

Friends of Blackwater Canyon

501 Elizabeth St., Rm 3, Charleston, WV 25311 • 304-345-7663 • www.saveblackwater.org • info@saveblackwater.org

Canyon Trail in Danger -- Could be Destroyed! Your Help Needed

Friends of Blackwater has obtained copies of confidential documents showing detailed plans by Allegheny Wood Products (owned by John Crites) to turn the beautiful and historic Blackwater Canyon Trail, located on National Forest land, into a commercial logging road. The documents, including a survey and engineering map of the proposed road, were obtained by a Freedom of Information request to the United States Forest Service.

AWP wants to turn the Canyon Trail into a commercial road to serve AWP's timber and other businesses (including planned condominiums) on AWP's adjacent private land in the Canyon. As an "adjacent landowner" to public land, AWP has a right to ask for such a use of public land — but the Forest Service does not have to grant the request. AWP's road would run through the heart of the Canyon for nearly ten miles, from the town of Hendricks at the bottom to the town of Coketon at the top.

Friends of Blackwater issued an urgent call to lovers of the Canyon to contact Senators Byrd and Rockefeller, asking the Senators to urge the Forest Service to deny Crites' request. The response to that call has been overwhelming. Hundreds of heart-felt faxes, letters, and e-mails have poured into Washington. Many people made their comments via our website, www.saveblackwater.org.

The Blackwater Canyon Trail is a beautiful, grassy pathway that slowly climbs for ten miles alongside the Blackwater River — amid towering trees, leafy shrubs, liverworts and ferns — a home to rare flying squirrels, salamanders, trout, and black bear. The Trail passes through red spruce and mixed mesophytic forest glens, over historic cut-stone arches, passing jewel-like waterfalls, moss-carpeted rocks, and massive boulders.

Like Blackwater Falls State Park, the Canyon Trail is a recreational resource for thousands of people. These Trail users — and thousands of others who love the Blackwater Canyon — are incensed and outraged by AWP's proposal — and they are making their voices heard.

We expect that the Forest Service will make an initial decision about AWP's request this fall. The Forest Service is not likely to simply grant the request. They may refuse the request (we hope so); or (more likely) they may go into a "scoping" process, where the agency solicits public comment about what aspects of the request should be further studied. **Massive public comment to the Forest Service during any scoping period will be crucial to protecting the Canyon Trail.**

It would be insane to allow **our public land** in the Canyon to be horribly degraded — just when officials like West Virginia Governor Bob Wise are working to protect the entire Canyon, by getting it all into public ownership.

This is an issue for people everywhere who care about public land. We must stand up for the lovely cucumber magnolia; for the tiny winter wren, singing its heart out by the rushing stream; for the shy Cheat Mountain salamander, hiding under its rotting log; for the flying squirrel, gliding out from the red spruce to dig mushrooms under the old beech trees. **We must stand up for the Blackwater Canyon now!**

In August of this year, Friends of Blackwater began contacting various nonprofit groups and individuals to help with the campaign to tell the Forest Service that we do not want our trail turned into a logging road. To date we have received one thousand and thirty-seven postcards, telling the Forest Service not to grant AWP's request. We expect that a formal scoping process will begin soon, with a formal comment period. Be ready to make your voice heard, loud and strong!

We would like to thank just a few of our wonderful volunteers with the Postcard campaign: Gene Kistler, owner Water Stone Outdoors in Fayetteville, Mary Doolin of ACE Adventure Center in Oak Hill, Dr. Jana Peters, D.O. of Princeton, Sam McCormick of Morgantown, Ms. Mattie Hardy of Mattie's Roastery in Lewisburg, Neil Moore of the Shepherdstown area, Jerry Adkins of Rugged Resources in Huntington, Lori Haldeman of the Art Company of Davis.

If you have already filled out a post card to the Forest Service - Thank you. If you have not, please see the instructions below.

PROTECT THE BLACKWATER CANYON TRAIL

The Official Forest Service Public Comment Period Will
Open In November!

**Call or email Friends of Blackwater to get a packet
of Forest Service comment cards to distribute to
your friends ASAP!!**

1-877-WVA-LAND outreach@saveblackwater.org

Go to www.saveblackwater.org to contact WV Senators to tell them you oppose the logging road. To contact Senators Byrd and Rockefeller directly:

Robert C. Byrd
(202) 224-3954
fax: 202-228-0002

John D. Rockefeller IV
(202) 224-6472
fax: 202-224-7665

**Check our website for the latest scoping information.
www.saveblackwater.org
WE NEED YOUR COMMENT**

**Fall 2002 Newsletter, in this issue:
Blackwater Holiday Items, Fundraising Events,
Blackwater Illustrations, North Fork News**

Become a Friends of Blackwater member.

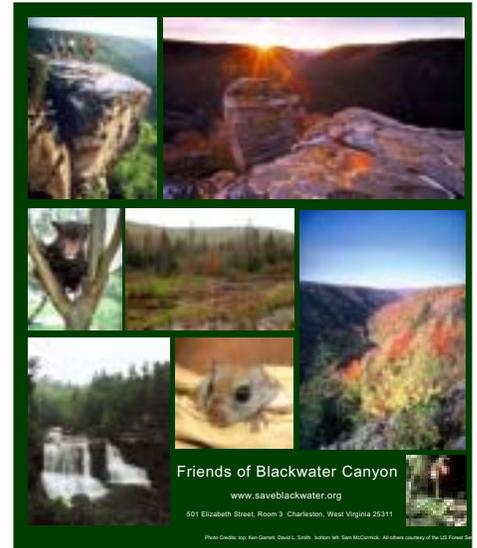
- \$1000 *Porte Crayon Society*
- \$500 *Steward*
- \$250 *Patron*
- \$100 *Sustaining*
- \$50 *Family*
- \$35 *Individual*
- \$5 *Senior or Student*

As a member you will receive quarterly newsletters to keep you informed about Blackwater issues.



Flying Squirrel T-shirt. \$15

The art work was created by Brad Basil of the Art Medium in Elkins. The shirt is cream with brown printing and preshrunk 100% cotton [kids M, L adult S, M, L, XL, XXL]



Limited Edition Blackwater Poster \$12

This gorgeous full-color poster combines images of well known West Virginia photographers Ken Garrett, Sam McCormick, Stephen Shaluta, and David Smith. The poster is 23" x 35". Check our website to view it in color.

Special holiday offer!

Buy a gift membership (at the *individual level or higher*) and receive a t-shirt or poster at half price!

Item	Size	Price	x Quantity	Total
Blackwater Poster	NA			
Flying Squirrel T-shirt				
			Total	

Cut off and send this completed order form and check to Friends of Blackwater 501 Elizabeth Street, Rm 3, Charleston, WV 25311

Thanks to all our volunteers!!!

Katherine Stone helps us with our summer newsletter mailings and addressing our fundraiser invitations.

Rich Stonestreet helps with our data entry. This extra help gives us the boost we needed to get our responses to our Forest Service Campaign recorded and delivered in a timely manner.

Sue Price is a regular volunteer who has helped us keep our membership up to date.

Mary Samargo, Scott, Christina and Amber Lavigne helped with the tedious task of the summer newsletter mailing.

D.C. Fundraiser a Success!

On September 24, a crowd of more than 75 people gathered in Northwest Washington, DC to celebrate and learn about the campaign to save the Blackwater Canyon. Longtime Blackwater enthusiasts mingled with curious "new recruits" at the home of Rafe and Lenore Pomerance. Happy recollections of time spent in the Blackwater area could be heard -- above the din in the Pomerance's house and garden -- tall tales of lost kayaks in the Blackwater River, camping trips with family, cross-country skiing along the Canyon rim, and seeing a black bear for the first time.

Friends of Blackwater Director Judy Rodd narrated a video journey through the Canyon. Then, to everyone's surprise, there was a special visit by "Ginny," the West Virginia Flying Squirrel!

This fundraising party raised five thousand four hundred fifty dollars, to support Friends of Blackwater's campaigns to protect the Canyon. Thanks to our hosts Rafe and Lenore and to our other party hosts-- and a special thanks to Pat Munoz of the River Network for her wonderful help!

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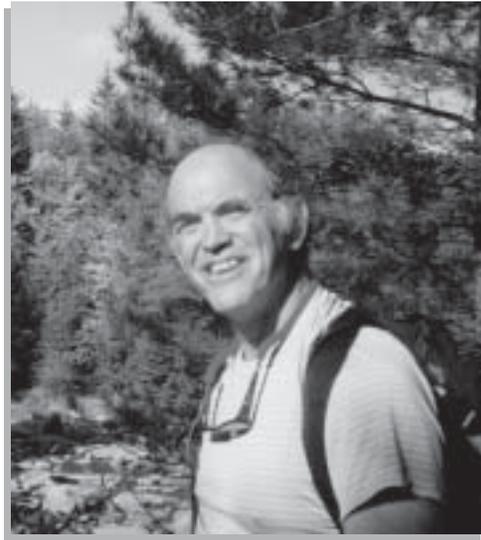
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A Friend of Blackwater

Friends of Blackwater board member **Rafe Pomerance** is currently the chair of the Americans for Equitable Climate Solutions, a non-profit working on global warming policies. During his tenure as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment and Development, Rafe was responsible for the successful launch of the International Coral Reef Initiative. He is the past president of Friends of the Earth, past chairman of the League of Conservation Voters, and the founder and past chairman of American Rivers. Rafe discovered West Virginia's scenic beauty and recreational rivers in the 1970s when he bought a farm in Pendleton County's Germany Valley. He has hiked the Monongahela National Forest from top to bottom, and he especially enjoys the Blackwater area. Rafe is also an avid hiker and canoer.



The newest addition to the Friends of Blackwater staff is **Tina Namay**. Tina works in a variety of areas at Friends of Blackwater, including organizing, lobbying and outreach. Tina was born and raised in West Virginia and graduated from WVU with a degree in psychology. She's had a variety of career experiences from design/editing/writing, to marketing as well as computer, research and management experience. Tina loves hiking, biking and whitewater rafting all over West Virginia.

Viewing Platform Built at Lindy Point

Lindy Point is part of Blackwater Falls State Park – thanks to your public outcry! And now, thanks to the work of the Park Service there is a new viewing platform that permits the public to more easily access the magnificent vista seen from the Point. The platform will allow children and those with some physical limitations to safely enjoy the panorama. It is relatively small and unobtrusive to the natural beauty of the rock outcropping on which it sits.

Thanks to massive citizen protest, Lindy Point -- which just five years ago was owned by a timber company and “off limits” to the public -- is now a treasure that West Virginians can share with the world. This State Park project complements trail improvements completed in July of this year. Most of the work was done by volunteers. This new work is part of an overall improvement process happening at the Park. Work has begun on a bridge over Dinky Run, on the new Pase Point trail. Plans for the future include improvements to both of the viewing platforms that overlook Blackwater Falls.



“The platform is modest. We felt a smaller size would fit best in the space available. It takes care of a safety concern and allows people to feel more comfortable while enjoying the viewshed.”

-Rob Gilligan, Blackwater Falls State Park Superintendent



Friends of Blackwater

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Address Service Requested

The North Fork Watershed office is now open on Front Street in Thomas. Stop by to learn about water quality issues, if you want information about things to do in the area or just to visit! The office is new and could use a few things.

- paper
 - manila envelopes
 - fold out couch, chairs
 - a clock
 - plants
 - volunteers to do water testing
- Hope to see you soon!

North Fork Watershed Office Now Open

Friends of Blackwater's North Fork Watershed Project office is now open on the main street of Thomas, WV. The bright storefront is headquarters to initiatives aimed at educating the community about the effects of acid mine drainage in the North Fork of the Blackwater River, and to coordinate installation of water treatment systems.

Initially, volunteers will assist in water sampling and related tasks. As water treatment systems are designed, the community will take part in the aesthetic and historic components of the plan. The

office is run by the project's full time VISTA volunteer, Emily Samargo, who speaks to community groups, recruits and trains volunteers, and meets with experts to gather information for the project. For more information about the North Fork Watershed Project, call 304-463-4068 or send an email to info@northforkwatershed.org.



FOB Commissions Nature Portraits of Blackwater

Nature artist Anna Hess, of Pennington Gap, VA, has completed an extraordinary series of pencil-and-pastel renderings of the unique flora of the Blackwater Canyon area. During a week of observing the highland landscape – including lots of hiking in the rain -- Anna produced 13 botanically accurate, graceful drawings, ranging in subject matter from the rare Cheat Mt. Salamander, to red spruce and "cotton grass," (to the left) which is found in high mountain bogs.

Friends of Blackwater will incorporate these drawings into a series of educational materials that focus on the fascinating, fragile habitats found in and around the Canyon. Anna has just finished a year working for the Rolling Ridge Foundation Nature Preserve outside of Harpers Ferry, and will now work on a botanical inventory in Tennessee. Look for her sketches to appear in other FOB publications!

