



THE FOREST FRIEND

SPRING 2024 EDITION



Message from the Chair

John Hughes, Page 2

Jody Richmond Promoted - Page 2

The Traveling Red Admiral

Dale Porter, Page 2

Value of Native Plants

Luanne McGovern, Page 3

April 2, 2024 Storm

George Singleton, Page 4

The Pinxster Flower

Chris Gatens, Page 5

The Casual Volunteer

Dale Porter, Page 5

The Mary Ingles Trial

Dale Porter, Page 6

The Osbra Eye Spring Nature Walks!

Dale Porter, Page 7

Responsible Stewardship, Some Do's and Don't in Kanwha State Forest. Page 8

Volunteers Making a Difference!

Dale Porter, Page 9

*"There is a pleasure in the pathless
wood,*

*There is a rapture on the lonely
shore,*

There is society, where none intrudes,

*By the deep sea, and music in its
roar:*

*I love not man the less, but Nature
More."*

Lord Byron

KSF Foundation

7500 Kanawha State Forest Drive

Charleston, WV 25314

Letter from the Chair

By John Hughes, Chairperson

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

Wildflowers that is! With the winter blues behind us spring has arrived. Wildflowers are blooming in the forest. Everywhere you walk you can see the beauty and color of nature waking up from a long sleep. So, take a hike along the Davis Creek trail or any other of the 60 miles of trails and enjoy their beauty.

The KSFF is wrapping up the spring session of our outdoor classroom. Over 500 children from 8 different schools have attended this year's outdoor classes. Classes include Stream Ecology, Insect Scavenger Hunt, Bears, Owl Pellet Dissection, Trout Habitat, Tree Identification, and Water Quality. Many thanks to Becky Linger for organizing this great event along with the help of her Master Naturalist the children have had a great learning experience.

With the extreme weather we have had this Spring a special thank you goes to the volunteers who came out to help clean up from the strong storm we had. Without this help the cleanup would have taken the park staff all summer to cleanup.

In park news the rebuild and renovation to several bath facilities as well as the new sidewalk to the park office will be starting soon. The small bathhouse at the campground, the park office bathhouse and the Johnson Hollow bathhouse are all to be renovated or replaced. The park office sidewalk replacement will include the That's MY Brink program! These will make a great improvement to the forest.

So come out, enjoy, picnic, hike, bike, camp and have a good time in a beautiful nature setting!

Jody Richmond Promoted

For the past couple of years, we have been fortunate to have Jody Richmond as trails coordinator for Kanawha State Forest. Unfortunately his skills and work ethic have not gone unrecognized and he has been promoted to State Trails Coordinator. This is somewhat an acknowledgment of what was already happening, as Jody had already been consulting with other state forests and parks.

Though Jody will no longer be primarily dedicated to Kanawha State Forest, he will still be a familiar face, as Kanawha State Forest will be his home base. He just won't be available at all times cut out the latest reported dead fall across the trails.

The Traveling Red Admiral

Photos and text by Dale Porter

The Red Admiral butterfly arrived in Kanawha State Forest from its southern winter breeding grounds in late April. Unlike some butterflies found in KSF like the Morning Cloak or Comma that hibernate in their adult stage over winter, they are unable to survive winter weather. The first arrivals have come up from the South and continue to colonize northward into Canada. These early migrants have about a 1 3/4 inch wing span. They will breed and we will see the first flight of these new adults from June into July. These will produce offspring that emerge in August and fly into September. These subsequent broods are generally larger with wingspan reaching 2 1/4 inches and often have a brighter red/orange markings.

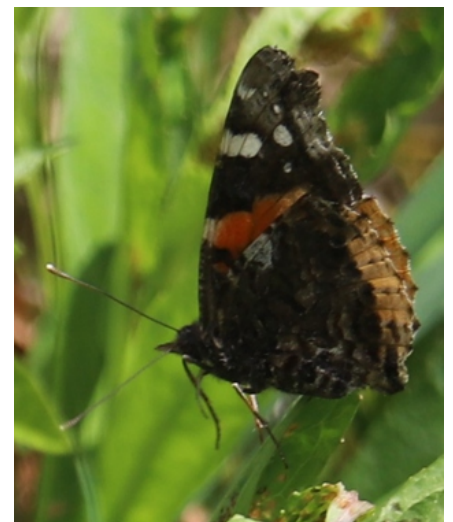
They frequent forest edges and roads. They prefer nettles as a larval host plant including stinging and wild



nettle. They feed on sap flows, fermenting fruit and dung but will frequent some flowers such as Queen Anne's lace and dogbane.

Keep an eye out for these medium sized butterflies in KSF and see if you notice any difference in size and appearance as the Summer progresses. The photos here were taken in KSF this April.

Source material from: *The Butterflies of West Virginia and Their Caterpillars*, by Thomas J. Allen.



Value of Native Plants

Text and photos by Luanne McGovern

For the second year in a row, April 2024 was designated as “West Virginia Native Plant Month”. This is a coordinated effort across all 50 states to increase awareness of the critical role native plants play in supporting a healthy environment, and ensuring thriving wildlife and pollinator populations.

The National Native Plant Month initiative was started in 2021. Senator Mike Braun (R-Indiana) and Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) have co-sponsored the renewal of the Senate Resolution to make April 2024 National Native Plant Month for the fourth year.



Wood anemone / *Anemone quinquefolia*

our insects and pollinators have not evolved quickly enough to be able to eat these strange, exotic foods.

Spring is one of the best times to get out and explore and learn about the wonderful native plants located in Kanawha State Forest.

- Visit the Forest Nature Center to learn about the incredible biodiversity within Kanawha State Forest. There are many resources available for visitors, including books, plant checklists and displays.
- Take a walk along the Spotted Salamander Trail, a paved quarter mile trail that is handicap accessible. There are dozens of interpretive signs with photos of local plants, a great place to start learning about these native beauties.
- Visit the Kanawha State Forest Arboretum, located behind the headquarters building. Over 50 native plants and trees are planted there, along with interpretive signs.
- Get adventurous and check out the Old Growth Forest on the southern end of the Forest. About 1350 acres have been designated as “old growth” and there are informative signs all along the trail, explaining the importance of preserving these forest giants.
- Volunteer to help remove invasive non-native plants from the Forest. Visit our Facebook and web page for volunteer opportunities.
- Grab a trail map and get out and explore on your own – there are over 60 miles of trails in Kanawha State Forest for your enjoyment.



Longspur Violet / *viola rostrata*

Native Plants are special because they have evolved over thousands of years alongside native bees, birds, and wildlife. The intricate relationships that have developed between local flora and fauna are extremely specialized and cannot be replaced with ornamental, non-native plants. Our landscapes today often contain plants collected from around the world, but many of

The Endless Trail
April 2, 2024 Storm
By George Singleton

On Tuesday, April 2, a terrific storm passed over Kanawha County, knocking out power, downing trees and limbs, and sending residents running for cover.

This same storm left many of the trails and forest roads - including the main paved road - either partly or completely blocked. The Kanawha State Forest Office, Nature Center and Gift Shop were also without power for several days.

While a few trails, such as Mossy Rock and Beech Glen, completely escaped having any trees fall onto them, most trails had multiple trees fall along their route. A few trails, including some most popular, suffered devastating damage which made them impassable.

Davis Creek was completely blocked by a large evergreen that fell right onto the trail between the creek and the steep hillside.

At the intersection of Middle Ridge Trail section 14 and Laurel's Trail, the damage looked as if a tornado touched down - which it did! The National Weather Service has determined that an EF1 tornado with peak winds of 100 mph hit Kanawha State Forest for four minutes, traveling 5.14 miles from the park to just beyond Hernshaw, leaving scores of flattened, uprooted and tangled trees over the trail. The winds continued up the ravine from the MRT14/Laurel's intersection to cause similar devastation on Middle Ridge Road.

The same winds hit the top of Pigeon Roost like a bomb, making the trail not only unreachable, but unrecognizable.

A number of Kanawha State Forest Board members and volunteers, along with KSF personnel, have spent the days since the storm scouting the damage and working to open the forest roads and the trails. Clark Sanford, Jody Richmond and their team have spent hours cutting out downed trees and clearing fallen



limbs, and many volunteers have done the same.

A special 'shout out' needs to be made to Doug Atkins, 'Mr. Chainsaw', and his collection of Kanawha Valley Trail Alliance mountain bikers, who worked long hours on on Sunday/April 7th to clear a significant part of Middle Ridge Road and tackle some of the mess at MTR14/Laurel's trail. Ultimately, it is likely that section is going to need to be rerouted (sections of Pigeon Roost may be facing the same situation).

The storm left enough damage that recovery efforts are going to take some time, and while teams are still scouting trails and clearing trees, it will likely be several weeks until conditions get close to normal. So, if you are going hiking in the next couple of weeks, it might be worthwhile to stop in the Forest Office and see if there are any updates on which trails are still problematic.

Until next time...



**Volunteer Chainsaw Wizard
and board member Doug Atkins.**

The Pinxter Flower

By Chris Gatens

This Spring, the “pinxter” flower or pink honeysuckle *Rhododendron periclymenoides* (Michx.) was added to the arboretum. The species is native to Central Appalachia and is a showy, flowering shrub making its presence known in Kanawha State Forest. The common name, pink honeysuckle is a descriptive misnomer and is often used by folks in the region. The plant genera does not belong to the Honeysuckle Family (Caprifoliaceae) and is an actual member of the Heath Family (Ericaceae). Establishment of the species in the arboretum will take 3-5 years and will require watering, selective pruning, and fencing to provide protection from deer browsing.



The pinxter flower can be seen in bloom in the forest during a period from Mother’s Day to Memorial Day. The ridges at the top of Porter Hollow and Rocky Ridge are two locations to see this showy species in a natural setting. At those sites, the soils are slightly acidic with a forest canopy consisting of scarlet oak, white oak, black oak, and some shortleaf pine. The shrub often grows in a heath community in association with mountain laurel, black huckleberry, lowbush blueberry, and sourwood.

(The pinxter flower has been planted in the arboretum, but there is no sign placed yet. We will wait to make sure the transplant takes before getting a sign and post for it.)

The Casual Volunteer

By Dale Porter

The Forest is fortunate to have many devoted volunteers (can always use more) who donate their time for various tasks like trail maintenance, and painting. Some persons participate in organized volunteer efforts and there are some formal and informal groups that do volunteer work in the forest.

There are many persons who utilize the forest for recreation, but do not participate in volunteer maintenance efforts and that is OK. We all only have so much time, and though people may be using the forest without volunteering, it does not mean they are not volunteering their time to other causes just as worthy.

Here are a couple ways to contribute while recreating in the forest. No commitment to a specific time or length being required.

1. Carrying a pair of side-cut snippers (pictured) allows you to cut back that occasional intruding branch or greenbrier while doing a normal hike. Carry it in your camelback and take a couple minutes out of your ride to get rid of that frustrating branch.

Finding a leather pouch to carry the snippers make it a convenient option. I found mine with an Amazon search.

2. Carry a plastic bag with you and pick up any trash you come across on the trail. Fortunately, most users do not trash up the trails, but you will occasionally find a bottle or wrapper along the trail. You can fold a plastic grocery bag into a very small size for easy carrying until it is needed.



Mary Ingles Trail

By Dale Porter

The Mary Ingles Trail is the longest designated trail in Kanawha State Forest at 14.5 miles. It traverses the forest from Northwest corner to the Southeast portion of the park. The trail is composed of sections of other named trails, forest service roads, and a short sections of asphalt road. The trail is marked with two inch square yellow plastic blazes. The Winter 2022 edition of the Forest Friend included the article "Slack packing the Mary Ingles Trail in Kanawha State Forest" detailing five ladies' two day hike covering the Mary Ingles Trail. Past editions of the newsletters can be found on the Foundation's web page (ksff.org) under the "More Information" link.

Starting at the Mary Ingles Trail head (the only section designated as the Mary Ingles Trail on the KSF Map) on McGhee Road off of Trace Fork Road, the trail goes as follows: (There is limited parking at this trail head.)

- Start Mary Ingles Trail to Boundary Ridge Road
- Right Boundary Ridge Road to Hemlock Falls Trail
- Left Hemlock Falls Trail to Beech Glen Trail
- Right Beech Glen Trail to Wildcat Ridge Trail
- Left Wildcat Ridge Trail to main Forest paved road.
- Left Paved Road north to Davis Creek Trail

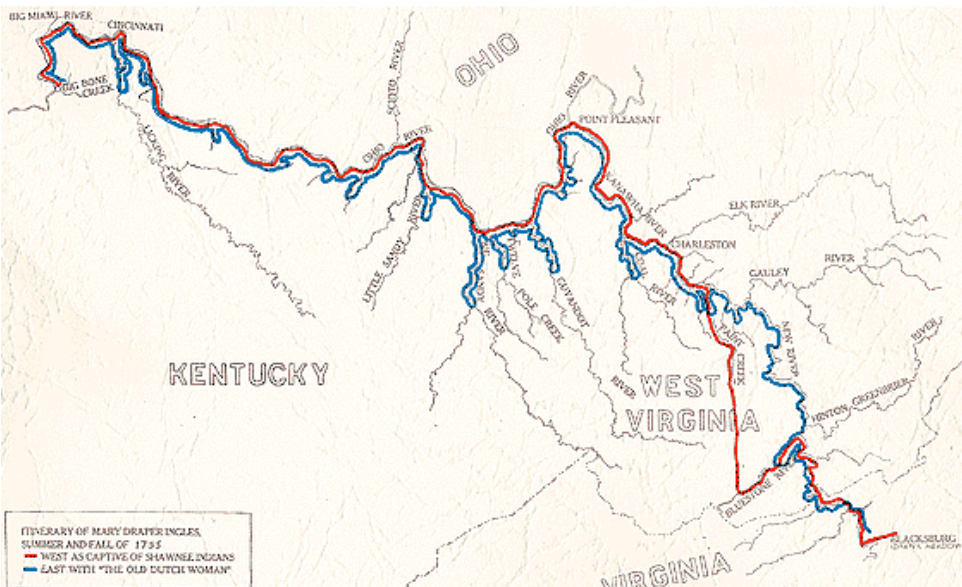
- Right Davis Creek Trail to Forest Office and Arboretum.
- Right `Arboretum behind office and CCC Snipe Trail to Mossy Rock Trail
- Straight - Mossy Rock Trail to Middle Ridge Road



- Left Middle Ridge Road 0.4 miles to Ballard Trail
 - Right Ballard Trail to Shooting Range Road
 - Right To shooting range and Wall Fork Trail to East Boundary Road and trail end at East Boundary Road.
- Taking a right on East Boundary Road will take you back to Middle Ridge Road.

The Winter 2022 edition of the Forest Friend included the article "Slack packing the Mary Ingles Trail in Kanawha State Forest" detailing a five ladies two day hike covering the Mary Ingles Trail. .

The trail is named after frontier woman Mary Draper Ingles, who along with her two sons, two year old George and four year old Tommy were captured in Virginia near present day Blacksburg, by Indians in 1755 and taken to their Ohio villages. Being immediately separated from her children, and given to



Osbra Eye Spring Nature Walks
Photos and Text by Dale Porter

On April 20th, the Foundation held its annual Osbra Eye Spring Nature Walks. Though the turnout was admittedly smaller than we would have liked, especially with such nice weather, the participants were enthusiastic and appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about the Forest. Seven walk options were offered to participants.

- 1 NATIVE PLANTS and FOREST ECOLOGY
Leaders: Katerina Thongdara, Brooke Moore
- 2 TREES, FLOWERS, and BIRDS
Leaders: Chris Gatens, Sara Miller
- 3 BIRDS
Leaders: Jim Waggy, Kevin Cade
- 4 GEOLOGY
Leaders: Pete Sullivan, Ted Jones
- 5 HISTORY and REMNANTS of MINING in KSF

- Leader: Dale Porter
- 6 SCENIC HIKE
Leaders: George Singleton, Devon Fox
- 7 NAVIGATING the TRAILS
Leaders: Michelle Platt, Christopher Wood



Responsible Stewardship Some Do's and Don't in Kanawha State Forest.

The big DO is to come out and enjoy Kanawha State Forest!!

However, there are some rules and laws to obey while visiting the forest.

Leave no trace: Place all trash in appropriate trash receptacles.

Dogs: All dogs are to be kept on a leash.

Camping: Camping is only permitted at numbered sites in Campground or Group camp areas and require a reservation prior to occupancy.

Fires: Fires are only permitted in designated fire rings or fireplaces. Burn only firewood or charcoal. NO pallets or structural wood products are to be burnt. Collecting or harvesting of firewood is not allowed within the boundaries of KSF, and only wood originating in West Virginia may be burned.

Wildlife: All animals, including snakes, reptiles and fish, are protected in the forest, except game animals taken during designated hunting and fishing seasons. All snakes and reptiles are protected species and are not to be killed, collected or harassed in the forest without appropriate permits. If you come upon a snake, leave it along and just move on around it. If you think it might be a poisonous one (copperhead or rattlesnake), just keep your distance and go

around it. If you are concerned about the proximity of the snake to other people such as near a camping area or playground, keep people away and notify the park staff, so they may determine if relocation is necessary. If you find one lying in the trail, you might find a long stick and coax it off the trail for its and others safety.

In general, no plants or animals are to be removed from the forest, with the exception of game fish and animals during the appropriate hunting or fishing season.



<https://wvdnr.gov/plants-animals/amphibians-reptiles/>

Bicycles:

It is recommended that all persons wear a helmet whether legally required or not.

Only ride on trails open to bicycles.

All persons under fifteen years of age must wear a helmet when on a bicycle. §17C-11A-4 (a) Parents or guardians are legally required to assure that persons under fifteen years of age wear a helmet when operating a bicycle. §17C-11A-4 (b)

When overtaking a bicycle, drivers of a vehicle are to pass on the left and allow a **minimum** of three feet between the bicycle and their vehicle. §17C-7-3 (2)

Bicycles and all classes of e-bikes are permitted on any road surface of trail within KSF unless signed otherwise.

Parking: Park in designated areas only. Stay off the grass. Do not block access road gates.



Photo by Dale Porter

Volunteers Making a Difference! by Dale Porter

Volunteers make a difference in Kanawha State Forest. While usage of the forest has increased over the years, forest maintenance staffing has remained relatively static. The forest staff time is mostly consumed with maintaining grounds and facilities in the central part of the forest.

Since 2012, volunteers have more than doubled the mileage of single track trails in the forest. In doing so, it is also critical that volunteers have continued to assist in the maintenance of the trails in the forest. After the April tornados, trail volunteers jumped in and assisted the park staff in clearing debris from the trails, greatly reducing the amount of time required to reopen these trails to the public.

Volunteers have cleaned and painted shelters, done handicapped stripping in the parking lots, and repaired fire pits as well as created the arboretum. Some of the volunteer effort has been by individuals, and others by community groups or organizations such as the Boy Scouts. This Spring, University of Connecticut and West Virginia State University (WVSU) students have together spent a combined week, working to clear brush (mostly invasive species) around shelters one and two. They did in five days, what would have taken two or three people weeks to accomplish. WVSU students also restored foot paths to shelters 1 and 2 utilizing existing CCC hand-cut stone. Compare what the hillside below the shelters look like after clearing to what it looked like in the photo in the next column.



University of Connecticut students are ready to leave after clearing hillside of brush.

For the past few years, as part of their Earth Day celebration, Diversified Energy has sent a crew of about 30 employees to the forest along with heavy equipment and trucks to assist the



What the hillside below shelters 1 & 2 looked like before the volunteer clearing efforts.
Photo by Jennifer Bauman

forest staff.

Jennifer Bauman must be recognized for her efforts to organize, coordinate and encourage volunteers in the forest.



West Virginia State University students and KSF staff load brush for disposal.
Photo by: Jennifer Bauman

It is important that these volunteer efforts continue. Efforts such as invasive species suppression depend on these volunteer efforts. If you have a group that would like to volunteer, contact the Kanawha State Forest at 304-558-3500.



Diversified Energy staff during their Earth Day event at KSF.



Tree fall from storm along portion of Middle Ridge Trail. Photo by Dale Porter



TRAIL RUNNING SERIES

There will be a four event trail running series in Kanawha State Forest in 2024. Each event will be longer than the previous one.

May 25th, 8AM - Honor Our Heroes 5K

June 29th, 8AM - Big Timber Trot 10K

August 17th, 8 AM - Dog Days of Summer 15K

October 20th 9 AM - Fall Classic Trail Half Marathon.



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 11th, 8AM - Middle Ridge Monster 8 Hour Run

May 25th, 8AM - Honor our Heroes 5K

June 16th, 2PM - West Virginia Day Concert by the Kanawha Valley Community Band.

June 29th, 8AM - Big Timber Trot 10 K

August 17th, 8AM - Dog Days of Summer 15K

October 20th, 9AM - Fall Classic Trail Half Marathon



Kanawha State Forest Foundation Board of Directors

John Hughes, Chairperson
George Singleton, Vice Chairperson
Luanne McGovern, Secretary
John Fischer, Treasurer
Rebecca S. Linger, Newsletter Editor

Ted Armbrecht	Wayne Stevens
Doug Atkins	Peter Sullivan
Chris Gatens	Jim Waggy
Eric Hastings	John Wirts
Jack Hoblitzell	Doug Wood
Brad Schmalzer	



Deadline for Summer Edition of the *Forest Friend* is July 10, 2024 for early August publication.

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.



The Forest Friend

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

