

Ancient Mountain Sentinel

Shenandoah
Ecosystems
Defense
Group

Range after range of mountains.
Year after year after year.
I am still in love.
-Gary Snyder



Vol I, No. VI

ACTION for the wild Shenandoah and central Blue Ridge Bioregions

Summer, 1999

Virginia Begins Study Of Chip Mill Impacts

by Nancy Gilliam

On Feb. 25, 1999, the Virginia General Assembly passed HJ 730, the Chip Mill Study bill. Forest activists from all over the state celebrated and braced themselves for a difficult next 2 years.

In 1998, I learned of the Stokes County, NC chip mill proposal, and the fact that it would source timber out of Patrick, Carroll and Floyd Counties in VA. I alerted the Patrick Environmental Awareness Group (PEAG), a newly formed organization focusing on local environmental issues. Several of us took turns attending rallies and meetings in order to educate ourselves about the encroaching chipper. Danna Smith, executive director of the Dogwood Alliance, an organization working to slow the spread of chip mills in the southeast, provided a formal presentation to our group and outlined several strategies we could take.

In August, my local state delegate, Bernie Day, agreed to sponsor a chip mill study bill in the General Assembly. Since we had legislative support, but knew very little about how to get a bill passed, we asked Albert Pollard, Sierra Club lobbyist for VA to host a training session in Direct Action Organizing. The newly formed Virginia Forest Watch (VAFW) attended the training and became the leading force behind passage of the bill. VAFW is a coalition of various environmental organizations (SEDG is on the steering committee) focused on protecting and preserving public and private forest land in Virginia.

On Oct. 30, 1998, the first meeting of the Chip Mill Task Force of VAFW took place. This group of seasoned, committed, raring-to-go folks grabbed the issue and ran, making the idea of a chip mill study a reality with vision, speed and tenacity.

Ceilo Sand, an activist with the Dogwood Alliance, wrote the draft bill (*cont. pg. 5*)



One easy step from a forest to a landfill: Chipmills are infiltrating Eastern forests at phenomenal rates, reducing living growing trees to pulp for paper and disposables like cigarette and frozen food boxes.

Groups Call for Blackwater Canyon National Park

By Jason Halbert

The threat of a lawsuit over logging on a 3,000 acre privately held tract in West Virginia's grand canyon has drawn environmentalists, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the owner of a timber corporation together in yet another legal test of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). But efforts are not stopping there, as several groups have proposed buying the land for inclusion in a new Blackwater Canyon National Park.

Members of Heartwood and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy filed a 60 day notice of intent to sue Allegheny Wood Products (AWP) of Petersburg, WV, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service on October 30, 1998. The West Virginia Sierra Club also filed notice to AWP shortly after. Preparation for this lawsuit is still underway, but parties intend to file as soon as the case is ready.

At issue is a hotly contested piece of property now owned by John Crites' Allegheny Wood Products. Tucker County's Blackwater Canyon is touted on WV tourism brochures sent around the world. Millions visit Tucker County every year for the views, or to get married on Lindy Point, to hike, fish, kayak the whitewater, and enjoy the rugged, remote canyon. An old railroad grade on the north side of the river now serves as a rail trail and is proposed as a (*cont. pg. 5*)

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View From A High Ledge

It's been a long time coming for this issue of Ancient Mountain Sentinel. We have undergone many changes, brought in some new faces, and are working on developing exciting projects. With all the energy used in making these transitions, AMS fell temporarily and understandably, by the wayside.

What has been happening during the interim? SEDG is elated to welcome Susan Curry, Eastern Field Coordinator for the National Forest Protection Alliance, to Charlottesville. Her presence is welcome both on a personal level and for the new projects she is coordinating in Virginia and the eastern U.S. SEDG has also seen an influx of volunteers (we thank you! your efforts are vital to this work!). SEDG has formally joined with two dedicated individuals to maintain a constant pressure on the Forest Service. Sherman Bamford and Steve Krichbaum are monitoring the Jefferson and George Washington Forest Timber Sale program. SEDG salutes their phenomenal past efforts and is pleased to work with them as Forest Watch Coordinators for Virginian public lands. We are also pleased to be involved with Virginia Forest Watch, a recently-formed coalition of conservation groups leading the charge against chip mills in Virginia.

The new year kicked off with a fund-raising drive which brought new members and welcome \$\$ to the organization. In April, SEDG organized the state meeting for Virginia to support an end to commercial logging on public lands, specifically the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act (H.R. 1396). Tell your Congress-folk to cosponsor it!

SEDG thanks you for your continued support, and encourage you to get in touch with us! It's (always) a great time to volunteer, donate, attend workshops and lobby!

Opinion Editorial

By Dale Wallace

"A spirit is a terrible thing to waste" and "it's a wonderful world after all" weigh upon the balance beam in my mind.

This comes to you from a forest of the loess bluffs deposited along the east edge of the lower Mississippi River. An uncommon soil type in the world, erodes interestingly, awfully, and grows diverse hardwood forests quickly or does so until its overcut. In about the center of the NE ¼ of Section 31, Township 14N, Range 3E, on the side of a first generation, moderately forested ridge facing NW is a large beautiful cherrybark oak, flanked by a couple companions, a magnolia and an elm about my girth. The two grow together at points and go up toward the waist and chest of the oak, and so do I. There I found several secure and comfortable perches 30-40 feet up. I peered down, at times with binoculars, across the hollow 150 yards away. I was located at the edge of the recently deforested area and watched human attempts to unstick a huge CAT skidder. They went on several hours.

Recognizing, considering and testing an almost forearm in diameter grapevine that hung just in front of my perch, I slid down to the ground. Removed best I could, paint spots dooming these trees. Didn't work. So go spirit.

Clearcutting or virtual clearcutting in the Southeast? Why? How about Greed over Ethic? Factor in foresight about the length of a nose. And, we're one of the last semi-frontiers with easily accessible trees that the world wants. "The southeastern region is the largest producer of pulpwood in the world." If current trends continue, between the years 2000 and 2010, hardwood removals in the south will exceed growth due to their expanded use in the manufacture of pulp and paper (Chipping Forests and Jobs, August 1997, Dogwood Alliance, Chattanooga, TN).

The sudden mechanization/automation of harvesting and conversion of big tree wanna-be's into 'short fiber products' is a mammoth leap towards erasing the remains of our forest and habitat sight before our very eyes. Our lack of awareness and involvement and wastefulness, facilitate and allow increasingly rapid deforestation of the Southeast. All while the omnipresent opportunists abound, eager for dollars, ethically impoverished and spiritually impoverishing.

Sisters and brothers, spread the word, walk the talk.

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Submissions

We will gladly print most anything you supply--articles, op-ed, poetry, cartoons, photos, drawings, etc... so please send it on in. Please try and keep text under one typed page... we may have to edit for space. Our next issue will be coming out in Summer 1999, so please submit by July 1st. Thanks!

Donations to SEDG are gratefully accepted, and much appreciated. We operate on a tight budget and can always use additional equipment, volunteers, and financial support.

Ancient Mountain Sentinel is printed on 100% recycled, 50% post-consumer, non-chlorine bleached paper that costs less than virgin fibers. Your use of this or similar paper will prevent the destruction of native forests. Recycle... Pass this newsletter on to a friend!

Fin out what's happening in our National Forests! **PROTECTING VIRGINIA'S NATIONAL FORESTS** Workshops for concerned citizens!

Saturday, July 17th * Wytheville, VA * 10am - 5pm *** Sunday, August 1st * Front Royal, VA * 10am - 5pm

* HISTORY, ECOLOGY & ECONOMY of Virginia's National Forests * Should COMMERCIAL logging be allowed on National Forests? *
How to monitor Forest Service projects * What can I do? Community organizing in your home town!*

DIRECTIONS: JULY 17th WORKSHOP: WYTHEVILLE at the Wythe County Community Hospital: Take exit 70 from Interstate 81. Take a right at the first stop light. The entrance of the hospital is on the right. Bear to the right (not up the hill to the emergency entrance) and take the first right. The road will then bear left. The Bland Wythe Room is about halfway down the building. Signs will be posted. Parking available adjacent to the meeting room. **AUGUST 1st WORKSHOP: FRONT ROYAL** at the Indian Pipe farm: Take Rt. 66 to the Markam Exit - #18, go left off the exit if you're coming from 66 east, right if you're coming west to the stop sign make a right on to 55 west. Fiery Run Rd (also 726) is your second left. 1.8 miles on the right is 3526 Indian Pipe. Folks are welcome to make this a weekend trip, contact SEDG for camping information!

The National Forest Protection Movement: To Honor our Ancient Forests

By Christina Wulf

Oxygen, in the spring mountains of Virginia, is green. We live beneath a breathing blanket of deciduous tree canopies, however ghostly and torn they may be today. Standing in the Shenandoah Valley, looking west to the Alleghenies and east to the Blue Ridge, gaze upon an ancient landscape. These mountains expose some of the oldest rock above the surface of North America; as their limestone sediments peeled away from wind & water, the mountains fed nutrients to the richly complex forests from the piedmont to the highlands and beyond. Appalachian hardwood forests evolved in a balance with earth & animal over extraordinary expanses of time.

But times change. This valley bloomed early with human inhabitants, from the generations of Native tribes who traveled the region, to the early Europeans who settled in what was then considered the far west, as distant from the control of the throne as possible. The Euros moved in following the rivers, Potomac, Shenandoah, Calfpasture, James & Jackson, Roanoke, Clinch, Holston, and the New. Along these rivers, the early European industries (farms, foundries, furnaces & lumber yards) have boomed far beyond their carrying capacity in this landscape.

Along with the memories of an endless forest, western Virginians inherit the usual degradation of an industrial age: too many clearcuts, animal-production factories, sick rivers, sick trees, and possibly the most polluted air in the nation, hovering on hot summer days over the Shenandoah National Park. The population too is booming as the rural rush sweeps west from big eastern cities, washing a poison tide of strip malls, tract housing, and chemical-green lawns over farms & forests.

Here, as in communities across the country, people are gathering together in the

name of conservation and restoration. In late April, a National Forest Protection meeting drew forty Virginians to the genteel grounds of the University of Virginia to strategize an end to commercial logging on public lands. The echoes of the Great Eastern Forest are most audible in the folded lands of western Virginia where the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests encompass some 1.8 million acres. These forests, like an oasis in the dessert, draw people from far distances. And so the meeting drew people from all corners

dividual epiphanies, some moment, imprinted on us, when the wonder of the wild became manifest. And it was apparent, again, that this movement to limit human impact is not so much a revolution as it is a reconnection. Tracing our human bloodlines back a brief genetic distance, a handful of centuries, to relearn how to live on this earth in balance with breathing forests & all their inhabitants.

We begin with a commitment to community & place, a loyalty to our home range, and an instinctive urge to protect it for its own sake & for ours.

The April meeting began with stories of home ranges, some intact, some bulldozed. We began by speaking of the commonality of care, and then learned how to turn our powerful emotions into political firepower. How to lobby from the heart. How to organize as a member of a community. How to hold the old-boy network of Virginia politicians accountable in the naked light of day. And then we

went to Washington. And we lobbied our elected officials. We learned that everyone cares about the environment, but no one wants to take political risks. Not yet. Not until we the people show in concrete ways that real conservation is really common sense.

In the gathering together of caring people, to fight Congress or a proposed Wal Mart, to protect a park or restore a watershed, a powerful energy is born. Almost every evaluation form from the April meeting said, the best part was the



On every scale, scenes of beauty on the National Forests.
All Photos: M.A. Jones

of the Old Dominion; each of Virginia's eleven Congressional districts was represented. We were diverse people- newcomers & old-timers, high school and college students alongside retirees and politically-seasoned organizers. For an hour in the morning, we introduced ourselves and spoke of our in-

people, meeting other people who care. Every day there are more of us. The movement to conserve wild nature belongs to ordinary folks, and restoration of our home ranges is a joyful but urgent task in which everyone must find a part.

Come to summer workshops on Nat'l Forest Protection! (see pg. 2 for details)

Air Pollution in Appalachia: Spotlight on all Species

By Jennifer Tetterton and Jennifer Nalbone

Along ridges, especially on westward facing slopes, of the Appalachian Mountains (from Maine to Georgia and Alabama) trees of every major species are in decline. Symptoms include very slow growth, early leaf drop, snap-offs, root decay, discolored foliage, and premature death. Ground-level ozone and acid rain are the likely culprits. These pollutants acidify the soil and cause a deadly chain reaction. Nutrients are leached from the soil, toxic aluminum poisons the trees, and the health of the forest collapses. With a weakened immune system, the trees become much more vulnerable to drought, frost and attacks from pests like the woolly adelgid and the gypsy moth. The majority of air pollutants are caused by emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide from coal-burning power factories of the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys, the industrial heartland. Because the Appalachian forests are downwind, we are reaping the bleak effects of serious forest decline and high mortality.

An increasing number of Eastern lakes and streams have also become acidic and can no longer support life. The pollutants that damage and kill trees, have caused the disappearance in freshwater fish and invertebrates and contribute to the decline of amphibians. Additionally, visibility (the distance and clarity that one can see landscape features) is seriously degraded, worse than ever before, because of sulfate particles, originating from sulfur dioxide emissions.

The air pollution affecting ecosystems is also threatening human health. From maple syrup production to tourism to recreation to healthcare, an increasingly diverse number of interest groups are concerned about air pollution's effects on the eastern United States.

Here are some facts concerning coal burning power utilities and their impact on Appalachian forests:

Burning Coal for Power:

*Despite the fact that air pollution emissions decreased nationwide due to Clean Air legislation, the Appalachians are seeing higher rates because the demand for electricity has increased and because prevailing winds carry emissions from high smoke stacks of the Midwestern utilities to the East.

*Power factories are responsible for 70% of sulfur dioxide emissions and 35% of nitrogen oxide emissions.

*Requiring the nation's older power factories to meet current coal-burning factory standards would reduce utility-generated air pollution by 75%.

*If the Senator Moynihan/D'Amato bill, Acid Deposition Control Act of 1997, is passed, electric utilities would have to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by 50% and nitrogen oxides by 75%.

Visibility:

*In the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, sulfur particles, which impair visibility rose 21% from the years 1984 to 1995.

*In fifty years, visibility in the Southern Appalachians has decreased from an average of 93 miles to 22 miles due to human activity.

*With present legislation, it will take 300 years for the viewshed to return to normal visibility.

Forest Decline:

*According to the Appalachian Forest Action Project, upland forests are losing trees at 3-5 times the rates documented in the '60's and 70's.

*After conducting an inventory of West Virginia's forest growth, the US Forest Service reported the growth rate to have changed from 2.64%/year from 1977-1989 down to 0.33%/year from 1989-1995.

*According to a survey conducted in summer 1997, all 12 of the different species of northern hardwoods in the Southern Appalachians were showing signs of decline. For example, in Roan Mountain, Tennessee at 5400ft., 44% of the trees surveyed were dead or in severely poor health.

*Pests are killing trees in fewer growing seasons than normal. For instance, (cont. pg. 7)



Coal burning power plants across the Eastern United States, like this resting beast located on the shore of Lake Erie, spew tons of noxious emissions that cause ozone depletion, smog and acid rain. The result: poor visibility and dead trees throughout Appalachia, as seen in this photograph of Mount Michell. photographs: Jennifer Nalbone, James Ford

"There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop."

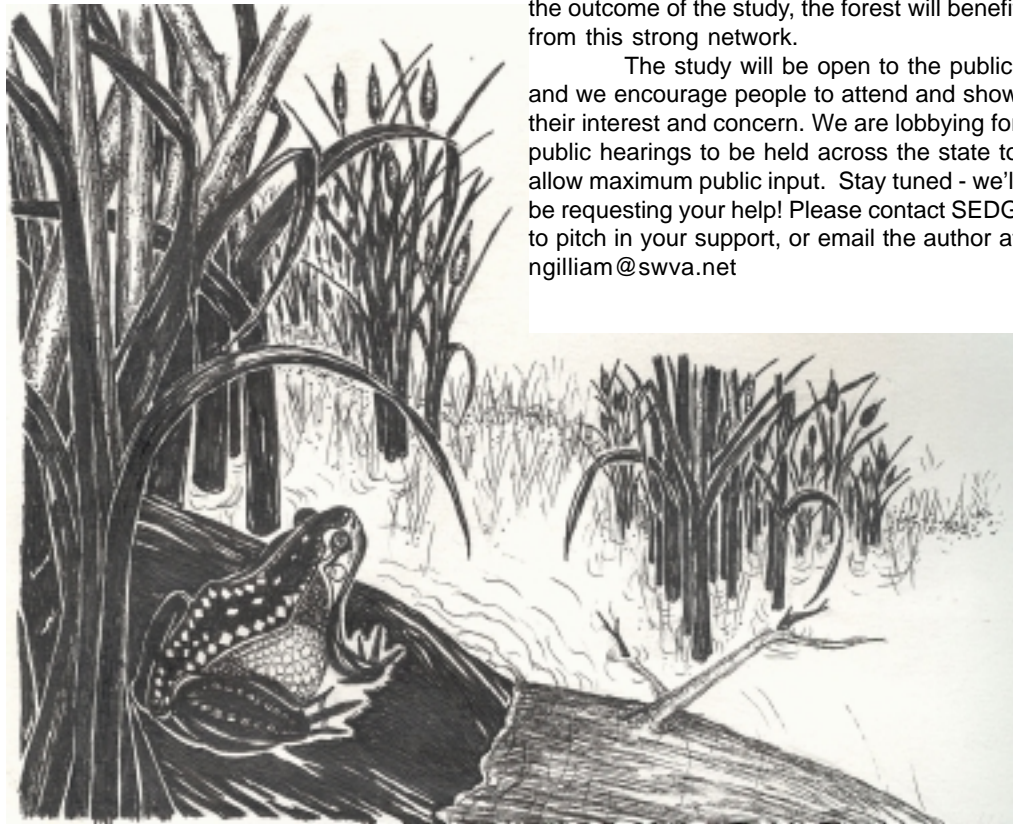
- Mario Savio

(from *Chipmill*, pg. 1) which landed on controversial soil in Richmond in early Jan., 1999. Lobbyists from the timber industry and VA Department of Forestry worked hard to kill the bill. VAFW members lobbied local delegates and senators before the General Assembly went into session to gather cosponsors. Activists from SEDG and ARC in Charlottesville organized several lobbying trips to Richmond. Through action alerts & emails, we made sure our state officials heard about this bill from their constituents.

The bill passed easily through the House and Senate with minor changes. The outcome is a 2 year study with a committee consisting of 13 members, six legislative and seven non-legislative. Four members of the House of Delegates; 2 members of the Senate; 2 environmentalists; 2 members of forest products industry, one of whom represents the solid wood industry, the other representing the pulp and paper industry; 2 private forest owners, one of whom represents the Farm Bureau; and the state forester, Jim Garner, serving as an ex officio member.

The bill states: "The joint subcommittee shall examine:

1. Experiences in other states with the operation of satellite chip mills.
2. Current and potential impacts of satellite chip mills on VA's economy, natural resources, and environment.
3. Potential impact on private forest land owners, including long-term profitability, the availability of markets and forest management options
4. Sustainability of VA's forest resources to accommodate current and potential satellite chip mill production, including methods to improve forest management by private landowners.



5. Practical methods for assuring economic and environmental sustainability of the forest, including the need for adequate resources for the VA Dept. of Forestry and other Gov't agencies charged with the conservation of VA's forest lands."

Although we were glad to see the bill pass, there are problems with the study. For example, VAFW initially requested that the word "satellite" be omitted in defining chip mills. That way, the study would cover all chippers running at pulp, paper and OSB mills, and exclude those attached to sawmills. This was denied. We are concerned that the full impacts of chip mills will not be evaluated. Additionally, the study was granted a very small budget of \$12,000 for administrative costs, and no new formal research will be conducted. The study will be run by a joint subcommittee, rather than a state agency; however, "technical assistance shall be provided by the VA Dept. of Forestry and the Dept. of Wood Science and Forestry of VA Tech." Both of these agencies have some wise and broad minded representatives as well as industry-oriented silviculturists. We hope to find those experts with balanced ecological philosophies. Perhaps most problematic is that Virginia's forested land inventory data is currently 10 years old. Members of the study committee now have the substantial challenge of gathering enough relevant information to make this an informed study!

Creating the bill, the publicity, and the grassroots support necessary to pass the chip mill study bill took the combined effort of many good folks across the southeast. No matter the outcome of the study, the forest will benefit from this strong network.

The study will be open to the public, and we encourage people to attend and show their interest and concern. We are lobbying for public hearings to be held across the state to allow maximum public input. Stay tuned - we'll be requesting your help! Please contact SEDG to pitch in your support, or email the author at ngilliam@swva.net



(from *Blackwater* pg. 1) link in the transcontinental American Discovery Trail.

For several years the United States Forest Service and the DC-based Conservation Fund negotiated to purchase the world famous property. Their offer of \$3.5 million was turned down in favor of \$4.85 from Canyonlands, Inc. Canyonlands Inc. immediately sold to Crites for a one-day profit of \$15,000.

Despite letters alerting Crites to the potential presence of four listed species, and despite the 60 day notice of intent to sue, Crites selectively logged over 1500 acres in the canyon. Research and preparation continues for a strong lawsuit alleging ESA violations continues.

Vivian Stockman, of the Conservancy outlined the long term goal as, "Our 90 page Blackwater Canyon National Park and Ecotourism Training Center proposal is our effort to bring economic and ecological sustainability to the highlands of West Virginia."

With 10,000 signatures already collected backing the National Park plan, the groups hope to create enough political pressure on Congress, the state, and owner John Crites to bring the land into public ownership.

John Crites believes he is a good steward of the land, on CBS' Sunday Morning he stated, "I have difficulty understanding with the passion I have for this land, and for the forest, and for the future of the forest why they think I - they don't trust me to manage it wisely."

Judy Rodd of WHC feels differently, "Our point here isn't to argue about good timber versus bad timber, it's really to say 'no timbering here.'"

The future of the Blackwater Canyon may rest with John Crites. But pressure building from the work of thousands of concerned individuals may indeed outweigh Crites' plans. Politicians, too, hold the future in their hands. Author of *Blackwater Country*, J.L. Smith, offers a hopeful vision, "The Blackwater country can never again be as it was when seen by the adventurers of the last century; time and the hand of man have seen to that. It can be what it is today for generations to come, but that will come about only when value is placed upon the sound of rushing water, the solitude of deep woods and the sight of a raven over the abyss of a gorge. We are fooling ourselves if we insist that such things have no value because a price tag cannot be attached to them. Many people miss the full measure of what life is all about because they are blind to all but material values."

For more info contact Jason Halbert Heartwood_arcmaps@firstva.com 804-971-3898 or Judy Rodd WV Highlands Conservancy judy_rodd@wwise.org

Consider This

By Rob Kurtz

In my twenties, I valued the preservation of other species over the preservation of cultural institutions such as mining and logging. I have come to realize, though, that our culture is a delicate form of life in its own way and deserves respect as any life form does. Such institutions are foundational to our culture's form. As a cat gets nutrients from eating songbirds, we get metals through mining. Our culture eats rocks and trees. Nonetheless, I still value the existence of other species over our cultural institutions even though doing so will mean increased personal effort and sacrifice on everyone's part to change our consumptive habits. Cats can eat mice too, and we can be selective with our mining and logging practices.

If our culture is a life form, I find myself asking what value does our culture have to the earth community as a whole. Some answers are unsettling. Our culture appears similar to a parasite that consumes its host as we daily consume ecosystems into extinction. Or worse yet, it looks like a cancer in unchecked growth consuming healthy organs. The most favorable metaphor I have come across is that our culture is in its adolescence experiencing a growth spurt. Like a teenager, our culture is growing rapidly and discovering our unprecedented ability to affect the environment, yet we are inexperienced with that power and prone to make irresponsible, selfish, and poorly thought out decisions. We also appear to be suffering from the acne of urban sprawl, hoping it will clear up. I like this metaphor because it suggests that responsibility, wisdom, and sensible productivity may be in our future as we mature into an adult culture. Will we survive the risks of irresponsibility and inexperience of youth? Will we be willing to transform our harmful institutions into forms more benign to the community of life in which we must live as adults?

Every area of our culture needs to be reinvented in accordance with ethics that reflect a finite, living world. We leap before we look with technology as with the creation of nuclear waste that we can not responsibly deal with. Even if we bury the stuff and could guarantee it will not enter

the environment for a hundred thousand years, it is every bit as cruel to the generation of 102,000 AD as it is to the generation of 2010 AD. The earth is our home, and as with any home, it must be maintained and cared for. We take care of our metaphorical bedrooms, living rooms and tennis courts, but our bathrooms and kitchens are over run with wastes and poisonous chemicals. We can not allow ourselves to continue to trash them. In the past, the earth was large enough to dispose of our more benign wastes with its natural processes, but that is no longer the case. We can not carry those habits, such as using rivers as industrial toilets, into our future. As we reach the carrying capacity of our resources and their waste products, we must create production processes where the waste of one product is the resource for another. This would allow our culture to become more of a natural system in its own right. In nature, the waste of one organism is food for another. Thus life can perpetuate itself indefinitely. We have awesome industrial powers available to us, but we need to express them responsibly.

We have the power to destroy life on this planet. It is clear that if we value our lives we have the responsibility not to exercise this power. More so, I suggest we adopt an ethic that while we have the power to destroy, we have the obligation to protect. Power demands responsibility. We must, therefore, designate ourselves as stewards of this planet and allow that task to take precedence over all other worldly pursuits. This planet and its life are foundational to our existence. We must provide for its maintenance if we can cause its degradation. What we must maintain is the viability of all life on this planet indefinitely. That should be our primary responsibility as a culture. We must protect it from ourselves.

The challenges of the coming century may seem vast and overwhelming to an individual whose effective contribution seems so small. However, it is with the individual that changes must ultimately take place. Technology has emerged from the creative thoughts of millions of individuals and, like a gift, been given for each of us to use regardless of our individual capacity for responsibility. It is as if we have each been given a powerful tool to use without being trained to use it. We must learn to use it without a guidebook or experienced mentor. The power we have through technology encompasses our ability to destroy ourselves. Are we like a child playing with a gun? As individuals, responsibility means being able to distinguish and choose between our wants and our needs. Can we abstain from our wants if fulfillment of our desires means compromising our duty as steward to the earth? Clearly, as a people Americans have not shown this capacity. Change can only be legislated so far. You and I must labor the true work of change. We must reinvent our life-styles so that they are more compatible with our duty as stewards of this planet and share what we learn with others. This is our responsibility as individuals and our most important task as a people.

Some Uncertain Spring

By Steve Willig

I have heard of a time
when trees were old
and woods as deep, uncertain
as digging with hands under moist black soil,
or searching through a fog at dawn for the sun which must be somewhere.

And I have heard of a time
when the blood of Her veins was pure,
when people could drink this river's waters.

And I have heard of a time long ago
when people looked from this ridge
at the other people's land -
which now dissolves in haze.

I have heard that once
we died young and life-full;
not living old much of our time,
waiting
while pills sustain, a machine breathes for us; technology surrogate to lengthen life,
impeding the inevitable "What"
and why?

And I have heard of a time
when vast clouds of pigeons darkened the sky; storms of birds with wings
beating soft thunder; too many to number -
not too many to shoot.

Some people say
that time moves not in a line
but circles.
That just as some plants die each year, fall, and sleep in roots;
then spring forth, responding
when the sun sheds its life -
its blood of longer life, which plants' roots can not see but somehow know-
so the Earth when Her time comes around.

And so will we end our withering?
Sleep, dream, then sprout anew?

Cycles might suffice for trees, rivers, views;
but do not call for passenger pigeons if time returns. They would not hear.
Nor would the ivory billed woodpecker, the woodland bison, or all our
kin in the tropics, more of whom vanish
each day the sun rises
before they're even named.

They could not store life enough,
did not have root enough
to endure this dark winter
for some uncertain spring.

Virginia's Forest Service Criticized by USDA Inspector General

Thanks in large part to years of effort by Bob Mueller and Virginians for Wilderness, two Virginia Forest Service Ranger Districts were scrutinized by the Department of Agriculture's Office of the Inspector General (OIG). In a report released in January 1999, titled *Forest Service Timber Sale Environmental Analysis Requirements*, the OIG found the Forest Service in Virginia habitually breaks environmental laws regulating timber cutting. The OIG studied compliance with environmental laws at six Forest Service ranger districts nationwide, including the Deerfield District of the George Washington NF, based in Staunton, and the Clinch District of the Jefferson, based in Wise. Unfortunately, problems raised in the OIG report are still widespread on Virginia's two National Forests.

On the Clinch Ranger District, planned forest buffers to protect water quality and endangered mussels were logged during the timber cutting. Timber sales on the Clinch logged up to three times more trees than the Environmental Assessments (documents prepared to show compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act) allowed; when this problem was pointed out by the OIG, "five of the six timber sales were terminated and Forest Service paid claims totaling about \$650,000 to the timber purchasers for breach of contract," according to the report. The Deerfield Ranger District's Environmental Assessments relied on outdated data, still in use today, and lacked required information on environmental impacts and surveys for sensitive species. The timber sales themselves did not follow mitigation guidelines written into Environmental Assessments to prevent soil erosion, and protect streams and wildlife.

The audit report concluded: "Future generations and the natural environment also suffer when Forest Service employees overlook sensitive resource issues and do not adequately protect heritage resources, water quality, and threatened, endangered, or sensitive species and their habitat." That's what Virginia citizens have said for years! The full report is available electronically on the USDA Inspector General's webpage: <http://www.usda.gov/oig/auditrpt/auditrpt.html>

(from *Air Pollution*, pg. 4) trees used to withstand gypsy moth attacks for 4 growing seasons now can only survive 1 or 2 years before they die.

*The average pH of rain in the East is < 4.5, which is about 10X more acidic than normal (5.5), due to emissions of sulfur and nitrogen oxides.

*On Mt. Mitchell, NC, the moisture surrounding the highland forests can be 1000X more acidic (pH 2.5) than natural rain and on average is about 100X more acidic.

*High elevation areas, which are exposed to the highest levels of air pollution, serve as advanced warning system for lower forests.

*Ozone and acid rain have been named possible culprits in the current massive amphibian population decline. Amphibians are considered ecosystem indicators, species that because of their sensitivity to changes in the environment, predict changes that could cause decline in other populations, including human.

Costs to Society:

*The tourism and recreation-based industry generates over \$417 billion/year and supports 6.3 million jobs nationwide. Appalachian communities rely on this industry for survival.

*Shenandoah National Park has put up signs to warn hikers to restrict activity on high ozone days

*Over the past 15 years, ground level ozone has caused agriculture and forestry losses of about \$40 billion per year.

*Nitrogen and sulfur oxides are responsible for an estimated \$40 billion in health care and time- lost expenses and \$1 billion in damage to lakes and streams.

*Ground-level ozone, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, and haze particles have been associated with changes in human immune function, chronic respiratory problems, pneumonia, acute asthma, lung inflammation, changes in heart function, eye irritation, etc.

What You Can Do to Reduce Air Pollution

Influence Congressional Action:

Write letters, make phone calls! Become one of the many voices speaking out against these injustices in the Appalachians. Contact your representative and two senators and let them know how you stand on the issues of regional haze, ground-level ozone and acid rain. Let them know you are a voter who will not tolerate the utility industries apparent lack of concern for the air, forests, water, residents and visitors of the Appalachians. Encourage them to support the Moynihan/D'Amato senate bill (S.1097) which calls for tighter restrictions on air pollution from electric utilities, in order to reduce acid rain. And don't forget to send letters to local and state decision-makers as well. Each letter or call received in a Congressional or government office represents a much larger number of voters. Write today!

Your Representative	Your 2 Senators
House Office Building	Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20515	Washington DC 20510

Reduce Energy Production: Energy production is the greatest source of air pollution. At home and work we can all conserve energy by reducing, reusing and recycling. By reducing our use of energy, we help decrease the amount that is produced, and the pollution created by utility factories. This is a "must do" until legislation passes to stop their unethical practices and/or cleaner energy alternatives begin to be more widely used.

Change Transportation Habits: Automobiles are another major source of air pollution. By buying more fuel-efficient vehicles, consumers can change the attitudes and practices of the automobile industry. These kinds of decisions could help encourage the production of cleaner electric cars. Also, carpooling, bicycling and mass transportation

decrease air pollution, especially at peak times. Keeping tires sufficiently filled and automobile pollution control devices in proper working order are two important ways to help.

Education: is vital to any attempt to improve our air quality. There are many options. Appalachian Voices has an educational clean air video and excellent books published on the issue, including **An Appalachian Tragedy** and **The Dying of the Trees**. Share these tools with others and your local library. Also, you or a group could sponsor Appalachian Voices clean air slide show in your community. For a firsthand education, take a hike in the Appalachian Mountains and see the forest decline and visibility reduction yourself. Teach people what you have learned, inspire them to take action.

In our ongoing work to preserve Virginia's natural heritage, it is vital to understand the interconnections of wildlife and wildlands. Often, the spotlight is shone on an individual threatened or endangered species. However, endangered species cannot survive without healthy intact habitat. By preserving habitat, its air, water and soil, we preserve a home for a balanced breathing ecosystem. Air pollution damages virtually every species in an ecosystem, directly and indirectly. From tree species to mycorrhizae, stream invertebrates and fish to their many predators, from the endangered Peaks of Otter salamander, who is sensitive to changes in pH, to the northern flying squirrel, who prefers a particular (living) forest canopy composition. Air pollution threatens them all. And we don't know, we cannot know, which link in our Appalachian forest chain will be the one that irreparably modifies the lands that we are striving to protect. **Do your part.** Write letters, call government leaders, educate the people around you. If you don't know how to start, call SEDG. That's what we're here for.

References available upon request.

Jennifer Tetterton is the Clean Air Organizer of Appalachian Voices. Appalachian Voices (www.appvoices.org) sponsors an Air Pollution multimedia presentation. Contact Jennifer at 828-262-5908 or jent@boone.net if you would like the show to visit your school or community organization.

Forest Watch Update

by Sherman Bamford & Christina Wulf

Jefferson National Forest

On the Glenwood Ranger District

Bannister Branch T.S. -- 130 acres -- 1.25 mi roadbuilding

This May, the Forest Service piled more logging plans on this already over-logged forest. This particularly bad sale is just one installment in yet another three-part series of logging operations. It not only logs more of a previously-inventoried, 5,000 acre roadless area, but also seriously impacts recreational values. A gem of the Wilson Mtn. area is the Sprouts Run National Recreation Trail, a yet undeveloped 3.5 mi. hiking trail that winds along a graceful, meandering stream past pines, hemlock, beech and hardwoods. The USFS regional forester in Atlanta requires the trail to be "managed for a low level of use in a primitive setting with opportunities for solitude". Ignoring this clear mandate, the Forest Service dismisses concerns about the trail simply because it has a low level of use. Two logging units are planned within 500 ft. of the trail as part of the sale. Some cutting would also take place 200-300 ft. from the popular Wildcat Mtn. loop trail, which runs from Cave Mountain Lake Campground. Citizens describe recent timber operations on Wildcat Mtn. as some of the worst they have seen. In the course of these operations, loggers cut outside of approved boundaries, near the trail itself.

Harkening Hill T.S. -- 140 acres

The second installment is already approved near the Peaks of Otter. It includes logging in rich cove sites upstream from two trout streams.

Middle Creek T.S.

The third sale is contemplated near the Appalachian Trail. All three sales are questionable "salvage sales," a term used to justify logging in parts of the forest where natural disturbance such as fire or, in this case, ice have toppled or broken limbs off trees. According to Jeffrey St. Clair, "the value of salvage sales as ecology therapy is extremely questionable. By removing most of the coarse woody debris from the site, salvage sales actually abort natural healing processes instead of aiding them" (1991). And salvage sales typically cost taxpayers money because of higher operating costs and lower timber quality (Congressional Research Service, 1994).

On the New Castle Ranger District

When combined, the planned T.S. on this district total 859 acres.

Broad Run T.S./Mottesheard T.S./ Stone Coal T.S.

These three sales would scar the FS-inventoried North Mountain and Mottesheard roadless areas with even-aged logging. The 18 month moratorium on roadbuilding in roadless areas has temporarily brought logging to a halt in roadless areas that are not accessible by existing roads or by helicopters, but logging can and does go on the periphery of some roadless areas, as is the case in the Broad Run timber sale (North Mtn. roadless area). And let's not forget that the moratorium does not offer permanent protection. The Mottesheard timber sale remains on project schedules. This sale is located in the 6,555 acre Mottesheard roadless area, upstream from habitat for the endangered James spinymussel. Yet another sale is planned in a third area, but has yet to be scoped: The Stone Coal timber sale in the 10,964 acre Broad Run roadless area, one of the Jefferson's largest roadless areas.

Enterprise T.S. -- 117 acres

This sale is located in a citizen proposed de facto roadless area on Sinking Creek Mountain.

Taylor Branch T.S. -- 130 acres

Located in a key area for the endangered Indiana bat, this sale was illegally exempted from detailed analysis because it was mischaracterized as a salvage sale. The sale included 60 acres of even-aged logging in an uneven-aged recreation emphasis area. The FS, following appeals by Preserve Appalachian Wilderness and Heartwood, is rescoping both Enterprise and Taylor Branch.

Little Mountain T.S. --123 acres -- 2.2 mi roadbuilding

Logging trucks would be routed over Trout Run, which is a native trout stream. Richard Ettelson, a nearby resident, has seen large quantities of sediment washing from previous sales in this watershed and is concerned about this sale.

Peters Mountain T.S. -- 90 acres

The sale was reversed upon appeal, swiftly reissued, and re-appealed by an angry horde of citizens. It proposes logging and roadbuilding on the top of the mountain, the preferred route for one uncompleted segment of the Allegheny Trail, a 300+ mi. trail stretching from Virginia to the Monongahela National Forest to the WV-Pennsylvania border. The trail route here would be confined to a thin beauty strip on top of the mountain surrounded by new and recent cuts. The Forest Service found that roads from previous timber sales were in disrepair and producing sediment, but it refused to examine a no-logging alternative that would have cleaned up and restored the roads.

A victory!: Turner Land Swap -- No Go!

Located near the North Mtn. roadless area. In this swap, the FS would have exchanged a tract of Forest Service land for a less valuable tract of land to a developer. Finally cancelled!

On the Blacksburg-Wythe Ranger District

A victory!: ORV trail on Round Mountain -- 12 mi. no-build alternative!

One of the most controversial projects in these districts was this proposed trail on Round Mountain, in the Burkes Garden ecoregion. The ORV trail would have been audible from the Appalachian Trail, just across the valley. The trail was proposed on quiet old woods and steep slopes upstream from Hunting Camp Creek. On June 18, District Ranger David Collins chose the no-build alternative, citing potential for trespass onto private land, hazardous trail/road crossings, potential impacts to numerous stream channels on the side of the mountain, and overwhelming local opposition to the motorized trail.

Powerline

A new AEP-proposed route for the 765 kV powerline, going through Long Spur Roadless area. It also runs over private lands underlain with a giant karst system according to Dave and Donna Muhly. Contact them at 540-228-4156 or davem@naxs.net for more info. Maps of route at www.aep.com/765project

On the Clinch Ranger District

CMB (Clear-Machine-Burns Creek) T.S. -- 996 acres!!

This huge sale, approved last year after appeals, would dump tons of sediment into a tributary of the Guest River, an impaired waterway under the Clean Water Act. The actual volume of the sale is 30% larger than the size approved in the decision.

Bark Camp T.S. -- 1,413 acres!!

Proposed nearby, this sale would impact important recreational and biological areas near High Knob. Over 1,000 area residents have signed a petition opposing the sale. The Bark Camp timber sale is proposed in the High Knob area of the Clinch Ranger District, mainly along the Chief Bengé Scout trail, a backpacking trail through one of the highest, most scenic recreational areas of the district.

Hagan Hall Salvage Sale -- 1,081 acres!!

Calling for the usual knee-jerk reaction to natural disturbances in the forest: massive logging. This sale would be located in a watershed home to rare cerulean warblers, a number of rare, threatened and endangered bats, and is upstream from over twenty-four rare and endangered mussels. The sale is located in the same area as the Big Flat Top timber sale, which was investigated by the Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General (OIG). This investigation found evidence of serious lapses, including overcutting and failure to complete biological surveys, timber sale administration reports, and stream monitoring for this vital watershed.

Additionally: *Thunderstruck T.S.*: logging next to a small old growth tract. Bogus logging to "help" the cerulean warbler. *Powell Mtn. II T.S.*: in the remote Laurel Fork opportunity area.

On the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area

Cripple Creek/Grouse T.S. -- 96 acres -- 3.2 mi. road reconstruction

The 30-day comment period for this sale began on May 28. It is located in the 7,320 acre Devils Den-Ewing Mtn. Virginia Mountain Treasure area on the east end of the NRA, in the New River watershed. The sale is located within the largest FS-inventoried semi-primitive area (4818 acres) on the east end of the NRA. The sale in this beautiful area of low hills, white pines and oaks calls for 56 acres of clearcutting and 43 acres of seed-tree logging, two of the most intensive logging methods used.

The FS has proposed an additional sale along a high ridge near Comers Rock, one of the major viewpoints on the east end of the NRA. Hundreds of acres of cutting and thinning is proposed, supposedly to "enhance" viewsheds along Rt. 57 overlooking Little Dry Run Wilderness.

For updates on our efforts to protect the Jefferson National Forest, check www.heartwood.org/VA/PAW

George Washington National Forest

On the Lee Ranger District

Rocky Anderson T.S. -- preferred alternative: 189 acres, 14 acres clear-cut

Initially scoped over 2.5 years ago, this sale was recently revived by the F.S. on the Lee Ranger district in NW Virginia & eastern West Virginia. The justification for the sale is to "reduce the susceptibility and vulnerability of timber stands to gypsy moth damage before they are defoliated and die." Gypsy moth populations plummeted in Virginia in recent years. Logging is not needed to protect the forests of Rocky Anderson. The district's environmental documents are hugely inadequate, despite the two and a half year delay, and (illegally?) fail to respond to public comments. (cont. pg. 9)

Our last SEDG Fund-raising Drive was a SUCCESS thanks these generous supporters! Over \$2000 has been raised so far to offset the costs of this 100% volunteer grassroots environmental organization. If you haven't donated yet, NOW IS THE TIME!

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SEDG would like to thank these area businesses which contributed towards the production of Ancient Mountain Sentinel and the protection of our public lands.

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Your business can also sponsor Ancient Mountain Sentinel. Contact James Ford for more information: 263-5469

(from T.S. , pg. 8)

On the Dry River Ranger District

North River Watershed Restoration Project

This proposed project would relocate sections of FDR 95, an open Forest Service road dividing Virginia's two largest, contiguous roadless areas: the Little River and the Ramsey's Draft Extension, both on Shenandoah Mountain west of Staunton. If FDR 95 were closed, the area would become the only F.S. land east of the Mississippi which meets the criteria for "primitive recreation" being at least 3 miles from an open road. The road could be closed & revegetated using emergency appropriations funding allocated after 1996 floods, 'paving' the way for the proposed Ernie Dickerman Wilderness Area, encompassing the roadless areas & beyond.

On the Deerfield Ranger District

Chestnut Ridge #2 T.S. -- 159 acres -- 1.5 system roadbuilding

District Ranger David Rhodes, whose district was the subject of a critical investigation by the USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), is continuing business as usual on the Deerfield. This sale relies on the same procedures criticized in the OIG report for failing to adequately analyze erosion, water quality, and biological surveys. The Deerfield was also cited by the OIG for failing to implement mitigation measures; similar mistakes on the Chestnut Ridge #2 sale could have disastrous effects on the water supply of nearby private landowners.

On the Pedlar Ranger District

Liming St. Mary's

Helicopters descended on the St. Mary's River in the St. Mary's Wilderness Area this past spring. Chunks of limestone were dumped into the river in a band-aid attempt to decrease acidification caused by air pollution falling to the earth as acid rain. When will humans learn to deal with the causes of these problems rather than wasting taxpayer money to hide the effects?

One last thing... I-73

I-73 is listed among 50 Road to Ruin Projects nationwide (for Waste & Environmental Destruction) See VARR press release at www.bredl.org/press/1999/i73ruin.htm

If you enjoy Virginia's National Forests for outdoor fun or simply for their own sake, then write a letter! Your opposition can stop these timber sales and others like it! Tell the Forest Service and your Congressional Representative that logging on Virginia's National Forests should end, NOW. Contact SEDG to help in these monitoring efforts.

National Forest District Contact Information

<http://www.fs.fed.us/gwjnf/offices.htm>

SEDG Supporter Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

Check box to sign up

Action Alert Network: If you would like to be contacted when SEDG holds demonstrations or otherwise calls on its members to come out in large numbers in support of a particular issue (about 4 times a year).

Volunteer Resource: SEDG is an entirely volunteer organization and is always looking for more help. We are in particular need of people outside Charlottesville who would like to be local contacts/resource links, and people who would like to help us in our efforts to educate the public.

Check box of \$ enclosed (help us protect these endangered Sedges of Virginia)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$5-25 | Awoned Sedge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$26 -50 | Epiphytic Sedge |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other-_____ | Variable Sedge |

comments? _____

thanks!

Action Calendar (post it on your fridge)

SEDG Office/Events Hotline: (804) 971-1553, or email SEDG at sedg@firstva.com for more information and carpool details.

MEETINGS- *When?* 2X/mo. on the first & third Thurs.: July 1st and 15th, etc... *Where?* Rm106 in the Old Michie Building, E Market St., C'ville.

JULY

9-10: *Virginia Forest Watch Chip Mill Task Force Strategy & Planning Meeting.* Contact Nancy Gilliam - ngilliam@swva.net, or SEDG for details.

12: *HUGE Anti-Chip Mill Demonstration:* Richmond, 12noon. Meet at the general Assembly bell tower.

13: First meeting of the *Chip Mill Study Committee* in Patrick Co. Public attendance encouraged!

14: *Albemarle Co. Board of Supervisors' Public Hearing* on the proposed new big box (Walmart?) superstore in Charlottesville.

31: *"Fish Diversity and the Health of our Local Watershed"* by Billy Teels, Director of the Wetland Science Institute talks on the present study of the Occoquan watershed, then explore Broad Run to see the diversity of fish life that exists. Contact Friends of Bull Run's Educational Coordinator, Susan Leopold at leopold@igc.org. 2-4pm at Friends of Bull Run, Haymarket, VA.

AUGUST (Congress is on recess, set up a face-to-face meeting with your Representative!)

12-15: *Opening the Book of Nature: Discovering Spiritual Lessons in Wilderness.* Monongahela National Forest, WVA. Contact the Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation at 707-573-3162 or email woodhavenwva@netscape.net.

SPECIAL! Protecting Virginia's National Forests: Workshops for Concerned Citizens SPECIAL!

Saturday, **JULY 17th**, from 10am to 5pm at the Bland/Wythe Room of the Wythe County Community Hospital in Wytheville, VA.

Sunday, **AUGUST 1st**, from 10am to 5pm at Indian Pipe farm just outside Front Royal, VA.

Morning workshops will cover general forest ecology, the economics and politics of National Forests & the U.S. Forest Service, as well as information on ending commercial logging on public lands. Afternoon lobbying and organizing trainings will also be featured. Please contact SEDG at 804-971-1553, sedg@firstva.com, or P.O. Box 1891, Charlottesville, VA 22903 to sign up! Free & open to the public! Cosponsors by Heartwood, Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Virginia Forest Watch, Virginians for Wilderness, and the Clinch Coalition.

Upcoming for Fall!

OCTOBER

1-3: *Heartwood Family Reunion!* For more information call 812-337-8898 or inform@heartwood.org

15-18: *Nat'l Forest Protection Campaign Convention* in southern Illinois. Call 406-542-7565 or email nfpa@wildrockies.org for more information.

NOVEMBER

5: SEDG fund-raiser/concert featuring wilderness musician and storyteller *Walkin' Jim Stolz!*

11: Slideshow in Charlottesville by Peter Kirby on *Virginia's Mtn. Treasures - protecting the roadless wildlands of the Southern Appalachians.*

SEDG

P.O. Box 1891

Charlottesville, VA 22903

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