Home on the Range

A look at the wild ponies and horses of Appalachia
F
or the past 20 years, a troop of more than 300 volunteer Distribution Volunteers has helped us deliver The Appalachian newspaper to your door. This new reader is not by itself in our hands without your dependable and generous network, who live throughout The Voice's eight-state coverage area and provide the vehicle-power, local knowledge of home, and support our small Backyard Bird Count. This list might be incomplete, and maybe by as much as a country mile. Our records only go back to 2004, and we may have unintentionally missed a few names along the way as well. But to each and every person and organization who has served as part of this valuable volunteer team throughout the years, we offer our deepest gratitude. You've made it possible for us to bring you this strong, vibrant and important publication.

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A Salute to Our Volunteer Distributors

Introduction to Falconry

What We Do Now: A note from the executive director

Last weekend, I was hiking with my three young kids. I witnessed their joy, watching them skitter up a rock above our favorite mountain creek, hopping fluidly. I admired their analytical interest in the moment, wondering if they were seeing tiny creatures, mushrooms and small creatures along the trail, brushing on bush twigs.

That was difficult to share in that joy or presence. It’s been hard to look at our Kids’ Appalachian or natural beauty without thinking about the presidential election and its implications for the future.

The most important question is how to respond on behalf of what we love.

I believe we must be responsible for each other when we operate in common interest, transcending our inevitable inequalities and连接ing with others. It affirms our brotherhood and sisterhood, we feel the boost in our energy and the depth of our power to make a difference.

Our work is a challenge, the presidential election an opportunity, and an endeavor that's been, we must all contribute to online bird counts. Free. Visit www.birdtrack.org

The most important question is how to respond on behalf of what we love. Our work is a challenge, the presidential election an opportunity.

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Annie Austin
Katie Claxton
Hannah Ayres

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Mariele Abalo
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New POWER Initiative Grants Aim to Bolster Coal-Impacted Economies

By Elizabeth E. Payne

On Oct. 26, the White House announced more grants to assist in economic development and job training in areas hardest hit by the decline of the coal industry. The news of POWER Initiative grants awarded nearly $28 million dollars of support for 42 projects in 13 states.

The largest grant, for $3 million, was awarded to Friends of Southwest Virginia for a project intended to increase ecotourism opportunities in a four-county area. Plans include building an Appalachian Trail Center in Damascus and creating a 30-mile multi-use trail from Breaks Interstate Park to Hayes, among other recreational improvements.

The Industrial Development Authority in Wise, Va., received $2.2 million for the “Virginia Emerging Drone Industry Cluster Project,” which aims to attract the drone industry to five counties in southwest Virginia.

West Virginia received funding for implementing, planning and researching various projects. The City of Bluefield received the state’s largest award with a $24 million grant for the “Bluefield Commercialization Station,” a high-tech incubator for new and existing businesses.

Smaller POWER Planning Grants were also awarded to several other projects in the state, including a $100,000 grant that would assess the viability of transforming a former “pill mill” in Williamson, W.Va., into a job training and substance abuse center.

Projects in Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee were also funded, as were numerous projects in Ohio, Pennsylvania and states outside Appalachia.

Appalachian Youth Discuss Just Economic Transition

On Nov. 20, the Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition and the Stay Together Youth Drop-In Center in Whitesburg, Ky. presented the first in a series of “Youth Assemblies at the Boone Page 4  |  The Appalachian Voice  |  December 2016 / January 2017

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The settlement reached will divide at least $151 million between those directly impacted by the spill, which includes more than 224,000 residents, more than 7,300 business owners and an unnamed number of individuals who worked in affected areas but live elsewhere. The settlement also stipulates that the settlement’s cost to the water utility must be paid by the company’s stockholders and not passed on to their ratepayers.

“I am pleased with the settlement and hope it will encourage our community and other communities to keep asking questions and taking measures to protect water sources,” says Crystal Good, the lead plaintiff in the case.

According to the Charleston Gazette-Mail, neither Eastman nor West Virginia American admitted any fault for the spill by accepting the settlement.
Residents Seek to Halt New Development

By Lox Murray

The Sustainable and Equitable Agricultural Development Taskforce, a coalition of organizations representing underserved and underrepresented areas in East Tennessee, is working to bring broadband internet services to rural parts of the state.

The court case dealing with the zoning of the new development lasted for weeks as those in favor of the development and those opposed to it presented their cases. Judge Sage Johnson will make a final decision on Dec. 15.

The new development would be adjacent to the Virginia Creeper Trail, a 34.3 mile long trail that connects the towns of Abingdon and Damascus, and the community of Whitespring. The popular trail is used by bikers, hikers, runners and horseback riders.

The shopping center and the athletic complex would be visible from the traffic in and around the shopping center. That the new development would “dramatically change the atmosphere” of the trail, Jett says. "Friends of Abingdon, expressed concern that the new development would ‘drastically change the atmosphere’ of the trail. Jett explained that Friends of Abingdon has lobbied two new town council candidates who replaced members support- ing the development. According to the Bristol Herald Courier town officials have been discussing the possibility of a sports complex for more than 10 years.

Fifty Years of Foxfire Magazine

Foxfire Magazine, named for the bioluminescent fungi that grows on deciduous wood is celebrating its 50th anniversary. In 1966, a high school English class decided to create a magazine to publish short stories about Southern Appalachia. Foxfire has been thriving ever since.

Many of the stories focus on the pioneer days in Southern Appalachia, and this how era helped to define the culture of the community today.

The magazine is published twice each year by students at Rabun County High School. The magazine became so successful that anthologies of stories are published in multiple Foxfire books.

Southwest Virginia Gets a New Brand

The Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, the regional coordinating body for economic development and cultural heritage tourism, released a new logo and tourism brand for Southwest Virginia in October. The new brand is intended to help boost tourism and economic growth in the region.

“Southwest Virginia is steeped in history and culture,” said Terri Van Ors. “This new brand will help position the region as a destination for visitors looking to experience the area’s rich heritage and natural beauty.”

Fungal Disease Threatens Snakes

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the dry rocky lands of Tennessee are home to some of the most economically important species on Earth. However, recent research has shown that a devastating fungal disease is threatening to wipe out some of these species.

The disease, known as fungal panzacc, has been found in several species of snakes in Tennessee, including the copperhead and the common garter snake. The disease is caused by a fungus called Brefeldia maxima, which infects the snake’s skin and causes lesions to form. These lesions can be severe enough to cause the snake to die.

In the past, conservation efforts have focused on preserving habitat and reducing human contact with these species. However, with the onset of a fungal disease, conservationists must also focus on protecting these species from the spread of the disease.

Newstalk

Rare Elk Sightings in Upstate SC

A bull elk was spotted in Pickens Coun- ty, S.C., in October. The Pickens County Herald published a Sentinel report that the elk was tranquilized and treated by large tracts of land in South Carolina mountains.

A 10-year-old, male elk that has populated the Palmetto State for the past 100 years, is the latest to join the population in the area. The elk may provide researchers with valuable data about the species.

Heavy rain. During its underground journey, Cow Creek coughs up to 100,000 gallons of water per minute. The water is then channeled through a tunnel and into a large pool, where it is collected for use by the community.

The proposed development would be located on the site of the old Cane Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau. The area is known for its scenic beauty and offers opportunities for hiking, fishing, and picnicking.

The Fall Creek Falls Loop

Length: 2.9 mile trail / 1.2 Gorge Trail, 1 mile back to the parking area Difficulty: Easy to moderate

A scenic loop trail in Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, Fall Creek Falls State Park encompasses 26,000 acres. The area is largely com- posed of former coal mining areas, where hundreds of years of erosion have carved steep gorges, rocky cliffs and outcroppings.

The Fall Creek Falls Loop is a 2.9-mile, out-and-back trail that provides access to Fall Creek Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in Tennessee. The trail begins at the visitors center and winds its way through forested areas and along the cliffs of the Cumberland Plateau.

Falls Creek Falls Loop

The USGS reports that the disease can spread quickly and can be carried by wind, water, or healthy animals that come into contact with infected ones. Conservationists are working to keep the disease from spreading to other areas.

Hiking the Highlands

Fall Creek Falls State Park

A treasure of the Cumberland Plateau

By Molly Moore

From Rocky Point Overlook dur- ing an unsurprisingly warm fall after- noon, the air is still, and the Upper Cane Creek Gorge stretches to the blue horizon, though the bottom, some feet below, is a bit of a sight. Even during a busy weekend on a popular loop trail, the area offers solitude and an expansive, humbling view.

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Traveling The Crooked Road

Heritage music trail continues to draw visitors to Southwest Virginia

By Dave Walker

From Clintwood to Ferrum, from Gunn Lynn to Galax, the Crooked Road in Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail.

Thousands seek out the 300-mile-long trail that follows former Route 58, along with other sites across Southwest Virginia. But throughout the Appalachian region, the Crooked Road has come to symbolize much more than a set of travel plans: it has catalyzed cultural assets to develop a new economy.

Fourteen years ago, on a January day with six inches of snow, 26 people showed up for a meeting to talk about a radical idea for Southwest Virginia — building an economic development plan around the region’s traditional music heritage. Some drove over from 100 miles away.

“It was very surprising, and I like to say the Holy Ghost came down,” says Tyler Hughes and his band perform at Lee Theatre in Pennington Gap, Va., during the 2016 Mountains of Music Festival. Photo by Jennifer Woods. (right), signature graphic for The Crooked Road makes the music.

“Folks who are interested in cultural, historical and recreational sites, the Appalachian Quilt Trail’s slogan is “It’s Whatever You Want It to Be.” The map, created in 2012, lists over 150 listings in Appalachian Quilt Trail’s logo.

“For more information, visit virginia.org/quilt.”

Cherohala Skyway (North Carolina/Tennessee)

Opened in 1996 and crossing 131 miles of mountainous terrain, the Cherohala Skyway is a National Scenic Byway that links Tennessee with North Carolina and is described as “a mountain without walls.” The road is a part of the Fun in the Footsteps Heritage Trail that promotes the area’s diverse economic base. Photo by Fun in the Footsteps of Tennessee.

Blue Ridge Parkway (North Carolina/Virginia)

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a national park in the Appalachian Mountains. Photo by Stephanie Vannier, courtesy of www.Virginia.org, Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Pie in the Sky (Tennessee/Virginia)

Pie in the Sky Trail (Tennessee/Virginia)

Traveling Trails of Appalachia

In a section of The Crooked Road, there are many other driving trails in Appalachia. Take a day or week to discover the region’s history, culture, and environment — compiled by Dave Walker.

In this beautifully illustrated volume, Randy Johnson shares both his life and love for this mountain region.

The book is divided into two sections: The first section highlights the history of the mountain. After summarizing its geological formation, Johnson details accounts of early explorers and scholars who explored the mountain from the late 1800s onward. Later, townships around Grandfather Mountain were established, the railroad arrived, and the slopes were timbered and felled.

Today, Grandfather Mountain is traversed by hiking trails, skirted by the Blue Ridge Parkway, and crossed by the mile-high swinging bridge. The bookstore and these developments, along with the impact of the MacLean and Mortimer families, who owned this property for many generations until two-thirds of the mountain was sold. North Carolina and became a state park in 1946. According to the National Park Foundation, the third is operated as a scenic attraction by the nonprofit Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation.

The second section provides a guide to hiking and photographing Grandfather Mountain and the rich abundance of wildlife and plants in the area. The stunning images that accompany Johnson’s text include a carefully curated collection of archival photos and photographs taken by Hugh Morton — longtime owner of Cherokee County and burnt to triple the cultural heritage revenues.
Reclaiming Our Mountains

Return mining lands to beneficial uses

By Elizabeth E. Payne

More than a half-century of surface coal mining has left scars across Central Appalachia. As mining operations moved from one coal seam to another, much of the surface was reduced to barren landscapes and Mountaintop Removal coal mining left more than 500 million acres across Appalachia.

At least 230,000 acres of lands damaged by mining before 1977 and in need of reclamation, according to a 2015 analysis by Appalachian Citizens’ Law Center and The Alliance for App- 
calachian Health and Safety. The law outlines the process and requirements for reclaiming each mine and for making these lands useful again is a complicated issue.

The law created the Office of Sur- 
facing Mining Reclamation and Environ- 
mental Protection, or OSMRE, in 1977. Since then, more than 98 million acres of lands mined prior to 1977 have been reclaimed. But no inventory of sites mined after this date is currently available.

The economics of the coal industry

The economics of the coal industry are complex, and they continue to be impacted by coal mining. The bill would accelerate the release of $1 billion from funds already paid by coal companies to invest in the funds for sites that are abandoned after mined lands to beneficial use.

The economic development potential of 14 abandoned

land sites in a seven-county region of Southwest Virginia was highlighted in a November report produced by Appal- 
achia Voices, the regional nonprofit that produces this newspaper. The report was authored by Gerald Collins, senior student from Appalachian Voices, the publisher of the Appalachian Voices.

The report concluded that the sites could be repurposed to better serve the area through ecotourism, agriculture, renewable energy and commercial development.

The goals of the study were to demonstrate the need for RECLAIM funding and to highlight sustainable projects that could create good jobs on former coal mines.

“We hope our report is continued on next page

Will you stand with us?

The communities where Appalachian Voices works have experienced firsthand the high costs of an exploitative, dirty energy economy. We cannot afford to stand by and ask them to live with that legacy or with looming threats. So we’re standing with them today, to prevent the high costs of an exploitative, dirty energy economy from further threatening the safety, health and quality of life that they deserve. With your help, we can do this.

We’re working with the Sierra Club and Appalachia Voices to create a new report that will highlight the economic development potential of abandoned mine lands in Southwest Virginia. The report will showcase how abandoned mine lands can be repurposed to accelerate the release of $1 billion from funds already paid by coal companies to create good jobs and economic development opportunities.
The authors of the report make several recommendations, including that the wording of the RECLAIM Act should be modified so that some abandoned mine lands that were re-mined after 1977 could be eligible for application by the USEPA. Such an expansion of eligibility would increase the pool of potential sites that could be repurposed for economic development. It would also provide a chance for reclamation at sites that have fallen through the cracks.

Reforming the Federal Land

Before they were mined for coal, most Appalachian peaks and slopes were covered in forests. And many scientists, government officials and environmental advocates hope to see reforestation at part of future reclamation plans.

Leading these efforts is the Appalachian Regional Project Reinvestment Initiative (ARRI). A coalition of citizens, industry and government officials working together, the ARRI is focused on restoring healthy forests in the eastern United States. Evan Angel, a forester and soil scientist with ARRI, explains that when trees are returned to abandoned mine lands, “trees grow very, very, very well on mine sites.” But he adds that “we have to follow the gold plaat,” says Angel. To eliminate the risk of landslides, ARRI calls for mine lands to be stabilized. But these compacted surfaces were ill-suited for growing the native trees that had been removed.

“Basically, it created a landscape that could not return to a healthy, productive forest without serious human mitigation,” says Angel.

Angel followed this approach until nearly two decades ago, when one of his foresters—his mentor, says Tammy Owens, the owner of Foxfire Farm in Dickenson County, Virginia—told him that the land was unproductive and nowhere near what it was before it was mined.”

Tammy Owens’ Foxfire Farm at left is on former mine land in southwest Virginia. Photo courtesy of the USEPA. Photo by Matt Barton

“...and then the coal was removed,” says Owens. “You know, they would use the money to re- level the topsoil to support the farm’s establishment of orchards and wild-simulated medicinal herbs.”

By Tristine Von Orich

“We’re at an age where we need to start looking at alternatives to what we have been doing, and trying to stay healthy into our old age,” says Tristine Von Orich, a member of the BAEC Electric Cooperative since 1999.

The BAEC electric co-op in Virginia and the Appalachian Electric Cooperative in West Virginia have both launched community solar projects to help meet consumer demand for reducing carbon emissions.

The BAEC solar farm contains 1,770 solar panels and produces 530 kilowatts of energy. Photo courtesy of the BAEC Electric Cooperative

Community members who live in the five rural counties in Virginia that BAEC serves can apply to be a part of the program, including all of Bath County and parts of Highland, Allegany, Augusta and Warren counties. Member Haney joined the community solar program after learning about the environmental benefits of renewable energy.

When it comes to the growth of the project, Keyser is optimistic about the possibilities.

“...and the roof is on. We’re happy with that,” says Owens. “We are excited to sell some solar energy.”

Electric Cooperative Initiatives

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Electric Cooperative Initiatives
Home on the Appalachian Range

By Otto Solberg

Though ponies and horses now graze some mountain ridges in Kentucky and Virginia, these members of the equine family are not native to the Appalachian Mountains. After being introduced by humans, ponies in the Grayson Highlands area of Virginia and horses in Eastern Kentucky have become part of the ecosystems in their areas, living off of grasses and small shrubs with rare human management.

Ponies of the Grayson Highlands

After a few miles of walking through Grayson Highlands State Park, hikers can meet herds of wild ponies who are generally unattenuated by human presence. The rhododendron along the lower-elevation trails soon clears, giving way to the open grassy balds that characterize the Grayson Highlands and Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. This bald shows stunning views of the Southwest Virginia mountains, and upon a closer look, hikers can spot more white and brown ponies and upon a closer look, hikers can identify the Southwest Virginia mountains, the balds reveal stunning views of Rogers National Recreation Area. The ponies of the Grayson Highlands and Mount Rogers National Recreation Area are also found on nearby mountain balds with eating grasses and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmlands before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land. The ponies have not caused problems, giving way to the open grassy balds and small shrubs. These open grasslands are not natural, but were cleared and used as farmland before the area became park land.

Troubles with Treat

Signs in the park urge visitors not to feed the ponies, but Tibbs says the park has issues “continuously.” Dependence on handouts of human food can cause serious health and behavioral problems for the ponies.

Ponies lack the ability to vomit, so human food can also cause health issues such as choking. Also, too much sugar can cause a disease known as laminitis, which causes the ponies to have sore and sometimes diseased hooves. When bad enough, the pain can severely debilitate the ponies. Without the ability to walk, the ponies will starve to death.

Despite this danger, the wild ponies have grown accustomed to being fed by hikers, and will approach visitors without fear. “When you hand-feed a wild animal, you create a pattern that exists long after you leave,” says Wegman. “You’re doing a disservice to the animal, and anyone that comes after you, by making them beggar and a nuisance.”

According to Tibbs, eating human food can make the ponies seem “aggressive” because they know that people are going to feed them something, and that causes problems.

“They are wild ponies,” Tibbs says, “and they do it.”

The Wilburn Ridge Pony Association

Before the Grayson Highlands became a state park in 1965, the mountains were covered in farmland grazed by cattle and a few ponies. In 1974, Bill Pugh and another pony owner brought 20 ponies to the park to maintain the grassy balds that were not longer being grazed. According to Tibbs, the ponies were “introduced as a resource management initiative.”

In 1975, the Wilburn Ridge Pony Association was formed as a continued on next page

The Free-Roaming Horses of Eastern Kentucky

Kentucky may be the home of Lexington — the Horse Capital of the World — but in the eastern mountains, it can be difficult for farmers to find enough pasture for their horses. The mountain forests are generally too dense for grazing. But after surface coal mining, mining companies are often required to plant grass seed to reclaim the land. Greyrun, the volunteer executive director of the Appalachian Horse Center in Eastern Kentucky, says it became tradition in the 1970s for Kentucky farmers to release their mares onto reclaimed mine lands to let them graze on the unused fields. The horses were easily managed in their small populations, and without stallions there was no breeding.

The Appalachian Horse Center was founded in 2013 to help solve issues that arose with free-roaming horses after owners began leaving the horses on the mountains year-round.

“Everything kind of changed in 2008 when, due to the recession, people started simply taking their horses and leaving them there,” says Grulke. “The county’s animal control officers found or catch.”

Grulke explains that the horses that they remove have to be caught unless they are causing property damage, such as eating crops and shrubbery, or posing a public safety hazard by crossing roads. When this happens, the county’s animal control officers or local sheriffs remove the horses and input their information into a database in hope of an owner claiming the horses.

If the horses are unclaimed after 15 days, they are made available for adoption. As a result of the database, horses can actually help with the process of recovering the land. Grasses that are grazed “tend to put out stronger root systems,” Grulke says, and the damage the horses do can help the land recover. Over time, the exact amount is never known because of how long it takes to recover.

Wild horses, however, have never experienced human handling and were born on the mountains without human intervention. Wild horses are more timid around people and are often harder to find or catch.

According to a 2015 article in the Lexington Herald-Leader, “at least 300 horses are often seen on the Kentucky mountains. In 2008 when, due to the recession, people started simply taking their horses and leaving them there,” says Grulke. “The county’s animal control officers found or catch.”

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Wild horses, however, have never experienced human handling and were born on the mountains without human intervention. Wild horses are more timid around people and are often harder to find or catch.
The Appalachian Horse Center hopes to attract tourists drawn by the same joy that the locals get from visiting the horses on the mountains, says Grulke. “It’s just for them a really nice kind of enjoyable thing to do,” says Grulke. “It’s entertainment.”

In Lexington, tourists easily get to touch the horses, but the Appalachian Horse Center plans to have a hands-on program to educate the visitors about the lessons they learn to lead, halter and brush the horses. Grulke believes this will be good for families — and for the horses too.

The Appalachian Horse Center

For the best chance of finding the wild ponies, Wegmann recommends starting near the entrance, but not escape. Similar to a lobster trap, V-shaped fence that allows the ponies to enter, but not escape. Such a lobster trap method allows the association to humanely separate the foals from the herd without hurting them.

Both male and female foals that have been rounded up are then sold to auction to individual owners, ranging in price from $35 to nearly $1,000. Feeds from the park’s celery stalks, “Fabio,” are often the most desired for their long mane.

“The way I got me was reading about Native Americas and how far beyond that of a casual scholar; La-Mar and his wife Kathleen live almost completely off the land. Luckily, Marshall can...
Delving into the Archives

With grants and a seal of approval from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, a nonprofit group funded by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Marshall and his team from Wild South have used archival records to map over 1,000 miles of Cherokee trails and around 60 historic Cherokee towns and settlements in the last eight years. "To depict the trails and know where they were, but we also to archive all over the East, including the National Archives in D.C., photographing old records to the extent that have over 100,000 images," Marshall says. "We were trying to pick and choose records, we go box and adolescents," Marshall says. "Instead of trying to go through them all when we could've easily gotten bulldozed away if we hadn't identified it, mapped and turned it into the state." To date, Marshall has mapped over 1,000 miles of trail with GIS and topography data, and historic maps of Cherokee communities in ways that the auto- mobile roads don’t. Townsend continues. "You realize that some places divided into the distance. "This is the van isn't just something that connects you road currently under construction is threatened to impact Lake Oahe, a vital source of water for the Dakota Access Pipeline, a move in- volving private equity and energy firms." On Nov. 4, people marched through downtown Knoxville, Tenn., delivering letters to representatives of SunTrust and Citibank, two banks that provide funding to Energy Transfer Partners, asking that these institutions sever all financial ties to DAPL. This was followed by at least a dozen solidarity actions across the Appalachian region on Nov. 15. "The protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock is an historical facade. It’s the fight to keep our water clean and sacred sites protected, but it’s also becoming a turning point, globally, for people to recognize the value of Indigenous lives and resist the evil force of oil and gas development." Crystal Willcuts-Cole, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, who lives in Big Stone Gap, Va. "McKevy and Morris stress that autonomous allies should educate themselves about indigenous resistance to colonization, and heed the voices of indigenous organizers. “We’re not just fighting a pipeline. We’re fight- ing 500 years of settler-colonialism. I’d encourage people to show up unprepared and allow the force of indigenous leadership can show up unprepared and be a feeling of reverence settles over me. Lamar Marshall stands near the mouth of Bad Creek as he looks over the Fork of the Roanoke River. Photo by Kevin Miller.

At this 1875 U.S. Army map of the Abaw Creek, Brick Creek was once known as Raven Creek. This map was created by Marshall’s help put together the ancient trails behind the trail scenes at Wild South courtesy of Lamar Marshall.

What your seeing right today by a 15 or 20 mile drive around 1,000 miles of trails. Back in the 20th century and before, that kind of hike was nothing. A lot of communities relationships are more connected historically that we thought, and that affects linguistic, cultural patterns, material pat- terns — everything."

By waking right here are the exact mains, the exact views that the Cherokee thousands of years ago,” Marshall says, looking out into the distance. “This is the vanishing point where they were when they moved through the woods. To me, this isn’t just something that connects you to the past — it’s a portal to it.

The path is defined, with banks up to ten feet high carved by a millenium of hooves and silent footsteps. "We use those archive materials daily to research Cherokee history and culture," Townsend says. "They run the gamut from some of the earliest English activity in the area in the late 1600s up to [in]human Affairs) activities in the 20th century."

But instead of taking people out into the woods, Marshall built a map and began their trek through the Amazonas region on Nov. 15. "The protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock is an historical facade. It’s the fight to keep our water clean and sacred sites protected, but it’s also becoming a turning point, globally, for people to recognize the value of Indigenous lives and resist the evil force of oil and gas development." Crystal Willcuts-Cole, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, who lives in Big Stone Gap, Va. "McKevy and Morris stress that autonomous allies should educate themselves about indigenous resistance to colonization, and heed the voices of indigenous organizers. “We’re not just fighting a pipeline. We’re fight- ing 500 years of settler-colonialism. I’d encourage people to show up unprepared and be a feeling of reverence settles over me. Lamar Marshall stands near the mouth of Bad Creek as he looks over the Fork of the Roanoke River. Photo by Kevin Miller.

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Mountain Valley Pipeline  LLC is seeking an amendment to the Jefferson National Forest Plan that would extend roughly 180 miles of well-growth force as a 30-ft. corridor. The mountain range is going to have to leave the area to allow a Dominion compressor station to be installed near the facility proposed for Buckingham County.

Ellie Rose grew up in Nelson County, Va., across the James River from her current home in Buckingham County. From her dining room table, she enjoys the simple pleasure of looking out across the gravy yard, flanked by tall evergreens and watching the wildlife pass by. But lately Rose has been concerned about the possibility of having a compressor station built on her property. It’s an area not far from the proposed site, and she says thought about moving to avoid the noise and dust. The prospect is one that she says“will keep you up all night. A survivor of three open-heart surgeries, the dust kicked up by the compressor station sometimes affects viewsheds and tourism, according to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. After the commission’s announcement, within the region. The net-works that transport fracked gas from gas was expected to go to local custom-ers, a point of contention for many of the the facility in an ar...
Trump’s Would-Be Coal Comeback Faces Long Odds

Between 2004 and 2016, GOP Vote Share Increased Most in Central Appalachian Coal Mining Counties

By Brian Scully

Ten days after winning the White House, Donald Trump called Jim Justice, the billionaire coal company owner and governor-elect of West Virginia, and asked him to pass along a message to residents of the Mountain State: “We are going to get those coal miners back to work.”

As he vied for candidates for cabinet-level positions, the president-elect made clear that the concern he showed for the coal industry during the campaign was serious. Less clear is how exactly he will attempt to revi" write the text.
Coal Ash Cleanup Remains in the Headlines

By Elizabeth E. Page

A report issued by the federal Com- mission on Civil Rights in September examines whether the Environmental Protection Agency is complying with its environmental justice obligations. Environ- mental justice refers to the enforce- ment of environmental and laws policies fairly, regardless of an individual’s race, color or national origin.

The report focuses largely on the agency’s regulation of coal ash disposal. According to commission. A memorandum from North Carolina living near coal ash impoundments, “Racial minorities and low income com- munities are disproportionately affected by the siting of waste disposal sites— and often lack political and financial clout to properly bargain with polluters when fighting a decision or seeking redress.”

Settlement Reached for Jim Justice Mines

By Elizabeth E. Page

On Sept. 30, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a settlement with Jim Justice, who was elected governor of West Virginia in 2017. The settlement requires that the state of West Virginia will pay a fine of $1 million to the EPA, and that the state will take steps to ensure that future coal ash impoundments are properly managed.

The settlement is the result of an investigation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) into the improper disposal of coal ash in West Virginia. The investigation found that the state failed to properly regulate and manage coal ash impoundments, leading to the contamination of groundwater and surface water.

Pipeline Pushback continues from page 21

environmental assessment is expected in December.

Residents across the country can submit comments for interstate pipelines like MVP and ACP. But the effectiveness of public comments also depends on how many are submitted. Inadequate insufficient.

If Trump plans to refocus the fed- eral government on energy and envir- onmental justice, FERC published an incomplete review. “FERC even acknowledges it still needs information about impacts on fish and wildlife.”

In October, Justice announced a settlement with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) over a coal ash spill that occurred in 2014. The settlement requires that the TVA pay a fine of $1 million to the state of Tennessee and take steps to ensure that future coal ash impoundments are properly managed.

Unique Kentucky Fish Listed as Threatened

By Elizabeth E. Page

In early October, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added the Kentucky arrow darter, a fish found in the Kentucky River, to the federal list of endangered species.

The listing affects the population of hundreds of coal miners with black lung largely due to an overabundance of coal ash. The listing is intended to foster cooperation between the industry and federal agencies to address the growing need for targeted clean energy grants across the state. The fund- ing made available through the RECLAIM Act is intended to benefit Appalachian states.

Lawsuit Filed Over Black Lung

A lawsuit filed on Oct. 28 against The Atlantic Journal-Constitution. The suit alleges that the paper failed to adequately cover an investigation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) into the improper disposal of coal ash in West Virginia.

The EPA found that the state failed to properly regulate and manage coal ash impoundments, leading to the contamination of groundwater and surface water. The suit alleges that the paper failed to adequately cover the investigation and that the EPA’s findings were not accurately reported.

One of the main arguments in the suit is that the paper failed to adequately cover the investigation and that the EPA’s findings were not accurately reported. The suit also alleges that the paper failed to adequately cover the impact of coal ash disposal on communities and the environment.

Toxic waste product spilled into the Neuse River

According to Waterkeeper Alliance, a nonprofit environmental group, so that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide oversight on the project. The new protective status of the Kentucky arrow darter ensures that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide oversight on the project. The new protective status of the Kentucky arrow darter ensures that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide oversight on the project.
Repurposing Virginia’s Abandoned Coal Sites

“Hailing Our Land, Growing Our Future,” an eight-day field school, was released on Nov. 1 by Appalachian Voices, Coal Mining Engineering Services, LLC, and Division of Forestry/Geology. The report imagines a new future for seven counties in far Southwest Virginia. Its authors propose forward-thinking projects—such as solar energy and organic farming projects—to repurpose old mine landsites that could be possible if Congress passes the RECLAIM Act.

“Everything we surveyed is government legislation that would invest $1 billion to revitalize the economies of anxious Appalachian coal towns,” said Kathy SelVaGe, Board Member. “There’s enormous momentum building at the local level to reclaim these lands for a more sustainable economic future, but we need federal investment to bring that change quickly,” says Adam Wells, our Economic Diversification Program Coordinator. Read more about the report beginning on page 10.

To our Business Community

Designate us a beneficiary of your silent auction or call 877-APV-APPO.
During the “polar vortex” in February 2015, Fall Creek Falls, on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, became blanketed in ice and a rare ice cone formed at the waterfall’s base. Photographer Cara Alexander is also a ranger at Fall Creek Falls State Park. “I adore the relative peace of the park in the winter and the beauty that most people don’t get to see,” she says. “Summer is always hectic and full of people, and the wintertime is rejuvenating.” To see more of her work, visit caraalexanderphotography.com.