

The Current



News from the Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation

December 2023

ANOTHER BIG YEAR AT THE FORKS

A BUSY YEAR OF HAPPENINGS

2023 was the first full year since the opening of the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center and a lot has happened. We had visits from 19 school groups, (elementary through high school) including two home school groups, three YMCA groups, the Wayne County 4H and Forrest Burdette Day Care.

The schools were from all over Kanawha County, Boone County and Lincoln County.

Other events included:

- First Day hike
- Winter Night hike
- Beyond the Backyard
- West Virginia Day celebration
- Back to School Bash
- Honey Bee presentation
- Project WET (see page 3)
- Crafting with Carrie
- New aquarium fish
- New exhibits



West Hamlin Elementary students learn about wildlife

JOIN US FOR FIRST DAY HIKE

Everyone is invited to join us for a **First Day Hike on Monday, January 1**. The hike will start at the wildlife education center at 12:00 noon. Depending on weather and number of participants, there may be two hikes. Refreshments will be available.

COMING SOON: SELF-GUIDED HIKING BROCHURES

Our hiking trails here at the Forks of Coal State Natural Area offer visitors so much to see. That's why Carrie, our VISTA staffer, has been busy creating self-guided hiking brochures to help identify things you may otherwise never notice.

The items on the brochures are organized by numbers and will correspond to a number along the designated trail. Each item in the brochure is followed by a brief description of what you are looking at. The Blue to Green Trail brochure will focus on tree identification.

The Yellow Trail brochure will focus on a variety of things such as the Big Coal River, tree abnormalities, habitats, and more. Wildflower brochures have also been created to help visitors to the pollinator field identify flowers that are commonly in bloom during certain times of the year.

We hope to have these available soon and that visitors of all ages will enjoy them.

PLEASE START THE NEW YEAR BY RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR DONATING. Thank you!



CARRIE: The VISTA Report

SCHOOL VISITS, NEW EXHIBITS

We have had a busy fall so far here at the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center. We have had many school visits that allow us to create a fun but educational experience for students of all ages. During these trips, kids can do a scavenger hunt in the center, a class of the teacher's choice, and guided hikes. This is a great opportunity for kids to learn more about West Virginia's beautiful nature and for them to experience it themselves. We are always scheduling field trips year-round, and we encourage teachers near and far to reach out to us. We have also been busy adding new exhibits to our education center.

Our new additions include a White-breasted Nuthatch, Five-lined skink on a mushroom, a Copperhead, Pileated Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, Barred Owl, a squirrel and a pair of Mallard ducks. All these species are commonly found throughout West Virginia.

A couple of awards have also been displayed to showcase the hard work that goes into the center and surrounding area. We encourage everyone to stop in to see these latest additions.



West Virginia Day hikers

[Carrie Kirkendoll is a WVU graduate with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Resources and is part of the staff at the center thanks to funding through the VISTA program.]

THE FORKS OF COAL STATE NATURAL AREA FOUNDATION

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Annual memberships are due in January. HOWEVER, if you renewed your membership after October 1, you are covered for 2024.

All memberships include a subscription to our newsletter. You may pay dues by check to "Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation" at P.O. Box 5556, Charleston, WV 25361, or go to our website at www.forksofcoalfoundation.org and click the "DONATE" button on any page. See back page for membership options.

WATER FESTIVAL AT FORKS OF COAL

On September 21, 2023, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection worked in conjunction with the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center to host the annual **Project WET Water Festival**. This event brought in approximately 175 fifth-grade students and their teachers from surrounding schools. (See page 3 for more on Project WET.)

Students transitioned from different stations that were set up to learn about the water cycle, wetlands, pollution, acid rain, aquatic benthic macroinvertebrates, and more. This was a great opportunity for students to learn about the abundance of our water resources and encouraging positive change for future generations.

WATER SCIENCE:

PROJECT WET: GREAT FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The WVDEP has a program that makes learning about water fun for students. It's called Project WET, a water science/education program for preK-12 educators – public, homeschool, private school teachers, youth club leaders and many others. The Project WET curriculum was developed through collaboration with teachers, scientists and resource professionals. It correlates with state and national standards and supports STEM principles.

Water Festivals are held as part of the programs. These are 1-day events for fifth grade students, designed to increase children's awareness about our natural resources and how we can protect those resources. The festivals are held all around the world to educate students in fun, interactive environments with hands-on activities. The activities complement existing curricula.

Topics include:

- The water cycle
- Groundwater
- Water quality
- Stream ecology
- Molecular properties
- Wetland functions
- Water management
- Water conservation
- Water properties of soils
- Non-point source pollution/stormwater

Teachers can become certified in Project WET by attending a free 6-hour Educator 2.0 workshop. Contact the WVDEP for more information. Or go to www.facebook.com/ProjectWET



Students participated in an educational game as part of Project WET.

THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS!

The support of our members, friends and neighbors is vital to our success and we are sincerely grateful to these most recent supporters:

Warner Law Offices and
Beyond the Backyard
Dave and Kim McCluskey
Ronald L. King
Samuel Reese
Rachel Whitfield
Tommy H. Mullins
Diana K. Green
John Jordan
Katherine Hastings
Anonymous Visitors at the Center

BRICK SALES CONTINUE!

You can help us spread the word

There is still time to support the Foundation by buying a custom engraved brick to honor someone special, or as a gift for Christmas, an anniversary, birthday, wedding or any other special occasion.

If you have already ordered a brick, please spread the word among your friends and neighbors about this unique opportunity. Brick sales will continue into 2024.

For more information or to purchase a brick, visit our website at www.forksofcoalfoundation.org or our Facebook page.

Or, e-mail us at forksofcoalfoundation@gmail.com.

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.

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 create 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 operation of the center and educational activities and programs which will benefit our local Coal River and Kanawha Valley communities.

To join us or to learn more, please 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___\$1,000___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

1ST DAY HIKE - JANUARY 1

Visit www.forksofcoalfoundation.org and follow us on Facebook!

