



WEST VIRGINIA *ADVENTURES*

By Frank Minter

Sure, John Denver called West Virginia “almost heaven” in his song “Take Me Home, Country Roads” back in the 1970s. But what’s up with the Mountain State today? Awesome adventures, that’s what.

West Virginia’s mountains, forests, and streams are your outdoor playground, with more than 30 state parks renowned for their scenery and mountain-bike trails. Rock climbers scale Seneca Rocks in Pendleton County and the New River Gorge’s Endless Wall in Fayette County. Historic trains chug visitors into the wildest places in the East. Rafters and kayakers experience the New River Gorge and many other streams. Anglers casting for smallmouth bass and trout choose from streams that national fishing magazines consider must-visit destinations.

So to give you a glimpse of what West Virginia has to offer, we’re highlighting nine fun destinations and their varied adventures and events. But for even more cool things to do, check out the calendar of events at the West Virginia Division of Tourism’s Web site, wvtourism.com.

West Virginia
Wild and Wonderful



If getting there is only half the fun,
get off the beaten path.

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Adventure Galore at the Summit

First, we have to mention the Summit, also known as the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve. A 10,600-acre high-adventure base operated by the Boy Scouts of America and located in Southern West Virginia right in the middle of some of the most spectacular country east of the Rocky Mountains, the Summit offers every adventure you can think of in one outstanding location. And starting in 2013, the property will become the permanent home of the national Scout jamboree. Although it's a day's drive (or less) from many large cities in the East, this wild area is one of the best-kept secrets in the United States.

So what's going on there? Where to start...

Located near the New River Gorge, which is forever protected by the National Park Service, the area's streams, mountains, and forests are a haven for those who love outdoor sports. Mountain bikers will ride the Summit's "High Gear" downhill course and the 27 miles of



cross-country trails on the "Low Gear" course. White-water rafters will float the New River Gorge's class III, IV, and—yikes!—V white-water. Rock climbers will flock to the Gorge to scale the Endless Wall along its north face. Fishermen will float the New River and many other streams to engage in the world-class, smallmouth bass fishing. Summit visitors will also find a

lake for canoeing and kayaking, zip lines, BMX and mountain biking, scuba diving, a water obstacle course, and even a stadium area for outdoor concerts and events.

Planners say the site will be ready for the 2013 National Scout Jamboree, which begins July 15. The expected 50,000 Scouts, including as many as 10,000 adult volunteers, will make the Summit the second-largest city in West Virginia from July 15-24. To register or check out the cool activities taking place at the jamboree, go to summit.scouting.org.

An Amusement Park and More



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Take a break from your nature-oriented excursions and head to Camden Park in Huntington. Camden boasts more than 30 rides and attractions, including a rollercoaster, a haunted house, and more (866-822-6336; camdenpark.com). Or for a slower-paced afternoon, visit the Heritage Farm Museum (304-522-1244; heritagefarmmuseum.com). This Huntington museum showcases Appalachian heritage through interactive displays. The shopping area down-

town is also worth checking out. The stores and specialty shops in downtown Huntington also offer a variety of one-of-a-kind items, many crafted by local artisans.

For an interesting lunch or dinner experience stop by Hillbilly Hot Dogs, which was recently featured on The Food Network. A large menu with an interesting dining experience that has fun with rural Appalachian culture (hillbillyhotdogs.com; 304-522-0044).

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WEST VIRGINIA



Southern West Virginia Adventures

Nine counties make up this swath of wild country and small towns. In Monroe and Greenbrier counties, you'll experience unspoiled wilderness along the Allegheny Ridge. Mercer, Summers, Raleigh, Fayette, and Nicholas counties lie in the New River Gorge region—also where the New, Bluestone, and Gauley rivers flow. McDowell and Wyoming counties boast the southern mountains, which are the heart of the Coal Heritage Trail (**coalheritage.org**), an area well known for its outdoor adventures.

Because there's so much to do in this region, Visit

Southern West Virginia created a smartphone app designed to take you off the beaten path—down winding roads, scenic trails, and up and over mountains. Each excursion will lead you to something unique, historic, beautiful, and fun. Also, browse the app for lodging, activities, and events, as well as local adventures such as mountain biking, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, museums, fairs, and more. For more information, call 800-VISITWV or go to **visitwv.com**.

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MERCER COUNTY GETAWAYS

West Virginia's Mercer County sits nestled in the heart of Appalachia. Outdoor enthusiasts recognize the area for its scenic hiking and mountain biking trails, fishing, and festivals. The community of Lyburn is a gateway to the Hatfield-McCoy Trails (go to trailsheaven.com for details). Mercer County also contains Camp Creek State Park and Forest (800-CALL-WVA, campcreekstatepark.com), which has fishing, picnicking, and playgrounds. If fly-fishing's your thing, call Riverbound

X-Stream Fly Fishing in Princeton at 304-487-3303. For winter activities, check out the Winterplace Ski Resort in Ghent near Beckley (800-607-SNOW, winterplace.com). If you'd just like to see the scenery in an old-fashioned way, step aboard the Ridge Runner Train in Bluefield (304-327-2448, theridgerunner.org). Ridge Runner Train is only open on weekends, April-September.

For more Mercer County info, call 800-221-3206, or go to visitmercercounty.com.

Tamarack's Arts and Crafts

In Tamarack, billed as the nation's "first showcase of handcrafts, fine art, and regional cuisine," you'll find 59,000 square feet of shopping that features—in addition to the products for sale—working art studios for resident artisans, a 178-seat theater, a fine art gallery, and "A Taste of West Virginia" eatery. Many of the craft people here create their unique works while you're watching. It's a taste of rural Americana worth a visit between your outdoor adventures: for the beautiful, heirloom-quality handcrafts such as glass, Appalachian quilts, pottery, and carved furniture. Tamarack is located at Exit 45 off of I-77/I-64 in Beckley. Get more information at 1-88-TAMARACK or tamarackwv.com.

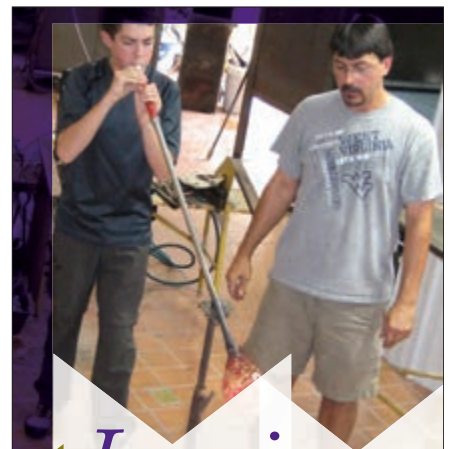


See Bears and More at West Virginia Wildlife Center

Upshur County in north-central West Virginia—just west of the million-acre Monongahela National Forest—exudes small-town charm, especially in the downtown Buckhannon Historic District. It's home to the West Virginia State Wildlife Center, a zoo with a twist. Operated by the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the Wildlife Center provides realistic interactions with native wildlife. Just take a wheelchair-accessible, 1.25-mile trail through a

mature hardwood forest and keep your eyes peeled for black bears, bobcats, eagles, deer, and more. Don't worry; they're inside spacious enclosures. The Wildlife Center also features a gift shop, picnic facilities, and a pond filled with bluegill and catfish. Find out more by calling 304-473-1400, or going to visitupshur.org.

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Fun on the Water

If variety is the spice of life, then make Summersville your destination. Summersville Lake offers an abundance of water activities, including fishing, swimming, kayaking, boating, scuba diving and more! The lake is the largest clear-water lake in the state, with 60 miles of shoreline, and boasts 68–80 degree temperatures from June to September. Popular spots for swimming, snorkeling and scuba diving include Bubbles Cove and Long Point, which *Skin Diver Magazine* has called “The Little Bahamas of the East.” Boat rentals are available at Sum-



mersville Lake Marina and Summersville Lake Retreat. Sarge’s Dive Shop is also open for scuba gear and more.

If you’re looking for high adventure, try zip lining, rock climbing, or white-water rafting. Summersville is also rich in Civil War history, and you’ll want to save time for a walk on one of the many beautiful trails. Even

plan a day on the golf course!

Put your worries away and let Summersville be your destination. Visit summersvillecvb.com for more information or call 866-716-0448.

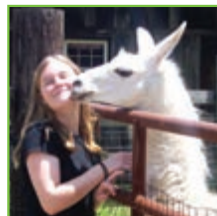
Whitewater Rafting Escapades

Experience a one-stop shop for your active vacation at River Expeditions, offering whitewater rafting and adventure packages that include zip lining, rock climbing, mountain biking, and more in the New River Gorge National River area and the Gauley River area. They have “Family Class” trips that feature easy-to-moderate rapids, “Adventure Class” trips for beginners and experienced rafters, as well as “World Class” trips for experienced rafters. River Expeditions offers discounts for Scouts, cabin rentals, and more. Find out more at 800-463-9873 or raftinginfo.com.

CAMDEN PARK



HERITAGE FARM MUSEUM & VILLAGE



HILLBILLY HOTDOGS



WELCOME TO HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA!

Cabell-Huntington CVB will connect you with great places to stay, unique dining, local shopping and exciting places to visit in Huntington and Cabell County. Stop by our Visitors Center in Heritage Station to pick up your free Visitors Guide. From riding roller coasters at Camden Park, stepping back in time at Heritage Farm Museum & Village or stopping by our very own restaurant featured on Diners, Drive-ins and Dives, Hillbilly Hotdogs, Cabell County has something for everyone.





West Virginia Time Travel

The Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad offers mountain rail adventures on several trains from April to December. The trains depart from the historic depots in Durbin and Elkins, and offer an opportunity to earn the Railroad merit badge.

The Durbin Rocket, a 55-ton steam locomotive built in 1910, is powered by Old No. 3, one of only three operating Climax-gear logging locomotives still in service. She puffs her way along the Greenbrier River. Scout troops are invited to camp at the Scout Camp, located in the remote forest alongside the river. The Rocket drops off and picks up on scheduled run dates.

From Elkins, the diesel-powered New Tygart Flyer climbs up to a 150-foot-wide waterfall. The 1920-vintage Cheat Mountain Salamander follows the same route as the Flyer but climbs into an even more remote wilderness where Scouts can camp. The Great Cheat Mountain Train Race is scheduled for July 13, 2013. Diesel and steam trains will compete to honor West Virginia's 150th birthday.

The American Mountain Theater offers a perfect way to relax after a day on a train. It can also help your boys earn their Music merit badge (requirement 3A).

West Virginia
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- New & Gauley River Rafting
- Luxury Cabins, Rustic Cabins, Tent Camping, RV Sites
- Lodge with Wi-Fi, Gift Shop
- Outdoor Pool & Hot Tub
- Zip Line, Bridgeway Tours, Horseback Riding, Rock Climbing, Mountain Biking, Fishing



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What Small Town Charm Is All About.

Look no further than **Upshur County, WV** for **Jambo 2013!** Our Downtown Historic District features **12 amazing restaurants, 15 specialty shops and 6 places to stay.** Be sure to stop by the **Wildlife Center** to see WV black bears and more native animals.



Upshur County
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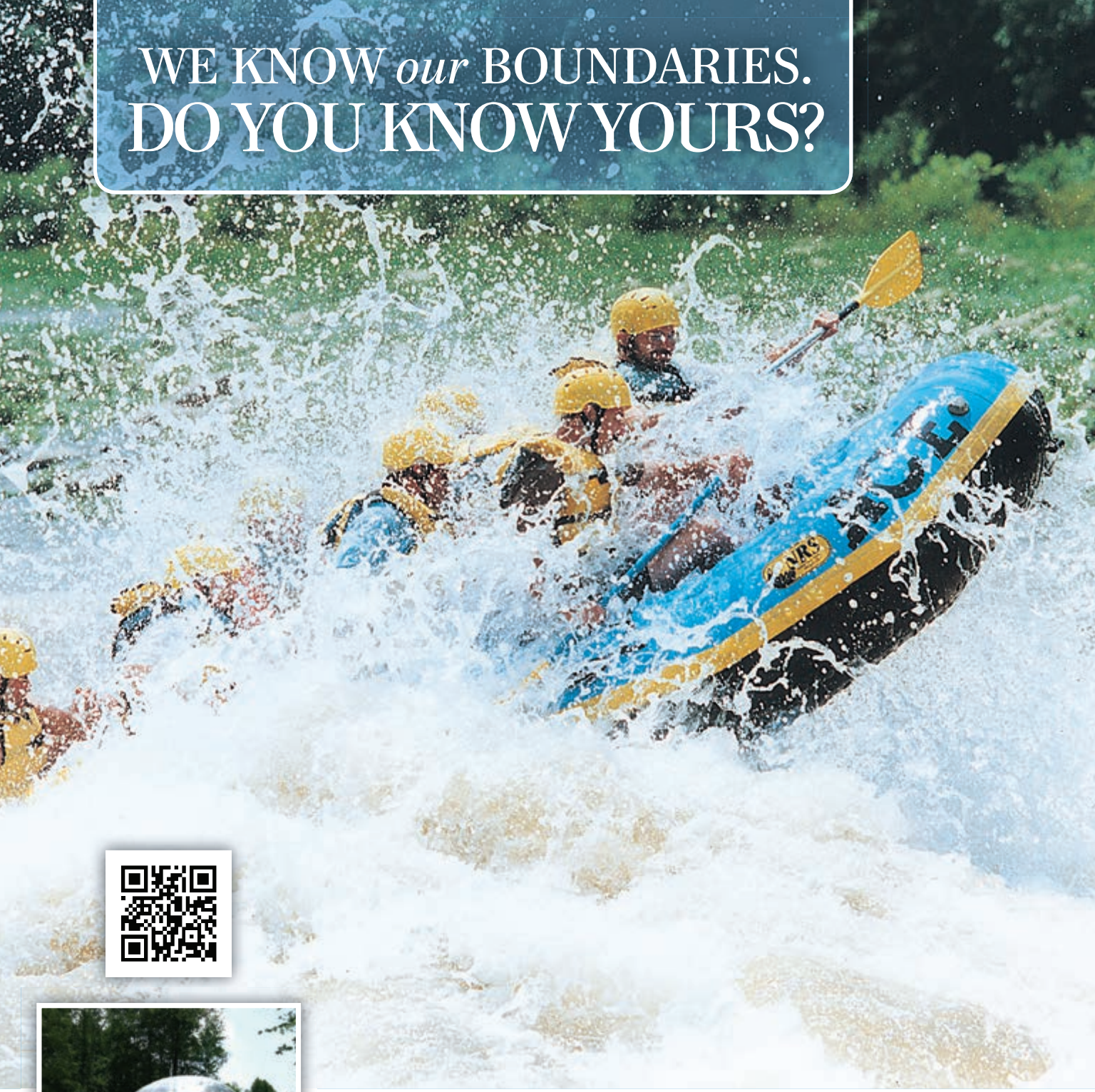
RAILROADING & MUSIC EXPLORE!



Add us to your **Journey to the Jamboree**
Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad
&
American Mountain Theater
Elkins, WV

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DO YOU KNOW YOURS?



Unclimbed mountains, crashing
whitewater, soaring zip lines and you.
Do you remember what butterflies feel like?
Call or click to explore your boundaries.

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