

Friends of Blackwater

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Photo courtesy of Paul Brown

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

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Notes from the Director

Dear Friends of Blackwater,

As we look forward to the cool days of autumn and its bright fall colors, why not make plans to visit West Virginia's scenic "crown jewel", the magnificent Blackwater Canyon?

At the end of September and in early October, the Canyon's red and gold fall foliage display will be at its peak. The views from Blackwater Falls State Park and Lindy Point -- the bright sugar maple and yellow birch leaves against a green background of red spruce -- are thrilling! We have to protect this landscape -- today, and for our children and grandchildren!

On page 11 of this newsletter, there's a map of a fall foliage driving tour. We'll be leading a tour on September 29th -- Public Lands Day. Call if you want to join us: 1-877-WVA-LAND. We'll have fun, even if it rains.

A great big thanks! to everyone for the great comments on the Blackwater Trail that were submitted in July. We have highlighted some of these comments on page 10. West Virginia Congressman Alan Mollohan gets a special "thank you" for his devotion to Blackwater Canyon Trail protection, and for the detailed comment letters he has sent to the agencies involved.

Our summer work in Tucker County focused on the North Fork water pollution issue. Lisa Porter and Joyce Edgell worked with Janel Farron and Brandae Mullins to get three rounds of water monitoring done. Joyce and Lisa interviewed senior citizens to learn about the history of the North Fork during the mining and timber boom. Young people who attended the oral history sessions explained the water testing program to the older generation. You can see photos on pages 6-7.

As always, there's plenty going on in our offices. We continue to work like beavers to protect "Ginny" the West Virginia northern flying squirrel, the Blackwater Canyon Trail, the Cheat Canyon, and Dolly Sods and the Allegheny Front. Thank you so much for your generous financial support, which makes out work possible, and for keeping the pressure on our public officials and representatives. Be sure to take time to get out and enjoy those beautiful fall leaves!

Sincerely,

Judy Rodd



Judy Rodd discusses Blackwater issues with Senator Hillary Clinton at a recent event.

GINNY & HER FRIENDS ARE GOING TO COURT

The Center for Biological Diversity of Tucson, AZ has filed a formal Notice of Intent to Sue the Department of Interior over Endangered Species Act Interference

Here's good news for "Ginny", the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel -- and for all of us who love the West Virginia Highlands. Our "SOS! -- Save Our Squirrel" Coalition has gained a powerful national ally -- and Ginny has 54 new animal friends, who are joining her fight for survival!

Friends of Blackwater put together the "SOS!" Coalition in 2006, after the Interior Department issued a bizarre proposal to remove all endangered species protection from Ginny. More than 27 groups have joined the Coalition, and we have assembled a crack legal and scientific team to defeat the Forest Service Plan.

Ginny's new ally in her fight for survival is the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity, one of the most cutting-edge advocacy groups in the nation. On August 29, the Center filed a Notice of Intent to Sue the Department of the Interior for political interference with 55 endangered species in 28 states -- including our own Ginny! The notice initiates the largest substantive legal action in the 34-year history of the Endangered Species Act.

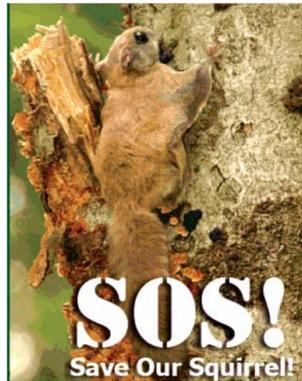
"This is the biggest legal challenge against political interference in the history of the Endangered Species Act," said Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Center. "It puts the Bush administration on trial at every level for systematically squelching government scientists and installing a cadre of political hatchet men in positions of power."

Many of the illegal decisions were engineered by former Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior Julie MacDonald, who resigned in disgrace following a scathing investigation

by the Inspector General of misconduct at the Department of the Interior. "The Bush administration has tried to keep a lid on its growing endangered species scandal by scapegoating Julie MacDonald," said Suckling, "but the corruption goes much deeper than one disgraced bureaucrat. It reaches into the White House itself through the Office of Management and Budget. By attacking the problem systematically through this national lawsuit, we will expose just how thoroughly the disdain for science and for wildlife pervades the Bush administration's endangered species program."

Among the 55 species named in the legal filing are the marbled murrelet (CA, OR, WA), Florida manatee (SC to TX), Arctic grayling (MT), West Virginia northern flying squirrel (WV), California least fern (CA), brown pelican (LA, TX, PR, VI), California red-legged frog (CA), arroyo toad (CA), Mexican garter snake (AZ), piping plover (NC to TX), snowy plover (CA, OR, WA) and Preble's jumping meadow mouse (CO, WY).

Over 5,000 members of the public have spoken out in official comments against the flying squirrel "delisting" plan. FOB Director Judy Rodd testified for Ginny before the House of Representatives in May. To make your comment, and learn more, go to www.saveoursquirrel.org.



Congressman Mollohan on the Trail! WHEN CITIZENS SPEAK OUT, PUBLIC OFFICIALS LISTEN

What happens when citizens speak out on behalf of our precious public resources?

For one thing, we know that political leaders and public officials pay attention to vigorous expressions of public opinion. And for another thing, we know that (sometimes) those leaders and officials do something about it!

A case in point: for more than five years, thousands of individual citizens and civic groups have been relentlessly speaking out and working to protect the Blackwater Canyon Trail, which runs through the ten-mile-long heart of West Virginia's scenic "Crown Jewel," in the beautiful Highlands of Tucker County.

Now, those heartfelt voices have been joined by West Virginia Congressman Alan Mollohan, who recently spoke out forcefully for Canyon Trail protection. And even better, Mollohan is ready to do something, as well!

On July 23, in an official comment letter to the United States Forest Service, Mollohan wrote:



BLACKWATER HERITAGE Grave Research

In doing historical or genealogical research there are few areas that are as often overlooked as graveyards. Long the center of many childhood horror stories, graveyards or cemeteries more often serve as a means of verifying ancestral data.

Recently, FOB staffer Brandae Mullins decided to do some additional research related to the JR Clifford-Carrie Williams case. She had made some headway regarding Carrie Williams' family using Ancestry.com and the new vital records search available online through the WV Division of Culture and History.

The search then led her to the Rosehill Cemetery in Thomas, WV. After spending about two hours reading headstones, it was decided that a properly placed phone call might be easier. So calling the offices for the City of Thomas, Brandae was able to confirm several things, including the headstone of James Clifford, half brother of J.R. Clifford, West Virginia's first African American lawyer. As the pieces to the puzzle continue to fall into place we will bring them to you both here and on the internet at www.jrclifford.org. If you are tracing your Tucker County Roots and we can be of any assistance, please contact us at 877-982-5263 or by e-mail at outreach@saveblackwater.org. We will be launching a new genealogy component to our website in the near future, so keep watching, and if you have information you would like to share we would be glad to help.

Right: The headstone of James H. Clifford as it stands in Thomas, WV.

Congressman Alan Mollohan, D-WV



representing the area in which the trail is located, and as a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, I am prepared to support and work for the enactment of funding for the Forest Service that would enable the agency itself to rectify whatever conditions there may be that inhibit the public's recreational use of the trail. . . . I am also prepared to support and work for the enactment of funding for federal acquisition of the company's entire holding in Blackwater Canyon, provided that the company is willing to negotiate a sale of the property, and agreement is reached with the company on the terms of a sale at a price supported by appropriate appraisals."

Congressman Mollohan's letter ends: "Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. I look forward to working with the Forest Service to protect the public's use and enjoyment of the Blackwater Canyon Trail."

To which remarks, the members of Friends of Blackwater can only say: **A-men!**" (Remember, these comments by Congressman Mollohan are a direct result of your speaking out! **Thank you!** (You can call Congressman Mollohan's office and thank him at 203-225-4172 or write him at Congressman Alan B. Mollohan, Room 209, Post Office Building, PO Box 1400, Clarksburg, WV 26302-1400. Send an e-mail through www.house.gov/mollohan.)





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

PSC DENIES PERMIT AT JACK'S MOUNTAIN Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County Update

by Arthur Hooton

On June 22, 2007, when the WV Public Service Commission denied Liberty Gap Wind Force's application to construct a wind turbine project on Jack Mountain in Pendleton County, all the citizens, property owners and friends of the county who treasure its unindustrialized scenic beauty, exhaled a collective sigh of relief.

When public notice of Liberty Gap's intentions first appeared in the Pendleton Times on Nov. 19, 2004, the response was dismay. That quickly changed when it became known that the county commissioners had agreed secretly to use their power of eminent domain to facilitate Liberty Gap's acquisition of transmission line rights-of-way. The public uproar that ensued led to the creation of Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County (FOBPC), and to its intervention in the proceedings of Liberty Gap's application. Little did we realize what a long, involved, expensive struggle that intervention would become. As a footnote to the initial uproar, one of

the county commissioners has since been turned out of office, and another will get his turn in the 2008 election cycle.

With victory, it would be pleasant now to think that the PSC's ruling, by denying a siting certificate for a wind power project, after having previously approved four others, represents a major shift in the PSC's attitude toward industrial wind power projects. It does not, and the PSC made that plain in its ruling.

Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County didn't win the case so much as Liberty Gap lost it, by filing a woefully deficient application. FOBPC made the most of those deficiencies and the PSC took notice, ruling against Liberty Gap because lack of information in certain areas made it impossible for the PSC to judge how to balance or weigh the competing interests. The PSC even went so far as to include a recommendation to future applicants on what they need to do to avoid the fate of Liberty Gap.

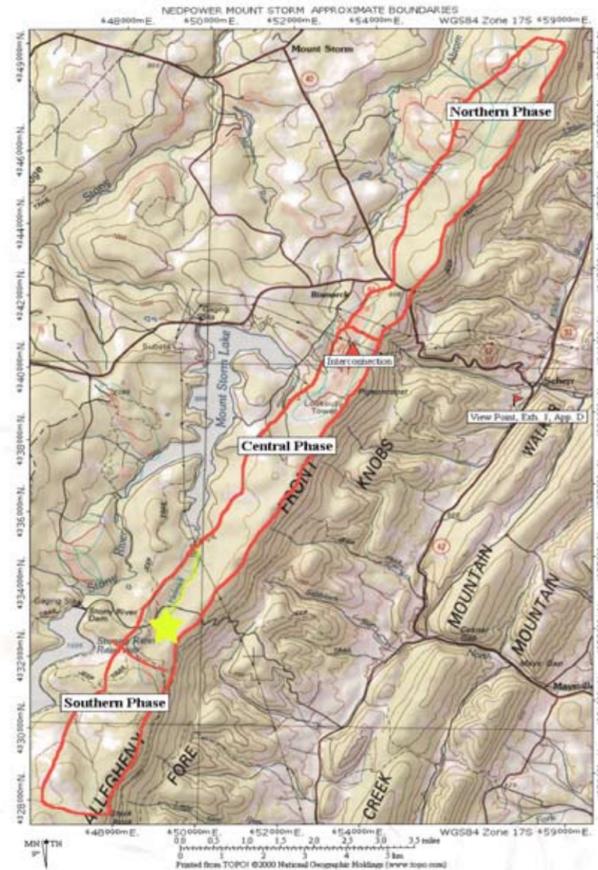
Who Owns the Mountain? by Donna Cook

Studying the topography of the Allegheny Front and Fore Knobs on a map, I see all the familiar landmarks condensed on one page: Stack Rocks, Red Creek, Helmick Run, Stoney River Dam, Snowy Point, and Saltblock; Little Star and Big Star Runs.

Tracing the lines, I locate the Baker Sods and the Beech Woods and the Weimer Place. My topo map, like the silent, strong outline of the crest of the Allegheny, looks perfectly real and natural. Looking south toward Bear Rocks, the silhouette of red spruce creates visual interest and comfort on the horizon against a blue September sky. To those of us born and raised in the Fore Knobs, this mountain is our home; this is our life. And it always will be changed forever. Regardless, the ongoing trauma precipitated on our mountains is hitting hard.

Looking north on the Allegheny Front, the horizon is drastically changed. Giant metal turbine bases, reflecting the sun like a mirror, have become the focal point. And this is only Phase I of the "wind farm". This is less than 20 of the 200 turbines that are planned across the top of the mountain. A new road across the Front has cut through stands of red spruce and shoved giant lichen covered boulders into piles. Black bear, their homes disturbed, are seen running in the lowlands and valleys to the east. Bald Eagles at Mount Storm Lake have all but disappeared. And mysterious towers (perhaps for wind monitoring) have sprung up in 2 different places to the south.

Who owns the mountain? Whose land? Do we go Somewhere Else? Maybe we shut our eyes, that may help.



Dr. Tim Pearce aka "The Mollusk Man"

SAVE CHEAT CANYON: SCIENTISTS MOVE FORWARD WITH SNAIL HABITAT STUDIES

Friends of Blackwater's litigation over Endangered Species Act protections for the Cheat Snail in the magnificent Cheat Canyon have led to new scientific research and protections for this rare mollusk. A team of scientists have been analysing the characteristics of the snail habitat on the steep slopes of the Cheat Canyon, including sites at the Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area and Coopers Rock Overlook. They have produced a final report to guide a delineation team who will set aside Cheat Snail Preserves on Allegheny Wood Product's land in the Canyon. Thanks to all the participants who helped create the report: Nick Fedorko, geologist, and snail experts Dr Thomas Watters, Dr. Ron Calwell, Dan Doursen of Copperhead Consulting, and most especially, Dr. Tim Pearce of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, PA.

Nature Notes

Splendor of Autumn Color



by J. Lawrence Smith

The array of colors on the trees during autumn is something that we have experienced for so many years that we take this wonder for granted! There is pumpkin orange of sugar maple, crimson of red maple, gold of quaking aspen and russet of white oak. The shedding of leaves by the trees has given us our familiar name for the season--fall.



Few areas of the earth have anything quite like the annual display of color in eastern North America. In the Northern Hemisphere, only western Europe and eastern Asia have anything comparable to our fall colors.

Our forest trees are the descendants of a large number of ancient trees that existed throughout the higher latitudes of the earth ages ago. Fossil leaves of sycamore-like trees have been found in Greenland near the icecap that blankets the island.

During the Pleistocene or Ice Age, the southern Appalachians became a refuge for a large number of tree species. In Europe, many plants confronted the barrier of the Pyrennes and Alps and died out.



Today there are 125 different trees in our southern mountains which is nearly 50 more than all of Europe.

The yellow of hickory, beech, yellow poplar and birch is due to pigments in the leaves at all times, but is hidden by the green of chlorophyll during the summer. When the chlorophyll begins to break down with the chill of autumn,

the pigment is revealed.

The bright red of trees such as the red maple, certain oaks and gum is produced by the addition of tinted sap to the leaves. The presence of sugar in the sap aids in producing the bright orange color.

The expression "Indian summer" comes from the early days on the frontier when the Indians often made their last raids on the settlements during a time of warm weather late in autumn. What is now a time of enjoyment for us before winter was often a time of uncertainty for the pioneers.

Fall is also the season when many wild fruits and berries become ripe. From lower elevations where pawpaws and persimmons will be found to mountain ash and highbush cranberry at high elevations, there a wide variety for both wildlife and people!

Colors on the trees always seem brighter in the mountains especially when trees such as sugar and red maple are set before a background of red spruce in the land of Blackwater. Soon, however, only the deep green of the spruce remains as the others turn down the flame of the year by shedding their leaves.



World Renowned Wildlife Artist Highlights the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel

This past June, we received a letter from a gentleman who described himself as a freelance wildlife illustrator who had built something of a reputation as such. What an incredible understatement! This wildlife illustrator is none other than Chuck Ripper. We had no idea that such a national treasure was right under our very noses!

If you don't know who Mr. Ripper is, that is okay - because it is a good bet that you have come across some of his artwork. Perhaps one of the 575 different pieces he has done for the National Wildlife Federation, or the 25 books he has illustrated, and most certainly at least one of the 80 stamps he has designed for the US Postal Service. His artwork has appeared everywhere from the Smithsonian Museum to cards that were given with Sugar Daddies and Red Rose Teas in the 1960s, as well as the cover of the LLBean Catalog at least 7 times.

Mr. Ripper was born the day before the stock-market crash in 1929. His father, who did landscapes in oils to make ends meet during the Great Depression, helped to foster both his artistic talent and his love of the outdoors. After a stint in the US Army, Mr. Ripper married his wife Virginia in 1953, by which time he had already completed several artistic endeavors. Needing employment he took a position as art director at the Standard Printing Company in Huntington, WV. He struck out on his own in 1965 and has thrived as an artist largely through word of mouth advertising.

We are thrilled that Chuck Ripper sought us out, and was able to provide us with two lovely illustrations of the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel. (One of which is on the right!) If you would like more information about how to contact Chuck Ripper, please call us at 877-982-5263 or send e-mail to outreach@saveblackwater.org.



The West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel as depicted by Chuck Ripper.

Generations United Bridging the Gap

When is the last time you sat down and truly listened to what someone older than yourself had to say? If you are under thirty and sometimes even a bit older, chances are you haven't really done that. Perhaps time is the issue or maybe you just don't know what you might have in common with someone 50 or 60 years older than yourself.

Friends of Blackwater and the North Fork Watershed Project, with the legwork and dedication of summer VISTAs Joyce Edgell and Lisa Porter, and funding from a Generations United grant, recently undertook an effort to "bridge the generation gap" by bringing together burgeoning environmentalists and older community members. The initial goal was to gather historical information about the watershed and some of its former uses from the older residents and allow a bunch of young "whipper-snappers" to share their knowledge of current issues and what is being done to improve the water quality. With an age range that spanned some 90 years, the actual outcome has been far more rewarding than anyone could have ever imagined.

Beyond the oral histories and increased interest in improving the water quality of the area, we have been able to bring people together. Young and old have learned to treasure and appreciate each other, regardless of age, for their unique experiences and individual knowledge. We hope you enjoy these pictures as much as we have enjoyed bringing everyone together.



Above: These generations united are: Kassey Edgell (16), Owen Porter (3), Dylan Edgell (13), Resi Anderson (5) and Richard Harr (80s), Dorothy Thompson (80s) and Sarah Fletcher (60s)

Below and Right: Janel Farron, former VISTA volunteer for NFWP, trains volunteers for water monitoring in June 2007. The age range on this monitoring trip was 3-67.



Below: Tucker Welch (6) enjoys exploring the coke ovens during a July tour of the watershed.



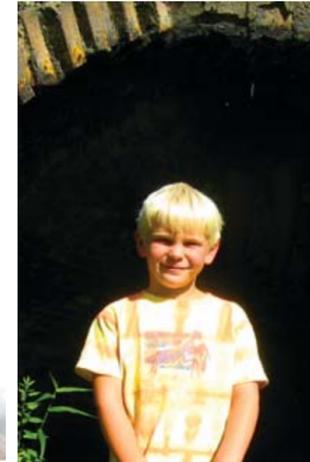
Left: Kelcie Mullins (13) and Julia Aucremanne monitor water. Below: Joyce Edgell (51), Carolyn Brown (62) and Owen Porter (3) inspect the interior of one of the historic coke ovens in Coketon, WV during a tour of the watershed.



Below: The North Fork of the Blackwater River just above Douglas Falls. Right: Pajj Mullins (16) climbs behind Douglas Falls during a watershed tour.



Right: Joyce Edgell (51) explains to Owen Porter (3) how she is checking to see how "dirty" the water is during a water monitoring trip.



Below: Three generations of the Thayer family. Stuart Thayer (87), Karen Thayer Lewandowski (50), Katherine Lewandowski (13) and Joseph Lewandowski (6). Mr. Thayer shared with us lots of stories about his life in Coketon. Sadly, Mr. Thayer passed away in August and WV lost another great treasure. Our condolences to his family. You are in our thoughts.



Above: Lisa Porter (44), Hazel Gatto (84), Kassey Edgell (16), Katherine Lewandowski (13) during an oral history interview with Hazel. Hazel says she is the oldest woman in Thomas, WV.

Below: Sue Cooper Sturm (64) and her husband Kenny Sturm (67) view Blackwater Falls during a recent tour of the area. Kenny rode on the last passenger train to run through Thomas, WV.



We would like to thank all of those who helped make this project a success!

Generations United, Joyce Edgell, Lisa Porter, The Thayer/Lewandowski Family, The Cooper Family, Ruth Cooper Allman, the Drs. Phillip and Karin Nelson, Tony Lambruno, Hazel Gatto, Fannie Tecavek, Russell Cooper and Janel Farron

FALL CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 9/25/07- 9/28/07

Septemberfest Senior Fling -
Blackwater Falls State Park
9/28/07- 9/30/07

Leaf Peepers Festival
Tucker County, WV
9/29/2007

National Public Lands Day
Blackwater Canyon Trail
Hike and CleanUp - Thomas, WV

OCTOBER 10/5/07-10/7/07

Autumn Festival
Timberline Four Seasons Resort
10/6/07

Wild Walks Weekend
Canaan Valley Resort
10/7/07

4th Annual Aurora Barn Dance
Brookside Farm, Route 50
(304) 866-4428

10/12/07- 10/14/07
Oktoberfest
Canaan Valley Resort

10/12/07 - 10/14/07
20th Annual Astronomy Weekend
Blackwater Falls State Park

10/16/2007
"Roots and Branches" Symposium
"J. R. Clifford and the
Carrie Williams Case"

Marshall University, Huntington, WV
10/19/07

Western Themed House Party
Home of Chuck Smith
Charleston, WV

NOVEMBER 11/30/2007

Annual Reception and Charity Auction
Mickelson's Framing/Parker Gallery
Washington, D.C.

(For more information on any of the above events please contact FOB at 877-WVA-LAND or by e-mail at outreach@saveblackwater.org)

In Memory and Honor...

MARJORIE STROSNIDER GREEN



Marjorie Strosnider Green

Marjorie Strosnider Green was recently memorialized by her daughter Dianna Green of Charleston. When asked to tell us about her mother, Dianna described her in such an inspirational way that we wanted to share her words with you, our readers.

"My late mother was a born teacher, but she was not an outdoorswoman or environmentalist.

Our cousin Ruth Strosnider of Blacksville was the scientist/teacher and avid birder in the family and was known to many in the conservation community. Instead, my mother quietly fostered my childhood interest in the natural world by faithfully taking me to the library each week to find books on things that fascinated me—plants, reptiles, insects, fish, fossils, birds and anything to do with nature.

My father was an engineer who hunted and fished, while Mother was into arts and literature. Still, she recognized the importance of helping me find my own path into the natural world. She allowed my sister and me to turn our backyard into a mini-nature preserve with a hand-dug puddle for raising tadpoles, a sandbox turned turtle "motel", bird feeders, a flower garden, and a clover patch for the neighborhood rabbits. The T-poles for the clothesline became home to nesting bluebirds each summer.

My mother eventually spent a small fortune buying me each and every book I wanted for my own personal science library. I had all the nature guides a child could hope to have, along with hundreds of books on subjects ranging from ecology to how to build a bird house.

Thanks to her support of my interests, much of my adult life has been spent as a volunteer on

conservation and environmental education in my own community, working with students on environmental science projects, leading nature walks, and teaching stream ecology workshops for grade school children. I hope that in my own small way, I can help foster children's interest in nature and conservation as my mother did with me."

Left and Background: Dianna Green avidly pursues fly fishing

JEFFREY HOLLIDAY

The Friends of Blackwater staff wishes to memorialize Jeffrey Holliday of Pinch, WV. Jeff passed away on August 26, 2007 after a courageous battle with melanoma. He was the husband of FOB accountant Pamela Holliday and father of Cory Holliday.

Jeff was a teacher and coach for Kanawha County Schools, last teaching and coaching at Herbert Hoover High School in Elkview, WV. He was a member of Heritage Baptist Church and the Kanawha Southern Board of Basketball Officials.

The thoughts and prayers of everyone at FOB go out to those whose lives were touched by Jeff Holliday.



Jeffrey Holliday

Letter to the Editor

Editor,

I made my first visit to Blackwater Falls in the spring of 1971. I was working on my Masters Degree in education. Every Saturday morning that springtime we'd meet at the final class in Vegetation of West Virginia that the professor emeritus taught at the school -- Earl Core. I remember that final field trip through the Cheat River Valley; Route 69 had not yet, I believe, been finished. I remember the spectacular view of 1000's of trees from Coopers Rock. I realized why they call the place "Cathedral" State Park. In those days a person could reach the rocks below the falls on the Blackwater River. I have such a picture taken of me at that location. Every year since, except those when my mother was ill and needed care, I have been inexorably drawn to this spot in Tucker County.

My visits have involved family or group events. For instance, we've stayed at Cabin #10 where I spotted the first wild bear I've ever seen crossing the park road. Our family was awakened by a barred owl in the spruce trees at 4 a.m. Deer, who should have read the sign, arrived at the cabin every morning expecting a breakfast treat and just before dark again. So, yes, I am interested in viewing wildlife--animals.

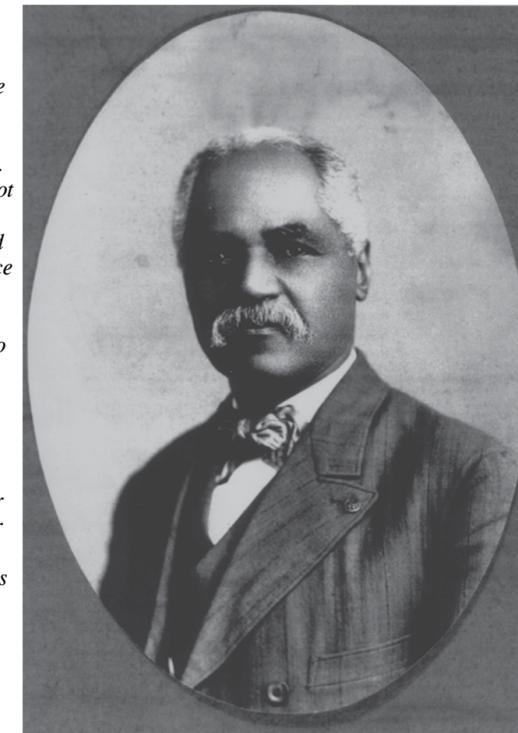
The rich history of the North Fork and Blackwater Canyon should be stressed. History is so important to the region. I want to know more about the coke ovens and the town of Douglas. But, there is so much more history that has not been covered along old rail trails.

No one word or words can adequately describe the Canyon of the Blackwater. I have visited many locations on the Pilgrimage and during other trips. The park has been the anchor to trips where I saw bats at Sinks of Gandy, beautiful scenery and water falls and ladies slipper below the coke ovens during 2 hikes down the canyon to Hambleton. I feel sorry for those that do not understand the desolation of Dolly Sods. I remember the bear tracks in the mud on Dobbins Trail and in the dust on McGowen Mountain. Was he following us on our wildflower journey?

I am reminded of many memories carried with me during visits to that special place. For instance, she is gone, but I have a photograph of my mother in front of a cake in front of the lodge at the 25th Pilgrimage.

Hope to meet with you who similarly love the Blackwater, soon.

Sincerely,
Carl M. Patsche



September 13, 2007

Proclaimed as J.R. Clifford Day

Governor Joe Manchin III has proclaimed that September 13, 2007 shall be observed as J.R. Clifford Day in honor of the numerous accomplishments of John Robert Clifford, West Virginia's first African-American Attorney and Blackwater Canyon hero. This proclamation was in response to a request by Sandy Fisher, Volunteer Coordinator, Friends of Blackwater, which was fully supported by the West Virginia chapter of the NAACP.

The J.R. Clifford Project has also been awarded a mini grant by the [West Virginia Humanities Council](#) for curriculum development. Who knows? Someday soon J.R. Clifford may be the answer to a question on The Golden Horseshoe examination given to WV 8th graders every year.

For more information on J.R. Clifford, please contact us at info@jrclifford.org or by visiting www.jrclifford.org.



Volunteers In Action

SECOND CAREER

If one were to press Bob Hiser for a reason why he retired, you may well get the answer that he retired to pursue a life of rest and relaxation. But the real secret is that Bob is just as active now as he was during his years with Beneficial Finance.

After he retired Bob embarked on a second career as a volunteer. Bob volunteers in the office of Friends of Blackwater, taking on tasks including filing, data entry, and writing thank you notes. Bob also actively volunteers with the Elk Valley Library and with S.C.O.R.E.S. Bob is also a member or the Kanawha Valley Senior Services Walking Club, The Highlands Conservancy and The Sierra Club.

In his spare time, Bob is an avid reader, a hiker, a biker and an occasional golfer. He and his wife Gloria are also WV State Parks Very Important Parks Persons (VIPP) and have visited every state park and

forest, as well as the national forest lands in WV. When he is not following these pursuits Bob and Gloria enjoy antiquing. Bob is particularly fond of the three monkeys characters (hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil) and books by Henry Van Dyke.

As if that wasn't enough Bob is the father to a son, Robert Jr. of Omaha, Nebraska and a daughter Shari Lee Ulman of Wilmington, North Carolina, and the grandfather of four.

Left: Bob Hiser today.
Above right: Bob during his first visit to Blackwater Falls in 1944.



What did you say about USFS granting an Easement to AWP on Our Trail?

"It would be a travesty to have this preposterous plan approved, and lose an amazing piece of West Virginia. Recreation, whether it be biking, hiking, or kayaking access would be lost due to dangerous conditions with tremendously heavy equipment everywhere, choking the canyon with diesel fumes.

An amazing bit of history would be destroyed; early settlers amazing stonework at Big Run would be lost as this 30'wide super logging highway is installed, in place of a pristine natural trail through the heart of Blackwater Canyon. Not to mention the uncontrolled runoff from road building, causing water quality degradation and subsequent loss of quality fishing waters and reoccurring road destabilization after each heavy rain/runoff event.

Natural habitat for numerous wild creatures, not to mention species that are on the endangered species list would be lost, possibly forever due to this misguided plan. We cannot allow this to happen in our canyon!

As a kayaker of the Blackwater River, whether it be the Upper, North Fork, or Lower, each section will be subject to dangerous man made hazards on the river. Every boater's nightmare, a river wide strainer was a common sight on the Lower Blackwater, there were 2 such hazards the last time logging was done in the Lower Blackwater corridor, obviously a miscut tree fallen into the river, not retrieved, and subsequently lodged in the river,

spanning almost the entire flow for 2 complete years before it was weakened by some strategic sawing on each run down the river and washed away after a high water episode, thank God. Surely the loggers knew what kind of hazard they had just caused for kayakers and never notified anyone. with saw marks on the right side of the trunk, it would be hard to deny their wrong doing in the event of a serious injury at this site.

In closing let me say that I am partial to this canyon, to the protection and preservation of this spectacular river, for my generation, for my son's generation, and for all to come and enjoy this spectacle of Mother Nature. It has been tortured once before by money hungry, environmentally callous men, this cannot befall our beloved Blackwater again.

Let's send a message that West Virginia is still wild and wonderful in this part of the state, Blackwater Canyon is not open for business!!!!!!" - **Mike Moore**, *Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival*

As a West Virginian I feel this represents the interests of the wealthy and politically conneted at the expense of the majority of our citizens. DO NOT GRANT THIS EASEMENT! - **Don Sauter**

My parents introduced me to this beautiful area of our state as a child in the early 60's. We went there for summer vacations, hunting, and fishing trips at least once a year. I started taking my wife there while we were dating. Now after 24 years of marriage the places have a very special place in our history and our hearts. Over the years we have taken nieces, nephews, and friends for some great camping and hiking trips, with unforgettable memories for the rest of our lives. Please do all you can to stop the plan to use the canyon for use as a right of way for the personal gain of only a few. And protect it so many more who visit this area can come away with great memories like we have. - **John Haynes**

Please keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful! - **Chelsea Sencindiver**

Once again, greed rears its ugly head. - **Barbara Lee Hermann**

My wife and I and our 4 children have enjoyed hiking and camping in the beautiful Blackwater Canyon. I have also kayaked the Blackwater Canyon. West Virginia is slowly climbing out of its reputation for denuding mountains and polluting streams, and becoming a place to visit again. - **John O. Mullen**

Please stop this intrusion on this trail. This is public use area, and an exceptionally unique trail. Let us retain this public use for the present and for our future generations, Thank you, - **Kristin Douglas**

The fact that it is uneconomical for AWP to log the area using methods other than turning the Trail into a logging haul road does not justify trampling the interests of recreational users, the tourism industry, and the environment. AWP was fully aware of the difficult access when acquiring this property. If AWP paid too much for the land to economically log the property without an easement then AWP simply made a bad business decision. Beneficiaries of the trail must not have their interests diminished due to bad business by AWP. - **Christopher Hunnisett**

"...From several sources, I have learned of the Forest Service's principle of "Leave no trace." Let me quote from one of your publications: "Your challenge is to leave no evidence of your visit so that the next person can enjoy a natural scene. Tread lightly so that nature can endure and replenish.".....Driving trucks through the forest definitely goes against this policy. I urge you to follow your own principles in issuing easements, especially perpetual ones, such as proposed for the Blackwater Trail." - **David Hiebert**

I've been to the Blackwater Canyon several times, and I cannot believe that a proposal to turn the trail into a logging road has even seriously been considered! How dare the Forest Service destroy the natural beauty of West Virginia - the lands owned by its collective citizens - to help out a LOGGING COMPANY! As a tax-paying citizen I absolutely request that this proposal is withdrawn. - **Briana McElfish**

This is a dumb idea! The upper Tucker County economy is trying to build its foothold on eco-style tourism and the ability to get away from the hustle and bustle of the eastern population center which this area services - **Gary Berti**

Why are you allowing commercial use of public property? I grew up in this area and the canyon and falls are truly a treasure. This will all be ruined with the passage of lumber trucks and why do they need to log there anyway?? - **Peggy Frankenfield**

The Blackwater Canyon is West Virginia's geological classroom equivalent of Arizona's Grand Canyon - **Steve Keating**

Please...leave us more than photographs of what has been to teach our children with. Leave Nature be. - **Cheryl Grimm**

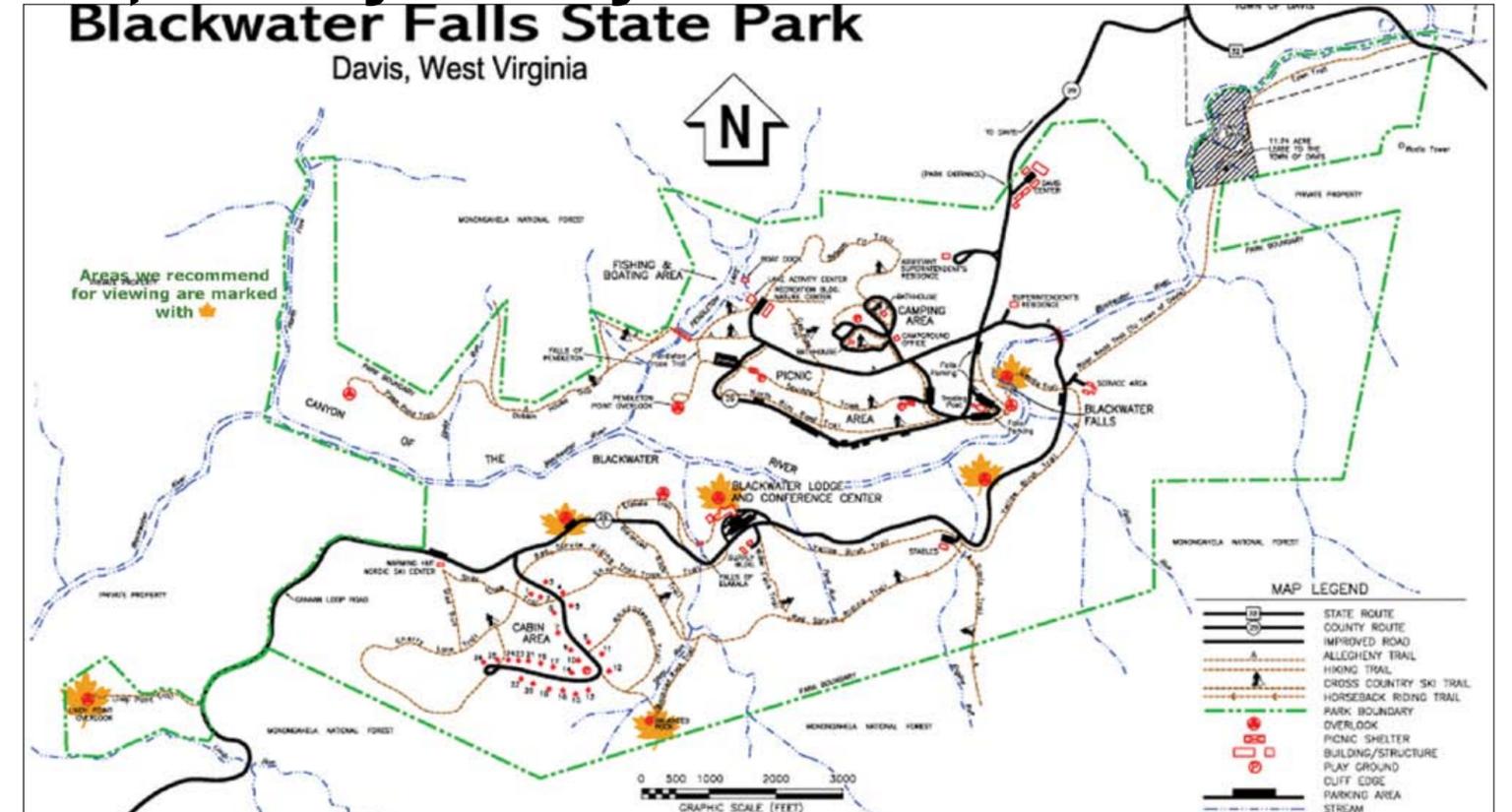
Letting this land alone is key to the ecological and psychological health of an increasingly technological and crowded civilization - **William Stremic**

Top Ten Reasons to Complete the Blackwater Canyon section of the Allegheny Highlands Trail

by Matt Marcus, Vice President WVMB

- One** - Tucker County's number one industry is tourism.
- Two** - The most popular trail in Tucker County is the Blackwater Canyon Railroad Grade.
- Three** - Rail trails are big business and are good for economic development. Go to Ohiopyle, Pa. or to the waterfront in Morgantown, WV to see the living proof. If West Virginia is "Open for Business", then doesn't it make sense to complete the Blackwater Canyon section of the Allegheny Highlands Trail for business sake?
- Four** - Build infrastructure, like the Blackwater Canyon section of the Allegheny Highlands Trail, which benefits Tucker County and does not negatively affect farms or homeowners property. Whose interests are being protected when projects like Corridor H, the PATH 750 kilovolt power line and the Trans Allegheny Interstate Line 500 kilovolt power line are rammed through Tucker County and down peoples throats using government eminent domain powers to seize land, homes and farms from property owners? Business and economic development is used as an excuse for these bigger and far more socially and environmentally detrimental actions and is endorsed by our elected officials.
- Five** - Mitigation money from the Corridor H project is required to be used to complete the Allegheny Highlands Trail to Grant County. If this money is not used to upgrade the Blackwater Canyon Railroad Grade, it will be used to build a trail next to a four lane, interstate style highway that will be a longer, more difficult and less desirable route.
- Six** - Rail trails are good for community health and promote fitness. The number of people who walk and ride bicycle in Parsons, WV has increased dramatically since the arrival of the Allegheny Highlands Trail.
- Seven** - The Allegheny Highlands Trail provides a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists than our narrow, busy highways.
- Eight** - The Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail needs to remain a TRAIL and not be turned into a rough surfaced logging road as proposed by the Forest Service and Allegheny Wood Products. Why should we destroy this awesome resource and turn it into another Forest Service road?
- Nine** - Allowing the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail to be turned into a logging road and be closed during road building and logging operations for up to six months at a time to facilitate a 300 acre log job is harmful to the tourism industry (#1 industry in Tucker Co.), is entirely unacceptable and is an economic disaster.
- Ten** - The time is now for this project to begin. Why is the U.S. Forest Service even considering the idea of closing and destroying the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail when Allegheny Wood Products has alternate access to this property and has no right to access through the Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail? We need this resource now and the unreasonable actions of the Forest Service are delaying economic development in Tucker County.

Sites for Viewing Fall Foliage in Blackwater Falls State Park



FOB TECH TALK

As technology continues to grow and change we here at FOB are making the attempt to keep up with the "hot" thing of the moment. Now we haven't moved to podcasting or webcasting just yet though I don't rule out anything in the future. We are attempting to reach our audience of supporters in a variety of new ways.

For instance, we now have a presence on [MySpace](#) and [Yahoo!Groups](#), as well as a "blog" for open discussion on [Blogspot.com](#). We have even invaded [YouTube](#) with videos posted of Blackwater Falls. Look for more coming up very soon as we continue to post new information. If you want to join any of our groups or blog with us then send us an e-mail. We would love to count you among our friends and we definitely would like to have some more contributing authors on our blog.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER PUBLISHES NEW NOVEL

Annie Dillard, a member of the FOB Advisory Board and Pulitzer Prize winner, has recently published a new novel. "The Maytrees", set in the dunes of Cape Cod, tells a story of lifelong love and marriage.



Annie Dillard, author of "The Maytrees"

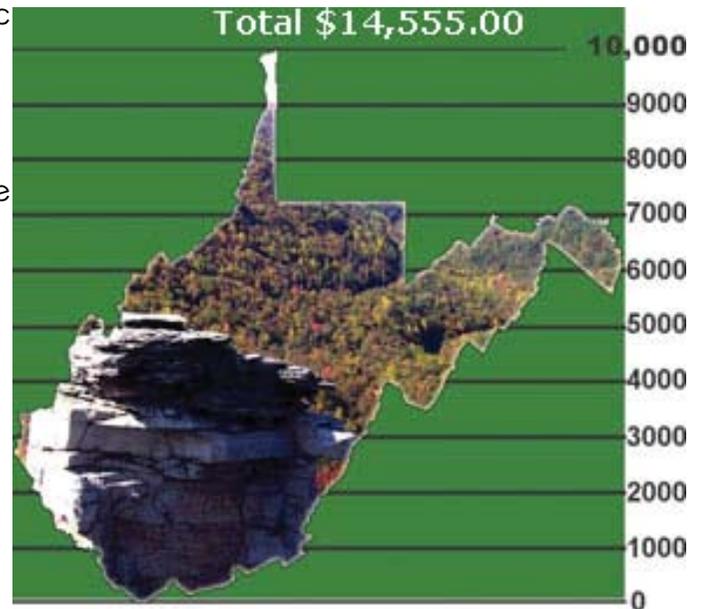
So next time you are in the bookstore, be sure to pick it up. You won't be disappointed!

Wild, Wonderful West Virginia Matching Funds Campaign Surpasses Goal!

Kudos! To all the supporters who donated to help Friends of Blackwater with their effort to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful by protecting the Blackwater Canyon Trail, The Wild and Scenic Blackwater River and Ginny the WV Northern

Flying Squirrel and her Mountain Home. A goal of \$10,000 by July 20 was set in order to receive matching funds. We met and surpassed that goal.

We continue to receive donations to this campaign and to date we have received \$14,555.00. This coupled with the matching funds for a total of \$24,555.00 makes this one of our most successful fundraising campaigns ever!



Thank you for all that you do to support Friends of Blackwater and to keep WV Wild and Wonderful! Special thanks to Emily Schoenbaum, Amelia & Bob McPeak and other anonymous matching donors for helping make this campaign such an overwhelming success!

NEW FOR THE KIDS!

Ginny the WV Northern Flying Squirrel stuffed toys and magnets



Ginny the WV Northern Flying Squirrel stuffed toys are available in two sizes. Large (8.00)* and Small (5.00)*
Ginny the WV Northern Flying Squirrel magnets are also available (2.00)*

Order Today!
(quantities limited)



*Postage & handling included

YES! I WANT TO JOIN FRIENDS OF BLACKWATER

Choose a membership level and send your name, address, and e-mail to

Friends of Blackwater, 501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston WV 25311

- | | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Porte Crayon Society | \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crown Jewel Club | \$ 500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | \$ 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Steward | \$ 250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$ 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 50 | | |

Name _____

Address _____

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My donation is in memory/honor of: _____

Please send card to: _____

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

Add me to your volunteer database.

Please send future newsletters only via e-mail.

Please update my personal information.

Please remove me from your mailing list.

_____ Ginny Stuffed Toys Lg 8.00 ea. Sm 5.00 ea.

_____ Ginny Magnets 2.00 ea.

My check/money order for _____ is enclosed.