

Friends of Blackwater Canyon

Summer 2003 Newsletter

501 Elizabeth Street Room 3, Charleston, WV 25311 • 304-345-7663 • www.saveblackwater.org • info@saveblackwater.org

Welcome

To all our Friends of Blackwater - thank you so much for your interest in protecting Blackwater Canyon and the Blackwater Canyon Trail. Your support is our most important weapon in protecting West Virginia's scenic "Crown Jewel." Here are some of our accomplishments so far:

In just two short years, we have:

- Worked with Governor Bob Wise to add 500 acres to Blackwater Falls State Park.
- Implemented television, radio, newspaper, e-mail and direct-mail campaigns to raise the public profile of the Canyon and the need to protect it. This resulted in 3,000 people sending postcards to Governor Bob Wise naming Blackwater Canyon as West Virginia's most "special place" to preserve.
- Created watershed, nature education, scientific research, tourism, and cultural and history outreach programs - focused on the unique resources of Blackwater Canyon.
- Protested the move by Allegheny Wood Products to turn the Blackwater Canyon Trail, on public land, into a logging road. Worked with citizens across the state and nation to get more than ten thousand people to send comments to the U.S. Forest Service - a record for comments to the Monongahela National Forest!

The Friends of Blackwater campaign to protect the Blackwater Canyon and move it all into public ownership is strong and growing stronger. We are building a climate in which public officials - and the timber company - will see that the love and support that people have for this magnificent Canyon cannot be denied or overcome. A conservation purchase of the private land in the Canyon will fully compensate the landowner - and will create a public-spirited legacy for future generations, far more valuable than short-term profits.

Come to Tucker County for the Leaf Peepers Festival, September 27-28. Call us or visit our website for a schedule of Blackwater Canyon hikes and bike rides!

Blackwater Canyon Update

Public Outcry Gets Results: Forest Service Plans EIS

Your ten thousand comments have had a powerful effect!!

The U.S. Forest Service office that oversees the Monongahela National Forest has requested proposals for a **full Environmental Impact Statement** analysis of the request by Allegheny Wood Products to turn the scenic and historic Blackwater Canyon Trail into a logging road!

A full EIS is the most rigorous study possible, and it means plenty of chances for public input, as well as expert evaluation of all of the options and consequences. The EIS request by the Mon Forest staff is a **great first step**, but we must remain vigilant. We will monitor the Forest Service's actions, and if we have to get twenty thousand comments in to keep this on track, we will!

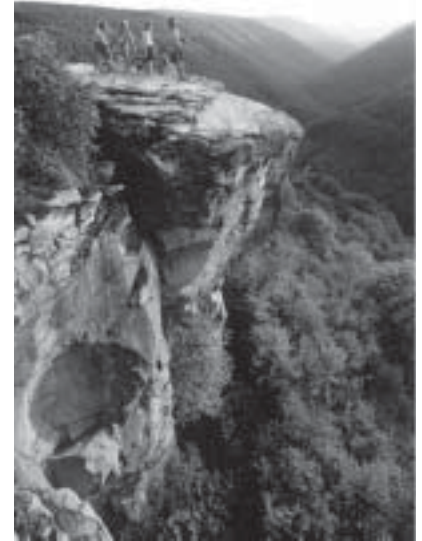
Friends of Blackwater Mourns Richard DiPreto Vows to Continue His Work

Richard DiPreto, a longtime West Virginia environmental activist who recently died in a plane crash, had a close connection with Friends of Blackwater's North Fork Project. Just a few days before Richard died, he completed and delivered an inventory of mine drainage data for the North Fork of the Blackwater River.

The North Fork Project is staffed by Emily Samargo and summer intern Josh Nease. The Project is headquartered in the Town of Thomas in Tucker County, at the head of the Blackwater Canyon. The Project is working to build community support for mine drainage cleanup on the North Fork, and to document the cultural and historic resources associated with the river.

We will miss our beloved friend and colleague Richard, and we will continue his work to protect the Blackwater. For more information, call 304-463-4068, or go to the website: www.northforkwatershed.org

Help Us Save this View!



Openhouse at Charleston Office

On Thursday, September 25, from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. we will have an open house at the FOB office to celebrate the 3,000 people who nominated Blackwater Canyon as a "Special Place" and to applaud Governor Wise for implementing the program. Prizes and refreshments. Public welcome. 501 Elizabeth Street, Charleston; 345-7663 for more information.

Fieldwork Update

Ecologist and artist Anna Hess finished her summer set of botanical drawings, and she plans to get back in the Canyon in late September to capture the pristine beauty of autumn nature. Thanks to grants

from the NiSource, Laurel and Hunt Foundations, Anna's fieldwork will be part of a statewide educational project.



Fundraising Update

Taylor Books Reception

FOB needs to match \$30,000 of grant money from a major foundation for a national media campaign. This endeavor would bring national awareness and support that could bring all of the Canyon land into public ownership.

To kick off our effort to raise the "grant match," Friends of Blackwater hosted a reception and auction in June at Taylor Books' beautiful location in downtown Charleston, WV.

The reception was a success with more than 150 guests attending.

And we raised \$9,000 of our \$30,000 goal!

Special thanks to some of West Virginia's best

artists who donated their work to our auction: Arnout Hyde Jr., T. Paige Dalporto, Mark Blumenstein, Steve Payne, David Fattellah, Michael Leftridge Sr., Steve Shaluta, Jr., Kevin



Mark Blumenstein's "Breaching Pair" - one of the many great auction pieces.

Boyle, Kathy Boland, Joe Chasnoff, and Sam McCormick. We also thank Michael Davis for donating a three-night vacation getaway to Cheat River Cabins.

Soulful music for the evening at Taylor Books was provided by Ron Sowell, director of the "Mountain Stage" band

- and our auction was conducted by Tom

Rodd and Francis Fisher. Thanks to everyone for making it a terrific evening!

Taylor Books Host Committee*

David C. Bailey
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Maureen Conley & Carter Zerbe

*thanks for your financial support

New Grants

This year, Friends of Blackwater has received funding from **Patagonia, the Laurel Foundation, the Roy A Hunt Foundation, NiSource, the DEP Stream Partners Program, the Education Foundation of America, Norm Thompson, the Martin and Carlson Family Funds and the West Virginia Humanities Council.**

Congratulations Blackwater Sweepstakes Winners!

Congratulations to Sallie Hunt of Charleston, West Virginia! Sallie won our "Blackwater Getaway": one night's stay at the Bright Morning Inn Bed and Breakfast, dinner at Sirianni's Café, Mountain Music weekend at the Purple Fiddle, and a relaxing massage from Highland Inn.

The winner of the "Blackwater Canyon From Home" package is Josh Whetzel, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Josh wanted to share some of his bountiful winnings with other Friends of Blackwater members, and Josh asked us to select two other entrants who would receive some of his prize package. We chose Mary Sackett, from Novato, California to receive Josh's Friends of Blackwater poster. We sent Josh's Blackwater Falls Adventure Guide to Sandra Staggers in Charlottesville, VA. But we absolutely insisted that Josh receive *The Blackwater Chronicle*, by Philip Pendleton Kennedy, as a reminder of the times Josh used to "jump the rocks way down in the Canyon."

North Fork Watershed Project Update

The North Fork Acid Mine Drainage watershed tour and BBQ Picnic on July 26 hosted by Philip and Karin Nelson was a great success, with more than 30 community members attending.

The **Coketon Labor History Seminar Series** began in July. North Fork staff will work with local historians and scholars to document and promote the rich cultural resources in the watershed. Special thanks to summer intern **Corrine Evans** who helped with the collection of historical data.

We also want to welcome to the North Fork Project, a full-time summer intern supported by the Office of

Surface Mining. **Joshua Nease** is from Bridgeport, WV, and is a recent graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College. Nease has always had a great interest in the effects of mining on stream water, and he would love to see improvements in the North Fork Watershed. He enjoys fly-fishing and hiking. Thanks, Josh, for great work.

The West Virginia Stream Partners Program awarded us a grant that will support our office this coming year. With the help of the grant, our inventory of water quality data will be completed soon, and we will be ready to move into a remediation study phase.



Tucker Co. Residents Lori Halderman, Cindy Phillips, Karin Nelson, Alvie Goff, Mary Collins and former WV Delegate, Dave (O.B.) Collins view photos on the North Fork AMD Tour with leader, DEP employee, Marshall Leo.

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Special thanks to Susan Watkins, a Charleston office volunteer who has been updating our donation records and helping reorganize our storage and filing system. Susan lives in Charleston.



Connie Rice, Doctoral Candidate at WVU, presented her latest research on J.R. Clifford and other historic personalities from Coketon during a meeting sponsored by the WV Humanities Council. In 1898 J.R. Clifford, a black lawyer, won a landmark case against the Tucker County Board of Education when the WV Supreme Court ruled that discrimination against the black school in Coketon was illegal. He represented Carrie Williams, a teacher for the Negro School.

Board Member Highlight: Sheila McEntee

Sheila McEntee of Charleston, a stalwart Friends of Blackwater board member, has hiked, camped, and watched birds in Blackwater Canyon - but her favorite activity there remains sitting on the craggy rocks at Lindy Point, clutching a tattered volume of poetry by Gerard Manley Hopkins, and "watching the hills being their magnificent selves."

A longtime wildlife advocate, Sheila worked throughout the 1990s on behalf of the West Virginia Audubon Council to achieve permanent funding for West Virginia's Wildlife Diversity Program (formerly the Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Program). This statewide effort by citizens and groups culminated in the passage of a constitutional amendment in 1996, and the subsequent establishment of West Virginia's wildlife motor vehicle license plate, the proceeds from which are dedicated to the Wildlife Diversity Program.

Sheila has contributed many articles on state wildlife to *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine, including one on the endangered West Virginia northern flying squirrels that reside in Blackwater Canyon. She is a contributing editor for *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine



and a writer/editor at Appalachian Educational Laboratory, a research company headquartered in Charleston. Sheila especially enjoys walking in Kanawha State Forest with notebook, pen, and her dog, Seamus.

Summer Interns Get "A" in Communications



From updating our mailing list to stuffing envelopes, Brian Bausley and Carrie Nyden worked very hard this summer in our Charleston office. Not only were they a big help in getting FOB's word out, but

they brought a lot of intellect, energy and inspiration to each project.

Brian is a freshman studying music education at Marshall University. He is a Promise Scholar and received multiple scholarships from the University for his musical and vocal talent. Brian is a classically trained pianist who enjoys his spare time as the choir director of Pilgrim Home Missionary Baptist Church. Brian is the son of Shelly and Sherri Bausley.

Carrie is an avid athlete. For Capital High, Carrie runs with the long-distance track and cross-country teams. Last year, Carrie was inducted in the National Honor Society, and she hopes that her excellent academic standing will carry her to her dream school, Boston University. Carrie likes mountain biking and going to the gym. Carrie is the daughter of Paul Nyden and Sara Sheets.

We are very glad that these very special teenagers took time to help us through a very busy time.



Attendees of the Coketon Labor History Seminar got to see what the Blackwater Industrial Complex at Douglas looked like at its peak in a slide show by historian Mike Caplinger.

Friends of Blackwater

www.saveblackwater.org
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Wind Project Update

250 bats killed at Backbone Wind Facility!

Friends of Blackwater is very concerned about the record number of bats killed at the Backbone site just over the ridge from Blackwater Canyon. This large mortality points to the need for strict regulations on the siting of these industrial wind facilities. The Friends of the Allegheny Front was granted a 15-day extension on comments to the West Virginia Public Service Commission which is writing siting criteria regulations for wind facilities. Thank you to those who commented. We will keep you updated on this issue.



Thanks to Our 2003

Porte Crayon Members!



Nathan Anderson

Oshel Craig

Richard Edwards

Miriam & George Martin

Philip & Karin Nelson

Jim Norton

Jane Showacre

Steven F. White

Elizabeth Zimmerman



Become a Member of our Special Support Group

- \$1000 Porte Crayon Society
- \$500 Crown Jewel Club
- \$250 Steward
- \$100 Patron
- \$50 Family
- \$35 Individual
- \$5 Senior or Student

To purchase FOB gear and books visit
www.saveblackwater.org

Calwell Reflects on Blackwater

Margaret Calwell is a strong supporter and source of encouragement to Friends of Blackwater. Her love for Tucker County and the Canyon is fueled by memories of growing up in Davis. Calwell's amazing childhood comes to life in her first book, *Speak to the Past: A Memoir Fat With Words*. Her stories tell of Davis' rich cultural and industrial history. Calwell describes clambering over huge boulders to take "the old way" to the foot of Blackwater Falls and how she swam in the deep pool where the raging waters fall and dove into the cave-like areas behind the Falls.

Calwell, now lives in Charleston, and she attributes her inspiration for writing the book to her Aunt Pearle Digman Mott, who was the vital statistics clerk of Davis and the author of *History of Davis*



Margaret in the 1930s above Blackwater Falls.

and *Canaan Valley*, published in 1972.

If you would like to order a copy of Calwell's book, please contact the Friends of Blackwater office.