Friends of Blackwater

Celebrating the Winter of 2010 ~ We Survived!

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

501 Elizabeth Street - Charleston, WV 25311 ★ 1-877-WVA-LAND ★ fax 304-345-3240 ★ www.saveblackwater.org ★ info@saveblackwater.org

Photo ©akaflash.com, Ludovic Moore
Dear Judy,

When we began to work on protecting the Blackwater Canyon, we thought about what inspirational vision would excite people. We decided that making the Canyon part of a new National Park in West Virginia would be a great idea. So we studied how National Parks are created and how they can help local economies. We found out that the best single way to build a local tourism economy is with a National Park. We also round out that only the greatest landscapes will qualify for National Park status.

Now years later, the new Administration is in "sync" with our vision and wants to create New National Parks – and the Blackwater Canyon region is a real center of interest!

We believe that the time is right to create West Virginia's first National Park. High Allegheny National Park would be a tremendous shot in the arm for the Highlands economy. And a National Park will give national and global recognition to the Mountain State's scenic granteur on the 150th Anniversary of the Creation of West Virginia – Our Sesquicentennial.

We have an exciting opportunity here that we can grab with both hands! We can create High Allegheny National Park!

Stay tuned for details!

Sincerely,
Judy Rodd

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**A New National Park**: West Virginia

- **High Allegheny National Park**
- **Blackwater Canyon**
- **Seneca Rocks**
- **Bear Rocks**
- **Dolly Sods**, The Durbin Rocket and Blackwater Falls.

**Top to Bottom**: Seneca Rocks, Bear Rocks at Dolly Sods, The Durbin Rocket and Blackwater Falls.

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**NATIONAL PARKS**

- **High Allegheny National Park**: West Virginia's new National Park
- **Blackwater Canyon**: A new National Park
- **Seneca Rocks**: A natural wonder
- **Bear Rocks**: A historic site
- **Dolly Sods**: A wilderness area
- **Blackwater Falls**: A scenic waterfall

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**Ginny**, the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel, is now in court -- in front of Judge Emmet G. Sullivan of the US District Court in Washington. Her lawsuit says that the Fish and Wildlife Service must restore endangered species protection to this beloved and rare creature of the West Virginia Highlands.

Ginny’s main lawyer is “legal eagle” Jessica Alimy, of the firm Meyer, Gitlinstein, and Crystal. The government will turn over their records by April, and oral argument will be in October. Thanks so much to all of Ginny’s friends for helping make this important case possible -- and a special shout out to everyone who adopted Ginny’s babies.

Meanwhile, Ginny’s unique forest habitat is being degraded, all across the West Virginia Highlands, by unregulated timbering and other land disturbance. You can help Ginny (and her forest friends) by writing to the President and the Department of Interior, to make them aware of Ginny’s plight.

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**YES! I WILL HELP SAVE GINNY AND HER BABIES!**

**Please send adoption packet to:**

- **Name:**
- **Address:**
- **City, State and Zip Code:**

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**Adopt a Northern Flying Squirrel**

These tiny flying squirrel babies need your help to survive against threats of logging, road building, and industrial development that will destroy their mountain homes. Your generous donation will help us advocate for this rare species and litigate to bring back its full federal protection under the Endangered Species Act for West Virginia’s Northern Flying Squirrel.

- **$25.00**: A set of two of the baby’s photos, information card and a Virtually Adoption Certificate
- **$50.00**: A set of two of the baby’s photos, information card, Species Habitat Certificate, Inscribed and Stuffed Flying Squirrel
- **$100.00**: A set of two of the baby’s photos, information card, Species Habitat Certificate, Inscribed and Stuffed Flying Squirrel, Original Adoption Certificate

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**Statehood Superstars: Celebrating WV’s Sesquicentennial**

- **12-13**: The J.R. Clifford African American Heritage Map
- **11**: Keeping King’s Memory Alive
- **11**: Keeping King’s Memory Alive
- **10**: Athey Lutz
- **9-10**: Winter Birds

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**Legal Brief**

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to support recent moves by the National Park Service to re-establish endangered species protection for the West Virginia northern flying squirrel, the signature species of West Virginia’s high elevation boreal forests. The Bush Administration failed to follow the Recovery Plan written for the endangered species by top scientists in this field and removed all federal protections from this rare nocturnal mammal in September of 2008. This rush to judgment under the Bush Administration was based on shoddy science and ignored the opinions of experts on Appalachian flying squirrels.

We support the legal brief filed by Friends of Blackwater, The Wildlands Society, The Center for Biological Diversity, the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Heartwood, and Wild South challenging the delisting. We ask you and the Department of Interior to rescind the rule that removed the squirrel from the Endangered Species list.

Sincerely,
Ct. Secretary of Interior Salazar, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 Street NW, Washington, DC 20240

Congressman Nick Rahall 301, Prince St, Beckley, WV 25801-5313

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**Adopt Ginny**

“Ginny” is in Court -- and Needs Our Help More than Ever!

Below is a sample letter and addresses. If you have internet service, a similar letter and the e-mail addresses are on Friends of Blackwater’s website, www.saveblackwater.org. Either way, making your voice heard can make a difference for Ginny and her babies!

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**Judy Lutz**

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More West Virginia Caves Infected by White Nose Syndrome

On February 23rd the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that they had found the deadly bat disease White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in West Virginia’s most famous cave: Hel homme. Hel Home is the largest and most important bat cave in the state. An estimated 200,000 bats spend the winter hibernating in the cave. The cave is also important on a national level as it is designated critical habitat for two federally endangered species: the Indiana bat and the Virginia big-eared bat. Hel Home supports nearly 13,000 Indiana bats and 5,000 Virginia big-eared bats. The other bats in the cave are mostly the common little brown bat. This single cave supports more than 40 percent of the world’s entire hibernating population of Virginia big-eared bats. WNS is a serious wildlife health crisis estimated to have caused the death of more than 1 million bats in the United States during the past three years. It is named for a white fungus that appears on the muzzles and wings of hibernating bats. Once a cave is infected, the fungus spreads rapidly through the bat population, and the mortality may exceed 90 percent. Hel Home was first seen in early 2006 in a cave near Albany, N.Y. It has spread more than 500 miles to caves in 10 states from New Hampshire to Tennessee. Last winter it was documented in four caves in Pendleton County. At least 21 of the 25 turbines sites planned for 2010 and to abandon forever 21 of the 25 turbines sites constructed in 2009. Plaintiffs MCRE, Animal Welfare Institute, and Dave Cowan will continue to monitor Beech Ridge's compliance and make positive suggestions to US Fish and Wildlife Service during the permitting process. MCRE is extremely grateful to all who have given their support over the last 4 3 years and we are especially grateful to Eric Gitzin ter, Bill Eubanks, and Kathy Meyers for this unprecedented environmental victory in federal court over a huge renewable energy project. The ripple of this decision will reach very far. While MCRE and its two thousand supporters remain convinced that massive installation of industrial wind turbines on these 21 forested ridges will create more problems than it will solve, we believe our actions have sent a vitaly needed message to the wind industry as a whole. Renewable energy projects do not get a pass on existing laws designed to protect endangered species and the natural environment. And, although industrial wind turbines were not the issue in Greenbrier County’s highest ridges, they will forever be banned on those ridges in closest proximity to endangered Indiana bat caves.

Treat Unlimited Opposes Gas Drilling in the Monongahela National Forest

Marcellus Shale drilling would destroy native Eastern brook trout habitat.

Arlington, Va.—In a unanimous vote, Trout Unlimited’s (TU) West Virginia Council voted in favor of a moratorium on natural gas leasing in the Monongahela National Forest. The vote, which occurred at the council’s general membership meeting on February 19 in Charleston, was the first decision made by the state council regarding drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation, a region that is rich in natural gas resources and includes portions of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia and Ohio. The hydro-fracturing process used to release gas from the Marcellus Shale formation requires up to 8 million gallons of water per well to extract the gas from deep underground. In addition, an undisclosed blend of chemicals is used in hydro-fracturing. Water withdrawal from streams and rivers, and particularly the treatment of the chemically-laden wastewater from drilling sites, has proven to be of significant concern in several areas in Pennsylvania where Marcellus drilling has occurred. “TU’s West Virginia state council and its individual members should be commended for taking this critically important position regarding the protection of native brook trout populations on the Monongahela National Forest,” said Bryan Moore, TU’s Vice President for Volunteer Operations and Watersheds. "The Monongahela is not only a treasured resource for the residents of the state and the mid-Atlantic region, but also contains 85% of West Virginia’s remaining brook trout populations,” Moore continued. “We simply cannot afford to use these sensitive public lands as an experimental testing ground for a drilling process which has resulted in irreparable resource damage in neighboring states.”

TU is committed to working with the U.S. Forest Service to protect these last remaining brook trout, recognizing that once they are lost, they are lost forever. That is a risk TU is simply unwilling to take. “TU’s West Virginia council voted in favor of a moratorium on natural gas leasing in the national forest because of the potential for irreparable habitat destruction to rivers, streams and other fish and wildlife habitat. TU’s West Virginia council represents TU’s 1,500 members in the state. TU, as a national organization, has opposed drilling in the Monongahela and supports the West Virginia council position. The Monongahela National Forest encompasses 900,000 acres and is located in the Allegheny Mountains of eastern West Virginia. Trout Unlimited is North America’s leading cold-water fisheries conservation organization, with more than 140,000 members dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring North America’s coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.
A Labor Day Weekend at Red Creek Campground Long Ago

By Gordon A. Knight

Experienced Dolly Sods visitors know they can’t wait until the last minute to make their plans for a summer holiday weekend on the high Allegheny Plateau. Campsites fill up and chances of finding one in the US Forest Service Red Creek Campground are virtually nil.

It wasn’t always that way. I fondly recall a particular uncrowded Labor Day weekend at the Red Creek campground in 1959. I arrived two days before the start of the holiday weekend, camped alone and stayed ten days. My first choice: find the best site for my tent and my gear. Though well into mid-afternoon, it wasn’t too late to have a choice of good campsites. Actually except for my old coupe, there were no other rigs in the campground. There were no other campers. So I just picked out a fire ring – a few were left – and found a spot with relatively few rocks where I pitched my pup tent and unfurled my sleeping bag. I pulled an old, weather-beaten picnic table into place. Drinking water flowed steadily from a pipe at the spot, a short walk away. I can’t say which I relished more: the taste of the spring country. On this camping trip I didn’t have to seek solitude. Both were delightful. Breezes rustling through the alders occasionally hushed the trickling sound of the stream.

Readers may wonder what I liked most about my “once upon a time” camping experience. I found my most indelible memory overhead: “What difference here?” “Maybe it’s the higher daytime scale of the entire plateau seemed to fade, night after night the star-lit sky opened in my “once upon a time” camping experience. I am unable to imagine the magnitude of the out-of-control destruction that took place on the Allegheny Plateau. My professors spoke of trees that smoldered and burned from one year to the next. Literally “burning out” the ground on which the great stands of ancient spruce had stood. They repeated stories of huge spruce stumps that occasionally remained afterwards; supported on long charred roots, spoken like stumps stood like ghosts above the rocks. These days the prospects of “solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation” (to use wilderness legislative wording) attract many to Dolly Sods and the adjoining back country. On this camping trip I didn’t have to seek solitude. No hiking required. I was alone nearly all the time. In ten days less than a dozen rigs must. Most didn’t stop at the campsites. Actually cows interrupted my solitude more than people, occasionally wandering through the campsite. Day or night the distant clanging of a cowbell might waft over camp. Nevertheless, “primitive and unconfined” well describes my long-ago Red Creek camping experience.

In September 2001, after a forty-two years and the writer (Ralph Bell) founded AFMO. The Station was open for 45 days and closed for 13 due to high winds, fog and inclement weather. The best day was on June 2 when 100 birds were banded, 2 days over 200, 2 days over 300 and the best day of the season was October 1 when 471 birds were banded. The most of all the birds was 930, which brings the AFMO total species banded to 121. The Mourning Dove was a hatch year bird. The overall percentage of hatch year birds (using known age birds only) was 72.15%. A total of 4428 birds were banded since 1958, when the writer (Ralph Bell) founded AFMO. The Station was open for 45 days and closed for 13 due to high winds, fog and inclement weather. The best day of the season was October 1 when 471 birds were banded. The most species banded on October 1 were Blackpoll Warblers (250), Blue-ribboned Warblers (25), and Blue Jays (40).

Allegheny Front Migration Observatory Report for 2009

Gordon Knight, a native of northeastern MD graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in forestry. After graduation, he earned two years in the U.S. Army at Ft. Bliss, TX and in South Korea. He began a long career with the U.S. Department of the Interior as a forester in western Oregon. Later, he earned a master’s degree in regional planning at the University of Wisconsin (Madison). Following a field office work for the BLM in Colorado and Nevada, he moved to the agency’s Washington office as a natural resource planner and environmental impact review analyst. After retiring in 2001, Gordon helped establish a banding station at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Ochoco Refuge in northern Virginia. He also assisted with band handling along the VA-WY border near Harper’s Ferry, WV, and regularly worked with the MAPS bird banding program Gordon married Joan Pattison from Kemptown, WV. They recently moved to Cumming, GA and now live near their daughter and her family.

Above:  Gordon Knight on a return trip to Red Creek Campground

Right: A volunteer at AFMO bands a white-throated sparrow.

Above:  Joan and Ralph celebrate the 50th Anniversary of AFMO with a picnic at Red Creek Campground

Above:  Gordon Knight (above) was a young student WVU when he camped out at the Red Creek Campground and worked with Ralph Bell and Dr. George Hall, at the AFMO in September 1959. J. Lawrence Smith, our archived newsletter article writer, was there too and took pictures of Gordon “laying one brick” in the creation of the AFMO.
A WINTER BIRD

SECRETIVE SAW-WHET OWL

The tooting voice of a little saw-whet owl was heard on a June evening in Canaan Valley near birder Jim Triplett’s “home away from home.” It was heard a few times as the bird seemed to move from perch to perch before it was beyond hearing. The owl was named for the similarity of its call to the filing of a saw blade.

Birders wanting to find the owl should listen for a mellow series of “toots” in areas that offer its preferred habitat of largely coniferous woods. They often respond to recordings of their vocalization and some are caught in mist nets. Even though many of the little owls may be migrants, depending on the season, there may be little doubt that numbers, or the lack of them, in recent decades reveals decreased numbers in winter occurrence beyond the grosbeak’s breeding range.

The flow of grosbeaks southward has dwindled to a trickle of late. A correlation exists between its decreasing numbers and the lessening of spruce budworm outbreaks in eastern Canada. Should other factors be responsible for greatly reduced numbers, they remain a mystery.

In the meantime, West Virginia birders must be patient in waiting and diligent in watching for the return of these vangobdits from the north!

LORD OF THE NIGHT

The fervent overhead seems as clear as crystal on winter nights when the multitude of stars appear hardly beyond our reach. The hour glass shape of the constellation Orion is emblematised on the blackness as the mythical nimrod hunts the heavens.

The rush of a night in winter is different from other seasons especially when the scene around us is draped with snow. At night in winter, the air, the wind, everything, may seem frozen into icy stillness. There is no stillness, calm or mood of solitude that compares.

The birds are subjects of the seasonal movements of the sun and now the amount of daylight is waxing. The hush of a night in winter is different from other seasons especially when the scene around us is draped with snow. The bird seemed to move from perch to perch before it was beyond hearing. The owl was named for the similarity of its call to the filing of a saw blade.

A SIMPLE SONG OF SPRING

On a February day it is difficult to tell where the gray of the mountains ends and the gray sky begins. Gray often seems a predominate shade of winter and lingers even into spring. The trees are bare and leafless. The Algonquin is far from the Carolina Card trick of warmth and comfort.

The perching birds are subjects of the seasonal movements of the sun and now the amount of daylight is waxing. The hush of a night in winter is different from other seasons especially when the scene around us is draped with snow. The bird seemed to move from perch to perch before it was beyond hearing. The owl was named for the similarity of its call to the filing of a saw blade.

March 2010

By J. Lawrence Smith

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VAGABOND FROM THE NORTH

A winter day brightens when a flock of evening grosbeaks appears at the feeder to feast on sunflower seeds. The male’s honey-colored plumage gives him the look of large pears and black and white wings add to his striking appearance.

The first specimen of the bird was collected at Sault St. Marie, Michigan, in 1823 by Henry Schoolcraft. A major Dakelidai was responsible for the mistaken belief that the grosbeak is active only late in the day. On seeing birds leave a perch near Lake Superior in late afternoon, he mistakenly assumed they had removed because they had been bathing in the mellow light of a full moon. The grosbeak may be broken and the night given a voice by a great horned owl sheltering in darkened woods beyond a snow-capped field bath in the soft glow of moonlight.

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Keeping King’s Memory Alive
by Megan Lowe

In 2003, Friends of Blackwater sponsored a heritage education program in the Town of Thomas in Tucker County about J.R. Clifford, an African American lawyer who fought on behalf of the black coal and coke workers in the Town of Coke ton, at the head of the Blackwater Canyon. Who could have predicted, in 2003, that FOB’s program would lead to a partnership with thousands of West Virginians – exploring West Virginia’s rich civil rights history, in programs across the state? This year, in 2010, I have the honor of being an Americorps/VISTA Volunteer working for Friends of Blackwater to continue to build these partnerships. Environmental protection and community protection are one big issue. We have to celebrate our history and our communities – if we are to preserve and protect them for future generations. Thank you, supporters of Friends of Blackwater, for giving me the opportunity to work on this important project!

One of my activities has been working with the West Virginia Martin Luther King Holiday Commission. Led by Commission Chair Dr. Hozo Carter, President of West Virginia State University, the Commission is comprised of citizens from all over the state who work to commemorate the legacy of Dr. King. My involvement with this group includes serving on the former Supreme Court Justice Larry Starcher, a long-time Commission member and supporter of Friends of Blackwater. In relating Dr. King’s mission, which was formed during a time of blatant and legal discrimination based on race, to our world today, Justice Starcher said, “The legacies of the evils of human slavery exist yet in many quarters – racial profiling, incarceration in disproportionate numbers, and economic disadvantages are not fictions of imaginations. The works of Dr. King are as relevant today as they were in the 1960’s.”

The Commission gave an award to Friends of Blackwater’s J.R. Clifford Project, for the work in anti-racism education. To accept the award on behalf of The J.R. Clifford Project was one of the Clifford Project’s Directors, Katherine “Kitty” Dooley, Esq., a Charleston attorney. Awards were also given to students in kindergarten through grade 12 who had worked on the state, which participated in a poster and essay contest rooted in the theme “We Are the Dream.” Nearly 42 years after Martin Luther King was assassinated, the Commission’s events in Charleston, West Virginia, exemplified the ideal that Dr. King dreamed of: “When we allow freedom to ring...we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jew and Gentile, black and white, Scots-Irish and Negro, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

The J.R. Clifford African-American Heritage Map

Left: The J.R. Clifford African-American Heritage Map (on one side), and (on the other side) a poster supplementing the map, with more information on West Virginia’s African American heritage, and the life and message of J.R. Clifford. We intend for this map and poster will be distributed prominently in West Virginia schools. They will be a powerful tool for keeping alive our state’s rich African American history. For justice before a generation of West Virginians, and a tool for educators throughout the state. And as a way for us to connect with our heritage, to be used by people with an interest in Heritage Tourism and African American History. David Vago of Eiko is our designer. Kitty Dooley and members of the Mountain State Bar are leading the effort.
The purpose of Blackwater’s heritage program on the West Virginia sesquicentennial is to help create a fresh, widespread, and inspired public understanding of West Virginia’s creation in the crucible of the Civil War. These programs will engage citizens and teach them about the forces and people that came together in the “Rending of Virginia.” The program’s message is that the Mountain State was forged by the bold and unprecedented actions of courageous “ordinary people” and their creative leaders, who “seized the time” and made innovative history—working without a script! Their creation is our heritage, unique among the United States. The events that led to West Virginia’s birth began with the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. All of these precursory events led a Presidential Declaration of the newly formed State of West Virginia on June 20, 1863.

A Declara-
Growing Up in Canaan Valley
by Linda Cooper

My Childhood Home In the Valley
We lived in a big two-story, wood-framed house that was one of the first built in the valley. It was a great old place, with plenty of rooms even with our big family and mysterious, dark corners. The exterior was weathered, gray wood slatillos that had never felt a coat of paint. In summer, one end of the porch was draped with the light purple grape cluster blossoms of a heavy vine emitting a delicious fragrance.

The northwest side of the house were tall sugar maples that were sometimes tapped for their sap in late winter to make maple sugar. In summer, the maples were played amid and picnicked under, but their dark silhouettes were a source of dread at night in winter when hasty trips had to be made to the schoolhouse.

Mom was diligent in her efforts to brighten two sides of the house with flower beds, but only with moderate success. Her colorful perennials often fell to weeds when the fire went out. In winter, the bare maple branches were a challenge to keep mowed, but it was often a gathering place for the community including the teacher, cook and even my parents were paid a quarter of a mile from our house. The building had two classrooms, but only one of them was central to our lives in winter. Mom baked the best yeast bread you could imagine. She was the only one in the kitchen range and cooked everything we ate on it.

At Home in Winter
While it was bitter cold outside, Dad kept the potbellied stove burning warming up the living room all winter. He would toss a couple of pieces of inside it to get the fire started and then maintain the fire with coal to get the live heat. The potbelly and the wood-burning Rumilda range in the kitchen were central to our lives in winter. Mom baked the best yeast bread you could imagine. The live heat was a source of dread at night in winter when hasty trips had to be made to the schoolhouse.

Mom would occasionally bundle up like the rest of us and lead the way to school by breaking a path through the snow drifts. After all her efforts, we would arrive only to find that that school had been cancelled that day!

Keith Pitzer
1954-2009

Keith Pitzer, executive director of the Friends of the Cheat since 2001, died on the morning of December 22, 2009 following a year and a half long battle with cancer.

Under his leadership, Friends of the Cheat dramatically expanded its efforts to restore, preserve, and promote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River Watershed.

Key milestones under the Pitzer tenure include establishing three public river accesses, completing an interpretive driving trail, invasive species eradication, and a major expansion of the organization’s public education and interpretive efforts.

Today the Cheat River, once considered dead below Albright, is making a comeback. The water is typically cleaner, perch, and fish, eagles, herons, and others have been sighted, although much work remains.

Keith also laid the foundation for ongoing projects including developing rail trails in the Kingwood area and from Albright to Rowlesburg, developing a key river and trail access at the confluence of Pinnie Run and the Cheat River, and many additional acid mine drainage remediation projects throughout the lower Cheat watershed.

A memorial celebration of Keith’s life will be held on Saturday March 20th, 2010 (The Spring Equinox) from 12:30 - 2:30 pm at the new pavilion at the Cheat River Festival site in Albright, WV.

Thank You, CLOLA!
by Tom Rodd

In the mid-1980’s, I had the honor to represent the Concerned Loved Ones and Lot Owners of Beverly Hills Memorial Gardens (CLOLA). This hardy band of citizens united to stop the mining of a one hundred acre wooded hillside lot that was part of a Morgantown area cemetery. And they won!

CLOLA was founded by Milton Cohen, Bert Cohen and Edie Viola.

What a wonderful group they were! Edie had been a burial lot salesperson; Milton and Bert were leaders in Morgantown’s Jewish Community, which had a section of the cemetery.

Milton died in 2008 at the age of 102, and was honored by his community. Just this year, CLOLA disbanded, and they donated a big chunk of their trust fund to Friends of Blackwater.

One environmental battle is won, and many more to fight.

If you would like to help keep the faith and fight for our dear Mother Earth, as Milton Cohen and all the other supporters of CLOLA want us to!
Kim Landis Needs Our Help!

Kim Landis and Alex Nelson at the opening of Landis Realty July 2009.

By now you may know about the tragic accident that befell Kim Landis of Landis Realty in Canaan Valley and her 7 year old son, Alex Nelson on Sunday February 28th. The child was badly burned in a home accident and is now at the West Penn Burn Center with severe burns over 65% of his body.

The community has held Kim up in prayer as well as financially by making generous contributions to her account at:

Grant County Bank
Attention Brenda,
HC 70 Box 254,
Davis WV 26260.

Additional donations are welcome. If you want to send a card to Alex or Kim, you can mail it to their home address which is
Alex or Kim Landis
P.O. Box D11
Harman, WV 26270.

Alex also has a site at CaringBridge.org where you can receive updates on his condition and send messages to the family.
Visit http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/alexnelson.

YES! I WANT TO JOIN FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER

☐ Porte Crayon Society $1000 ☐ Individual _______ $ 35
☐ Crown Jewel Club $ 500 ☐ Senior _______ $ 20
☐ Sustaining Steward $ 250 ☐ Student _______ $ 10
☐ Patron _______ $ 100 ☐ Other _______ $ 0
☐ Family _______ $ 50

Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

Mail completed form and check made payable Friends of Blackwater to:
Friends of Blackwater
501 Elizabeth St.
Charleston, WV 25311

Letter to the Editor

Editor,

We all have memories of our visits to Blackwater Falls State Park. Those remembrances may be the basis of why we must return to these canyons as often as possible.

Maybe my first visit was with a group of graduate students and Earl Core during a field trip from West Virginia University in the early 1970’s. Do any of our readers remember when the Gentle Trail was constructed? I recall the falls below on our left as we faced north; however, I don’t remember the Gentle Trail at that time.

Although signs tell visitors to remain on the boardwalk, I have a photograph we took in the canyon below the falls. Obviously visitors were permitted in that area in the early 1970’s. And is it true a couple fell from the falls many years ago?

Signs which say “Do not feed the wildlife” were not directed to the deer. Every morning and evening during our visit to Cabin #10 in 2006, deer came for a handout. And just down the road at the junction and the stop sign, I spotted a bear. These memories and those of Balanced Rock will remain forever.

Although deer are everywhere here in the Northern Panhandle, different kinds of Wildlife make trips to the Blackwater Country worthwhile. During Wildlife Diversity Weekend, we spotted a red-shouldered hawk near Pendleton Lake. That was June 2004. Along the track to Dobbin House, we were shown droppings and tracks of black bears. That was June 2001. I’ll never forget a 1,000 (I guess) black vultures flying south over the Lodge during our October 2006 stay.

It was during a solo trip of October 2007; I was looking north from Lindy Point up the Canyon. At first I thought it was a giant black bird in the distance. The noise got louder as a jet airplane flew below my vantage point and disappeared toward Hendricks.

These and other memories will inevitably pull me back to the Canyons of the Blackwater River next year.

Carl M Patsche
Weirton, Almost Heaven, West Virginia

Chief Logan Is Smiling Today!

The celebrated Native American leader Chief Logan is smiling down upon West Virginia today -- because our State Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether the Legislature really wanted to make our State Parks unprotected from private gas wells.

In the fall of 2009, Friends of Blackwater, former State Parks chief Cordie Hudkins, and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy joined forces to appeal a judge’s decision in Logan County, that would have allowed unrestricted drilling in Chief Logan State Park. More than fifty wells had been planned.

Luckily, the circuit judge allowed us to participate in the case, and now the Supreme Court has agreed to hear our appeal. We are delighted to be on the same side as the WV DNR and DEP. We will have to file legal briefs this summer, and probably will argue the case this coming Fall.

Thanks to everyone who spoke out and donated to help pay our legal costs. This is a battle for all of our West Virginia State Parks! Please give it your support! And special thanks to Cordie Hudkins and the Highlands Conservancy for making this (so-far) successful effort possible!

A Big Thank You
to Phil Ferguson and his crew at Ferguson Construction for waging war on the snow covered parking lot at our Davis office.