

CORRIDOR H Waste: \$19 Million a Mile

Corridor H Alternatives president Hugh Rogers notes in the WV Highlands Conservancy *Voice* that West Virginia's elected officials have begun to fight over highway money. In February, Gov. Bob Wise had to cancel nearly \$100 million in highway design contracts. It was obvious that taxpayers could not afford every road that former Gov. Cecil Underwood started to build--but the cut drew complaints from pork-hungry legislators. "I want the kind of attention paid to southern West Virginia that is given to Corridor H," said state House of Delegates Majority Leader Rick Staton. "We're just as deserving as everybody else."

How much money is Corridor H costing taxpayers? New figures are in. The Corridor H northern bypass around Elkins cost \$67.2 million for three and a half miles. That works out to \$19.2 million per mile. Eighty per cent of this is federal tax money, the state's share is 20%. For ten years, the Department of Transportation estimated Corridor H's cost at \$10 million a mile. The up-to-date number is nearly double that and they haven't reached the big mountains yet. At this rate, this 100--mile four-lane mountaintop removal and paving project would cost about \$2 billion.

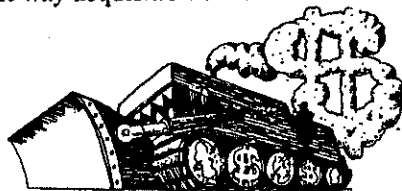
And that figure, Rogers points out, doesn't include damage to streams, trees, and habitat, the loss to land and homeowners, the impact of noise or the death of small communities. Six years ago, EPA cost benefit analysis showed that no reasonably likely benefits of Corridor H could offset the cost of building and the damage to the environment. That truth-telling cost Peter Kostmayer, the EPA Philadelphia Regional Director, his job.

Citizens Contest Some Sections

Under the lawsuit settlement last year, Corridor H has been broken into sections, each of which can be challenged by citizens. Rogers' group, Corridor H Alternatives, is dogging the western sections while Stewards of the Potomac Highlands is helping citizens battle eastern sections. Both groups hope WVDOH will run out of money before it can complete the now-\$2 billion road.

Elkins to Kerens 5.5 miles, is under construction and according to WVDOH's status report of Jan. 2001, is expected to be completed in November 2001.

Kerens to Parsons, 13.5 miles, WVDOH is studying re-routes for this sections which include Corricks Ford and Shavers Fork. They issued a draft environmental impact statement (SDEIS) for public comment in February and estimate they will issue a final EIS in June 2001 and a Record of Decision (ROD) in July. No dates for beginning final design, right of way acquisition or construction.



Parsons to Davis, 9 miles, the Blackwater Canyon section. WVDOH plans to issue a final EIS in July 2001, and a ROD in August. They have no dates for beginning of final design and right of way acquisition, or construction.

Davis to Bismarck, 16.5 miles: WVDOH issued an ROD for this flat section paralleling Route 93 in March 2001. Estimated dates for beginning final design are July 2001, and right of way acquisition to begin in January 2002.

Citizens watchdogging the above western sections should contact Hugh Rogers, Corridor H Alternatives, PO Box 11, Kerens WV 26276, 304-636-2662, rogers@wvhighlands.org. Contact us at Stewards of the Potomac Highlands regarding eastern sections:

Bismarck to Forman (Greenland Gap section), 9.5 miles, WVDOH says it will issue a ROD in July 2001. No dates are stated for final design, right of way acquisition, or construction.

Forman to Moorefield, 16 miles, WVDOH says it will issue a ROD in May 2001, begin final design this summer, and right of way acquisition in September 2001. Construction of Cunningham Lane to Route 220 is planned for spring or summer 2002.

Moorefield to Baker portion, 14 miles, are under construction, scheduled to be completed in November 2001 but will probably take another two years. You can view the mountaintop removal-type devastation by traveling along Route 55.

Baker to Wardensville, 7 miles, ROD was issued in November; WVDOH plans to advertise for contract bids this month and begin construction June-Sept. 2001, to be completed in May 2003. Stewards is looking for legal means to contest this section.

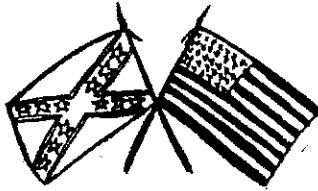
Wardensville to VA line, 5.5 miles: WVDOH estimates the ROD will be issued in June 2001, but says that final design, right of way acquisition and construction will be deferred for up to 20 years, in accordance with the agreement signed with Corridor H Alternatives in February 2000.

As part of the CHA-WVDOH agreement, Wardensville has been promised \$1 million for capital improvements to acknowledge the damage Corridor H would do to the town's economy. A citizens planning group using a facilitator from Canaan Valley Institute, has been discussing how the town should spend the money. Under consideration are sidewalks, trails, and spot beautification.

Virginia line to I-81, 14 miles: Supposedly this section will never be built, but West Virginia's strategy is to complete its 100 miles and dump the traffic onto two-lane Route 55 at the state line, forcing the building of four lanes to connect with I-81 That's why Virginians should stay aware...and support the opposition to Corridor H in West Virginia!

Stewards Board of Directors.... Seeking More Members & Helpers:

Andy Andryshak, Great Cacapon, Morgan Co. 304-947-5664
Francis Bode, Wardensville, Hardy County, 304-874-3188
Donna Cook, Maysville, Grant County, 703-620-2681
Bonni McKeown, Capon Springs, Hampshire County,
304-874-3887, barreilbonni@hotmail.com



Corridor H Threatens Greenland Gap

Greenland Gap, with its 800 foot cliffs, located near Route 93 at the tiny crossroads village of Scherr in Grant County, stands unmolested. Its unique vegetation, delicate geology and Civil War history in an 1862 battle between Confederate forces of "Grumble" Jones and the Union Irish brigade, make a fascinating stop for neighbors and for hikers on the American Discovery Trail. WVU ecology professor emeritus Charles Baer terms the Greenland Gap a unique landform. The layers of rock, the fallen boulders known as a "talus", and Canadian-type plants on the shady side fascinate scientists, bird watchers, trout fishers, rock climbers.

Debbie Kunkel has been fighting for a year to keep the West Virginia Division of Highways from building Corridor H next to the gap. Kunkel compiled a thick report on the Gap's history and ecology, which she presented to highway officials in mid-April. Kunkel's husband's family donated the land for the 255-acre Greenland Gap preserve to the Nature Conservancy years ago. She and her neighbors contend that the four-lane would mar the view and the peace and quiet, and destroy the village of Greenland.

While Stewards oppose any Corridor H route in that area, Ms. Kunkel is merely asking the state to move the four-lane route a half mile away. She has letters of support from state Sen. Jon Blair Hunter, the Mineral and Hampshire County chambers of commerce, the Mineral and Grant County commissions among others. *Debbie Kunkel, HC 72, Box 160, Scherr, WV 26726, 304-749-8420; kunkelatgap@mountain.net*

To Help Save the Gap: Write to Gov. Bob Wise, Capitol Bldg 1, Charleston WV 25305. Tell him to delay any construction in this area...preferably until the 22nd Century.

Corridor H vs. Hanging Rock: Act Now or We'll Lose It

With the 14-mile section of Corridor H between Baker and Moorefield, WV less than halfway completed, WV Division of Highways plans to let bids this month on the 7-mile section between Baker and Wardensville. Having bulldozed the mountains between Moorefield and Baker, they are now targeting, for the first contract, one of the most beautiful views along any highway in the state: Route 55 at McCauley, where people fish in view of the spectacular cliffs and the geological formation Hanging Rock. The entire hill across Lost River from Hanging Rock would be blasted away by Corridor H. This area contains several caves, plus the Lost River Sinks.

Stewards of the Potomac Highlands considers the Baker-to-Wardensville section of Corridor H particularly offensive. Traffic on this stretch is lower than the Moorefield-to-Baker segment. Building a four-lane highway here is wasteful, destructive and totally unnecessary. We are looking into legal means for preventing this construction.

ACTION: Save Hanging Rock! DELAY construction between Baker and Wardensville! Whether you are a West Virginian or a loyal visitor who spends money in our state, write a letter to Gov. Bob Wise, State Capitol Bldg. 1, Charleston WV 25305. You can use the following points:

1. Is scenery like Hanging Rock important to the economy? Absolutely! Classy businesses are not attracted to an area where the state government destroys the most beautiful spots.
2. Shouldn't they clean up one mess before starting another? Contractors say it will take "two to three years" before the Moorefield to Baker section is opened. The Elkins section cost \$19.2 million a mile and it is likely that this South Branch Mountain construction will cost even more. Why not spend the money to complete Moorefield to Baker before starting Baker to Wardensville? WVDOT does not yet even own all the right of way between Baker and Wardensville.
3. It makes no sense to begin building in the middle, at McCauley, instead of connecting to the construction at Baker.
4. Has anyone considered disruption to the water table from blasting in the area of Lost River's caves and underground channel?
5. Is it wise to build Corridor H at all, when more passing lanes, turn lanes, pulloff spots, and other measures on Routes 50 and 55 would help traffic move more safely and efficiently for much less money?

Join us! Send your contribution to Stewards of the Potomac Highlands Inc., P.O. Box 455, Wardensville WV 26851. Because we are an advocacy group and exercise our rights to lobby to protect our Potomac Highlands, we are not tax deductible. Should you desire to make a tax deductible contribution of \$100 or more benefitting our work to educate and inform the public, please make the check to Friends of the Earth and send it to our address.

Medwaste, Landfills kept at bay in Cumberland, Martinsburg areas

Toxic waste is a fairly quiet subject in Mineral County and the Cumberland MD area today. Not so two years ago. A battle to stop a huge Chambers landfill on Route 36 south of Frostburg, MD ended with a partial and significant victory: a cap was put on the tonnage of out of state garbage allowed to be dumped there. And in Fort Ashby, a town south of Keyser, citizens signed a petition asking for a referendum to stop an infectious medical waste processor from locating in the Ft. Ashby Business and Technical Park. Such petitions can be submitted, according to the West Virginia State Supreme Court, if properly signed by 15% of the number of people who voted in the county in the previous gubernatorial election. The medical waste operator dropped his plan after the petitions were presented, and a county commissioner, Blair Deremer, who supported the medwaste facility was defeated in the 1998 election.

In Berkeley County, the Solid Waste Authority works to contain landfill problems. Latex medical gloves recently found embedded

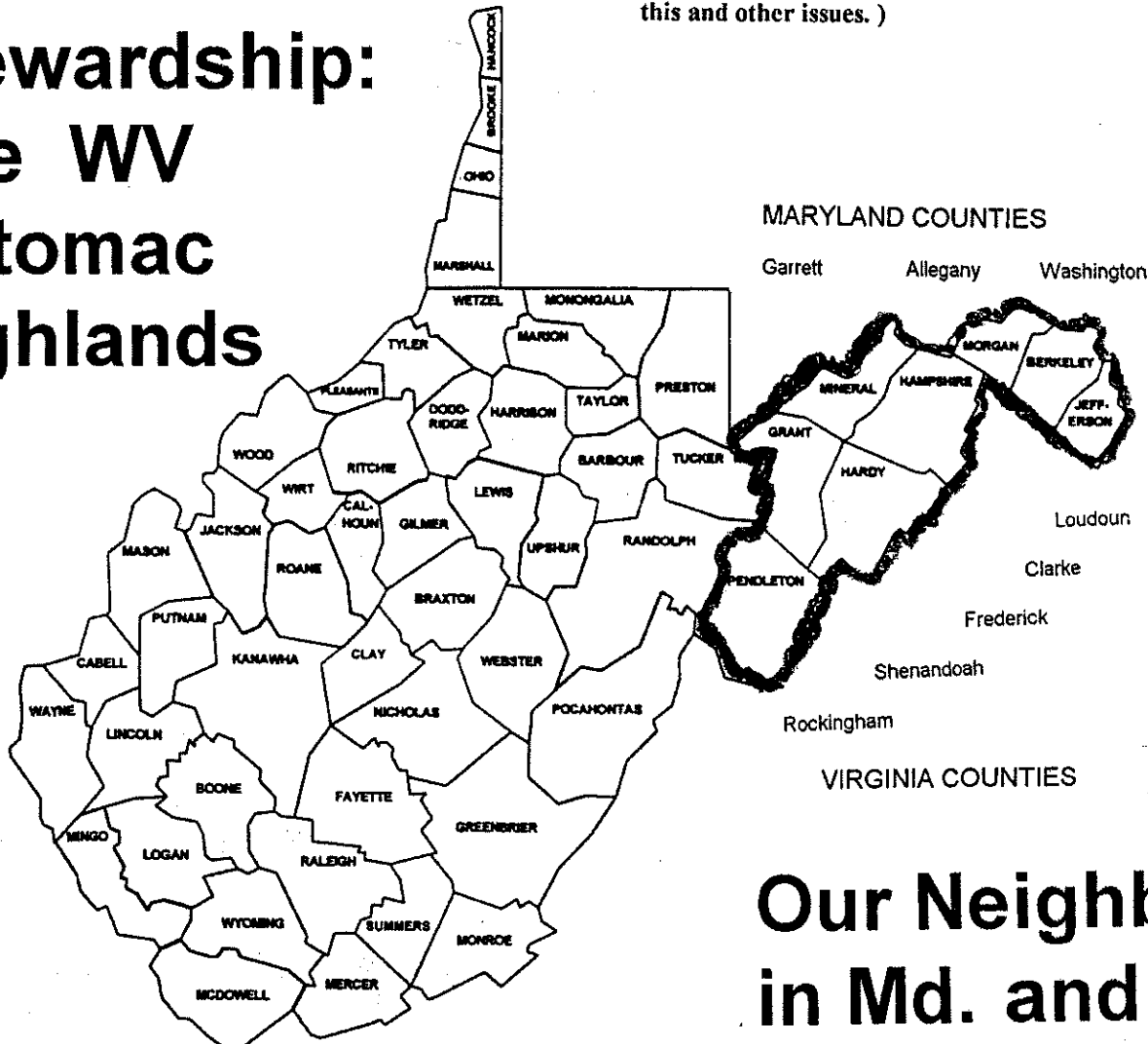
in clay mud on Allensville Road symbolize the nauseating and potentially toxic plight neighbors of the 82-acre North Mountain Sanitary Landfill claim they face. Some blame the landfill, located a mile north of Hedgesville, outside Martinsburg, and operated by LCS Services, a subsidiary of solid-waste giant Waste Management Inc. They say trucks from the dump dribble polluted mud and garbage, which ends up on their property. Clint Hogbin, an active citizen on the Solid Waste Authority, has been filing complaints and working to address the problems through the discharge permit process. *Contact Clint Hogbin at Rt. 1, Box 339AA, Hedgesville, WV 304-754-3852.*

UPPER POTOMAC:

Big Polluters Try to Control Themselves

An ongoing issue around Keyser and Cumberland, MD is the pollution of the Upper Potomac River by large firms. Westvaco, a paper making company, is applying for a new discharge permit and apparently is adding some strong pollution controls to its plant. Also the Navy is cleaning up its Superfund site at the Appalachian Ballistics Laboratory. (Stewards would appreciate hearing from any citizens groups in the Allegheny highlands on this and other issues.)

Our Stewardship: The WV Potomac Highlands



with Our Neighbors in Md. and Va.

West Virginia: Leader in Sprawl

Sprawl, defined by the American Planning Association, is the amount of land developed per person, and West Virginia has the dubious distinction of leading the nation in APA's sprawl study from 1982 to 1982. The state's population is spreading out even though West Virginia as a whole isn't growing.

Fueled by both highway building and the auto-dependent styles of design, sprawl increases the cost of basic services like water, sewer, police and fire protection. It gobbles up forest and farmland, and makes it impossible for public transportation to be economical--forcing still more dependence on automobiles.

A new study by USA today showed that five areas in West Virginia ranked among the nation's worst 25 sprawlers: Parkersburg/Marietta Ohio; Keyser/Cumberland MD, Wheeling, Huntington, and Weirton/Steubenville Ohio.

Jefferson County Fights Sprawl

The rolling farmland of tiny Jefferson County, located on the verge of sprawling Loudoun and Frederick Counties in Virginia, is almost too tempting for developers. Slow-growth advocates have been fighting uphill battles. A slow-growth candidate, Doris Milstead, lost a highly contested race for county commission. Jefferson is the only county in West Virginia with comprehensive zoning, but this hasn't stopped the tide of sprawl. A major issue is that farmers are finding it tough to make a living, and thus are selling their land to developers.

As always, roads are the mother of sprawl. Despite over 1000 signatures last fall on a petition by the Greater Shepherdstown Association, which included many merchants who feared it would spur development detracting from this classy, old fashioned town, a bypass is being built around the town by the WV Highway Division.

The four-laning of Route 9, is sure to bring more sprawl from Loudoun County Va. Unfortunately for those who wanted a straighter, safer Route 9 from Charles Town to Martinsburg, the first construction is scheduled to start in the highly developable rural area of Cattail Road to Route 340, lending credence to the theory that Route 9 is intended to spur development rather than help residents cope with existing traffic.

Dick and Frances Latterell of the Jefferson County Watershed Coalition keep on racing from meeting to meeting to aid the sprawl fighters. The latest battle is over a proposed 3300 unit housing development called Hunt Field, by a developer named Green Vest.

Contacts: Paul Burke, Citizens for Jefferson's Future Join his email group: <http://www.listener.homestead.com>. Harvey Heyser, a professional planner, authored a 185 page report "A Vision for the Shepherdstown Area." P.O. Box 343, Shepherdstown, WV 25443, 304-876-6637; Dick and Frances Latterell P.O. Box 763, Shepherdstown, WV 25443, 304-876-6072.

Virginia:

I-81: TEN LANES?? Or Tracks?

With trucks now making up at least 40% of the traffic on four-lane I-81, harried motorists are crying for relief. Public hearings have been held on a \$4 billion proposal to six-lane the road all the way from Harrisburg PA to Chattanooga TN. But as with most highway capacity upgrades, the relief will be temporary, since I-81 is attracting more and more NAFTA north-south truckers who are fed up with delays on I-95.

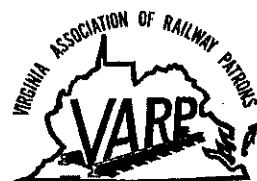
What's the answer? Could be trains! I-81 already has CSX and Norfolk Southern tracks running next to it. The cost of building a second track and upgrading the railroad to serve both passenger and freight traffic would be around \$3 billion. That's a bargain if it saves I-81 from having to expand yet again into, say, 10 lanes, which would destroy thousands of acres of farms and towns in the Shenandoah Valley.

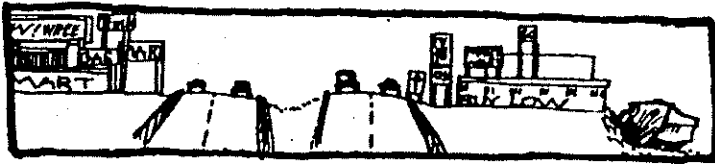
Public benefits of rail are huge. A Virginia state funded SJR-55 study quoted a savings of five cents a mile for every 80,000 pound truck that is diverted to trains, even after subtracting lost truck revenues (taxes) from road-maintenance expenses. Heavy trucks cause much more wear and tear on the roads than cars. Trains can haul more people and goods more safely (and more enjoyably!) on less energy, and tracks take up a fraction of the space of a multi-lane highway. Rail and city transit promote compact development rather than sprawl.

However, rail executives have traditionally been bottom-line people and have not tried to sell the public benefits of their travel mode. However, in March, Norfolk Southern RR general counsel Wiley Mitchell spoke to a citizen rail group, Virginia Association of Railway Patrons in support of a rail alternative for I-81.

Meanwhile, Tony Coogan has been promoting the vision of the rail alternative, starting with a tourist train from Staunton VA to Hagerstown MD on behalf of his group, the Shenandoah Rail Initiative. He has asked the city of Winchester, VA, for a \$10,000 feasibility study of the section of Winchester & Western track from Winchester to Martinsburg, WV. Many old towns and Civil War battle sites, including Ft. Collier and Kernstown, plus the rail roundhouse being renovated in Martinsburg, would be attractions worth riding the train to visit.

To promote rail use and travel, join by sending \$15 a year to the Virginia Assn. of Railway Patrons, P.O. Box 867, Richmond VA 23218-0867. Contact Mike Testerman, president, at TESTERTRAIN@erols.com. Contact Tony Coogan: rr_warrior@hotmail.com.





Sewer Showdown at Murphy's Farm

Next to Harpers Ferry National Historic Park along the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County lies Murphy's Farm. The historic 100-acre farm can be seen from the nearby Appalachian Trail and from Jefferson's Rock, a view that President Jefferson described as "worth a voyage across the Atlantic." Murphy's Farm is now threatened by a proposed housing development, sewer plant, and water tower, opposed by a coalition consisting of the Jefferson County Commission; the towns of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar, WV; hundreds of local citizens; and organizations including the American Farmland Trust, Civil War Preservation Trust, Harpers Ferry Conservancy, WV Rivers Coalition, National Trust for Historic Preservation, the NAACP WV Chapter, American Canoeist Association, National Parks Conservation Association, and the National Park Trust.

The farm's owner, a developer, has disregarded deep community concerns over interference with local history and the booming tourist economy (Harpers Ferry has over 1 million visitors a year) and a potential win-win solution. Instead, the developer is pushing for approvals to build a 188-house subdivision, a sewage treatment plant, and a 130-foot high water tower.

Murphy's Farm was the site where Confederate General A. P. Hill took actions critical to his victory in the Battle of Harpers Ferry September 1862--a key battle in the Civil War. Abolitionist John Brown's Fort was moved to Murphy's Farm in 1895 after the railroad bought its original site. In 1906, W.E.B Du Bois and civil rights leaders of the Niagara Movement made a barefooted pilgrimage to Murphy's Farm and the Fort. Decisions made at this important civil rights meeting led to the founding of the NAACP to advance African American interests in America.

Last year, Congress appropriated \$2 million for acquisition of Civil War sites adjacent to the Harpers Ferry National Park, which could be used to purchase Murphy Farm or other battlefield sites. Moreover, there may be substantial tax breaks in exchange for selling the land for conservation. Unfortunately, the developer continues to push forward, so opponents are focusing on stopping the proposed sewage treatment plant.

On May 15 at 7 PM, at Jefferson High School, WV Division of Environmental Protection will hold a public hearing on the developer's Clean Water Act application (for a National Pollutant Elimination Discharge System, or NPDES, permit) to build a sewage treatment plant and discharge up to 70,000 gallons daily into the Shenandoah River. The Shenandoah is already polluted under certain federal and state standards, and West Virginia is planning to test for more pollutants. The Potomac is polluted downstream with nutrients, which the sewer would increase. Some 3,000 boaters use these rivers during summer months, contributing to the area's economy. Moreover, development here likely would spur more development all along the pristine School House Ridge, further degrading the rivers and living systems of these historic lands.

ACTION: Write to the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection, in Gov. Bob Wise's administration. Ask WVDEP to deny the NPDES sewer permit Application # WV0105635 using the talking points listed above. Send to: Michael Callaghan, Director of WV DEP, 10 McJunkin Road, Nitro, WV 25413, After the May 15 permit deadline write Gov. Bob Wise, Capitol Bldg. 1, Charleston, WV 25305.

Contact the Harpers Ferry Conservancy, PO Box 1350, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25443 www.harpersferry.org, 304-535-9961 or prosa@crosslink.net

Washing the Trucks Out of Bath?

The Morgan County Citizens Coalition is fighting plans to four-lane the entire West Virginia length of Route 522. Though there is no money to build it now, the WV Division of Highways (WVDOH) plans this month to submit a Record of Decision--the last step in the Environmental Impact Statement process before construction bidding. Two-lane 522 is now being used by long-haul trucks as an alternative to I-81, causing pollution and congestion in Berkeley Springs, and some local officials hope the WVDOH plan will get the trucks out of town.

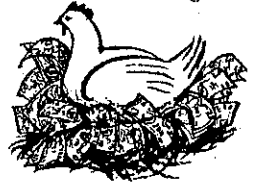
However, WVDOH's plan would cost around \$200 million for 22 miles of a completely new, four lane version of 522, from the Virginia line to the Maryland line. Those who like the small-town feel of Berkeley Springs fear that a huge new road would bring uncontrolled development. MCCC is concerned about direct construction impacts on neighborhoods east of town; on diversion of business from the historic town center of Bath; and on drainage in the flood-prone town.

The Coalition's solution, suggested in EIS comments by traffic consultant Gerald Neilly of Baltimore, is a two-lane road around Berkeley Springs, system-wide planning for improvements to a variety of local roads, and reinstatement of a weigh station to discourage through trucks. Contact: Morgan County Citizens Coalition, P.O. Box 900, Berkeley Springs WV 25411, 304-258-4878; mcccwv@aol.com. <http://www.greenspider.com/mccc/>

Hampshire Citizens Balance Jobs, Nature

The Hampshire County Comprehensive Planning Committee, a diverse, all-volunteer citizen group has drawn fire from county commissioner Les Shoemaker for its "anti-growth" approach. Committee chair Greg Kenney, a minister and schoolteacher, pointed out that of the committee's 142 draft goals, 50 addressed economic development, and only 25 dealt with clean water and preservation of open space. "The committee supports and encourages growth. However, we are currently witnessing the many problems neighboring counties are encountering because of directionless growth... We have all chosen to live in Hampshire County because we like it here. The Comprehensive Planning Committee is invested in maintaining what we love most about our county." See committee's website: www.homestead.com/HCCPC. Kenney: grkenney@raven-villages.net, 304-856-3841

Clean Bill of Health for S. Branch River? Science is Questionable



There's a fox guarding the henhouse, one might say. Or is it a hen guarding the house where a fox is needed? The WV Division of Agriculture, the same government agency that is promoting the spread of corporate poultry farming, spent over a million dollars studying river pollution at its lab in Moorefield. State Agriculture Secretary Gus Douglas has been citing a new ag lab report in his claims that factory farming is not polluting the Potomac watershed.

Manure runoff from large chickenhouses has been assumed to cause pollution, since there are not enough flat fields in the area to safely absorb the excess nutrients. Individual farmers who grow chickens and turkeys under contract are held liable for pollution, rather than poultry processing giants Con-Agra (formerly Hester) and Pilgrim's Pride (formerly Wampler). The farmers have trouble affording corrective measures; many are saddled with heavy debts from constructing the poultry houses. Some have disposed of the manure safely by composting with wood chips, or having it collected and hauled away as pasture fertilizer, but at other farms the litter is carried by rain water into rivers and streams.

The ag lab report makes two claims: First, it says overall pollution of the South Branch and several other rivers is low enough for the state DEP to drop them from the state's list of dirty rivers under the Clean Water Act. (The Ag Dept. is not seeking to de-list Lost River, where severely polluted spots have been found in Cacapon Institute studies.) Neil Gillies of Cacapon Institute, an independent laboratory which studies water quality in eastern West Virginia, says he cannot argue scientifically with the delisting recommendation. He does note, however studies done during the last few years of drought, when no rain is washing pollutants from the land, will have different results than those done after rainfalls. Also, the South Branch is a bigger river than the Lost River, and bigger rivers have the effect of diluting pollution.

Gillies does contest the second claim made by the ag lab reports: that fecal pollution in area rivers is caused by wildlife just as much as domestic agriculture. Do the bacteria in the South Branch, for example, come from a chicken, a goose, a cow or a raccoon? This a fairly new DNA methodology claims to identify e.coli bacteria found in a river with a particular type of animal manure. Gillies says that this method should still be considered as being developed. The intestinal bacteria they are looking at may well say a lot more about where geographically the manure came from than the type of animal it came from. He noted that the lab's written report is far from conclusive, and, in fact, doesn't try to make conclusions. The problem has been in the press releases issued by Gus Douglas, which state definitely that agriculture practices are not polluting the South Branch.

Dr. Margaret Janes of WV Rivers Coalition has observed that, indeed, some cleanup of area rivers has occurred. "Good-actor" individual farmers have moved chicken litter piles away from the river, and some cattle farmers have put in water troughs and fenced their cows out of streams. However, WV Rivers Coalition finds it has to keep hounding the WV Department of Environmental Protection to follow up on its warning letters to "bad actors" who

are still polluting the South Branch and other area rivers. The poultry processing plants themselves are a point source for pollution as well.

How much would it cost to have an independent water pollution study done for the South Branch River? About \$200,000. Anyone with that kind of spare change is asked to call the Rivers Coalition immediately! Meanwhile, a local chef advises: don't eat fish from the South Branch. Catch 'em and throw em back.

To help clean Potomac Watershed and other W.Va. rivers, join the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, 800 N. Randolph St., Elkins, WV 26241, 304-637-7201, or Dr. Margaret Janes, 304-897-6048, mjpaws@aol.com. Scientific information is available from the Cacapon Institute, Rt. 1, Box 326, High View WV 26808, 304-856-1385, pcrel@access.mountain.net, www.cacaponinstitute.org.

PENDLETON COUNTY: Die-gester Dead!

A makeshift, possibly dangerous attempt to combine two waste products--human sewage and poultry litter--in an experimental digester has been stopped in Pendleton County. Anti-digester Republican Kelly Hartman defeated pro-digester Democrat Paul Morton in November's election for county commissioner, which put an end to the project. Citizens Against the Digester Inc., fearing odor and pollution, had written letters to public officials, packed county Economic Development Authority meetings, and posted conspicuous yard signs. The project was backed by Gus Douglas, state Agriculture Commissioner. For economic development, there is now talk of starting a state park.

Could on-farm composting be a solution? Activists say large poultry processing plants in Virginia have helped farmers start composting; would that work here? Contact: Karl and Yvonne Esser, HC 72, Box 12C, Franklin, WV 26807, 304-358-7539.

Want Some Composted Chicken Litter?

A year or two ago, it seemed like a good idea to some in the town of Paw Paw: receiving chicken litter to be composted with wood and paper for fertilizer. A company Borderline, LLC, set up a quick-composting system of long plastic "ag-bags." Promises were made that the West Virginia Highway Department would use the finished material, called Earth-Aid, in roadside plantings. But the market for the compost didn't materialize, and some of the 50 pound bags of composted litter, stacked in the Cacapon River floodplain, are beginning to burst, causing concern about pollution.

The town and company are looking for a good deal: someone to buy, trade, use the fertilizer. It should be an ideal soil-builder for ornamental plantings. For details call Wayne Carruthers at Earth-Aid, Monday through Friday, 7a.m.-3:30 p.m., 304-947-5555; or PawPaw's town hall, 304-947-7476, pawpawWV@intrepid.net.

Contact: Andy Andryshak, HC 62, Box 39, Great Cacapon WV 25422; Friends of the Capon River, Abby Chapple, president: abbyc@aol.com, <http://users.sgi.net/~cacapon>.

WHAT CAN I DO?LOTS!

Corridor H : Help Contain the Monster Defend Hanging Rock, Greenland Gap

Write to Gov. Bob Wise, Capitol Bldg. 1, Charleston WV 25305. See Page 2 for Details.

COME TO THE STATE SUSTAINABLE FAIR, JULY 27-29:

It does no good to protest environmental pollution if we can't come up with better ways of living and working in harmony with nature. What's the latest thinking on organic and transitional farming? energy efficient housing and vehicles? Come to a Sustainable Fair July 27-29 at WV Wesleyan College, Buckhannon. Sponsored by WV Environmental Council, OVEC and other groups. Live music by Carrie and Michael Kline, Barrelhouse Bonni, Ed Mahonen, and "harper for harmony" John Lozier. *Contact Denise Poole for more info at deniseap@earthlink.net*

Learn to Monitor Stream Pollution May 19

Want to keep an eye on pollution in your favorite stream? Come to a free workshop Sat. May 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the James Rumsey Technical Institute, Route 9 West of Martinsburg. Learn from Evan Hansen, a Morgantown consultant working with the WV Rivers Coalition, how to monitor Clean Water Act permits. These National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits regulate the amount pollution that wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities are allowed to discharge into rivers and lakes. Sponsored by the WV Rivers Coalition and the Blue Heron Environmental Network. Open to public. Lunch provided. Register with Evan Hansen, 291 Halleck Road, Morgantown, WV 26508 (304) 291-8205 ehansen@downstreamstrategies.com, *Contact Sherry Evasic, Blue Heron Environmental Network, Rt. 1, Box 362, Hedgesville WV 25427, 304-744-8717*

Shout from the Mountaintops: Mon Forest Summer Outings

WV Highlands Conservancy is sponsoring a "Mountain Odyssey 2001" program of hikes, nature walks and meditations, and canoe trips all year long. Most programs offer a chance to visit the Monongahela Forest. Locally, in Morgan County, on Sat. June 9 Rich McGervey will lead a long day hike from Cacapon State Park to Paw Paw. *Contact mgervey@hotmail.com*. On Saturday June 23, there will be a Simultaneous Summit Celebration, with various groups hiking to various mountain peaks, sounding off with horns, rattles and songs, and waving flags and flowers! *Contact Ruth Blackwell Rogers, ruthbr@wvhighlands.org, 304-636-2662. See WVHC website for details: www.wvhighlands.org*

KEEP UP ON W.Va. State Environmental News! Email Chris Hogbin from Berkeley County: cahogbin@cs.com and get on one of her email lists for various subjects: forests, farmland preservation, roads, poultry, rivers, etc.

Easement: Protect Your Land for Posterity

Landowners who want to keep their land in forest or farm forever are taking the legal steps to put conservation easements on their land. These easements, which run with the land and limit the rights to develop it, are held by nonprofit conservation groups called land trusts. The easements reduce the resale value of the land when it is sold, but often give the sellers a capital gain tax break because the easement is a charitable donation.

Cacapon-Lost Rivers Land Trust now holds easements on nearly 1000 acres in the Cacapon River Watershed, and Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle holds a comparable easement acreage in the eastern three counties. *Contact: Cacapon-Lost rivers Land Trust, Nancy Ailes, 304-856-3911, email nailles@access.mountain.net; Margarita Provenzano margarita69@peoplepc.com, president, Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle..*

Help Farmers, Rivers and Yourself: Buy Potomac Headwaters Petite Beef

Healthy cows, healthy rivers, healthy consumers: that's the goal of Petite Beef Headwater Farms, an unusual working group of Hampshire County cattle farmers, extension agents, and environmentalists. Some fans of rural beauty forget that farmers must make a living to keep their farms: this group walks the talk!

Headwater farmers fence the cattle away from the streams, and they rotate fields for grazing to give cattle fresh feed and avoid erosion. They avoid routine antibiotics and hormones; in fact, they save money from not having to feed the cattle grain, because the cattle are slaughtered without having to winter over. The tender, lean meat, called "petite beef" is direct-marketed to people who appreciate healthy food and a rural landscape. It is packaged in a Romney food plant called Gourmet Central which also uses local produce to make jelly and relish. *To learn more, and order some beef, call Bob Cheves, Hampshire County extension agent, 304-822-3020; or Neil Gilles 304-856-1385. Or see the Cacapon Institute website, www.cacaponinstitute.org*



Stewards of the Potomac Highlands
P.O. Box 455
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INSIDE:

- ** S.O.S.! Corridor H vs. Hanging Rock
- ** Battle at Greenland Gap
- ** Sprawl Wars
- ** County Plans and Land Trusts
- ** How Clean are Our Rivers?

WHAT'S A STEWARD?

A steward is one who takes care of land, for the benefit of today's and tomorrow's generations. Like the pioneer in our logo, holding his staff, we take responsibility for what happens on our own land. Also, as citizens, we know that what happens in our community, our town, our county and watershed affects our land, our clean water, our breatheable air, and all the living things that share it. Taking an even broader view, symbolized by the Native American in the Stewards logo, no human really "owns" land. The land was here before we were born and hopefully, will be here after we are long gone. We owe it to Creator, to those who went before us-- and to those who follow us-- to listen to nature, receive its offerings and treat it with respect.

Eastern West Virginia has a proud tradition of small farm and forest ownership and historic towns. To protect this heritage, Stewards of the Potomac Highlands is organizing a news and action network in the eight northeastern counties of West Virginia. We will also be networking with our neighbors in the Allegheny highlands to the north, Monongahela National Forest to the west, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to the east. We will support and publicize existing group efforts. On certain issues, such as Corridor H, we will take the lead. Above all we want to encourage and support those who labor so faithfully on behalf of our little corner of Planet Earth.

