Ospreys Along the Cheat:
A Message of Renewal and Recovery
by Adam Webster

It’s springtime in Cheat country and the forests and fields are coming alive. The regular stock of summer songbirds are arriving from Central and South America—warblers, vireos, orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, sparrows, buntings, and bobolinks. Hawks and harriers are gliding in along the ridges from Florida and Mexico; ducks, geese, and mergansers are stopping over from Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana; and a plentitude of local flora and fauna are tipping the scales with the color and calamity of spring.

But wait! Another visitor needs to be added to this year’s roster as well.

Ospreys—also known as fish hawks—have been spotted at several locations along the lower Cheat River in recent months. In mid-May, I was lucky enough to photograph one of these birds—with a fish in its talons—several miles into the Cheat Canyon near Big Nasty rapid.

A Unique Bird

Ospreys have several features that make their presence along the Cheat unique. Although rarely seen inland, Ospreys are occasionally seen along inland rivers and lakes during migration. At times, they even establish localized populations. Is it possible that these magnificent birds of prey are thinking about sticking around the Cheat for the summer? Or are they just passing through? That depends.

First and foremost—no matter where Ospreys are living—they require a diet that consists almost entirely of live fish. In fact, a brood of three Osprey fledglings requires about six pounds This photo of an osprey carrying a fish was taken by Adam Webster on May 15 in the Cheat Canyon. The bird was soon challenged by a hawk seeking to steal the fish.

Continued on page 9
Into the Canyon

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Working Upstream
By Keith Pitzer, Executive Director, Friends of the Cheat

Weather has a way of reminding us of who’s in charge. It is the ultimate natural balance that affects us in all seasons. The late winter weather was fortunate indeed for those that love winter activities like cross-country skiing. Now the snow is gone but spring seems unsure just when to come to stay with nights cool enough that the wood fire still feels good.

The Cheat Narrows continues to get increased fishing usage with the continued stocking efforts of the local group Trout for Cheat, Inc. I hope we can look forward to more of the Cheat River becoming fishable in the next few years.

We are looking forward to the spring and summer for the construction of more acid mine drainage treatment projects. Last fall, a project was finished on upper Pringle Run. Three additional projects will be built this year. We are planning three more at this time and monitoring water at several additional sites for next year’s consideration.

As you read in the last issue, Ben Mack is staying with us through the year to continue the monitoring and mapping work he piloted as a VISTA. This effort is funded by WVDEP/DWWM through 319 funds. Current VISTA Danielle Adams is assisting with monitoring and heading up a busy season of watershed education activities. To assist in these projects, Sheila Westfall has joined our staff as a summer intern through the Office of Surface Mining’s summer internship program.

Cheatfest was another successful event. After our obligatory rain shower, the day turned fair and things ran smoothly. The first Cheatfest 5K footrace was a big success with 96 runners. We hope this will become a permanent part of Cheatfest, focusing on the need for recreational trails in the area. Read more about this year’s festival and list of sponsors on pages 6, 7 & 8. We couldn’t succeed without their support.

The West Virginia legislative session came and went with its all too typical clamor for open season on environmental protection. I communicated with legislators several times about issues particularly pertinent to the Cheat Watershed. There were resolutions full of downright untruths to block any future wilderness designation in West Virginia, the failure of the bottle bill to be introduced, the demise of the Environmental Quality Board’s role in writing water quality rules and the blocking of one of the two first nominated Tier 2.5 trout streams in the state. This is such a beautiful state in places and it sure is hard to preserve those remaining places.

Senator Byrd was instrumental in attaching another extension of the AML Fund tax program to a federal spending bill. Hopefully, this will give Congress the time it needs to draft a reasonable re-authorization of this essential tool for restoration of our scarred minelands in Appalachia.

Issues like these and funding cuts in every agency program we work with can have a negative impact on attitude. But hope springs eternal. The warm days of spring still bring on buds and flowers. The trout still feed on early hatches in the remaining healthy streams. The streams still feed the river and people are still restored by the cycle of such things. We will do what we can with what we have. Toward that end we will be working upstream.

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Patagonia switched entirely to organic cotton in 1996 and have a program (Beneficial T’s) that helps to support sustainable production. All of the festival T-shirts, tote bags and new caps are from Patagonia.

Americans throw away 100 billion plastic grocery sacks per year. Using tote bags for shopping saves the petroleum used for plastic grocery bags. Be a responsible steward of our planet!
Acid Mine Drainage Project Updates
by Keith Pitzer

With spring we will hit the ground running with construction slated for three acid mine drainage (AMD) projects this season. This is in addition to one completed last fall on a headwater of Pringle Run. The successfully bidding construction firm for all four projects was Bolyard & Son, Inc. of Kingwood. Bill and crew will be working on Sovern Run at two sites this spring and then one on upper Muddy Creek. The improvement from the Sovern Run sites should be noticeable on the Big Sandy from Rockville downstream and the Upper Muddy Creek project will enhance a fishable section of Muddy Creek downstream of the Brandonville Pike.

These four projects represent a total investment of more than $750,000 in water quality improvement. This funding comes from WVDEP’s Non-Point Source Program and from the Office of Surface Mining’s Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program. The latter program is funded through the Abandoned Mine Land tax on coal produced. This coal tax also funds the WVDEP/AML reclamation projects and water line projects to replace domestic water lost due to abandoned mines. Read more about the Abandoned Mine Land Tax in the next article.

More projects are planned for upper Pringle Run, Morgan Run, South and Middle Forks of Greens Run, and another project on Muddy Creek. These will represent continued partnership efforts between state and federal agencies, WVU, FOC and cooperating landowners. Together, these efforts are investing in the future of cleaner water in our watershed.

Abandoned Mine Lands Fund Tax Program
by Keith Pitzer

The Abandoned Mine Lands Fund tax program resulted from the Surface Mining Reclamation & Control Act of 1977. Since that time dangerous highwalls, mine openings, open pits, public water lines and water quality treatment have been addressed with this fund.

Even though the program has been in existence for a long time, the problems from pre-regulated coal mining are far from over. By all estimates there are still hundreds of dangerous sites, many of them discharging polluted water into streams and rivers. The cost to remediate these sites would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars and keep agencies and watershed groups such as Friends of the Cheat busy for many years yet.

This program is set to expire on September 30th this year unless Congress acts to pass a re-authorization of the program. West Virginia’s Senator Byrd has been instrumental in getting the recent extensions passed, but there needs to be a broad bipartisan effort to draft a sensible bill before the extension expires.

The wealth of the Appalachians has historically been linked to resource extraction. It is only fair that the cost of repairing damage from these activities be paid by extractive industries. This amounts to pennies per ton of coal mined today to pay for the damage caused by yesteryear’s mining. Without continued effort to heal mine-scarred lands, replace citizen’s tainted water supplies, and restore our streams and rivers, local economies and the quality of life here in Appalachia will never reach its potential. Citizens and other stakeholders can let their leaders know how important this program is to areas like the Cheat River Watershed in Preston County.

In WV, contact Senators Byrd and Rockefeller at US Senate, Washington, DC 20510. The state is divided into three Congressional districts. Depending on where you reside, contact Alan Mollohan, Shelley Moore Capito or Nick Rahall at the US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Your letter should show that you are a resident of the state and show your address. If you’d rather email or fax, check with our office and we can help you find that information.
Imagine having a place to walk or bike, enjoying the out-of-doors in relative peace and quiet. There would be other folks also using this space, but because we’re all here for similar reasons, and because we all value this experience, we respect each other and the space we share. It is quiet, and relatively trash free. Most folks using the trails don’t litter, and don’t appreciate four-wheelers on these trails designated for quiet uses. Sometimes you can see wildlife along the trail such as deer or turkey, ruffed grouse, a colorful woodpecker, a bluejay, or some variety of songbird.

That’s what could happen if Friends of the Cheat and the Preston Rail Trail Committee is successful in working with many partners in bringing rails-to-trails to three abandoned rail corridors in Preston County. These rail corridors once carried coal and timber away from here. History is rich with the dreams of connecting supply with market and making fortunes in the process. Steven B. Elkins was the financier of the M&K Railroad which is today the recently abandoned CSX corridor along the Cheat Narrows between Rowlesburg and Albright.

The original M&K stood for Morgantown & Kingwood and continued on from Albright, looped up Green’s Run to Kingwood and then back out along the North Fork of Green’s Run and over the watershed divide into the Deckers Creek drainage, following that stream into Morgantown. These corridors represent paths connecting the past with the present and future. They can become local recreation and fitness areas as well as travel destinations for tourism to enhance our local economy. Rail-trails are potential vacation destinations for people traveling by bicycle, who will patronize bed and breakfasts, restaurants and shops along the way.

Friends of the Cheat is seeking the $20,000 match it needs for an $80,000 recreational trail grant to purchase the Kingwood Northern corridor. If you’d like to contribute, there is a donation form near the back of the newsletter. We are actively communicating with CSX about the corridor along the Cheat Narrows. When these two corridors are developed and used by the community, we will seek the connecting corridor route with the Deckers Creek Trail into Morgantown.

If you’d like to become actively involved in these efforts, contact Connie Ervin with the Preston Rail-Trail Committee at 864-5901.
Cheatfest Sponsors

Sponsorship can be through gifts of money, or goods, donating services or loaning equipment, or discounting costs for us. We depend on our sponsors and vendors to cover part of the expense of putting on the festival. Our heartfelt thanks to each contributor.

Vendors

A major attraction at the festival is shopping for unique items - paddling gear, boats, clothing, arts and crafts, delicious food and many other items.

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Jeff Prycl of Rocky Mountain Kayak is the major sponsor of the race each year. He donates prizes for the race winners and his time and expertise in helping with the race.

**Mountain Streams and Trails** helps with organization and promotion of the race and supplies a bus for the shuttle.

**Cheat River Outfitters** supplies a bus for the shuttle.

**Glen Miller** donates his time and vehicles for the shuttle.

**Laurel Highlands** and **Whitewater Adventures** allow us to use their property for the race registration and public parking.

**Adventure's Edge** of Morgantown sponsored the climbing wall.

**Beneficial T’s of Patagonia** donated organic cotton tote bags.

**Mylan Pharmaceuticals** made a contribution to support the festival and donated barrels for recycling and trash.

**WV Brewing Company** loans us a large tent each year.

**Preston Distributors** donates beer for our downriver race.

**Kingwood radio stations** WKMM and WFSP donate announcements promoting the festival each year. **WAJR** in Morgantown also provided coverage.

**Dominion Post** and **Preston Publications** publish feature stories, news updates and lots of photos.

**EastWest Printing** donates the creative design of the festival T-shirt and discounts screenprinting.

**Chris Herring** has donated use of her photography to use on the festival T-shirt for the past two years.

**Hospitality Tent Food Donations:**

- **Applebees, Black Bear, Boston Beanery, Casa D’Amici, Chic-N-Bones, D.P. Dough, Maxwell’s, Mediterranean Market, Mounatin People’s Co-op, Papa John’s Pizza, Pita Pit, Puglioni’s, Wings Ole’, Albright Kwik Stop, Morgan’s Foodland, Kingwood Pizza Hut, Kingwood Subway, Twila’s**

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- A white quartz point from **MysticalCrystals** of Clarksburg
- Jewelry from **Mountain Mist Products**
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- Framed watercolor painting by Hoyt Reel, **Possum Point Productions**
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- Tshirt from **Beneficial T’s of Patagonia**
- A handcrafted pen from **Longhollow Pens**
- A Hard Hit paddling helmet from **Grateful Heads**
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Cheat Fest 5K raises money for
Preston Rail-Trail Committee
by Danielle Adams, OSM VISTA

Some came from Preston County, while others came from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio and even Michigan. Some were younger than 14 and some were older than 70. Some came to compete, while others came for fun. Some came to support the Preston Rail Trail Committee. Some came to try a new race. But despite their many differences, everyone came to run…

The Cheat Fest 5K was a new event this year at the Cheat River Festival. The race was held in conjunction with the Festival to create a new unique race for runners. Friends of the Cheat’s AmeriCorps OSM/VISTA Danielle Adams organized the race along with Monitor and Mapping Coordinator Ben Mack. The goal of the event was to raise money and awareness for the Preston Rail Trail Committee to assist in their goal of converting abandoned railroad corridors to running and biking trails.

On the morning of May 7th, while many others were probably still sleeping, 95 dedicated runners came to participate in the Cheat River Festival 5K. Before the start of the race, everyone traveled to the starting line at Woolen Mill Road via the Buckwheat Express. At the starting line, the cool, cloudy weather soon proved to be perfect for the race. Shortly after 11:00, the Preston County Sheriff’s department stopped traffic in the southbound lane providing racers a safe place to run. The Mountaineer Area Rescue Group, who volunteered to help with safety, signaled the start of the race to the Cheat River Festival grounds and everyone was off!

It was only 15 minutes and 57 seconds later that Steven Johnson of Elkins crossed the finish line to win the male competition. He was soon followed by Will Hunter (overall male, second place) and Travis Mersing (overall male, third place). For women Heather Bury clinched first place with a time of 19:08. She was followed by Amy Czesnowski (overall female, second place) and Libby Covelli (overall female, third place). Race results and pictures can be found at www.runhigh.com and www.jarvisphoto.com

After the race was over, almost everyone agreed that the course was fast and many people commented on how their times were much faster than their previous races. People also enjoyed the fun, original awards created by Gail Anderson Vincent. Gail created clay medals and used EnvironOxide (recovered from Acid Mine Drainage) as a pigment to dye the award a dark orange color. The entire award was eco-friendly, thus contributing to Friends of the Cheat’s mission to protect the environment. (You can read more about EnvironOxide in our next newsletter, where we will further describe this unique resource recovery method).

Overall, the race was a success! Not only did we effectively raise over $1,000 for the Preston Rail Trail Committee, but we also increased awareness about PRTC’s efforts to 95 people between the ages of 12 and 78. Thanks to everyone who participated and we remain hopeful that in the future the race will be able to be run on a rail trail. See you at the race next year!

The financial success of this race is largely due to our sponsors who donated money ahead of time to defray the race costs. We would like to thank them all, for their support.

Thanks to the following businesses for participating in our highest level of sponsorship:

AQUAFIX Systems Inc.
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Thanks also to:
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Monroe’s Restaurant
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Save-A-Lot
A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Cheatfest 2005
by Sally Wilts and Keith Pitzer

Cheatfest has been built on the extraordinary efforts of volunteers from its inception and much of this work is not evident to the public. I’d like to share some stories of the unsung heroes of this year’s festival to give you a better idea of the dedication of our members and volunteers.

Jim Snyder is chairman of our board and a passionate chronicler of the river’s recovery. He applied his tremendous energies and talents to designing and building a new sound booth and speaker stands next to the stage to improve sound quality. Jim oversaw the installation of two new power drops with buried electrical cable to meet our unmet power needs and added new lighting for the art market. He built a new fence between Teter’s camp and the back gate to deter gate-crashers.

All of this is in addition to his routine festival duties of putting his custom-made stage cover into place and assisting Chip Mefford with all of the electrical hook-ups to power the booths, musicians and lighting for the festival. Chip gives up a week of his life every year to make improvements to the site and to power us up. He even bought a generator to bring to the festival!

Keith Strausbaugh has donated thousands of dollars worth of electrical equipment to the festival and volunteers for several days before the festival, assuming responsibility, with Ralph Teter and other volunteers, for getting all of our signs positioned and helping out in any way possible.

Ralph does all of the mowing of the festival site and the outfitters’ property next door where we have our public parking. Running Teter’s Campground requires a broad wisdom and tolerance, which he contributes to our board and festival decisions.

Gail Anderson Vincent and Karen Wade oversaw the fledgling Art Market and were closely involved in all the decision-making. Mary Jo Schick of Cool Runnings created and donated the 16 foot long, 4 foot tall dyed fabric banner for the Art Market. The participating artisans reacted favorably to this year’s experience and we hope this area grows in future festivals.

The Cheat River Massacre-ence is the downriver race that is run on the Friday evening prior to the festival. This event has been growing yearly and is coordinated by Rick Gusic, who presents us with a check from the profits from the race. He is assisted by a crew of volunteers each year and Rocky Mountain Kayak has been the main sponsor of the race.

As vendors arrive Friday afternoon and Saturday morning and as the festival opens to the public, shifts of volunteers staff the gates. These people are responsible for answering questions, getting vendors to the correct booth space, collecting money and communicating with FOC staff for help with unforeseen situations. These volunteers are recruited and organized by Kelli Geswein, who has volunteered in various capacities almost as long as there has been a Cheatfest and has been volunteer coordinator for the past three years.

The Kingwood Junior Women’s Club has handled parking for the past several years and collects a small fee from each car to support the work of the club.

The WVU Sierra Student Coalition handled our trash and recycling duties this year and did an incredible job. This is the least desirable aspect of volunteering for the festival. We try to retrieve as many aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles as possible to divert them from landfills and send them to recycling.

The music at Cheatfest has become one of its identifying qualities. Focusing on acoustic styles rooted in our mountain heritage, Joan Pitzer organizes and plans the performance order for a fun filled day of listening.

The hospitality area behind the stage is the source of food, respite and quiet talk among our hardworking volunteers, musicians and staff. Karen Koehnlein has organized and collected a great array of donated food items and run the hospitality area for several Cheatfests now. Karen and her volunteers cook and maintain a healthy mix of food and drink to keep the festival running on full stomachs.

When the festival is over, there is all of the preparation to do in reverse. Take down tents, put things away, clean up the grounds, the parking area, take down signs, and start accounting for all that happened the previous day or so.

This year’s festival was not a record setter, but it was still very successful. Total revenue totaled just over $20,000. More than that, it was a great time for many FOC supporters that came to meet old friends, check out the fest and celebrate the Cheat River Watershed.
Ospreys continued from page 1

of fish daily. In the photographs taken in the Cheat Canyon, an Osprey is in flight with a fish in its talons. Things get even more exciting in one of the photographs when a Red-tailed hawk comes charging from the horizon attempting to make the Osprey drop its catch!

Nonetheless, are these photographs proof that the food chain along a stretch of river that many have considered polluted, dead, and sterilized is more intact than once believed? The major significance of these photographs is that they were taken several miles downstream of two of the top polluting tributaries, Muddy Creek and Green’s Run.

Are there fish in the Cheat Canyon? Are there Ospreys along the Cheat? Is the Cheat River recovering? It appears so.

A Parallel Past

Ospreys—like the Cheat River—have a troubled past that brings them to the forefront as symbols of enduring recovery and renewal.

During World War II, the widespread use of the pesticide DDT reached a peak when the military used it heavily overseas as a remedy for malaria-carrying mosquitoes, body lice, and other insect pests. After the war, heavy DDT usage continued in the United States. In 1972, however, societal concerns about the effects of the chemical on humans and animals climaxed — an awareness often credited to Rachel Carson’s 1962 book, “Silent Spring”— leading to a federal government ban on the toxin.

Regardless of the ban, however, the persistence of DDT in the environment had already taken its toll—particularly among certain bird populations, such as Ospreys, Peregrine falcons, eagles, and Brown pelicans. DDT was credited with thinning eggshells and therefore reducing brooding success.

During the 1960s through the 1980s, Osprey populations were reduced to very low numbers in coastal areas and were virtually non-existent inland. They remained on many coastal states’ endangered and threatened species list and were also placed on the Audubon Society’s Blue List from 1972 through 1981. They remained a species of special and local concern throughout the 1980s. They are still listed as a species of special concern in some inland and coastal states.

In a similar light, the Cheat River also suffered from persistent pollution coming from World War II and post-war era activities. During this time period, coalmining boomed—however, leaving behind a legacy of what are now known as abandoned mine lands.

It wasn’t until 1977 that the United States government took steps to ameliorate the problems associated with abandoned mine lands by passing the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation—known as SMCRA. The passing of SMCRA was just as significant of a recourse for areas polluted by acid mine drainage and heavy metals coming from abandoned mine lands as the 1972 ban of DDT was for wildlife populations.

Thus, the Cheat River too has been considered endangered and threatened. In fact, in 1995—a year after the acid mine drainage blowout on Muddy Creek—it was listed on American Rivers’ 1995 “Ten Most Endangered Rivers List”.

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Ospreys continued from previous page

It remained listed as one of the most threatened rivers in 1996. Because of hard work by groups like Friends of the Cheat and laws ensuring the protection and recovery of the watershed, however—like the Osprey and the laws forged to protect their populations—the Cheat is also on its way to recovery.

Predicting Omens

For thousand of years, humans have relied on animals for work, food, and even religion and worship. The practice of ornithomancy—a method of divination that interprets the flight patterns and songs of birds—was very popular in ancient Rome where it was even part of religion. Omens—good and bad—were often predicted depending on where, how high, what direction, and how fast a bird was flying. For example, ancient Greeks believed that Ospreys controlled bad weather, and North American fisherman watched Ospreys so they would know of oncoming storms.

Although today there are more practical explanations for understanding why some of these beliefs existed—for example, perhaps oncoming storms stirred up schools of fish and Ospreys took advantage of the situation—there are still important lessons to be learned from our feathered kin.

In the Cheat Canyon, the presence of feeding Ospreys is truly a promising omen. Whether or not these birds will stick around for the summer is beside the point. They have brought us a message of enduring recovery and renewal. They have brought us hope for the future of one of the most beautiful rivers in the East.

Friends and lovers of the Cheat River suffered a great loss when the 2003 bid for public ownership of 5,600 acres of Cheat country was lost to a private timber company. Perhaps the Ospreys are reminding us that not everything important comes through numbers and ownership. Sometimes we just need to appreciate things for what they are—public or private, ours or theirs, mine or yours. Perhaps the Ospreys are delivering a reminder that the Cheat River still flows freely. It is still truly wild. The Cheat River—the flowing water—belongs to ALL of Creation. Despite how mankind manipulates and morphs things for utility, nature is ALWAYS the overriding factor.

Sheila on the left and Danielle Adams (right) while testing water quality on Pringle Run this May. By measuring flow and measures of acidity and metal concentrations, we can plan restoration projects more accurately.

Introducing Sheila Westfall

OSM Summer Intern

Hello! My name is Sheila Westfall, I am a 22 year old student at West Virginia University, and I am the 2005 Friends of the Cheat OSM Summer Intern. I am currently pursuing a degree in Environmental Protection so working at FOC is a perfect stepping stone into my chosen field.

I came to value the environment and desire to protect it through my Mother who is a high school science teacher. When I was little she would pull over on the side of the road to take pictures of rocks that she could use in the classroom. I thought she was nuts but as I got older I began to appreciate her love of the outdoors.

I have been a lifelong member of 4-H and continue to volunteer and am actively involved in Collegiate 4-H. I have met many people through 4-H and last year had the opportunity to travel to Portland, Oregon for a National Collegiate 4-H Conference. There I was able to appreciate the natural beauty of a part of the country I had never seen before as I gazed on Mount Hood and visited Multnomah Falls.

I am very excited to be working with Friends of the Cheat this summer. I look forward to spending a great deal of time working on stream monitoring projects and putting the skills I’ve developed through 4-H to use doing community outreach.
Adopt-a-Highway - Great Fun!

by Keith Pitzer

On March 26th, FOC got together another great crew for its Adopt-a-Highway spring cleaning along three miles of Rte. 26 from the bridge at Albright north. Attending the grand event were Jim Snyder, Sally Wilts, Ben Mack, Danielle Adams, Tom Nutter, Nathan Snyder, Lynn Harden, Keith Pitzer, Jamie Hatcher and daughter MacKenzie.

The course was typically trashed. We ended up with a score of fifty bright orange bags of trash, some pieces too large to bag, a sink, some car parts, some tires, a basketball and other assorted items. But the highlight of the day was when one team found a geo-cache. They weren’t using GPS and clues picked up online, only picking up trash from the ground. The team members swore to keep the location a secret.

So if you haven’t been a part of an adopt-a-highway cleanup, you don’t know what you’re missing. It’s good exercise, a worthy cause and great fun! You meet and work with wonderful interesting people and find lots of topics for conversation….if you’re interested in helping us next time out, keep watching the website for details.

Successful Inaugural Art Market

The Cheatfest planning committee decided to create an area at the festival specifically for artists. By setting a specific area separate from the commercial vendors, we can attract visitors who are especially interested in original arts and crafts. Karen Wade and Gail Vincent Anderson worked together to decide who to invite and how to organize the market. Jim Snyder and Chip Mefford planned the physical layout and arranged electrical power, lighting and support posts for a banner. Mary Jo Schick donated the 16 foot by 4 foot banner that she created of dyed fabrics.

Participants this year included Natalie Boyland of MountainMade Candle Company of Thomas with hand-dipped and hand-poured beeswax candles. Eddie Fletcher from Williamsburg, WV has Appalachian WoodWare, which includes hand carved wooden spoons and bowls from sustainably harvested wood.

Mary Jo Schick from Morgantown owns Cool Runnings which includes a full line of hand dyed and sewn adult and children’s clothing and dyed fabrics. Eddie Maier of Eddie Spaghetti Art from Westover creates woodblock prints, many of which are nature-inspired. Stan Cook from Letart, WV owns Longhollow Pens, which are handcrafted high quality writing instruments. He uses a wood lathe to fashion wood, horn, antler and other materials into pen shafts.

Hoyt Reel of Possum Point Productions is from Dumfries, Virginia. He has long supported the work of Friends of the Cheat by donating prints of his watercolors to our silent auction and for our postcards. Many of his paintings are of rivers and landscapes.

Colleen Weeks of Summer Kitchen Pottery creates highly decorated stoneware, including bird baths, sculptures and kitchenware. Amy Nedrow of Designs by Amy in Morgantown makes beaded jewelry and paints acrylic abstracts.

Karen Wade of Another World Glass from Terra Alta has handmade stained glass and jewelry. Gail Vincent Anderson from Morgantown, Clay Art by Gail, specializes in functional and hand-painted pottery and jewelry incorporating sterling silver, leather, hemp and handmade clay beads.

We hope that the success of this year’s Art Market will encourage other artists to participate and that this creative part of the festival will continue to grow in coming years.
Cheat Canyon Takeout Access  
by Charlie Walbridge, FOC board member

For outdoor enthusiasts with an interest in the Cheat Canyon, it's been a discouraging two years. Hiking and paddling groups had a long history of working with the previous owner, a regional power company that held the land for over 50 years. The new owner, Allegheny Wood Products (AWP), has shown scant interest in continuing this tradition. After an initial meeting with management, phone calls and emails went unanswered and management was “too busy” for further meetings. They also turned down an invitation to raft the Cheat Canyon with American Whitewater and Friends of the Cheat last spring and shut down an 11-mile section of the Allegheny Trail that passed through the Cheat Canyon with no advance notice. They did not notify WV Scenic Trails Association, the organization that maintains the trail, even though there was a limited access agreement with the company in place. This told us any trail or river access on AWP property could be closed without warning.

Paddlers became increasingly concerned about the future of river access below the High Bridge in Jenkinsburg. This area has been a takeout for both the Cheat Canyon and the Big Sandy for canoeists and kayakers since the mid-1950's and for professional rafters since 1968. In recent years the area has become a popular destination for sunbathers, fishermen, and swimmers. It's been known for wild parties, destructive ATV use, and industrial-strength litter. Various outfitters, along with American Whitewater and Friends of the Cheat, attempted to work out an access agreement here without success. During our occasional conversations AWP regularly threatened to close the area down.

Last winter Dave Hough, the managing partner of Mountain Streams and Trails Outfitters, was able to negotiate a land swap with Allegheny Wood Products. Several years ago, he purchased land at the entrance to Cheat Canyon on river right. His land, which runs along Decision Rapid, was cut in half by AWP’s Cheat Canyon haul road. After lengthy negotiations he traded the part of his property above the haul road for land between County Road 14 (the Mount Nebo - Bull Run Road) and the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers. This is the area most important to paddlers. He’s committed to maintaining public river access here, but repairing the damage from decades of overuse and curtailing the nasty habits of a small minority of current users will be a daunting challenge.

Friends of the Cheat and American Whitewater have joined forces to help Dave and Mountain Streams and Trails meet this challenge. We’ve agreed to improve the Upper Parking Lot, now filled with deep potholes and truck-stopping mega-puddles. Considerable grading and filling will be required, and estimates range from $5000 - $10,000. Working closely with whitewater paddlers and clubs from West Virginia and surrounding states, both organizations have started a fundraising effort. Friends of the Cheat will be selling “CHEAT RIVER ACCESS SPONSOR” bumper stickers at Cheat Fest this year for $20, with all profits going to the improvement and maintenance of the area. We are also pursuing a number of state and private grants.

We need your donations to make this happen and to fulfill our promise to the outfitter. Any money raised beyond the cost of improving the parking lot will be used to pay for other improvements at the site and to fund a badly needed police presence during busy weekends. Make your check out to Friends of the Cheat - Cheat River Fund and mail to: Friends of the Cheat, 119 South Price St. #206, Kingwood, WV, 26537. Or call 304-329-3621 and use your credit card! You can also use Paypal on our website: www.cheat.org.

This photo was taken at Jenkinsburg this spring and shows some of the deep mudholes that have been created by destructive four-wheel drive vehicles. Every time it rains on the bare soil, particles are carried into the nearby streams, adding tremendous sedimentation to the river. This area has been totally degraded by human abuse and is badly in need of revegetation and traffic control.
Who wants to learn about water quality? Now, raise your hand....
by Ben Mack

In previous newsletters, we have written about our Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Awareness Curriculum, but it’s been a while since we have given you an update on this subject. So, bring your lunch box and get ready to go out to a stream, because school is in session!

On April 9th Danielle Adams and Ben Mack met two Girl Scouts troops (from the Girl Scouts Trillium Council) at Camp Roy Weller in Bruceton Mills. The day began with a presentation about AMD and stream sampling equipment. This was followed by a hike down to Big Sandy Creek to test for pH and metals, and to use a net to catch stream-dwelling critters. Despite the high current, the kids had a ball playing in the stream on such a nice day.

After a short (but strenuous) hike we returned to the Learning Center where we did some career exploration. First, we discussed environmental science degree programs at West Virginia University and Marshall University. Then we talked about the AmeriCorps program and other jobs in the environmental field.

All too soon, it was time for the kids to head home. All in all, everyone had a good time and the weather was perfect. The Girl Scouts were pursuing their Eco-Action badge, a program that educates Scouts about environmental issues, as well as careers and degree programs in the environmental field.

We were back at Camp Roy Weller three days later on April 12th for a presentation to the sixth graders from Bruceton School. This time, we filled an entire day with activities. As with the Girl Scouts, we first gave an introduction about FOC, AMD, and sampling equipment. Before long, everyone was getting restless and wanted to get out on the stream, so we split into four groups and each of us found a different sampling site along Big Sandy Creek.

We tested chemical and physical properties, and performed benthic sampling. After sampling, we broke for lunch and let the kids burn off some of their energy with Capture the Flag and Army Dodgeball. Following lunch, each group made and presented posters detailing their physical, chemical, and biological findings. Soon after, the bus came to take the class back to Bruceton School. We know that the kids had a good time, with one student saying that “this was the experience of a lifetime.”

If any of you know of a group that would like to learn more about water quality and AMD, please contact us at (304)329-3621, dadams@cheat.org, or bmack@cheat.org. We would be glad to talk to your group, and remember, always raise your hand before asking a question!
**Fun in the Watershed!**

**Volunteer Stream Monitor Training**
**Saturday May 14**

On Saturday May 14 Tim Craddock presented an all-day training for volunteer stream monitors on Roaring Creek. The WV Department of Environmental Protection sponsors the WV Save Our Streams Citizens Monitoring Program. Once volunteers have been trained and certified, the results of stream monitoring that they complete is compiled into a statewide summary of stream conditions.

We had hands-on training in doing a physical assessment of the stream and its surroundings, assessing physical and biological indicators of pollution and learned about the macro-invertebrates (animals that do not have an internal skeleton and are large enough to be seen with the naked eye) that live on the stream bottom. These are the aquatic larvae of insects, aquatic worms, mollusks, and crustaceans. Once we identify and count the specific types of organisms, we can make conclusions about water quality. Different creatures are more or less sensitive to different types of pollutants and their abundance or absence reflects the quality of the stream over time.

Friends of the Cheat is hoping to find new volunteer monitors for our area. To find out more, contact Ben at our office.

**Celebration of the Outdoors**
**Saturday June 11**

The Cooper’s Rock Foundation sponsors a full day of hands-on activities in the area near Cooper’s Rock State Forest each year. This is a low-cost and fun way to join others in workshops available for all ages and tastes. $5 per workshop. Workshops begin at 9, 10:30, and 1 pm. Questions? Contact: 296-0533, 296-4977 or zapple@labs.net. Meet at the Pavillions by the Main Overlook.

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**Stream Monitoring**
**Saturday June 18th**

Volunteers can help monitor three different streams in the watershed. Volunteers will monitor stream life and physical and chemical parameters of the stream. This is a wonderful way to get outside and get to know the local area a little better, as well as a great chance to play in the streams! All monitors will be treated to lunch at Monroe’s Deli! For more information, please contact Ben at bmack@cheat.org

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**Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup**
**Saturday June 25**

WV DEP and WV DNR are coordinating a number of stream clean-ups this year. Friends of the Cheat has been approved to clean up the southern end of Glade Run of Beaver Creek. The area that we will clean is at Centenary near the Brandonville Pike.

We have tentatively set June 25 as the date for the cleanup. We can use as many volunteers as are willing to join us for a few hours of wet lifting. The state agencies will load and transport the waste for safe disposal.

Check with Sally at swilts@cheat.org to volunteer and to get last minute information.
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! 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)

Video ___ River of Promise- A Catalyst for Change ___ River of Promise – Price of a Legacy $15 ea/ 2 for $25
DVD ___ Includes both videos and footage of the trout restocking into Beaver Creek $25
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, khaki, 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 ____________________________________________________________
Friends of the Cheat  
119 S.Price Street  
Kingwood, WV 26537

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Beech Run Falls

This photo of Beech Run Falls was taken last summer by Chris Herring. As you hike on the Allegheny Trail from Beech Run Road, this waterfall is a delight to all who pass by it. Since the photo was taken, this section of the trail has been converted to a timber haul road and there are culverts installed where the pool is at the base of the photo. We chose this photo for the Cheatfest Tshirt in memory of the unaltered natural beauty of the stream. Our thanks to Chris for her contribution.