

# the Highlands Voice

Vol. II, No. 3

May 1970

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The Conservancy finds itself today in the unenviable position of having to oppose the wills of two powerful adversaries to preserve the pristine beauty of the Otter Creek basin.

The U.S. Forest Service which is adamant in their insistence that two thirds of the area should be given over to timber production and that construction of the McGowan mountain road through the headwaters of Otter Creek should be started without a moment's delay. This is the first of our opponents and the Conservancy has been roundly criticized from several quarters for taking up the Forest Service's valuable time by filing an appeal, as provided by their own regulations, from these decisions which were made without a shred of public participation. We will continue to oppose the Forest Service's stated course of action by any means which is available to us.

Our second adversary is the Island Creek Coal Company which has declared their intention, in recent weeks, of core drilling five sites within the valley to prospect the Sewell coal which underlies much of the area. They are entitled to do this under the law and to construct the necessary roads for moving their equipment from place to place. The law also provides that these roads be approved by the Forest Service in advance and that they be fully restored and reseeded after drilling is complete. The letter from Tony Dorrell to the coal company is most thorough in delineating these responsibilities and I call on every member of the Conservancy to see that they are carried out to the letter. To those of you who are photographers, I urge that you make several trips into Otter Creek this summer for the express purpose of observing these activities of the company. Select your best slides and send them to Dr. Herb Eckert, 24 Bates Road, Morgantown, 26505. The Forest Service office in Elkins will be able to tell you where drilling is currently in progress. By summer's end we need a complete file on the activities of the coal company within the basin. Remember the coal belongs to Island Creek, but the surface belongs to you! You have as much right to the preservation of your property as they do to their's.

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ITEM: Congressman Ken Hechler of West Virginia has introduced a bill in Congress calling for a wilderness designation for the Otter Creek Basin, the Cranberry Backcountry, and Dolly Sods. The number of the bill is H.R. 17535.

Congressman John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania is expected to introduce an omnibus wilderness bill in the near future. It will contain several areas in the west plus the same three in the east contained in Mr. Hechler's bill.

## COAL AND OTTER CREEK

(Ed. Note: The following is an excerpt from a column written by Dr. Robert L. Smith and originally appeared in the Morgantown Dominion-Post May 17, 1970.)

"But while the Highlands Conservancy attacks the Forest Service, the same organization, if I interpret their press releases and other material correctly, have been sold a good story by the coal industry. At least they play down the effect proposed coal mining would have on Otter Creek and strongly emphasize the damage that would result from logging. They write, "The Island Creek Coal Company, which owns most of the mineral rights to the Basin, plans to take core samples in the near future. Normally a low standard road is built to the spot where each sample is taken. A representative of the company has assured the Conservancy members that the coal would be removed by deep mining, and that, except for mine shafts at the mouth of Otter Creek, practically no damage would be done to the surface." What the Highlands Conservancy and most West Virginians don't know is the full story. Island Creek Coal Company plans make anything the Forest Service might do in the area look like wilderness preservation."

"Island Creek Coal Company, a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum Company, as recently as March 20 has requested permission from the Forest Service to begin core drilling for coal in the Otter Creek watershed, which is underlain by 24 million tons of recoverable coal, of which 22 million tons is Sewell. The fact that the coal is Sewell is important. It is a high quality coal of low sulfur content (0.45 to .7 %) important in this time of concern about air pollution and low ash content (averaging about 5%)."

Island Creek initially wants to drill five test borings along the length of the Otter Creek watershed. At these locations there will be two to four thousand feet of drilling, and holes will be approximately 3 inches in diameter. To reach these drilling sites, 28 miles of roads of about 12 feet in width will be necessary to accommodate the two and one half ton trucks, used to carry the drills and accessories to the job sites. Sumps, about 12 feet square and four feet deep, will be constructed at each location for the settling of drill cuttings and additional sumps may be required for water storage. The coal company originally planned to follow the Mylius and Shaver's Mountain trails with their roads."

"If minable coal is located by this preliminary method, additional drilling would be necessary. This could involve a prospect hole every mile on a grid over the entire Otter Creek area, each of these would have to be connected by a 12 foot road and each would have to have one or two sumps. Thus, the entire Otter Creek area would be traversed by a grid of roads a mile apart. Yet the Coal Company assured the Highlands Conservancy members that "except for possible ventilation shafts, there would be no disturbance of the surface.""

"But this isn't all. Island Creek Coal would build a processing plant at Dry Fork at the mouth of Otter Creek and on the edge of the Otter Creek tract. They would put a road through the lower third of Otter Creek area to the edge of the pioneer area. There they would build an aerial tramway across Otter Creek with a coal tippie and parking lot.

"Yet the Highlands Conservancy is worried about an extension of the McGowan Mountain Road and a short road to Coal Run just above the mouth at Dry Fork. For the past several months, it has been consuming untold hours of time of the Forest Service with legal petitions for the establishment of a wilderness area in Otter Creek. With the outstanding mineral rights, Otter Creek does not stand an outside chance of ever becoming a wilderness area. The Forest Service could well be spending its time more profitably working with the coal companies to modify their plans for the area. If the Highlands Conservancy is really interested in saving the "beauty and wildness of Otter Creek", it and all West Virginians should be working on the coal issue not the wilderness issue."

"What can the Conservancy and the public do? Write the West Virginia Congressional delegation urging them to secure the mineral rights under Otter Creek. Conservatively, this would require some two million dollars, but it would be well worth the cost. The necessary laws and legal machinery already exist for its purchase. One way is through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The only way to save Otter Creek is to bring the

surface rights, the Forest Service. Then if it is ever necessary to mine the coal, the extraction could be carried out under Multiple Use with minimal surface and esthetic disturbance. In spite of the adverse criticism the Forest Service has been subjected in the past year or so, one has to admit that taken as a whole it has done a creditable job in managing the surface of the Monongahela National Forest. Otherwise, there wouldn't be an Otter Creek to worry about. Now the public needs to support its own efforts (the National Forest does belong to the people) to secure the mineral rights for itself. And only your Congressional delegation can do that."

Ed. Note: The above criticism written by well known wildlife writer Robert L. Smith, that although harsh has really hit home as far as this editor is concerned. He has pointed out to the real root of many of West Virginia's conservation problems. Next to people pollution, coal mining is the most serious environmental disturbance we have to deal with. We quoted a passage from Jack Weller's Yesterday's People in an early issue of the Voice. At that time it was pointed out that the most immediate threat to the Cranberry Back Country was the Princess Coal Company and not the Forest Service.

Weller graphically describes how companies obtained mineral and timber rights, often illegally, and always for a pittance. Although much land is in private ownership within the state, the owner seldom owns such rights. Coal is king in West Virginia, always has been. The sad part of it is that most of the companies are like the Island Creek outfit- a quaint name located in a distant, non-West Virginia city such as Cleveland or Pittsburgh. Profits seldom get put back in the state, employment has been decimated due to automation, and the coal itself is either transported out of the state or burned in the name of power on the spot with no attempt at pollution control. Taxes on such extractive procedures have historically been ridiculously low. State Legislatures have never been willing to offend big coal companies. Thus about all the state gets out of it are land disfigurement, air pollution, acid mine wastes, and undo notoriety every-time tragedy strikes a mine.

But conservationists point with pride at our model strip mine laws and say "Coal can be beaten". We should not forget that most stripping operations at the time were carried out by small independent companies many of whom were "strip and run" operations. Usually they were not controlled by the huge deep mining outfits who are so adept at pulling strings in Charleston and Washington. These stripping companies were not (then) well organized and hence were beaten in the legislature. If the truth were known, big coal . . . (you finish the rest). Hence a battle won against stripping is not a battle against deep mining.

As long as the people explosion continues (our real problem), as long as there is a public demand for power to run automatic dryers, all electric homes, and TV's in every room, as long as our legislators remain insensitive to our environment, and as long as mineral rights are so securely held by such absentee owners, there is not one acre of wild land in West Virginia that can be saved.

The Forest Service is vulnerable. We can carp and complain and cause them trouble, but of what avail? Mr. Dorrell was recently quoted as saying the Forest Service could hire a 1000 men to fight a forest fire, but their total budget for the year to manage mineral rights is only \$13,000. Makes you wonder why so little is allotted for this important function, doesn't it? Shouldn't we question our legislators more closely instead of begging favors from them? Shouldn't we begin looking into how these mineral rights were obtained? What chance has a wilderness bill in a state that traditionally prostitutes itself for such little return? Give W.Va. a half dozen prosperous towns like Elkhart, Indiana and you can give every coal camp town back to Cleveland and Pittsburgh and still be ahead.

"LAND OF 10,000 LAKES" - MINNESOTA OR WEST VIRGINIA?

ROYAL GLEN

In the last issue of the Voice, we reprinted a newspaper item concerning the recommendation by the U.S. Corps of Engineers to construct the Royal Glen dam near Petersburg, W.Va. Senator Randolph has given his name, if not his support to the project. We reported on the hearing this proposal had at Petersburg in the September Voice. At that time, other than for a couple of local politicians, there was not one statement made in favor of the dam. The many organizations and individuals gave dozens of reasons why it would be foolish to build this dam, all of which were apparently ignored by the Corps and Senator Randolph who called the study "the most comprehensive study of water resource development ever made". Makes one wonder why they bothered to have the hearing.

The folks around Petersburg have made a lot of noise about Federal intrusion in their private property with the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks thing, but were curiously silent over this proposal. The dam will bring another unwelcome intrusion into the Smokehole country. How does one spoil such an incredible resource? One begins by having the Forest Service ignore all recreational plans and advice made by the state's professional recreation planners and have them build the controversial Big Bend camp ground. Next get a governor who is fast becoming noted as one always taking a "safe" seat on the side lines when a conservation controversy appears. His "statement" made at the Royal Glen hearing under then DNR Director Pete Samsell was that he would announce his decision after he had heard all of the statements made at the hearing and weighed the possible benefits for all West Virginians. No statement was ever made and Division of Water Resources personnel appeared curiously uncommunicative about it. New DNR Chief Ira Latimer has chosen to remain silent about it. Finally have the Corps go ahead with their busy work and encroach upon the other end with mudflats and a sterile silt catcher.

POLITICIANS + DAMS = JOBS?

Senator Randolph has predicted 7,600 jobs for Petersburg. As an inveterate reservoir watcher, I pass on the following observations: Near Morgantown there is a reservoir, Cheat Lake, that has two cluttered marinas, one State Lodge (high prices, terrible food, beauty marred by dilapidated marina next door) and an awfully lot of expensive real estate. Where there are no \$80,000-100,000 summer cottages, the shores are the most littered in West Virginia. The power plant at the end employs a few people as does the Lodge, there are a few beer joints and a strip job and that is about it economically. The lake is primarily used by Pennsylvania speed boats. There is a new reservoir at Summersville. Lots of water skiers and fishermen, but where are the jobs? Same for Sutton. And Bluestone, only the fishermen are below the dam in the wild river, not upstairs in the tame, sterile reservoir. Jobs? I don't see any jobs. Now at Indian Lake near Russell's Point, Ohio, there are jobs! Thousands. This reservoir was built to store water for the old trans-Ohio canal system- another empire that was supposed to have lasted hundreds of years. Today its water front is lined solidly with hot dog stands, roller rinks (skate slowly and outside the black center line folks), dance halls, amusement parks (the biggest roller coaster in Logan County, only 25¢ kid), saloons, ice cream vendors, reeking bait stores, countless crumbling piers, enough speed boats to outfit the Polish navy, ricky-ticky vacation cabins, row boat rentals, and 387 miles of neon tubing. Anything in poor taste left over from Coney Island or Gatlinburg, Tenn. is hot stuff at the "Point". Great place, you can always find a job. But in Petersburg? Next door to the Smokehole? Will Petersburg look like Gatlinburg to eastern visitors the Forest Service envisions being lured to the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks NRA?

Well then what about industry? As Creed Sions said at the Petersburg hearing when referring to one of the main local industries, a notorious tannery that has killed hundreds of thousands of fish on a South Branch tributary, "That kind of industry we can do without." It has been my experience that the building of a dam has in itself never created an industry de novo unless the people of the community make an effort to bring industry in itself. Besides, what industry would be crazy enough to build in a flood plain today, dam or no dam? In a haste to provide a mythical 7,600 jobs, the little man, as usual, gets flooded over. What about the man who owns the nice filling station-general store near Cabins? His relatively new establishment will be flooded out. He and other small businessmen in the area don't seem to count to the dam planners. Don't be surprised Senator Randolph, if there is less business then before.

#### ROWLESBURG AND THE CHEAT

Then there is the Rowlesburg Dam. This will undoubtedly become the biggest pork barrel in the state. Again, hearings were held, many arguments were given against the dam, few were for it. Yet it has been decreed, "It shall be!" The people in Rowlesburg have been sold on the story that there will be no more floods, that everyone will have jobs, and all kinds of tourist money will come there way. They fail to realize that U.S. 50 will become obsolete when the new Appalachian corridors are built, none of which will come near Rowlesburg. About the only ones who believe the Corps' story are the economically underprivileged and a few others with sizeable, but otherwise worthless real estate holdings to unload. Senator Byrd has been an extremely vocal proponent of the dam, demanding that funds be freed for its construction. He has been joined recently (don't politics make strange bedfellows?) by Governor Moore, something his conservation-minded predecessor Hulett Smith would never have done.

If there were no reasons given for the Rowlesburg Dam, then why is it being built? If there is no West Virginia demand, where is all of the noise coming from? The answer is Pittsburgh and environs. They occasionally get a flood. They had one in 1936 that was a lulu, but the Yough dam is in now, an Indian reservation (another broken treaty) was flooded at Kinzua on the Allegheny, the Monongahela is under more elaborate control, the Tygart is pretty well harnessed at Grafton, but the West Fork is still flooded a good bit of the time at Weston. But apparently this doesn't matter. Still there is occasional high water in McKeesport, Braddock, Homestead, etc like when in the late 50's two feet of snow all over western Pa. was quickly melted by a freak 48 hour warm rain. Anyway it turns out the people in these communities have formed lobbies and pressure groups for the dam. Bad for water front business they say. Also there is a lot of commuter parking along the wharf. Nasty place to park in high water. City loses revenue. Insurance companies don't like to pay for soggy cars. Tsk-tsk. Now let's get to the real reason. River traffic. If the Monongahela carried more water in the summer months, greater tonnages could be shipped on barges what with all of the new locks being built to accommodate larger barges (another Corps project). Justifications for the Rowlesburg Dam include the little publicized benefit that the Monongahela will be provided with an additional 6" of water in the summer months. You can float an awful lot of coal out of West Virginia (the principal transported commodity) with 6" more water. Now let's say the trucking industry needs better roads for transportation. Who pays? The trucker. Ever notice those little signs on backs of the big road bruising semis about "This vehicle pays \$4,837 in taxes each year"? Fair enough for the wear and tear. But who pays for the dams, the increased flow rates, the new locks, the use of locks? The Corps, and you and me. But the barge operator (usually a subsidiary of a big coal company), NOT A DAMNED DIME!

And Senator Byrd keeps getting into our newspapers once a week urging that funds be released to get Rowlesburg going and we are led to believe he is serving us. He also gets into the Pittsburgh Press. In an article April 17, 1970, he was quoted in an

address to some mining engineers, "To criticize pollution has become very much the thing to do . . . like coming out in favor of something like . . . motherhood." He then praised the steel and coal industries for their waste control efforts. Makes you wonder who he represents.

#### A FUNERAL FOR ST. GEORGE

Certainly he doesn't represent the good folks in St. George, the starting point of a recent canoe trip led by Herb Eckert to view the effects of the proposed reservoir. According to Don Good, who has spent a great deal of time fighting this dam, plans call for flooding St. George by as much as 90' of water. The minimum pool is 7½ miles down stream at Hannahsville and the maximum some 12 or 14 miles upstream at Parsons. In dry periods, that is going to be an awfullot of mud. Through Don's efforts, octogenarian Ray Jenkins met us at the bridge and showed us many historical photographs and newspapers when St. George was Tucker County's seat. Full of pride and history, Mr. Jenkins led us on a tour of St. George which included a stop at its historic cemetery containing burials back to the late 1700's. The only people interested in seeing these hand carved monuments in the future will be SCUBA divers. It was a sad tour, followed by a sad canoe trip. Oh the sun was out, the water was clear, and the birds were singing, but the thought of so much beauty to be put on the block in order to get more coal out of the state faster was very sad indeed.

#### BLUE RIDGE

As most of you know by now, the Appalachian Power Company (APC) has for many years been interested in putting another dam on New River for power purposes. The dam they had in mind would be a modest sized one affecting the good folks down in North Carolina and Virginia, but would have had no effect on West Virginia. Apparently the Federal government could not bear to see private enterprise put up its own dam without interference for the Dept. of the Interior felt that APC's plans were too small and demanded a much more grandiose storage basin. They are interested, among other things, in providing increased flow rates for the Kanawha Valley. They object to the term pollution dilution and prefer to say that in order for the Kanawha to pass newly approved water quality criteria standards, more oxygenated water will have to flow through Charleston. Interior doesn't say that it should be up to industries and municipalities in the Valley to clean up the river and meet the standards, but rather seems to think it's Interior's obligation to clean up the streams (at public expense of course). The idea for providing more oxygen is based on the premise that organic pollution can be aerobically assimilated by microorganisms if the oxygen is high enough. This reasoning fails to take into account that much of the Kanawha pollution is from chemical industries and consists of phosphates, acids, metals, inorganic reducing agents, and other materials which are not only inimical to microbial growth, but are also chemical antagonists to the action of oxygen. Providing more water to flush Kanawha pollution only shifts the problem downstream. It would be the same as mounting huge electric fans over the VEPCO stacks at Mt. Storm and blowing all of the sulfur dioxide towards Washington, D.C.

Interior and APC have ignored the results of studies carried out under Pete Sam-sell's direction last fall by the DNR. Briefly stated, their studies showed that flow rates out of Bluestone Dam at Hinton in excess of 4,000 cfs during summer months would scour the river of plnkton and insect life which would deprive warm water species of fish of their food during this critical time. At slightly more flow, (Interior projects 10,000 cfs for Charleston by 2000) a fisherman couldn't even wade 6 feet from shore in the heavy current. Right now the New River for several miles below Bluestone is a fisherman's paradise. Miles of wide river dropping over shallow ledges and reefs form numerous pools and eddies conducive to optimum fish production. Fisherman success is fantastic and APC touts that increased flow rates would improve the fishing! They point to

high flow rates in March and April as not being detrimental so why not in June-August? Warm water fish are not feeding heavily in the spring, nor are they spawning. Neither are insects and other forms of aquatic life reproducing. High summer flows would not only wipe out the food sources, but also the spawning areas. We would lose a prime recreational asset used by tens of thousands so that Charleston's filth can be flushed downstream faster.

The most damaging thing in Interior's reasoning is a statement made by Assistant Secretary of the Interior James R. Smith before Senator Randolph's Committee on Public Works: "Whether more or less persons will enjoy the recreational resources of the New River, under changed conditions, represents a judgement that cannot be confirmed or substantiated until after the changed conditions have occurred . . ." In other words he is saying we really don't know how advanced flow rates will affect the New River below Bluestone so we might as well build the dam and see what happens. Does anyone in his right mind think a private industry is going to invest that much in a huge physical plant would then shut part of it down or dismantle it if someone thought the New River was being ruined? Conservationists or anyone else would have absolutely no legal way whatever of preventing such a monstrosity once it was built. Mr. Smith is urging a terribly foolish, experiment by such a statement.

#### AND WHERE ELSE?

Spit in any direction and you will see the Corps or a power company messing with our rivers. The Southeastern Power Company still drools when the Swiss Dam on the Gauley is mentioned. This is part of the power and pollution dilution business aimed at the Kanawha and is only one of 13 rivers involved in the power play (see Vol. I, No. 4). The Corps is already condemning land along the North Branch of the Potomac for an approved dam near the mouth of the Savage River. The Monongahela Power Co. has plans on the drawing boards for a hydroelectric dam on the Blackwater in the upper Canaan Valley for flooding at least another 7000 acres of terribly valuable wildlife habitat. What with a golf course (can you imagine a worse place for a golf course), a ski resort, and a hydroelectric reservoir all covered with flyash and sulfur dioxide from nearby VEPCO, it will be a sight to behold. At least our greedy, much-criticized forefathers only cut timber and allowed forest fires to ravage the land. Isn't what we are doing worse?

This has been perhaps too long an article for a newsletter this size, but my aim has been to impress conservation minded citizens of the scope of West Virginia's problems and to identify the adversaries. As you can see, coal and/or power have extended their cancerous tentacles into every conceivable niche of outdoor activity. Whether your bag is wilderness, scenic rivers, caving, bird watching, botanizing, back packing, photography, camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, just plain lookin', or even fresh air, it must be understood that none of these activities is safe for our generation to say nothing of that of our descendants. We must now decide what our course is to be- do we blindly follow technology, development, growth, profit, expansion, and quantity regardless of environmental consequences or do we start paying attention to quality, to ways to decentralize our blighted cities, to learn ways to live within the resources at our disposal, and to realize that the flow of energy and materials is not cyclical and emergent from a bottomless pit? Give a damn, get involved!

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#### AND MORE COAL

The Linan Smokeless Coal Co. has applied for a permit to mine Sewell coal in a 20 mile area along Shaver's Fork about one mile north of the Gaudineer Fire Tower. This

is only one of four planned by the company for the area. The Elk Sewell Coal Co. has applied for a permit to mine on the headwaters of Elk River. Another outfit wants to put in a coal preparation plant on the Williams near the Cranberry Back-country line, prospect for coal on Black Mountain near the Glades, while another request was made to prospect for gas and coal IN the Glades. See what I mean about no acre of wild land being safe? Meanwhile the price of coal has risen sharply and a dingy haze is forecast on the conservation horizon.

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#### EARTH DAY

Earth Day may have taught a few people some things they didn't know before, but it was still a net loss for those struggling to keep the planet inhabitable for orders of life above the blue green algae. This isn't the sponsors' fault; they couldn't have guessed they would have been inundated by politicians and businessmen who'd drain the occasion of meaning by making it too respectable.

Instead of it being a time of labored contemplation, Earth Day was turned into a muddled media carnival, a paint-up, clean-up, fix-up hoax. Our attention was drawn off our ecological destruction of man, agriculture, flora and fauna in Vietnam by such things as the full page ads by the Schlitz Brewing Co. adjuring us not to drop the beer cans on the beach but in the nearest trash can.

Schlitz didn't talk about what the sanitation department is supposed to do with the beer cans; it omitted mention of reusable or decomposable containers, while leaving the reader with the impression that our main problem is sloppy housekeeping. For Schlitz and the advertisers like them, Earth Day was an opportunity for institutional advertising, for making us think these companies are friendly corporate neighbors and not part of a marketing system which pollutes to prosper.

This ad also fostered the idea that the ruination of the globe's life systems, the using of our consumables is something we can do personally something to reverse by a few, rather small changes of habit. This attack on the problem is best seen in the April issue of Mademoiselle which carries an article entitled "40 Ways You Can Depollute the Earth". They inadvertently illustrate how little a person can do on his own, and how much the problem is political and economic.

To save human life on earth, Mademoiselle urges its readers not to "use colored facial tissues . . . The paper dissolves properly in water but the dye lingers on . . . If you really don't need a car, don't buy a car . . . Since the prime offender in detergent pollution is not suds but phosphates, demand to know how much is in the detergent you're buying. Write the manufacturers, newspapers, Congressmen, the FDA . . . Avoid disposable diapers if possible. They clog plumbing and septic tanks . . . Protest the SST; write the President . . . Remember: All Power Pollutes. Especially gas and electric power so cut down on power consumption. In winter put the furnace a few degrees lower and wear a sweater . . . Use live Christmas trees, not amputated ones, and replant them afterward . . . Suggest that your local radio/TV station remind listeners at 10:00 P.M. to turn down the volume . . . Radicalize your community . . . talk to a lawyer about a class action suit . . . Care, who will if we don't."

The magazine's treatment of the subject isn't as simple-mindedly fashionable as these excerpts make it appear, yet even with an interview with Paul Ehrlich, the prophetically angry biologist who wrote the Population Bomb the effect is not to minimize the problem, but, what's just as bad, to minimize and personalize the solutions. So there's a piece in the issue called "Ecology: New Cause, New Career," which tells women how they can train themselves for technical positions in the field, as if we were dealing with one more specialized activity that can go its isolated way taking care of the beer cans.



The politicians who've pushed themselves in the discussion do the same. "Any nation which can spend billions to put a man on the moon", they say one after another, "can afford to clean up pollution," thereby giving the impression that spending a lot of money on war was supposed to bring peace, and spending money on highways was supposed to bring transportation.

Assuredly money's needed, but it will be spent without result unless a great alterations are made in the way we conduct our national business and that's not going to happen for awhile. One of the reasons it's not going to happen is that so many of the interests who must ultimately fight ecological preservation have slithered in to mislead the parade.

The politicians who buy elections with money supplied them by the major pollutionists dare not be serious. No more than Mademoiselle can be when it tells its readers not to buy products bottled in polyvinyl chloride and then sells page after page of cosmetics in PVC containers.

The consequence of this swamping, cooptation of the ecological anguish will be confusion since it will appear that everybody is on the same side, marching along with Standard Oil of New Jersey, each of us doing our little bit to rescue the earth from sinful gluttony. After a time, when the skies do not brighten and the scum sets thicker on the waters, there will have to be a sorting out of friend from foe, a recognition of deeply antagonistic economic interests . . .

Ed. NOTE: The above article was part of a column written by Nicholas von Hoffman in the April 27, 1970 issue of the Washington Post and sent to us by Jim Johnston. I don't know how Earth Day went in your community, but in ours it didn't attract near the attention that a handful of students did who obstructed traffic a few hours, threw a brick through a campus window, shouted obscenities, and otherwise showed off for the local newsmen.

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#### OTTER CREEK GUIDES AVAILABLE

For those not having copies yet, additional copies of the Otter Creek guide are available at 25¢ each from Carolyn Killoran, 1605-D Quarrier St., Charleston, 25311. Put one in each school library as well as that of the community.

Also note that Herb Eckert is in charge of the slide show and speaker's bureau for Otter Creek presentations. Herb has been busy on the banquet circuit and has found the experience rewarding. Anyone interested in getting this program or the slides should contact Herb at 24 Bates Rd., Morgantown, 26505.

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#### BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

The editor has been receiving complaints of suspected sloppy weed killing applications by power company helicopters along power line right-of-ways. The overkill has boiled over onto not only private property, but also National Forest holdings. Conservancy members in the field are asked to be on the watch out for this sort of activity and to photographically document it. Please contact the editor if you come across any such misuse.

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## WHY THERE IS NO WILDERNESS IN THE EAST

Robert Moses [of the New York World's Fair-Flushing Meadows fiasco] is an avid proponent of "opening up" places that are now wilderness. A glance at the things he has already "opened up" indicates that the Moses solution consists mostly of asphalt. One of Mr. Moses' problems is that he doesn't know what camping is. I once asked him about a statement he had made favoring the "opening up" of the Adirondack Forest Preserve, the last remaining area in New York State, and he replied that he wanted to amend the State Constitution "so that you could camp there." But, I replied, you could camp there now. "Baloney," he said. You can't camp there. How're you going to get there? There're no roads." What about walking or canoeing? "More baloney. After you walk there, how can you put up a tent?" On the ground? "No, I mean they won't let you put in a tent floor." A lot of tents have canvas floors sewn into them these days. "I mean a wooden floor. A lot of people aren't going to camp in a place where they can't get into and where they're really out in the open. Where can they get water in the Adirondacks?" From the lakes, which are pure? "Drinking water," he said. "People have to have drinking water that they know is safe. And they have to have toilet facilities, and a first aid station--all the things a family needs."

From an article in this month's issue of Esquire, "Walden III", by Fred Powledge. I recommend that you read the rest of it, too.

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### THE FARMINGTON MINE DISASTER

In the town of Farmington, West Virginia  
Down in the dark of the Console No. 9,  
There's blood on the coal and miners lie  
In roads that never saw sun nor sky.

In the town of Farmington, you don't sleep easy  
Often the earth will tremble and roll.  
When the earth is restless, miners die  
Bone and blood is the price of coal.

In the town of Farmington, West Virginia  
Late in the year of sixty-eight  
Day still comes and the sun still shines,  
But it's dark as the grave in the Console No. 9.

Down at the coal face, miners working  
Rattle of the belt and the cutter's blade  
Rumble of rock and the walls close down  
The living and the dead two miles down.

Sixty-eight lay two miles from the pitshaft  
Sixty-eight lay in the dark and sang  
Long hot days in the miners' tomb  
It was three feet high and a hundred long.

Clish McCleaver

FROM THE CONSERVATIONIST'S BOOKSHELF

"To explain why anyone is a conservationist and what motivates him to the point where absorption in the preservation of an environment becomes a personal philosophy means going back to the very beginning of his involvement with the natural scene. I believe one of the basic tenets for anyone really concerned is to have a love for the land, which comes through a long intimacy with natural beauty and living things, an association that breeds genuine affection and has an inherent understanding for its infinite and varied ecology."

"Nourished by constant appreciation of what is aesthetically and spiritually enriching, this inevitably matures into a recognition of the significance of evolutionary development. Only if there is understanding can there be reverence, and only where there is deep emotional feeling is anyone willing to do battle. A Spaniard said long ago, 'There is only one cause a man must fight for and that is his home'. Conservationists fight not only for their individual homes, but for those of the whole human race, the total surroundings of man, the soil, air, water, and all life with which he shares the earth."

When I first came to the Quetico-Superior, I had not thought about conservation. Like most men who had not been confronted with desecration of the country or the loss of places of beauty, I had never thought that things would ever change, or that there were threats which might despoil the wilderness. I simply assumed the lakes and rivers of the Superior National Forest and the adjoining Quetico Provincial Park of Canada would always be the same. Were they not established as forest preserves by the governments on both sides of the border? Did not this guarantee their protection? . . ."

"After World War I and during the early twenties, a great road-building program was announced, one which would open up the lake country and make it accessible to tourists. 'A Road to Every Lake' was the slogan, and chambers of commerce from nearby communities trumpeted the hope of making the wilderness the greatest resort region of America. No longer isolated, the Superior National Forest would become a mecca for fishermen, 'The Playground of the Nation' . . ."

"The fight against roads was just the beginning. Even before it was settled, another proposal was made for a gigantic power development along the international border with a series of seven dams and storage reservoirs that would impound some of the lakes as high as eighty feet. Whole river systems were to be flooded, islands, campsites, and beaches submerged, thousands of miles of bays and shorelines changed to a morass of dead trees and unsightly stagnant backwaters. Far more destructive than logging or road building, this project would not only destroy the wilderness, but change it from a beautiful canoe country to a place of ugliness and desecration. . ."

"Could man in his new civilization afford to lose again and again to progress? Did we have the right to deprive future generations of what we have known? What would the future bring?"

Borrowing a page from Jim Comstock, the Highlands Conservancy will send a year's free subscription to the designee of the first one to notify the editor of the author and source of the above quotation. Come on, it's an easy one. Answer will appear in the next issue.

Bob Burrell, Editor  
1412 Western Ave.  
Morgantown, W.Va. 26505

WITH THE AFFILIATES

The BROOKS BIRD CLUB sends us their bimonthly newsletters containing nature reports from various members, conservation notices, and field notes. The various chapters have many activities going all of the time with nature forays and field trips being held periodically throughout the state. Their big summer foray is planned for the week of June 13-20 at Summersville. For more information of the organization and its activities, contact President Chuck Conrad, 137 North 11th St., Wheeling, 26003. Here is a chance for you amateur naturalists to participate in organized biotic surveys we so desperately need before the polluters are allowed to erase them forever.

COMING EVENTS

The Third Annual Family Trails Day Outing sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources has been set for Kumbrabow State Forest on Saturday, June 20, 1970. The affair begins at 11 A.M. at the picnic area. Bring your own lunch and get set to take a hike beginning at 1 P.M. An outdoor dinner will be served at the conclusion of the hike (\$2.25/adult and \$1.50/child). Entertainment will then be provided by the Helvetia Folk Dancers. For reservations or more information, contact Maxine Scarbro, DNR, 1800 Washington St., East, Charleston, 25305.

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# the Highlands Voice

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## SHOWDOWN AT OTTER CREEK

Senator Jennings Randolph has introduced S.3937, a bill to designate as wilderness the Cranberry, Otter Creek, and Dolly Sods areas in the Senate recently. As reported last month, Mr. Ken Hechler had introduced a similar measure earlier, H.R. 17774 in the House. "There is a need to protect these areas and to preserve them in their present environment, for the enjoyment of our citizens and future generation. We must act to establish wilderness areas, of which there are only two on the East Coast," Randolph said. It is planned to have the bills processed through committees quickly before Congress adjourns so that when it reconvenes in January, the matter will be treated as old business and will not have to be reintroduced.

Secretary of State Jay Rockefeller IV supported Congressional action on Otter Creek in a speech to the graduating class of Pickens High School. He applauded efforts of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy to spare the entire 18,000 acre tract from logging.

Meanwhile the Conservancy sought and was granted a temporary restraining order against the Island Creek Coal Company from cutting roads into the Otter Creek area. Judge Robert E. Maxwell had a hearing and ruled the Conservancy had just cause to restrain the coal company and the Forest Service from such action. Many newspapers throughout the state failed to mention the role of the Conservancy towards this end. Hearings will continue through June and possibly beyond in Elkins on this matter. The Voice will attempt to inform the Conservancy of this and other important matters monthly throughout the summer.

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## SHOWDOWN AT NEW RIVER

The Conservancy has been invited to appear as a witness under petitions of intervention by the West Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League and by the West Virginia Natural Resources Council regarding the Blue Ridge Project on New River. A ten-page testimony written by Clish McCleaver and your editor was filed with the Federal Power Commission and all intervenors. The Hearing is scheduled for Beckley on July 21. It promises to be a hot summer in more ways than one and the Conservancy will be there with its matches.

The Conservancy wishes to offer a special salute to State Attorney General Chauncey Browning for his sharp cross-examination of the spoilers in special hearings June 17-19 and for the way he has presented West Virginia's alarm at the threat to the New River.