

HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY SEEKS “SPECIAL PLACES”

By Frank Young

The West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) has invited the WV Highlands Conservancy and other interested groups to submit comments on siting rules the Commission will be developing for exempt wholesale generator (EWG) electric power facilities. This new siting authority was granted to the PSC by the West Virginia legislature only recently. Instead of the usual “Certificate of Convenience and Necessity” issued to facilities providing regulated rate electricity, EWG generators, which supply power to the unregulated, wholesale markets, will be issued only “Siting Certificates” by the WV PSC.

In developing comments to the PSC, the Highlands Conservancy’s wind power/green energy committee is seeking to identify locations that our members and *Voice* readers identify as “special places” and deserving of special consideration in regards to the impact of electrical power generation facilities.

Power plant facilities could include coal fired, wind powered, solar, hydro or other types of power plants. “Special considerations” for identified special places could include consideration of the discharge of pollutants into the air and streams, noise effects, impacts upon pristine or other “special” viewsheds”, or other considerations as may arise.

Some places we already acknowledge as worthy of special consideration include Spruce Knob, Canaan Valley, Wilderness areas, National and State Parks, etc. If your list of special places is especially long, you may want to rank them for your priority (priority 1 sites, priority 2 sites), etc.

Too, we expect to work with other interested “green” individuals and citizen groups in developing our comments to the PSC. Making comprehensive and inclusive comments to the Commission about power plant siting considerations will be tedious and difficult. The task is compounded by the realization that some parts of some kinds of facility location can be controversial. The committee will endeavor to fairly take all perspectives into consideration and to make comprehensive and inclusive comments to the PSC.

Comments to the PSC are due by August 1st. So time is of some importance on this project we have undertaken. Please promptly send your “special place” list to either Frank Young, WVHC President, at Rt. 1 Box 108, Ripley WV 25271, or email fyoung@wvhighlands.org, phone 304-372-3945; or to: Peter Shoenfeld, wind power committee chair, at 713 Chesapeake Ave., Silver Springs MD 20910, phone 301-587-6197.