

# Guardians of the West Fork Watershed

April 2012



## MUTIFLORA ROSE

MUTIFLORA ROSE (*Rosa multiflora*).

This is one of the nastiest plants you will ever run into. This plant / shrub is the bane of animals, farmers, sportsmen, and all landowners. One of the least wanted plants to ever be brought and planted in America. This thorny, shrub was brought to from Japan around 1866. The original thought was it would be a ground-cover and hedge. While it makes a really formable hedge, it also tends to take-over the woods, pastures and most landscapes. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service encouraged planting multiflora as an answer for soil erosion. In hindsight this has turned out to be a mistake. Even as late as the 1960's it was promoted as a good source of food and cover for wildlife.

This shrub provides food for birds in the form of its fruit called rose-hips. By birds eating these hips, the plant is spread far and wide to every part of the landscape. Thus there is no control as to where this shrub can spread to.

The bright red fruit is also a source of vitamin-c for animals and humans.

This shrub is the orneriest plant you will ever run into. It is covered with briars that are sharp enough and tough enough to make deer and grown men cry. While deer don't mind Green Briars, they will avoid thickets of multiflora. Once you are ensnared in its briary grasp, you will have to take your time to gingerly escape. Tenacious is the word to think of after you are in its hold. If you get the impression that I don't like this plant, you would be correct. There are many obnoxious plants that I have run into, but this one is in my opinion the absolute worst. Multiflora has been classified as a noxious weed in several states including West Virginia. Control of multiflora is best by mechanical, chemical methods and burning. Cutting of the plant only slows its growth a few years. Repeated cutting during its growing season is somewhat effective. Burning works but can only be used in fields carefully. Chemical means is the fastest way to get rid of multiflora. Herbicides such as: Glyphosate, Triclopyr, Fosamine, and Dicamba have been effective in controlling multiflora. By using herbicides we are adding more chemicals to our water by run-off.

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The Marcellus Balance Sheet  
by Dr. S. Thomas Bond

The public relations surrounding the Marcellus development is quite unbalanced. You read about all the money that will flow, the growth that will result, and vague projections for a golden future, largely unquantified. It is, however, a community enterprise, affecting not only the driller, the royalty owner, but and a certain number of laborers, but the whole community. Everybody is dragged into the project, whether they win, loose or draw from it. The winds blow and the water flows, and everybody drives the same roads and looks at the same surroundings.

First look at the long term, beyond the next forty years. The biggest cost is doubtless the degradation of the resource. Only about one tenth of it is removed, with no idea of how to get at the rest. With most mineral extraction, some is not available. But leaving nine-tenths behind degraded? Many thousands of miles of pipe will be put underground, which will have to be removed with no economic incentive or abandoned there to rust through the ages. How will energy which puts more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere affect the development of new sources of energy?

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Scenes from a recent West Fork Water Testing Effort by John Eleyette who is most well known For his almost drowning during a water testing effort in sulfur water early in his West Fork Career. Here is John showing Tom Bond how to use a flow meter...



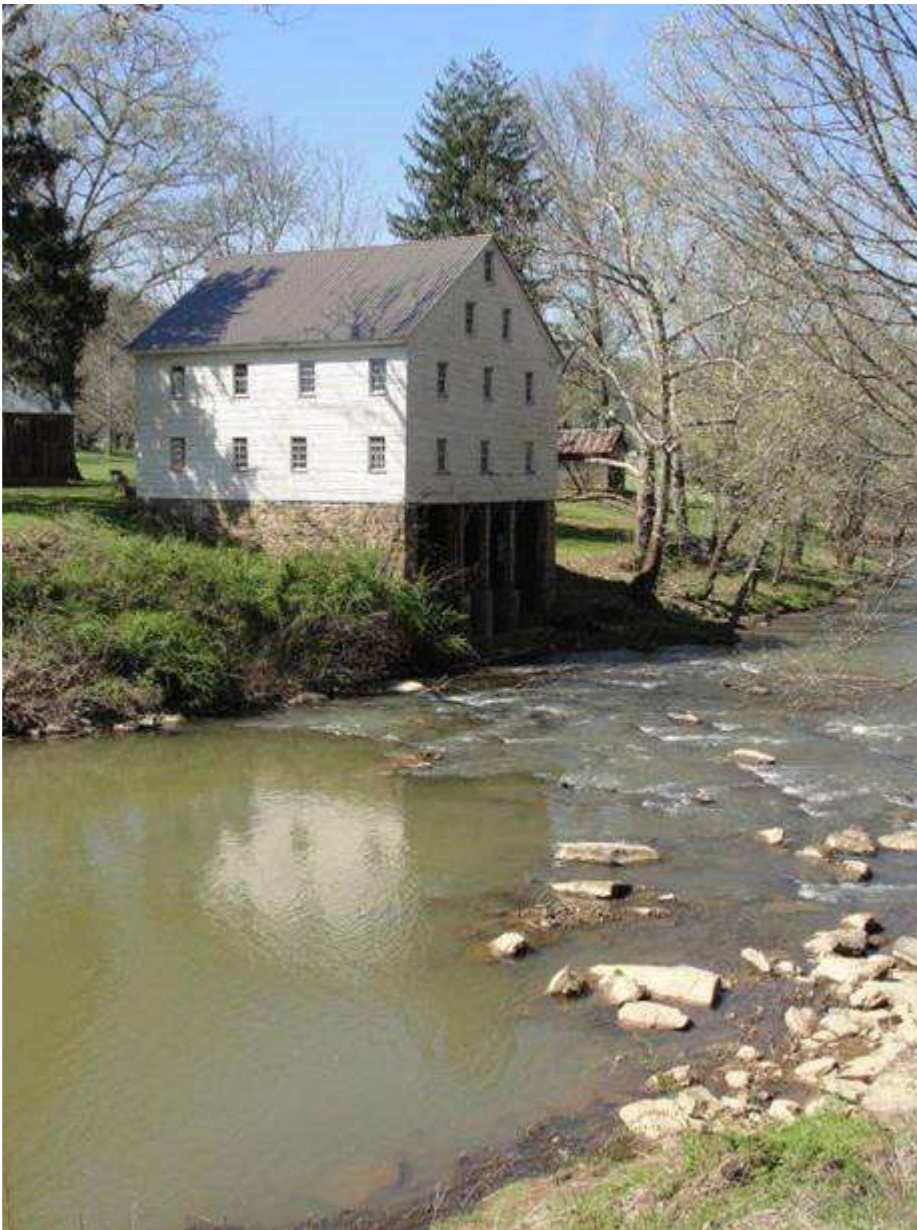
The Lesson in the actual water when well until John learned that the flow meter's Battery was dead...one less piece of data on the Strum Water Sample Test form! Here Eleyette and Tom Bond (Newest West Fork Water Tester in Training) learn how to scribe date found in the Hatcher Creek waters on the testing form...(Strum Environmental Services Chain of Custody Record "Sample Submittal Form")...which was unfortunately lost when John fell into Hatcher's Creek shortly after or near the end of the training session and it all had to be again rewritten...



This Water Testing is not for the faint of heart you have to get down on your hands and knees and get in and out of the snake filled water ways in the West Fork Region Watershed...and you have to fill up four bottles very carefully and all the time keep from getting snake bit and sunburned...



There is occasionally some nice scenery if you pick water ways near famous places like Jackson's Mill...where Stonewall's family was milling grain...



Back to work...Here you can see John has dried off from his spill in Hatchers Creek in Jane Lew... You even have to GPS this spot where you sucked up the water samples while risking your life near often times raging waters! Here Tom was Disagreeing with the GPS readings on John's broken screen GPS device...but after a few hours they came to agree on the spot's location in terms of MTU coordinates!...and I was getting hungry



This all took so long that a local fisherman came along and caught us lunch in Hatchers Creek and after several hours to complete just two water tests and fill up 8 bottles with swamp water Lunch looked good in any form...



We were lucky to make it back to Strum's Water Testing Facilities in Annmore before they closed at 4:30 PM... What a Day out in the environment with John and Tom...I will not soon forget it!!! I hope I am ready to run my first water sample tests shortly...

John Cobb

Mr. Cobb, this is Hackers Creek.....

## **The Current Situation with the West Fork Dams**

This article will attempt to explain recent developments in the effort to save the three dams on the West Fork in Southern Harrison County. So far, despite determined and repeated attempts, efforts to save the dams have not been successful. The Clarksburg Water Board, the current owner of the dams, is dead set on destroying these valuable assets despite the widespread opposition of local citizens.

Ever since this unjustifiable idea came to light several years ago, the people of the area have been fighting against the destruction of these Dams. The Water Board claimed they couldn't afford to keep up maintenance and insurance on the dams. This was the original justification for dam removal. The Federal Government, in the form of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, became involved and pretended an environmental assessment of the effects of dam removal.

This environmental study was extremely biased. Designed to ignore, hide, or belittle all the many adverse consequences; and to exaggerate, fabricate, and embellish the supposed benefits of dam removal, the outcome was entirely predictable. The overpaid, ill informed, so called economists and scientists, employed with our tax dollars, came to the ridiculous conclusion that there would no significant impact from removal of these dams.

Of course, they completely ignored effects on agriculture, on the cumulative loss of recreational opportunity, of the junk and debris that will be exposed, on the complete loss of swimming, on the elimination of much of the fishing, on the identity and character of the Town of West Milford. The Guardians contested this phony Environmental Impact Assessment, but the Fed's persisted.

One major falsehood is the continuing claim that insurance on the dams is costing the Water Board one hundred and thirty seven thousand dollars a year. The Guardians have looked into this and discovered that the actual cost of liability insurance on all three dams is only three thousand dollars a year. If the Water Board is paying well over a hundred and thirty thousand dollars, it's easy to see why they experience such huge financial problems.

Another claimed justification is the bogus prediction that removing the dams on the West Fork will benefit an endangered species of mussel found in ever dwindling numbers in just a few small locations on Hackers Creek in Lewis County. That this mussel hasn't spread is no fault of dams located many miles downstream in Harrison County. If Dams keep the mussels from spreading, how are they going to get by the dam on Hackers Creek in Jane Lew.

This idea of destroying these valuable assets, that would cost many millions of dollars to replace, is absolute insanity. The Guardians recognized this and voted last year to take over ownership of the dams from the Water Board. The Water Board had claimed from the beginning that they were willing to transfer ownership to some other entity so they could get out from under the costs of maintenance and insurance.

Even before the Guardians sought ownership, a former Guardian member attempted to acquire the dams for a hydroelectric project. The Water Board rejected his effort with rather vague reasons.

Before making a formal offer to the Water Board to take over the dams, the Guardians approached the Harrison County Commission for financial assistance. The Guardians Board felt that our group could safely commit three thousand dollars a year, which would basically cover the insurance. However, there are other expenses like signs and upkeep and some concrete repair due to a lack of past maintenance. We believe that ownership of the dams, for the first several years, could be managed on ten thousand dollars a year and somewhat less in future years.

We asked the County Commission for help in saving the Dams. Clearly seeing the importance of these dams to the people of Harrison County, the commissioners agreed to provide us with seven thousand dollars a year to help us meet the costs of ownership.

With this assistance and support, the Guardians went to the Water Board with a proposal to take over ownership. This initial proposal was rejected on the basis of a legal opinion by their attorney claiming that since the State of West Virginia owns the riverbed, the Water board couldn't sell the dams since the dams went across state owned riverbed.

This was apparently the same excuse they had used a couple of years before to brush off the effort to take over the dams for the hydro project. Well, the average 10 year old could see through this ridiculous excuse. Dams are bought and sold all across the country on a regular basis with no holdups whatsoever due to the state owning the riverbed. No amount of reasoning or argument on our part could convince the Water Board that they were wrong.

Our next step was to hire an attorney to research the law and write a formal legal brief to debunk the "State owns the riverbed excuse". In due time, this was accomplished, and we went back to the Water Board with a legal brief that demolished their flimsy excuse, and we made another proposal to take over the dams. The Water Board agreed that they had the power to transfer the dams, but they wouldn't transfer them to us because we are not a big or permanent organization and could perhaps disband in the future.

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Control by biological means is the safest way to control multiflora. Rose rosette disease carried by a mite (*Phyllocoptes frutiphilus*) is fatal to multiflora; however the virus will infect native roses, plums, apples, and some berries. This would be another mistake to use this virus.

The larva of the rose stem girdler beetle is also effective. The rose seed Chalid wasp (*Megastigmus aculeastus*) reduces the amount of seeds produced.

Mutiflora can tolerate temperatures down to -28 F. There is little hope of controlling multiflora in West Virginia. Kudzu will take over the south and multiflora the north.

When the end of the earth comes and there are no more humans, it is said that cock roaches and coyotes will flip a coin to see who turns out the lights, but only if they can get thru the multiflora.

Jim Nedrow  
Elk Hunter

I well remember my college chemistry teacher, Charles Lazzell of WVU, fifty years ago, remarking what a shame it is to burn hydrocarbons, that is, coal oil and gas, since organic chemistry can make such wonderful things from them. Presumably, he said, the human race could have thousands of years ahead, just as we had thousands of years behind our time, if we managed properly. We now know 60% of the excess carbon dioxide is going into the sea, which is being damaged, just as the atmosphere is being changed. Corral, the great protector of other kinds of life, and the calcium carbonate shells of shellfish are being affected.

In the short term there is a regular constellation of problems the drilled community must deal with. Surface and underground water problems, air contamination, noise, dangerous roads, dust, demands on local services like fire fighters and police. Erosion control is difficult because of the mountainous terrain. There is permanent reduction of property values, due to land withdrawal from agriculture and forestry, effects on hunting and fishing, and the reduced attractiveness of rural areas. And there are very serious health problems. Although reliable observers, primary care physicians are quite unlikely to publish their cases, and there is no agency collecting data, nor any likely to be in the present regulatory atmosphere if it must be paid for by government!

The jobs promised by the industry for the future are routine and not well paid, just like other extraction industries in the past. Remember the early coal industry? Lots of jobs alright but deadening, routine jobs. No opportunity to travel, no opportunity to enjoy the better things of life, no opportunity to educate their children and most of all, no chance to change their circumstances. Technically they could leave, but the absence of surplus resources, the absence of other experience and contact with the outside held families to the mining towns like serfs on a medieval manor. People and families had to turn into themselves to survive. Jobs provided by Marcellus will be similar. Hopefully not so dangerous and odious, but not a springboard for self-advancement or educating one's children or betterment of society.

Marcellus will keep Appalachia right where it is in the national scheme of things, a sort of internal third world nation. A 50,000 to 60,000 square mile energy field, for others to draw on, is in a semi-industrialized rural area. Once the heartland of the "Great American Forest," Appalachia once again, is a tag-along industrial subculture.

END

Bond is a retired teacher with a Ph. D. in Inorganic Chemistry. He is a member of the Guardians of the West Fork and the Monongahela Area Watersheds

Compact. He lives on and maintains a 500 acre farm near Jane Lew.

Tammy Marie Rose has a link to the story on the Guardians below

<http://tammymarierose.hubpages.com/hub/The-Guardians-of-the-West-Fork-Watershed>

I have a lot of environmental friends and maybe we can round up some volunteers in that area. If there is anything I can do in the future to help promote events ect please let me know



Now keep in mind, that all through the years of this dam removal controversy, the Water Board has always claimed that they were willing to transfer the dams for a dollar. This seems to be just another lie they hide behind because they figured that with their wildly exaggerated claim of a huge insurance premium, no one would even try.

At this point, which was early last fall, the Guardians went back to our friends on the County Commission to ask them for a letter to the Water Board that would stress the importance of the Dams to Harrison County, the continued support of the County for the Guardians efforts to take over ownership, and urge the Water Board to reconsider. At this Commission meeting, two of the Water Board members were in attendance.

One of them, Al Cox, voiced his concern over the County Commission butting into the running of the Water Board and said that they would not be willing to transfer the dams to the Guardians. However, he stated that if the County Commission thought the dams are so important and needed to be saved, then they would be willing to transfer the dams to the County and the County could transfer them to whomever they wanted.

The letter we were requesting was approved, but never sent. However, based on the comments of Water Board member Cox, our strategy changed. The focus now was on pushing through with this idea of the County taking the dams, just for so long as it would take to sign them over to the Guardians. This took a while for legal research and some lobbying to get the Commission comfortable with the idea.

We, the Guardians and the County Commission worked out a mechanism for transfer from the Water Board to the County and then to the Guardians. This was presented formally at a Commission meeting and a vote was made in favor of proceeding with a request to the Water Board for transfer of the dams to the County. The County sent a formal letter to this effect to the Water Board. Negotiations drug on for a couple of months with assurances from the Water Board that they were in favor of the transfer.

To our dismay, an article in the Clarksburg paper reported on a Water Board meeting, Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> at which the Water Board rejected transfer of the dams to the County. The reason given in the paper was that the County was unable to indemnify the Water Board against possible future liability. This rejection of the county's request for the dams came as a shock and a surprise to the County Commission, and there was a forceful expression of anger and disappointment at the next Commission meeting.

This latest rejection was not really a shock for me. I have seen the way this Water Board operates. The latest rejection of our effort to save the dams was quite in character. There is an agenda here to destroy these dams. This was the fourth rejection of an offer to take over ownership of these dams. Each time they come up with another bogus excuse.

This indemnification issue is as lame an excuse as were the others. There's already been a precedent set for this matter. The Water Board had no trouble selling the Buffalo Lake Dam and adjoining property to an influential group of wealthy businessmen. A wonderful public recreational area was lost for mining, timbering and private development without any problems over indemnity. With the West Fork Dams, the public is trying to acquire the dams and adjoining property to save them for the benefit of the public but the Water Board refuses to cooperate.

We have spent the last several weeks trying to obtain a copy of the correspondence between the Water Board and the Commission. The Water Board at first couldn't locate a copy. Just this week we received a letter from their attorney saying that this material is privileged information, and we cannot have a copy. The County Commissioners haven't seen this correspondence.

The engineering study for removal has been funded and is nearing completion. As soon as funding can be obtained, one of the dams-probably West Milford- will be destroyed. We've lost a few rounds, but this fight isn't over yet.

Funding will probably come from our tax dollars, through the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service. We can attack the funding by contacting our congressional delegation in Washington. Such an effort could have an impact.

Another approach would be to generate support for the creation of a recreation or aquatic park to encompass the property upon which the dams are built and the long pools of deep water behind the dams. The dams would be essential for the park and could be acquired through eminent domain if necessary. This might ruffle some feathers at the Water Board, but isn't nearly as drastic as tar and feathers.

Your help is needed and will be appreciated.

John Stenger

## **Officers, Directors. Contact Information**

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Non-officer board members:  
Matt Hokom  
(President, Board of Directors) Fairmont;

Dr. Thomas Bond, Jane Lew, W.V  
Mike Murphy, Lumberport, W.V  
James Nedrow, Shinnston, W.V

## **Mark your Calendars**

### **Monthly Meetings**

*Meetings are held the third Tuesdays of the month, 6:30 p.m., at the Nutter Fort emergency services (911) building, about 200 feet south of the Joyce St./Rt. 98 intersection, on the right.*

April 18, 2012

May 16, 2012

June 20, 2012

July 18, 2012

The Guardians alternate general meetings with speakers and refreshments and board meetings where business is discussed. Feel free to attend any meeting and also bring interested friends and family.

## **To Join and Receive this Newsletter ...**

If you would like to join and receive a mailed copy of our quarterly newsletter, you can join Guardians of the West Fork Watershed for \$5.00 per calendar year (or at a voluntary, higher level). Send your membership check and address information to Elaine Lucente, membership coordinator, (Her address can be found on the Officers and Board Members page.), or simply join during one of our monthly meetings. To receive a free e-mail copy of the quarterly newsletter, please e-mail John Eleyette, at [JMELEYETTE@rocketmail.com](mailto:JMELEYETTE@rocketmail.com)

**GWFW MISSION STATEMENT**

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***Guardians of the West Fork Watershed is a volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the ecological integrity of the West Fork River, its tributaries, and its watershed. It will monitor and assist agencies in monitoring the biological, physical, chemical and cultural characteristics of the watershed to identify sources of degradation and suggest their elimination. It will publicize the status of the watershed and encourage education and recreational enjoyment of the watershed. It will seek wide membership and outside funding to support its activities.***