

GROWTH RINGS

"Where History Is Growing"

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NEWSLETTER OF THE APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA

Rothkugel Plantation

AFHA has received a WVU Extension Research Team grant to inventory and develop an interpretive plan for the historic Rothkugel Plantation. Rothkugel represents the first experiment at applying the principles of modern forestry on a large scale to West Virginia's cutover forests. This unique plantation is the result of collaboration between lumber mill owner George Craig and two forestry pioneers at the turn of the twentieth century; Austrian-born forester Max Rothkugel, and Gifford Pinchot, father of American Forestry and Chief Forester of the newly created US Forest Service. The plantation was innovative for its day and attracted the attention of foresters worldwide.

2007 marked the 100th anniversary of the Rothkugel Plantation. The plantation is situated along WV Route 28 in Pocahontas County, approximately two miles east of Bartow, West Virginia in the Greenbrier Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest.

The project, coordinated by AmeriCorps member Andrea Brutscher, with professional leadership from Dr. Dave McGill and Robert Whetsell, is identifying and measuring the existing Norway Spruce and European Larch trees that remain from the initial plantation planting. These trees are being marked on a stem map of the site, along with boundaries and existing trails. From this information, an interpretive team including Monongahela Forest representatives will develop an interpretive plan to guide development of the site for visitors interested in forest heritage. AFHA wishes to develop the Rothkugel Plantation as one of the featured sites on their "Forestry Tour" self-guided tour brochure.



Max Rothkugel

Humanities Grant Awarded for Forest Heritage Video

AFHA has been awarded a research and development grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council for research, oral history collection, and video footage to develop a documentary film on forest heritage. Gerry Milnes of Augusta Heritage Center and historian Robert Whetsell are developing the film project. The project was initiated by the opportunity to film during the final month of operations of the family owned Myles Lumber Company sawmill near Beverly. A generous donation from the Myles family, through the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis and Elkins College, will be used to match the Humanities Grant. An additional Humanities Media grant will be sought for actual production of the film, which will explore a variety of forest heritage themes related to the initial "Resilient Forest" exhibit developed by Whetsell for AFHA. Milnes and Whetsell have partnered on two previous documentaries, *The CC Boys*, and *Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia*.

Stakeholder Donations Requested

AFHA is again requesting donations from stakeholders to support the work of our organization. Any amount, from \$10 to \$1000, is welcome. These private funds help to leverage many times the amount by matching grant funds. The donations from last year enabled us to support AmeriCorps member work on AFHA projects, as well as for projects on federal lands such as the Monongahela National Forest and Fernow Experimental Forest.

AFHA continues our policy of making newsletters, meetings, and other benefits available to all stakeholders -- everyone who expresses interest. We are asking for donations not as a membership, but as an expression of support from those who are committed to the program and able to help. Thanks to all of you -- past and future -- who can help us out!



Heritage Tourism Workshop

As part of a Cultural Heritage Development minigrant from Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, AFHA is planning a heritage tourism development workshop in Webster Springs in May. A driving loop brochure of Webster Springs and Cranberry Flats will also be published as part of this project. The project has been coordinated by AFHA VISTA Tina Ralston, who has worked diligently to involve potential heritage tourism businesses along the route. Tina will complete her VISTA service at the conclusion of the workshop, while additional work in the Webster Springs area will be continued by AmeriCorps member Kent Walker. Watch the AFHA website for date and details on the workshop.

Forestry Tours

The WV Division of Forestry will be conducting a tour at Greenbrier State Forest on Saturday, June 14 featuring a grand opening of the new wildlife observation deck at a forest clearing. The interpretive sign at the deck was funded in part by AFHA minigrant funds. To join in the tour of the wildlife viewing area while the local song birds are in their mating season and singing up a storm, meet at Greenbrier State Forest in the picnic area parking lot at 9:00 AM June 14 to carpool to the site. Those who want to get up early for the daybreak chorus, please contact Allen Waldron at (304) 256-6775 or allen.b.waldron@wv.gov. If you want to make a day of it, bring a lunch, and after lunch we can walk through the forest management demonstration area at the Forest.

AFHA will be arranging additional tours through the summer season. Possible tours being discussed include Kumbrow State Forest, Fernow Experimental Forest, Rothkugel Plantation, and tours of Maryland State Forests. Watch the AFHA web site and email list for announcements.

Darden Mill Plans and Progress

Rehabilitation work continues at the Darden Mill in Elkins, WV, future site of the AFHA Forest Heritage Center. Citizens for Historical Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County (C-HOPE) is leading the mill effort with participation from AFHA AmeriCorps members, local contractors and community volunteers. When done, the facility will provide information and visitor services, exhibits on forest heritage, workspace for artisans practicing traditional crafts and AFHA offices. The goal for this phase is to complete most of the work on the exterior and first floor.

The AmeriCorps historic preservation team, including Joe Sabatino, Eva Gutierrez, and Joan Pitts, have been hard at work since October 2007 clearing out many years of debris and additions inside the Mill, restoring and building three sets of double wooden loading doors, and

restoring metal window frames. Working with the contractor, Ed Devine, they have assisted with pouring footers, insulation, building walls, and repair of outside decking. Additional work in progress or planned includes repair of the porch roof awning, doors, floor repairs, wiring, heating, insulation and interior finish. In addition, the AmeriCorps conducted an archeological inventory under the floor of the Mill that revealed artifacts including a number of glass bottles dating from before prohibition.

Elkins Depot Celebrates 100 Years

The volunteers and board of the Elkins Welcome Center are gearing up for the fast-approaching 2008 season. Last year approximately 14,000 visitors passed through the train depot in which the Welcome Center is housed. During the past year, Welcome Center volunteers provided assistance to visitors from all across the United States as well as visitors from Canada, Germany and Japan. One international visitor, a college student from Aichi Japan, said that she would tell her family back home about the beautiful nature and friendly atmosphere that she enjoyed while visiting West Virginia.

Even more visitors are expected at the depot in 2008, which marks 100 years since the historic depot's construction. AFHA AmeriCorps member Teresa Goddard has assisted the Welcome Center in preparing for this season's expected increase in traffic by recruiting additional volunteers and helping develop new informational products for visitors. The Center is also updating volunteer training materials and, for the first time, hiring part-time staff. AmeriCorps members will continue to assist volunteers and help fill-in to keep the Welcome Center open more days this season. A rack card promoting the depot and Welcome Center's service as well as walking tour brochure are currently being developed, and benches have also been ordered to provide additional seating in and around the depot.

Visitors will be able to choose from up to three excursion trains when departing from the Elkins Depot. The Cheat Mountain Salamander will be moving to the Elkins depot this season and will feature expanded seating. The Tygart Flyer will continue to be available for those seeking a shorter scenic ride. The Mountain Explorer dinner train will also run on Fridays and Saturdays during the 2008 tourist season. An increase in the number of tour bus participants is expected.

More AmeriCorps

AFHA is making plans for our second AmeriCorps year to start in September. If your organization would like AmeriCorps help, or if you know someone who might want to serve, see details at www.appalachianforest.us.

Spring Stakeholders Meeting



May 8th & 9th, 2008

Braxton County, West Virginia

Please RSVP if you plan to attend (see below)

Program

Our Stakeholders meeting this spring in historic downtown Sutton will feature a variety of forest products, from the large corporation to the small-scale tree farm. Our luncheon speaker will be **Jim Wadsworth** from **Weyerhaeuser Corporation**, who will tell us about the high-tech products of their company, which we will see in person on our tour of their Heaters plant Friday morning.

Our afternoon speaker will be **Dr. A. Edwin Grafton, PhD**. Ed is a retired forestry professor from Glenville State College and a Christmas Tree Grower. He will share some of his insights regarding smaller scale forest production, and then will take us on a tour of his tree farm.

Friday and Saturday check out the **13th Annual WV Timber & Wood Products Show**, at Holly Gray Park, near Flatwoods. (This will be on your own – small admission fee). The show features numerous forestry-related exhibits, wood chopping contest, logger contests (chainsaw, truck, loader, skidder), horse logging demonstrations, bow shoot contest, turkey call contest, gun show, and handmade crafts. For more information contact the WV Forestry Association. Office toll-free 1-888-372-WOOD(9663).

Friday tour of Weyerhaeuser Heaters plant. We will meet for carpool at 9:30 at the Bowling Alley parking lot across from the GoMart at Flatwoods. If you miss the carpool, you can meet us at the plant, which is on the left a few miles further north. The tour will start promptly at 10 am.

Thursday May 8th La Dolce Vita, Sutton

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| 9:30 am | Welcome |
| | AFHA Updates |
| | AmeriCorps Projects |
| 11:00 am | AFHA Council Meeting (all welcome) |
| Noon | Lunch (on own from menu) |
| 12:30 pm | Jim Wadsworth |
| 1:30 pm | Ed Grafton |
| 2:30 pm | Tree Farm Tour (car pool) with Ed G. |
| 6:00 pm | Board dinner and meeting |

Friday May 9th

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|----------|------------------------------------|
| 9:30 am | Meet car pool at Flatwoods Bowling |
| 10:00 am | Tour of Weyerhaeuser Heaters Plant |
- Remainder of day and Saturday, May 10th:**
WV Timber & Wood Products Show
At Holly Gray Park

Directions: La Dolce Vita is on the corner of Main Street and 4th Street in downtown Sutton, just past the court house. We will meet here both for the Thursday daytime meeting, and for the Board meeting Thursday night. Lunch and dinner will be on-your-own cost, from the menu (prices are reasonable.) The Thursday afternoon tour will carpool from here.

Lodging:

Reservations are on your own – no rooms have been blocked for this meeting.

Microtel Gassaway - \$59.99 per person. (304) 364-6100
Days Hotel- \$78.96 per night plus tax (304) 765-5055

RSVP

If you are planning to attend any portion of the meeting, please **RSVP** so that we will have count for meals and tours, and can send you updates of any last minute information. Council and Board members please confirm your attendance or send proxy for our quorum count. Send RSVP by email to afha@appalachianforest.us or call 636-6182.

RSVP



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Appalachian Forest Heritage Area
Dave McGill
PO Box 6125
Morgantown, WV 26505

Events In The Woods

Selected Highlights From Around AFHA Country

May 3 — Family Trail Day: Blackwater Falls State Park and Canaan Valley Resort State Park. Eight-mile walk between Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley State Parks. Contact: Blackwater Falls State Park 304-259-5216 or Canaan Valley Resort State Park 304-866-4121

May 8 - 10 — 47th Annual West Virginia Wildflower Pilgrimage: Blackwater Falls State Park. Famous activities packed weekend includes bird walks, wildflower tours, nature programs, beginner wildflower and bird identification workshops, crafts. Contact: Blackwater Falls State Park, 304-259-5216

May 9-10 – WV Timber & Wood Products Show. See inside for details.

May 23 - 26 — Webster County Woodchopping Festival: Southern U.S. World Championship Woodchopper contest, many activities. See: www.woodchoppingfestival.com

May 30 - June 1 — Whistles, Wings and Wildflowers: Cass Scenic Railroad State Park. Enjoy a weekend full of birding and wildflower walks and talks, with a special train ride and a little history thrown in for good measure. Contact: Cass Scenic Railroad State Park 304-456-4300 More info: www.cassrailroad.com.

June 5 — Wildlife Refuge Tour & Volunteer Training: Canaan Valley State Park 8a - 4p. Bring lunch. Learn about trail upkeep & what visi-

tors can experience at each entrance to refuge. Sponsored by Canaan Valley Nat'l Wildlife Refuge & Friends of the 500th (Tucker Co.) Register by calling: 866-3858. Check website: fws.gov/canaanvalley/volunteer

June 6-8 — Southern Boreal Bird Festival Canaan Valley Resort State Park (Tucker Co.) offers ideal habitat for many bird species normally found further north. Enjoy daily walks, workshops & guest speakers. Lodging/info: www.canaanresort.com or 866-4121

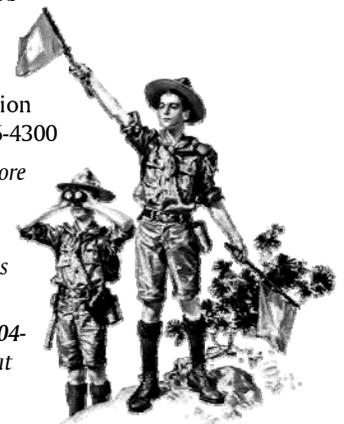
June 14 — Wildlife Observation Deck Opening Greenbrier State Forest. See "Forestry Tours" on Page 2 for more information.

June 28 — Bike Off The Mountain at the Cass Scenic Railroad - Bring your bike on board & ride to Bald Knob for a scenic 12 mile bike ride on old forest service roads back to Cass. All skill levels welcome; helmets required. Bring water. Train leaves station at 11a. Tickets: \$14. Pre-Register: 456-4300

Watch www.appalachianforest.us for more forestry tours and activities.

See www.wvstateparks.com/Hikes_Walks.html for other guided walks in WV State Parks.

See www.fws.gov/canaanvalley or call 304-866-3858 for other walks and activities at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.



...Is the periodic newsletter of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Inc., in partnership with West Virginia University Division of Forestry and Extension Services. Our mission is to work locally to conserve, develop, interpret, and promote a regional network of forest-based resources and experiences in the highlands of West Virginia and Maryland for the enjoyment and appreciation of residents and visitors in order to enhance economic and community development.