

Community Shares of West Virginia

Welcome to the first edition of The Shares!



Picture taken at Pipestem by CSWV member Evelyn Dortch of DAWG

Welcome to the first edition of The Shares, a newsletter from Community Shares of West Virginia, which will highlight activities and stories about CSWV member groups.

Community Shares of West Virginia has eleven member groups at this time: The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); DAWG; Family Leadership First (FLF); Mountain State Education and Research Fund (MSERF); Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC); The Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS); Step-By-Step WV; WV Free; The WV Highlands Conservancy; The West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and

Workcamps (WVMAW); and The West Virginia Rivers Coalition. We expect to add several additional groups over the next few months.

While our member groups do very different work, they are united in the belief that meaningful, lasting community improvement requires addressing the root cause of problems rather than just treating the symptoms.

Our members are working on the issues West Virginians care about: community improvement, education, health, citizen empowerment, economic justice, the environment, and social justice issues.

AFSC– WV Economic Justice Project: WVEJ



Rick Wilson of AFSC's WVEJ program reads a liturgy at a vigil to protest federal budget cuts that would adversely affect the poor.

WVEJ works statewide on issues affecting low income/working

families by:
•helping people get best possible deal from current system:

•spreading information about benefits/programs for low income families, labor law, civil rights, education, buying a home, tax credits for working people, and other useful information through publications, trainings, outreach, inc *A Guide for Working Families*

•along with West Virginia Welfare Reform Coalition and Legal Aid of West Virginia, WVEJ helped

About WV Free

WV FREE represents a wide variety of people in West Virginia. Organizations affiliated with WV FREE include social justice organizations, student groups, social workers, health care providers, and a broad array of religious groups. Our members are affiliated organizations that work to promote family planning and protect reproductive freedom for all West Virginian women. We are a 50c(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Our Mission: The mission of WV FREE is to further and protect reproductive rights of all West Virginia women.

WV FREE's goals are to:

- Seek legal protection at state and national levels guaranteeing reproductive freedom of choice and health care for women of all ages
- Broaden the base of active and vocal support for reproductive rights in West Virginia
- Expand community understanding and awareness of the meaning of reproductive freedom throughout West Virginia
- Ensure access to reproductive health care for all West Virginians, especially low-income women and teens.

develop the Making Connections program to train families & advocates statewide on issues such as welfare, supports for employment, health care, accessing higher education, advocacy skills. Making Connections trainings have been held statewide, reaching >1000 people.

•Engages in campaigns to gain/defend economic rights for workers/low income families.

WVEJ has joined with community allies to improve/restore cuts in

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Helping West Virginians create a better West Virginia

Special points of interest:

- OVEC: Coal to Liquid
- Family Leadership First Conference
- Spruce Ecosystem Restoration
- WV Free
- WVDAWG: Need More \$\$\$
- After-school at SALS
- About MSERF
- WVEJ

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The Shares

AFSC-WVEJ, cont.

the social safety net; past campaigns restored welfare benefits for families with members receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI); allowed welfare recipients to count education from literacy to college as work activities; improved due process rights for families seeking benefit extensions; helped secure guarantee of welfare assistance for battered women & children; restored cuts in other social programs.

Current campaigns include efforts to raise minimum wage at state/federal levels; restore workers comp benefits for widow(er)s of workers killed on the job; expand health care access; protect WV Medicaid program from cuts impacting children, seniors, low income adults, people with disabilities.

To find out more, contact Rick Wilson:

Rick Wilson
Project Director
P.O. Box 1964
Charleston, WV 25327
Rwilson@afsc.org

304-529-3890

WVDAWG Asks: Could You Use Extra Money?

With the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) you could get more money back on your taxes. The EITC is a special federal tax credit for eligible working families with incomes less than \$37,263. If you are eligible, you may receive money back from the IRS *even if you don't owe taxes, but you must file a tax return.*

You may also qualify for the Child Tax Credit (CTC), if you have an earned income above \$10,500 and you can claim at least one dependent child under age 17.

VITA - FREE tax assistance from January through April 15.

To find a VITA site near you, call **1-866-WVA-EITC**

To find out more call DAWG for details on EITC.

Or visit www.wveitc.com

Youth Project

Step By Step WV (SBS WV), in partnership with the Sustainable Kanawha Valley Initiative (SKVI), will be holding a meeting for youth interested in youth-led, youth designed projects in such areas as: youth internships, youth web site, youth computer building and recycling program, etc. It will be held at New Connections, 1598 Washington Street E #C, on the east side (a few blocks from the capital) at 4:30pm on April 21st 2008.

Youth are an often overlooked resource, who have dreams and desires about their communities as do the rest of us, along with untapped capabilities and a fresh way of looking at problems. This is a great chance for youth to have a voice in their communities and to say what is important to them, what it is they would like to be involved in and see happen.

For more information, contact :

- SKVI at: 346-3620
- Step By Step WV at 414-4452.

COREY BONASSO JOINS HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY RED SPRUCE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION EFFORT- from The Highlands Voice



WVU students gather each Spring to plant spruce on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

In the past Corey has helped organize students from WVU to volunteer a weekend in the spring to plant red spruce and balsam fir on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The event has been a huge success that has sent over 10,000 spruce and fir seedlings back to their home in the mountains. This spring will mark the fourth annual WVU spring planting on the refuge.

Corey is a long-time musician of many stringed instruments, as well as an aspiring potter. His internship will involve developing a Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration Plan for Freeland Run area of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, Corey will help with outreach surrounding these efforts. If you would like to know more about our work to restore the red spruce ecosystem in West Virginia contact Corey: cboass1@mix.wvu.edu.

How does Corey define Forest Health?

A healthy forest system is one that contains a diversity of plant and animal life with a species composition native to the area that finds balance with itself. Healthy life is that which has the ability to be sustained by its surroundings, recover from diseases, and have effective reproduction indefinitely.

The WV Highlands Conservancy has recently hired Corey Bonasso as an intern that will provide assistance with the Red Spruce Ecosystem Restoration program. From Carolina, West Virginia, Corey was raised in the hills where he developed a great appreciation for nature and the outdoors.

Corey is currently finishing his final semester in the Davis College of Agriculture and Forestry at WVU in the field of Forest Resource Management. Corey's interests encompass the entire system of living forest organisms, rather than looking at a stand for its board foot volume.

Family Leadership First Conference in April

Family Leadership First, in collaboration with Direct Action Welfare Group (DAWG), Mountain State Direct Action Center (MSDAC), Mountain State Parents CAN (MSPCAN) and Step By Step (SBS) is hosting its annual Family Leadership Conference at Canaan Valley April 18-20, 2008. The conference offers:

- A free training conference to build a network of informed families throughout the state
- A place to learn from other parents as well as professionals
- A safe place for the entire family to come and enjoy a weekend of learning
- The first step in creating new WV Family Links teams in counties and local communities.
- A way to gain valuable training & experience
- A way to have a voice in decisions that affect your family and community

• The ability network with statewide organizations to ensure families have a voice in decisions that affect them

Time to spend a great weekend with your family and friends learning together

Teens attending with their parents will have their own track at the conference with workshops for Middle School & High School planned & presented by teens. Childcare for younger children will be provided during workshops, but **NOT** during meals.

To get an application, visit www.wvdawg.org or call 304-539-3157

After School at SALS *By Iris Adkins, VISTA Volunteer*

This has been a good year for the after-school program. The program is designed for children in grades kinder-garten through 12th. They are bussed after school to Beards Fork. When arriving at SALS the children receive a snack

and drink. Then they do their homework with the teachers, Rebecca Morgan and Kara Shue-make. After homework they play outside, do artwork, dance and learn to sew.

I drove one of the vans for the "Lights on-Lights off" at the State Capitol in Charleston in October. The SALS children sang during the program and really enjoyed the festivities. We had dinner and took them home. The Halloween party was very nice and we had a high turnout. I received donations from McDonalds, Mountain Vending, and Kroger and their support was appreciated. We had help from YouthBuild and AmeriCorps members with the decorations, and they deserve "thanks" as well.



OVEC– Coal to Liquid is NOT the Answer

At the August meeting of West Virginia's Public Energy Authority, "A Perspective on Coal to Liquid," by Dr. R. Bajura, director of WVU's National Research Center for Coal & Energy summarized various reports and news, including some of the Southern board's findings from a "study" released in July. The Southern States Energy Board supposedly examined the real cost of imported oil. The question was asked if the Southern States Energy Board also looked at the real costs of coal; this was a question the authority should have asked, but didn't. It was acknowledged that the process does use a lot of energy, and Paul Hardesty, the authority's executive director, said he would find out.

While this information crucial in determining if coal-to-liquid makes sense was missing from the presentation, other information screamed: "No! Coal-to-liquid does not make sense!" despite the limits of oil supplies worldwide:

• Emissions of CO₂, a major culprit in global warming (which even the Pentagon has labeled a greater threat than terrorism), will be nearly 2X higher than using petroleum fuels.

- If 90 % of the CO₂ created by CTL were sequestered underground, the emissions would be nearly comparable to petroleum.
- In July, a Reuter's article, "Concerns Rise About CO₂ Burial," noted that hundreds have died from leaks of naturally occurring underground CO₂.
- In August, Oxford Analytica stated that carbon sequestration is currently commercially unviable and extremely costly and warned that investing in this technology is risky and could crowd out opportunities for cleaner, more sustainable energy sources.
- To produce 1 barrel of coal-to-liquid, a refinery uses 2.5 barrels of water.

Just one plant producing 80,000 barrels of coal-to-liquid fuel a day would use 200,000 barrels of water and cost \$6.5 billion. Inevitable federal regulations on CO₂ will make CTL plants even more costly. The Public Energy Authority needs to ask itself if hundreds of billions of dollars that could go into coal-to-fuel plants might be better used advancing truly clean renewable energy.

*Excerpt from report by Vivian Stockman
Project Coordinator, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition*

WVMAW

The West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps (WVMAW) is a Christian ministry supported in part by the Presbyterian Church (USA) that offers the opportunity for discipleship by partnering with those in need whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters or by the disaster of poverty in areas of West Virginia.

They are a year-round work camp ministry, and since October 2001, have brought 40-52 volunteer groups per year to work in West Virginia. Their work has consisted of home repair and reconstruction, deconstruction, playground restoration, parks cleanup, stream bank stabilization, and vacation Bible schools, among other things.

They are supported by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Synod of the Trinity and The Presbytery of West Virginia. The groups they recruit come from churches of various faith traditions, as well as from colleges and universities.

They invite you to join them during 2008 to help repair damage and bring hope to victims of extensive flooding and other disasters, including poverty, in West Virginia.

For more information, go to www.wvpresbytery.org/wvmaw.htm



		Donation/Payroll Deduction Campaign	
Last Name: _____ First: _____		Middle Initial: _____	
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Social Security Number: _____		Payroll Code: _____	
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Annual Contribution: <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 (MSERF (EX))		I wish to allocate my contribution to the following groups: _____	
\$ _____ per pay period		Group Name: _____	
\$20.00 per pay period		Annual Amt: _____	
\$10.00 per pay period		FOR AUTHORIZATION OF PAYROLL WITHHOLDING, I hereby authorize the above named company in the State of West Virginia by which I am employed to deduct the amount shown above from my each pay period starting with the next pay period cycle. I understand that this authorization may be revoked by me in writing at any time. Signature: _____ Date: _____	
\$5.00 per pay period		West Virginia Payroll Code Vendor # 736	
\$2.00 per pay period		_____	
For your one-time donation, please be sure to include a check, as we do not do payroll deductions on a one-time basis. We will treat all information with confidentiality.			
Please fill out, sign, & return to Community Shares of West Virginia: P. O. Box 20117 Charleston WV 25362			

Background

Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) is currently the main pollutant of surface water in the mid-Atlantic region. AMD is caused when water flows over or through sulfur-bearing materials forming solutions of net acidity. AMD comes mainly from abandoned coal mines and currently active mining. AMD degrades more than 4,500 stream miles in the mid-Atlantic region with the loss of aquatic life, and restricts stream use for recreation, public drinking water and industrial water supplies.

What is Mine Drainage?

Mine drainage is metal-rich water formed from chemical reaction between water and rocks containing sulfur-bearing minerals. The runoff formed is usually acidic and frequently comes from areas where ore or coal mining activities have exposed rocks containing pyrite, a sulfur bearing mineral. Metal-rich drainage can also occur in mineralized areas that have not been mined.

Mines built as early as the 1800's were developed in a manner which utilized gravity drainage, to avoid excessive water accumulation in the mines. As a result, water polluted by acid, iron, sulfur and aluminum drained away from the mines and into streams.

How does Mine Drainage Occur?

Mine drainage is formed when pyrite, an iron sulfide, is exposed and reacts with air and water to form sulfuric acid and dissolved iron. Some or all of this iron can precipitate to form the red, orange, or yellow sediments in the bottom of streams containing mine drainage. ***The acid runoff further dissolves heavy metals such as copper, lead, mercury into ground or surface water***

Problems Associated with Mine Drainage

- Contaminated drinking water
- Disrupted growth and reproduction of aquatic plants and animals
- Corroding effects of acid on parts of infrastructure such as bridges

Economic Concerns Resulting from Acid Mine Drainage

A region impacted by acid mine drainage often has a decline in valued recreational fish species such as trout as well as a general decline in outdoor recreation and tourism

About MSERF: Mountain State Education & Research Foundation

Founded in 2003, Mountain State Education and Research Foundation (MSERF) has earned a reputation as an organization that strives to put public policy process back into citizen's hands though its commitment to social justice and economic fairness.

MSERF is a statewide 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides original research and public education on progressive issues facing the people of Appalachia such as a environmental & consumer protection, media access, public policy, government & corporate accountability, universal health care, and elimination of all forms of discrimination.

Founded in 2003, Mountain State Education and Research Foundation (MSERF) has earned a reputation as an organization that strives to increase citizen involvement in the

making of public policy though its commitment to social justice and economic fairness.

MSERF has developed strong working relationships with a broad range of progressive allies in West Virginia, regionally and at the national level. We have collaborated extensively with USAction Education Fund and Democracy South in many aspects of our work. At the state level, MSERF has forged successful issue coalitions with many groups including:

- Community Shares of WV
- Citizens for Clean Elections
- Direct Action Welfare Group
- Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
- National Association of Social Workers –
- WV Chapter
- AFSCME Council 77

- SEIU- 1199
- Southern Appalachian Labor School
- WV AFL-CIO
- WV Citizen Action Group
- WV Council of Churches
- WV Environmental Council

In coalition and alone, MSERF has excelled at promoting progressive public policy such as fair taxation, state campaign finance and election reforms, civic engagement including registering and mobilizing low-income and minority voters, and protecting Social Security and Medicaid

For more information, check out:

<http://mserf.org>