



# THE FOREST FRIEND

SPRING 2023 EDITION



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*“And into the forest I go to lose  
my mine and find my soul.”*

*- John Muir*

*“It is not so much for its beauty  
that the forest makes a claim upon  
men’s hearts, as for that subtle  
something, that quality of air that  
emanation from old trees, that so  
wonderfully changes and renews a  
weary spirit.”*

*- Robert Louis Stevenson*

**KSF Foundation**

**7500 Kanawha State Forest Drive  
Charleston, WV 25314**

**Letter from the Chair**

*By John Hughes*

**Spring Is In The Air**

The forest is waking from a long winter nap with flowers blooming and trees budding. Even though we had a relative mild winter it is good to get back to moderate temperatures to watch this awaking.

The foundation is pleased to announce we have partnered with Kanawha County schools to restart outdoor classrooms in the Forest. With the help of Dr. Rebecca Linger, local Master Naturalist, and several board members, the Nature Center is hosting Kindergarten to fifth grade classes. Local schools have already booked this educational event through the months of April and May. The weekly events are on Tuesday and Wednesday of each week from 9 to 1 pm. Educational modules include insect identification, tree identification, stream habitat, owl pellet dissection and black bear education. Please stop by if you are at the forest, or if you want to volunteer or present, please let the foundation know your availability ([info@ksff.org](mailto:info@ksff.org)).

The ADA vault toilet at the Spotted Salamander Trail is now open for use. This completes the foundation's ADA project that included a playground and paved trail. The completion of Middle Ridge Trail is slowly moving along. The foundation met with WV DEP and the



An equestrian enjoys a ride in the Fall of 2022.

paperwork process has begun. It will take time but the front section to complete the trail should start this Fall or Spring 2024. Several events are scheduled for this Spring through Fall so watch our Facebook page and look out for our new and improved website which should be up and running in the coming months.

Kanawha State Forest has contracted with a vendor to provide horseback riding. The current trail designated for horse use will be utilized. The stable will be repaired, and a grand opening will be announced at a later date. The campground electric project is still not completed but once the



Electrical work in the campground.

switch gear arrives, AEP can do the upgrade to finish the job. The new electric will increase the current 15- and 30-amp service to 30 and 50 amp. A new septic system will be installed at the park office restrooms so be careful once this starts since the lawn leading to the office and nature center will be impacted. The stream restoration project allowed DNR to stock the stream with trout. This fishing is for class Q requirements. Children under 15 and licensed disabled can fish until May 31st. Starting June 1st everyone can fish. Please check license requirement prior to fishing.

With spring in the air, it is a good time to hike, bike, run, picnic, camp, and fish at Kanawha State Forest!

## The Endless Trail

By George Singleton

Photos by George Singleton

Over the past few months, with the weather turning cold and snowy, then warm and sunny, then cold and rainy, it has been an interesting time to be on the trails in the forest. Despite the weather, there's always something going on.

On Nov 5, when the weather was warmer and there were still some leaves on the trees, we had a trail maintenance day organized by our friends at Kanawha Valley Trail Alliance (KTVA). Moving some dirt and smoothing the trail bed, the section of Middle Ridge Trail near the Park entrance was made much easier to hike, run, and bike by the volunteers, which included our friends in Park management as well.

On a separate outing, KTVA and the Park management team, including Trail Coordinator Jody Richmond, replaced a large plastic culvert on



Acting Superintendent Clark Sanford and Dennis Strawn

the brand-new section of Middle Ridge Trail near the Four Mile end of the Park. The original culvert had completely melted away in the fire that swept over the hills in late fall.

Then, on Jan 7, the annual Frozen Sasquatch trail race was held. Organized by the West Virginia Mountain Trail Runners organization, this race covers either 25K or 50K depending on which distance you want to run and is always full to capacity of 200 participants.

This race follows a loop that begins at the Forest office, then traces a loop that winds from Overlook Rock Trail to Hemlock Falls and Beech Glen, through the campground to Logtown, then along Middle Ridge Trail/road to Teaberry before finishing where it began. The race is always challenging and fun.

The weather for this year's run was cold, but much nicer than last year when there was a foot of snow on the ground!

As usual, the KSF staff were always helpful, lending their technical support as well as opening the Nature Center for hot food and snacks served



Eric Hastings, Big Foot, Race Director Mike Dolin

by volunteers to the hungry finishers. A shout out to the Kanawha Valley Trail Alliance as well, who had some of their members staff a few of the aid stations for runners along the trail. All the volunteers that day were much appreciated by the runners, as

well as their family and friends who were there to cheer them on.

A fun fact: runners were greeted by an actual Sasquatch mid-race, and had a chance for a photo op with the same Big Foot at the finish.

Finally, the question can be answered: Yes, they exist!



KVTA team pave a section of Middle Ridge Trail.

## Interpretative Trails and Kiosks in KSF

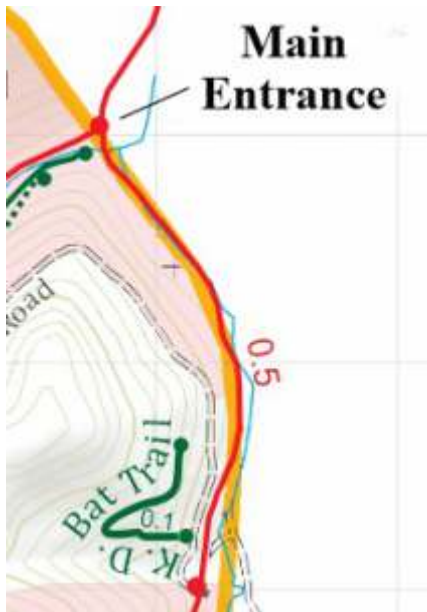
By Dale Porter

### Trails

One of the Foundations and the Forests goals is to make the Forest, not only a place for recreation, but also an educational experience. Several interpretative trails and kiosks have been developed for Forest users to further their knowledge of nature.

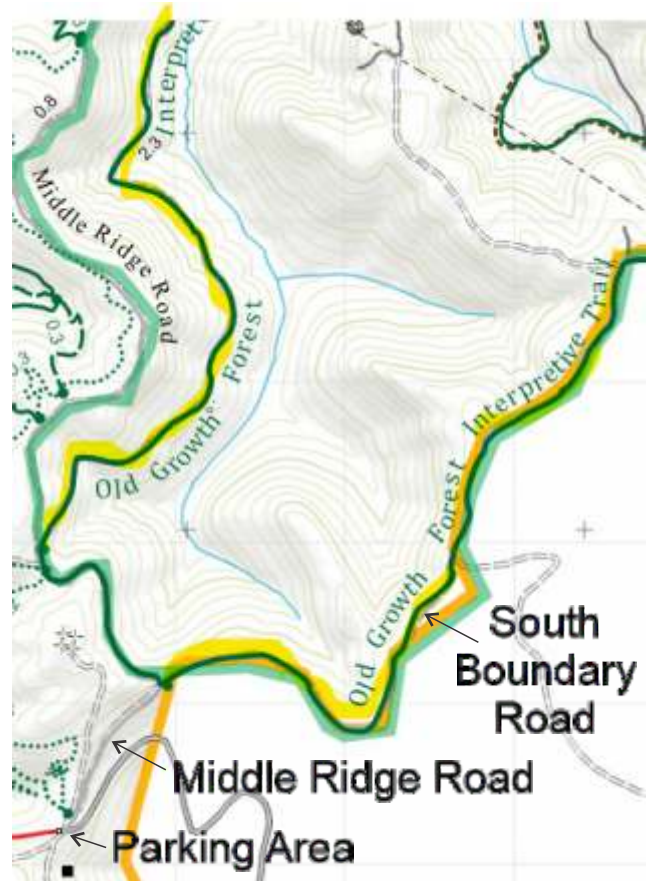
Taking them in order of age, the Spotted Salamander Trail is a quarter mile paved trail that has guide ropes for the visually impaired, with signs including brail inscriptions identifying trees and shrubs along the trail. It is located 1.9 miles from the North entrance to the park.

The Kevin Dials Bat Trail is a short 0.2 mile trail that starts with a short climb. It has kiosks explaining bat ecology in KSF and ends at a gated mine entrance that provides shelter for the endangered long eared bat. To access the trail, you head toward the gun range at the entrance of the forest and park at the junction of Middle Ridge Road. Walking up Middle Ridge Road, the trail is on the left, a couple hundred yards past the gate.



The Old Growth Interpretative Trail (follows roads) runs out South Boundary Road to the power line and also down Hoffman Hollow Road to the power line crossing. There are five signs that are repeated on each section that provide information about the ecology of old growth forest. To access this trail, you go to the far south end of the forest and park at the lot at the end of the pavement at the top of the hill. At the end of the lot, there are two gated gravel roads. Taking the road on the right, Middle Ridge Road, you go 1/4 mile till Middle Ridge Road makes a left turn and South Boundary Road continues straight. Continuing straight on South Boundary, you go down a dip and then a short steep section. In the next mile, there are five interpretative signs on the left side of the road.

To reach the other section of the trail, instead of going out South Boundary Road, you continue left on



Middle Ridge Road for 0.4 miles and then turn right and head down Hoffman

low Road. The five interpretative signs are repeated along this section of trail.

The Arboretum has signs identifying 53 native trees, shrubs and one grass. It may be the only native species arboretum in the state. The arboretum is located a couple hundred yards behind the main office and nature center building.

### Informational Kiosks

There are four kiosks in the forest that explain some of the geology of the forest. Two are located adjacent to the office parking lot. One that describes coal in the forest is located at the CCC snipe trail head at the upper end of the arboretum. Another is located in the Johnson Hollow picnic area.

The most recent addition are four kiosks with tables and roofs that have been placed along Davis Creek, by the WV Department of Environmental Protection as part of the stream restoration project. One is located near the site of the dam that was removed and gives some Civilian Conservation Corp history. One is located a couple hundred yard upstream. Another at Rattlesnake Run The fourth is located in the office parking area near the stream and covers the CCC camp that was at that location.

## Tenth Annual Black Bear Enduro

*By Paul Broughton*

The 10th edition of the Black Bear Enduro occurred on 16 April 2023 led by promoter Tristan Broughton. The Dunlop group campground was again used as base of operations.



A Enduro type mountain bike race is one where riders travel at their own pace to points where a section is marked off for timed competition. In general the terrain trends down, but every promoter has their own definition of what a section should look like. The one at



Photo by Wendell Withrow

Slatyfork is flat across one of the longest rock gardens in the state, Tea Creek Mountain Trail, then up before finally down a very rocky descent. Try to go fast enough to just hit the tops is a good strategy. Sometimes it is a loop and sometimes a star shape which allows section order discretion,

do it in whatever order suits you. Kanawha State Forest (KSF) is known throughout the mountain bike community as one of the harder places to ride. If you master the trails here, there is nowhere you will go that you won't be prepared. Our race was 17.5 miles and included five stages. Three were in KSF and two were on the Bess Northrup property to the South. The three KSF



Photo by Dale Porter

trails were Black Bear MTB trail, Pine Ridge/Dunlop and Backhand bend.

Having promoted the Black Bear 40K many times since the 90s, my friend Benji Klimas and soon to be friend John Harod came to me with this Enduro format idea in 2014. Benji having raced here many times knew the potential of the area and I know the area, so I immediately said yes. Big Bear Lake, Coopers Rock, Kanawha State Forest and Valley Falls were the first venues for the series with Snowshoe coming on board for the finals. Even during COVID isolation we continued, due to the intrinsic separation of time trials with masking, and isolation. We adopted a chip and go to mitigate lines at the start areas. Now back to regular racer meeting, roll out together format.

Seventy riders participated in the 10th edition of the Black Bear Enduro.



### Earth Day Celebration

*By Dale Porter*

To celebrate Earth Day, on Tuesday, April 18th Diversified Energy employees came to the forest to assist in preparing it for the for Spring and Summer season. Diversified employees dispersed across the forest to perform various tasks. Some cleaned painted and policed the facilities in the Salamander Trail area. The Rattlesnake Trail and Polly Trails were cleared of dead fall.

Diversified also provided a backhoe and dump truck to handle some tasks that the Forest did not have equipment to handle. Stream crossing were made vehicle passable and a large tree was cut of and removed from the stream near the office.



Employees gather for a group photo in main parking area.



The crew that worked in the Salamander Trail area.  
Photo by Jennifer Bauman



Daron ;Hall and Chris Carpenter from Ripley removed this dangerous tangle of deadfall on the Polly Trail.



This crew removed the large log from the stream.  
It took four truck loads to remove the log.



### Osbra Eye Nature Walks

*By Dale Porter*

*Photos by Jennifer Bauman*

The annual Osbra Eye Nature Walks were held on Saturday, April 22th. The combination of a forecast of rain and early morning rain resulted in a disappointing turnout for the walks. More volunteers were available than walkers. However, the rain had moved out of the area by the nine AM start time, and it was a pleasant day for walking.

Nine different interpretative walks were offered to the participants guided by knowledgeable persons. The Foundation thanks all the volunteers and participants who ignored the forecast and came out to enjoy the Forest.



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## KSFF UPCOMING EVENTS

### Outdoor Elementary Classrooms at 9:00 a.m.

May 2 Shoals Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> grade

May 3 Edgewood 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

May 9 Belle 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

May 10 Richmond Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> grade

May 16 Richmond 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade

May 17 Richmond 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade

May 23 Pratt 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade

May 24 Pratt Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> grade

### Other Events

June 3 National Trail Day, 9:00 a.m. Easy to Moderate Hikes, Old Growth Forest Tour, ADA accessible

June 18 West Virginia Day Celebration with the Kanawha Valley Community Band, 11:00 a.m.

August 19 Rock the Park Concert (Band line-up TK), 1:00 a.m.

Sept. 16 Margaret Denison Fall Nature Walks, 9:00 a.m.



### Kanawha State Forest Foundation Membership Renewal

We ask our members to renew their membership each year in January. If you have not recently done so, please renew your membership now. An Individual Membership is only \$15.00 and a Family Membership is only \$25.00. Members can do so by writing a check payable to Kanawha State Forest Foundation and mailing it to:

John Fischer, Treasurer  
100 Wills Drive  
South Charleston WV 25309

You can also pay conveniently online with a credit or debit card by going to the Membership Tab on the Foundation’s website – ksff.org

Donations are always appreciated so we can continue our educational programs and various improvement projects at the Forest.

Thank you for your continued support of the Foundation.

### Board of Directors

- John Hughes, Chairperson
- George Singleton, Vice Chairperson
- Joe Carney, Secretary
- John Fischer, Treasurer
- Rebecca S. Linger, Newsletter Editor
- Ted Armbrecht
- Doug Atkins
- David Dendler
- Chris Gatens
- Eric Hastings
- Luanne McGovern
- Brad Schmalzer
- Wayne Stevens
- Peter Sullivan
- Jim Waggy

### NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION

- When submitting articles for the newsletter, please submit photos as separate files. Do not embed them in the article. It makes it very difficult or impossible to place in the newsletter format.
- Please identify the photographer.
- Identify persons featured in photo when possible.
- Submit articles and photos by deadline.

The Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any article submissions.



**Deadline for Summer Edition of the *Forest Friend* is July 10, 2023 for early August publication.**

### The Forest Friend

Edited by Rebecca S. Linger  
Layout by Dale A. Porter

We are looking for a volunteer to take over the layout of the quarterly newsletter. If you are interested, please contact Rebecca Linger.



On April 10, 2023, about 75 acres burned in the Rattkesnake Trail area.



Chris Gatens installs the 53rd sign identifying native species in the arboretum.