

The Current



News from the Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation

Winter-Spring 2019

CELEBRATE THE RIVER - MAY 11TH

Kayaking and paddleboarding featured

Come join us for "Rivers and Ridges" and celebrate the Little Coal River., sponsored by Boone Career & Technical Center. The all day event starts at 9:00 a.m. at the Hatfield-McCoy log cabin trail headquarters on Corridor G next to Waterways. The family friendly event will include lessons in kayaking and paddle boarding and a float down the river for young and older. Megan Roberts of Mountain Surf Paddleboards and Dain Bender of Little Coal River Kayak and Camping will be offering rentals and lessons on the 1-mile section that curves around the Waterways "peninsula." The float trip lasts about 45 minutes and is low gradient, Class 1 water.

Guided tours are planned throughout the day and you can even bring your own kayak. Shuttles will be provided by Boone County Schools and Boone Career & Technical Center students will assist with life jackets, loading and unloading, etc. The Foundation will sponsor a "floating nature walk" later in the year.

For more information look for _____ on Facebook or our website at www.forksofcoalfoundation.com.

PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION FOR CENTER INFRASTRUCTURE BEGINS

Following a January pre-construction meeting of all parties involved, work on Phase 1, the essential infrastructure the the wildlife education center, began the week of February 4. The first project was the relocation of the gas pipeline, which Cranberry Pipeline completed in two days.

Bear Contracting started on the sewer system upgrade in March, with plans to complete in late May. A new water line will be installed and a new entrance to the Natural Area will be constructed.

BLUE TRAIL SECTION BEING RELOCATED

Due to construction of the new entrance to the Natural Area, part of the Blue Trail is being relocated. The new route has been flagged and the trail will be cleared by volunteers and Boy Scouts within a few weeks.

BIRD HABITAT PROJECT PLANNED

The Foundation is collaborating with the Handlan Chapter of the Brooks Bird Club on finding a suitable location to create habitat for our native Chimney Swifts at the Forks of Coal State Natural Area. Chimney Swifts, so called because they like to nest in chimneys and hollow trees, no longer have enough chimneys and well-situated hollow trees in which to nest.



Swifts are beneficial birds that eat a lot of flies, mosquitoes and flying ants, but due to habitat loss they are declining in North America.

In order to provide nesting places for the birds, nesting towers are being constructed around the Kanawha Valley. Funding for the proposed nesting tower is being provided through a grant.

These little 5" birds stay around until early November before migrating to South America.

**THE FORKS OF COAL
STATE NATURAL AREA
FOUNDATION**

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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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WHAT IS A PARK/FOREST SUPERINTENDENT?

According to the internet, "A park ranger, or forest ranger is a person entrusted with protecting and preserving park lands." This definition does not describe all that a park superintendent does. We recently lost Kevin Dials, Superintendent at Kanawha State Forest with responsibility for Forks of Coal State Natural Area. Kevin lived within Kanawha State Forest. You may say "how lucky!" but don't forget he and his family had people knocking on their door at all hours, day and night. I once had a park superintendent tell me someone knocked on his door and asked him to put a watermelon in the fridge so it would be cold for their picnic!

Park superintendents come out on off-hours for foundation meetings, which are never held during working hours! Kevin had two monthly foundation meetings to attend since he was responsible for Kanawha State Forest and Forks of Coal! All this takes away from family time.

The job is thankless. Folks will look at you as they are complaining and say, "But I pay your salary! I pay taxes!" Believe me, you don't pay enough!

Duties given to park superintendents include special law enforcement duties, bathroom cleaning, conservation science, environmental specialist work, working with naturalists, secretaries, accountants, IT specialists, marketers, tourism specialists and swimming pool managers. They manage a staff of 1-200, many being high school kids and first-time job holders. They don't get to take a vacation during the summer because that's when other people vacation at their park. And yet, park ranger is one of the few jobs still highly respected by the public.

Most park superintendents do the job because they believe in their mission. This is where the job description comes into play! They are "entrusted" to preserve and protect the land given to us as citizens of West Virginia. They fight daily with legislators and citizens to preserve and protect these lands for future generations.

Thank you, Kevin Dials, for a job well done. Thank you to the WV State Park System staff. I am happy to pay my taxes for a job well done!

Kim McCluskey

BUY A BRICK – BUILD A LEGACY

The Foundation is offering commemorative bricks for sale that can be ordered with inscriptions up to 3lines and will be built into the entry area walkway at the new wildlife education center. Individual bricks are \$125 each or 10 for \$1,000.

For information please contact a board member or visit our **website** at www.forksofcoalfoundation.org or Facebook page where you can place your order online. You can also **e-mail** us with any questions at forksofcoalfoundation@gmail.com.

THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS!

We are sincerely grateful to these most recent members and generous donors for their support.

Ruth E. Webb
Roger C. Hardway
Jerry and Donna Goldberg
Curry Funeral Home
Pete Sullivan
DNR Commissioner Kenneth Wilson
Tommy H. Mullins
Jim and Bev Triplett
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PART 2... REMEMBERING LIFE AT THE FORKS OF COAL RIVER

Becky Hager's family lived in a one-story frame house that was located on a high bench overlooking Little Coal River near what once was Union Carbide's Camp Cliffside. Her family had electricity at their home but no running water. She and her sister carried buckets of water from the river for her mother to do the laundry. She refers to it as "we had running water....we would run to the river and get it." The washing machine sat on the front porch and they built a fire under it to heat the water.

The family had a cook stove that was fueled by wood and coal. Becky recalls a family member building a fire in the stove every morning. The house itself was heated by a fireplace that was open to two rooms. In the summer when the river was low and the water was warm, Hager and her sister would take a flat-bottom boat and pole it down the river, and then swam along towing it as they went and collecting loose coal. By this method they were able to collect enough coal to use for heating and cooking in the winter.

The family of four grew a large and productive garden on the gently sloping land around their home. Their crops of potatoes, beans, tomatoes, corn and other vegetables were enough to feed the family. Plus, they raised ducks and chickens. Hager recalls having to tend a flock of domesticated mallards as a child, but they had no cattle or sheep.

PART 3 NEXT ISSUE....

AT THE HUNTING & FISHING SHOW

The Foundation had a booth at the WV Trophy Hunters' annual Hunting & Fishing Show at the Charleston Coliseum in January.



PLEASE JOIN US AND SUPPORT THE FORKS OF COAL FOUNDATION TODAY!

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 support the 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.

Please 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

Please don't forget to renew your membership!

