



SNAP SHOTS
NEWSLETTER



In This Issue

- ▶ Director's Update
- ▶ Summer Book Recommendations
- ▶ Community Engagement
- ▶ Yellow Creek Campaign Updates

Volunteer Vacations

Have you ever heard of a “volunteer vacation?”

Many of us had not heard of such a thing until the West Virginia Land Trust (WVLT) was chosen by the American Hiking Society (AHS) to be a destination for their Volunteer Vacations program. This program allows folks to sign up to spend a week doing trail work at sites across the country.



AmericanHiking.org

During the first week in June, as part of WVLT's ongoing efforts to develop access and recreational opportunities on our preserves, WVLT welcomed a 7-person trail crew from the AHS's Volunteer Vacations program to work on trails in Toms Run Preserve in Morgantown. The volunteer crew members came from as far away as California and New Hampshire, and their lodging at Camp Muffly Park was donated by Monongalia County Parks and Recreation. A lot was accomplished in a week, with the crew focusing on improving the existing 2-mile trail system – using natural materials to build advanced features such as several sets of split-log stairs and reinforced drainage channels for stream crossings. To show appreciation for their hard work, WVLT treated the crew to a mid-week outing to see the sites around Thomas, Davis, and Canaan Valley. Crew members closed out a very successful week by participating in the Meet the Cheat Float on Saturday, June 8th.

For most of the volunteers, this was their first experience in the beautiful woods and waters of West Virginia. Many of them expressed that their time with WVLT left them wanting to experience more of our Mountain State. Our first experience with AHS Volunteer Vacations has exceeded expectations, and we are planning to host another crew in 2020.



A Letter from Our Executive Director

Brent Bailey, Ph.D.

Sometimes I like a book so much I want someone else to take it and enjoy it. I think carefully about who might appreciate it like I did, and then happily pass it along.

In a similar vein, at the West Virginia Land Trust (WVLT) we're often happy to shift properties we've protected into ownership by another entity. Protecting land is WVLT's core expertise, requiring complicated legal documentation, the challenge of cobbling together funding, leading negotiations, aiming for protection that's perpetual. But our "big picture" goal is to help build a conservation community around the state, and a portfolio of conserved properties that play a role in economic and community development. Sometimes the right local partners are in the mix, and after we've ensured that the site is conserved, we'll pass it along to a new owner, with caveats for permanent protection.

"This is the kind of place that will bring people to this community," Chelsea Ruby, WV Tourism Commissioner, said to attendees in Oak Hill in May, as WVLT transferred the Needleseye Climbing Park to the City of Oak Hill. Citing statistics about tourism, economic development, and the burgeoning outdoor recreation industry, Ruby congratulated the City of Oak Hill and the West Virginia Land Trust for the partnership that led to the creation of the Needleseye Climbing Park, and a destination that will put Oak Hill on the map for recreationists.

Indeed, you should go: A dramatic 2-mile wall of giant boulders is the property's most distinctive feature, popular with climbers, but also striking in its geological features, easily seen from the trails network that the City is developing in its lush mature forest.

The City initiated the project, with robust support from the City Council, local businesses, and non-profit organizations that support environmental protection and recreation development. It seemed fitting that as the driving force behind the idea, the City should become the owner. WVLT was pleased to lead the acquisition phase. Upon transfer of the tract, WVLT retained an easement on the property that stipulates that the land will forever be dedicated to public use, and that no development on the site may occur.

Likewise, we recently sold our Gauley Canyon 665-acre tract to the National Park Service (NPS). It's the right place: The Gauley River National Recreation Area is managed by this federal agency. We'd purchased it at the request of the NPS, and then held it until federal funds were secured (thanks to our WV Congressional delegation) so the Service could purchase it from us. Now this linchpin property will continue to sustain the local recreation economy in Fayette and Nicholas counties.

We protect land with a goal of perpetuity. But that doesn't always mean the Land Trust is the forever owner of a conserved property. Sometimes, there's a better owner for these Special Places!

Staff Summer Book Recommendations

Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming

Edited by Paul Hawken • 2017

How can an individual influence a global issue? This book provides "100 Solutions" to some of the greatest drivers of climate change. Both a good reference work and also a hopeful compendium of research and recommendations from esteemed experts, *Drawdown* highlights contributing factors to the planet's warming that are varied and sometimes surprising: From changes in refrigeration technology, to supporting education of girls in developing countries, and – for WVLT – conserving temperate forests. Note: A conference on "Research to Action" will be held at Penn State this September.

SUGGESTED BY Brent Bailey, Executive Director

Baby Birds: An Artist Looks into the Nest

Written and illustrated by Julie Zickefoose • 2016

The author, a unique combination of biologist, artist, and wildlife rehabilitator, chronicles 13 years of saving, studying, and painting baby birds through various stages of development, from nest to fledging. Her personal and sensitive observations color the text of each page, accompanied by more than 400 watercolor illustrations with field notes. Both a coffee table book and a natural history guide, *Baby Birds* reminds us of our innate connections to nature, and softened my unfavorable perception of common invasive species like Starlings with her apt description of them as "sloppy hoboes."

SUGGESTED BY Brent Bailey, Executive Director

Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth

Written by Oliver Jeffers • 2017

This children's book is packed with delightful illustrations and information about our place in the Universe and the nature of our home planet. Written with a sense of reverence and wonder, Jeffers' story can be enjoyed over and over with youthful audiences. It is a great reference for school-aged children as well.

SUGGESTED BY Jesse Cecil, Operations Coordinator



First aid kits, trail mix, and a hike with local cub scouts

On April 27, we had an excellent day with Cub Scout Pack 39 in Coopers Rock State Forest! Scouts had the opportunity to build a first aid kit, make a bag of trail mix, and hike through Rock City! Special thanks to our partners at MedExpress Urgent Care for offering first aid education!

◀ *Matteo Spatafore showing off his first aid kit*



Celebrating Earth Day



In celebration of Earth Day, WVLT welcomed nearly twenty employee volunteers from MedExpress Urgent Care to help build new hiking trails in two of our nature preserves.

MedExpress volunteers from Morgantown worked in the Toms Run Nature Preserve, while volunteers from the Charleston MedExpress center met in the Wallace Hartman Nature Preserve.

MedExpress employees were able to volunteer with the WVLT through the MedExpress Volunteer Program in which team members can take a certain amount of time off to volunteer in their community with an organization of their choice.

Would your business be interested in volunteering with us? Give us a call at (304) 413-0945 or email info@wvlandtrust.org.



We're Almost There!

The clock is ticking on the final stage of the Yellow Creek Preserve campaign! In 2018, WVLT launched an ambitious \$800,000 fundraising effort to protect nearly 900 acres in Tucker County that adjoins the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Little Canaan Wildlife Management Area. The property has long attracted hikers and bikers to Moon Rocks, a scenic rock formation that is a popular destination.

Knowing the property was being sold piecemeal into private ownership, WVLT stepped in to protect public access and ensure that the unique high elevation wetlands on the property would be permanently safeguarded. The Land Trust has been pursuing a range of grants and contributions from individuals – the remaining balance has been whittled down to less than \$30,000. The closing on the transaction has been scheduled for mid-August.

Please consider a last-minute donation ensuring this property remains a public recreation area into the future. Contributions to the campaign may be made at: www.BuyTheMoonWV.org or by calling (304) 346-7788.

Special Thanks to the Tucker County Community

- Stumptown Ales hosted a Yellow Creek fundraising night, donating \$1 from every beer sold on February 2.
- Appalachian Dirt hosted an informational booth about the campaign at the Fat Tire Race on February 3 at Whitegrass XC Ski Resort.
- Hellbender Burritos and White Grass Ski Touring Center promoted the campaign on their social media, and also made contributions.
- Andy and Bruce Dalton hosted "Friends of the 500" members to their home for a fundraiser which advanced \$20,000 to our campaign!
- And 180+ individuals, from naturalists and hikers to mountain bikers, who stepped up to help "Buy the Moon."



Special thanks to the following funders of the Yellow Creek Preserve fundraising campaign:

\$400k West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection AML Pilot Program

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection selected WVLT as a recipient of a \$400,000 competitive grant from the agency's Office of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) for the purchase and restoration of the Yellow Creek Preserve. The purpose of the grant is to accelerate remediation of abandoned mine sites that have the potential to boost the local economy in historic coal regions that have been hard hit by the industry's decline.

\$250k WV Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund

The WV Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund (OHCF) awarded WVLT \$250,000 towards the purchase of the Yellow Creek Preserve. In 2008, the West Virginia Legislature created the OHCF to invest in the conservation of unique and important wildlife habitat, natural areas, forest lands, farmland, and lands for hunting, fishing and recreation.

\$35k The Conservation Alliance

The Conservation Alliance awarded WVLT a \$35,000 competitive grant to help protect the Yellow Creek Preserve for public recreation and habitat conservation. The Conservation Alliance is an organization of like-minded businesses whose collective contributions support grassroots environmental organizations and their efforts to protect wild places where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Alliance funds have played a key role in protecting rivers, trails, wildlands and climbing areas. To learn more about projects supported by The Conservation Alliance, see www.conservationalliance.com.

In order to apply for a grant from The Conservation Alliance, applicants must be nominated by an affiliate. We are grateful to Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine for our nomination! Check out Blue Ridge Outdoors at www.blueridgeoutdoors.com.

\$15k The Oakland Foundation

WVLT received a generous \$15,000 grant award from the Oakland Foundation for the purchase of the Yellow Creek Preserve. The Oakland Foundation is a small family foundation and we are extremely grateful for this award.

\$70k People Like YOU!

Have you contributed to the campaign? If not, please donate today at www.BuyTheMoonWV.org.

Connect with us!



Our Staff

Brent Bailey, Ph.D.

Executive Director • brent@wvlandtrust.org

Ashton Berdine

Lands Program Manager • ashton@wvlandtrust.org

Debby Berry

Administrative Assistant • info@wvlandtrust.org

Jesse Cecil

Operations Coordinator • jcecil@wvlandtrust.org

Amy Cimarolli

Land Protection Specialist • amy@wvlandtrust.org

Terrell Ellis

Organizational Consultant • tellis@te-associates.com

Rick Landenberger, Ph.D.

Science & Management Specialist
rick@wvlandtrust.org

Jessica Spatafore

Director of Development & Communications
jessica@wvlandtrust.org

Adam Webster

Conservation & Communication Coordinator
adam@wvlandtrust.org

Our Board

Jonathan R Marshall
President

Skip Harless
Treasurer

Andy Altman

Calvert Armbrecht

Ted Armbrecht

Dave Clark

Chap Donovan

Nathan Fetty

Rod Graves
Vice President

Jackie Hallinan
Secretary

Larry Harris

Nina Peyton

Bren Pomponio

Gabe Rushden

Craig Slaughter

Please Recycle Me!



Help us reduce our carbon footprint! Share this newsletter with your friends to spread the word and be sure to recycle it when you're done reading!



PO Box 11823
Charleston, West Virginia 25339-1823

www.wvlandtrust.org

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, November 8th

Clay Center for the Arts and
Sciences of West Virginia
Charleston, WV

Sponsorship Opportunities
www.WVSpecialPlaces.org

\$125 Individuals

\$200 Couples

