

M Mountain State Sierran

VOLUME 46, NUMBER 3

FALL 2020

New Legislation Holds Great Promise for America's Parks and Wildlands



BY KAREN YARNELL



New River Gorge: One of West Virginia's public lands that benefits from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. PHOTO BY GARY HARTLEY, COURTESY OF NPS.

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), S. 3422, was signed into law by President Trump on August 4. Containing components of two previously introduced bills, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Restore Our Parks Act, it provides for full funding of the LWCF. The bill overwhelmingly passed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. GAOA's

benefits to our public lands are even greater due to last year's passage of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (S. 47), which gave permanent authorization to LWCF.

It is hard to overstate the importance of full and permanent funding for the LWCF, which is funded primarily with revenues from offshore oil and gas royalty payments. Every

U.S. state and territory have benefited from the fund since it was established, and Sierra Club activists and others have lobbied for full funding for many years. The LWCF provides funding for recreation and conservation projects on local, state, and federal public lands, including hunting and fishing access on wildlife management areas, preservation of historic buildings and battlefields, and buying inholdings, easements, and mineral rights on federal public lands.

Since 1964, West Virginia has received \$241 million for over 500 projects in 54 of 55 counties. \$184 million in "direct federal acquisition" funds benefited the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Gauley River National Recreation Area, Harpers Ferry

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Inside this Issue

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 2 | Chapter Directory | 5 | Kunkel on Economic Revitalization | 10 | Longview |
| 2 | From the Co-Chair | 6 | Rewilding Through Tech | 12 | EPSC Group News |
| 3 | Atlantic Coast Pipeline | 7 | Turtles | 13 | Order 2021 Calendars |
| 4 | Primary Results & New Staff | 8 | Creating a Nature Park | 14 | Outings & Morgantown River Access |
| 5 | Walker on Environmental Justice | 9 | Ann Devine-King Memorial | | |

[SIERRACLUB.ORG/WEST-VIRGINIA](https://sierraclub.org/west-virginia)

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Finding Hope in Today's Struggles

BY ERIC ENGLE



In times like these, it can be difficult to find hope and promise for the future or even for today. We've lost so much. But there are silver linings and reasons to fend off despair and dejection. There are ways we can help each other rise above the darkness.

Case in point—this news from WV Public Broadcasting: “A federal judge has ruled a coal company owned by the family of WV Governor Jim Justice is liable for more than 3000 violations of federal clean water standards stemming from pollution discharged from a coal mine in southern West Virginia.”

This court ruling was the result of a lawsuit brought by our Chapter, the Ohio Valley

Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and Appalachian Voices.

Meanwhile, in Ohio, Larry Householder, now the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, was arrested in connection with a \$61 million bribery scandal involving energy utility First Energy. That was the company's cost for Ohio legislation, which, to quote from Vox, “was widely recognized as the worst energy policy in the country.”

At the Federal level, the Trump administration, in its deregulatory zeal, has lost more than 90% of the court cases rising from its attempts at deregulation. The Sierra Club has often been a plaintiff in those cases. Why?

We will not stand by and watch more than 50 years of environmental lawmaking, rulemaking and regulatory structuring be scrapped in favor of polluters with big campaign donations and lobbying largesse.

Finally, there is presently a great struggle in my home region, the Mid-Ohio River Valley, against barge docking stations proposed by Deeprock Energy Resources LLC for the disposal of barged fracking waste. Numerous organizations, including the Ohio and WV Chapters of Sierra Club and Mid-Ohio Valley

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

West Virginia Sierra Club Chapter Directory

Term ends at first meeting of indicated year

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Eric Engle, Co-Chair ('22)
304-488-4384 • ericengle85@yahoo.com
Aileen Curfman, Co-Chair ('21)
304-433-5321 • acurfman@gmail.com

Kevin Campbell, CCL Delegate, ('21)
304-613-4099 • kevincampbell@gmail.com
Ciera Pennington ('21)
304-807-0713 • ciera@kaleidoscopewv.com

Dan Taylor ('21)
304-521-9865 • danotbob@gmail.com

MONONGAHELA GROUP EXCOMM

Adrienne Epley Brown, Chair & Outings ('21)
adrienne_epley@yahoo.com
Michael Attfield, Vice Chair ('22)
attfield@comcast.net

David Sturm, Chapter Delegate ('21)
304-263-7160 • davidsturm@gmail.com
Betsy Lawson, Secretary ('20)
bjaegerart@gmail.com

Sally Wilts, Treasurer
304-379-7567 • sallywilts@yahoo.com
Kurt Greibel, Political & Conservation ('22)
740-348-6824 • kurtgreibel@yahoo.com

EASTERN PANHANDLE GROUP EXCOMM

Gail Kohlhorst, Chair ('21)
304-283-7222 • Kohlhorst@comcast.net
Regina Hendrix, Political & Conservation ('21)
304-725-0223 • Regina.hendrix@comcast.net
Maggie Loudon, Secretary ('21)
maglouden@gmail.com

Aileen Curfman, Treasurer ('22)
304-433-5321 • acurfman@gmail.com
Gerald Hatcher, Political ('22)
304-240-8614, dgeraldh@frontiernet.net
Chris Craig, Outings ('22)
304-433-1260 • ccraig@laurelodge.com

Roz Eiler, Webmaster ('21)
540-931-5906 • rozeiler@gmail.com

OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

Kathy Gregg, Archives/Chapter History
304-472-4055 • gregg@wwvc.edu
Jim Kotcon, Political & Conservation
304-594-3322 • jkotchon@gmail.com
Laura Yokochi, Membership Engagement
304-695-1523 • lyokochi@aol.com
Chris Craig, Newsletter & Outings
304-433-1260 • ccraig@laurelodge.com

Mel Waggy, Secretary & Public Lands
melwaggy@gmail.com
Abby Minihan, SCC, WVU
304-208-3063 • armo051@mix.wvu.edu
Sally Wilts, Treasurer
304-379-7567 • sallywilts@yahoo.com
Autumn Long, Webmaster
304-841-3539 • autumnlong11@gmail.com

Karen Yarnell, Wilderness Coalition
304-657-0812 • bioverdant@icloud.com
OPEN, Gas Committee

REGIONAL SIERRA CLUB ORGANIZING STAFF

Bill Price, East Reg Snr Organizing Mgr
304-389-8822 • bill.price@sierraclub.org

Karan Ireland, Senior Campaign Representative
304-356-8774 • karan.ireland@sierraclub.org

Keena Mullins, Reg. Organizing Representative
304-840-7375 • keena.mullins@sierraclub.org

Good Bye, Good Riddance to the Atlantic Coast Pipeline

It was not surprising that Duke Energy and Dominion Energy canceled the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) on July 5. Slated to bring fracked gas from West Virginia through Virginia and into North Carolina, the project was never about supplying natural gas to households. The stated purpose of the pipeline, when it was announced in May of 2014, was to wholesale fracked gas to Duke for generating electricity. The other purpose was to make money for Dominion, as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), known for rubber-stamping almost all applications, allows a 14% return on investment. Costs of the project, initially set at \$4 billion, had ballooned to more than \$8 billion—but no worries, it could all be passed on to ratepayers. So Dominion hoped!

The biggest surprise was that the announcement to cancel the ACP was made exactly one month after Dominion had prevailed in the Supreme Court on June 5, 2020. That decision would have allowed them to drill under the Appalachian Trail, a process that would have taken at least a year. The FERC certificate for the ACP was set to expire in October of this year, and Dominion had asked for a 2-year extension, but might not have gotten it. And, there were eight other permits needed.

The ACP was also never about providing permanent well-paying jobs to people in West Virginia, Virginia, or North Carolina. Much of the work completed in West Virginia, before all construction was halted due to loss of permits, was done by crews from out of state. Had the pipeline been completed, there would have been only about 20 permanent full time jobs in West Virginia.

Grassroots opposition to the pipeline was immediate. At first the efforts to stop the pipeline were strongest in the rural mountain counties of Virginia and West Virginia. Many people in the urban areas either didn't know



This demonstration in Harrisonburg, VA, in September 2017 drew pipeline opponents from many affected counties in the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia. PHOTO BY DIANA WOODALL.

about the ACP or believed the Dominion myth that it would bring good paying jobs to the region and provide a “clean transition” away from coal. Governors of all three states promoted the pipeline for those reasons, as well as for contributions to their campaigns. Eventually, people began to understand that methane is leaked during the process of extracting so-called natural gas. Fracked gas isn't “natural” or “clean” at all.

The Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA), a coalition of 51 conservation organizations in Virginia and West Virginia, formed in September 2014. ABRA announced its “Pipeline Airforce” by December that year. In spring 2018 ABRA rolled out its Compliance Surveillance Initiative (CSI). Using drones and planes, as well as high-tech mapping tools, CSI documented and reported on construction violations by Dominion's workers in WV. They also trained citizens in all impacted counties on how to monitor pipeline violations themselves. ABRA will remain active, and readers are encouraged to visit their storyboard at www.arcg.is/05uLLD for a virtual or actual tour of the construction sites in West Virginia.

Organizing efforts in the rural mountain counties had a low-tech aspect as well. Neighbors reached out to other neighbors who did not have reliable internet or cell phone service. Old-fashioned print newspapers such as *The Recorder* of Highland County, Virginia, played an important role.

It would be a mistake to attribute the cancellation of the ACP as simply a win of environmentalists over corporations. Or,



MAP COURTESY OF ABRA.

BY DIANA WOODALL



worse, as NIMBYS (not in my backyard) vs. jobs. The people who fought against it for six long years were of many faiths, political persuasions, races, and backgrounds. If any folks did start with a Not-in-my-Back-Yard attitude, they grew to understand that projects like the ACP do not belong in anyone's backyard.

Pages have been, and will be, written about the many permits for the ACP that were tossed out by the courts. By the time the 4th US Circuit Court in Richmond vacated the air quality permit for the Buckingham, Virginia compressor station, the environmental justice issues related to the ACP had attracted international

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

INTRODUCING OUR STAFF:

Keena Mullins



In early 2020 **Keena Mullins** joined the regional staff of Sierra Club as Regional Organizing Representative. Keena was raised in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, where she fell head over heels in love with mountains.

While attending Berea College in Kentucky, she learned about the devastating impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining and how her community, the mountains, and Central Appalachia had been sacrificed and left vulnerable for profit. Though she'd set out to pursue a career in Biology, and continues to be passionate about science, Keena found her calling in service to others and environmental advocacy.

She has been active in economic transition work throughout the region for almost a decade, and moved to West Virginia to continue that work in 2015. She has served on the board of the West Virginia Environmental Council, worked as a coordinator for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, and was instrumental in growing a West Virginia-based solar start-up fourfold in capacity during her tenure there as Project Manager. In August 2019, Keena co-founded a solar and energy efficiency company to help build an industry of green jobs in the Mountain State. Keena brings a passion for empowering others to her role as Organizer. She lives in Barboursville with her children including Kylie, pictured above.

Primary Election Results

BY JIM KOTCON

By now, you know that the West Virginia Primary election was postponed from May 5 to June 9. Republican incumbent Jim Justice carried 63 % of the Republican vote. In the Governor's race, we endorsed Stephen Smith for the Democratic nomination. Smith carried 33% of the vote, but lost to Ben Salango (38%) by approximately 10,000 votes. Smith won 24 of 55 counties, but Salango got a huge lead from Kanawha and Raleigh counties.

For US Senate, we endorsed Paula Jean Swearengin, who won the Democratic Primary and will face Republican incumbent Shelley Moore Capito in November. Capito has earned a Lifetime score of 17% with the League of Conservation Voters (LCV).

For the 2nd District of the US House of Representatives, we endorsed Cathy Kunkel who was unopposed in the Primary. She will face incumbent Republican Alex Mooney, whose LCV Lifetime score is 2%.

In District 1, incumbent David McKinley was unopposed and will face Democrat Natalie Cline, while in District 3, incumbent Republican Carol Miller will face Democrat Hillary Turner.

The **big news** from the June Primary was the races lost by ten Republican incumbents in the Legislature. Three State Senators, including Senate President Mitch Carmichael, and seven Delegates, including Majority Whip Daryl Cowles, lost to Republican Challengers. That turnover indicates that the 2021 WV Legislature will almost certainly look very different than it did in 2019-20.

While none of these defeated incumbents represent environmental heroes (pro-environment voting scores ranged from 0-29%), and all were defeated by other Republicans, a few takeaways are worth mentioning.

It appears that several of these incumbents (including Carmichael and Cowles) were defeated by Republican teachers or school service workers. One commentator suggested that the teachers unions have figured out that a Democrat could not win in those heavily Republican districts, but finding a

All of Sierra Club's endorsed candidates in the WV House of Delegates won nominations:

10th	TRISH PRITCHARD
16th	SEAN HORNBUCKLE and DAKOTAH NELSON
35th	KAYLA YOUNG and KATHY FERGUSON
49th	MIKE MANYPENNY
51st	DANIELLE WALKER, BARBARA FLEISCHAUER, and EVAN HANSEN
53rd	CORY CHASE
65th	SAMMI BROWN
67th	JOHN DOYLE

Republican teacher was the key to their victories.

Second, the defeat of Senator J.R. Pitsenbarger by Robert Karnes sets up an interesting race in the 11th Senate District. Karnes carries a lot of negative baggage with his opposition to teachers, trouble with residency issues, and other issues. Karnes also had a very anti-environment record as Senator before his defeat by Hamilton in 2018.

Third, the race for the 15th Senate District pitted incumbent Craig Blair against Kenneth Matson and went late into the night before Blair pulled ahead by about 900 votes. There is no Democratic challenger, but the Mountain Party has nominated Donald Kinnie. Blair has consistently been an anti-environment vote (Lifetime score <3%), and the Primary results suggest Blair is vulnerable.

Finally, three legislators appointed by Gov. Justice to fill vacancies all lost. That suggests Justice, in spite of his lop-sided Primary win, does not have much in the way of "coat-tails."

For more details on your legislator's voting record, check out the Sierra Club's Scorecard at www.sierraclub.org/west-virginia/political.

There are few things we can do that have more impact than helping pro-environment candidates win. To get involved, or for more information on these races in November, contact the WV Chapter Political Committee (jkotcon@gmail.com). 🌱

Environmental Justice

BY DELEGATE DANIELLE WALKER

I am Delegate Danielle Walker, serving the 51st District in the WV House of Delegates (Monongalia County). My Kings (sons), my Queen (Mother), and I reside in Morgantown. We are transplants from our home state of Louisiana. I've been in "Almost Heaven" West Virginia for ten years and counting. That means the most common reaction from folks is, "Hurricane Katrina brought your family here."

So let's begin my truth-telling with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These two deadly natural disasters cast a light on environmental injustices for the black community. Those New Orleans levees were a death sentence for too many and a call for help for others. Climate hazards like hurricanes and flooding disproportionately impact black and brown communities. From the rooftops of buildings, people yelled at airplanes and the National Guard, "Help! Don't forget us! Don't leave us here to die!" As a widow at 28 years young, that was when I understood "Black Lives Matter."

I lost my first husband due to heart disease at the brink of those horrible storms. Being an African American widow didn't register in the government's eyes. I was just a single, black mother trying, like others, to beg for any assistance possible in the backwards world of systemic racism. Even today, Black experts in science are overlooked or muted because they are too emotionally attached to living, learning, and striving while being Black.

Black communities exist with a constant understanding that we must be strong. We know you have to figure things out without supportive legislation from elected officials. They may come into our homes, but they will never drink a glass of our tap water or eat fresh vegetables from our gardens because of the messes left in our neighborhoods by the oil and gas industries.



Black Lives Matter. Read that slowly—one word at a time. BLACK. LIVES. MATTER. Yes, the same black lives of those who live in areas segregated by redlining. Yes, the same black lives growing up with unequal educational opportunities. Yes, the same black lives with limited prospects for economic advancement. The black lives of those who live with polluted air and water leading to cancer, asthma, cardiac disease, and hypertension.

Black Appalachians fight in the Eastern Panhandle against Rockwool. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) fight in the southern part of West Virginia for clean water. Charleston residents remember the Water crisis brought about by a chemical leak. Where are the EPA regulations? Where's the responsibility of our elected officials in Washington, DC and in Charleston? When will the loopholes and passes for corporate greed be stopped? When will the knees of corruption, pollution, and discrimination get off the necks of Mountaineers? "All Lives Matter" will not be a true declaration until Black lives are protected. Environmental justice is justice for all.

Delegate Danielle Walker represents the 51st District in the WV House of Delegates. Her candidacy for re-election has been endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Economic Revitalization

BY CATHY KUNKEL,
CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS

Every election season, we hear politicians talk about making West Virginia a place where young people will want to stay. Yet never do we hear those same politicians leading a serious conversation about the economic future of our state.

For its entire existence, West Virginia has been dominated by an extractive economic model—whether timber, coal or natural gas—that has never brought real prosperity to our people. The benefits of our natural resource wealth have largely gone to out-of-state corporate executives and stockholders, leaving us with crumbling infrastructure, a declining population and economic despair. Recent attempts to retain more of our natural resource wealth in the state—including efforts to raise the natural gas severance tax to fund the public employee health insurance plan (PEIA) and a prior effort to establish a permanent mineral trust fund like Alaska's—have been defeated by our own state legislature.

We can only turn this around and build an economy in this state that puts West Virginians first if we are willing to work together towards a different vision as we rebuild from the coronavirus pandemic.

We can move away from the extractive economic model. It will require building up small businesses and actively encouraging and supporting the further development of tourism, agriculture, renewable energy industries, opportunities for tele-work, and more. In many parts of our state this requires significant federal investment—putting people to work in environmental restoration, rebuilding safe drinking water and sewer infrastructure, developing rural broadband, and more—

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Rewilding is a term that means returning to a more natural state. Humans have domesticated themselves away from their wild past by removing themselves from nature. Domestication has taken many forms, including long work hours, overscheduling, and feeling the need to always be busy and productive. We are constantly distracted from being in the present and appreciating the beauty around us. Our fast-paced, consumer driven culture has become a barrier from the natural world. Lost connections to nature have resulted in a lack of concern for its wellbeing. Rewilding ourselves can restore a connection with our planet.



Rewilding through Technology

I've often become frustrated with my children's love of technology. Without my limiting their use, they would play on devices or watch TV for hours on end. They can even get grouchy if I tell them we are going outside.

But sometimes, technology can help us connect. Recently, my son began playing a game called Animal Crossing on Nintendo Switch. It has taught him about animals, and he now has an interest in finding them in nature and learning more about them. This has made me think that I could use my children's beloved technology as a catalyst for rewilding.

The WV Department of Natural Resources has created a digital citizen science project to record sighting of box turtles and lightning bugs. (www.wvdnr.wordpress.com/2020/05/05/). Participating in the lightning bug study, we have learned an incredible amount about these insects by observing their location, flash patterns, and proximity to woodlots or milkweed. It requires long periods of silence, stillness, and mindfulness. Detailed observation has deepened our understanding of the natural world. And we didn't merely learn about lightning bugs. In the silence and darkness, we utilized more of our senses and lived in the present. We observed the moon's cycle and watched bats hunt insects under street lamps. We appreciated the cool night air after a hot day. We smelled night blossoms and cookouts down the street. We heard owls hoot and frogs croak. Being in nature also created a new bond for us.

We are currently taking the class Wild Yards Cooking, offered online by Mountain SOL School, an outdoor education non-profit based in Morgantown. In the class we are assigned plants to forage and are provided with recipes. It's been the highlight of my summer, teaching us survival skills, nutritious dietary supplements, and new connections with the earth.

After my children showed no interest in plant guide books, I tried the app Picture This. It allows us to take a picture of any plant and identify it. My son loves this app and asks me to identify whatever captures his attention. It's helped make foraging immensely enjoyable. My daughter now enjoys creating food, art, and even hairstyles with the items that we have grown or collected. Foraging has become an amazing bonding experience!

Another tech activity, Geocaching, has been the greatest success of all. Geocaching is a fun family adventure in nature. My children are learning important navigational skills using the Geocaching app. They have developed a love of exploration, and they feel rewarded when they find a cache and discover its contents. They feel excited about what they leave for the next person. It's been a fabulous introduction to the concept of reciprocity.

All these nature based activities are enriched through technology. If new technology can create a bond with nature and a love of adventure, then perhaps it can be our ally



Top left: "Wildcraft" hair on the author's daughter, Briar. Above: The author's son, Fox, shown here investigating a box turtle, has become a WVDNR citizen scientist.

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE EPLEY BROWN.

in fighting climate change. At a time when many feel disconnected with nature, we have a better chance to reduce threats to our planet if we love wild things and reconnect to the earth. Here's to high tech if it can help us get there! 🌿



Courtesy of Marshall University. PHOTO BY MARK B. WATSON.

What Can One Person Do? Treat Turtles with Tenderness

“Be careful, Zoe!” called Megan. “I am,” replied Zoe, running through the strip of woods behind their house. Megan sighed, wondering whether she would soon be treating an insect bite or a cut toe, and went back to her work-from-home routine.

Soon Zoe was by her side. “Mom! Look what I found!”

Megan followed her daughter to a fallen log. There, almost hidden in some old leaves, was a box turtle. Gold spots on his brown shell created the perfect disguise.

“Can I keep him?” begged Zoe.

“We can’t bring him in the house,” Megan explained. “He has everything he needs right here. He can find plenty of mushrooms and earthworms to eat. We couldn’t give him a good home. He might get sick.”

Pouting, Zoe asked, “Can I at least pick him up?”

“Yes, but be gentle. Put one hand on each side of his shell, between his front and back legs. Put your thumbs on top, and your fingers on the bottom. Move very slowly, especially if you turn him over. Turn him head over tail. If you turn him side to side, you could hurt his intestines.”

“Wow, Mom, look how flat his belly shell is!”

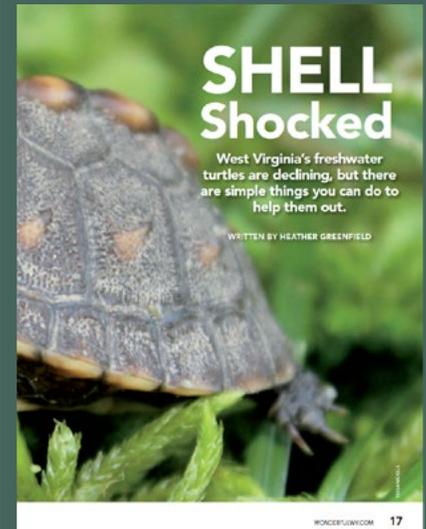
“Yes, his plastron is really flat. That means this is a girl turtle. That’s good news—she’ll lay eggs in the spring. We might see baby turtles next year! Better put her down now. She’s had a big enough adventure. And you’d better go wash your hands. She crawls around in some really funky dirt.”

As Zoe lathered her hands, she asked, “What’s the name of her belly shell, again?”

“Plastron,” replied Megan. “Let’s get online and see if we can find the words “carapace” and “scutes.”

Zoe scrolled through her iPad. “Mom, look at this page! The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources wants everybody to tell them whenever they find a box turtle. Let’s find out how.”

Box turtles are one of the most common West Virginia turtles, but their numbers are declining. Turtles are long lived, but many of their eggs are eaten by raccoons, dogs, and cats. Although many of us kept turtles when we were children, wild turtles should never be captured and kept as pets. A wild turtle should never be moved to a new location, as they may carry diseases to resident turtles



LEARN MORE ABOUT TURTLES!

- MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
<https://www.marshall.edu/herp/pages/turtles.htm>
- WONDERFUL WV
<https://www.wonderfulwv.com/sitecollectiondocuments/jun2019/shell%20shocked.pdf>
(featured above)
- MID-ATLANTIC TURTLE & TORTOISE SOCIETY
<https://www.matts-turtles.org>
- WILDLIFE CENTER
<https://www.wildlifecenter.org/tips-helping-turtles>
- WV DNR
<https://wvdnr.wordpress.com/2020/04/15>

BY AILEEN CURFMAN



in the new locality.

Caring for them is simple. Avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides in your yard. Provide a brushy protected place for them. Limit handling, using the technique that Zoe learned in this story. And yes, do help them across the road.

Aileen Curfman lives in Shepherdstown. She loves all wild creatures, especially ones that move slowly enough for her to get a good look at them.

Want to create your own community nature park?

SOME LESSONS LEARNED IN BUCKHANNON

In the summer edition of Mountain State Sierran, Kathy Gregg shared her experience in developing the popular River Walk and Nature Park in Buckhannon. Here, she offers suggestions for those interested in launching a similar project in their communities. If you want more information, she is open for discussion at gregg@wwc.edu.

A community nature park is a big project, especially for small cities and towns dependent on volunteers for the bulk of the work. But the first thing to remember is that all the **hard work is worth it** in the reward of seeing folks enjoy and appreciate nature. It was such fun to show a little boy and his mom where a beaver had gnawed some branches off one of our large shrubs and then tell him that the beaver's lodge was right under his feet!

We obtained the initial funds for our nature park with a grant from the WV Department of Transportation. However, writing a grant is only the beginning of a long-term project that will take longer than you expect. Be sure to **plan for long-term maintenance and enhancement** of the park.

We mapped the park by making rough sketches and thus temporarily lost a number of plants that were “eaten up” by competing vegetation. **Use GPS and accurately-scaled maps** to better allow for plant care and future planning.

Active groups of people are crucial! You'll need a small group of dedicated folks to help with decision-making and planning. For us, that's an informal Board that includes the city horticulturist, ex officio. You'll also need a large group of volunteers to help with continuous maintenance, especially removal of exotic, invasive species so that your native species can thrive. We've been lucky to have college students, Americorps volunteers, Boy Scouts, neighbors, and others. Buckhannon's online Volunteer Center is a great help because volunteers can learn about us there and sign up for community opportunities.

Having a formal association with a municipal or other organization that can **guarantee some financial assistance and regular labor for heavy jobs**, like removal of fallen

trees and large limbs, is extremely beneficial. For instance, Buckhannon's city crew regularly mows our paths, which keeps the park looking neat and professional.

Marketing with a logo and brochures helps get the word out in an inexpensive and colorful manner.

Be aware that of the dangers of vandalism and illegal use of your park. Install video cameras and have the area patrolled regularly. Signage, especially, should be as vandal-proof as possible. After suffering almost all our aluminum and wood signs being destroyed, we changed to all-metal signs. Installed in 2014, vinyl sheets glued to metal structures that are cemented into the ground have seen no further vandalism!

Obtain some movable plant markers so that you can identify plants that come up in different places in different years.

Always think about safety! Keep dead limbs trimmed and paths clear. Add non-slip strips to wooden bridges and other slippery surfaces. Identify poison ivy!

Think ahead and **plan for enhancements**. Our wish list includes a few more signs, benches, special events, and a large kiosk that will present park history and have space for brochures and children's scavenger games. One of our Board members made and installed a couple of blue bird houses this spring, and one resident bluebird now keeps us happy!



Kathy Gregg among yellow ironweeds: Definitely a hands-on volunteer at Buckhannon Nature Park.

PHOTO BY RACHAL MERCADO.



One of the two bluebird houses that are the newest addition at Buckhannon's Nature Park; movable markers help identify plants, wherever they pop up from year to year; signs at Buckhannon's Nature Park offer plant names, images, descriptions and uses; the all-metal signs with concrete bases have so far (Knock on Metal!) proven resistant to vandalism at the Buckhannon Nature Park.

ALL PHOTOS BY KATHY GREGG.

Memorial to Ann Devine-King constructed at Coopers Rock State Forest

BY ADAM POLINSKI, COOPERS ROCK FOUNDATION



A new user-friendly pavilion graces Coopers Rock State Forest and honors the memory of Ann Devine-King. PHOTO BY ADAM POLINSKI. In 2015 the WV Chapter honored Ann Devine-King of Morgantown for her exceptional work as an outings leader for eight years and her leadership of the Adopt-a-Trail project in Coopers Rock State Forest.

Ann Devine-King loved the outdoors and sharing that love with others. She was the WV Chapter Outings Chair at the time of her death in September, 2017. She also led many volunteers at trail maintenance three times each year, for seven years, on the Intermediate Ski Loop Trail that we adopted at Coopers Rock State Forest. The November/December 2017 *Mountain State Sierran* and our chapter website contain remembrances of Ann.

At the time of her tragic death, her family requested memorial donations be sent to the Chapter. We received \$4,031, and the memorial committee decided to donate the funds to the Coopers Rock Foundation for a suitable, significant memorial. After combining these funds with \$12,000 from the Foundation, a pavilion was built—a rustic, hardwood, 10'x10' timber-framed structure. It is at the Day Use parking lot, a very busy trailhead site just off I-68, so it will have plenty of visibility and use. It is modeled on a larger pavilion at nearby Trout Pond that recent research shows was likely built by the WV Department of Natural Resources in the 1950s. The new pavilion currently contains a picnic table that will soon be replaced with a wheelchair-accessible picnic table. That will result in a cluster of accessible features, including a sidewalk and restroom. A plaque honoring Ann will be mounted on the pavilion later this year.

The pavilion will be free for anyone to use during daylight hours. It is expected that people will meet there for hikes, skiing, and trailwork, all activities that Ann enjoyed. It will also be used for lunch, a break in the shade, map reading, and many other purposes. Please visit it and think of Ann the next time you are at Coopers Rock. 🌿



REVITALIZATION | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

in order to make it viable for our state to attract and retain skilled young people.

The global climate crisis adds another layer of urgency to the challenge of economic transition. The impacts of a changing climate in West Virginia are becoming too real to ignore, with deadly flooding, extreme summer heat, and losses to our small farmers. And we know this problem is only getting worse. Scientists tell us we need to cut climate pollution 45% in the next decade. This problem has gotten so bad because, for decades, fossil fuel executives funded misinformation and bought off politicians to keep raking in profits. It is past time to treat climate change like the emergency it is.

Here in West Virginia, our political elite—bought and paid for by the fossil fuel industry—have tried to tell us that we cannot address this crisis without making our terrible economy even worse. They try to tell us that it is impossible to plan for the future.

But we can rise to this challenge. We can bring in new investment and build on our existing strengths to rebuild a stronger state that is less dependent on the booms and busts of the fossil fuel economy.

The rest of the country owes a debt to Appalachia for the coal and natural gas that have powered our country for so long. We need to demand that no West Virginia worker is left behind as our country transitions to a clean energy economy. We have the resources in the richest country in the world to ensure that no one loses a day's pay, or a dime of their pension. We can put people to work rebuilding our drinking water infrastructure, reclaiming old mine sites and growing other sectors of our economy, including tourism and agriculture that depend on clean water and clean air.

If we want to create a West Virginia—and a world—where young people have a viable future, we can do no less.

Cathy Kunkel is a candidate for West Virginia's 2nd District in the US House of Representatives. Her campaign is endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Longview Emerges from Bankruptcy, Plans for New Plant Unclear

BY JIM KOTCON

Longview Power in Monongalia County constructed a 700-MW coal-fired power plant that began operation in 2011, now designated Longview I. They announced plans for a 1200-MW gas-fired power plant in 2019 (Longview II), and received a Certificate of Site Approval from the WV Public Service Commission in April 2020. But less than two weeks later, Longview I filed for bankruptcy, citing low electricity demand.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved a reorganization plan for Longview in July, in which new investors take over the assets, while previous investors retain 10% of the existing plant's equity. Details of the plan are still sketchy, and little is known about the new owners.

Longview II is still requesting a new Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Monongalia County. This agreement would waive millions of dollars in taxes owed to

the State and County. Little information on the proposed PILOT has so far been revealed, and it is not clear what opportunities will be available for public comment. The Monongahela Group of Sierra Club seeks limits on greenhouse gases and careful economic analyses of the actual need for another power plant. We are also concerned about the environmental justice implications of yet another fossil fuel plant in the area.

Meanwhile, Longview has applied for a "greenhouse gas" permit under the Trump Administration's Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule. The ACE rule is the Trump EPA replacement for the Obama EPA's Clean Power Plan. Unfortunately, the ACE rule does

very little to limit greenhouse gas emissions, and we expect that the Longview permit may set a weak precedent for implementing greenhouse gas restrictions in West Virginia.

To get involved, contact Jim Kotcon (jkotcon@gmail.com) or Betsy Lawson (bjaegerart@gmail.com).

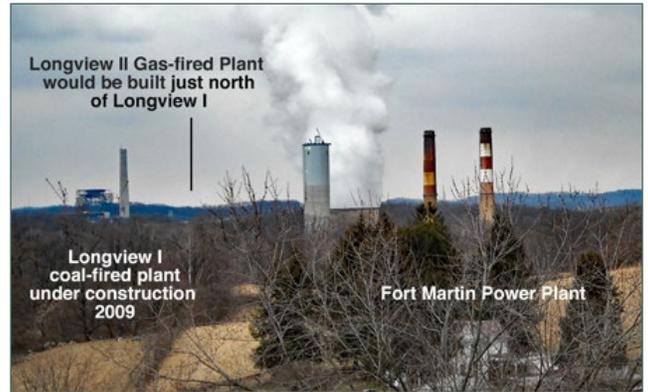


PHOTO BY BETSY LAWSON..

PIPELINE | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

attention. Dominion had chosen the predominately African American rural community of Union Hill to site its compressor station when another option further from population was available. Dominion had also run into resistance in North Carolina for choosing a pipeline route through land belonging to the Lumbee Tribe.

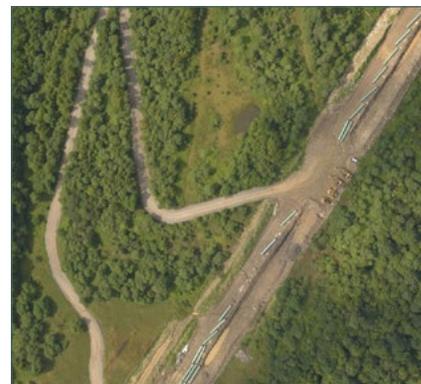
The Virginia permit might not have been approved in the first place. The Department

of Environmental Quality's Air Quality Board is comprised of five citizens appointed by Virginia's governor. When Governor Northam learned that two of the five were likely going to vote against the permit, he fired them. The Southern Environmental Law Center filed a challenge to the permit immediately and prevailed in court a year later, January of this year.

There is nothing like winning to inspire us

to continue fighting other pipelines, most notably the Mountain Valley Pipeline, or MVP. To get involved, contact the coalition Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights at powhr.org.

Diana Woodall is a member of the Sierra Club and Eastern Panhandle Green Coalition. She is an activist, writer, and yoga teacher who lived in Rockingham County VA for 15 years and is in the process of relocating back to Virginia.



From left: The failure of Dominion to control erosion at its West Virginia construction sites is evident in this photo; right of Way at Point Mountain near Elk Springs, WV; pipeline construction site on a West Virginia Right of Way. PHOTOS BY BEN CUNNINGHAM (ABRA).



Harpers Ferry National Park: Murphy-Chambers Farm. PHOTO BY NPS/AUTUMN COOK; *Maryland Heights and the Potomac River as seen from a vista on Loudoun Heights.* PHOTO BY NPS/DEVIN TAGGART.

GAOA | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

National Historical Park, Monongahela National Forest, New River Gorge National River, Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area. LWCF has protected 57,000 acres in the Gauley River and New River Gorge Recreation Area that include all public access points along the Lower and Middle Gauley River and over 2,000 named rock climbing routes, as well as what remains of 19th and 20th century mining towns in the New River Gorge.

“State and local assistance” grants provide funds for local community parks and other public outdoor recreation facilities, like swimming pools, bike trails, golf courses, tennis courts, marinas, and campgrounds. Together, twenty-six WV State Parks have received \$8 million for campgrounds, lodges, and recreation facilities.

Yet, lack of full funding for LWCF has meant a shortfall in public land budgets, especially in recent years. Since the LWCF was created in 1964, the same year as the Wilderness Act, only \$19 billion have been appropriated, with \$22 billion additional revenues being siphoned for non-conservation purposes. In fiscal year 2020, only \$495 million was appropriated to the LWCF, not nearly full funding, but the highest amount in 15 years. The program was fully funded at \$900 million only twice in its history. GAOA will now provide full funding every year.

GAOA also establishes the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund, which is funded through half of existing unobligated revenues the government receives from on and offshore energy development, up to \$1.9 billion per year for the next five years for a total of up to \$9.5 billion. This should help with a \$20 billion maintenance backlog on

our public lands; the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Education will all benefit. The Act provides funding to repair infrastructure like roads, trails, recreation sites, bridges, buildings, and water systems.

According to WV Senator Joe Manchin (D), funding-deferred maintenance projects will create more than 110,000 infrastructure-related jobs. With the full funding of \$900 million, the Land and Water Conservation Fund could support an additional 15,000 to 28,000 jobs each year.

Support for GAOA from West Virginia legislators is a mixed picture. Manchin, along with Sen. Cory Garder (R-CO) were the original sponsors in the Senate. Manchin’s leadership, as ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, was also crucial in passage of the Dingell Bill (S. 46) and its permanent authorization of LWCF. Sen. Shelly Moore Capito cosponsored both GAOA and the Dingell Bill.

In the House of Representatives, all three WV Congressmen cosponsored GAOA, but only Rep. Carol Miller voted aye. Apparently, Rep. McKinley thought he was voting aye, but mistakenly voted no, according to his legislative aide. We have no information on why Rep. Mooney voted no. Trump tweeted on March 3 that he supported the bill, to help Cory Gardner and Steve Daines (R-MT) in their Senate reelection bids. Previously, Trump had proposed slashing the LWCF by nearly 97%.

Karen Yarnell is the Wilderness Chair for the WV Chapter of Sierra Club and co-chairs the Sierra Club Grassroots Network Wildlands and Wilderness Team.



Canaan Valley, West Virginia. PHOTO BY JEN ROLSTON.

HOPE | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Climate Action (of which I am Chair), are fighting tooth and nail the issuance of permits to build these stations. The Ohio River is a drinking water source for approximately five million people and is already one of the most polluted and contaminated waterways in the nation. We will not let this stand without a fight!

Why do I feel hopeful from all this? Because it shows that people in Appalachia want accountability. During the worst pandemic in 100 years, we will not watch our beautiful region suffer as an extraction colony and sacrifice zone. Not only will we fight the fossil fuel-based status quo, but we will work toward alternative visions like the Reimagine Appalachia initiative (reimagineappalachia.org) and the National Economic Transition Platform (nationaleconomictransition.org).

Together, we can overcome. Together, we can change the course of history and help make a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. We can build a safe and clean environment, stabilize the climate, protect public health, and create an economy based on having enough for everyone instead of an obscene amount for a few. This effort starts in our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) communities, which have suffered the most. It continues in our LGBTQ+ communities, which still face marginalization and oppression. And the work never really ends. The WV Chapter of Sierra Club has fought this fight and stands ready for more. Won’t you join us and become involved? 🍀

Eastern Panhandle Sierra Club (EPSC) Works On in the age of COVID

BY GAIL KOHLHORST

Time ZOOMS by, and we are getting used to our new standard form of communication. Although all our planned summer events and hikes had to be cancelled due to COVID-related restrictions, the monthly ExComm meetings continue to be held online. Hot environmental issues keep us on our toes: we have submitted comments, attended virtual government meetings and hearings, and worked with partner organizations, including the Eastern Panhandle Green Coalition, Jefferson County Vision, Jefferson County Foundation, Eastern Panhandle Protectors, and the WV Environmental Coalition.

In July, EPSC signed on to a letter to the US Environmental Protection Agency concerning the WV State Department of Environmental Protection's general stormwater permits (see below). Additionally, EPSC is working with others to fight the State's use of PILOT agreements (Payment



in Lieu of Taxes), which allow industries to avoid taxes. We are also monitoring a new ordinance proposed by the Jefferson County Planning Commission that affects the permitting process of solar farms.

In our ongoing battle against the Rockwool manufacturing plant under construction in Ranson, EPSC has combined efforts with the Jefferson County Foundation to insist on a new air permit that reflects their proposed change in fuel from coal to fracked gas. Although this may be a positive change, we believe a new permit is needed to outline what new emissions will result from the change.

We have two fall events planned. We have already altered plans for our September Political Forum to an online event, but we hope that by November we will be back at our regular venue for our program on the Coal Wars. 🍃

Another EPSC ExComm meeting in the age of COVID. The group continues its environmental work in the Panhandle in spite of restrictions and dangers. PHOTO BY GAIL KOHLHORST.

A Call to Regulate the Regulators

The WV Chapter of Sierra Club has joined with the Jefferson County Foundation and a coalition of advocates asking the EPA to investigate actions of the WV Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) for its failure to enforce the Clean Water Act. The letter points out that WVDEP has allowed industries to operate under expired permits dating back to 2012 that lack more protective provisions that would be required by 2019 permit standards.

Even after the EPA directed the agency not to allow any entity to continue operating under the 2012 permit's conditions, the state agency withdrew a 2019 draft revised permit from consideration and issued 697 enforcement orders that allowed entities to continue working under the 2012 General Permit.

The Foundation letter points out that lack of regulation and oversight threatens the watersheds of the Ohio River and Chesapeake Bay and may lead to groundwater contamination and reduced populations of endangered species. For more information or to read the letter, go to <https://www.jeffersoncountyfoundation.org/is-the-epa-turning-a-blind-eye-to-wvdep/>.

Tuesday, September 22 Eastern Panhandle Environmental Online Political Forum 6:30pm - 8pm

Join us as US Senate Candidate Paula Jean Swearengin, Congressional Candidate Cathy Kunkel, and State Legislative candidates Sammi Brown, John Doyle, and possibly others share their thoughts on the environment and economic transformation for the Mountain State and the nation.

(Check prior to the date at sierraclub.org/west-virginia or easternpanhandlewvsierraclub.org to learn how to join online and submit questions.)

Tuesday, November 17 6:30pm - 8pm EPSC Presents Doug Estopp on Mine Wars in the Mountain State

Doug Estopp operates Coal Country Tours and is a nationally recognized expert on the coal wars of the early 20th century. Join us as he speaks on the Battles of Matewan and Blair Mountain, and the labor strife that shook the nation.

St. John's Lutheran Church Annex
101 W. Martin St., Martinsburg

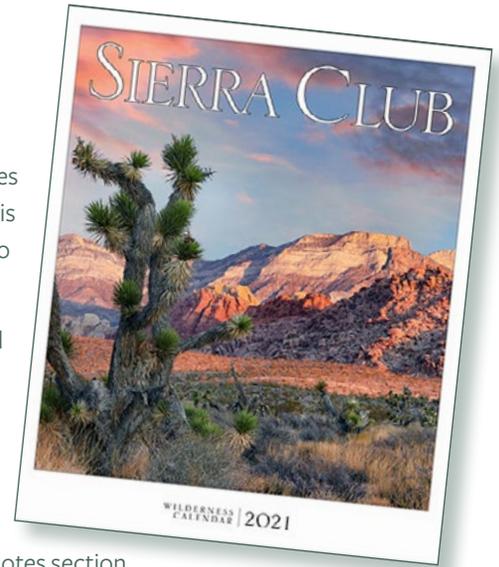
(Note that this program is subject to cancellation or alteration due to Club or State restrictions. Check at sierraclub.org/west-virginia or easternpanhandlewvsierraclub.org for information prior to attending.)

Pre-order your 2021 Sierra Club calendars now

BY CANDICE ELLIOTT

Ordering Sierra Club calendars from the WV Chapter beautifies your wall or desk and contributes to our work in West Virginia. To get a better idea of how many Club calendars I should order this year, I am asking members and friends to contact me before September 20 if you would like to purchase them from the chapter.

As usual, two styles will be available: the monthly Wilderness calendar to hang on your wall (retails for \$14.95; our price \$13) or the weekly Engagement calendar for your desk or bag (retails for \$15.95; our price \$14). If you live within 25 miles of Morgantown, or have occasion to pass through, you need not pay for shipping, as I will arrange to deliver your calendars myself. Otherwise, I ask that you include \$7 with your payment to help defray the cost of mailing them. Payment may be made either by sending me a check (made out to: WV Sierra Club) or by using the Donate button (via PayPal) on our Chapter webpage and entering "Calendars" in the Notes section.



You need not pay at this time, but I would like to know how many of each style you are likely to purchase so I can be sure to order the correct quantities. Please send me your expected order along with your address and phone number, either via email (celliot2@comcast.net) or postal mail (414 Tyrone Avery Rd, Morgantown WV 26508). I will arrange for delivery in October and November when I have calendars in hand.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are needed for members to run for 2020 election to the executive committees of the WV Chapter (4 positions), its Mon Group (2 positions), and its Eastern Panhandle Group (4 positions). Members of these entities in good standing may nominate themselves or other members. To do so, or for more information, contact the following nomination committee members:

WV Chapter

Jim Kotcon (jkotcon@gmail.com)

Mon Group

Betsy Lawson (bjaegerart@gmail.com)

Eastern Panhandle Group

Ed Wheelless (ewheelless@laurellodge.com)



With your help we can clean up our water

Sierra Club Water Sentinels are the first line of defense of America's waters. We live on the water planet. However, water is a finite resource with only about 1% of the world's water actually being available for human consumption. Water pollution & over-use are threatening both the quality & quantity of our water resources at an alarming rate.

Keep our water safe. Join Sierra Club.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club

Please charge my: Visa Mastercard AMEX

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____ / ____

Signature _____

Membership Categories	Individual	Joint	
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 15	N/A	Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 49	
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100	
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 175	
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1250	
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35	
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35	
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35	

Contributions, gifts & dues to Sierra Club are tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$ 7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and \$ 1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.



F94Q W5700 1



Enclose a check and mail to:
 Sierra Club, PO Box 421041
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041
 or visit our website: www.sierraclub.org

Chapter ExComm Meeting

The next meeting of the WV Chapter of Sierra Club Executive Committee will be held online at **10 am, Saturday, October 10.**

Contact Co-chair Aileen Curfman at acurfman@gmail.com for an invitation and the link.

Outings



At time of publication, all Sierra Club outings and other in-person events had been **cancelled** due to the COVID-19 pandemic through **August 31**. These fall outings are subject to alteration, postponement or cancellation, based upon Club or local advisories and restrictions.

Please contact the trip leader closer to time to check on status.

Saturday, September 19, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Murphy Farm, Trail to Lower Town, Harpers Ferry NHP**

The Murphy Farm is a branch of Harpers Ferry NHP where many stories intersect: Civil War invasion, Union fortifications, John Brown. Plus, it boasts one of the prettiest Shenandoah views anywhere. Our walk will take us from the Park visitor center, around the farm meadow, followed by a hike to Lower Town Harpers Ferry through Virginius Island, once home to mills and factories powered by water. Hikers may return to the visitor center via the Park shuttle or walk back on their own. Those wanting a short, easy hike may join us for only the Murphy Farm section. The walk will be along a gravel road, earthen trails, and grassy meadow. Terrain is flat to rolling hills. The hike is open to any adult or child accompanied by adult prepared for such walking. There is no charge for this hike, but Park admission or permit is required.

- Distance/ Difficulty:** 3.5 miles (with a shorter 1.5mi option) / MODERATELY EASY
- Duration:** 2.5 hours (Total hike. Shorter option approx. 1 hr)
- Bring:** water, snack.

Meet: 10 am, in front of Visitor Center, Harpers Ferry, NHP, 171 Shoreline Dr., Harpers Ferry (Just off US340, opposite the towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar).

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurelodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest towns: Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, WV

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour.

Additional information: Park admission or permit is required.

Saturday, October 3, 2020

DAY HIKE & PRESENTATION: **Tom's Run Preserve**

Tom's Run Preserve is a 318-acre conservation trust owned and managed by the West Virginia Land Trust. It is just a few miles south of Morgantown and has a small network of recently constructed trails through hilly woodlands. We will hike the easy Elizabeth's loop and the moderate Hollenhorst loop, crossing several streams on bridges or stepping stones. We will also have a brief presentation from Land Trust staff on the preserve and the climate change research underway there in partnership with WVU.

- Distance/ Difficulty:** .7 mile/EASY, followed by .5 mile/MODERATE. You may do either or both.
- Duration:** 2 hours
- Bring:** a snack, water, sunscreen, and shoes for the varied terrain.

Meet: 10:30 am. Tom's Run Preserve parking lot, Little Falls Road. From I-79 south of Morgantown, take the Goshen Road exit, turning right on Goshen Road, left on Smithtown Road, and immediately right on Little Falls Road. Continue .4 mile and turn right on the new gravel road. You will see a Tom's Run sign on your right at the parking lot entrance.

Leader: Adrienne Epley Brown,
adrienne_epley@yahoo.com
702-465-9119

Nearest town: Morgantown

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour

Additional information: There are no restrooms at the preserve. To learn more about Tom's Run Preserve, go to www.wvlandtrust.org/rec-access/toms-run/.

Sunday, October 4, 2020

DAY HIKE: **C & O Towpath – McMahon's Mill**

Come out for a leisurely hike along the C&O Towpath beginning at the historic McMahon's Mill. From the mill we will hike upriver along the Towpath for an hour and then turn back. Along the way you will see some rocky cliffs, scenic views of the Potomac River, and the result of the \$19 million dollar restoration project of the Big Slackwater section of the towpath completed in 2012. (Find out more at nps.gov/choh/learn/news/big-slackwater.htm and canaltrust.org/pyv/mcmahons-mill).

- Distance/ Difficulty:** 4.0 miles/ Easy
- Duration:** 2 hours
- Bring:** plenty of water and a snack. Wear comfortable walking shoes and dress for the weather.

Meet: 1:30 pm. McMahon's Mill parking lot is located at the end of Avis Mill Rd. Parking is limited. From I-81 in Maryland, take exit 1 and follow MD63 South for 3 miles. Turn right on Dam Number 4 Rd, then right on Dellinger Rd. and left on Avis Mill Rd.

Group Size: Limited to 20 people. Carpooling is recommended.

Leader: Janet Hayes
JHayes215@gmail.com

Nearest town: Downsville, MD

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour.

Additional information: Attendance will be limited to 20; please reserve via email or at Meetup.com/sierra-club-eastern-panhandle.



The Byron Bridge pedestrian pathway, the link for hikers and bicyclists between Harpers Ferry and the State of Maryland, has been rebuilt after being destroyed by a December 2019 train derailment (see related article in our Summer 2020 issue). It reopened just in time for the 4th of July; and, in spite of Harpers Ferry NHP still being closed, the bridge has been busy with day hikers, C&O Canal bike tourists, and a few Appalachian Trail thruhikers who have carried on even with COVID-related restrictions along the trail. PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG.

Top Left: After a long hiatus forced on our outings by the pandemic and safety considerations, Sierrans look forward to renewed adventures this fall. Shown here at Devil's Nose, Tuscarora Trail, October 2018. PHOTO BY CHRIS CRAIG.

Saturday, October 31, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Appalachian Trail: Keys Gap (WV/VA) to Buzzard Rock**

What better place to celebrate your Halloween than Buzzard Rock? Our exploration of the Appalachian Trail in the Mid-Atlantic continues with this hike along the VA/WV border. We will hike out and back from Keys Gap, where Route 9 crosses the Blue Ridge to the scenic outcrop at Buzzard Rock. The hike is along the ridge, avoiding major climbs or descents. The hike is open to any adult or child (accompanied by an adult) fit for the distance and substantial elevation changes. NPS regulation restricts our group size to 25, and parking is limited at Keys Gap. Please reserve your space. The hike is free, though donations are welcome.

Distance/ Difficulty: 7.2 miles/ MODERATE

Duration: 3.5 hours

Bring: plenty of water and a sack lunch. Hiking poles or sticks may be helpful.

Meet: 9 am. Keys Gap parking area on the AT, at State line on Route 9. (Recommended approach is from the Virginia side (east). Parking is limited; park close to your neighbor.)

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurelodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest town: Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, WV, and Hillsboro, VA

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain but cancel in a downpour.



PHOTO BY DAN FREEMAN / UNSPLASH

Saturday, November 14, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Big Schloss, Great North Mountain, VA/WV**

This autumn hike will take us through one of the loveliest areas of George Washington National Forest. We'll walk along a clear, bubbling trout stream, climb to a rocky ridge full of laurel and scrub oak, and through mature forest with dense undergrowth. One highlight will be the rocky ledge of Big Schloss, named by early German settlers for its castle-like appearance. Our loop will include some level walks, but also 2300 feet of elevation gain and areas of mountain switchbacks. The hike is open to those able to maintain a moderate pace on mountain terrain for a long day's hike. There is no charge for the hike, though contributions are welcome.

Distance/ Difficulty: 12.7 miles/ DIFFICULT

Duration: 7 hours

Bring: plenty of water, a bagged lunch, and ample snacks. Layered clothing is advised for diverse temperatures.

Meet: 9 am. NFS parking lot on FDR 92 next to Little Stony Creek crossing. From I-81 go west on VA 42 (Exit 283) 5.4 m., turn right on SR 768/623 for .3 m., then another right on SR 675. Follow SR 675, cross creek and bear left, still on SR 675 (Wolf Gap Rd.). Bear right at junction with SR 717 to remain on 675, and in 2 m. turn right onto unmarked FDR 92 (Johnstown Rd.). Continue on FDR 92 for 4 m. to parking area on right after crossing Mill Creek and just before Little Stony Creek. Or from Wardensville, take Trout Run Rd. 13.3 m. and continue onto VA Rt. 675 (Wolf Gap Rd.) 1.4 m. Turn left onto FDR 92 (Johnstown Rd.) for 4 m. to parking lot.

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurelodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest towns: Woodstock, VA and Wardensville, WV

Cancellation policy: We will cancel if weather predictions indicate likely serious precipitation.

Sunday, December 6, 2020

DAY HIKE: **Olde Tyme Christmas Hike on Camp Hill & Virginus Island, Harpers Ferry NHP**

Enjoy hiking in Park and in Town during Harpers Ferry's 50th annual Olde Tyme Christmas celebration. We will meet at the Park Visitor Center and ride the Park shuttle to the lower town. From there we will walk along the Shenandoah on Virginus Island before climbing a little piece of the Appalachian Trail on the flank of Camp Hill. Expect wintertime expansive and rocky views and possibly some wildlife. We'll also view some history along the way: ruins of mills that once bustled along the Shenandoah, Jefferson Rock and Robert Harper's house. Ending the walk in the town business district, you may opt to join us in one of the restaurants for refreshment or a meal. Or, you can shop at some of the businesses in town.

Distance/ Difficulty: 2.5 Miles/MODERATE

Duration: 2 hours

Bring: Water, a mask available for crowded settings, and clothing appropriate to the early winter temperatures we may experience.

Meet: 1 pm. in front of Visitor Center, Harpers Ferry, NHP, 171 Shoreline Dr., Harpers Ferry (Just off US340, opposite the towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar).

Leader: Chris Craig
ccraig@laurelodge.com
304-433-1260

Nearest towns: Bolivar and Harpers Ferry, WV

Cancellation policy: We will carry on in light rain or snow, but cancel if there is ice or heavy precipitation.

Additional information: Park admission or permit is required.

Please be advised that Sierra Club assumes no responsibility for shuttle/carpooling. Carpooling is at the sole risk of the participants.

MAP Makes Mon River Accessible

Access A: This new handicapped accessible kayak/canoe launch at Walnut St. Landing in Downtown Morgantown allows paddlers to get in and out of their boat easily, and enter and exit the Monongahela River safely. Those in wheelchairs can get into their boats by using retractable shelves to position themselves over their boat, then lower themselves in. This launch, a project of the Morgantown Area Paddlers (MAP), is part of the revitalization of Morgantown's Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, and is one of six launches on the West Virginia section of the Mon River. These and other access points, within a 2-hour radius from Morgantown, can be found on the on-line MAP Guide to Flatwater Paddling in and around Morgantown (<http://arcg.is/2pCMnJA>).

Access B: There is ample free parking next to the new kayak launch, and a set of six kayak/canoe lockers, the first in the region, designed to temporarily hold boat and gear for those who paddle up and want to eat, drink and shop at Morgantown's many Downtown establishments before returning to the river. Padlocks required.

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARY WIMMER.





Sierra Club

West Virginia Chapter

PO Box 4142

Morgantown, WV 26504

sierraclub.org/west-virginia

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Fall 2020



This newsletter is printed by Progressive Printing in Martinsburg, WV on 100% post-consumer, recycled paper, using vegetable-oil-based inks.

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates. Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at: ccraig@laurellodge.com

Deadline for the 2020 Winter issue:
NOVEMBER 1

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 quarterly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members. \$1 of each member's annual dues helps offset the cost of producing this newsletter.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

A Will is a Way

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature

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

Public Officials

U.S. SENATE

Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Joe Manchin (D)

(202) 224-3954
manchin.senate.gov

The Hon. Shelley Moore Capito (R)

(202) 224-6472
capito.senate.gov

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. David McKinley (R, 1st)

(202) 225-4172
mckinley.house.gov

The Hon. Alex Mooney (R, 2nd)

(202) 225-2711
mooney.house.gov

The Hon. Carol Miller (R, 3rd)

(202) 225-3452
miller.house.gov

WHITE HOUSE

Washington, DC 20515

Comments Line

(202) 456-1111

Fax

(202) 456-2461

Capitol Switchboard

(202) 224-3121

WV STATE LEGISLATORS

Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1, State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

WVlegislature.gov has contact
information for all state legislators.

(877) 565-3447 or (304) 347-4836

GOVERNOR JIM JUSTICE

State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305
(888) 438-2731 • governor.wv.gov