



Adam Webster

Snap Shots

WEST VIRGINIA
LAND TRUST

Gauley River Canyon

We are thrilled to announce permanent protection of 665 acres of land, which fronts six miles of the Gauley River! The purchase ensures that an area known as the Gauley Canyon located within the Gauley River National Recreation Area (GRNRA), which had once been considered for development, will remain intact and be managed to provide forests, river access, and recreational opportunities for the public.

"The acquisition of this property represents the culmination of many months of cooperative discussions with owners who chose to forgo their own development plans in favor of protecting some of West Virginia's most iconic land," said Brent Bailey, Executive Director of the land trust. "Not only will views in the canyon be protected, but the essence of West Virginia's beauty will continue to be on display for the thousands of people who visit the Gauley River each year. We are very grateful that this transfer of lands could take place," Bailey said.

"The Deitz and Bright families are also pleased to have been able to work with the West Virginia Land Trust to transfer this property," said Bill Bright, former owner of the property. "This will preserve a beautiful and special place for all to enjoy in West Virginia," Bright said.

The Gauley River is perhaps best known for its world class whitewater, which draws nearly 60,000 whitewater rafters during a six week period each fall. Despite its popularity during this time period, the deep forested gorge that the river cuts through provides year-round recreational opportunities, including rafting, kayaking, hiking, biking, climbing, hunting, and fishing.

"For a number of reasons, this is one of the most strategic acquisitions within the Gauley Canyon," said Dave Arnold, Vice President of Adventures on the Gorge. "This land fronts on six miles of the river on both sides and many of the rafting companies use this area for their lunch stops. Protecting the visual corridor in this area is critical to the quality of our customers' experience," he said. "Many people don't know that the rafting companies run the Gauley all year long and one of our issues is with river access when the water levels are down. With this acquisition, we now have a potential public access point. This is critical for us when the river is low."

The newly protected area includes land on both sides of the Gauley River, just downstream of its confluence with the Meadow River. A large part of the tract is below Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park.

"Its location in the heart of the canyon includes the site of some of the most significant rapids on the Gauley River," Arnold said.

The GRNRA was designated as part of the National Park system in 1988. It contains 25 miles of the Gauley River and 5 miles of the neighboring Meadow River. The area is host to abundant wildlife, including federally-endangered species, such as Indiana and Virginia big-eared bats. The Eastern hellbender is a rare salamander found in the Gauley River, which can reach over two feet in length and weigh up to five pounds.

SUMMER 2014 In This Issue

Join us for an EPIC Adventure!

Learn how you can help keep WV wild & wonderful, while joining the staff on an adventure!



Calling All Volunteers!

We are looking for folks to help manage our two Nature Preserves!



Faces of Conservation!

We want YOU to be a "Face of Conservation!"





EPIC Engaging Professionals In Conservation
A West Virginia Land Trust Program

Join us for an Epic Adventure!

EPIC (Engaging Professionals In Conservation) is a great opportunity to get involved with the WV Land Trust, venture outdoors, make new friends, and learn how YOU can help keep West Virginia wild and wonderful! In addition to learning more about land conservation, the program consists of three components – leadership, networking, and an entry level outdoor activity. Please check our website for more details and updates!

2014 EPIC Adventures:

August 16	Sinks of Gandy Caving Trip
September 28	Zip-lining Canopy Tour
October 25	Haunted Happy Hour & Hike
November 15	Blue Jean Ball (fundraiser)
December 14	Snow Tubing / Skiing

To join the EPIC Adventure fun, contact:

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Elizabeth's Woods and Wallace Hartman Nature Preserve Updates

Work continues at the Elizabeth's Woods Nature Preserve near Morgantown, and at the Wallace Hartman Nature Preserve in Charleston. Both properties are being appropriately 'developed' by the Land Trust to support semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation and environmental education, and will be cornerstones of the Trust's outreach and engagement program.

At the 85 acre Elizabeth's Woods tract in Monongalia County, Science and Management Specialist Rick Landenberger is working with Jason Kikel, a summer intern, to design two connected loop trails and a small parking area, identify sites for American Chestnut restoration, and identify areas where invasive species control will begin. The Mountaineer Area Council of the Boy Scouts is interested in helping with various projects, and a green space meeting is planned in Morgantown to let people know about the property, including how volunteers can help with its development.

Down south at Wallace Hartman, contractor Ruffner Woody of Holly Grove Forestry LLC has drafted a management plan that addresses access, loop trails, invasive species and other forest health issues, and connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods. Both preserves will rely on community volunteer projects, external funding, and a lot of sweat. But, given the pay-off in additional green space, protection of native forest and wildlife habitat, and outdoor educational resources for the local communities, these areas offer tremendous potential for recreation, environmental education, and last but not least, environmental protection. They represent a 'win-win' not only for the local communities, but for all West Virginians who appreciate the native forest and all it has to offer.



Pictured here: Jason Kikel, summer intern and future graduate student in Regional Planning at New Mexico State University in Albuquerque, at the Bechtel Summit Reserve in Fayette County. Jason has been a big help with Elizabeth's Woods.

Faces of Conservation

We want YOU to be a "Face of Conservation!" Send us your photo today! Tell us why you believe conservation is important in West Virginia. Hold up a sign. Draw it in the sand. Spell it with sticks. We'll add you into the video! Please email photos to adam@wvlandtrust.org.



A Note from the Director

You'll see in this issue of Snap Shots that the WV Land Trust is busy on multiple fronts: Our recent acquisition of property in the Gauley watershed is a major addition to protection of recreational opportunities, the tourism industry, and endangered and threatened species. Our launch of the EPIC program is designed to make outdoor experiences and skills more easily accessible to people who want to enjoy our state's great natural resources and special places, but haven't gotten "there" on their own. And we are shaping two existing preserves to serve the public with trails and educational programming.

Land conservation is very personal for the landowners with whom we work, so we take our time to craft conservation agreements that represent the long-range wishes of property owners. But we are also mindful of the broader role that conservation can play to support our economy and improve the quality of life for residents of the state, by keeping water supplies clean, by reducing erosion, runoff, and flooding, by setting aside lands that serve recreationists (boater, bikers, climbers, hikers), and by protecting "working landscapes" such as forests and farms.

In New Hampshire and Maine, studies of the economic impact of land conservation indicate that for every \$1 spent on land conservation, a return on investment of \$11 was realized in the creation of jobs, in providing services such as clean water, in reducing water treatment costs, and in preserving wildlife habitat that sustains hunting and fishing activities. A recent study by the National Park Service showed that visitors to NPS lands in the southern part of West Virginia spent \$51 million last year. Add in additional revenues from visitors who converge on our state parks, state forests, wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, national forests, and other protected sites, and it's clear: Protecting land creates an economic base that is sustainable, and only likely to grow over time. Though it may be obvious, it also bears repeating: New land isn't being created; the best time to protect it is now.

We hope you'll take the time to visit our web site, to see the short videos we're produced about our work and the recent Gauley acquisition. Click also on our "Faces of Conservation" video, to see some of the many reasons people love conservation in West Virginia. We'd love to see your face on the next version of that video! And of course we hope you'll generously support our mission to expand the protection of special places throughout the Mountain State.



Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Brent Bailey Ph.D.
WV Land Trust Executive Director

Special Places EVENT

An Incredible Success!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

As another great event comes to a close, we want to thank everyone who helped make our 9th Annual Special Places Event an incredible success! Thank you sponsors, silent auction donors, attendees, land owners, WVLT Board of Directors, Special Places Planning Committee, and staff!

Together, we raised nearly \$80,000 that will be used to fund trail construction, outdoor education, and the protection of nearly 10,000 acres of land that are currently under consideration.

We cannot function without your support, and for that we are grateful. West Virginia is blessed with abundantly beautiful landscapes. Your generosity will help ensure that they will forever remain as a Special Place for generations to come.

Next year will be our 10th anniversary party and we hope you will join us again, for more fun and a great evening of celebrating the land we love and honoring those who protect it!

Upcoming Events

Land Trust Staff



Save the Date!

October 18 | Meet at the Bridge

During the 35th annual Bridge Day event, the WVLT will be joining in a Clean Water Initiative called: "Meet at the Bridge – For Clean Water!" (Please check our website and facebook for more details: wvlandtrust.org)

November 15 | Blue Jean Ball



Folks are invited to dress up their favorite blue jeans for a fun evening of dinner, dancing to a live band, open bar, silent auction, raffle items, and more. Tickets will be available for \$50 per person and we will be offering sponsorship deals as well.

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