Developing Perspective
The unfolding portrait of Appalachia in film and photography
A note from the executive director

The winds of change are blowing in Central Appalachia, carrying voices of people determined to see their communities thrive in a future that could include a diverse economy. Since June 2016, several new local government entities have passed resolutions supporting major federal investment to reimage the region’s economy in new ways. Most of the resolutions support a White House proposal called POWER, a multi-billion dollar plan for better economic opportunities in places that are struggling to emerge from the shadows of government officials. We’ve co-hosted several community forums in Southwest Virginia this fall, and people from all walks of life came to share their visions for a new economy (see page 20). Progress on this front is one way we’ve continued our quest for a sustainable future that honors our region’s unsung natural heritage. As 2015 draws to a close, we’re celebrating highlights of the past year’s work.

We helped thousands of citizens weigh in on the Obama administration’s proposed Stream Protection Rule and are in close communication with agency officials to push for a stronger final rule.

We partnered with the Appalachian Mountain Club’s new “Mountain Remap” tool, which uses satellite imagery to show that mining continues to blur the boundaries of our public lands.

In North Carolina, we deepened our partnership with people living near coal ash ponds and potential mining sites. As people form a statewide coalition to keep Duke Energy in line on coal ash, we’ve seen progress.

We worked with residents and partners in Virginia to elevate clean energy as a priority for the McAlester administration, including major job announcements and new infrastructure investments.

Our Energy Savings for Appalachian Community Electric Cooperatives in North Carolina and Tennessee to commit to up-front financing for efficiency improvements on a regional scale.

We are grateful for the members and concerned citizens who help make our change and our supporting partners who make this work possible.

Here’s to another year of working together for Appalachia.

For the mountains,
Tara Conliff, Executive Director

A note from the executive director

State Environmental Departments Criticized

By Eliza Laubach

North Carolina’s Department of Environmental Quality’s regulatory control is in jeopardy, according to a letter sent to the state-department’s secretary from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in October. In the letter, the EPA expressed concern that recent court cases limit citizen rights to challenge the DEQ’s permitting processes.

The DEQ’s response claimed they will review the court cases, but the state permitting rules give citizens greater input than the federal rules. As the court cases are upheld, the EPA could exercise its right to review DEQ’s permit processes, but a federal judge said, which would also encompass a package of changes to environmental regulations passed by the state within this fall. If discrepancies are found with federal requirements, the EPA could then revoke the state’s authorization to DEQ’s permitting programs.

In Kentucky, a WFPL Louisville Public Media investigation found that the state’s Department of Environmental Protection has become lax in its permitting of polluting activities in the past 20 years. Budget cuts, staff reductions and infrastructure development restrictions have contributed to decreasing violations and enforcement pursued in court. Legal proceedings over violations have decreased almost 60 percent over the past 15 years of the previous decade, according to the investigation, which said that some of Kentucky’s waterways are more polluted than they were a decade ago.

Algae Blooms, Water Quality Worries

By W. Spencer King

Algae may not be the first pollutant that comes to mind, but in the Ohio River basin, blue-green algae has been a growing concern for human safety. The particular algae is a cyanobacteria containing a toxin that has made news recently with its sour contact with it.

In April 2013, officials from the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection pledged to draft a plan to mitigate these toxic algae blooms that were collecting in the Ohio River’s waterways, but as of press time, no plan has been released.

Governments have made headway on controlling nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, which could help control the algae, but former DEQ commissioner, Tom Goodin, director of the Division of Water, told the Courier Journal. According to Goodin, a plan to stop the pollutants that feed the algae is a very complex task, as the pollutants come from so many areas and in forms of wastewater treatment plants, and commercial fertilizers.

Environmental organization Kentucky Waterways Alliance believes that the state’s pollution control plans to deal with the problem and educate the public on how waterway pollution is regulated are not enough.

Although algae blooms are not currently a threat to human life, current state officials have previously warned that direct contact with river water when algae blooms are occurring could result in skin, eye and respiratory irritation as well as sickness.

The Bloomed:禁止了

Mountain Music Trail Winds Through WV

By Elizabeth E. Payne

The mountain music trail provides an opportunity to support local arts and cultural events. The trail is a multi-year project, celebrating West Virginia’s vibrant tradition of dance, music and storytelling.

The West Virginia Division of Tourism and West Virginia Public Broadcasting Mountain Stage collaborated to produce a virtual map of the trail. The website provides visitors with links to trails along the path, streaming music, and information on local cultural events. It is an invitation to visit at least a weekend exploring West Virginia. For more information and to find the sounds and sights of the virtual tour, visit www.mountainmusictrail.com.

By Eliza Laubach

Kentucky officials have made a determined effort to advance sustainable economic solutions through citizen engagement and outreach to all levels of government. The effort worked with residents and partners in Virginia to elevate clean energy as a priority for the McAlester administration, including major job announcements and new infrastructure investments. The 2016 Appalachian Studies Conference is themed: “Voices from the Misty Mountains: Diversity and Unity,” and focuses on the advocacy of local and state organizations and groups and education. Organized by the Appalachian Studies Association, Registration fees vary. The website, W. Va. Call (304) 870-3119 or visit appalachianstudies.org/annualconference to register.

Mountain State.

By Elizabeth E. Payne

The Mountain State.

By Elizabeth E. Payne

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Public Input Invited for Pisgah and Nantahala Forest Planning

By Molly Moore

Drafting a plan to guide management of the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests for the next 15 years is a complex process, one that began in spring 2014 and will continue through fall 2017.

Currently, the U.S. Forest Service is working to determine which areas of these two western North Carolina national forests could be recommended for firewise official wilderness or included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Wilderness areas and Scenic rivers receive the highest level of federal protections. Although the USFS can recommend areas for protection, an act of Congress is required for official designation.

Following the renovations, a chemistry lab with links to Thomas Jefferson was discovered behind a walk in the University of Virginia’s Rotunda.

According to the agency website, the USFS will seek public input as it develops its Draft Environmental Impact Statement in early 2016, with a formal public comment period to follow in spring.

To learn more about the process and provide input, visit http://1.usa.gov/1s4QQR

Ohio Woman Wins $1.6 Million in Pollution Damages

Carla Barhelt of Guisvale won a three-week-long trial against chemical company DuPont in early October. Barhelt alleged that she developed kidney cancer following exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid, a chemical the company used and then dumped into the Ohio River at their Washington Works plant in Parkersburg, W. Va.

Barhelt is among approximately 3,500 individuals living nearby who claim illness related to the chemical plant, some of whom won a class-action lawsuit against DuPont in 2001. After a week-long trial against chemical company 3M for its disposal of toxic chemicals in and around the city of Decatur, Ala., as well as directly into the Tennessee River and its tributaries.

According to the group, these chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonate, can make their way into human tissue through the consumption of fish that are exposed to high concentrations of the pollutants in the water. Additionally, the chemicals can potentially cause cancers, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and ulcerative colitis. The group also claims that conventional wastewater treatment procedures do not sufficiently filter the chemicals.

Tennessee Riverkeeper has requested that 3M increase their efforts to clean up groundwater contamination and stop the discharge of these chemicals by chemical disposal and leachate from landfills.

However, 3M claims that the chemicals are not harmful, protected by an agreement that prevents public involvement in the decision has drawn attention to a years-long legal battle over ownership of the city of Asheville’s water system.

Later this fall, the EPA is expected to issue its final decision based on the data it has collected.

EPA May Take Over Cleanup of Asheville Superfund Site

This action may influence the cleanup of a Superfund site that has been containing groundwater with toxic waste in south Asheville for decades.

From 1959 to 1986, the electronic manufacturing plant CTS of Asheville buried significant amounts of trichloroethylene. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency listed the area Superfund in 2012, and in 2013 CTS Corporation voluntarily cleaned up groundwater contamination caused by chemical disposal and leachate from landfills.

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Sumac: A Winter Spice

By Chris Rehbein

Keep an eye to the roadside on your winter travels and you'll likely glimpse a flash of red among the mixed woods and snowy fields. The distinctive "spike" of sumac berries are a common sight in winter, persisting long after other trees and shrubs have fallen bare. Topping the sumac’s branches like red candle flames, the berries, called drupes, ripen in autumn and gradually turn dark red as winter sets in. When forage becomes scarce, these berries are an important food source for winter wildlife, including fox squirrels, cottontail rabbits, whitetailed deer and more than 300 species of birds.

Their attractiveness also plays a key reproductive role: animal digestion helps disperse the seeds through their scat. Given the right conditions — namely dry, well-drained soils — sumac thrives easily, and is among the first plants to reinvade disturbed areas like roadways, burns and mine sites. Sumac’s preference for poor, disturbed soils, as well as its ability of growing in alkaline conditions, enabled it to spread even more.

But that’s not the only reason sumac gets a bad rap. “Most people, when they hear the word ‘sumac,’ think ‘toxic poison sumac,’” says Becky Lingler, associate professor of medical chemistry at the University of Charleston and certified West Virginia naturalist. “It’s currently written in a book on edible and medicinal plants in Appalachia. Both poisonous and nonpoisonous sumac types are classified within the same family of plants, Anacardiaceae, along with poison ivy, cashews, pistachio and mangos. That sumac is related to the cashew, whose husk is as toxic as its nut in melanoma, speaks further to people’s ambivalence toward this curious plant.

While desiring of its toxic reputa- tion for the painful rash it causes, poison sumac is relatively uncommon in the mountains. Distinguished by its palmately clustered white drupes, it tends to prefer swampy lowland soils. “People have contact dermatitis against a lot of things,” says Lingler. “And just as people may mistakenly blame goldenrod for hay fever, sumac often takes the heat for other skin allergies. Besides poison sumac, there are four nontoxic species: Staghorn, smooth, fragrant and shining or winged. Smooth and fragrant sumac are by far the most easily confused, found throughout the eastern United States. Shining, or winged, sumac is equally common. Classified as shrubs or small trees, their heights range according to type: Staghorn sumac plants are the tallest, reaching up to 20 feet while fragrant sumac are the shortest at 2 to 7 feet. Lingler says another variety, white, or winged sumac, is nearly ubiquitous in West Virginia and further north. It is distinguished by its delicately curved panicles as well as the fine, still hairs that cover its drupes and branches and resemble buck velvet. This particular variety is well-known for its use in making qualla, a tart, antioxidant-rich drink made by steeping the drupes in cold water.

Tipping the sumac’s branches like a flash of red, Photo by James P. Blair; sumac leaves are identifiable by the leaf-like covering its drupes and branches. Photo by Gregorio Perez

First brought to North America by European colonists, who in turn acquired the plant from the Middle East, where it originated, sumac has a long history of use as a spice. The concentrated juice of the drupes also makes a good astringent, imparting meats with a lemony tartness. American Indians utilized sumac for a host of medicinal uses, depending on the variety. Tannins made from the drupes or leaves of fragrant sumac were used to treat boils, while the bark of winged sumac was used as a nursing aid for mothers.

Leaves from the winged sumac, rich in tannins, were also used to make toothpastes, diuretics, diaphoretic and other stomach ailments. These tannins are also useful in making dyes and tanning leather; in the Middle East tanners used a solution made with dried sumac leaves to achieve a soft, pliable leather and then dyed it a deep Monrovia red. The uses of sumac are as varied as its long, multicultural history. So when those bright red panicles next catch your eye, take a moment to pause and consider the richness bundled within.

To reduce our region’s carbon footprint and bring affordable energy efficiency to rural mountain communities in North Carolina and Tennessee.

“We are committed to pushing state leaders and utilities to expand solar, wind and energy efficiency in their plans.”

Robert Belton, Executive Director

Appalachian Voices' determination, perseverance and wise, determined, passionate and committed Appalachian team to increase our effectiveness and remain vigilant in defending impacted residents and the environment from the ongoing devastation caused by mountaintop removal coal mining in West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee.

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The loyalty of our members is the backbone of our shared success. Thanks to their support, we accomplished this and so much more in 2015:

- As a native trout fisherman, I admire and expect Appalachian Voices’ determination, perseverance and wise, thoughtful action to protect our mountains and waterways.

Bob Belton, Supporter & Volunteer

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MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL | Aided staff to our Central Appalachian team to increase our effectiveness and remain vigilant in defending impacted residents and the environment from the ongoing devastation caused by mountaintop removal coal mining in West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee.

COAL ASH | Fought for people living near coal-fired power plants who are speaking up for safe drinking water and an end to coal ash pollution.

Pipelines and Fracking | In North Carolina, we challenged the rush to expand tracking and pipeline infrastructure that would lock the Southeast into decades of over-reliance on natural gas.

ENERGY SAVINGS FOR APPALACHIA | Stepped up our efforts to reduce our region’s carbon footprint and bring affordable energy efficiency to rural mountain communities in North Carolina and Tennessee.

CLEAN ENERGY | Remained committed to pushing state leaders and utilities to expand solar, wind and energy efficiency in their plans.

A NEW ECONOMY FOR APPALACHIA | Opened an office in Norton, Va., and started an Economic Diversification program to help communities struggling with the steep decline of the coal industry find new opportunities to build resilience and establish a sustainable economic future.

Connect with us to build a better future for Appalachia.

AppalachianVoices.org/donate

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A Bridge Over Troubled Water
Faced with Threats to Nolichucky River, Residents Unite

By Lorelei Goff

conflicts of interest by local officials are planned at the same location. A new threat was proposed along the North Toe River in Avery County, N.C., the Nolichucky River transitions to the company’s ammonium nitrate solution plant in Erwin, Tenn., and the Greene County Industrial Development Department, U.S. Nitrogen eyed the area as a potential site for a calcium nitrate plant operated by Yara International. “Our well is less than 300 yards from the pipeline to be installed in state highway 421, and the Greene County Industrial Development Department, U.S. Nitrogen eyed the area as a potential site for a calcium nitrate plant operated by Yara International. A new threat was proposed along the North Toe River in Avery County, N.C., the Nolichucky River transitions to the company’s ammonium nitrate solution plant in Erwin, Tenn., and the Greene County Industrial Development Department, U.S. Nitrogen eyed the area as a potential site for a calcium nitrate plant operated by Yara International. The return route to your vehicle is (mostly) downhill from here. Follow your steps, Mr. Peter Barr, you’re about to com- plete your hike. That is if you can bring yourself to leave the top of the mountain.

Peter Barr is the Trails & Outreach Coordinator at Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy and the author of “Hiking North Carolina’s Least Traveled Trails.”

Four miles, 550 feet elevation gain of approx. 2,800 feet.

Directions: From the intersection of U.S. Highway 321 & TN Highway 32 in Cosby, Tenn., drive TN south 1.2 miles to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park entrance. Turn right into the park and drive 2.2 miles to the Cosby Campground. Hiker parking is on the left prior to the campground information center.

Contact: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, (866) 436-1200, www.nps.gov/gsmo

— Peter Barr

For more details, visit hikinginthesmokies.com/cammerer.htm

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Getting Perspective

By Elizabeth E. Payne

It has been almost forty years since Harlan County, USA (1976) brought attention to the miners’ strike at the Brookie Mine in southeast Kentucky. Since then, dozens of films, including Justice in the Coalfields (1999), Slog (2005) and The Last Mountain (2011), have explored the challenges facing Appalachia. Three new films continue this long tradition. “Blood on the Mountain” explores the role that Hollywood played in creating the “hillbilly” stereotype and contrasts this stereotype with real men and women from the region.

Three new films continue this long tradition. “Blood on the Mountain” explores the role that Hollywood played in creating the “hillbilly” stereotype and contrasts this stereotype with real men and women from the region.

**Blood on the Mountain** (2014)

From the Archives - Harlan County, USA

In February 2005, The Appalachian Voices published an interview with the editor of the Academy Award-winning 1976 film Harlan County, USA. “To read Kopple’s reflections on the film three decades after its release, visit appvoices.org/archive/harlancounty.

By Samantha Eshleman

Appalachia in television and film. “After Coal” is another example of a participatory documentary project. “After Coal” filmmaker Tom Hansell profiled individual and community-based approaches to not only saving lives but also providing a just economic transition to communities after coal jobs are lost.

**Hillbilly: Appalachia in film and television** (expected 2016)

Hillbilly: Appalachia in film and television (expected 2016)

Hillbilly: Appalachian filmmakers discuss their work in the region

By Elizabeth E. Payne

Her latest film, “Blood on the Mountain,” co-directed with Jordan Freeman, recently screened at the festival with broader distribution expected in spring 2016. The final film will be released in 2016. For more information, visit bloodonthemountain.com.

By Samantha Eshleman

Overburden” take different approaches to investigating the grip that coal continues to have on the region. The film, directed by Sally Rubin and Ashley York, aims to contrast the realities of life in McDowell County, West Virginia, with broader distribution expected in spring 2016. The final film will be released in 2016. For more information, visit bloodonthemountain.com. Filmmaker Tom Hansell and camera person Mari-Lynn Evans interview Silent哨兵 in Harlan, Ky. for “After Coal.” The company was formed in 1915 by the Knoll brothers, three sons of a Kentucky coal miner.

Filmmaker Tom Hansell and camera person Mari-Lynn Evans interview Silent Sirens in Harlan, Ky. near Abilene, W. Va. The company was formed in 1915 by the Knoll brothers, three sons of a Kentucky coal miner. W. Va. for “After Coal.” The company was formed in 1915 by the Knoll brothers, three sons of a Kentucky coal miner.

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Documentary films
continued from p. 10
Appalachia isn’t, simultaneously, in the same film.” Both directors have strong ties to Appalachia. York is from eastern Ken- tucky. And Rubin, whose previous work includes “Deep Down: A story from the heart of coal country,” which she co-directed with Jon Gilmore, is family with both Rubin and York now live in Los Angeles, which provides them with a simultaneous closeness to and distance from their topic.

“...she says. “It is the only way I can imagine the hills and the people, and I would even say so popular, in popular culture and media...”

Appalachia, particularly coal, is then of the region. And others perpetuated a derogatory stereotype and unflattering degree. The piece solicited a strong online debate, with some commenters objecting that the photographers perked a view of the region, and others defenders of the art of the work. To understand why Gilden’s photographs caused such outcry from some people living in the region, it is important to have an understanding of the history of Appalachian images...

The late 19th and early 20th century saw the re-discovery of culture and resources in the Appalachian Mountains by the rest of the country. Missionaries, industrialists, scholars, writers, photographers and the like perked those wild and untouched mountains as America’s own preconceived narratives were used to present the coal beneath the ground and the lumber... on its hills, or a chance to preserve the last remnant of ‘Pioneer America.’”

Chad A. Stevens

Bette Harrack (left) and Lorelei Scarbro (right) find common ground in their fight to keep their homes in the explosion.

In a book and series of short documentary projects are listed here. More are available through Appalshop, a nonprofit Kentucky-based cultural organization focused on documenting Appalachia. In a book and series of short documentary projects are listed here. More are available through Appalshop, a nonprofit Kentucky-based cultural organization focused on documenting Appalachia.

The 20th century also witnessed a rise in the exploration of culture and resources in the Appalachian Mountains by the rest of the country. Missionaries, industrialists, scholars, writers, photographers and the like perked those wild and untouched mountains as America’s own preconceived narratives were used to present the coal beneath the ground and the lumber... on its hills, or a chance to preserve the last remnant of ‘Pioneer America.’”

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How, which supports leadership development and community engagement among young people through youth-led strengths and interviewed community members. The project was facilitated by the grassroots organization Know-Of their school. The youth took photos of their current experiences, drew maps highlighting their neighborhoods’ landmarks, and interviewed people about their lives. The project took place on an annual basis, and photos must be taken within one of the 420 counties designated as Appalachia by the Appalachian Regional Commission. "I'm in love with the area, I'm in love with the people." Learn more at sarahhoskins.com

In fall 2014, students at Vine Middle School in Knoxville, Tenn., created a book documenting the community history and issues that people in Appalachia have already had enough from. Visit LookinAtAppalachia.org. Instagram @LookingAtAppalachia

“Ain’t I Appalachian too?” project created by Roger May. Fifty years later in 2014, Roger May, a photographer with roots in Kentucky and West Virginia, started a web-based project in which he asked photographers to submit images that explore the diversity of the region and expand the visual narrative. The project takes place on an annual basis, and photos must be taken within one of the 420 counties designated as Appalachia by the Appalachian Regional Commission. "I'm in love with the area, I'm in love with the people." Learn more at sarahhoskins.com

The advent of social media has provided an opportunity to look at Appalachia through a wide-angle lens. Increased access to the internet and websites like Instagram and Facebook have broadened the diversity of images and stories coming from the region. Contemporary movements include the “Affrilachian Artists Project,” which aims to build community among artists of color living in and inspired by the mountains, the Stay Together Appalachian Youth Project’s Appalachian Love Story campaign which encourages individuals to share their own photographs and stories using the hashtag #EbbEbullo, and the “Looking at Appalachia Fifty Years After the War on Poverty” project created by Roger May. Visit rogermay-programs in the arts and media. Learn more at knoxknow.wordpress.com, Instagram @LookingAtAppalachia

Stormy, near Nip, West Virginia by Kate Fowler

“Vibs,” a project originally about the company Monstanto, focuses on a small West Virginia town. After spending time in the town and meeting with residents and activists, Fowler said, "I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see radiation and pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. I began to realize that it’s hard to be from this area and not see the effects of pollution in your community. 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Land through the Lens

Photographs of Appalachia’s wild workers have shaped our relationship with the mountains since the early 20th century, and witnessing the destruction of the region’s land and waters has long stirred residents to defend our natural heritage. — Compiled by Molly Alvin

Photographs of Appalachia’s natural beauty still beckon visitors to the area, and invite locals to explore and rethink their surroundings.

Photo by E.J. Sugg courtesy of US Forest Service and US National Archives and Records Administration

A note archived with the 1923 image of Pigeon River National Forest in western North Carolina states, “Here fire swept through repeatedly after destructive logging with the result that . . . this is a disheartening sight.” Images of logging in the southern Appalachians helped spur the movement to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

From the Archives - Paul Corbit Brown

In our December 2011 issue, we profiled West Virginia photographer Paul Corbit Brown, whose powerful photographs of the people and places that have suffered due to the coal industry continue to invite the viewer to fight against injustice. Read about his work at appvoices.org/news/photoarchive/whorunsamerica

Photo by Paul Corbit Brown

Peter Givens

COUNTERING STEREOTYPES IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON THE PARKWAY

By Dan Radnicher

Peter Givens has made a career out of dispelling Appalachian myths and stereotypes, first as a ranger for the National Park Service and now as a faculty member in Virginia Western Community College’s history department. The driver behind it all? A deep and abiding love for the region.

“We live in such an incredibly beautiful world, either good or bad. That’s why we’re here in the world,” says Givens. “You can take any American, put them in Appalachia — is it the natural history, the biodiversity, the recreation, the recreational value that’s just inherent in the mountains and what I think is a very, very deep and rich culture — and it just hurts me when it’s not treated properly.”

According to Givens, the Park Service, where he started in 1977, was sometimes guilty of perpetuating Appalachian stereotypes at its facilities.

“In the 1970s, when the parkway was built and the signs were put up and they were deciding what to interpret and what not to, you can tell they thought, ‘Let’s make it quaint; let’s make it what people expect to see,’” Givens says. “Very, very interesting, let’s tear down the two-story white frame farmstead and find a log cabin somewhere and put it there instead. Their idea was they were creating what they felt like the parkway should be.

Givens, who worked on a number of visitor centers and exhibits during his 35 years with the Park Service, tried to notify as much of that as he could.

“When the facilities that I worked on and some of the wayside exhibits, we just feel like we were telling a much more historic, honest, sort of than maybe the parkway did in the beginning,” he says.

The Appalachian was featured in films dating back to the late 1930s, Givens says the real exploration of cultural atten-
tion occurred after the 1960 presidential election. It was the first presidential campaign that America really watched on television and John F. Kennedy focused an incredible amount of attention on the region.

“You can make a case that many Americans sat in their homes during that campaign and saw Appalachian history and culture for the first time,” says Givens. “And we are interested, intrigued, engaged — even bemused, maybe — by what they see on their television screens.”

That new interest was reflected in a slew of new television shows — Beverly Hillbillies, Petticoat Junction, Green Acres, Hee Haw — that all consisted of one-sided portrayals of Appalachia. That went on for 10 or 15 years, longer, Givens says. “Dukes of Hazard is right out of L’Tis Amner, ” he says. “You can take Daisy Mae from L’Tis Amner, you can put Ellie Mae Clampett from the Beverly Hillbillies or Daisy Duke in there and not tell the difference. It’s the same sort of image.”

Images that lack a broader perspective still predominate — even within Appalachia. Givens points to a mural set in the sidewalk, around the renovated Market Square Building in Roanoke, Va., which depicts a young, barefoot banjo player in threadbare overalls, guitar slung across his back.

Several recent novels more accurately reflect the actual richness of Appalachia, Givens says, pointing especially to novels by Adriana Trigiani and Ron Rash. Trigiani’s “Big Stone Gap” was recently adapted as a movie that Givens recommends (see page 12).

“The depiction of Appalachia in popular culture is getting better and changing,” he says. “But we’re not there yet. We still see lots of stereotypes.”

In his classes on Appalachian his-
tory, Givens tries to ensure that his students understand the complexity of the story and help them understand that many Appalachian stereotypes really depict rural life across America, not just in this region.

“There is a preponderance of iconic images that America associates with Appalachia that really are just folk tales,” he says. “I tell my students that people in Kansas make quilts and play banjos and lived in log cabins.”

Appalachia isn’t a static entity, either, Givens stresses. “Appalachia is changing, and it has always been chang-
ing,” he says. “But one thing does seem constant: The deep sense of place developed by those raised here. ‘There seems to be something very personal and precious about people who’ve grown up in this re-
gion that they just don’t want to let go of.”

“There are so many stories of people who have left the region for big cities and factory jobs and they just keep coming back, and they won’t let go of the homeland.”

That sense of place seems to motivate Givens. “I just want people to know, in whatever sphere of influence I have, how special this place is.”
Fostering Stewardship Through Stories

“Saving Annie’s Mountain” is a new children’s book that follows a group of four homeschooled children in Wind Dance Farm and Earth Edu- cation Center in Mountain City, W.Va. The children are taking supplementary courses in history, writing and science at Wind Dance Farm when they write the book. The book “really stems from the dearth of information on the issue of mountaintop-coal removal aimed at young students,” says publisher Gary Stewart. “So, main- ly out of frustration, Leslie and four of the kids at Wind Dance Farm decided to create their own tale on the subject, hoping to make it accessible to others in the same predicament.”

The book is beautifully illustrated by O’Ryan, a local illustrator and artist, with images of scenic landscapes starkly contrasted with the ugly images of coal mining and destruction. “I think everyone knows, at some level at least, that the environment influences the physical characteristics of species, and that all species have a niche,” says Leslie Milbourne. “I think it’s crucial that kids learn about the complex interactions and interrela- tionships between living and nonliving components of our Earth so they can be better stewards than we were.”


— Review by W. Spencer King

A TALE OF TRAILS AND TIME

In “The Adventures of Bubba Jones: Time Traveling Through the Great Smoky Mountains,” readers follow young Bubba Jones, his sister Hug-a- Bugg and their grandfather Papa Lewis on an adventure through time and culture.

“The Appalachians have something that folks back then,” author Jeff Alt, “I’ve hiked out West and various other places around the world, and my heart still brings me back to the Appalachians.”

Alt set the first book in the Bubba Jones adventure series in the Smoky Mountains because of their status as the most visited park in the country. Alt’s own experiences with through-hiking the Appalachian Trail and overall interest in the outdoors inspired him to write children’s books. “I learned about eight weeks into my AT adventure, after my schedule of domes- tic society [had] left my mind, that [the woods are] the most awesome thinking room on Earth,” he says.

Alt’s exciting, inquisitive and eng- aging writing style reflects his sense of adventure. “Nature is so profound, so simple to access, but more complicated than any computer that we could ever design,” he says. “It’s mentally and physically healing to walk in the woods. It gives your mind time to just decompress.”

The book emphasizes the impor- tance of environmental education, as Bubba Jones learns many things simply by going out into nature. By getting kids excited about the outdoors, Alt hopes to change attitudes about what means to be outside. “The whole premise is that we’re not [just] thinking, ‘Hey, it’s an adventure.’”

All arts also aims to highlight how each individual’s actions have an influence on the planet. “We’re realizing now that we’re in the day and age of climate change, and it’s becoming a national se- curity threat,” he says. “Each and every one of us, by preserving your local park or monitoring a fragile species, you are [playing] a role in not only preserving your park, but you’re serving your country.”


— Review by W. Spencer King

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AN APPALACHIAN BOOKSHELF

TWO NEW CHILDREN’S BOOKS SHARE TALES OF THE OUTDOORS AND ACTIVISM

American history, when over 10,000 miners banded together in a attempt to amine. Along the way, the chil- dren learn about the harm that mountai- ntop removal coal mining brings to the area and the positive impact that speaking up about an issue can have.

A group of four homeschooled children, Lillie Gill-Newton (age 9), Maryam Keeley (age 11), Samantha Keck (age 11) and Nicholas Mobridge (age 13) wrote the book with the guid- ance of Leslie Milbourne, an educator at Wind Dance Farm and Earth Edu- cation Center in Mountain City, W.Va. They, meet an elderly woman named Annie who tells them about her childhood experiences in the area and its history. She recalls all of the memories about the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest labor dispute in

West Virginia Communities Still at Risk Despite Idled Mines

By Terence Ray

As of the end of November, Alpha Natural Resources will have idled two of its coal mines near the community of Naoma, W.Va, citing “adverse mar- ket conditions,” as their reason as both instances. In early October, 92 miners received notice of the impending lay- offe. The decision follows Alpha’s filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in August.

One of the mines, the Eddisworth mountaintop removal mine, has affected several nearby communi- ties in addition to Naoma, such as Sundial, Poffy Bottom and Eddisworth. The 2.8 billion gallon Shumate coal sludge impoundment is located 405 feet above the now abandoned Manchur Fork Elementary School in Sundial.

The Shumate coal sludge pond, which holds roughly twenty times the amount of coal sludge that was released in the fatal Buffalo Creek Flood of 1972, is fed by Alpha’s Goals prep plant. It remains to be seen whether Alpha will keep it operational, now that there is no more coal.

The impoundment is listed by the West Virginia Department of En- vironmental Protection as a Class C dam. It is “someplace you went where the type of dam you were at, where failure may cause a loss of human life or serious damage to [buildings and roads],” A report by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation found that if the Shumate impoundment were to fail, it would release a wall of sludge more than 20 feet high. Within five minutes, the sludge would reach the community of Eddisworth, a half-mile downstream. Mine Safety and Health Administra- tion officials have also cited the dam for safety violations on multiple occasions.

In April of this year, Appalachian Voices published a study of 50 com- munities in central Appalachia that are similarly “at risk” of the worst impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining. These impacts include, but are not limited to, increased blasting, dis- turbed water quality, and negative health, cold and public support trends. Sundial is Number 25 on this list of “Communities at Risk.”

According to Vernon Haltom, ex- ecutive director of Naoma-based Coal River Mountain Watch, these risks do not go away, even if you get nothing local, or even na- tional, media. Haltom references a recent New York Times article that claims “mountaintop removal is all but dead to a hole.” “It’s a ridiculous idea that coal mining is dead,” Haltom says. He points out that, although Alpha is

Willing to ship from a pair of national office, Appalachian Voices, is proud to announce the launch of Naoma, W.Va, where the Appalachian Mountain and Shumate coal sludge impoundments are located. In July, Appalachian Voices will be publishing a book about the history of coal mining in West Virginia.

“A Appalachia: The Legacy of Coal Mining in the United States,” which chronicles the history of coal mining in the United States, will be published by Beaufort Books. 824 pages, $9.95. For more information, visit AppalachianVoices.org.

“West Virginia Communities Still at Risk Despite Idled Mines” is published by Beaufort Books. 824 pages, $9.95. For more information, visit AppalachianVoices.org.

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Powering Up

Efforts to diversify central Appalachia’s economy gain steam

By Cat McClurk

Last July, in far southwest Virginia, Wise County made national news when it hosted the first federally approved commercial drone delivery in the United States. The scene was a rural medical clinic tucked deep among the Appalachian mountains, and the package being delivered by the small aircraft contained much-needed supplies.

“They were calling it our Kitty Hawk moment,” says Syndee Kilgore, a Wise County native who was involved in the project and whose ex- tentionist for the possibilities it signaled for the future of her community hasn’t waned since.

“Despite some misconceptions from the rest of the world, this area could really be a leader in technology,” she says.

Kilgore, 25, was among more than 130 people who attended one of eight rural economic development forums last fall. The region would also get some $826,400 to extend water to an industrial site near Union, W.Va.; almost $23 million for 2008 (the most popular project in Elizabethtown, Ky.); and most of the funding, including:

• $826,400 to extend water to an industry near Union, W.Va.;
• Almost $500,000 for a local food-supply project in Elizabethown, Ky.;
• $1.2 million for a substance abuse treatment program in Asbestos, Ky., a coalfield community struggling with rampant drug use; and
• $500,000 to support efforts in southeast Virginia to develop outdoor recreation and tourism, and provide training for entrepreneurs.
Appalachia’s Political Landscape

Budget vs. Appropriations: How Congress Controls Regional Spending

By Travis Byers

Before leaving Congress, House Speaker John Boehner worked with the White House to reach such a budget deal. Few members of Congress are happy with all of the specifics of that deal, the fact that the country isn’t facing another government shutdown is widely accepted as a good thing.

Passing a budget and passing an appropriations bill, however, are not the same thing. Although both a budget and an appropriations bill are a part of the federal budget process, they are different in several important respects.

While a budget is a comprehensive plan that sets overall goals and priorities for the federal government’s financial operations, an appropriations bill outlines specific amounts of money that will be available to different federal agencies and programs.

The appropriations process involves several key steps:

1. Congress approves a budget resolution.
2. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees develop a budget for each appropriations bill.
3. Congress passes the budget and appropriations bills.
4. The President signs the bills into law.

The appropriations process is highly political, with each member of Congress involved in the decision-making process. Members of Congress are often required to vote on amendments to the appropriations bills, which can affect the funding levels for specific programs and agencies.

The appropriations process is also closely watched by the public, as the funding decisions made by Congress can have a significant impact on federal programs and services.

In conclusion, the appropriations process is a key component of the federal budget process, with each member of Congress involved in the decision-making process. The funding decisions made by Congress can have a significant impact on federal programs and services.

Energy:

EPA and the President’s Climate Action Plan

The EPA is continuing its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. In 2015, the EPA announced its Clean Power Plan, which sets ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions from existing power plants.

The Clean Power Plan is designed to help states meet their goals for reducing carbon emissions, and it includes a variety of strategies for achieving these goals.

However, the Clean Power Plan has been the subject of intense debate and legal challenges, with many states opposing the plan and seeking to block its implementation.

In conclusion, the Clean Power Plan is a key component of the Obama administration’s efforts to address climate change. The plan is designed to help states meet their goals for reducing carbon emissions, and it includes a variety of strategies for achieving these goals.

In a word, efficient heat pumps are efficient. They can be so energy-efficient that they are free to operate. According to the Department of Energy, heat pumps can save homeowners 30% to 50% on their energy bills. In addition, heat pumps are an excellent source of renewable energy.

In conclusion, the use of advanced technology such as heat pumps is essential for reducing the cost of energy for homeowners. They can save up to 75% on energy bills and provide a considerable return on investment. In conclusion, the use of advanced technology such as heat pumps is essential for reducing the cost of energy for homeowners. They can save up to 75% on energy bills and provide a considerable return on investment.

Improve the Efficiency of Your Home

Tips for Energy-Aware Homeowners

1. Reduce the heat by tightening the home.
2. Insulate well.

In this article we will focus on the first tip, which is to save energy by heating and cooling more efficiently.

About Sunray Day Homes

SunRay Day Homes is a family-owned general contracting firm based in Lexington, KY. The company specializes in providing turn-key homes to customers throughout the southcentral United States.

In conclusion, energy efficient heat pumps are an excellent investment for homeowners. They can save up to 75% on energy bills and provide a considerable return on investment. In conclusion, energy efficient heat pumps are an excellent investment for homeowners. They can save up to 75% on energy bills and provide a considerable return on investment.
Coal Ash Management Continues to Challenge Region

By Elizabeth E. Payne

Coal management in North Carolina, including Appalachian Voices, the publisher of this paper, are challenging a settlement Duke Energy and the regulatory commission in the state that was reached in 2014 to reduce emissions from the company’s coal ash ponds. The settlement is set to expire in 2020, and the utility company—along with the Tennessee Valley Authority—has proposed a new agreement that would require Duke to reduce emissions by 60% by 2020 and meet a 90% reduction goal by 2030.

By John Brummet

The final rule for the Clean Power Plan, a cornerstone of President Obama’s climate change strategy, was announced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in August 2015. The rule requires existing power plants to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 32% below 2005 levels by 2030. The EPA estimates that the rule will prevent about 6,600 deaths and 500,000 asthma attacks annually.

By Elizabeth E. Payne

Conservation groups in North Carolina, including Appalachian Voices, the publisher of this paper, are challenging a settlement Duke Energy and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality that significantly reduces the fines for violation of the North Carolina Clean Coal and Coal Ash Management Act. The settlement also requires Duke to pay a modest fine of $1 million and, according to a statement issued by the groups, to “safeguard the health of North Carolinians who live near Duke coal ash facilities, including the retired Sutton plant.” In addition to the fine, the settlement requires Duke to accept responsibility for the costs of cleaning up the coal ash contamination at the Sutton plant.

By Elizabeth E. Payne

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Organizing Around the Clean Power Plan

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized the first-in-a-series of carbon pollution rules from power plants earlier this year: Known as the Clean Power Plan, the rules give states a wide degree of flexibility to determine how to reduce their carbon emissions.

Our teams are hard at work in the Appalachian states to ensure that energy-efficiency and renewable energy are priorities and our dependence on fossil fuels is replaced with sustainable energy sources.

Southwest Virginia’s New Economy Forums

In October, Appalachian Voices partnered with Old Dominion University to host eight community forums in the coalfield counties of southwest Virginia. We went into the communities to ask our neighbors how they think about their ideas for how to move the economy of their communities forward.

More than 130 residents participated in the forums, sharing their ideas and the ideas being generated.

For more information, visit appvoices.org/new-economy/forums

Welcome Maya and Leigh

Join us in welcoming two new members to the Appalachian Voices team.

Maya Viknius, Controller

Maya comes from and lives in Kiev, Ukraine, and spent her childhood in the U.S., where the residents were mostly self-reliant. She moved to the United States at the age of 21, living in the Midwest and on the New England coast before settling in the mountains of Western North Carolina in 2013. She currently lives with her husband Brian, and two sons, Nicholas and Stephen, near the beautiful Watauga River in Sugar Grove, NC.

Maya will serve as our controller overseeing the financial operations of the organization.

Leigh Kirchen, Development Coordinator

Leigh comes up to beautiful Rockbridge County in the heart of Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley to work as a Development Coordinator at Appalachian Voices. Her family has been in the area for generations, and she is excited to work in the greater Appalachia region. Her passion for successful grassroots campaigns has fueled her drive to help residents across the mountains and valleys of the region. Our mission is to empower Appalachian voices to achieve a sustainable future.

Both Leigh and Maya are excited to work with the Appalachian Voices team and our supporters to build a more secure future for our region. We’re excited to see what they bring to the table.

To visit the Appalachian Voices blog, visit appvoices.org/blog

Welcome Maya and Leigh!
Located on the North Fork of the Blackwater River in West Virginia, the Kennedy Falls are a beautiful destination for a rugged hike in any season. North Carolina photographer Sharon Canter took this picture on the last day of a holiday vacation to the area and ushered in the New Year in this winter wonderland. You can find more of Canter’s work on Flickr by searching for “Sharon C2010.”

Appalachian Voices has never been better positioned to usher in a cleaner and healthier future — through our work with residents in impacted communities, tracking down polluters, and expanding our focus on solutions for the region.

But to do this, we need your support. Help us continue to make strides toward a positive future for Appalachia by donating today.