DISCOVERY DAY AT THE FORKS OF COAL A GREAT SUCCESS

The Foundation’s “Discovery Day” at the Forks of Coal State Natural Area was held from 9:00 to 3:00 on May 6th. The free, family-oriented day was entertaining, fun and educational. The day began with an introduction by the Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation, followed by a morning bird walk led by Brooks Bird Club member Cindy Ellis. There were wildlife exhibits by the WV Division of Natural Resources and Marshall University Herpetology Lab (reptiles and amphibians) and the WVDEP’s mobile aquarium. Especially popular was a presentation of three live raptors by the WV Raptor Rehabilitation Center and a Coal River history presentation by our renowned local reenactor Doug Wood, who also led an afternoon nature hike.

West Virginia American Water had its mobile water unit there with information about water conservation and free fill-ups. The WV Forestry Division and Beyond the Backyard each had exhibits, and the Alum Creek Lions Club had a hot dog sale. The Girl Scout troop from Midway Elementary had a cookie sale and the Foundation had special baked goods from Charleston Bread, pepperoni rolls from Swiftwater Cafe and the Pro Start Training program at St. Albans High School. Pro Start also provided some of the world’s best ever fresh made cinnamon rolls. In addition There were games for children, educational booths, food and much more.

DON’T MISS THE NATURE WALKS ON SEPTEMBER 23RD!

Join us September 23rd for a morning of entertaining and educational nature walks and exhibits OR a special “floating” nature walk on Coal River.

Learn more about the Natural Area’s birds, geology and history by joining a hike on one of the trails or join our “floating” nature “walk” on the river and learn more about the river and plans for stream habitat improvements.

Participants in the float trip must pre-register and pay in advance by September 18th. Kayaks or paddle boards and transportation to and from the stream will be provided for $25.00/person donation. Donation for lunch and shuttle is $20.00/person with your own boat. The number of participants on the float trip is limited, so sign up early.

Meet at the parking lot at the Forks of Coal Natural Area at 9:00 to register for the hikes and check in for the floating walk.

SIGN UP FOR THE FLOATING WALK BY CALLING 304/543-1948.

MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS: the Alum Creek Lions Club, West Virginia American Water, the Coal River Group, Cabela’s, the WV Division of Forestry, the WV Division of Natural Resources, the WV Dept. of Environmental Protection, Green’s Feed & Seed, Swiftwater Cafe, Charleston Bread, Mountain Surf Paddle Sports, Beyond the Backyard, West Virginia State Parks, Marshall University Herpetology Lab, West Virginia Raptor Rehabilitation Center, West Virginia Humanities Council, Alum Creek Volunteer Fire Department, Linda and Frank Coulter, the Kanawha Valley Chapter of the Master Naturalists of West Virginia, Jim Strawn and Trout Unlimited.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

DISCOVER THE FORKS OF COAL DAY!

Rain, rain, go away...and it did for five hours on Saturday, May 6! It stormed prior to and it stormed after but for the first Discovery Days at the Forks of Coal, the weather cooperated. This event saw about 300 people through the booths and at the presentations. The day was a success!

It could not have taken place without many volunteers. Everyone from the Alum Creek Fire Department that filled the fish tank with water, to the folks that loaned us generators, to the Lion’s Club that sold hot dogs, we are thankful for each of you.

Several state agencies, local businesses and civic groups were there to share their expertise with the community. Thank you! Your knowledge and willingness to share it is a gift.

A big shout out to the Board of the Foundation. This is a working Board! They did everything from setting up the day before, to spending the night with the fish tank and generators, to working and cleaning up afterwards.

A special thank you to all the event sponsors who donated items for raffle and to sell. We are grateful for your donations and assistance.

To Superintendent Kevin Dials and the staff at Kanawha State Forest, who always go above and beyond what is asked, the Board is grateful.

The purpose of this event was to show off this newest state natural area to folks that live nearby, to make people aware of the upcoming plans for the area, to welcome them to be a part of the foundation and to offer them a chance to enjoy the trails and all the area has to offer. You don’t have to wait for the next special event. Come out this summer and walk the trails! Join the Foundation! Become a part of what is happening at Forks of Coal State Natural Area.

Kim McCluskey

YOU CAN SPONSOR A PARK BENCH!
Boy Scout to build benches as his Eagle Project

Commemorate a loved one; celebrate a special birthday or anniversary or simply show your community support by sponsoring a park bench. Benches can be dedicated for a donation of $500. Plaques will be affixed to the bench with your desired memorial or commemoration and all donations are tax deductible. Your donation will help in maintaining the bench and area around the bench for the next 10 years.

The park bench project is an Eagle Scout project of Life Scout Matthew Blackwood of BSA Troop 64. He plans to build seven benches to be placed on trails on the Natural Area. Your donation is a win-win to support scouting and the Forks of Coal State Natural Area.

Forks of Coal Foundation gratefully accepts gifts and donations from individuals, families, businesses and community organizations for Forks of Coal State Natural Area. For more information about the park bench sponsorship visit our website at www.forksofcoalfoundation.org or contact Kim at 304/982-2008 or Diana at 304/543-1948.
**DISCOVERY DAY REVIEW**

**COAL RIVER HISTORY ALIVE!**

A large and enthusiastic crowd turned out despite early morning rain. Young and older got to enjoy a learning experience. Doug Wood portrayed Gabriel Arthur, the earliest known European to set foot in the area. Dressed in clothes of the 1690s, he explained Arthur’s mission, having been sent by investors from Virginia to “explore the western lands” of the colony of Virginia. Complete with furs, a bundle of paw paw bark strips and a staff of native cane, he definitely looked the part. It was an entertaining glimpse into the Coal River’s long forgotten past.

**BIRDS OF PREY PRESENTATION**

The birds of prey were a very popular part of the event. The WV Raptor Rehabilitation Center from Fairmont brought a fascinating Turkey Vulture, a totally charming Eastern Screech Owl and a distinguished Red-Shouldered Hawk. Their presentation was quite informative and entertaining.

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**FORKS OF COAL FOUNDATION RECEIVES AWARD**

At this year’s annual Environmental Awards held on June 6 at the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection offices, the Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation was nominated and received an award for Education and Community Involvement. Two dozen businesses, groups and individuals from all across West Virginia received awards in categories that included Clean Energy, Brownfields Redevelopment, Volunteers, Industry, and Environmental Stewardship.

In order to receive an award, recipients had to be nominated by a WVDEP employee for exemplary actions in promoting a healthy environment in our State. The awards were presented by Cabinet Secretary Austin Caperton.

Foundation members Kim and Dave McCluskey, Tena Webb, Diana Green and Dennis Stottlemyer attended the presentations and accepted the award on behalf of the group.

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**THE FOUNDATION’S MISSION**

The mission of the Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation is to work with the WV Division of Natural Resources to preserve, protect and enhance the Forks of Coal State Natural Area by providing leadership in communication, funding, advocacy and conservation education for children and the community.
The Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation was formed in 2016 to work with the West Virginia DNR to build a wildlife education center and conservation area on the 102 acres at the Forks of Coal. The Foundation and the DNR are working together in the development of the center and educational activities and programs which will benefit our local Coal River and Kanawha Valley communities.

We invite you to join us! To learn more, go to Facebook or our website at www.forksofcoalfoundation.org.

Name_________________________________________ Phone Number/E-Mail ______________

Address____________________________________________________________________

Street Number   City   State   Zip Code

Amount of Gift ____$25____$35____$50____$100______ $250 ______$500______Other

Please make check payable to:  Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation
P.O. Box 5556, Charleston, WV 25361

The Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation
Post Office Box 5556
Charleston, West Virginia 25361

Join us SEPTEMBER 23RD for nature walks and special “floating” nature walk!