



*Pioneering wilderness protection
in Virginia since 1969*

Fall 2016 Newsletter

From the President: *New Faces and Old Friends*

With our annual election of new Officers and Board members, VWC welcomes both new faces and old friends.

New Board member Larry Evans joins the Board as Treasurer, replacing Ron Stoltzfus. A part-time bookkeeper and carpenter, Larry serves on several other nonprofit boards in addition to VWC. Ron has accepted a new teaching assignment out of State but will remain on the Board and continue to maintain the Buck Mountain Trail in the proposed Little River Wilderness Area. Old friend Catharine Tucker of Richmond joins the Board after having been associated with wilderness preservation in both Michigan and Virginia for years. We are fortunate that she is active in a number of other Virginia and national environmental groups, as well. In addition, we want to recognize the long eight-year service of Pete Bsumek as Secretary – well beyond the call of duty. Christy Bradburn, an adjunct professor in the Geographic Science Department at James Madison University, will relieve Pete as Secretary. Pete will continue to serve on our Board and is our principle liaison with the Sierra Club.

We also welcome new Outreach Coordinator Lacey Dean of Staunton. Lacey is a Virginia Master Naturalist with 12 years of experience working in informal science education. Field Director Mark Miller will move up to the position of Executive Director, a position that, in reality, he has already been occupying by virtue of his leadership qualities and initiative.

VWC continues to be blessed with both old and young advocates of wilderness preservation and environmental protection. I look forward to another year of working on our priorities with these wonderful colleagues (more complete biographies of all VWC Board members and advisors are available on our website, www.vawilderness.org). I invite you to join this inspired group on what I think is a truly vital cause – preservation, enlargement, and increased public knowledge and enjoyment of these priceless treasures.

For the Wilderness, Bud Watson, President



UPDATE ON PIPELINES The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) announced that it will release a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) in December. The proposed ACP route slices through core forest areas and crosses pristine brook trout streams in both the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests. The proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) through the Jefferson is also moving forward with a draft EIS released in September. FERC has refused to do a programmatic EIS that would assess the need for multiple pipelines through Virginia and West Virginia and the resulting cumulative environmental impacts. A new independent study concluded that neither of these pipelines is needed to meet our energy demands; existing infrastructure is quite adequate. Learn more at: vawilderness.org/dominion-pipeline.html. The best action you can take is to write to the U.S. Forest Service as soon as possible and voice your objection to these pipelines. Both the ACP and the MVP would create new utility corridors through unspoiled public lands and violate the applicable Forest Service management plans. The contact for both pipelines in the George Washington, Jefferson, and Monongahela National Forests is: **Clyde Thompson, Forest Supervisor, Monongahela National Forest**
200 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241
Comments-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us

ALERT: Senate Bill Could Open Wilderness Areas to Mountain Biking

The Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act, introduced on July 13 by Senators Lee and Hatch of Utah, proposes to open federally-designated Wilderness Areas to mountain biking. The Bill would grant managing agencies two years to decide whether to permit this new use. If the agencies do not decide within two years, the default would be to (cont'd)

allow mountain bike usage. VWC stands behind the Wilderness Act and opposes this bill. The Wilderness Act of 1964 forbids “mechanical form of transport” in Wilderness, and for good reasons. Mechanical transport diminishes wilderness values, like solitude and freedom, from the fast pace of modern civilization. Passage of this bill, which is supported by a small faction of mountain bikers, could pave the way for other prohibited activities that would weaken the Wilderness Act. Mountain bikers have access to the vast majority of the 1.8 million acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, almost everywhere, in fact, except for the twenty-three Wilderness Areas, totaling 137,584 acres. VWC is committed to working with mountain bike organizations in developing win-win Wilderness proposals with boundaries drawn to respect current mountain bike use, just as we did with the Ridge and Valley Act (2009) and with our current Shenandoah Mountain Proposal.



Please ask Virginia’s Senators to oppose S.3205:

Senator Tim Kaine: 231 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
Senator Mark Warner: 475 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

Shenandoah Mountain Campaign Update

Our 90,000-acre Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area proposal is continuing to gain public support. Since January, Friends of Shenandoah Mountain (FOSM) Co-Chair Lynn Cameron has presented to nine groups, including Headwaters Master Naturalists and Izaak Walton League of America-Staunton-Augusta Chapter, among others. FOSM exhibited at the 3-day Red Wing Roots Music Festival at Natural Chimneys in July and led hikes for festival goers.

New endorsements include Depot Grille (Staunton), Staunton Steam Laundry, JMU Adventure Program, JMU Geography Club, and many more. See the full list of over 270 endorsers at www.friendsofshenandoahmountain.org.

FOSM is continuing to reach out to neighboring landowners, some of whom have become ardent supporters of the proposal. The 4th annual Shenandoah Mountain Wildflower Walks, led by Headwaters Master Naturalists on April 15, had the best attendance ever with over 50 participants, including several families.

Sempervirens, the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) quarterly, featured an article by Lynn, “A Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area: Methodical Work Key for Successful Designation,” January 2016.

Help our campaign keep momentum:

- Ask for a presentation about the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area proposal to a group. Contact: slynncameron@gmail.com.
- Ask a business to endorse our proposal.



Lynn Cameron



P.O. Box 1235
 Lexington, VA 2445

Recipient

Address

City, ST Zip