

Friends of Blackwater

*Come to the Limerock Reunion
June 29 in Hendricks - 1-4pm*



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Working to protect West Virginia's High Alleghenies, Blackwater River & Blackwater Canyon.

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"GINNY" AND HER FRIENDS FEATURED IN CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ART SHOW

"Ginny" the West Virginia Flying Squirrel will be one of twenty animal and plant species depicted in a new interactive art show that will open on Friday, June 6, from 5:00-6:30 PM, at Blackwater Falls State Park Lodge.

The June 6 art show opening is part of the June 6-8 Conference, "Climate Change and the Highlands: What's at State – What's at Risk" -- at the Park Lodge. The show will remain up and viewable through June 8. The show is titled "Shhhh . . . Listen!" Friends of Blackwater's beloved "Ginny" will be depicted by artist Mack Miles.

Ann Payne, Nik Botkin, and Elizabeth Jaeger, who are organizing the show, explained its purpose: "The mission of 'Shhhh . . . Listen!' is to show plant and animal species suffering from the impacts of climate change. Species that we take

for granted may be in irreversible decline if steps are not taken to slow climate change, reduce toxic pollution, and protect habitat."

"As artists, we can bring attention to issues in ways that words cannot. To empower our viewers to engage with this issue, 'Shhhh . . . Listen!' is interactive. Viewers can actually remove from and restore the 20 highlighted species to their habitat."

At Friends of Blackwater, we believe that loving and caring for the natural world is good for everyone, and we are proud to celebrate and appreciate these artists who are donating their talents to help protect



the Highlands.

For more details on the "Climate Change and the Highlands" Conference, and the June "Shhhh . . . Listen" art show, go to wvalleghenyclimate.org. If you miss the opening June 6, contact us and we'll let you know where and when the next showing is. And thanks to our wonderful donors, who make this event possible!

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION OVER FWS 30-YEAR EAGLE KILL RULE

(Washington, D.C., April 30, 2014) A leading bird conservation organization—American Bird Conservancy (ABC)—has announced its intention to sue the Department of the Interior (DOI), charging DOI with multiple violations of federal law in connection with its December 9, 2013, final regulation that allows wind energy companies and others to obtain 30-year permits to kill eagles without prosecution by the federal government. The previous rule provided for a maximum duration of five years for each permit.

ABC sent DOI and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) an April 30, 2014, Notice of Intent to Sue that cited DOI violations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) in connection with the new eagle kill rule. ABC is being represented by the Washington, D.C. public interest law firm of Meyer Glitzenstein & Crystal.

"ABC has heard from thousands of citizens from across the country who are outraged that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to let the wind industry legally kill our country's iconic Bald and Golden eagles. The rule lacks a firm foundation in scientific justification and was generated without the benefit of a full assessment of its impacts on eagle populations," said Michael

Hutchins, National Coordinator of ABC's Bird Smart Wind Energy Campaign.

As the notice to DOI states, "ABC strongly supports wind power and other renewable energy projects when those projects are located in an appropriate, wildlife-friendly manner and when the impacts on birds and other wildlife have been conscientiously considered and addressed before irreversible actions are undertaken. On the other hand, when decisions regarding ... projects are made precipitously and without compliance with elementary legal safeguards designed to ensure that our nation's invaluable trust resources are not placed at risk, ABC will take appropriate action to safeguard eagles and other migratory birds."

ABC is initiating legal action in order to have the rule invalidated pending full compliance with federal environmental statutes. For example, the 30-year eagle permit rule was adopted in the absence of any NEPA document or any ESA consultation regarding impacts. It is therefore a "... glaring example of an agency action that gambles recklessly with the fate of the nation's Bald and Golden eagle populations," the letter says.

"Bald Eagle populations may be technically recovered, but their popularity and symbolic importance to our nation suggests that the American people are not going to tolerate



American Bald Eagles by Steve Shaluta

the deaths of many," said Hutchins. "Golden Eagles are another matter. Much more needs to be known about their status before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can safely decide how many wind energy companies can kill with no net loss to the population."

The ABC Notice of Intent to Sue letter closes by saying: "The 30-year rule ... undermines the nation's longstanding commitment to conservation of eagles—unique animals that are 'ubiquitous in U.S. culture, attesting to the widespread symbolic importance the eagle holds in U.S. society.' ABC will pursue legal action to address these violations and ensure that eagles, and the millions of Americans who enjoy them, obtain the legal protections to which they are entitled under U.S. law."

MY JOURNEY TO LIMEROCK CEMETERY

In the fall of 2013, the Tucker County Historical Society began a new project to inventory all county cemeteries. We were surprised that several good sized cemeteries and many small cemeteries had been missed in prior listings. While working on lists, I was twice asked the following question by my husband John and by Bill Bilby: "And of course you have the Limerock cemetery?"

Well no, we didn't. So, as winter approached, I began to try to research the Tucker County Town of Limerock. I found one footnote listing for Limerock in the index of Homer Fansler's History of Tucker County. Internet research then connected me to railroad pages and information.

I started asking questions about Limerock, taking notes from several local people who remember people living in Limerock, or had hunted there and remember the changing scene, as the march of time reclaimed the buildings and the marks made by those who lived there.

My search also opened the door to Friends of Blackwater, who had been researching and writing about Limerock for around 8 years. They introduced me to Ronald Martin Eckard's book, Eckards: From the Rhine to Limerock, which reports that that the first families settled in Limerock in 1877, and the last date on a stone in the cemetery was 1937, a span of 60 or more years. I also learned that in 1888 James W. Bowman constructed a store on Spruce Lick Run -- a smaller counterpart to his store in Hendricks -- to help service the extra 1,000 workers working on the railroad being built in the Canyon that summer.

I was most thankful someone was trying to preserve Limerock's history, and certain that the Tucker County Historical

Society should be part of that effort. So, on a warm Saturday morning in April, John and I, with three other members of the Tucker County Historical Society, set out to visit the Limerock Cemetery. With information from those who had travelled this path often, we followed the rail grade to what is locally known as "Garber Hollow," where the remains of the Limerock School greet you with an awesome display of craftsmanship in hand-cut stones.

We scaled the hill and visited the school remains, and continued to the Cemetery. After all these years in is hard to tell the boundary of the Cemetery. Locals tell me it was once fenced, but now there is no visible sign of a fence. I would guess there to be 35-plus graves, mostly marked with fieldstones, and many where the stone has slipped away from its intended spot.

We found several grave markers that we could read. The first was huge, and overturned, face down. When lifted up, it was a marker for Benjamin (1853-1931) and Elizabeth (1853-1933) Wratchford. This family is well documented in Ronald Eckard's book.

Another stone was for the Waitman C. Cross Family (1878-1937). With a



The headstone of Waitman Cross and Family

little research I found that Waitman Cross married Charlotte C. Wratchford, daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Wratchford, on July 24, 1899. Their first child was born in Limerock on May 3, 1900, named Marquis Benjamin Cross. Three other stones were simply etched Kile R, 1914-1916; Elsia E., 1900; and Ernest M., 1905.

After visiting the Limerock Cemetery, we returned to the railroad grade and continued upstream to white oak flats where the Limerock Trail is marked -- and explored the remains of the town of Limerock itself. That is another story. Visiting the Limerock Cemetery was a very enjoyable morning, shared with wonderful people. If you have any information on families from Limerock or those buried in the cemetery please contact me at jdavis001@frontiernet.net or contact Friends of Blackwater.



Headstone of Benjamin and Elizabeth Wratchford



Headstone of Kile R



Headstone of Elsia E

CHEAT CANYON WIN!

We just won a great victory with the permanent protection of the Cheat River Canyon.

After eleven years of advocacy by Friends of Blackwater and our allies, the West Virginia Sierra Club and CLEAR, the Cheat Lake Environment and Recreation Association), the entire wild and scenic Cheat River Canyon in Preston County is now permanently safe from destructive logging and road-building -- and will be moved into protective public ownership.

Here is the "backstory" on what many say is the largest conservation land purchase in recent West Virginia history.

Way back in 2003, Allegheny Wood Products -- the same company that in 1997 bought the remaining private land in the Blackwater Canyon -- began logging in the Cheat Canyon, in recognized endangered species habitat.

The company ignored requests from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct surveys to protect species like the flat-spined three-toothed land snail, which is only found in the Canyon. Other rare animals in the Cheat Canyon include the Allegheny wood rat, the green salamander, the Indiana, northern long eared and eastern small footed bat, three land snails, the osprey, and two cave invertebrates or "scuds." There is also the rare streamside plant, "Barbara's buttons."

This situation cried out for action, and Friends of Blackwater was ready to step up to the plate. We hired top-ranked lawyers from Meyer and Glitzenstein in Washington to challenge the logging. These experts deployed sophisticated legal strategies -- and we won! The lawsuit settled with a landmark court order that protected 1,400 of the 4,000 acres in the Cheat Canyon as snail habitat.

But that was not the end of the story. Last year, land purchase funds became available from the Conservation Fund, Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And thanks to those agencies' initiative, now the entire 4,000 acres has been purchased and protected, to be managed by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources for its rare wildlife.

With this land purchase, the Cheat Canyon will be open to the public from Albright to the Big Sandy. The Allegheny Hiking Trail, a cross-state trail that was set up in 1970, will be re-established in the Canyon. Rafting companies plan to set up short family-friendly trips to the middle of the Canyon, with a takeout several miles into the Canyon and a trip back by jitney.

Today, just as in 2003, Friends of Blackwater is taking the lead in enforcing the Endangered Species Act in West Virginia's Allegheny Highlands. That's our job -- and supporter donations allow us to do it. So let's celebrate this victory in the Cheat Canyon -- and let's work for many more victories to come!



Cheat Canyon by Kent Mason



Cheat Three-toothed Land Snail



Kayaking the Cheat River



Green Salamander

STILL FIGHTING FOR BLACKWATER CANYON

Since 1997, Friends of Blackwater has been working to protect all of the land in the ten-thousand-acre Blackwater Canyon – West Virginia's scenic and recreational "Crown Jewel," in the heart of the Allegheny Highlands and the Monongahela National Forest. The late Senator Robert C. Byrd called the Canyon a "National Treasure."

The Canyon's historic trails, rugged cliffs and glens, cascading waterfalls, and churning whitewater attract hikers, kayakers, hikers, skiers, birders, hunters, and fishermen from across the country.

Two thousand acres in the Blackwater Canyon are in private ownership, and need to be protected as a public recreational resource. Because so many people care deeply about the Canyon, Friends of Blackwater has been able to move hundreds of acres in the Canyon into such public ownership – and to protect hundreds more acres of Canyon land from gas drilling, timbering, and development.

In 2010, after a ten-year campaign, FOB defeated a proposal to turn the historic Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail into a commercial timber haul road. Thousands of people across the country joined this campaign.

Along with advocacy, FOB funds research about Canyon residents like the endangered Cheat Mountain salamander, Cheat snail, Indiana bat, Virginia big-eared bat, two-spotted skipper butterfly -- and of course "Ginny" – the iconic West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel (*glaucomys sabrinus fuscus*).

Growing out of the Canyon protection effort, FOB's larger-scale work to protect the Allegheny Highlands region includes hikes, conferences, history tours, tree planting, trail building, and water monitoring.

With the help of grants and donations from our members and our many wonderful allies and partners, Friends of Blackwater is building a strong and sustainable movement in West Virginia to protect ecosystems, headwater streams, public lands, and threatened special places. Join us!



Indiana Bat



Blackwater Canyon by Kent Mason



WV Northern Flying Squirrel by Steve Shaluta



Blackwater Falls by Kent Mason



Cut-stone archway at Big Run in Blackwater Canyon by Ken Sherman



Kayaking in Blackwater Canyon



Forest near Blackwater Canyon by Paul Corbitt Brown

TOURING ABANDONED MINE LANDS

We at the North Fork Watershed were given a tour of abandoned mine sites by John Goode of the Elkins DEP office and Martin Christ of the Morgantown DEP District office.

All of these sites have streams running into the Blackwater River; some are clear and clean and others are heavily impacted by AMD (acid mine drainage).

Our first area was the Tub Run reclamation site recently done by the DEP over miles and miles of hill top and valleys. The amount of area and work done is impressive. From there we bumped and traveled cross-country to the Albert Highwall sites. There are two phases of work done in this area, the first being a

series of sediment ponds which catches metal precipitation. Long Run, which runs into the North Fork of the Blackwater from this area, is heavily impacted with AMD, which means there is additional work to be done on the Albert/Douglas Highwall areas. On our tour we found several abandoned mines with open portals into the mine which is a danger to exploring hikers, hunters and other adventurers. Pendelton Run has been reclaimed and has neutral PH. Chaffey Run area which includes part of the Mountain Top Hunt Club and is frequently visited has much to reclaim. The area is low in vegetation and has loose rock highwalls and open portals.

This tour was an education to me in

the amount of land which has been abandoned and left in a damaged and dangerous state and the amount of work needed to reclaim. Most of the abandoned land is off highway and not visible, yet it impacts our streams and rivers, vegetation, wildlife and human life. Much has been done and is being done to reclaim our land and waters and much still needs to be done.



Volunteer Lon Marshall touring AMD sites

WELCOME BRIANNA ALL!

We are happy to have a new summer field worker for Friends of Blackwater -- Brianna All. Brianna will be following up on Doug Gilbert's work, collecting data on "Ginny," the West Virginia Flying Squirrel. (Doug just started working for Friends of Deckers Creek in Morgantown. Thanks for all your efforts, Doug).

From a young age, Briana All was fascinated by nature and wildlife. As a child she spent summers searching for salamanders under rocks, and listening for frogs on the edge of the lake where she grew up in upstate New York. She would even try to sneak a few creatures into the house!

Today, Briana is interested in ecology, ornithology, mammalogy, and the effects of global climate change. Briana is a junior at the State University of New York in Cobleskill, NY, where she is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management. She completed her Associate's degree in Natural Resources at Eastern New Mexico University. In 2012 Briana worked as a Biological Aide for the U.S. Forest Service on the Lincoln National Forest in Ruidoso, New Mexico, and in 2013 as an Avian Field Technician for Louisiana State University at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in San Antonio, New Mexico.



Brianna All

Briana has also volunteered on projects such as mist-netting cave swallows in Carlsbad Caverns, rocket-netting waterfowl at the Bosque del Apache, and mist-netting bats in Ruidoso. Wow! **Welcome to West Virginia, Brianna -- and, let's give a big round of thanks to all the Friends of Blackwater supporters who make Brianna's important work in the Highlands possible!**

BEN'S OLD LOOM BARN – A HIGHLANDS BUSINESS WITH DEEP ROOTS

Ben's Old Loom Barn is located on Cortland Road South in Canaan Valley. The Loom Barn was built by Dorothy and Ben Thompson in the early 1980's. Dorothy Thompson started her weaving experience when she attended Arthurdale School in Preston County, West Virginia. She and her family moved to Arthurdale in 1935 as homesteaders in a well-known New Deal homesteading project.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was a founding force in getting the Arthurdale project started, and she spend much time in the community. Mrs. Roosevelt arranged for Dorothy Thompson to attend a weaving school called "The Little Loomhouse" in Louisville, Kentucky. Dorothy attended the school until 1941; then she returned to Arthurdale to teach weaving.

After meeting and marrying Ben Thompson of Canaan Valley, Dorothy took her looms and equipment to the farm in Canaan. She produced many hand-woven items while raising a family and being a farm wife. Dorothy also began teaching weaving in 1964 in the old Cosner School building. Her students were farm wives, retired teachers and young people who lived nearby. After building the Loom Barn, she maintained the school until her daughter, Sarah Fletcher, came to live with her and took over management of the Loom Barn.

Today, the Loom Barn has more than 16 looms. The oldest is a pre-Civil war frame loom that Ben's family transported from Maine to New Hampshire to Vermont -- and finally to West Virginia. This loom is the origin of the name, "Ben's Old Loom Barn." Dorothy's father, Alex Mayor, was an accomplished woodworker and made six of the looms in the Barn, along with a large warping reel and many shuttles. Sarah Fletcher is carrying on the traditional weaving programs that Dorothy started. To visit the Barn, contact Sarah at sfletcher@canaantv.tv or by phone at 304-642-4161.



Bens Loom Barn

TUCKER COUNTY EVENTS

ARTSPRING INCLUDES FOB ART SHOW

ArtSpring promotes and cultivates the arts in public life and presents a Memorial Day weekend festival of the arts in the highlands of Tucker County, WV.

ArtSpring was founded in 2011 when gallery owners, artists and musicians of Tucker County came together with a vision to connect and promote its rich and varied arts communities. From such was born the ArtSpring festival, a Memorial-Day-Weekend tour of Tucker County: an opportunity for visitors and residents alike to see the arts communities unite in a collective effort to show just how dynamic and extensive the presence of the arts are in our county.

The ArtSpring Festival, now in its fourth year, is a county-wide celebration to highlight the arts community of Tucker County and offer opportunities to explore its creative landscape during memorial-day weekend. This "tour of Tucker County" - through Thomas, Davis, Canaan Valley, and Parsons - brings together and celebrates the best of the arts community.

Visit our Davis office on Saturday May 24 for the Blackwater Art Show.



BLACKWATER CLASSIC BIKE RACE: LET'S CREATE A BIKE PARK

One of the most famous mountain biking races in West Virginia is the Blackwater Classic -- held each Memorial Day weekend near the Town of Davis, West Virginia.

The exciting Blackwater Classic race, which gives new meaning to the word "gnarly," is organized by Tucker County Trails and the West Virginia Mountain Biking Association. The Blackwater Classic brings a lot of outdoor enthusiasts to Tucker County -- spending their tourism dollars. To grow the County economy, let's ensure that racing and mountain biking continue on the iconic Classic trails along the Blackwater River, Beaver Creek and Yellow Creek. Here's how:

Blackwater Classic bikers go through the Little Canaan Wildlife Management Area, and also through 900 acres of land owned by two non-profits: the Canaan Valley Institute, dedicated to clean water in the Allegheny Highlands; and the Vandalia Heritage Foundation, which has protected and restored historic properties across West Virginia. In Tucker County, Vandalia helped preserve the Peacock Building, Opera House and the Buxton Landstreet Building in Thomas as part of their economic revitalization mission.

The Blackwater Classic race course is run in part on land that is owned by the Vandalia Foundation which may be available for a conservation purchase. This land should be purchased now -- and developed into a permanent bike park - featuring trails and racecourses for different skill levels. A permanent home for a premier West Virginia sporting event!

CANAAN VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL: JUNE 5-8

The Canaan Valley Birding Festival welcomes all levels of birders and nature lovers. The theme for this year's key note presentations will be Wetland and Grassland Birds. Canaan Valley. Because of its diverse high elevation boreal habitats, the Valley is fortunate to be the breeding ground for many neo-tropical birds. The schedule will have 3 all-day walks on Friday and Saturday (leaving around 5:30 AM) which will bring you back to the lodge in time to relax or explore the area before the evening key note and evening sounds walk. It will also have half-day walks. For more information visit the Canaan Valley Resort webpage under events.



Cerulean Warbler

TRAVELLING 219: THE 1892 CIVIL RIGHTS CASE OF COKETON, WEST VIRGINIA

The J.R. Clifford Project was conceived in 2003 as the result of a Friends of Blackwater symposium held at the Thomas Educational Center in Thomas, West Virginia. - where historian Connie Rice talked about the life and work of John Robert Clifford (1848-1933), West Virginia's first African American attorney - and Clifford's connection to the nineteenth-century coal mining era in Tucker County.

Over the last ten years, the work of the J.R. Clifford Project has achieved several milestones, including Clifford being honored on an USPS commemorative stamp; and the installation of two historical markers in Parsons and Coketon. These way cool markers celebrate the famous Carrie Williams case, where the teacher of African American coal miners in Tucker County won a major civil rights case in West Virginia's Supreme Court in the 1890s.

The J.R. Clifford Project was honored to be featured in a radio documentary about the Carrie Williams case that was recently produced by Allegheny Mountain Radio and their great series "Travelling 219." The documentary was replayed on West Virginia Public Broadcasting's "Inside Appalachia." You can listen to a podcast and read about the story - including interviews -- at <http://www.traveling219.com/stories/deep-creek-lake-elkins/1892-civil-rights-case-coketon-west-virginia/>. Learn more at www.jrclifford.org.

May 2014



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COME TO LIMEROCK REUNION JUNE 29TH 1-4 pm



Where: Hendricks City Park Picnic Shelter. Speakers, music, food and photo displays on historic Limerock, Hendricks and the Western Maryland Railroad. Tours of the old cemetery and the remains of buildings at Limerock. Share memories and photos. Sponsored by Tucker County Historical Society, Friends of Blackwater and City of Hendricks. Open to all. Contact Rose Davis at the Historical Society: jdavis001@frontiernet.net or Friends of Blackwater at 304-345-7663.

FRACKING NEWS FROM NRDC

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 9, 2014) – The Environmental Protection Agency today announced it will solicit comments from the public regarding whether it should require chemical manufacturers to reveal basic information about the dangerous chemicals used in fracking around the country. This move could—and should—be the first step toward developing long-overdue nationwide rules that would allow the agency and the public to better understand what chemicals are being used in fracking and the effects they have on human health.

Natural Resources Defense Council Response:

"It's time for the administration to demand answers about the chemicals that are being used to frack in our communities. "For too long, the oil and gas industry has been allowed to keep their chemical cocktails a secret, while injecting them underground alongside drinking water sources, storing them in families' backyards and transporting them through neighborhood streets. Even emergency room doctors have been refused answers necessary to treat patients who have been exposed to fracking chemicals. "The administration must require nothing less than full transparent information about all chemicals this industry is using, and the health and safety risks they pose to the millions of Americans who live with fracking. While disclosure will not make fracking safe, it plays a critical role in helping the public understand the risks, and what must be done to protect themselves." From NRDC's Matt McFeeley



Marcellus Well in Upshur County. Photo courtesy of WWSORO

You can submit your own comments to the EPA by writing to:

- Mail: Document Control Office (7407M), Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001.