Working to protect West Virginia’s High Alleghenies, Blackwater River & Blackwater Canyon.

501 Elizabeth Street - Charleston, WV 25311 - phone: 304-345-7663 - fax: 304-345-3240 - www.saveblackwater.org - info@saveblackwater.org

Photo © Kent Mason
Our Mountain Stewards Summer Camp has wrapped up another successful year with ninety-eight campers from all across the region, ages 9-17 participating in the program in 2016! Despite heavy rain at times, our campers proved they can do more than just survive in the woods, they can truly thrive.

This year marked the beginning of a wonderful partnership with the Friends of Blackwater (FOB), and the United States Forest Service (USFS). Forty-eight high school-aged Mountain Stewards spent the week in the Blackwater Canyon working on FOB’s recent Lime Rock Trail project. The work involved erosion control and the removal of low and mid-level vegetation from an old logging road, now being converted into a mountain bike and hiking trail. The work was multifaceted—by the time Mountain Stewards hit the trail, the USFS had already come through with chainsaws, clearing large trees, and cutting through thickets of thorn-ridden greenbrier. Each group of campers worked hard to clear nearly a mile of trail each program week, with FOB picking up where the Stewards left off to see the project through. It wasn’t all work; days were balanced with afternoon adventures to learn about human and forest history at a local fire tower and the biodiversity of a wetland ecosystem. This investigation led to the identification of two types of carnivorous plants. Campers orienteered using a map and compass to a local coal reclamation site. They hiked through beautiful patches of blooming rhododendron high atop the canyon rim. They saw first-hand the impact of a natural resource extraction industry while also learning about, and seeing, the ability of the land to recover. Days were hot and muggy at times, and campers chose to spend ample time streamside at Big Run, swimming, journaling, and reflecting on the week’s achievements......

We believe it is vital for everyone, regardless of means, to have access to wild places, high quality experiential education, and meaningful stewardship opportunities. Thanks to generous donations we are able to offer this program on a sliding scale basis. This allows many of our campers to continue to return, summer after summer, and it is our hope that our program will continue to grow along with our campers. As we look out towards 2017, we are excited to pilot a farm-based stewardship camp, where campers will live, work, eat, learn, and play at a local farm. We will continue to offer trail-based programs and grow our partnership with FOB and the USFS. For more information on our summer program please access our website, like us on Facebook to see more photos and stay connected, or contact Melinda at mbrooks@mountain.org.

BLACKWATER TRAIL EXTRAVAGANZA!! SPECIAL THANKS!

As we wrap up the first year of work on trails in the Blackwater Canyon we want to thank all those who made this work possible. First we want to thank District Ranger Troy Waskey who threw his heart into this project and recruited a great team to open up one mile of the Rail Trail outside of Thomas and 9 miles of Limerock and Canyon Rim Trails. Gray Buckles, recreation specialist was key to training and supervising young volunteers from the Mt Institute and WVU. He is also the chain saw guru. Jeff Wood and his team cleared the Rail Trail section and installed bollards. Fairfax Stone gave us gravel and limestone sand to create a smooth surface for hiking and biking. We couldn’t have done the work without a $12,000 grant from the National Forest Foundation which we matched with individual donations and additional funds from Dominion Foundation and the American Hiking Society. This money helped us pay for advertising, the trail boss, materials and travel for volunteers. We look forward to another year of trail work and hope you can come along.

Karen Watson volunteered on Lime Rock Trail.
The landscape architecture program at West Virginia University worked with Friends of Blackwater and the Vandalia Heritage Foundation to develop a design for a new trailhead at the Buxton-Landstreet (B&L) Building in Coketon. The conceptual design creates a multifunctional space in an underused area and builds upon the foundation of an arts/culture hub, industrial heritage establishment and recreational asset. Working with Laura Kurtz Kuhns, President and Chief Executive Officer of Vandalia Heritage, David Young and Judy Rodd of Friends of Blackwater; the space is envisioned as a trailhead and event venue that interprets the history of mining in the community, the company store, engineering building and company town housing. The B&L trailhead creates a resting, picnicking, and informative space for residents and visitors to the railtrail of the North Fork of Blackwater Canyon. Play structures for children are drawn from the history of Tucker County, paving details evoke the railroad that once ran along the Francis Grade to Francis and Davis, and the design takes full advantage of the views from the site and the significant narrative that the views communicate. As a hub for community members and tourists alike, the design follows the premise that the Buxton-Landstreet Building and the Engineering Building have the potential to become one beginning point of the Blackwater Canyon trail experience celebrating heritage and nature-based recreation. The design envisions locations for installing local artworks, providing space and facilities for food trucks, markets, bike rentals and performance. Other amenities include wayfinding, thresholds and maps of local trails; interpretive panels; a pergola and foldable café tables and chairs for event seating; space and a bicycle plaza with racks, compressed air- ’a public bike pump’ and seating. The plan seeks to establish a public space designed and built to reflect local values and traditions, as well as sustainable design approaches, including bioswales for stormwater management, the use of native vegetation, using local materials and crafts, and being fully ADA accessible. As a ‘concept’, the goal of the design is to gather more community input and to generate local interest that will lead to grant applications and implementation. This project is supported by a grant from the Benedum Foundation to the Tucker County Cultural District Authority, through the Tucker Community Foundation. For further information contact: Peter Butler, Associate Professor- Landscape Architecture Program, School of Design and Community Development, West Virginia University at 304.293.5462 or email at pebutler@mail.wvu.edu.

Buxton & Landstreet Trailhead-Master Plan
"MYTHBUSTER" CORRIDOR H ROUTE UNDER REVIEW

By David Young

The current proposed route alignment for the section of the Corridor H highway coming east from Parsons – ascending the storied flanks of the High Alleghenies -- would intersect Route 32 between the towns of Davis and Thomas. This alignment proposal has not been approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

As currently proposed, the four-lane highway would cross the Canyon of North Fork of the Blackwater near the small town of Douglas, including a giant land bridge over the historic coke ovens. The rare Virginia big-eared bat, protected by the Endangered Species Act, has been found along the current proposed alignment.

However, the proposed alignment for the highway may be shifted slightly north, to intersect with Route 219 just north of Thomas. This alignment would keep major truck traffic out of Thomas, and many think would lead to significant long-term environmental and community benefits.

Under this alignment, the mountain communities of Davis and Thomas would reap the many blessings of unity -- versus being “bisected” by a four-lane highway.

Bat studies are being conducted, and new alignments evaluated. With all proposed routes on the table, NOW is a good time to focus on the benefits of a northern route.

Top 10 reasons why the towns of Davis and Thomas stand better united versus bisected.

The current proposed route alignment route will:

10. Disturb coal geology and pollute the North Fork with more Acid Mine Drainage.
9. Keep and increase huge, loud tri-axle truck traffic running through historic Thomas.
8. Reduce opportunities for complementary and collaborative tourism services, negatively impacting both towns’ economies.
7. Encroach on Blackwater Falls, WV’s most visited State Park, and diminish the visitor experience.
6. Undermine our quality of life, by separating these charming high mountain towns with a dangerous four lane highway.

Choosing an alternative Northern route will:

5. Promote pedestrian use by reducing truck traffic through historic Thomas and encouraging hiking and biking links between Davis and Thomas.
4. Preserve the scenic and cultural resources of the historic North Fork Canyon.
3. Protect Thomas’s link to recreational and cultural attractions in the Blackwater Canyon.
2. Avoid critical habitat of the Virginia big-eared bat and Ginny the flying squirrel.
1. Preserve the cultural, economic, and recreational linkages between Thomas and Davis.

Think about it, and let your voice be heard. You can send your comments to the

Thomas City Council
PO Box 248
Thomas, WV 26292

Davis City Council
PO Box 207
Davis, WV 26260

Federal Highway Administration
700 Washington St E # 200
Charleston, WV 25301

FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER RECOMMENDS AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE NORTH EAST OF THOMAS
LET'S DO THE GREENHOUSE BOOGIE!

by Thomas Rodd

Friends of Blackwater Board Member and volunteer Tom Rodd has been presenting our "Kitchen Klima Science" hands-on science education program around West Virginia, and the reception has been excellent. Experts agree that the ecology and economy of our beloved Allegheny Highlands are "On the Chopping Block" unless we rein in global warming – so we had better understand the problem!

We just finished a training in Morgantown for science teachers who are mentors in West Virginia University's trail-blazing Health Sciences and Technology Academy (it's called "HSTA" for short). In HSTA, rural and lower-income high school students can join a HSTA club -- and if they work hard, they can get full scholarships to study science in college! One HSTA mentor, Dave Ruediger from Tucker County High School, is leading 20 club members in making the tools to demonstrate climate change science to other students.

Thank you so much for supporting this important work!

FOREST SERVICE LOGGING PLAN USING OUTDATED CLIMATE SCIENCE

A Forest Service logging proposal is based on outdated science that ignores the importance of global warming and climate science. On August 13th, Friends of Blackwater group filed a 139-page comment letter that includes a scientific bibliography of more than 75 peer-reviewed studies. See a copy of the entire comment letter with attachments on our website at www.saveblackwater.org.

The letter states that a recent draft environmental assessment for the National Forest's proposed Big Mountain Project, which would involve logging near Spruce Knob National Recreation Area, is based on outdated science that ignores the seriousness of past and future temperature rise and extreme weather -- which threatens endangered species and forest ecology. The letter states, “numerous studies and reports have clearly established that the impacts of rising global temperatures are already affecting the Monongahela National Forest region, with increasing and accelerating effects to come;” and asks the Forest Service to withdraw and redo the assessment in light of current science.

Friends of Blackwater also raised concerns over the Mower Project and Upper Greenbrier North Project where logging could occur in “Ginny” the flying squirrel’s habitat and have very negative impacts. These actions seem to go against the MON Forest Plan. These problems have not been resolved.
1997: 3,000 acres in the Blackwater Canyon in Tucker County, West Virginia’s “Scenic Crown Jewel,” are sold to a timber company.  

2000: FOB is formed with the mission to protect the Canyon and the special places and creatures of the Allegheny Highlands region.

2000 - 2005: FOB campaigns add 625 acres – including iconic Lindy Point and the River Road Trail -- to Blackwater Falls State Park.

2002 - 2010: Eight-year-long FOB-led campaign defeats timber company plan to destroy the historic Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail.

2002 - present: FOB’s North Fork Watershed Project enlists hundreds of volunteers, students, and reclamation specialists to clean up streams.

2003 - present: FOB heritage programs celebrate regional history and community values. The J.R. Cliford Project, railroad heritage and the Lime Rock Reunion.

2004 - 2014: FOB lawsuit creates preserves for endangered Cheat snail, leading to 4,000 acre land acquisition for public use in Cheat Canyon.

2006 - present: FOB fights for “Ginny,” the West Virginia northern flying squirrel, keeping our Highlands “poster child” protected on most of her habitat in the Monongahela National Forest. Bats, too!

2009: Work begins to improve parks and trails in the Canyon region.

2013 - present: FOB brings public and scientific attention to impacts of climate change in the Highlands with ground-breaking conferences and school and community outreach.
WE SALUTE DR. ALLAN COMP FROM THE OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING

Allan Comp is a genius who blended reclamation of mine scarred lands and waters with community arts and heritage programs. With a focus on helping in the recovery of Appalachian mining communities from a century of pre-regulatory exploitation and neglect, Allen expanded that philosophy across the Department of the Interior. He served as the Project Officer for two teams of VISTA positions, one with the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement and the other spread across the Department of the Interior, bringing 125 VISTA Volunteers to some of the poorest communities in which the Department has a presence through the Abandoned Mine Lands programs. Allan helped Friends of Blackwater create the North Fork Watershed Project in Tucker County in 2002. He has received national awards for his work with the people of the Appalachian coal country, for his successful effort to engage the arts and humanities in environmental recovery and for his remarkable choreography of multiple federal agency partnerships, particularly with VISTA, in working with rural mining communities. A Senior Program Analyst at the Department of the Interior Office of Surface Mining, Allan was profiled by Orion Magazine, received a Phoenix Award from the EPA Brownfields Program, was named a Purpose Prize Fellow by Civic Ventures in 2007 and was the first federal employee ever to be named a National River Hero by River Network in 2009. In September of 2009 he was awarded the Service to America Medal in the Environment by the Partnership for Public Service, the highest award a federal employee can receive and first ever to recognize work with National Service. An historian with a long engagement in cultural resources, community redevelopment and environmental reclamation, Allan was once described as “a relaxed blend of John Muir, John Dewey and John the Baptist.” Thanks for all you have done, Allan. You are an inspiration to us all.

WELCOME SAVANNAH WING!

NEW AMERICORPS VISTA IN OUR THOMAS OFFICE

My name is Savannah Wing and I am incredibly excited to work with Friends of Blackwater for the next year as an AmeriCorps VISTA.

I recently graduated from Cornell University’s School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Through my studies and research I gained an appreciation for water as a vital resource. The role of water, and the importance of its quality, is often overlooked in our world. I knew I wanted to work with FOB after learning about the work being done around the North Fork Watershed, in addition to all of the other environmental advocacy projects. In the next year I hope to have helped in at least some small way to remediate the effects of Acid Mine Drainage, while working towards a healthier environment and an engaged community.

Orientation

Two days before I started my job with Friends of Blackwater, I drove 6 hours and landed in my new home: Thomas. As with every beginning there was a transitional period, an orientation. Within the first weeks of moving to Tucker County, I became acquainted with more than just the work that our organization does.

I got to imagine the changing face of Front Street through Thomas’s ups and downs as I was introduced to the history of this area.

I waded through the North Fork of the Blackwater River and watched the various tributaries mix their way to the bottom of Douglas Falls.

I was struck with the realization that the essence of a “small-town” is not the sparsity of population, but the abundance of personal relationships.

And perhaps most importantly, I was given the opportunity to expand my introduction to the Thomas and Davis region by working with many amazing people at some incredible organizations including Canaan Valley Institute, Backbone Farm, Tucker Community Foundation, Tucker County Development Authority, and the US Forest Service. I discovered the robust network of passionate, hardworking people that make this community what it is and for that I am wholly thankful. I am confident that I made the right choice in moving to Thomas and working with Friends of Blackwater and I am so grateful I get to live in, learn from, and be a part of this community.

Savannah Wing
Friends of Blackwater will soon monitor seventeen new sites in the Blackwater watershed, thanks to the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection’s Watershed Improvement Branch.

Beaver Creek, which empties into the Blackwater at Davis and runs along the new section of Corridor H, will be closely monitored at 14 sites. As with FOB’s monitoring on the North Fork of the Blackwater, Acid Mine Drainage is a priority; but we also plan to monitor for pollutants like sedimentation and fecal coliform. In addition to Beaver Creek, this new monitoring will include Yellow Creek, Freeland Run, and a site on the Blackwater River in Canaan Valley.

The grant will also pay for improvements to a discharge structure from the Coketon mine pool, so that we can measure outflow more accurately. This improved accuracy matters because discharge and pollutant concentration are important variables to inform a planned passive treatment system.

Friends of Blackwater is strengthening our commitment to improving the Blackwater River. To see how the above projects fit into our long term strategy, please stop by our office in Thomas or call. If you have extra time, consider volunteering; with the increase in monitoring we need volunteers in the field or in the office to enter data. Please contact David Young, Project Director, at 304-345-7663 extension 6.

FOB RECEIVES GRANT TO EXPAND WATER MONITORING
by David Young

HIGHLANDS REUNIONS LIFT SPIRITS

What is more fun than a big reunion in the Allegheny Highlands? This Summer of 2016, Friends of Blackwater was part of two great get-togethers to celebrate the heritage of these beautiful mountains --and to remember how the hills have been illuminated by many brave and creative people.

Reunion Number One was held on the weekend of August 12-14 in Moorefield, in Hardy County. Almost 100 people from as far as California came to the Clifford-Kent reunion, headquartered at the elegant South Branch Inn. The descendants of two “free black” families who settled in the South Branch Valley gather every two years, to keep their family flame alive.

Of course, our Blackwater heroes J. R. Clifford and Carrie Williams are well known to the Clifford-Kent gathering – the 2006 reunion was part of our Niagara Movement Centennial program at Harpers Ferry in 2006. Tom Rodd was in Moorefield this year distributing copies of our new book featuring stories from Clifford’s life, and eating some great reunion food! Thanks to all the FOB supporters who help us spread the word on these great West Virginians!

Speaking of great reunion food, let’s switch to the fabulous Lime Rock Reunion in the Town of Hendricks in Tucker County!

After a year of hard work, we were proud to show off the new gate and access road to the Lime Rock Cemetery, in the heart of the Blackwater Canyon. The U.S. Forest Service has been a great partner in protecting and preserving this important historical site. We had an informative lecture on Henry Gassaway Davis by Lars Byrn of the Barbour County Historical Society. Members of the Tucker County Historical Association like Rose Davis and Connie Eye have helped spread interest in this local history. Roy Teter has put in countless hours tracking down descendants of Lime Rock Residents. Not to mention the great food, and musical entertainment by Tom Rodd and Roy Teter. Go to our website to view them singing Lime Rock Gals, Won’t You Come Out Tonight and the Lime Rock Blues. Special thanks to our MC Dan Barkley. Again, it’s FOB donors who make our part in these community events possible. We are building a circle of love and protection around the special places of the Highlands – thanks for being part of this effort!
MEMORIES OF A TUCKER COUNTY CHILDHOOD

by Joseph Dumire


My Dad was born in Benbush, near Thomas, and finished his education at Thomas High School. He entered the Marine Corps during World War II, where he served in the Pacific theatre. He came home and took a surveying position with the Western Maryland Railroad at Coketon.

He began dating Mother, who worked as a bookkeeper at the Buxton and Landstreet company store, which is now where Friends of Blackwater have their offices. After a period of time as a mine boss near Philippi, Dad went back with the Western Maryland at Coketon.

The field office of the Western Maryland at Coketon (the old Engineering Building) oversaw the coal, timber and real estate holdings for the Eastern portion of West Virginia, and the Western portion of Maryland. Dad’s duties were as a surveyor and draftsman.

I remember going to the office with Dad and exploring the office while he worked. It was a treasure trove of many things such as an old Photostat machine, core samples taken while exploring coal reserves, vaults containing old maps and other documents, many antique phones, an Ediphone now in the possession of the Tucker County Historical Society, and the company seal (now in my possession), as well as a number of antique roll top desks. Dad kept warning me not to play with one of the vault doors. However, the warning went unheeded and not only did I close the vault door, I locked it. He ended up having to call the Baltimore, MD office of the railroad to secure the combination to the vault door.

One summer during my years at West Virginia University at Morgantown, the Western Maryland was doing some core drilling on Dolly Sods to find out what coal reserves were there prior to the area becoming The Dolly Sods Wilderness Area. I spent the summer with Dad running all over Dolly Sods. How amazing it was to witness the bog areas, the one sided trees, the many rock formations, and the overall beauty. Even though Dolly Sods has a reputation for numerous rattlesnakes, we had only seen one rattlesnake all summer and it was dead in the road.

After the retirement of Al Salvato, Dad took over the operation of the Coketon office until his death on April 25, 1981. The Western Maryland was unable to find anyone else as familiar with the territory as was Dad, and ended up closing the Coketon operation during 1983. I miss my father and cherish my memories of him.

A LINDY POINT WEDDING

Photo courtesy of Ron Eckard’s niece. This mystery couple was married at Lindy Point. Does anyone know who they might be?

DOUGLAS FALLS

David Young and Stephen Strothers - “Stro” - photographed acid mine drainage in the North Fork of the Blackwater using a drone. This photo of Douglas Falls was taken at low water on October 4, 2016.
IN MEMORY OF HENRY HOFFSTOT, FOB'S OLDEST DONOR

Mr. Henry Hoffstot of Pittsburgh PA died Monday, June 29, 2015. He was 98. He was a son of the late Henry Phipps Hoffstot and Marguerite Martin. Mr. Hoffstot was born on Dunmoyle Street in 1917 and grew up in the Fifth Avenue mansion that was his longtime home. He graduated from Shady Side Academy in 1935 and earned his bachelor’s degree from Harvard in 1939, returning to that school for his law degree in 1942. He joined the Reed Smith law firm that year but his employment was interrupted by the war. His grandfather, Frank Norton Hoffstot, owned Pressed Steel Car Company, a manufacturer of passenger and freight railroad cars on the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and McKees Rocks. Henry was a philanthropist, preservationist, a lawyer and a gentleman.

Mr. Hoffstot died at his Shadyside home, a 21-room mansion built in 1914. A lover of symphonic music and Mozart compositions, especially “Cosi Fan Tutte,” Mr. Hoffstot used his landmark home to stage an annual benefit for Opera Theater of Pittsburgh. Those magical evenings, which featured dinner and the staging of a chamber opera in the great hall and on the grand staircase, kept the arts group afloat, said Mildred Posvar, who founded it in 1978. Thrift was part of Mr. Hoffstot’s Presbyterian bent. He regularly rode the bus to his Downtown law office so he could read the newspaper. In fine weather, he wore seersucker suits and a straw boater while walking on Fifth Avenue from Shadyside to Downtown. An expert on corporate governance, he wrote the bylaws for the Carnegie Institute, the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Phipps Conservatory and the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. He served on more than 30 boards, including the Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens, Carnegie Institute, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, Visiting Nurse Association of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

As an antique car enthusiast, in 2007, Henry drove to Blackwater in his 1953 Bentley with goose down filled seats and no air conditioning. He was 90 at the time. He spent the night at Blackwater Falls State Park enjoying the view of the spectacular Canyon and learning more about our work. We are proud to have known Henry as a supporter and a family friend. Besides his son Phipps, Mr. Hoffstot is survived by his daughter, Thayer H. Drew and five grandchildren. He is buried at his family’s ancestral farm in New ALAN REGINALD CLARKE, WV RAILROAD HISTORIAN

Alan Reginald Clarke, 77, of Flemington, WV passed away Saturday, February 27, 2016, at United Hospital Center with his family by his side. Alan was born July 14, 1938, in Wolverhampton, England; Alan earned his PhD in Chemistry & Physics from the University of Sheffield. Upon graduation Alan moved to Scotland to study glass technology. In 1966, he left Scotland and moved to Salem, WV, with his wife and children to work at a glass works. He began teaching Chemistry and Physics at Salem College in 1970. Alan was paralyzed in 1975 as a result of a fall while mountain climbing in upstate New York. Undaunted by his handicap, he moved to Woodbridge, VA in 1979 to work for Northern Virginia Community College where he went on to become the Division Chairman of the Science Department. After retirement, Alan and Patricia moved back to WV in 2004. Alan had a keen interest in the history of the railroad industry in WV. This interest led to his writing four published books on the subject: “Coal & Coke Railway,” “West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh Railway,” “Western Maryland Railway in West Virginia – the photographs of G. H. Broadwater” and “West Virginia & Pittsburgh Railroad.” He was working on his fifth book when he died. Alan spoke about the Western Maryland Railway at our Lime Rock Reunion in Hendricks in 2014. We treasure his wonderful books and are saddened by his death.
MAE ELLEN WILSON, WORKED TO SAVE BLACKWATER CANYON

Mae Ellen died at age 81 on May 27th. She was married to Julian Martin. She loved nature and native flower gardening and was a certified West Virginia Master Naturalist. She enjoyed hiking and visiting state and national parks and forests. She served as an officer or finance committee member in the West Virginia Native Plant Society, the Kanawha State Forest Foundation, and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

Mae Ellen presented programs promoting the preservation of Blackwater Canyon and helped gather 5,000 signatures on the Save Blackwater Canyon petition. She walked with Larry Gibson in his Walk for the Mountains which was sponsored by the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. Mae Ellen was a driving force in getting legislation passed to protect Kanawha State Forest from more ravages of gas well drilling.

Mae Ellen was a feminist, and a pioneer in the banking industry. She began her career at Kanawha Valley Bank as a switchboard operator in 1963. She accepted a challenging job offer from Kanawha Banking and Trust to become West Virginia’s first female correspondent banker. Mae Ellen retired in 1996 as a Senior Vice-President at United National Bank. She earned a diploma from the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University. At age 54, she graduated from the University of Charleston—a persistent goal that began when it was Morris Harvey College. All this while raising four children. Mae Ellen listened to opera on the radio for some fifty years. She was not at all pleased with public radio when they removed it from her Saturday afternoons.

JOE RIEFFENBERGER, FOB ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Joseph Carol Rieffenberger, age 89 years, a resident of Elkins, passed away Saturday August 27, 2016. He was born December 2, 1926 in Austin, MN. He was married for 43 years to Mary Moore Rieffenberger who preceded him in death. He began his illustrious career as a Wildlife Biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) on August 10, 1953 and retired November 30, 1999. Joe conducted research on wood ducks, woodcock, and other species throughout his WVDNR tenure. However, he was best known as “The Bear Man” for his research that restored the population of the black bear, our West Virginia state animal. Joe gave advice to Friends of Blackwater on black bears mauling our flying squirrel hair snares. (They liked the peanut butter bait). Joe was known for his intellect and his unique woodworking skills including making chainsaw bear sculptures which he donated to FOB. Joe was an active member of environmental organizations; among them were Friends of Blackwater, The Brooks Bird Club, The Highlands Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy. Joe supported several philanthropic endeavors including the local Arts Bank. He also sponsored so many third world foster children over the years that he lost count. We will miss “The Bear Man”.

NEW! RAILROAD HERITAGE BROCHURE

Blackwater Canyon’s railroad history comes to life in Friends of Blackwater’s heritage brochure. The historic map inside explains where Davis Coal and Coke’s buildings were located along the current rail trail from Thomas to Hendricks. To order send one dollar ($1) to:

FOB
501 Elizabeth St.
Charleston, Wv 25311

RUN FOR IT BLACKWATER TEAM!

Our Friends of Blackwater Run For It Team took home the race day prize for most enthusiastic with a $1000 award! Congratulations!
CONTENTS
LIMEROCK TRAIL PROJECT IN BLACKWATER CANYON 2
BLACKWATER TRAIL EXTRAVAGANZA!! SPECIAL THANKS! 2
NORTH FORK TRAILHEAD AT THE B&L BUILDING 3
"MYTHBUSTER" CORRIDOR H ROUTE UNDER REVIEW 4
LET'S DO THE GREENHOUSE BOOGIE! 5
UADA LOGGING PLAN USING OUTDATED CLIMATE SCIENCE 5
FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER'S FIFTEEN YEARS.... 6
WELCOME SAVANNAH WING! 7
WE SALUTE DR. ALLAN COMP 7
FOB RECEIVES GRANT TO EXPAND WATER MONITORING 8
HIGHLANDS REUNIONS LIFT SPIRITS 8
MEMORIES OF A TUCKER COUNTY CHILDHOOD 9
A LINDY POINT WEDDING 9
DOUGLAS FALLS 9
IN MEMORY....... 10
NEW! RAILROAD HERITAGE BROCHURE 11
RUN FOR IT BLACKWATER TEAM! 11

**Holiday Order Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Save Blackwater Canyon Bat T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginny the Flying Squirrel T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save Blackwater Salamander T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking Ginny T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking Ginny T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing Ginny T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Climbing Ginny T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishin' Blackwater T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. R. Clifford T-shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Blackwater Canvas Tote Bag</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plush Flying Squirrel Puppet</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plush Bat Puppet</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eckards: From the Rhine to Limerock</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories from WV's Civil Rights History</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Shaluta Photos - 11x14&quot; Matte Print*</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Shaluta Photos - 16x20&quot; Mounted Canvas Print*</td>
<td></td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Membership Sale: Save $20 when you order 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>$35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/$50.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please visit [www.saveblackwater.org](http://www.saveblackwater.org) to view the Steve Shaluta photos available. You can also see them on page 7.