Annie Dillard Urges Blackwater Lovers
“Tell Candidates How You Feel About Canyon Protection”

“Living this way by the creek, where the light appears and vanishes on the water, where muskrats surface and dive, and redwings scatter, I have come to know a special side of nature. I look to the mountains, and the mountains still slumber, blue and mute and rapt. I say, it gathers; the world abides.”

Annie Dillard, A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.

Dear Friend,

As a child, I fell in love with the West Virginia Highlands. These beautiful, ancient mountains are an oasis of peace and natural beauty.

But today, the destructive roar of chainsaws and bulldozers is threatening the Mountain State’s scenic “Crown Jewel” — the magnificent, 10,000-acre Blackwater Canyon and the wild and scenic Blackwater River.

We must preserve and protect this pristine landscape — home to endangered salamanders, flying squirrels, water shrews, and many more species — for our children and grandchildren.

That’s why I am asking you to take a few minutes, right now, to let your voice be heard.

Please cut out and complete the enclosed BLACKWATER PROTECTION PETITION form (page 2) and return it in the mail. Your voice will join with thousands of others to show West Virginia’s 2004 statewide political candidates that protecting the Blackwater Canyon is an important issue.

The creatures of the Blackwater Canyon have no voice. They are counting on you.

Please send in your form today.

Yours in friendship,

Annie

We are excited that Pulitzer Prize-winning nature writer and author Annie Dillard is helping Friends of Blackwater in our 2004 Blackwater Protection Petition Campaign.

The goal of the 2004 Petition campaign is to make sure West Virginia political candidates make Blackwater Protection part of their political platform.

We hope that you will respond to Annie Dillard’s heartfelt call to action. Please send in the form on page 2, adding your name to the 2004 Blackwater Protection Petition. Petition signers’ names will be delivered to candidates throughout the election season. Only your name will appear on the petition.

Historic Blackwater Heroes

J. R. Clifford, West Virginia’s first black lawyer, who lived from 1849 to 1933, is an early hero of the civil rights movement in West Virginia.

Clifford won his most important civil rights case on behalf of a schoolteacher in Tucker County in the town of Coketon at the head of the Blackwater Canyon!

...read more on page 6

In this issue:
Director’s Update 2
Valentine Sweepstakes 2
Board Profile: Linda Cooper 3
Celebrating our Membership 4,5
Northfork Update 6
Website Redesigned 6
Winter Canyon Hike 7
DC House Party Success 7
Photo Contest 8

...read more and find out how you can help on page 2
Have you been bitten by the love bug and need to share some romantic space with a special someone? You can qualify for two fantastic grand prize packages to be given away in the Friends of Blackwater "Cuddle-Up In Style" Valentine's Day Sweepstakes. You may find yourselves nestled in a cozy cabin or relaxing on the couch, surrounded with gifts. To qualify, check "Valentine Sweepstakes" on the form below and include it with your winter donation or annual membership renewal. Donations are not required to qualify, but are certainly appreciated. Make sure your envelope is postmarked on or before February 14.

Following are the prizes:

"Blackwater Getaway"
This package includes a two-night cabin stay near Blackwater Canyon, two tickets to a Mountain Music Weekend show at the Purple Fiddle in Thomas, dinner for two at Siriani's Cafe in Davis, and a massage from the Highland Inn and Spa in Canaan Valley.

"Virtual Blackwater Getaway"
Enjoy the Blackwater Canyon area from home! This package includes a romantic dinner for two consisting of West Virginia smoked trout, a bottle of West Virginia wine and a box of West Virginia chocolates, a copy of West Virginia: The Allegheny Highlands by Jim Clark, a Save Blackwater Canyon t-shirt, and a limited edition Blackwater Poster.

When entering, be sure to specify which prize package you prefer. All online contributions made at our website, www.saveblackwater.org will be eligible for the prizes, as well.

Blackwater Valentine's Sweepstakes!

Name:__________________________________________
Phone:________________________________________
Address:_______________________________________
email:__________________________________________

☐ Blackwater Getaway ☐ Virtual Blackwater

Your information will be kept confidential by Friends of Blackwater. An e-mail address will allow us to send you updates at a low cost to us and the environment.

2004 Blackwater Protection Petition
Dear West Virginia Candidates in the 2004 Elections:

Protecting West Virginia's signature landscape — the magnificent Blackwater Canyon — is very important to me. I support moving all of the private land in the Canyon into public ownership. I urge you to make protecting the entire Canyon a prominent campaign issue in 2004, for the welfare of West Virginia, today and in the future.

Yours truly, ________________________________
(Name)
________________________________________
(Address)
________________________________________
(City, State, Zip)
________________________________________
(Phone)
________________________________________
(E-mail)

Your information will be kept confidential by Friends of Blackwater. An e-mail address will allow us to send you updates at a low cost to us and the environment.
Board Member Highlight: Linda Cooper

Linda Cooper grew up in Canaan Valley, with six brothers and sisters. Linda recalls the long winters in the Valley, and the remoteness and extreme quiet of their home. Her grandmother and aunt were bought out by Canaan Valley State Park, but Linda managed to save her grandmother’s house. She moved it onto property that her family still owns, and converted it into a second home where she can continue to enjoy the area.

Linda remembers her father’s stories about the Blackwater Canyon. “He told me if I ever had a chance to ride the railroad through the Canyon that I had better do it. He was not a poetic man, and I think that was one of the few times I heard him talk about a place with such warmth. I took it as one of his highest recommendations. He rode that railroad line as a child, and it was such a fond memory for him.”

While Linda was at Berea College in Kentucky, she became concerned about the damage caused by strip mining practices. She became involved in efforts to protect mountain lands from destruction. During her first summer back home in West Virginia, 1970, the Davis Power Project was proposed. Linda became a leader in opposing plans to flood the Canaan Valley to create a hydro-electric dam in Davis. Linda is one of the founding members of Friends of Blackwater.

Blackwater Merchandise

The Flying Squirrel and Kayaking Squirrel T-shirts (100% preshrunk cotton) were created by artist Brad Basil of the Art Medium in Elkins, West Virginia. Flying Squirrel: kids M, L; adult S, M, L, XL, XXL. Kayaking Squirrel: adult L, XL.

The Blackwater Chronicle by Philip Pendleton Kennedy, published by WVU Press, is a “Narrative of the Expedition into the Land of Canaan in Randolph County.” Edited and with a new introduction by Timothy Sweet. Illustrated by David Hunter Strother.

West Virginia Adventure Guide - Blackwater Falls State Park by Emily Grafton, West Virginia botanist. Beautiful drawings and detailed botanical, activity and wildlife information on the Blackwater Canyon. A must for nature lovers.

Limited Edition Blackwater Poster, (23” x 35”). This full-color poster combines images of well known West Virginia photographers Ken Garrett, Sam McCormick, Stephen Shaluta, and David Smith.

Speak to the Past: A Memoir Fat With Words by Margaret Calwell, 226 pages, Paperback. Margaret remembers her childhood near Blackwater Canyon. The book includes photos of people and buildings in Davis, West Virginia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>hard cover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>paperback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Membership Donation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*$2 for t-shirts and posters and $2.50 for books
Thank you all so much for joining the Friends of Blackwater family!! Last year was the first time we offered memberships. All donors who sent in a white donor remittance envelope in 2003 are listed here. Other supporters will be recognized in the next newsletter. It gives us heart and keeps us going to have so many members standing behind us. We are also recognizing those people who gave gifts to the Friends in 2003. Please keep the memberships coming!!

Porte Crayon Society
Oshel B. Craigo
Phillip and Karin Nelson
Jim Norton
Jane Showacre
Steven F. White
Elizabeth C. Zimmermann

Crown Jewel
Nathan Anderson
Frances and William Pope

Steward
Anonymous
Susan M Baker
Gary and Helga Benninger
Foster Family
Stephen Haid and Jennifer Taylor
Richard Hall and Heleny Cook
Blaise Hollot
James F Humphreys
Anthony and Cynthia Majestro
Glen and Linda Morrison
Lori Plummer
Marie L. Prezioso
Margaret Rea
Mr. and Mrs. S.M. Rust, Jr.
Josh and Farley Whetzel
Patricia Wilmsen
Gail S. Wippelhauser and Robert McIntire

Patron
Julie Adams and Josh Barnett
Dr. and Mrs. Duanie Alexander
Beth Allen
Cynthia Ashworth
George and Mary Belling
Charles and Margaret Biggs
Brent Blackwood
Timothy A Bradford
Margaret Calwell
Joseph C. Cometti
Donna and Carroll Cook
Sally F. Davidson
Charles DiSalvo and Kathleen Kennedy
March Enders
Mary Clare Eros and Jim Eros
Arthur and Betty G. Evans Jr
Brock Evans
Mike and Bonnie Fidler
Ronald and Fran Fulton
Shirley and Cliff Gay
Brian and Lena Thoren Glasser
Eric Glitzenstein
John G. Good III
Larry Groce and Sandra Armstrong Groce
Lila and Alvin Guyon
Jason Halbert
Mary Etta Hight and William J. Arnold
Nancy and Paul L. Hill Jr
John Huffman
Nancy and Ulysses James
Majid and Nooshazan Jaraiedi
Devery Jarvis
Robert and Jo Allen Jones
Charles and Montague Kern
Fred and Sandra Kerns
Sara King and Gail Berlin
Richard and Frances Latterell
Lawrence S. Lessin
Marc Levine and Gail Gregory
William and Marjorie Lewellen
Jim and Judy Lewis
Jim Maddy
Bill McCabe
Sean P. Mcginley and Anna Marino
Deborah McHenry and Elaine Moore
Leslie Mead
Dick and Mary Meeks
Florence Kate Millar
Peter Moshein
Patricia Munoz
William O'Brien and Sarah Flaherty
Catherine Pardee
Michael Piante
Rafe and Lenore Pomerance
William David Powell
Betty J Rice
Albert and Peggy Richardson
Joe and Mary Moore Rieffenberger
Claudia P. Schechter
Carol Schimpff
Emily Schoenbaum
Joan Schroering
Betty L. Schmimmer
Juliana Serafin and Albert Liu
Emma Shelton
Paul Sheridan and Kate Fitzgerald
George and Margaret Smith
Michael Smith
Fred and Barbara Stafford
Sandra Staggers
William and Françoise Stauber
Kathryn and James Stone
Sally Swisher
Robert Talkington
Annette H Tanne
McCarty Thornton
Dee and Frank Webb
Tim and Tammy Wenzel
David E. Wilcox
Caroline Brady Wilson
Robert B Wilson and Jackie Hallinan
Mitch Zemel
Carter Zerbe and Maureen Conley

Family
Harold Allan
Ron and Sue Anglin
Julia Aurecmann
Brent Bailey
John and Holly Holman Bailey
Steve Barnett, MD
Robert M. Bastrress
Thomas and Cynthia Beres
Lee Bowen
Michael and Jon Brooks
Nancy and Clark Campbell
Craig Close
Dormal E. Cometti
Ira Craig
Sara M. Crickenberger
Linda Davidson
Low and Penny Dimler
Jack and Margaret Dolly
Douglas and Lynn Downs
Cholly Erb
Eric and Linda Erbe
Sandra Fallon
John Fenwick
Richard D. Finn
Jeff Frontz
Helen and Neil L. Gibbins
Scott Goetz and Nadine Laporte
Richard and Audrey Gray
Bea and Cliff Hackett
Hedda and Ray Haning
Byron L Harris and Jill McDaniel
Richard Harris and Karen Ford
Jeff Hazel
Alice Hypes-Brown
Daniel and Sally Jackson
Bob Jordan and Mary Ludtke
Steve and Christine Dolan Keating
Tom and Joan Becker Kelsch
Pat W. Kingman
Rhonda Koch
Stephen H. Koeppen
Robert and Mildred Lynn
Suzanne Maben
Robert and Joyce Manyik
Roy Meyers
William Mills
Karyn Molines and Gary Pendleton
Marcia and John Moore
John and Leslie Mugaas
Brian and Polly Mullins
Gina and Elliot Namay
Ronald and Doreen Neff
Duane Nichols and Carol Sue Miles
Virginia Nugent
Erika Pallie and Adam Polinski
Barbara and Arthur Pavlovic
Sandra Lee and Charles Romesburg
Mary C Samango
Don and Susan Sauter
Marie Sauter
George and Karen Schnackenberg
David and Linda Schoyer
Neal Secrist
Karen Sembower and Mike Aiton
Anne and John Sils
Eileen and Stanley Smith
Nelson and Marie Spencer
Pat and Dave Stepian
Irving and Gail Stern
Albert W. Stewart
Anne and Dennis Strawn
Donley and Susan Studlar
Bill Styer and Anna Gerig
Diane Sylvester
Ronald and Sharon Tebben
Bonne Thurston
Julie S. Vargas
Thomas Ward
Tim Warner and Paula Hunt
Elizabeth Weimer
Greg and Maria Whiteaker
Nick Williams
Thomas and Barbara Williams
Donald E. Wright

Individuals
Art Abrams
Betty Anne Adams
Steve Antoline
James S. Baczuk
Tristan Bond
Johnny L. Brooks
John Brown
Rives and Richard Carroll
John and Betty Colhoun
George R. Dasher
Drew Ellis
Kay Evans
Richard Ford
Bob Gedekoh
Francis R. Gilmore
Robin Godfrey and Mary Ellen O'Farrell
Joan Golden
Katharine Gregg & Kathleen Parker
George Hall
Ian Paul Hallwill
Teresa and Mark Hanson
Robert & Susan Harpold
H. Milton Harr
Joseph Harris
Craig A. Holberger
Robert G. Humphrey
Reba Hutton
Virginia J. Jones
Karen J. Kelley
Janet and Emory Kemp
Teresa Koon
Michael T. Lamason and Karen French
John D. Leach
Lenna Leeson
Jeffrey Dale Legge
Claire Levine
Robert G. Livingston Jr.
2003 Members

Helen and Thomas Lohm
Steven D Mace
Lisa C McIver
Michael and Twila Miller
B Kent Parker
Pertie Lee Prouty
Alice Rathbone
Melissa A Ratliff
Ernie Reed
William and Carol Reuther
Randall Reyer
Paul and Marjorie Richter
H John Rogers
Midge and Lucian Schrader
Fred and Sharon Sencindiver
Timothy Shanahan
Stanwyn G and Elaine R Shetler
Barbara Smith
James Sullivan & Mary Henderson Sullivan
Helen F Thalheimer
Jim and Judy Van Gundy
Mike and Judy Webb
Robert W Williams
Elaine Wilson
J Wilson and Tristan Bond
Barbara Wolfert
Carol Wolf
Sandra Woods
Brad and Kisten Woodward

Supporters

Donna Accord
Silas and Loretta Adkins
Bob Adkisson
Clarence Aleshire
Alvin and Roberta Allison
Zeke Applegate
Charlie Baer
Jim and Wynona Bailey
Robert and Nancy Baldwin
Elizabeth Bare
Jo Ann Barlow
Theodore A Beadle
Elizabeth Beatty
Marilyn Bible
Richard and Julia Bird
Bruce and Marcia Bonta
Dorothy Bremsen
Ann L Brown
Kevin F Brown
Charles L Buchanan
Samuel J Burchfield
Ron Burkhart
Eleanor M Bush
Griffin and Lynne Callahan
Dan Cantner
John and Caroline Charonko
Nelle Ratrie Chilton
James and Helen Clark
Jeffrey S Cogle
Fred Coleman
Maureen Comiskey
Charlie Comly
April Crowe
Jeff Crowe
William and Lillian Dodd
J W Dumire
Ajay Eastman
Bettie Mae Aldrich Eisenhardt
James W Evans
Ian Fitzpatrick
Rebecca Fore
G. Drew Forrester
Roland Foss
James A Fowler
Peggy Frankenfield
James A Garretson
Diana George
Claire and Paul Gesalman
Louise F Gillooly
Evelyn Glyn
Raymond Godwin
K Diana Green
Mary and Steve Groome
Molly Blake Gunther
Betty W Hall
Sallie and Mark Hall
Marjorie Hamperian
Walter Harbison
Phyllis Harman
Phyllis A. Harman
Seth and Elizabeth Harper
Curtis, Barbara & Tia Harris
Kathy Hastings
Gardner Hathaway
Helen L Hazelton
John and Judy Hillman
Esther Hinchman
Cathy Hood
Joseph Hovious
Sallie Hunt
William A James III
Fanny M Johnson
Thomas Johnson
Robert E Jordan
Kenneth Kaleida and Donna Gunther
Richard and Kay Kewal
Mary Ellen Koenn
Beth Koller
Elizabeth Koller
Robert and Dolores Lad
William B Leaman, Jr
Lindsey Family
Penny Loeb
Johnathan Love
Robert Lynch
Ric MacDowell
Connie and John Manchester
Martin and Verbanic
Kent and Ruth Ann Mason
Jeanette Wallich McCarthy
Bert and Maxine McClain
Elizabeth McKey
Jenetta and Sidney McClure
Cathy McConnell
David McCutcheon
Terry McIntosh
Stephanie Mendelson
Bradley Midgett
Jim Miernyk
Carol and Doug Milam
Mary Miller
Nathaniel Miller
Mary Alice Milnes
Glenand Anna Mitchell
William and Elinor Moore
Mary and James Morgan
James Mosher
Robert and Elizabeth Mueller
Sarah H Naas
James E and Edward Nabors
Lucinda Nicholson
Jerry Oland
Marlyn Orr
Erika Parmi
Ann Payne
Mark and Lois Payne
Helen Perry
Scott Plantier
Cindy Rank
Jane Rector Donaldson and Susan Breiding
Rob and Cynthia Riddle
Rich Riegler and Diana Simonton
Betty Riley
Rose Marie Riter
John & Betty Roberts
Tom and Judy Rodd
David Rodgers
Shirley Rosenbaum
Larry Rowe and Julia Beury
Alan Rudley
Alexander J Sabo
Paul Salstrom
Grace S Sargeant
Stanley and Ethel Schiff
Jim and Melinda Schmitt
Joe Schreiber Jr
Joseph F Schuppe
Stephanie Schuster
Joseph Second
Peter O Sellare
Don and Martha Shearer
John Sherwood
Lois Shinn
Walt R Shupe
Don Spencer
Richard Spotts
George and Katherine Starzmann
Geneva Steele
Bruce and Linda Stennett
Pete and Wendy Sullivan
John C Taylor
Jon and Debbi Thomas
Virgil and Shelley Thorne
Lori Thornton
Harriet Tucker
Waino Tuominen
Annette Van Hilst
Richard, Janet and Jason Wallis
Buddy Watkins
Scott and Laura Welch
Carolyn Welcker
Stephen L Wellons
Joy Wheeler
James Winski
Dr and Mrs. Anthony Winston
Wayne Wolfram
Josephine Wood
Robert and Autumn Wooling
Charles Yoho
Peter Zadis

In-Kind

Colleen Anderson
Mark Blumenstein
Kathy Boland
Kevin Boyle
Margaret Calwell
Joe Chasoff
T Paige Dalporto
Michael Davis
David Fattaleh
Emily Gaillot
A Rontu Hyde Jr.
Carol Jackson
Michael Leftridge Sr
Sam McCormick
Philip and Karin Nelson
Steve Payne
Rafe and Lenore Pomerance
Steve Shalata Jr
Julie Zickelooe
Friends of Blackwater’s North Fork Watershed Project received a West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection award for outstanding efforts in Outreach and Education. Our presentations to local organizations and school groups, and a series of newspaper articles, were cited “for creating watershed awareness and changing attitudes.” We will continue our outreach and education programming in 2004.

The North Fork Watershed Project was also chosen to receive an EPA “Targeted Brownfields Assessment” grant. The Brownfields program identifies and cleans up areas of hazardous substances and pollution. Sites selected are those that show great potential for “reuse.” In the case of the North Fork Watershed, reuse will come in the form of heightened recreational opportunities on the North Fork of the Blackwater River and on the adjacent rail-trail. Assistance through the Brownfields program will help clean up acid mine drainage in the North Fork and improve recreational and historic resources in the watershed.

The North Fork Watershed Project will be hiring for another position in April. The position will be filled through the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Responsibilities include: organizing community events, working with state and federal agencies, grant writing. For details call Emily Samargo at 304-463-4068.

Historic Blackwater Heroes... continued from page 1

J. R. Clifford was born in Grant County. He fought in the Civil War at the age of fifteen. He moved to Martinsburg, W. Va. after the war, where he started the Pioneer Press, West Virginia’s first black newspaper. He worked with his younger colleague and friend William E. B. Dubois to help found the modern civil rights movement.

In 1892, in the town of Coketon, Mrs. Carrie Williams taught in the “colored” one-room school. West Virginia had segregated schools at that time. Williams was refused full payment for her eight months of teaching the African-American students of this coal mining community. The colored school was only to be open for five months, instead of the eight months provided to white students, according to the local school board.

Williams taught the full eight months, and she demanded her full pay on the principle that African-American students were entitled to an equal education. J. R. Clifford took Williams’ case, tried it in the Tucker County Courthouse — and he won! The school board appealed to the West Virginia State Supreme Court, where Clifford won again, in 1898! This was the first “separate but equal case” in the United States.

The story of J. R. Clifford, Carrie Williams, and the Coketon case will be highlighted this year at the West Virginia University Law School in a seminar on March 9, and in a dramatic reenactment in the Martinsburg Court House on April 12.

Both events are free and open to the public, and are sponsored by the West Virginia Supreme Court and the West Virginia NAACP, in connection with the anniversary year of Brown vs. the Board of Education.

For more information, contact us toll-free at Friends of Blackwater, 1-877-WVALAND.

www.saveblackwater.org - Redesigned and Improved

We are expanding our website! We invite you to use this resource to learn about our organization and the remarkable Blackwater Canyon.

Now you can read online — and see great pictures — about Friends of Blackwater’s history, including our past campaigns and successes. You can even view the alarming development plans that have been filed by Allegheny Wood Products.

• View Maps.
• Find information on trails, public lands, restaraunts, lodging and more.
• Learn about the Canyon’s endangered species.
• View a complete list of books, t-shirts and posters available for sale.
• Keep up to date on current action alerts.
• Read newsletters on line.

Visit our website often, as we are adding more information all the time.
A Holiday Outing Along the Blackwater Canyon Rim

By Tom Rodd

On the Saturday after Christmas, Judy and I and our sons, Ira and Solomon, took a winter hike along the Blackwater Canyon Rim.

We went through the towns of Thomas and Coketon (home of Mountainmade.com), driving another 1.5 miles to Douglas, where the road-plowing came to an end. Going by way of Thomas gave us a chance to get coffee at the Purple Fiddle — “where the beat meet the elite” in Tucker County — live music every weekend!

We parked in Douglas and put on winter-friendly footgear. I lent Ira my Gore-Tex booties; they transform the mediocre hiking shoe into a wilderness-terrain-eating machine! We were well equipped for snow-over-the-shoe-top conditions.

Our route was Forest Road 18, which runs along the Canyon Rim for six miles. Below us, Douglas Falls was crashing. The sky was blue and cloudless, fresh snow sparkling on the trees and ground. Some kindly soul (one could also say “nut”) in a four-wheel-drive had thankfully “broken trail.”

As we walked, we could see the evergreen spruce on the far side of the Canyon, a half-mile away — good habitat for the West Virginia flying squirrel, and one reason why development plans for this part of the Canyon were scotched — after a citizen lawsuit, of course.

Judy and I lingered at bends in the road, where the warm low winter sun breaks through the trees. We caught up with our sons where a crystal-pure stream crossed the road. We looked across the Canyon at the magnificent Lindy Point overlook — now owned by the people of West Virginia, also thanks to hard-fought citizen efforts.

We could see another Lindy-Point-style overlook, this one on our side of the Canyon. “We must go out there!” said Sol, plunging off the trail into the undergrowth. Judy and I followed. Ira said, “I’ll stay and call 911,” — but in a minute, he was on our track.

We all climbed down a rocky slope, across a couple of icy ledges, and then up a rock staircase. We emerged on a wind-swept rock platform, looking out over a 270-degree vista of the Blackwater Canyon. The Blackwater River carved its ancient way, a thousand feet below us.


“Now, Mom, let me stand near the edge here and take a picture . . .”

“No, don’t go so close!”

What is more fun than torturing your worry-wart parents? Did I mention that my sons are in their thirties? Those bums!

It was dark when we got back to the car. Time for a pizza at Siriani’s in Davis. We shared a table with folks from Fairmont who have a retirement home on the Dry Fork. Their son had hiked every trail in Dolly Sods, deer hunting.

To help save Blackwater Canyon (it’s worth it!), please join Friends of Blackwater. Call 1-877-WVA-LAND; or visit www.saveblackwater.org. Happy New Year, everyone!

Check the website for trail locations.

Washington DC Fundraiser a Great Success

The Washington DC Garden Party for Friends of Blackwater was held under a magnificent magnolia in Rafe and Lenore Pomerance’s back yard. The patio was filled with friends, old and new, on a surprisingly warm November evening. Guests traded stories about trips to the Canyon, watched Blackwater videos and enjoyed updates about Friends of Blackwater projects. Many Blackwater lovers live in the greater Washington area and enjoy getting together to share their enthusiasm for West Virginia’s scenic “Crown Jewel” and to support the cause of Blackwater protection with their donations. Local musicians “Herb and Hanson” provided entertainment.
Blackwater Photo Contest!

Categories:
A. Wildlife and Botany
B. Recreation
C. Landscapes/Vistas

Dates:
Entries will be accepted until November 15, 2004.

Guidelines:
1. All entries should be accompanied by: name, address, phone number, e-mail, image title, equipment and technique used.
2. Photographs must be taken in the Blackwater Canyon Area of Tucker County, West Virginia.
3. Entries must be submitted as an 8” x 10” color print. Photos may be landscape or vertical orientation. Prints should be matted and mounted on foam core.
4. Photographs become property of Friends of Blackwater and cannot be returned.
5. A short description of the photo, including location, on an 8½” x 11” sheet of paper must accompany the photo.
6. Individuals may enter as many photographs as they wish. Open to all ages.


Winners will be selected from each category; a Grand Prize winner will be chosen. Grand prize: $100; Category Winners: $50 each. Dates of public display will be announced at a later date. For additional information please call: 1-877-WVALAND. Mail entries to: 501 Elizabeth Street, Room 3, Charleston WV 25311.

Blackwater Updates:
The Forest Service reports that they are doing a content analysis of the 10,000 comments received in 2003 demanding protection for the Blackwater Canyon Trail.

Articles on threats to Blackwater Canyon Trail and its scenic beauty appeared recently in the Charlotte Observer and the Akron Beacon Journal.

Look, it's another "baby" flying squirrel! And this one is Miles Case. Be on the lookout for other members of our flying squirrel family.