Birthplace of Rivers National Monument

*Why the southern Monongahela National Forest deserves permanent protection*

Mike Costello, Executive Director
**WV Wilderness Coalition**

The southern Monongahela National Forest, in particular the area in and around the Cranberry Wilderness, is undeniably special. This unique area contains features such as Cranberry Glades, Falls of Hills Creek, Honeycomb Rocks, the former Mill Point Federal Prison, not to mention opportunity for extensive backcountry recreational experiences. These natural and historic treasures, along with the headwaters or tributaries of the Cranberry, Cherry, Gauley, Williams, Elk and Greenbrier Rivers, is what makes this land a strong candidate to become West Virginia’s only national monument. Throw in strong support from area business owners, religious groups, sportsmen, mountain bikers, various local leaders and several prominent conservation groups, and the initiative to protect one of the Mountain State’s most iconic landscapes is poised for success.

**What is a National Monument?**

National monuments are special designations which aim to preserve federal public lands that possess special features of historic, ecological, geologic or cultural significance. Monuments are managed by the Forest Service, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management. There are currently more than 100 national monuments, ranging from small historic sites to million acre tracts of wild lands in the West.

National Monuments may be established either by an act of Congress or by presidential proclamation. Most importantly, national monument designation is statutory, meaning the landscape is permanently safeguarded against future administrative actions, which could open these special resources up to industrial development or other activities and could compromise the way they are enjoyed in the future.

**The Threats**

Like all National Forests, the Monongahela — or the “Mon,” as many of us know it — is managed to emphasize multiple uses. Some of these uses include backcountry recreation and restoration of resources, such as the historic red spruce ecosystem, uses currently emphasized on nearly all lands considered for monument designation. Other uses, however, include commercial logging and mineral development, such as gas drilling of federally owned minerals. Perhaps the greatest threats to public lands, however, are those we cannot predict: decisions made by future administrations. Since 2010, certain members of Congress have launched an attack on America’s treasured public lands through repeated attempts to strip protections for roadless areas, such as Tea Creek or Turkey Mountain. Currently pending bills would eliminate environmental review for development projects on public lands, and at least one recent presidential candidate pledged to double gas drilling on public lands, if he had been elected. For better or worse, each change in federal administration means a shift in priorities for managing federal public lands. Put simply, the futures of the Mon’s special wild places are far from certain without a statutory designation such as national monument in place. A national monument would identify resources for permanent protection, such as the backcountry trails, high-elevation spruce forests and extensive native brook trout streams the area contains, keeping those features intact for the enjoyment of future generations.

National monument designation would withdraw federally owned minerals from exploration and development, and could prioritize the acquisition of private minerals from willing sellers within the monument. Commercial logging would be prohibited in Wilderness and special backcountry areas, just as it is today. Areas managed to promote restoration of the red spruce ecosystem would continue to emphasize this important management objective, enhancing the viability and overall resilience of the landscape and its special resources.

**The Opportunity**

West Virginians from all backgrounds have come together to define a vision for the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument. Establishment of the monument would keep the area under the management of the Forest Service and would result in few, if any, changes to the landscape itself. Birthplace of Rivers would be the first USFS-managed monument in the East and would place an emphasis on protecting the natural and cultural resources that have made our connection to this land as strong as it is today. At a time when our public lands are under attack, the Mountain State’s leaders in Washington have an incredible opportunity to honor West Virginia’s scenic beauty and outdoor heritage by supporting protections for the Mon under national monument designation.

**Take Action!**

Congressional leaders in the Mountain State need to hear from West Virginians who want to ensure protection of the Birthplace of Rivers for future generations! Take a quick moment to call our U.S. Senators, tell them why the southern Mon is important to you and ask them to support the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument.

**Senator Jay Rockefeller**
(304) 347-5372

**Senator Joe Manchin**
(304) 342-5855

For an excellent editorial in support of national monument status for the “Birthplace of Rivers” see the August 7, 2013, issue of the [Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram](http://www.exponent-telegram.com/opinion/editorials/).

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For more information, visit: [WV Wilderness Coalition](http://www.wvwildernesscoalition.org)
MARCELLUS CAMPAIGN NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP GATHER DATA

Our new 3-Ring Binder project is off the ground, but there is still work to be done.

People removed from the fracking phenomenon have no idea of the range of problems that come with it — inadequate setbacks from residential property, excessive spills, unethical actions from landmen pressing owners to sign drilling leases, unresponsiveness or misbehavior of inspectors, threats and intimidation by drillers, lack of sediment/erosion control, poor waste management, open pits/ponds, unidentified hazardous waste, problems with underground injection control (UIC), noise, fumes, contaminated wells, trucks, accidents, explosions … and the list goes on.

To gather the necessary documentation illustrating these problems, we must do some research. Many people have suffered serious impacts, but their stories are frequently written off as emotional exaggerations. So we need to get the facts — dates and times, documents from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), pictures, media coverage, whatever it takes.

The finished product will serve to illuminate and broadcast the many personal hardships that West Virginians have had to deal with since the advent of industrial-scale gas drilling in the state.

If you have been adversely affected by Marcellus drilling and would consider being part of this project, please request our Gas Drilling Incident Survey Form so you can detail the problems you've experienced. Additionally, we are asking for volunteers to work on reviewing these surveys for submissions and reporting. Ideally, these volunteers would have some experience with desktop publishing, video shooting and editing, or webpage design, but there will be ample opportunities for anyone willing to work on documentation and verification.

Some of the work can be done at home on a computer or by phone; some of it may involve a site visit, landowner interview, or trip to the DEP in Charleston.

The eventual result will be the 3-Ring Binder, an eye-opening collection of thoroughly documented examples of how and why our current laws and regulations are not protecting us — not our land, our air, our water, or our health. It will be a tool we can take to our representatives, the media, or our doubting neighbors to make our case. Here is your chance to make a difference. Even if you can only check out one part of one story, it will be a valid (and valuable) contribution.

If you are interested in helping, please provide your name, address, email, and phone number(s) to our outreach coordinator, at outreach@marcellus-wv.com or 1-877-252-0257. We will get back to you to find out what types of things you are interested in and able to do. Together we can make a difference.

HELP WANTED

Nominations for Executive Committee (ExCom)

Both the Chapter and the Monongahela Group are looking for a few good folks to be leaders and decision-makers for their respective groups. The Chapter needs four candidates on the ballot to fill two expiring terms; the Mon Group needs five candidates for three expiring terms. Ballots must be mailed in December, so nominations are needed by Nov 1.

Chapter ExCom members must keep abreast of various conservation issues, attend four meetings around the state each year, and participate in occasional conference calls and email threads to make decisions for the Chapter.

To nominate yourself, someone else, or to get more details about what the position entails, please contact Nominating Committee Chair, Sally Wilts: sallywilts@yahoo.com.

Membership Chair

This position has been vacant for several months. Someone with an outgoing personality, internet access, a smidgeon of tech savvy, and an extra 4-8 hours per month would be ideal. We need a membership chair who can ensure that new members are properly welcomed and informed of activities and events in their areas, and who can work with the national member database (training provided). An ambitious chair could even recruit a committee and develop innovative membership recruitment strategies.

If interested, please contact Jim Sconyers at jimcon@gmail.com.

Toxics Headed to Masontown?

Carol Nix

What happens when toxic fracking fluid is injected deep underground? Well, the real answer is that nobody knows. As fracking operations proliferate and turn bucolic West Virginia hamlets into industrial zones, the problem of what to do with the toxic brew that is “produced” grows more urgent. One company is proposing to use an old gas well in the middle of little Masontown, WV, as an injection site. West Virginia Sierra Club and Friends of Deckers Creek are opposing this operation.

Fracking creates tremendous waste, and politicians seldom talk about this — it’s all about the “prosperity” and “jobs.” Ohio has seen a huge increase in the number of injection wells, but public outrage there has led the industry to put places like tiny Masontown in its crosshairs.

According to an article in Scientific American, June 21, 2012, “Leaking injection wells may pose a risk — and the science has not kept pace with the growing glut of wastewater. Once waste is underground, there are few ways to track how far it goes, how quickly or where it winds up. There is plenty of theory, but little data to prove the system works.” The article continues, “Until recently, scientists and environmental officials have assumed that deep layers of rock beneath the earth would safely entomb the waste for millennia … there are growing signs they were mistaken.” Scientific American quoted Mario Salazar, an engineer with 25 years experience in the fracking and underground injection program in Washington: “In 10 to 100 years we are going to find out that most of our groundwater is polluted, a lot of people are going to get sick, and a lot of people may die.”

There are hundreds of documented cases of wastewater migration in the U.S. and Canada; will we let Masontown be the next statistic? Masontown is underlain with a honeycomb of old coal mines and riddled with gaswells, the locations of which may or may not be recorded. Fluid migration through abandoned gas wells and failed casings has resulted in contaminated aquifers, as any quick internet search will reveal. Of course, they’ll say it can’t happen here.

“Over the past 20 years the City of Morgantown, Monongalia and Preston Counties, the State of West Virginia, the Federal government and numerous other funding groups have invested over 6 million dollars in the restoration of the Deckers Creek watershed, with the majority of those funds coming from taxpayers. The subject Class II injection well will jeopardize the intent of this investment,” says Liz Miles, executive director, Friends of Deckers Creek. The proposed well is adjacent to Deckers Creek, and trucks hauling fracking water will have to cross a well-used rail trail to access the site.

The West Virginia Sierra Club supports the efforts of the Friends of Deckers Creek to inform the public and rally opposition to the proposed well.

To stay abreast of planned events on this issue or to offer your help in the fight, contact the Friends of Deckers Creek:

Office: 304-292-3970
Email: liz@deckerscreek.org
Website: www.deckerscreek.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Deckers-Creek/
155850824453758

Chapter Website moves to New Platform, Gets New Look

Paul Wilson

Sometime last year, national Sierra Club decided to move its web content to the open-source web software, Drupal. The Club has since moved it’s Activist Network webpages, as well as other content, over to Drupal.

The West Virginia website began construction in late 2003 using the content management software, Atomz Publish. The Club subscribed to this software and provided it to a number of chapters without their own websites or which were running into financial problems with their current web platforms. The web staff set up the templates and the Chapters provided content.

This has worked well for us for the past 10 years, even though we did have to put up with some quirks in the Publish software, such as a less than adequate homepage layout. And Publish was sold or bought out, first by Omnite, then most recently by Adobe Digital, which affected subscription costs and availability. So the Club decided to move to an open-source software that is more flexible to the end-users and has a relatively painless learning curve. That software is Drupal.

Since your webmaster is a Drupal idiot, and my time was fairly limited this year, our Computer Committee Open Source Committee Chair, Mark Branciaroli, recruited Mark Branciaroli to help us, as Mark is experienced with Drupal and builds websites for a living.

Mark migrated over the content from the old Publish website with the aid of the Club’s web staff Jason Berry. The web address remains the same, but the old version of the site is invisible to the user. We still have content to load, updates to make, and some administrative tasks and responsibilities to identify and assign. Please be patient during this updating process.

One of the best benefits of Drupal is that we can assign access to add or change content for specific webpages by assigning passwords and content rights to other Chapter leaders and activists. For example, Outings Leaders will be able to add their own outings and the Chapter Outings Chair can approve the outing via his editorial rights, which will post the new outing to the Chapter website. And updates, or cancellations, of outings can be done by the Outing Leaders. In this case, the benefit of Drupal would be the immediate access to outing listings to update the content without having to wait for the Chapter webmaster to do it.

So, do check out the new website, westvirginia.sierraclub.org, and bookmark it in your web browser.

If you wish to have access or provide content, please contact Paul or Mark. In the meantime, if you know as little about Drupal as I do, check out various books on the subject at your local bookstore or online. My personal favorite is Drupal for Dummies (2nd edition). It’s a brave new world out there.

Paul Wilson, pjgrunt@gmail.com
Mark Branciaroli, mark@markandbonnie.com
Marcellus Academy Photo Essay

Above: Pam Dodds, a registered professional geologist with a PhD in Marine Geology and specializing in hydrogeology, speaks on planning for watershed protection.

Left: Gene Smith, DEP Assistant Chief of Permitting

Below: John Detwiler & Gloria Forouzan of Marcellus Protest in Pittsburgh speak on creating a communication network between community action groups via social media.

Right: Ben Stout, professor of biology at Wheeling Jesuit University, speaks on the proposed Wheeling wastewater facility.

Photo Essay
by Chuck Wyrostok
Marcellus Academy 2013
July 13-14 at WV Wesleyan College
in Buckhannon, WV

Left: Gene Smith addresses dozens of attendees.

Above right: Mike McCawley, School of Public Health at WVU, in charge of measuring air pollution effects from Marcellus for a DEP study due in July, Chair & Associate Research Professor, Department of Occupational & Environmental Health Sciences.

Above left: Former state senator Charlotte Pritt and Delegate Mike Manypenny talk about the WV Legislature.

Above: A rapt audience listens attentively.

Left: Alan Collins, Professor and Assistant Director for the Division of Resource Management at WVU, speaks on Split Estates and Surface Owner Perceptions of Shale Gas Drilling.
I’ve been thinking about the changes happening in the West Virginia coalfields. I worry about young miners who may be feeling uneasy about their and their families’ futures. And I’m reminded of my days as a classroom teacher in West Virginia. These thoughts prompted me to imagine a letter to a young West Virginia coal miner — I’ll call him Cole.

Dear Cole,

When I was a high school teacher in West Virginia in the 1980s, I often faded into the background during morning homeroom, nothing happening as we marked time for a few minutes. The students would chat as if I weren’t there.

One subject I heard was boys’ futures. A common theme went something like this: “I’m not worried. I’m just putting in time here. I have to go to school, but I’m basically blowing it off. You know why? Because when I get out of here I can go into the mines. My daddy, and his daddy, were coal miners, and I’ll be one too. I’ll sit in the back of the classroom and ignore the teachers. I won’t make trouble as long as I’m left alone.”

These fellows had it all figured out. School was an unavoidable waste of time. They would leave school one day and go right into the coal mines. They were basically untouched by the school experience.

Were you one of these guys, Cole? The problem is, things change. The assumption that anybody could walk out of high school into a coal mining job became unfounded quite a while ago. Coal production in West Virginia is declining. That’s happening for many reasons. But it is declining, and all the experts tell us that is going to continue.

What’s a coal miner to do? After all, you have a family, and bills to pay. Seems like there are several possibilities. A lot of folks bury their heads in the sand. Pretend that it’s not happening. Ignore it and it’ll go away. Problem is, it doesn’t go away; and when the pink slip comes, they’re totally unprepared. Others rant and rave, trying to find someone or something to pin the blame on, someone who caused this to happen. “If it just weren’t for Mr. X or the Z Corporation this wouldn’t be happening.” But the handwriting is on the wall, and it isn’t going to change because of a lot of outdated screaming and shouting.

Where does that leave you? You might be one of the lucky ones. After all, coal mining is declining, but it will continue, just on a reduced scale. But a good many miners are going to be let go. So what’s a guy to do?

You know, I’m sure, that there will be other jobs. It won’t do any good to dig in your heels and refuse to face the changes happening. Yes, you thought coal mining jobs were forever, but for many folks it just isn’t working out that way.

I know advice isn’t always welcome, but if I were giving it, here’s what I might say. Prepare. Study the facts about jobs for the future. Take advantage of opportunities to train in a new field, one with a bright economic future. Don’t wait for the axe to fall. Maybe you’ll resent the necessity of doing that, because you’ve been perfectly happy as a miner, and you assumed that would be for always. But it isn’t for always. For a good many coal miners.

Many political “leaders” and coal company bosses want folks like you to stay angry and afraid. It serves their interests. We see the results: These “leaders” have neglected their responsibility to the people. They should be taking action to assess the changes that are in the wind. To help miners prepare for the real future. And to bring economic diversity to the coalfields. They have refused to do this. That’s why you yourself have to be proactive. Do what you can to create your own future — and it can be a good one.

Good luck to you.

Jim Scowens

Letter to the Editor

Pear Energy sells electricity produced from the wind and sun

I paid my electric bill last month and actually felt good about it — how weird is that? I paid 2 cents more per KwH but my electrons came from the wind and sun, right through my ordinary service wires. My new provider, Pear Energy, allows customers to purchase clean energy using “renewable energy certificates,” regardless of whether the local utility offers a renewables option or not (mine doesn’t). Sort of crowd-sourcing wind and sun, and it’s amazing how comforting it feels to be part of that.

Their website, www.pear-energy.com, displays the logos of the Better Business Bureau, Green Business Bureau, and Green Building Council, so I’m assuming it’s legit (anyone who knows differently please let me know). I made one phone call (877-969-7327), no one came to my house, and I got a bill about a month later that was easy to understand but a little higher than usual. I’ll have to think up some way to conserve a little extra to make up for that 2-cents/KwH. MonPower still maintains my lines and reads the meter, as always.

I thought Sierra Club members might want to know that they have this option right here in West Virginia, and it’s easy and stress-free. But it’s the feeling of actually contributing to a cleaner future that’s worth every extra cent.

Check it out!

Carol Nix

Ed’s Note: There are a number of other companies who sell renewable energy certificates (RECs). A list of some of them may be found on the U.S. Department of Energy’s website: apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/markets/certificates.shtml?age=1
MEMBER PROFILE: Bill Csutoros

Intrigued by Jim Sconyers’ email invitation to the August Leadership Retreat at Camp Horseshoe, Bill Csutoros RSVP’d that he would like to attend. He thought it would be a good opportunity to become more informed about what the local Sierra Club did and how its leadership operated.

A McDowell County native, Bill worked as an underground coalminer for much of his career and later traveled the region on construction jobs. As an outdoor enthusiast and nature lover, he joined the Sierra Club in the early 1980s, largely due to the disastrous environmental policies touted by then Secretary of the Interior, James Watt. Bill was a member in the early days and remembers when the West Virginia Group of the Potomac Chapter was first organizing to form our own state Chapter.

Now retired and living in Lost Creek, WV, Bill loves to go dancing and helps out with his local Literacy Volunteers. Though he would like to be more involved with the Chapter’s activities, his distance from the Chapter’s main social centers as well as various time conflicts make him reluctant to take on any major Club leadership roles at this time. Nevertheless, he says he learned a lot at the Retreat and would not be averse to helping out with some of our efforts when he can.

It was a pleasure to meet and get to know Bill better at the Leadership Retreat. It’s nice for some of us “long-timers” to see new faces once in awhile. It would be great if more of our members followed Bill’s example and came out to see what we are all about.

Chapter Leaders Retreat to Camp Horseshoe to Get Reinvigorated

Memes, ELGs, SSMs — two dozen participants learned about these terms and more at the Chapter’s Leadership Retreat at Camp Horseshoe in Tucker County over the Aug 2–4 weekend. Many long-time members recalled staying at primitive cabins there years ago for chapter Gala events, but we were treated to modern accommodations with all the conveniences of home, including wireless internet.

The composition of the group varied over the course of the weekend, but everyone contributed ideas and stories as we attended workshops, watched environmental films, socialized, and applauded five of our volunteers who were honored with Outstanding Service Awards.

Award Recipients

Our chapter is among a handful that do not have paid staff, yet we won three national awards last year and Chapter Chair Jim Sconyers will be honored this September in San Francisco with a Special Service Award for his strong and consistent commitment to conservation and the Club over an extended period of time.

The Chapter Awards committee felt Jim also deserved a more local show of appreciation and presented him with one of the engraved ceramic plates we have commissioned for our Chapter awards over the last few years.

Jonathan Rosenbaum was honored for his service to the Executive Committee and his work on both our chapter website and the Marcellus-WV website that he maintains for us. He continues to serve as Transportation Chair.

Chuck Wyrostok is an independent contractor who has served as our outreach coordinator for the Marcellus Campaign for the past three years. He was honored for the excellent work that he has done and his continued commitment to our goals.

Frank Young has been an environmental activist for three decades and was honored for his work with the WV Environmental Council as well as with our ExCom.

George Monk and his wife Molly were honored for their extensive research and teaching about inspection and regulation of natural gas wells. Our Chapter Chair developed an online course to teach volunteers to monitor the safety and environmental impact of these wells with George’s input and supervision.

Workshops

Our workshops included Outings Leader Training, Introduction to our new Chapter Website, Updates on our Conservation Issues, Learning to Engage Our Members Effectively, and Strategic Social Media. All were excellent and provided stimulating ideas and food for thought.

Outing

We finished the weekend by touring the natural stream restoration project that was completed on Horseshoe Run about five years ago. This stream, a tributary of the Cheat River, runs through Camp Horseshoe. Jennifer Newland, Director of Canaan Valley Institute, was kind enough to lead us on a tour of the areas of the stream that were re-engineered with large rocks and tree stumps to direct the current to the center of the stream and stop the erosion that had been eating away at the banks and threatening residents’ homes and property.

FYI: A MEME is a visual graphic designed to attract attention on social media and spread a message or idea rapidly by word of Mouth, E-Mail, blogs, Etc. ... ELGs are Effluent Limitation Guidelines, proposed federal standards for limits on pollution that can be discharged from coal plants. ... SSM is an acronym for Startups,Shutdowns, and Malfunctions; the emissions from which would count toward total limits for coal plants.
Art21” series, which will screen the film the WV Chapter’s first Chapter Chair. The subject of this documentary and the son of Tim DeChristopher, lives on the line, this is what love looks like, what patriotism looks like. With countless betrayals that has sold out its principles, this is In these times of a morally bankrupt government, this is what hope looks like.

107 High St, Morgantown
Mon Art Center (MAC)
Movie: Bidder 70
Tues, Oct 8, 8:15–10pm
Monongahela Arts Center “Art21” series, which will screen the film Balance at 7pm.

Tues, Oct 12, 8:15–10pm
Movie: The Last Mountain
Mon Art Center (MAC)
107 High St, Morgantown
“Art21” series, which will screen the film Boundaries at 7pm.

All events at the MAC are free and open to the public. Donations will be appreciated.

Perspectives on Outings — Russ Flowers, Outings Chair
Take to the Water!

MONONGAHELA GROUP
Tues, Sept 10, 8:15–10pm
Movie: Triple Divide
Mon Art Center (MAC)
107 High St, Morgantown
A movie that attempts to answer the question, “How are state regulators and industry handling impacts from fracking?” Actor Mark Ruffalo co-narrates this 18-month cradle-to-grave investigation by Public Herald that discovered contamination hidden away in America’s most valuable water-sheds. It’s a clarion call that everything, and everyone, is downstream from shale gas extraction.

Shown in conjunction with the Monongalia Arts Center “Art21” series, which will screen the film Balance at 7pm.

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Fri, Nov 1, 8:30–11pm
(Rain date: Nov 2)
Saw-whet owl banding with Joey Herron
Valley Falls Superintendent’s Office
(top of hill)
Discussion at 8:30pm followed by (hopefully) netting and banding these interesting creatures as they migrate. Bring folding chairs (you will be outside), WARM clothing, a flashlight, your camera, and maybe a hot drink for a night you won’t forget. We should finish by 11pm. Contact David Sturm with questions: 304-363-7160, davidsturm@gmail.com

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Though hiking is one of my favorite outdoor activities, water has become my new outdoor love. My wife, Sue, and I were recently camping in Canaan Valley and were invited to go kayaking with some of our friends. When they told me that it would be on the Blackwater River, my first reaction was to say, “Thanks, but no thanks.” I saw visions of white water and the dangers associated with it: flipping upside down, crashing into a rock, and so on. My friend explained it would be a flat paddle outing and we would be on still water, not whitewater. I was so relieved, and I became excited to try a new activity.

As a bonus to kayaking up the Blackwater River, we would be stopping to picnic and monitor vernal pools in a remote section of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (CVNWR). Our friends said there are no trails to the pools, so traveling by river was the only way to access them. It sounded like a great new adventure, so Sue and I were in. After borrowing two kayaks, we were on our way. We put the kayaks in near Davis and paddled upriver towards the CVNWR.

Not being an experienced kayaker, I was a bit nervous. Our friends helped us feel better when they told us how relatively simple it is to learn and that kayaks are very stable; they do not flip as easily as canoes. Within minutes of being in the water, we got the hang of it and were paddling up the Blackwater River. At ease in the water, I was able to relax and take note of the beauty around us and the peace and serenity of the “calm” section of the Blackwater River. As we paddled further up the river, we felt as if we were miles away from civilization. This was the instant that I became a fan of kayaking.

I am not sure how many miles we paddled before we arrived at our first destination. We pulled our kayaks onto the bank of the river, ate our picnic lunch, and found the vernal pools. We used dip nets to assist our friends with the wood frog and salamander counts. In addition, we collected water-quality data and pool measurements. It was such a treat to be part of this! After monitoring the vernal pools, we paddled downstream to return to our vehicles. The water was so calm that it was hard to tell whether we were even paddling with the current.

Sue was as enthralled as I. As soon as we were in the truck, we both turned to each other and said, “We need to get kayaks!” We have caught the kayaking fever and found a new way to enjoy the great outdoors.

As with hiking trails, WV offers a multitude of paddling adventures. Some great spots are the Blackwater, Cheat and Greenbrier Rivers. If you are a beginner, you can always go with a group. Throughout the year the WV Chapter offers flat paddle outings, which will be listed in the Mountain State Sierran and on our website. Also, there are numerous outfitters throughout the state that offer guided and self-guided tours. Don’t worry if you do not own a kayak. You can always rent one from an outfitter, or perhaps a friend or neighbor might let you borrow one.

If you are interested in having more flat paddle outings, or want to lead one, I encourage you to contact me. 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
November/December issue
October 10

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.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Make a gesture that lasts a lifetime.

A Sierra Club Life Membership is a gesture on behalf of all life - from our oceans to our forests, and from the tiniest insect to the largest sequoia. As a Sierra Club Life Member, you’ll be helping to support programs and campaigns that protect endangered species and preserve threatened wilderness areas (and all the life that they support) - not only for today, but for decades to come.

Make a really grand gesture.
Become a Sierra Club Life Member.

I am pleased to enroll as a Life Member of the Sierra Club.
Please enroll me as an Individual Life Member.
☐ Full payment of $1000 is enclosed.
☐ $350 first annual installment is enclosed.
We are enrolling as Joint Life Members.
☐ Full payment of $1250 is enclosed.
☐ $450 first annual installment is enclosed.

☐ Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX

Cardholder Name
Card Number
Exp. Date

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and our environmental successes. Your dues ($17–$100) for a subscription to Sierra magazine and 5% for your Chapter newsletters.

Receive a check and mail to: Sierra Club.
PO Box 421043, Ocala, FL 32142-0431
or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org

F94QW 5700 1

www.westvirginia.sierraclub.org

July/August 2013
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 wear 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 special 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. The trail leader at 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’s "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, including hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campsite 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 208776-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

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 alleghenyogc.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

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West Virginia Sierra Club Chapter Directory

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Joe Manchin
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Phones: (202) 224-6472 (JR)
(202) 224-3954 (JM)

Fax: (202) 224-7665 (JR)
(202) 228-0002 (JM)

White House Comments Line:
(202) 456-1111 Fax: (202) 456-2461

Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121

To Contact the GOVERNOR

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Dial-the-Governor:
1-888-438-2731
email: governor@wvgov.org

To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

e-mail 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

Inside this Issue

1
Birthplace of Rivers National Monument status would protect southern
Monongahela National Forest

2
Help Needed for Marcellus “3-Ring Binder” Project • Injection Well Siting in
Masontown a Bad Idea • Chapter Website Moves to New Platform, Gets
New Look • Chapter Needs: ExCom Nominations, Committee Chairs

3
Photo Essay from July 13-14 Marcellus Academy

4
View from Chair. Letter to a Young “Cole” Miner • Book Review: In Suspect
Terrain by John McPhee • LTE: Pear Energy, a New Kind of Electric
Company • Beech Ridge Wind Wants “Energy Storing Device”

5
Highlights of Leadership Retreat at Camp Horseshoe — Awards, Workshops

6
Perspectives on Outings: Take to the Water! • Mon Group Events
• Membership Form

7
OUTINGS Autumn 2013 • Outings Liability Policies

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