

Mountain State Sierran

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The Games Corporations Play: *and How the People and the Environment Lose*

Jim Sconyers, Chapter Chair

Part One

Patriot Coal: "Created to Fail?"

Patriot Coal was created by Arch Coal and Peabody Energy in 2007. Arch and Peabody Union miners east of the Mississippi became employees of the new Patriot company. Among other provisions, Patriot took responsibility for the health benefits of thousands of retirees and their families. At the time, it appeared that this new company was burdened from the outset with impossible and inappropriate financial obligations.

Observers have used the term "created to fail" to describe this awkward new child of Arch and Peabody. Not only did Patriot begin life with massive retiree benefits on its ledger, but it then went on to operate recklessly and rack up millions of dollars worth of clean water violations.

Were the UMWA and others prophetic? Or just astute and analytic? In any case, sure enough Patriot went bankrupt—as predicted. Then came many months in courtrooms and across negotiating tables.

Foremost among the issues in the bankruptcy delibrations were the company's obligation for retiree benefits. These are critical to thousands of retirees in West Virginia and their families.

Now the bankruptcy court judge, Judge Kathy Surratt-States, has made her decision on the Patriot bankruptcy. Here are a couple of points in her commentary:

- Blame the victim—"Unions generally try to bargain for the best deal for their members; however, there is likely some responsibility to be absorbed for demanding benefits that the employer cannot realistically fund in perpetuity." In other words, the union is to be blamed for negotiating a good contract with the company.

- Message to union members—"Years of toil, perseverance and determination of miners past yielded the employment terms and conditions of miners today, but this does not matter where, as here, savings everywhere else have already been explored within reason and exhausted." In other words, everyone else has sacrificed, now it's your turn, regardless of what your contract with the company says.

- The union is at fault because it and the company agreed to a contract that gave better pay and benefits to union miners than non-union workers.—"Given the grave disparity between union and non-union pay and benefits pre-bankruptcy, the limitations placed on non-union labor that have been in place for years, and acceptance of the reality of the savings needed, the Court concludes that the UMWA-represented employees are not tasked to disproportionately shoulder the burden of Debtors' bankruptcy."

- The bottom line—"This is not a union versus non-union evaluation; it is an evaluation of what is necessary for Debtors to emerge from bankruptcy as a viable company...." In other words, the viability of Patriot trumps the lives and livelihoods of its workers.

The action components of Judge Surratt-States' decision:

1. Patriot can discard its supposedly binding contracts with the union.
2. Patriot will no longer provide the health benefits guaranteed for retirees and their families.

Part Two

First Energy: Playing a Classic Shell Game

Shell game: A game, usually involving gambling, in which a person hides a pea under one of three nutshells, then shuffles them around while spectators try to guess the final location of the pea. [www.thefreedictionary.com]

First Energy, the huge energy conglomerate, has been playing the corporate version of the shell game. We, the

company's customers, stand to lose.

Here, in brief layperson's terms, is an outline of the scheme. Warning: It is a twisted and convoluted narrative, but try to follow. Here are some abbreviations used to simplify the verbiage:

FE – First Energy, an Ohio corporation.

AES – Allegheny Energy Supply, an Ohio subsidiary of First Energy.

Mon Power – Monongahela Power, a West Virginia subsidiary of First Energy, and the electric company for northern West Virginia homes and businesses.

Harrison Station is a large, aging coal-fired power plant near Clarksburg. Eighty percent of the plant is owned by AES. First Energy is trying to foist the plant onto Mon Power.

I know, you're wondering, "Aren't all these just parts of the same company? So FE is trying to make one FE subsidiary sell to another FE subsidiary? Why?"

Here's where it gets complicated.

Turns out FE and AES are Ohio companies, and Ohio has deregulated its electric power industry. So these Ohio companies have to scramble and work smart to make a profit—or maybe not.

What about Mon Power? West Virginia electric companies are still regulated, specifically by the Public Service Commission (PSC). And in West Virginia the electric company has a monopoly in its service region, along with guaranteed profit rates.

I think you get it now! **Of course** FE would be ecstatic to unload the power plant onto Mon Power. Then the PSC will allow FE to raise rates—for the next 20+ years—to cover the \$1 Billion-plus price tag. And hundreds of thousands of West Virginians would have no choice—pay up folks!

It's the old shell game. Put the Harrison plant under the AES shell—shuffle the shells around—now you see it now you don't—and presto! There the pea is, but now it's under the Mon Power shell—gotcha!

You might be thinking, "Isn't this all just a sham transaction? Isn't it all a paper chase? Doesn't the plant still sit there and generate electric power?" Yes; yes; and yes.

As my energy guru puts it, "All this accomplishes is to suck a billion bucks out of the wallets of West Virginians and put it into the pockets of FE shareholders." It's a slick scam if one can get away with it.

Wildlife?... What wildlife?



Carol Nix



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

McKinley Seeks to Exempt Coal Ash from Federal Regulation — Again

Jim Kotcon, Chapter Energy Chair

First District Republican Congressman David McKinley introduced HR 2218, the Coal Ash Residuals Reuse and Management Act, in June. It is a slightly revised version of a 2011 bill, and retains most of the anti-environmental provisions.

Coal ash, also called coal combustion residuals, is the ash and debris left over from burning coal in power plants. It can also include wastes from scrubbers or fluidized bed boilers. It has high levels of heavy metals such as arsenic, selenium, cadmium, lead and mercury. Although exempted from hazardous waste rules for years, EPA has been developing rules to regulate it as a “special waste” to allow appropriate uses while protecting the public from the real hazards



It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on windling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Let your voice be heard.

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contained in the ash. But most coal ash today is deposited in unlined landfills or impoundments, or worse, simply dumped at coal mine sites with no meaningful regulation at all.

Problems with HR 2218

Although McKinley touts the benefits of Coal Ash recycling and includes “reuse” in the title of the bill, not one word in the bill addresses coal ash recycling or reuse.

The bill purports to establish a regulatory program for coal ash, but most of the bill creates exemptions, or outright prohibitions, on federal enforcement.

- The bill prohibits EPA from finalizing coal ash rules, first proposed in 2010, and prohibits any new rule-making by EPA for coal ash.
- It allows states to set up a permit program, and directs EPA to defer to those states, even though most states do not have the political will or the capacity to enforce a program.
- The permit program applies only to “structures” (impoundments, landfills, etc.) and explicitly exempts ash disposal on coal mines from any regulation.
- It copies some provisions from municipal solid waste landfill regulations, but exempts leachate collection requirements for impoundments, allows ash placement below the water table (identified by EPA as the worst case scenario for ground

water contamination), and waives key closure requirements.

- The bill allows existing landfills to continue operating for up to seven years without a permit, and allows landfills to accept ash for 10 years without a liner.
- Sites with ground water contamination must develop a corrective action plan—but that is not required for 10 years, and even that “deadline” may be extended indefinitely if no alternative ash disposal has been developed.

Problems Here at Home

The bill does nothing to address the key ash disposal problems found right in McKinley’s home district. For example, the Albright ash dump in Preston County would not be regulated under this bill because it is no longer receiving ash, even though it is leaking arsenic and has no liner or leachate collection system.

The Coresco ash landfill in Monongalia County and the New Hill West mine are both major ash disposal sites, associated with known stream pollution, yet would be waived under McKinley’s bill as they claim to be operating under mining permits. Coresco proposes a landfill with coal ash hundreds of feet deep, but claims the exemption because it is placed on a former surface mine and accepts wastes from a coal preparation plant.

Even the “Little Blue” impoundment on the border between Pennsylvania and

Hancock County, WV—at 1700 acres, it is the largest coal ash impoundment east of the Mississippi River—would find loopholes. McKinley represents Hancock County and has been getting reports of persistent pollution problems for years. Neighbors complain of dust, leaks and seeps, and contamination of drinking water wells. The operator, First Energy, recently agreed to close the impoundment and has bought out some neighboring homeowners. But under McKinley’s bill, some of the minimal protections agreed to by First Energy would not be required.

In summary, McKinley’s bill is designed to offer the appearance of regulation, while protecting large coal corporations from any meaningful federal oversight.

Perhaps Chapter Chair Jim Sconyers said it best, “McKinley is at least consistent. He continues to act to protect the profits of the coal and electric power industry, and not the health and safety of his constituents.”

What You Can Do:

HR 2218 was approved in Committee by a voice vote on June 5 and is headed for the full House. Contact Senators Jay Rockefeller and Joe Manchin. Urge them to oppose HR 2218 and to support strong federal enforcement oversight to regulate coal ash disposal facilities. We know the ash has to go somewhere, but it needs to be done safely. West Virginia citizens should not have to be exposed to these hazardous materials, and HR 2218 does not protect our health or the environment.

A Monument to 150 Years of Wild and Wonderful!

Celebrate West Virginia’s sesquicentennial by sharing your stories and photos of the southern Monongahela National Forest.

Establishment of the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument will preserve some of the Monongahela’s best recreational experiences and most remarkable ecological resources. This unique designation would be an honor for this storied landscape and the Mountain State’s rich cultural heritage, which is tied to the rugged mountains of the southern Mon. Special features of the potential monument include Cranberry Glades, Falls of Hills Creek, the Highland Scenic Highway, Tea Creek, Cranberry and Turkey Mountain Backcountry Areas and headwater resources within six critical watersheds—the Cranberry, Cherry, Williams, Gauley, Elk, and Greenbrier Rivers.

The southern Monongahela National Forest means so much to Appalachia’s outdoor heritage, but its future is far from certain. Several bills introduced in Congress aim to open roadless areas such as Tea Creek to potential industrial development, while others would streamline industrial activities on National Forests and other public lands without proper environmental review. From the establishment of the Cranberry Wilderness to the Wilderness expansion achieved with passage of the Wild Monongahela Act in 2009, West Virginians have a strong history of advocating for the area’s protection through citizen conservation initiatives.

The Birthplace of Rivers National Monument would extend stronger, more permanent protections to this landscape while preserving access to all currently permitted recreational activities. West Virginians have a deep connection to this special place, and ensuring its protection would be a tremendous gift to future generations.

Do you have photos or stories from this special area? If so, please consider sending them to info@birthplaceofrivers.org. The Birthplace of Rivers initiative will be featuring guest posts at birthplaceofriversblog.org throughout the summer.

Book Review

Earth Works: Selected Essays by Scott Russell Sanders

Published by Indiana University Press, 2012

Richard Mier, Martinsburg

Scott Russell Sanders, he says up front, is an Earth writer, focused on the webs that connect us all to nature, communities, and “on out to the farthest reaches of the imagination.” This collection of thirty essays, written and published over the last twenty years, is full of acute and personal observations, not only about the environment but also about the questions which “must occur to every inquisitive mind.”

His reflections come one-on-one to the reader, diary-like, born of family and experience. He speaks as a gifted teacher—which he is, at Indiana University—about Emerson and Thoreau, René Dubos, Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, and Wendell Berry, to mention only a few. He writes wonderfully: his baby daughter is “a rosy wriggle of a girl,” in the mountains “snowy peaks rose before me like the promise of a world without grief.”

Nature, the environment, “our own indifference to other species, and even to our own long-term well-being” figure prominently. But he writes of other things, too. In “Mountain Music” he tells of a contentious trip to the Rockies with his then teen-aged son who is angry that his father’s deep concern about the environment leads to his “seeing nothing but darkness.” He writes movingly about his father and his father’s alcoholism in “Under the Influence.” Other essays are about a very short career in boxing (“Reasons of the Body”), a stint on a jury in a criminal trial (“Doing Time in the Thirteenth Chair”), and about petroglyphs, going home, looking at women, and money.

He always brings the reader gently back, no matter how far afield he deviates, to the central issue. More often insistent than strident, he makes it clear as glass that we are each of us responsible, including him. The current state of the world is our original sin; anyone with a car or a refrigerator is culpable. But it is also true, he writes, that the “summing together of countless acts of healing could restore the health of individuals, communities and planet.” One doesn’t so much read as listen—this book is worth a listen.

Gimme That Old Time Religion

"Don't Tread On Me—First Energy!"
"Don't Tread On Me—First Energy!"

This was the chant (thanks to Carol Nix) that reverberated through the halls as a band of energy advocates marched through the West Virginia Capitol in Charleston. Fresh from the Public Service Commission hearing about First Energy's scheme to unload a \$1 billion white elephant onto West Virginia's electric customers, the intrepid team voiced their demand on the way to the governor's office. There they would present over 1200 letters of protest and ask the governor to stand up for our citizens.

"First Energy Failing—On Coal Ash"
"First Energy Failing—On Energy Efficiency"
"First Energy Failing—Working Families"

These were the messages on colorful signs carried by hundreds of protesters, including dozens of Sierra Clubbers, gathered at 7 AM outside the conference center entrance in Morgantown to greet First Energy shareholders and officers arriving for the company's annual shareholder meeting. Environmentalists, union members, and others all had beefs with the company—and they made sure the huge energy conglomerate's directors and shareholders knew it. One

high point of the demonstration: Many of the union folks asked for our "First Energy Failing..." signs too!

Who are these people? Hardcore veteran radicals? Paid agitators? Hippies on trust funds? Nope—just regular folks who care about clean air and green energy. They are grassroots volunteers who decided they care and decided to raise their voices, sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively. They found the time and energy to stand up and speak out along with dozens, or hundreds, of like-minded compatriots.

From my perspective, this is the "old-time religion." It is important, and effective, and empowering, and it makes you feel good! Never think that only specially trained and experienced activists can do these kinds of "actions." Or that only the big and strong and aggressive and extroverted can—although they too are welcome! Anyone can—and we always make sure there are plenty of others to stand together with you and to support each other.

Next time you hear of an opportunity like this, think about participating. You'll meet some fantastic people, have fun, and do good work! Who could ask for more?

First Person: *I Was There*

May 29 Field Trip to PSC Public Hearing in Charleston

Carol Nix

On May 29, two vans full of Sierra Club supporters and friends made their way from Morgantown to Charleston. We travelers were prepared to testify at a "public hearing" held by the WV Public Service Commission regarding the proposed transfer of the old Harrison power plant to Mon Power.

When we arrived, the beautiful hearing room was packed with some of the finest suits we had ever seen. Soon disabused of the notion that this would actually be a "public" hearing we, the public, were cordially reminded that written comments were already on record, which counts as being "heard." Some of us had come from the Eastern Panhandle, some from Fairmont, but most had driven the three hours from Morgantown. Some had taken off work to be there. Some had risen at three o'clock, but most had slept till five that lovely morning. No matter, we were not to be heard.

Three of our number did manage to finagle (don't ask) a few minutes of face time with the three commissioners. Jim Sconyers told them how much cheaper the CFLs were across the Maryland border, thanks to First Energy's efficiency programs in Maryland. Doug Gilbert bravely admitted poverty, and on behalf of some of the poorest people in the nation (us), asked the good gentlemen not to saddle us with this \$1.2 billion debt. Emilie Marlier spoke about the unexplainable recalcitrance of Mon Power to modernize the street lights in Morgantown, costing that fair city not less than \$100,000 per year. She also put in a word for all the contractors, carpenters, and handymen who might be expected to put food on their tables by putting insulation in our attics. Fist bumps to these heroes!

Then off to the Capitol we all went, to see the gleaming marble and Governor's beautiful secretary. We wanted to see Governor Tomlin, but were told he was "not in." It took three of us to carry the more than 1,200 citizen comments against this power plant transfer. Some of those comments were postcards, some were online comments, and some were handwritten on lined paper. Perhaps one was yours. We delivered them all, in front of half a dozen reporters with cameras and mike's, to one of the Governor's aides, who accepted them with grace and without comment. Now begins the wait, while the Commission decides our fate.



Representatives from the WV Sierra Club and other citizen groups deliver letters of protest to the Governor's Office in opposition to First Energy's proposal to transfer ownership of its Harrison Power Station to West Virginia subsidiary Monongahela Power.

photo by Chris Dorst, courtesy of the Charleston Gazette (used with permission)

June 4 DEP Public Hearing on Danny Webb Underground Injection Well in Lochgelly, WV

Beth Little

The hearing at the Oak Hill High School was very well attended, especially since there was a conflicting meeting on school consolidation. From about 100 people in attendance, 15–20 of us made verbal comments.

When I first arrived, Julie Archer, of the Surface Owners Rights Organization (SORO), asked if I had the actual section number of the code indicating that the comment period extended for 10 days past the hearing, because the DEP representatives there had told her that comments closed at the end of the hearing. I did have it because we had anticipated the DEP saying that the hearing closed comments, as they have before. At Julie's request, I approached the DEP, showed them the code number and text, and when they officially opened the hearing, they announced that comments would be received until June 14.

I also had the code number for the section saying that a fact sheet shall be prepared and be sent to the applicant and, on request, to any other person. I had asked for the fact sheet, but was told that the fact sheet was to go to the applicant, the EPA and other state/federal agencies. After the hearing, I asked for the fact sheet again and received it, but it was useless. It was just some general boilerplate text

about permits for underground injection wells with no specifics about the Lochgelly well.

I bring up these instances regarding the code to alert you readers that DEP staff do not necessarily know what the law is that they are supposed to be following.

There were several emotional speakers against granting the permit—even some tears when pleading for the health of their children. There were also a couple of Webb employees who basically said that Danny Webb was a good guy and they needed their jobs. There was one man whose voice was so messed up that I couldn't tell what he was trying to say. He apparently worked, or had worked, for Webb, and he was upset, but I didn't understand whether he was for or against the permit, or whether his condition was a result of working at the well.

Ron Miller and Bill Laird, State Senators for the district, were there and seemed genuinely concerned.

I submitted a DVD with video taken at the Webb facility to substantiate my comments that Danny Webb is in violation of the law.

The site has no security. The gate stands open while several trucks, tankers, and pickups drive in and out, and an ATV goes through. Even if the gate is closed, there is a by-

pass for smaller vehicles that would stay open; and because the site is not fenced, a person could walk into the site from virtually any direction.

The pits were not constructed according to engineered specifications, and seeps from the side of the pits have killed all vegetation, indicating toxic ingredients. There is orange staining on the soil, and the creek below runs bright orange. The claim by the DEP that this is due to acid mine drainage does not explain the high chloride content, the presence of barium, glycols and benzene in the test results, or the petroleum-like film on top of the creek that does not break up when touched. Even if it were acid mine drainage, this should not be allowed to be discharged into the waters of the state.

Another of my videos showed that the freeboard of the pits is less than the 2 feet required by DEP regulations. Local residents report that the pits have overflowed. They have also reported noxious odors, and there is a recorded event of hydrogen sulfide gas emanating from the pits.

The DEP did not give a date for when they will make a decision about the permit. Meanwhile, the most outrageous violation of the law is that Danny Webb has been allowed to continue operating without a permit.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Presented by the WV Sierra Club

MARCELLUS ACADEMY 2013

Weekend of Presentations & Workshops on Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling

July 13-14, 2013

WV Wesleyan College, Buckhannon WV

You are cordially invited to attend a special weekend workshop on Marcellus shale drilling on the campus of WV Wesleyan College on July 13-14, 2013.

Marcellus Academy 2013 will train a new cadre of emerging activists who can proactively work on Marcellus gas drilling issues in their communities. Since industrial-scale drilling sites are causing major problems with our water, our land, our air and our health, this workshop will focus on giving you the tools to effectively organize others, build grassroots networks of reporters who can monitor industry practices, and help guide local leaders toward environmentally sound Marcellus policies.

This is **not** an introductory course on how Marcellus drilling works. Instead, emphasis will be on education, outreach, recruiting concerned citizens and activism. Participants will be limited to those who can clearly commit to organizing people in their area by holding meetings, giving presentations, organizing house parties and speaking out to build public education and awareness. The goal is to empower more everyday citizens to take the initiative in protecting their communities and to serve as leaders for building public support.

A detailed agenda will be forthcoming. Speakers and workshops on both days will cover topics such as:

- The status of gas wells in West Virginia...new, old, and abandoned
- Problems caused by the gas industry
- Health issues associated with Marcellus drilling
- Bad practices used in underground injection wells
- Citizen Watch Groups that can monitor industry activity
- Organizing gas industry study committees within your county commission
- Citizen participation in the gas permitting process
- Open session for guest videos, slide shows and personal stories
- Well site field trip
- The WV Legislature - Who's who and how it works
- Organizing local watershed groups

All of your expenses for the workshop (lodging, meals, and mileage) will be covered by WV Sierra Club. Applicants are not required to be affiliated with any particular environmental organization. Our program will run from 9:30AM Saturday until 3:30PM Sunday.

Only a limited number of registrations will be accepted. Applicants will be considered based primarily on geographical region, resulting in new organizers in as many regions as possible. We do hope to see more than one person from a community, so they can work as a team, but the number will depend on applications from the rest of the state.

Space is limited, so please apply as soon as possible listing your name, address, county, phone number and email. Contact information is below. If you cannot attend but know of someone in your community who fits our guidelines and could benefit from joining us, please let us know. Again, they should be people who can make a clear commitment to do what it takes to build local grassroots action on their home turf.

We hope you will take this opportunity to grow our numbers in West Virginia and create a strong, intelligent response to the challenge of Marcellus drilling in our neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Contact: Chuck Wyrostok
Sierra Club Outreach Organizer

Toll free: 877-252-0257

Email: outreach@marcellus-wv.com

Website: www.marcellus-wv.com

MON GROUP ANNUAL CORN ROAST & POTLUCK

Aug 29, 6-8:30 pm

Krepps Park Picnic Shelter
Morgantown, WV

All fellow environmentalists are invited to come enjoy freshly roasted corn-on-the-cob. Plates, utensils, and drinks will be provided. Please bring some food to share if you can.

Come learn how to get involved in political actions or sign up for an outing. Volunteer to help the local or state Sierra Club. Play some games or make a craft. There will be something for everyone.

Contact anyone on the Mon Group ExCom for more details (see Directory on back page).

Perspectives on Outings — Russ Flowers, Outings Chair

Take a Hike! — In Your State Parks

Hiking is one of my favorite outdoor activities. I feel so connected and up close with nature while meandering down a remote trail. I feel fortunate to be living in a state that offers some of the best hiking in the country (in my opinion). Our state and national park and forest systems, as well as many nature preserves, contain thousands of miles of hiking trails. Trails exist at all skill levels, going through forests and fields, and along rivers and streams.

Recently, my wife Sue and I discovered that the WV State Parks offer a goal-oriented program, called Hiking West Virginia, to get more people visiting the state parks and out on their trail systems. Once enrolled, participants are issued a hiking log for recording the parks and trails visited and miles hiked, along with a packet of park and forest trail maps.

The program is quite affordable at \$10 per person. To provide added incentive, there are accomplishment plateaus and rewards along the way. After hiking the first 25 park miles, participants receive a really nice, sturdy, wooden hiking staff. At the 50-mile plateau, the program provides a 50-mile hiking-staff shield. Shields are also awarded at 100 miles and then at 100-mile intervals up to 2,000 miles. In addition, there are special hikes sponsored by the parks. Those who participate receive a cane shield for that event. An example of one of their special hikes is the "8-Mile Hike Between the Parks" (Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley State Parks).

Sue and I completed one of these hikes last October and had a wonderful time; so much so that we plan on participating in other special hikes. It is a great way to meet fellow hikers, experience different trails, and get to know our state parks and beautiful state better.

So far, we have both surpassed the 50-mile mark and have received our hiking sticks and 50-mile cane shields. During our travels we noticed most gift shops at state and national parks have hiking-cane shields for sale. So we decided to start collecting shields from our travels throughout the state and country and putting them onto our hiking sticks. It's so much fun collecting them, and they make really nice mementos of our travels, too.

In addition to the hiking program, the State Parks offer a Very Important Park Person (VIPP) program. This program is free and, once enrolled, you will receive a card to check off the state parks and forests you visit and brochures for all the parks. To complete the program you must visit and get stamps from 15 specified parks/forests and 5 elective parks/forests. Once you visit the required 20 parks/forests throughout the state you receive a VIPP jacket.

Both programs are a great opportunity to visit and explore West Virginia's State Parks and Forests. In turn, if you find a favorite trail that you want to share, we would love to have you lead an outing to it.

If you are interested in participating in either program you can find more information on the state park website: www.wvstateparks.com. Or contact me with questions on these programs or if you are interested in becoming an outings leader.

Take to the Outdoors!



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
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August 8**

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.

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

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

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

West Virginia Chapter Outings

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

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

Upcoming Outings — Summer/Fall

Abbreviations Used

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

Sat, Jul 13

Workshop: Wildlife Habitat Improvement & General Ecology

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on two-part workshop on Wildlife Habitat Improvement & General Ecology at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshop is free of charge and open to members & nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader; seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (fridge & microwave available). Workshop is from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. Meet at Refuge Headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30AM. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: www.fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sun, Jul 14

Day Hike: Bluestone Lake SP

rated moderate — Join us on this 5-mile hike in the Bluestone State Park. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Mike Price, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Hinton, WV

Web info: www.bluestonesp.com

Sat, Jul 20

Day Hike: Coopers Rock SF

rated easy to moderate — Join us for an easy to moderate hike of about 6 miles. We'll do an out-and-back hike along the Goodspeed Highway Trail, on the Chestnut Ridge Park side of the forest. Contact leader for information on parking & start time.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest Town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com

Sat, Jun 29

Service Outing: Coopers Rock SF

rated moderate — This will be the summer trail clean-up on our "adopted" Intermediate Cross Country Ski Trail and Loop for 1.25 miles at Coopers Rock State Forest. Volunteers seeking community service are encouraged to participate. Much of the work will be cutting back vegetation, cleaning out and restoring drainage ditches/culverts and general trail clearing. The work is meant to be rewarding and at a pace to enjoy each other's company; however, some moderate intensity work will be necessary, using shovels, rakes, pruners, and moving reasonably sized rocks. Anything requiring power tools or heavy lifting is deferred to the Forest Superintendent. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots and work gloves and carry water and snacks. Contact leader for more details.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2636, atdking@gmail.com

Nearest City: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com; coopersrock.org; www.wvstateparks.com/community/adopt.htm



Fri, Aug 9

Day Hike: Summersville Lake to Long Point

rated easy — Join us at Summersville Lake on this 3.5-mile hike to Long Point with great views of the lake. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Mike Price, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Summersville, WV

Web info: www.localhikes.com/Hikes/Summersville_Lake_0000.asp

Sat, Aug 10

Workshop: Nature Interpretation & Reptiles/Amphibians

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on two-part workshop on Nature Interpretation & Reptiles/Amphibians at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshop is free of charge and open to members & nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader; seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (fridge & microwave available). Workshop is from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. Meet at Refuge Headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30AM. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: www.fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sat, Aug 17

Day Hike: Anthony Creek

rated moderate — Join us on this 5.4-mile hike to Anthony Creek in Pocahontas County. Bring your swimming suit. We will take a nice dip in Anthony Creek swimming hole. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Mike Price, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: White Sulphur Springs, WV

Sat, Aug 24

Day Hike: Cacapon SP

rated moderate — Join us on this 5.6-mile hike at beautiful Cacapon State Park. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Mike Price, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Berkeley Springs, WV

Web info: www.cacaponresort.com

Sun, Aug 25

Canoe Trip: South Branch of the Potomac

rated easy — Join us on this canoeing trip down the South Branch of the Potomac River with possible eagle sightings. Canoe and kayak rentals are available. The outing depends on weather and adequate water level. PFDs (lifejackets) are required on Sierra Club watercraft outings. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Mike Price, mikeprice54@suddenlink.net

Nearest town: Petersburg, WV

Sun, Sep 8

Day Hike: Dolly Sods North

rated moderate — Dolly Sods North was added to the Dolly Sods Wilderness in 2009. Come and see why! We'll explore the forest, savanna, streams, and the natural and human history. Dolly Sods North is a high alpine landscape with spectacular scenery, encompassing the headwaters of Red Creek. Our trail distance is approximately 8 miles. Grades are generally moderate, and this hike rates as leisure for difficulty and moderate for length. We will keep a leisurely pace with numerous stops to "smell the roses." Our route focuses on the more northerly trails in the upper parts of the headlands. Dayhiking gear is needed, along with plenty of water, sunscreen, and weather protection. Please pre-register with leader.

Leader: Jim Sconyers, 304-698-9628, jimscon@gmail.com

Nearest town: Harman, WV

Sat, Sep 14

Workshop: Flora & Fauna Nature Identification & Wetland Habitat

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on two-part workshop on Flora & Fauna Nature Identification & Wetland Habitat Workshop at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshop is free of charge and open to members & nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader, seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (fridge & microwave available). Workshop is from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. Meet at Refuge Headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30AM. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: www.fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sat, Oct 12

Workshop: Nature Interpretation & Reptiles/Amphibians

not rated — Join WV Master Naturalists for this fun, interactive, hands-on two-part workshop on Nature Interpretation & Reptiles/Amphibians at the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The workshop is free of charge and open to members & nonmembers. Please pre-register with the leader, seating is limited. Bring bag lunch (fridge & microwave available). Workshop is from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. Meet at Refuge Headquarters in Williamstown at 8:30AM. Contact the Outing Leader for further directions and questions.

Leader: Russ Flowers, 304-482-7919, russwvu@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Williamstown, WV

Web info: www.fws.gov/northeast/ohioriverislands

Sat, Oct 19

Cass Train Ride

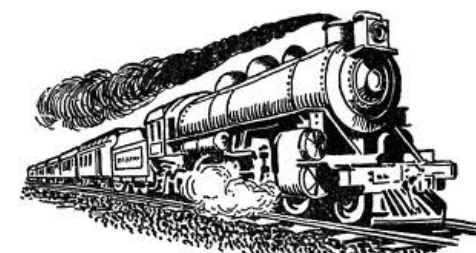
not rated — Join us as we take a scenic train ride to the third highest peak in Wild and Wonderful West Virginia. We will depart from the train station in Cass, WV, and make our way up to the top of Bald Knob. Mid-October should provide for Fantastic Fall Foliage (fingers crossed). The Bald Knob area has a climate similar to that of Canada; therefore, attendees should dress for the weather, as the temperature at the top of Bald Knob is considerably cooler than that of our starting point at the station in Cass. The view is spectacular, and from the overlook, we will be able to view two states. Attendees won't want to forget their binoculars and cameras for this outing! The train ride will last about 4.5 hours.

Attendees MUST register for this outing by Aug 31. Fees associated with this outing are: Adults, \$32; Children, \$24. Registrants must pre-pay for this outing by sending a check to Aaron M. Vedock by 8/31/13. Contact Aaron to register and get his mailing address. Contact leader for information on parking & start time.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest Town: Cass, WV

Web info: www.cassrailroad.com



Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to everyone, members and non-members alike. Each outing is intended to be a wholesome, safe, and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. Participants must have suitable clothing, gear, and stamina, and are encouraged to select activities that match their individual abilities for outdoor adventures.

The Club offers a variety of outings from "easy" to "moderate" to "strenuous" that suit all activity levels. The difficulty of each outing is clearly designated in the announcement. Reservations are generally not required unless noted, but the outing leader may be contacted in advance for questions about the terrain, the difficulty and recommended gear.

Activities are normally held "rain or shine," but may be postponed at the leader's discretion for safety reasons in the event of inclement weather. Participants are reminded that all outdoor activities carry a degree of risk, and some take place in locations where professional emergency medical aid may be two or more hours away. People with health concerns should consult a physician to determine the advisability of participating in these or similar activities. The leader is responsible for the safety of all participants, and has the final authority to decide whether or not an individual may participate on a specific outing. Sierra Club safety policy requires that helmets be worn on bicycling outings, and a personal flotation device (PFD) be worn when using personal watercraft such as kayaks or canoes.

Unless noted in the announcement, Club outings are intended for adults. Children and

dogs are not normally permitted, unless an outing is so designated. Minors (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian, or they must have both 1) a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader's prior consent to participate in the Club outing. Sierra Club outings officially begin and end at the trailhead.

Travel to the official starting point and back, even from an advertised meeting place, is the sole responsibility of each participant. While the Club encourages car-pooling, such arrangements are strictly between the riders and the drivers, and are not a part of the outing. Participants assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver, which can be viewed on the web at www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or by calling 415-977-5630.

The Sierra Club does not charge for chapter outings, although payment of park entrance fees, a share of campsite rental costs, permit fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be required from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, including hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campfire impacts, packing out all trash, respecting wildlife, being considerate of other visitors, and leaving the environment as it was found.

The Sierra Club's California Seller of Travel identification number is CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.



Sierra Club

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email: governor@wv.gov

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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
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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