



Into the Canyon

Newsletter of Friends of the Cheat

Spring 2006



May 6 is the date for this year's festival and you are all invited to come and enjoy the music and all the other attractions while supporting our work. The festival will start at noon and the music will continue until 11 pm. The scheduled performances are:

- 12:30- Herb and Hanson
- 1:30- Young Abe & the Curmudgeonly Old Hickory Winded Frothy Slosh Band
- 2:30- Tanglewood
- 4:00- Trent Wagler & the Steel Wheels
- 5:00- Half-Time String Band
- 6:00- Wolf Creek Session
- 7:30- Hillbilly Gypsies
- 8:30- Rachel Eddy & The Morgantown Rounders
- 9:30- Stewed Mulligan

continued on page 7

In this issue

Cheatfest Invitation	1, 7
Working Upstream	3
From A Distance	4
Targeted Watershed Initiative.....	5
Cheat Lake wins Robot Contest	6
Cheatfest 5K info & registration	8,9
Brook Trout Restoration.....	10
Cheat River Recovery	11
Adopt-a-Highway.....	12
Doug Ferris Joins our Team	13
Rails-to-Trails in Watershed	13
Grants awarded to FOC	14



Into the Canyon

Published by:
Friends of the Cheat

119 S. Price St., #206
Kingwood, WV 26537
phone: 304-329-3621
fax: 304-329-3622
web: www.cheat.org
email: foc@cheat.org

Friends of the Cheat Board of Directors

Jim Snyder, Chair and Secretary, Charlie Walbridge, Vice-Chair, Dave Bassage,
Dave and Lena Cerbone, Dan Lenox, Tom Nutter, Ralph Teter, Troy Titchenell

Friends of the Cheat Staff

Keith Pitzer - executive director, Sally Wilts - office assistant, Danielle Adams - OSM VISTA, Doug Ferris - OSM VISTA

Business Sponsors

Adventure's Edge • Adventuresports Institute of Garrett College • Adventure Sports Center International • Alpine Lake Properties • Another World Glass • Appalachian Wildwaters • Backlund Paddles • C.E. Bolyard and Son • BoofGEAR • Cheat River Outfitters • Cool Runnings • Custom Inflatables • East/West Printing • Fawley Music • Filtersource • Fluid Kayaks • Grateful Heads Helmets • iPlayOutside.com • Mario's Fishbowl • WKMM • Monroe's Deli • Morgantown Energy Associates • Mountain Streams and Trails • Mountain Surf • Muskrat Paddles • Northwest River Supplies • OhioPyle Massage • Preston Distributors • PS Composites • Pyranha • Rapidstyle • Riversport School of Paddling • Rocky Mountain Kayak • Sony • Surface Dynamics • Teter's Campground • The Underwear Guys • Tygart River Metalworks • Gail Anderson Vincent • Wavesport • We're Nuts • West Virginia Brewing Company • WFSP • Whitewater Video.com

Major Donors with thanks to *all* of our members

Steve Barnett • Dave Bassage • Guy Alan Clark • Michael Cox • David Cushing • Michael Farrell • Ken Gfroerer & Lisa Smith • Joe Greiner • Carlton Gutschick • Mary Lynn Harden • John Harvey • Blakely Lacroix • Dan and Janet Lenox • Ben Mack • Jon Maiman • Harry Marinakis • Joann McGrew • Constance Miller • Eloise Milne • Arch Moore • Anne and Wayne Nelson • Larry Pethick • Howie Pentony • Ann Rivers • Randy Robinson • Pamela Schwer • Peter F. Smith • Patty Snow • Jan Steckel • Toddi Steelman & Joe Sinsheimer • Amy Staub • Keith Strausbaugh • Janet & Imre Szilagyi • Steve Taylor • Ann and Cecil Tickamyer • Robert Uram • Tim VanFleet • Fred Wright • Charlie and Sandy Walbridge • Ed Westfall • Nick and Amy Zervos

Organizations

American Canoe Association • American Whitewater • Blue Ridge Voyageurs •
Canaan Valley Institute • Canoe Cruisers Association • Cheat Lake Environmental and Recreation Association •
Coopers Rock Foundation • Downstream Alliance • Friends of Deckers Creek •
Friends of Laurel Mountain • Greater Baltimore Canoe Club • Harper's Ferry Outdoor Festival • Keel Haulers Canoe Club •
Kingwood Junior Women's Club • Monocacy Canoe Club •
Philadelphia Canoe Club • Preston County Commissioners •
Project Wet • Richmond Whitewater Club • River Network • Shavers Fork Coalition • Three Rivers Paddling Club •
Trout Unlimited • Upper Monongahela River Association • US Army Corps of Engineers • US EPA •
US Office of Surface Mining • WV Department of Environmental Protection • WV Raptor Rehabilitation Center •
WV Rivers Coalition • WV Save Our Streams • WV Stream Partners • WV Watershed Network •
Zoar Valley Paddling Club

Working Upstream

By Keith Pitzer, Executive Director, Friends of the Cheat

Where does the time go? Spring is coming, despite the occasional snow shower in April....we had spring-like weather in January which was a treat while we took water samples. As I drive along the Cheat Narrows to and from the office, I notice boaters on nice days and fishermen angling for the big trout stocked by Trout for the Cheat. There are opinions both pro and con on the wisdom of stocking a river such as the Cheat with trout. What is undeniable is the increased usage for fishing. This translates more and more into a vision of the lower Cheat Watershed serving as a recreation destination for travelers from surrounding states.

The development of rails-to-trails in the lower watershed plays hand in hand with other recreational activities. We foresee a time when boating, fishing, bicycling, running and hiking the trails and corridors of our watershed bring thousands of tourists to our area each year. Further, we foresee telling these visitors a story of a watershed reborn from careless and abandoned impairment to a living watershed once more. This story will include the history of a people that brought railroads in to haul out the timber, to haul out the coal, to fuel an industrial economy, and struggle just to make ends meet.

This is a typical story of Appalachia and yet it is the unique story of this place.

Planning for Cheat River Festival

With spring comes planning for the Cheat River Festival. It seems almost impossible that this has happened eleven times already. It is no small satisfaction that I have played at least a small role in each one of the Cheat River Festivals. This year, I am rewarded more and more with a capable staff and volunteers to take on the organizing of this increasingly detailed event. Our volunteers and staff are never so called upon as with making Cheatfest happen. Each year, people come together from different places and different walks of life to share what they value and believe in about

this watershed, this place.

Also this year, we welcome the opportunity to work with Mary Kay Schreiner as she leads up publicity and promotion for the event. I first worked with Mary Kay some twelve years ago when we both were at Appalachian Whitewaters. She put the marketing program together for rafting our wonderful mountain rivers. I now look forward to seeing her work promoting the mission of Friends of the Cheat.

Second OSM VISTA in office

We welcomed our 2nd OSM/VISTA position to the FOC office in February. Doug Ferris joins us and brings a technical ability combined with a deep appreciation of nature.

He has dug deep into the water quality data, organizing files and assisting OSM/VISTA Danielle Adams with the changeover to a new GIS system. (see grants updates)

As spring rolls on, we are increasingly in the field, taking water samples from abandoned mine sites. We have projects developing on Pringle Run, Morgan Run and Muddy Creek. We plan on assessing Lick Run this year as well as continuing our monitoring of Greens Run.

Late last summer, the Jenkinsburg project was completed. This consisted of introducing erosion control measures throughout the six acre site, installing a stabilized takeout ramp to serve both the Cheat River and Big Sandy Creek, and putting a perimeter of boulders and a gate to regulate traffic onto the previously abused area. The first week of April, the partners in this project met onsite to erect a sign listing the supporters of this project. Initial reaction to the work done has been positive. Boaters recognize the improvement in access and we hope to encourage respectable use of this special place.

And so another season begins. We'll be building projects, sampling water, encouraging use of our wild and wonderful watershed. We'll provide the best Cheatfest we can and foster the beginnings of an area network of rails-to-trails. At the end of the day, this watershed will be more natural than before. To that end we'll be working upstream.

From a Distance

by Jim Snyder, Chair of FOC Board of Directors

Indian legends talk about the wisdom of living with the "Long Body". This could be interpreted as a way of seeing things as they relate to the long haul. When I was a young parent, anticipating my children's teen years, a woman told me I might need to use the "Ten Year Rule". That holds that "If it won't matter in ten years, don't worry about it". That advice probably has saved me a lot of needless trouble. I wonder how these distant perspectives bear on the mission of the Friends.

We are entering a crux phase of our rehabilitation of the Canyon's waters. We have received a sizable grant to apply to remediation of the AMD in Muddy Creek. If you know the Cheat, you know that Muddy Creek offers the greatest insult to its water quality. We're going to take a whack at it. And I'm sure we will get substantial results- noticeable by anyone who ventures into the Canyon. A few years ago we ran the Canyon with a special guest- Rebecca Watson. Rebecca W. Watson is the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the U.S. Department of the Interior. She provides policy, priorities and oversight to the Bureau of Land Management, Minerals Management Service, and Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. These three bureaus have responsibility for the production of about 35 percent of our domestic oil, natural gas and coal that heat and cool our homes, fuel our cars and trucks, and power our high-tech economy. The Bureau of Land Management also manages about one-eighth of the land in the United States for a wide variety of uses benefiting the public including recreation, grazing, timber production, mining, wilderness, energy development and wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, Muddy Creek was having a bad day that day and it's pollution was quite noticeable. It tainted and flavored the water for miles. It was a beautiful day but the splashy rapids tasted like....iron. If she comes back in ten years she won't taste iron. And orange rocks won't be her predominant memory of the environment in the Canyon.

Of course denuded hillsides and possibly logging truck traffic will be part of her "wilderness" experience. Who knows how the Canyon's bears and mountain lions will have responded to those changes. You have to do what you can with what you've got. And the big job in restoring the Cheat is to bring its waters up to par with other rivers in this country. Only the last ten percent of the river runs tainted. In ten years we will have crossed a threshold to where only experts can detect the AMD pollution from generations past. The lion's share of restoring the Cheat will have been accomplished. And we will always intend to preserve whatever wilderness aspects of the Canyon we can. If we have the opportunity to facilitate a purchase of the Canyon someday- we will go for it.

The Canyon is becoming healthier in a substantial way. Someday it will be home for osprey, kingfishers and other fish-eating birds. We are turning over to future generations a better Canyon than was left to us. That's cool. We're doing well. It's a long hard process, but we have unbending intent. And trees grow back.

Someday the Canyon will be a truly valued clean wilderness. I'm just glad to be a part of the process.

Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival set for June 17

For 8 years the paddling community of the Harpers Ferry area has hosted a kayak race/festival in memory of Tim Gavin. Tim lost his life in a kayaking accident in March 1998 on the upper Blackwater River.

Part of the proceeds from the festival are donated to Friends of the Cheat to help support our work.

This is a fun race for all skill levels of boating, so bring your boat of choice and join the fun. You can bring a tent or stay at one of the cabins at the KOA campground in Harper's Ferry. Live music, silent auction, great food and awards ceremony are the highlights.

More information can be found at www.harpersferryoutdoorfestival.org or call Mike Moore at 304-676-6853.

FOC Receives Coveted Targeted Watershed Initiative Grant

by Keith Pitzer

Friends of the Cheat was selected as one of twelve watershed projects from across the nation to receive a Targeted Watershed Initiative (TWI) grant from EPA. The grant is for \$835,000 and will focus on acid mine drainage sources in the Muddy Creek drainage upstream of the T&T site. This constitutes sources on Dream Mountain that impair about .8 mile of Muddy Creek along Woolen Mill Rd. Also, this area takes in the drainages of Martin Creek, Glade Run and Fickey Run. Muddy Creek is the largest acid contributor to the Cheat mainstem.

There is currently active treatment at several sites the WVDEP/Special Reclamation has installed over the past two years. Most of these sites are bond forfeitures from Rockville Mining in the 1980's. An increase in the coal tax during the Wise administration made the installation and operation of dosers possible at a cost of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The TWI will work at sites that were abandoned before the bonding era began. These sites will be monitored, assessed for conceptual needs and either passive systems installed or instream dosing used. This instream dosing is a relatively rare approach in West Virginia. The best example of current instream dosing is the Blackwater drum station at Davis, WV. Operation and maintenance for an instream doser will be sought from the same fund that pays for the Blackwater station.

With the cumulative improvement from the bond forfeiture program treatment and the passive treatment supplemented by instream dosing, the acid load of Muddy Creek should diminish significantly. Our proposal predicts removing 27 stream miles in total from the impaired list of streams. This will include most of the Cheat Canyon section of the Cheat River mainstem and should result in a smallmouth bass fishery from Muddy Creek downstream. (read DNR Fisheries biologist Frank Jernejcic's report on recovery of the lower Cheat

River in this newsletter)

Another component of the TWI is the study of cost/benefits of the different treatment methodologies. The current bond forfeiture program is mandated to treat the water only from the permitted site that forfeited its bond. There are sites where a bond forfeiture site is adjacent to an abandoned site, but the two cannot be treated cooperatively, since each is regulated by a different program. The findings of this project may show clear efficiency advantages to looking holistically at stream reaches and in effect, doing more with less. This could have application across the state in acid mine drainage impaired watersheds. The monitoring work to develop the data for this work will be performed by FOC staff and volunteers. Bi-annual benthic monitoring will be done by Dr. Todd Petty, WVU Forestry Department/Fisheries and his students.

FOC has a long history of working with the National Mine Land Reclamation Center and now its sibling, the Water Research Institute, both at WVU. These programs are led by Dr. Paul Ziemkiewicz. This proposal marked the third submittal to the Targeted Watershed Initiative grant program. The proposal was developed by FOC Director Keith Pitzer and Watershed Research Institute program coordinator Rick Herd.

The grant period will run from 2006 through 2009.

Mon-Earth Benefit Concert April 22

Concert begins at 8 pm, doors open 7 pm

Morgantown High School in South Park

\$10 admission in advance, \$12 at door

Free parking

Performers:

Dulcie Taylor, Washington, DC

Buddy Mondlock, Nashville, TN

Rachel Eddy and the Morgantown Rounders, Morgantown, WV

Proceeds from the concert will benefit local environmental groups. Come and show your support!

More information at: mon-earth.org

Cheat Lake Robotics Team wins Two Awards

by Judy Werner

The Cheat Lake Sharks were one of three Morgantown teams that competed in the West Virginia FIRST LEGO League Robotics Tournament which was held at the Center for Educational Technologies Center at Wheeling Jesuit University Saturday, December 10th, where they competed against 18 other teams from around the state

The eight Cheat Lake Middle School students won First Place trophies in the Research Project and Teamwork competitions. This was the third year in a row that the Cheat Lake team has won the Teamwork award and the second year in a row that they have won the Research award. At the tournament they also competed in Robotic Performance and Technical Design. Appropriate for a LEGO tournament, each of the trophies is entirely made of LEGO pieces.

These eight middle school students have been working together on the tasks of constructing their robot, programming the missions and collecting information for their research project since the beginning of the school year working as an after school activity. The Research Project this year has focused on water and the oceans. For their Project the students focused on the problem of acid mine drainage in the Cheat River. Their skit presented their collected data in the form of a special news report interviewing people effected by acid mine drainage – including a fisherman, a

boater, a homeowner whose drinking water might be the Cheat, and a white water rafter. They then presented their innovative solution, a robotic probe that would move through a stream and attempt to isolate sources of acid mine drainage. The team had been told that one of the biggest problems was not knowing exactly where the source of AMD was specifically located. The team was commended by the judges for their excellent use of local scientists as resources in collecting information. Danielle Adams from the Friends of the Cheat shared her expertise and information with the team. She provided the team with visual aids and brochures, along with samples of iron pyrite.

As these students became involved in this research, they had to read and research the general topic and become knowledgeable about acid mine drainage. After presenting their skit, they had to be prepared to field all of the questions presented by the judges. This was an excellent learning opportunity for them to become involved in a very local issue of importance.

The Cheat Lake team included Ben Bond, Lydia Martinelli, Logan Mikorski, Nathan Tehrani, Eric Lutes, Jacob Graham, Peter Chen, and Tommy Alappat. The team was coached by Mrs. Judy Werner, a teacher at Cheat Lake.

The Cheat Lake Robotics team was sponsored by the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at West Virginia University and the Outback Steakhouse.



Festival information *continued from page 1*

For more information on the bands see our website at cheat.org/festival/music

We have enclosed a brochure in the newsletter with more information about the festival.

We hope you will join us to show your support for our efforts to re-establish healthy streams, encourage recreational access to our natural areas and establish rail-trails from abandoned rail lines.

We always need volunteers so call the office to sign up for a shift at the festival and get free admission, free refreshments and a discount of this year's festival t-shirt. We have been able to use organic cotton again this year to support sustainable agriculture and fair treatment of garment workers.

Vendors (as of press time)

Adventure's Edge, www.adventuresedge.com

Adventuresports Institute of Garrett College, www.adventuresortsi.org

Adventure Sports Center International, www.adventuresportscenter.com

Appalachian Essentials, 304-864-6564

Boof Gear, www.boofgear.com

Fluid Kayaks, www.justfluid.com

Firefly Grill, 724-875-4528

Grateful Heads Helmets, www.gratefulheads.com

Jake's Kettle Korn, 304-257-6825

Liquid Logic, www.liquidlogickayaks.com

Mario's Fishbowl, www.mariosfishbowl.net

Monroe's Deli, 304-329-3354

Mountain Surf, www.mountainsurf.com

PS Composites, www.customkayak.com

Pyranha Kayaks, www.pyranha.com

Rapidstyle, www.rapidstyle.com

Riversport School of Paddling, www.riversportonline.com

Rocky Mountain Kayak, www.rockymountainkayak.com

Sushi-fo-Yushi, www.sushifoyushi.com

Thought you Couldn't Find It LPS and CDS, 304-876-8234

Wave Sport Kayaks, www.wavesport.com

We're Nuts, 304-291-0432

Whitewater Warehouse, 937-222-7020

Artists (as of press time)

Anotherworld Glass - Karen Wade, 304-906-8146

Cool Runnings - MaryJo Schick, 304-296-8469

Clay Art by Gail, Gail Anderson Vincent, www.clayartbygail.com

D. John Marie, Debbie Johnson, 304-265-5178

Eddie Spaghetti Art, Eddie Maier, 814-322-6463

Long Hollow Pens, Stan Cook, www.longhollowpens.com

Possum Point Productions, Hoyt Reel, 703-221-1792

Summer Kitchen Pottery, Colleen Weeks, 304-449-1337

Auction items (as of press time)

Ray Frankhouser, licensed auctioneer, has volunteered to do two auctions on the stage.

Hoyt Reel is donating a 24" x 30" watercolor painting based on the 1989 "Worlds Canoe/kayak races held on Savage River, western Maryland"

Precision Rafting - one rafting trip for 3 people

Wilderness Voyageurs - one day of bike rentals on the Yough River trail, 2 tickets to the Gear and Beer fest June 24 at Ohiopyle, 2 guided trips on the lower Yough, 1 guided trip on the Cheat River

Laurel Highlands River Tours - 2 rafting trips on the Cheat and 2 on the Yough

Cheat River Outfitters - 2 rafting trips down Cheat Canyon

Long Hollow Pens - two handmade wooden pens engraved with "Friends of the Cheat"

Eddie Spaghetti Art - woodblock print

D. John Marie - pottery flower pot on pedestal

Cool Runnings - flared sweats

Laura Hough - tie-dyed hotpods

Airtight Inflatables - drybag

Chrissy Zeltner - 1 hour of massage

Grateful Heads - helmets

Appalachian Wildwaters - paddling gear

Rapidstyle - pogies

Mario's Fishbowl - Mario's merchandise and gift certificates

Monroe's Deli - gift certificates

SPONSORS

Fawley Music - support for stage

Adventure Sports Center International

Second Annual Cheatfest 5K

by Danielle Adams and Julie Black



The Cheat Fest 5K has a lot to offer this year – it is now part of the Morgantown Area Grand Prix, there is a new scenic course, new ceramic awards and great organic cotton T-shirts. Participants will also enjoy free admission to the Cheat River Festival and the first one hundred pre-registered runners will receive a free organic cotton race T-Shirt! All race proceeds will support the Preston Rail Trail Committee's acquisition of rails-to-trails in Preston County. Event details are below.

Entry Fee: \$20 if you register by Sat. April 29th, 2006. Registrations postmarked after that date and on race day will be \$25. Fees are non-refundable.

Application: can be found at <http://www.iplayoutside.com/Events/2006/05/7379.html> or on the next page of the newsletter

Race Course: Come join us on Saturday May 6th at 9am in Albright, West Virginia for a scenic foot race that runs from the Caddell Bridge to Albright Municipal City Park. The route is relatively flat and offers a beautiful finish line right near the banks of the Cheat River! Immediately after the race, participants can enjoy refreshments and a relaxing awards ceremony at the Albright City Park.

Race Day Check-In/Start Time: Registration is from 7 – 8am at the Albright Municipal City Park on St. Joe's Road in Albright. Racers will be

shuttled to the starting line from 8am – 9am. The last shuttle will leave the park at 8:30am. The race begins near the Caddell bridge at 9am.

Awards: Back by popular demand - unique awards made by a local artist! Age group winners will receive beautifully carved ceramic medallions, while overall race winners will receive carefully sculpted ceramic bowls. All awards are dyed with EnvironOxide, a pigment recovered from acid mine drainage streams. Awards will be given to the top 3 overall male and female finishers as well as the top three male and female finishes in each of the following age groups: 14 & Under, 15-18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 and over.

Directions: Parking is available at the Albright Baptist Church or the Albright United Methodist Church.

From I-68 - Take Exit 23 off I-68 at Bruceton Mills. Turn onto Route 26 South. Follow Route 26 South approximately 12 miles past the Cheat River Festival site and past the Albright Kwik Stop. Take a left onto St. Joe's Road (Route 7/12) right before the Cheat River Bridge. Registration will be at the Albright City Park on your left. Racers will be shuttled to the starting line from Albright City Park.

From Morgantown (Route 7) - Follow Route 7 from Morgantown through Kingwood. Take a left onto St. Joe's Road (Route 7/12) immediately after the Caddell Bridge. Follow St. Joe's Road about 3 miles. Registration will be at the Albright City Park on your right.

Race Photos & Results: Photos and results will be provided by iPlayOutside.com.

Festival: Non-racers should note that the Cheat Fest admission price has changed. You can purchase an early Cheat Fest ticket for \$10 until April 22 or you can purchase one that day for \$15.00. Go to www.cheat.org/festival for more details. As always, children under 12 are admitted free. Food and beverages will be available for purchase from vendors inside the festival grounds. For more Cheat River Festival information go to cheat.org.

Cheat Fest 5K Registration Form 2006

Name: _____

Street (or P.O. Box): _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email (optional): _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Age as of 5/6/06: _____

Male: _____ Female: _____

Where did you hear about the Cheat Fest 5K? _____

REGISTRATION

Includes free admission to The Cheat River Festival (\$15 value) for all racers and free organic cotton T-shirt (\$15 value) to the first 100 registered runners

Early Registration: \$20 MUST BE POSTMARKED BY APRIL 29TH

Race Day Registration: \$25

T-shirt Size (circle): Small Medium Large X-Large

Make Checks Payable to:

Friends of the Cheat

Mail payment and application to:

Friends of the Cheat

119 S. Price St. Suite 206

Kingwood, WV 26537

In consideration of your acceptance of my application for entrance in the Cheat Fest 5K, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release FOC and all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out my participation in this event.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Entrant's Signature

Parent or Guardian, if under 18

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Restoring our native Brook Trout

by Bill Thorne

Indeed, the diminutive brookie of our cold mountain streams is in the spotlight. Government agencies and conservation groups like Trout Unlimited are working on plans to maintain and enhance existing populations. Increased emphasis on protection and restoration is apparent throughout the Eastern United States. Why the importance placed on this fish that many people take for granted? It is likely because it is the only trout native to the eastern US and Canada. In addition most of its historic range has been lost or degraded by development and other land use practices. Whatever the reason emphasis is placed on the Brook Trout it can be nothing but good news for FOC and others working to restore streams.

Biologists know it by its scientific name *Salvelinus fontinalis*, but by most old timers they are referred to as natives. As trout go the Brook Trout is certainly not the largest, nor is it the favorite of many anglers who prefer the big fat hatchery raised trout that are stocked in many streams throughout WV and many other states. It is however our state fish in WV and most think that the brookie is the most beautiful of all fish. To see these fish in spawning colors in October is an awesome sight and I look forward to that each year.

They are a very resilient specie compared to other trout. The brookies were severely affected but survived the clearcutting of timber on our mountains in the early part of the 20th century. They also can stand more acidic stream conditions than either the Rainbow or Brown Trout that are found in some of the state's streams. However since the 1960s they began to be affected in most high elevations caused by Acid Precipitation, which dropped the pH of streams below what even they can tolerate. The acid rain is mostly caused by coal burning power plants in the Ohio valley. The one thing they do need is cold water, and as land was cleared the stream canopies were lost. The brookie could not adapt to the increased stream temperature and were lost. In the lower watershed many streams have also been

lost to Acid Mine Drainage.

Despite being gone from much of their original range, which covered most of WV, they are still plentiful in many of our forested headwater streams. These hearty species are well known to be plentiful in the high elevations in the Monongahela National Forest. We also can find them as far down the Cheat Watershed as Coopers Rock State Forest. They are found at this low elevation because heavy forests maintain cool water throughout the hot summers. Brook Trout can be found in 100 or more streams throughout the Cheat Watershed.

FOC and others may benefit from all the excitement because money is available that may be used for restoration of headwater streams. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has spawned a program called The National Fish Habitat Initiative. This program in turn supports programs like the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV). This program is a unique partnership between state and federal agencies, regional and local governments, academia, scientific societies and private citizens. The EBTJV is a program throughout the historic range of the Brook Trout, from the Southern Appalachians to Maine. In addition Trout Unlimited has a program called Back the Brookie that calls for restoration of the cold water habitats in the eastern states. Right now studies are under way to find where populations exist in WV and other states. This information should be a valuable in identifying restoration opportunities.

It is quite possible that money can be obtained through one of these programs, when restoration of a coldwater stream is planned. While it is not totally clear how this can be accomplished at this date, options may become clear in the near future. I do know some agencies plan to attempt drawing from these programs when restoring potential Brook Trout streams. Hopefully FOC can also use some of these funds to supplement their restoration work. I do know these funds are being used for such issues as livestock fencing and other riparian restoration. I feel AMD remediation should fit well into the overall objectives of these programs. Hopefully we can find a way to do more for this jewel of our headwater streams.

Validating Cheat River Recovery

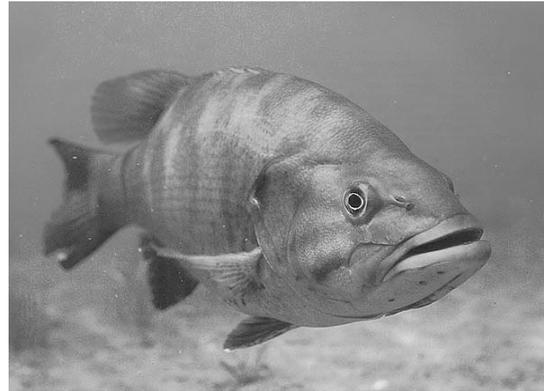
by Frank Jernejcic, WVDNR Fisheries Biologist

Fish are arguably the best long-term indicator of water quality and river habitat in a watershed. We have used fish population surveys to estimate standing crops of fish in the Cheat River from St George to Albright since 1959. These surveys determine numbers and weights of each species of fish collected. Abundance and species composition can be used to evaluate the fishery response to changes in water quality.

In 1999, we conducted four fish surveys from St. George to Albright which documented a good fishery at St. George but declining as acid mine drainage (AMD) entered below Rowlesburg and heated water at Albright. Downstream of Albright in the Cheat Canyon, access is too difficult to conduct comparable fish surveys that would document the impacts of Muddy Creek, Greens Run, and Bull Run. However, my visual observations from 1971 to 2001 while kayaking from Albright to Cheat Lake never revealed the presence of fish. In contrast, the fishery in Cheat Lake has continued to improve annually since 1990 and ranks in the top five waters for bass tournament fishing success in West Virginia. Additionally, it has the only fishable yellow perch population in the state.

Catching fish by angling can also be used as an index to indirectly measure fish populations. I had kayaked and fished from Jenkinsburg (mouth of Big Sandy) to the head of Cheat Lake (4 miles) once in August, 1997 and only caught one fish, a 9-inch yellow perch. Two anglers that I encountered had caught a few bullheads which are a very acid-tolerant species. I had no desire to go back since the fishing was so poor and the take-out at Mt. Chateau required 4 more miles of flat-water paddling.

Why was the lake fishery so good while the river immediately upstream appeared to be so poor? Intermittent pH measurements prior to 2004 always revealed pH values above 6.0 at Jenkinsburg. Yet the lack of observable fish implied pH limitations. To test this hypothesis, monitoring probes were installed at Albright and at the head of Cheat Lake in May, 2004 to measure pH,



temperature, and conductivity at 0.5 hour intervals. The pH values through November, 2005 never fell below 6.4 at Albright and 6.0 at the head of the lake. Mean pH values for the period of record were 7.1 and 6.9. Water quality appeared suitable for fish during this entire 19 month period; something had obviously improved.

Based on this recent continuous pH monitoring that represented improved water quality, it seemed like a good time to reevaluate the fishery in the lower Cheat River by angling. DNR Conservation Officers patrol Cheat Lake on weekends and were willing to meet me at the head of the lake which eliminated the 4-mile flat-water paddle.

My first trip on June 5, 2005 produced 22 small-mouth bass (SMB) and 7 other fish representing a total of 6 species. Many minnows were also observed. I floated two more times in June and once in September with similar success. My total catch was 132 fish (7 species) that included 100 SMB during 23 hours of fishing. This represents approximately 4 SMB per hour which I characterize as good fishing success on floatable West Virginia rivers. The largest SMB was 14-inches and 19 were 12-inches or larger. In contrast, during this same period I only caught 4 SMB during 13 hours on Lake Erie, and 13 SMB during 21 hours on the New River.

I can only imagine what the sport fishery will be like in the entire Cheat Canyon when Muddy Creek and the other acid tributaries are restored. The River of Promise Shared Commitment is being implemented through the successful coordinating efforts of the Friends of Cheat to reduce AMD in the Cheat watershed. The major payoff is the restoration of a sport fishery that my generation had forgotten.

Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

by Keith Pitzer

On a Thursday afternoon, FOC OSM/ VISTAs Danielle Adams and Doug Ferris, ECRR Coordinator Hanna Wheeler, volunteer Duane Lazzell, and FOC staffers Sally Wilts and Keith Pitzer enjoyed the springlike weather while picking up trash along this three mile section of Route 26 north of Albright. Well supplied with bright orange bags, bright orange or green safety vests and mechanical "litter gitters" that save much bending and reaching, we made our mark.

While picking up someone else's trash isn't the most enjoyable thing I could think of, the time spent doing this does feed the mind some thoughts that otherwise might not come about. For instance, I am always interested in the brands of repeat trash. If this were a real study in trash habits of people, we would track brands of fast food wrappers, candy wrappers, soft drink or beer containers. This would ostensibly tell us something about those people and their buying habits. Suffice it to say this is not a real study-but based on the results of this day on this section of Route 26, the following observations could be made:

It looks like road killed deer are just keeping up with deer carcasses dumped along the road in garbage bags by less than noble sportsmen last hunting season. I noticed four of each on the section I walked. This and the occasional baby diaper are usually the most disgusting thing found. On this cleanup, Doug Ferris scored the most baby diapers. It makes me wonder how responsible the parents are when they trash up the roadsides with this.

In the less offensive trash such as fast food wrappers, we really have to hand it to these franchised purveyors of convenience. We live fast paced lives, it's true. We can drive through a fast food joint; order, pay and receive the meal of choice and drive on down the road while eating. Then, when we've ingested this stuff, we can conveniently pitch the paper, plastic and styrofoam that held it together out the window. Never mind that styrofoam and plastic will last indefinitely in

the soil or waters that it ends up in. I particularly took notice of how much of this lightweight trash is caught at the intakes of culverts crossing the road, just waiting for the next big rain to wash it through and down the hill to Muddy Creek. There it's gone, out of sight, out of mind.

With candy, Slim Jims seem to be a local favorite. These long slender plastic sleeves are a little challenging to pick up with our litter gitters. There seem to be a wide variety of soft drink brands, juices, even water whose containers end up being pitched along the road. When it comes to beer, the local favorites are definitely the least expensive. Based on this cleanup, I would say more beer drinking litterers drink Busch Light than any other brand.

One thing we did not pick up this time were the many political signs along the road. They all seemed to be from candidates for County Commission. I wonder if any of these candidates favor a bottle bill to reduce litter and create jobs in the process. More than that, I wonder if any of them will come out and pick up their signs after the election. But that's alright, we'll get them next cleanup.

That's about it for the report. We do this three times per year and would love to have you join us on the next outing. It's a great way to walk a couple miles and learn about our consumptive wasteful ways. Check our website for the next cleanup date.



Bagged trash in front of (L to R) Keith Pitzer, Hanna Wheeler, Sally Wilts, Duane Lazzell and Danielle Adams. Doug Ferris picked up trash and took the photo.

Doug Ferris Joins our Team

by Doug Ferris

Hi all you folks who are interested in the health of the Cheat river, I'm the newest OSM VISTA working with Friends of the Cheat. My name is Doug Ferris and I've come here to Friends of the Cheat after spending 20 years doing basic research at the National Cancer Institute in Frederick Maryland where I was the principal investigator in the Cell Cycle Section of the Laboratory of Cancer Prevention.

So why am I here now? Lots of reasons but one big one is this: In twenty years I authored or co-authored over 50 papers on lots of interesting molecular details of cell growth, but when I looked at it all, nothing seemed very concrete, nor did I really have the feeling that if I hadn't done the work, it wouldn't have gotten done. So I wanted to do something different, something where at the end of the day, I could point to something tangible where my contribution made a measurable difference and I've always been interested in conservation issues.

Two other, not unrelated reasons are that I love canoeing rivers and I love fish and fishing. Give me a clean river, a fly rod and a canoe (and a couple of week's vacation) and I'm in nirvana. So it happened that my wife, youngest daughter and I decided one fine day in September of 2005 to take a little canoe trip down the Cheat River from Albright to Jenkinsburg. It was our first trip on the Cheat and what we saw appalled us; old tires, rusted hulks of unidentifiable machines, parts of cars and most of all, the nearly omnipresent red precipitation from AMD that made the rocks ugly and slick as ice; all that pollution concentrated in what is otherwise a spectacularly beautiful and surprisingly remote-feeling river canyon just a few miles from Morgantown. What has been done to the Cheat river is a tragedy, but it is not damaged beyond repair; the trash can be removed and AMD pollution eliminated or abated if only there is sufficient will to do so. That is the kind of issue I want to work on for the rest of my life.



FOC staff from left to right: Keith Pitzer, Doug Ferris, Sally Wilts, Danielle Adams. Photo courtesy of the [Dominion Post](#)

Rails-to-Trails in the Watershed

by Keith Pitzer

All good things take time. FOC has received the final agreement necessary to move into the acquisition phase on the Kingwood Northern trail. The accompanying notice to proceed allows us to have an appraisal performed to determine fair market value. We should have this by summer and hopefully begin sales negotiation with the owner at that time. We submitted a Recreational Trail grant for development of the surface of this trail and should have news on that this summer. It is our hope to have this trail available to the public in 2007.

We are continuing communication with CSX Transportation about the corridor along the Cheat Narrows. This would be the "crown jewel" of regional trails and we are actively seeking funding sources. We submitted a Transportation Enhancement Grant proposal for 80% of this corridor cost. In March, we met with Congressman Mollohan about the CSX corridor. He expressed enthusiasm for the project and encouraged us to stay in communication with his office.

Friends of the Cheat staff Keith Pitzer and OSM/VISTA Danielle Adams took rail trail project information to Charleston in February for "Tourism at the Legislature Day."

While there, we met and spoke with Joe Manchin Jr. who serves on the WV Tourism Commission. This was a good opportunity to share stories with other travel and tourism related projects in other parts of the state.

So while driving the Route 72 Scenic Byway along the Cheat Narrows, or fishing or boating this section of the Cheat, imagine the empty rail corridor being used for bicycling, hiking and river access. This will bring additional travelers to the Cheat watershed to enjoy this wonderful stretch of river.

Three FOC Projects Receive Grant Funding

by Danielle Adams

Friends of the Cheat has recently been awarded three small grants for various projects in the watershed. Read below to find out about the about the grant awards and the projects they will be used for!

Environmental Science Research Institute (ESRI)

In December of 2005 we were awarded a grant of software, books and classes from the Environmental Science Research Institute (ESRI) Conservation Grants Program. This program is designed to "help create and develop spatial analysis, computer mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) capability among thousands of non-profit organizations and individual projects of all sizes and types worldwide". (<http://www.conservationgis.org/aaesrigrants.html>).

For our grant award, The Institute has given us a reduced rate on *Arcview 8.3*, *Spatial Analyst Extension 8.3*, *3D analyst extension 8.3* and *Network Analyst Extension 8.3*. In conjunction with the software, we also received the books *GIS for Everyone, Third Edition* and *Getting to Know ArcView GIS*. Finally, we received a reduced rate on two ESRI virtual classes: *Learning ArcGIS 8, Part II* and *Creating, Editing and Managing Geodatabases for ArcGIS 8.3*.

The software, books and classes will be used to upgrade our current GIS maps from ArcView 3.3 to ArcView 8.3. The upgrade will help us be able to better organize and manage our data within the ArcView system.

Bikes Belong

In January 2006 we were awarded a \$7,500 grant from the Bikes Belong Coalition. This organization is "a national coalition of bicycle suppliers and retailers working together to put more people

on bicycles more often." They "work to make bicycling safe, convenient, and fun" through "national leadership, grassroots support, and promotion".

More information can be found at: (<http://bikesbelong.org/>).

The coalition has awarded us these grant monies to support bicycle use on the Kingwood to Tunnelton Rail-Trail. This trail is currently in the process of being appraised and purchased by Friends of the Cheat. Once purchased, the grant will be used to help with drainage repair, development, and resurfacing.

The ultimate goal is to make the trail suitable for bicycle use. Other goals include increasing the number of cyclists in the local area, creating a healthier lifestyle for community members and visitors, and encouraging tourism in and around Preston County. We also hope that the success of this trail will aid in our efforts to convert the other abandoned rail corridors in the community into rail-trails.

Oakland Foundation

In March 2006 we were awarded a \$5,000 grant from The Oakland Foundation of Parkersburg, WV. The Oakland Foundation supports West Virginia and northern Vermont tax-exempt organizations working in the areas of social services, the arts, education, environment, health, and historic preservation, with emphasis on social services.

This grant marks the beginning of a fund to be used to build an outdoor classroom pavilion on the Cheat River Festival grounds. The Outdoor Classroom would allow us to increase public use of the land for education purposes by allowing us to bring schools, camps and civic groups to the site to teach them about the Cheat River.

This is the first step in making the Friends of the Cheat property an Educational area. In addition to the classroom, we also plan to create a Nature Learning Trail that will showcase native plants and animals, land use characteristics, and local water quality issues.

Why Get Involved with the Friends of the Cheat?

From its headwaters in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, the Cheat River flows 157 miles to the Pennsylvania state line. In its lower 20 miles the river has been so severely polluted by acid mine drainage that it is effectively dead. Most of this damage is caused by underground and surface coal mines that were abandoned decades ago. The continuing legacy of this pollution has been the loss of fish and wildlife, aesthetic damage, degraded drinking water, and losses to the local economy from diminished recreation activities such as fishing and boating.

Our objective is to foster cooperative efforts by federal and state agencies, private industry, and local landowners to address the severe acid mine drainage problems that paint the Cheat Canyon orange and render it ecologically sterile. We need your support to create a new legacy for the Cheat River. Our membership includes fishermen, paddlers, guides and outfitters; land owners and renters; politicians and activists; geologists and biologists; small businesses and large industries; residents and folks from many states away. We are a diverse group with a common goal. Ours is a vision of a healthy river that provides multiple recreational opportunities and sustains viable local economies.

Help us make that vision a reality. Remember...Rivers carry the lifeblood of the planet... but they should not run red. Restore water quality on the Cheat! Consider making a planned gift to Friends of the Cheat in your estate planning. Making us a beneficiary of a retirement plan, insurance policy or as a bequest can provide you or someone you designate with favorable financial or tax benefits. Become a member by completing the form below or by visiting our website at www.cheat.org.

Yes, I Want to Be a Friend of the Cheat!

Membership and Donation Form All donations are tax-deductible

Membership includes our quarterly newsletter Into the Canyon

Basic Membership

- Individual/family \$20
- Non-profit Organization \$50
- Business \$100

Supporting Contributors

- Stream Steward* \$100-\$249 includes ball cap with FOC logo and choice of video
- Watershed Watch* \$250 or more includes Tshirt & choice of video

Contribution for Preston Rail-Trail Committee _____ (make check out to Friends of the Cheat)

T-shirt - \$15 (\$10 with \$50 or more donation) Size ___ Medium ___ Large ___ XLarge ___ XXLarge

Choose ___ Cheat Map Shirt or ___ Cheatfest shirt

Cap – Low Profile Twill Cap with FOC logo. Camel, green, grey, putty \$15.00 _____

Tote bag Roomy organic cotton (natural color) tote with FOC logo \$15.00 _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ Payable to: Friends of the Cheat
119 S. Price Street, Suite 206
Kingwood, WV 26537

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 35
BRUCETON MILLS,
WV
26525

Friends of the Cheat
119 S.Price Street
Kingwood, WV 26537

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



A permanent sign listing the contributors to the Jenkinsburg River Access Project was set in place in April. Pictured from the left: Brad Durst, WV Conservation Agency; landowner Dave Hough, Mountain Streams and Trails; Charlie Walbridge, board member American Whitewater and Friends of the Cheat; Keith Pitzer, director of Friends of the Cheat; Matt Shafer, WVDNR conservation officer; and Lou Schmidt, WV DEP. Photo by Doug Ferris, Friends of the Cheat OSM/VISTA.