

# Friends of Blackwater Canyon

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

## Charleston Open House Celebrates Blackwater's Special Places Campaign

### Open House Features Hamrick, Squirrel, and Butterfly

On Thursday, September 25, at an Open House and Reception at the Friends of Blackwater offices, located in Asbury Methodist Church in Charleston, we presented 3,025 colorful postcards to Ed Hamrick, Director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

Each postcard was from a West Virginian citizen, and each nominated the Blackwater Canyon as West Virginia's most "Special Place." Helping deliver the postcards to Director Hamrick was a baby West Virginia flying squirrel, played by Holden Pomponio/Russell – along with his sister, Elana, who was dressed as a butterfly.

Hamrick praised Friends of Blackwater and our supporters for our ongoing work to protect the entire Blackwater Canyon. Judy Rodd, FOB's director, said, "We are taking this opportunity to recognize the leadership of Governor Bob Wise in creating the 'Special Places Initiative,' which gave an opportunity to citizens to express their love for West Virginia's natural heritage. We are especially pleased that the Blackwater Canyon was the top nominee."

### Post Card Campaign Wraps Up

The postcard delivery culminates FOB's two-year campaign to nominate the Blackwater Canyon as West Virginia's "most

Special Place." This is one of several recent campaigns spearheaded by FOB -- including the ongoing campaign to keep the Blackwater Canyon hiking/biking Trail from being turned into a logging road. As a result of more than ten thousand citizen comments to the Forest Service from FOB supporters, the Service has agreed to do a full environmental impact statement study of the logging road proposal.



Judy Rodd and Ed Hamrick



Margaret Calwell

### Tucker County Author Signs Book

Many FOB volunteers and supporters, including some who have worked on the Blackwater Campaign since 1997, attended the Charleston reception. A special treat was a book signing by Margaret Calwell, who is the mother of Charleston labor lawyer Stuart Calwell, and the author of "Speak to the Past: A Memoir Fat With Words," a history of Calwell's growing up in the town of Davis in Tucker County. In her memoir, Calwell remembers swimming under Blackwater Falls -- and she worries about the fate of the Canyon.

There was also an exhibit of historic Tucker County photographs, covering turn-of-the-century boom times, the CCC era, the work of artist Porte Crayon and ecologist/artist Anna Hess, and documents from the 1898 landmark State Supreme Court equal rights case from Coketon.

### More Bat Kills Near Blackwater Canyon

Friends of Blackwater has learned that at least 450 bats were killed by the new Backbone Mountain Wind Project, owned by Florida Power and Light, just over the ridge from Blackwater Canyon. Species killed include red, hoary, silver hair, little brown, and eastern pipistrelle bats. This is the largest known bat kill in the world at a wind turbine facility. Mutilated bats had broken forearms, broken wings, and severed heads. The Backbone Mountain ridgetop string of 350-foot tall wind turbines is located 8 miles from endangered Indiana and Virginia big-eared bat caves. Indiana bats are known to migrate 35 miles along ridge tops from their summer colonies in the forest to winter caves. Not all of the hundreds of dead bats found at Backbone Mountain have yet been identified by species. We will keep you informed about this situation.



In this issue:

- Lobbying for AmeriCorps, Holiday Membership Specials, Board Member Highlight, Blackwater Parade, North Fork Update, and More!

# North Fork Watershed Project Update

With a presence in Thomas for over a year, the North Fork Watershed Project continues to work towards cleaning up Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) in the North Fork of the Blackwater River. This fall the project has been busy with educational and history projects.

September and October were focused on watershed education. Josh Nease, our intern, helped with hands-on water lessons with county fifth graders and Thomas/Davis Middle School students. Presentations were also made at Tucker County High School and the Rotary Club. Emily Samargo, NFWP site coordinator and Nease also began work on a "Hydrologic Unit Plan" for the watershed. This plan is a prerequisite for receiving funds from West Virginia's Abandoned Mine Lands Program for AMD treatment.

In contrast to the water pollution of AMD from the early mining era, the watershed is filled with historical treasures from the same period. The banks and towns along the North Fork of the Blackwater River

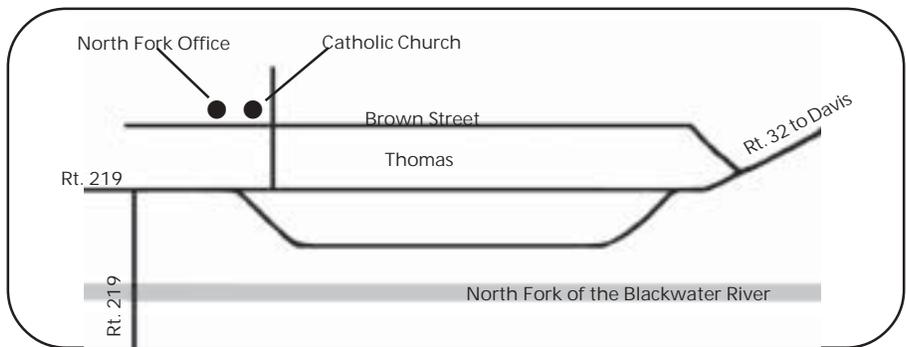
contain unique and fascinating historical structures and artifacts. Headquartered between Thomas and Coketon, the Davis Coal and Coke Company reached peak production in 1910. The company controlled 135,000 acres, employed 1,600 to 2,500 men of 16 nationalities, operated two power plants, and worked approximately 1,000 coke ovens and 9 deep mines within one square mile of the central office. Today, the river and railroad grade run past coke ovens, old company houses and sealed mine openings. The NFWP has been consider-

ing options for historic interpretation. Such options would complement the NFWP's river clean-up goals.

To find out more about the North Fork Watershed Project or to take a tour of the watershed on your next visit, call 304-463-4068 or send an email to [info@northforkwatershed.org](mailto:info@northforkwatershed.org). We can also help you plan a trip to the Blackwater area, tell you about places to stay and things to do in the beautiful West Virginia highlands.

The NFWP would especially like to thank our intern Josh Nease for his four and a half months of hard work!!

Visit us if you are in the area. We can help you plan your trip. Stop by or call the North Fork office to get Blackwater touring information.



## Blackwater Holiday Items



Become a Friends of Blackwater member. \*

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

- Give to Friends of Blackwater this holiday season. Help Save Blackwater Canyon while giving a truly meaningful gift.**  
**Special membership packages for friends and family: (check one)**  
 \*Give 3 individual memberships for \$90 and get a free Blackwater poster. Save \$15.  
 \*Give 2 family memberships for \$90 and get a poster too! Save \$10.

	Qty.	Price	Size	Total
Blackwater Chronicle H/B		27.50		
Blackwater Chronicle P/B		18.00		
Adventure Guide		10.00		
Flying Squirrel T-shirt		15.00		
Kayak Squirrel T-shirt		15.00		
Blackwater Poster		10.00		
		Subtotal		
		**Shipping		
		Membership Donation		
		Total		

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

\*\*\$2 for t-shirts and posters and \$2.50 to ship books. Merchandise shipped same day order is received.

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**Gift membership comes with gift card announcing your special gift and explaining our work. Be sure to put your name on the remittance envelope. Books, t-shirts, bumperstickers, and Christmas ornaments make great gifts as well.**  
**Simplify your shopping and help Save the Blackwater Canyon at the same time!**

\*Gift Membership Names and Addresses: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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If additional space is needed, please use another sheet of paper. Be sure to put your name on the return envelope.

To view and purchase FOB gear and collectibles you can also visit our website [www.saveblackwater.org](http://www.saveblackwater.org)

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Special thanks to Mary Samargo, Sandy Fisher, Paige Dalporto, Kasey Russell, and Susan Watkins for donating many hours of their time to Friends of Blackwater this fall.

## Board Member Highlight: Jeannie Dalporto

Originally from Summersville, WV, Jeannie is an assistant professor of English at the University of Charleston. She received her Ph.D. from WVU in 2001 in English. She has a son who is a junior at WVU, a daughter who is a sophomore at NYU, and a daughter who is 15.

Jeannie has fond memories of camping around Blackwater. One memorable trip occurred when Jeannie took her five cousins aged 17, 14, 13, 12, and 9 camping for three days. After pitching tents it rained almost the entire time. They couldn't light the Coleman stoves and had to eat cold food. Even with the rain, they swam in the lake, took a canoe trip, and biked through several trails in the park and around Davis.

Jeannie serves as Secretary for the Friends of Blackwater Board of Directors.



Jeannie Dalporto, greets visitors at the Open House in Charleston.

## Emily Lobbies for AmeriCorps/Vista on Capitol Hill



Emily Samargo with Hilary Clinton and two other Vista Alumni

In early September hundreds of AmeriCorps supporters gathered in Washington DC to take part in the "100 Hours of National Service Testimony." The event was held to urge Congress to approve funding to save AmeriCorps programs that are in danger of terminating.

Emily Samargo, who has just completed a second year of AmeriCorps service with the North Fork Watershed Project, was in Washington for the event. She spoke about her experiences serving in West Virginia and in California and about the importance of this program to watershed groups in Appalachia. Over 700 others spoke in support of the program, including AmeriCorps alumni, program directors and senators. The high point of Emily's trip was meeting Senator Hilary Clinton, a strong supporter of AmeriCorps/Vista.

## Birth Announcement: Loki the Flying Squirrel

Judy Rodd's grandson, Loki Foster Lindsay Kern, was born on June 24th in Charles Town WV to Priscilla Rodd and Deane Kern. Loki is only 3 months old and already weighs 18 pounds...pretty big for a flying squirrel baby. He likes the outfit and supports the cause...but is not sure about living in a tree. Get a Loki The Flying Squirrel Christmas tree ornament with your next donation or order.



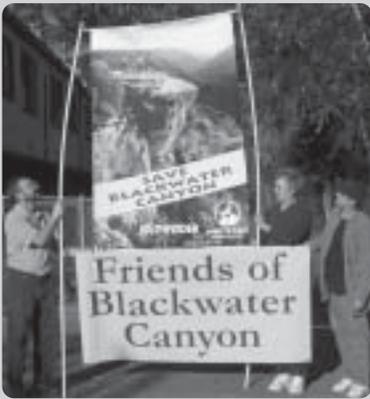
## Friends of Blackwater

www.saveblackwater.org  
501 Elizabeth Street, Rm 3  
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Thanks to Pathfinder of Morgantown for our new banners!

Our November 4th Washington DC garden party/fundraiser was a great success with help from The Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth, and The River Network! The banners shown above were displayed at the party. Thanks to Rafe and Lenore Pomerance for hosting the event!

### Blackwater Homecoming Parade Contingent Makes Front Page

On October 31, Halloween evening in Morgantown, a lively group of colorfully costumed Friends of Blackwater Canyon supporters led the West Virginia University Homecoming Parade down High Street – accompanying a 16-foot-tall Mother Earth Planet Float/Puppet. A front-page photo of the Blackwater group and our unique float was featured in the next day's Morgantown Dominion Post.

Within Mother Earth's green embracing arms – marching and singing – was the Blackwater Band and Eco-Chorus, featuring inspired saxophone playing from Mike Furbee and spicy clarinet work by Bob Cohen. Morgantown music legends Bob Shank, Cathy McConnell, John Lozier, and Keith McManus were among other pickers and grinners who joined the marching band.

Thousands of WVU fans, alumni, and students lined the sidewalks four deep along the parade route. The Morgantown crowd, known around the state as serious parade enthusiasts, went wild at the sight of the cheery Blackwater float, which was operated by ten WVU Service Fraternity students wearing flying squirrel banners.

Tom Rodd, dressed in a tuxedo, glitter-covered gloves, and a four-foot tall top hat, served as ringmaster, leading the band and chorus in "When the Saints Go Marching In" and "This Land is Your Land."

Morgantown green businesses Pathfinder of West Virginia and Whitetail Cycle and Fitness sponsored Friends of Blackwater's parade posters – thanks to Bruce Summers and Mia Sieminski for making this happen.

And thanks to everyone in Morgantown who saw the Blackwater entourage and cheered for us – we loved doing it!



Nicole Raley is the newest employee at the Friends of Blackwater office. She does data entry and sends out our thank-you letters and other mailings. Born and raised in Morgantown, Nicole moved to Charleston in September and immediately started working for Friends of Blackwater. She is a recent graduate of Fairmont State College with a degree in Marketing and a minor in Psychology. She enjoys hiking and camping and loves animals. She has ferrets, cats, fish, and a dog. Thanks, Nicole, for all your hard work!