim Tomlin of the PATC. Right off the bat I'd like to thank Jim for sharing his time and expertise with us. As a result of his involvement in this outing I hope to absorb this entire hike into a 25 mile backpacking experience next spring.

Earlier in the year I reported on visiting White Rocks, Big Schloss, Halfmoon Lookout and other overlooks on the Great North Mountain in GWNF. They all offer grand vistas but Halfmoon and Big Schloss offer different perspectives of Trout Run Valley. As you scan the view one formidable peak stands out at the southern end of the valley between Mill and Long Mountains, the infamous Tibbet Knob! For 4 years I've wanted to hike Long Mt and visit Tibbet knob from the southern, and easier, approach. I met Jim through my site, [www.midatlantichikes.com](http://www.midatlantichikes.com). He happens to be the trail overseer for Mill Mt and is quite familiar with that entire area of the Lee Ranger District. He eagerly volunteered to act as scout for this outing so I scheduled it.

Jim and I were joined by the Mad Hatter, Rodney D., M.I.A., Shutter Bug, Keith, Ted (AKA Legs), Water Bug and, as always, Sam the wonder Dog. We dropped off vehicles at the Wolf Gap Campground

and started hiking the Long Mt Trail by 11:00. We were right on schedule. This would give us about 8 hours of daylight to complete what I initially thought would be a 12.5 mile trek. (Jim had thought it was closer to 13.5 and upon later study I came up with 13.3 miles. Regardless, we still had plenty of time.)

Even though Trout Run was running low the crossing at the beginning of the hike proved tricky. Some of us were able to rock hop, others switched footwear and the rest of us "just did it"! As we neared the junction of the old Cat Whip Furnace trail the first episode of rain started. From that point in time until we picked up our cars at the end of the hike the weather constantly changed. In the course of 7 hours we experienced rain, sunshine, sleet (YES, SLEET!!!!) and 50 mph winds. We stopped several times to "rotate our wardrobe".

A little more than 3 miles into the hike we had some real fun ... traversing a 350 yard rock field. Wet leaves and rocks added to the difficulty. We just slowed down as we crossed, making sure our ankles survived the ordeal. Once on the other side we made good time. We stopped for lunch at a clearing that lies in the shadow of Ben's Ridge. I hope to make this a campsite for next year's backpacking trip. As we passed the

turn-off for Trout Pond we climbed up Devil's Hole Mountain to a gravel service road. It was a quick 2 mile walk down the road to the Tibbet Knob trail, listening to the wind howling around us as we proceeded.

The trail out to Tibbet Knob was quite rocky but then that's what makes these things knobs! The view was awesome: Long Mt to the left, Halfmoon lookout in the distance in front of us, Mill Mt with Big Schloss to the right and all of Trout Run Valley below us. The high winds had blown out most of the clouds but also made it difficult to stay too long. After a very brief break we shifted into 4 wheel drive and climbed down the front of the summit. Luckily this only has to be done for about 100 yards before reaching a more suitable path.

We were now on the last leg of the trip and had plenty of daylight left with only 1.5 miles to go. We sauntered along, each at his/her own pace, and enjoyed occasional views of Big Schloss and Little Sluice as we descended to our waiting cars. By the time we got back to the Long Mt Trailhead to retrieve the other vehicles more dark clouds and a pelting, chilly rain had moved into the area. Perfect timing!

View from Tibbet Knob:  
Long Mt to the left, Halfmoon  
Lookout straight ahead in  
the distance, Mill Mt with Big  
Schloss to the right and  
Trout Run Valley below us.

Photo by Mike Juskelis





# HIKES AT THE FALL REVIEW

By Don Gasper

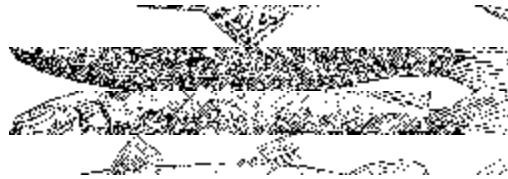
Our Fall Review field trip up the North Fork of Cherry and head of Hills Creek consisted of several short hikes. The longest was the U.S.F.S. foot path and board walk to Hills Creek Falls, reportedly 3/4 mile. With its big trees and excellent footing, (thank you U.S.F.S.) though, it was such a beautiful draw that it was not too long at all. The three falls nestled in a steep draw and the streambed itself were something to see. Especially pretty was the ledge rock bed where the U.S.F.S. chose to build the single bridge. (Thank you U.S.F.S.) The access was made as easy as could be and it assuredly protects from over use the resource we had come to see: the second highest falls in the state.

The other short hike along a creek was a beautiful steep little Brook Trout stream. In one nice clear flow we saw one 10" Brook Trout but no spawning beds although the date was right (Oct. 25). The valley floor was wide with some very big trees and the stream bed occupied its middle fifteen feet. It was easy walking for one half mile. Then it became covered with big boulders and it may never have seen the light of day again as the now narrow valley floor climbed to the hill top a mile beyond.

The shortest of our three hikes was into the head Of Hills Creek itself to see just how flat it was. Beaver dams had made the long pools even longer. The valley floor is wide with tall goldenrod and aster cover. There is no shade on the flow. It is warmed then and minnows dominate rather than Brook Trout in most reaches.

Both Hills Creek and the North Fork of Cherry have flat headwaters. Highway 39 separates them today by only a few hundred feet. Quite obviously Hills Creek headwater once flowed down the North Fork. It was "captured" by the steep headcutting gorge of Hills Creek. It was a little foggy but mild and nice hiking weather. We really enjoyed it, and we wished more folks had joined us.

Of the two Saturday "Review" treks, the one beyond the Cranberry Campground was the most difficult. It was up the mountain and up toward the Wilderness. Dave Saville and Matt Keller led to see what that area looked like as the Wilderness could be expanded that way. It was a nice woods and a nice hike on a nice day.



## 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](mailto:imaginemew@aol.com) or 304-342-8989.

## MORE GOOD STUFF FOR FREE

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.

## T SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-Shirts with the I [heart] Mountains slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. Sizes S, M, L, XL, 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 green 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.

## GOOD STUFF FOR FREE

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

# Board Meeting Highlights

By John McFerrin

The trains were running on time as new President Hugh Rogers guided us through his first Board meeting as President. Everybody had their say, all fisticuffs were avoided, and we finished half an hour early.

Treasurer Bob Marshall reported that we are operating at a sustainable level. The committees which carry out most of the issue work of the organization were raising the money for those efforts as they went so that projected revenue and expenses bal-



anced out.

Both Don Gasper and Dave Saville offered ideas on trail maintenance projects. Don has prepared an application for a grant available from a federal program which, for the most part, funds highway construction. Part of that program is dedicated to non-highway projects, including maintenance of trails. Don suggested that we apply for a grant of \$5,000 and provide the required \$1,250 match through volunteer labor on trail maintenance.

Dave Saville pointed out that the Forest Service discourages volunteer trail maintenance because it doesn't have the money to hire someone to coordinate the volunteers. He suggested that we find a way to serve as a coordinator of volunteers for trail maintenance on the National Forest. He thought we might be able to hire a summer intern to do this.

Since Hugh Rogers was a rookie president, outgoing President Frank (lame duck) Young presented the President's Report. He reported that we will print an additional 1,500 Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guides in November. He also reported that he had represented the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy at the

meeting of the West Virginia Environmental Council where it sets its legislative priorities for 2005. He had offered timbering regulation reform as our top priority; when the sawdust had settled, it was listed as third on the Environmental Council's list.

In his report, Administrative Assistant Dave Saville handed out a report showing that our membership had nearly tripled in the last six years. He also sought suggestions on how we should get former members back into the fold. We keep track of lapsed members and now have a substantial list of people whose membership has lapsed. We considered sending them a post card inviting them back.

Peter Shoenfeld suggested that we sell advertising in the Voice and use the revenue from that to include color pictures and to improve the mailing to those who now get it so late. Due to some idiosyncrasy of the Postal Service, Voices mailed to members who live north and east of a line somewhere east of Elkins are substantially delayed. This does a disservice to out members in Maryland and the DC area. Some sort of different (and more expensive) handling by the Postal Service would correct this. Peter's was not a suggestion that he sought action on. Just something to noodle on.

We had a lively discussion on the prudence of placing a photo of Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV) in the October Voice. Since the photo happened to appear on the same page as a listing (labeled "Endorsements") of groups and businesses who endorsed expansion of wilderness areas in the Monongahela National Forest, the casual reader might infer that we had endorsed her candidacy. Since we never endorse any candidate for public office, we would not like to leave that inference.

There was also the question of the propriety to our allowing her to use our publication to make a statement when she had generally voted against our interests. Several Board members pointed out that, even if she did generally vote against our interests, she had said generally positive things about wilderness expansion and deserves recognition for those positive statements.

The Board took no action other than to treat this as a cautionary tale demonstrating the importance of avoiding unintended inferences so close to an election.

Jim Solley made a presentation of his plan to create an electronic edition of

the Hiking Guide. This electronic edition would take the next print edition, put it on CD, and add some additional maps and photographs.

President Hugh appointed Frank Young as logistics czar for the Spring Review. Barbara Weaner and Don Gasper offered to help with arranging outings, speakers, etc. The Fall Review, 2005, will probably be at the Cheat Mountain Club again.

With the administrative stuff out of the way, we launched into the committee reports dealing with issues. Peter Shoenfeld reported on the actions of the Wind Committee; his report appears elsewhere in this Voice. Cindy reported on the actions of the Mining Committee, including her trip to the Society of Environmental Journalists and the hearings on the Mittiki mine. Both of these are reported upon in this issue of the Voice.

Dave Saville reported on the actions of the Public Lands Committee. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society have formed a loose coalition to work on Monongahela National Forest issues. With all this attention, there is a lot going on in the Forest.

President Rogers recognized himself to give the report of the Highways Committee. The West Virginia Department of Highways is back to thinking about going across Blackwater Canyon. To do this it needs approval of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service but the Fish and Wildlife Service is too involved in other projects to look at this so the whole thing is bogged down.

The meeting ended half an hour early, leaving veteran Board members who were used to adjourning at least an hour after the scheduled time wandering around wondering what to do with themselves.



# Signs, Signs, Everywhere Signs ..... in Dolly Sods North That Is!

By Trudy and John Phillips and Mike Juskelis

Yes, boys and girls, proud owners of high tech GPS equipment, you no longer have to bring these pieces of electronics with you on future jaunts to Dolly Sods North. This story starts on Oct. 2nd, 2004 and is still unfolding. It goes like this:

On that cool, cloudy, blustery Saturday I hooked up with Hardcore, Rodney D., M.I.A., and JJ to scout the entire route for an outing I would be leading the following week. I had made a topo map on my PC based on work done by John and Trudy, and, of course, JJ and I got some more exact details from them via Email.

To keep this as brief as possible, I'll simply say that the trip was a success. We walked a pretty nice 10.8 mile loop but I was a bit perplexed because I missed the southern most 1.21 mile section of what, until recently, was known as the Raven Ridge Trail. What we walked was way more than "good enough" but I was still puzzled. Upon my return to Baltimore a flurry of Emails between Trudy and me gave me more detail to work with.

I returned to the scene that following Friday accompanied by the Coca-cola Kid, pockets stuffed with topo maps and copies of E-mails. We parked at the Bear Rocks trail head and proceeded along our way. I noticed something different right away. At the beginning of the trail was a brown surveyor's post with the USFS insignia and one word, "TRAIL". We walked quickly to the junction of Dobbin Grade and "What to my wondrous eyes did appear but" ... a USFS trail sign officially naming the grade as such and giving it the trail designation #526. Distances to other assorted trails were also given (See photo.).

The Kid and I crossed Red Creek and climbed to the first rise and easily found Trudy's missing 1.21 miles. We couldn't miss it this time. It was posted with another USFS surveyor's stake. We followed the trail up to Raven Ridge where we found the same stakes marking the trail every 500 yards or so. At the intersection with what was previously known as the Grassy Trail by many was another USFS trail sign marking this as the western terminus of Bear Rock Trail. Having found the missing link and wanting to save our legs for Saturday's Trip and JJ's trip on Sunday, we returned to my truck using my previously discovered route. Imagine that folks ... signs in DSN!

We returned on Saturday and hiked the entire planned route with a crew of thirteen (See "An Autumn Trek in DSN"). About 0.5 miles into the trip, we were joined by Trudy and John who had hiked in from Canaan Valley with the news of even more signs along their route. We proceeded as planned. Besides taking many pictures of the beautiful surroundings we also photographed the trail signs so we could adjust our maps and report the info to you. When we reached the junction of Dobbin Grade and Upper Red Creek Trail, John and Trudy left us and scouted for signs along their route home. The rest of us finished the hike and picked up a little more trail info as we went along.

I called Mr. Ed Lang at the Potomac RD upon my return to Baltimore and he gave me a complete rundown of the trail system. The trail inventory goes like this:

**509: Upper Red Creek Trail.** Northern terminus at Dobbin Grade. Southern terminus at Black Bird Knob Trail. Length about 1.2 miles.

**511: Blackbird Knob Trail.** Eastern terminus at FR 75. Western terminus now at junction of Big Stonecoal Run Trail, Breathed Mountain Trail, and FR 80. Length about 4.3 miles.

**520: Beaver Dam Trail.** Eastern terminus on FR 75. Western terminus on Dobbin Grade. Length 0.7 miles.

**521: Raven Ridge Trail:** Now includes all of Grassy Trail. Southern terminus on Dobbin Grade. Northern terminus on Cabin Mt at what is now called Rocky Ridge Trail. (Note: signs will not be placed on any portion of Raven Ridge Trail until the northern 0.25 miles is rerouted off of private property. Pink flagging currently marks the new route at this section.) Length about 2.6 miles.

**522: Bear Rocks Trail.** Eastern terminus at FR75. Western terminus near the center of NEW Raven Ridge Trail. Length 2.2 miles.

**523: Beaver View Trail.** Northern terminus Raven Ridge Trail. Southern terminus Dobbin Grade. Length 1.1 miles.

**524: Rocky Ridge Trail** (formerly part of Cabin Mt North Tr). Northern terminus Raven Ridge Trail (See note for Raven Ridge Trail concerning signage.). Southern terminus Black Bird Knob Trail (previously Black Bird Knob West Trail). Length 2.4 miles.

**525: Harmon Trail** (Formerly Black Trail). Western terminus Rocky Ridge Trail. Southern terminus Black Bird Knob Trail. Length 1.3 miles.

**526: Dobbin Grade.** Includes all of Dobbin Grade south of Bear Rocks Trail and a section of the old Harmon Trail. Northern terminus Bear Rocks Trail. Western terminus Rocky Ridge Trail. Length 4.3 miles.

Also of note is the fact that almost all of FR 80 has been re-graded and fresh gravel applied making car travel to the west side of DSW possible. There are a few other trails shown on our maps that the FS does not consider official trails but they are there nonetheless and might prove helpful in making unique circuits in this spectacular area. Yes folks, DSN has been tamed!

Note: A color coded map of this venue based on John and Trudy Phillips excellent GPS work can be found on: [www.midatlantichikes.com](http://www.midatlantichikes.com). Or see the original GPS data at <http://users.adelphia.net/~johntrudy>.



# Moving Mountains:

## Voices of Appalachia Rise Up Against Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining



*Moving Mountains* was the brainchild of mereng musician and activist Jen Osha, who first heard coalfield residents speak about the impact of mountaintop removal on their communities during her graduate work in Forestry at Yale. A Mountain State resident, Osha has devoted much of her time to harnessing the healing and storytelling power of music to help coalfield communities end mountaintop removal. "My family is very proud of its mining heritage. The men in my family have been miners back through to the early 1800s, when my ancestors came from Germany. I am the first generation to be raised outside of the coalfields," Osha said.

"It inspires me to see that so many musicians donated their work...In the last year and a half, there have been a lot of difficult events in the coalfields: the closing of the last school in Coal River, the increase of the limits on coal trucks. Judge Haden's ruling being overturned...again. But what I saw was that people hung on to this music. It was something hopeful in a pretty dark time," she said.

**The CD features songs inspired by the people and places of rural southern Appalachia being devastated by MTR as well as interviews with local residents. Most of the proceeds from sales of *Moving Mountains* go to non-profit organizations helping mining communities threatened or destroyed by MTR.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**-Send \$16(includes postage) to Cindy at WVHC PO Box 306, Charleston WV 25321-**

**Or call 304-924-5802 clrank@direcway.com**

### What does Mountain Top Removal Look Like?

Want to see mountain top removal up close and personal? Almost any time you can 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. Julian Martin, (304) 342-8989, [imaginemew@aol.com](mailto:imaginemew@aol.com) and Larry Gibson, (304) 586-3287 or (304) 549-3287 cellular.

### West Virginia Environmental Council Sets Legislative Priorities

The West Virginia Environmental Council has established its legislative priorities for 2005 Legislative session. This took place at WVEC's annual convention in September.

The priorities were:

1. Air quality
2. A moratorium on coal sludge impoundments
3. Timber regulation
4. Water quality
5. Clean elections
6. Ban on mountain top removal mining

The Environmental Council lobby team will be advocating for improvement in the law in these issues as well as other matters which may arise during the course of the legislative session.

### Rivers Coalition Seeks Development Director

Development Director position is open for the environmental non-profit organization, West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WVRC). The position is full-time with health care, retirement, and other benefits. Salary and incentive program are negotiable, and competitive with comparable positions.

The Development Director is responsible for membership growth, event planning, and membership communication including newsletter, web site and fundraising public relation appeals.

The successful candidate will be able to convey a passion for protecting rivers to West Virginians and downstream members in neighboring states. The candidate will have strong organizational skills, an ability to work independently, yet manage and rally volunteer groups. A flexible and dependable schedule will be required of the Development Director.

Submit resumes to: Development Director Search, 801 North Randolph Ave., Elkins, WV 26241. Resumes will be accepted through November 12, 2004.



# An Autumn Trek in Dolly Sods North

By Mike Juskelis

This was the last joint West Virginia Highlands Conservancy/Sierra Club outing of the year for me and it proved to be very special. Before I summarize the outing I'd like to thank all of those who scouted the trails prior to the outing (See "Signs, Signs, Everywhere Signs ... in the DSN that is" article elsewhere in the Voice). I'd also like to thank Trudy and John Phillips, as well as Jonathan Jessup, for their excellent map work and sharing of their trail info with me. It made the outing a lot easier.

Nine of us shared a group site at Seneca Shadows that weekend. We awoke on Saturday to an amazing sunrise with pink, purple and yellow hues radiating from behind Seneca Rocks. By 9:00 Doc, Zsa Zsa, Eddy, the Mad Hatter, the Coca-Cola Kid, Yo Adrienne, John, Da Cheese and I met Captain Kirk and Lt. Uhura at the Bear Rocks parking area.

The Capt. and Lt. were celebrating their anniversary by doing what they do every year—backpacking in the Mon. They had planned a route starting at Bear Rocks and ending at the Roaring Plains Canyon Rim. They were unfamiliar with Dolly Sods North so asked if they could tag along with us until we approached Harmon Knob. This brought our number to 11.

We headed down Bear Rocks Trail and just before we began our descent towards Dobbin Grade ran into Trudy and John Phillips. We headed off toward Raven Ridge. What began as a crew of 9 was now 13 strong. Sometimes I led and at other times Trudy led. That worked out great because it's difficult for a leader to hold a discussion with someone behind him/her and this gave me a chance to mix with the rest of the crew.

It seemed like it took no time before we broke out onto the wide expanses of Raven Ridge. Except for John, Trudy and me, no one in the group had been to this part of the Sods before. All were amazed at the primordial feeling of it all—tall white grass bending in unison with the wind, patches of bright red huckleberry and green/blue red spruce, flattened hills and ridges, acres of cotton grass and cranberries with rounded boulders jutting up in a haphazard way, miles of blueberry bogs

red spruce. This grove is filled with several "rooms", making it a great place to camp on a backpacking trip, close to the wide-open spaces but yet pretty well sheltered from the elements.

We proceeded on our way taking breaks at a rocky overlook of Dolly Sods North, looking back at places we had just explored (I think it is sooooo neat to be able to do that!), and then Rocky Knob. The clouds temporarily parted providing a grand view of Canaan Valley and Mountain.

At the intersection of what is now officially called Dobbin Grade (previously a part of the old Harmon Trail) we wished the Capt. and Lt. a Happy Anniversary and parted company with them. After taking another break at the junction with Beaver View Trail we continued on through the bogs of DSN to the junction with Upper Red Creek Trail. Trudy and John left us there and returned to their home in Canaan Valley.

The rest of us hiked up the remainder of Dobbin Grade. Walking through the muck wasn't that big of an issue since we knew we

were close to the end of the hike and I really don't think any of us was in any really big hurry to have it end. We eventually all made it back to Seneca Shadows, hot showers, dinner at the 4-U and a beautiful, clear, moonless Milky Way kind of a night that probably is experienced only a couple of times in one's lifetime. For those of us who could stay awake there were never-ending clouds of stars to gaze at, a toasty fire to warm us and the soft hooting of far away owls to soothe the inner being in all of us.



**Left Fork of Red Creek. Photo copywrite Jonathan Jessup**

seemingly flowing between isolated knolls of red maple and yellow beech, the heavy, sweet aroma of dying hay-scented Fern, a heavy deck of clouds compressing an endless view from above, orchards of yellow quaking aspen. Cabin Mountain was about 2 miles away but it seemed to be right there. Jack Slocumb was right! Where are the Mastodons and Saber Tooth Tigers?

The walk up the ridge was quick but we didn't want it to be so. The desire to just sit and study all you could see was overwhelming. Still we continued on. We stopped for a brief break in a "house" of



The Way it Was

# Cheat Mountain Wilderness: A Soldiers' View in 1861

By Hunter Lesser

Long before the invasion of railroads and lumberjacks, an invasion of a different sort played out in the wilderness of Cheat Mountain. The year was 1861. In response to pleas from loyal citizens, a Federal army led by General George B. McClellan crossed the Ohio River in late May and invaded "Western" Virginia, winning the first Union victories of the Civil War.

Those victories drove Confederate forces back across the Alleghenies. To keep them out, McClellan ordered the erection of defensive works on the Staunton-Parkersburg turnpike, a vital link to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. As the general departed for Washington, Ohio and Indiana volunteers marched south on that turnpike to Cheat Mountain.

Enormous moss-covered rocks, huge overhanging trees, and gushing springs all added mystery to their ascent. "On the winding way upwards," wrote one soldier, "the character of the timber changes; soon the [spruce] thickets shut out the light, and nothing is seen but the green leafy curtain on either hand." At the crest, weary soldiers fell out to catch their breath and marvel at the scenery.

Cheat Mountain was an authentic wilderness. "To one who loves the wildly picturesque in nature," wrote an Indiana volunteer, "this region could not fail to awe, to please, to fascinate." Another who viewed the mountaintop in 1861 regarded it "as savage as the unexplored wilds of Oregon. The growl of the bear, the cry of the panther, and the bark of the wolf are sometimes still heard... Laurel-brakes stretch out like inland seas, and with never-fading leaves and snake-like branches interlaced, forbid a passage to even the light-footed deer; blackberry bushes extend miles in compact

masses; superb firs lift up their crowned heads to the height of a hundred and fifty feet; and silvery cascades never cease their solitary murmur."

Military strategists eyed Cheat Mountain for defense. The Staunton-Parkersburg pike crossed its summit in a gap nearly four thousand feet high. Here, on the afternoon of July 16, 1861, members of the Fourteenth Indiana Infantry pitched their tents, seized a covered bridge over Shavers Fork one half mile below the gap,

*"Of all the places on this earth, there's none I do declare, That can surpass Cheat Mountain top for misery and despair."*

"Col." Coe, 32nd Ohio Infantry

and plunged into the wilderness.

Soldiers delighted in their novel assignment. One wrote of the "placid pools of Cheat River, in whose depths and on whose laughing ripples play the mottled mountain trout." They scaled the mountain peaks and mailed fragrant spruce-gum to their sweethearts in letters. Cheat Mountain "was an enchanted land," declared another. "How we reveled in its savage beauties!"

And then began the building of an immense fort. Tall spruces were felled by axe and lobbed with the tops outward, presenting a barrier of sharp points. Logs were stacked in crib fashion above the road and then covered with rocks and dirt to form a large embankment, armed with cannons. That fort "surpassed anything of the kind I have since seen" gloated a member of the Fourteenth Indiana, "and with our regiment to garrison it, we felt entirely secure."

These soldiers, like visitors before them, found Cheat Mountain to be a most curious place. Famed Harvard botanist Asa Gray had explored that lonely summit after the turnpike was opened in the 1840's, and discovered plants unknown to science. Another curiosity was the Shavers Fork of Cheat River, a stream of considerable size that seemed to glide on top of the mountain. One amazed soldier insisted it had been "placed there by a mistake of nature."

The weather on Cheat Mountain was also quite remarkable. Cold, chiseling rains fell almost daily, wearing on the constitutions of the volunteers. Even in the "dog days" of August, brisk temperatures compelled the men to heat flat rocks by campfires and

place them at their feet at night for any hope of comfortable rest. The slightest breeze caused the tall spruces to "give forth a most melancholy dirge," remembered one. "When it stormed they howled as if all the demons of the mountains had congregated to frighten off the intruders who had dared to set foot on their domain."

Incredibly, on the afternoon of August 13, 1861, snowflakes fell on the summit! Huffed an astonished Federal; "While our friends [in Indiana] are basking in the sunshine, eating peaches and watermelons, we poor devils are nearly freezing to death upon the top of Cheat Mountain."

Making matters worse, the soldiers' flimsy tents crumbled from mildew, and their poorly made uniforms were soon shredded in the laurel thickets. To hide their nakedness, many reported for duty wrapped in blankets—like "Scotch Highlanders" in their kilts. Speaking for all, an Indiana infantryman declared: "The name of this mountain certainly could not have been more appropriate, for we have been *cheated* in various ways...since our arrival."

On September 12, their misery was interrupted by a surprise attack. Four Confederate brigades, led by none other than General Robert E. Lee, had marched through the rugged Cheat Mountain wilderness to surround the Federal fortress. But Lee's assault went awry, the outnumbered Federals drove off the attackers, and Lee suffered his first defeat. He left the mountains with a humiliating nickname—"Granny," his reputation much diminished.

Federal defenders of the mountaintop began constructing cabins in preparation for winter. To break the routine of army life, chestnut gathering, trout fishing, music and gambling were popular pastimes. Soldiers dug up the abundant laurel or rhododendron bushes and from the roots carved handsome smoking pipes, rings and other objects to be mailed home.

The winter of 1861-62 was severe, and the troops suffered terribly on Cheat Mountain. Many were victimized by frostbite—the frozen skin of their hands and feet peeled off like onions. Deep snowdrifts sometimes locked them in their huts; while the howling winds outside convinced many that an icy death was imminent!

*(Continued on p. 15)*



# Solitude in the Laurel Fork Wilderness

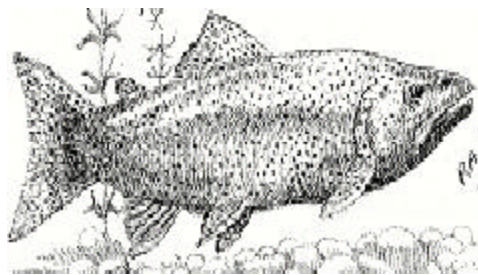
By Susan Bly

For those seeking a retreat from the crowds at Spruce Knob and Dolly Sods, consider giving the Middle Mountain area a try. Brian Beard, Art Abrams, Judy Smoot, Karin Birch, Chris Felton and I did just that. After various times and methods of meeting, we eventually assembled together on October 22.

Our hike began and ended on FR 14, as we would be following the Laurel Fork North and South trails. I proposed a shorter hiking day consisting of approximately 6 miles per day at the onset, so as to be able to stop and enjoy the scenery, get into camp sooner, and in general, just relax from the normal schedule of backpacking.

We knew and expected a challenge finding the route as this is a wilderness which does not allow blazes. This appealed to my bushwhacking heart. You really can't go wrong if you stick to the Laurel Fork River itself. This trail is located on old railroad grades and woods roads, making for easy walking. I would recommend our leisurely pace and route for any beginning backpacker shakedown trip...providing the leader is well versed in route finding and orientation skills. There were several times we had to study the map and directions closely for clues as to the paths' progress. I must take a moment to commend the person or persons bearing clippers who cleared out the Laurel Fork South trail. Your work made the location of the trail so much easier to follow.

At this time of year the edge of fall had come, giving us the last hurrah of gold and rust. At times we walked on carpets of scarlet and even brighter gold, which seemed to make the forest glow. What made our progress even easier was the lack of leaves in that we were able to distinguish land masses and were better able to orient ourselves to the map. Others had



stamped the way through meadows, along with the first frosts which had flattened some of the grasses.

Artifacts from the logging days were scattered along the way. At our first lunch stop, we came across what appeared to be part of a two man saw. As we hiked near the river, we came across some large cinders and chunks of coal, a dump from a coal fired steam engine, a Shay perhaps? At campsite #2, after cleaning out and enlarging the fire pit, we came across a slender foot long spike. It rests near Laurel Fork and hopefully will not be swept away during a flood by said stream.

We stopped at Shine Run the first

day, to see if we could find the rock alcove so beguilingly described as a port in case of storm. Brian persevered and found it on the right hand side of the stream, in the obvious rock outcropping. He said it looked a wee bit dangerous to camp out in as the rocks appeared loose.

Our first night's camp along Abramson Run easily held our 6 tents, with room for more. We disagreed with the (1993) "excellent campsite" description in the old apple orchard, as the place was covered in thistles. Either upstream on Abramson Run or in the spruce grove beyond the Run are excellent places for camping.

Our second night was spent in another spruce thicket, near the virgin stand of hemlock trees. We arrived in camp around 3:00 p.m. and knew we had plenty of time to putz around. Some of us gathered firewood, others chose to conquer the hill across the river for possible views, and some chose to be future Martha Stewarts...we'll let you guess on that one. I felt like a kid again playing camp...but this time it was for real!

We were thankful to have the Laurel Fork area all to ourselves this weekend. The only other "hiker" we saw was a squirrel hunter. All in all, we enjoyed our visit to Laurel Fork and will return someday to try other interests there.

## Cheat Mountain Summit

By April 1862, the survivors abandoned their mountaintop fortress and marched east to clash with Confederates in the Shenandoah Valley. From their efforts, the new state of West Virginia was born.

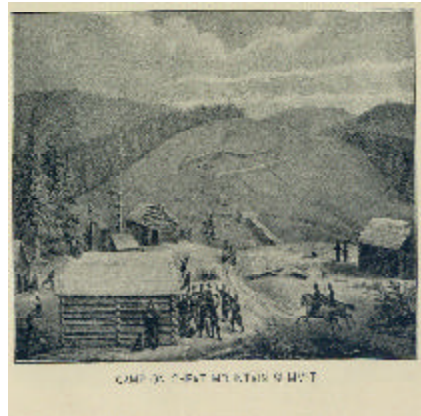
Unfortunately, few recall those stirring times. Yet vestiges of the fortress at "White Top" remain, along with the fern-covered graves of Federal soldiers. Their ordeal on Cheat Mountain shaped American history, and their accounts give an early glimpse of the wilderness remaining today.

For more about the Allegheny Mountains in 1861, West Virginia statehood, and the first campaign of the Civil War see Rebels at the Gate: Lee and

*(Continued from p. 14)*

McClellan on the Front Line of a Nation Divided by W. Hunter Lesser

*(Sourcebooks, 375 pgs. \$24.95), available at bookstores everywhere, or from the author at hless@meer.net.*



## Our Readers Write

Dear West Virginia Highlands Conservancy,

My name is J. P. Hieronimus. I'm a 25 year old dentist from Marshall County. I've just recently learned of, and become a member, of your organization. Although my knowledge of all the things you do is limited, I am very, very grateful that an organization like the WVHC exists. 'While attending WVU Dental School, I enjoyed my four years in Morgantown greatly. Had it not been for mountain biking at Baker's Ridge, climbing at Coopers, or swimming at Blue Hole, I don't think I would have made it



through the stressful times at school.

I hope you take some time to consider what I am about to say because I feel very passionately about it. Actually passionate doesn't describe my feelings. 'When I think about what I'm about to write to you my stomach turns, and I get ready mad.

One of my favorite things to do outdoors is explore, whether it's a little known tributary of the Blackwater Canyon, or just some sandstone cliffs at Coopers Rock that no one else cares about, I really enjoy getting to places not many people go, then taking other people there. While I was in Morgantown, I kept hearing the local outdoor enthusiasts talk about a place called Big Sandy. The section of this river that I am referring to is the area between Bruceton Mills and the end of this creek where it enters the Cheat River ('WV Atlas Gazetteer <P26 C-4 to be exact. Kayakers know it well; it's in the WV Wildwater Whitewater Guidebook.

I've seen folks come from hundreds of miles away to enjoy it. This section of the Big Sandy is incredibly scenic. The calm smooth water around Bruceton Mills turns into gorgeous rapids, flowing through chutes and over waterfalls. The laurel and pines make it a truly breathtaking place. It resembles the Youghiogheny River near Ohio Pyle or the Tygart near Valley Falls State Park, only a little smaller.

One section is accessible by road-County Road I4, near Laurel Run, off of State 73, near Coopers Rock. Apparently this access is part of the Allegheny Trail. The yellow blazes on the trails will lead you there. The road has been recently greatly improved by Allegheny Timber who recently purchased the land

below and around some of the road. This road leads to an old bridge and some limited parking spots. This is where the boaters put in and kayak to the Cheat River at Blue Hole.

During my first year of school (2000), a friend of mine took me to the bridge and we walked one mile back an old logging road parallel to Big Sandy to one of the most beautiful and unique places I've ever seen in West Virginia. At about one mile below the bridge, the Big Sandy cascades over a solid sandstone bottom with chutes and small three foot falls then drops 18 feet off of Wonder Falls. I was really impressed the first time I saw it. I couldn't believe this place wasn't a state park or on state land.

This particular spot on the river was a favorite hang-out for local WVU students who wanted to get away from the stresses of school. It wasn't uncommon to see 15 to 20 people soaking up the sun on the sandstone, sitting in the natural mountain stream Jacuzzi holes, or flying down thru the whitewater chutes. The adventurous few who took the trek down the river another three quarters of a mile would find the biggest payoff. At least three good swimming holes and more cascading falls leading to Big Splat, a waterfall and place that is unmatched in its beauty in this state. The trail leads back past some tall cliffs with a climbing route or two and a really spectacular 35 foot waterfall on one of the streams flowing into Big Sandy.

Over my four years in school, I've taken 20 people down to Big Splat. Everyone, I do mean everyone, has asked me why this isn't a state park, or has made some comment that it should be. The area is absolutely gorgeous.

All that is good stuff, now for the bad. There is a group of people in the world I refer to as the Ignorant Stupid People's Association (ISPA). These people usually share the same interest in getting outdoors that I do. The only problem is they leave all the stuff they were using behind when they go home. For example, beer bottles, pop cans, chip bags, sleeping bags; snuff cans, cigarette wrappers, etc. These are the ignorant few that ruin it for everyone else. They're also the people that get drunk and ride ATVs with no helmets, and then try to jump off of Wonder Falls.

People like this absolutely trashed this section of river. This, along with the huge liability of such idiots, is what probably led to the closing of this area. The last time I ventured down to Big Sandy, I encountered a huge, bright orange "KEEP OUT!" spray painted on

a boulder, along with barbed wire up across the access path. Posted signs littered the trees every 10 yards signed by the Mountain Man Militia (whoever they are).

It didn't take long before someone tore down the sign and the wire. The last time I was out there I just stood and looked; I knew I had absolutely no right to go onto private property, even if someone else had. The thought of all this being closed to the public makes me sick even though I know it's perfectly legal.

My fear is that there will be a bloody run in with some college kids who choose to go check it out, and the Mountain Man Militia. Rumor has it in Morgantown that this has happened twice already with the landowner, (in places other than Big Sandy) resulting in two deaths.

My desire would be that the state could purchase the land that the access path is on so that people could enjoy this place. However, every time I bring up this issue with a Park Ranger, they inform me that the state isn't in any situation financially to do any purchasing right now.

But maybe it's not that hard. Is it possible for the state to negotiate a right of way down the footpath to Wonder Falls and Big Splat? This isn't something that would take much effort or money is it? I've heard of Eminent Domain. Would this apply? Again, I'm not suggesting the state buy thousands of acres in this situation, just establish a right of way to the Falls and put up a forest service iron gate to keep the idiots on ATVs out. I think the landowners would actually benefit from this.

In my opinion, denying people access to this place would be like if Seneca Rocks, Blackwater Falls, Cranberry Glades, Dolly Sods, or Canaan Valley were on private land and no one could enjoy them. Think about it for a while. It is wrong, and really, what's the difference between Wonder Falls and Big Splat, and the scenic areas above? There is none. Thank you for your time, and again thanks for all you do. If you can't help, can you give me some information on someone who can? I would love to hear from you.

J.P. Hieronimus  
Cameron, WV

