A REASON TO CELEBRATE

Public participation and citizen advocacy are at the heart of WV Rivers’ policy work and it’s all too easy to be disheartened by the challenges facing our environment. That’s why it’s essential we recognize and celebrate our successes!

One of the highlights of this past year we want to celebrate is witnessing the persistence of citizen advocates throughout the 2021 legislative session.

*Never underestimate the power of persistent citizen advocates.*

One of the most inspiring moments happened when advocates organized a virtual “People’s Public Hearing” in response to the Legislature’s refusal to hold a public hearing on a proposed exemption to the Aboveground Storage Tank Act. This exemption would deregulate more than 880 oil & gas storage tanks near drinking water intakes. More than 80 citizens, including members of the Legislature, joined the People’s Public Hearing and the bill was defeated.

By the end of the session, advocates had sent over 48,000 messages to the Legislature in support of clean water. Now, that’s reason to celebrate!

TAKE THE PLUNGE

Ian Urriola of Stephens City, VA is a WV Rivers’ Paddling Partner, a donor who makes automatic recurring donations. He, too, appreciates the persistence of West Virginia’s water advocates.

Ian says there’s a special place in his heart for West Virginia. “The tenacity of the people and the natural beauty of the state are at the intersection of the things I care about,” he said.

“I set up a recurring monthly gift because I know how important a steady stream of income is for small organizations.”

When asked how he’d encourage other donors to consider becoming Paddling Partners, Ian immediately answered, “Take the plunge! A gift of any size on a recurring basis can make an impact, it helps WV Rivers plan for the future.”
We heard from user groups whose interests included topics like birdwatching, paddling, hiking, hunting and accessibility. The feedback provided will help guide our public lands programming and policy positions.

Accessibility, adequate signage, trail maintenance, habitat protection and overuse of prime tourist locations were top concerns across the interest groups.

While these findings are preliminary, you can read a report on the project by scanning this QR code with your smartphone camera.
LEAVING A LEGACY OF CLEAN WATER

WV Rivers' board chair, Chrissy Zeltner, has always been drawn to the healing power of water. Whether it's the sheer enjoyment she gets from kayaking on the rivers around the state or the importance of clean water for healthy living, this Preston County resident is passionate about all the benefits of clean water.

But, for Chrissy, it's also personal: “I want to leave a legacy of clean water for my niece and nephew.” That’s why she documented a planned gift with WV Rivers. “I’m not able to give a major gift right now, but I can provide a legacy gift well into the future.”

For Chrissy, planned giving is about the future: of WV Rivers and the waters that flow through West Virginia. “We need to be thinking now so future generations can enjoy the beauty of our rivers and streams.

“I want to leave a legacy of clean water for my niece and nephew.”

If you’ve considered leaving a legacy gift to WV Rivers, our development officer, Chett Pritchett is here to help. You can call Chett, (304) 315-4799, or email him, cpritchett@wvrivers.org. If you’ve already created a planned gift, please reach out to Chett to ensure we are prepared to honor your legacy.

MINI GRANTS: BIG IMPACT

Since 2019 WV Rivers has had the opportunity to make mini grants to grassroots groups in West Virginia. Our mini grant program is made possible through the generous support of a private foundation. These small grants range from $500-$2,500 and are designed to aid grassroots groups in organizing their communities on environmental issues. If you know a grassroots group who could benefit from a mini grant please have them email wvrivers@wvrivers.org. Pictured right are participants at the Grassroots Policy Summit hosted by WV Citizen Action Education Fund, a recipient of a 2020 mini grant.
One of WV Rivers favorite memories of the past year happened in July when we gathered with friends in Tucker
County. We spent the day along the banks of the Black Fork of the Cheat River appreciating the gifts of nature.
Next year, we hope to have more opportunities to gather with you at special places across West Virginia.