



APPALACHIAN FOREST HERITAGE AREA

Wood Energy Tour

The AFHA-sponsored tour of the Hamer Pellet Fuel Company in the Elkins industrial park showed the tour party of about 15 the process used to make wood pellets for pellet stoves. The tour was led by Rob Jones, public relations director for the Jim C. Hamer Company.



The pellets are made entirely from sawdust, without any added binders. The pellets at this plant are made primarily from local oak sawdust. Pellet stoves produce clean, reliable heat with low emissions and an extremely small amount of ash. Current cost per BTU to heat with wood pellets is about half that of natural gas. The tour group included individuals who own and use pellet stoves, who shared with the group about how it works for them.

This tour was one of a series of educational activities about wood energy being offered as part of the biomass education project of the WVU Biomaterials and Wood Utilization Center in the Division of Forestry and Natural Resources. This year-long project includes workshops and demonstrations on wood energy, tours, and informational handouts. Watch the AFHA web site for future activities, or contact Dr. Dave McGill, Forestry Extension Specialist WVU, 304-293-2941 x 2474, dmcgill@wvu.edu.

AFHA in the Forest Festival

The Mountain State Forest Festival is held each fall in Elkins, in the heart of the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area. The Mountain State Forest Festival was created in 1930 to celebrate the beauty of the Appalachian Forest, its abundance of natural resources, and the richness of Appalachian culture. Over the years the festival has grown in both size and acclaim.

This year, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area was pleased to participate in a group effort to emphasize forest conservation. Initiated by the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, a large number of forest and conservation related organizations were grouped together in the City Park to celebrate the Forest in the Forest Festival. The group was especially successful during "kids day" on Thursday, when bus loads of school children enjoyed leaf rubbing at the AFHA booth, as well as a pond bubble, face painting, stream table, and live snakes!

AFHA also participated in the Forestry Exhibits at the VFW hall. A short media presentation introducing AFHA themes and projects was shown continuously at the exhibit hall.

For the first time, AFHA offered two Forest Festival tours for 2008 – Penn Virginia Forest Demonstration Area, Oct 1 and Hamer Pellet Plant tour, Oct 2

If you missed these tours, watch the AFHA web site www.appalachianforest.us for future tours related to the forest, forest management and forest products.



New Faces at AFHA

Local businessman Logan Smith is taking over the reins from Melvin Lester, supervising the new AmeriCorps historic preservation team and providing AFHA financial administration. Logan's own experience with the renovation of historic Scott Hill in Elkins, and years of business management, makes him ideally suited to give AFHA's new AmeriCorps team sound guidance.

We also have a new VISTA, Aubrey Dickerson. Aubrey is a recent cultural-geography graduate from Marshall University. He brings with him years of computer experience including GIS/GPS technology, and will be working on several innovative projects to help make AFHA bigger and better than ever.

AmeriCorps Gets Things Done!

Over the past year AFHA has benefited from the hard work and dedication of our first team of AmeriCorps volunteers. These enthusiastic and talented volunteers originate from across the nation, bringing diversity and energy. As volunteers they earned very little money; however, they've earned a tremendous amount of respect. Instead of spending the past year investing in a new car or a 401k, they invested their labor in our communities. While they often struggled to keep a roof over their heads and to afford groceries, they still continued to give us the gift of their service. In giving of themselves, they've left behind a legacy of contributions to our communities and our lives, which will continue even after they are gone. We are proud to share in their success and to share with you a few of their many accomplishments.

The Darden Mill project is one of our most visible efforts. With the help of C-HOPE, Joe, Joan, and Eva have continued the laborious task of rehabilitating the mill. Anyone who goes past the building can clearly see their hard work and progress. AFHA is excited to see its plans leap from the drawing-board to the street-corner! We are yet another step closer to opening the Forest Heritage Museum. This project will continue in the new year.

Eva also worked on a feasibility study of the First Ward School. Her work gives us hope that this building can someday be restored and returned to use in the community.

The old adage says, sometimes we don't see the forest for the trees.

Likewise, we sometimes don't see the trees for the forest!

With their hands-on forestry work, our AmeriCorps members remind us that each individual tree has its own story to tell. Andrea worked at the historic Rothkugel Plantation, mapping the introduced trees surviving the site's 100 year history. This has helped lay the

groundwork for a new interpretive tour, thereby strengthening the AFHA's inventory of attractions. Meg worked with the Friends of Trees group to map the thousands of trees within the city of Elkins. Her work with the group, including state-of-the-art GIS mapping helped to develop the city's tree plan to be recognized as a "Tree City". Andrea, Meg, and Kelly get special mention for "putting their backs into the job", as they back-packed and planted hundreds of trees throughout the area! Their work will continue to grow in our back-yard for generations and help restore the natural habitat.

There are simply too many AmeriCorps achievements to list them all! Jane at the Randolph County Community Art Center, Tiffany at Historic Beverly, Teresa, Kelly and Jane and the Depot Welcome Center, and Kent in Webster Springs helped highlight culture and heritage tourism and helped visitors find their way. The first year's AmeriCorps team has held true to their motto! "*AmeriCorps gets things done!*"



The New AmeriCorps Team

AFHA is proud to announce the arrival of this year's AmeriCorps team – now 15 members strong! These men and women come from diverse backgrounds and locations. However, all share a common goal for the next year: the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area.

The historic preservation team has its sights set on the Montgomery Hart / Andrew Collett House. As perhaps the oldest existing structure in Beverly, this project will be a preservation treasure. Joe, Anna, Darrell, Russell, and Claudette have been in training for the job by working under the tutelage of Melvin Lester at other locations in Beverly, such as the Hill Building and the Goff House. They've also lent helping hands in the community by working with Youth Empowered Solutions. Taking advantage of training by preservations trades experts, they've assisted in a moth-balling project which received local news coverage in the area.

Evan and Nathan are working this year with the US Forest Service. Evan is inspired as he described some of his experiences so far. He has assisted in water monitoring which tests for the presence of heavy metal and dissolved oxygen and was involved in monitoring temperature trends of waters which were inhabited by native brook trout. In Greenbrier County, he went out to inspect road erosion to determine whether the road should remain open, as well as its potential impacts to the environment. From fish population to the GPS mapping of Japanese stilt-grass, Evan is definitely "getting things done"! Erin will be heading up the Rothkugel project, and is working on volunteer development.

Stacy has just completed a project with Tucker County Connections involving 80 Tucker County fifth-graders. With the help of some generous volunteers, the children created a beautiful "Flora and Fauna of West Virginia" themed quilt. Filled with rhododendron and sugar maples, honey bees and timber rattlers, each child contributed a square. Stacy and her volunteers sewed the squares together in a two-day quilting marathon and presented it back to the children and to the Tucker County Board of Education, where the quilt will remain permanently on display. For an upcoming education project, Amanda will assist Teachers for the Forest in arranging more training opportunities for teachers.

Iva is working at the Randolph County Community Arts Center. She is working to help put together a show of WV women painters, sculptors, printmakers, potters, and more. They are currently collecting names and contact info for anyone interested in participating, so let's help to spread the word! Iva is also investigating potential projects with area youth and teens which could result in an artistic mural.

Returning members include Joan, working in historic Beverly, and Kent with the Webster County Museum. Linda is new this year with the Randolph County CVB, and Chris is helping with archiving for the Upshur County Historical Society.

AFHA AmeriCorps members have started off with training so that their contributions will be even better! They have been on forest and factory tours, learned to build sustainable trails and apply traditional plaster, discussed historic preservation principles and conservation education. They will soon be sworn-in in Charleston as official AmeriCorps members! Go team!

2008 Fall Stakeholders Meeting

October 30 – November 1

Romney, Hampshire County

FOCUS ON NATURE TOURISM AND CONSERVATION

Thursday, Oct 30 or

Saturday Nov 1 — Optional Activities

Ride the historic **Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad**, one of America's most beautiful train rides. Enjoy a 3-hour narrated excursion through a tranquil and pristine mountain valley, including "The Trough," a spectacular narrow mountain valley along the South Branch of the Potomac.

Above you the high mountain walls and thick forest help keep the secret of the American Bald Eagle. These majestic birds soar high above in their natural habitat, undisturbed by the low rumblings of the occasional train and the passengers who have come for a sighting. 11:30 am each day, reservations required. You must make your own reservations for the train. (see box at right)

Ice Mountain, along the North River just north of North River Mills, contains a set of stone chimneys called "Raven Rocks" and a large talis. At the base of the talis is an area where small caves hold ice most of the year. There are flowers growing at the base of the talis that are found only in areas in New York state and northward. The mountain is a unique ecosystem for a middle Atlantic state. This Nature Conservancy site is open only for guided tours with a docent. If you are interested in an Ice Mountain tour on Thursday or Saturday, RSVP by Friday, October 24 and we will arrange a tour if we have a group.



You must make your own reservations for the train. If you do plan to be there Thursday, please let us know in advance, and we'll help the AFHA attendees find each other for train ride, touring, and/or dinner

See train website at: www.potomaceagle.info

RSVP

Friday, Oct 31 —

Meet at the Bottling Works Visitor Center in Romney. 426 E Main / Rt 50. It is a brick building with signs to visitor center, across from WV School for Deaf & Blind, 1 block east of McDonalds

- 9:00am** Board meeting. Only Board members are expected at this time, but Council members and Stakeholders are welcome to sit in.
- 10:30am** Stakeholders meeting -- Introductions, local welcome, progress reports, new Ameri-Corps team, etc.
- 11:30am** Brief Council meeting, fall annual elections
- 11:45am** lunch (provided – donation requested to cover cost)
- 12:15pm** panel discussion on nature and eco-tourism, including the Hampshire County experience
- 1:30pm** speaker, non-native invasive species and how we can help deal with this problem
- 2:30pm** adjourn for tours

Group tour following – tentatively Fort Mill Ridge and Wildlife Management Area

LODGING

South Branch Inn. Rates 2 people \$81.00 + tax. Route 50 East, Romney, adjacent to a shopping center and restaurants 4 miles from downtown historic Romney. Continental breakfast and free high speed internet. 304 822 2444 / 866-492-3122 toll-free

Koolwink Motel, Rt 50 East, 304 822 3595, \$63+ tax 2 queen size beds, wireless internet

Hampshire House 1884 B&B, 165 North Grafton St., Romney. 5 guest rooms and suites, some w/fireplaces in a brick Victorian country house built in 1884 and furnished with Victorian antiques. 304.822.7171 or 888.806.1131 HH1884@aol.com

RSVP

Please let us know you plan to attend, and whether Friday only or for additional tours. This will help us plan meal count and arrange tours. Watch AFHA web site for updates. RSVP to: phyllisb@meer.net, 304-636-6182

RSVP



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Appalachian Forest Heritage Area
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Help Get Things Done!

Many worthwhile community activities rely largely on volunteers to get the work done. AFHA and our AmeriCorps team are helping to organize volunteer opportunities that might include:

Conservation – building trails, restoring streams, repairing site damage, controlling invasive species, monitoring wilderness areas, conservation education.

Historic Preservation – rehabilitating historic buildings ranging from cleanup and site preparation to skilled preservation work. Volunteers can receive training in specific preservation trades skills that you can use on community projects, or on your own home.

Heritage Development – giving tours, educational programs, costumed living history, staffing booths, planning events, researching history, demonstrating crafts, marketing, visitor information.

Make a Difference Day

On October 25, AFHA AmeriCorps are organizing volunteer opportunities for the national Make a Difference Day. Projects tentatively include:

Historic Preservation construction project to start work on restoring Riverside School, which was the historic black school in Elkins.

Cleanup of Pink Helictite Cave sinkhole, on the Monongahela National Forest near Durbin. Volunteers will help remove trash to clean up this site and remove groundwater pollution into the cave. Call 304-636-6182 or email

afha@appalachianforest.us if you are interested in helping with one of these projects.



...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.

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

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