Friends of Blackwater

Save Our Squirrel Campaign Coalition Wins Extension of Squirrel Comment Period -- April 23rd is new deadline.

More than twenty-five groups have joined the “SOS - Save Our Squirrel” Coalition to keep federal protection for “Ginny”, the endangered West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, a beloved resident of the Blackwater region.

The SOS Coalition now includes Heartwood, The Wilderness Society, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, the West Virginia E-Council, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Appalachian Voices, the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, WildLaw, the Sierra Club Appalachian Region, Virginia Forest Watch, National Wildlife Federation, Blue Heron Environmental Network, and the Endangered Species Coalition.

Additional members are American Lands, Potomac Valley Audubon Society, Sustainable Living for West Virginia, Missouri Forest Alliance, Stewards of the Potomac Highlands, Kentucky Heartwood, The Maryland Conservation Council, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, The Center for Biological Diversity, La Paix Herb Farm, and The West Virginia Wildlife Federation.

Whew -- what a team!

West Virginia Congressmen Nick Rahall and Alan Mollohan have already helped us get the comment period on the “delisting” proposal extended to April 23, 2007.

Our coalition says that the Fish and Wildlife Service has failed to establish squirrel population numbers or trends, and has ignored known threats to the squirrel. They want to give the timber industry unfettered access to the most important part of Ginny’s habitat -- the older growth northern logging haul road. The Forest Service did not include the public in a historical resources review.

In March of 2006, Friends of Blackwater and the Wilderness Society asked to be part of this review, followed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The review, under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, is called a consultation, and involves the SHPO, the Forest Service, AWP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation -- plus advocacy groups that ask to be parties. It has been a difficult process, so far, with the Forest Service and the timber company refusing to share the document that describes the proposed land deal or the survey of the property line, or to rule out

continued See SOS! Page 2
Dear Friends of Blackwater,  

It was up to us.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, charged with enforcing the Endangered Species Act, wouldn’t do their job.

So it was up to us to protect the Cheat snail and its habitat — and we did it!

We are working hard to make the same kind of real and lasting difference — in protecting the Blackwater Canyon region, and its insect species, “Ginny”, the endangered West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel.

The agencies that should be protecting the Blackwater and Ginny are not doing their jobs.

National forest officials won’t protect the historic canyon. Trail, outbuildings and parks are praticially the norm at the fish and Wildlife Service.

So it’s up to us to protect these special West Virginia hardwood forests, places and creatures for all of us — and for our children and grandchildren.

We love to hear from you. We try to stay with your ongoing support and confidence every day. Thank you, especially for writing letters, e-mails and making calls to public officials.

It’s up to us — and we are doing it.

Sincerely,

Judy Rodd

July 3rd

USA Today Highlights Blackwater on Valentine’s Day!

50 Dates in 50 States

ROSES and chocolates may be fine, but there’s nothing like wandering to make a traveler’s heart faster.

With Valentine’s Day as inspiration, USA TODAY’s travel staff listed local experts for each state and the District of Columbia to pick a favorite romantic experience that can be enjoyed on 14 or beyond.

From hobnobbing with butterflies in Sioux Falls, SD, to hot-tubbing on Orcas Island, Wash., here’s what puts stars in your eyes.

WEST VIRGINIA

Watch the flames in a stone fireplace in a cabin at Blackwater Falls State Park in the Allegheny Mountains.

There is no better place to spend a day of cross-country skiing or hiking to the Linny Point Overlook and sharing the kiss-me-quick view of Blackwater Falls and Point Overlook and sharing the kiss-me-quick view of Blackwater Falls State Park.

WEST VIRGINIA

The supporters of Friends of Blackwater have put in place the first ever court-approved endangered species protection plan in West Virginia.

The detailed, multi-year plan protects critical habitat for the rare Cheat three-tooth snail (triodopsis platysayoides), which lives in rock crevices in the heart of the Blackwater Canyon near Morgantown, West Virginia. Scientists will call the shots in defining protected areas.

Here’s a brief run-down on this campaign — and how we won it:

Three years ago, the news leaked out that the timber company Allegheny Wood Products was preparing to building logging roads and timber in the Cheat Canyon — right in the middle of the steep, rocky Blackwater Canyon.

The spectacular habitat of an area called the Cheat Mountain Wilderness, home to 195 species of plants and animals, was under threat.

The agencies that should be protecting the Blackwater and Ginny are not doing their jobs.

National forest officials won’t protect the historic canyon. Trail, outbuildings and parks are praticially the norm at the fish and Wildlife Service.

So it’s up to us to protect these special West Virginia hardwood forests, places and creatures for all of us — and for our children and grandchildren.

We love to hear from you. We try to stay with your ongoing support and confidence every day. Thank you, especially for writing letters, e-mails and making calls to public officials.

It’s up to us — and we are doing it.

Sincerely,

Judy Rodd

Notes from the Director

David Hammer, Esq.

Jason Halbert

John Brown

Judy Rodd, Director

Lindas Cooper - Treasurer

Judy Rodd, Director

March 2007

March 2007

March 2007

March 2007
Molohan pushing PSC on wind farm studies

By Paul J. Nyden
Staff writer Charleston Daily Mail

Rep. Alan Molohan says he wants the state Public Service Commission to look more carefully into the potential environmental impact of windmills proposed by companies like NedPower Mount Storm and Shell WindEnergy Inc. "The whole issue of industrial wind siting is an important public policy question," said Molohan, D-W.Va., on Friday. "It cries out for public debate and legislative action to put some real siting criteria into place."

In a Jan. 31 letter, Molohan urged the PSC to work more closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about the impact huge windmills have on animals such as birds and bats. The PSC, Molohan wrote, has "no basis to conclude that the service has approved the studies conducted by NedPower about risks posed to migratory birds, including rare species. NedPower told the PSC it had 'not received comments from the [Fish and Wildlife] Service indicating a disagreement with the findings that the company has made,' Molohan wrote. "Quite clearly, the commission cannot base any finding regarding the position of the Fish and Wildlife Service on testimony such as that.""

Christopher L. Callas, a lawyer with Jackson & Kelly PLLC who represents NedPower, wrote to the PSC on Feb. 8 criticizing the "untimeliness" of Molohan’s letter. Molohan, Callas wrote, asked for "certain actions and opinions from the [Fish and Wildlife] Service that is not required under statutory authority to issue" and that the PSC "lacks authority to require the [Fish and Wildlife Service] to issue." The letter from Molohan ‘adds nothing to the evidence adduced at hearing or the parties’ subsequent briefing," Callas also wrote. In a second letter sent Thursday, Molohan wrote that the PSC “clearly does have the authority to ... require NedPower to seek the judgments of the service regarding the studies it conducted and to submit those judgments to the commission. Molohan added that unless the PSC ‘directs NedPower to do so, the company is not going to rely on the service’s judgments regarding its studies.’"

The PSC’s newest commissioner, meanwhile, says he will recuse himself from hearing cases involving NedPower. Michael A. Albert — appointed by Gov. Joe Manchin — became a commissioner on Monday, joining Chairman John W. McKinney and Commissioner Edward H. Staat. Before the appointment, Albert was a lawyer for Jackson & Kelly representing clients including Allegheny Power. Reaching on Saturday, Albert said he never represented NedPower over risks posed to migratory birds, including rare species. Molohan, Callas wrote, asked for "certain actions and opinions from the [Fish and Wildlife] Service that is not required under statutory authority to issue" and that the PSC “lacks authority to require the [Fish and Wildlife Service] to issue.” The letter from Molohan ‘adds nothing to the evidence adduced at hearing or the parties’ subsequent briefing,’ Callas wrote. Molohan added that unless the PSC ‘directs NedPower to do so, the company is not going to rely on the service’s judgments regarding its studies.’"

Albert said he never represented NedPower over risks posed to migratory birds, including rare species. Molohan, Callas wrote, asked for “certain actions and opinions from the [Fish and Wildlife] Service that is not required under statutory authority to issue” and that the PSC “lacks authority to require the [Fish and Wildlife Service] to issue.” The letter from Molohan ‘adds nothing to the evidence adduced at hearing or the parties’ subsequent briefing,’ Callas wrote. Molohan added that unless the PSC ‘directs NedPower to do so, the company is not going to rely on the service’s judgments regarding its studies.’"
As far back as he can remember, Andy Altman has enjoyed photography. From elementary school days on family vacations across the US and Canada, he has worked to capture the beauty and majesty of nature on film. An avid hiker, whitewater paddler and mountain biker, his joy in exploring nature continues. Now that family vacations include his wife and two boys, he also enjoys the challenge of squeezing quality photography time into quality family time.

With experience, the encouragement of friends and evolving equipment, Andy reached the decision to start offering his photography for sale in 2004. His work can be found at art and craft shows in the Charlestown area, at Southwest Virginia Museum, and various craft shows in the Charleston area.

Bruce K. Haley, Jr., a Charleston, WV native and Vietnam veteran has always had a need to document. He experimented with writing, music, painting and crafts. While finding all of these mediums fascinating, and life satisfying, it wasn’t until he found photography that he knew he had found what he had been searching for all his life.

Bruce uses the camera as his lens. His bold and colorful presentation of nature has made his work much sought after throughout the United States. Since November of 2002, Bruce’s award winning art has appeared in over seventy shows in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina and California. His work is included in many corporate and private collections including six pieces recently purchased by the state of West Virginia for their permanent collection.

Bruce’s work provides the opportunity to see the beauty and variety of the Blackwater area and love the forward to a new visit. “I am so thankful for the opportunity to see the beauty and enjoy nature is just something I really love to do. It refreshes my soul, clears my mind and prepares me to face the daily issues which crowd our busy lives these days. Blackwater area is a sanctuary for weary souls. I enjoy standing off the trails and watching the kayakers and a carpet of flowers that are at the very top of my list of places that make my spirit wake and make my day an enjoyable experience.” – Andy Altman

“Nature photography for me is more of a feeling and is something I find very hard to put into words. It is just something I really love to do. It refreshes my soul, clears my mind and prepares me to face the daily issues which crowd our busy lives these days. Blackwater Area is a sanctuary for weary souls. I enjoy standing off the trails and watching the kayakers and a carpet of flowers that are at the very top of my list of places that make my spirit wake and make my day an enjoyable experience.” – Andy Altman
AllegheNY Owls by J. Lawrence Smith

In the icy cold of a night in late winter you may hear a query, too hoarse too hoot hoop, coming from the darkened woods. You have heard the deep voice of the Great Horned Owl that seems a sound from the underworld. Once the wildness long gone—the wilderness that remains in the rutting of its heart.

Many birds are seeking to survive winter and find sufficient food, the Great Horned Owl joins the responsibility of nesting and brooding young. The big owl will usually nest on the perches of such as the Red-tailed Hawk that has egg-laid long before winter is ended.

Named for the tufts of feathers on its head, the Great Horned Owl’s plumage is at rest at nearly two feet in length with a wingspans of up to five feet. It is a predator not so much come away swallowing the encounter and a more effective hunter because it can detect the least movements. The reverse habitat of woodland interspersed with farms is to the liking of the “tiger of the air.”

Barred Owls will be heard catcalling in spring when they feel the urges of a new season and their series of rolling notes ending with a questioning who-all. The Barred will often respond to a recording or imitation of its voice, especially during the spring.

Somewhat smaller than the Great Horned, the Barred Owl is often active during daylight almost as though it takes flight from西湖翻身 and must become vocal. The owl seeks a habitat near a forest with slight cover. The Barred Owl is the most common owl species in New York State. It is found from the Canadian border to New England.

Liking heavily forested lower slopes, hollows, and grassy meadows that are often within striking distance of a home or barn, the Barred Owl will be found around farms and along the bigger streams and around forested edges. It is to the liking of the “tiger of the air.”

NATURE NOTES
For someone who grew up in the Guy- andotte Valley, and marveled the ridges along its river, looking down upon Canaan Valley, was a sight to behold.

Gosh, was my first expression. My little sister, standing beside me, had not spoken. It took her some time to make a sound. “I didn’t know, West couldn’t tell, that the view would look anything like this. I was thinking, this looks more like what you are seen on Television, when they show some movie scenery. In the next year, I would come to know the land, like the back of my hand.

Before school started, I made friends with several of the boys, of the old jeep roads were under water because of the beavers. It didn’t do the Game Officers any good, to tear them down. The beaver was building his dam, the next day. I spent the days before school, learning the lay of the land, and it was mighty easy to get lost with no fence on the land.

By Shadowcloud

“3 heard of the efforts of some, to destroy what Mother Nature had so graciously made for man to enjoy, the news brought tears to my heart.”

Virginia was this beautiful state”, finally she managed to say. I agreed, as we stood there talking it all over.

We had spent 7 hours driving in my old 1947 Chevy. And other than stopping for gas, this the first stop to look around. Driving across the valley floor, you sure that were growing up in Davis. Soon they were taking me on the old jeep roads, that their dads had shown them, while going deer hunting. The old jeep roads going around Canaan Valley floor were something else. Beavers seemed to think, a road would, I will build a dam here. Most encounter with my first Black Bear, was for me to look at him, to look me at, and each of us took off in different directions. Canaan Valley was like a treasure chest, over each hill, a different lay of the land. Standing up on the Mountain and looking down on the valley, it all looked flat, but that, sure wasn’t the way it was, once you started walking it. Phoey, you needed to be a mountain goat to get around down there. There were plenty of little hills, ”flatlander hills”, my new friends called them. Most of them had never been anywhere other than Davis or Thomas. So to them, the hills that were in Canaan Valley were just “flatlander hills”. They were used to the Mountains around them.

They showed me my first view of Blackwater Falls, and soon thereafter were taking me on trails, their dads had taken them on, trails that led you around the winding canyon of the Blackwater River. It was wild untramed land, with laurel so thick you could not crush it, so you had to take a longer way around, to get where you wanted to go. And the word go, meant adventure to me.

It’s been only a year or two since I drove up to Davis. I took my daughter for a trip to Blackwater Falls for a Sunday Drive. I wanted to show my daughter the most beautiful place I had ever been, which included four years in the Navy, traveling overseas four times. To me, Canaan Valley, and Blackwater Falls, were the prettiest places I had seen. Not too awful long ago, I heard of the efforts of some, to destroy what Mother Nature had so graciously made for mankind to enjoy, the news brought tears to my heart.

Virginia in her memory should be sent to:
Oglebay Institute
George Breiding Scholarship Fund
1330 National Road
Wheeling, WV 26003
March 2007

SOS! Save Our Squirrel!
Help Save Blackwater Ginny, the WV Flying Squirrel!
Stop Fish and Wildlife’s Crazy Plan!
Sign the letter below and send with your comments, Friends of
Blackwater, 501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV 25311 before
April 21, 2007

Re: FWS-2006-0547-0001

To the Fish and Wildlife Service,

I am commenting on the Proposed Rule to Remove the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus fuscus) from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. This proposed rule is premature and based on inadequate scientific information. More specifically,

• The proposed rule is not based on population studies that show a stable or increasing population of the squirrel. No such studies have been done in the 22 years that the flying squirrel has been listed.

• This proposed rule is based on a review which fails to correctly describe the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel’s habitat. Plans by the Forest Service and other public land managers to “permanently protect squirrel habitat” based on this flawed model will not work, and could lead to extinction for the squirrel.

• Threats to the squirrel are increasing, as its habitat is strip-mined, logged, and cleared for development, highways and industrial wind projects. The high elevation central Appalachian boreal forest habitat is an endangered ecosystem and is being decimated by acid deposition and the balsam woolly adelgid. Furthermore, climate change may cause direct loss of habitat.

Please withdraw this proposed rule and continue federal protections and research needed to recover this species.

Comments
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Name
____________________________________________________

Address
____________________________________________________

Comments
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

□ YES! I WANT TO JOIN FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER  
Choose a membership level and send your name, address, and e-mail to
Friends of Blackwater, 501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston WV 25311

□ Porte Crayon Society $1000  □ Individual__________ $ 35
□ Crown Jewel Club $ 500  □ Senior__________ $ 20
□ Sustaining Steward $ 250  □ Student__________ $ 10
□ Patron__________ $ 100  □ Other__________
□ Family__________ $ 50

Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

□ My donations is in memory/honor of:

Please send card to:

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

□ I want to add my name to the Petition to Protect the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail.

□ Add me to your volunteer database.

□ Please send future newsletters only via e-mail.

□ Please update my personal information.

□ Please remove me from your mailing list.

COMING SOON TO WWW.SAVEBLACKWATER.ORG!

An online form to send your comments about the Squirrel de-listing

A chance to tell us why you are interested in the Blackwater Canyon! Inquiring minds want to know.

Volunteer Opportunities

Information about upcoming events!