

# Mountain State Sierran

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July/August 2011

## Blair Mountain March Demonstrates Power of a United Group of Citizens to Overcome Industry Obstacles

*Bill Price*

In WV the coal industry seems to always have the political power to get what they want. They use their influence to try to weaken rules by the federal EPA; to block the WV State Legislature from banning slurry impoundments and keep candidates for office from being seen as "attacking" the industry; and, too often, they use their power to intimidate residents from speaking out against the industry. But, there

are times when that power is challenged in some of the simplest ways. One example of that was during the recent 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle on Blair Mountain.

In August of 1921, over 10,000 miners responded to the murder of Sid Hatfield, on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse by organizing a march to unionize the southern WV coalfields. Hatfield was a fervent supporter of coal miners and their efforts to unionize. His murder galvanized miners' simmering frustration into an armed protest. The shooting war that followed in Logan County during August and September of 1921 became known as the Battle of Blair Mountain

In 2011, organizations, including the Sierra Club, came together to commemorate the 1921 march by re-enacting the original march as a protest against the current threats on Blair Mountain by the attempts of the coal industry to blow up Blair Mountain by mountain top removal mining. The goals of this effort were multi-faceted. First was to advance the campaign to abolish mountain top removal and to preserve Blair Mountain. Another goal was to bring attention to the plight of working men and women whose rights to organize are under attack all through-out the United States. And finally,

the connecting piece was the need for true sustainable economic development in Appalachia. The core organizers of the march's re-enactment did a heck of a job joining all of these goals together in a coherent message about the future of WV and all of Appalachia. MTR destroys jobs, if we are going to have true prosperity, we need to end our over-dependence on the coal industry and begin to transition to clean energy. Yes, we need jobs in Appalachia, and we can't continue to destroy our land to obtain those jobs. And Blair Mountain is the icon. The attempt to blast apart Blair Mountain shows the arrogance of the industry and indicates their wanton disregard for both land and labor. The Blair Mountain preservation efforts are an opportunity for people to come together with the common goal of pushing back on the coal industry and showing that power that people have when united.

One of my favorite moments from the six-day march came on day 5 as the marchers approached the base of Blair Mountain and were preparing the base-camp to spend the night and prepare for the rally and final two-mile section up to the top of the mountain. In my role as a peacekeeper for the march, I was asked to go up ahead with the team that was to set up the camp kitchen. That team had several support vehicles and three of those vehicles were pulling trailers with water and other supplies. The problem was that the occupant of the house next to the field we were camping at

*Blair Mountain, continued on p. 2*



*Marchers stretch out along highway on way to Blair Mountain.  
— photo by Cheshire Tongkat*

## Coal Ash Battles Piling Up in WV

*Jim Kotcon*

Ever since an ash impoundment broke loose near Kingston TN in 2008 and spilled more than a billion gallons into the Clinch River, awareness of the threats from coal ash has increased steadily, and the WV Chapter has been taking action to protect our air and water.

For many years, coal ash was considered fairly innocuous, and even had some uses that were thought to be beneficial. But lingering reports of problems have coalesced into awareness that coal ash is a huge disposal problem, with many toxic impacts that are not being properly regulated. US-EPA proposed regulations in 2010 and held a series of hearings to take public comment. But EPA recently announced that, due to the high level of public comment (EPA must analyze over 450,000 comments received during the comment period last year), final rules would not be released this year.

The problems are particularly acute in West Virginia, and three separate cases illustrate the failure to properly control discharges from coal ash disposal.

### Albright Power Plant

The Albright plant is over 50 years old, and its ash land-fill drains into Daugherty Run, a tributary of the Cheat River. Monitoring reports indicate that the discharges from the fill exceed permitted levels of arsenic, a well-known poison and a potent carcinogen.

In February, 2011, the Sierra Club filed a Notice of Intent to Sue unless the discharges were brought into compliance. In response, the operator, First Energy, indicated they were seeking to re-designate the stream to alternative uses that would allow a weaker arsenic discharge standard. Failing that, they would pipe the discharge directly to the Cheat River, potentially de-watering a significant flow of Daugherty Run.

*Coal Ash, continued on p. 3*



### 3rd Annual SierraFest Coming this Fall!

Come meet inspirational speakers, enjoy splendid entertainment, meet old friends, and make new ones — all in the heart of the West Virginia mountains in beautiful Webster County. Gather with like-minded folks who care about Wild Wonderful West Virginia. Talk, listen, watch, play, and learn!

There will be: \*\* top local and national environmental leaders sharing their issues and information \*\* an outstanding environmental film with a reception for the film's featured West Virginian \*\* workshops on key issues \*\* outdoor activities, art, games, field trips and recreational outings \*\* annual WV Chapter awards \*\* a celebration of recent victories \*\* music \*\* and more!

Save the dates for SierraFest 2011

**When:** Friday, Sept. 30 – Sunday, Oct. 2

**Where:** Camp Caesar, on Rt. 20 at Cowen WV, in Webster County

See page 5 for more information, the proposed schedule, and registration materials. Reserve early!

*Blair Mountain, continued from p. 1*

was not happy about our presence. He was an employee of a coal company and indeed his house and property were actually owned by the company. He had already attempted to block the drive that went through that property and was the only access to our properly leased field. The police had told him he could not block the right of way, so he had moved his vehicles right up to the asphalt of this drive-way sized easement. The road through had two very sharp turns in it and he had strategically placed his vehicles to make it "impossible" for our support vehicles with trailers in tow to navigate around those turns. After a few attempts to get the water truck around the curve failed, the power of people came into action. Approximately 15 marchers came up and unhitched the trailer from the truck, which allowed the truck to move forward, then manually pushed the trailer around the curve (with video cameras rolling to document that we were not going onto the industry property) and hitched it back to the truck. Three times, people moved together in unison to assure that the marchers would have water, food and a safe place to sleep for the night. I couldn't help but think of how this simple act was indicative of how, when people work together in unity, we can overcome any obstacle that the industry puts in our way.

The next day, almost 800 people came together, marched those final few miles and planted a monument on Blair Mountain. There is much work that still needs to be done, but I will always remember standing on that mountain knowing that the industry is already defeated as long as we stand united.

A special thanks to Gwen Jones and Jim Sconyers for coming to march. Also thanks go to the WV and Cumberland Chapters for contributing to pay for gasoline for shuttles that became needed because many of our campgrounds became "unavailable" during the week.

## The March on Blair Mountain — Finale

*Observations by Jim Sconyers*

Hundreds of marchers who had spent 5 days on the way from Marmet to Blair, retracing the route of the thousands of miners who fought coal company gun thugs and sheriff deputies for the right to unionize, were joined by more hundreds for a rally in Blair and the last leg of the March, to the summit of Blair Mountain.

The rally featured notables and performers - Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Hudson Riverkeeper, Ken Hechler, former Congressman and West Virginia Secretary of State, Larry Gibson, Kayford Mountainkeeper, James Weekly, "poster boy" of the fight against MTR, West Virginia author Denise Giardina, music legend Kathy

Mattea, Mari-Lynn Evans, Coal Country film maker, Josh Fox, Gasland film maker, Terri Blanton, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.

An estimated 800+ set off up the mountain. At the summit, more speakers, placement of a memorial sign honoring the miners who fought and died on Blair Mountain, then the walk back to Blair and the journey home.

Most memorable quotation of the day to this observer: Robert F. Kennedy, who said (as nearly as I remember), "When the government takes over corporations, that's called communism. When the corporations take over government, that's called fascism. That's what you have here in West Virginia, where the corporations, most notably huge out-of-state coal companies, own the government."



*Clockwise from above: Country singer/songwriter Kathy Mattea entertains the crowd; WV author Denise Giardina mingles; a crowd of 800+ masses atop Blair Mountain on the final day.*

*photos by Jim Sconyers*



*Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. speaks at the March on Blair Mountain.*

*photo by Jim Sconyers*

*Veggie Burger, Anyone?*

## WTO Challenges U.S. Meat Labeling Law

*Joan Jones Holtz*

*Sierra Club Trade Team*

Hamburgers have long been considered one of America's most traditional foods. But, many of us may soon be stocking our freezers with veggie burgers instead. A recent Reuters report suggests that WTO rules will soon prohibit the labeling of meat as to the country of origin. That means that American consumers will have no idea where the meat products they consume originated or if they were processed in a manner which would induce them to eat the meat.

In his 2000 book and later movie *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser wrote, "The days when hamburger meat was ground in the back of a butcher shop, out of scraps from one or two sides of beef, are long gone. Like the multiple sex partners that helped spread the AIDS epidemic, the huge admixture of animals in most American ground

beef plants has played a crucial role in spreading *E. coli*. A single fast food hamburger now contains meat from dozens or even hundreds of different cattle."

The ground meat horror stories publicized by Schlosser helped to push for the inclusion of COOL (country of origin labeling) in the 2007-2008 Farm Bill. COOL said that beef, lamb, pork, chicken, or goat meat could only be designated as "Made in the USA" if it were "exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States." Although President Bush originally vetoed the bill, Congress overrode the veto and COOL became law on May 22, 2008. Now the American COOL law has been challenged.

Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, European Union, Guatemala, India, Korea, New Zealand, Peru, New Zealand and Chinese Taipei have all asked the World Trade Organization (WTO)

to step in to squash the U.S. meat labeling program. It is still unclear which WTO rule the U.S. is violating by labeling meat. The probable conclusion is that the U.S. can't institute a meat labeling program if by doing so consumers will choose against buying meat from unknown countries whose processing standards are hygienically questionable (and ground meat that may come from hundreds of animals and dozens of countries).

WTO rules puts trade volume and corporate interests first — way ahead of consumer safety or environmental standards. The laws we, in a democratic society, pass to protect our health and our safety mean nothing in the face of WTO rules and corporate profit. In other words, the trade rules that our country has agreed to follow roll back democracy.

### Paper or electronic?

Save resources and costs

If you have an e-mail address, would you consider receiving your Mountain State Sierran electronically rather than by U.S. mail?

You will receive an e-mail notice containing a link to the Chapter website containing a full-color PDF version of the newsletter when the Sierran goes to press. You get your news faster and save the Chapter printing and mailing costs.

If interested, please send an e-mail request with your name and mailing address to:

**celliot2@comcast.net**

### Coal Ash, continued from p. 1

In other words, First Energy had no intention of reducing their discharge; they simply wanted to find a way to legally keep discharging arsenic.

In May, 2011, we learned that First Energy apparently never received, or even applied for, a Section 404 permit to allow them to place ash fill in the headwaters. This has led the Sierra Club to file a second Notice of Intent to Sue, and a formal complaint has been filed over the arsenic discharges.

This saga illustrates the lack of pollution controls and the hazardous leachate discharged from ash landfills, precisely the kind of situation that new EPA rules should address. The lack of enforcement and the weak permits issued by WV-DEP illustrate the need for strong federal rules.

### Coresco Ash Fill

A pernicious weakness in West Virginia rules is illustrated by a permit application filed by Coresco for an expansion of an ash landfill adjacent to the Longview Power Plant in Monongalia County. West Virginia solid waste rules exempt any "beneficial use" of coal ash used in mine land reclamation. Thus, by claiming that they will be using coal ash to neutralize acidity from coal waste, Coresco is able to avoid requirements for landfill liners, leachate collection systems, lead detection, groundwater monitoring, and a host of other rules. Since the site is clearly an ash disposal fill, comments filed by the WV Sierra Club urge DEP to reject the site as a "beneficial use" and to impose all requirements of a landfill site. The applicant is plainly simply using the beneficial use exemption to authorize a largely unregulated dump.

### New Hill West

Just north of Morgantown, adjacent to I-79 is the New Hill surface mine. The operator is proposing to expand the site to strip several hundred acres to the west of the current mine. Unfortunately, the coal is very high in sulfur and would generate copious amounts of acid mine drainage. WV-DEP therefore requires significant neutralizing material to be added to prevent water quality impacts. In this case, coal ash from the Morgantown Beechurst Avenue power plant was to be used. But in the mining permit, the applicant proposed applying up to 10,000 tons per acre, a layer many feet thick. Even worse, WV-DEP required no limits on discharges of heavy metals or dissolved solids known to leach when coal ash is applied to such mine sites.

In our appeal to the WV Environmental Quality Board, EQB ruled that these pollutants clearly must be limited. But rather than revise the permit to include limits on Total Dissolved Solids and heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, and chromium, WV-DEP has appealed the EQB decision to circuit court. The Sierra Club will be vigorously defending the EQB ruling to protect our water and to limit the ash discharges.

The New Hill West case illustrates that even this so-called beneficial use is really just an excuse to dump coal ash with minimal regulations. And it shows why stringent, federally enforceable rules are needed.

### Now the Bad News

Instead of working to protect water quality and the health of citizens from the hazards of coal ash, West Virginia's First District Congressman, David McKinley, introduced HR 1391 which prohibits EPA from regulating coal ash as hazardous waste. As seen from the stories above, all of the cases described are in McKinley's own District.

### Take Action

Please write a letter, e-mail, or call Rep. McKinley and ask him to withdraw HR 1391. West Virginia needs enforceable federal regulation to protect citizens from coal ash toxins. Tell McKinley that these are ongoing problems in our back yard and that current rules are NOT protecting citizens. Hundreds of thousands of citizens from across America want stronger rules; numerous scientific studies document that coal ash is hazardous; and the time is now for EPA to act. Ask McKinley to let science and the rule of law work to protect us. McKinley's contact info is available on the back page of this newsletter. For more info, call Jim Kotcon at 304-594-3322.

## Boards Hold Hearings in Martinsburg on North Mountain Shale Project

Paul Wilson

To address appealed permits granted by the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the North Mountain Shale quarry near Gerrardstown, the Surface Mine Board and the Environmental Quality Board held hearings in Berkeley County on June 6, 7 and 8.

Early on the first day, the DEP and DOT (Dept. of Transportation) argued about the use of a public road as an industrial haul road. Curiously, those of us in the rear of the packed room at the Martinsburg Holiday Inn, could not hear the speakers. A comment was made by one in the audience and we were promptly told by Surface Mine Board Chairperson Wendy Ratcliff that no one in the audience was allowed to speak and that testimony was strictly for the Board members.

Thus, DEP and DOT lawyers argued about roads and access points till about 9:15am. The finer points I do not know as I could not hear very well either. Typically, the regulatory agencies of WV exist only to further the profits of corporations, usually at the expense of public health and private property.

North Mountain Shale is limited by the DEP permit to five truck loads of shale per shift, and Continental Brick (North Mountain's holding company) declared that they usually work one shift and sometimes two shifts per day at their Martinsburg plant. The company acknowledges that road dust may be an issue (they have had numerous dust complaints

in Martinsburg), but the DEP has specified that the road must be watered down regularly to contain dust.

Obviously, this means the DEP must actively enforce the restrictions it has applied in the North Mountain Shale permit. Unfortunately, the WV DEP does a very poor job of enforcement in the Eastern Panhandle, and probably throughout the entire state.

Over two days, the appellants presented expert testimony on the effects of the proposed quarry on local water resources, the historical resources of Gerrardstown, and the health, welfare and character of the local community. Counsel for North Mountain Shale LTD refuted all points of the appellants' experts and counsel. On a positive note the Surface Mine Board extended the hearing until July 11 in Charleston to allow testimony by one missing expert to discuss sediment ponds.

The third day of hearings was the Environmental Quality Board's review of the NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) limits under the Water Control Permit. With a totally different Board, and hearing atmosphere, the members asked succinct, pertinent questions of all parties, in a manner that indicated they actually reviewed the material and understood the issues at stake.

Any decisions by the two Boards will be made 6-8 weeks after final testimony is presented. Chances on a reversal of the DEP permit may not be much better than those of the slot machines at the Hollywood casino at the Charles Town Races.

## WHY IS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS SO IMPORTANT?

### BECAUSE...

... we can reach you quickly when it comes time to make your voice heard.

... the last Legislative Session's failure to deal with Marcellus shale drilling only served to illustrate how much more pressure needs to be applied to our legislators to get the needed regulations.

... as we carry our Marcellus Campaign into the Interim Sessions of the Legislature, one crucial ingredient is the ability for us to respond quickly with action alerts that reach you right away.

... we need our many voices to be heard. Unless we make our legislators enact laws that will guard our birthright and our children's future, our hills and hollows will be a very different place.

... the Sierra Club has a solid history of not sharing its mailing list. We make the same promise about your email address.

For those of you *without* email, we honor your desire for a slower pace of life. Our action alerts will be on our website, available at your public library or cyber café at [www.marcellus-wv.com](http://www.marcellus-wv.com)

For those of you *with* email, please take a minute to send your name, email address and county to [outreach@marcellus-wv.com](mailto:outreach@marcellus-wv.com)

Because... we need to keep West Virginia wild and wonderful.

## View from the Chair

A Lot Going On for the Chapter — Jim Sconyers

This is a very busy time for the West Virginia Chapter. Let me just share a few items that have gotten my attention lately.

Last weekend I joined a delightful outing on the Cheat River. Floating with old and new friends on a nice day through beautiful landscapes, watching the bald eagle high overhead, learning about the threat to the river from Marcellus drillers who take the water with impunity. Bumped along on a rock or two, had a great trip.

By the time you read this the Chapter will have completed conducting "Marcellus Academy," a weekend-long series of workshops. The goal is to identify and train "emerging" activist/leaders and equip them to go home and take a lead role in the campaign for meaningful regulation of the Marcellus tsunami that threatens to inundate the state. Twenty-five trainers and trainees came together for an intensive weekend at West Virginia Wesleyan College, acquiring the knowledge and skills to organize back home.

Also by the time you read this, the huge March on Blair Mountain will have happened. Hundreds of us from all over West Virginia and beyond rallied for a week, marching to reclaim Blair Mountain for its history and mountain integrity and to save it from mountaintop removal coal mining.

Frank Young and his committee have been busy too, planning SierraFest 2011. Our third annual meeting/conference/expo is shaping up to be a great weekend-long extravaganza (well, maybe "enviro blowout" is more accurate). Join us to learn, meet/greet, have fun — details are in this issue. A special treat this year is award-winning writer/singer/songwriter/performer/storyteller/educator Kate Long, who will be with us Saturday evening of SierraFest.

Stay tuned!

## 3RD ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY FAIR SEEKS PLANNERS AND EXHIBITORS

Kanawha Valley Connections will hold its third annual Kanawha Valley Sustainability Fair on **Saturday, September 24, 2011**. This year's event will be held from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Columbia Gas Transmission Building, 1700 MacCorkle Avenue SE in Charleston.

The Kanawha Valley Sustainability Fair is the signature event of Kanawha Valley Connections, a volunteer organization dedicated to creating pathways to sustainability throughout the Kanawha Valley and surrounding communities. Organizers are currently seeking planning committee members, volunteers, partners and exhibitors.

"Sustainability is about strengthening our community ties and skills, making us better prepared to maintain our resources in good times and bad," says KVC Project Manager Barbara Frierson. "Last year people were thrilled to learn how many businesses, agencies and groups are working toward sustainability in this area."

The Fair will introduce participants to and educate them about economic, environmental and social sustainability. Fair goers will experience sustainability through a variety of themes, including locally grown food, conservation, renewable energy, green building, green jobs, government and community resources, recycling, health and wellness, economic development, culture and history. The event will feature food, interactive and hands-on exhibits, activities for children, performances, and practical ideas for residents and businesses. We are expecting vendors with a variety of goods to sell. Over 2,000 participants attended last year's Fair and associated events, taking advantage of activities, products and services offered by more than 100 exhibitors and off-site sponsors.

The Fair is funded in part with a \$10,000 grant from the Sustainable Kanawha Valley Initiative and a \$1,800 grant from the Capitol Conservation District. Volunteers from Bridgemont Community and Technical College, Habitat for Humanity of Kanawha and Putnam Counties, Ignite Studios Creative Services, Center for Economic Options, Nisource Gas Transmission and Storage, Step by Step, West Virginia Citizens Action Education Fund and West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection are planning and promoting this year's event. Many other individuals and organizations are contributing to the effort. Anyone interested in helping should call Kanawha Valley Connections at 304-941-3281 or email: [info@kvsfair.org](mailto:info@kvsfair.org) Visit our website at [www.kvsfair.org](http://www.kvsfair.org)

All businesses, organizations and individuals with green or sustainable products, services or practices are invited to participate. Call 304-941-3281 to request Exhibitor Application packets. Applications must be received by **August 1, 2011**.

## WV Chapter Accepting Nominations for Chapter Awards

If you know of a WV Sierra Club member, or other citizen for that matter, who has made a significant contribution to the efficacy of our Chapter's efforts in any area, please consider nominating them for recognition at our annual SierraFest gathering.

To nominate someone for a Chapter award, please send their name and an explanation of why you think they deserve special recognition to a member of the Awards Committee by **August 30**.

Please send your nomination to one of the following committee members: Gwen Jones, Jonathan Rosenbaum, or Gary Nelson (contact info on back page).

## D.C. Metro Area Solar Homes & Buildings Tour

October 1 - 2, 2011

The 21st annual D.C. Metro Area Solar Homes and Buildings Tour will be held on October 1 and 2 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Over seventy energy-efficient homes and buildings will highlight a variety of solar and passive design, technology and sustainable living concepts, including photovoltaic and solar hot water systems, radiant heat, energy-efficient appliances, and energy-saving building construction techniques.

Additional homes can be viewed on our Sister Solar Tour. The 2nd Annual Western Maryland Tour features more than thirty-five green homes and buildings from Frederick and Washington Counties and West Virginia. The tour includes a variety of renewable energy improved buildings and properties, as well as residential solar homes featuring many energy efficient improvements.

Details will be available on the solar tour website [www.solartour.org](http://www.solartour.org) in early September. The tour guides can be downloaded for free at that time. In addition, the D.C. Metro tour guide can be purchased for a tax-deductible \$5 from participating outlets, such as local REI stores. The Western Maryland tour guide can be purchased for a tax-deductible \$2 from participating outlets in Western Maryland.

## Monongahela Group Events

### Wednesday's at noon

Morgantown Area Concerned Citizens have been holding weekly protests at the Mon County Courthouse to raise awareness of the dangers to the city's drinking water from two Marcellus wells that are being drilled at Morgantown Industrial Park, close to the water intake for Morgantown Utility Board's water treatment plant.

### Thursday, July 14, 6:30 p.m.

During this monthly program meeting we will be showing the Emmy Award winning documentary *Split Estate*, which shows the dirty side of hydraulic fracturing and natural gas.

The meeting will be held at the Quaker Meeting House, located at 648 E. Brockway Ave., Morgantown. This venue seats 30-40 — so feel free to bring your friends.

### Thursday, August 25, 6:00 p.m.

Annual Corn Roast and Potluck at the Krepps Park Pavilion. We welcome students back to town and reconnect with friends after the summer. Bring some food to share and something to drink. Plates, utensils and fresh roasted corn will be provided.

### Other Meetings of Interest

### Thursday, July 7, 6-9 p.m.

Green Drinks Social Networking

Open to all. No RSVP necessary. Green Drinks is a National and International organization that provides social and networking opportunities for individuals/citizens who work on environmental issues, are environmental advocates, or who might be looking to get involved in them.

Each month, Green Drinks Morgantown meets at the Mountain State Brewing Company. To learn more about the Green Drinks organization please visit the International website at: [www.greendrinks.org](http://www.greendrinks.org) or our local website at: [www.greendrinks.org/WV/Morgantown](http://www.greendrinks.org/WV/Morgantown). Please note that this event is open to all and has no agenda.

### Thursday, August 4, 6-9 p.m.

Green Drinks Social Networking  
(Location TBD)

## In Memoriam

### Glade Little

Long-time WV Sierra Club member **Glade Little** died at home on April 3 this year. Glade, 83, lived in St. Albans with his wife, Jennifer. He was a regular fixture at Sierra Club events in the early years of our Chapter and served a term as Chapter Vice Chair from 1991-92. Many of us remember fondly his slow and self-deprecating humor and were glad to have a chance to reconnect with him at the 25th anniversary SierraFest in 2009. Peace be with you, Glade.

## Next Chapter ExCom Meeting

August 13

Cranesville, Preston County

Contact Jim Sconyers for more info.

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates.

Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at

**celliot2@comcast.net**  
414 Tyrone Avery Rd.  
Morgantown, WV 26508

**Deadline for  
Sep/Oct issue  
Aug 11**

Opinions expressed in the **Mountain State Sierran** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.



### Bear in mind the consequences.

The Yellowstone grizzly bear is an irreplaceable part of America's natural heritage, a symbol of the independence that defines the American character and an icon of all that is wild and free. The Bush administration set forth a proposal that would remove federal protection for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Since it was first listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, the grizzly bear has made a strong recover, but there is still more work to be done. Help Sierra Club protect our forest friends; they prefer the woods than being on display.

**Get grizzly and JOIN Sierra Club.**

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Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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## Distinguished Speakers and Guests at SierraFest 2011

**Harvard Ayers** is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. Ayers has founded or co-founded several nonprofit organizations, including the Sierra Club Native American Committee, Southwest Native American Art Foundation, Coal River Mountain Watch, Appalachian Voices, Arctic Voices, and most recently the Friends of Blair Mountain. He is now a plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging the actions of the Department of Interior in taking the Blair Mountain Battlefield off the National Register of Historic Places, where it had earlier been listed. The battle site is scheduled for coal strip mining if the lawsuit fails. This would destroy the 1600 acre battlefield.

Harvard (perhaps along with his historic and archeological team, Brandon Nida and Kenny King) will be the Saturday evening Keynote speaker(s) for SierraFest 2011.

**Deborah "Deb" Nardone** is Sierra Club's national Natural Gas Reform Campaign Director. She directs the Club's national campaign aimed at getting the natural gas industry to fully protect our water, air, wildlife, open spaces, and communities. Nardone comes to the Sierra Club from the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited where she served as a Coldwater Resource Specialist, developing conservation plans to protect the headwaters of streams from inappropriate development that would destroy water quality and trout habitat.

"I grew up amidst the hard-rock coal mountains of Pennsylvania, so I am familiar with the energy legacy of orange streams and dead rivers," says Nardone. "It is unfair to burden future generations with more land and water destruction."

Deb will be the Saturday morning SierraFest 2011 Kickoff speaker.

West Virginian **Kate Long** has worked as a media writing coach with the Charleston Gazette for 22 years. Her fiction, songwriting, video editing, radio production, and newspaper stories have won national awards. She frequently produces programs for West Virginia Public Radio and Television, and teaches writing workshops for teenagers, songwriters, and other groups. Kate's music storytelling venues include: Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, National Storytelling Festival (Exchange Stage), Northeast Folk Alliance showcase, Augusta Heritage Workshops, Swannanoa Gathering, Baltimore Folk Music Society, Seattle Folklore Society, Stonewall Jackson Jubilee, Portland (OR) Folklore Society, WV Rural Health Conference, Coalition for Religion in Appalachia, and various local arts groups. Her simple yet thoughtful style of putting life's dramas to music has lightened the hearts and raised the spirits of many listeners.

Kate will provide Saturday night musical entertainment for SierraFest 2011.

# SierraFest 2011

## Sept 30 - Oct 2

### Camp Caesar, Webster County

(on Rt. 20 at Cowen, WV)

#### Program for SierraFest 2011

#### Friday – September 30

4 PM + — Arrive, Check-In, Begin silent "Auction for Action!"  
 6 PM — Informal reception for Ed Wiley (pizza, chips/dip, drinks, etc.)  
 7 PM — Introduction of featured film, remarks by Ed Wiley  
 7:30 PM — Film: **On Coal River**, featuring Ed Wiley (81 minutes)  
 9 PM — Bonfire

#### Saturday – October 1

*Breakfast* — followed by:  
 Welcome / Ice-Breaker / Kickoff  
**Kickoff Speaker: Deb Nardone**, SC Natural Gas Reform Campaign  
 Workshops:  
 • Outings Leader Training  
 • Water Sentinel Program; also Dunkard Creek, 90-species wipeout  
 12 Noon, *Lunch* — followed by:  
 Workshops:  
 • Outings Gear  
 • Legislative Outlook: "Looking Back, and Forward" (WV Legislators)  
*Break* —  
 • Short Updates: Coal, Wilderness, Marcellus Shale Gas  
*Free Time* — Various recreational activities (weather dependent)  
*Dinner* —  
**Keynote Speakers: Harvard Ayers, Brandon Nida**  
*Short Break* —  
 West Virginia Sierra Club Awards  
 Evening Session:  
 "Celebrating Victories" — PATH, People Concerned about MIC, New Hill West Mine, recent legal victories in court  
 9 PM — Party Time! Music, featuring writer/musician **Kate Long**

#### Sunday – October 2

*Breakfast* — followed by:  
 End of Silent Auction for Action!  
 Ending ceremony — Departing Speaker  
*Bag Lunch* to take on:  
 Educational Field Trip or Recreational Outing

### Bring "Auction for Action" Items to Fest

We need items for our silent auction during SierraFest 2011. We had a very successful and profitable auction last year. Here's your chance to help out the WV Chapter again. We are looking for nonperishable food items, sporting goods, household or gardening items in good condition. Last year the weekend contributed by Laurel Lodge was a very popular and profitable item. Maybe you know of a local business that might be willing to contribute a coupon for a meal, lodging, etc.

If you plan to bring something for the auction, please contact Regina Hendrix at: 304-725-0223 (home) or 304-590-4943 (cell) or at [rh1936@frontier.com](mailto:rh1936@frontier.com).

## SierraFest 2011 Registration Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your registration form and a check for any room reservations and meals made out to WV Sierra Club to:

**Karen Grubb**  
**SierraFest 2011 Registration**  
**21 Beverly Circle**  
**Fairmont, WV 26554**

Question about reservations?  
 Call 304-367-4878 or Email: [karen.grubb@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:karen.grubb@fairmontstate.edu)

**Dormitory style rooms** – \$20/night per person  
 (very limited number of private rooms available for couples)

**Please mark room and meal choices.**

Cabin Room Reservation:

Friday night \$20 x \_\_\_\_\_ (number) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday night \$20 x \_\_\_\_\_ (number) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Motel Rooms: Mineral Springs Motel (13 miles away at Webster Springs)  
 For Reservations, call: 304-847-5305

Meals: Cost is \$6/\$7/\$9 for Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Saturday: Breakfast \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday: Breakfast \_\_\_\_\_ Box Lunch (\$7) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Room and Meal Charges:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Perspectives on Outings

### A Beautiful River

— Dan Soeder Outings Chair

I've been on a number of river trips since I took up kayaking ten years ago.

The longest was a run on the Delaware River from Bush Kill to the Water Gap that took a few days. We went in late October and woke up to frost on our tents, plus it snowed several times on the river. The last day rewarded us with beautiful, warm and sunny Indian Summer weather as we rounded Kittatinny Mountain and shot through the Water Gap at the end of the run.

The scariest trip was a guided "moonlight" paddle on the Potomac River from Seneca Creek down to one of the lock houses on the C&O Canal. Unfortunately for the guide (who should have checked an almanac), the moon didn't rise until 11 PM, and it got dark at 9. We spent a good two hours running a pitch-black river with rocks, eddies, riffles and tricky currents. I'm here to tell you that even mild whitewater is pretty terrifying in the dark. I slammed into a few things and got stuck a couple of times that could have been easily avoided in daylight. Or even moonlight.

I've been on lots of tidal rivers in the marshlands around Chesapeake and Dela-

ware Bays. I learned how to approach wading Great Blue Herons in a kayak by gliding in slowly with the paddle lying across the boat, especially a non-paddling boat, as a predator, and allow you to get quite close before flying off. In Delaware Bay, the horseshoe crabs come ashore to lay eggs on high tides in the summer months. The bottom of the bay is alive with this ancient species that was old when the dinosaurs roamed, and paddling a kayak over the spectacle is a very primeval experience. Tidal rivers are tricky, however. One hot-shot paddler I knew with a sleek Dagger kayak and a fancy wetsuit zipped up a creek at Bombay Hook on an ebb tide, and got stuck in the mud as the tide drained the water out from under his boat faster than he could paddle back. He was a sorry, muddy mess by the time he trudged back through the marsh, dragging his useless kayak.

One of the most beautiful rivers I've been on was the Cheat, during Jim Sconyers' paddle outing in June. Seven of us put in at an outfitter location in the tiny town of St. George, north of Parsons, and "leisure

paddled" the river about seven miles downstream to Seven Islands. I like Jim's outings, because they are done at a pace that allows for the enjoyment of nature, the place and the surroundings. Some outings warrant a vigorous pace. This one did not, on a partly sunny, warm and beautiful day.

This reach of the Cheat River is quiet and undeveloped, with little more than a few farms and some campgrounds. Most of the banks and surrounding hills are heavily wooded. The river has classic, natural stream hydrology consisting of a series of deep pools connected by shallow, rocky riffles. I've seen this done artificially in urban stream restoration projects, but it is rare to find it in nature. Most of the riffles we were able to paddle through with only some bumps, although we did get stuck a few times and had to walk the boats off the rocks and into deeper water. We saw an eagle circling high overhead, woodcocks, geese and a variety of other birds, interesting woods, rocks and clear water. The water was clear enough to see freshwater mussel shells, fish and tadpoles, attesting to the health of this stream.

We had a dog follow us part of the way. He was a friendly but annoying mutt and ran along the riverbanks, swimming out to the boats several times. At a deep pool where some teenage boys had a rope swing to jump into the river, they recognized the dog as "Huggy Bear" (the informant from the old Starsky and Hutch TV show, for those who don't know the reference). Thankfully, Huggy Bear stayed with the boys and we continued onward.

We took the boats out of the water on a rocky, rather swift reach at Seven Islands. We all agreed that it was a wonderful trip, and I think the program should include more water outings. If you have a special stretch of river below Class III whitewater that you like to paddle, let me know. We'll check it out, and maybe turn it into an outing. So instead of "see you outside," how about "SYOTR"? That's kayaker talk for "See You on the River." Cheers!



### Maryland Chapter Outings

Our neighboring chapter to the east has an active outings program, with many trips coming into West Virginia or western Maryland. These outings, by highly experienced leaders, range from easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at [maryland.sierraclub.org](http://maryland.sierraclub.org)

### Allegheny Group Outings

Sierra Club members in the Pittsburgh area belong to the Allegheny Group. They have a moderately active outings program as well as links to other local outdoor activities. Visit their website for an outings calendar and more details at [alleghenysc.org](http://alleghenysc.org)

### Potomac Region Outings (PRO)

This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Washington, D.C., area. A calendar of activities, information and updates can be found on their website at

[www.sierrapotomac.org](http://www.sierrapotomac.org)

### West Virginia Chapter Outings

For updated listings of outings sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter, check our Chapter website at

[westvirginia.sierraclub.org](http://westvirginia.sierraclub.org)

### Abbreviations Used

<b>AMC</b>	Appalachian Mountain Club
<b>AT</b>	Appalachian Trail
<b>GWNF</b>	George Washington National Forest
<b>JNF</b>	Jefferson National Forest
<b>MG</b>	Monongahela Group
<b>MNF</b>	Monongahela National Forest
<b>NPS</b>	National Park Service
<b>NRA</b>	National Recreation Area
<b>NWR</b>	National Wildlife Refuge
<b>PFD</b>	Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket)
<b>SF</b>	State Forest
<b>SP</b>	State Park
<b>SNP</b>	Shenandoah National Park



Floating on the Cheat River

photo by Jim Sconyers

## Mon Group Maintains Adopted Trail at Coopers Rock

Seven volunteers completed the first maintenance session of the year on our adopted trail at Coopers Rock State Forest. The forecasted showers on April 23 did not dim our enthusiasm or slow our work and we were able to clear all of the drainage channels, trim overgrown vegetation and remove downed limbs.

Ann Devine-King is our leader and reports on our work to the superintendent of the forest. Aaron, Greta, Cindy, Paula, Sally and Duane completed the crew. A broken handrail on a bridge over a stream had not been repaired from the previous year, so Duane volunteered to purchase the lumber and complete the repair himself. We are proud of our work on the Intermediate Ski Loop Trail and welcome additional help at future work sessions. They will be listed in the newsletter and on the Chapter website.



Yellow Sessile Trillium

WV member Carol Mollohan recently returned from an April national Sierra Club trip to view Appalachian wildflowers in the Smoky Mountains area.

"It was beautiful. I think they offer it every year or so. I certainly recommend it to anyone interested in seeing or photographing wild flowers," she said. >>



Eating lunch with a view of the Blue Ridge from Big Huckleberry Knob off the Cherokee Skyway in the Nantahala National Forest in Tennessee, just south of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.





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July/August 2011



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email: governor@wvgov.org

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email to WV Legislature:  
cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu  
(Put name of recipient under subject)  
Messages for legislators can be left at:  
1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836  
Mail address:  
Member, WV Senate or  
House of Delegates  
Bldg 1  
State Capitol Complex  
Charleston, WV 25305

website: [www.legis.state.wv.us](http://www.legis.state.wv.us)  
has contact information for all state  
legislators



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will. There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

**Sierra Club Gift Planning Program**  
85 Second St, Second Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
gift.planning@sierraclub.org • (800) 932-4270

For planned giving in West Virginia, contact Paul Wilson at 304-725-4360

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