



CELEBRATION OF THE OUTDOORS SET FOR JUNE 12

Join us on Saturday, June 12 for the 21st Annual Celebration of the Outdoors at Coopers Rock State Forest. The Celebration will feature hands-on activities like hiking, fly fishing and climbing, as well as education programs from DNR and other groups. Everything is free to the general public. The Celebration offers something for everyone in the family. Mark your calendar NOW and plan to spend June 12 with us at CRSF. A complete schedule of activities will be available on our website and via email soon. Keep checking www.coopersrock.org for more information on the Celebration of the Outdoors.



PINK LADY'S SLIPPERS IN BLOOM

The annual Pink Lady's Slipper bloom is at its peak. The middle of May is the annual peak time for them to bloom, and they'll all be gone by June. Go see them now! Bring a camera!

One easy patch to get to: from the "Salt Sands" B&W sign in the large gravel parking lot just before the Overlook parking lot, go a few steps left until you see some stairs going downhill. Walk down to the 8th stair. Go right. In a few paces you'll start coming upon these wild orchids, which have spread around for a few dozen yards in this area between the Salt Sands sign and the nearby pavilion.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL

The West Virginia State Park Adopt-A-Trail program has come to Coopers Rock State Forest! To help preserve the beauty of our State Parks and maintain the quality of the trail system, individuals, families, groups and organizations are invited to "adopt" one of the Forest's many trails.

Adopt-A-Trail participants are asked to:

- Clean up the trash on the trail at least 3 times a year
- Trim back vegetation that is hanging out over the trail
- Re-paint blazes as needed
- Report back to the Forest Superintendent any trail issues.

To adopt a trail, participants must be at least 12 years of age or be a part of a group (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Church Group) and complete a Volunteer Work Program Agreement (children under the age 18 must have parent/guardian signature). The entire trail must be adopted; the adoption period is for one year. One member/leader from your group must attend trail maintenance orientation.

For more information, visit the Adopt-A-Trail page on the WV State Park website at <http://www.wvstateparks.com/community/adopt.htm>

CCC FIREPLACE PROJECT

Many area families have traditions centered around the picnic areas at CRSF and the fireplaces that have existed there since the middle of the last century. More than 20 fireplace sites were built during this time by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for the use of and enjoyment by West Virginians.

Now, many of the CCC Fireplace sites can no longer be used due to neglect and natural causes. To preserve this element of the Forest's history, the Coopers Rock Foundation will undertake a project to repair these sites, which range from completely flattened to "not so bad."



More information will be available as the project develops. Visit the Coopers Rock Foundation website at www.coopersrock.org to find out how you can help!

STUDY REQUESTED TO PROTECT CRSF HABITAT

Several local environmental groups have joined together to send a letter to state and federal officials requesting plans for timbering at Coopers Rock State Forest (CRSF) be put on hold until environmental concerns are addressed and protections can be put in place for two endangered species that call the Forest home.

In a letter dated April 9, 2010 to the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the WV Attorney General (among others), the Friends of Blackwater and the Coopers Rock Foundation asserted that the proposed Scott Run II timber project in Coopers Rock State Forest, as currently planned, would harm the endangered Cheat Threetooth Snail and the Indiana bat, and possibly violate other applicable laws and regulations.

The area for this timber project is approximately 210 acres located on the south side of CRSF, between Raven Rock trail and the McCullum Campground. The physical features contained within the harvest area, and those most familiar to Forest visitors, include the Raven Rock Road/Trail, the

Raven Rock-Campground connector trail, and the WVDNR Woodshed Area.

In July 2009, the West Virginia Division of Forestry (DOF) held a public tour at Coopers Rock State Forest on the proposed timber project titled "Scott Run II." It was DOF's stated intent to inform the public of plans for a project to "help regenerate a variety of tree species, and provide more diverse wildlife habitat and forest growth potential." Several current and former members of the Coopers Rock Foundation (CRF) participated in this tour and, subsequently, the organization sent letters to the WVDOF, voicing their concerns.

The organization felt that responses from WVDOF did not adequately address the protections for endangered species (or other issues) and, in April of this year, members voted to secure the services of an attorney to delay timbering in the Scott Run II Project Area at Coopers Rock State Forest until (1) a Habitat Conservation Plan is in place, and (2) a commitment is made to conduct annual population studies for each of the endangered species within Coopers Rock State Forest. Furthermore, the groups are requesting that 300ft.-buffered snail habitat "preserves" be used to protect both actual and potential snail habitat, as well as maintaining the integrity of the nearby forest microclimate until such time as definitive research can be acquired with respect to best methods for protecting snail habitat.

"The snail is to be protected," said Jan Kiger, member of the Coopers Rock Foundation Board of Directors. "A comprehensive study must be done in the timber management area prior to logging it in any way. Coopers Rock State Forest managers have an opportunity to do the right thing and lead the way in protecting the snail."

The Flat-spined Three-toothed Land Snail, or Cheat Threetooth Snail ("CTS"), *triodopsis platysayoides*, is a land snail whose entire global range is along only 10 miles of the 16 mile long Cheat River Canyon in West Virginia. Within its range, the habitat is widespread and extensive, covering hundreds of hectares including Coopers Rock State Forest, the largest in the state.

The Cheat Threetooth (CTS) was listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act on July 3, 1978 (USFWS 1978). It is estimated that perhaps one third or more of all known CTS snails may reside at Coopers Rock. Since snails do not migrate, their habitat must sustain them throughout the year and throughout their entire life cycle, including essential activities such as breeding, feeding, and sheltering.

Specific snail location data from a 2008 endangered snail survey of the Scott Run timber project area, completed by Copperhead Consulting in June and July of that year, confirmed locations of the snail as well as several potential habitat areas within the timber project boundaries. Despite the lack of extensive and reliable data regarding CTS populations and locations, the WVDOF and WVDNR are moving ahead with proposals to timber in close proximity to both known snail habitat and potential habitat.

A mammalian species, the Indiana bat is migratory, with a range extending throughout the eastern half of the United States. The Indiana bat is today in added peril due to White Nose Syndrome (WNS) which is spreading at alarming rates to all bat species in the east. Some experts estimate that perhaps fifty to sixty percent of all bats in this range may perish before the cause of this disease is found.

The Indiana bat spends summers roosting and foraging in flood plains, riparian forests, and upland forests, and uses both live and dead trees and snags as roost sites. In 1976 the US Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat for this bat including 11 caves and mines in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia. At this time all of West Virginia is considered potential summer habitat for the Indiana bat because of the high number of hibernating bats here during the winter.

Indiana bats are likely to use caves and trees within the boundaries of the Scott Run Timber Project at Coopers Rock State Forest. The proposed Scott Run timber project plans are to timber many of the tree types known to be used by Indiana bats including many species of oak, maple, and also to clear dead and decaying trees which are used by bats. The Indiana bat is at high risk of population decline due to WNS. The timbering of Coopers Rock State Forest puts a greater stress on surviving bats due to additional loss and degradation of potential habitat within their known range.

Among the other concerns regarding the current plan is the DOF intent to develop a savannah within the forest; the potential negative environmental impact of the widespread use of herbicides; the questionable use of clear cutting and creating so much early successional habitat; the removal of all but a small number of one or two specific species of large trees and the creation of mono cultures or "farmed areas" of one particular species of tree; and the impact of extensive widening and daylighting of roads throughout the project areas.

It is the groups' contention that Coopers Rock State Forest must not be timbered without first giving rigorous consideration and study of the role the forest plays in the life cycle of these imperiled species, and that current proposals and plans for timbering must be placed on hold. In addition, the Coopers Rock Foundation will be working to secure support for this initiative from other local environmental groups whose missions are also impacted by the Scott Run project.