

FREE

The Appalachian VOICE

December 2015 / January 2016

Developing Perspective

The unfolding portrait of Appalachia in film and photography



Also Inside: Sumac, A Winter Spice | Powering a New Economy | New Books for Young Readers

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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 where the coal industry no longer dominates. Since July, 24 local government entities have passed resolutions supporting major federal investment to invigorate the region's economy in new ways. Most of the resolutions support a White House proposal called POWER+, a multi-billion dollar plan to foster economic opportunities in coal-impacted communities.

Early this year, we opened our new office in Norton, Va., at the heart of the coal-bearing region, determined to advance sustainable economic solutions through citizen engagement and outreach to all levels of government officials. We 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 unsurpassed 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 strong final rule.
- We partnered with Google and SkyTruth to launch the interactive "Communities at Risk from Mountaintop Removal" tool, which uses satellite imagery to show that mining continues to encroach on communities.
- In North Carolina, we deepened our partnership with people living near coal ash ponds and potential fracking sites and helped these residents form a statewide coalition to compel Duke Energy and the state to clean up coal ash.
- We worked with residents and partners in Virginia to elevate clean energy as a priority for the McAuliffe administration to create jobs and reduce carbon pollution.
- Our Energy Savings for Appalachia program moved electric cooperatives in North Carolina and Tennessee to commit to up-front financing for energy efficiency improvements on customers' homes.



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

Here's to another year of working together for Appalachia!

For the mountains,

Tom

Tom Cormons, Executive Director

GET INVOLVED environmental & cultural events [See more at appvoices.org/calendar](http://appvoices.org/calendar)

Christmas in Old Appalachia

Dec. 5-24: Join the Museum of Appalachia for a celebration of the holidays in modest pioneer fashion. Traditional trees and hand-made decorations transform the museum's authentic log buildings. Admission required. Norris, Tenn. Call (865) 494-7680 or visit museumofappalachia.org/events/christmas-in-old-appalachia

Swannanoa Valley Rim Hike

Dec. 12: Hike the strenuous four-mile Swannanoa Rim, explore its history and enjoy the outdoors! Pre-registration required, \$30-50. Asheville, N.C. Call (828) 669-9566 or email info@swannanoavalleymuseum.org

First Day Hikes

Jan. 1: More than 400 hikes nationwide. Find First Day Hikes near you at your local state park website or americanhiking.org/first-day-hikes

Trout Fishing Workshop

Jan. 16, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.: This workshop will guide you to the best streams, tactics and flies to use when fly fishing in the Shenandoah National Park. \$20, registration required. Edinburg, Va. Call (540) 984-4212 or visit murray-sflyshop.com/fly-fishing-workshops-2

Free Entrance to National Parks

Jan. 19: Celebrate Martin Luther King Day with fee free national park entrances. Visit: nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm

Tennessee Heartwood Meeting

Jan. 23: Hear Greg Foster describe adventures from his through-hike on the Appalachian Trail and highlights of his hikes on the Pacific Coast Trail. Chattanooga, Tenn. Visit tennesseeheartwood.org or call (423) 877-4616

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference

Jan. 27-30: The 25th annual conference offers informative pre-conference courses and field trips, practical conference sessions, networking, trade show, Taste of Kentucky event and more. Lexington, Ky. Registration fees vary. Call (479) 251-8310 or visit ssawg.org/january-2016-conference/

Blowing Rock Winterfest

Jan. 28-31: Join residents of the N.C. High Country to celebrate the fun side of winter. Includes the popular Polar Plunge, ice carving demonstrations, hayrides, a cross country ski and snow equipment exhibition and more. Prices vary by event. Blowing Rock, N.C. Call (828) 295-7851 or visit blowingrockwinterfest.com

Cast Iron Cook Off

Feb. 5-6: Teams of amateur cooks paired with the region's finest chefs compete to create innovative dishes using native ingredients and traditional cast iron cookware. Local Appalachian dinner and dancing to follow Saturday awards ceremony. Hosted by the Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia. \$40-150. Charleston, W. Va. Call (304) 610-3180 or visit castironcookoff.org

Reelfoot Lake Eagle Festival

Feb. 5-7: Enjoy professional bird-of-prey shows, bald eagle nest tours, storytelling, craft vendors and more. Free. Tiptonville, Tenn. Call (731) 253-2007 or visit reelfootlakeattractions.com/eagles-waterfowl-tours

Appalachian Studies Conference

Mar. 18-20: An annual conference to encourage dialogue, research, scholarship and creative expression in the Appalachian region. The 2016 conference is themed: "Voices from the Misty Mountains: Diversity and Unity, a New Appalachia" and focuses on the advocacy of local groups and educators. Organized by the Appalachian Studies Association. Registration fees vary. Shepherdstown, W. Va. Call (304) 876-3119 or visit appalachianstudies.org/annualconference

Submit event information to calendar@appvoices.org by Jan. 25 for listing in our February-March issue

Help the Audubon Society Count Birds This Winter

116th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Dec. 14 - Jan. 5: Join the nation's longest-running citizen science project as participants hike park trails to identify and count as many birds as possible. Gathered data will be sent to the Audubon Society for compilation, so help conservation efforts while enjoying the beautiful outdoors. For more information, visit audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count

Great Backyard Bird Count

Feb. 12-15: Join this annual birdwatching event at select National Parks, or in your own backyard. Spend 15 minutes - or as long as you'd like - tallying bird numbers and species, then enter them into the GBBC online checklists. Visit audubon.org/content/about-great-backyard-bird-count

Across Appalachia

Environmental News From Around the Region

State Environmental Departments Criticized Mountain Music Trail Winds Through WV

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 appeal DEQ permits beyond federal standards.

The DEQ's response claimed they were misunderstood and argued that state permitting rules give citizens greater input than the federal rules. If the court verdicts are upheld, the EPA could exercise its right to review DEQ's permitting programs, the letter said, which would also encompass a package of changes to environmental

regulations passed by the state earlier this fall. If discrepancies are found with federal requirements, the EPA could withdraw their authorization of 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 regulatory enforcement over the past 20 years. Budget cuts, staff reductions and recent industry-friendly administrations have contributed to decreasing violations and enforcement pursued in court. Legal proceedings over violations currently average about 50 percent less cases per year than 15 years ago, according to data reviewed by the investigation, which also found that some of Kentucky's waterways are more polluted than they were a decade ago.

By Elizabeth E. Payne

Following U.S. Route 219 through Monroe, Greenbrier, Pocahontas, Randolph and Tucker counties in West Virginia, the Mountain Music Trail highlights the old-time music of the Mountain State.

Inspired by Virginia's heritage music trail, the Crooked Road, The Mountain Music Trail connects musicians and musical venues along this scenic highway. Participating musicians include The Black Mountain Bluegrass Boys and Aurora Celtic, and venues range from the Pocahontas County Opera House in Marlinton to The Purple Fiddle in Thomas.

"Economic development is one of the primary reasons we wanted to start this project," Cara Rose, executive director of the Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau, told the Charleston Gazette-Mail. "But it's

also about preserving the music. It's about sharing the music of our region and our culture."

The trail also provides an opportunity to highlight local businesses along the route, including several microbreweries. The organizers have also partnered with the Mountain Dance Trail, a project celebrating West Virginia's vibrant tradition of community square dancing.

The West Virginia Division of Tourism and West Virginia Public Broadcasting's Mountain Stage collaborated to produce a virtual tour of the new music trail. The website provides videos of stops along the trail, streaming music of featured artists and an interactive map. It is an invitation to spend at least a weekend exploring West Virginia.

For more information and to take in the sounds and sights of the virtual tour, visit mountainmusictrail.com.

Algae Blooms, Water Quality Withers

By W. Spencer King

Algae may not be the first pollutant that comes to mind, but in Kentucky, blue-green algae in the Ohio River has become a concern for water quality and human safety. The particular algae is a cyanobacteria containing a toxin that is harmful to humans who come in direct contact with it.

In April 2013, officials from the Kentucky Division of Water pledged to draft a plan to mitigate these toxic algal blooms that were affecting the waterways, but as of press time, no plan has been released.

Kentucky officials have made headway on controlling nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, which could help control the algae, Peter Goodman, director of the Division of Water,

told the Courier Journal. According to Goodman, creating a plan to control the pollutants that feed the algae is a very complex task, as the pollutants are often found in runoff from farms, wastewater treatment plants, and commercial fertilizers.

Environmental organization Kentucky Waterways Alliance believes that the state should prioritize plans to deal with the problem and educate the public on how waterway pollution is causing the buildup of algae.

Although algal blooms are not currently threatening municipal water supplies, state officials have previously warned that direct contact with river water when algal blooms are occurring could result in skin, eye and respiratory irritation as well as sickness.

About the Cover

The frozen road, barely visible in the photo, had just reopened to travelers on the frigid February morning that photographer David Allen made his ascent to Morton's Overlook to capture this majestic image.

The overlook is located in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, on U.S. Highway 441, between Gatlinburg, Tenn., and Cherokee, N.C.

To view more of Allen's work, visit daveallenphotography.com



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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 official wilderness designation or inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Wilderness areas and Wild 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.

At two public meetings in November and via online forms, the U.S. Forest Service provided information and solicited feedback. The agency stated that public input would be most useful by Dec. 15.

These and other opportunities for public involvement were added after an early draft of the plan, released in late 2014, led to concern in the conservation community that the plan might increase logging and strip some places of their Wilderness Study Area status.

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/11qVQ9I>

Renovations Reveal Link to Thomas Jefferson

During recent renovations, a chemistry lab with links to Thomas Jefferson was discovered behind a wall in the University of Virginia's Rotunda.

According to a university press release, Jefferson — the third U.S. president and founder of UVA — collaborated with Professor John Emmet in the 1820s to design a space where Emmet's students could conduct their own research. The hearth at the center of the lab had two heat sources and was equipped with flues to remove smoke and fumes. Students worked at five adjacent countertops.

"This may be the oldest intact example of early chemical education in this country," campus preservationist Brian Hogg said in the release.

Following the renovations to the Rotunda, the newly discovered lab will remain on display. — Elizabeth E. Payne

Water Rights a Hot Topic in North Carolina, West Virginia

By W. Spencer King and Molly Moore

A recent N.C. Court of Appeals decision has drawn attention to a years-long legal battle over ownership of the City of Asheville's water system.

Legislation passed by the N.C. General Assembly in 2013 required the city to transfer its water system to the Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County. The transfer was delayed while the city sued to block the action. In June 2014, a trial court judge ruled in favor of the city.

The state appealed, and in October 2015, the N.C. Court of Appeals upheld the state law that requires the city to transfer its water system to the regional authority.

"The decision sets a precedent that local governments can have water systems and not necessarily own them," says Katie Hicks of Clean Water North Carolina. "[It would] make it harder for local governments to invest in their water infrastructure because they're

concerned that at any time it could be taken away from them."

In West Virginia, a movement to transfer ownership of West Virginia American Water Company to public hands continues. The privately owned company is requesting a 28 percent rate increase from the state's Public Service Commission. Advocates for A Safe Water System, a grassroots organization formed in the wake of the MCHM chemical spill in January 2014 and is concerned that the company is not prioritizing water safety and reliability.

"What we've learned in the rate case emphasizes the need for a public water system," Karan Ireland, Charleston city council member and steering committee member of Advocates for a Safe Water System, said in a press statement. "The water company says they won't make the investments we need without higher profits. We need a public water system so that safe and reliable water can be the top priority."

Ohio Woman Wins \$1.6 Million in Pollution Damages

Carla Bartlett of Guysville won a three-week-long trial against chemical company DuPont in early October. Bartlett 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.

Bartlett is among approximately 3,500 people who claim illness related to the chemical plant, some of whom won a class-action lawsuit against DuPont in 2001. DuPont plans to appeal the recent decision. — Eliza Laubach

Legal Action Sought Against Chemical Company

Tennessee Riverkeeper, an environmental conservation group, intends to sue chemical manufacturing 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 diets 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 out the chemicals.

Tennessee Riverkeeper has requested that 3M increase their efforts to clean up groundwater contamination caused by chemical disposal and leachate from landfills.

However, 3M claims that the chemicals are not harmful, provided they do not exceed accepted levels. — W. Spencer King

EPA May Take Over Cleanup of Asheville Superfund Site

Civic action may influence the cleanup of a Superfund site that has been contaminating 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 the years since CTS Corporation has unsuccessfully challenged personal injury claims from individuals living nearby.

At a public meeting in mid-October, the EPA supported public comments calling for

an expansion of the single acre CTS initially included in its cleanup plan. Craig Zeller, EPA project manager of the site, said that the agency is weighing whether to accept the plan or to manage the cleanup themselves, which would triple the corporation's bill and may delay the cleanup, the Asheville Citizen-Times reported. At CTS's request, the EPA gave the corporation another month to revise its cleanup plan. A decision about how the EPA will proceed is expected in January, according to the Citizen-Times.

— Eliza Laubach

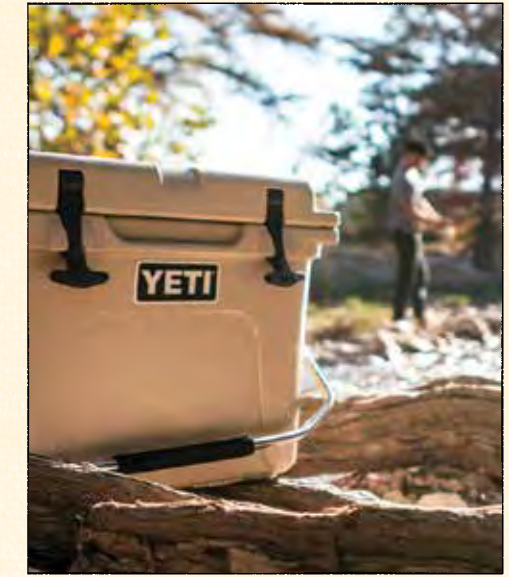


The EXPERIENCE IS A GIFT

The holiday countdown has started—the lists are made and the clock is ticking. A camp stove for Johnny; a cast iron skillet for Suzanne; a leather journal for Joe; and beautiful earrings for Rebecca—with an eclectic mix of items to surprise your entire family, the best gift is your step back in time.



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Sumac: A Winter Spice

By Chris Robey

Keep an eye to the roadside on your winter travels and you'll likely glimpse a flash of red among the muted woods and snowy fields. The distinctive "spikes" of sumac berries are a common sight in winter, persisting long after other trees and shrubs have fallen bare.

Tipping 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 the seeds germinate, while freeroaming wildlife help disperse the seeds through their scat.

Given the right conditions — namely dry, well-drained soils — sumac thrives easily, and is often among the first plants to reinhabit disturbed areas like roadsides, burns and mine sites. Sumac's preference for poor, disturbed soils, as well as its habit of dropping root suckers wherever it dies, lends to its reputation as a pesky invasive species.

And that's not the only reason sumac gets a bad rap. "Most people, when they hear the word 'sumac,' think poison sumac," says Becky Linger, associate professor of medical



Tangles of sumac, above, color the winter landscape with a splash of red. Photo by Chumlee10. Seen up close, staghorn sumac is identifiable by the bristly hairs covering its drupes and branches. Photo by Gregorio Perez.

chemistry at the University of Charleston and certified West Virginia naturalist, who is currently writing 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, pistachios and mangoes. That sumac is related to the cashew, whose husk is as toxic as its nut is nourishing, speaks further to people's ambivalence toward this curious plant.

While deserving of its toxic reputation for the painful rash it causes, poison sumac is relatively uncommon in the mountains. Distinguished by its pallid white drupes, it tends to prefer swampy lowland soils. "People have contact dermatitis against a lot of

things," says Linger, 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 wide-ranging, found throughout the eastern United States. Shining, or winged, sumac is also fairly common. Classified as shrubs or small trees, their heights range according to type: Staghorn sumac plants are the tallest, reaching up to 35 feet while fragrant sumacs are the shortest at 2 to 7 feet.

Linger says another variety, staghorn sumac, is nearly ubiquitous in West Virginia and further north. It is distinguished by its delicately curved panicles as well as the fine, stiff 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.

A Dash of Sumac

Until the Romans introduced lemons to Europe, sumac was used as a spice for thousands of years to impart foods with a lemony tang as well as a lovely burst of color.

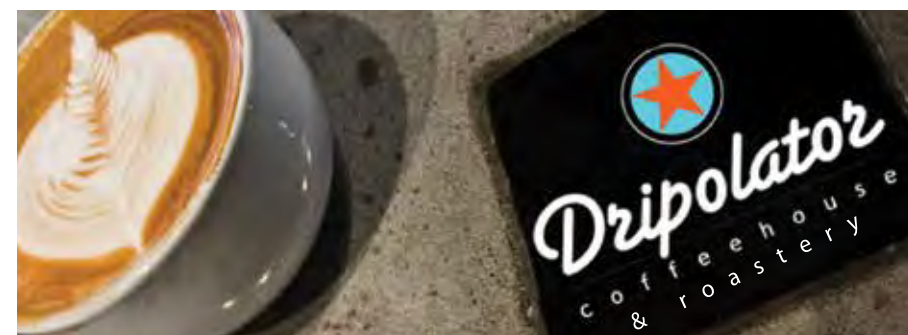
According to the cooking blog The Kitchn, sumac remains a key ingredient in many Turkish, Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese dishes. The ground-up drupes can be used for rubs, marinades and dressings as well as for seasoning grilled meats and vegetables. Read more and pick up a few easy recipes with sumac at <http://bit.ly/1lbwKtS>.

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 marinade, imparting meats with a lemony tartness. American Indians utilized sumac for a host of medicinal uses, depending on the variety. Teas made from the drupes or leaves of fragrant sumac were used to treat bronchitis, 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 for treating toothaches, diarrhea, dysentery 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 Moroccan red.

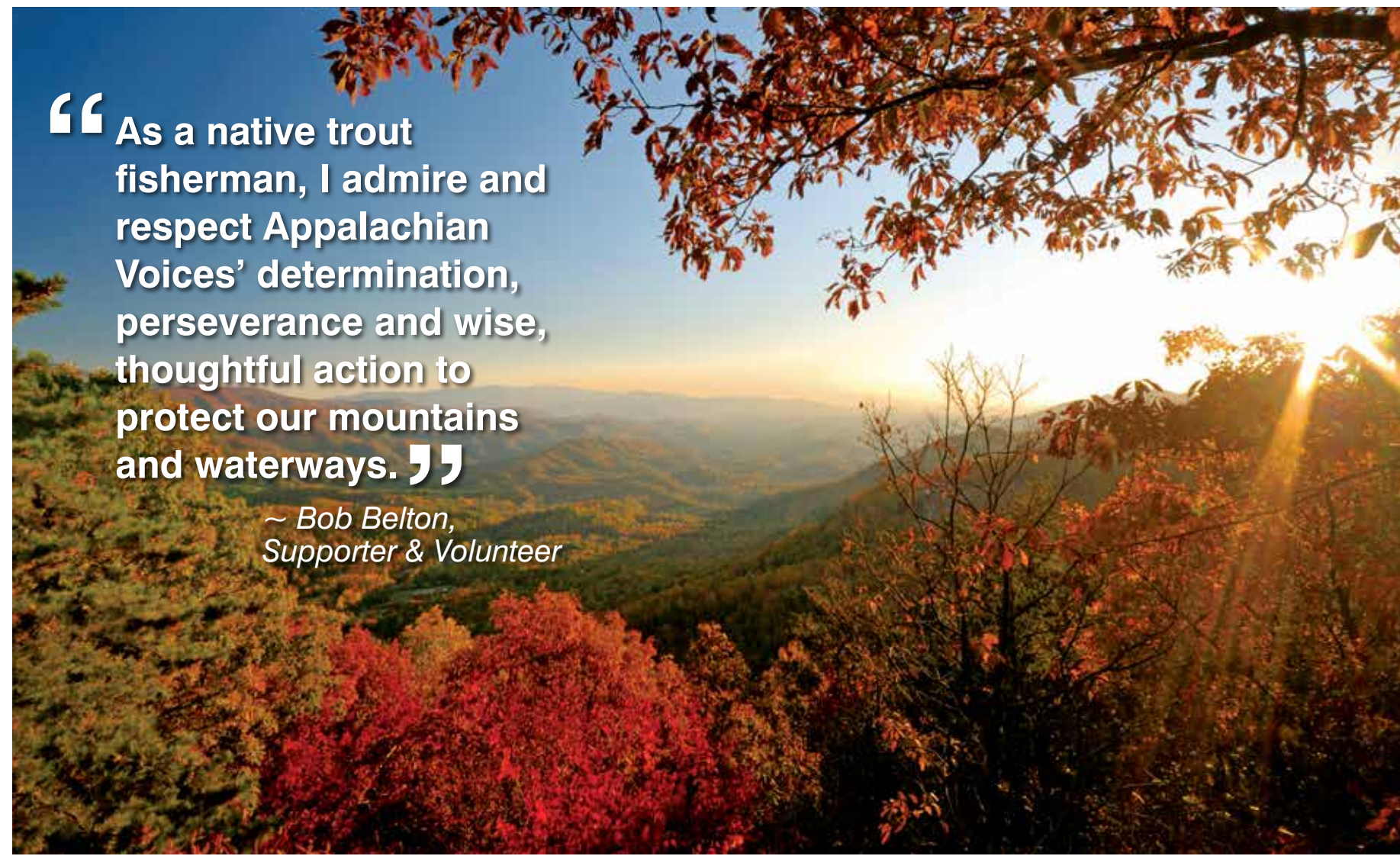
The uses of sumac are as varied as its long, multicultural history. So when those bright red panicles next catch your eye, take a moment to pause and consider the richness bundled within. ♦

From the Archives - Witch Hazel

Another plant that may catch your eye this winter is witch hazel — its scraggly yellow blooms stand out brilliantly against bare forests. Once, farmers used its branches for making divining rods they believed would lead them to freshwater. Today, its extract is common in many skincare products. Read more from our spring 2007 issue at appvoices.org/archives/witch-hazel.



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

~ Bob Belton,
Supporter & Volunteer

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:

IMPACTS

MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL | Added 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 and Virginia, we challenged the rush to expand fracking 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.

SOLUTIONS

Connect with us to build a better future for Appalachia.



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A Bridge Over Troubled Water

Faced with Threats to Nolichucky River, Residents Unite

By Lorelei Goff

Winding southwestward from the North Toe River in Avery County, N.C., the Nolichucky River transitions between a wide, placid ribbon, a narrow torrent of whitewater and a shallow, dancing shoal during its 115-mile course into East Tennessee. Its waters have long been troubled by sediment and runoff from poor agricultural practices, radioactive waste from the Nuclear Fuels Systems plant in Erwin, Tenn., and pollution from other human impacts that have threatened its beauty, diverse ecosystems, recreational opportunities and use as a public water source.

A new threat was proposed along its banks in 2011. Industrial explosives manufacturer U.S. Nitrogen eyed the site of the historic Conway Bridge, which joins Greene and Cocke counties in Tennessee, for a 12-mile dual pipeline. The pipeline will pump up to 1.9 million gallons of water from the river to the company's ammonium nitrate plant and return 500,000 gallons of effluent daily. The subsidiary of the Austin Powder Company, which supplies explosives for mining operations, plans to operate two ammonia plants, a nitric acid plant and an ammonium nitrate solution plant at the site. A calcium nitrate plant operated by Yara International and a carbon dioxide recycling plant to be operated by an unnamed company are planned at the same location.

Controversies marked the construction of the pipeline, including alleged conflicts of interest by local officials

and lawsuits over right-of-ways, trespassing and open meetings violations. These controversies and concerns about the river — ranging from the fate of the endangered Appalachian elktoe mussel, air and water quality, and the lack of an environmental impact study — are bridging social and cultural gaps between predominantly liberal environmentalists, conservative landowners and apolitical residents.

April Bryant, founding director of the Save the Nolichucky group, organized a mock funeral on the Conway Bridge to protest the pipeline. "I get emotional because the Conway Bridge is my family history," she says. "My great-grandfather's great-grandfather was Joseph Conway, who fought in the Revolutionary War."

According to Bryant, she sees the fight for the river as a "fight against tyranny" and hopes her ancestor would be proud of the group for defending it. But she says it's the environmental concerns that are bringing folks together.

"Our well is less than 300 yards from where the pipeline goes into the river," she says. "There are limestone caves and sinkholes ... so I'm sure that water from the river works its way all around under the ground to our wells. My kids drink out of that. Who's going to check it?"

CWEET, or Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee, is an environmental



Jack Renner, above, sits in his tractor as workers with U.S. Nitrogen start digging to install the pipeline on his land against his will. Ann Calfee of Save the Nolichucky measures the pH of the river below a U.S. Nitrogen work site in December 2014. Photos by April Bryant, aprilbryant.com

advocacy group that works for clean water and other social justice issues in the region. The group partners with the nonprofit environmental research laboratory Environmental Quality Institute to conduct chemical and biological water monitoring on the Nolichucky. The groups have completed two rounds of testing to gather baseline data before operations at the plant begin and will continue sampling on a quarterly basis with the help of volunteers.

Ann Calfee is a director of Save the Nolichucky and a plaintiff in a pending lawsuit against the Tennessee Department of Transportation, U.S. Nitrogen and the Greene County Industrial Development Board. The suit questions the legality of permits that allowed the pipeline to be installed in state highway right-of-ways reserved for utilities that serve the public. Calfee says residents are volunteering with CWEET because of concerns about how the plant's operations will impact the health of the river.

"Our main concerns are what will happen to the aquatic life, the vegetation and the wells," she says.

CWEET's director, Deborah Bahr, sees the local efforts as part of a larger grassroots movement to preserve the area and demand high-quality jobs that don't harm the community. One local teacher created an Advanced Placement class that will give students an opportunity to take part in water testing. Bahr says she hopes CWEET will become a water testing resource for other communities that have concerns about their waterways.

Though the troubled waters flowing under the Conway Bridge are still at risk, the impact on community engagement in environmental and social justice issues in the area has been positive.

"It's been this really weird mix of people who have come together with all these different views and all these different beliefs," says Bryant. "But we just want to save the river. We've all come together with that purpose." ♦

Hiking the Highlands

Trek to the Top of Mt. Cammerer

By Peter Barr

Mt. Cammerer via Cosby Campground

Difficulty: Strenuous

Details: 11.2 miles roundtrip, elevation gain of approx. 2,800 feet

Directions: From the intersection of US Highway 321 and TN Highway 32 in Cosby, Tenn., drive TN 32 south 1.2 miles to the Great Smoky Mountains NP entrance. Turn right into the park and drive 2.3 miles to the Cosby Campground. Hiker parking is on the left prior to the campground information cabin.

Contact: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, (865) 436-1200, hikinginthesmokys.com/cammerer.htm

"I have never wanted to leave the top of a mountain," wrote Harvey Broome, a prominent advocate for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, after an inspiring 1956 hike to Mt. Cammerer.

You, too, will long to stay when you trek to this dramatic summit situated on the state line between Tennessee and North Carolina on the rugged crest of the Smokies. Reaching the peak won't come easy — it requires a long, determined hike — but once on the precipice, you'll be awed by its sweeping vistas and captivated by its fascinating history.

The hike begins on the Low Gap Trail at the Cosby Campground, located in the northeastern corner of the national park in Tennessee. Follow this trail as it skirts the campground, staying straight at all junctions to remain on the Low Gap Trail.

The trail climbs moderately as it parallels picturesque Cosby Creek. After a mile of hiking, the grade intensifies as the climb begins in earnest. At 1.3 miles, you will reach the first of a series of trail switchbacks. Be grateful for them — it's better than going straight up!

Rock-hop across what remains of Cosby Creek, now just a small branch trickling down the mountainside, at 2.4 miles. A lung-busting half mile later, take a well-deserved rest at Low Gap. You have now reached the crest of the Smokies on the North Carolina-Tennessee state line.

At the gap, a trail sign denotes a junction with the storied Appalachian Trail, a footpath that spans more than 2,000 miles between Georgia and Maine. Turn left and follow the AT and its white rectangular blazes — you guessed it — uphill.

Don't despair; the arduous ascent persists only a half-mile further. At 3.5 miles into your hike, the trail levels to a few ups and downs that barely register compared to the climbing now behind you.

At mile 5, veer left off the AT onto the Mt. Cammerer Trail, and allow your anticipation to grow. After one last half mile of easy hiking, arrive at your long-awaited reward.

Mt. Cammerer is crowned with a historic fire lookout tower. The quaint stone structure resembles a turret on a medieval castle. It sits atop a rock outcropping at the edge of a cliff that drops precipitously to the Pigeon River Gorge some 3,000 feet below.

Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1937 and 1939, the tower was used to detect smoke among the surrounding slopes and valleys. Tower lookouts would relay the location of suspected blazes to firefighters below who would be sent to the scene. By identifying them early, the small fires could more easily be managed and prevented from growing into raging forest fires.

The men and women who staffed the Mt. Cammerer lookout lived inside the tower itself — its interior hosted a bed, cook stove and basic necessities for a rustic residence atop the remote peak. One tower operator once inhabited the lookout for 18 straight days before a break in duty.

The tower was decommissioned in the 1960s in favor of aerial fire detection. Abandoned, the structure fell into disrepair during the next three decades and was considered for demolition by the National Park Service in the 1980s. Fortunately, in 1995, a full-scale

restoration of the tower was undertaken. The project was the first initiative of a dedicated group of park supporters that ultimately became the Friends of the Smokies.

A stroll around the catwalk of the lookout tower reveals breathtaking views in all directions. The Great Smoky Mountains stand tall to the west, the Tennessee Valley stretches to the horizon in the north, and successive mountain ridges make up the

highlands of western North Carolina to the east.

The return route to your vehicle is (mostly) downhill from here. Follow your steps the way you came to complete 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 Lookout Towers." ♦



Mt. Cammerer firetower. Photo by Thomas Gaines, tgainesphotography.blogspot.com

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Developing Perspective

ste-reo-type: to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

For decades, residents of Appalachia have contended with the weight of stereotypes. Whether positive or negative, these generalizations oversimplify the diverse perspectives and people of the region. Often, these clichés have come from one-sided im-

ages of mountain people in popular culture, but today numerous contemporary photographers and documentary filmmakers — such as the sample we look at on the following pages — are portraying the region's stories with greater depth.

Documenting Appalachia

Filmmakers Discuss Their Work in the Region

By Elizabeth E. Payne

It has been almost forty years since "Harlan County, USA" (1976) brought attention to the miners' strike at the Brookside Mine in southeast Kentucky. Since then, dozens of films, including "Justice in the Coalfields" (1995), "Sludge" (2005) and "The Last Mountain" (2011), have explored the challenges facing Appalachia.

Three new films continue this long tradition. "Blood on the Mountain" and "Overburden" take different approaches to investigating the grip that coal has on West Virginia. And "Hillbilly: Appalachia in film and television" explores the role that Hollywood played in creating the "hillbilly" stereotype and contrasts this stereotype with real men and women from the region.

The directors of these documentaries discussed their films and how they approached representing the region and its people authentically.

Blood on the Mountain (2014)

On April 5, 2010, while Mari-Lynn Evans was promoting her film "Coal Country," an explosion in the Upper Big Branch Mine in Raleigh County, W. Va., killed 29 miners. Evans quickly returned to filmmaking hoping to answer her own questions about what led to this tragedy.

Her latest film, "Blood on the

Mountain," co-directed with Jordan Freeman, seeks these answers with what Evans describes as "a 150-year autopsy of the state of West Virginia." The film tells the history of West Virginia's environmental and labor movements, from the state's creation during the Civil War until the current day, focusing on the steady pattern of resource and wealth extraction by outside corporations and efforts by the labor movement to protect the health and livelihoods of workers.

The film depicts how events such as the labor uprising in 1921, known as the Battle of Blair Mountain, were systematically omitted from the traditional history of West Virginia in favor of presenting an image more hospitable to industry. According to Evans, who is from West Virginia, "Our history has always been censored to us."

Evans makes it clear that as a documentary filmmaker and an activist, she hopes to not only educate people through her films but also to motivate them to work for change. "What's happened to the people of West Virginia and to Appalachia has been a great injustice," Evans says. "And justice is what the people in our film, and the people of the region, are fighting for."

According to Evans, she feels a responsibility to capture and tell the



Billy Redden, who played the banjo boy in "Deliverance," is interviewed in "Hillbilly: Appalachia in television and film." Movie still provided by Sally Rubin and Ashley York

stories of the people she documents. She has been motivated by a concern that, "If I didn't capture these stories, if I didn't do this work as a documentary filmmaker, ... no one would ever know who we were and no one would remember us."

Throughout her career, Evans has fought against stereotypical portrayals of her native state. She undertook her first documentary, "The Appalachians," a three-part television miniseries that first aired in 2005, in part because "I thought, someone needs to make a documentary about who we really are because I am so sick and tired of people asking me if my grandfather made moonshine and I was married to my brother."

To Evans, the origins and motives of these stereotypes are linked to corporate interests that have historically been eager to "dehumanize" the region. "It's easier to take the land and lives of

people that you don't view as equal."

"What I hope the take-away [of this film] is, is to see that all of us that live in the region, all of us that work in the region, we have common ground," Evans says. "We're human beings. And this is our story, and this is our struggle."

"Blood on the Mountain" is currently screening at film festivals, with broader distribution expected in spring 2016. Runtime 91 minutes. Visit bloodonthemountain.com.

Hillbilly: Appalachia in film and television (expected 2016)

"Hillbilly," a documentary still in production and directed by Sally Rubin and Ashley York, aims to contrast the traditional Hollywood "hillbilly" stereotype with portraits of individual artists, writers, activists and others. According to Rubin, the film will illustrate "what Appalachia is and what

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Movie still from "Blood on the Mountain" provided by Mari-Lynn Evans.



Beyond the Big Screen:

AFTER COAL

By Samantha Eubanks

Appalachia has long been misrepresented in media. As a result, many filmmakers working in the region have made a push to ensure accurate portrayals of community members. One way the filmmakers are doing this is by including the input and feedback of documentary participants.

In "Hollow," a 2013 Peabody award winning interactive documentary, Elaine McMillion Sheldon documents the realities of life in McDowell County, W.Va., by placing cameras into the hands of residents. The method she used allows local people to play an active role in the storytelling.

The documentary "After Coal" is another example of a participatory documentary project. "After Coal" filmmaker Tom Hansell profiled inspiring individuals who are building a new future in the coalfields of central Appalachia and south Wales in the United Kingdom, two regions developed around the extraction of coal. Between 1980 and 1990, Wales lost 20,000 coal jobs, and central Appalachia lost an identical number of coal jobs between 1994 and 2014. "After Coal" shares stories between residents of Appalachia

and Wales, building collective wisdom about how to survive dramatic job loss and supporting a just economic transition in the coalfields.

According to Hansell, participatory exchange is one way to empower communities to control their own destiny. His participatory approach to documentary filmmaking involves the input and feedback of the community members being represented. This type of filmmaking gives power to the subjects — they determine if the portrayal is accurate, and it becomes the filmmaker's responsibility to interpret this feedback for the audience.

"My experience in Appalachia showed that when a film was perceived as offering a skewed vision of a community, then people dismiss the issues in the film," Hansell says. "I don't want the grassroots groups who are doing the real work of revitalizing the Appalachian region, or South Wales, to discount this film. I want 'After Coal' to be of use to the communities where it was filmed."

Hansell showed rough-cut screenings in coalfield communities across both regions to encourage a discussion of issues such as cleaning up mine



Filmmaker Tom Hansell and camera person Suzanne Clouseau interview Geraint Lewis near Abercraf, Wales. The company Lewis started, Call of the Wild, has repurposed an old farm and created a leadership development center. Photo by Mair Francis

waste, retraining miners and developing renewable energy.

At the same time, he collaborated with community groups to support an exchange between former miners, musicians, activists and policymakers from both Appalachia and Wales. Recordings from these discussions were used for a radio series broadcast on WMMT-FM in eastern Kentucky and BBC Wales in the U.K.

Hansell learned these methods at the Appalshop media arts center, one of the region's premier media making organizations. While living in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky, he listened to the concerns of miners about adjusting to an economy that no longer needed coal.

For Hansell, "After Coal" is an attempt to explore what keeps communities alive after their main industry has moved on. He stresses that making a documentary goes beyond simply entertaining the audience — it is about asking questions and seeking truth. And through building relationships and asking thoughtful questions, Hansell is

able to assist community members in the search for varied and sustainable industry "after coal."

"After Coal" has a 56 minute run time. The final film will be released in 2016. For more information, visit aftercoal.com ♦

Appalachia at the Movies

By Elizabeth E. Payne

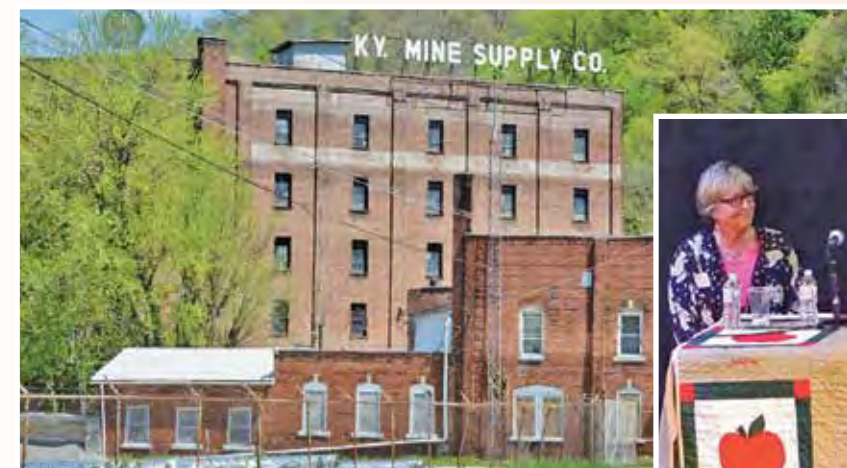
Hollywood films such as the iconic 1972 thriller "Deliverance" have often misrepresented Appalachia through negative stereotypes. But a recent wide-release film is breaking new ground by presenting a more nuanced and authentic view of the region.

"Big Stone Gap" — starring Ashley Judd and Whoopi Goldberg — is a 2014 movie based on a novel by Adriana Trigiani. Trigiani, who also directed the film, grew up in Big Stone Gap, the small Virginia town that gave this fictional portrayal its name.

Set in 1978, "Big Stone Gap" centers on Ave Maria Mulligan, an unmarried pharmacist whose life changes forever when she learns a family secret. This romantic comedy is as much a love story of this small town as it is of the characters themselves.

"People all over the world think they know something about Appalachia, because they've seen 'Deliverance,'" wrote Silas House, award-winning novelist and former Appalachian Voices board member, in an October article published by Salon magazine. He adds, "Movies have taught us that all rural people are racist, homophobic and misogynistic."

"Big Stone Gap" defies these stereotypes by portraying characters who are diverse, accepting and well-read. "These may seem like small victories," wrote House, who is also NEH Chair of Appalachian Literature at Berea College, "but for Appalachian people, this portrayal is revolutionary."



At right, a panel discusses strategies for regenerating coalfield communities in Appalachia and Wales at a 2014 community forum held at the Appalshop building in Whitesburg, Ky. From left to right: Mair Francis, founder of DOVE Workshop, Hywel Francis, then a member of Parliament, Robin Gabbard of the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, and Evan Smith of the Appalachian Citizens Law Center. Photo by Angela Wiley. Above, the Kentucky Mine Supply Building in downtown Harlan, Ky. Photo by Tom Hansell



From the Archives - Harlan County, USA

In February 2005, "The Appalachian Voice" published an interview with Barbara Kopple, the director 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/archives/harlancounty

Documentary films

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Appalachia isn't, simultaneously, in the same film."

Both directors have strong ties to Appalachia. York is from eastern Kentucky. And Rubin, whose previous work includes "Deep Down: A story from the heart of coal country," which she co-directed with Jen Gilomen, has family from the mountains of Tennessee. Yet both Rubin and York now live in Los Angeles, which provides them with a simultaneous closeness to and distance from their topic.

"We talk about that a lot in the film, how leaving the region affects your view of it, what it's like to be someone who's from the region and then leaves and then comes back," says Rubin. Such issues of regionalism and identity will be interwoven with their discussion of media portrayals of Appalachian stereotypes.

Rubin is excited by the level of support the project is receiving within Appalachia, noting that the film was recently awarded a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council. Individuals supporting the film either as advisors or as interviewees include such well-known Appalachian personalities as Silas House, Chad Berry and bell hooks.

According to Rubin, she and York value these collaborations and are proud that the film will be "produced all, totally, within the region, with the partnership and support of people who live there."

In one of the film's interviews,



Betty Harrah (left) and Lorelei Scarbro (right) find common ground in their fight to increase miner safety in "Overburden." Movie stills provided by Chad A. Stevens

Virginia Tech professor Barbara Ellen Smith summarizes how the stereotypes about the region have benefited those who extract the region's resources. According to Smith, because popular culture sees Appalachia as "a region of people who are deprived, not part of the American dream, [and] don't really deserve the kind of resources and wealth that lie beneath the land of Appalachia, particularly coal, [then] of course we can dispossess them of their land."

Rubin has found that outside the region, many have questioned why there is a need to investigate representations of Appalachia. "There's a reason that the hillbilly stereotype is so prevalent, and I would even say so popular, in popular culture and media," she says. "We're trying to overturn something that people, in many ways, don't want overturned."

"Hillbilly: Appalachia in film and television" is in production, with release expected in late 2016. Runtime approximately 90 minutes. Visit hillbillymovie.com.

Overburden (2015)

Driven by a desire to help stop mountaintop removal coal mining, Chad A. Stevens began work on his new film "Overburden" in 2006. His story begins by following two environmental activists — Lorelei Scarbro and Rory McIlmoil — as they work to save Coal River Mountain, W. Va., from mining by pushing instead for a wind-power project. The film takes a dramatic turn when the April 2010 Upper Big Branch Mine disaster leads to an unlikely alliance between Scarbro and Betty Harrah, a pro-coal advocate who begins fighting for greater miner safety after her brother was killed

in the explosion.

As a filmmaker striving to tell this story as authentically as possible, Stevens emphasizes how important it is to let the people in his film have their own voice and avoid imposing his own preconceived narrative onto the film. "Ultimately, it's about respect," he says. "Respecting where they're coming from and then [having an] openness to that."

Stevens' respect for the two main women in his film is evident.

In describing his years-long collaboration with Scarbro while making the film, Stevens notes that as early as 2008 she was using the term "mono-economy" to describe the lack of opportunities residents in her area had outside of the coal industry.

"I look back at that and see how insightful she really was at that time, and I didn't even get it then. I didn't get that until later in the process," Stevens says.

He was also deeply affected by his interactions with Harrah. While he remains opposed to mountaintop removal, he says he now has a more nuanced view of the situation. Despite her efforts to increase miner safety, Stevens says that Harrah remains "ultimately pro-coal."

"I think it's because it's the only option she can see for families like hers to survive there," he says. "And I can understand that now, having worked with her over time. So, she really changed my thinking in a pretty big way."

Stevens sees Scarbro and Harrah, not the environmental and social justice themes, as the emotional heart of the film. "The most important thing to me is that these two women are really on opposite sides of the struggle. And they find this common ground," he says. "And I think that that's hopefully inspiring and a model that can be used by others."

"Overburden" is currently screening at film festivals, with broader distribution expected in early 2016. Runtime 65 minutes. Visit thecoalwar.com. ♦



Protesters at the March on Blair Mountain in 2011. Movie still from "Blood on the Mountain" provided by Mari-Lynn Evans.

Documentary Digest

Several other recent and forthcoming documentary projects are listed here. More are available through Appalshop, a nonprofit Kentucky-based cultural organization focused on documenting Appalachia.

Coal Ash Chronicles

In a book and series of short documentaries films, this project collects stories from people across the country, speaking with those impacted by, and working to solve problems created by, coal ash waste. In production.

A transmedia project by Rhiannon Fionn-Bowman. *Official website: coalash-chronicles.com.*

Hollow

The residents of McDowell County, W. Va., have faced many challenges including population and job loss. Through photos, videos and music clips, this interactive online documentary tells the stories of 30 inspiring individuals who call this county home.

Directed and produced by Elaine McMillion Sheldon. *Official website: hollowdocumentary.com, best viewed with Google Chrome web browser*

In the Hills and Hollows

The individuals documented in this film face an uncertain future. In rural West Virginia, where the coal industry has had an impact for over a century, many residents are now also affected by the extraction and transport of natural gas. In production. Produced and filmed by Keely Kernan. *Official website: inthehillsandhollows.com.*

Herb Key: Nurturing American Heritage

The great talent and DIY spirit of master luthier and renowned musician Herb Key comes through in this short documentary film. Directed by Rebecca Branson Jones and Jim Lloyd. *For more information, email rebecca@jonesb@gmail.com*



Out of Frame

Addressing Regional Stereotypes in Photography

By Lou Murrey

Earlier this year, a photo essay published by Vice Magazine titled "Two Days in Appalachia" provoked controversy over the portrayal of the region in the media. The images were made in the photographer Bruce Gilden's signature style, using a harsh flash and zooming in on his subject to an almost-uncomfortable and unflattering degree. The piece solicited a strong online debate, with some commenters objecting that the photographs perpetuated a derogatory stereotype and narrow view of the region, and others defending the artistic merits of the work. To understand why Gilden's photographs caused such an outcry from some people living in the region, it is important to have an understanding of the history of Appalachian imagery.

The late 19th century 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 perceived these wild and untouched mountains as America's last frontier, to be used for the coal beneath the ground and the lumber

on its hillsides, or a chance to preserve the last remnant of "Pioneer America."

Child-labor advocate Thomas Robinson Dawley selected photographs of families in western North Carolina and East Tennessee in his 1912 unofficial government-report-turned-book, *The Child that Toileth Not*, to highlight the ignorance, lawlessness and immorality of the mountain people as a justification for industrialization. Northern missionaries and educators flooded into Appalachia, determined to preserve and enhance the lifestyle of the hard-working, hand-hewn and independent mountain people who still spoke in Elizabethan tongue.

Simultaneously, colorful stories appeared in the well-established *Atlantic Monthly* magazine that characterized the people in Appalachia as uneducated moonshiners and hillbillies, designed to entertain urban readers.

This era of re-discovery resulted in two polarizing and anglo-centric stereotypes that have continued to represent Appalachia: that of the wizened but simple mountaineer on the verge of extinction, and his brother, the poor, ignorant and sometimes dangerous hillbilly.

Bayard Wootten's photographs for



Photo by George Etheredge

Zhada Johnson holds a chicken at Gardens United's Pisgah View Peace Garden, a community growing space that raises awareness of healthy eating and creates jobs for a public housing neighborhood in West Asheville, N.C. Etheredge consciously tries not to perpetuate visual stereotypes of the region. "I don't think that there is a "right" or "wrong" way to portray something, but you must have a moral compass." Learn more at georgeetheredge.com/splash

Doris Ulmann, "Maggie Lewis and Wilma Creech, Pine Mountain, KY," 1934, Photograph on paper, Bequest of Doris Ulmann, Berea College Art Collection 150.140.2022, With Permission of the Doris Ulmann Foundation



Muriel Early Sheppard's 1935 book, *Cabins in the Laurel*, present the Appalachian people as ignorant and unindustrialized. Wootten's portraits and Sheppard's writing omit any evidence that industrialization or broader American culture had ever reached Southern Appalachia, when in fact the railroads had been running lines through the region since the 1850s. Appalachian State University history professor Ralph E. Lentz wrote that while *Cabins in the Laurel* was well-received by critics outside of western North Carolina, the subjects of the book were less than pleased to be presented as "backward, illiterate, drunken hicks."

On the other end of the spectrum, Appalachian photography is also commonly associated with the image of the dignified and wise but simple mountaineer, who is the last of his kind. Photographer Doris Ulmann's beautiful and nostalgic portraits for the 1937 book *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* echo this sentiment. When Ulmann arrived in western North Carolina in 1932, she would ask her subjects to change out of their normal

clothes and into their old-time linsey-woolsey clothing to look the part of the "Appalachian mountaineer."

It is worth noting that with the arrival of the railroad came the Sears Roebuck & Co. Catalogue; so even though people in the mountains were unable to afford all the amenities of modern life, many were aware of and able to follow the fashion of the day. But in Ulmann's images of the Appalachian people, bonneted and bare-foot women spin wool and churn butter and old men wield handmade tools.

"Ulmann consciously sought those people who fit the Appalachian stereotype because she believed they were a disappearing species in modern, 20th century America," Lentz writes.

continued on p. 15



Photo by Clayton Spangler

Ed Shepard has owned a gas station in the town of Welch, W.Va. for over sixty years. A prominent local figure, Shepard is depicted in the mural behind him. Spangler says, "He was telling me what was in place in the county when it was a boomtown when he was a young man. He was telling me the stories of his town and he was so proud of it." Visit claytonspangler.com, Instagram @ClaytonSpangler



Aunt Rita in Red Jacket, West Virginia. Photo by Roger May. Visit rogermay-photography.com, Instagram @walkyourcamera

In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty in the United States and images of Appalachia became its poster child. 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. May makes an effort to say that he is "making" rather than "taking" photographs, because making a photograph invites the subject to be a part of the creation of the image. "Whether it was coal, mineral rights, or images, the people in Appalachia have already had enough taken from them." Visit LookingAtAppalachia.org, Instagram @LookingAtAppalachia



Left photo by Tynaijha Habersham, right photo courtesy Know How

In fall 2014, students at Vine Middle School in Knoxville, Tenn., created a book documenting the community history of their school. The youth took photos of their current experiences, drew maps highlighting their neighborhoods' strengths and interviewed community members. The project was facilitated by the grassroots organization Know-How, which supports leadership development and community engagement among young people through youth-led programs in the arts and media. Learn more at knoxknow.wordpress.com.



Wide-Angle

Contemporary photographers broaden our view of Appalachia

Compiled by Melanie Harsha, Lou Murrey and Molly Moore



"Gossip Girls" by Suzi Phillips

This image of two clogging dancers at Plott Fest in Haywood County, N.C., was a Culture Finalist in the 10th Annual Appalachian Mountain Photography Competition. The competition, now in its 13th year, recognizes images of "the unique character, people, places, and pursuits that distinguish the Southern Appalachians." "It's real people and real landscapes," competition coordinator Rich Campbell says. "I really feel like it's important to try to create a collection that is authentic." Visit appmthphotocomp.org



Greene County, Tenn., police officers, part of "Hispanic Appalachia" by Megan King

"My goal is to present the people I was photographing without a political rhetoric," King states, "just to present these people as they are and to strip away all these ideas that people put on them just to show that they are ordinary people just like the rest of us living here in Appalachia just doing their thing." The day after this picture was taken a person called the police station to report that two "Mexicans" were seen impersonating officers and stealing the cop car, King says. "It just reiterates the point of my project." Learn more at www.megangking.com, Instagram @mgking_



Pulling Leaves/Stripping by Sarah Hoskins

Fifteen years ago, Chicago-based photographer Sarah Hoskins began to document African American communities near Lexington, Ky., in a project titled "The Homeplace." "They are positive images and we see way too many negative images of African Americans," Hoskins states. "I'm in love with the area, I'm in love with the people." Learn more at sarahhoskins.com



Photo by Pat Jarrett

Youth Night is one of the most anticipated events at the Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention. "It's important for me to be part of the community," says Jarrett, who works for the Virginia Folklife Program, a cultural heritage organization that showcases images of the region. "I would happily sacrifice a great photograph for a great relationship in a community." Learn more at patjarrett.com, Instagram @patjarrett



Stormy, near Nitro, West Virginia by Kate Fowler

"Nitro," a project originally about the company Monsanto, focuses on a small West Virginia town. "After spending time in the town and meeting with residents and activists," Fowler states, "I began to realize that at its heart it's a story about Appalachia." Referring to this photograph of Stormy walking home from school, Fowler says, "For me, this image was an important reminder of the cultural shift that's taking place in the region as the economy begins to diversify away from coal and chemical manufacturing." Learn more at www.kateelizabethfowler.com, Instagram @kateelizabethfowler

Out of Frame

Continued from page 13

The photographer's desire to collect and preserve the traditional Appalachian mountaineer, while well-intentioned, produced a popular assumption that to be considered Appalachian you had to be isolated and of Scotch-Irish or English descent. Even the magnificent landscape photographs made by George Masa to advocate for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park during the 1920s tell the story of a geography so remote there was nary a sign of human life in the mountains. In reality, hundreds of people were displaced from their homes in order to build the national park.

These narratives depict Appalachia, for better and for worse, as an isolated land of poverty, backwardness, fierce religiosity and tradition. This singular view became the standard for representation of the region in the canon of popular culture. While the images are certainly rooted in elements of truth, they often fail to represent residents of Appalachia as people from differing racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds with a full spectrum of emotions and experiences.

Additionally, photographs that continue to just show one view of the region, like the ones that appeared in "Two Days in Appalachia" piece, suggest the culture in Appalachia does not differ from hill to holler to city. This kind of homogenization of an entire region establishes a rigid set of criteria for what it looks like to be Appalachian, denying many people their sense of belonging to the area. As Afrilachian poet and social media activist Crystal Good implored on her Facebook page in response to the photo essay, "Ain't I Appalachian too?"

There have been photographers both before and since the discovery of Appalachia who have made meaningful, authentic work that represents the complexities of the region. These photographs, until recently, lacked the sensationalism to make it into the media.

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 "Afrilachian 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 #appalachianlovestory, or the "Looking at Appalachia Fifty Years After the War on Poverty" project created by Roger May. All around Appalachia there are photographers engaged in a dialogue to change and expand perception of the region, allowing folks to declare 'hey, I'm Appalachian too.'

Lou Murrey is a photographer from western North Carolina. Her work has appeared in *The Sun Magazine*, *the North Carolina Folklore Journal*, and *the Looking at Appalachia Project*. She was the photographer and co-creator of *The Blue Ridge Farm Book with Blue Ridge Women and Agriculture*. Lou Murrey's work can be found at www.loumurrey.com and on Instagram at [loumurrey](https://www.instagram.com/loumurrey).



Land through the Lens

Photographs of Appalachia's wild wonders 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 Moore



Photos of mountaintop removal coal mining and the New River by Carl Galie

"Lost on the Road to Oblivion, The Vanishing Beauty of Coal Country" is a photography project by Carl Galie, a West Virginia native and current North Carolinian. Galie's artist statement describes the images as both "an attempt to expose the devastating mining practice of mountaintop removal that has only one purpose, maximizing profits" and "to focus on the beauty of coal country rather than just devastation."

The aerial image above was captured during a flight with Southwings, a nonprofit aviation organization that provides flights to decision-makers and members of the media to help illustrate the impact of environmental issues ranging from coal ash contamination to coastal erosion. The organization's flights also assist scientists with remote monitoring efforts.

The exhibit is accompanied by poems from North Carolina poet laureate Joseph Bathanti, and will be on display at the Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center in Portsmouth, Va., in spring 2016. Visit cargaliephotography.com



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

WNC Magazine chose a photograph of sunrise on Roan Bald in the Roan Highlands, by Kevin Adams, to grace the cover of their May/June 2014 special Travel & Outdoors Issue. Blue Ridge Country Magazine's September/October 2015 cover featured a fall image by Michele Sons, and WV Living Magazine selected a frosty image of Paw Paw Creek by graphic designer Carla Witt Ford for their Winter 2014 issue.



Image of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, left, presumed to be by George Masa, and postcard of Mt. Mitchell, above, made from George Masa photograph. Photos courtesy North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Public Library, Asheville, N.C.

George Masa's stunning landscape images from the 1920s and '30s are credited with raising awareness of the natural beauty of the area that became the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. His black and white pictures were often hand-colored to create postcards promoting the area (above). A Japanese immigrant, Masa arrived in the United States in the early 1900s and moved to Asheville in 1915. He was close friends with naturalist Horace Kephart, another prominent advocate for the creation of the Smoky Mountains park, and the two explored and documented the natural features of the region in great detail. Masa also charted the path of the Appalachian Trail in North Carolina.



Photo by E.S. Shipp, courtesy U.S. Forest Service and U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

A note archived with this 1923 image of Pisgah National Forest in western North Carolina states, "Here fire swept through repeatedly after destructive logging with the result that today ... this peak is a distressing 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 and environmental activist 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/archives/paulcorbitbrown



Peter Givens

Countering Stereotypes in the Classroom and on the Parkway

By Dan Radmacher

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 special place in the world," says Givens. "You can take any aspect of what Appalachia is — whether it's the natural history, the biodiversity, 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 right."

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

"In the 1930s, when the Blue Ridge Parkway was built and the signs were put up and they were deciding what to interpret and what not to, you can tell their thought, 'Let's make it quaint; let's make it what people expect to see,'" Givens says. "You know, let's tear down the two-story white frame farmhouse and find a log cabin somewhere and put it there instead. They were creating what they felt like the public wanted to see."

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

"In the facilities that I worked on and some of the wayside exhibits, we just feel like we were telling a much truer, richer, honest sort of story than maybe the parkway did in the beginning," he says.

Though Appalachia is featured in films dating back to the late '30s, Givens says the real explosion 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 Appalachia for the first time, on television," he says. "And they were interested, intrigued, enamored — even horrified, maybe — by what they saw 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, or longer, Givens says.

"Dukes of Hazard is right out of Li'l Abner," he says. "You can take Daisy Mae from Li'l Abner and 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 clothing sitting with a hound dog.

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 better," 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 rural things," he says. "I tell my students that people in Kansas made quilts and played banjos and lived in log cabins."

Appalachia isn't a static entity, either, Givens stresses. "Appalachia is changing, and it has always been changing," he says.

But one thing does seem constant: The deep sense of place developed by those raised here. "There seems to be something very precious and personal for people who've grown up in this re-

gion that they just don't want to let go of," he says. "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 homeplace."

That sense of place seems to really motivate Givens. "I just want people to know, in whatever sphere of influence I have, how special this place is." ♦

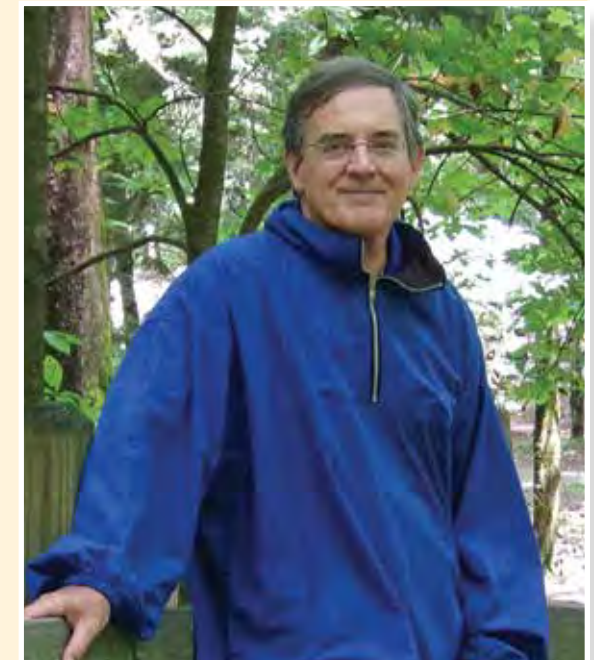


Photo by Carole Givens.

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AN APPALACHIAN BOOKSHELF

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

FOSTERING STEWARDSHIP THROUGH STORIES

"Saving Annie's Mountain" is a new children's book that follows four school children to a mountaintop removal coal mining protest at Blair Mountain, W.Va., where they meet an elderly woman named Annie who tells them about her childhood experiences in the area and its history. She recalls her memories about the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest labor dispute in

American history, when over 10,000 miners banded together in an attempt to unionize. Along the way, the children learn about the harm that mountaintop removal coal mining brings to the area and the positive impact that speaking up about an issue can have.

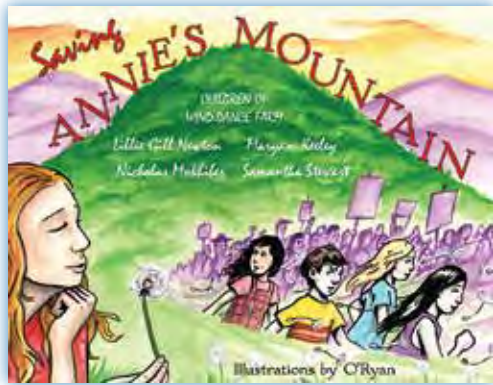
A group of four homeschooled children, Lillie Gill-Newton (age 9), Maryam Keeley (age 11), Samantha Stewart (age 11) and Nicholas Mokhiber (age 13) wrote the book with the guidance of Leslie Milbourne, an educator at

Wind Dance Farm and Earth Education Center in Morgan County, W.Va. The children were taking supplementary courses in history, writing and science at Wind Dance Farm when they wrote 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, mainly out of frustration, Leslie and four of the kids at Wind Dance Farm decided to create their own take on the subject, hoping that it would be of help to others in the same predicament."

The book is beautifully illustrated by O'Ryan, a local illustrator and activist, with images of scenic landscapes starkly contrasted with the ugly images of coal mining.

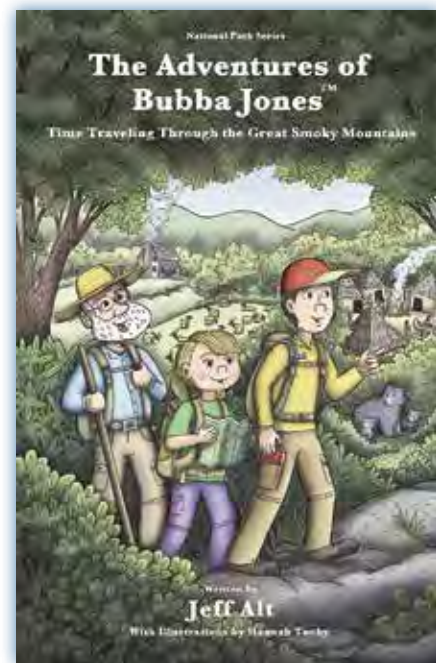
"I think everyone knows, at some level at least, that the environment



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 interrelationships between living and nonliving components of our Earth so they can be better stewards than we were."

Saving Annie's Mountain is published by Cold Run Books, Hard cover, \$18.99, coldrunbooks.com ♦

— 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-Bug and their grandfather Papa Lewis on an adventure through trails and time.

"The Appalachians have something that feels old," says 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 domestic society [had] left my mind, that [the woods are] the most awesome thinking room on Earth," he says.

Alt's exciting, inquisitive and engaging 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 importance of experiential learning, 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 it means to be outside. "The whole premise is they're not [just] hiking, they're exploring," he says. "It's an adventure."

Alt 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 security 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."

"The Adventures of Bubba Jones" is published by Beaufort Books. Ages 8-14. Paperback, \$9.99. Official website: bubbjones.com ♦

— Review by W. Spencer King

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West Virginia Communities Still at Risk Despite Idled Mines

By Tarence 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 market conditions" as their reason in both instances. In early October, 92 miners received notice of the impending layoffs. The decision follows Alpha's filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in August.

One of the mines, the Edwight Source mountaintop removal mine, has affected several nearby communities in addition to Naoma, such as Sundial, Pettry Bottom and Edwight. The 2.8 billion gallon Shumate coal sludge impoundment is located 400 feet above the now-abandoned Marsh 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 idle operations at this prep plant.

The impoundment is listed by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection as a Class C dam — the type of dam "located 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 Edwight a half-mile downstream. Mine Safety and Health Administration officials have also cited the dam for safety violations on multiple occasions.

In April of this year, Appalachian Voices published a study of 50 communities 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, diminished water quality, and negative health, wealth and population trends. Sundial is Number 25 on this list of "Communities at Risk."

According to Vernon Haltom, executive director of Naoma-based Coal River Mountain Watch, these risks do not often get reported in local, or even national, media. Haltom references a recent New York Times article that claims "mountaintop removal...has all but ground to a halt." "I wish somebody would tell Alpha that," Haltom says. He points out that, although Alpha is



A still image from an aerial drone video of mining operations near the community of Naoma, W.Va., shows the Edwight Source Mine and Shumate coal sludge impoundment in fall 2015. View the video from Coal River Mountain Watch at crmw.net

idling its Edwight mine and recently filed for bankruptcy, it is still applying for permits in the area, including a new mountaintop removal mine one mile upstream from Sundial.

"Bankruptcy doesn't mean that you go out of business," Haltom says. "It means you get some special financial treatment, a loan from Citibank. Yeah you shut down, you lay some people off. But they don't just immediately shut down and go away."

According to Haltom, the back and forth between idling mines and reapplying for permits has had depressing effects on local communities like

Sundial. "You see For Sale signs on a number of houses," he says. "There's houses been for sale for five or six years at least. So there's nobody rushing in to buy it up. But people shouldn't have to leave. You shouldn't have to be a refugee."

"It's one thing to go someplace else to find work," Haltom says. "It's another thing to leave because you can't live there because it's toxic."

To view maps and information about other communities at risk from the health and environmental impacts of mountaintop removal, visit: ilovemountains.org/communitiesatrisk ♦

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Map layer courtesy West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, design by Haley Rogers

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Powering Up

Efforts to diversify central Appalachia's economy gain steam

By Cat McCue

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 delivered by the small buzzing aircraft contained much-needed supplies.

"They were calling it our Kitty Hawk moment," says Andrianah Kilgore, a Wise County native who was involved in the project and whose excitement for the possibilities it signified 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 community forums in September called "Southwest Virginia's New Economy Forums." The forums, hosted by Appalachian Voices, which publishes this newspaper, and Virginia Organizing, provided a place for ordinary citizens from across southwest Virginia to share their ideas and vision for stabilizing and growing the region's economy. The area has been pummeled in recent years by layoffs and business closings as the coal industry continues to decline.

"The coal industry, like it or dislike

it, has to, or will be, slowing down. It's an exhaustive resource at the end of the day," says Zafar Kahn, who also attended the community forum in Wise.

More than 60 percent of central Appalachian coal-producing counties are currently classified as "economically distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Those counties saw population declines of 9 percent between 1980 and 2010, compared to a 36 percent increase nationwide, and these days, the average per-capita income is just 59 percent of the national average.

Kahn, an associate professor of economics at the University of Virginia at Wise, has an academic interest in the region's challenges, but also a personal stake in the community where he has lived for the past nine years.

"I'm very concerned about the economic development of the local area," he says. "You can't be just dependent on that one industry. So you must diversify."

A tipping point

The coalfields of Virginia, and across central Appalachia, have hit hard times before, each resulting in efforts to



Local residents and members of Kentuckians For The Commonwealth stand with the Benham City Council in eastern Kentucky after a unanimous vote to pass a resolution supporting the Power-Plus Plan in August. Photo courtesy Appalachian Citizens' Law Center

bring in more industry and business. The pervasive belief, however, was that the coal industry would always be there, so those efforts never truly pulled the local communities out from under dominance of coal, says Adam Wells, a fifth generation Wise County resident and the economic diversification campaign coordinator for Appalachian Voices.

This time, though, it's different. "We're in a watershed moment, a tipping point," Wells says. "There have never been as many people working in a coordinated way on economic diversification, or even using that term, 'diversification.' There's a collective understanding that coal is on its way out, for real this time."

Over the last several months, a groundswell of support has been spreading across central Appalachia for the "POWER+ Plan," announced in February as part of President Obama's 2016 proposed budget. The Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization plan calls for billions in federal funding to help coal-impacted areas nationwide, including Central Appalachia.

As of press time in late November, 24 local government entities in the coalfields of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee have passed resolutions supporting the plan, or generally supporting federal action to aid the region. All but

one have passed unanimously.

The POWER+ Plan would advance a new way of thinking about abandoned coal mines, which continue to pose a safety and health threat and pollute local waterways. In Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee, it would deliver \$340 million over five years to clean up sites that have potential for long-lasting economic activity, such as developing a solar installation or mountain bike park.

"In the past, federal funds were used just to clean up the worst messes, but this funding would be specifically for economic development," Wells says.

The region would also get some portion of \$153 million to support worker retraining, tourism, agriculture, energy efficiency and other economic development initiatives. The plan would also refurbish the United Mine Workers' health and pension funds, which distribute \$570 million annually to the four states.

"Appalachia is the next great investment opportunity in America," says Earl Gohl, the commission's federal co-chair. For decades, "people have spent their lives underground, in the dark, making a living. There's no doubt in my mind those skills they had to use to support their families and develop communities are the same skills that are

continued on next page

Powering Up

Continued from previous page

critical and important now."

To nurture this survival instinct, the region needs help establishing what he calls an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" that includes capital funding, broadband internet and technical support for marketing and export.

The POWER+ Plan would be a strong step in that direction, and Gohl commends the local governments that support it. "From the commission's point of view, we are very excited to work with them, and hopeful to how far we can move the needle," he says.

The resolutions show the growing consensus among citizens and local leaders around the dire need for economic diversification in the coalfields. But for POWER+ to work, Congress must approve the funding, and so far, there hasn't been strong public leadership from congressional representatives to usher the bill through the legislative process (see page 22).

Simultaneous with proposing POWER+, President Obama announced a "down payment" on the plan of \$14.5 million in existing funding for coal communities this year — no congressional approval needed. As of October, that money is on the ground in 12 coal states and tribal territories.

Awarded through four federal agencies, the funds are fueling a wide variety of projects, including retraining former coal-plant workers from Washington state and the Navajo Nation, developing a strategic business plan in southern Pennsylvania, diversifying the coal region of the San Juan Basin in the desert southwest and many others.

Central Appalachia by far received most of the funding, including:

- More than \$3 million to expand broadband internet in Kentucky;
- \$826,400 to extend water to an industry near Union, W.Va.;



Learn more about efforts to diversify central Appalachia's economy at appvoices.org/new-economy

- Almost \$550,000 for a local food supply project in Elizabethtown, Ky.;
- \$1.2 million for a substance abuse treatment program in Ashcamp, Ky., a coalfield community struggling with rampant drug use; and
- \$350,000 to support efforts in southwest Virginia to develop outdoor recreation and tourism, and provide training for entrepreneurs.

Not waiting around

While Congress squabbles and coal companies seek to shelter their profits in bankruptcy courts, the people of Central Appalachia are not standing idly by. Over the last decade in particular, dozens of public and private initiatives and enterprises have taken root to grow the regional economy.

There are the big-vision projects. In southwest Virginia, the idea for a tourist-oriented, auto-centric "museum" showcasing the area's musical heritage emerged in 2003. Today, the Crooked Road is a 330-mile route that includes 19 counties and more than 55 towns and cities and has been written up in the New York Times and Lonely Planet. The total economic impact as a result of the Crooked Road was estimated to be almost \$23 million for 2008 (the most recent data available), with 445 full-time equivalent jobs.

There are the small business startups. In Pikeville, Ky., Bit Source trains laid-off coal miners and other industry workers in software coding and pairs them with markets well beyond the city limits. Its website proclaims: "The business concept and plan is to transition a workforce from one that exported coal from the region to one that exports CODE (#exportCode)." Started in October 2014, Bit Source received 900 applications in its first month and now employs 13 local people, most of whom were coal industry workers themselves. Its success drew U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez for a visit in early 2015.

And then there are the local public projects. In Norton, Va., Shayne



Common themes that emerged from all eight forums were supporting advanced manufacturing and ecotourism, enhancing relationships between local colleges and the community, expanding broadband infrastructure, and ensuring that younger people have a voice in helping shape the region's future. Photo by Alistair Burke

Fields has been working for the city for several years to design and build a top-notch mountain biking trail system on nearby High Knob Mountain. The way he sees it, there's a double advantage in developing outdoor recreation facilities — attracting more affluent visitors to frequent restaurants, hotels and shops, and enticing local folks outdoors.

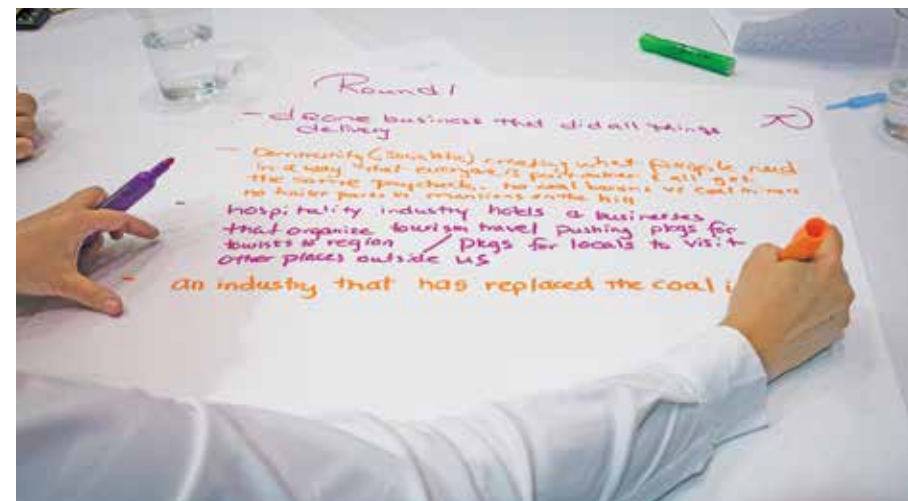
"Like many other depressed areas, you don't see a lot of people here who are very active. You need to try to get people off the couch, outside and engaged in anything," Fields says. "The tech industry won't come unless they have a happy, educated work force and they get happy by doing the outside things."

So, what will pull the region through in the years ahead? Gohl, with the Appalachian Regional Commission, says it comes down to the endemic sense of

independence and a strong attachment to community. "In Appalachia, it's hard to find someone who's not running a business out of the back of a truck," he says. "They don't see themselves as entrepreneurs, but they are."

Andrianah Kilgore, the young woman at the Wise community forum, embodies that attachment. She was born and raised here, her parents, too, and she doesn't see herself living anywhere else. Not if she can help it.

"I feel a very huge sense of, I guess, debt to my community," she says. "They gave a lot to me growing up. I absolutely feel like I should be a driving force, and hopefully bring the group of peers that I have along with me, to help the community continue to be successful." ♦



Forum participants broke into small groups to discuss what kinds of economic growth they envision for their community. Photo by Alistair Burke

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Budget vs. Appropriations: How Congress Controls Regional Spending

By Thom Kay

Before leaving Congress, House Speaker John Boehner worked with the Senate and the White House to reach a federal budget deal. While 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. A budget sets a total spending limit and allocates a specific amount to mandatory and discretionary spending. Mandatory spending includes benefits like Social Security, Medicare, and food assistance programs, while discretionary comprises nearly everything else, including spending allocations for the military, education, and federal regulatory agencies like the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement.

The appropriations bill decides how much money is allotted to each individual agency, even down to the separate departments within the agencies. As such, the appropriations bill has enormous implications for agencies like the OSMRE. Congress can cut the agency's budget by allocating the money to a different agency, and can also include amendments to limit OSMRE's actions. For instance, Congress will likely give the agency approximately \$130 million. But legislators can also add amend-

ments, or "policy riders," that can tell OSMRE they are not allowed to spend a single dollar on a specific action.

OSMRE is currently working on completing the Stream Protection Rule, which is intended to limit the impacts of surface coal mining on streams. Coal industry advocates in Congress are trying to pass the STREAM Act, H.R. 1644, which would take away the agency's legal authority to complete the rule. If that tactic fails, however, Congress could instead attach a policy rider to the appropriations bill that would prohibit OSMRE from using their funds to complete the rule.

In other words, the OSMRE could still have the legal authority and the total money necessary to complete the Stream Protection Rule, but Congress can take away their ability to use their funds to complete the rule. The effect, at least in the short term, would be the same as passing a standalone bill like the STREAM Act that blocks the rule.

The appropriations process is meant to allocate money, not act as legislation. However, Congress has frequently used it as a tool to counter actions from the executive branch, especially when Congress and the White House are held by different parties as they are now. Political analysts on both sides of the aisle are expecting to see dozens of anti-environmental amendments offered that would, among other things, prohibit the OSMRE from completing the Stream Protection Rule and prohibit

the EPA from enforcing the Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. The chances that such amendments will pass remains unclear.

Aside from telling agencies what they can't do, legislators also have opportunities to fund new projects like the POWER+ Plan, an economic revitalization package proposed by the Obama administration that is aimed at assisting regions affected by coal's decline (see page 20 for details). Through this plan, Congress can focus existing funds to projects that would create jobs in Appalachia by reclaiming abandoned mining sites, retraining former miners and coordinating economic transition work throughout the region — all without increasing overall government spending.

Appalachian representatives will have major influence over the final appropriations bill. Congressman Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) is the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is the Senate Majority Leader. The POWER+ Plan would direct money to eastern Kentucky, which Rep. Rogers

represents, so both he and Sen. McConnell have an interest in making sure Kentucky gets that money. On the environmental side, the Stream Protection Rule would alter regulation of the coal industry in Kentucky, and, along with the coal industry, Rep. Rogers and Sen. McConnell oppose the new regulations.

As of press time in late November, the future of the appropriations bill was cloudy, and answers about how the final bill will affect the environmental and economic programs in Appalachia are still unknown. While much of the debate happens publicly, real negotiations usually happen behind closed doors. In both instances, the people of Appalachia have an opportunity to speak out and ensure that their voices are reflected. ♦



Polluted water flows from a reclaimed surface mine in Kentucky. The congressional appropriations process could affect whether regulators can finalize a new rule designed to protect waterways from some of the damage caused by coal mining. Photo by Matt Wasson

114TH CONGRESS: Below are recent congressional bills and amendments on environmental issues and how central and southern Appalachian representatives voted. To see other recent votes, or for congressional representatives outside of the five-state area, visit congress.gov. ● = pro-environment vote ✗ = anti-environment vote ○ = no vote

HOUSE

H.R. 538, the Native American Energy Act, would loosen regulations for energy development on tribal lands. Among other provisions, it would prohibit the general public from commenting on environmental reviews that affect tribal land and makes it more difficult for any Department of Interior rules governing hydraulic fracturing to affect these areas. **254 AYES 173 NOES 7 NV PASSED**

H.R. 702 would amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to repeal the ban on crude oil exports and repeal the authority to restrict export of coal, petroleum products, natural gas or petrochemical feedstocks. **261 AYES 159 NOES 14 NV PASSED**

SENATE

Note: Senate legislation needs 60 votes to pass

S.J. Res. 22 expresses the joint view of the Senate and House to disapprove a recent rule by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that clarifies which waters fall under jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. **53 AYES, 44 NAYS, 3 NV FAILED**

	Kentucky			Tennessee				North Carolina			Virginia			West Virginia		
	T. Massie (R) KY-04	H. Rogers (R) KY-05	A. Barr (R) KY-06	P. Roe (R) TN-01	J. Duncan (R) TN-02	F. Fleischman (R) TN-03	S. Desjarlais (R) TN-04	V. Foxx (R) NC-05	P. McHenry (R) NC-10	M. Meadows (R) NC-11	R. Hurt (R) VA-05	B. Goodlatte (R) VA-06	M. Griffith (R) VA-09	D. McKinley (R) WV-01	A. Mooney (R) WV-02	E. Jenkins (R) WV-03
H.R. 538	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
H.R. 702	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
S.J. Res. 22	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

This GREEN House

Knoxville Homes Get an Energy Makeover

By Maureen Robbs

Cracks around your windows, drooping or nonexistent crawl space insulation, and inefficient appliances could be contributing to your high utility bills. If you are cranking up the heat to stay warm this winter, it may be time to do an energy audit.

A coalition of community groups in Knoxville, Tenn., is taking energy efficiency initiatives to new heights, setting a goal to weatherize 1,278 homes by September 2017.

The \$15 million Knoxville Extreme Energy Makeover project, initiated in August, is funded by the Tennessee Valley Authority and led by a project team comprised of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, the City of Knoxville, Knoxville Utilities Board and the Alliance to Save Energy.

TVA made the funding available as part of a 2011 settlement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the utility's violations of the Clean Air Act.

"We have some pretty aggressive goals for climate mitigation: a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020," says Erin Gill, sustainability director for the City of Knoxville. "The KEEM project stems from Smarter Cities Partnership, which was founded September 2013 and recognizes the persistent challenge of more than 10,000 families who struggle with high utility bills, which are often driven up by aging housing infrastructure."

According to the U.S. Department

of Energy, the average value of weatherization improvements is 2.2 times greater than the cost. The KEEM project targets at minimum a 25 percent reduction in energy spending for each home. The allotted upgrade costs are based on the square footage of the home.

A Custom Fit

"It is a custom experience for each house," says Jennifer Alldredge, an education team program manager at the Alliance to Save Energy. "The auditors thoroughly examine each home and every home receives services specific to that home."

Weatherization practices are energy efficiency measures intended to help low and middle-income residents improve their homes, reducing long-term energy costs and immediately enhancing in-home comfort.

To calculate the projected electricity savings of each home, the KEEM project coordinators use a TVA-provided data entry tool. With the homeowner's or renter's permission, the KEEM team collects electric bills from participating households so that TVA may measure and verify how projected savings compare to actual savings over time.

Eligible participants must reside in a single-family home or duplex at least 20 years old within the Knoxville city limits and earn a household income at or below 80 percent of the area median. The home must also have electric heat and a water heater. The KEEM program

is available to renters with their landlord's permission.

Jason Estes, director of Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee Housing & Energy Services, confirms that approximately 430 homes have already qualified and 23 audits were completed by the end of October.

Energy Education

Participants must pass a pre-audit and attend a free educational weatherization workshop, but "attendees don't have to be eligible for KEEM, anyone who is interested can attend the workshops to learn tips and habits for energy efficiency," says Alldredge, who has run 42 workshops in the first two months of the program.

The KEEM project's ultimate goal is to benefit local families through education, increased energy efficiency and monthly utility cost reductions.

"The project empowers people through education," says Chris Woudstra, project coordinator for the KEEM project at the City of Knoxville Office of Sustainability. "I saw a house get weatherized this weekend, and it put into perspective how small actions can have a big impact."

The initiative also provides jobs for qualified local contractors, who are installing the upgrades once the KEEM auditors approve a participant's home. Based on TVA's projections, Gill noted that the KEEM project will help create approximately 120 jobs.



Top: Energy auditor evaluates a home. Left: Mayor Rogero and Dorothy Ware on KEEM opening day. Images courtesy of City of Knoxville Office of Sustainability and Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee Housing & Energy

"Our strategy is built for creating opportunities for small contractors, who may have already been doing weatherization projects and can now make this a core component of their business," says Gill. "They can participate in the green economy in a very real way."

To learn more about the KEEM project, visit KEEMTeam.com. If you are interested in conducting your own personal energy audit, visit Energy.gov/EnergySaver. ♦

Improve the Efficiency of Your Home

Jan. 20, 2-4 p.m.: Learn more about energy efficiency and how you can save money while reducing your carbon footprint. A panel of experts will answer your questions in this live webinar. Free. Visit apvoices.org/webinars

BUILDING BETTER SPONSORED BY



Modern High-Efficiency Heat Pumps Deliver "Free Heat"

The biggest user of energy in most homes is the heating and cooling system. There are three basic ways to reduce the energy consumed by your heating and cooling system.

- Produce the heating and cooling more efficiently

- Reduce the load by tightening the home's thermal envelope
- Obtain energy from clean and renewable sources

In this article we will focus on the first item, specifically how a heat pump can help heat and cool a home more efficiently.

ABOUT SUNNY DAY HOMES: Sunny Day homes is a small, family-owned general contracting firm that has been incorporated since 1997. They built the first certified green home in North Carolina's High Country in 2008 and have been advocating for non-toxic, environmentally responsible and energy-efficient building ever since. Call/text (828) 964-3419 or visit sunnydayhomesinc.com

In a word, super-efficient heat pumps ROCK in the mountains where the weather can be so variable from one day to the next. An average heat pump is able to get about two and a half times more heat from a kilowatt-hour of electricity than a conventional heat source, such as an electric baseboard. For example, a home that uses 10 kilowatt hours of electricity on heat will get 34,120 BTUs of heat with an electric baseboard system, but would get 85,300 BTUs from a heat pump.

In the past, one concern with heat pumps was that they required supplemental heat during very cold weather. Modern, super-efficient heat pumps, however, can

perform at 100% efficiency down to much colder temperatures. A mini split is one such type of efficient heat pump system. Some models of the Mitsubishi Mini Splits are 100% efficient down to -13°F. A mini-split system can also be set up with multiple zones, which means that if you have an in-law suite, for instance, you can set that area to a different setting than the rest of your home.

Because heat pumps are 2.5 times more efficient than electric baseboards, you will be paying much less money for what you actually get. And getting more heat from the same amount of electricity equals fewer carbon emissions, which is great for the planet!

Environmental Groups Challenge How Pipeline Impacts are Assessed

By Elizabeth E. Payne

A coalition of conservation groups is asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to consider the collective impact of four natural gas pipeline projects proposed for West Virginia, rather than evaluating each project individually as applications are received.

In a Sept. 22 press release, the Southern Environmental Law Center called on FERC "to undertake a comprehensive regional Environmental Impact Statement to study pipeline capacity, the need for new pipelines, and their effects on communities and the environment."

The four pipeline projects at issue

are the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, the Mountain Valley Pipeline, the Appalachian Connector and the WB XPress Project, each of which would carry natural gas from the Marcellus Shale formation in West Virginia east into Virginia, with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline continuing into eastern North Carolina.

This degree of overlap has led environmental groups — including Appalachian Voices, the publisher of this paper — to challenge the need for all four projects.

Official applications to begin construction on three of the pipelines were filed with FERC in 2015: the WB XPress

Project in April, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in September and the Mountain Valley Pipeline in October. Approval of these projects is pending. An application for the proposed Appalachian Connector has not yet been filed.

"The only way to unravel these interrelated proposals and ensure a careful and deliberate decision that is protective of the environment and local communities is with a comprehensive, region-wide [Environmental Impact Statement]," wrote the SELC in their statement.

In an Oct. 26 press release, Duke Energy announced its intent to purchase

Piedmont Natural Gas — a natural gas distribution company serving North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee — for approximately \$4.9 billion. Both companies are significant stakeholders in the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

In national news, federal officials are seeking stricter safety regulations governing natural gas pipelines following a series of disasters in recent years. The U.S. Department of Transportation is proposing expanded inspections in rural areas and following floods and hurricanes, as well as increased analysis and reporting of inspection results.

Blankenship Verdict Awaits Jury's Decision

By Elizabeth E. Payne

As this paper went to press on Nov. 30, the jury in the trial of Donald L. Blankenship had concluded its sixth full day of deliberation without reaching a verdict.

Blankenship, former CEO of Massey Energy Co., was indicted in November 2014 on charges related to the fatal explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine in Montcoal, W.Va., that killed 29 miners on April 5, 2010. He is charged with "[conspiracy] to commit and cause routine violations of mandatory federal mine safety standards at [the mine]," as well as impeding federal mine safety standards and making false and misleading statements after the accident.

The conspiracy charges against Blankenship were expanded in March 2015 to include falsification of dust samples collected at the Upper Big

Branch mine by misrepresenting where the samples were collected.

Blankenship is the highest-ranking coal executive to be indicted for safety violations in Appalachia. If convicted, he could face up to 31 years in prison.

Blankenship ran Massey Energy for nearly two decades. When he resigned in December 2010, the company was mining approximately 40 million tons of coal each year from its mines in Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky. But critics and federal prosecutors allege that such productivity came at the expense of miner safety.

Prosecution witnesses testified to a pattern of safety violations at the Upper Big Branch mine and a belief that this focus on profits over safety stemmed from Blankenship's heavy-handed leadership style, but none testified that they had been ordered to break the law.

Lawyers representing Blankenship did not call any witnesses.

Coal Company Accused of Intimidating Whistleblowers

In 2014, Murray Energy Corporation CEO Bob Murray held mandatory all-staff meetings at five underground mines in West Virginia where he emphasized the vulnerability of the miners' jobs. During his speeches, he announced that workers who file anonymous safety complaints with the government about the company must also alert the mine management.

Federal regulators recently issued approximately 70 safety citations at the five mines, spurred by anonymous worker complaints. In response to Murray's mandates, the U.S. Department of Labor ordered Murray Energy to rescind the management order and pay \$120,000 in civil penalties. — *Eliza Laubach*

N.C. Communities Take Steps to Block Fracking

By Elizabeth E. Payne

On Nov. 10, the commissioners of Walnut Cove, N.C., passed a three-year moratorium on fracking, another action in a lengthy tug-of-war between state and local officials over who has power to regulate the expansion of fracking into the state.

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, is a method of drilling to extract natural gas that causes significant impact to the environment. Since 2012, the legislature has steadily worked to ease restrictions to fracking in North Carolina, while community members have pushed to block this access.

On Sept. 30, just days after Stokes

New Ozone Regulations Have Limitations

On Oct. 1, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency revised its air quality standards to limit ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion. Gina McCarthy, the administrator for the EPA, stood by her decision. But public health organizations insist that adverse health effects, such as asthma and premature death, are a risk above 60 parts per billion, according to E&E Publishing. Ozone, a gaseous air pollutant, can be harmful when inhaled.

Bankruptcy jeopardizes health care for 12,000 retired miners, families

A dispute between a mining company and its subsidiary has put \$145 million in retired miners' health benefits at risk. In October, Peabody Coal filed a lawsuit in

County passed a three-year moratorium on fracking, the N.C. General Assembly approved a bill that makes such ordinances more difficult to enforce. The measure also temporarily halted efforts by local governments to pass new measures blocking fracking in their communities.

Despite the new law, in November the town of Walnut Cove and Rockingham County each passed multi-year moratoriums. Lee County took a similar vote, but without unanimous support a second vote will be taken on Dec. 7.

Anti-fracking measures have also passed in the towns of Creedmoor and Bakersville, and in Anson and Chatham Counties.

a St. Louis bankruptcy court, where its subsidiary Patriot is filing for its second bankruptcy in three years, claiming that if its subsidiary Patriot is not responsible for paying retired miners' benefits, the parent company should not have to be either. According to Law360, Patriot joined the United Mine Workers Association to file an objection to the lawsuit in federal bankruptcy court in Virginia.

Coal's Decline Here to Stay, Utility Leader Says

In an unexpected admission, Charles Patton, president of the utility company Appalachian Power, told the West Virginia Energy Summit in October that the nation's dependence on coal was waning, regardless of what happens with the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan. While many still argue this point, Patton said, "the debate largely, at this point in time, has been lost."

States Hold Strong on Clean Power Plan Positions

By Brian Sewell

The legal assault on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan began long before Oct. 23, when it was published in the Federal Register. But that day, states and industry groups were able to officially challenge the rules, which are aimed at limiting carbon pollution from coal plants and boosting cleaner energy sources.

Within a day, more than 15 separate cases were filed, making the Clean Power Plan the most litigated environmental regulation in history, according to E&E Publishing. Appalachian states including Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio signed onto a lawsuit led by West Virginia Attorney General Patrick

Morrissey that includes 20 other states.

Attorneys general and agency officials fighting the EPA, however, may not have the public on their side. A poll released in November by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication found that a majority of residents in every state except West Virginia, North Dakota and Montana believe there should be strict limits on carbon dioxide emissions from coal plants.

Virginia and Maryland are among a group of 18 states intervening in the case to defend the Clean Power Plan.

Describing his reasons for supporting the EPA, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring told reporters that policies to address climate change and invest in renewable energy are "exactly

the kind of shot in the arm that we need to grow a real, vibrant clean-energy economy here in Virginia."

The fight over the Clean Power Plan's future is expected to last years, especially if the case reaches the U.S. Supreme Court. In the meantime, states are carefully considering their approaches to compliance.

The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality quickly crafted a plan focused entirely on improving power plant efficiency — the only component of the Clean Power Plan the state agency considers to be legal. Experts say that approach could easily backfire, leaving North Carolina with less control over its carbon-reduction efforts.

"If the EPA successfully defends

the [legal] challenge and the EPA denies DEQ's plan, it can impose a federal plan it is developing without the states," Jonas Monast of Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions told the Charlotte Business Journal.

Kentucky could also be assigned a federal plan if incoming Gov. Matt Bevin keeps his campaign promise to rebuke the EPA. Due to Bevin's refusal to even develop a compliance plan, the group Kentuckians For The Commonwealth has pledged to create its own.

"They are turning their backs, again, on our opportunity and Kentucky's future," the group wrote on the website for the project, Empower Kentucky. "If the politicians won't do it, it's up to us."

Coal Ash Management Continues to Challenge Region

By Elizabeth E. Payne

Conservation groups in North Carolina, including Appalachian Voices, the publisher of this paper, are challenging a settlement between Duke Energy and the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality that significantly reduces the \$25.1 million fine levied against the company for pollution violations at its Sutton Lake power plant near Wilmington, N.C.

The settlement requires the company to pay a much smaller fine of \$7 million and, according to a statement issued by Duke Energy, the arrangement "resolves former, current and future groundwater issues at all 14 North Carolina coal facilities, including the retired Sutton plant." In addition to the fine, the settlement also requires Duke to accelerate

cleanup at four of these sites, each of which has documented contamination outside Duke's property lines.

Also in North Carolina, a U.S. District Court judge sided with environmental groups in dismissing Duke Energy's challenge to their lawsuit over water pollution and safety violations at Duke's retired Buck Power Plant near Salisbury.

In her ruling, Judge Loretta C. Biggs also raised concerns about the DEQ, formerly known as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. "The court is unable to find that [the agency] was trying diligently or that its state enforcement action was calculated, in good faith, to require compliance with the Clean Water Act," she wrote.

Finally, the DEQ is required to pre-

pare its recommendations for the state's coal ash impoundment by Dec. 31. The N.C. Coal Ash Management Commission was set up to advise this process, yet as of late November the commission is unable to reach a quorum due to a challenge to the constitutionality of six of its nine members. Until the challenge to its membership is resolved, the commission will be unable to contribute to the assessment.

In Tennessee, residential wells near the Tennessee Valley Authority's Gallatin Fossil Plant in Sumner County have tested positive for elevated levels of hexavalent chromium, a known carcinogen. According to The Tennessean, local residents learned this information in letters from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

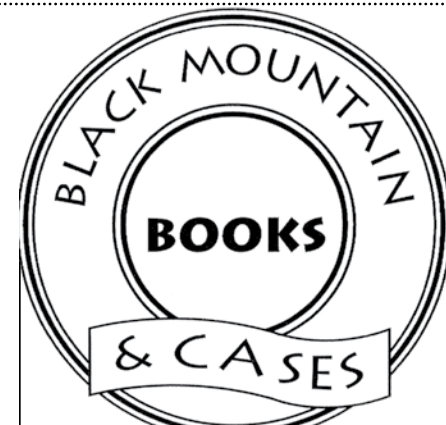
Competition in Solar Power Challenges Utilities

A nonprofit's solar project on a church in Greensboro, N.C., is testing the state's utility regulations, and Duke Energy has called for steep fines. The project "begins to wrestle and engage with the monopolistic nature of Duke Energy," said Rev. Nelson Johnson.

NC WARN, an environmental justice group, funded the solar panels in June and began selling the electricity to the Faith Community Church at a reduced rate, contesting a state law declaring that only utilities can sell renewable energy. The group submitted their case to the North Carolina Utilities Commission for review. In November, Duke Energy

called for the organization to be fined \$1,000 per day, which NC WARN Executive Director Jim Warren says could exceed \$120,000.

In Virginia, the State Corporation Commission rejected a proposal by Dominion Virginia Power to build a 20-megawatt solar farm stating the utility did not convince regulators that allowing it to develop the project — instead of hiring a third party — was the best deal for ratepayers. Regulators sided with solar advocates who argued that tapping into the competition of the market could lower the cost customers pay for renewable power. — *By Eliza Laubach*



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Community Networking for Coal Ash Cleanup in N.C.

Our North Carolina team continues to work directly with those most impacted by coal ash. In November, we helped organize the second statewide gathering of ACT (Alliance of Carolinians Together) Against Coal Ash, a powerful grassroots group of residents living near current or proposed coal ash dumps.

In Stokes Co., outside of Duke's Belews Creek Power Plant, we've been helping Residents for

Coal Ash Cleanup grow in strength and numbers. The group is currently working on a community-led health survey and a county resolution advocating for the safe, permanent cleanup of the ash in their backyards. We plan to work through the new year to ensure that Duke Energy continues supplying bottled water to residents with contaminated wells and ultimately pays for a permanent source of safe water for them.

We will also be watching the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to make sure that no coal ash site is deemed "low-priority" and given an inadequate cleanup plan. And we've joined the Southern Environmental Law Center and other state organizations in challenging the deal between Duke Energy and DEQ that lets the utility giant pay just \$7 million to settle water pollution problems at all 14 of its coal-fired power plants (see page 25).

Organizing Around the Clean Power Plan

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized the first limits on carbon dioxide emissions 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 choices.

In North Carolina, the Clean Power Plan has met resistance from government environmental officials. Our team's focus is on generating citizen input at the state's December public hearings to demand a true clean energy plan. In preparation for the hearings, we are drafting public and technical comments and partnering with environmental justice groups, faith organizations and health groups.

In Tennessee, we are launch-

ing an on-the-ground campaign to educate Volunteer State residents about the plan and encourage state officials to include clean energy in their power mix.

And in Virginia, we are calling for a state plan that will meet and exceed the 38% pollution reduction target, supporting a citizen movement to press decision-makers to address carbon pollution in a significant, long-term way through emissions trading with other states.

Southwest Virginia's New Economy Forums

In October, Appalachian Voices partnered with Virginia Organizing to host eight community forums in the coalfield counties of southwest Virginia.

More than 130 residents participated in the forums, sharing their ideas about how to move the economy of their communities forward (read more on page 20).

We are excited to continue this

conversation. In the coming months, we will publish an outline of the suggestions gathered so far and host an online, wiki-style crowdsourcing project that will broaden the reach of this initiative and get more specific feedback about how to proceed with the ideas being generated.

Ultimately, we will combine all of this community-generated information into a "Citizens' Roadmap

for a New Economy." Local governments and other planning officials can use to this help secure federal and state funding for job training, infrastructure and other projects that can help grow the economy of this region.

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

Rallying Against Climate Change

In October, we worked with our community partners to organize a rally in downtown Charlottesville, Va. This demonstration was part of the National Day of Action in advance of the United Nations Climate Change Conference schedule to take place in Paris in December. More than 150 residents gathered to ask their representatives to stop the proposed pipeline projects in Virginia and address the challenges of climate change.



Photo courtesy Wild Virginia



A Fondest Farewell

It is with much fondness and appreciation that we bid farewell to one of the longest-running staff members at Appalachian Voices. Susan Congelosi (nickname: The Uzi) joined the organization in 2000, becoming only the second staff member in the fledgling nonprofit's history. Over the past 15 years, as our Controller Susan was responsible for overseeing the financial operations of the organization and guided us through three different main offices and numerous satellite offices as our staff grew nearly 12 times in size. She also helped launch our employee retirement program, stayed on top of health insurance, and maintained our financial fluency in the nonprofit realm.

A passionate and active defender of the environment, Susan is also an accomplished artist, earning a B.F.A. from the California College of the Arts and running her own glassblowing studio when she first moved to Boone in 1976. She worked in accounting and real estate for many years before joining Appalachian Voices.

"Through all the growth and change Susan's helped with at Appalachian Voices over 15 years, one constant has been her infectious love for the work we do," says Executive Director Tom Cormons.

Susan plans to use this time to focus on personal endeavors and spend time in her peaceful home on beautiful Watauga Lake. We will definitely miss her keen wit, intelligence and skill with numbers, and most of all her warm smile. We wish her all the best!



Dean Whitworth Member Spotlight

By Chris Robey

Don't let the easy handshake and crinkle-eyed smile fool you; long-time forest defender Dean Whitworth is full of surprises.

Many at Appalachian Voices know Dean as our biggest volunteer distributor of The Appalachian Voice. Starting in 1998 with an initial run of fifty copies, he's since gone on to distribute anywhere from 5,000 to 7,500 copies of each issue. Lauren Essick, our distribution manager, recalls how "he'll push down the seats in his car and cram copies into every little space he can," before setting off on his circuit, encompassing five locations around Mountain City, Tenn., with a sixth to be added this year. But Dean has worn many hats, and distributing the Voice is just a part of what this retired chemical engineer has done.

Having served variously as campaign organizer for the Sierra Club, member of the Appalachian Voices Board of Directors and treasurer for Cherokee Forest Voices, Dean's environmental credentials are impressive. It may then come as a surprise when he mentions the movies he still does occasionally, "if the story is compelling."

That's right. Though his de-

gree is in chemical engineering, Dean's real passion is acting.

He's appeared in nearly 40 films, including Tony Minghella's film adaptation of Charles Frazier's Cold Mountain. "Your best chance of seeing me is when the credits roll," he laughs. Look close and you'll catch him in the scene where Inman gets a shave before his homeward journey. The barber who shaves him? That'd be Dean.

How, then, did Dean take on his current role as seasoned advocate? "Well, it started in my backyard," he says. His cabin is situated on 16.5 acres right on the Cherokee National Forest boundary near Mountain City. Two hundred feet of old access road passes through his land, leading up to a grove of national forest standing just beyond his property line.

"Well, one day I came out to find a man had showed up and was standing out there looking up at that stand of trees," he says. The man said he was a logger planning on using Dean's access road to move his crew and equipment in to cut the grove for timber. "I don't think so," said Dean. The logger nodded and said "We'll



see," returning with the sheriff and a lawyer the next day.

Dean won the ensuing lawsuit—as the current landowner, he had the right of way—but knew his victory was only temporary. "I knew they'd keep trying," he said. And so Dean added the advocate's hat to his repertoire; for him, it's since become far more than just another role to play.

"The first rule of good tinkering is never throw away the pieces," he says, taking a line from conservationist Aldo Leopold. "And I'm there to make sure we have all the pieces." There's that smile again, with a wicked flash in the eye. Rest assured, Dean Whitworth will keep on doing what he does best: protecting the Cherokee National Forest, no matter which hat he wears.

Welcome Maya and Leigh!

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



Leigh Kirchner, Development Coordinator

Leigh grew up in beautiful Rockbridge County in the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, where her roots go back many generations to a Monacan Indian on one side and German settlers on the other. A first-generation college student, she earned a B.A. in English at Virginia Commonwealth University and an M.A. in Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University. While in graduate school, she developed an interest in protecting the Appalachian region from exploitation. She will be working with our development team to manage development projects and bolster our membership program.

Maya Viknius, Controller

Maya was born and raised in Kiev, Ukraine, and spent her summers in a rural country village where the residents were mostly self-sustainable. She moved to the United States at the age of 21, living in the Midwest and on the West Coast before settling in the mountains of North Carolina in 2011. She earned a minor in economics from Kiev's University of Economics, a B.S., in business administration/accounting from Southern Oregon University, and completing the CPA examination in 2013. She currently lives with her husband Brian and two sons, Nicholas and Souren, near the beautiful Watauga River in Sugar Grove, N.C.

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



Appalachian Voices is committed to protecting the land, air and water of the central and southern Appalachian region. Our mission is to empower people to defend our region's rich natural and cultural heritage by providing them with tools and strategies for successful grassroots campaigns.

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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."



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