



HEADWATERS

Conserving and Restoring West Virginia's Exceptional Rivers and Streams

SPRING / SUMMER 2018



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Chris Colin at Kanawha Falls;
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Find Your Voice And Raise It

Everyone who loves spending time on the water knows that every river has a story; its bends and flows, its fasts and slows. Rivers have a way of speaking to us, but no way of speaking for themselves. Every river — all our rivers — needs a voice.

You are a River Voice. Maybe you write letters or respond to action alerts. Maybe you comment on policies or show up to raise your voice in person. Or maybe you donate to our policy work. Or, like the people featured in this edition of Headwaters, you're directly involved in a West Virginia Rivers program.

Our job is to inform and empower you to speak for the rivers, to mobilize many voices as a community of people who want to be part of something bigger than themselves, who want to be part of a power shift — one that at times moves at a tectonic pace, but one, even in these politically divided times, continues as sure as the plates of the earth.

Don Garvin, a WV Rivers founding director who died in March, was a voice to be reckoned with. Don was no-holds-barred, yet a total realist. When you merge those two things you have passion and grounding about what's best for our rivers.

Don loved policy work, and knew that we must have impeccable credibility. When marginalized by interests who want to push us aside, we have to stand on truth. That's why we work to provide you the facts. And that's why your voice is vital.

That was the case in the recent uprising to prevent opening West Virginia's state parks to commercial logging. Together we had the passion to say, "No, these lands are ours. Let us have these lands and the rivers they hold as one thing that we don't compromise or degrade. We will draw a line, a bright line, and declare 'Not On Our Watch.'"

Maybe you're still finding your way to support our rivers. Maybe you've never been political. Maybe you've never voted or voted infrequently. If you want to speak for our rivers, please vote. The people making decisions need to know we all care about water. They understand we're at an economic crossroads and that we are faced with choices, whether to transform and diversify our economy through clean water, education, and infrastructure like broadband access and worker training; or to once again rely on a single industry to get us through a few decades of boom only to leave behind degraded water and struggling communities.

Now's our time to find our voice and make it louder. Stay informed. Get outside. Love a river. Speak. Vote!

See you on the water,

—Angie Rosser, Executive Director

Above: People from across West Virginia gathered in Hillsboro to show support for Watoga State Park and locals who care about it.



Don Garvin was a member of WV Rivers' founding board of directors. He was a champion for supporting water advocacy with water science. And he believed the people's voice would win out in time. Thanks to his financial support for the WV Rivers Science Fund, that voice is growing: 760 new clean water advocates took action during the 2018 legislative session.

Water Policy

Don Garvin's Legacy Challenges Us All To Stand And Speak

Over the past 28 years, many people have helped WV Rivers grow from a band of passionate outdoorspeople to the statewide voice for clean water. That's what makes our community thrive. In the WV Rivers family, Don Garvin was a constant presence from our founding until his death in March. He was an original board member, a legend in West Virginia environmental advocacy, and, even when he could no longer make the trip to the Capitol, a trusted voice for sound water policy.

"Whenever he was in a room, you could usually count on a lively debate punctuated with laughter," wrote WV Rivers Executive Director Angie Rosser in a remembrance. "He got everyone thinking; he challenged everyone to see the heart of the matter. On the WV Rivers board, however debate unfolded, there was a sense that, indeed, he was our heart and soul."

Don spent 16 years as a vice president and field manager of an oil and gas company. Then he spent 15 years as the legislative coordinator and lead lobbyist for WV Environmental Council. He knew the issues from different sides and the importance of getting to the root of the truth. That's one reason Don founded the WV Rivers Science Fund. He knew more than anyone how much time and expertise it takes to analyze mountainous legal briefs and studies, and he knew how critical it is to mobilize people around policies.

His approach could be summed up this way: You bring three things. You bring the science; you bring the solutions; you bring the people.

During the 2018 legislative session, WV Rivers supporters and friends sent over 20,000 letters to legislators; they made phone calls; they showed up. Underpinning their enthusiasm was the knowledge that our policy prescriptions were based on sound science. To Don, that's where all good policy began.

Don believed in WV Rivers. He poured a lot of his life into it. He really wanted to see it succeed. And he was happy to see how we grew from an idea so many years ago, to what we are today. To Don the realist, it wasn't about the idea that we would *win* every battle, but that we were *in* every battle. Every battle. Show up. Be bold. Speak truth to power.

So after decades of volunteering his expertise for WV Rivers, Don Garvin took on establishing our Science Fund. To him, this was most important, the way to advocate policies firmly based in scientific facts. It would enable WV Rivers to be nimble and responsive when called upon.

Don's generous contributions to our Science Fund supported our work on Water Quality Standards, a technical and sometimes mind-numbing regulatory framework to conserve and restore our rivers to health for all of their uses. Without him, we would not have been able to improve two highly technical bills this past legislative session.

There will never be another Don Garvin at WV Rivers. He had the insight of a founder coupled with first-hand knowledge of the history of environmental politics in the state. He understood the importance of funding science-based policy because he'd spent nearly two decades in the trenches working it. He had the technical and political expertise to be a mentor.

He knew how to get what we can, when to say no, and when the truth was more powerful than any compromise that might be gained.

We know we cannot replace Don. We can honor him by carrying on his legacy through financial support for the Science Fund. We have no choice.

The coming months bring another review of Water Quality Standards. We know industry will be there with a big checkbook to attack them. We know the fragile commission controlling pollution in the Ohio River is under pressure to relax standards. We know that the drive to deregulate Clean Water Act protections nationally will not abate. And while we don't know all the details of new degradations industry will propose next year, we know they are in the works.

Policy work and advocacy is rarely funded by grants; it is funded by the people who care passionately. People like Don Garvin. People like you. Our online Donate button at WVRivers.org gives you the easy option to join the 121 people who have already donated to the Science Fund so far this year. We still have \$7,700 to go to replenish the fund; please help us get there.



Public Lands

SOS Parks Creates The Spark

At first, it was just odd. The Justice administration wanted to log our state parks to pay for maintenance. It didn't make sense. How could turning Wild and Wonderful into "Tame and Mediocre" improve our parks?

WV Rivers set up a meeting with public lands advocates and commerce secretary Woody Thrasher to explore ways to fund our parks. But before we could meet again, a bill was introduced.

The speed with which partners mobilized was breathtaking. Advocates launched a campaign called Save Our State Parks — SOS Parks. WV Rivers took on coordination, compiling ideas to fund our parks, setting up supports to help raise partners' voices in the media, generating over 18,000 letters through our action alerts, and helping the lobbying effort go from zero to sixty in a flash.

There were many partners, including WV Wilderness Coalition, WV Environmental Council, Sierra Club WV, Friends of Blackwater, WV Scenic Trails Association, and Kanawha Forest Coalition.

"If places like our state parks matter to us, then we must continually work to protect and defend them," said Chad Cordell of Kanawha Forest Coalition. Chad created a video that went viral, led a powerful social media campaign, and spent time in the Capitol.

As the administration took to the airways, their story fell flat. Then their story changed. Commercial logging, they said, would improve the visitor experience. The coalition amplified voices of park visitors who said, "Wait! We visit our parks because they contain amazing forests!"

The narrative changed again. Logging would improve forest health. Our coalition brought the voices of foresters to the Capitol and to the press. Science showed that old forests were better able to ward off fire, pests, and invasive species.

Then the administration tried a new approach: They would log only in Watoga State Park. Perhaps they thought people wouldn't care about a remote park in Pocahontas County. They were wrong.

We helped local advocates mobilize, and the magic grew. People from all over the state wrote letters and called the Senate committee considering the bill. Not Watoga, not anywhere.

Voices of reason emerged. Among those were agriculture commissioner Kent Leonhardt and Senator Mike Woelfel. Most Senators were skeptical. What they needed was to hear constituents had their backs. And they did. Phone lines were jammed; email boxes filled. Through West Virginians for Public Lands, we organized letter writing parties in homes, libraries, and brew pubs. Experts testified. The climax came in Pocahontas County on a snowy Saturday, when advocates from across the state joined local people in a show of support.

In the end, the bill fizzled in committee. One senator said he had heard from more people on the issue than any other.

Now we have returned to the national scene. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF — a critical funding source for national and state public lands — is in the sights of Congressional members who want to dismantle it.

LWCF uses offshore oil and gas royalties to buy national lands and fund state and local parks. It's helped paddling in the New and Gauley, fishing the Williams, hiking in Seneca Rocks, and exploring our wildlife refuges. Our state parks have used it; city pools and playgrounds and local parks have received funds.

Helping mobilize the charge are the WVPL volunteer leaders, trained and empowered by WV Rivers. Carmen Bowes is one. "I grew up on the Tygart River. Its waters were and are vital to me. That place bred in me a love for the streams, forests, and landscapes of our beautiful state."

Carmen and a corps of leaders organize events, table at festivals, coordinate letter writing, and rally the troops. Our WVPL business alliance members are other voices; they know that as go our public lands, so goes our tourism economy.

Under WVPL, WV Rivers is helping protect our national public lands from a push to commercialize and industrialize the headwaters of our rivers and streams. You can help. Sign up for our WVPL e-news, become a volunteer leader, stay informed.

Above left: Chad Cordell of Kanawha Forest Coalition, a volunteer for the SOS Parks campaign.

Right: Carmen Bowes, a West Virginians for Public Lands volunteer leader; photo by Samuel Taylor Photography.



Safe Water for West Virginia

Amplifying Voices For Safe Water

For Martha Ehlman, there was no Aha! moment. Just a realization that many of her fellow merchants in Harpers Ferry, WV, didn't know the source of their water. Martha's shop, Ten Fold Fair Trade, sells handcrafted goods from around the world, working with fair trade groups that guarantee fair wages to artisans for their work. She knows the origins of everything in her shop. "Our businesses rely on safe water," Martha said. "They might not understand it, but they need to, and they need to know where it comes from."

She would like the town, which is interwoven with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, to become an eco-tourism destination. "We have this beautiful town where the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers meet," she said. "We are a rafting and paddling destination, and we have a national park and businesses that rely on park visitors. We have such potential."

That's one reason Martha got involved in WV Rivers' Safe Water Harpers Ferry project. Business owners, the town, public agencies, watershed groups, and tourism boosters are developing projects to restore and protect Elks Run, the town's water supply. She and the town's merchants teamed up with the water utility and the regional development office to create Harpers Ferry Water Faire. They're eyeing this annual celebration of the watershed to raise the stream's profile as a community asset.

For another Safe Water volunteer, community organizing around water began with a threat. Allen Johnson of Pocahontas County is coordinator of Christians for the Mountains, a network advocating that Christians and their churches recognize their responsibility to "live compatibly, sustainably, and gratefully joyous upon this God's earth."

When gas companies began to buy easements in the Marcellus shale region, Allen and others formed the Eight Rivers Council. The group of county residents works to get information about what deep shale gas means to the local economy, water, and way of life.

"All our water leaves the county, none of it comes in. We are the headwaters," said Allen, who has been active in source water protection along the Greenbrier River. "A lot of us value our

water; it's a thermometer of how the environment is doing."

So he got involved in WV Rivers' efforts to protect the City of Marlinton's drinking water supply, Knapp Creek watershed. There, organizations and agencies are working on projects to raise awareness of the watershed and help people understand that, as Allen says, "What happens on the land impacts our water."

Our six Safe Water WV pilot projects are community driven and watershed based. WV Rivers coordinates, hosts meetings, finds funding, and brings together people that don't always work together. The goal is to help create projects that address the goals of the local utility's source water protection plan, improve overall watershed health, and leverage resources to accomplish more together than they might alone.

In Jefferson and adjacent Berkeley County, this synergy has brought together land trusts, watershed groups, and utilities to explore how land conservation can help protect drinking water supplies. Their Safe Water project is called Private Lands, Public Waters: A Safe Water for West Virginia Conservation Collaborative.

Land trusts in the two counties are among the most successful in the state. Their main tool is the conservation easement, where landowners donate or sell a portion of development rights to keep their land available for farming or open space forever.

Grant Smith is president of the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle. "Over half our easements border a stream, creek, or river, and most of the remainder have ponds or Karst-type sink holes," he said. "The Safe Water initiative has identified potentially promising funding sources for our and other conservation efforts with an impact on local water and the Chesapeake Bay."

Liz Wheeler of the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board says that one of the exciting aspects of the project is the emphasis on public awareness. "A lot of people still don't understand easements. Or they think they are tax breaks for wealthy landowners," said Liz. "Easements provide benefits for everyone, including the prospect of cleaner water."

Above left: Martha Ehlman, owner of Ten Fold Fair Trade in Harpers Ferry. Right: Allen Johnson of Christians for the Mountains.



Natural Gas Development

Pebbles In A Stream, What Volunteer Monitors Can Tell Us

What does it mean when you see pebbles piling in a stream? Or, when you scoop a jar of water from a mountain creek and the water looks cloudy, what's going on? Ask one of our volunteer stream monitors, and you'll learn.

Already this year, 240 volunteers have been trained to conduct visual and/or water quality assessments of streams in the paths of pipeline construction. They are the eyes of the WV-VA Water Quality Monitoring Project, a Trout Unlimited program implemented in West Virginia in partnership with WV Rivers. The goal is to train and equip volunteers to monitor streams that could be impacted by shale gas development.

Since 2013, we've trained 346 monitors. They've monitored 507 locations over almost 4,000 sampling trips. Volunteers come from many backgrounds, and from across the state. Some are directly impacted. They or their neighbors are living in the pipelines' paths or downstream from a crossing that could be damaged during construction.

That's the case of Susan and Ty Bouldin, West Virginia natives who live along Hungards Creek in Summers County. "In 2014 we learned that our land — our homeplace — was in the survey corridor of the Mountain Valley Pipeline," said Susan. "After the initial shock, we found ourselves reaching out to neighbors, local watershed associations, public interest law firms, and government officials to try to understand what, exactly, was happening in West Virginia."

Susan recounts how families have found "their land, homes, and beloved streams in the crosshairs" of the rush to extract, develop, and control. "There is virtually no acknowledgement of the personal and financial costs to the citizens of the state," she said.

The Bouldins are no longer in the MVP pipeline corridor, but their neighbors are. "We've seen lifelong dreams destroyed, fear of the pipeline exploding, worry over loss of property value, and the debilitating realization that all their work and love for their land and homes have come to this," Susan said.

Susan and Ty monitor Hungards Creek. They've received training to conduct assessments that are key to determining whether pipeline construction is impacting streams. Excess mud and cloudy water can be signals, which are indicators for high turbidity — a high level of soil in water caused by construction. By measuring turbidity, volunteers measure for sediment pollution from earth disturbance activities. Pebble counts provide another tool to document erosion and sedimentation issues, and their impact on aquatic habitat. Monitoring also measures pH, discharge, stream cross-sectional area, stage, air and water temperature, and conductivity.

Conductivity relates to water's ability to conduct electricity. It is affected by the presence of inorganic dissolved solids like chloride, nitrate, sulfate, magnesium, calcium, iron, and aluminum cations. By measuring conductivity, volunteers are monitoring for sources of nonpoint source pollution like logging, mining, construction, and unconventional shale gas development.

Measuring temperature and stage, cross-sectional area or discharge are important for establishing a baseline on conductivity for a specific stream. Our visual assessment protocols ensure volunteers have the knowledge to identify and properly document pollution incidents resulting from earth-disturbance activities so that regulatory agencies can be alerted and take action.

"We are grateful that there are well-informed, passionate, articulate people working in partnership to preserve what we believe to be the state's most precious natural resource — West Virginia's waters," said Susan. "West Virginia Rivers Coalition's leadership and commitment to science-based analysis is critical in documenting potential impacts of the over-development of pipeline infrastructure in the state."



Above: Pipeline activists want clean water; photo by FightingFox Photography. Left: Susan and Ty Bouldin are volunteer stream monitors on Hungards Creek near Pence Springs. Hungards Creek is a substantial tributary of the Greenbrier River.

A Life Of Adventure And Trust

A memoir by Jamie Shumway

There are two emotions shared by every outdoor adventurer. One is the thrill of uncertainty no matter how sure you are of your approach. The other is the serenity of safety and trust shared among companion explorers. Jamie Shumway, co-founder of West Virginia Rivers who died in 2014, knew that these two things are inseparable.

The title of his recently published memoir, *Off Belay: A Last Great Adventure*, captures his spirit. A climber calls, "Off Belay," when finding safe footing. It's a way of saying you're in a safe place, and an acknowledgement that you didn't get there alone. The thrill of the adventure is possible only through trust of the team.

In *Off Belay*, written with Renee K. Nicholson, Jamie shares his memories of a life well lived with tales of whitewater paddling, skiing, mountaineering and rock climbing. From backpacking in Yosemite, to climbing at Seneca Rocks, to paddling the Grand Canyon with his wife Betsy Pyle and adventures with his son Wesley, Jamie's stories inspire all of us to cherish the moment, to seize each day, and to keep looking ahead to the next journey.

Jamie, who served as associate dean for medical education at West Virginia University's School of Medicine, brought that same sense of adventure and trust to the founding of WV Rivers, when he and co-founder Mac Thornton and others gathered to create one of the nation's first statewide river advocacy groups.

Jamie hosted that first meeting, inviting others like Mac to outline a vision that everyone could share and support. He brought his own ideas and dreams to the conversation. He also brought unwavering belief in collaboration, letting everyone be heard. That's how the idea could be transformed into a sustaining purpose.

That's still how we work. WV Rivers brings the voices, talents, ideas, and energies of people together in a spirit of trust, as fellow explorers, to achieve things no person or organization could do alone. Jamie was most proud of the WV Rivers way of "building community and citizen support for river conservation in West Virginia."

"As a founding board member of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition," Jamie wrote, "I am proud of what the West Virginia Rivers Coalition has accomplished, and I look forward to its bright and continuing future." To help secure that future, proceeds from the sale of *Off Belay* will be donated to WV Rivers. For a copy of the book, see Mac Thornton's remembrance at WVRivers.org/2018/05/offbelay.



Want To Help WV Rivers Protect Our Headwaters Rivers And Streams?

There are many ways you can be involved in the work of WV Rivers. Whatever time you have, you can make a difference! Here are a few ways.

Make a financial gift. Our work is not possible without the foundation of financial support of our members. Send in the return form on the backside of this page, make an online donation at WVRivers.org, or call us at 304-637-7201. You'll be in great company of people who give back to rivers!

Become a volunteer stream monitor. Learn the techniques of conducting visual assessments. It might be a nearby stream, or a stretch of a special creek you like to visit. Learn more by emailing Autumn Crowe at ACrowe@WVRivers.org.

Join our corps of public lands volunteers. Our growing team of West Virginians for Public Lands volunteer leaders needs help with tabling at events and festivals, organizing house parties, or hosting gatherings at brew pubs. You can take it a step further and become a WVPL volunteer leader! Contact Megan Hamilton at MHamilton@WVRivers.org.

Sign up for our policy updates. Actions by WV Rivers friends and supporters on the state parks logging bill show that people make a difference. If you're super-busy, this is the most time-efficient way to have your voice heard. Our policy updates come out weekly during the WV legislative session with opportunities to raise your voice. Visit WVRivers.org and click on email sign-up. Check the box for WV Water Policy News.

Share your photos! This summer we're documenting the parks and forests that have benefited from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which uses offshore oil and gas royalties to fund national public lands and our wonderful state parks. You can help by capturing a photo of your favorite place on your phone. Contact Matt Kearns at MKearns@WVRivers.org.

Participate in the public input processes on water quality. If writing comments is your thing, we make it easy. Your first step is signing up for our e-news at WVRivers.org. There are also opportunities to attend public hearings on critical regulations. This year three important public comment periods are happening:

- **WV Water Quality Standards.** WVDEP will be proposing changes to statewide limits for multiple pollutants. A 45-day comment period is now open; a public hearing takes place July 10. Then changes will go through legislative review and approval.
- **Ohio River pollution limits.** ORSANCO is the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission. It's the multi-state commission that sets pollution limits for the Ohio River. It is considering abandoning a uniform standard for the entire river. A public comment period and hearing will be held this summer, with a decision expected this fall.
- **Chesapeake Bay watershed improvement plan.** If you live in one of the eight WV counties that drain to the Potomac, you can help chart the future of local streams in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed through the next phase of WV's watershed improvement plan.



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