



Wild Virginia Supports New Research on Shenandoah Mountain Economic analysis to highlight value of recreation on the George Washington NF

Wild Virginia is pleased to announce a recent agreement to understand better the potential economic impact of the Shenandoah Mountain area. This wild area combined with nearby urban areas has great existing and potential economic value for recreational opportunities and the ecosystem. Through a competitive request for proposals process this past spring and summer Wild Virginia awarded the research contract to Dr. John Bergstrom, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Georgia. The research will estimate the value of Shenandoah Mountain to the local and regional economy. This is the first phase of a planned two-phase project. The second phase, not yet awarded, will dig deeper to assess the value of "ecosystem services" such as clean water to local cities like Staunton.

Shenandoah Mountain is a 60 mile stretch of the George Washington National Forest west of Staunton and Harrisonburg, VA. It is the largest block of publicly owned, contiguous forest in the eastern U.S. that is not permanently protected. It is an incredible opportunity for forest conservation and is worthy of national recognition for many reasons, including habitat conservation, ecosystem services (such as drinking water and carbon sequestration), wildlife and recreation. Citizens want to know the potential for a national designation of portions of Shenandoah Mountain. Designations such as National Wilderness,

Historic, Recreation, or Scenic Areas attract an array of tourists, hunters, anglers, birders, and others that otherwise might not visit without the national recognition.

Dr. Bergstrom has over 25 years of experience in this type of research and numerous publications. One of the recent books he co-authored, The Multiple Values of Wilderness, is intended to help inform interested and engaged members of the public about the values of *their* public Wilderness areas. After

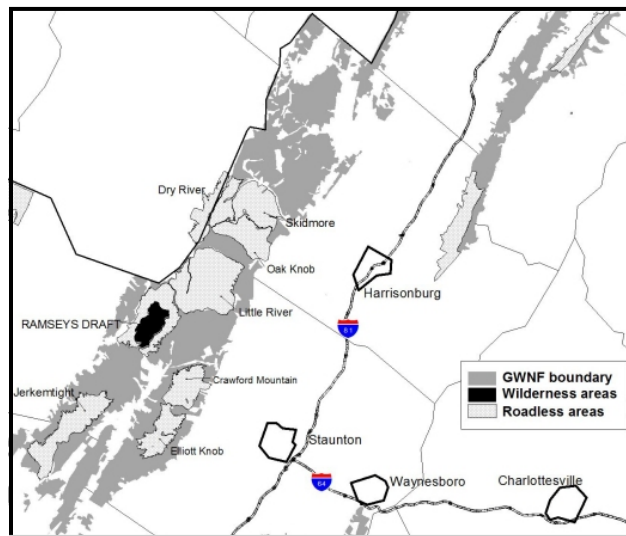
and more scarce all over the country, but especially in the East. These remaining wild gems are also growing in value because of the unique recreational opportunities and ecosystem services that are available to large Eastern population centers. In this study, we will assess the contribution that recreation visitation to Shenandoah Mountain makes to the local economy and to the economies of Virginia and West Virginia. Such information is currently not available and is needed to understand better

the total benefits of Shenandoah Mountain. The results of this study will help us assess how future changes in the protection and use of Shenandoah Mountain may impact the future recreational value of the area to people."

Information on the present and future economic value of Shenandoah Mountain recreation is important for policy and management decisions as it helps illuminate the benefits and costs of those decisions and provides a common "measuring stick" for comparing the value of uses under different management alternatives. More trans-

parent information on benefits and costs facilitates dialogue between people interested in the outcomes of policy and management decisions leading to more informed and hopefully better decisions.

Dr. Bergstrom and Wild Virginia will have the results from the study available in February, 2007.



Map of Shenandoah Mountain Region in GWNF.

all, it is the American citizen who can influence public policy in the greatest measure through their individual and collective voices and actions. After announcing the contract award, he stated:

"I am very much looking forward to working with you on this project! Natural, wild areas such as Shenandoah Mountain are becoming more

Wild Virginia Update

Letter from our President, Jennifer Creasy

In late September I had the fortune of seeing Erik Weihenmayer speak at the Charlottesville Performing Arts Center. On May 25, 2001, Erik became the first blind man to stand at the top of the world, the summit of Mt. Everest. And, he didn't stop there. One year later, Erik joined the elite club of only 100 mountaineers who have climbed the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. He is truly someone who has overcome tremendous obstacles in life. Throughout the course of his talk, Erik discussed some of the mantras for how he lives his life and for his successes. As I listened to his remarkable story, I realized that there were many parallels with Wild Virginia.

One of the first things that Erik stressed in his talk is the undeniable truth that he would never have made it to the summit of Mt. Everest without the dedication and hard work of his teammates. As Erik said in his speech, "Imagine everyone connected by a giant rope, helping each other, compensating for individual weaknesses, using everyone's abilities to the fullest. We'd be an unstoppable force." As President of Wild Virginia, I am also very fortunate to be "roped" to an amazing team of people. Wild Virginia's members are some of the most sup-

portive and passionate people I know. You never cease to amaze me with your level of forest advocacy. Guiding our team, is an amazing group of leaders, our Board. And, I am very pleased to announce that we have two new people on our Board, **Cynthia Hurst** and **Nathan Van Hooser**. Together they bring even more skill and enthusiasm to add to our "unstoppable force." I have included their bios below so that you can get to know them a little better. **Please join me in welcoming them to Wild Virginia!**

Another point that Erik discussed in his talk is that you must take great risks to achieve great successes. And, great successes rarely come without their fair share of failures. This was an especially poignant point for me because of the current political climate for forest protection in Virginia. It is often diffi-



cult to fight for something that you fear will end in failure. But as Erik said, "Success is not just the crowning moment, the raising of the flag on the summit. It is the whole process of reaching for a goal" We must keep this in mind when we seek more protection for forests in the Commonwealth. We may not immediately gain better protection for areas like Shenandoah Mountain, but with each small step in that direction, we raise awareness, educate the public, and come closer and closer to our ultimate goal of saving our last wild spaces.

During Erik's talk, he challenged me to undertake "something miraculous", to rise to the level of my own internal potential. He made me think about the kind of legacy I hope to leave behind in the world. In this time of environmental degradation, we cannot afford to become complacent. We must seek more ways to "rope together" with our like-minded community members and to take risks so that we can take Wild Virginia to newer and greater heights. And hopefully one day soon, we'll be able to stand together on the summit and look out over miles and miles of beautiful, unbroken forest, a legacy we'll be proud to leave behind for the generations to come.

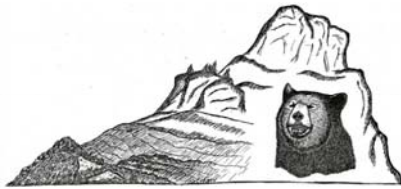
Welcome to Wild Virginia's new Board Members!

Cynthia Hurst is the owner of Butterflies in Progress, L.L.C., a development consulting company. She has worked with non-profit organizations since 1988, most notably serving as the director of Clean Water Action in Baltimore and Miami. In addition, Cynthia worked for the Wildlife Center of Virginia and WHTJ Charlottesville PBS. Her Bachelor of Arts degree is from James Madison University and she did graduate work at Virginia Tech. Cynthia grew up in the Shenandoah Valley hiking in the George Washington National Forest and still backpacks there when time will allow. She also enjoys yoga, canoeing, scuba diving, dancing and laughing.

Nathan Van Hooser works as a network engineer during the week but treasures secluded mountain cabins for weekend get-aways. He grew up in the Shenandoah Valley and roamed the Eastern slopes of the Alleghany Mountains from Rockingham to Giles counties. Jefferson National Forest timber issues occupied Nathan's activist time at Virginia Tech while also earning a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. After a two year teaching job in West Africa, he moved back to Central Virginia and helped start TradeLocal, a non-profit designed to encourage local small business patronage. Nathan currently enjoys hiking the Blue Ridge with his wife and four-pawed friends.

Ancient Mountain Sentinel
Volume VII, Number III - Fall 2006

WILD VIRGINIA



Protecting Your Favorite Wild Places

PO Box 1065
Charlottesville, VA 22902
(434) 971-1553
<http://www.wildvirginia.org>
info@wildvirginia.org

Board of Directors

Jennifer Creasy—President
Jason Halbert—Treasurer/Secretary
Eric Gilchrist
Nathan Van Hooser
Cynthia Hurst
Ernie Reed
Kristin Taverna

Layout Design- Kristin Taverna

Donations to Wild Virginia are gratefully accepted. Please make checks payable to VOP (our fiscal sponsor) and send to address above.

Ancient Mountain Sentinel is printed on 100% recycled, non-chlorine bleached paper. Your use of this or similar paper will prevent the destruction of native forests. **Recycle.... Pass this newsletter on to a friend!**

PLEASE USE RECYCLED PAPER

Wild Virginia Hikes and Outings

All hike info also available on our website: <http://wildvirginia.org/programsRecreation.html>

Past Outing Report: July'06 Tour de Cut

This past July Wild Virginia joined the Sierra Club and Virginia Forest Watch for a weekend in the woods – the Tour de Cut. We took a look at part of a recently cut timber sale by Elliot Knob, and were joined by the District Ranger of the North River Ranger District, Elwood Burge. The group was glad that he values dialogue between us and the Forest Service. After lunch we hiked six miles on the Georgia Camp trail next to the recently cancelled Signal Corp timber sale. At night we set up camp by the Thunder Ridge Wilderness and fell asleep to the sounds of owls and frogs.

The next day was set aside as a meeting to discuss the new George Washington forest plan (see article on pg.4). It is important for Virginia's forest conservation groups to work together to influence this plan. We would like the Forest Service to shift its focus away from logging and road building and towards ecological restoration.

The Tour de Cut is a great way to see the forest, meet other like minded people, and learn about local forest conservation efforts. It happens every year in the summer. We hope to see you on the Tour in 2007!



Check out our website to read an op-ed piece written by Wild Virginia member, Rebecca Farris. We regret that the full letter could not be printed due to lack of space.

Her submission discusses how a change in diet can help save forests around the world and is healthy too!

Fall Hike through Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Area

Come enjoy the Fall colors on Shenandoah Mountain and learn more about the area Wild Virginia is working hard to protect! The hike is in a beautiful section of the George Washington National Forest, and will include some great views before heading into an old growth valley.

When & Where:

Sunday, **October 22nd**, meet at 9 am. Meet at Java Java, 2214 Ivy Road (by Sneak Reviews) in Charlottesville.

Hike Details:

The hike is a moderate 5.5 mile hike. We'll be using a shuttle to bring hikers back to their cars. Bring lunch and water, and binoculars if you'd like. We should be back in Charlottesville around 5pm. Call Mike Kruse at 434-293-7401 for rain date information or if you would like to meet us near the trailhead.

Timber Sale Hike in the George Washington NF

Join Wild Virginia members on a hike through a recently cut timber sale. This is a great opportunity to learn first hand why Wild Virginia is working hard to protect our National Forests.

When & Where:

Sunday **November 12th**, meet at 9 am. Meet at Java Java, 2214 Ivy Road (by Sneak Reviews) in Charlottesville.

Hike Details: To be announced. Please check our website in early November for details.

National Forest Roadless Areas Protected (again)!

Federal judge reinstates the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule

The story of the 2001 Roadless Rule, originally enacted by the Clinton Administration, has been one of triumph followed by defeat for our national forests. The original Rule provided permanent protection for 58.5 million acres of roadless areas, including 394,000 acres in Virginia. President Bush quickly dismantled the 2001 Roadless Rule upon taking office and significantly weakened protections for all national forests by requiring that governors petition the federal government to protect the roadless areas in their states. This ruling held no guarantee the US Forest Service would accept the governor's petitions.

Over this past year, a number of state Governors, including Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia, have shown they disagree with the rollbacks by petitioning the US Forest Service for full roadless area protection. In doing so, they have supported the opinions of millions of Americans that want the wildest parts of our national forests to stay wild.

September 20, 2006 marked a major turning point in the campaign to protect roadless areas. In California, Federal Judge Elizabeth Laporte, reinstated the popular 2001 Roadless Rule and also threw out the rule that the Bush Administration enacted to replace the 2001 rule. Judge Laporte

stated that the government violated the National Environmental Protection Act in enacting its rule, and that the Forest Service is "enjoined from taking any further action contrary to the [2001] Roadless Rule without undertaking environmental analysis consistent with this opinion." This is truly a major success for our forests and for the many citizens that have worked hard to keep our roadless areas wild! If challenged, it will go before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. We will be sure to keep our members informed of the latest developments.

To view the full decision, visit: <http://www.ourforests.org/>

George Washington NF Plan Revision

Environmental groups come together to foster public involvement and forest restoration in new forest planning process

Last year, the Bush Administration adopted a new process for revising National Forest Plans, and the George Washington National Forest will be one of the very first forests to develop a plan under these new regulations. The George Washington National Forest Plan was last revised in 1993 and it is now up for revision.

Every National Forest in the U.S. has a Resource Management Plan, also called the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan describes how the US Forest Service will manage each national forest for the next 10 to 15 years. Long-term planning of this kind is required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

Environmentalists are extremely wary of the new regulations adopted for Forest Plan revisions since they no longer require an Environmental Impact Statement to

be prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process insured broad public participation in the development of the plan, required a consideration of alternative approaches to managing the forest, provided for an assessment of the cumulative impacts of activities on the forest and allowed for legal challenges. The new regulations significantly weaken these elements of the planning process.

The Bush Administration's rationale for removing forest planning from the full NEPA process is that only actual, site-specific projects affect the forest, despite the fact that forest plans govern the overall management of the forest for 10-15 years, including, for example, setting timber targets. Since the new regulations also encourage these new plans to avoid setting enforceable standards and guidelines, it is especially important for citizens to hold the agency accountable by insisting it adopt firm, enforceable standards to protect natural resources.

Without the safeguards of the National Environmental Policy Act, forest protection activists are preparing for the new planning process by reaching out to diverse groups to inform them about the value of the George Washington National Forest as an environmental and recreational resource. One objective of forest advocates in this planning process is to encourage restoration of the ecological health of the forest.

The environmental organizations engaged in this effort at this time include Wild Virginia, Virginia Forest Watch, Virginia Wilderness Committee, Southern Environmental Law Center, Wildlaw, Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club.

For more information on the George Washington Forest Plan revision process and progress, please contact Mike Kruse at 434-293-7401; mold@nexet.net.

Species Spotlight : Trillium

By Philip Coulling, Ecologist, VA Division of Natural Heritage

Anyone who has taken a walk through rich woods in the spring has surely witnessed the glorious display of wildflowers in bloom beneath a sparse canopy of newly emerging leaves. Among our many native species of vernal wildflowers, perhaps none attains the splendor of the large-flowered trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), the most common and widespread of Virginia's ten species of trillium. The genus name *Trillium* comes from the Latin word for three and refers to the characteristic number of whorled flower parts and leaves. Typically found in rich, moist forests, trilliums produce large, showy flowers in colors ranging from pure white to shades of green, yellow, pink or maroon.



Large-flowered Trillium
(*Trillium grandiflorum*)

photo by Irv Wilson

Most trilliums are slow-growing, long-lived perennials. Technically, trilliums do not produce true leaves aboveground. The trio of what appear to be leaves subtending the showy flowers are actually bracts, or modified flower parts, although they do perform photosynthesis. Like many low-growing, perennial, herbaceous plants of eastern deciduous forests, trilliums produce seeds that are dispersed mainly by ants. Many species are also able to spread asexually, or clonally, by sending up shoots from the rhizome, or underground stem.

There are about 50 species of

Trillium worldwide, but the center of diversity lies in the southeastern United States. Trilliums are often divided into two groups, or subgenera, those with flowers borne on short to long stalks (called pedicels) and those with stalkless, or sessile, flowers. Of the latter group, only the aptly named sessile trillium (*T. sessile*) is found naturally in Virginia, primarily in floodplains and along riverbanks. Yellow trillium (*T. luteum*), native to Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia, appears to have escaped from cultivation and become naturalized in Frederick County. The remaining sessile-flowered trilliums in North America generally have very restricted distributions in the Southeast or on the Pacific coast.

Most of Virginia's pedicillate trilliums occur chiefly in the mountains. Painted trillium (*T. undulatum*) and southern red trillium (*T. sulcatum*) are found primarily in the southern Blue Ridge and Ridge and Valley. Red trillium (*T. erectum*; also known as stinking willie for its malodorous flowers) has an interrupted distribution from northern Virginia to the southwestern corner.

Although Virginia does not boast the diversity of trilliums that states farther south possess, there are four species that are considered rare in the Commonwealth. Snow trillium (*T. nivale*) is known from only a single site in the state, just inside the West Virginia line in Highland County. Bent trillium (*T. flexipes*) has a primarily Midwestern distribution and in Virginia is restricted to the southwestern counties of Lee, Scott, Buchanan and Dickenson. Nodding trillium (*T. cernuum*) ranges from the northeastern United States west into the upper Midwest and southern Canada. It reaches the southern limits of its distribution in northern Virginia, occurring in Clarke, Warren, Fauquier, and Rappahannock Counties..

But most interesting of all is the Virginia least trillium (*T. pusillum* var.

virginianum), the only trillium in the state found on the Coastal Plain. Federally listed as a Species of Concern, Virginia least trillium blooms in very early spring and ranges from



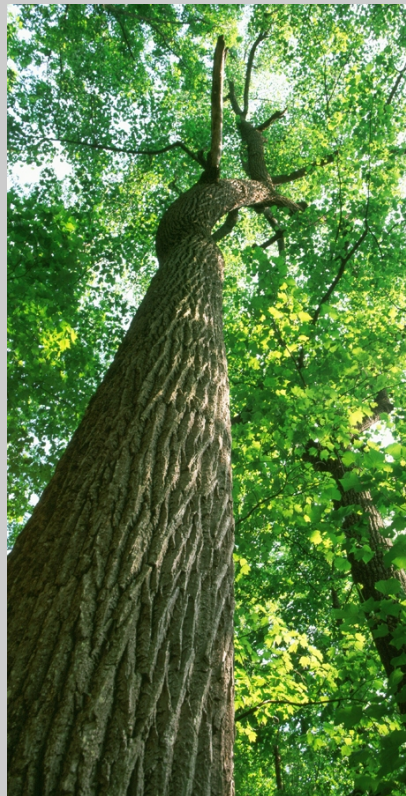
Virginia Least Trillium
(*Trillium pusillum* v. *virginianum*)
photo by Gary Fleming

the Eastern Shore in Maryland to northeastern North Carolina, with the vast majority of locations in southeastern Virginia. Geographically separated populations also occur in the area known as The Glades in Grayson County, where rich soils support a number of rare plants, and at high-elevation sites near Elliott Knob in Augusta County and near the crest of Shenandoah Mountain in Rockingham County, northeast of Reddish Knob. The reasons for this puzzling distribution and the relationship of Virginia least trillium to other species remain poorly understood.

References

- Cabe, P.R., and C. Werth. 1995. The *Trillium pusillum* Michaux (Liliaceae) complex in Virginia. II. Isozyme evidence. *Castanea* 60(1): 15-29.
- Case, F.W., Jr. 2002. Trillium. pp. 90-117 in *Flora of North America* Editorial Committee (ed.). *Flora of North America north of Mexico*. Oxford University Press, NY.
- Hill, L.M. 2005. The genus *Trillium* (Liliaceae) in Virginia. *Castanea* 70(1): 13-19.
- Weakley, A.S. 2006. *Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia*. Working draft, 17 January 2006. UNC Herbarium and NC Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, NC.

Annual Wild Virginia party set for November 10th!



Wild Virginia cordially invites you to our 3rd annual member appreciation party.

Please join us at the Charlottesville Community Design Center on the Downtown Mall on Friday, Nov. 10, 2006 from 7-10pm for our annual party. This annual gathering gives our Board and members the opportunity to meet and socialize and discuss the critical issues facing Virginia's National Forests.

We'll have light snacks, refreshments, and great music followed by a brief presentation. Please come join us on the 10th and let us know how we can work together to keep our national forests WILD!

WILD VIRGINIA

Protecting your favorite wild places



P.O. Box 1065

Charlottesville, VA 22902

www.wildvirginia.org