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The Highlands Voice

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New Winds on the Allegheny

By Peter Shoenfeld

Proposals for large scale wind energy projects are proliferating in the West Virginia Highlands. This presents opportunity, responsibility and unusual challenges to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Opportunity and responsibility exist because we can and must influence these projects. An unusual challenge is there because we must do so without the moral certainty with which we approach many issues—the environmental “goods” are not all on one side.

Wind energy is clean energy and must be supported, especially as an alternative to coal. On the other hand, there are undeniable adverse environmental impacts. These are very location sensitive, and, unfortunately, the locations that are most energy-productive are often also the most environmentally sensitive. Neither the State of West Virginia nor environmental organizations have established policies or procedures for certifying wind power proposals as environmentally sound. Concerned citizens feel that these are needed, pointed to those already existing in Colorado, and have suggested that the current negotiations over individual projects might lead to adoption of standing procedures.

Although no construction has yet taken place, two projects each are advancing in Grant and Tucker Counties, and additional projects are rumored. The project of present great concern is the NedPower Mount Storm LLC proposal for a 200-unit, 300-megawatt development on Allegheny Front. The

project would occupy a 14-mile by ½ mile strip along the Front, with southern boundary at Stack Rock, just a little over a mile north of Bear Rocks.

The Allegheny Front in Grant County is the eastern boundary of a broad plateau at the headwaters of Red Creek, Stony River, and several tributaries of the Blackwater and North Branch of Potomac Rivers. When traveling west on Route 93/42 from Scherr we ascend 2000 feet and stay high for many miles—this is a mountain with only one side. This windy plateau has been extensively strip-mined and is home to the massive Dominion Resources Mt. Storm power plant. At its southern extremity it also includes the spectacular resource we call North Dolly Sods.

The Allegheny Front is a unique geologic, meteorological, ecologic and geographic landmark. It is the western boundary of the folds and uplifts that developed when North America and Northwest Africa collided 300 million years ago. The prevailing west wind is compressed and clouds drop their precipitation here, creating a rain shadow that results in much drier weather to the east. The winds, rain, snow and rocks create unique boreal habit. The Front is a bird migration flyway, and, along most of its length, it is also the eastern continental divide, with waters to the east reaching the Chesapeake and those to the west reaching the Mississippi.

The Nedpower project would occupy a 14-mile by ½ mile strip along the Front, with southern boundary at

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From The Western Slope Of The Mountains
by Frank Young

There's Gold in the Winds over them there Hills

"I just love that mountain air", we often hear people say.
But is that "mountain" air different from the Kanawha and Ohio Valley air? Yes, the West Virginia "mountain" air includes some of the air from the western valleys laden with smoke and invisible chemicals and particles from the valleys' coal burning power plants, chemical plants and smaller air fouling industries.
But the mountain air we so crave is mostly mixed with air blown across the continent, usually from the north and west, on high level "jet stream" winds, blowing from afar. These jet stream winds blow at speeds beyond 100 miles an hour at higher altitudes- 25,000 to 30,000 feet. At the level of the West Virginia "highlands", approximately 3500 to almost 5,000 feet, these winds, though reduced in speed, still are often quite brisk.

That the winds move is an indication of energy. The faster the winds blow, the more energy they contain. And our human society is constantly clamoring for more and more energy- to run the wheels of industry and to light homes, stores, industrial facilities, and even to light the great outdoors during hours of natural darkness.

Energy is in demand. Therefore harnessed energy has value. The winds of the WV highlands, when harnessed, are valuable. And the technology revolution of the 20th century has revolutionized the ability of mankind and machines to capture and harness the energy in the wind. Enter the age of commercial wind power.

We are familiar with the images of quaint little wind mills used long ago to mechanically pump water from here to there, or to power a grain mill located adjacent to the energy converting wind mill. But like Henry Ford's Model T, those quaint little windmills are mostly relegated to the pages of history. Today's "wind mills" often stand higher than the tallest electrical power transmission line support towers. Some are taller than the length of a football field. Giant rotating blades whirl and swish in the sky on the highest mountain ridges. Why there? Because usually that's where the wind blows strongest.

We are the West Virginia *Highlands Conservancy*. Our name suggests that we seek to *conserve* the mountain regions- presumably in their nature state. That means that we promote low impact, "sustainable" uses of the natural resources there. In doing so we encourage hiking, bicycling and a reasonable level of tourism and modest commercial and human habitat infrastructure and institutions. We discourage mountain strip mining, excessive logging of trees, unneeded highway corridors, water resource degradation and ugly intrusions upon nature.

The recent interest in constructing wind power towers and turbines, made relatively economical through technological achievements in electronics, plastics, and metallurgy, as well as governmental economic incentives, creates a dilemma for the *WV Highlands Conservancy* and other conservation advocates.

Theoretically, wind generated electricity can replace that generated by mining and burning coal and other fossil fuels, avoiding the need for those processes. At first glance we are tempted to say, "Great! Clean power at last!"

Second thoughts, though, give us pause to think about potential problems with wind generated electrical power, too. Do wind turbines create significant bird mortality hazards? Do they impact the habitats of endangered species? Do large wind turbine and tower assemblies, and their associated "aviation warning lights", mar majestic viewsheds? Are these impacts significant enough to warrant discouraging wind power development? Can these, and perhaps other potential problems, be mitigated and still keep wind power economically viable?

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Stack Rock, just a little over a mile north of Bear Rocks. The plans call for 200 units of 328-foot total height (tower plus blade). By way of comparison, the monstrous smoke stack at the Mt. Storm power plant is about 750 feet in height. The units will be distributed more or less linearly, generally in two rows about a thousand yards apart. Construction is planned in separate Central, Southern and Northern phases, with the Central phase occupying the portion between Old Stony River Dam and a point just south of Route 93/42. Central phase construction is planned for 2003. Southern and Northern phase construction are planned for 2004.

The principal regulatory authority for such projects in our state is the West Virginia Public Service Commission (WVPSC). NedPower filed for a “certificate of convenience and necessity” with WVPSC in mid-August. They requested a “fast-track” for their application, and this will likely occur unless environmental organizations formally protest. The application included a preliminary viewshed analysis and commitments for studies of avian and endangered species impacts.

We are very concerned with all of these impacts. In the days since this proposal surfaced several Conservancy members have walked the North Dolly Sods area of Monongahela National Forest identifying locations providing scenic views of the Allegheny Front Ridge line. These exist along Raven Ridge, on Cabin Mountain and on Allegheny Front outcrops south of Bear Rocks. There will also be major visual impact along the (presently) privately held Divide north of Dobbin Slashings, at the The Nature Conservancy’s Bear Rocks Preserve, and possibly at their Greenland Gap Preserve as well.

In the photo below, Dobbin Slashings bog is beyond the trees, the Divide, beyond that, and the Allegheny Front on the right horizon. The power plant is visible on the horizon toward the left, and the wind turbines would be visible along the Front.

The Allegheny Front is a major migratory flyway for both raptors and songbirds. The Brooks Bird Club conducts their annual bird banding project along the Front near Red Creek Campground. Judy Rodd told the Charleston Gazette: “I’m concerned about the effect on bird populations — migratory neotropical birds that in certain weather conditions can get killed. The Allegheny Front lies along one of the primary routes followed by migrating birds. On foggy days and at night, birds can get confused by tower lights and fly into windmills.” These issues should be addressed in the avian study, but they may not be easy or possible to mitigate.

The NedPower application promised local economic benefit and included several letters of local support, including one from the Board of Education. This is no surprise since the application specifically promised “annual educational contributions” to “two local schools.”

The other Grant County project is planned by US Wind Force for 166 turbines on this same plateau in the area north of Route 93, south of Bayard and west of Stony River. It is fully permitted and is now soliciting investors. They hope to begin construction in the spring. This project has not attracted major environmental opposition.

The two Tucker County projects are on Backbone Mountain (by Atlantic Renewable Energy) and near Horseshoe Run (by Mega-Energy). The Highlands Conservancy participated in public discussion and negotiations in late 2000 regarding the Backbone Mountain project and obtained some significant concessions. These included elimination of those turbines that would be visible from Blackwater Falls State Park overlooks, and a year of avian impact monitoring to be approved by the Conservancy.

The Backbone Mountain discussions led to the formation of a Highlands Conservancy Wind Power Committee, chaired by President Frank Young. This same committee has gone to work on the Nedpower Allegheny Front Project. At Voice deadline time, counsel had been retained and discussions initiated with the developer. Contributions will be needed and should be sent to the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321, and marked “Allegheny Front Windpower.”



View of Allegheny Front from Raven Ridge

Photo by George Beetham

Hundreds Urge Byrd and Rockefeller: “Don’t Trash Blackwater Canyon Trail!”

By Judy Rodd, Director, Friends of Blackwater

As reported in last month’s *Highlands Voice*, the timber company Allegheny Wood Products (“AWP”), owned by John Crites, has just asked the U.S. Forest Service to turn the beautiful Blackwater Canyon Trail, located on our public Forest Service land, into a commercial and logging road. Crites wants the road to go to his proposed condominium sites in the heart of the Canyon. As an “adjacent landowner” to public land, Crites has a right to ask for such a use of public land — but the Forest Service does not have to grant the request.

Friends of Blackwater issued an urgent call to lovers of the Canyon to contact Senators Byrd and Rockefeller, and to ask the Senators to urge the Forest Service to deny Crites’ request. The response to that call has been overwhelming. Hundreds of heart-felt faxes, letters and e-mails have poured into Washington. Many people made their comments from the Friends of Blackwater website, www.saveblackwater.org. Here are a sample of those comments:

Dale Porter, of Dunbar, WV, wrote: “For years I have led mountain bike rides in Blackwater Canyon. To destroy this trail by making it a logging road would be a tragedy. The Canyon is a great treasure for West Virginia and deserves to be saved from commercial exploration. I dare say, there is no one who has been down the Canyon who would not agree with me.”

Katharine B. Gregg, of Buckhannon, WV wrote: “I have just learned that Mr. John Crites has requested the USFS to turn our Blackwater Canyon scenic hiking/biking trail into a logging road! This will be a tragedy. West Virginia only has a few such pristine gorgeous places and they should be preserved FOR the public and not exploited to make money for a few.”

Marcia Bonta, of Tyrone, Pa. wrote: “As a Pennsylvania citizen, I have enjoyed the Blackwater Canyon. West Virginia could become the ecotourist destination of the eastern United States if such places would be saved.”

Charles and Montague Kern, of Washington, DC, wrote to Senator Rockefeller: “We urge you to immediately contact the U.S. Forest Service to convey

your strong opposition to this gross misuse of public land. The notable conservation efforts of the Rockefeller family, which we have seen in New York, Wyoming and elsewhere, give us confidence that you will take immediate and, if necessary, sustained ac-



tion in this instance.”

Milton and Joan Gottlieb, of Pittsburgh, Pa. wrote to Senator Byrd: “My husband and I visit the Blackwater Falls, Canaan Valley and Dolly Sods areas frequently, and I have written botanical papers on the unique flora of this rich region. Our children enjoyed many camping adventures with us there when they were young. Please use your good offices to bring Blackwater Canyon into public ownership so that future generations may enjoy it as we have, and so the life of the Canyon can continue to flourish. Our children will not forgive us the decimation of this natural treasure.”

The Blackwater Canyon Trail is a beautiful, grassy pathway that slowly climbs for ten miles alongside the Blackwater River — amid towering trees, leafy shrubs, liverworts and ferns — home to rare flying squirrels, salamanders, trout, and black bear. The Trail passes through red spruce and mixed mesophytic forest glens, over historic cut-stone arches, passing jewel-like waterfalls and moist, moss-carpeted rocks and boulders.

Like Blackwater Falls State Park, the Canyon Trail is a recreational resource for thousands of people. These Trail users — and thousands of others who love the Blackwater Canyon — are incensed and outraged

by the timber company proposal — and they are making their voices heard.

We expect that the Forest Service will make an initial decision about AWP’s request this fall. The Forest Service is not likely to simply grant the request. They may simply refuse the request (we hope so); or they may go into a “scoping” process, where the agency solicits public comment about what aspects of the request should be further studied.

Massive public comment to the Forest Service during a scoping period on AWP’s request is crucial to protecting the Canyon Trail.

Friends of Blackwater is distributing and collecting thousands of comment postcards to submit to the Forest Service. Call our office at 1-877-WVA-LAND, and we will send you cards to distribute and get your friends to sign. Or go onto our website (www.saveblackwater.org) and send us an e-mail. On the

website, you can also see the current status of the AWP request, and you can send a message to Senators Byrd and Rockefeller, if you have not already done so.

It would be frankly **insane** to allow **our public land** in the Canyon to be horribly degraded — just when politicians like West Virginia Governor Bob Wise are working to protect the entire Canyon by getting it into public ownership.

This is an issue for people everywhere who care about public land. We must stand up for the lovely cucumber magnolia; for the tiny winter wren, singing its heart out by the rushing stream; for the shy Cheat Mountain salamander, hiding under its rotting log; for the flying squirrel, gliding out from the red spruce to dig mushrooms under the old beech trees.

We must stand up for the Blackwater Canyon now!

COAL EXTRACTS A BIG PRICE

By Scott Shalaway

Coal mining is a big, controversial business. If we want electricity, we've got to burn coal, but it carries far more than its economic price.

For example, though coal-fired power plants provide most of our electricity, the economic impact from labor's perspective shrinks yearly. According to a recent commentary in *The New York Times*, in West Virginia alone coal mining employment declined from 140,000 jobs in the 1940s to approximately 15,000 today. We burn more coal than ever, but thanks to technological advances and efficient extraction techniques, fewer miners benefit. Yet company profits climb.

Today's efficient mining techniques also impose a steep environmental cost. Longwall mining removes 1,000-foot-wide swaths of material hundreds of feet under ground. When the mine roof collapses, subsidence often occurs near the surface. That results in roads collapsing, foundations cracking, wells drying up, springs disappearing and stream degradation. Why just a few years ago, traffic was disrupted for months when portions of Interstate 470 in Ohio caved in. Repairs totaled millions of dollars, all at taxpayer expense. And when water supplies vanish, it's tough for people who depend on wells and springs to cook and bathe, and farmers can't water their livestock.

Though offending mining companies are required to provide water to those who lose it, I hear repeatedly how insufficient their efforts are. Earlier this year I attended a public forum on longwall mining at Wheeling Jesuit University and listened to the coal company representative say all the right things to appease the crowd. His mastery of defusing the situation and putting off specific corrective action was admirable.

Room and pillar mining, which minimizes subsidence is still a viable mining technique. But it requires more labor and is less profitable. Not unprofitable, just less profitable.

Another consequence of underground mines are mountain breaks—cracks and crevices in the earth that can swallow up an unsuspecting hunter or hiker. Back in April a story in the *Sunday Gazette-Mail* brought this problem to my attention for the first time.

The most offensive mining technique, though, is mountaintop removal, and it's quite common in Southern West Virginia and parts of Kentucky. Instead of burrowing under mountains for coal, operators literally blast off the mountaintops. Entire communities, rocked by explo-

sions, dust and debris, have been abandoned. The considerable rubble left behind is then deposited in nearby streams and valleys. (I wonder if valley fills are related to the devastating floods Southern West Virginia has suffered in recent years. Perhaps profoundly disturbed landscapes simply cannot handle heavy rains.)

Ironically, mountaintop removal may prove to be its own undoing. Outsiders are hearing about it, and they're outraged. West Virginia's image is one of wild, wonderful mountains and scenic vistas. If people get upset about drilling for oil in Alaska, where few will ever venture, it's understandable that they would be equally offended by industrial rape of places much closer to home.

In the May 20 *New Yorker*, a piece titled "Bad Environments" railed against mountaintop removal. A May 11 editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* described mountaintop removal as "legalizing permanent ruin of the countryside to temporarily, very temporarily, increase coal production and fatten the coffers of mining companies." And a May 6 editorial in the *Lakeland (Fla.) Ledger* lamented that more than 1,000 miles of Appalachian streams have already been buried by mountain fill.

And then there's the "monster truck" issue. In Southern West Virginia, where many people are poor and politically impotent, coal trucks routinely exceed the 65,000 pound weight limit on winding mountain roads. And people, sometimes entire families, die when these behemoths rage out of control. The Legislature's response to a deadly issue under its control seems to be to simply raise the weight limits. After all, what's more important, the lives of a few hillbillies every year, or the business of



coal?

Let me be clear. I know we need coal to produce electricity. The hydrogen economy is coming, but it's still 20 years downstream. Meanwhile, let's mine and transport coal responsibly, and make mining companies responsible when their methods destroy lives, buildings, roads and water supplies, and when they emasculate an entire state's natural heritage.

This article first appeared in the Charleston Gazette.

BUMPERSTICKERS--SUCH A DEAL

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

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 imagine mew@aol.com or 304-342-8989.

BROCHURES YOURS FOR THE ASKING

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.

HOW LONG, O MOTHER EARTH?

By Joan Ellison

What thoughts lie fallow in your bosom,
Mother Earth, as we encrust
your rills and rustic frame in
concrete ribbons laced with clover leaf?
Surely stays like these
constrict your rhythmic pulse,
inhibit flowing breath.

What grief engulfs you, Mother Earth,
when your veins of ore are gouged
and virgin beauty of your hills
is ravaged, raped, consumed?
Till compromised, your countenance
lies naked, stripped and bare.

What veils of noontime darkness,
eeriness and stench infest you,
Mother Earth, obliterating sun
and sky with terminal persistence
until decaying lesions pollute
a once clear placid atmosphere?

How long, O Mother Earth,
can patience last with mortal flesh?
How long can you endure
such an avaricious appetite?
How long will mortals prostitute
your wealth with reckless,
grasping selfishness?
How long will we extort, lay waste
and nonchalantly desecrate
eons of your riches laid in store?
How long, O Mother Earth,



Star of Bethlehem

Swamp violet (lower left)

Photos by Sam McCormick



OUT READERS WRITE

My name is Chad Ellison and I am 24. I am originally from WV and then I moved to western MD (just across the state line). Recently my family and I moved to Gunnison, Colorado. I enjoy each Highlands Paper out of concern and interest of the area. The article "Doesn't Smell Like Cedar" was particularly interesting to me and my wife, who is actually finishing her teaching degree here in Gunnison. I believe that teaching stupidity will breed ignorance and we need factual education to unlock and utilize renewable resources. That is not to say they should not understand coal and the companies, but the information can not be allowed to be one-sided.

Southern WV has crossed the point of no return, how far will it be pushed?

Please let me know if and how I can help.

Thank You,
Chad Ellison

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www.wvhighlands.org

We are now offering a wonderful incentive for new membership applications we receive. We have had two beautiful National Geographic book donated to us. Join now, using the form below, for your choice of either of these books as a free gift. Please circle the book you want.

Nature's Medicine: Plants that Heal by Joel L. Swerdlow, Ph.D.

Throughout human history, plants have been our chief source of medicine. The fascinating story that unfolds in this book is much more than a catalog of natural cures. Equal parts scientific inquiry and cultural history, it's nothing less than a chronicle of the healer's art as it evolved from folk remedies to modern science. 400 pages, featuring over 200 full color photographs and an illustrated catalog of 102 healing herbs.

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Patron	\$100	\$200	\$400
Mountaineer	\$200	\$300	\$600

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**More Wind From Frank
(Continued from page 2)**

Today, as I write this, I am informed that US WindForce of Wexford, Pennsylvania, and Padoma Wind Power of La Jolla, California are forming a joint venture for the purpose of developing, constructing, financing and selling as many as 1500 MW of wind energy projects, involving 10 or more project locations, over the next 5 years in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, including West Virginia.

That equates to from between 1000 and 1500 tower-turbine assemblies on mountain ridges. And on this same day I am informed of a pending permit application for a 600 Megawatt coal fuel electrical power plant near Morgantown, WV. The march to supply more and more energy goes on.

Will wind power be the yearned for alternative to fossil fuel extraction and burning and the associated environmental detriments? Or will wind power simply be an added source for the nation's seemingly insatiable appetite for more and more "cheap" energy?

Can we ask and answer these and other related and important questions rationally, avoiding knee-jerk attitudes and reactions?

How should the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy approach wind power issues in the West Virginia highlands? One of the WV Highlands Conservancy's good friends recently cautioned against "squandering our good name" in challenging the wind power industry to make marketed "greenpower" really green.

So far our approach on this has been on a project-by-project basis. Two years ago we successfully challenged a mostly naked "green" wind power project on Backbone Mountain in Tucker County. We successfully negotiated with Backbone Mountain Windpower to move the proposed 65 tower-turbine project from the viewshed of the Blackwater Falls State Park lodge. We also negotiated an agreement whereby the West Virginia

Highlands Conservancy can be part of a technical committee to help monitor and make recommendations on wildlife impacts of that project.

Now we are trying to decide to what degree to engage with the project developer and the permitting state agency on a proposed 200 turbine wind power project on the Allegheny Front in Hardy County. This project may have a significant viewshed impact on the Dolly Sods North recreation area, as well as some possible migratory bird impact. We are trying to learn more about this project.

I am becoming concerned about the costs and inefficiency of WV Highlands Conservancy trying to keep track of and act defensively on each separate wind power project-especially as it appears that these projects will be coming along quickly in the next few years.

The West Virginia Public Service Commission (WVPSC) issues permits for wholesale wind power electricity generating projects. However, WVPSC is not primarily an environmental agency. Rather, the WVPSC traditionally has limited its analysis of utility infrastructure and power generating facilities to need, supply and cost considerations. I propose that WVPSC should develop, as apart of a universal application process, a full environmental assessment of electrical power generation projects, and help to develop effective mitigation of viewshed impacts and other impacts on nature.

In any event, we need to have the discussion about how we will relate to ongoing and the many future wind power generation facilities that are certain to be forthcoming soon. In a separate article in this issue of the Highlands Voice, Peter Shoefeld writes about the pending Allegheny Front wind power project. We are starting to have the discussion. We need to continue and expand the discussion.

To ask to be on our wind power energy committee, contact me as indicated on our page 2 roster. To offer your views, brief or extended, in the Highlands Voice, write to Editor John McFerrin.

Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

by Allen deHart & Bruce Sundquist

Published by the

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GOVERNOR CAN'T DECIDE ON FLOODING RULES

By John McFerrin

Governor Bob Wise has not decided whether or not he will support new timbering and mining guidelines designed to reduce future flooding.

These guidelines were prepared by the Department of Environmental Protection based upon the studies and recommendations of the task force which Governor Wise appointed to study the July 2001 flooding in southern West Virginia.

The recommendations of the Department were published in draft form and subject to criticism both by citizens and by coal and timber interests. The Department delivered a final version to Governor Wise on August 6, 2002.

The guidelines would require the coal industry to do runoff studies before they could obtain permits. They would have to show that their mining would not increase runoff during heavy rains. The guidelines would also require the coal industry to use "constructed valley fills." Instead of shoving or blasting the rock and dirt into the valley, the mine operators would have truck the material to the bottom of the area to be filled, deposit it in layers, and compact each layer. While this would be a change from different practice, it would not represent a novel practice. In the past all valley fills were "constructed valley fills."

The guidelines would also require stricter oversight of logging operations. The Division of Environmental Protection wants the Division of Forestry (which regulates logging) to inspect all timber operations and limit logging in particular watersheds to limit runoff.

Governor Wise has not indicated when he might announce whether he supports his agency's rules or not.

SONGS NEEDED

Has coal mining touched your life or the life of a loved one? Are you worried about the impacts of mountaintop removal in your community? Use your talents to help spread the word. Aurora Lights, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, in conjunction with FEC III publishing studios, will be producing a CD of songs about mountaintop removal and its impacts on the people and land of Appalachia. Proceeds will benefit local activist organizations and flood victims.

We are calling for submissions of music to be included on this CD. Contributions of art and photography will also be considered for the CD cover. All advice, suggestions, and ideas are welcome. If you aren't artistic, but want to help, letters of support and donations will be helpful as we seek additional grants to cover expenses.

Submissions should be received by October 1, 2002, through email or snail mail. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like your submission returned. Thank you! Please send correspondence to Jennifer Osha, Aurora Lights, RR1 230-G, Aurora, West Virginia. 26705. jen_osha@yahoo.com.

Coming attractions

September 13-15 *Caring for Creation: An Interfaith, Intergenerational Retreats* sponsored by the West Virginia Council of Churches, Interfaith Global Climate Change Campaign; Bluestone Conference Center; Friends of the Lower Greenbrier River. For more information contact Marcia Leitch, P.O. Box 226, Talcott, WV 24891; 466-0982, imleitch@cwv.net

September 21 Elkhenge Music Festival benefit concert at Old Timer's Camp in East Dailey, WV. This year's concert will benefit the Shaver's Fork Coalition and the Highland Trail Foundation. For information, call 637-3911 or visit www.footmad.org/festival/wv/elkhenge

September 21 The WV Native Plant Society annual meeting at Timberline Resort. Hikes are scheduled for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in the Blackwater/Canaan area. For more information, contact Romie Hughart 429-7358.

October 10 West Virginia Conference on the Environment: From the Outhouse to the Statehouse—Dealing with Sewage in West Virginia. University of Charleston

October 16 – 19 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Fall Review, Canaan Valley. See pp. 13-15 for details.

October 19 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Annual Membership Meeting and Fall Board Meeting, Canaan Valley.

January 25, 2003 West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Winter Board Meeting

LIPSTICK ON A PIG?

By John McFerrin

To many, the idea of a less damaging method of mountaintop removal coal mining is about as interesting as installing hot and cold running water in the slave cabins. It might make the practice slightly less offensive but when the whole idea is lopping off the tops of the mountains it is offensive no matter how responsibly or carefully it is practiced.

Those who are interested in the topic, however, can consider one change suggested by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. That change is called the constructed valley fill. This change would result in valley fills they were years ago were "constructed."



Current practice is to blast or shove the top of the valley. The bigger rocks smaller stuff stays on and the valley is full, the top, plants grass,

being constructed as when all valley fills

practice is to blast or shove the top of the valley, the top of the bigger rocks, filled up. When the company smooths out and that is that.

Leaving aside the fact that the practice leaves what was once a valley full of rock and dirt there is another difficulty. The valley is not filled all at once. The first material which is shoved into the valley is left unvegetated until the entire fill is complete. Revegetation does not start until all the rock and dirt has been added to the fill.

The problem with this is that leaving all that dirt exposed while waiting for more material to be added leads to more erosion. The unvegetated material is also more likely to slip off the face of the fill.

The Department of Environmental Protection wants to fix this. Its solution to this problem is to require what it calls "constructed valley fills." This is part of the package of regulations that the Department has proposed as part of its response to the study of flooding recently completed by the Governor's Task Force.

With a constructed valley fill, the rock and dirt is hauled to the floor of the valley, spread out, and compacted. The face of the completed portion of the fill is revegetated. The process continues until the valley is filled. The result of this is that less material is left unvegetated at any one time.

Changing to "constructed valley fills" would result in less erosion and more stability for the fills. This is the way that all valley fills were previously constructed in West Virginia.

Political leaders who favor "responsible" mining are generally less than specific about what they mean by "responsible." Supporting the Department of Environmental Protection in this effort would be one way to show that support. The result would not be the elimination of mountaintop removal mining. It would just make the practice less damaging.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

The October 19, 2002, Annual Membership Meeting includes election of officers as well as at-large board members. The nominating committee is Hugh Rogers, Cindy Rank, and Peter Shoenfeld. To suggest nominees, including yourself, please contact one of them. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN FISHER SPRING BOG

By Susan Bly

Jonathan Jessup led two exploratory hikes into the interior of Dolly Sods. Murat Tandirci, Cleo and I met up with Jonathan and Kim along the forest road for the morning hike which was Jonathan's GPS search for the Holy Grail catalog of balsam firs. Bushwhacking is fun...if a readily available path is found through the dense spruce and laurel. Exposed rockslides and "pools" of rock help make the journey easier. One never knows what hidden treasures lie just beyond the next gap in the trees. Because Kim had to leave early for work before the main hike, Jonathan took us for a preliminary hike out to a leg of the bog. There we encountered ankle deep mud...our deepest on the trek for the day.

After lunch, we met with the rest of the 10 hikers which included Judy Smoot, Janet Dombrowski, Peter Schoenfeld, and Jack Slocumb. After exiting the cars, we started on a naturalist ramble through the bog. This bog is a huge flat area on topographical maps, due to being a large meadow. The 500-acre bog is listed as one of WV's Natural Landmarks and all of us could see the special significance behind that term. The interesting plants we encountered along the way were cotton grass, tiny plants that catch gnats, blueberries which were



at the peak of the season, sphagnum moss, cranberries nearing perfection, and cattails. Fisher Spring which runs through the bog, contained crayfish, one of which nibbled on Janet's toe during a rest break. A dead crayfish found prior to our rest break, was an exceptionally large critter for a stream that only measured a foot across in some spots. The rest break was taken along the stream where it crosses a rock field. Most unusual layout in that it resembled a giant's effort at constructing a streambed, flat rocks with laid out forks. Other interesting things included a smashed log with marks on some of the wood. Cleo scratched at the same log and her claw marks didn't even come near the depth of the marks left by another beast as it searched the wood for delectable ants and grubs. We completed our 4-mile jaunt around the bog, bouncing on sponges of sphagnum moss and sniffing the rising odor of super due to the rotting organic material in the slurry below our feet.

A good time was had by all and whets our appetite for what lies off of the beaten path. For those wishing a visual trip through this wonderland, log onto Jonathan's website at <http://www.JonathanJessup.com/bog-hike2002>.

WEST VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN ODYSSEY SCHEDULE

Aug 31-Sept 2(Sat-Sun/Mon) North Fork Mountain backpack Sat-Sun with Mon. Forest Hiking Guide author Bruce Sundquist. Prior backpacking experience required, carry your own water, 12 miles total. An optional third day will be spent exploring Dolly Sods North. Leader: Bruce Sundquist, (724) 327-8737, bsundquist1@juno.com

Sept 7-8(Sat-Sun). Ramsay's Draft two-day trip. A unique wilderness area on the Shenandoah Mountain VA/WV line. Leader: Don Gasper, (304)472-3704.

Sept 14 (Sat). Dry Fork River-Mozark Mountain Bike Trip. Steep climbs and descents with great scenery on paved and gravel roads. Meets 10 AM at Otter Creek parking lot on Dry Fork. Up Rt 72 below Mozark Mtn, across bridge to Jenningston, and back down on Dry Fork. Swimming/lunch at Gladwin. Then over the ridge and down to Dry Fork again. We will ford the river to get back to the cars completing our 4 hour trip. Leader: Barnes Nugent, (304)284-9548, barnes@geosrv.wvnet.edu.

Sept 21-22 (Sat-Sun). Red Spruce cone picking. We will be picking cones at several locations to help protect, restore, and educate the public about the importance of, the Red Spruce ecosystem in West Virginia. The seeds will be extracted and made available to agencies and others to use in restoration and reclamation projects. Dave Saville, 284-9548, daves@labyrinth.net

Sept 28-29(Sat-Sun). Dolly Sods North Backpack. Visit Bear Rocks, Raven Ridge, Cabin Mtn, Blackbird Knob on impromptu trails. We'll camp on left fork of Red Creek. Leader: Peter Shoenfeld, (301) 587-6197, peter@mountain.net.

Oct 5th (Sat). Fall Foliage day hike on Roaring Plains - Canyons Rim Trail. Spectacular views of thick forests, beautiful mountains and valleys. Some bushwhacking, rocky areas and make-shift trails are involved. Mostly flat except one 350 foot climb. 4.5

miles. Leader: Jonathan Jessup, (703) 204-1372, jonathanjessup@hotmail.com

Oct 12-14 (Sat-Mon). Three day backpack trip in **Spruce Knob-Seneca Creek Backcountry**. Foliage and weather should be perfect for touring this gorgeous area. Spruce Knob, High Meadows Trail, Seneca Creek, Allegheny Mountain, Big Run of Gandy. Leader: Peter Shoenfeld, (301)587-6197, peter@mountain.net.

Oct 18-20 (Fri-Sun). West Virginia Highlands Conservancy **Fall Review in Canaan Valley**. See pp. 14-15 for a schedule of outings.

Oct 26 (Sat). Otter Creek Wilderness Dayhike. Enjoy a spectacular fall day and old growth hemlocks on the Shaver's Mountain Trail. Length of hike will depend on group inclination. Leader: Larry Kaeser, (304)452-9753.

Nov 2(Sat). Join us for a 10 +/- mile hike on **Canaan Mountain** utilizing some of its beautiful trails. Though we will be past the peak of fall color, the woods will still be alive with evergreens and flowing brooks. Those wishing to spend the night, may do so at the Canaan campground or the lodge nearby. Contact Susan Bly at sbly@shepherd.edu or (304) 876-5177 or (304) 258-3319 after 7 pm with any questions and for reservation

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

MOUNTAIN ODYSSEY ROCKS AT BEAR ROCKS PRESERVE

Highlands Conservancy Mountain Odyssey Outing

Outing hosted and trip report written by Jonathan Jessup. Edits by Dave Saville. Scenery and memories provided by Mother Nature.

The five of us met at the parking area on FR75 and Blackbird Knob Trail. The parking area was over full and it was a busy day for The Sods. It was my first time meeting Eric and his wife Charity. Dave Saville arrived and my fiancé Emilie, Eric, Charity, and I departed to drop our car shuttle off and drive two more miles up to the Bear Rocks parking area. Our goal for the afternoon was to hike the perimeter of Bear Rocks Preserve - owned and protected from development and exploitation by The Nature Conservancy. After that, we'd return to the cars and then make camp not far away. The next day, we'd hike the rarely hiked alpine-like ridge south from Bear Rocks to near the Blackbird Knob trailhead.

Two years previous on this same day of the year, the mountain laurels up here created such a show that I will never forget the sight. It was my hope that we would experience such a wondrous display this day. While the laurels were in bloom, it was not nearly as explosive as June of 2000.

We readied our gear and departed north to read the new Bear Rocks Preserve informative sign. We then headed west, downhill, through beautiful laurels and heaths (stopping for photo). The soils here are rocky and sparse. Several rock barrens break the open barrens of heaths.

We soon arrived at Bear Rocks Bog, an open, grassy, flat and muddy area in a bowl between the higher surrounding ground. Dave said that visiting this bog was of special interest to him. He had not been here before. Much of his fascination is in the floral life in these high wetlands. We saw many cranberries blooming (small white flowers). Dave quickly identified two uncommon species in West Virginia, those being - *Lycopodium inundatum* ("Bog Clubmoss") and *Coptis groenlandica* ("Goldthread"). Bog clubmoss is a bright green moss that hugs the wet boggy ground (often 'inundated'). Goldthread was used by Indians for having medicinal purposes. There are hummocks here - giving the large open bog a bumpy ground appearance. We saw many sundew - an insectivorous plant that traps insects for nutrients. Any area where there might be bare ground is often covered with a carpet teaberry, which grows only an inch or so high here and has a pleasant odor. Break a leaf and it smells like chewing tobacco. The berries taste like teaberry gum, or rather the reverse.

We took some photos and proceeded northwest up to and just north of a red spruce plantation that was planted by the old railroad company that owned land here many years ago. There appeared to be a 'blow-down' in the spruce. They are an odd occurrence that must be a violent episode. Fierce winds will blow down a patch of forest, often killing the trees in the process. I've also seen blow-downs on the Roaring Plains and in Cranberry Wilderness.

We were on the Fairfax Line, established in 1746 as a property boundary for Lord Fairfax's land grant (political payoff) by the King of England. South of the line here is the old spruce plantation and north of it is large expanse of open meadow of only slight incline with very little vegetation more than several inches high. The few trees that do grow in the meadow are bent over by extreme winds. Growing low to the ground are large patches of hay scented ferns among grasses, teaberry patches and low growing heaths. The ferns have a distinctive smell of hay whilst one walks through them, of which we had the pleasure to enjoy while we headed north



to towards a rocky knob (unnamed) over 4100' in elevation. The open meadow was a joy to traverse. We saw a few old skeletons from the virgin forest that once lived here.

The arc of the hill obscures the rocky knob until we are not too far from it. At the top the boulders are as high as about twelve feet above the surrounding meadow. There are many large rocks here and the two women in the group wisely decided not to scramble them. On the north side of the rocks is the Potomac drainage and the south side is Red Creek (eventually flowing to the Mississippi). This is the eastern continental divide. Far to the

north we easily see 'the monster' billowing smoke from its coal driven furnaces (Mount Storm Power Plant). To the south we see the flat plateau of Dolly Sods North and Wilderness proper and beyond that, The Plains. Towards the Bear Rocks Parking area is a saddle that exposes only North Fork Peak of North Fork Mountain that is a great backpack destination.

From this high point we headed east towards Allegheny Front north of Bear Rocks through more stunted and open meadows of ferns, heaths and grasses. We then descend a hill to pass a cluster of rocks with a single stunted mountain ash that was in full bloom. Further on we are still in a large alpine-like meadow that has an eastern border of mountain laurels (in bloom) and one-sided red spruce. We entered the laurels and spruce and followed faint animal trails to continue east. The laurels here are about four to five feet high having a manicured garden appearance. As one looks on the horizon, it seems that only mountain laurel and spruce grow here with only an occasional invading stunted oak tree that don't reach more than six feet high.

It was not long until we reached a precipice over Potomac Valley to the east. We stand on the edge of the Allegheny Mountain province and look to the ridge and valley province, two very different geologic zones.

(Continued on next page)

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We then turned and head south east along the ridge towards Bear Rocks. The low growing vegetation was thick and several small and unstable rock barrens made progress slow. We circled a dense spruce patch, crossed a rock barren and arrived at another stunning overlook into the Potomac Valley. A small spot for a tent had been cut out of a tree to make an interesting campsite on the flat rock with a thirty foot drop to boulders below. We continued across Bear Rocks to reach the cars where we drove Dave back to his car as he had to return home.

The four of us readied our backpacks and departed across a small grassy meadow and into low heaths to follow the ridgeline. After only ten minutes we had reached a very nice camp site that has no sign of usage and has a fantastic view to the east. Among low and wind swept heaths it has several large and very flat rocks up to thirty feet across that make an ideal place to sit and talk or set up stoves for cooking meals. It's as if mother nature put the rocks there, knowing that we'd use them for. We dropped our packs and explored further south along the ridge where we discovered a wind shaped rock that resembles an alligator. We then returned to camp to set up our tents and cook dinner.

Sunset was spectacularly red as it set among some rocks to the west. This was a summer solstice sunset - the end of one of the longest days of the year. Then it slowly darkened and we enjoyed the warm temperatures and calm air. This was the first time I had camped on the ridge in such still air. The moon was almost in full phase and it was bright enough that we could see our surroundings quite well. We listened to and watched several night hawks shrilling and buzzing in the twilight air.

After some time and with the aid of such bright moonlight, we noticed what at first we thought was a low flying night hawk coming towards us. It was much larger and flew differently with more flapping action. It started an attempt to land on my tent only fifteen feet away. This was when I realized it was an owl with a wingspan of at least five feet. Perhaps it noticed the four of us

sitting on the rock. It aborted its landing and flew away to the south. We never heard any flapping sound despite it flapping vigorously. Owls use their stealth to catch prey at night.

The weather was so nice, the bright moon was out and the scenery so spectacular we were happy to stay up to talk about the owl and observe our surroundings until about midnight before we retired to our tents. It was my hope that sunrise would be as spectacular as sunset. Our campsite on the ridge looking over the valley to the east was on purpose so that we may enjoy it.

The next morning came and I awoke only a few minutes before the sun rose above the horizon. However the sky just wasn't as spectacular as I've seen before. It's hit and miss for any sunrise or sunset. Eric enjoyed the sunrise and I used this opportunity to get more sleep.

Emilie and Charity were not up for the rugged two mile hike over the many rocks and through tough heaths that would finish our Odyssey. They hiked back to the cars at Bear Rocks while Eric and I hiked the length of the ridge towards the Blackbird Knob trailhead. We hiked by and through several oddly shaped rock formations created by the frequent gale force winds up here. Broad mountain vistas lay to the east while we hiked through large open heath meadows that are constantly pruned by winds. When I hike up here I often get the feeling I'm in some far away land rather than in West Virginia as the vegetation is so different. Every tree's branches point east and any shelter from the winds a rock creates is occupied by dense vegetation. This ridgeline has the best heath and rock meadows in West Virginia that I've yet found. Why the forest service hasn't established a trail here is unknown to me as the location is perfect.

We departed the ridge to head west toward the cars and walked through a nice, slightly boggy, meadow. We reached the cars only a few minutes later. I will have fond memories of this outing for many years to come.

I hope to host a similar hike next year and hope you will consider joining a West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Odyssey Outing!

MOUNTAIN ODYSSEY BIKES GREENBRIER RIVER TRAIL

By Susan Bly

On July 19, Judy Smoot, Jason Rainville and I were shuttled by Appalachian Sport up to Cass. The base for our adventure was Watoga State Park where we had spent the night previously. Appalachian Sport in Marlinton is highly recommended for shuttling on the Greenbrier.

After starting at 10:30 with a beautiful sunny morning for our setting, we set off on a 36 mile bike ride back to Watoga. This section of trail is quite scenic following bends in the river with views of the mountains along the way. Our only qualm was the excessive use of gravel in some sections, causing our bike tires to wallow about a bit. Jason had to deal with a faulty tube which kept going flat on him. Being the prepared fellow that he is, he quickly put another tube in. We enjoyed riding through the Sharps Mountain tunnel and explored its entrances. Several nice bridges along the way. The one I found photogenic was a bridge built around 1920 by Bethlehem Steel. Weathering had turned the steel from black to brown to rust orange. We watched people kayaking and canoeing here and there on the River and also passed fellow bikers as they enjoyed the path as well. For an afternoon break, we stopped in Marlinton at the depot for some free lemonade and a look at the Pioneer Days festivities in town. A few miles later we were riding into Watoga.

The next day didn't go off as well as the previous. Judy fought physical illness from a cold and stomach complications before the ride. Thankfully she felt better by lunchtime. Appalachian Sports shuttled us again down to North Caldwell where we started off in sunshine. This

section of trail has less interesting points of interest and so we saw fewer folks out and about. We had lunch on a large boulder along the river. On one of the rocks, Jason pointed out the large amount of crayfish shells. This might be a favorite raccoon fishing spot.

Once we were back on the trail it began to sprinkle. That's easy enough to handle, except the sprinkle turned into steady rain, which turned into a downpour at times. We did not bring raingear, as we trusted the faulty reports given by the Weather Channel, stating only cloudy weather. Bah, humbug. I must tell on myself (as I told on the others) in that I did a wipeout in the grass. I gathered too much slippery mud in my front wheel while riding through a gravelless spot on the path. Not realizing the mud was there I decided to cross over a wet grassy median to the other side. My bike and I gathered more muck from the ground.

Needless to say we pushed on, pedaling fast at times to keep ourselves warm. Droop Mountain Tunnel gave us a bit of respite from the rain for about 15 minutes. By then we had started to cool down and needed to speed ahead to keep the chill off. We finished our 44-mile slog covered in mud from the waist down, but a hot shower helped us forget our troubles. A warm, filling supper in Marlinton let us sleep like babies in our tents while the rain played on.

CHEAT MOUNTAIN PROPERTIES PLACED INTO CONSERVATION OWNERSHIP

By Diana Kile Green

Editor's Note: Later this fall, public notices will appear in the Elkins newspaper concerning the upcoming "release" of some old coal mining permits in the upper Shavers Fork watershed. We thought it would be of interest to our members to provide background on the complicated conservation transaction that has quietly protected Cheat Mountain from any future coal mining.

In June of 2000, more than ten years of effort and patience culminated in the transfer of 730 acres of surface rights and 57,300 acres of deep coal mineral rights on Cheat Mountain to The Nature Conservancy for later conveyance to the Monongahela National Forest. The ownership of those properties was transferred through a complex arrangement of both sale and donation by the Elk River Land Company, L.P. — an out-of-state investment group that had acquired the properties in 1990 from the previous owner, Mower Limited Partnership.

The surface tract encompasses 7,000 feet of frontage directly on the Shavers Fork River at Cheat Bridge. The 57,300 acres of coal rights underlie Forest Service property that stretches from the old town of Spruce downstream to the High Falls of Cheat and from rim to rim on top of Cheat and Back Allegheny Mountains. As such, any future mining activities within those coal reserves could have threatened the many rare animals and plants that occur there. Of course, those mining activities could also have negatively impacted the upper Shavers Fork, as nearly 38 miles(!) of the river flow through the mineral properties.

Shortly after its acquisition of the properties in 1990, Elk River Land Company approached Ed Maguire of Charleston and Lewisburg and asked him to help "package" the properties for a sale to the U.S. Forest Service. Maguire had just "retired" at that time from a decade-long tenure as WV State Director of The Nature Conservancy and was very experienced in garnering congressional appropriations for expansive tracts of lands.

Maguire agreed to coordinate the effort through his land company, The Highlands Group, Inc. He eventually succeeded in getting the properties added to the list of approved sites for federal land acquisition in 1992. In fact, purchase of the Cheat Mountain mineral and surface properties by the Forest Service was on track to occur in the spring of 1993 when an unfortunately timed press release from then-Congressman Bob Wise — in which he praised the government's intended acquisition of "these new WILDERNESS lands" in Pocahontas and Randolph Counties — resulted in a backlash from folks who wanted no further purchase of public lands in their local communities. Not surprisingly, Senate Appropriations Chairman Robert Byrd suddenly lost interest in a congressional appropriation for the acquisition as

a result of that public outcry.

With prospects for a sale to the federal government suddenly removed, the owners instructed Maguire to seek private buyers for both the surface lands and the coal properties. A few major players in the coal industry reviewed the property package and seriously considered a re-opening of the underground mines — all of which had been shut down in the winter of 1987. At the same time, plans for residential lot development of the Cheat Bridge surface tract that had been put together by a previous owner were also "revisited".

Fortunately, no substantive purchase or lease offers for the mineral properties from well-established national concerns were generated. Instead the owners were tempted by purchase offers from new players in the coal industry and/or investment speculators with no track record for

claim all of the permit sites to the complete satisfaction of the Forest Service. The justification for such an accommodation was that it would facilitate placement of this ecologically significant minerals estate into the "public domain". Armed with that commitment by D.E.P., Elk River Land Company initiated the full reclamation of the permit sites in August of 1998 — a task that took a full year to complete and cost nearly \$900,000.

Unfortunately, the federal Office of Surface Mining — which had an oversight role due to the project involving federal lands — informed the parties late in the reclamation process that it would refuse an accelerated permit release, regardless of any public benefits that it might have produced. O.S.M. noted that it didn't necessarily want to "kill the deal", but their regulations provided no specific provisions for an accelerated release of permits.

In response to O.S.M.'s inability to accommodate any flexibility on the permit release timetable, Monongahela National Forest officials reversed their earlier position and agreed to accept an assignment from Elk River Land Company of those permit responsibilities. They did this in large part because the permit sites had just been reclaimed and there were no environmental risks involved. Thus, all that was needed to meet O.S.M. requirements was for some entity to formally "sign on" to the permits until they became eligible for Final Release status under a conventional timetable.

At about this same time — the spring of 1999 — another complication developed when the Forest Service learned that its available funding for the acquisition component of the property transfer would be inadequate to complete a purchase during the current fiscal year. Such a delay could have jeopardized the entire transaction. Maguire responded by immediately approaching The Nature Conservancy to seek their assistance in providing interim financing for the acquisition. Due to the significant ecological impact the acquisition of the properties would have on the upper Shavers Fork watershed, that international land conservation group readily offered to assist.

So much, so good, until August of 1999 when national staff of the Forest Service and lawyers in the Office of General Counsel determined that they could not follow through on the agency's previous offer to take over the permit responsibilities. As they repeatedly noted, the Forest Service decision had little to do with the environmentally benign sites on Cheat Mountain. They were instead concerned about the precedent such a permit assignment could set for other mine permit sites on national forest lands, particularly at some "really nasty" sites in the West.

Thus, in spite of the combined effort and good intentions of all parties concerned, this property transfer teetered on the brink of collapse in the fall of 1999. The owners, whose patience had waned considerably, were forced to again consider



mining such remote and environmentally sensitive lands. Maguire succeeded in convincing the partners in Elk River Land Company that a sale or lease of the minerals to such entities would put at risk the well-established environmental stability at the former mine sites. Were any of the "tire kicker" prospects to fail in their operation of the reopened mines, Maguire's clients could have been saddled with the consequences.

Late in 1997 Maguire persuaded Elk River Land Company to instead consider a donation of the mineral properties, since such a gift could produce a significant charitable deduction. However, even that seemingly simple task turned out to be profoundly complicated, in large part because of the presence of some mining regulatory permits that had been left in-place on the properties. The Forest Service very much wanted to acquire the privately owned mineral rights under their surface properties on Cheat Mountain. After all, the agency was willing to consider their purchase just a few years previously. However, the Forest Service did not want to accept any responsibilities for getting the mine permits formally released.

Initially the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection indicated that it would endeavor to accelerate the "release" of the permits if Elk River Land Company would first re-

Fall Review 2002

Canaan Valley Celebration

This year's Fall Review will be held in Canaan Valley October 16-19 (note date change). We will be joining Canaan Valley Institute, which has put together a wonderful *Celebration of Canaan Valley*.

The Highlands Conservancy has plenty to celebrate when it comes to Canaan Valley! For over 30 years, the Highlands Conservancy has made protection of this jewel, the headwaters of the Blackwater River, among its top priorities. From successfully stopping the dam that would have flooded nearly half the state's entire acreage of wetlands, to the declaration of Canaan Valley as a National Natural Landmark, to the establishment of the Nation's 500th National Wildlife Refuge, to the continued land acquisition, most recently bringing 12,000 acres of Allegheny Power lands into the Refuge making a total of over 15,000 acres, the Highlands Conservancy has been there. Yes, celebrate we must. But just briefly, There are still critical acreage left to protect in Canaan. And just downstream destructive forces are still at work in the Blackwater Canyon.

But for this week in October, in the Heart of this West Virginia Gem, at the peak of the Fall foliage display, we will celebrate. The Highlands Conservancy is proud of its accomplishments in protecting Canaan Valley, and we thank the Canaan Valley Institute for bringing together such a comprehensive program highlighting, and exposing some of the many wonders of Canaan.

The event is organized into 2 separate sessions. All events take place in the main lodge at Canaan Valley State Park.

-Technical Symposium: Wednesday evening, October 16 - Friday afternoon, October 18: Scientific & technical presentations on natural history; geology; fish, birds, and wildlife; native plants and forests; climate; and the cultural & economic history of Canaan Valley. Registration for this portion of the program is \$100.00

- Open Forum, Public Tours & Celebration: Friday evening, October 18 & all day Saturday October 19: *Everything you ever wanted to know about Canaan Valley from Native Americans to skiing:* Twenty minute presentations and question and answer periods throughout the day Saturday on natural history; geology; fish, birds and wildlife; native plants and forests; climate; and the cultural, economic, and recreational history of Canaan Valley. There will also be Friday afternoon afternoon field trips to Thomas & Davis, to the north and south ends of the Valley, through Blackwater Falls State Park, and on the Canaan Valley State Park ski lift; evening barbecue; entertainment by Gandydancer and the Valley Ridge Studio; and historical monologue by "Porte Crayon."

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy will host a reception and cookout Saturday evening beginning at 4:30 at a cabin in the State Park. Peter Shoenfeld will host us at his house in Old Timberline on Sunday for breakfast beginning at 7am. The annual Highlands Conservancy membership meeting will begin there at 9am with the Board of Directors meeting held immediately following. Questions call Dave Saville at 304-284-9548 or daves@labyrinth.net

More About Cheat Mountain (Continued from previous page)

a sale of the minerals estate to a coal concern — any coal concern.

In response Maguire turned to West Virginia Third District Congressman, Nick Rahall. Maguire had worked with Rahall's staff on other river-related projects in the past. In addition, Rahall was familiar with the Cheat Mountain properties as he had been supportive of their acquisition via purchase by the Forest Service at the beginning of Maguire's involvement in the early 1990's. As a congressman with significant influence with the involved agencies, Rahall was the perfect candidate to assist in helping the parties find a way to successfully complete this now convoluted property transfer.

Congressman Rahall called all of the involved parties to a meeting on Capitol Hill in October 1999. At that meeting it was decided that a new West Virginia non-profit entity — the Cheat Mountain Trust — would be created to serve as the "steward" for the mining permits. Its sole responsibility would be to accept an assignment of the remaining regulatory permits, including all bonding, monitoring, and reporting requirements

attached to them, until they were eligible for Final Release. The government agencies — state and federal — formally pledged their cooperation to the Trust in helping it meet those regulatory requirements and in getting the permits released under a conventional timetable. As a result of this combined effort, the permits will remain in place until the expiration of the five-year requirement. Some will meet that deadline this fall while the balance of the permits will become eligible for release status next year.

The Elk River Land Company agreed to fund the Trust, hence the need for the sale portion of the mineral transfer versus an outright donation of all of the property interests. Even so, the appraised value of the gift portion of the transaction was more than \$4 million. As such, it represents one of the largest charitable donations of a conservation property interest in the state's history.

Thus, with the patient cooperation of the Elk River Land Company partners, along with considerable participation and cooperation by the Forest Service, the Division of Environmental Protection, the federal Office of Surface Mining, the timely financial involvement and organizational support of The Nature Conservancy, and the critical intervention of Congressman Rahall, the full package of properties was finally conveyed to the Conservancy in late June of 2000. Those property interests have since been transferred by the

Conservancy to the Monongahela National Forest.

As you can see, this turned out to be an immensely complicated project. Its successful conclusion is owed to a number of factors, not the least of which was the strong commitment by all parties to find a way to "get it done". Perhaps it will serve as a model for the creative disposition of other large mineral estates under conservation lands. In the meantime, thirty-eight miles of the cleanest river in West Virginia have been protected from the negative impacts of future mining and more than a mile of Shavers Fork shoreline at Cheat Bridge has been spared from future development pressures.

For additional details about this project, contact Ed Maguire with The Highlands Group, Inc. in Charleston at (304) 343-4343.

Diana Kile Green is a long-time member of the Highlands Conservancy. She's the author of Trout Unlimited's "Guide to Catch and Release Trout Streams" and has written numerous articles for the Gazette and Wonderful WV over the years.

Canaan Valley Celebration
Sponsored by the Canaan Valley Institute Technical Sessions

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

3:00 pm Display and poster set up Maple Room
 3-7:00 pm Registration Lobby
 6:30 pm Poster Session & Social Balsam Room
 Opening Remarks, **Kiena Smith, CVI**
 8:00 pm WV's Sub-arctic Tundra: Dolly Sods Balsam Room
Joseph Henry, Nature Photographer
 Selected Readings by **Lee Maynard**, Author of *Crum*

Thursday, October 17, 2002

7-9:00 am Registration Lobby
 9:00 am Opening Session Balsam Room
Kiena L. Smith, Executive Director, CVI
 9:15 am Keynote Address
J. Bruce Wallace, Professor of Entomology & Ecology,
 University of Georgia
 10:10 **Break** Maple Room
 10:20 Geology of Canaan Valley Balsam Room
David L. Matchen, WV Geological & Economic Survey
 10:45 Invasive Plants in Canaan Valley
William Grafton, WVU Extension Service
Ronald H. Fortney, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering, WVU
 11:10 Rare Plant Communities of the Blackwater Watershed
Ronald H. Fortney, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering, WVU
 Steven Stephenson, Dept of Biology, Fairmont State College
 11:35 The Fernow Experimental Forest: History of Research
M.B. Adams & J.N. Kochenderfer, USDA Forest Service
 12:00 pm Lunch Maple Room

Concurrent Session A, Wildlife – Pine Room

1:30 Amphibians of the Canaan Valley Drainage
Thomas K. Pauley, Department of Biological Science, MU
 1:55 Temporal Variation in Songbird Abundance on Grasslands in Canaan Valley, West Virginia
James T. Anderson, WVU, Division of Forestry,
 Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program
Kelly A. Warren, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
 2:20 In-situ bioassay Response of Freshwater Mussels to Acid Mine Drainage Pollution and its Mitigation
Janet L. Clayton, Shelly A. Miller, Raymond Menendez
 West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
 2:45 **Break** Maple Room
 3:05 Waterfowl Surveys in Canaan Valley: 1980-1993
Edwin D. Michael, Division of Forestry, WVU, Emeritus
 3:20 Headwater Stream Are Critical Components of Healthy Appalachian Ecosystems
Ben M. Stout III, Department of Biology,
 Wheeling Jesuit University

Concurrent Session B – Balsam Spruce Room

1:30 White-Tailed Deer Browse on Balsam Fir in Canaan Valley
Chad Chereffko, USDA NRCS,
Collin Fridley, Jason Medsger, Melvin Woody, & James T. Anderson, West Virginia University, Division of Forestry,
 Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program
 1:55 Rare Plants of Canaan Valley and the Dolly Sods
Rodney L. Bartgis, The Nature Conservancy
Ronald H. Fortney, WVU, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering
 2:20 Vegetation of Old-Field Habitats in the Canaan
Kelly A. Warren, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
James T. Anderson, WVU, Division of Forestry,
 Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program
 2:45 **Break** Maple Room
 3:05 pm Plant Communities of Abe's Run, Canaan Valley State Park
James Rentch & James Anderson, Division of Forestry
Ronald H. Fortney, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, WVU

3:20

Age Estimates Of Cinnamon and Interrupted Fern Colonies

Andréa Faust & Raymond L. Petersen, Biology Department, Howard University

Evening General Session

6:00 pm Poster Session & Social Maple Room
 7:00 **Guest Speaker - Dr. William Mitsch**,
 Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Science and Director of the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park at the Ohio State University

Friday, October 18, 2002

General Session – Balsam Spruce Room

8:30 am Baseline Water Quality Assessment for Environmental Impact Avoidance: The Beaver Creek Watershed
Roger C. Viadero, Jr. & Ronald H. Fortney, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering, WVU
 8:55 am Characterization of Soils Developing in Materials Mined for Upper Freeport Coal
Jennifer Lanham, John Sencindiver, & Jeff Skousen, West Virginia University Division of Plant and Soil Sciences
 9:20 Characteristics of Wetland Soils Impacted by Acid Drainage
Kyle Stephens, John Sencindiver, Jeff Skousen, WVU, Division of Plant and Soil Sciences
 9:45 am Analysis of Water Quality Data for the Blackwater River
Jessica Smith, West Virginia University
 10:10 **Break** Maple Room
 10:30 am Panel Discussion:
What is the Value of the Research on Canaan Valley and the Surrounding Area? What are the Gaps this Research?
 Moderator – Ronald Fortney, WVU
 12:30 pm **Field Trips** Be prepared with good hiking boots or shoes and rain gear. Advanced Registration Required and an additional \$6.00 (Box lunch included)

Field Trip #1—North End of the Valley. Not handicap accessible; intermediate to advanced hiking. One of the most spectacular, views of Canaan Valley. Discussion of the flora of Canaan Valley.
 Guide: Ron Fortney, West Virginia University. Meet in the main lobby of the conference center at 12:30 p.m.

Field Trip #2—Bus & Walking Tour through Canaan Valley and Historic Thomas and Davis. Handicap accessible; easy to moderate walking. Stops at sites in Canaan Valley, Thomas, Davis, and Blackwater Falls.
 Guides: Cindy Phillips, Canaan Valley Institute & Ed Michael. Meet in the main lobby of the conference center at 12:30 p.m.

Field Trip #3—Walking Tour of the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge. Not handicap accessible; easy to intermediate hiking. Guided tour through different trails and areas of the refuge, including wetlands, grasslands, bird nesting grounds, and the visitor's center, with a general talk of the history and purpose of the refuge and its plants and wildlife.
 Guide: Jackie Burns, Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge. Meet in the main lobby of the conference center at 12:30 p.m.

Field Trip #4—View of Canaan Valley from Bald Knob. Beginning to intermediate level hiking; not handicap accessible. Ride the chair lift at Canaan Valley State Park and hike to the top of Bald Knob. Ride the lift down or hike back to the Park. Lift tickets compliments of The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Meet at the Canaan Valley ski lodge at 12:30 p.m. Guides, Ben Stout, Dept. of Biology, Wheeling Jesuit University and Chip Chase, Whitegrass Ski Touring Center in Canaan Valley.

Afternoon & Evening, Friday, October 18, 2002

Celebration Session begins

3-6:00 pm Registration Balsam Spruce Room
 6:00 pm Social & Poster Session
 • **Jim Clark**, WV Photographer – *Mason Jars & Memories* 6:30
 • Excerpt from *Coming of Age* by **E. Reid Gilbert**,

Valley Ridge Studios – Pine Room 7:30

Saturday, October 19, 2002

Free Day for the Public – Registration Suggested

7:30 Registration/ Information Lobby
 8:30 General Sessions begin Balsam - Spruce
 8:30 An Ecological View of the Prehistory of Canaan Valley
 George Constantz, Canaan Valley Institute
 9:15 Rock On: Geologic Overview of Canaan Valley, a Billion Years of the Past and 10 Million Years into the Future
 J. Steven Kite, Dept. of Geology & Geography, WVU
 Robert E. Behling, Dept. of Geology & Geography, WVU
 9:40 The Dirt on Canaan: Soils of Canaan Valley
 John Sencindiver, WVU, Div. of Plant and Soil Sciences
 Kevin Thomas, WVU, Div. of Plant and Soil Sciences
 Jason Teets, USDA-NRCS
 10:05 Winds of Change: Climate Trends in Canaan Valley
 Christoph A. Vogel, NOAA Atmospheric Turbulence and Diffusion Division, and Oak Ridge Associated Universities, assigned to Canaan Valley Institute
 Robert J. Leffler, NOAA National Weather Service, Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Services
 10:30 Break Maple Room
 10:45 A River Runs Through It: US Geological Survey Studies of Canaan Valley Hydrology
 Douglas B. Chambers, Jeffrey B. Wiley, and Mark D. Kozar, U. S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, Charleston, West Virginia
 11:10 Of Brookies, Birds and Beavers: the Interrelationships of Canaan Valley's Aquatic Habitat
 Craig D. Snyder, United States Geological Survey, Leetown Science Center.
 Ben M. Stout III, Dept. of Biology, Wheeling Jesuit U.
 John A. Young, United States Geological Survey, Leetown Science Center
 11:35 Historic View of the Blackwater River Fishery
 Peter E. Zurbuch, WV DNR (retired)

12:00 – 1:30 Lunch – On your own – Canaan Valley Resort will have a BBQ Lunch available on the lawn in front of the lodge over looking the pool and ice rink – Seating in the Hawthorne-Birch Rooms

1:30 Loggers & Railers: The Logging & Railroad History of Canaan Valley and Surrounding Area
 Kenneth Carvell, WVU Division of Forestry, retired
 1:55 Feathers & Fur: Historical Review of Wildlife Management in Canaan Valley and Surrounding Area
 Walter A. Lesser, WV DNR, retired
 Jack I. Cromer, WV Division of Natural Resources, retired
 2:20 Unique Plant and Animal Species of Canaan Valley
 Brian R. McDonald, Wildlife Diversity Program, Wildlife Resources Section, WV Division of Natural Resources
 2:45 An Overview of the Birds of Canaan Valley
 John E. Northeimer, Canaan Valley Resort State Park
 3:10 Break Maple Room
 3:25 Tucker County's Tree Army: a History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942
 Larry N. Sypolt, West Virginia University, Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology
 3:50 History of the Ski Industry in Canaan Valley
 John Lutz, Timberline Four Seasons Resort
 4:15 Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
 Jackie Burns, Recreation Director, Canaan Valley NWR
 4:40 Canaan Valley: Promised Land or Battleground for Outdoor Recreation and Nature-based Tourism
 Steve Selin, Associate Professor, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources, West Virginia University
 5:05 \$\$\$ An Economic Perspective for the 21st Century
 Jerald J. Fletcher, Natural Resource Analysis Center and Division of Resource Management, WVU
 5:30 Conference Summary and CD Proceedings
 James T. Anderson, WVU

5:45 **A Valley Called Canaan** – a book by Edwin Michael, Division of Forestry, WVU, Emeritus
 6:05 **Blackwater Chronicles** - a new edition edited by Timothy Sweet, English Department, West Virginia University
 Additional remarks by Geoff George, WVU Press
 6:30 **Porte Crayon - Noel Tenney**, West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State College (also performing at 10:00 am, 12:45 and 6:30 in the Hawthorne-Birch Room)
 7:00 – 9:00 **GandyDancer – Old Time String Band**
Concurrent Saturday Activities (all day)

- Doug Wood and Diane Anestis – Native American Reenactment Lawn overlooking ice rink and swimming pool
- Tucker County Vendors - Pine Room
- Porte Crayon Display by WVU Archives - Hemlock Room
- McClain Printing Company – Holly Room
- Porte Crayon Portrayal by Noel Tenney, performing in the Hawthorne – Birch Room at 10:00 am, 12:45 pm and 6:30 pm.

Lodging

We have procured one cabin (sleeps 6) in Canaan Valley State Park. We have also had a beautiful vacation home in Timberline (sleeps 15) donated to us for our use during the weekend.
Camping is available in the campgrounds at Canaan Valley State Park.
Rooms are available in the State Park Lodge. Call 1-800-622-4121

Registration

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____
Phone _____ **E-mail** _____

	amount	# of people	Total
Technical Sessions 10/16-18	\$100.00 _____	_____	\$ _____
Friday Field trip box lunch	\$6.00 _____	_____	\$ _____
Lodging	\$15/nite _____	_____	\$ _____
Fall Review	\$10.00 _____	_____	\$ _____
(sat. dinner, Sunday breakfast and lunch)			
			TOTAL\$ _____

Field trip

- # _____ **Field Trip #1**—North End of the Valley
- # _____ **Field Trip #2**—Tour Canaan Valley, Thomas & Davis
- # _____ **Field Trip #3**—Tour of the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge
- # _____ **Field Trip #4**—View of Canaan Valley from Bald Knob

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

WHY WE NEED WILDERNESS

Editor's note: The following is the testimony given by Ed Hamrick in 1982, speaking in favor of the establishment of the Cranberry Wilderness. Mr. Hamrick is the current Director of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Hamrick recently supplied the photograph that accompanies this story.

My name is Ed Hamrick. I am the President of the Marshall University Student Body, Huntington, West Virginia.

Tonight you will hear both sides of the story supposedly, and there will be those who give you scientific studies and statistical data informing you of how this area can be mined and timber can be harvested without harming the natural environment. There are some who would even wish to turn the backcountry into a grazing area. I do not relish the thought of hiking and backpacking in a cow pasture. I do not want to be constantly watching where I might step.

I would like to read to you tonight not a plea for the Cranberry, but a plea for life.

There was once a time when the world knew true peace. All rivers and streams were pure and life-sustaining. Animals lived in coexistence with their environment.

Then, with the emergence of man, began the systematic rape and destruction of the very life-giving source we are dependent upon for survival, our own environment. I am reluctant to believe that mankind does not have the foresight to once and for all put a stop to this vicious dilemma.

The animals, streams and forests are defenseless against this unrelenting attack. So we, as human beings, who are the very root of this evil problem, must rapidly come to our senses and put a stop to this ultimate destruction now.

The real issue is not the preservation of the Cranberry Backcountry, but ultimately the preservation of the human race.

I want my grandchildren to experience the tranquillity of a clear mountain stream in a Wilderness setting, to drink from its waters with-

out fear of disease or pollution. I want them to experience the excitement and mystery of seeing wild animals in their natural habitat.

In a sense, I want the future generations to be free. Free to live and coexist with nature, which God has so graciously given to us, to love and to cherish, but not to abuse. The time to end this potential nightmare is now, not in the future.

Because when future generations awaken to see their forests and streams replaced by concrete and steel, then it will truly be too late.

We, the Student Representatives of Marshall University, urge the leaders of the proud state of West Virginia to set precedence by protecting the environment in which we live. By the power vested in me as President of the Marshall University Student Body, I would like to present a bill in the form of a resolution passed unanimously by the Marshall University Student Senate supporting the first Forest Service proposal to designate the Cranberry backcountry as Wilderness. Thank you.

Seated at the table to testify in favor of wilderness designation are (Speakers' right to left) Larry George, Linda Cooper, and Ed Hamrick.



THE PUBLIC SPEAKS ON THE MONONGAHELA!

The Forest Service has recently solicited public comments on the the revision of the management plan for the Monongahela National Forest. Here is a sample of the comments.

Throughout the year, my family and I make frequent trips to West Virginia, and the Monongahela National Forest Area. We visit this area to enjoy the overwhelming wealth of natural beauty and outdoor recreation activities such as camping, kayaking, and hiking that the area has to offer. The combination of rugged terrain, diverse wildlife, crystal clear streams and rivers have endeared us to this area.

I support a plan that protects and expands the Monongahela National Forest.

Eric W Rees
Elkins, WV

I have often camped at Dolly Sods and hiked in the Monongahela. I have wonderful memories of the Forest. I would hate to see it spoiled in any way. This is a very popular National Forest; everyone is starting to come to West Virginia! Please keep it unspoiled. So many love and need the place, and I'm not just talking about PEOPLE — songbirds, wildlife, cranberries and native plants. Keep it wild!

Patressa G. Kearns
Charles Town, WV

It is with great concern that I hear that the management plan is up for review. With the astronomically rapid loss of forested areas in the eastern US we are very fortunate to have this wonderful treasure in our state. Please read carefully the recommendations below and remember that if we lose the intact forest now we will never be able to replace the fragile balance of life that exists there now.

Wilbur L Hershberger
Hedgesville, WV

I am very concerned about the use of the forests in West Virginia and would like to take this opportunity to let you know how important it is to carefully manage what little is left. If we allow profiteering at the expense of our forests then we have stooped very low and generations to come will be robbed of our beautiful natural history and will soon have none to manage.

Diana Cummins
Harpers Ferry, WV

My name is, Curtis Rohrbaugh, and I am an avid user of the Mon National forest. This is by far one of the greatest assets to the state of WV. I travel into the forest almost on a daily basis for adventure in kayaking, mountain. biking, hiking, etc. I think that if the outdoor pursuers that utilize this land were to say the best thing that could happen to the Mon National forest is to leave it the way it is. This land needs to be kept as a pristine environment, for all that inhabit it. The issues on such things as, logging and mining are to major factors on the future of this great, amazing forest. Restrictions are necessary for the welfare and future of this land. It is not wise for business men/women to have open access to the Monongahela National Forest. It is evident that the largest use for this area is for recreation. This land needs to be preserved and kept a special place for everyone that use it now and for all those to come. This is God's country, which is, a wonderful place and it needs to be kept to its natural state. I thank you for you to take the time to hear what I have to say.

Curtis P Rohrbaugh
Morgantown, WV

Also please consider reintroduction of extinct species such as mountain lion, elk, wolf, and bison to large wilderness areas.

David R Essig-Beatty
Lewisburg, WV

I have a deep personal interest regarding the issue of use of the Monongahela National Forest. We are fortunate to have property that borders the forest in the magnificent Canaan Valley and we hike there extensively as often as we can. It is spectacular in its wildness and we are especially blessed to be so close to the Dolly Sods Wilderness

Preserve (and hope for its planned expansion to the north sooner rather than later). We have also witnessed the horror of logging on the Allegheny Power land that the Canaan Valley Refuge just purchased. I understand the necessity for logging; that it is a renewable resource, that it is also an opportunity for employment...but I urge you to wander the area that has just been logged to see the carnage that has been left in the wake of "progress and industry". There has to be a better way and there has to be more intentional management of this wondrous resource.

Elizabeth Pollock
Perryburg, OH

I simply implore you to do everything in your power to revise the management plan in a manner that favors conservation over development. The future generations of all flora and fauna thank you in advance.

Mark A Diehl
Cumberland, MD

In general, I feel that the Monongahela National Forest should be managed to promote wilderness habitat and non degrading recreational opportunities for people. I do not want the forest exploited for wood products or other resources.

Bert Lustig
Berkeley Springs, WV

I am very concerned about the future of the Monongahela National Forest. I have loved the Mon since my first visit to Otter Creek as a fourth grader just entering Boy Scouts. As a college student at WV Wesleyan, I made frequent trips to Otter Creek, Spruce Knob, and numerous trails. Two of my closest friends held their marriage ceremony in the forest. Now as a Graduate Student at WVU, I continue to enjoy the Mon. This spring I visited the area around Black Water Falls for the first time. I feel that the forest has shaped who I am; it is very important to me that it continue to be cared for, so that I and others like me may continue to benefit and grow from exposure to it.

Dominic J Ashby
Morgantown, WV

The Monongahela National Forest, along with other nearby forested regions in the eastern US, will only grow more valuable in the coming decades as a centrally located retreat from the ever expanding urban sprawl. All the managers and powers that be have to do is not sell it off to the extractive resources industries. Extractive resource profits are short term for the benefit of a few. Conservation and improvement to the forest yields long term benefits for all of us. Please design the new management plan for the life of the forest and not for profits.

Douglas L. Hurst
Fayetteville, WV

My wife and I live in Ohio and have a vacation home about 7 hours away in Canaan Valley. The long drive to Canaan Valley is made timeless by our enthusiasm about the incredible opportunities to hike in the West Virginia wilderness. I want you to know that without the extensive Monongahela National Forest I would NOT come to WV! My wife & I have hiked and backpacked all over the US and Canada and yet we spend at least one long weekend each month of the year hiking or snowshoeing in WV.... and we often bring friends. Tourism brings many assets to WV. Please don't turn us away by exploiting one of the most beautiful National Forests in North America.

Daniel A Pollock
Perryburg, OH

HELP ME!



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THE ORIGINAL FOREST SPEAKS

By Don Gasper

The original forests, those which occurred prior to European colonization, are often considered to be the baseline "natural forest" condition. This "original" natural forest provides critical information on forest ecology and can serve as a benchmark against which to measure forest status today, prospects of recovery, and, of course, the results of modern forest management.

Precolonial forests were dominated by complex stands of long-lived shade-tolerant trees such as spruce, yellow birch, beech, sugar maple, white pine, and hemlock. Oaks and the chestnut were important components. Many trees grew to ages of 150-250 years or more and attained diameters in excess of two feet.

These mature and old growth stands had large amounts of dead woody material, both standing and down that stored water, and provided valuable habitat for species ranging from fungi and insects to birds and salamanders and small and large animals. They contributed to soil and forest floor building for 10,000 years. Accumulating also, leaves continually captured the few airborne nutrients over this long time and incorporated them into its tight nutrient cycling. The original forest with its many robust back-up systems worked their life sustaining processes up on the land. Younger stands, though present, occupied a relatively small portion of the landscape.

The composition and structure of this forest was always shaped by site conditions such as soil, weather, and topography. The dominant disturbances were wind and ice, disease, insects and fire. This complex pattern of natural disturbance ranges from frequent small-scale events causing the death of one or a few trees; to less frequent but more severe events such as severe wind or ice storms, insect outbreaks or smaller fires that remove a significant proportion of the canopy at intervals of decades to a few centuries, to finally catastrophic disturbances (such as hurricanes or intense fires) that kill most or all trees across hundreds of acres at intervals of many centuries. In addition to lightning caused fires, the pre-colonial inhabitants set generally limited fires for clearings for thousands of years. The infrequent occurrence of catastrophic disturbance contributed to the development of mature and old-growth conditions across much of the landscape. Early survey records indicate the original forest had gone at least 150 years and in many cases over 300 years since a major disturbance.

All together canopy openings naturally formed at relatively consistent rates across temperate forests. Scholars suggest these "gaps" average about 1% of the canopy. This dynamic process occurs throughout the landscape year after year. If it takes 10 years for the canopy to close again, the annual gap formation was .1%. Most of this occurred in small openings of an acre or less. Even though stands were constantly subject to disturbances that created small openings or removed part of the canopy, enough trees survived to reach large sizes and create complex multi-aged forests dominated by shade-tolerant species. (These small openings did not modify forest conditions [light, heat, drying] to the extent modern larger clearcuts do with their large size, site compaction, and roads. The original forest permitted enough sunlight for tree species that grew only in the sun to persist in "patches" and become very old big trees and a characteristic component of this ancient forest.

The pre-colonial forest partly described here (water in this forest has not been) may, in fact, not have been static and unchanging. In its 10,000 year history the ancient forest itself has probably changed to quite an extent a number of times after becoming in place after the last ice-age. (This too, is not explored here.)



We do know it was stable enough to accumulate a leaf litter and forest floor several feet deep that produced an organic component to the soil. All this mantle had great water absorb ability. In addition there was probably considerable soil depth- surely in some topographies. Great storms and snow runoff was released slowly without flooding.

Over a vast amount of time this forest floor was produced by this essentially closed forest canopy with its interception of snow and rain that was evaporated and its great root to leaf to air process of transpiration. (At Parsons, W.V. today of their 58" of rain and snow on forested watersheds, 7" is evaporated, 20" is transpired up through trees during the growing season, and there is a loss of 7" to deep seepage - and run off is 24" (42%). What do you think these figures were in the original forest with its deep forest floor and soil? Would streams flood out of their banks very often? While the ancient forest floor is as responsible for this canopy as vice-versa, to achieve this status this canopy could afford only 1% openings (or .1% /yr.).

At the first logging all this changed. That ancient forest, even its soil mantle, is gone. Changed or gone are the evolved structures and functions and back-up systems of an ancient forest. We have an anemic, fragile, recovering forest. If the canopy of the eastern pre-colonial forest had only 1% openings, what percent do you think today's forest should have with today's substrate? In the state of Maine in 1997 progressive citizens got their legislators to consider a rate of clearcutting limited to .25% /year in large forests.

Thus colonial man in his short history found a great forest carved by the patient fingers of time. They found a natural wonder that shaped their way of life and much of their thinking. Yet they did not understand it. Do we? Today's forest canopy is as much being cleared again as expanding, but it is rooted in a different hostile substrate. Though a pathetic remnant, its adaptability and recovery is amazing, and modern man cares deeply for it. Will he work to understand it and intelligently seek to assist in its recovery? Will he listen to what our ancient forest might still be trying to communicate to us about the importance of the forest canopy in reducing flooding and in landscape recovery?

NEW STUDY ON CLEARCUTTING AND FLOODING

By Don Gasper

There has been another study on clearcutting effects on stream flooding published by the U.S.F.S. Hydrological Lab in North Carolina. They are located about like our unit at Parsons, W.Va., and do the same kind of work. The work is entitled "Long-term Hydrologic and Water Quality Responses Following Commercial Clearcutting of Mixed Hardwoods on a Southern Appalachian Catchment."

The long-term considered is about 20 years after clearcutting the watershed of a small 6' wide stream-bed. No stream-side forest border was left. The stream flow in the first year increased in annual flow by 28%. By the year five it had returned to normal as the canopy though small with small roots began to dry the soil. Most importantly storm hydrographs just after clearcutting show the peak flow rates increased 15% and these storm flow volumes increased 10%. This causes stream channel scour.

Stream flow concentrations of nutrients in these increased volumes indicate as much as 3.2 lbs./ac. of Calcium (a vital nutrient) was lost in the third year after the clearcut. (This is not a lot, in many circumstances it is 3X this; and the amount over 5 years was equal to roughly 1/2 the annual export of nutrients - at Parsons W.Va.)

Large sediment increases were measured in year one due to 2 major storms on new road construction. After logging sediment was much less and termed "insignificant". However increased sediment yield accumulated downstream over the next 15 years in the experimental stream's 6' wide dam. In this interval 500 metric tons of sediment had collected. The expected (carefully predicted) amount would have been 180. - Over 2.5 times more was measured. The authors attribute this to the time it takes (15 years) for the sediment to work its way down through the stream to the dam. (They perhaps did not think of channel scour due to the measured

flow increases as a source of sediment, or did not think it important.)

This study does again show increased flows (10-15% in this case) in stream channels unaccustomed to handling such flows in the last 80 years.

In the recent W.V. D.E.P. study of flooding in Southern W.Va. this principal author was consulted. He gave us some hydrological guidelines. They are exactly as follows. (The "basal area" he refers to is the same as forest canopy, and by his last statement he means great storms (4" in 48 hrs.?) over-ride the effects of a clearcut, though surely true he might admit these are additive and some dry soils can absorb 4" of rain before they flow. His five points follow.



1. On a given watershed, at least 25% of the forest stand basal area must be cut to measure significant changes in annual water yield and even larger harvests are required to measure changes in parameters of the storm hydrograph.

2. Hydrologic recovery from forest cutting occurs quickly (4-5 years) due to rapid regrowth of natural regeneration.

3. Overland flow seldom occurs in undisturbed forests. Roads, landings or other compacted features are the primary source of surface runoff associated with logging activities. As road density increases, the potential for altering storm hydrograph parameters increases.

4. The beneficial effects of forest cover on reducing peak discharge and storm-flow volume have been documented over a range of storm events.

5. During major flood-producing storm events the effects of a forest cover on peak discharge are minimal.

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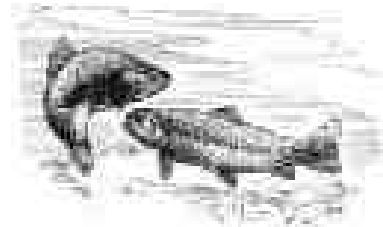
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY AND WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION PETITION ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition have petitioned the Environmental Quality Board to close an exemption of coal mining operations from some water quality standards.

The standard in question is the turbidity standard. Turbidity is a measure of the clarity of the water. A turbidity standard would typically be violated when sediment is in the water, making it less clear than it otherwise would be. At least half of the streams which are listed as "biologically impaired" by the West Virginia Division of

Water Resources are damaged by sedimentation.

Under current law, coal mines must comply with limits on how much sediment they may discharge. Other industries must also comply with a turbidity standard which limits the amount of sediment which is in the stream itself. Under the terms of a 1980 regulation, the coal industry is exempt from this turbidity standard. The petition seeks to eliminate that exemption.



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE WORLD SUMMIT

By Michael Hasty

Last month, what was billed as the largest United Nations conference in that organization's history convened in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was scheduled as a followup to the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, ten years ago, to measure humanity's progress over the decade in addressing serious global environmental problems. Unfortunately, by just about any standard, humanity is moving backward, and headed toward ecological disaster.

It is not that humans lack the scientific knowledge or resources to address problems like global warming and climate change, disappearing forests and freshwater, species extinction, overfishing and air and ocean pollution. What we lack is the political will to alter our course, because our political institutions are controlled by the same transnational corporate interests that are currently benefitting from the status quo.

An indication of just how strong a grip these corporate interests have on humanity's future is how the conference agenda has been distorted, away from dealing with environmental

issues and into the economic arena.

Aside from an underlying embarrassment about the utter failure in meeting the objectives of the Rio conference, a dominant theme in Johannesburg is the historic tension between rich and poor nations. This tension is sometimes referred to as "North vs. South." In preliminary meetings leading up to this summit, rather than directly addressing environmental problems, the "developed" industrial nations of the northern hemisphere have characterized Earth's ecological crisis as a question of "free trade" and "alleviating poverty." The "developing" nations that predominate in South America, Africa and Asia are suspicious of the North's intentions. They rightly see the references to trade as codewords for more of the economic imperialism (or "globalization") and "privatization" of resources (like water) that have historically put them at an economic disadvantage, and left their citizens impoverished and exploited. At this point, there is little optimism that the stalemate between North and South will be resolved in any meaningful way.

Nevertheless, the issues addressed by the Johannesburg summit are regarded globally as being so critical that most of the world's national leaders will be in attendance. Conspicuous by his absence is George W. Bush, whose oil industry sponsors convinced him to avoid the conference, on the grounds that his presence would only focus attention on problems, like global warming, that they prefer to keep unnoticed.

Of course, it goes without saying that a guy who thinks the solution to forest fires is to remove the forests, and the solution to global climate change is to "get used to it," is not going to make a positive contribution to any conference about the environment, anyway.

But Mr. Bush did send an American delegation. Based on the precedent of the past year and a half of his administration, the delegation's role will be to safeguard the interests of large corporations, and prevent any substantive environmental agreements.

And Americans wonder why we are hated.

MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT WIND POWER

Another letter to the Editor

Regarding the NedPower proposal to develop a windmill farm along the Allegheny Front in Grant County (Second windmill farm proposed at Mount Storm, Gazette, Friday August 16, 2002, By Jim Balow), it would be erroneous to assume the windmills would not be visible from public viewing areas as a NedPower representative has stated.

Bear Rocks and Stack Rocks along the Allegheny Front are owned by the Nature Conservancy and open to the public. Both are just south of the southern limits of the proposed project, as outlined to the Grant County Commissioners. Both are heavily visited by hikers, campers, backpackers, birders, nature photographers, and nature lovers. They are geologically and naturally unique microenvironments that have been preserved from development. The towers would ruin the view from both of these places.

The Monongahela National Forest, the crown jewel in West Virginia's natural areas, is located just south of the project area. Part of the plateau there is taken up by the Dolly Sods Wilderness, a congressionally declared wilderness, and the Dolly Sods Scenic area, set aside by the U.S. Forest Service as a unique natural area. Much of the remaining area on the plateau south of the eastern continental divide is either managed as wilderness or proposed for inclusion within the national forest. Both logging and mining are excluded in this area.

The Dolly Sods plateau is unique geologically. The Allegheny Front marks the western limit of the folded Appalachians, which were folded and uplifted when what is now North America collided with what is now Northwest Africa some 320 million years ago. To the west of the front, the force of that collision resulted in only mild ripples, in the case of the Dolly Sods, a shallow syncline or dipping valley.

It also is unique meteorologically. Prevailing winds from the northwest are compressed as they flow

over the region, creating the winds that make the plateau so attractive to developers of wind power. But those same winds create a microclimate that is similar to parts of Canada many miles to the north.

The shallow dip of the underlying rocks also creates basins that are occupied by bogs - micro-habitats containing unique and somewhat rare plants.

The plateau is also home to woodcocks, or timberdoodles, in season. Other birds and animals use the plateau as either a seasonal or permanent home.

Everything about the Dolly Sods is unique.

The NedPower project, if developed, would be highly visible from Cabin Mountain, the eastern continental divide, Raven Ridge, and other high points within the national forest down to and including Roaring Plains.

I spent the past week camping on the Dolly Sods and hiked through much of the area, including Raven Ridge, Cabin Mountain, and around Bear Rocks. This is a beautiful and pristine region with expansive views from extensive heath meadows. Although the Mount Storm power plant, 14 miles distant, is visible on clear days, it is at a remote distance. Placing wind turbines closer than that point would over-power the views.

My enjoyment of these wild places this past week was tempered by the realization that the view could be marred by windmill towers. I am extremely unhappy over that prospect. I have urged NedPower, in the interest of the many people who come to enjoy their national forest in all its natural glory, to modify its proposal and place the towers north of the existing power plant. My support of wind power is tempered by my feeling that natural lands are being encroached upon from every side and the realization that we must fight to protect them from unseemly development.

On any weekend one can drive up to the Dolly Sods. You will see a large number of cars parked at the parking lot near Bear Rocks and throngs of people walking and climbing them, picking blueberries, hiking, taking photos, looking at migratory birds, or just lounging.

Farther south along the forest road you will find the trailhead for the wilderness area filled with cars of hikers and backpackers. Red Creek Campground will also be filled to capacity on most weekends.

Further, the Allegheny Front is a migratory flyway. Volunteers from the Allegheny Front Migratory Observatory band migrating songbirds along the front and count migrating raptors from a rock outcropping accessible from a gravel path from the parking lot just north of the Red Creek Campground from Aug. 10 to Oct. 10, 7-11 a.m. every day. Their work seems to show declining numbers of migrating songbirds, a decline that is consonant with similar studies elsewhere. Placing 200-foot high windmill towers along this flyway could interfere with this historic migration pattern.

I suggest a visit to these areas to see for yourself the impact the NedPower proposal would have on these natural places. They are precious. They are beautiful. They are loved and used by countless people - destinations for tourists. The NedPower proposal would, if allowed to proceed as planned, ruin both the views and the wilderness experience.

I realize that I am not a West Virginian, but I have traveled to the Monongahela National Forest for three decades. In that time, I have met a number of West Virginians, wonderful people who are friendly and gracious. I understand the economic issues West Virginians face, and generally support efforts toward economic development.

But economic development should not come at the price of desecrating the natural wonders of the state, wonders that are, after all, a large part of West Virginia's heritage and tourism destinations. Windmill power is cheap, clean, and certainly a worthy goal ... but not in an area where wilderness rules and man is but a visitor ... and not where people go in search of the Earth's beauty.

George E. Beetham Jr.
Glenside, Pa.