

July 2006

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Friends of Blackwater

501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV 25311

www.saveblackwater.org

YOU ARE INVITED TO

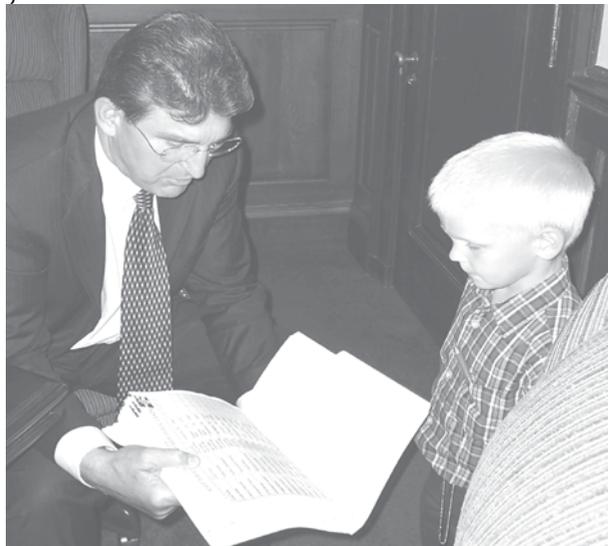
the 1st Annual Blackwater Challenge

October 8, 2006 in Tucker County

see page 10 for details

GOVERNOR MANCHIN MEETS WITH FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER

3,000 PETITIONS DELIVERED



Signed petitions are presented to Governor Manchin by Tucker Welch.

On June 16 representatives of Friends of Blackwater met with West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin to discuss the plight of the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail. The public Trail is under threat from the Forest Service, which wants to turn it into a logging haul road for Allegheny Wood Products. The group delivered over 3,000 petition names to the Governor, asking him to intervene on behalf of the citizens of West Virginia and tell the Forest Service to stop the public land give-away.

The Governor was welcoming and listened to our group's concerns. The petitions were turned over to Governor Manchin by four-year-old Tucker Welch of St Albans. The Governor said to Tucker, "You want to tell me

that you want more public land for your children and grandchildren to be able to use, right?" To which we all vigorously nodded in agreement!

Blackwater Friends Director Judy Rodd reported, "We reminded the Governor that the state has a vested interest in keeping the Trail's scenic and historic views and sites intact. The West Virginia Highway Division has committed to use Corridor H highway mitigation money to improve the Trail and to preserve the 100-year old coke ovens and historic stone archways along the old railroad grade. It would make no sense to squander this state investment by allowing the public Trail to be destroyed for a tiny amount of private logging".

see Governor page 3

Agencies Support Friends of Blackwater's Trail Position

Supporters of the protection of the Blackwater Canyon Rail-Trail have hit a "Trifecta"! Three separate government agencies have strongly criticized the U.S. Forest Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") on John Crites' proposal to turn the historic Canyon Rail Trail into Crites' personal logging haul road.

The most recent official body to speak out is the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the lead national historic preservation agency. In a May 22, 2006 letter to the Forest Service, the Council expressed concern about "substantial impacts on important historic properties". The Council's letter noted "procedural problems" and "concerns regarding the Forest's consultation and compliance."

The second agency in the Rail-Trail "Trifecta" is the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. On February 10, 2006, the Division's Historic Preservation Office advised the Forest Service that: "There is insufficient information in this current draft for the public to comment on the historic resources and their eligibility. The public should have

see Agencies page 3



Working to protect West Virginia's Highlands, including the Blackwater River watershed, the Blackwater Canyon and the North Fork River.

Our Projects

Blackwater Canyon National Park - Page 4

Save Blackwater Canyon - Page 5

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Keep Dolly Sods Wild - Page 7

Cheat Canyon Campaign - Page 8

Nature and Heritage Education - Page 9

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Other Items of Interest

In Memory and Honor - Page 11

SOS! Save Our Squirrel - Page 12

Blackwater Canyon National Park

Creating Blackwater Canyon National Park - combining landscape wide preservation with sustainable economic development in the Blackwater Canyon area

Protecting and promoting Blackwater Canyon - West Virginia's scenic "Crown Jewel" - while working to move all of the Blackwater Canyon into public ownership.



A Tourism Magnet for the High Alleghenies!



The Blackwater Canyon, West Virginia's scenic Crown Jewel, should be protected as a National Park.

This unique, unspoiled wilderness is threatened by reckless developers in search of a quick profit. Their short-sighted views ignore the long-term sustainable value of the Blackwater Canyon.

Preserving the Blackwater Canyon as a National Park makes good economic sense. The Canyon's pristine habitat enhances property values in the area and attracts dollars from across the region.

Many people do not realize that protected public land like national parks pays up to six times more money to local government than private timberland taxes.

We must preserve the integrity of the Blackwater Canyon for sound economic reasons, and to preserve West Virginia's natural heritage for future generations.

Look at what a national park in West Virginia could do!

Economic Impact of Selected National Parks			
Park	Visits	Visitor Spending (millions)	Jobs
Shenandoah	1,163,950	\$42.7	1,011
Great Smoky Mountains	9,366,845	\$598.4	15,186
Acadia	2,431,062	\$133.5	3,556
Yosemite	3,378,664	\$329.3	9,065
Grand Canyon	4,124,900	\$338.1	7,812



West Virginia's Scenic "Crown Jewel"

The 10,000-acre, ten-mile-long Blackwater Canyon, in the heart of the Monongahela National Forest, is West Virginia's signature scenic landscape. Its sweeping vistas and wild river Canyon grace the covers of West Virginia tourism brochures. At the head of the Canyon, Blackwater Falls State Park is a beloved recreational destination for West Virginians and outdoor lovers from the mid-Atlantic Region. The Canyon is a regional mecca for hikers, skiers, kayakers, birders, climbers, hunters, and fishermen. The Blackwater Rail Trail is beautiful and well used, with historic sites and a diverse population of plants and animals including endangered flying squirrels, bats



and salamanders. The adventurer, artist, and writer Porte Canyon said of the Blackwater Canyon in 1853: "Never in all this fair land of ours has a scene more beautifully grand broken on the eye of painter or poet." West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd calls the Blackwater Canyon "one of West Virginia's most cherished natural treasures."

Serious threats to the Canyon's scenery, recreational use, and ecological integrity began in 1997, when 3,000 acres of pristine river corridor in the heart of Canyon -- the only land in the Canyon not in protective public ownership--were sold by a public utility company to timber operator John Crites, of

Allegheny Wood Products, for five million dollars. Crites soon began logging in the Canyon and planning condominium developments

in its pristine forests. Governor Bob Wise offered to purchase the land for public ownership at fair market value, but Crites has so far been unwilling to sell. Crites is pressuring the state park and the Monongahela National Forest to allow a logging road on the scenic hiking trails and through public land in the Canyon.

Since 1997 the Friends of Blackwater (FOB) has advocated for protection for Blackwater Canyon and the Wild and Scenic Blackwater River as a National Park. We have helped to move 675 acres of the Canyon into public ownership under the Underwood and Wise Administrations. We have protected the endangered species of the Canyon through research, public education and advocacy and promoted recreation by sponsoring tours and educating decision makers about the value of the Blackwater Rail Trail. In May of 2005, under pressure from FOB, the Forest Service began a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Study on Allegheny Wood Products' proposal to turn the public Black-

water Canyon Trail into a logging haul road that would lead directly to proposed housing development along the Wild and Scenic Blackwater River.

In the Forest Service's Draft EIS, issued in February, the Service favored turning control of our Trail over to the timber company. Our campaign caused over 5,000 people to tell the Forest Service to redo the plan. As we wait for the final EIS, we are challenging this "public land grab" by asking West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin to speak out against the Forest Service plan. Please will join us in this effort through our petition campaign. (See page 3).

We are also advocating for a National Park in the Canyon and supported a National Park study bill in the 2006 West Virginia legislature, sponsored by Delegate Sharon Spencer and Senator Randy White. We will continue this work in 2007.

Under pressure from Friends of Blackwater, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Allegheny Wood Products began research for a Habitat Conservation Plan for



endangered species protection in the Canyon. We are monitor-

ing this process to make sure that the law is followed.

GOALS FOR 2006:

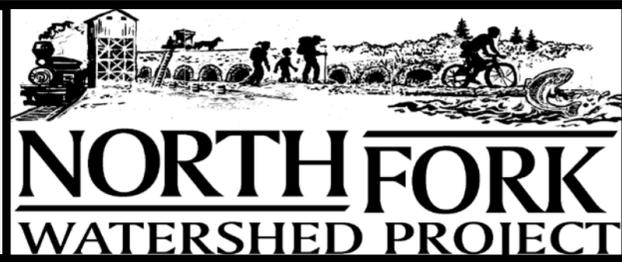
- ✿ Work to keep the trail public.
- ✿ Review the Habitat Conservation Plan on Allegheny Wood Products Land.
- ✿ Participate and Comment on the Monongahela National Forest Management plan.
- ✿ Work towards the creation of a National Park.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✿ Sign the petition calling on Gov. Manchin to protect the Trail. Sign on-line at www.saveblackwater.org
- ✿ Download petitions and help get more West Virginians to sign. Take them to club meetings, outings, and local outdoor businesses.
- ✿ Send a donation for our scientific research on wildlife, historic sites and water impacts of proposed logging haul road on our public trail



Working to improve water quality, educate the public on the negative impact of acid mine drainage and combine water remediation with historic preservation.



GOALS FOR 2006:

- Set up monitoring program.
- Create a map of the Watershed.
- Write report on the health of the North Branch of the Potomac.
- Educate the public about water quality issues.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

• Volunteer to be a water monitor. Call the North Fork office at 304-463-4068 or email info@northforkwatershed.org, and ask about the next training session.

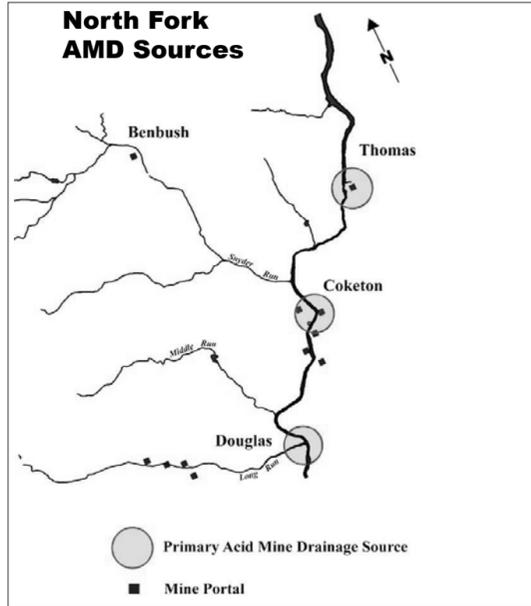
• Donate items and/or attend a fund raising auction on July 22, 2007 at 6:00pm at the Purple Fiddle in Thomas. Items up for bidding include hiking gear, outings, weekends in cabins, and crafts.

PARTNERS:

- US Office of Surface Mining
- WV Division of Environmental Protection
- Generations United - Nisource
- The Norcross Foundation - Town Creek
- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The Thomas Education Center

RESTORE THE NORTHFORK - GATEWAY TO THE CANYON

The trail along the North Fork, a key tributary of the Blackwater River in Tucker County W.Va., is a gateway for hikers coming into the Blackwater Canyon. It's a walk into history, past overgrown stone coke ovens where 10,000 immigrants from 15 different countries toiled in the early 1900s. The industrial history has left its mark on the river including acid mine drainage (AMD) and metal deposits from abandoned deep mines and strip mines. There are safety problems: a wall of coal separating the Coketon and Kempton mine pools (two sets of flooded mine tunnels under the Maryland-West Virginia border on the eastern continental divide) could break and cause major flooding and pollution. Previous reclamation projects helped stabilize disturbed land, but surface subsidence, water pollution and some safety problems remain. The North Fork underground mine pool of polluted water also impacts the beautiful headwaters of the North Branch of the Potomac.



LIZ SALSBUARY JOINS NORTHFORK WATERSHED TEAM

In April of 2006 the Northfork Watershed Project added a new staff member when Liz Salsbury joined the team as an OSM intern. In July she will become part of the full time staff taking the position of the project leader. Liz graduated from Davis and Elkins College in May of 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Ecology. She also has



lived across the globe studying and working as a raft guide. She now calls West Virginia home, and has recently purchased property on the Blackfork River where she will be living and playing with her dog, Denali. She is excited to be working on the Northfork Watershed Project, because she wants to allocate her professional efforts to the preservation of the beautiful and pristine rivers of West Virginia.

an Associate of Science in Adventure Sports from the Adventure Sports Institute in Deep Creek Lake, MD. Liz grew up outside Longview, Washington and moved away from home after completing high school. Since then she has traveled and

A fond farewell to Meredith and Janel, who brought energy and enthusiasm to the North Fork over the past year!

We wish you well!

Right: Meredith Ballard and Janel Farron



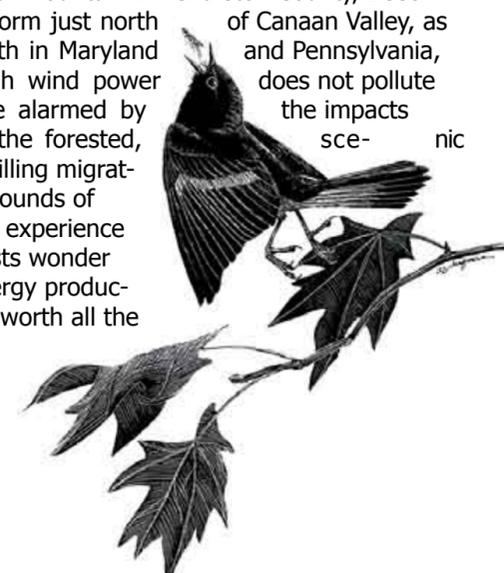
Working in coalition to achieve siting regulations for industrial wind projects in WV, while challenging those projects that degrade special places, like Dolly Sods.

The Dolly Sods wilderness and scenic areas, on the high Allegheny Front, have a unique ecology of windblown, arctic-like spruce forests and highland bogs. The Front is a flyway for flocks of migrating birds and a magnet for sightseers, birdwatchers, hunters, hikers and berry pickers. In the past two years, visitors have been startled to see 44 huge industrial wind turbines rising along Backbone Mountain, along



Above: Owl killed by wind turbine.

Route 219 in Tucker County. Over 600 of these mega-mills, spurred by federal, state and local tax breaks, are proposed in West Virginia's Allegheny Highlands not only near Dolly Sods, but also on Jack Mountain in Pendleton County, Beech Ridge in Greenbrier County, and Mt. Storm just north of Canaan Valley, as well as neighboring counties to the north in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and to the south in Virginia. Although wind power does not pollute like coal or nuclear power, citizens are alarmed by the impacts of these 450-foot-high structures on the forested, mountaintops. The whirling blades are killing migrating birds and bats, and the sights and sounds of the turbines are causing some people to experience headaches and dizziness. Energy analysts wonder if the small amount of unpredictable energy production from these overbuilt towers is even worth all the trouble.



WV WIND PROJECT STATUS

TUCKER COUNTY: Forty-four turbines owned by Florida Light & Power at Mountaineer project on Backbone Mountain form the largest industrial wind project in the East. An estimated 5,000 birds and bats die a year. Local tax benefits haven't materialized; the county has only received \$92,000 in three years the project has existed.

The state legislature reduced property taxes on wind turbines to 5% of assessed value. The tax revenues will decline every year with depreciation.

GRANT COUNTY: Two hundred turbines on the Allegheny Front were certified by the West Virginia Public Service Commission. A nuisance suit by five landowners against Ned-Power contends that the project will reduce property values and cause noise pollution here. The suit has

been appealed to the WV Supreme Court.

The US Windforce project of 125 turbines north of Canaan Valley, certified by PSC but not built. Citizens for Responsible Wind Power asked for and got the PSC to create a certification compliance review before building can begin.

PENDLETON COUNTY: US Wind Force applied for a PSC certificate for 24 turbines at Liberty Gap, Jack Mountain. Learn more at www.protectpendleton.com

GREENBRIER COUNTY: Inventory applied for over

124 wind turbines at Beech Ridge. At weeklong PSC hearings in May, citizens pointed out impacts to the Cranberry Wilderness and Highlands Scenic Highway.

OTHERS: pre-application processes are underway for projects on Rich Mountain, Randolph; Laurel Mountain, Barbour County; Briery Mountain, Preston County; Mineral County; Garrett and Allegheny Counties in Maryland; Highland County near Monterey, Virginia.

These projects will impact scenic views around the Monongahela National Forest.

GOALS FOR 2006:

- Slow down the building of wind turbines until federal siting regulations are in place to protect ecologically sensitive areas.
- Inform the public and government officials about true costs of these projects, and about the value of the Allegheny Highlands, its heritage, scenic viewsheds and special habitats.

PARTNERS:

The coalition of groups under Citizens for Responsible Wind Power (CRWP) which includes Friends of the Allegheny Front, Stewards of the Potomac Highlands, Friends of Beautiful Pendleton, Friends of Backbone Mountain, Friends of Blackwater Canyon, and Mountain Communities for Responsible Wind (Greenbrier)



Through partnerships, working to protect the endangered species of the Cheat Canyon by limiting logging and road building.

About 30 miles north and downstream of the Blackwater Canyon is another gorgeous West Virginia canyon, along the Cheat River. Flowing through Preston and Monongalia Counties, the Cheat is the largest undammed river east of the Mississippi. Its 16-mile long Cheat River Canyon, which begins at Albright and ends at Cheat Lake, is a rugged, wild area, beloved by whitewater rafters and kayakers. Bordered by steep sandstone walls, the Cheat Canyon offers crucial habitat for the endangered Indiana bat and the Cheat three-toothed flat-spined land snail.

Allegheny Wood Products' logging is a violation of the Endangered Species Act. Negotiations failed to get Allegheny Wood Products to agree not to log sensitive habitat along the steep canyon walls - so Friends of Blackwater, the West Virginia Sierra Club, the Cheat Lake Environment and Recreational Club, and the Coopers Rock Foundation pushed ahead with a suit. The trial is scheduled for September in U.S. District Court in Elkins, WV. We've hired terrific lawyers and scientists to protect crucial endangered species habitat.



*You are cordially invited to attend a
Cheat Canyon Fundraiser*

*at
Forks of Cheat Winery*

from 6-9 pm on August 3, 2006

*Proceeds will be used to fund the campaign to
protect endangered species in the Cheat
Canyon. For more information
contact FOB at 304-345-7663
or send e-mail to
outreach@saveblackwater.org*



Lawsuit filed to stop Cheat Canyon logging

Three environmental groups have sued Allegheny Wood Products Inc. to stop the company from logging portions of the scenic Cheat River Canyon. In their lawsuit, the groups allege that the logging would illegally harm protected endangered snails and bats and important habitat for those species. Charleston lawyers Josh Barrett and Molly McGinley Han filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Sierra Club chapter, the Cheat Lake Environment and Recreation Association and Friends of Blackwater. In late 2002, the administration of then-Gov. Bob Wise announced plans to buy the Canyon to turn it into a public wildlife-management area. But in May 2003, Allegheny

Energy announced that it had finalized the sale of 5,600 acres of the Canyon and nearby Big Sandy Creek Gorge to Petersburg-based Allegheny Wood. Since 1997, Allegheny Wood owner John Crites has been under fire from conservationists for his purchase and subsequent logging of 3,000 acres of Blackwater Canyon in Tucker County. The Wise administration bid \$9.4 million in grants and pledges for the Cheat Canyon property. When Allegheny Energy revealed that Crites had bid \$9.75 million, the state came up with another \$500,000, for a total of \$9.9 million. Allegheny Energy sold to the timber company anyway. The Cheat Canyon, including Allegheny Wood's property, con-

tains important habitat for the threatened Cheat three-toothed snail and the endangered Indiana Bat, the lawsuit notes. The timber company's Cheat property accounts for nearly a third of the snail's entire known range. "It is impossible to conduct normal road building or logging activities in this location without some adverse impacts to this snail's habitat and likely harm to individual snails," the lawsuit says. Company officials have not "implemented the most basic protection for Indiana bats," the suit says - restricting logging until after Nov. 15, when most bats are believed to be hibernating. In July 2003, Allegheny Wood asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to

declare that its logging would not harm threatened or endangered species. Agency officials declined, the lawsuit says, and "expressed concerns" that the company's activities would harm these species. In October 2004, then-DNR Director Ed Hamrick also told Allegheny Wood that his agency was concerned about the impacts on endangered species in the canyon, the suit says. Hamrick told the company that it needed to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan, or HCP, for its Canyon activities. The lawsuit says that the company has never done so.

Based on a Charleston Gazette article by Ken Ward, April 12, 2005



To provide education about the natural and historical wonders of the Blackwater Canyon.

From wilderness explorers and illustrators like Porte Crayon, to a landmark African American case in the West Virginia Supreme Court, to the family tales of settlers who worked in the coke ovens from Italy, Germany, Croatia and other faraway places, the Blackwater area is full of fascinating stories. Natural wonders vary from the grandest rapids to the quietest old growth forest.



Blackwater Roots

FOB'S HERITAGE PUBLICATIONS

Friends of Blackwater has published historic walking tour brochures, and staff members have been leading historic tours for the towns of Parsons, Davis and Thomas. We've also published three issues of a history tabloid called "Blackwater Roots," featuring the stories and illustrations of Porte Crayon, who wrote about Blackwater in the 1850's. "Roots" was mailed to all Tucker County residents. Contact

us at outreach@saveblackwater.org for your copy. Developing signage and a museum along the historic rail trail near the town of Thomas from Coketon (site of the old coke ovens) to Douglas has been proposed by Friends of Blackwater. Our discovery of the Coketon Colored School controversy led to staging of a courtroom drama about J.R. Clifford, West Virginia's first black lawyer, and his landmark 1898 WV Supreme Court civil case.

J.R. CLIFFORD COURTROOM DRAMA, HARPERS FERRY Aug. 17

In 1898, West Virginia's first African-American attorney, John Robert Clifford (1848-1933) won a landmark case for Coketon Colored School teacher Carrie Williams. The foundation of the Coketon schoolhouse where Ms. Williams worked still sits along the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail. FOB's Clifford-Williams Project, housed at our Charleston office, is now spreading the word about this newly-rediscovered bit of history. The vehicle is a



J. R. CLIFFORD.
play produced by West Virginia State Supreme Court Justice Larry Starcher and attorney Tom Rodd.

On Aug. 17, at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Justice Starcher will lead a celebrity cast as the courtroom drama goes on stage at the

GOALS FOR 2006:

- ✿ Continue to distribute information to all age groups about nature and history of the area.
- ✿ Publish children's books about the ecology of the Blackwater Canyon watershed.
- ✿ Plan the 2007 Blackwater BioBlitz
- ✿ Produce the Clifford Niagara play at our October 8th Blackwater Challenge 1st Annual FUNdraising event.
- ✿ Produce two more issues of Blackwater Roots.

OUR PARTNERS:

Tucker County Historical Society, WV Humanities Council, Clifford-Niagara Project, Nisource, North Fork Watershed Project, Mountain State Bar Association, WV Department of Education, Appalachian Community Fund

Niagara Movement Centennial, sponsored by the National Park Service, at Curtis Freewill Baptist Church in Harpers Ferry WV. Tickets are free, but space is limited; call Guinevere Roper at National Park Service, 304-535-6166. To volunteer in any capacity call Maria at Friends of Blackwater, 304-345-7663.

BLACKWATER NATURE EDUCATION BIO-BLITZ 2007

BOOK SERIES

OSM-Vista volunteer Janelle Faron, now completing her year of service, has completed two children's activity books—one about Blackwater's special habitats, and another about the Blackwater watershed. Already they've been used to

teach children in local schools. Order our children's natural history activity books for kids in your life; Vol. I on Habitats and Blackwater's Special Critters, and Vol. II, the Blackwater Watershed.

BLACKWATER HABITATS



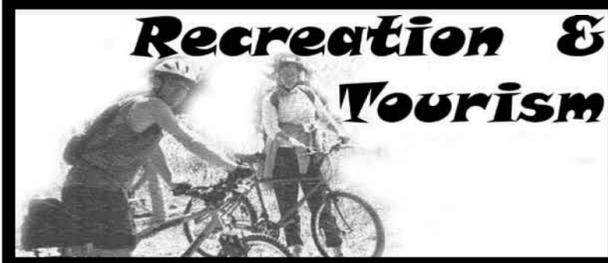
BLACKWATER NATURE BOOK SERIES VOLUME I

The first meeting of the Blackwater BioBlitz 2007 planning committee was held June 3rd. The BioBlitz will be a 24 hour survey of rare species in Blackwater Falls State Park, led by science professors and researchers.

Bayer CropScience has graciously provided the initial seed funding for this project. The Blitz will produce a final report and special collections of plants and insects available to future researchers.

We are currently

looking for scientists to act as team leaders for the Bio-Blitz, to be held in June 2007, and are actively seeking volunteers to assist the team leaders. If you are interested please contact us at (304) 345-7663.



Recreation & Tourism

Promoting recreational opportunities in the Blackwater area

GOALS FOR 2006:

- ✿ Hold Blackwater Challenge Event
- ✿ Lead hikes through Blackwater Canyon.
- ✿ Assist with trail maintenance and bridge construction to complete the new trail along the Blackwater River from Blackwater Falls State Park to the town of Davis.
- ✿ Protect the Rail-Trail.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✿ Be a tour leader.
- ✿ Share stories of your trip to Blackwater on our website.
- ✿ Join the Blackwater Challenge Fund Raising Team.
- ✿ Volunteer for Trail maintenance.
- ✿ Donate time, dollars, decking lumber or concrete for the bridge in the Park.

OUR PARTNERS:

Blackwater Falls State Park The Conservation Fund - Nisource
WV Trails Coalition - Tucker Co. Trails

The Blackwater Challenge

... is a family weekend of bike riding, hiking, boating, art, theater, and games to raise money for Friends of Blackwater.

Stretch your mind, your body and your wallet to support a worthy cause.

Participants will raise a minimum \$300 each by pledging to complete 2 events planned for October 8th in Tucker County, WV.

Families who accompany the Blackwater teams can also take part in exciting activities.

Followed by a Saturday night awards banquet.

COME AND ENJOY THE FALL FOLIAGE AND BLACKWATER CANYON'S SCENIC BEAUTY

Think you are interested? Contact us at 304-345-7663 or outreach@saveblackwater.org



T is for TOURISM

HOW FOB IS PROMOVING TOURISM & RECREATION IN THE BLACKWATER CANYON

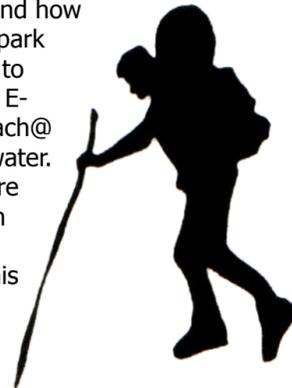
We were able to pool several grants to sponsor the construction of a bridge in Blackwater Falls State Park in partnership with Tucker County Trails.

We have a printable map of the

Blackwater area available on our website with a list of places to stay and things to do in Tucker County. Our on-line newsletters profile a number of these green businesses.

Additionally, we have published a report on the value of public land to

the Tucker County economy and how a national park would add to that value. E-mail outreach@saveblackwater.org for more information about ordering this report.



STATE REPORTS ECONOMIC INCREASE DUE TO TOURISM

According to the WV Division of Tourism, in a press release for Tourism Week in May 2006, travelers to the Mountain State spend more than \$3.4 billion a year, or \$9.3 million per day, generating \$536 million in tax revenue each year and supporting 41,000 jobs. Without those travel-generated tax revenues, each household in West Virginia would have to pay an additional \$730 in state and local taxes to maintain current service levels. Travel spending in West Virginia has increased by 11.4 percent per year since 2000.

In Memory and Honor...

Jane Avery's dog Maxcie, part German Shepherd, died after a long and happy 18 year life, part of which was spent as mascot of Our Town Theater in Oakland, Md., where Jane is artistic director. Maxcie was a special pal to the kids in the theater's youth program, breaking the ice for those who were shy or socially awkward. Jane's friend Linda Reeves of Aurora, WV, often goes to Blackwater Canyon and came up with the idea of a donation in memory of Maxcie the dog. "I just like to sit on the rocks and look out over the Canyon. It's a treasure," says Linda. "We're fortunate to have an expansive landscape like this. I just like to know that place is there, and know it's somewhere I can always go."

Clayton Burger, age 89, of Middle River MD and his wife Anna honored the memory of Clayton's parents, Guy and Nina Burger, with a donation. Guy was a coal miner, working in small mines near Davis, Thomas, Benbush, Pierce, and Kempton. Guy and Nina farmed on five lots in Davis, where Clayton was born during the height of the timber boom. Nina worked in the old Warden Hotel on Second Street in Davis. The Burgers still own property in the town, including Nina's homeplace.

Madonna Carr of Akron, OH, donated in memory of her father Roy A. Carr, 1929-2000, who was born and raised in Dry Fork. A Korean War veteran, he moved to Ohio to work as a truck driver, but he often visited his trailer in Dry Fork. His brother still owns the

family farm, and several of the family camp together in their trailers and cabins.

"As kids we would visit Blackwater Falls," Madonna recalls. "I take my son there, my nieces have gone there. Blackwater Canyon is something my dad would have wanted to preserve. He didn't want anybody ruining 'God's country,' as he would have put it."

F. Ethan Fischer of Harpers Ferry WV made a donation in memory of his brother Mark. Ethan wrote: "Mark J.F. Fischer was a world traveler, Latin scholar, witty poet, yoga instructor, body worker and lawyer in Colorado. His translations of German philosophers as well as his book on Hatha Yoga await a wider publication. In 1987 Mark's heart stopped in Telluride; his widow Elaine has since become the longtime Mayor and later the County Commissioner. Mark loved the mountains of West Virginia as well as those of Colorado, and his spirit abides in high places."

Paul Lansky of Sioux Falls, SD donated to Friends of Blackwater in memory of his dear friend Ruth Naomi Hofer, who died Sept. 10, 2005. Paul was Ruthie's caregiver for 10 years. "She was an even tempered, lovable person and it was hard to lose her. The family all came together and gave her a great send-off," he wrote. Ruth loved music and dancing, collecting antiques, and fishing with her late husband Elvin Hofer. She loved the community of Sioux Falls and was a booster of the town's growth. She



Mark J.F. Fischer

also loved the wildness of the nearby Black Hills, "Your Blackwater Canyon must be like our Black Hills, beautiful and wild. Ruthie would have loved it," said Paul.

Filba Frasher of St. Albans, WV, donated in memory of his brother in law, Roger Martin of Glasgow, WV. He was an active hunter and fisherman. Mr. Frasher also supports his son Patrick's activities on behalf of Blackwater Canyon. "I was raised around Elkview," he says. "If my son's interested in preserving Blackwater Canyon, so am I. I see that Senator Byrd is also in favor of it, so that's a pretty strong ally."

Stephen and Carol Schimpf of Columbia, MD had a son, Charles Edward Schimpf, who died of a congenital heart disorder in 1979. They donated to Friends of Blackwater in his memory. "A friend of ours who also lost a son about that time gave us a white birch tree, and we planted it in the back yard. Now it's 27 years old, the same age Charles would have been," Carol says. The Schimpfs were introduced to the

Blackwater area by neighbors who came from West Virginia. They have had a summer cabin in Canaan Valley since before Charles was born. "We love the canyon, and we're glad our daughter has had a chance to see it," says Carol.

Barbara Schulz of Elkins, WV donated to Friends of Blackwater in memory of her husband Arnold Schulz, a U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologist, who died Dec. 26, 1997, a day shy of their 49th wedding anniversary. Arnold, along with Bill Wiley, led the annual Wildlife Walk from Blackwater Falls State Park, which is being held May 11-14 this year. "My favorite wildflower from the walks is the painted trillium," she says. "It's rare, and only grows in acid soil in high altitudes, it's white with a splash of red in the center." Mr. Schulz also served out West as a ranger and naturalist at Rocky Mountain National Park. He studied botany in the 1940s with the pioneer of West Virginia forest plants, Dr. Earl Core of West Virginia University and served in the state DNR before joining the Forest Service. Both Arnold and Barbara have enjoyed creating paintings of natural scenes.

Hazel Oliff of Maysville, WV, donated in memory of her father Charles E. Smith who was a pioneer in that Grant County farming community. In addition to farming, he, along with many neighbors, worked in the sawmills as the virgin timber was cut at the turn of the 20th century. Charles

raised a large family in a house which was located on the site of the current barn belonging to Carroll and Donna Cook. Donna is active in Friends of the Allegheny Front, calling attention to the impact on scenery, birds and bats posed by industrial wind turbines along the mountaintops.

Catherine Tebay, a West Virginia native practicing dentistry in Jackson, WV, has honored her father Talbott Tebay, of Parkersburg, also a dentist, with a donation to Friends of Blackwater Canyon. "A lot of my friends have hiked and kayaked the Canyon. It's a jewel," says Catherine. I enjoy all of Tucker County, and my favorite area is Dolly Sods. My dad is a fisherman—fly fishing, trout, and salt water—and he's a ruffed grouse hunter. He's taken me on West Virginia back roads to places I never knew existed. My dad supports more business in West Virginia. I want to convince him that tourism is going to help the economy more than extractive industries that trash our natural

resources. Thomas and Davis are really neat towns that attract tourists, a lot like this area of Wyoming."

Adele Thornton Lewis, an artist from Huntington, WV now living at Smith Mountain Lake near Wirtz, VA., donated in memory of her parents, Grayson and Adele Kershaw Thornton. Her mother, also an artist, did watercolors and made dioramas for various state parks. Young Adele turned the artistic gift into a profession, winning a portrait contest to paint a portrait of Gov. Jay Rockefeller. The picture hangs in the governors' hall of fame in the state Capitol building. Adele also used Blackwater Canyon landscapes as a favorite subject, holding a show at the Blackwater Falls state park lodge. An art professor, Bill Gerhold, held art workshops there, she recalled. "I always loved to go there; it was like a different country." Adele sends best wishes to all her friends in West Virginia.



Above & right: Charles E. Smith



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SOS! Save Our Squirrel!



Ginny, the West Virginia Flying Squirrel, Blackwater Canyon's mascot and her friends and relations -- could face extinction. The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to remove the squirrel from the legal protection of the Endangered Species list, even as the squir-

rel's habitat becomes more threatened by increased human activity in remote, high elevation old growth forests.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has been crippled in its ability to fulfill its conservation mission under the Bush admin-

istration, due to funding cuts and delisting directives from DC. On June 2, 2006, the Service announced its intention to delist the flying squirrel, plus review for possible delisting two West Virginia river mussels and the Cheat Snail. The Fish and Wildlife Service claims to have located 1,100 West Virginia Northern flying squirrels over the past 20 years. Is 50 squirrels a year, on over one million acres, "a lot"? We don't think so!!

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulates disturbance of the habitat of scientifically selected plants and animals, on private and public land. The ESA has been a "thorn in

the side" of some developers, timber operators, road builders, and coal companies, who have lobbied to get rid of the law, despite the extinction of multiple species worldwide each year. Popular support has kept the Endangered Species Act in place. Outdoor lovers have joined with Evangelical Christians, who recall the Biblical story of how Noah and his family saved the animals in the Ark.

Timber operators like John Crites of Allegheny Wood Products, the leading opponent of putting the entire Blackwater Canyon into public ownership, have contributed thousands of dollars to George W. Bush and West Virginia's

Republican Congresswoman, Shelley Moore Capito. Now it looks like payback time!

The Fish and Wildlife Service concedes that logging is the single biggest threat to the flying squirrel, and logging will continue to grow under the new Forest Service plan for the Mon Forest. "What the Fish and Wildlife Service fails to say is that older forests are essential to the squirrel, and that older growth habitat is constantly under threat," said Judy Rodd. "West Virginia Northern flying squirrels' main food source is underground mushrooms that thrive under old trees. The spores from the mush-

rooms are spread in squirrel manure. Ginny the flying squirrel glides through the forest, sowing her own future garden and enriching the forest floor. That's how this ecosystem works," Rodd explained. "The ESA works because it protects habitat, not just individual plants and animals. We don't believe that the Service has done enough research on the squirrel and its needs, or put the right measures in place to keep it from going extinct and disappearing forever." Fans of Ginny should stay tuned to the "SOS" campaign. The flying squirrel may have to go to court, to stop the delisting.