



Into the Canyon

Newsletter of Friends of the Cheat

Winter/ Spring 2010

The Long Winter by Joan Pitzer

As I write this the snow falls heavy bowing tree branches to the ground under its weight. This winter is what one might call an old fashioned West Virginia winter. Parts of Preston County have seen over 200" with more in the forecast. It has turned into one of the longest winters of my life for more reasons than just the amount of snow.

As most readers of this newsletter are aware, FOC Executive Director, Keith Pitzer, passed away on December 22, 2009. He'd served as the ED since the summer of 2001. Keith brought to this position an honest and sincere passion and selfless commitment to clean and protect the Cheat River watershed and the surrounding mountains. Doubting his qualifications for the position he quickly learned and became highly knowledgeable in the field of watershed protection. He came to love his work, particularly the days that took him out of the office working on field projects requiring him to get wet and muddy in the same mountains and streams he worked to protect. But there was so much more to him than his work as ED.

Keith was a philosopher, poet, life-long learner, singer/songwriter and musician. He was a loving and caring father and grandfather. He was a wonderful husband and my best friend. Those who knew him well quickly recognized him as a highly intelligent and talented man. The one thing he valued most was his music and the time to create and play whether in our living room or in front of an audience. Writing and sharing songs was a way for him to communicate the way he felt and saw things in the world, and a way to reach a much broader audience. His songs were inspired by the beauty of the mountains and rivers and helped bring a sense



of rhythm, harmony and discipline to his work.

Music was his release and could turn the worst day into one of peace and calm. A daily journal, something he'd done since high school, was where he would write and breathe life into his songs. His songs and lyrics were a

way for him to communicate the way he saw things in the world. If he ever had any regrets in his life it would have been not having the courage to become a full-time performer.

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Stream of Consciousness

By Dave Bassage, Interim Director

It's been nearly ten years since I wrote in this space, and I have to confess I approach the task with decidedly mixed emotions.

The death of Keith Pitzer left a large empty space at Friends of the Cheat and in the hearts of all who knew him. Under his tutelage the upstart grassroots organization with scant resources but big dreams that I ceded leadership to a decade ago has grown into a thriving, successful, highly respected and well established hub of reclamation projects, recreational access and development, and education and outreach.

And therein lies the root of my mixed feelings. Like many, I miss Keith. I wish some other circumstances had led to me resuming the role that I confidently passed to him so many years ago.

My friendship with Keith predates the formation of FOC, starting when we managed adjacent raft companies on the banks of the river we would ultimately join forces to care for. We quickly discovered then that we both valued promoting the outstanding recreational resource of the Cheat Canyon over engaging in petty competition, and shared everything from paddles to shuttles to guides to ensure our guests had experiences worth repeating. It was a smooth transition to fostering shared stewardship of the outstanding natural qualities of the watershed via Friends of the Cheat.

But much as I miss Keith, I also find myself filled with pride that the watershed group a handful of determined but novice organizers cobbled together in the early nineties has evolved to where it is today, poised to take its next big step forward.

Sometimes you don't know how much you have to lose until it's gone, and sometimes you don't see how much has changed until you return from an extended absence.

Even though I stayed involved as a volunteer and Board member, it wasn't until I returned to the

director's role that I realized just how much FOC had grown.

Ten years ago we were justifiably proud that we had brought together diverse agencies, businesses, and academia to inspire an increase in acid mine drainage remediation projects in the watershed. Today we directly manage those projects at roughly triple the frequency, with lower administrative costs, based on a now well established planning process supported by our own monitoring and mapping program.

Back then we were proud to have recently acquired the site of our annual Cheat Fest. Today that property is also a well used river access, demonstration site for invasive species eradication, starting point for an educational driving tour, and soon to be home of an outdoor classroom with a newly erected timber frame pavilion as its centerpiece.

Where once we promoted public river access, now we manage three additional accesses besides the Fest Site, owning two of them outright. We're making strong progress on two rail trail projects: one between Kingwood and Tunnelton, the other starting at our newly acquired property at the end of the Narrows section on the Cheat and extending upstream nearly to Rowlesburg.

That latest property acquisition, currently known as the Preston Site, was formerly a coal processing plant and now is the potential future home of trailhead, river access, and environmentally friendly structure serving as Friends of the Cheat offices, education and outreach center, and outdoor recreation support facility. All of that is very early in the planning stages, but as these past ten years prove, dreams can come true when the right people work together.

When last I wrote here I spoke of cycles, both natural and human. I spoke of the human cycle of leadership as I announced my transition to new endeavors. Little did I know that a decade later I'd be sharing my cycle back to FOC with readers. And there was no inkling then of how soon FOC

would come face to face with the fragile and too short cycle of any single human lifespan. But during the same period we've also demonstrated how we can accelerate the cycle of environmental healing through careful application of sound science and strong leadership. I wrote then of nature's capacity to heal herself, and our capacity to nurture that process. Individual leaders may cycle through any given organization or endeavor, but the human capacity and desire to serve as responsible stewards to the only planet we have to call home is a constant asset to the natural cycles we all depend on.

At least that's my take,

Dave

In Wake of our Lost Friend

By Jim Snyder, FOC Board member

By now fans of the Cheat know we have lost our great friend and champion, Keith Pitzer. He left a big hole in our world- but it is filled with so many cool memories of his shining eyes, grand laugh and sharing smile~ not to mention his earnest intent. I will always remember how he led us by example to be careful, kind, cool, and inclusive. And he was a joyful man. None of that has been lost. His intent remains intact.

I'd like to welcome Dave Bassage to his interim role at the helm! Dave will prove in time to be a worthy interim successor and he will further our cause successfully. As our original Executive Director and one of the original founders of the powerful River of Promise team- he is already quite accomplished and familiar with the turf. He'll shoulder the harness well until we get settled with our new permanent ED (whomever that may be) which we hope to have in place by summer.

The Cheat River is a work in progress. We have a long ways to go before it becomes one of the cleanest rivers in the eastern United States. It's already one of the longest unregulated rivers. You can paddle from one end to another without having to pass through the locks of a dam. It flows like it always has- since before the days when a young

George Washington rode through the watershed.

I want to give you the big picture. We've had this deep cold for almost a month now and the river is quite iced up. A couple weeks ago I really wanted to do a kayak camping trip on the river above Rowlesburg. I broke through 30 feet of ice to get out to the middle and there I fought heavy piles of slush quietly drifting downstream. After a half hour I decided it was just dumb and reluctantly turned home. I still love that river though. The river by the Caddell bridge is dammed shut with ice for over two miles! The ice is interesting because it holds evidence of the AMD pollution coming in from the Dirty Sisters (polluted streams) further upstream. The ice holds the stain which couldn't be seen in the water alone. It displays the dirtiness. We've made progress on the Dirty Sisters- but the lion's share is still ahead. Our focus is now changing to the biggest challenge ahead- Muddy Creek. The good news is that we are guaranteed progress- because it is so damaged- everything we do will help. The bad news is that it may never be perfectly clean and drinkable~ abounding with fish and bugs. Our standard for success has yet to be set- but the much enjoyed Canyon will be the beneficiary- from now on- forever.

Other good news includes the Albright Power Plant- their new cooling towers seem to be working perfectly and the Canyon's summer temperatures are a natural, fish-friendly cool. The power plant invested heavily in the well being of the river here and should be recognized for their good faith effort- and the success it has enjoyed. They've also been able to keep the distant left side of their dam runnable- although they don't allow or endorse it. Most of the dam is a classic low head dam- the style of which has drowned thousands of people worldwide since their inception. But the left side is different- it has an 'ice breaker' feature at the bottom which renders it runnable. What does this mean? Little to most people- but at the core of it- it means the river is runnable non-stop from one end to the other- 150 miles worth of free flowing freedom. Aesthetically- that's huge. Another thing to keep in mind is that the hills downwind of the power plant's smoke stacks are vibrant green

in the summer and apparently suffer no damage from existing directly downwind of the stacks. And their ash pile is directly above one of the best native trout streams in the county- and has been for years. The brookies are still happy- after decades of being downhill from the ash pile. I think both the power plant and the Kingsford charcoal plant further upstream in Parsons are really making an earnest effort to be good players in this watershed. We're blessed that way- those are the only two big industries with a large footprint right next to the river.

The next largest impact on the river is all the large parking lots in the watershed. They are pervasive and their runoff is hard to control. Evidence of their existence is apparent on the river in the summer. We often play at a specific spot on the Narrows called "Fascination Alley" We do 'mystery moves' there - where we dive our boats underwater in whirlpools and ride around until our breath nearly gives out. After about an hour of diving under and returning- our eyes get a thin layer of oil on them from oils invisibly floating on the surface of the water. This last summer- it was worse than usual. Not great. We've become an indicator species for this oil! Friends of the Cheat might have to consider what it would take to filter this parking lot water in a passive manner at some point in the future to really get a handle on this beauty of a river.

Also- I'm a bit concerned. On my low water Canyon runs last summer- quite a few at 100 cfs and lower- I saw less fish than last year. In the summer of 2008 the abundance of fish was remarkable. They would come and hide under the shade of our kayaks as we drifted through the pools. We would easily see at least 50 fish on any given trip. This last summer- we saw fish- but not nearly so many and not so big. It makes me wonder how things will be next summer.

One final bit of good news is that the Canyon has changed ownership and active logging has stopped. Allegheny Wood Products pretty much logged what they could easily off the right side of the river. Their biggest most pervasive footprint is the big double wide logging road they ran most of the way through

the right side of the Canyon. I've seen their logging sites and it looks like they actually did have a plan and left the right trees to gain in value in a decade or two. Notably, there's been recent studies out west proving how the bigger an older a tree gets- the more wood it puts on every year! Loggers with a real long term view would do well to wait and cut later. Maybe their accountants will consider this and the long term logging in the Canyon will diminish as time goes by.

So- the Cheat Canyon's health is tenuous~ but improving. I'm hopeful and inspired. Other corners of our state are suffering from permanent disfigurement of their mountains. The mining industry there seems bent on leveling the whole state if we don't mind thank ya.. That's what the economics dictate. But- I don't think the residents like it for the long term and all that has yet to settle out. Before I came to Preston County in 1975, a huge and harsh environmental battle was waged in Preston County between miners and fishermen-related to the permitting of mining on the 'hot' Upper Freeport seam of coal (Muddy Creek and the Dirty Sisters). It was too expensive to clean the AMD and the mines and state knew it. The permits were finally no longer allowed. And this was way back before it was cool to be an environmentalist! Our generation is tasked with decades of expensive and difficult AMD clean up- but it's underway. No one will ever put the tops back on the mountains in the southern part of the state. Our legacy to future generations there is different- and worse. They will have thousands of years to think about what we've done for them. We didn't like living with sterile streams- and fortunately we're not sentenced to a life of that. A lot of residents don't like mountain top removal- but the jury's still out on that.

So- it's time for the Cheat watershed to lead by example- like our beloved Mr. Pitzer so ably did. We need to be inclusive- and yet remedy our faults. We need coal. We need clean water. Our future lies within those elements. It's like an uneasy marriage- evolving and committed. If we can only make it harmonize like our lost brother did so well.

Growing up on a farm in Ohio, Keith always appreciated the natural order of things and how the earth could provide all our needs. At the early age of 25 his father passed away leaving him in the position of managing a 600+ acre operation raising crops, cattle, sheep and hogs. Frustrated with the “commercialization” farming had become he turned to organic methods. We were already raising our own food with a large organic garden, chickens, rabbits, beef cattle and our own supply of milk with a family milk cow, so it seemed only natural to carry this over to the larger operation. The farm would have been eligible for organic certification when we found our West Virginia farm in 1989.

From the time Keith and I spent our honeymoon in the Smokies we’d always been attracted to the mountains. After visiting a friend in WV several times we began to think seriously about the possibility of living in the mountains. Things fell together quickly and easily as if it was all meant to be, and shortly thereafter we were moving to our own mountain farm... our dream come true. And though our first few years here were a challenge- trying to find jobs, make new friends, getting the kids established in school and ourselves established in the community- it was here that we felt our lives really begin to have a ‘purpose’. We found the mountains and rivers to be a place of beauty and an environment worth saving from degradation.

On one occasion I remember being snowed in for a week at the farm and x-country skiing the three miles to work in Rowlesburg. The ski down wasn’t so bad and actually a fun adventure. But when the work day was over and darkness had settled in except for the light of a near full moon, the trek up the mountain wasn’t near as fun. Struggling and out of breath after our two mile climb but within a quarter mile of the house I found myself uttering un-pleasantries under my breath, asking myself what were we thinking about when we decided to settle up here in God’s country. At that point Keith stopped just ahead of me, turned around and said “Joan, stop. Look around you.” Everywhere the snow was glistening and sparkling like diamonds from the light of the moon.

“Now look up” he says. Looking up I saw a sky filled with millions of stars with a bright moon circled by a ring of light. It had to have been one of the most beautiful starlit skies I’d ever seen. Then he said, “Now - remember why we moved here?” Refreshed and renewed by his wonderful observation the last quarter mile was an absolute joy!

I feel honored and blessed to have shared a life with Keith for 35 years. He was a warm affectionate husband lovingly admired and respected by four sons- Seth, Zach, Jake and Jesse. I share this with the hope that we can all take something from what he gave to the world and learn how to give back in our own special ways. May his music and visions live on.

There’s Gas Under Those Mountains

By Troy Titchenell, Board Member

Three to four years ago the record room in the county court house in Preston County and some of the surrounding counties began to see an increase in researchers reviewing the property records to determine the ownership of the natural gas underlying the surface properties. Land agents for oil and gas companies began to contact those owners to lease their gas rights.

This was the beginning of interest being shown in a gas bearing shale underlying parts of New York, Pennsylvania and north central West Virginia called the Marcellus shale.

The Marcellus shale is a deep shale formation formed about 380 million years ago that covers more than 95,000 square miles in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York. This formation is rich in organic material and as these organics were compressed natural gas was trapped in the shale’s fractures.

The Marcellus Shale is 4,000 to 8,500 feet below the surface and is 50 to 200 feet thick and is estimated to hold 500 trillion cubic feet of gas. Even if only 10% is recovered it is enough to fuel the entire United States for two years.

Leases being presented to the gas owners started

out at a modest offer of \$5 to \$25 an acre and a 12.5% royalty. This was pretty much the standard for gas leases throughout West Virginia but was fairly new to Preston County landowners as natural gas has never been a sought after resource here. Most landowners were not willing to tie up their properties for a small amount and fortunately most of the gas ownership in Preston County is still attached to the surface. In many areas of the state the gas and drilling rights are owned by large corporations separate and apart from the surface

As gas prices continued to climb more companies were knocking on doors and soon it was a bidding war. Lease prices climbed to \$500 per acre and then to \$1500 per acre. Many landowners were still holding out for the big up front payment when the bottom dropped out of the economy in late 2008 and the gas companies quickly departed.

In mid-spring of 2009 when the economy started showing improved vital signs these companies returned but have kept the lease prices for now to between \$500 and \$1000 per acre and royalty rates of around 15%.

One of these new wells may produce 2000 to 5000 MCF/day (MCF = 1,000 cubic feet). Gas prices right now are near to \$6.00 per MCF and after deducting about \$1.50 in expenses for cleaning and transporting the product the royalties are based on \$4.50 per MCF. Using the 2000 MCF/day yield at \$4.50 per MCF and a 15% royalty rate that calculates to a royalty of \$1350/day to the gas owners. Due to the length of the production portion of these wells they normally involve more than one gas tract and the royalty is split between the different gas owners based upon their total area of ownership in the producing zone of the well called the “pool”.

Geologists have known for years that the Marcellus Shale held a tremendous amount of gas but it was so tightly locked in the dense material that getting a profitable amount of gas to flow to the surface was iffy and expensive. New drilling and fracking (fracturing of the target formation) techniques have made it feasible to go after this vast resource.

A new drilling technique called horizontal drilling is being used in this deep drilling. In this process the well is drilled vertically down to a point 500 to 800 feet above the target gas bearing formation and then the well bore begins to turn as it deepens until it parallels the plane of the formation. It continues in that zone for as 2000 to 5000 feet allowing for much more of the well bore to penetrate the strata and allow for a much increased gas yield.

These well bores are cemented between the well casing and the outside of the hole to protect the groundwater and after the hole is completely drilled and cemented the part of the bore that is in the target formation is perforated with relatively small explosive charges.

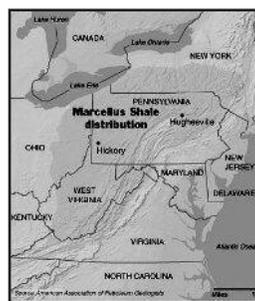
The drillers then pump large amounts of high pressure water mixed with sand and .01% to .05% of other agents to expand and hold open the fractures in the formation to allow the gas to flow. Once this process is complete the water is collected and reused at another site or treated at a permitted treatment facility.

There are currently 12 new treatment facilities proposed in Pennsylvania and I would not be surprised to see one in our area.

I'm not sure if this gas bonanza is the cure for foreign oil and coal but I think it may be a good transition fuel to fill the energy void until the greener answers such as wind and solar can be better perfected. I do believe that natural gas is the least offensive of the fossil fuels in burning, extraction and

transporting.

A good website to visit to watch a very good video of the drilling process and to find out more about this is www.pamarcellus.com.



Native Plant Walk Coming to Outdoor Classroom

By Andrew Miller, OSM Vista

A native plant trail featuring native trees and shrubs of the Appalachian hardwood forest will be coming to the Doug Ferris Outdoor Classroom this spring. The walk will be a rectangular loop along Muddy Creek, the Cheat River, the wetland, and on the road behind the stage area.

The walk will feature plant identification signs created by the Robert C. Byrd Institute and 1st and 2nd grade students from the Rowlesburg School in Manheim. The Robert C. Byrd Institute, a nonprofit organization in Bridgeport, WV that focuses on manufacturing training, cut 28 detailed leaf shapes with a CNC router (in laymen's terms, a programmable, high pressure water jet). These leaf shapes were then painted by 1st and 2nd grade students of Jason Jaros's art class as part of the Martin Luther King National Day of Service in January. The students were given just two simple rules: use lots of color and, most importantly, have fun. After the leaf shapes received their colorful new paint jobs from the Rowlesburg students, they were outfitted with aluminum tags produced by Willington Nameplates that display common and botanical names, as well as brief descriptions of plant characteristics, use, and their contributions to Appalachian forest. The project was a wonderful blend of art, nature, and public service.

The signs will be placed at the Doug Ferris Outdoor Classroom sometime this spring after the weather breaks, ideally before the Celebration of Keith Pitzer's Life at the outdoor classroom site on March 20th. So keep your ears open and check your inbox because volunteers will be needed to help attach the signs to trees and posts, in addition to digging holes for the signs that need to be placed on posts.

Many special thank yous need to go out for this project. First to Steven Davis and Len Tartamella of the Robert C. Byrd Institute who donated much of the time that spent on creating the leaf shapes. Next to Jason Jaros and his students who painted



Jason Jaros Art Class at Rowlesburg School in Manheim

the leaf shapes. Watching the students express their creativity was by far the most enjoyable part of this project. Also a special thanks to Amanda Lachowski and Brian Carlson of Friends of Deckers Creek. Amanda organized the event with the art class and provided some critical supplies such as paint and polyurethane. Brian generously donated his time to help screw on the plant ID tags. And finally a special thanks to volunteers Connie Miller, Buster Carico, and Amelia Snyder.

Eloise Milne Pavilion Nears Completion

After years of planning and a range of logistical, funding, and weather delays, the Eloise Milne Pavilion, centerpiece of the Doug Ferris outdoor classroom on the Cheat River Festival site is as of this writing within shooting distance of being completed.

A 20x30 foot timber frame masterpiece constructed by Kevan Damm of Big Sandy Timbers, the first use of the pavilion will be as focus area at the 2010 Cheat Fest, housing Friends of the Cheat and other non-profit booths. It will then assume its intended role as starting point for our outdoor classroom, including interpretive trail and demonstration acid mine drainage treatment site. The pavilion will also be available for use for special events hosted by Friends of the Cheat and through prior arrangement other organizations and private groups.

Years in the making, progress accelerated toward the end of 2009 as timber framer Kevan Damm meticulously transformed raw oak and cherry beams into intricately fitted frame members. Meanwhile, a team of volunteers headed by experienced concrete worker Paul Shreiner Sr. (www.customkayak.com), met on a



**Paul Schreiner, Sr. with 11 Volunteers
work on the Pavilion foundation**

cold December day to pour and finish the concrete foundation.

Paul worked on site until well after dark using headlights to finish the surface of the foundation. Friends of the Cheat would like to say Thank-you to Kevan Damm, Jeff Snyder (Wood-N-Wares, LLC), Andrew Miller, Dan Lenox(www.brierywindturbines.com), Charles & Karen Stemple - www.skirtworks.com, Eric Smeltzer, and Jake Pitzer (Cohen Carpentry) who all volunteered their time to help Paul. Also, a special Thank-you goes out to Walt Jepson (www.polarpaddles.com) and Jim Snyder (www.rivrstyx.com) who stayed to help Paul through the evening putting in a good 10-12 hours of volunteer hours.

The next step, construction of the timber frame itself, would have happened shortly thereafter had Preston County not experienced the snowiest winter in many years. It wasn't until March 19 that Kevan, Seth Pitzer, and others were able to transport the pre-cut beams from Kevan's work area in Rowlesburg downstream to the Fest Site and pre-assemble four main sections to be lifted by crane into place just a few days from the writing of this article.

Between now and Cheat Fest on May 1st, a rough cut poplar subroof will be applied, and if remaining funding is secured a metal roof installed to complete

construction. Donations to finish this fine addition to our Fest site, public river access, and now outdoor classroom will be deeply appreciated! A combination of private donations and grants through the WV Department of Environmental Protection have brought us this far.

Come visit us during Cheat Fest and admire our newest addition!

Cheat Fest 2010 5K Run **By Emily Perrotta, OSM Vista**

Ladies and Gentleman, grab your running gear, baby strollers, and water bottles because it's that time of year again, the return of the sixth annual Cheat Fest 5K run/walk race.

All proceeds generated by the 5K go directly to the Preston Rail Trail Committee (PRTC), a group of local citizens with the ambitious goal of turning abandon rail corridors into a walking, biking, and hiking trail system in Preston County. To date, the race has generated more than \$6,000 dollars and the PRTC is currently closing on a deal with Kern Valley to purchase a rail corridor from Kingwood to Tunnelton.

If you would like to register for the 5K race, you can do so online at www.cheat.org/festival/roadrace. Early registration of \$20 must be post-marked by April 24th, 2010. After that date the fee will be \$25. Registration includes admission to the Cheat River Festival for all runners, and a free 5K t-shirt for the first 100 registered runners.

If you would like to volunteer for the 5K race please contact Andrew Miller or Emily Perrotta at 304-329-3621. All volunteers will gain free entrance into Cheat Fest as a thank you for helping with the 5K!!

Race Information:

Date: Saturday May 1st, 2010

Registration: 8:30am -9:45am

Start Time: 10am

Race Categories : 14 and under, 15-18, 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 and over. The overall

awards to be given to the top 3 male & female finishers. In addition, the top 3 male & female finishers in each category will receive an award,

The 5K is friendly for walkers and runners of any age. The course is a flat to rolling loop course that begins and ends at the Preston County Country Club. There is a slight incline at the beginning of the course until runners bear right onto Whetsell Road, a gently rolling hill. At 1.6 Kilometers (1 mile mark), Whetsell Road intersects with Country Club Road. Runners will continue left on Whetsell Road as it parallels the rhododendron lined banks of Buffalo Creek. Shortly after crossing Buffalo Creek, runners will spot a turnaround that will direct them back to the intersection with Country Club Road. This time runners will bear left onto Country Club Road. Just beyond the intersection participants will reach the halfway mark at 3.2 Kilometers (2-mile). From this point on, runners encounter a mostly flat to slightly downhill course. At the next intersection runners will make a right and cruise along the Cheat River until they return to the Preston Country Club, completing the circuit and finishing the 5K (3.2 mile) race.

Thank You Sally!

This Winter Friends of the Cheat said farewell to Sally Wilts, FOC's long time administrative assistant. Sally may have retired, but her passion and commitment to conservation continues to guide her.

Sally began working with FOC as an Ameri-Corps VISTA in 2002 after retiring as a Physician's Assistant. In 2003, she began working part-time as FOC's administrative assistant. Sally worked to fulfill FOC's mission—to restore, preserve, and promote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River Watershed—in everything she did. Sally managed the day-to-day activities at the office in Kingwood, helped OSM/VISTAs understand their role within the organization and managed all of FOC's financials. She wrote grants, generated reports, assisted in fundraising efforts that contributes to the overall mission

of the organization. Sally was Cheat fest Coordinator during the time she worked for FOC helping Cheat Fest run successfully each year. She forged a partnership with the Sierra Club to manage the recycling center at our annual festival. Sally supports recycling in the office and continues to help to recycle goods from the office even after retirement. In addition to her administrative role, she dedicated her time to writing grants to combat the Japanese knotweed along the Cheat. She wrote and was awarded approx. \$5,000 for Japanese knotweed eradication on the fest site and the Preston Site.

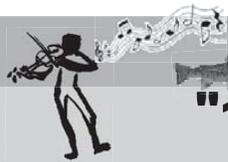
There is a quote by Alicia Bay Laurel, American author, writer and musician that reminds those in the FOC office of Sally: "When we depend less on industrially produced consumer goods, we can live in quite places. Our bodies become vigorous; we discover the serenity of living with the rhymes of the earth. We cease oppressing one another." Sally lives by and promotes these ideals. She will be missed as a staff member but still cherished as a volunteer.

Friends of the Cheat would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude for Sally's long and committed dedication to the organization. Sally practices what she preaches and inspires every person entering the office to become a more vigilant steward of the land.

Thank you Sally from the Board Members and Staff at FOC.



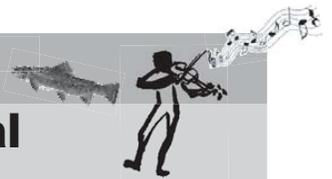
Sally Wilts doing Recycling during Cheat Fest



Friends of the Cheat's

"16th" Annual Cheat River Festival

Dedicated to Keith Pitzer



Saturday May 1st, 2010 • Noon - 11 pm
\$15 Adult (under 12 Free with Adult) • **Albright, West Virginia**

Festival Grounds on WV Rt 26 north of Albright, WV ~ 30 miles from Morgantown

Coolers & alcoholic beverages are permitted within our gates, on-site security will card.

Pets are NOT allowed! NO CAMPING ON-SITE OR IN PARKING AREA

Celebrate the Cheat River

Enjoy these Annual Festival Favorites:

- **Center Stage:** Traditional, Folk, Bluegrass, Celtic **Live Music 2pm-11pm**
- **Art Market:** Quality Arts & Crafts Booths
- **Vendor Market:** Paddlesports/Outdoor interest /Crafts/ Services & More
- **Food Court:** Assorted Fine Food
- **Climbing Wall:** Thrills & Adventure
- **Kids Tent:** Fun Environmental Workshops & Activities
- **Focus Tent:** Cheat River Watershed & Conservation Education
- **Friends of the Cheat Booth:** FOC Information & Retail Items
- **Green Technology Area:** Wind & Solar Power



Wear rugged shoes!

The site is a woody park like setting.

Bring a blanket or camp chairs

2010 Festival
T-shirts are
organic!

Raffle & Door Prizes

All Raffle & Door Prize Items posted at
<http://cheatfest2010.cheat.org>

New Items added Daily-All drawn at Festival

Buy Tickets online or at the Fest

SAVE \$5!
If You Buy Your
Festival Ticket
thru April 29th

Get Your \$10 Fest Tickets thru April 29th:

Online by April 23rd: <http://cheatfest2010.cheat.org>

Kingwood, WV: FOC Office

Morgantown, WV: Mountain People's Co-Op,

Blue Moose Cafe, Black Bear Burrito

Friday May 1st

15th Annual

**Cheat Canyon
Downriver Race**

www.cheatriverrace.com



Saturday May 1st

6th Annual

**Cheat Fest 5K
Foot Race**

<http://cheatfest2010.cheat.org>



2010 Entertainment

Hickory Wind Trio - (1:15pm - 2:15pm)

T. Mitchell Bell & The Wandering Coalition - (2:30pm - 3:30pm)

Bibs & Barefeet - (3:45PM - 4:45PM)

Medicinal Whiskey - (5:00PM - 6:00PM)

Hillbilly Gypsies - (6:15PM - 7:15PM)

Stewed Mulligan - (7:30PM - 8:30PM)

Trent Wagler & the Steelwheels - (8:45PM - 9:45PM)

Halftime String Band - (10:00PM - 11:00PM)

2010 Festival Sponsors

Patriot Mining Co. Inc.

Aquafix Systems

Microtel Inn & Suites

Rocky Mountain Kayak

Cheat River Outfitters / The Adventures Edge



Volunteer of the Season

Written by: Emily Perrotta OSM/VISTA

Friends of the Cheat is proud to announce a new addition to our newsletter titled Volunteer of the Season, a section dedicated to in the many volunteers who actively support our mission—to restore, preserve, and promote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River Watershed. Each newsletter will connect you with a different “seasoned” FOC volunteer.

It is through your continued support—be it through volunteering in our Kingwood office or at our annual Cheat Fest, monitoring streams with our Monitoring and Mapping Coordinator, Jessica Zamias, or through your donations—that we are able to advance our mission. Your support allows us to keep the lights on in the office so we can apply for grants to manage additional Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) projects in the Cheat Watershed and construct a pavilion at the Cheat Fest Site in Albright. People just like you—the real Friends of the Cheat—grant us the opportunity to carry on the work of Keith Pitzer, a true Cheat River hero, as we begin our transition into a new future.

I have been told that Keith would sometimes refer to a quote by American anthropologist Margret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has,” to make the case that even a small group of people, like Friends of the Cheat, can enact change and have positive influence on our environment. We thank you—our volunteers, our members, our funders—for allowing us to help empower a small group of people and make the watershed as mighty as she can be.

Volunteer of the Season: Martha Ferris

Volunteer since: 2006

Total Volunteer Hours: 400

Total In-Kind donation: \$8100

Volunteer Season: Winter 2010

Martha Ferris is a licensed therapist working in Morgantown. She is a Preston County transplant, origi-

nally from northern Virginia. When she is not working full time, or volunteering, Martha enjoys spending time with her critters, watching and feeding the birds, turkeys and deer. “I love to fish and target shoot, but I spend way more time thinking about those activities than I do performing them. Driving around at a snail’s pace on dirt roads is another joy—I am always looking for snakes,” says Martha.

Martha began her volunteer career with FOC in 2006, helping former administrative assistant, Sally Wilts, with the auction at Cheat Fest. Martha has volunteered over 400 hours since 2006. Martha has generated approx. \$8100 in in-kind donations to Friends of the Cheat by volunteering her time and energy. “I participate with the mapping/monitoring crew, fold letters and stuff envelopes, clean signs, plant trees, work at the Cheat Festival, check the flow data—whatever is needed, I do.” says Martha. Her favorite volunteer activity is, “Falling in the creek in January... I love going out with the monitoring crew, serving as scribe, getting pH, EC, and water samples. My favorite jaunts are in those in the



Martha & Doug Ferris enjoy a beautiful day on Cheat Lake

boonies but close to the road.”

I asked Martha why she volunteers with Friends of the Cheat. She replied, “I have a long answer to your short question. My grandfather was a well-known conservationist and ornithologist, so my brother and I grew up in a culture of respect for nature. Then, after a career at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, MD, my brother came to FOC as an OSM/VISTA in February 2006. So, I joined FOC. When I moved here, Doug said, ‘Oh good! You can help with the Cheat Fest!’ and so I did and have ever since. My brother died in December 2007 and keeping Fridays for FOC allows me to feel that I am continuing his

work.”

Martha works four ten hour shifts Monday through Thursday and reserves Fridays as her time to volunteer at FOC. “If there is anything I can do, I’m there. I arrive between 8-8:30am and leave when the job is done.” Martha’s brother, Doug Ferris helped reshape the monitoring and mapping program during the 19 months he spent with FOC, applying his technical expertise as a scientist, both in the field and in the office. Doug developed the FOC water quality database and integrated the data into a Geographical Information System, raising FOC’s credibility with government and nongovernmental affiliates. Martha envisions FOC expanding on the scientific groundwork laid by Doug, “I would like to see FOC as the premier, scientifically rigorous watershed team in the state—the “go to” group for data collection and utilization protocols, water remediation design, implementation and outcomes for streams.”

“Passion,” Martha claims, is her main motivator in volunteering with FOC. “I have a need to feel that what I do makes a difference. I keep my sister in-law signed up for working the 5K at the Cheat Fest.” “FOC is the voice of a watershed that has been ravaged. FOC serves to educate the public to the value—esthetic and economic—of our natural environment. Dead, orange streams and flattened mountains are not ‘Wild and Wonderful’; they are the epitome of the short sightedness of the people driven by the profit motive. I believe the FOC will always need a director in the mold of Keith Pitzer, who brought divergent parties together in cooperation for the common good. Otherwise, we will become a feel good, do-nothing organization or a hot bed of rabid environmentalists who antagonize the very people with whom we need to work with.”

“I love the Cheat and I think of it as my brother’s river. I watched the video of the T&T Mine blowout. I’d be thrilled to see Muddy Creek as pristine as its mouth as it is in its posted headwaters. I have very strong feelings about coal mining in general, coal fired power plants, P.A.T.H., Deckers and Dunkard Creeks, trash in the Mon River and about drilling the Marcellus Shale. I yearn to see all ‘these waters here once held trout,’ hold trout again. I can identify

Autumn Olive, Japanese Knotweed, Multiflora Rose and Tree of Heaven. I have seen logging activity too close to streams. My connection to FOC has greatly broadened my awareness and understanding of the general rape of West Virginia. And, fortunately, having met Keith Pitzer as Executive Director of FOC re-grounds me in the knowledge that my hot-headedness is counter productive. I believe FOC is making a difference.”

Speaking with Martha inspires me to be a better volunteer. She reminds us all that it truly is our responsibility to engage ourselves in society and be to active, compassionate stewards of the earth.

Do you know a volunteer that FOC should recognize? We are currently seeking nominations for: Spring, Summer, and Fall 2010. If you would like to nominate a volunteer for our “Volunteer of the Season” please send a short paragraph about the person and how they have helped contribute to the mission of FOC. Please include their contact information, as well as your name and contact information to: foc@cheat.org or call the office at 304.329.3621. We look forward to hearing from you!

Eat For the Cheat!

By Andrew Miller, OSM Americorps Vista

Do you shop at Kroger? Do you want to support Friends of the Cheat? If you answered “yes” to both of those questions, then we’ve got a deal for you. Friends of the Cheat has joined Kroger’s Fundraising Program for non profits.

Here’s how the program works: Send five dollars to Friends of the Cheat and we will send you a gift card from Kroger with an initial value of five dollars. You then can add however much money you wish to the card (which can easily be done at the cash register by check, cash, debit or credit card) and use it essentially as a Kroger debit card when shopping at Kroger grocery stores or Kroger gas stations. Every four weeks Kroger will send FOC a check for 5% of the amount participants spent that period.

So, for example, if FOC supporters participating

in the program collectively spend \$6,120 dollars on groceries and gas in a four week period, Kroger will write FOC a check for \$306. In the course of a year FOC would net \$3978! That may not be enough to bring a creek back to life, but it would put a roof on a pavilion, pay office rent for a year, or be used to leverage the large grants we do use to make our watershed a better place for all creatures, including humans, to live and play.

This program requires no extra money out of your pocket. As long you take the time to “reload” money onto the card that you’ll be using to buy groceries and gas then it’s Kroger who will be donating to FOC. So in essence you will be supporting Friends of the Cheat without even trying. All you have to do is eat and/or drive!

To sign up, fill out the form below and send it along with a five dollar check to the Friends of the Cheat office.

For more information contact FOC Americorps Vista Andrew Miller: amiller@cheat.org or 304-329-3621.

Friends of the Cheat’s “Wish List”

Do you have an old fridge taking up space in your garage? Or, maybe you have held onto your paper folder for the past 10 years thinking you might one day use it in a mass mailing but have yet to come across an opportunity? Well, Friends of the Cheat is currently seeking donations of goods for our Kingwood office! If you or someone you know would like to donate to FOC, you can contact us at our office and we would be happy to assist you in unloading it!

We are seeking the following items:

10 x 10 Tent / Two 10 x 20 Tents/

Office Refrigerator / Automatic Paper folder

Chest freezer / Flat screen computer monitors (as many as four)

Speaker phone for conference calls / Desk Lamps

As always, all donations are tax deductible. Make your donations today! Thank you for your support!

Please sign me up for Eat for the Cheat!

Fill out this form and send it to the Friends of the Cheat office with a five dollar check (please make checks payable to Friends of the Cheat and write *Eat for the Cheat* on the memo line). In return, we will send you a "reloadable" Kroger gift card with a balance of \$5.00. When you use this card at Kroger grocery stores and Kroger fuel stations 5% of your purchase will be donated to Friends of the Cheat by Kroger.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Friends of the Cheat office address

Friends of the Cheat
119 South Price Street, Suite 206
Kingwood, WV 26537



Thank-you to Pioneer Press for Donating
Two colored magnetic signs for the FOC Monitoring Jeep

**Pioneer
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102 Fourth Street
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(304) 789-2455
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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 periodic newsletter [Into the Canyon](#)

Basic Membership

- Individual/family \$25
- Non-profit Organization \$50
- Business \$100

Want to do more? See the new contribution categories

Supporting Contributors

- Stream Steward* \$150 includes ball cap with FOC logo and choice of video
- Watershed Guardian* \$250 or more includes choice of T shirt and video

Cheat River Festival Sponsorships also Available

(Contact Friends of the Cheat for details)

Videos – *River of Promise-A Catalyst for Change* or *River of Promise – Price of a Legacy* \$15 each or 2 for \$25

T-shirt - Short Sleeve \$20 (\$15 with \$50 or more donation) Size Medium Large XLarge XXLarge
Long Sleeve \$25 (\$20 with \$50 or more donation) Size Medium Large XLarge XXLarge

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Members: The date on your address label shows when your membership expires. Renew to continue your support.



Please Recycle



Pavilion got erected on Saturday April 3rd. We are now seeking funding to complete this wonderful addition to our Outdoor Classroom & Festival Site