

---

---

# The Potomac Highland Steward

---

---

MARCH 2018

## Write a Piece, Join Our Board

What issues and innovations in Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Berkeley, Morgan, Jefferson, Grant, Pendleton, and neighboring counties have caught your attention? What do you want us to help work on? What are you reading and finding important for our region? We welcome news articles and websites where we can find more. We update our website whenever we get new content, so send us your thoughts.

We could use more networkers, news writers, and potential board members from Berkeley, Mineral, Morgan and Pendleton Counties. Please write to [info@potomacstewards.com](mailto:info@potomacstewards.com) (or our PO box) Tell us about yourself, your expertise and experience, and what issues and groups you've been working with. □

## Sustainable Local Businesses

During the past two years, tourism, value-added farm products and shops that feature history and heritage have grown by leaps and bounds in the Cacapon River Valley from Lost River and Wardensville to Capon Bridge. Sustainable, grass-fed beef is catching on, with Sam Brill getting Capon Springs and Farms resort into the act with Scottish Highland cattle and pasture-raised hogs and laying hens.

### Town of Capon Bridge

Area residents successfully pressed the WV Division of Highways to repair rather than replace the historic metal green bridge on Route 50 that gives the town its name. The simple span steel through truss bridge, 180 feet long, was fabricated by Wheeling Structural Steel Company and erected by E. R. Mills in 1933.

A derelict riverside building is now the **River House**, a community-based arts and music center. The **Farmer's Daughter Market & Butcher** continues to make mouth-watering dishes out of locally-raised meat. The **Kettle Stop** antique shop also serves ice cream and kettle corn.

### Wardensville

In Wardensville, the historic Frye farm has been brought to a high-profile life as **Wardensville Garden Market + Bakery**. The bustling two-acre garden and farm market uses the latest techniques in small-scale, low-input, high-density, and sustainable farming. The

educational market was launched with a private foundation grant obtained by Paul Yandura and Don Hitchcock. Local high school students and recent grads get jobs and learn sustainable growing techniques, customer service, money management, and environmental stewardship through hands-on experience and mini-classes. They have their own beehive and grow flowers that draw friendly bugs that are natural predators to undesirable insects. They've been selling farm produce, Christmas trees and baked goods. Like several other local weekend tourist oriented businesses, they're open Thursday through Sunday.



Yandura and Hitchcock also opened the nearby **Lost River Trading Post** gift and coffee shop. Tensions have erupted between the urban, gay entrepreneurs and the longtime rural locals. But people are thriving as over a dozen local businesses have been opened by non-natives. Martha Warden Bradfield, whose great-great uncle founded the town, says in her politically diplomatic way that she hopes things will smooth out between folks and put Wardensville's economy on a favorable course. □

## Rural Health Care

### HOSPITAL ALLIANCE HELPS PATIENTS

Rural areas used to have fewer health care choices than big cities. The good news is that Valley Health System, based in Winchester, has built a strategic alliance since 2013 with Inova of Falls Church, so high quality care can extend out into Hampshire and Morgan counties in WV, and Shenandoah and Warren counties in Virginia. Inova has more than 1,700 licensed beds across its five

► **HEALTH, FROM PAGE 1**

hospitals in northern Virginia. Valley Health has 594 beds across its six hospitals in Virginia and West Virginia. It also has doctors' offices spread from Hancock and Romney to New Market and Shenandoah. Because the two health systems use the same electronic medical records system, they can share clinical information and research, to optimize patients' care. The system also lets individual patients access and review their own medical records from wherever they may be, using a secure system. The goal here is not to increase hospital admissions, but to increase the health of the regional population as a whole.

Finally, the resources shared between the two separate, but cooperating, systems mean that specialty care and expertise not available in one system or facility may be shared with the other. This includes physician travel in certain cases. This cuts costs for the two medical systems and makes treatment more easily accessible in far-flung rural communities for which travel can be a significant obstacle.

Since the US spends more money on health care than most first world countries, but with poorer outcomes overall, this may be a step in the right direction. That both hospital systems remain separate entities, are in good financial shape, and cover proximate but different areas make them agile and competitive in the ever changing health care world.

And more widely, patients can find doctors who offer longer appointments than average, and the most experienced specialists, at [Globe1234.info](http://Globe1234.info). □

## Rails and Roads

### RAILROAD MOMENTUM IN SPITE OF DELAYS AND STAFF CUTS

Local bus and train connections make so much sense that ridership keeps growing. Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry, in addition to being stops on the Chicago-to-DC Amtrak Capitol Limited, are also served by commuter trains on MARC's Brunswick line, [mta.maryland.gov](http://mta.maryland.gov). Local buses reach the stations in time for MARC departures at 6:30 am in Martinsburg and 6:50 am in Harpers Ferry. Buses pick up after MARC arrivals at 7:18 in Harpers Ferry and 5:30 pm and 6:39 pm in Martinsburg, [eptawv.com](http://eptawv.com).

During 2017, after a pleasant period of arriving on time, Amtrak trains in West Virginia have been

running late, delayed by the host freight railroads—and rail passenger advocates are taking the matter all the way to the Supreme Court. The National Association of Rail Passengers (NARP) joined the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC) in a petition to overturn decisions by the DC Circuit Court and the Eighth Circuit that stripped the powers of federal agencies to regulate on time performance.

Adding to problems for passengers, Amtrak has chosen to un-staff several stations in major West Virginia cities including Martinsburg, Huntington, and Prince (outside Beckley). This may save money, but the decline in customer service is probably not helpful in marketing the trains in the long run.

### CORRIDOR H: NO PLANS IN VIRGINIA

Corridor H last year hit an old-but-new snag, according to a July 2016 article in the Moorefield Examiner. Virginia DOT Administrator Charlie Kilpatrick noted that MAP-21 (the last major federal transportation funding law in 2012), eliminated all of the earmarking of funds for programs such as the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) corridors, so Virginia is no longer required to set aside funding for Corridor H. It's not on the planning charts in Virginia.

The four-lane sprawlway, planned to run from I-66 to Elkins, remains incomplete. Several sections have been built, including about 20 miles from Wardensville to Moorefield, a bypass around Elkins, and a section through a desolate, mined stretch of Tucker County. The most controversial sections, Parsons-to-Davis, involving the Blackwater Canyon and the towns of Davis and Thomas; and the section from Wardensville to Strasburg VA, remain unbuilt.

Stewards and its sister environmental group, Corridor H Alternatives, have actively opposed the project since 1993, protesting government waste as well as environmental damage. Projected traffic through this wild, rural area does not justify \$15 million-per-mile construction. We contend that some rural areas are more valuable to society if left undisturbed to host clean air, water and forests, with an economy based on the appreciation of these natural and historic resources. This economy seems to be developing now. Small towns like Thomas, Davis and Wardensville are likely to suffer economically, being bypassed by drivers, if the corridor were to be completed. □

**► ROADS, FROM PAGE 2**

West Virginia has confused motorists by naming the built sections of Corridor H, and even adjacent sections of Route 55, as *Route 48*. This used to be the route number for I-68, an east-west interstate to the north through Morgantown and Cumberland Md.

A map of Corridor H sections is available on a site which supports it, [CorridorH2020.com/Maps.html](http://CorridorH2020.com/Maps.html). □

## National News Roundup 2017

### CLEAN WATER, AIR, BEES, AND CLIMATE

The U.S. Global Change Research Program ([GlobalChange.gov](http://GlobalChange.gov)) put out a report that blames human activity for the rise in global temperature. Yet, administrator Scott Pruitt and the Trump Environmental Protection Agency are still planning to scrap the Clean Power Plan which aimed to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent by 2030. The plan was projected to prevent thousands of early deaths and 140,000 to 160,000 asthma attacks in children.

Pruitt has also rescinded drinking water protections, cancelled a scheduled ban of the neurotoxic pesticide chlorpyrifos, and covered up the carcinogenic risks of glyphosate, the main ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup.

Friends of the Earth ([foe.org](http://foe.org)) has focused on the corporate influences of Monsanto and other chemical makers, as government policies continue to disregard scientific research showing these substances are poisoning bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects.

This is one place we as gardeners and landowners can make a difference, in planting plants that attract bees and butterflies. But beware—some nursery and garden store plants have been pre-treated with pesticides. More info at <https://foe.org/projects/bee-action>. □

## Energy

**Want to go solar?** Check the Solar United Neighbors (SUN) website [solarunitedneighbors.org](http://solarunitedneighbors.org) for state-by-state advice on installing solar energy at your house, and on lobbying for better public policy. They have a list of WV businesses with solar installations, including several in Berkeley Springs, Shepherdstown, and Harpers Ferry.

### PIPELINES BESIEGE W.VA., NEIGHBORS

While the dramatic fight against the North Dakota pipeline by indigenous people at Standing Rock captured our attention, dozens of other environmentally damaging oil and gas pipelines around the country have been sneaking through the regulatory system.

So far, 18 environmental groups, including the [Upper Potomac Riverkeeper](http://UpperPotomacRiverkeeper.org), have urged Gov. Hogan and the Maryland Department of the Environment to deny a 401 Waterways Permit for the **Potomac Pipeline**. This four-mile pipeline would bring fracked gas from Pennsylvania to West Virginia, through Maryland, west of Hancock and north of Berkeley Springs, WV. The pipeline would cross directly under the C&O Canal and the Potomac River, the primary drinking water source for more than 6 million people.

A north-south pipeline down the center of West Virginia, the **Mountain Valley Pipeline**, won federal approval and appears to have the state OK to build. The West Virginia DEP took the unprecedented step of waiving its own authority to review the project. WV Rivers Coalition ([wvrivers.org](http://wvrivers.org)) is trying to figure out its next steps; taxpayers have to wonder why we are paying the salaries of WVDEP bureaucrats if they are not going to do their job of monitoring and protecting.

FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) has approved the building of the Mountain Valley Pipeline as well as the **Atlantic Coast Pipeline** which would start near Clarksburg and cross West Virginia southeast through the Monongahela Forest and then cut through Virginia and North Carolina. The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, which monitors fossil fuel issues in detail, notes that the government has made only the general route and need for the pipelines subject to public review, saving the choice of the pipeline's specific route, with all the environmental impacts, for a separate process later. Again—anything to keep from doing their job and protecting the public.

Yet another pipeline **Mountaineer Gas Eastern Panhandle Expansion Project (EP Pipeline)**, a 23-mile pipeline has threatened to bring its pollution into Berkeley and Morgan Counties. WV Rivers reviewed the EP Pipeline's stormwater permit application and found that it lacks critical information the WVDEP needs to certify that the project will be able to meet permit requirements. Stay tuned to [wvrivers.org](http://wvrivers.org) for actions needed. □



Stewards of the Potomac Highlands  
PO Box 455  
Wardensville WV 26851

PotomacsStewards.com

***President***

Paul Burke  
Jefferson County

***Vice President***

Kirsten Weiblen  
Hampshire County

***Treasurer***

Eric Burleyson  
Hampshire County

***Secretary***

Donna Cook  
Grant County

***Board Member***

Bonni McKeown  
Cabell County

## STEWARDS OF THE POTOMAC HIGHLANDS

We are a nonprofit 501(c)(4) citizens group addressing ways to live and work in respect and harmony with nature and people in the beautiful Potomac Highlands of West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland. We aim to strengthen citizens' efforts by sharing information and promoting networking among our neighbors. We lend our support to other groups who lobby for changes in laws and policies.

We have personal experience in many of the issues that we cover. Please contact us via our website [PotomacStewards.com](http://PotomacStewards.com) and ask us when you need more information.

**Together we can make a difference.**

### ***We Depend Solely on Your Contributions***

***You can mail a check, or donate securely online at [PotomacStewards.com](http://PotomacStewards.com)***

***We are an advocacy group so your contribution is not tax-deductible, but whatever amount you can afford, no matter how small or large, is used 100% for our all-volunteer work to protect our Potomac Highlands.***

***Stewards of the Potomac Highlands***

***PO Box 455***

***Wardensville, WV 26851***

***[info@PotomacStewards.com](mailto:info@PotomacStewards.com)***

***Help us spread the word - when you are done with this newsletter please recycle it by sharing it with a friend or neighbor.***