Thank you so much for your continued support for Friends of Blackwater! As we move into our 20th year, we look back with pride on our accomplishments in 2019 -- that your donations made possible. Let’s celebrate a year of advocacy!

We spent four months challenging a bizarre proposal for a massive industrial “pump storage” project on the edge of the Blackwater Canyon. Our grassroots organizing campaign used Facebook, e-mail, our newsletter, and our website to engage people in opposing this destructive boondoggle. It would have destroyed scenic views from Lindy Point and Blackwater Falls State Park, taken 1,000 acres of the Monongahela National Forest (“the Mon”), and created acid mine drainage water pollution.

Twelve hundred people made public comments against the project -- and the Forest Service and FERC rejected it! Our/your voices were heard, and your donations helped pay for the communication tools to make this happen.

We used a similar approach to challenge and defeat an ill-advised plan for commercial logging in the heart of Canaan Valley -- on the National Wildlife Refuge. Invasive species brought in by logging truck tires could have taken over habitat currently used by globally rare plants -- plants that this Refuge was created to protect. Thanks to our campaign, the small amount of non-commercial habitat improvement logging now proposed will be done by hand.

We have spent many hours this year reviewing and commenting on timber plans proposed on the million-acre Mon National Forest. Increased pressure from the new administration in DC to “get out the cut,” has rushed ahead new projects without sufficient input from the public — or enough protection for rare wildlife like “Ginny,” the West Virginia Northern flying squirrel.

We had a number of meetings with the National Forest planners about their Spruce Mountain Ruffed Grouse Project proposal. We were able to pressure them to avoid all timbering in and near flying squirrel habitat. The project isn’t perfect, but it’s much improved.

However, this is not true for logging proposals along the Greenbrier River and near the Cranberry Wilderness. Both would have negative impacts for rare species, including the federally protected Candy Darter fish and several bat species. The proposals also fail to follow the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act. Working with the Center for Biological Diversity, we filed objections to both projects, which may take us into court next year.

We responded to local concerns about logging on the Little Canaan Wildlife Management Area, and the revival of the proposed Corridor H highway alignment across our beloved Blackwater Industrial Complex. Under one leading proposal, this giant four-lane highway would be literally over your head as you visit the historic coke ovens, old railroad bridges, our historic signs, and the rail grade itself. The proposal could hurt the Virginia big-eared bat and the rusty-patched bumble bee. Stay tuned!

Thanks to your donations, we have completed historic signage along the Blackwater Rail Trail below the Town of Thomas, at the head of the Blackwater Canyon. Contact us for a guided tour. We can also send you a self-guided brochure. We want to especially thank Stuart Thayer, who grew up in Thomas, and many people in the nearby Town of Douglas, who shared photos and stories that give these eleven unique historic markers so much meaning.

Our watershed work has entered a new phase -- with the State of West Virginia agreeing to install a $5,000,000 treatment system for acid mine drainage pollution along the North Fork of the Blackwater. It took us 17 years of advocacy, but it looks like we finally got our dream project. We can now envision a future with living in the Blackwater Canyon!!

Please help celebrate the season with an end-of-year gift to Friends of Blackwater, to keep our staff of five on task! Thank you so much!
HUGH ROGERS
Hugh was the perfect villian in our “Shootout at the Depot” play this summer. His legal skill is a force for protecting the Highlands.

LARRY SIMS
Larry keeps us warm on these cold winter days and lends a helping hand around the office. He is also a skilled craftsman and donor to our xmas silent auction!

DEBBIE MCHENRY
A wonderful artist and avid outdoors woman, Debbie volunteers her time to help FOB with water monitoring and litigation assistance.

SHANNON GRAY
Shannon is our graphic designer extraordinaire! Along with running her own photography business, she creates the great graphics that FOB uses online and in print.

Cool Finds
go to the links to learn more

ILLUSTRATION BY: ROSALIE HAIZLETT
bit.ly/wv5treasures
(FOB receives 10%)

FLYING SQUIRREL BOOK: HAL MAHAN
bit.ly/squirrelbook

2019
GRANTS RECEIVED

- WVDEP - 319 AGO GRANTS
- APPALACHIAN STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION
- SOUTHERN PARTNERS FUND
- PATAGONIA
- THE DUNN FOUNDATION
- WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL
- CLIF BAR FAMILY FOUNDATION
- WV STREAM PARTNERS PROGRAM
- WVU LAW SCHOOL CENTER FOR ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- TUCKER COUNTY CULTURAL DISTRICT AUTHORITY
- THE DAYTON FOUNDATION
- ASTROV
- PURPLE LIZARD MAPS THROUGH 1% FOR THE PLANET
- SIERRA CLUB
- PRESERVATION ALLIANCE
We love winter waterfalls, kids playing in the snow, winter birds, wonderful wildlife, cross country skiing, snowstorms, and the scenic beauty of the Allegheny Highlands dressed in white. Friends of Blackwater works hard every day to ensure that our favorite things are protected for our children and grandchildren. Your support is so important! Donate today.

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call 304-345-7663 or order online at:
saveblackwater.org/2019-holiday-fundraiser