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# The Highlands Voice

The Monthly Publication of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

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**Environmental Destruction? What Environmental Destruction? We've Got a Rubber Stamp to Use**

## THE ARMY CORPS MARCHES ON.....

By Cindy Rank

Three recent developments in the ongoing saga of the Army Corps of Engineers' role in filling stream valleys are worthy of note. (A summary/history of WVHC's involvement in these matters 1984-2005 was printed in the February 2005 issue of the Highlands Voice. If you have already recycled that issue of the Voice, it is available on line at [www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org))

**1) September 19, 2005:** The Fourth Circuit heard oral arguments in the Bush administration's appeal of Judge Goodwin's 2004 ruling that directed the Corps to use its individual permitting process when considering Clean Water Act 404 Permits for coal companies wanting to fill stream valleys with mine waste. Until that time the Corps had used the streamlined nationwide permitting process (NW#21) to rubberstamp virtually all valley fills at mountaintop removal and other large mining operations. (NW#21 was used to authorize the filling of over 1200 miles of headwater streams.)

Ken Ward's Charleston Gazette article "**Judges grill lawyers in mining case**" provides a brief overview of the case and excerpts from the hearing in Richmond VA. [See excerpts of Mr. Ward's article printed on page 3 of this issue of the *Voice*.]

**NB: Although the individual permit system is an improvement**

**because it requires more information be provided by the company, more thorough review by the Corps, and allows for public input during the process, the applications submitted this past year and the Corps' review of those applications have been woefully inadequate. The following two items are examples of how West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and others are continuing to be involved.**

**2) September 22, 2005:** Represented by the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment and the Washington DC based Earthjustice, WVHC, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) and Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW) filed a legal challenge of a Corps permit for Aracoma Coal Company. Aracoma's Camp Branch Surface Mine will permanently bury and destroy approximately 3 miles of streams near the historic Blair Mountain in Boone County.

In January 2005 Margaret Janes of the Appalachian Center submitted detailed comments on our behalf. These comments elaborated many reasons why the Aracoma permit should be denied, and emphasized the need for the Corps to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement – especially because of its proximity to the Blair Mountain Battlefield currently being considered for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. **(Continued on p. 6)**

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## From the Heart of the Highlands

by Hugh Rogers

### Forest Plan Rejoinder

Twenty years ago, planners for the Monongahela National Forest invited citizens to comment on new management rules for the Mon. They got much more than they'd expected: nearly 4,000 letters and calls, most highly critical of the draft plan's emphasis on resource extraction. To their credit, the planners didn't flinch but instead asked for more. After an extended comment period and a thorough redrafting, the Service unveiled the 1986 Plan, which struck a very different balance between resource use and protection.

Here we are again. Though the comment period on a proposed new plan will remain open until November 14, the Forest Service has already begun to respond to some of the criticisms they're hearing. Issue 8 of their Forest Plan Revision News seemed to be specifically directed at us. By "us" I mean the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition, whose widely-distributed alerts encourage comment letters favoring Alternative 3 and more Wilderness instead of the Forest Service's Preferred Alternative 2. (The Coalition is composed of the Highlands Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society.)

I want to share with you two key points from Mary Wimmer's response to the Forest Plan Revision newsletter. Mary is a very effective activist who helped shape the 1986 Plan. She represents the Sierra Club's West Virginia Chapter on the Wilderness Coalition.

One of the chief accomplishments of the 1985-86 effort was **Management Prescription 6.2**, designated for "semi-primitive" (i.e., roadless) backcountry recreation. The 6.2 areas, such as Canaan Mountain, Roaring Plains, and Cranberry Backcountry, also offered the best protection short of wilderness for water supply, flood prevention, hunting and fishing, and all sorts of species "intolerant of disturbance," in the Forest Service's language. Changes to 6.2 areas have become a sensitive issue in the current planning process.

Our coalition proposed 16 of these roadless areas for recommendation to Congress as Wilderness. Forest Service Alternative 2 recommends only one of them, Cheat Mountain, in its entirety. Four of the 16 would be entirely reassigned to management prescriptions that would allow logging and road building. Another five, including the well-known areas named just above, would be partially opened to logging and roads. Three more are reassigned to a new prescription for the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area—which might appear to protect them except that so far it remains undefined. The Forest Service has put that off for another day.

Besides the reassignments, the forest planners want to alter the guidelines for 6.2 areas, allowing, for example, "vegetation management to meet the emphasis of the management area." Thus, wild areas would take a double hit, removal for some and redefinition for the rest.

Adding insult to injury, the 6.2 area that we consider the best Wilderness candidate on the Forest, Seneca Creek, would be split in half, one side to be defined as part of the National Recreation

(Continued on p. 16)

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# JUDGES GRILL LAWYERS IN MINING CASE

**By Ken Ward Jr.**

RICHMOND, Va. — Federal appeals judges on Monday offered mixed reviews of the latest court decision more strictly regulating mountaintop removal coal mining.

A three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals grilled lawyers in the challenge of a July 2004 ruling by U.S. District Judge Joseph R. Goodwin in Charleston.

Judges Paul V. Niemeyer and J. Michael Luttig led the questioning, with criticism of the way the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued its permit for mountaintop removal valley fills.

Both wondered aloud whether the corps had ever determined that mountaintop removal mining causes the minimal impacts required for it to be approved through a streamlined permitting process.

“When did the [corps] make that determination?” Niemeyer asked Elizabeth Kessler, a lawyer for the corps. “You didn’t look at a single fact to make that determination.”

Luttig expressed frustration when Kessler could not immediately recite exactly when and on what basis the corps determines that mining fills have only minimal impacts.

“Otherwise, this looks like it is just a complete sham,” Luttig said.

In the case, the Bush administration and the coal industry are challenging Goodwin’s ruling that the corps can no longer approve mountaintop removal valley fills through a streamlined process that allows little public scrutiny.

Under the federal Clean Water Act, the corps can issue two types of fill permits: in-

dividual and nationwide, or general, permits.

Individual permits cover specific fill proposals. Before issuing them, the corps conducts “case-by-case” evaluations of potential environmental impacts.

General permits cover categories of activities, and are issued on a regional, statewide or nationwide basis. When it issues gen-



eral permits, the corps spells out the general conditions that a particular category of activity should meet. Then, companies seek authorization for specific projects. If they promise to meet the general conditions, their projects are authorized with much less review than individual permits.

Under the law, general permits are allowed to be used only for activities that “will cause only minimal adverse effects when performed separately, and will have only minimal cumulative effects on the environment.”

For years, the corps approved coal mining valley fills through a general permit called Nationwide Permit 21.

In a series of rulings starting July 8, 2004, Goodwin blocked that practice. The judge ruled that the corps could not use NWP 21, because it had never concluded that mining fills caused only minimal impacts.

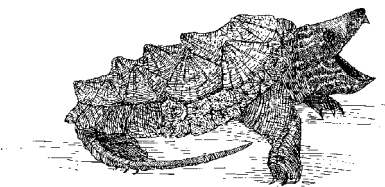
As a result, coal companies have been forced to undergo more rigorous review to obtain individual permits. Coal production is up in 2005 and so far this year, the corps has issued nearly two dozen individual permits for mining operations.

But the industry and the administration appealed, with government officials arguing that Goodwin’s ruling would “substantially curtail” coal production in West Virginia.

In arguments Monday, Luttig said the corps has supported its actions with a “nonsensical argument” — that mining fills will not cause greater than minimal impacts, because if they did that would violate the law, and the corps would never allow anything that violated the law.

“History doesn’t support you, because people operate outside the law all the time,” Luttig said. “Even by Washington standards, that’s pretty incredible.”

*Note: This article originally appeared in The Charleston Gazette. It has been abbreviated for space reasons.*



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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.*

See? We Told You So

## OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING CRITICIZES METTIKI MINE

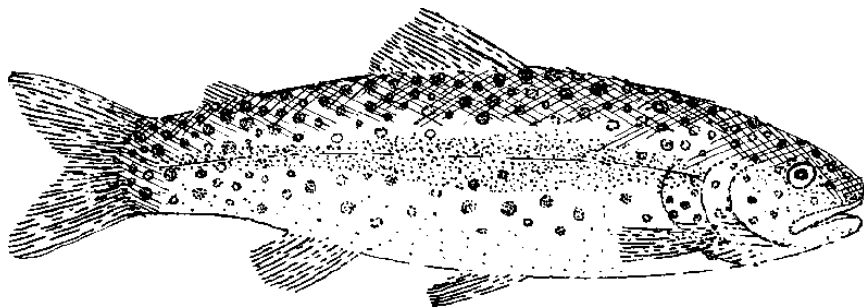
By Ken Ward, Jr.

Federal regulators have found dozens of major problems with a Mettiki Coal Co. underground mine permit that the state Department of Environmental Protection already approved.

The U.S. Office of Surface Mining findings back up complaints from state environmental groups, who fear the mine will eventually pour acid mine drainage into streams.

Late last week, Roger Calhoun, director of the OSM field office in Charleston, rejected the DEP's response to those citizen complaints as "arbitrary, capricious and an abuse of discretion."

OSM rarely gets directly involved in the review and issuance of state mining permits. But in this case, many observers believe the Mettiki permit is the first of a series of proposals that



could reopen the acid drainage-producing coal seams of north-central West Virginia to new mining.

"What we see here is a technology that has promise," DEP lawyer Tom Clarke said in defending the Mettiki proposal before the state Surface Mine Board. "Hopefully, it will be a model for future efforts to mine in the acid-producing seams of northern West Virginia."

In May 2004, DEP approved the permit for Mettiki's E Mine along the Grant-Tucker county line. Mettiki says it would control acid mine drainage by pumping polluted water into the underground mine works before it is released into streams. Once underground, the water would be treated with alkaline materials to reduce acidity. It would also be deprived of oxygen to keep more acid from forming.

But in a series of reports made public this week, OSM experts say the plan is "an experimental method ... which has not been successful elsewhere."

"Every previous attempt to do this or something similar has been a failure," wrote OSM hydrologist Jay Hawkins.

In three separate reports, Hawkins and OSM hydrologists Tom Galya and George Gunn analyzed the Mettiki permit in response to a citizen complain filed by Joe Lovett of the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment.

Mettiki and DEP had predicted the E Mine's discharge would need treatment for 17 years, and then be clean.

OSM experts projected the discharge could actually contain 30 times the legal limit of iron for decades to come.

Among the problems the OSM reports identified in the

Mettiki permit and DEP's approval of it:

Neither the company nor DEP is clear on how much water would be pumped into or drained out of the underground mine workings. One permit document says 767 gallons per minute; another 588 gallons per minute.

Without such basic information, OSM experts said, it is impossible to accurately predict the long-term effects on water quality.

Mettiki and DEP agreed that there was no way for oxygen to enter the underground mine workings to foster the formation of more acid.

OSM found that the company and the state did not account for numerous potential pathways. Federal officials said, "There is no data from any other mine showing that oxygen can be excluded completely."

In backing up their plans, Mettiki and DEP cited examples that OSM said are not comparable to the E Mine situation.

For example, DEP cited a report by state hydrologist George Jenkins that dealt with alkaline treatment of coal refuse piles, not underground mines. "It doesn't take a hydrologist to realize that the physical hydrology of the two is vastly different," OSM's Hawkins wrote.

"This is analogous to comparing pineapples and hand grenades," Hawkins wrote. "They may look similar, but that is as far as it goes."

In response to his staff's reports, Calhoun said that he would launch an even more detailed OSM investigation of the Mettiki permit.

But even before that can happen, the state plans to appeal Calhoun's decision to the federal Interior Board of Land Appeals, said Randy Huffman, director of mining and reclamation at DEP.

"I think there is a fundamental disagreement between the technical people in our agencies," Huffman said.

Originally, DEP in October 2003 rejected the Mettiki permit. At that time, agency officials said it would cause an illegal, perpetual source of acid mine drainage.

Then, Mettiki hired former Wise administration chief of staff Mike Garrison, who brokered a special meeting with the DEP and with Wise for company officials.

Mettiki submitted a new mining plan. DEP regional staff in Philippi said they didn't think it would work, but agency officials in Charleston overruled them and issued the permit.

In February, the state Surface Mine Board deadlocked in an appeal of the Mettiki permit, a move that allowed the DEP's approval to stand.

*Note: This story originally appeared in The Charleston Gazette.*

## THE APPALACHIAN COAL COUNTRY WATERSHED TEAM (ACCWT)

Appalachian coal country, a region stretching from Pennsylvania to Alabama and once bustling with prosperous coal company towns, is now too often the scene of environmental desolation and economically abandoned communities. Between the verdant hills of Appalachia lie orange stained streams, the product of acid mine



drainage (AMD) seeping from abandoned mines. This metals-laden water essentially smothers all life in a stream, emblematic of the slow death of too many rural coal communities. But while one can find much despair in the hills of Appalachia, one can also find hope in its communities; hope to restore watersheds and prosperity to the region.

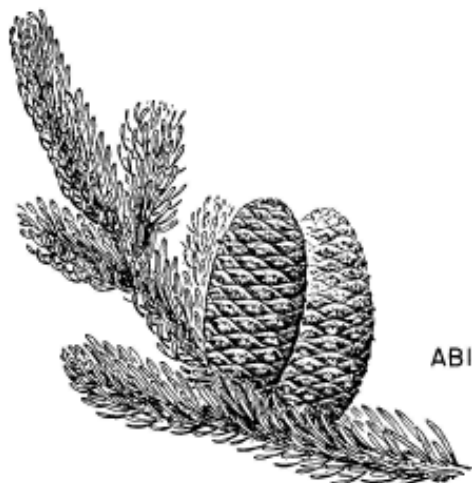
Seeing this challenge and this opportunity, the Office of Surface Mining Clean Streams

Program (OSM) formed a partnership with AmeriCorps/VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) in 2001. In just three short years, the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team (ACCWT) expanded to 26 full-time OSM/VISTAs serving in 8 states. Eight of these OSM/VISTAs serve in West Virginia, dedicated to preserving the beauty of the mountains and the pride of the small communities. With partners like the Big Coal River Watershed Association (BCRWA), Friends of the Cheat, Kelly's Creek Communities Association, North Fork Watershed Project, Plateau Action Network, Upper Guyandotte, The Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable (ECRR), and The Citizens Conservation Corps of WV (WVCCC), OSM/VISTAs are making a significant contribution to communities throughout the state of West Virginia.

The ACCWT strives to strengthen local watershed groups by recruiting volunteers and fostering public awareness about environmental issues. Whether it is community development workshops at the Whitesville Rotary Club, recruiting volunteers for the Friends of the Cheat Adopt-a-Highways clean-up project, or monitoring AMD on Kelly's Creek in Glasgow; each OSM/VISTA is responsible for a multitude of tasks. Members of the ACCWT monitor AMD, write reports, press releases, prepare grant proposals, produce educational materials, and other capacity-building tasks. Often these volunteers are the

only staff able to work full-time towards the interest of their volunteer watershed sponsor. These dedicated advocates work to build sustainable programs in rural communities-and they are succeeding. Since 2002, the ACCWT recruited over 5000 volunteers who contributed sixty thousand hours of time, raised nearly two million dollars of in-kind services, and secured one million dollars in grants. For its efforts, the team was awarded the Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award (2004).

One of the strongest methods the ACCWT volunteers use to build effective community assets is combining the science needed to clean up local streams with the civic engagement to promote sustainability. As Appalachian streams transition from orange creeks to sustainable watersheds, we begin to see the successes of the ACCWT and the transformation of rural Appalachia.



*ABIES balsamea*

### RED SPRUCE CONES NEEDED

The Highlands Conservancy's red spruce restoration efforts continue in October as we collect more spruce cones. We'll be out on the Forest October 8&9 and again Oct. 15&16 gathering cones. If you'd like to join us, contact Dave Saville at [daves@labyrinth.net](mailto:daves@labyrinth.net) or 304-284-9548.

If you live in, or are visiting, the highlands in October keep an eye out for spruce cones. This seems to be a very poor year for cones but we desperately need them. Much of our effort will be spent just finding some to collect. We can use help locating them! We will be extracting the seeds from the cones and using them to grow seedlings for restoration and reclamation purposes.

## MINING MATTERS (Continued from p. 1)

The Corps, however, issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and granted the permit.

Our legal action filed September 22<sup>nd</sup> contends that the Corps' action violates substantive and procedural provisions of the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and is otherwise in violation of the Administrative Procedures Act.

In part the challenge says, "The valley fills and associated activities planned for the Camp Branch Surface Mine will generate significant adverse environmental effects, individually and cumulatively, that cannot be eliminated by mitigation measures. These effects include impaired water quality, degradation of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and habitats, impaired species survival and diversity, permanent destruction of crucial stream functions, forest loss and fragmentation, and severe impairment of the aesthetic value of the destroyed mountains. NEPA requires the Corps to fully analyze these impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS")."

"The cumulative adverse environmental effects caused by the permitted activities at the Camp Branch Surface Mine and other similar surface mines located in the Appalachian region are significant on a local, regional and national scale. The Corps' failure to analyze both the individual and cumulative impacts of the Camp Branch Surface Mine in an EIS violates NEPA."

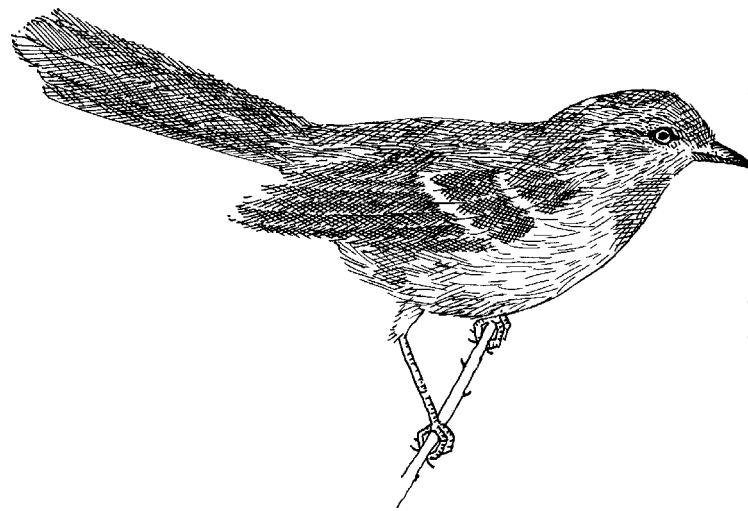
The complaint requests the Court to "(1) declare that the Corps violated its statutory and regulatory duties under the CWA and NEPA, (2) issue an injunction requiring the Corps to rescind the Camp Branch Surface Mine permit, (3) enjoin the Corps from authorizing any further mining, mountain top removal-valley fills or sedimentation ponds in connection with the Camp Branch Surface Mine until an EIS has been prepared for the project that analyzes the project's individual and cumulative environmental impacts."

It is our understanding that Judge Charles Chambers of the US District Court in Huntington will hear the case.

**3) September 27, 2005:** WVHC joined Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and Coal River Mountain Watch to comment on a 404 application that would allow Hobet mining to extend its approximately 12,000 acre Hobet 21 operation into Berry Branch, a stream that flows

into the Mud River just downstream of what used to be the town of Mud.

Our 25 pages of comments elaborate on the following general areas of concern. The Project Purpose is too narrowly defined. The company failed to adequately explore all practicable alternatives. The mine will contribute to significant degradation of the environment and must be analyzed fully in an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA. The mitigation plan is flawed and illegal. The mining proposal does not comply with West Virginia water quality standards for either surface or ground waters. The in-stream treatment ponds violate the Clean Water Act. Issues that impact the State and citizens in the region (i.e.



declining property values, flooding, etc.) must be considered by the ACOE. Assurances of long-term mitigation success must be provided.

The comments conclude: "For all the reasons outlined above, the ACOE cannot logically conclude that the mine will have no significant impact on the environment. To do so would be counter to the numerous findings of the DEIS and the plain reading of the scientific studies that it contains. Thus, the ACOE must proceed with a careful and complete evaluation of all the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the project. However after due consideration, because there is no time-proven way to mitigate the impacts of the permanent and total destruction of jurisdictional streams and because the mining proposal does not comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act or the National Environmental Policy Act the permit must be denied."

### Final Personal Comment/Observation

Long time readers of the VOICE may remember a December '96 article in which I attempted to explain the maze of permitting that had allowed hundreds of miles of streams to be buried. The article highlighted Hobet 21's Westridge permit and the specifics of the

seven valley fills proposed for tributaries of the Mud River — one of which would bury the entire length (2 ½ miles) of Connelly Branch.

Since that time Hobet has proceeded downstream with any number of modifications, incidental boundary revisions and relatively small permits — consuming every tributary of the Mud River as it goes. The 2005 Combined Decision Document for an Individual 404 Permit for one of those expansions (the West Ridge South No.1 Surface Mine) quotes EPA as stating the headwaters of the Mud River will be 42.2% disturbed by past, present, and future mining and other land disturbance activities.

In a comment letter written in reference to the Laxare and Black Castle 404 permits, Dr. J. Bruce Wallace expressed his view about impacts from extensive damage to headwater streams. He wrote: "In our opinion, burial of many headwater streams in one basin ... is akin to trimming the roots of a tree and having the misguided view that this will not impact the tree."

I'll never forget taking the picture that appeared with that '96 VOICE article, or the ride through the small community of Mud and up the Connelly Branch hollow on a rickety bus with other members of the legislative interim committee on Mitigation before the Westridge permit was granted.

I visited the mine site on a number of occasions after that, during mining when Big John had been unleashed to feast on the deep mountain greenery — and have returned to the area several times since then.

Believe me, there is no combination of words from our 2,478 page Random House Dictionary that could even begin to describe the total annihilation that has taken place.

In that 1996 article I wrote that the state's reliance on industry's promises and the recuperative powers of mother nature to recovery after being put through the giant mixer of modern day mining appeared to me to be crap shoot with the future of southern WV at stake.

Today, nearly ten years later, numerous studies have documented extensive harm to the streams, forests and families where mountaintop removal and valley fills are permitted. Operations like Hobet 21, Samples, Marsh Fork, FOLA, etc., continue to turn the earth inside out. Homes and families in Mud and elsewhere continue to disappear, and stories of people from Delbarton, Van, Whitesville, Cow Run, Rock Creek, and so many other coalfield communities fill the airwaves.

I no longer view this activity as a crapshoot. — It's just plain crap.

## **Compact Disc version of Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide**

WV Highlands Conservancy continues to bring its publications into the computer era with its latest innovation- the publication of the Electronic (CD) version of its famous Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, 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 7<sup>th</sup> edition in an interactive pdf format. It also includes the following ancillary features, developed by a WVHC dedicated volunteer, and **not available anywhere else:**

- 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:

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## **THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARDED TO AN ENVIRONMENTALIST**

By Don Gasper

Mrs. Wangari Maathai of Kenya won the Nobel Peace Prize. This is world-wide recognition of the importance of the environment and the sweeping changes needed to restore a "world of beauty and wonder." In her acceptance speech, she said, "Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own." She further urged democratic reforms and an end to corporate greed to "build a fair and just society". "Further, industry and global institutions must appreciate that ensuring economic justice, gender equality, and ecological integrity are profits of the greatest value."

Ms. Quaranto Goes to Washington**HOW I BECAME A LOBBYIST FOR THE MON**

by Dee Quaranto

I've been a member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy for only a year. Shortly after hiking in Dolly Sods last summer, I'd stopped at the Purple Fiddle in Thomas and saw a copy of the Highlands Voice. I was excited to read about the many environmental issues the organization was working on, and sent in my membership fee shortly after returning home. I was already benefiting greatly from the information in the WVHC's Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide, which I'd picked up at the Cranberry Visitor's Center, and wanted to support the organization's work. Following up information in the Voice, I participated in stream monitoring and a guided hike last year.

Recently, I read in the Voice that the Management Plan for the Mon was due to be revised. When I read about possible alternatives to the current Plan, I knew it was time to get more involved. I contacted Dave Saville, who lives a couple of miles from me in Monongalia County and asked what I could do to help. He told me the group was getting a mailing on the Mon together, and I volunteered to help. A thousand stuffed envelopes later, he asked if I'd like to go to Washington DC to lobby for Alternative 3. I didn't have enough money to stay in DC, but when Dave said he'd gotten a grant to cover travel and lodging for some people, I agreed to go immediately.

I'd never lobbied for anything before, but I couldn't pass up the opportunity to see how it's done. Although I had some anxiety about what I could possibly do to justify the expense of sending me, I duly assembled some lobbying-type clothing and spent a week learning more about the Mon in general, the United States Forest Service's preferred Alternative 2, and the benefits of Wilderness designation. Monday morning I gathered all my information and was ready to hit the road.

Although we slept at a hotel, the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club actually provided our home while we were in DC. When we arrived on Monday afternoon, we attended our first meeting at the Wilderness Society, where we got to know each other a bit and discussed what we'd be doing during the next two days. This really helped us break the ice, and begin to focus on what our message would be and how best to deliver it. With representatives from The Wilderness Society and Campaign for America's Wilderness, we discussed some of the details of Alternatives

2 and 3, and the importance of using our time in our representatives' offices to relate why the Mon is important to each of us personally.

Our group represented quite a diversity of backgrounds. It included a physician, college students, a retired engineer, and an unemployed former social worker, ranging in age from their teens into their seventies. Some are long-time environmental activists,

*West Virginia Wilderness advocate Dee Quaranto talks with Congressman Mollohan at the US Capitol Building reception during our Volunteer Lobby trip to DC in September*



and some of us are just getting started. We came from all over the state. As one of the staff members who hosted us in DC told us, the mere fact that we were willing to travel so far, during the week, and leave schools, jobs, and families, spoke volumes to the aides with whom we met.

The following morning, we traveled from the hotel to the Sierra Club, headquartered near Capitol Hill. Once again our Washington hosts were there to hand-hold, strategize and brain-storm. They reminded us that Congressional and Senatorial aides are people, too, and emphasized that we didn't need to be experts. Although I had been having some anxiety about what we were actually going to do once we sat down in our representative's offices, I left that meeting feeling like "I can do this."

That day, our entire group met with a representative from Senator Byrd's office. The following day we all met with Senator Rockefeller's aide. For meetings with the aides of our congressional representatives, we split up by district. Because I live in

Monongalia County, I was part of the group that met with Congressman Mollohan's aide.

We did not meet with our elected officials directly. Instead, we had meetings with their staff members. The aides were polite and seemed genuinely interested in our opinions. I had expected them to be experts on the subject for some reason, but was surprised that there were things about the Forest Service's preferred action, Alternative 2, with which they seemed unfamiliar. In fact,

WE were the experts. Each one of us, regardless of our familiarity with the Plan revision process, is an expert in why the Mon is so important, and why we want it wild. It was an important opportunity to educate the aides about the Mon, and about the reasons individual members of our group had for wanting to see Wilderness-level protection within our National Forest increase.

Our reasons were many. We want the Mon wild to protect watersheds, preserve opportunities for recreational activities, or because our religious or spiritual conscience compels our political participation. We advocate Wilderness because we cherish what is unique about West Virginia and about the Mon in particular, and it is not the ability to provide timber. We met with these people because we want to be able to walk in the woods unaccompanied by the sounds and sights of roads being built and timber being cut — because we care about water and air quality, and wildlife habitat.

**(Continued on next page)**



# GO WILD AT A WILD MON PARTY

This fall you can play a vital role in helping to protect the Mon's wildest places. The Forest Service's draft management plan for the Mon is out; it evaluates options for new wilderness areas. Now is the time for West Virginians to send their comments to the Forest Service and tell them to keep the Mon wild.

That's where you come in – and help spread the word by hosting a Wild Mon Party. Here's what to do:

**1. Get a Wild Mon Party Pack from the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition.** The Party Pack includes a wilderness video, fact sheets, brochures, and other helpful information. Call or e-mail Matt Keller at 304-864-5530 or [mattk@twc.org](mailto:mattk@twc.org).

**2. Set a date** and get your neighbors, friends, coworkers, relatives, children, church members, business owners, and any other people who love the Mon together at your house or convenient community location.

**3. Watch the newly released "A Vision for a Wild Mon" video** produced by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition to educate and inspire your group about our proud tradition of protecting our natural heritage. This exciting new video features some of West Virginia's most wild landscapes, located in the Monongahela National Forest, including areas deserving of wilderness protection. The video also highlights threats to these primitive places, as well as ways you can help.

Narrated by West Virginia's own **Larry Groce**, famed voice, host and Artistic Director of Mountain Stage, "A Vision for a Wild Mon" shows a side of West Virginia that we cannot afford to lose: breathtaking, unique, irreplaceable wilderness that deserves to be protected forever. The video also features the mu-

## Ms. Quaranto Goes to Washington (Continued from previous page)

After Tuesday's meetings were finished, we were feted at a reception in the U.S. Capitol Building. While West Virginia musicians played traditional music, we had a chance to meet and speak with Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall, who joined us after returning from Charleston, where Senator Byrd had announced his intention to seek re-election. However, the highlight of the evening was the Washington premiere of the film *Vision for a Wild Mon*. Jonathan Jessup's images of our National Forest were so beautiful and moving that, I must admit, I cried at one point. After the showing, Jonathan was introduced, and I had a chance to meet one of my heroes. It was such a pleasure to tell him how much I appreciate his work, and to thank him for making his beautiful images of West Virginia's wild places available to others.

None of the aides or representatives with whom we met promised us anything, but I did feel they were attentive and listened to what we had to say. I can only hope they will join us in the effort to help the Forest Service understand that Alternative 3 is the only ac-

ceptable plan the Forest Service has offered the people of West Virginia.

**4. Talk about your favorite wilderness areas.** This is a party to celebrate the Mon and why we love it and must protect it. Remember that time you camped in Dolly Sods? What about the great fishing trip you took Cheat Mountain? And, don't forget the stories about hikes to breathtaking overlooks in Roaring Plains and Seneca Creek. Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

**5. Write the Forest Service** and ask them to keep the Mon wild. Your party pack includes the address of the Forest Service option and suggested talking points for writing your letters. Get everyone at your party to write a letter. Encourage them to write about their favorite places and special experiences in the Mon's wild places and tell why wilderness is important to them. We need to send the Forest Service as many comments as possible before the 90-day comment period ends on **November 14**.

**6. Recruit two people** at your party to host the next Wild Mon Party. We need to spread the word about the Forest Service's draft management plan for the Mon and make sure our beloved forest is not opened up to commercial logging, road building and development. What better way than by hosting a Wild Mon Party?

The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition is available to answer any questions and to help you host a successful Wild Mon Party – possibly even including speaking at your event. To request a Wild Mon Party Pack or learn more about the Mon management plan, contact Matt Keller at 304-864-5530 or [mattk@twc.org](mailto:mattk@twc.org).

Like one of the members of our group, who wants her ashes released on Dolly Sods when she dies, and spoke eloquently about how the Mon nourishes her spirit, it just hadn't occurred to me that the Mon was NOT protected. Why in the world would we need to build roads and haul logs out of a National Forest in a state that has so much timber available on privately-held lands? It just doesn't make sense, financially or otherwise.

There are too many good reasons not to increase logging and road building in our National Forest, and far too few benefits to be realized from further development. Any economic gain accrued from further timber extraction will be more than offset by the damage to the quiet wild beauty of the Mon that will result. There are innumerable areas in the state which can provide timber, but we have only one National Forest, and currently only nine percent of that land is permanently protected from logging and road building. Only Alternative 3 provides a starting point from which we can begin to truly secure the treasure that is the Mon National Forest.

I urge you to take the time to write the Forest Service and let them know why West Virginia's unique areas should be protected.

I urge you to take the time to write the Forest Service and let them know why West Virginia's unique areas should be protected.

West Virginians Bring Wilderness to Washington

# THE PEOPLE SPEAK

By Harrison Case

At this critical time for the future of the Monongahela National Forest, a diverse group of West Virginians trekked to our nation's capital to express the broad support for protecting the Mountain State's special places.

Volunteers from each of West Virginia's Congressional districts visited the offices of Representatives Shelley Moore Capito, Alan Mollohan and Nick Rahall and Senators Robert Byrd

Participants came from across the state and from a wide variety of backgrounds. Students from Shepherd University, Fairmont State University and West Virginia University joined representatives from Christians for the Mountains, West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Greenbrier River Watershed Association and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

"It was great to see so many people coming together to

celebrate West Virginia's best-loved areas," said Dee Quaranto, who made the trip from her home in Monongalia County. "I met rock climbers from South Carolina who use the National Forest every year and folks from as far away as California who recently discovered the unique areas on the Mon. I think a lot of people who have worked on Wilderness issues elsewhere were surprised to hear that we have had such success working with both the Forest Service and our Congressional delegation."

West Virginians gather in the US Capitol for a gala Wilderness celebration. Thanks to Senator Byrd for procuring such a wonderful location for our reception.



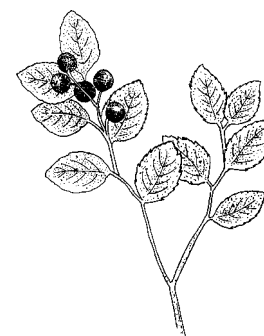
and Jay Rockefeller during the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition's inaugural West Virginia Wilderness Week in Washington, September 26-28.

"We stressed the importance of a good Forest Plan and eventually a Wilderness bill," said Brent Rowley of Shepherdstown. "But more importantly, we shared our personal reasons for wanting more wild areas permanently protected on the Mon: our passions for hiking, photography and cross-country skiing; our desire to keep the watersheds clean; our belief that West Virginia can build an economy based on appreciation and use of our natural resources, not destruction of them."

On Tuesday evening, the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition presented the Washington premiere of *A Vision for a Wild Mon*, featuring Jonathan Jessup's photography, the music of Wolf Creek Sessions and narration by Larry Groce. The video, which is also being shown at dozens of Wild Mon House Parties across the state, drew a large crowd of Congressional staffers, national conservation group professionals and friends of the Mon from across the DC area. Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall also attended the reception at the Capitol, and spoke to the crowd about their past, present and future efforts to protect West Virginia's forests. Morgantown musicians Chris Haddox, Jim Truman and Corey Bonasso provided old-time music for the celebration.

Wilderness Coalition campaign coordinator Matt Keller explained that the week was the result of cooperation by a number of groups and individuals.

"Because of the success of the Wilderness campaign so far and the prospects for protecting some of the East's last remaining wild areas, we were able to secure funding from a national organization, the American Wilderness Coalition, for this lobby week," Keller said. "The Wilderness Society, Campaign for America's Wilderness and all of our state-level organizations came together to make this effort a success. But most importantly of all it was our volunteers, who set up the meetings, brought the message to their representatives and showed Washington what makes West Virginia so special."



## The Future of the Monongahela National Forest is in Your Hands!

The Monongahela National Forest is the heart and soul of wild and wonderful West Virginia. Sadly, the Forest Service's recently released draft 15-year management plan for the Monongahela puts our forest at risk. The agency has chosen Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative, which would allow logging and road building in protected areas. In addition, the agency's plan does not recommend many of our wildest places for wilderness – leaving special places like the spectacular Seneca Creek (West Virginia's largest unprotected roadless area) off the list.

The Forest Service should choose Alternative 3, a balanced proposal that would permanently protect the Mon's wildest places.

Your comments on the draft Monongahela Forest Plan are needed to make sure that clean water, wildlife, backcountry recreation, and wilderness come first, and that the Monongahela National Forest will be protected for generations to come.

### Make Your Comments Count!

The Forest Service requires substantive comments on the draft forest plan. In your letter, please address specific things you want to see in the forest plan, and your reasons why. This is necessary to ensure that your comments are appropriately counted by the U.S. Forest Service. Please also mention the names of places that you want to see protected as wilderness and, if possible, base your comments on personal experiences.

Please send your comments to the Forest Service by **November 14, 2005** and tell them:

- **Protecting wilderness and wild areas should be top priority.** Wilderness designation will protect watersheds, safeguard fish and wildlife habitat, protect backcountry recreation opportunities, and enhance economic opportunities. Alternative 3 is a great start, recommending two additions to existing wilderness areas and designation of nine new wilderness areas, including the well loved Seneca Creek, Spice Run, Big Draft, and East Fork of Greenbrier.
- **The Forest Service should recommend all 15 special wild areas identified by the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition.** The agency should choose Alternative 3 and amend it to expand the Dolly Sods Wilderness and make new wilderness recommendations for North Fork Mountain, Lower Laurel Fork, Roaring Plains, Little Allegheny Mountain, and Laurel Run.
- **Alternative 3 protects additional backcountry areas (6.2 areas).** These areas are essential to protecting wildlife and recreational opportunities vital to local economies. Any new 6.2 areas established must remain free from roads.
- **Logging and clearcutting should not be increased.** Alternative 2 would more than *triple* the amount of timber cutting allowed on the Mon, open protected areas to logging and roads, and raise the maximum size of clearcuts from 25 to 40 acres. Clearcutting and roads pose the greatest threats to fish and wildlife, and increase the risk of flooding.
- **Streams and rivers must be protected.** The Mon provides drinking water to thousands and sustains over 90 percent of the state's trout streams. The Forest Service should safeguard these vital watersheds from logging and road construction.

Mail your letter to: Monongahela National Forest, Attn: Forest Plan Revision, 200 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241. Or, fax it to (304) 637-0582. Or e-mail your comments to [comments-eastern-monongahela@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-monongahela@fs.fed.us), and please send a copy to [info@wvwild.org](mailto:info@wvwild.org).

# GOVERNOR DECLARES WILDERNESS MONTH

In a Ceremony in the State Capitol on Thursday, September 29, Governor Manchin signed a proclamation declaring September as Wilderness Month in West Virginia. The room was full of Conservancy members and other Wilderness Coalition members representing several Conservation organizations including Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Sierra Club, Citizen Action Group, Council of Churches, and others. We are extremely grateful to Governor Manchin for recognizing the many values of Wilderness that are so important to the quality of life and health of the economy in West Virginia.

## *Proclamation* *by Governor Joe Manchin III*

**Whereas,** we have a proud history of protecting the wild federal lands of the Monongahela National Forest – the heart and soul of Wild and Wonderful West Virginia; and,

**Whereas,** this year marks the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson signing into law the Wilderness Act, which was overwhelmingly passed by Congress on a bipartisan basis to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness in our National Wilderness Preservation System; and,

**Whereas,** Senator Robert C. Byrd was a leading champion for the 1964 Wilderness Act, one of his many contributions to America’s world leadership in conservation; and,

**Whereas,** currently only four percent of the Wilderness System lies east of the Mississippi River, where more than 60 percent of the U.S. population resides, but there are relatively few federal lands, making wilderness lands here especially rare and valuable; and,

**Whereas,** under the terms of the Wilderness Act, Congress has designated five treasured wilderness areas in West Virginia’s Monongahela National Forest – Dolly Sods and Otter Creek in 1975, and Cranberry, Laurel Fork North and Laurel Fork South in 1983; and,

**Whereas,** these Wilderness Areas offer West Virginians and visitors to our state some of the best recreation opportunities available in the East, and they also provide our children opportunities to experience nature in action by safeguarding wildlife habitats, including those set aside for threatened and endangered species; and,

**Whereas,** West Virginia’s leaders have long contributed to the protection of our national resources, scenic wonders and wild landscapes, and continue to work to protect the wildest portions of our state’s federal lands under the 1964 Wilderness Act;

**Now, Therefore,** Be it Resolved that I, Joe Manchin III, Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim *September 2005* as:

### *Wilderness Month*

in the Mountain State and encourage all citizens to join me in this observance.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

**Done** at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Five, and in the One Hundred Forty-third year of the State.



*Joe Manchin III*  
Joe Manchin III  
Governor

By the Governor:

*Betty Ireland*  
Betty Ireland  
Secretary of State

# HOW SAFE IS TREATED ACID MINE DRAINAGE?

By Jeffrey A. Simmons, West Virginia Wesleyan College

Dr. Jeff Simmons, from West Virginia Wesleyan College, and Dr. Tom Jones, from Marshall University, recently completed a study on the effects of treated and untreated acid mine drainage (AMD) on three key stream properties and functions. Researchers have known for decades that raw (or untreated) AMD drastically alters the chemistry of a stream, thereby making it inhospitable for living organisms. Since 1977 coal mining companies have been required to treat AMD before releasing it to surface waters. Chemical treatment is common and usually consists of adding something like limestone or anhydrous ammonia to the AMD to raise the pH. This causes most of the toxic heavy metals to settle to the bottom of treatment ponds as a sludge.

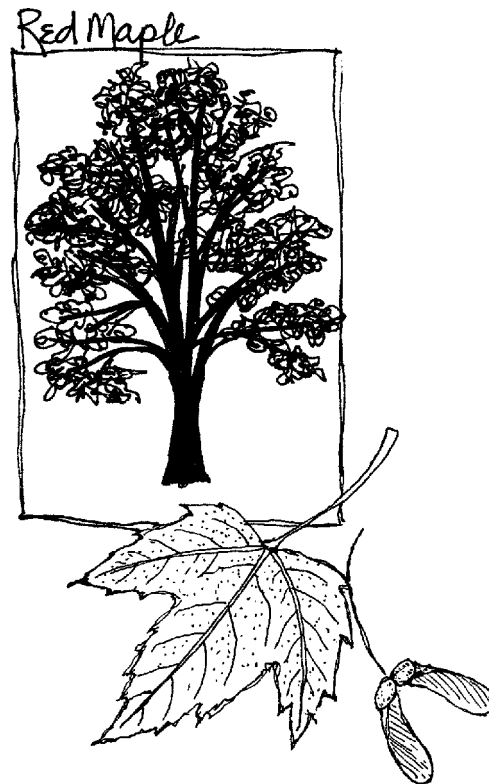
However, streams receiving treated AMD often still have higher-than-normal metal and dissolved salt concentrations. Furthermore, many of these streams still show deposits of yellow boy from residual metals that escape treatment or that enter from untreated groundwater sources. Thus, it is possible that these streams could experience negative impacts, albeit less serious impacts than those receiving untreated AMD.

Our objectives were to determine how three key measures of ecosystem function and integrity, namely periphyton biomass, leaf decomposition, and benthic macroinvertebrate community structure, differed among uncontaminated (reference) streams, streams receiving treated AMD, and streams receiving untreated AMD.

Four streams from each of three categories (AMD, treated AMD, and reference) were selected randomly from within the Tygart Valley River watershed in West Virginia. Analysis of stream water verified that the three stream types had very distinct chemical characteristics. Notably, the treated AMD streams had significantly higher levels of dissolved met-

als, sulfate, and alkalinity than reference streams.

Periphyton biomass (the algae that grow on rocks) was significantly reduced in AMD streams; however, treated AMD streams were no different from reference streams. Leaf decomposition was significantly slower in treated streams than in



reference streams. Compared to reference streams AMD streams exhibited significantly lower macroinvertebrate density and diversity. Treated AMD streams had significantly lower number of species, lower species diversity index, and fewer pollution-sensitive species than reference streams.

The lower diversity of macroinvertebrates could be a contributing factor to the lower leaf decomposition. Fewer types of macroinvertebrates means that some "jobs" in the food web are going undone. It also means fewer food choices for fish. The process of leaf decomposition is critical to the stream food web because it releases nutrients and carbon from the leaves that can be used by algae and bacteria who are the base of the food chain.

In the Tygart Valley River watershed we estimate that approximately 733 km or 21 % of the stream miles contain treated AMD. This means that more than one-fifth of the streams could be experiencing the consequences of slower decomposition rates and smaller and less diverse macroinvertebrate communities, namely reduced fish populations and slower nutrient cycling. It also means that the river mainstem will be receiving substantially less carbon and fewer nutrients than it did before mining. Thus, although treated AMD is much less toxic than raw AMD, it still has substantial and widespread impacts on stream processes.

*The above is a summary of the paper, "Acid mine drainage effects on periphyton productivity, leaf decomposition, and macroinvertebrate diversity," by J.A. Simmons, E.R. Lawrence, and T.G. Jones. Journal of Freshwater Ecology, Vol. 20(3), pp.413-424, 2005.*

## BUCKEYE FOREST COUNCIL NEEDS COORDINATOR

The Buckeye Forest Council is starting a search for a new Executive Coordinator for 2006.

The Buckeye Forest Council is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection of Ohio's forests and their inhabitants through education, advocacy, and organizing. Our work moves beyond traditional forest advocacy to address the interconnected problems of resource depletion and economic insecurity, and the impact these problems have on the land, wildlife and people. The Buckeye Forest Council takes a holistic approach by confronting the destruction of our natural resources and by challenging the social patterns that fuel exploitation of the land.

For more information, contact Randy Cunningham, Personnel Committee, Board of Directors, Buckeye Forest Council [randino@sbcglobal.net](mailto:randino@sbcglobal.net) or by United States Mail at P. O. Box 99, Athens, Ohio 45701

# West Virginia Mountain Odyssey



## Outings, Education and Beyond

**October 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, Great North Mountain Backpack, GWNF, VA/WV:** 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](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com).

**October 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:daves@labyrinth.net).

**October 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, Cranberry Wilderness Backpack, MNF, WV:** Approximately 24 mile circuit mostly along the drainages of North Fork of Cranberry River, Cranberry River, Beechlog Run, Laurelly 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](mailto:mjuskelis@cablespeed.com).

**October 22<sup>nd</sup>– 23<sup>rd</sup> West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review:** Cheat River Mountain Club. Outings all day Saturday, October 22, plus limited outings on Sunday, October 23. See full description of the weekend on page 20.

**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](mailto:imaginemew@aol.com) and Larry Gibson, (304) 586-3287 or (304) 549-3287 cellular. Contact in advance to schedule a time and date.

## 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

## BUMPER STICKERS

**I (Heart) Mountains** bumper stickers free! Send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to distribute free bumper stickers please send \$0.25 (includes postage) per sticker.

## MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL BROCHURES

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

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

# Spruce Knob/Seneca Creek Backpack

By Mike Juskelis

This will be the first time I need to mention the "R" word in one of our trip reports. Four of us caravanned from the D.C./ Baltimore area. The weather was great until we reached Seneca Rocks. Then the skies opened up for about fifteen minutes. We decided to check out the Visitor's Center just as the shower subsided. It was quite fortunate that we did. There we met Jason, one of two West Virginians joining us for the trip. He had driven up from Beckley to find Briery Gap Road closed for re-paving.

The volunteer inside gave us directions for a detour and after doing some shopping we headed up to car camp at Spruce Knob Lake Campground. Just as we set up our tents another storm hit and we all retreated either to our tents or vehicles. By this time Ed had joined us; after the storm, Lark arrived. We were all present and accounted for.

We finished setting up and then took a pleasant one mile walk around Spruce Knob Lake. We returned to camp and began cooking our dinner... another storm. Being undaunted souls, we temporarily stowed our cooking gear and erected the canopy that was still in the back of the truck. That was the cure.

The rain ceased for good and the rest of the evening was spent in a jocular fashion. We even had a fire.

The next day was the big event. We broke camp a little after 9:00, parked a couple of our vehicles at the Seneca Creek Trailhead and proceeded to Spruce Knob. The air was thick with fog and the foliage was drenched with the previous night's rain as we headed down the Huckleberry Trail. As we turned northward on the Lumberjack trail dim forms of our shadows were cast upon the ground.

The weather was improving! By the time we reached the top of the High Meadows we could see down into the

Seneca Creek Drainage. The Maples and Beech were just beginning their fall performance but the views were grand just the same. We dropped our packs at the edge of the first meadow and took a long break, some munching on their lunch, some drying out their tent and still others taking relaxing power naps.

A fog bank sliding down the valley abruptly prompted us to get a move on. As we proceeded down to camp with a quickened pace, what appeared to be a bad rain event just melted away. We got to camp just below Seneca Falls by 3:00. That was a bit early but worked out to be just fine since many of us still had tents and other gear to dry out. We could use a couple of hours of dry air. For the remainder of the day folks visited the falls and set about making dinner and pumping water. As usual the evening was spent socializing around a nice fire, this one started by Jason.

The weather was totally different the next morning. The air was crisp and cooler than the previous day. The skies were blue with only the occasional cloud. We took our time hiking out along the creek visiting every chute and falls along the way. We took an early lunch break at Judy Spring as some of us munched on small ripe apples from the old orchard. We then continued up the remainder of the trail to our waiting cars. The trip was over a little after 12:00 ... way too soon to go back to the real world. We drove back up to Spruce Knob and took a nice stroll around the Whispering Spruce Trail before calling it "a trip". Although the long distance views were quite hazy we could still catch glimpses down into the valleys and around the immediate peaks surrounding the Knob, some of which we had just hiked around. Needless to say, we'll be back.



## 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, and XXL. \$10 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. \$10 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

**MORE FROM PRES. HUGH (Continued from p. 2)**

Area, the other side, called Gandy Creek, to remain as 6.2. All the changes in the Preferred Alternative remind us that Wilderness is the only sure and permanent protection.

The second key point on which the Forest Service and the Coalition disagree is whether Alternative 2 would **open up more land to logging, and triple the amount of logging that is currently occurring under the old plan.** On this point, the planners have come forward with new information that should be incorporated in the final draft. They complained that we were comparing the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) in Alternative 2 with the average timber harvest in recent years—an “apples and oranges” comparison. Well, the Coalition used the figures we were given. Now we are told, “We anticipate that our annual timber targets will be in the range of 20-25 million board feet . . .” Not triple, no, but still double the average of the past ten years.

Since the planners used the ASQ figure rather than the predicted “targets,” their economic projections are badly distorted. The worst example, Table S-42, shows current timber-related employment, 189, exploding to 958 under Alternative 2, 724 under Alternative 3, and 1,223 in Alt. 4. Not only commercial logging jobs, but the Forest Service’s own employment and income projections were based on the ASQ. Nothing in the document suggests that the proposed maximum timber cut will not be reached. Also missing are figures for employment and income attributable to backcountry recreation.

Any reasonable comparison of the two main alternatives must include benefits to the region’s travel and tourism industry.

Returning to the issue of land use designations, Mary Wimmer used figures in the Draft Plan Summary to compare acreages devoted to timber harvest and backcountry recreation in the 1986 Plan (the “No Action” alternative) and the three new alternatives:

<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Suitable timberlands</u>	<u>Undeveloped wildlands</u>
<b>1986 (p. S-22)</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>
<b>Alt. 2 (p. S-27)</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>
<b>Alt. 3 (pp. S-29,30)</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
<b>Alt. 4 (pp. S-31,32)</b>	<b>77.9%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>

The balance in Alternative 3 contrasts sharply with Alternatives 2 and 4. Alternative 3 responds to the desire of the majority of the public for significant roadless wild area protection for the Mon. That message came through loud and clear in 1986, and it is being repeated today.

*(For more information on the Forest Service’s Preferred Alternative and the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition’s recommendations, go to [www.wvwild.org](http://www.wvwild.org).)*



# VISTAS TO DIE FOR ON ROARING PLAINS

By Mike Juskelis

This was one of those weekends in the wilderness that is so hard to describe. It would be easier if we could just paste about thirty photos on these pages and let you study them, but then a black and white, two-dimensional medium like this probably wouldn't begin to capture the grandeur of it all.



***Sunset on the Roaring Plains. Photo by Pam Wyatt***

We were all assembled at the South Prong/Boar's Nest trailhead by noon. There was Gear Gal and Gear Guy, Hardcore, The Kid (Coca-Cola that is), Pathfinder, Gadget Girl (She's always field testing this or that little trail goodie.), Hungry Ted, Indiana Moser and, last but not least, the Traveling Gnome.

The base route for this trip is only about 13 miles but some of it traverses some of the most rugged, yet beautiful, terrain in all of WV. We've done this one before as a day hike with Jonathan Jessup co-leading. Then it took nearly 9 hours to complete with light packs and plenty of water. This weekend the plan was to backpack it over three 4 to 5 mile days. Each day would include packless forays to some of the best overlooks in the Mon.

We climbed quickly up the South Prong Trail. Just before reaching our final destination for the first day we stopped at a campsite and dropped our packs. Jonathan and my good friend, Jim Kirk, had told me about a fantastic view of the South Prong drainage but I've never seen it. We fanned out and probed the Rhododendron until Ted and the Gnome found a soft spot through the thicket. There it was ... a pile of rocks about 10 feet tall and 20

feet across. We went up in groups of three or so and took in the first of many endless views.

We returned to the campsite, put on our packs and in minutes arrived at a wonderful little spot nestled in a bowl under a magnificent old oak with a stream flowing past it. We set up camp, took a break and then, with water bottles and cameras in hand, visited the vistas along the east segment of the South Prong Trail. The group was astounded at the views of Chimney Rocks and Dolly Sods. The views continued through the night as a clear, moonless sky produced a galactic star show the likes of which I've never seen. Even the Milky Way was clearly visible, a dense cloud of millions of stars!

The next day we trekked through the Hidden Passage out to the Meadows. We stashed our packs at the beginning of the canyon rim and conducted yet another foray down the Pipeline Swath to the next vista. We returned to our primary route and continued our tour of grand vistas. We collected extra water at Roaring Creek since the next campsite was going to be "dry" and stopped at "The Point". From there we could see North Fork Mt. with Chimney Top, Smith Mt., Spruce Knob, Haystack Knob, Shenandoah Mt., Great North Mt., and on and on. The views seemed endless in almost every direction.

We camped between two outstanding overlooks and took another side trip along the canyon, visiting vistas we would also pass tomorrow. That night, after dinner, we sat out on the rocks and watched one of the most incredible sun-

sets ever. This is what hiking the Canyon Rim is all about!

On the final morning we ate our breakfast and broke camp. Even with packs we seemed to make better time to the Tee Pee trail than we did the previous day without packs. At the trail junction we made another packless foray to one last Canyon Rim vista. We had all day to hike 5 miles so we laid about the rocks and took on the view for as long as we could.

We had a little moment of confusion as we descended along the Tee Pee Trail. Someone before us had cut and flagged a "false trail" that ultimately ended in a dense, impenetrable laurel thicket. It took a while to relocate the false trail but we did so and backtracked to the correct route.

Gadget Girl removed the flagging and covered the false trail with several branches. From there we quickened the pace and soon found ourselves at the Boars Nest Tr. We took a refreshing break at the final crossing of the South Prong before pushing on to our cars. As we descended steeply down what I call the "Sliding Board" (You really have to hike this with a 40 pound pack in the rain to understand the full meaning of the name.) we were greeted by one last panoramic view of Dolly Sods. The line of hikers stretched out, each individual hiking at their own pace, and finally made it back to the parking area.

This has to have been the best outing of the year, at least for this hiker. I can't wait to see what the Great North Mountain and Cranberry Wilderness has in store for us.

***Hungry and Indiana sharing the last view from the Canyon Rim***

***Photo by Mike Juskelis***



# MINING POLLUTION IN COAL RIVER NEEDS DRASTIC CUT, STATE SAYS

By Ken Ward Jr.

Mining operations along the Coal River need to cut their toxic metal discharges by nearly two-thirds to meet pollution limits, according to a draft state cleanup plan being released this week. Coal mines need to eliminate nearly 2.5 million pounds per year of iron, aluminum and manganese that they pour into the Coal and its tributaries, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection proposal.

"Reductions in discharges from mining operations are an important part of this picture," said Dave Montali, who coordinates stream cleanups for the DEP Division of Water and Waste Management.

To clean up the Coal, DEP officials say that the state also needs to eliminate raw sewage discharges, reclaim abandoned coal mines and reduce runoff of contaminated sediment.

"It's a combination of all sorts of kinds of things," Montali said of the Coal's pollution problems.

Details of the DEP's cleanup plan are available online at [Comments on the draft DEP plan are being accepted through Oct. 17.](#)

Over the last two years, the Coal River's problems and potential have gotten increased attention, including the formation of a new group working to protect parts of the watershed closer to Charleston.

The Coal River watershed drains nearly 900 acres in southwestern West Virginia, mostly in Boone and Raleigh counties. From its headwaters to the mouth at St. Albans, the Coal includes more than 1,118 miles of streams. Previously, DEP has said that more than 125 of those streams — flowing for about 600 miles — are impaired by various types of pollution.

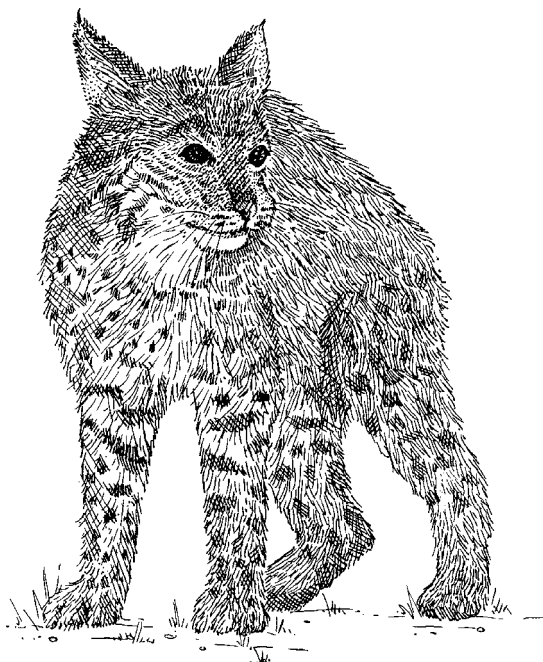
The new DEP plan is called a Total Maximum Daily Load. Under a federal court lawsuit settlement, state officials are writing hundreds of TMDLs to clean up state waterways that are polluted beyond their legal limits.

DEP officials say that one of the Coal's biggest problems is excess levels of raw sewage being discharged into the river's many tributaries.

"There are a whole lot of sewage issues all over the place," Montali said. "They only thing we can do is encourage the expansion of public treatment works."

But the coal industry itself is also a major problem, DEP says in its new report. Active and abandoned mining are linked to excess levels of acidity and toxic metals, including aluminum and iron. To fix those problems, dozens of active mining permits will have to be rewritten to tighten discharge limits, the DEP report says.

*Note: This article originally appeared in The Charleston Gazette.*



## HOW WE GOT TO WHERE WE ARE

The West Virginia Highland Conservancy, along with the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, the Rivers Coalition, and others had a role in requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to calculate Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's).

Most of the water pollution control that West Virginia does is through what is known as technology based discharge limits. The Department of Environmental Protection issues permits allowing a limited amount of pollution. The amount allowed is based in large part upon the available pollution control technology. The law assumes that if the sources of pollution in any watershed are using the best available technology and cleaning their discharge as well as the available technology could then the streams will be reasonably clean.

The law also assumes, however, that there are some situations where this does not work. Even when dischargers are using the best available technology, there are situations when the stream is still dirty.

To guard against this happening, the federal Clean Water Act requires states to study their streams and calculate what is called the Total Maximum Daily Load. If the stream exceeded these TMDL's, then the state was supposed to take action to correct the problem.

Ten years ago the West Virginia Highland Conservancy, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, the Rivers Coalition, and others found themselves in the position that West Virginia had had this duty for (at that time) about twenty years but had never done it. Those groups sued; the litigation ended in an agreement that West Virginia would begin studying its streams, doing TMDL's, etc.

Now Coal River has finally worked its way to the top of the list, resulting in the report that is the subject of the accompanying story.

# A VOICE FROM THE PAST

By Lou Greathouse

Historically, in 1965, 66 and 67, I served as one of the catalysts for your creation. At the time I was chief planner/coordinator for West Virginia Statewide Recreation Plan. My definition of Recreation recognizes the short and the long range, the moral and ethical interdependence, and responsibility of man to the land and to one another, while responsibly pursuing “the fun” and “the joy” for happiness during the cycle of our lives. For true recreation (recreation) it is essential that we:

1. Understand and steward the natural functions and processes in our natural environment; and,
2. Steward ourselves, our families and our culture.

The quality of recreation is significantly affected by the quality of the environment (the quality of the air, water, and land which are also the first priority elements essential to our survival as earthly beings).

Any sound state plan should begin with the broad classification of the natural and the man made, and provide for diversity of recreation opportunities which range from urban play areas, to natural and wilderness areas in the forested natural resource oriented regions. (West Virginia Highlands is a Natural Resource oriented region in the larger Mid-Atlantic Interstate Region.)

The users and visitors to the West Virginia Highlands, who live within the state, and who visit frequently from surrounding states know the significance of the West Virginia Highlands Recreation Resources.

It was upon these principles that I wrote letters to the Presidents of all major outdoor organizations in West Virginia and the surrounding states, and requested they affiliate in an interstate organization for citizen participation and leadership with the goal to create the optimum plan of conservation, development and transportation for the w. Va. Highlands Region.

The response and participation was positive (for we had the leadership of those who loved and understood the significance

and values of the West Virginia Highlands natural areas and scenic streams—based upon generations of use, education and experience). The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy was formed in 1967, similar to the organizational pattern of the western Pennsylvania Conservancy. For deci-



sion making purposes West Virginia held a majority on the board of directors, together with representative directors from the surrounding states. I was very impressed with the quantity and quality of the professional and lay leaders who joined together from diverse backgrounds in a common effort for the West Virginia Highlands. Among those original pioneer leaders were:

Robert Broughton, a lawyer from western Pennsylvania; Bob Harrigan of Fisher Scientific (and the Canoe Cruisers Association); Joe Riffenberger, Biologist of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources; Joseph Hutchison of West Virginia University, and numerous other outstanding individuals such as Rupe Cutler and Sayre Rodman.

Who could ever forget the “Spruce Knob Sermon on the Mount”, with 500 outdoor leaders and participants from the interstate region with Senator Byrd, U.S. Forest Service and other public officials on Spruce Knob and Seneca Creek. It poured down rain after dinner, and we used a big circus tent, as the alternative site to the open outdoor setting, to hear five speakers from

West Virginia and various states explain why the Allegheny Parkway should not be built on Allegheny Mountain. It was a convincing experience for the Senator abandoned the parkway project.

Among the early efforts and accomplishments were:

—Efforts contributed to the passage of the W.Va. Surface Mine Reclamation Act (Strip Mine Regulatory Controls);

—Spruce Knob National Recreation Area - Federal Legislative Act, and participation in the U.S. Forest Service Management Plan.

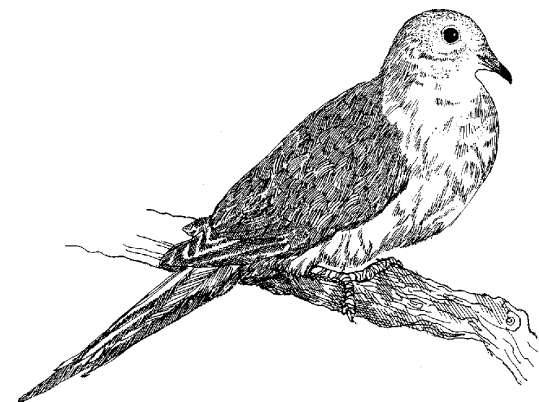
—Otter Creek and Dolly Sods wilderness Acts; and,

—The Cranberry wilderness Act. You are to be congratulated for the Cranberry wilderness. I was not sure you could make that happen.

I hope someone has kept a complete list of the accomplishments.

## THANK YOU!

Thanks to Christine Gyovai & Reed Muehlman, who tied the knot on August 6, for recommending the Highlands Conservancy receive gifts to honor the event. We appreciate the many donations we have received, and will use them judiciously in pursuit of our mission.



*The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy presents it's*

**40<sup>th</sup> annual**

**Fall Review**

*at*

**Cheat Mountain  
Club**

**October 20-27, 2005**



*For over 100 years known as a great place for hunting, fishing and wilderness adventure, the Cheat Mountain Club is a special retreat from the outside world - a gracious, quiet, comfortable lodge that fosters contemplation, good talk, and recreational enjoyment in a place of spectacular natural beauty.*

*This year we will again dedicate an entire week to our 40<sup>th</sup> annual Fall Review. In the heart of it all, on Cheat Mountain, on the shores of the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River, we'll have workshops, art, lectures, outings, service projects, dignitaries, music, and a whole lot of fun. Details are still being worked out, but mark your calendar for the greatest Fall Review ever!*

**Details are still coming together, tentative itinerary:**

October 20, Thursday, afternoon check in, evening programs and social.

Oct. 21, Friday, Upper Shavers Fork Brainstorming Day. All-day gathering with the Shavers Fork Coalition to (1) brainstorm draft of Recommendations developed from Shavers Fork Coalition's Coldwater Input Project data, and (2) share and discuss recent research of agencies, universities, and non-profits regarding the biological health of upper Shavers Fork.

Oct. 22, Saturday We'll have outings this day, some special events, and special guests and presentations for a banquet dinner.

Oct. 23, Sunday, there will be some outings and the WVHC Board meeting and Annual Meeting (including election of officers) beginning at 9:30, usually go till 4-5pm

Also beginning Sunday afternoon will be a Wilderness Coalition steering committee meeting,

Oct. 24, Monday, Wilderness Coalition meetings continue. Others welcome to stay and plan outings.

Oct. 25&26, Tuesday & Wednesday, Red Spruce Symposium, organized by Don Gasper, (304-472-3704).

**Lodging**

Space in the CMC Lodge is limited, first come, first served.

Beds in the double rooms on the second floor of the lodge are \$40/nite including breakfast. (\$250 for the whole week)

Beds in the large room on the 3rd floor (one king, 4-singles) are \$25/night, including breakfast. (\$145 for the whole week)

Breakfast for folks not staying in the lodge, \$5.00;

lunches (bag lunches available) \$8.00;

dinner \$20.00

Camping available on the grounds \$5.00/person

Bed and breakfast available in Durbin. Visit [www.destinationdurbin.com](http://www.destinationdurbin.com)

You can learn more about Cheat Mountain Club at [www.cheatmountainclub.com](http://www.cheatmountainclub.com)

*For more information  
and reservations.*

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