



# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



## ***Protecting Blackwater Canyon topic of March 21 webinar***

Judy Rodd, executive director of Friends of Blackwater, Inc. (FOB), has led the fight to protect the Blackwater Canyon for over 20 years. Rodd will provide an overview of her organization's work with citizens to protect the canyon from numerous logging plans, development, proposed highways, and threats to the nearby national forest.

FOB led projects to protect endangered bat populations, conserve federally-protected flying squirrel habitat, enhance historic sites, and improve stream quality. The organization has the support of thousands of citizens, businesses, and private foundations. Both the *Washington Post* and *CBS News* have reported on their efforts.

The March 21st webinar will focus on why places like the Blackwater Canyon should be preserved for future generations, the challenges the organization faces, and the tools that FOB has relied on to save some of our country's most precious land.

The 10,000-acres in the Blackwater Canyon holds some of the most beautiful natural resources, pieces of unique heritage, bio-diversity and outdoor recreation opportunities that the Mid-Atlantic Al-



*Judy Rodd, Executive Director,  
Friends of Blackwater, Inc.*

legheny Highlands has to offer. A rugged, heavily wooded, eight-mile-long gorge carved by the Blackwater River in the Allegheny Mountains of eastern West Virginia, it has been the object of controversy as environmental activists have contended with industrial (power, timber, development) interests over its ultimate status.

Rodd has run Friends of Blackwater since 2000. She has a master's in recreation and parks from West Virginia University and has been working as an environmental educator and advocate since 1985. In addition to serving as director, she handles much of the grants and fundraising.

## ***Final Opportunity for Comment on Draft Stewardship Plan***

It is so important for the public to support key elements of the White Township Stewardship's Committee draft Stewardship Plan for White's Woods.

**Please take the time to submit your public comment now** (ends March 22).

[As noted on the FWW website](#), this draft lays out goals, objectives, and even a management philosophy that are essential to the preservation of White's Woods as a natural area to be left to mature to old growth.

How do I submit public comment? Go to <https://www.whitetownship.org/white-township-stewardship-committee>. The link to the complete 2023 Draft Stewardship Plan is near the center of the page:

["White's Woods Draft Stewardship Plan"](#)

**Please support as many elements of the plan as you can.**

Input can be provided on (1) a form found on the Stewardship Committee landing page (see previous page), (2) USPS mail (White Township, 950 Indian Springs Road, Indiana, PA 15701), OR by (3) email ([wtinfo@whitetownship.org](mailto:wtinfo@whitetownship.org)).

### **UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS**

**March 21: Saving the Blackwater Canyon** webinar by Judy Rodd, Executive Director, Friends of Blackwater, noon to 1 p.m.

**April 6:** Barberry Pulling Contest. One Day Only. Put together your team of 10 people. (*Send email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org) to register your team.*)

**April 22: Earth Day Indiana**, Film Fest at Indiana Theater, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Environmental Groups will have tables in lobby. Free. Open to the public.

**May 9: Trees in White's Woods: A Walk**, Dale Luthringer, environmental education specialist, Cook State Forest. 5 p.m. 12th Street Entrance.

To register for FWW webinars, which are free and open to the public, please email at [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org). All previous webinars can be viewed at [friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events).

**For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)**

**Like us on FaceBook: Friends of White's Woods, Inc.**

**Follow us on Instagram: [friendsofwhiteswoodsinc](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwhiteswoodsinc)**

**Issue 45  
March 2024**

# Earth Day Indiana April 22

As many as 10 organizations will be hosting Earth Day Indiana Monday, April 22.

The event will be held from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Indiana Theater, 637 Philadelphia St. A free film fest and environmental group tables will highlight the event.

Featured will be “A Fierce Green Fire” narrated by Robert Redford, Ashley Judd, Van Jones, Isabelle Allende, and Meryl Streep at 6:30 p.m. This film spans 50 years of grassroots and global activism from the 1960s to 2009 and connects the major causes of environmentalism, from conservation to climate change. Chronicling the largest movement of the 20th century, the film tells vivid stories about people fighting – and succeeding – against the odds, from the Grand Canyon to Love Canal, from the oceans to the Amazon.

At 8 p.m., three short films will be shown: “Burned: Are Trees the New Coal?” “The Story of Stuff,” and “Brazil’s Warrior Women.”

To date, sponsoring organizations include: Evergreen Conservancy, Friends of White’s Woods, Indiana Community

## CFC Looks to Save Mature, Old-Growth Forests

According to the Climate Forests Coalition press release, more than 120,000 people from over 170 organizations sent comments to the U.S. Forest Service urging them to strengthen their protection of both old-growth and mature forests on federal land. During a public comment period, people asked for stronger provisions that eliminate commercial logging of old-growth trees and tighten other exceptions to ensure these trees stay in the forest. In December, the Forest Service proposed the first nationwide amendment to improve safeguards for old-growth forests. The proposal came in response to more than 500,000 comments submitted last summer urging swift and durable action from the federal government to protect mature and old-growth forests on federal land.

The proposal sets ambitious goals for managing and expanding old growth in national forests but contains major gaps that will hinder the achievement of these goals. Notably, the proposal would still let old growth get sent to the mill. And it carves out the Tongass National Forest—our largest old-growth national forest—from protection.



Garden, Indiana County Conservation District, Indiana County Humane Society, IUP Sustainability Studies, League of Women Voters.

To defray costs of this event (venue cost, film rental, etc.), Earth Day Indiana is seeking donations from our members and friends. If you can assist, please send check made payable to Friends of White’s Woods to P.O. Box 1271, Indiana, PA. 15701. Please write “Earth Day” in memo portion of check.

The proposal also does not offer protections for mature trees and forests, which if not logged, will eventually become old-growth. Protecting mature forests is essential to recover old-growth that has been lost to logging. Many national forests, especially in the eastern United States, have little old-growth remaining.

Protecting older trees is a critical, cost-effective solution to address both the climate and biodiversity crises. Old-growth forests are more resilient than younger forests but, unfortunately, the vast majority (97% in the east; 95% in the west) of old-growth forests in the U.S. have already been logged. Those that are left are largely on federally managed public lands. The Forest Service has approved numerous logging projects across hundreds of thousands of acres that target mature and old-growth trees, which store vast amounts of carbon.

The Climate Forests Campaign is a coalition of more than 120 organizations nationwide that advocates protection of the trees that serve as the greatest buffers against climate change. FWW is a member of this

## REMINDER: BARBERRY-PICKING CONTEST APRIL 6

FWW’s plan to remove barberry is to gather 10 teams from 10 different organizations to work on Saturday, April 6th from 10 a.m. to noon.

The teams will be directed to specific locations, provided team leaders to explain how to remove the barberry, given bags in which to place the plants for removal, and provided work gloves. The bags filled with barberry will be picked up and removed by White Township staff. Barberry-pullers should wear long sleeves and long pants and bring water. The goal is to field 10-person teams, but even if your team is smaller, please join us.

In addition to the satisfaction of community service and two hours in the peace and quiet of White’s Woods, what else will your team receive from this outing?

- We will declare a barberry-pulling champion team!
- The winning team will receive a prize! (signed White’s Woods prints and more.)
- At the conclusion of our work day (two hours), FWW will provide light refreshments.

How can a team sign up?

Send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org) to let us know that you are putting together a team (or if you have questions). Please include an email address and cell number so we can send updates.

Thank you so much for the service your organization already provides for our community. We sure hope that you can join us on April 6th at 10 a.m. (Rain Date for this event is April 13th, 10 a.m. We will keep you posted!)

coalition.

What’s next? In May 2024, the U.S. Forest Service will release a new forest policy draft and post it for public comment from June to August. Then, in January 2025, the final U.S. Forest Service policy document will be released. Look for reminders beginning in June when the next round of public comment regarding national forest management policy is invited.

**Note:** There is a second federal agency that manages public land. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management is also developing policy. After accepting public comment in the summer of 2023, BLM is poised to release their new policy soon. More public action may be needed regarding BLM policy.

For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)

We welcome feedback. Email us at:  
[info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org)

Issue 45  
March 2024