

FRIENDS *of* BLACKWATER



December 2018

Dear Friend,

2018 has been an extraordinary year for Friends of Blackwater. We are grateful for the many wonderful people and partners who have worked with us on many exciting projects and campaigns.

More than ever, we need your generous year-end donations to keep our work going strong in 2019. We promise to use your contributions wisely -- to fight for the beautiful Blackwater Canyon and River and the Allegheny Highlands, and the creatures who live here.

One of those special creatures, our mascot, "**Ginny,**" the **West Virginia flying squirrel,** sent us a note (see the adjoining picture) to share with you. Ginny, you can count on us!

Along with protecting Ginny's babies, and all our other projects, Friends of Blackwater plans to hire a new Director in the coming year, so Judy Rodd can take a break from her long-time volunteer effort. **This means we will need to up our \$200,000 annual budget by \$50,000. We can do this, but only with your help!**

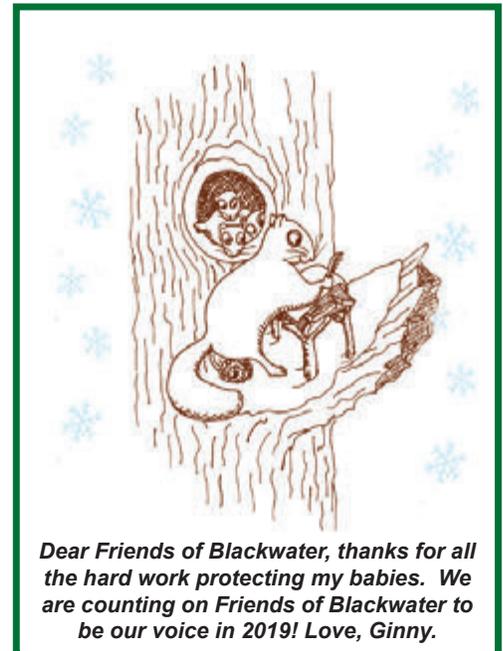
Thinking back a little, here are some of our 2018 accomplishments that your donations will build on in the coming year:

- Hundreds of citizen voices, supported by our crack legal team and our partners at **Defenders of Wildlife**, persuaded the **Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge** to drop their plans for commercial logging in the Refuge. These same experts, along with the our partners at the Center for Biological Diversity, are now ramping up to challenge logging in the Monongahela National Forest that would decimate Ginny's habitat, including a project right next to the Cranberry Wilderness.

- Our state-of-the-art acid mine drainage pollution treatment project, on the North Fork of the Blackwater, is finally beginning. We are planning similar projects for Beaver Creek, a major tributary of the Blackwater River, that will bring back an iconic trout fishery in this scenic river.

- **We are excited to be documenting and sharing the industrial and railroad history of Tucker County.** The tourism economy of the Highlands needs more historic markers, public lectures, and tours – and we are delivering them! In 2019, with your support, we will celebrate local families whose ancestors came to the Highlands to work in the forests, mines, mills, coke ovens, and railroad lines.

- We are wrapping up the year with a major **Climate Change Conference at the West Virginia University Law School on December 1st.** Climate change threatens what we love most in the Highlands, and we all need to be part of the solution. These are difficult times, because threats to the natural world come from many directions. We will persist and continue in 2019, thanks to support from people like you. Acting together, we can make a big difference.



Please donate to Friends of Blackwater to protect our public land, improve our waterways, stand up for West Virginia's rare and vulnerable wildlife, and preserve the heritage of the Highlands.

Thanks again for your support!



Meet some of our amazing partners!



Tom Rodd
Climate



John Brown
Technology



Kent Mason
Photography



Kent Karriker
Endangered Species

Thank you to our Foundation and Government Supporters!

Appalachian Stewardship Foundation
Clif Bar Family Foundation
The Dayton Foundation
North Face
The Pittsburgh Foundation
Tucker County Cultural District Authority
WV DEP 319 Program
WV Humanities Council
Town of Hendricks

Bowman-Hunter Family Charitable Fund
Cheat Lake Environment and Recreation Association
Duffy Family Foundation
Southern Partners Fund
Tucker Community Foundation
Tucker County Landmarks Commission
WV DEP Stream Partners Program
WVU Center for Energy and Sustainable Development

Check out our new merchandise!

Friends of Blackwater is now selling "West Virginia's Allegheny Mountains: A Photographic Journey" by Kent Mason and Rodney Bartgis.

Check it out online at

<https://saveblackwater.org/shop/>

You can also get t-shirts, tote bags, maps, books, and toys on our online store. If you have questions about ordering, call 304-345-7663 or email kate@saveblackwater.org



Young People Care About Highlands Climate

We are both humbled and proud that hundreds of West Virginia young people and their science teachers welcomed our “Kitchen Klimate Science” program into their classrooms in 2018.

Dancing “the Greenhouse Boogie” with colorful molecule and photon headbands makes learning about atmospheric science fun! These programs exist thanks to our many climate-concerned supporters, and our great partners like the WVU Medicine Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA). They give us hope for our future! One reason Friends of Blackwater works to help solve the climate crisis is because rare creatures like “Ginny,” the West Virginia Flying Squirrel, and her forest pals like the Cheat mountain salamander, and totemic species like the native brook trout – and many more -- are “on the chopping block”



Fingerling Native Brook Trout

from globally warming temperatures. To protect the creation that we cherish, including our beloved Blackwater Canyon, we must work to rein in runaway global warming.

On December 1, 2018 (right when this newsletter is scheduled to come out), Friends of Blackwater, partnering with the

West Virginia University College of Law Center for Energy and Sustainable Development, and the Appalachian Stewardship Foundation, is convening a major conference on climate change issues in Morgantown. FOB staffer Logan Thorne is co-ordinating the event. Details are at <https://saveblackwater.org/conference-page/>.

The New York Times magazine just did an article about one of our conference speakers – a cover story, no less! The article features the work of Rafe Pomerance, a founder and leader in climate advocacy, who is on Friends of Blackwater’s Advisory Board. Rafe and his wife Lenore own a farm in Pendleton County WV.

Readers, thanks again for your support of FOB’s climate-concerned programs. We are making a difference.

Public Lands and Wild Nature Under Assault: An Update

Commercial Logging in State Parks and Refuge: Success So Far

In January of 2018, FOB Director Judy Rodd sparked a grass-roots campaign, joined by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, to show the West Virginia Legislature what a bad idea it would be to allow commercial logging in West Virginia State Parks. “Logging doesn’t belong in parks, that’s why they are parks,” Judy said. Public efforts to protect parks were successful this session, but we encourage you to stay engaged. In order to ensure the long-term safety of our parks, we are helping to develop sustainable sources of funding, and organizing fellow park-lovers to strongly resist any future threats.

In July of 2018, Friends of Blackwater put out an alert about proposed commercial timbering in Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and our members responded with over 300 comments. As a result, the Refuge has decided to step back and stick with non-commercial management for a while, so that they can study the issue further. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Save Our State Parks campaign or the Refuge comment period.

Timbering in the Mon: Way Over the Top

We have filed comments on three large timber projects on the Monongahela National Forest, working in partnership with the Center for Biological Diversity. These logging jobs threaten rare and endangered species and have not been subjected to adequate analysis. “Ginny” the West Virginia flying squirrel is in the cross-hairs, as well as federally protected bats, and aquatic species like the hellbender and candy darter minnow. Our challenges to these unprecedented logging proposals will continue well into 2019. Friends of Blackwater is a watchdog on the Monongahela National Forest (MNF) and we will analyze other new projects being considered on the MNF.

Endangered Species: We Must Speak for Them

One of the key factors we always consider in evaluating projects on the MNF is the impact to the West Virginia Northern Flying



Fall at Babcock State Park

Squirrel. We are working to learn more about the health of West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel populations, and are looking forward to supporting a new research project by Purdue University professor Liz Flaherty next year. We have also worked to support the Endangered Species Act, a bedrock environmental law that protects many rare creatures in our region. In February, we partnered with the Endangered Species Coalition on a trip to Washington, to remind our Senators and Representatives about the importance of wildlife conservation.

The Blackwater Canyon: the View from Lindy Point

For more than twenty years, thousands of people have actively supported the campaign to protect and preserve the 10,000 acre Blackwater Canyon in Tucker County from timbering and development. 2700 acres remain unprotected. We work every day to protect and secure this landscape. We need your support to continue to fight for the Canyon.



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**Congratulations to
watershed project manager
Ian Smith on an award
from the WV DEP for the
North Fork Project!**



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Happy Holidays!



***Save the Date:*
Winter Film Festival
February 7th, 2019
@ Whitegrass Ski Center**

A WINTER IN A SPRUCE FOREST, CANANAN MOUNTAIN MNF, WV © KENT MASON

