



# Into the Canyon

Newsletter of Friends of the Cheat

Winter 2005

## Sneak Preview of Cheat River Festival Attractions

We will publish an issue of Into the Canyon in April, devoted to Cheatfest, but we wanted to let you know some of the highlights we are planning for this year's festival, to be held on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Danielle and Ben have organized the **first annual Cheatfest 5K race** to be held on the morning of the festival (article and entry form on page 6 and 7). This will benefit the fledgling Preston Rail-Trail Committee as they work to establish rail-trails in Preston County.

Also new to the festival this year is a **rock climbing wall!** The wall is sponsored by **Adventure's Edge**, an outdoor equipment store in Morgantown. Children and adults are welcome to come and give it a try!

We are setting up an **Artist's Market** behind the center row of vendors. The Market will consist of invited, juried artists and crafters. Hopefully, we'll be able to attract some talented artists from this area and over time, establish the festival as an artist's marketplace.

For entertainment, **Johnny Staats and the Delivery Boys** are headlining in mid-afternoon. This is often a time of low attendance and we'd like to attract more music lovers earlier in the day. He and Robert Shafer will offer workshops during the festival as well. Joan Pitzer has worked hard to create a line-up of high-quality musicians.

Sony has donated a **digital camera with a waterproof case**, allowing photography even while submerged underwater. Raffle tickets will be sold at all of the events leading up to Cheatfest, as well as at Cheatfest. The winner will be chosen that night.

To better control overnight noise on the festival grounds, we have decided that only vendors, mu-

sicians and their crews, and a few selected trustworthy volunteers will be allowed to camp on the festival site. To encourage all attendees to make arrangements for overnight camping or lodging, we'll have the parking attendants reinforce the message that no camping will be allowed at the public parking area or on festival grounds. They will hand out a flyer describing available camping and lodging in the area.

We need lots of dependable volunteers, so contact us by phone or email if you are willing to help. Free admission, discount on T-shirt and refreshments during the festival are your rewards. More information is available at our website. Hope to see you there!

### In this issue.....

<b>Cheatfest Highlights .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Working Upstream .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Thanks FOC, It's Been Fun .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Stream Monitoring .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cheatfest 5K Run .....</b>	<b>6,7</b>
<b>New Website .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Land Down Under .....</b>	<b>8,9</b>
<b>Celebration of the Outdoors .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cheat Canyon Review .....</b>	<b>10,11</b>
<b>Mon-Earth Benefit .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>AML Projects Update .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Adopt-a-Highway .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Guiding Light Award .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Rail-Trail Update .....</b>	<b>14</b>



## Into the Canyon

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# Working Upstream

By Keith Pitzer, Executive Director,  
Friends of the Cheat

It's a new year, full of new challenges, new opportunities and developments as yet impossible to foresee. Sometimes that's just as well. Commitment and resolve are far better partners than wishfulness and a little luck.

We have a shifting tide in elected government that doesn't so much reflect the population's values about the environment as its sensitivity to "traditional values" and vulnerability to fear about security. In every poll that asked, every column that reported from the mainstream, from sportsmen to treehuggers, a cross-section of our society agreed on the importance of clean air and water and sane land use. Yet funding cuts for these issues are all too common.

I recently read of an effort to re-unite the environmental community with the sportsman community. This makes mountains of sense in several ways. First, both communities share a concern over restoration, preservation and access to quality outdoor areas. Second, both communities have organizations and resources with which to address not only the threats to environmental quality and wildlife, but also the ennui of Congress when it comes to these issues.

A more united message from these communities will get the attention of more Senators and Congressmen. Third, it is time for reconciliation, to overcome the misconceptions each are accused of having of the other. There is far more in common than differences between the two camps.

Working on the relevant issues in the Cheat Watershed, I can see the benefit of this potential partnership. Improving water quality of the Cheat River and its tributaries benefits everyone, including sportsmen, boaters, enviros and the citizens that live and work and drink the water here. Hardly a special interest, improving water quality, which includes land stewardship, conservation of resources and all attendant activities, is one of the most common interests. It should be right up

there with health care/wellness, education and transportation. It is one of the ways in which we measure quality of life and desirability of communities in which to live.

So I am both disheartened and encouraged as we move into this new year. The AML program hangs on a precarious limb, blowing in the political breeze. Within that program, OSM's Watershed Cooperative Agreement program is in jeopardy of being discontinued. The EPA has cut non-point source funds to the state and that translates out to projects here in the watershed. But I am encouraged by new efforts to bring industry to the reclamation table, to partner with local industry in community projects like the Cheat River Rail Trail, in continuing our outreach and education programs in local schools and summer camps to educate young people about the waters around them and what can be done to improve them. These young people will soon be voting and hopefully, a clean environment will be a major issue to them.

You can read about these things and more in this issue of *Into the Canyon*. I hope you have checked out our new website format including a forum for your questions and input. If not, give this a few minutes some winter evening. Also, mark your calendar for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheat River Festival for May 7<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime we'll be *working upstream*.

*PS...I apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. We are not shirking here in the office. We are increasing our capabilities and are involved in more issues as time goes on. Our increased project load comes not so much from direction or vision but from well intentioned good people willing to meet opportunity in the public arena. The FOC office is currently the best staffed it has ever been. I am fortunate to work with such talented dedicated folks. I hope you appreciate this edition of Into the Canyon, no matter how late. We intend to send you a shorter Cheatfest issue in April and get back to a full newsletter in July.*

# Thanks, FOC, it's been fun! Wait, I'm still here....

by Ben Mack, Mapping and Monitoring Coordinator

I look out the window at the snow falling and I wonder how it is that I am still working for FOC? How did this happen, when my term as a VISTA ended in November of 2004? An even better question is what am I working on now that justifies my continued presence here in the hallowed halls of the FOC offices?

First, let me start with a little background information. I started with Friends of the Cheat in November of 2003 as a VISTA volunteer. I was a little anxious to work with an organization that I had heard of, but knew nothing about. However, between Sally and Keith, I felt comfortable in no time. As my time at FOC progressed, I found that working with a nonprofit group was the best job I had ever had. Every day was different and there was always something interesting to do. I really did not want to leave when my term as a VISTA was up. Now, to return to the present...

At FOC, we partner with many different agencies and other organizations here in the office. These include the Office of Surface Mining (who provides us with the VISTAs that we use to get so many things done, as well as Cooperative Agreements for our AMD remediation projects), the River of Promise Steering Committee, West Virginia University, and various state and federal agencies without whom much of the work we do would not get done.

Another of our major partners is the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP). They aid us in the design and implementation of our AMD remediation projects. They also provide personnel to work with us, so that our projects can be more effective. Many people from the WVDEP have been of great help to me on the GIS Mapping Project.

Perhaps the most important item they offer is

a source of monies for our various projects. One of the main sources of funding that we use is channeled through the WVDEP from the EPA, and is provided for by Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. These funds are earmarked specifically for treatment of non-point source pollution, which is pollution that does not have an easily definable source. AMD remediation is eligible for this funding because it is considered a non-point source.

What does this have to do with me? FOC learned of some leftover money from 2001 that could be used to fund staff positions. I was preparing to hand off the reins of the GIS mapping project to Danielle, our new VISTA. However, FOC applied for and received a \$25,000 grant from the 319 fund to provide for my salary and other project expenses. This answers the question of why I'm still here, but you may be wondering what I am doing with my time?

Once I got over the initial excitement of working for FOC for another year (and not having to endure the torture of searching for a different job), it was time to get back to work. The main focus of my work will be the GIS mapping project that I started as a VISTA. Now known as the Cheat River Monitoring and Mapping Project, this task calls for extensive water monitoring, so that FOC can get a better overall picture of water quality in the watershed. This water quality data will be added to subwatershed maps to aid in the prioritization of remediation projects. I will also be continuing some of my other duties that I had as a VISTA, such as: grant writing, running the volunteer stream monitoring program, and aiding in FOC's education and outreach programs.

For more information on these and other FOC projects, check out our new website at [www.cheat.org](http://www.cheat.org).

# Volunteers in Action: Dust off your Waders

by Ben Mack

It's that time again...grab your waders (or, an extra pair of ours) and bring your family and friends to volunteer as a stream monitor for Friends of the Cheat! If you like spending time outside, splashing around in a nice cool stream and being active in the community, then come join our Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program.

The program started in 2003 and was designed by AmeriCorps OSM/VISTA volunteers Meredith Pavlick and Sally Wilts. It has been largely successful in helping us better understand the watershed.

Today, volunteers monitor three streams in the Cheat Watershed: Beaver Creek, Buffalo Run and the North Fork of Green's Run. Each stream has a team of 4-5 people responsible for sampling it. The teams meet twice a year to sample; once in the fall and once in the spring. In the fall, teams collect chemical data such as pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and temperature while also collecting water samples that are sent to the lab for further analysis. They also assess physical data such as water condition, streambed color, sediment composition, land use and habitat use. In the spring biological data is gathered. Volunteers use a macroinvertebrate kick-net sample to see what is living in the stream.

This year, as spring begins, why not dedicate yourself to a great cause and become a volunteer stream monitor? As a volunteer, you will get great experience working with sampling equipment, meet other people in the community, learn about the effects of Acid Mine Drainage *and* we'll treat you to a free lunch at Monroe's Restaurant! The following people took part in the last sampling in September of 2004: Aaron and Rachel Miller, Rick Cheney, Martin Christ, Lynn Harden, Lynn Houser, Sally Wilts, Danielle Adams, and Ben Mack. Craig Mains of Downstream Alliance as-

sisted with the macroinvertebrate identification.

So join us for training on the morning of Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005. **All new and old volunteers must attend.** *Everyone is welcome* and no experience is necessary so don't wait any longer to become active in the community. Interested volunteers can call (304-329-3621) or email (dadams@cheat.org) for more information.



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preserve, and promote  
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natural qualities of the  
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Ben Mack posing by the Friends of the Cheat sign on Price Street, near the entrance to our building. Ben has become an indispensable part of our team and we are thankful that we were able to find grant funding to allow us to hire him.

## First Adopt-a-Stream Clean-up Scheduled

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 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.

# Run, FOC, Run!!!

by Ben Mack

OK, so maybe a cheesy reference to *Forrest Gump* isn't the best way to start a newsletter article. However, this bit of dialog is a perfect lead-in to one of Friends of the Cheat's latest projects.

Recently, two meetings were held to form the Cheat River Running Club (CRRC, pronounced "creek," not "crick"). This club is attempting to promote fitness and health in Preston County by having a series of foot races for anyone that wants to participate. There will also be a chance to join CRRC and receive certain benefits as a member. These benefits include: extra points in the series standings, a quarterly newsletter telling about upcoming races and general fitness information, and the opportunity to meet and exercise with other people through organized weekly group runs.

The running series will be scored on a percentile basis, and the standings will be divided by age. Awards will be given to the top finishers in each age category, as well as the top 3 finishers overall. This is a relatively standard scoring system for a series such as this one.

So, why is this important to FOC, you may ask? Good question! Ben Mack (Cheat River Monitoring and Mapping Coordinator) and Danielle Adams (current VISTA for FOC) are going to be the race directors for the 1st annual Cheat Fest 5K race. The race will take place on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Cheatfest on May 7, 2005. Registration form is in the newsletter and on our website. Registration is possible on the day of Cheatfest at the public parking area after 9 am. Racers will be bussed to Woolen Mill Road for the start of the race at 10:30 am. The race will start at 11 am and proceed from Woolen Mill Road to the public parking area for the festival.

Awards for this race will be announced from the stage of Cheatfest, thus giving all those hardy runners the recognition they deserve. Profits from this race will go to the Preston Rail-Trail Committee, whose mission is to encourage rail-trail development, as well as health and fitness, in Preston County. The hope is that in the not-too-distant future, a new Preston County Rail-Trail System will be unveiled, and races could be run on the new trail.

Like everything else we do here at FOC, volunteers will be needed for the race. They will perform various duties, including handing out water and registering runners for the race. We estimate we will need approximately 10-15 volunteers for the race. Any one who would like to help with the race can contact Ben Mack ([bmack@cheat.org](mailto:bmack@cheat.org)) or Danielle Adams ([dadams@cheat.org](mailto:dadams@cheat.org)) at 304-329-3621. Also, if you stay for the race, why not come to Cheatfest! Hope to see you there!

## New Website for FOC

In November 2004 Jonathan Rosenbaum successfully created a new website for us based on Plone, a freeware program which is accessible to anyone. He volunteered his time and know-how to create a CMS or "content management system" website. Then, with incredible patience, he has coached Danielle, Ben and I as we have gradually learned to post to the website. Now, delays in posting are due to OUR busy schedules.

Jonathan continues to serve as our technical support person and cheerfully manages all of our requests. He has set up communication forums on the website and invites members to log in at the site and participate in setting up their own home pages pertaining to FOC's mission, participate in forums or even have part of the site set-up for them to manage.

You can find out more about Jonathan on our website by clicking on the link to **foc** in the article on the new website or by searching in members for **foc**.



# 2005 Cheat Fest 5K

## Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age as of 5/7/05: \_\_\_\_\_

Male: \_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about the Cheat Fest 5K? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you participating in the Preston County Racing Series? \_\_\_\_ Yes No \_\_\_\_

Are you a member of the Cheat River Running Club? \_\_\_\_ Yes No \_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*REGISTRATION\*\*\*\*\*

(Includes free admission to The Cheat River Festival and free T-shirt)

Early Registration: \$15.00 MUST BE POSTMARKED BY APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>!

Race Day Registration: \$20.00

T-shirt Size \_\_\_\_ Small \_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_ Large \_\_\_\_ X-Large

Make Checks Payable to Friends of the Cheat

Mail to: Friends of the Cheat

119 S. Price St. Suite 206

Kingwood, WV 26537

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrant's Signature Parent or Guardian, if under 18 Date

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# What Can We Learn from the Land Down Under ??

by Danielle Adams, OSM Vista

In the fall of 2004, I left Massachusetts and boarded a plane with twenty other students to leave the United States and study abroad. Sixteen hours later, we arrived on the other side of the world: New Zealand. Although the first few weeks were spent homesick and jetlagged, the immediate discomfort soon proved to be worth it as I grew to love and respect this unique land. Upon departure four months later, I knew that returning to the U.S. would be difficult. And it was.

I was immediately stricken with "back from abroad depression" that began shortly after my arrival when someone pushed me over in L.A.. I spent the rest of the day wallowing in my own misery. The depression eventually subsided and was replaced with nostalgia. Since then, I have remained optimistic by putting my experiences abroad into context with my daily life. As 2004 comes to a close and my time in West Virginia now roughly parallels the time I spent in New Zealand, it is inevitable that I have found similarities between two places that are otherwise miles apart.

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Small, secluded, and nestled quietly in the South Pacific, New Zealand developed uniquely, isolating itself long before mammals arrived. Many birds grew to large sizes, lost their ability to fly and flourished in the absence of traditional mammalian predators. The *moa* was the largest, reaching heights up to seven feet. The *kiwi*, with its long beak and weak sense of balance, was one of the smallest.

With the arrival of humans many centuries later, the native bird population was dramatically reduced. Slow and sluggish, the *moa* was the first to go, easily falling victim to hunters from the south pacific islands. The smaller *kiwi* barely managed to escape extinction, and even today is severely endangered due to introduced predators (dogs, cats) and native habitat destruction. Many

species only continue to survive because of New Zealand's proactive approach to environmental protection, which has increased as their economic dependence on eco-tourism grows.

For the most part, New Zealanders have a solid grasp of extinction's negative effects on biologic diversity and economic possibilities. This knowledge has produced a people determined to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the environment and the economy. For example, in 1996 New Zealand instituted the Resource Management Act (RMA), an act requiring "environmental consent" for all construction projects. The proactive nature of the RMA has helped NZ achieve economic growth without over-exploitation of its natural resources. In addition, NZ's Ministry of the Environment promotes predator-free sanctuaries for native birds, environmentally friendly products and the education of citizens and tourists. Overall, this has resulted in a society fundamentally respectful of the environment and of the eco-tourism industry.

As one can imagine the eco-tourism industry of New Zealand differs greatly from that of West Virginia. In New Zealand, direct spending on tourism contributes 4.5% to the total Gross Domestic Product. Indirect spending, such as spending on hotels and meals, contributes another 4.5%<sup>1</sup>. In West Virginia, on the other hand, the combination of direct and indirect spending<sup>2</sup> on tourism contributes less than one percent to the total Gross State Product (GSP)<sup>3</sup>. Because tourism currently represents a very small portion of West Virginia's economy this indicates an enormous potential to expand and increase employment opportunities throughout the state.

Regardless of these differences, similarities between the two regions are undeniable. New Zealand's green rolling hills scattered with sheep and cattle, towering mountains, rural communities and winding country roads would make most West Virginians feel right at home. In addition,

*continued on next page*

## What Can we Learn? (continued)

New Zealand's struggle to protect native birds can be paralleled with West Virginia's struggle to fight acid mine drainage contamination. Both are examples of short term gain resulting in long term loss where the people and the land are left to bear the consequences. This parallel manages to create a sense of understanding between the two societies, despite economic, cultural and geographic differences.

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After careful thought I have finally been able to compare my time here with my time in New Zealand. More importantly, I have learned from, and been inspired by the conclusions. The truth is that New Zealand offers the world much more than flightless birds, kiwi fruit and vegemite sandwiches. A deeper look reveals a nation that has created a high quality of life for its people by mastering a sense of balance between the environment and the economy.

Overall, this has reminded me that the environment is rich with possibilities; possibilities that are endless in West Virginia. Even after my term as a VISTA ends, I know that I will continue to be inspired by the tremendous potential of this state. For those who are dedicated to this work, it is with great respect that I eagerly look forward to seeing it fulfilled throughout the coming years.

1. Statistics New Zealand: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz). 4, February 2005.
2. Northeast, Midwest Institute. [www.nemw.org](http://www.nemw.org). 21, December 2004.
3. West Virginia Tourism Commission. <http://www.wvtourism.com/inforeports/annualreport2003.pdf>



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Danielle Adams joined us in September and quickly organized the Water Festival at Aurora School. She has taken the lead on Outreach and Education. She and Ben carpool together from Morgantown and they are doubly effective working as a team.

## Celebration of the Outdoors June 11th at Cooper's Rock SF

by Sally Wilts

The Cooper's Rock Foundation has organized the Celebration of the Outdoors for fifteen years now. It is a full day of hands-on activities in the area of the Cooper's Rock State Forest. There are classes to encourage visitors to learn more about the history of the area, including timbering, pioneers, iron furnace and loss of chestnut trees due to disease. There are courses in learning to kayak, or birdwatch, or identifying wildflowers. Want to visit the Cooper's Rock Mountain Lion Sanctuary? Go on a hike to see a huge boulder that is expected to roll down to the Cheat River? All these and more will be offered at the Celebration on June 11.

Friends of the Cheat and Cheat Lake Environmental and Recreation Association have been invited to help in the organizing this year and we can use lots of volunteers. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. Contact the office for more information.

# Cheat Canyon Review

by Keith Pitzer

A recent question on our website forum prompted this article. I hope this explains where we are at this point, although I don't think there is any way to know where we are going.....

It has been more than a year since the Cheat Canyon was sold by Allegheny Energy to Allegheny Wood Products. Friends of the Cheat worked hard for the state purchase effort last year. We worked as closely as possible with the Governor's office and with DNR personnel involved in putting the state purchase bid together. But that was not to be. River access has been allowed, but the Allegheny Trail has been converted into a haul road. The largest remaining issue seems to be endangered species in the Cheat Canyon. With questions coming to our website asking what FOC plans to do in the current proceeding, I think the time is right to explain our position, details and motives surrounding the current situation.

We have heard that many in the timber industry were opposed to public ownership of the Cheat Canyon. I think that the failure of this effort was unfortunate for all of concerned, and for the future of this region. Some felt that that if the Cheat Canyon became public land it would hurt the local tax base. I beg to differ. The total real estate tax (approximately \$6300) was minuscule when compared to new business and related taxes that could have been the result of public ownership and tourism/recreation promotion. Others believed that this purchase would "lock up" valuable timber resources. But the Cheat Canyon would not have become a state park; it was being considered as a potential wildlife management area. State parks typically have multiple road access points, the Cheat Canyon does not (at least at this time). Another way that land is taken out of timber management is by wilderness designation. The Cheat Canyon, while remarkable in its rugged habitat, is not large enough to come into consideration as wilderness. This meant it would have served many purposes, including logging.

Jobs and business volume in the timber industry would have been protected. Timber management would have been driven by the state's professionals and timber cutting would have been bid out to various timber companies over the years. Recreation would have thrived, driven by public ownership, and improvements made to some of the more popular areas. We would have had a more transparent process of endangered species protection, including the development of habitat conservation plans. Most of all, we would have been assured of maintaining this valuable area of greenspace for future generations.

Because timbering keeps large parcels of land intact, it's overall affect on an area can be extremely positive. The health of the land is determined by the quality of stewardship practiced. But because private land owners have the freedom to change their practices and philosophy, public ownership is the only sure way to insure long-term protection from development, fragmentation of forest lands, and the loss of recreational opportunities.

But that's not what happened. The Cheat Canyon passed from one private owner to another. AWP's expressed intentions are to harvest timber and their work is now under way. We hope that the harvest is done responsibly, without polluting streams or eventually losing greenspace. Many concerned citizens are watching them closely.

Now the issue of endangered species protection has come to the forefront. The work in the canyon began without a formal Habitat Conservation Plan being developed with the Fish and Wildlife Service. AWP knew about the endangered species when it bought the property. It could have saved itself some measure of criticism and scrutiny if it had been open about its plans, including their own endangered species survey work and habitat conservation planning. It remains to be seen how much has been done, and how much heat their approach to this issue is going to draw. At this point the issue appears headed for litigation.

FOC is a small river conservation group

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## **Cheat Canyon Review (continued)**

faced with the huge task of restoring the watershed from the damaging effects of acid mine drainage. Our mission statement is "to restore, preserve and promote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat River Watershed." We lack the resources and expertise to make a useful contribution to the controversy over endangered species in the Cheat Canyon. Our strength has always been in bringing various members of the community, including large businesses, together to improve the health of the river. The Board of Directors and myself agree that moving down a confrontational path on this issue dilutes the essential strength of the organization.

We can best follow our mission if by working with willing partners, including AWP, on projects where we have the resources and expertise needed to succeed. For example, we have successfully negotiated access to treat a source of acid mine drainage on Lick Run and are looking at another site for treatment on the Pringle Run headwaters. Both sites are owned by AWP and the work will bring significant water quality improvements. We are now discussing the fate of the abandoned CSX rail corridor along Cheat River from Rowlesburg to Albright, which passes the AWP mill facility at Caddell Bridge. A "rail trail" running along the Cheat Narrows could be a huge recreational asset for the area.

The issues of private landowner rights in relation to those of our society as a whole will be debated for a long time to come. Friends of Cheat will continue to work with willing partners to improve the health of our much loved, and much used, Lower Cheat River watershed.

## **Cheat River of Monongahela River of Planet Earth...**

by Ben Mack

Here at Friends of the Cheat, we are always asking you, our loyal members, to volunteer your time (and money) to help us out as we try to clean up the Cheat. Over the years, we have been in-

involved in many different projects, such as volunteer stream monitoring, trash cleanups, and the ever-popular Cheatfest. FOC loves being involved in all these different projects, and we hope that you do as well. However, we are always looking to do new and different projects (as well as offer our members and volunteers new things to do). One of these new activities is the Mon-Earth Concert.

In 2004, a concert benefiting local environmental groups was born. It was the brain child of Robert Tower, a resident of Morgantown, and was called the Mon-Earth concert. This concert was created to show the links between the local and global environment. Four nationally touring musical acts played the night away, while 15 local environmental groups set up displays to educate the public about many different conservation issues. Friends of the Cheat sold concessions, which were donated by the Mountain People's Co-Op, a natural foods store in Morgantown and several other sponsors. Kelli Geswein did a fantastic job of organizing this activity. The show was very successful last year, thanks in large part to all the volunteers that helped out before and during the show.

Building on Robert Tower's vision of an event to help raise awareness and provide quality music in Morgantown, Mon-Earth 2005 promises to be a smashing success. There are once again 4 musical acts: John Flynn, the Rowan Brothers, FREEBO & PHOTOGLO, and disappear fear. These are all professional, nationally-touring musicians that are donating their time and music for the show this year. In addition to the music, there will again be educational displays from 15-20 local environmental groups, as well as concessions donated by the Mountain People's Co-Op. There will be Mon-Earth T-shirts sold, as well as merchandise from all the musicians. This is a great chance to help out Friends of the Cheat, as well as other environmental groups!

For more information, please go to [www.mon-earth.com](http://www.mon-earth.com). If you would like to volunteer to help with the concert, email Robert Tower at [tower@toweringideas.org](mailto:tower@toweringideas.org).

# Acid Mine Drainage Treatment Updates

by Keith Pitzer

As reported in the previous issue, FOC received approval for funding of four projects last year. However, because of funding appropriation delays, only one project was completed before winter weather limited construction activity. This was the Pase Project on Pringle Run. It is located on Rt. 26 north of Tunnelton on a northern fork of Pringle.

The project consists of a vertical flow pond, an anoxic limestone drain (ALD) and a settling basin. Each component of the design is critical to the next component's function. The vertical flow pond is located near a collapsed mine portal that is the source of bad water at this site. The water enters the pond at the top and soaks down through a layer of compost material.

During this process, anaerobic bacteria in the compost strip the acidic water of sulfate and oxygen. These qualities are important in the ALD. As the name implies, this is an excavated area filled with limestone and shutoff from oxygen. The presence of oxygen would allow aluminum to precipitate or drop out of the water solution in the ALD, diverting flow and eventually plugging it. It is thus essential for the ALD to be airtight. It is encased in a heavy vinyl material with seams welded on site and buried. Water exiting the ALD flows through an innovative trap design, into a short channel and then into the settling basin. Here the water has enough residency time to settle out substantial iron and aluminum precipitate before exiting through another open limestone channel and back to its original channel to Pringle Run.

The entire project was the conceptual design of Dr. Paul Ziemkiewicz and Brady Gutta at NMLRC. The construction design was done by Triad Engineering, Inc. The project was funded through WVDEP/DWWM Non-Point Source Program 319 funds and Office of Surface Mining's Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program.



Photos taken during construction at the Pase site in October 2004.



The total cost was \$156,000. The partnering landowner is Charles Pase. Project management was a partnership effort between NMLRC, WVDEP/DWWM Non-Point Source program and Friends of the Cheat.

# Adopt-a-Highway Notes

by Keith Pitzer

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in September, FOC Board Chair Jim Snyder, his son Nathan, FOC staff Sally Wilts, volunteer Lynn Harden, OSM/VISTAs Ben Mack and Danielle Adams, OSM/Intern Aaron Miller and yours truly, FOC Director Keith Pitzer met at Albright Quik Stop to divvy up garbage bags, pass out bright colored mesh vests and make the plan of attack on our three miles of Rte. 26 running north of town. I thoughtfully wore a pedometer to monitor the exercise value of this experience.

There's food for thought in the variety of trash that ends up along the road. There is the occasional hub cap from some hapless vehicle, maybe a tail light lens from a close call. From my observations, the worse a person's diet is, the more he or she must litter. Fast food wrappers from McDonalds, Hardees and Dairy Queen far outnumber Subway. I guess if you're counting fat or carbs you're taking care of yourself and the space around you a bit more.

Then there is the demographics of beer brands. This three miles is almost exclusively Budlight, Busch and Buschlight....mostly cans.....not one Sam Adams or Heineken bottle. Marlboro cigarettes seem to be the most popular brand to litter with and in snack foods, SlimJims seem to be very popular. There's the occasional tool that falls from a truck, a glove or article of clothing. Sunglasses, lighters, toys and baby diapers usually round out the list. It's important to keep a sense of humor while working the road ditches, stay aware of traffic passing by and try to look proud for doing your part and more in this noble effort. I personally was rewarded by checking my pedometer when we finished and found that I had walked 1.15 miles and burned up 125 calories. I felt sorry for those unfortunate people that were pitching the wrappers of their unhealthy lifestyle out along the road. Rest assured in three

or four months, we'll have the opportunity to do this again.

With eight volunteers in all, the process was really quick and efficient. Working in teams of two or three, various sections were covered and bags stashed along the stretch of road. As we neared completion, 26 bags were collected and gathered at the Appalachian Wildwaters parking lot for WVDOH to pick up. It had taken less than two hours and we went away feeling good about ourselves....if a bit grimy. But hey, that washes off. Come out and join us next time!

Our next Adopt a Highway cleanup is scheduled for March 26, weather permitting. We plan to meet at the Albright Quik Stop at 9 am. Boots are recommended, and polypro glove liners help to keep hands warm inside rubber gloves since we often are lifting trash out of water in ditches. Check with the office for last minute changes.

## Executive Director honored with Guiding Light Award

Keith Pitzer was honored with the Guiding Light Award at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual WV Watershed Network Celebration Day on November 6, 2004.

"This award is presented to the watershed association individual who has promoted the grassroots approach to problem solving outside their watershed." Keith has participated in many roundtables and coalition meetings to brainstorm about funding mechanisms, water quality criteria, legislative concerns and many other issues concerning watersheds. He is regarded as a valuable resource by other watershed groups.

Ben Mack accepted the award for Keith because on the day of the ceremony he and Joan were doing a short tour of benefits in Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee to raise awareness of the damage caused by mountaintop removal. Keith wrote and contributed the song Underneath a Blackened Moon to the CD Moving Mountains.

# Rail-Trail Update

by Keith Pitzer

The Preston Rail Trail Committee of FOC has met regularly and is actively pursuing acquisition and development of a system of rail trails in the area. The first trail in line seems to be the Tunnelton to Kingwood corridor or Kingwood Northern, as it was known. This corridor was approved for Recreational Trail funding last summer. This program is an 80-20 matching program. The asking price for the corridor is \$100,000 and the approved amount was \$80,000, leaving \$20,000 in matching funds yet to raise. We are proceeding with an appraisal to determine fair market value and will negotiate from there.

The next corridor on the agenda is the CSX corridor along the Cheat Narrows between Rowlesburg and Albright. Some potential roadblocks are showing up at the Albright end, but we are hopeful of alternatives to still make the link with other trails. We have submitted a Transportation Enhancement proposal for this corridor as well as proposals to Congressman Mollohan and Senators Byrd and Rockefeller. This section could truly become a crown jewel of rail trails, situ-

ated along the picturesque Cheat Narrows and affording users access to several activities including biking, boating and fishing.

The last corridor of interest is still strategically important. The M & K corridor, between Kingwood and Reedsville, would connect the other two trails to the Deckers Creek trail and the Mon Rail Trail system. The M & K has been abandoned for some time and approximately one-third of the original corridor has been sold to adjoining landowners that may or may not support a rail trail.

Common misconceptions persist about rail trails and what they mean to property values and communities. Part of our work is in attracting funding for these projects and part of our work is promoting the benefits of rail trails to landowners along the corridors. Other communities tell us that property values actually increase along rail trails and that trail users are by and large responsible citizens that "buy in" to trails and take pride in trails. It is our vision to bring a system of trails to the area that the community will take pride in and will attract travel and tourism to the area, thus enhancing the local economy.



Preston Rail-Trail Committee members and area legislators sharing the excitement of the \$80,000 Recreational Trail grant award last fall in Masontown.

# 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 the form below or by visiting our website at [www.cheat.org](http://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 choice of Tshirt and video

**T-shirt** - Short sleeve \$15 (\$10 with \$50 or more donation) Long sleeve \$20.00

Size  Medium  Large  XLarge  XXLarge

Choose Cheat Map Shirt  or Cheatfest shirt 2003 or 2004

**Cap** - Low Profile Twill Cap with FOC logo. Dark green  khaki  putty  \$7.50

**Total amount enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Friends of the Cheat**

Invites you to volunteer or participate in the following activities. Details are inside the newsletter

March 26 Adopt-a-Highway cleanup near Albright

April 22 Mon-Earth Benefit Concert in Morgantown

May 6 Annual Cheat Canyon Downriver race

May 7 1<sup>st</sup> Cheatfest 5K run

May 7 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheat River Festival

May 14 WV Save Our Streams Stream monitor training

June 11 Celebration of the Outdoors at Cooper's Rock SF

June 25 Adopt-a-stream cleanup at Glade Run