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Beat the Summer Heat

Real Whirled Ice Cream, Page 9

◆◆◆

Wings of Gold

Finding the Golden-Winged Warbler, Page 16

◆◆◆

From the Archives

C.J. Richardson, Page 22



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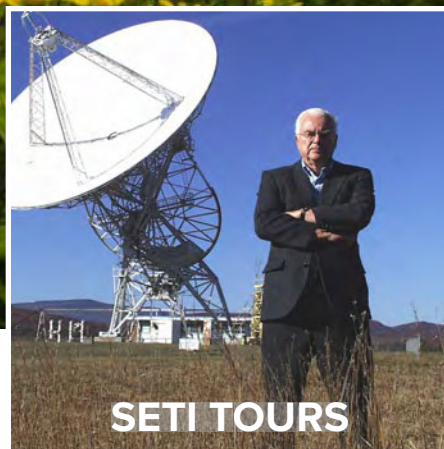
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Step into a fantasy world at the Opera House

Fantasy Garden Party opens a new season

There is something special about the moment before a new season begins. The posters are not all hung yet, the stage lights are still waiting, and the calendar is full of possibilities.

At the Pocahontas County Opera House, that moment will arrive Saturday, June 13, at 7 p.m., when the community is invited to step into the garden for the 2026-27 Season Preview Party.

This year's theme is Fantasy Garden Party, a fitting invitation for an evening meant to celebrate what is growing at the Opera House. Guests will get the first look at the upcoming season, with a preview of the music, theater, storytelling and community events that will help fill the historic Marlinton venue in the year ahead.

The Preview Party is free and open to the public. The evening will include hors d'oeuvres, libations, door prizes, drawings and a silent auction. Guests are encouraged to come dressed for the theme, bring a friend and enjoy a festive night in support of the arts in Pocahontas County.

More than a party, the event is a celebration of the Opera House's role as a gathering place for the

community. Each season brings artists from near and far to the stage, while continuing to keep performances accessible for local families, neighbors and visitors. The Preview Party offers a chance to look ahead, reconnect with friends and help toast another year of shared experiences in one of Pocahontas County's most cherished spaces.

The Pocahontas County Opera House 2026-27 Season Preview Party will be held Saturday, June 13, at 7 p.m. at the Opera House in Marlinton. Admission is free and all are welcome. Come dressed for the garden, ready for a little whimsy, and help welcome the next season as it begins to bloom.

The Rustic Mechanicals bring Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to Marlinton

On a July afternoon in Marlinton, the Pocahontas County Opera House will become a doorway into Shakespeare's enchanted woods, where fairies stir up trouble, young lovers lose their way, and one unlucky actor wakes to find himself transformed in the most memorable way possible.

The Rustic Mechanicals, West Virginia's only professional touring Shakespeare troupe, will present William Shakespeare's



beloved comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at 3 p.m. Sunday, July 12, 2026, at the Pocahontas County Opera House.

Known for their fast-paced, "unplugged" style, The Rustic Mechanicals bring Shakespeare off the pedestal and into the room, making the Bard's

language lively, playful and accessible for modern audiences. Their production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" invites audiences into a world where the line between the everyday and the magical disappears, with mistaken identities, accidental enchantments,

See *HOUSE*, page 5

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Cover: Ken Springer's dog, Bongo, takes in the view from an overlook at Watoga State Park.



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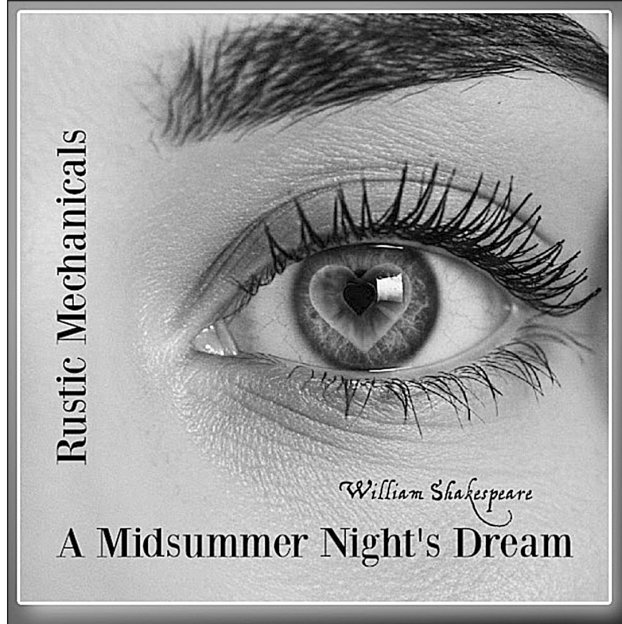
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fairly magic and one very famous donkey-headed surprise.

"The Opera House is the perfect vessel for this story," said director Jim Warren. "It's intimate, historic and just a little bit magical, much like the woods of Athens themselves."

Founded in 2013, The Rustic Mechanicals have built a reputation for bringing Shakespeare to communities across West Virginia and beyond with energy, clarity and a healthy dose of theatrical chaos. The company focuses on making Shakespeare's plays approachable without losing the poetry, humor and heart that have kept them alive for more than 400 years.

The performance is available for a \$10 donation, and guests 17 and younger are admitted free. Advance reservations are recommended due to limited seating. Tickets are



available online at pocahontasoperahouse.org, at 4th Avenue Gallery in Marlinton or at the door, as space allows.

The Pocahontas County Opera House is located at 818 Third Ave. in Marlinton.

The Opera House Performance Series is made possible through the generous support of grants

from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History and the West Virginia Commission on the Arts. The series also benefits from the backing of Pocahontas County Dramas, Fairs and Festivals, and the Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau, reflecting the community's continued commitment to preserving and celebrating its rich cultural heritage.

For more information, visit pocahontasoperahouse.org

Young performers bring 'The Frog Prince' to the Opera House stage

After a week of rehearsals, teamwork and theatrical transformation, young performers from the Pocahontas County Opera House Summer Theater Camp will bring "The Frog Prince" to life



on the Opera House stage.

Performances will be held Friday, July 24, at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, July 25, at 3 p.m. at the Pocahontas County Opera House in Marlinton.

Presented in partnership with the Missoula Children's Theatre Touring Program, "The Frog Prince" gives local children the chance to experience the full arc of live theater, from auditions and rehearsals to lights-up performance before a hometown audience.

This year's production invites audiences into a fairy tale world filled with three princess sisters, a lonely Frog, Ollie the Aspen Tree, bumbling Knights, kindly Swamp Things, a well-read Alligator, fancy Flamingos, help-

ful Ducks, a busy Fly and a few Venus Fly Traps with plenty of personality.

The cast will have spent the week building confidence, learning lines, practicing movement and working together to create a full production in just five days. Along the way, campers explore acting, stage presence, cooperation and the behind-the-scenes magic that helps bring a story from page to stage.

The annual Summer Theater Camp has become a treasured Opera House tradition, giving children entering first through eighth grades an opportunity to take part in a live performance in a fun and supportive setting. The program is made possible through the support

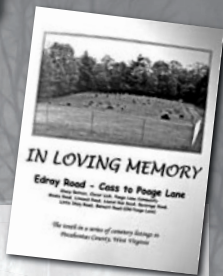
of volunteers, community partners and local organizations.

The late Shenda Smith, a former Opera House board member who helped establish the camp, believed deeply that all children should have access to the arts. In her memory, the Shenda Smith Memorial Scholarship helps keep this opportunity open to children in the community.

Community members are encouraged to attend, cheer on the cast and celebrate a week of creativity, collaboration and courage on the Opera House stage.

"The Frog Prince" will be performed Friday, July 24, at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, July 25, at 3 p.m. at the Pocahontas County Opera House.

We know where the bodies are buried!



Pocahontas County Genealogy Group has Cemetery Books for sale documenting 155 cemeteries:

Oak Grove, 2011; Mountain View; Mace to Brush Country, 2014; Little Levels, 2015; Huntersville, 2016; Woodrow to Buckeye, 2018; Back Mountain Road - Durbin to Cass & West Fork, 2019; Frost to Dunmore, 2021; and Edray Road - Cass to Poage Lane, 2022.

Books are priced from \$12 to \$20 each, plus tax. Add \$5 for shipping.

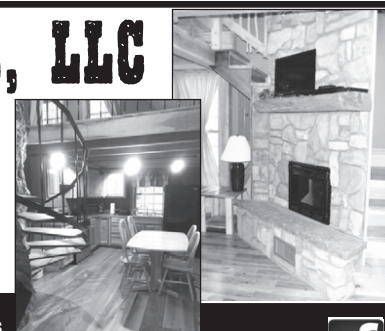
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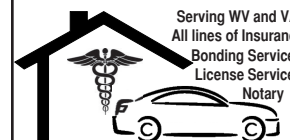
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Summer in Pocahontas County

Lucas Adcock
Staff Writer

There's something that's quietly magical about Pocahontas County in the summer. Nothing really shouts for your attention, you can settle in slowly and hear the hum of cicadas or the steady flow of a river you didn't even realize was there. Tucked into the mountains of West Virginia, this county feels like a place where the modern world loosens its grip just enough for you to remember what quiet actually sounds like. It's rejuvenating.

One of the first things visitors notice, whether they expect it or not, is the absence of constant connection. In a world that runs on notifications and endless scrolling, Pocahontas County offers

something increasingly rare: space to unplug. Thanks in part to the nearby Green Bank Observatory, located within the National Radio Quiet Zone, cell service is limited in certain areas. At first, it can feel strange if you're not used to the silence. You might reach for your phone out of habit, only to realize there's no signal waiting for you. No doom scrolling to occur. If you're waiting in the car, maybe instead, you grab your favorite novel or book on hiking trails. This is the beginning of the shift — where you start to look up more. You notice the landscape instead of documenting it through a lens. And before long, the quiet stops feeling empty and starts feeling full.

That sense of calm carries into the outdoors, which is really where Poc-

ahontas County shines in the summer months. The sprawling beauty of the Monongahela National Forest stretches across the region, offering miles of hiking trails that wind through dense forests, open meadows, and along cool mountain streams. Whether you're an experienced hiker or someone just looking for a peaceful afternoon walk, there's a trail that fits the mood. And the best part? You're unlikely to be surrounded by crowds. It's entirely possible to walk for an hour and only hear birdsong and the crunch of your own footsteps. Imagine that in the big apple.

Water plays its own quiet role in shaping the rhythm of summer here. The Greenbrier River moves gently through the county, inviting visitors to slow down in the most literal



Photo courtesy of Pocahontas County CVB
Kayaking on the Greenbrier River is a great way to cool down while experiencing the beauty of Pocahontas County in the summertime.

sense. Kayaking or tubing across the surface of the river is an escape, eyes drifting along the bank. You float past the tree lines watching sunlight flicker

See **SUMMER**, page 7

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just as peaceful, locals and visitors alike casting lines into cool, clear water and waiting patiently for a bite. It's the stillness that keeps fishers coming back, and sometimes, the catch.

Beyond the forests and rivers though, there's a simple charm to the small towns scattered throughout the county. Places like Marlinton, Cass, Hillsboro and Durbin don't try to be anything they're not. You'll find local shops, friendly conversations, and a pace of life that feels refreshingly unpolished. A coffee shop, some mountain gear, a local farm store, and others just around the corners of its streets. Summer often brings events and gatherings, nothing flashy, but the kind of community moments that make visitors feel less like tourists and more like temporary



Photo courtesy of Pocahontas County CVB

With miles of trails throughout the county, there are endless possibilities for cyclists of all skill levels.

neighbors.

And then there's the night sky, which might be the most underrated part of a Pocahontas County

summer. With so little light pollution, the stars come out in full force once the sun goes down. If you've never been out of

the city, it's a different experience, almost forcing you to pause without you consciously having to do it.

Constellations sharpen into view, the Milky Way stretches faintly overhead, and the quiet deepens in a way that feels almost tangible. It's a reminder of just how much gets washed out in brighter, busier places.

The quiet atmosphere is the foundation of the county. The landscapes aren't curated or crowded; they're simply allowed to exist, and you're invited to step into them. Summer here doesn't demand some packed itinerary. In fact, it works best when you let go of one and just get on the trails.

You might start the day with a hike, spend the afternoon drifting along the river, and end it sitting outside as the sky fills with stars. It's pure bliss, really. Even if you have screaming kids. Or – you might do even less than that and somehow feel like you experienced more. That's the subtle charm of Poca-

hontas County kicking in. It's not overwhelming with the things to do like most places you'll visit. Instead, it gently reminds you to support small local businesses and is a constant expression of the artists that live near the area. The county reminds you how to be still, how to notice, and how to enjoy a place without rushing through it.

If you feel that travel often feels like a race to see and do as much as possible, Pocahontas County offers something different. It's not about checking boxes or chasing high-lights. It's about stepping away from the rat race, even briefly, and letting the quieter moments take the lead.

In the middle of summer, when everything is green, alive, and humming softly in the background, there's no better place to do exactly that.



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Give it a whirl

Suzanne Stewart
Staff Writer

There are certain foods that are synonymous with the seasons – pumpkin spice and apple pie in the fall; hot cocoa and peppermint sticks in winter; and summer is naturally ice cream.

With so many flavors to choose from, it can be overwhelming. Rather than trying to stock up on hundreds of tubs of ice cream, Real Whirled Ice Cream truck owners Nelson Hernandez and Andrea Biondi decided to keep it simple.

Before moving to Marlinton, Hernandez and Biondi had an ice cream shop in North Carolina.

The couple owned and operated the Old Clark Inn in Marlinton for several years. When they sold it, they decided they did not want to completely re-



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Photos courtesy of Nelson Hernandez. Real Whirled Ice Cream, owned by Nelson Hernandez and Andrea Biondi, is a mobile ice cream shop that serves a New Zealand specialty – vanilla ice cream mixed with real fruit. At left, a cone of raspberry ice cream with a drizzle of salted caramel.

Hernandez came across this concoction on a motorcycle trip. “I believe it was in Black Mountain, North Carolina, that I came across this particular kind of mixer and I was watching what these guys were doing and it was really interesting, so they decided to find something to do that they and the community would enjoy. Going back to their roots, they chose ice cream, but not just any ice cream, whirled fruit ice cream.

See **WHIRL**, page 10

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WHIRL from pg 9
 teresting,” he said. “Once we sold the Inn, I started looking into it and found a similar machine from New Zealand.”

The machine was actually invented by berry farmers in New Zealand. They wanted something to do with extra berries and came up with the mixer to add the real fruit to ice cream for a delightfully fresh and natural treat.

“We’ve had a number of people stop by because they saw the sign, and they ask if it’s like New Zealand ice cream,” Hernandez said. “I’d get stories like they were there during college or took some time off and decided to explore, and they came across it. It’s kind of funny that people actually show up and know exactly what it is.”

Instead of opening another brick-and-mortar



The Real Whirled Ice Cream “shop” is a mobile trailer that allows owners Nelson Hernandez and Andrea Biondi to take the show on the road from April to October. They travel throughout Pocahontas County and set up shop for local events and on most weekends in Marlinton.

shop, Hernandez said he went with the towable trailer idea so that it would be easier to operate and they could travel to events

to share the ice cream. As a seasonal operation, that just makes sense.

The menu consists of a base of vanilla ice cream,

Photo courtesy of Nelson Hernandez

with fruit options of raspberry, strawberry, banana, blueberry, tart cherry and pineapple, and perhaps add a drizzle of either dark

chocolate or salted caramel. Keeping things simple, Hernandez said he can get the best and “cleanest” ingredients possible. He uses real vanilla or vanilla bean ice cream, with the least amount of high fructose corn syrup possible. “We use premium vanilla,” he said. “I use Mayfield. There’s no artificial flavor and no artificial color.”

The fruit is real, not a fruit flavored syrup, so it is nice and fresh. The dark chocolate and salted caramel drizzles are also natural ingredients and the tasty treat comes in either a waffle cone or cup.

They sometimes get customers who can’t have dairy, so they have two options – Outshine Frozen Fruit Bars or Lactaid.

“Some people say the Lactaid is good enough, but it doesn’t work for others,” Hernandez said.

In addition to the ice cream, they serve specialty sodas made with Monin syrups. Hernandez has a non-motorized carbonator with which he carbonates water and then he adds the flavored syrup. They also have sparkling lemonade made the same way.

“We go on the not so sweet side,” he said. “But people can ask for extra sweet.”

The best way to find out where the truck will be parked is to follow the Real Whirled Ice Cream Facebook page. Hernandez frequently updates where they will be and what events they plan to attend.

The ice cream truck can often be found at the mini park on First Avenue in Marlinton.

Their season runs from the Great Greenbrier River Race in April to Columbus Day in October.

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An out of this world summer at Green Bank Observatory

Lucas Adcock
Staff Writer

Tucked away in the mountains of Pocahontas County, summer at Green Bank Observatory offers something that feels increasingly rare: dark skies, quiet nights and a chance to

slow down for a while. It's an experience that everyone should have, seeing the sky like that – lit up with stars and a streak of the Milky Way sitting silently overhead. Over the next few months, the observatory will welcome visitors from across the country for a full lineup of

summer events that combine science, outdoor adventure, camping and small-town Appalachian charm.

The season begins June 5-6 with the return of the Space Race Rumpus, a unique weekend event that blends mountain biking, camping, astronomy and live entertainment all on observatory grounds. Riders can take part in scenic mountain and road bike routes that wind through the hills surrounding Green Bank, while visitors who prefer a slower pace can either enjoy the atmosphere, camp beneath the stars, or explore one of the most unusual destinations in the country.

There are not many places where two things



Photo courtesy of the Green Bank Observatory

One of the most unique parts of the annual Star Quest event at Green Bank Observatory is visitors get to camp out in a field within view of the Green Bank Telescope, the worlds largest fully steerable telescope.

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occur side-by-side: cyclists racing beside giant radio telescopes before enjoying the evenings gathered around campfires under a sky filled with stars.

Because Green Bank sits within the National Radio Quiet Zone, the area remains free from much of the noise and connectivity that define our modern life. For many visitors, that temporary disconnection becomes part of the experience itself.

On June 6, the observatory will also host one of its popular summer "Star Parties," inviting guests to spend the evening exploring the night sky through telescopes with help from observatory staff and astronomy enthusiasts. Families, first-time stargazers, and longtime astronomy fans alike are encouraged to attend. With little light

See **OBSERVATORY**,
page 12

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from pg 11

pollution in the surrounding areas, Green Bank offers some of the clearest night skies in the eastern United States.

Later in the summer, Green Bank will welcome visitors for Star Quest XXI from July 15–18, a four-day gathering that attracts amateur astronomers, campers, and science lovers from across the country. This particular event features telescope observing, educational talks, workshops, family activities, and long evenings spent under the Milky Way.

While astronomy remains at the heart of these events, the experience itself is often the thing that lingers most in the mind. Visitors come for the telescopes but stay for our quiet mountain scenery, with its cool summer nights and the chance to unplug for a few days. Families camp together in open fields, travelers explore Pocahontas County during the day, and evenings are spent looking upward rather than downward at screens.

For both locals and visitors, Green Bank's summer schedule offers wide-open skies, peaceful surroundings, and a commu-

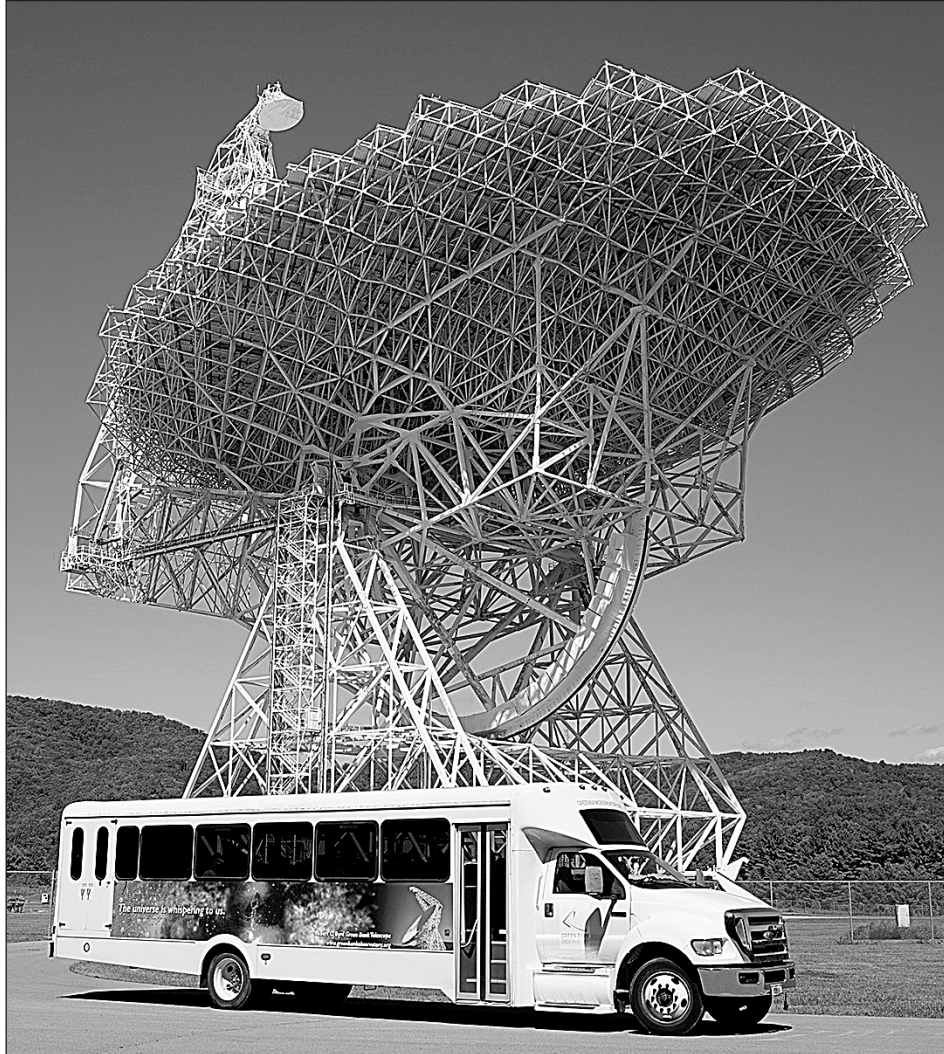


Photo courtesy of Green Bank Observatory

The daily tours that wind through the Green Bank Observatory takes visitors on a trip through history as they learn about all the telescopes at the site, including the Green Bank Telescope, shown above, towering over a tour bus.

nity that continues to celebrate curiosity, exploration, and the outdoors. So whether you arrive for

the biking, astronomy, or simply the scenery, this summer's events at Green Bank Observatory promise

a chance to experience a side of West Virginia that is both timeless and unforgettable.

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'In the good old summertime'

Lucas Adcock
Staff Writer

June in Pocahontas County is packed with mountain music, hometown traditions, cycling adventures, and old-fashioned summer fun. As the weather warms and the county's valleys turn to deep green, locals and visitors alike gather for festivals that celebrate Appalachian culture and community spirit.

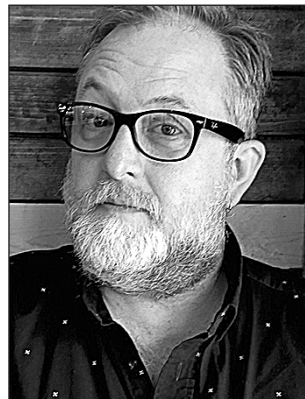
One of the first major events of is the Space Race Rumpus, scheduled for June 5-7. Hosted near the world-famous Green Bank Observatory, the festival combines cycling, camping, live music, races and stargazing into one unique weekend. Riders can explore scenic mountain roads and trails while families enjoy games, clinics, bonfires and outdoor activities beneath some of the darkest skies on the East Coast. The event has become a favorite for both serious cyclists and casual visitors looking for a laid-back summer atmosphere.



Ned Dougherty

Later in the month, music lovers and artists will gather in Marlinton for Allegheny Echoes, which runs June 21-27. This weeklong celebration focuses on traditional Appalachian music, bluegrass, dance, and creative writing workshops. Musicians and storytellers from across the region come together to preserve mountain traditions while welcoming newcomers interested in learning old-time crafts and performance styles.

Joining the instructor Ned Dougherty for his creative writing workshop will be West Virginia writer Doug



Doug Van Gundy

Van Gundy, who will deliver a featured reading with books to sell and sign. The Creative Workshop will run Monday - Friday, June 22 - 26, 9 a.m. to noon, at McClintic Library in Marlinton. More information at Alleghenyechoes.com

The biggest celebration of June, however, is the Little Levels Heritage Fair, taking place Friday - Sunday, June 26-28, in the historic town of Hillsboro. This will be the 28th year of the fair, which honors the heritage of the Little Levels region and celebrates the birthplace of author Pearl S. Buck. Visitors



Photo courtesy of Allegheny Echoes

Allegheny Echoes is an annual retreat for musicians of all abilities who want to hone their skills in playing old-time and bluegrass music. Instructors not only provide lessons in fiddle, banjo, guitar, bass and mandolin, but they also give performances during the week long event, which culminates with a student performance at Discovery Junction in Marlinton.

can enjoy live bluegrass and old-time music, craft vendors, parades, pie contests, car shows, children's games and local food. The event captures the charm of a classic Appalachian summer festival and draws families from throughout the region

every year.

Beyond the festivals themselves, June is also a perfect time to experience the county's farmers markets, mountain scenery and small-town hospitality.

If you are in search of good music, excellent biking

opportunities, local history, or simply a weekend escape to the mountains, summer in Pocahontas County offers a welcoming glimpse into the traditions that make Pocahontas County one of West Virginia's most beloved destinations.

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Hellbenders are heaven sent

Suzanne Stewart
Staff Writer

Pocahontas County is known for its many rivers, streams and creeks. They are great places to fish, swim, float and relax on a hot summer day.

The waters are also home to a large ecosystem of organisms; more life than just the trout that are commonly seen.

Among those organisms is the seldom seen hellbender, the world's fourth largest salamander.

The hellbender is a large, dark creature that makes its home under the large flat rocks in rivers in the eastern and central states.

The salamander was discovered in the early 1800s, and it is claimed it received its name from settlers because it looked like a creature from hell, bent on returning from whence it came.

There are several reasons the hellbender is such an interesting creature – more than just its



Photo courtesy of Wildland Trekking

The Hellbender is the fourth largest aquatic salamander species in the world and the only one found in North America. It can grow to up to three feet in length and is unique in the fact that it has both lungs and a dorsal lateral flap, similar to gills, that it uses to absorb oxygen from water.

name.

The salamander is born with both lungs and gills. When it matures, the gills remain, but the salamander uses frills – a dorsal lateral flap – to absorb oxygen from the water. While they can leave the water and use their lungs to breathe, they do so only occasionally, preferring to remain water bound.

The females lay up to 200 eggs at a time, which look like a string of pearls, held together by a thin thread. Once the eggs are fertilized, the male scares away the female so he can

watch over the eggs until they hatch.

Hellbenders have dark and slimy skin with spots. The only part of their bod-

See *SENT*, page 15



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ies with color are their toes, which are commonly orange or pink.

So, what makes these

large salamanders so important?

They are considered habitat specialists and if you find any in your river, count yourself lucky. It

means the water is clean, clear and is of good quality. Hellbenders are picky. They have to have very clean water because they absorb their oxygen

straight from the water. With the presence of hellbenders, you can be assured the river is a clean and healthy habitat for other aquatic critters.



Photo courtesy of Highlands Conservancy

The hellbender likes to make its home under large, flat rocks in rivers and prefers the cleanest water possible. If you find a hellbender in your river or stream, it means the water is clean and as close to pure as possible - without being filtered.

Unfortunately, the population of hellbenders is decreasing due to disturbances to their habitats and the changes in the health of streams.

One way to ensure hellbenders and the rest of the ecosystem remains safe is to leave rocks where they are. It may seem like a fun activity to build a tower of rocks or even a little wall of rocks, but those rocks are home to these creatures and when the rocks are moved, mud and silt can fill in the cavities, destroying their habitats.

“Hellbenders, which are found here in a lot of the nearby rivers – are a sensitive species because they’ve had so much habitat loss and degradation,” he added. “They rely on those large flat rocks to nest in.”

Pocahontas County is a great place for hellbenders because of the National Forest, where the rivers are protected and their habitats can remain clean and healthy.

It is possible to find hellbenders by grabbing a snorkel and hitting the shallow parts of the local rivers. They have been found to reside in the Greenbrier and Cheat rivers, but the possibilities are endless with all the streams here in the county.

“Moving one is a detriment to the system because those rocks play an important role in the aquatic system as they provide habitat for fish and a lot of macro-invertebrates the fish eat and rely on in the water,” he said. “They

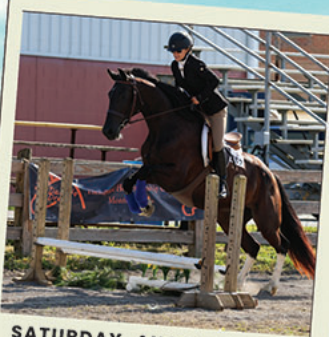
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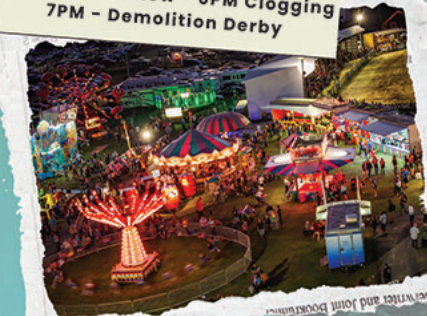
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7PM - Demolition Derby



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Wings of Gold

Ken Springer
Contributing Writer

The plight of the Golden-winged Warbler and those who strive to save it and other threatened bird species:

While recently searching through a box of books stored in my shed, I came across a lost, but not forgotten, book by Rachel Carson called "Silent Spring." Written in 1962, this prophetic book posits a future devoid of the sounds of nature because of the indiscriminate use of environmental hazards such as DDT.

Carson asks us to consider a world without the melodies of songbirds, the honking of wild geese, the chirping of crickets, the cawing of crows, the cacophony of spring peepers, and so on. I cannot imagine a world without the sounds of our fellow creatures. However, "Silent Spring" was key in getting DDT pulled from the shelves in most countries.

Compare Carson's image of a mute world with what I hear each morning when I walk outside here on my 40 acres on Caesar Mountain: a multitude of songbirds greet my ears.

I recently had guests for a few days, and on their first morning, they, too, remarked on the abundance and variety of birds, as well as the tweets, trills and warbles from the eight-acre bird habitat just below my cabin. This verita-



Dawson Rader, left, and Kyle Rhodes set up bioacoustic monitoring on my eight acres of bird habitat, with great results.

ble symphony of sounds did not exist here until a portion of my land was made into a habitat friendly to songbirds.

When I first purchased my land, I had no intention of creating a bird habitat, nor was I an avid birder. Oh, I knew many of the common songbirds and much of the migratory wildfowl, having been a duck hunter for many years when I was a young

man.

Decades later, it was under the tutelage of my friends Jim and Beth Bullard that I gained an appreciation for the many songbirds we have here in the Appalachians.

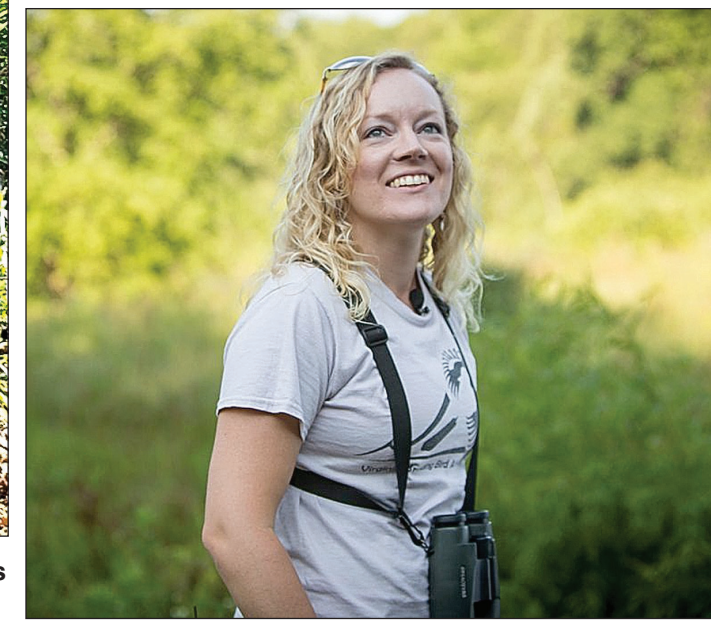
Jim, now deceased, and Beth lived in the northern part of Pocahontas County and were active in the Brooks Bird Club for decades. As I continue learning to identify

birds by sight and sound, I think of Jim and Beth and am grateful to them for opening a new and fascinating world to me.

When I first purchased the land, I was unaware of the programs offered by our local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It was when I hired a competent arborist, Ken Beezley, to cut the eight-acre



The Golden-winged Warbler is Near Threatened globally and federally listed as Threatened in Canada.



Dr. Ashley Peele's efforts as an avian ecologist for the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture go a long way in creating bird habitats here in the Appalachians.

viewshed below my cabin that he shared with me how creating this opening would attract wild birds.

Furthermore, Ken made me aware of the existential plight of a bird, previously unknown to me - the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA).

He also suggested that I contact the NRCS to see what programs they offer that would make this mountain-side forest healthier than I found it. I was inspired and driven to make this piece of land better for birds, other wildlife, and the forest itself.

In December 2022, I walked into the USDA office in Buckeye and found a group of people more than willing to help me reach my goals. I worked with several people from the NRCS in the first two years, and in 2024, two gentlemen arrived at my place in a government vehicle. Dawson Rader and Kyle Rhodes would make all the difference in the world by suggesting many ways to maintain the birds and create a healthier forest.

Seeing my first Golden-winged Warbler here last year was a thrill. Only nature can elicit such unbridled joy in the dark times we are currently experiencing for both nature and humanity. Seeing that tiny bird made me want to share the experience with others and make them aware that they, too, can help save this and other threatened birds.

As we shall soon see, there are programs available to assist landowners in creating

See GOLD, page 18

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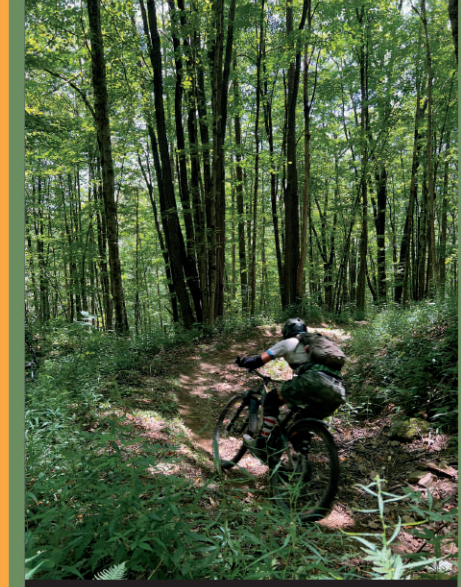
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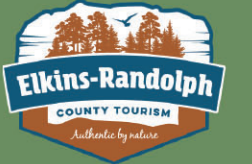
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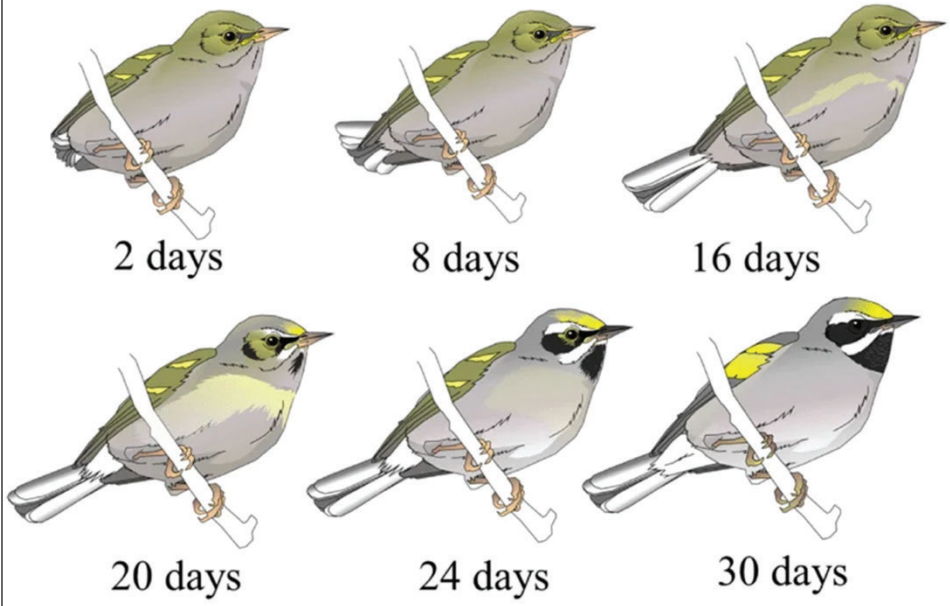


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bird habitats and providing on-site guidance to control invasive plant species, thereby making your forest healthier. Last year, Kyle and Dawson set up a bird monitoring system at my bird sanctuary, the results of which were extraordinary and will be discussed later in this article.

I recently asked Dawson, an ornithologist with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, to share information about the plight of the GWWA and how land-owners can help save this and other threatened birds here in the Appalachian Mountains. With input from several of his colleagues, Dawson had the following to say about the GWWA specifically, and other threatened birds in general.

“The GWWA population is in steep decline. Since 1966, the global GWWA population has declined by >70%, and in the Appalachian Mountains, GWWA have suffered even steeper regional declines



Observed plumage development of fledgling Golden-winged Warblers from day 2 to day 30 postfledging based on observations from the 2014 through 2016 breeding seasons in Delaware State Forest and Sproul State Forest in Pennsylvania.

of >99%. Golden-winged Warbler declines are largely driven by habitat loss along with other compounding factors.’

“When we hear about habitat loss, we generally think about natural landscapes being paved over for a parking lot or a suburban development. And, while that certainly is a

factor, the GWWA faces additional serious threats, not just here in the Appalachians, but also in Central and South America, where they migrate to for over half a year; even there, habitat is dwindling.’

“Disturbance events, both manmade and natural, can take many forms:

ice storms, wildfires, mudslides, flooding, lightning strikes, wind events, disease, insect pests, old age, logging, mountaintop removal mining, and more.’

“While some of these events can be disastrous, there is a silver lining: the GWWA is disturbance-dependent. GWWA in the Appalachians exclusively

hold breeding territories and nest in areas where vegetation is in the early stages of revegetation after a major disturbance.’

“Over time, large-scale disturbance events have become less common. Wildfires are largely suppressed, where they were once common. Shifts in grazing practices and reduced logging have reduced the number of interspersed patches of vegetation, which is detrimental to the Golden-winged Warbler.’

“Since its foundation, the Working Land For Wildlife (WLFW) has facilitated the creation of over 42,000 acres of GWWA habitat nationally.”

“Finally, the Golden-winged Warbler isn’t the only disturbance-related species we have here in the Mountain State. Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, Prairie Warbler, American Woodcock, and dozens of other species use the habitat created when managing for the Golden-winged Warbler.’

“The Golden-winged

Warbler (GWWA) is one of eight national Working Lands for Wildlife target species. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) program in 2012 to create wildlife habitat and support habitat connectivity for target species on private working landscapes.’

“The program offers technical and financial support to agricultural producers seeking to improve their land to benefit wildlife.’

“The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and partners work closely with agricultural producers to plan, design and implement conservation practices on their land that align with the landowner’s goals and the NRCS’s conservation goals.’

“Agricultural producers are eligible to apply for technical and financial assistance through USDA Farm Bill programs. If you are interested in improving your land for wildlife,

See **GOLD**, page 19



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GOLD from pg 18

reach out to your local NRCS service center for more information."

(A huge thanks to Dawson Rader, Kyle Rhodes, and colleagues for their contribution to saving threatened bird species.)

Meet Ashley M. Peele, Ph.D., Science Integration Coordinator for the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV). Ashley is also working to preserve our many threatened bird species by providing coordination with other groups and agencies with the same goals - here's what she has to share.

"I grew up on a deep-water lake in Central Florida, spending my childhood days watching otters playing in the canal and gators basking in the sun. The diversity of bird life in my own backyard would make many bird-nerds (that's a new one for this author) drool, with Roseate Spoonbills foraging alongside Limpkins, who themselves competed with Snail Kites for the abundant apple snails.

"My childhood gave me a deep love for the natural world, and my granddaddy

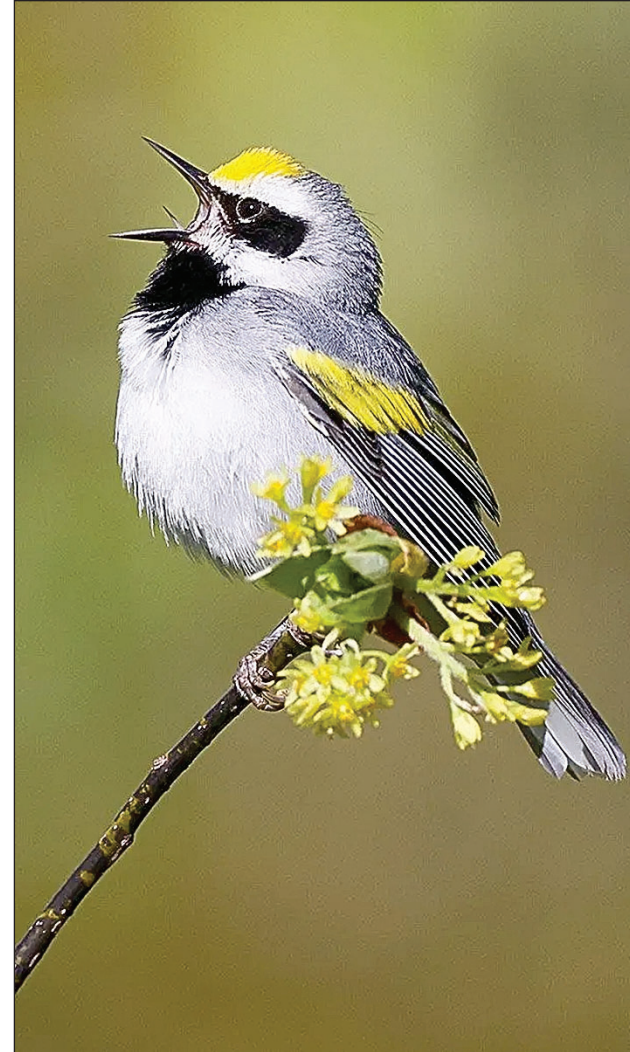


Photo courtesy of American Birding Association/Gene Koziara
A Golden-winged Warbler.

ensured that my heart felt most at home in the an-

cient hills of Appalachia.

"I obtained a degree in Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan University, where a wonderful mentor introduced me to the world of Ornithology and Field Biology. I completed a doctorate in Avian Ecology from Tulane University and dedicated my career to working on applied conservation challenges facing the birds of Appalachia.

"In my role as the Science Integration Coordinator for the AMJV, I spend much of my time

See **GOLD**, page 20

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GOLD from pg 19

exploring creative ways to leverage community science and advancing technologies like bioacoustics to address key information gaps in our understanding of Appalachia's bird populations.

"These are challenging objectives in the Appalachian geography because most of the land is privately owned, and much of the region is remote and difficult to access. These characteristics mean that traditional survey methods are logistically challenging and increasingly cost-prohibitive.

"Recent advances in bioacoustics are opening new pathways for evaluating and monitoring bird populations.

"In Central Appalachia, the AMJV is working with WV DNR and WV NRCS to design and implement a new acoustic monitoring program on private properties that participate in the USDA cost-share programs.

"In the summer of 2025, the AMJV worked with both our own field staff and partner biologists from WV DNR and WV NRCS (including Dawson Rader and Kyle Rhodes) to launch the first round of acoustic monitoring

surveys. "AMJV staff and partner biologists deployed 34 bird song recorders across a dozen properties in Eastern West Virginia. To our delight, only a few recorders fell victim to bears, moisture, etc. This enabled us to evaluate bird communities across all participating properties effectively.

"The AMJV staff processed and analyzed thousands of hours of recordings, using a range of software, including the Bird Net Analyzer, a product of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. AMJV staff member Danielle confirmed each species at

each site and compiled summary reports for participating landowners.

"We detected a diverse range of priority bird species at each property. We also detected priority species such as the Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush and Vermivora in many of the sites.

"One amusing anecdote from 2025 concerns two program participants who live next door to each other in northeastern West Virginia. From their reports, they learned that one neighbor had more priority species, while the other had a higher overall number of bird species."

The outcome? Each is

now looking at additional habitat management programs to make their properties even more attractive to birds. Well, there's nothing wrong with conservation motivated by a little healthy competition."

I wholeheartedly agree, Ashley.

Author's Note: Dawson Rader and Kyle Rhodes set up a bioacoustic bird-monitoring system on my property last year, and the results were encouraging, to say the least. I was surprised and delighted when the Golden-winged Warbler was on the list of birds found on my property.

If you are a property owner interested in saving

our songbirds, you can get help. Please locate your local NRCS service center using the following link: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center>

In closing, the much-needed rain we have recently experienced has filled the vernal pool on my property. With it came the croaking of mating frogs and a bird I didn't expect to see in these parts: a Hooded Merganser.

Below are two tables listing the results of the bird monitoring system set up in 2025 on my property.

Ken Springer
ken1949bongo@gmail.com

Springer 1 Species List

Acadian Flycatcher*	Eastern Wood-Pewee*	White-breasted Nuthatch
American Crow	Field Sparrow**	Wood Thrush**
American Goldfinch	Golden-winged Warbler**	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
American Redstart	Gray Catbird	Yellow-throated Vireo*
American Robin	Great Crested Flycatcher	
Barred Owl	Hairy Woodpecker	
Black-and-white Warbler*	Hooded Warbler*	
Blackburnian Warbler**	House Finch	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	House Wren	
Blue-headed Vireo	Indigo Bunting*	
Blue Jay	Least Flycatcher^	
Brown-headed Cowbird	Kentucky Warbler**	
Brown Thrasher*	Mourning Dove	
Canada Warbler**	Mourning Warbler	
Carolina Wren	Northern Cardinal	
Cedar Waxwing	Northern Flicker*	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Ovenbird	
Chickadee sp.	Pileated Woodpecker	
Chimney Swift*	Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Common Raven	Red-eyed Vireo	
Common Yellowthroat	Red-headed Woodpecker**	
Dark-eyed Junco	Red-shouldered Hawk	
Downy Woodpecker	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	
Eastern Bluebird	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	
Eastern Phoebe	Scarlet Tanager*	
Eastern Towhee*	Tufted Titmouse	

*AMJV priority species

**WVDNR species of greatest conservation need

Springer 2 Species List

Acadian Flycatcher*	Northern Flicker*
American Crow	Ovenbird
American Goldfinch	Pileated Woodpecker
American Redstart	Red-bellied Woodpecker
American Robin	Red-eyed Vireo
Barred Owl	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-and-white Warbler*	Scarlet Tanager*
Black-throated Green Warbler	Tufted Titmouse
Blue-headed Vireo	White-breasted Nuthatch
Blue Jay	Wood Thrush**
Canada Goose*	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Carolina Wren	Yellow-throated Vireo*
Chickadee sp.	
Chimney Swift**	
Common Raven	
Common Yellowthroat	
Eastern Towhee*	
Eastern Whip-poor-will**	
Eastern Wood-Pewee*	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Hairy Woodpecker	
Hooded Warbler*	
Louisiana Waterthrush**	
Mourning Dove	
Northern Cardinal	

*AMJV priority species

**WVDNR species of greatest conservation need

Hike and Bike Preparations

Lucas Adcock
Staff Writer

Regardless of the nights recently dipping into cool temperatures, the days are becoming hotter. But as temperatures continue to rise and the days grow longer, summer becomes the perfect season for hiking and biking. Whether you're heading out on a wooded trail, cruising along a country road, or maybe even just camping, a little preparation can be

the difference between a great outing and a difficult one.

One of the first things to consider is your physical readiness. If you haven't been active during the colder months, it's important to ease back into activity. You don't want to pull anything! Start with shorter walks or rides, then gradually increase your distance and intensity. This helps build endurance and reduces the risk of injury. Stretching before and after your ac-

tivity can also help keep your muscles flexible and prevent soreness. Remember, your muscles are like rubber bands, they'll break if you stretch them when they're too cold.

Choosing the right gear is another key part of preparing for summer adventures. Especially camping. If you don't have pre-existing gear, take your time and consider multiple brands – something lightweight like breathable clothing can help keep you cool, while sturdy, comfortable shoes are essential for hiking.

For biking, make sure your helmet fits properly and that your bike is adjusted to your height. Small details, like moisture-wicking socks or padded bike shorts, can go a long way in improving comfort and increasing your stamina. No one likes walking with wet feet...

Now we talk hydration,



Quote and photo courtesy of Aaron Theisen
"The Tea Creek trail crosses and re-crosses its namesake waterway a dozen times in the span of a mile. Fortunately, the view never gets old."

which is especially important in the summer heat. Always bring more water than you think you'll need, and take regular sips rather than waiting until you feel thirsty. For longer trips, consider bringing drinks with electrolytes to help replace what your body loses through sweat – things like propel packets or any kind of electrolyte powders are a good way to get quick electrolytes in and keep from getting cramps. In addition to hydration, proper nutrition

matters too. Eating a balanced meal before heading out and packing light snacks, such as fruit or trail mix, can help maintain your energy level.

Now, you may not all be as fair-skinned as me, but sun protection is often overlooked, when it's actually just as important. Wearing a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen can protect your skin and eyes from harmful UV rays. It's also wise to plan your outings during cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening to avoid the hottest temperatures.

Before heading out, take time to plan your route. Choose trails, roads or camping spots that match your skill level, and be aware of the distance and terrain. Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return. Bringing a map, a fully charged phone, and a small first aid kit can help you stay prepared for unexpected situations, especially being here in Appalachia. If you have a ham radio, that's arguably even more useful consid-

ering the lack of cell service we have throughout our beautiful county.

If you're biking, a quick check of your equipment is essential. There's nothing worse than tumbling off a trail while kicking yourself for not making sure your brakes worked properly. Make sure your tires are properly inflated, your brakes are working, and your chain is in good condition. Carrying a basic repair kit can save you from being stranded if something goes wrong.

Finally, remember to pace yourself and enjoy the experience. Summer hiking, biking and camping are ultimately about being outdoors, staying active, and taking in the scenery. It's not about the destination, although we have many beautiful ones to see in Pocahontas County. After your outing, take time to cool down, rehydrate, and rest so your body can recover.

With a bit of preparation, you can make the most of your summer adventures while staying safe and comfortable.

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From the Archives

*A county cornerstone,
a living history ~
C. J. Richardson's*

Jaynell Graham
Staff Writer
Published 2008

Amid the changes of downtown Marlinton, a few things have remained constant, one of them being C. J. Richardson Hardware. Visitors to this area are often surprised by what local residents have come to expect. Upon entering Richardson's, they are greeted with a smile and a quick "May I help you?"

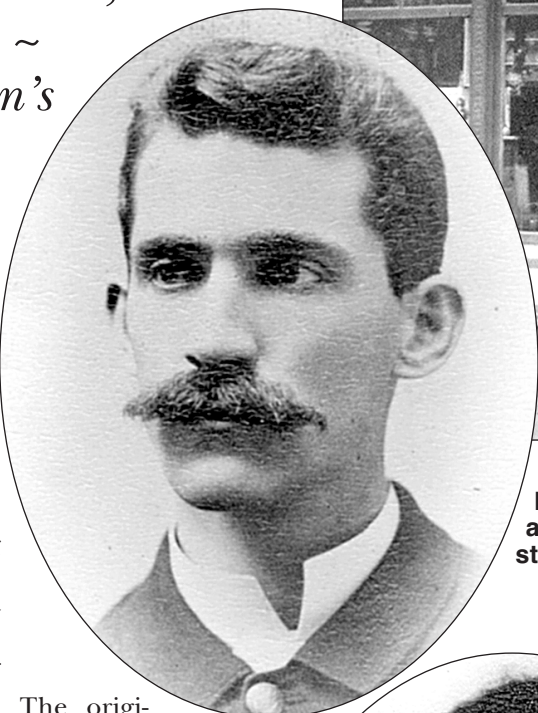
C. J. Richardson Hardware was there when the railroad came and when the railroad was dismantled, it was there through the Depression years, it was there when our men and women went off to wars and when they returned, and it remains today, the cornerstone of stability in an ever-changing world.

The floor-to-ceiling shelves, oak counters and nail bins of the hardware store are as they have always been. The open freight elevator is still in service. This elevator was originally operated by "mule" power, then advanced to a system of belts and pulleys and, finally, to an electric powered winch.

The original track ladder, which gives access to those tall shelves, succumbed to constant use and was replaced several years ago, but it, too, is still rolling.

Much of the merchandise of years ago is still offered today, although the demand for hand tools such as hammers, saws and hand sanders dwindled as power tools became the rage.

Throughout its history Richardson's has repaired what it sells. Those item-



Photos courtesy of the Richardson family
Men gather and visit at C. J. Richardson's. The store then sported a brick siding front. Now, as then, the windows were filled with seasonal displays. At left, portraits of Charles Johnson (C.J.) Richardson and Annie Laurie Thomas Richardson.

change with each generation and today it is appliances, chainsaws, weed eaters, lawn mowers, micro-waves and vacuum cleaners.

The friendly service today is orchestrated by Charles McElwee "Google" Richardson and his son, Terry, who left Marlinton to work in New Hampshire and "came home in 1984." Their commitment to the community, now as then, extends beyond regular business hours. Many folks in the county have been helped out of a bind by an after-hours phone

call to Google or Terry, or Buck's wife, Cookie, to Ira "Buck" Turner, who joined him at Richardson's for 27 years has assisted and they make a very accommodating team. those in need, both as an employee of Richardson's and as a friend and neighbor. A few years ago,

See ARCHIVES,
page 23

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The tradition of a Christmas drawing continues today with prizes such as guns, TVs and vacuum cleaners, but there was a time when the coveted prize was a new automobile.

Jewel Scott, who celebrated his 100th birthday this past July, was the winner of the last Ford car given away by the store. Scott and his wife, Nellie, had built a new house and all the materials came from Richardson's. Selling their lamb and calf crop just prior to Christmas, they were able to pay off their account. When

the winning number was posted in the store window, Scott went home to check his numbers. When he came across the winner he said, 'Nellie, go get your car.'

Charles Johnston "C.J." Richardson graduated from VPI as a civil engineer and headed to South America for his first job, opening a gold mine. He later worked for a friend in Decatur, Georgia, managing a hardware store. When he became quite ill with malaria, his brother, Dr. T. S. Richardson, recommended that he head for the mountains as a cure for what ailed him. Finding that he loved

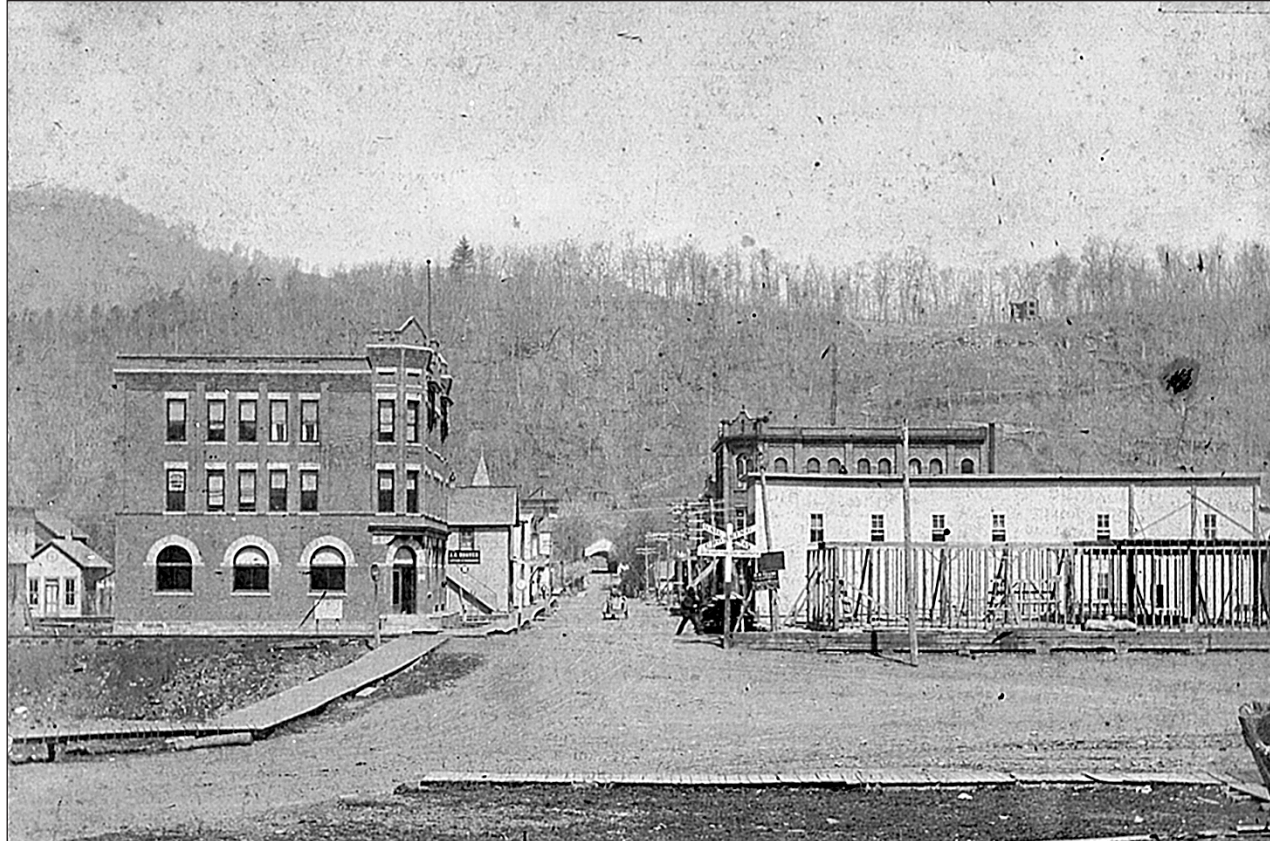


Photo courtesy Keith Moore

This photo shows the new store under construction next to the railroad. It was completed around 1905.

what this area offered with its hunting and fishing, he decided to stay and set about building a hardware store and undertaker's shop at the present intersection of Rts. 219 and 39. This was later the location of the People's Store and Supply Company. In response to the news that the C. & O. Railroad would soon pass through Marlinton, Richardson made plans and began construction of the present-day store and opened there around 1905.

Along the way, he married Annie Laurie Tho-

mas, of Bath County, Virginia. As his business grew, his brother-in-law, Andy Thomas, moved to Marlinton to help with the undertaking portion. Richardson's grandson, "Google," said that "Uncle Andy worked for 50 years, opening the store every morning and never took a vacation or a sick day."

C. J.'s brother, Ed, worked in the family business and added some spice to the atmosphere. Ed, who lived in a house in what is now Smith Addition, rode his horse to work, and was quite the

fiddle player. Musicians gathered at the store every Saturday night to play and sing. Joining Ed were Whitley Daughterty, Charlie Lovelace, "Greenbrier" Dotson and others. Google said that "Greenbrier" reminded him of Mahatma Gandhi, in that he was bald and had nothing to say, but smiled all the time.

Charlie Lovelace worked at Richardson's as the repairer of gasoline-powered Maytag washers. Ralph Dilley was the full-time radio repairman. And speaking of radio, Google remembers that all the stores stayed open late and every night "mostly the same people would come into the store to listen to 'Lum and Abner' and 'Amos and Andy.'" Jim Shinaut, who had lost his eyesight and whose grandson, Jerry Davis, works at Richardson's today, was "always posted at the radio for every base-

ball game." Each night Shinaut walked, unattended, to his home on Jerico Road. When asked how he knew he had reached Jerico, he said he could feel a difference in the atmosphere at that point and turned toward home.

As the third generation, Google began his career at the store right after WW II. He remembers that the business was still horse oriented at that time due to agriculture and logging in the area; work that demanded collars, harnesses and all the "horse trappings." There was a pipe that ran the full length of the store - front to back - with nothing but horse collars and "hardly a day would go by without selling a set or two of horse harnesses." Richardson's still carries those "horse trappings" but today they

See ARCHIVES,

page 24

are for pleasure horses, “nothing like back then.” Back then, as well, Googie said, “it was just what the name says, ‘hard, hardware’... nuts and bolts, lots of goods, bits and teeth for saw blades and a lot of items needed by sawmills.”

Osa Smith McLaughlin went to work at Richardson's in 1965 as the first woman “on the floor.” As with all new employees, her first two weeks were spent dusting the shelves to “acquaint” her with all the merchandise. In her 21 years there, she was in charge of advertising and was the furniture buyer, taking an annual trip to the High Point, North Carolina Furniture Show each October. Under the management of C. J.'s sons Charles and Craig Richardson, her co-workers were her brother, Jack Smith, John Quick, Tom Sharp and Jim McGraw. McGraw, according to Googie, was the most “enduring” employee, having worked at Richardson's for over 50 years. Osa remembers the 1906 Day Book, which recorded everything from caskets shipped by train to Cass, to newlyweds setting up housekeeping. At that time, \$250 would get you everything you needed – furniture to stovepipes.

Although Osa was the first woman “on the floor,” the bookkeeping department has always been manned by women. Craig Richardson's wife, Gertrude, led the way, followed through the years by Elizabeth Kessler,

Noble Moore and Edith McCloud. Today, you will find Lana Clark at the desk, where she has been for the last 16 years. The original office was on a platform, six to seven feet above the first floor, but in 1948 the office was tucked in-beside and behind- the wide staircase. Walking up that staircase, you leave the nuts and bolts of labor behind and find on the second floor, a bright, light and airy room full of furniture, floor coverings and accessories. A service stairway will take you to the third floor where extra stock is stored and tucked in nooks and crannies is a bit of merchandise from the past.

As in the days of Ed Richardson, the store still carries a selection of musical instruments which can readily be seen hanging from a pipe suspended over the oak counter. The musical talent of this family has passed through the generations, as well, with fourth generation Terry, and fifth generation Annie Laurie Richardson, Ann Grace and Michael David Ferrell carrying on the tradition of old-time music.

When employees stay for 21, 27, even 50 years, it's more than a business, it's family.

In his 100 years, Jewel Scott has dealt with them all, C. J., his sons, Charles and Craig, his grandson,



Photo by Jaynell Graham

Many buildings around Marlinton have come and gone, but Richardson's stands as it has more than 100 years.

Googie, and great-grandson, Terry. Scott summed up this family quite well, “Those Richardsons, they're wonderful people.”

Through the households of this county, for 105 years, generation after generation has said, “I've gotta' go to Richardson's.”

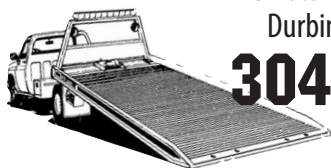
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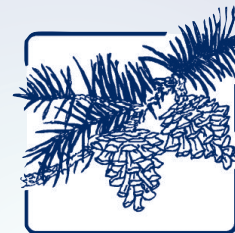
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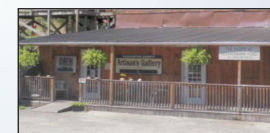
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The secluded world of Seneca State Forest

Laura Dean Bennett
Staff Writer
Published 2018

Not for the faint of heart, but definitely perfect for those who really want to get away from it all, Seneca State Forest's primitive cabins boast practically no modern conveniences, but offer a real taste of life in the woods the way it was

lived years ago.

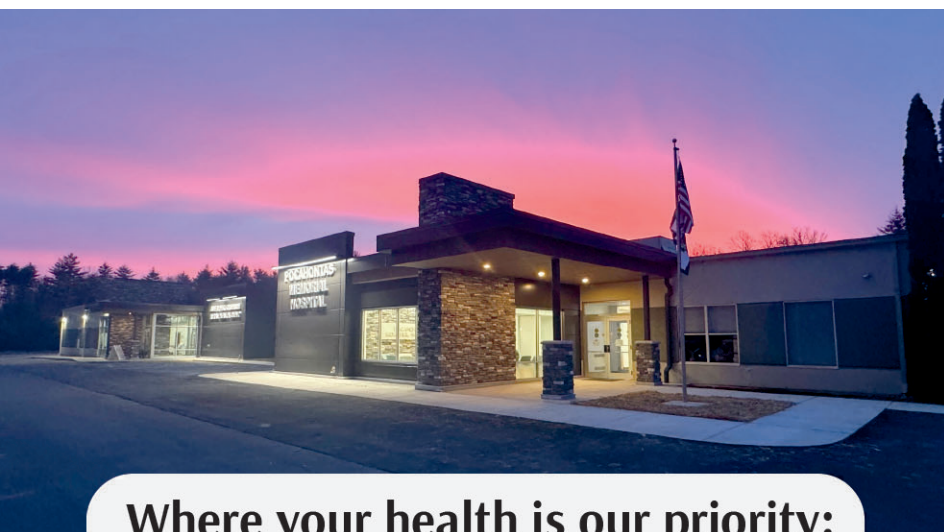
Seneca is West Virginia's first state forest. It was created in 1924 to ensure timber and wildlife for the future. During the 1930s, Seneca was home to the largest and most varied populations of wildlife found anywhere in West Virginia.

Today, Seneca offers unique hospitality by way of its eight off-the-grid "pioneer" cabins, with hand-

pumped water, gas refrigerators, gaslights, fireplaces and wood-burning cook stoves.

Five of the cabins are located along the shore of the four-acre Seneca Lake and come equipped with canoes. The other three overlook the beautiful Greenbrier River, and all were built in the 1930s.

You'll get a warm welcome at the park office and if you're there on an



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Photo by Laura Dean Bennett
Seneca State Forest's Cabin 4 is tucked behind a gate and perched right on the side of the lake, which is stocked spring and fall with trout and large mouth bass. There are also plenty of catfish, bluegill and perch to keep anglers busy.

80 degree day, don't be surprised if, after that warm welcome, you get a chillier reception among the pines, as you drive into the forest, where the temperature drops to a cool 70.

When you leave the office and set out in search

of your cabin, you'll get an otherworldly sensation, as the paved road gives way to a winding, rugged dirt road.

Keep your eyes peeled for wildlife and birds, as they are surely all around you.

You might as well have

stepped into a time machine as a narrow lane takes you miles into the forest and centuries back in time.

This is not the place for a fancy sports car. It is better suited to horse or covered wagon.

When you think of the cabin in Laura Ingalls Wilder story "Little House in the Woods," you might, for all intents and purposes, be imagining a cabin just like the ones you'll discover hiding in Seneca State Forest.

They are rustic, to say the least.

Two cabins have been rebuilt but were rebuilt exactly to their original specifications.

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See **SENECA**, page 26

SENECA from pg 25
 linens, blankets, towels and other amenities to provide for a relaxing stay. But they are primitive, which is what makes them special. They have practically none of the things that we take for granted these days – no electricity, no running water or indoor plumbing, no phones, no TV, no Internet. What there is, is the



Photo by Laura Dean Bennett
It doesn't get much more secluded than the cabins at Seneca State Forest.
 charm of days gone by – the beauty that comes from the hand of a skilled craftsman.
 Step up on the porch,

lift the old-fashioned door latch and enter into another time. There's the homey scent of the wood burning stove and the fireplace, the glowing beauty of wood is everywhere, in

See **SENECA**, page 27

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Boyer Station Campground, nestled within the beautiful mountains of the Monongahela National Forest, Pocahontas County, now offers cabin rentals!

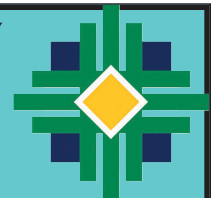
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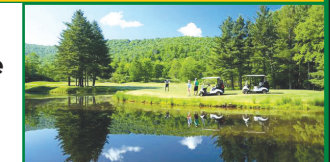
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the hand hewn furniture and oak floors, kitchen cabinets right out of great-grandma's kitchen, and cozy wooden beds covered in quilts.

And just because there's no electricity, don't assume you'll be left in the dark – there are gas-powered ceiling lamps to light your way in all the rooms.

There's also a gas-powered fridge tucked into the kitchen.

But for water, you'll head outside to the hand pump, where you will draw water just like in the old

days, and carry it indoors for washing and cooking.

Bring groceries with you and create a taste sensation for your family as you prepare meals and bake on a classic Mealmaster wood cook stove.

There's no charge for firewood for cabin guests who will want to make a fire on a chilly evening or cook their breakfast or supper on the cook stove.

Or, when you have a mind to, cook outside on the grill.

And don't bother looking for a bathroom. If you've ever heard the

terms "privy" and "outhouse," this is your chance to learn what they mean.

When you get tired of "cat baths," you can always go to the office where there are two hot showers.

Your children will never take indoor plumbing for granted again.

See *SENECA*, page 28

Photo courtesy of www.wvtourism.com

More adventurous visitors to Seneca State Forest can spend the weekend in the Thorny Mountain Fire Tower and experience the forest from a higher altitude.



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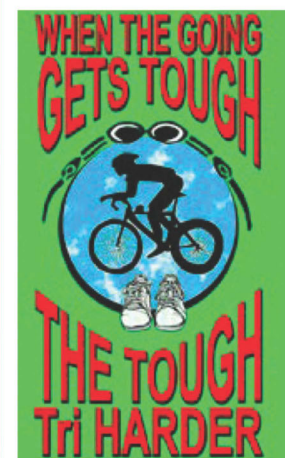
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SENECA built the Thorny Mountain Tower to replace a fire tower that had been built on nearby Michael Mountain during the 1920s.

For really adventurous guests who like camping, and want a truly unique sleepover experience, this tower is for you.

Beds, water and firewood are provided, along with a picnic table, grill, fire ring, and a privy at the base of the tower.

Steel and wooden stairs lead up to the cab and the catwalk surrounding it, so you get a workout just getting there.

An overnight stay in the fire tower is a real slice of the past. You can experience the life of a forest ranger of the 1930s.

"It's pretty sparse," Superintendent Jeff Layfield said. "We have a couple of sleeping cots with mattresses and a table and chairs. As far as cooking fa-

Photo by Laura Dean Bennett
And look at the interior of one of the cabins at Seneca Stata Forest. The cabins are rustic in the best way possible, with a fireplace, open concept rooms, comfy beds and full-size kitchens where you can prepare your own meals.

cilities, we'll provide a campfire location and grill on the ground level."

Whatever you need beyond that, you'll have to bring yourself. But talk

See **SENECA**, page 29



Visitors can also enjoy the unique experience of an overnight stay in the 55-foot tall, refurbished Thorny Mountain Fire Tower.

The spectacular view from atop the tower is the most complete 360-degree panorama possible of the Pocahontas County highlands and the Greenbrier River Valley.

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To add to your enjoyment and menu, Seneca Lake is stocked spring and fall with trout and large-mouth bass.

For those who like to hike and experience nature up close and personal, there are 40 miles of beautiful trails with lovely names like Scarlet Oak, Great Laurel, Hickory

Path and Thorny Creek. Seneca's trails are great for hiking and splendid for mountain biking, but if you want to ride horses, you'll have to bring your own.

Each season is special in Seneca State Forest. Many folks who visit in the summer say they want to return in the fall, when a wood stove or fireplace is just the thing to knock off the crisp chill.

But you'll have to plan you stay for before the deep snow of winter.

Although day use is allowed in the winter, the cabins aren't rented from the end of November until the second Friday in April, as snow often renders the roads impassable.

To learn more about Seneca State Forest or make reservations visit their website at www.senecastateforest.com or call 304-799-6213.

Photo by Laura Dean Bennett
Seneca State Forest superintendent Jeff Layfield outside Cabin 5. Layfield became the superintendent in 2013.



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- Garden Tools • Hose • Bird Feeders • Feeders and Feed
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"Large enough to supply; small enough to care."



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We're right on the river!

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Specials and events posted on Facebook/[HillsboroPublicHouse](https://www.facebook.com/HillsboroPublicHouse)

Space Race Rumpus

June 5 through 7

Family Road and Mountain
Cycling Festival, Green Bank



It's a festival and a race.
It's group rides and clinics.
It's a fundraiser.
It's a tradition!

Road and mountain bike rides and races by day, live music, local brews, bonfires and tours of the night sky each night! All in a family-friendly environment with many social activities and games.

LIVE MUSIC:

Friday, June 5: Elk River Ramblers
Saturday, June 6: Bicycle

Come! Bring your family.
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spaceracerumpus.org

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OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

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935 Vista Way Marlinton, WV



7 Bedroom/4.5 Bath on 100 acres



Spectacular views



Living room view



Gorgeous living area



Large kitchen



Formal dining room

One of Pocahontas County's most magical settings, this exceptional 7BR/4.5BA property offers sweeping, unobstructed views in every direction. This home is perfectly positioned just minutes from Marlinton and only 30 minutes from Snowshoe Resort. Surrounded by 100 acres of woods, meadows and mountain scenery, it provides endless opportunities to enjoy nature. Designed with comfort and

family in mind, the home welcomes you with a light-filled living room featuring an entire wall of windows that frame the breathtaking landscape. Watch eagles and hawks soar overhead while deer, turkeys and other wildlife wander the fields below. Multiple covered decks offer peaceful outdoor spaces to relax, entertain and take in the views, which include the Greenbrier River.

MLS 26-529 \$1,250,000

RemaxCountryWV.com

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Michael Hughes, Sales Associate/Owner 304.651.2100 mhughes@remax.net

**REMAX**
COUNTRY

570 Cass Road
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'26 SUMMER EVENTS SCHEDULE

- APR. 17** | Raven Golf Course Opening Day
- MAY 21** | Bike Park & Summer Opening Day
- MAY 22 - 25** | Memorial Day Celebrations
- MAY 22 - 24** | West Virginia Trail Fest
- MAY 30 - 31** | Hotdogs & Handlebars
- JUN. 6** | Snowshoe Foundation Golf Tournament
- JUN. 12 - 14** | Downhill Southeast
- JUN. 21** | Community Appreciation Day
- JUN. 26 - 28** | Grand National Cross-Country Series (GNCC)
- JUL. 3 - 5** | Independence Day Celebrations
- JUL. 5** | Ruff Race presented by The North Face
- JUL. 16 - 18** | 4848 Festival
- JUL. 24 - 26** | WV Speedfest
- JUL. 31 - AUG. 1** | Blues & Brews Festival
- AUG. 2** | Hotdogs & Handlebars
- AUG. 8** | Treasure on the Mountain
- AUG. 16** | Community Appreciation Day
- SEPT. 4 - 6** | Ballhooter Festival
- SEPT. 6** | West Virginia Enduro Series Race
- OCT. 10 - 11** | Bike Park & Summer
Closing Weekend

It's a little
OUT THERE



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