Legislature Passes Weak Marcellus Shale Bill in Special Session

Donald S Garvin, Jr
Legislative Coordinator, WV Environmental Coalition

After more than three years of false starts, the West Virginia Legislature finally passed a bill regulating the drilling of Marcellus shale gas wells in West Virginia.

The final version of the legislation — HB 401 — virtually assures that streams will be muddied, and private water wells and springs that provide drinking water in rural areas will be contaminated by horizontal drilling operations.

HB 401 was passed on Dec 14, 2011, and signed by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin on Dec 22, 2011, following a four-day “Extraordinary” Session called by the Governor.

The Governor “called” the special session after the Legislature’s Select Committee on Marcellus Shale Drilling reported out a bill at the end of the November Legislative Interim meetings.

The bill considered by the Legislature in the special session was a version of the Select Committee bill that was “tweaked” by the Governor to remove some of the industry’s objections to the bill. The Governor then lobbied leadership in both the House and Senate to accept his version of the bill.

While the final bill approved by the Legislature was weaker in several important ways from the Select Committee bill, it also contains some minimum provisions that will help protect the environment and surface owners from horizontal drilling operations.

So, what’s in the bill finally passed by the Legislature? Here’s a partial summary:

♦ Inspectors — The only sections of the new legislation that apply to the drilling of all oil and gas wells are the sections on DEP oil and gas inspectors. The Oil and Gas Inspector’s Examining Board (which was virtually controlled by the industry) is eliminated, and replaced with a system of civil service employees, similar to how other DEP inspectors are hired.

New inspectors must still have at least two years’ work experience in the oil and gas industry, provided that one year of the experience requirement may be satisfied by a relevant college degree or actual relevant environmental experience. This keeps the fox in charge of the hen house.

Salary levels for oil and gas inspectors are set at not less than $35,000 per year, and not less than $40,000 per year for supervising oil and gas inspectors.

The new permit fees for drilling horizontal wells will enable the Office of Oil and Gas to hire approximately 17 additional employees, including 9 new inspectors, basically doubling the current staff size.

♦ New Article §22-6A: Natural Gas Horizontal Well Control Act — The bill establishes a new code section that applies “to any natural gas well ... drilled using a horizontal drilling method, and which disturbs three acres or more of surface, excluding pipelines, gathering lines and roads, or utilizes more than two hundred ten thousand gallons of water in any thirty day period.”

The bill grandfathered in existing or pending horizontal well drilling permits. It does not apply to horizontal wells that disturb less acreage or use less water. It also does not apply to vertical Marcellus shale gas wells that might disturb three acres or more of surface or utilize more than two hundred ten thousand gallons of water.

♦ Legislative Findings — The “legislative findings” section of the new Act sets the tone for the permissive nature of the new legislation. For example, it states that the DEP Secretary “should have broad authority to condition” drilling permits in order to protect the safety of persons, prevent damage to publicly owned lands or resources, and to otherwise protect the environment. But it also states that the Secretary “should also have broad authority to waive certain minimum requirements” of the bill. The bill provides that the Secretary must submit annually a written report to the Legislature detailing the number of waivers granted. Similar permissive language exists throughout the bill, saying the “the Secretary may”, instead of “the Secretary shall.”

♦ Authority to Regulate and Propose Rules — The bill gives the DEP authority to propose necessary legislative rules to implement the provisions of the bill, and states that the Secretary “has sole and exclusive authority to regulate the permitting, location, spacing, drilling, fracturing, stimulation, well completion activities, operation, any and all other drilling and production processes, plugging and reclamation of oil and gas wells and production operations within the state.” This language is obviously aimed at preventing local authorities from attempting to regulate drilling operations. The bill also requires the Secretary to make a monthly written report to the Governor on how long it takes to issue drilling permits (an obvious industry proviision).

♦ Drilling Permit Applications — Among other things, the bill requires every permit application to include: an erosion and sediment control plan certified by a registered professional engineer; a site construction plan certified by a registered professional engineer; and a well site safety plan (with a copy provided to the emergency planning district in which the well work will occur at least seven days before commencement of well work).

In addition, “if the drilling, fracturing or stimulating of the horizontal well requires the use of water obtained by withdrawals from waters of this state in amounts that exceed two hundred ten thousand gallons during any thirty day period,” the permit application must include a water management plan. The water management plan provisions are basically the same as those spelled out in DEP’s Emergency Rule. The provisions in the bill do NOT require an operator to obtain an actual water withdrawal permit.

♦ Ability to Deny or Condition Permits — The bill says, “the permit may be denied or may be conditioned” if the Secretary determines that: the proposed well work will constitute a hazard to the safety of persons; the plan for soil erosion and sediment control is not adequate; damage would occur to publicly owned lands or resources; or the proposed well work fails to protect fresh water sources or supplies.

♦ Public Notice and Comment Period — The bill provides for public notice and a 30-day public comment period for each horizontal well drilling permit application. The Governor had removed this provision from the bill, but it was restored by a Senate amendment. However, the provision in the Select Committee bill to allow the Secretary of DEP to hold a public hearing on permit applications was removed from the bill. The bill also requires the DEP to develop a public web site containing detailed information on horizontal well drilling permits.

♦ Drilling Permit Fees — The bill sets drilling application permit fees at $10,000 for the initial horizontal well drilled at a location and $5,000 for each additional horizontal well drilled on a single well pad at the same location.

♦ Performance Bonds — The bill establishes a $50,000 individual well bond to accompany the drilling permit. Unfortunately, it still provides for a $250,000 “blanket” bond to cover a producer’s wells, which is totally inadequate to provide for reclamation of all those wells in the event a producer abandons its operations.

Salaries for DEP oil and gas inspectors are set at not less than $35,000 per year, and not less than $40,000 per year for supervising oil and gas inspectors. The new permit fees for drilling horizontal wells will enable the Office of Oil and Gas to hire approximately 17 additional employees, including 9 new inspectors, basically doubling the current staff size.

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Surface Owner Symposium in Bruceton Mills on March 4

Chuck Wyrzykowski
Sierra Club Outreach Organizer

West Virginia Surface Owners’ Rights Organization (SORO), Friends of Deckers Creek, Friends of the Cheat, and Preston CARES (Citizens’ Alliance for Resources and Environmental Safety) are hosting a Marcellus Shale community symposium focused on landowners’ rights. Other topics to be addressed include leasing issues and volunteer water monitoring programs.

The symposium will be held on Sunday, March 4, 3-4:30 PM at the Bruceton United Methodist Church in Bruceton Mills, WV, and is open to the public.

WVU Sierra Student Coalition News

Hannah Spencer

With the beginning of a new semester, we have seen an increase in new faces at recent meetings (held weekly at 7 PM on Tuesdays in the Blackwater Room of the Mountainlair). We are always excited to have new people join in on the fun!

This semester promises to be grand, complete with three major events set up by our members. Two events, an Earth Week Symposium and a Sustainable Fashion Show, will take place around Earth Week. The other event is our annual Sierra Swing held at 123 Pleasant Street and features various local bands. The SSC receives a percentage of the earnings for the night, and I hear it is always a good time. Stop by and visit for a while! Although the date has not yet been confirmed, you may contact me later or check the Daily Athenaeum for an announcement nearer Earth Week. If anyone has ideas or would like to contribute articles of homemade clothing or jewelry, feel free to contact Brianna at bsporter22@gmail.com. I am always open for new ideas.

Bianna Horton will be heading the planning for the Sustainable Fashion Show, which will feature garments and accessories that incorporate recycled materials. We are collaborating with the students in Fashion Design and are hoping this event will be a huge success. The idea behind this event is to spread awareness about various ways to recycle and to point out the abundance of litter around the Morgantown area. The date and location have not yet been determined but, again, you may contact me later or check the Daily Athenaenum for an announcement.

Last but not least, I would like to include some updates from our colleagues at Friends of Deckers Creek. We have been working closely with this nonprofit organization since December and it has been a blast! The SSC first got involved by volunteering during one of their water monitoring days to test conditions of 13 sites along the Deckers Creek watershed for the Clean Creek Project. We plan to continue this volunteer work by helping to monitor chemical parameters, measure water flow, and collect water samples at all 13 sites. Along with water monitoring, Friends of Deckers Creek is also holding an Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup Day on Sunday, March 25, from 1 to 4 PM. If you would like to learn more about the efforts of this organization, contact Pamela Engelmann at pamela@deckerscreek.org. The SSC will attend this event and would love to see other Sierrans there as well.

Let’s allremembe that’s all folks. Remember to e-mail me or check the Daily Athenaeum for the specific dates of the Fashion Show and the Sierra Swing. Spread the word about these events; we would love to see all of your smiling faces!

SSC member Emily Eddy helps with water monitoring during the Friends of Deckers Creek Clean Creek Project work day.
Sierra Club-Chesapeake Controversy

Many of you will have heard about this, but in case you haven’t, here is the short version. For the long version go to Club Executive Director Mike Brune’s discussion at: http://sierraclub.typepad.com/michaelbrune/

In the early 2000s Sierra Club was making great progress with its Beyond Coal campaign, including shutting down many coal-fired power plants. At that time the Club viewed natural gas as a “bridge fuel” between dirty coal-fired plants and the clean energy future we all aspire to. In line with the shibboleth that “any enemy of my enemy is my friend,” which we now know is false, the Club accepted $26 million from Chesapeake Energy for our Beyond Coal campaign. The money was well spent, and we achieved the closure or prevention of over 100 coal-fired power plants.

But as the Marcellus gas tidal wave began to break over Pennsylva-nia and West Virginia, many members became alarmed about the threats and risks posed by this new development. West Virginia Chapter leaders were among the first to raise our concerns. We pushed national over- calling gas a bridge fuel. Result: After listening to members and further study, documenting groundwater pollution and the emerging science highlighting gas’s huge air pollution threat, Sierra Club revised its position and dropped any talk of natural gas as a “bridge fuel.”

About this time the Club changed Executive Directors. Carl Pope resigned, and we were indeed fortunate to sign Mike Brune on as the new Executive Director. Mike discovered the secret arrangements that had been made with Chesapeake and immediately moved to terminate them. In fact, Mike was instrumental in rejecting an additional $30 million that Chesapeake had offered the Club.

That is the background of the story that broke in the media in Febru- ary. Sierra Club was out front to come clean, confirm that we had indeed been made with Chesapeake and immediately moved to terminate them. As Chapter Chair, I am the short version. For the long version go to Club Executive Director Mike Brune’s discussion at: http://sierraclub.typepad.com/michaelbrune/

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The past is history — now it’s time to look to the future.

Environmental Concerns Go Unanswered at WVU

Joseph P. James
WVU Sierra Student Coalition

I am an environmentally con-cerned student at WVU who has recently received an increasing number of questions from my peers concerning the water quality issues that accompany the hydraul- ic fracturing process used to harvest shale gas. As a voice for these students, I took their ques-tions and concerns to the Student Government Association (SGA) this past semester. I asked the SGA to seek a statement from WVU on where the university stands on drill-ing for shale gas on university property and on safety precautions that the university will take to pro-tect Morgantown, and the state, from water contamination.

I was told by the SGA that it is not their place to ask the administra-tion about this “complex” and “layered” issue. I received an email from SGA president, Jason Bailey, stating “he would look into the is-sue and he appreciated my comments.” I was frustrated that my own student government would not take my questions and con-cerns to the administration and that these very serious issues had only milked generic responses.

Water quality is a large issue that has the potential to build up and break down metropolitan populations. WVU, as a public in-stitution, has the obligation to supply the student body, as well as the employees, with clean and ade-quate water on campus. Recently, high levels of bromide were found in the Monongahela, and it is thought to be possibly caused by Marcellus shale drilling. Bromide when mixed with water-treatment additives becomes brominated trihalomethanes, which have been linked to severe birth defects and even cancer. Everyone on campus should be concerned, including student government and the ad-ministration.

This semester, WVU’s Sierra Student Coalition (SSC) will begin its campaign to have people’s questions and concerns an-swered. We plan to do so by working closely with the office of sustainability and hosting speak-ers on campus to bring to light issues that the university typically overlooks. Positive changes begin through education, and this sem-ester the SSC is going to work to bring about those changes.

Chapter / Group ExCom Election Results

In the recent Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) election, 240 ballots were returned from a total of 1820 mailed, about a 13 percent return. Jim Scooners and Jim Kotton received the most votes and have begun serving their two-year terms, while Gary Nelson, Gwen Jones, and Frank Young con-tinue their terms. Jim Scooners was re-elected by the ExCom to continue as Chapter Chair.

Mon Group Results

With 79 ballots returned (16%), three new members were elected to the five-person board of the Monongahela Group Executive Committee. While Rodger Dotson and Gwen Jones continue their two-year terms, Steve Runfola, Nicole Good, and Carol Nix are newly elected. Rodger will serve as Chair, Steve as Vice-chair, and Carol as secretary. Nicole agreed to be the group’s representative to the Chapter Executive Committee.

Shirley Rosenbaum will con-tinue as membership chair for the group; Jim Kotton will be conser-vation chair; Sarah Smith, program chair; and Sally Wilts will serve as treasurer.

Next Chapter ExCom Meeting

Sat, April 28, in Flatwoods, begin-ning at 10 AM.

All members welcome. Con-tact Jim Scooners for details.

Family-friendly outing on Sun, April 29. See Outings for details.

Mon Group News / Outings

Perspectives on Outings
Giving Something Back — Dan Soeder Outing Chair

We have several service outings on the calendar for this spring. We are co-sponsoring a Monongahela River cleanup effort on March 11, and there is an adopt-a-trail cleanup at Coopers Rock State Forest on April 7. These outings are a wonderful opportunity to give something back to the community, the land, the rivers, and the parks.

Often when we do things outdoors, we only think about the recreational aspects. But trail maintenance is one way to hike a non-maintained trail. You need to appreciate the amount of work that goes into keeping it both passable and safe. No matter how well constructed a trail might be, things happen to it out in the woods. Trees fall across the path and have to be removed. Footbridges rot and require rebuilding. Trail markings and blazes fade and have to be re-done periodically. Runoff erodes parts of the trail surface, creating gullies or wet spots. The government agencies that are responsible for the parks and recreation areas don’t usually have the personnel or budgets to deal with all the required trail maintenance themselves. Volunteer help, like the regular Adopt-A-Trail maintenance work that Ann Devine-King leads at Coopers Rock, is invaluable to the agencies. It also shows that Sierra Club members are willing to do more than just talk about the underfunded state parks and national forests. Members who participate on service outings show that they are actually willing to get out there and do something about it. These activities make a real difference.

I’d like to see the service outings program expand. There is much more that can be done. The Maryland Chapter next door has a busy invasive plant removal program, led by Marc Imlay, a retired botany professor. We are planning to contact the park superintendent at Valley Falls State Park, which has some of the worst-marked trails I have ever seen, and offer to re-blaze them. Should we pursue that? Dan Vedock, our Webmaster, has the expertise to rebuild footbridges at Coopers Rock. He commonly takes a saw and pruning shears along on hikes and does impromptu trail maintenance as he goes. The list of what can be done is virtually endless. Anyone with ideas for service outings is encouraged to bring them forward. If it is worth doing and merits the support of the Sierra Club, we’ll get it on the calendar.

On another subject, I got an announcement from the national outings leadership in San Francisco that the Sierra Club is planning some big events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014. We need to start planning something for West Virginia. Most of the designated wilderness is out west, in places like Nevada and Utah. However, West Virginia is home to many state parks with significant tracts of wilderness, like Dolly Sods, Cranberry, and Otter Creek. These areas are worth honoring and celebrating in 2014. If anyone has ideas for events or presentations, please let me know. It is early enough that we might be able to do something official with the state government, or maybe even someone from the U.S. Department of the Interior. See you outside!

Sat, Apr 28
The Mon Group of the Sierra Club will participate in Impact EARTH on April 28. This annual event, held in celebration of Earth Day, is held at the Waterfront Park in Morgantown. The event offers electronics recycling, area trash cleanups, 5K and 10K footraces, and several booths offering information to increase awareness of a multitude of local and global environmental challenges. For more information, contact Sarah Smith at wvussmitty@gmail.com or 304-685-1120.

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 whole day event 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 can 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 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 a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader’s prior consent to participate in the Club 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, permits, fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be required. All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver.

Sat, Mar 24
Gambrill State Park, Frederick Cnty, MD
rated easy to moderate — This is a 5.3 mile, two-hour wooded hike with a couple of good views of the mountains and Valley of Lights. The walk is moderately easy with a few short uphill sections. Participants must register with leader; outing will begin at 10 AM. Phone: 217-815-6554, pampeitz@hotmail.com

Co-Leader: Dan Soeder, 540-805-0019, dansoe@comcast.net

Nearest town: Frederick, MD
Web info: www.dnr.state.md.us/camping (click on parks and choose Gambrill from the drop down menu)

Sat, Apr 7
Adopt-a-Trail Clean-up at Coopers Rock
not rated — The WV Sierra Club will be leading a clean-up on the Intermediate Cross Country Ski Trail at Coopers Rock State Forest. Volunteers seeking community service are encouraged to participate. Much of the work will be cleaning out and re-directing drainage ditches and culverts clogged from the winter’s processes as well as 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. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots, carry work gloves, wear, and snacks. Adults and adolescents are invited and those under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian. Volunteers will be required to sign a standard Sierra Club Liability Waiver and a DNR Volunteer Work Program Agreement. Please pre-register with the leader.

Leader: Ann Devine-King, 304-594-2366, aking@gmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Sat, Apr 14
Coopers Rock Day Hike
rated moderate — Start by taking in the view at the Overlook Area, and then do a loop through the forest of about 4 miles. Bring some sturdy hiking shoes or boots, a camera, and a good nature book. Bring some snack and water. Many people enjoy doing this hike with their four-legged friends, but please keep your pets under control and quiet. There are some terrific vistas of the Allegheny Front that can be seen from this area.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, 4676626640, vedocks23@yahoo.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Deadline for May/June issue April 5
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.
Upcoming Outings — Spring / Summer

Sun, Apr 14
Cacapon State Park  
Located just south of Beverley, WV, this park boasts a 6- to 7-mile, very strenuous loop hike with a 500-foot elevation climb to the top of Cacapon Mountain, the highest peak in the state. Join us for a 30-mile pack-trail of WV. The trail to the top is a very tight series of steep switchbacks, and the activity is intended only for experienced hikers in good physical shape. Contact the leader for details and to register. Meet in the lodge at 10 AM, for this 2.5-hour hike.  
Leader: Pam Peitz, 240-818-6554, pampeitz@comcast.net  
Nearest town: Berkeley Springs, WV  
Web info: www.cacaponresort.com

Sun, Apr 15
Western Maryland Rail-Trail  
**rated moderate to strenuous** — Bring your bike to Big Pocahontas, Maryland, just off I-70 near Hancock to work off the frustrations of Tax Day. Meet at the trailhead of the Western Maryland Rail Trail at 10 AM. This fully paved bicycle trail follows the old Baltimore & Ohio railroad grade along the Potomac River and through the town of Hancock, where the tracks were a favorite target for Confederate artillery across the river. The trail continues west of town with some great views of Hoptown. OH, on May 5 at 10 AM. We will start by taking our bicycles on board the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and ride the train south to the Inside Stanislaus River, with a view of the green $3. The bicycle ride back to Boston will be about 15 miles, with possible stops at the Mussill Store, AWPCS/KB Compost (Waste-Energy Plant), Heron Hill, and an old train station. This is a fine activity. Meet at the rail-trail along the Youghiogheny River at Ohiopyle, PA, a loop through the park, which has a terrific campground for overnight stays. Meet at the old depot (now the visitor center) in the town of Ohiopyle at noon. Contact leader for details.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Ohiopyle, PA  
Web info: www.dcr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.aspx

Sun, May 20
Paddle on Cheat Lake, Morgantown, WV  
**rated easy** — Bring your canoe or kayak down to Cheat Lake for an easy, flatwater paddle in several sheltered coves. The big powerboats usually stay out of these, but they are fine for paddlecott. Launch at noon from the ramp in the small park at the end of Morgan Run Road. Participants must supply own boat, personal flotation devices (lifekackets) are required. Contact the leader for details.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Morgantown, WV  
Web info: www.sfp.org/cuva/index.htm

Sun, May 20
Valley Falls Day Hike  
**rated moderate** — Fox furnace loop hike of about 7.5 miles through the park, with stops at waterfalls along the trail. There are a few steep/rocky sections that can be a bit tricky. Bring snacks and water; there are areas for lunch. Group meeting at noon at least the main waterfalls.  
Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com  
Nearest town: Frostburg, MD  
Web info: www.valleyfallsstatepark.com

Sun, May 27
Ohiopyle State Park, PA  
**rated moderate** — Enjoy an early summer ramble on the rail-trail along the Youghihghen River at Ohiopyle, PA, a loop through the park, which has a terrific campground for overnight stays. Meet at the old depot (now the visitor center) in the town of Ohiopyle at noon. Contact leader for details.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Ohiopyle, PA  
Web info: www.dcr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.aspx

Sat, Jun 10
Paddle on Cheat Lake, Morgantown, WV  
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Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Morgantown, WV  
Web info: www.sfp.org/cuva/index.htm

Sat, Jun 23
Evening Bike Ride Along the Mon River  
**rated moderate** — Join us for a bike ride along the Monongahela River. Length of ride will depend on the desires of the group, but expect a ride of about 10-15 miles. Bring along some water, don't forget your helmet, and make sure your tires are properly inflated. Meet at 6 PM at Ruby McCuin Park.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Morgantown, WV  
Web info: www.sfp.org/cuva/index.htm

Sun, May 20
Potomac River (PRO)  
**rated moderate** — Enjoy a scenic 8-9 mile loop hike atop the tallest mountain in West Virginia. The hik will start at 10 AM on the Lumberland Trail track near the crest of Spruce Knob, then take the Huckleb-  
ry Trail down to Seneca Creek Trail and return. Lumberland and Seneca Creek trails are fairly level and easy trails; the Hickory Trail section has a moderate uphill climb. There are areas for lunch. Hike is okay for beginners. Participants should bring rain gear, lunch and water, and wear sturdy shoes. Personal Floatation Device (lifekacket) is available at Spruce Knob Lodge. Please pre-register with the leader.  
Leader: Brent Carminati, 304-567-2865, bcrental@frontiernet.net

Sun, Sep 2
Endless Wall Trail, New River Gorge  
**rated easy to moderate** — Family and pet friendly activity. Hike along the edge of West Virginia's most spectacular canyon. Meet at the National Park Service Canyon Rim visitor center on Route 19 near Fayetteville, on the north end of the famous bridge pictured on the back of the WV state quarters. Children must be accompanied by an adult responsible adult. Pets must be well behaved and on a leash, (children must also be well behaved, but a leash is optional). Stop off at noon for a 3.5 mile circuit hike. Heavy or steady rain cancels. Please pre-register with the leader.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Fayetteville, WV  
Web info: www.middatlantichikes.com/d191.html

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 the Potomac River Chapter, are often easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at maryland.sierracubl.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 alleghenyvcs.org

Potomac Region Outings (PRO)  
This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Vir-  
ginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Wash-  
gton, 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.sierracubl.org

Sun, Jul 8
Great Allegheny Passage  
**rated moderate to strenuous** — Beat the sum-  
mer heat by bicycling this delightful and challenging  
trail-up the high Allegheny Front from Frostburg, MD, to Meyersdale, PA, and back for a round trip of about 30 miles. The packed-gravel trail is built  
on an old railroad grade, complete with spec-  
tacular views, viaducts and tunnels, including a cool 3300-footer under Big Savage Mountain.  
Mountain bike tires are recommended but not required. Meet in Frostburg at noon in the trail parking area on New Hope Road. Heavy or steady rain cancels. Contact leader for details and directions.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Frostburg, MD  
Web info: www.atrail.org/index.cfm

Sat Jul 14
Cooper's Rock Ride  
**rated easy to moderate** — We’ll do an out-and-  
back hike of about 6 miles along the “Speedway Highway Trail” on the Chestnut Ridge Park side of the forest. Contact leader for information on park-  
ing. Meet at 9 AM.  
Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com  
Nearest town: Morgantown, WV  

Sat, Aug 4
Blueberry Picking: Dolly Sods Wilderness  
**rated easy** — Family and pet friendly activity. This will be a 4-mile hike in Dolly Sods at a very leisurely pace to allow for wild blueberry and huck-  
leberry picking. The meeting place will be just off Freeland Rd in Canaan Valley. We will cerra-  
vans up to the parking area near the wilderness area. The hike begins at the trailhead in the Canaan  
Institute at 9 AM. There is no shade in Dolly Sods or connection from rain, so be prepared for both. Bring sun protection, rain gear, snacks and a con-  
tainer for your berries. Please pre-register with the leader.  
Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Davis, WV  
Web info: www.patsc.us/hiking/destinations/  
dollysods.html

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Leader: Dan Soeder, 304-568-2164, Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org  
Nearest town: Fayetteville, WV  
Web info: www.middatlantichikes.com/d191.html

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 (lifekacket)  
PA State Forest  
SP State Park  
SNP Shenandoah National Park
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March /April 2012

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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
Bidg 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305
website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state legislators

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

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