

Dear West Virginia Highlands Conservancy:

#### Issue 1

I have been a member of the WVHC since, I believe, 1974. Recent issues have been discussing what our stand on windpower generation in the highlands should be. I wish to add my voice to the discussion.

First, let us acknowledge that everyone of us uses energy resources. Probably all of us wish to use clean, renewable energy resources that can be obtained in an environmentally sound manner. I think, by and large, wind power fills this bill.

The WVHC cannot be viewed as obstructionists to wind power being generated in the highlands. But concerns such as wind power generators interfering with migratory bird flightpaths, the potential negative effects of access roads to erect and service such facilities, and visual pollution from certain pristine areas in the highlands are legitimate. For these reasons, I believe that our position should be one of supporting wind power generation—but only if it is done in an environmentally sound manner.

If it has not been started already, I suggest that a committee of the WVHC be formed and charged with developing a model policy on wind power generation in the highlands. Obviously, business interests have already identified areas conducive to wind power generation. We should identify which of these areas are inappropriate due to proximity to pristine areas or interference with major migratory bird flightpaths. We should develop standards for building and maintaining access roads. And then we should work to adopt laws and regulations that take these factors into account.

I believe that there are members who are already aware of major migratory bird paths and knowledgeable about proper access road construction and maintenance. The visual pollution issue is one much more open to opinion. For starters, I would suggest no wind power generator erections in designated Wilderness Areas, State or National Parks. Furthermore, I would suggest that wind power generators not be erected on any ridge immediately adjacent to these areas. But is my enjoyment of a special area going to be significantly affected by my being able to see a generator in the distance? For me, probably less than the minor annoyance I experienced when, while backpacking in the Cranberry Wilderness Area, I saw and heard a jet go overhead. We need to all keep in mind that Utopia does not exist. I will feel more than satisfied if we can just preserve “Almost Heaven” here. Let us, the WVHC, use our limited resources on insuring responsible wind power development and on preventing/ameliorating the bigger environmental threats to the region.

#### Issue 2

Ever since I can remember, individual membership dues have remained at \$15.

Every other environmental organization that I belong to has dues in the \$25 to \$35 range. I suggest that we raise all membership dues by \$10. We can keep the \$15 membership dues for those who have a low income (honor system).

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Issue 3

I joined the WVHC when I was a senior at WVU and only 20 years old. I am now 50 and notice that many of the other active members are at least as old as me. We need an active strategy to bring in other younger people and be willing to share power with them.

Without new active blood, the WVHC will wither and die.

With positive regard and thanks to all those active members who have done so much for West Virginia in the past,  
G. Drew Forrester