

Holiday Thanks and Blessing

by, Mary Ellen O'Farrell, WVEC Board President

Dear friends and supporters of WVEC -

Thank you so much for all that you do for West Virginia's land & People! Without your efforts, what would our beloved state's future include? What could we reasonably expect for our children and grandchildren, assuming that they will choose to stay in the Mountain State?

May you be richly rewarded for the care that you have taken in defense of our state's health, beauty and livability, both now and for the years to come! May your holidays be blessed by peace, serenity, light and contentment, and may your New Year be joyful!

My gift to you is a lovely Native American prayer - may it enrich your daily life in the times and struggles to come:

Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion, and honor
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.

Ojibway Prayer

2003 Legislative Priorities

At our November board meeting the WVEC board developed a list of legislative priorities for the 2003 session of the West Virginia legislature. These priorities were established based on issues put forward by the WVEC membership at the fall annual meeting.

The list includes the following, in no particular order of importance or significance: air and water pollution rules and regulations; coal issues such as the mining regulations and overweight coal trucks; passage of a "bottle bill"; advancing research opportunities for the industrial hemp bill passed by the legislature last year; election campaign finance reforms; and reform of the Logging and Sediment Control Act and its impact on flooding.

In addition, the board is supporting a number of economic and clean energy proposals loosely grouped into a "Green Energy Campaign" package.

More details on all these issues will be included in the WVEC *Legislative Updates* published every Friday during the legislative session. Don't miss out - renew your membership today!

Lobby Team Set

The WVEC lobby team for the 2003 session of the West Virginia legislature has been hired and is ready to go.

Members of the team this year include Rick Eades, Conni Lewis, Allan Tweddle, Chuck Wyrstok, John Taylor, Denise Poole, Chris Hogbin, Amy Strege and Dot Henry. Don Garvin will serve his second year as the team's legislative coordinator.

There are no "rookies" on this year's team - everyone on the team has experience in the legislative lobbying arena.

Retaining a paid lobby team of this size and strength represents a significant commitment by the WVEC board and membership. So your contributions to WVEC are more important than ever. Please remember that when renewing your membership.

E-Day! 2003 Scheduled!

Tuesday, February 25th
10:00 am ~ 3:00 pm
Upper House & Senate halls

Enviro Displays &
Demonstrations
Green Business Displays
Citizen Lobbying
Award Presentations

*More details announced
as date grows closer. Stay
tuned to your Legislative
Update each week during the
session!*

Annual E-Day! Fund-raiser

Tuesday, February 25th
The Brick Cellar
1611 Washington Street East
Charleston, WV

5:00 till 9:00

Live Music
Delicious Buffet
Silent Auction

Honoring our Award
Recipients

*A suggested donation of
\$5.00 (or whatever you can
afford) will go towards meet-
ing our legislative budget.*

Legislative Update

Beginning Friday, January 10, 2003 we will be publishing our WVEC Legislative Updates weekly during the session.

The Legislative Update keeps you informed on our issues and all the latest news from the capitol.

Stay connected through WVEC!! Please let us know if you have a change of address, e-mail, etc. we need to know about to keep our list current.

As always, we need your e-mail address to help save postage so your Update can be sent to you electronically.

Check our web-site at: www.wvecouncil.org for continuing coverage of the 2003 legislative session as well.

West Virginia Environmental Council 2002~2003 Board of Directors

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G.R.E.E.N. is the Grassroots Environmental Effort Newsletter published quarterly by the West Virginia Environmental Council, a statewide organization dedicated to facilitating communication and cooperation among citizens in promoting environmental protection in West Virginia. Subscription's are based at \$25 per year. Subscribers also receive the *Legislative Update*, published weekly during the Legislative Session.

G.R.E.E.N. welcomes letters, articles, and art work from readers and reserves the right to edit or reject submissions. Submit materials (preferably e-mail or on disk) to: **G.R.E.E.N.**, Denise Poole, *editor*
deniseap@earthlink.net
1324 Virginia Street East
Charleston, WV 25301
304-346-5905
www.wvecouncil.org



Enviros, Faith Community and Labor Meet to Discuss Common Ground

By Julie Archer, WV-CAG

E-Council's Christmas Wish List

*Postage Stamps
Computer Printer
Small Refrigerator
\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Scotch Tape
Sturdy Staplers & Staples
Kitchen Trash Bags
Letter Size Paper
General Office Supplies*

Thank You WVEC!!!

The response to our recent fund-raising letter has been overwhelming! We have received a number of donations continually flowing into the office - keep em' coming!!!

We also appreciate all the wonderful, delightful, and insightful comments included with these donations. Your support of our lobby team and gratitude for all the work WVEC does year round goes a long way to lift our spirits!

Thanks to all of you for your generosity and words of encouragement. As always, the legislative effort could not be sustained without the support of our members.

Thanks to the following folks for donating several (much needed) pieces of office equipment & items over the past year:

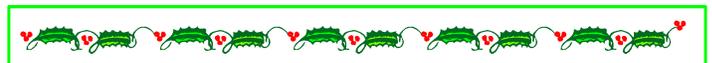
Greg Caroll,
Bob Marshall
Fred & Liz Sampson
Dot Henry
Larry Gibson
Don Garvin
Denise Poole
Shelli Turner
David Grubb

On December 12, representatives of labor, the faith community, environmental organizations and citizen groups met in Charleston to discuss their legislative issues and common goals. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation, Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Citizens Coal Council, Coal River Mountain Watch, Interfaith Global Climate Change Campaign, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, United Mine Workers of America, West Virginia Citizen Action Group and West Virginia Rivers Coalition.

The issue of overweight coal trucks will continue to unite many of the organizations, which worked together during both the 2002 regular session and a special session in July to defeat legislation to raise the legal weight limit for coal trucks. The groups will continue to work together to convince the governor and the legislature to put health and safety, and respect for West Virginia taxpayers above the interests of the coal industry.

Several of the organizations are also active in Citizens for Clean Elections, a coalition that supports passage of the West Virginia Clean Elections Act. The Clean Elections Act would establish a voluntary system of public financing for qualified candidates who agree to limit their spending and reject all private donations. The Clean Elections Act was introduced during the 2002 legislative session and will be reintroduced during the upcoming session.

The groups plan to meet again in January to continue to look for common goals on other issues. The individual groups are working on a wide variety of issues including air emissions from vehicles such as school buses and coal trucks, workers compensation, the West Virginia Jobs Act, tort reform, water quality, reforming timbering and mining practices and a West Virginia Bottle Bill.



Organic Consumers Association Needs Us

By, *Mary Wildfire, WVEC Past President*

After 26 years in West Virginia, I've moved temporarily to northeastern Minnesota, where I'm doing a six months internship with **Organic Consumers Association**. OCA's main office is a straw-bale structure, with a well-insulated yurt beside it, about 100 yards from the shore of Lake Superior. It's pretty, but ridiculously cold here. They have to bury water lines six feet!

Organic Consumers Association works on food issues like genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and irradiation, as well as defending organic standards and fighting for fairly traded, as well as organically grown food. They also connect consumers with sources of organically grown food. There is a campaign to pressure supermarket chains to remove GMO ingredients from their store brand lines; another to get Starbucks to push Fair Trade coffee and remove rBGH from the milk and GMO ingredients from their baked goods; as well as a new campaign, *Clothes for a Change*, to encourage clothing producers to switch to non-sweatshop, non genetically engineered cotton, ideally also organic. The OCA website, www.organicconsumers.org, has links to these campaigns and a huge news section which is updated daily.

A recent item, for example, is on Morphotek, which is experimenting with splicing human cancer-causing genes into various organisms to enhance the mutation rate, thus speeding up the breeding process. They assure us it'll be no problem to remove the cancer genes once they find what they want. (While they're putting things back where they go, maybe they could pop a few mountains back into place in West Virginia. That's sure to be no problem either.)

Organic Consumers Association is a national organization with some international ties, including a permanent office in Chiapas, Mexico. With a network of thousands of volunteers, links to several thousand natural food stores, and 500,000 names in their database, they have the clout to make real change.

I noticed, however, that the West Virginia section of the database is awfully sparse. Chris Treter, the organizer whose territory includes West Virginia, admitted to me that he's never been there and has

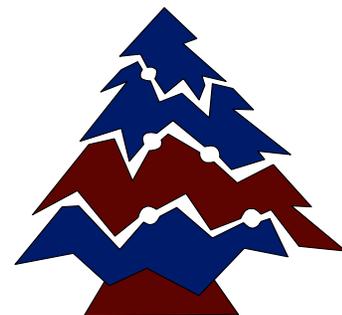
done little with the state. So I volunteered to make some connections.

Right now, OCA is working to expand its network. We'd like to have your name, perhaps your address and phone number, and definitely your e-mail address. We don't share our e-mail list with other organizations, but use it to send out action alerts, look for volunteers for local actions, and send out Biodemocracy News every six weeks. If you like, we'll also put you on the list for a shorter electronic newsletter that comes out every other week with one paragraph on each of the top five or so stories on the website, with links in case you want to read the whole story.

The link on OCA's webpage for organic food sources is also very incomplete for West Virginia; it has only three stores, one of which I know to be out-of-business. Please tell us about the others! Where do you buy natural foods? It helps them, of course, if new customers can find them.

You can sign up by clicking Join the Action Network on the upper right of the OCA homepage, or call Chris at: (231) 256-9667, or me toll-free at: 888-403-1007 (you have to ask for Mary Wildfire as there's another Mary here).

All our struggles are connected. The fight to preserve the purity of our food supply and the livelihood of family farmers comes from the same place as the fight to protect mountains and forests, and rivers and livelihoods and non-commercialized education and access to health-care. Joining OCA's network is a way to strengthen that paradigm, so that it may overtake the reductionist, profit-obsessed one now dominating our world.



Happy Holidays and a Joyful New Year!

A Different Kind of DEP

By Don Garvin

Two years ago when Mike Callaghan became head of the Department of Environmental Protection (he is now “Secretary” Callaghan) I noted in our newsletter that he was seemingly a “different kind of DEP director,” a marked contrast from the mold of past directors.

DEP actions this year seem to bear this out. The most dramatic evidence of this was the DEP flood advisory task force report that was highly critical of the contributions to flooding of bad mining and timbering practices. The task force report and recommendations were soundly based on valid science that was peer reviewed, and it took courage for the DEP not to give in to industry pressure to bury that study. If only Governor Wise had shown similar courage and promulgated the DEP recommendations as an emergency rule . . . well, that’s another story.

Two more recent actions by DEP are further evidence that we are dealing now with a different DEP:

The first is DEP’s recent decision to deny a longwall mining permit revision for Mettiki Coal to undermine a native brook trout stream in Grant County. The stream is Hind Leg Creek and it is a tributary of the North Branch of the Potomac River. DEP also denied the earlier original permit, which Mettiki appealed to the surface mine board, and then submitted a permit revision. In denying the permit revision, DEP said, “The (longwall) method would cause subsidence and water loss in the stream.”

In a press release DEP Division of Mining and Reclamation Director Matt Crum said, “We denied the permit based on a cumulative hydrologic impact assessment . . . In its permit revision, Mettiki focused on remediation of Hind Leg and not on the protection of the stream. Hind Leg is one of the few remaining trout streams in the North Branch of the Potomac watershed and it needs to be protected. While the agency encourages the development of new technology and remediation techniques, the native trout stream is the wrong place to experiment.”

These are definitely not the sort of words we have come to expect from previous DEPs.

The second DEP action of note is that on December 12 the DEP filed a lawsuit in Hardy County Circuit Court against the Pilgrim’s Pride poultry

G.R.E.E.N. News

processing facility for massive water quality violations in the South Branch Potomac watershed. The DEP alleges in the lawsuit that the Moorefield company violated discharge limits, failed to sample for pollutants, and had sloppy maintenance practices at its truck-washing facility. DEP is seeking civil penalties and “requesting that the court order the company to submit a plan that provides for the correction” of the violations.

It should be pointed out that DEP took this action only AFTER a notice of intent was filed by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition to initiate a similar lawsuit against the company. Nonetheless, previous DEPs would no doubt have filed a “friend of the court” brief in defense of the polluting company.

I am writing all this to applaud the agency for these recent decisions. We should support the agency when it makes the right decisions and takes the right actions.

And for the skeptics among us, let me add firmly that I do not believe we could have possibly been too critical of this agency in the past, and of course, we should continue to hold DEP’s feet to the fire to make sure they do the right thing in the future.

"Fiending On Telecom"

*A poem for sustainable development
By John Taylor, OVEC Board Co-Chair*

“The days are stacked against
what we think we are.
After a month of interior weeping
it occurred to me that in times like these
I have nothing to fall back on
except the sun and moon and earth.”

Jim Harrison - The Theory and Practice of Rivers

Kayford Mountain

Just at dusk on Kayford Mountain sow bear and her cubs walked past the mining machines and sheds and headed down toward the left hand hollow hoping to find their next meal and a place to lay down their heads.

We were just below the ridge looking down on the empty flattened dirt where the giant machines had worked. Larry said, “when I was a kid up here we stood right here And looked up, way up, to the top of it. Now you have to look down and its just flat dirt and rocks and the trees and the water and the animals and the birds are gone.

They got their coal and they killed our mountain
and killed our home place too.

"Fiending on Telecom" *cont. from page 5*

They took our ancestral ground, our sacred ground where we, in our generations, have lived, gone to church, married, made and birthed babies, taken family meals, slept in peace, died and been buried. Its wicked and unnatural to mock God's creation the way they're doing to get their coal. God is not mocked. That's all I have to say about it."

Last Christmas day three men were found dead on top of Kayford Mountain under a cell phone tower. All night they thought they were following the Christmas Star to redemption and life. Dazzled and beguiled by the strobing light they fell over a rock cliff into a valley fill. The rocks in the fill broke and crushed their bodies.

There are some who say these poor fools died of broken hearts, dead before they hit the rocks in the fill. That's probably true. Their hearts shattered when they saw the shallow emptiness of what the dominating light on the mountain meant.

Ritter Park. Huntington

How strange, but how usual to walk in Ritter Park along Fourpole Creek with office workers from the tall buildings downtown with cell phones transplanted into their ears.

No roots, no vines, just fungoid growths in their heads. Ignoring the cool sweet summer morning air, they're doing business and staying in the main stream of commerce and finance.

They've forgotten, if they ever knew, that there's been many a fool found floating face down in the mainstream.

At three o'clock they'll be on their breaks, standing outside the tall buildings, cell phones in their ears, and smoking their cigs. Fiending on cigs, fiending on cell phones.

We are all fiending on oil, fiending on coal, fiending on gas, fiending on central air, fiending on cars, fiending on four-lanes, fiending on S.U.V.s fiending on the flesh and bones of long-dead species, with no thought of our children, their grandchildren, their great-grandchildren, the generations to come. How will they live on the little we'll leave them?

Our national mantra is "Produce to consume. Consume for production. It's not working out. Why do we accept the unacceptable? Why are we leaving so little to sustain the lives of those who will follow us?"

Fourpole Creek, Ritter Park

It is late summer and our rivers teem with life. In the New, the Greenbrier, the Kanawha, the Cheat, The Gauley, the Cacapon, clouds of shad, shiners, chubs, Fathead minnows, soft and hard shell crawdads, frogs and all manner of aquatic insects fatten the waters and all that lives in them.

You can stand quietly and watch the bass herd the minnows and eat them. If you watch carefully for minnows jumping frantically out of the water and skipping over the surface, you will know where to cast for the mighty smallmouth bass, and join the beautiful, complex and complete circle of predation and prey. Quietly watching Fourpole Creek a small school of minnows is a very welcome sign of life in this gravely befouled stream.

The County Hospital has dumped its medical wastes leftover from its life-giving activities into it. Are the nurses and doctors throwing tumors and viruses at us?

My only wish when I finally get my genie is: let's make Fourpole Creek permanently habitable for a breeding population of Smallmouth Bass. O what a mighty time! when we rejoice and party all night for the re-birth of long-dead streams and long-dead species.

Sustainable Development

"Sustainable development?" Sustainable what? "Do what now, Buddy? You wanna run that by me again." A strange concept to most everyone. A vague concept except in its concrete applications.

A concept enshrouded by mist, speculation and mystery. But for sure we have to do it or else our coming generations will live most miserably and curse us if we do not make provision now for their survival.

O sweet strong sisters. O strong sweet brothers. Sustainable development is not optional. We have to do it. We must all take our best hold, our best grip, And make concrete from mist and speculation.

Let a thousand sustainable fairs blossom. Let solar Panels, fuel cells and wind turbines appear nightly on the evening TV death news so we can all see the possibility of life and the replenishment of God's Creation.

Bring it on! O bring it on with the speed and power Of a Nolan Ryan fastball! Bring it on! Bring it on with the grace, speed and power Of a Venus Williams serve. Bring it on! Bring it!

O bring it! Bring it. Bring it. Bring it. O bring it on now!

Calendar of Events

January 8: 2003 Legislative Session begins. Stay in touch through our **Legislative Update** newsletter published weekly during the session. Get all the latest information on important issues, active legislation, events and more.

January 17: 2003 Legislative Session Kick-Off Blast! WVEC Fundraiser - Perfater Law Office, 1311 Virginia Street East, Charleston. From 7:30 pm till 11:30. Live Music & refreshments! **Help us kick-off the session in style!** Meet the 2003 Lobby Team members, mingle with friends, and bid on Auction items. Great opportunity to catch up on issues!
Cover: A \$5.00 suggested donation at the door will go in support of WVEC legislative expenses.
For more information: Denise Poole, 346-5905 or deniseap@earthlink.net.

January 24, 2003: (This event postponed - new date to be announced) WVEC Western Region Fundraiser. Ebenezer Church - Huntington, WV - Enjoy live music, a delicious "Potato Bar", with lots of toppings to choose from, vegetable soup, bread & dessert! 5:30 till 8:30.
Cover: \$5.00 suggested donation.
For more information: Denise Poole at deniseap@earthlink.net or John Taylor, 925-7066.

February 25: WVEC Annual E-Day! at the Capitol, Senate & House halls, state capitol, Charleston WV. 10:00 till 3:00. Organizations, groups, eco-friendly business displays and other activities planned. Mark your calendar now, and join us! Lobby your legislative representatives!
For more information and to reserve display area contact: Denise Poole, 346-5905 or deniseap@earthlink.net.

February 25: Annual E-Day! WVEC Fundraiser. The Brick Cellar, 1604 Washington Street East, Charleston. From 5:00 pm till 9:00 pm. Stop by after E-Day! at the Capitol.....Buffet, Auction, Live Music!
Stay tuned for more details.
For more information: Denise Poole, 346-5905 or deniseap@earthlink.net

March 8: Last Day of Legislative Session. Stay tuned for details of End of Session Gathering.

April 26: Artists for the Environment Fundraiser. Perfater Law Office lobby, 1311 Virginia Street East. West Virginia and regional Artists in support of WVEC. Silent auction of visual artwork, live music, wine & cheese, and raffle drawing for Mark Blumenstein sculpture. Join us for this lovely evening and support the environmental efforts in West Virginia through WVEC!
For more information and to participate contact: Denise Poole, 346-5905 or deniseap@earthlink.net.



Support the West Virginia Environmental Council

1324 Virginia Street East, Charleston WV 25301 (304) 346-5905 www.wvecouncil.org

Renewed Membership: _____ **New Membership:** _____ **Donation:** _____

Membership Levels:	Student/Senior ~ \$10. _____	Enviro Steward ~ \$250. _____
	Regular ~ \$25. _____	Canopy ~ \$500. _____
	Seedling ~ \$50. _____	Old Growth ~ \$1,000. _____
	Sustaining ~ \$100. _____	Other ~ _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____ **e-mail:** _____

City, State, Zip: _____



**'Nature gives
to every time and season
some beauties of its own.'**

Charles Dickens



**The West Virginia Environmental Council
1324 Virginia Street East
Charleston , WV 25301**

