



**Highlanders for Responsible Development**  
P.O. Box 685 Monterey, VA 24465 [www.protecthighland.org](http://www.protecthighland.org)

## Newsletter

May 2013, No. 2

### **Allegheny Mountain School Begins Its Third Year**

Highland County's unique Allegheny Mountain School (AMS) has begun its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation, with ten new Fellows from 5 states and 2 foreign countries arriving the last week of April to begin their six-month program. AMS, launched in 2011 by HRD Board member Laurie Berman, is a not-for-profit experiential learning fellowship program empowering adults at the beginning of their careers in sustainable food cultivation and community development. AMS Fellows learn to grow and process food, study nutrition, land stewardship and community leadership skills. During their time in the program, AMS Fellows learn, teach and facilitate the building and planting of gardens and demonstrate healthy cooking techniques. AMS's goal is to touch the lives of community members and their families by creating a more restorative, food culture. It envisions a future where nutritious, fresh food is available to all people.



**2013 Allegheny Mountain School Fellows**

The AMS Fellows for 2013 are: Susanna Byrd (Charlottesville, VA); Evan Granito (Ann Arbor, MI); Amanda Henkler (Landsdale, PA); Kate Hopkins (Middleburg, VA); Paul Krysik (Chicago, IL); Emily Melvin (Somerset, PA); Ben Samuelson (Austin, TX); Ian Sawyer (Osaka, Japan); and Roger Woo (Vancouver, British Columbia). Kayla MacLachlan (Syracuse, NY) and Trevor Piersol (Richmond, VA), both of whom were AMS Fellows last year, will help manage this year's program in the capacity as Senior Fellows. Other 2012 AMS Fellows are now working on various community projects in Monterey, Staunton and Harrisonburg. For more information about AMS, visit [www.alleghenymountainschool.org](http://www.alleghenymountainschool.org).

### **Water Resources Committee Maps Out Plans**

HRD's newly formed Water Resources Committee is moving ahead on several fronts, including compilation of existing information on Highland County stream quality and planning for water quality surveys and long-term monitoring. Of immediate interest, the committee has scheduled an introductory stream-side training session about the Izaak

Walton Leagues' Save Our Streams (SOS) monitoring method, which involves the collection and identification of stream-bed life to assess water quality. The training session will be held on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. An invitation to participate is extended to everyone who is interested in preserving and improving streams in Highland County and the surrounding area. Jay Gilliam, former coordinator for the SOS program in Virginia, will be leading the workshop.

The SOS monitoring method is based on the fact that stream life differs depending on water quality. A healthy, unpolluted, stream, for example, will have a balanced and diverse community of species, including indicators of good water quality such as mayfly, stonefly, and caddisfly larva. The SOS method is used by a number of citizen stream-monitoring programs in Virginia, notably including the Cowpasture River Preservation Association.

Data collected by certified SOS monitors is used by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in its periodic state-level water quality reports. The HRD Water Resources Committee hopes to recruit volunteers who will become certified and participate in a county-wide survey of stream quality in the spring of 2014. Anyone who would like to participate in the introductory training session should contact Rick Webb, HRD Water Resources Committee Chair, at [rwebb@virginia.edu](mailto:rwebb@virginia.edu) or [540-468-2881](tel:540-468-2881).

### **VA Business Journal Reviews On-Shore Wind Turbine Projects**

A recent issue of *Virginia Business Journal* reviewed the status of several proposed onshore wind turbine projects in Virginia, characterizing them as being “stuck in neutral.” The article can be accessed at:

<http://www.virginiabusiness.com/index.php/news/article/tilting-at-windmills>.

### **IRS Issues Guidance for Renewable Energy Projects**

The Internal Revenue Service has issued a much-anticipated guidance to provide clarification on the eligibility of renewable energy projects, such as wind turbine facilities, for certain tax breaks. Legislation enacted by Congress in January of this year provided that a wind energy facility is eligible for a production tax credit if it has “begun construction” by December 31, 2013. The guidance document, issued on April 15, addresses the question of what it means for a facility to have “begun construction.” An explanation of the new guidance is available at:

<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/article/2013/04/irs-defines-start-of-construction-for-the-production-tax-credit>. The full text of the April 15 Notice is available on the HRD website at: <http://www.protecthighland.org/Documents/IRS-041513.pdf>.

***Highlanders for Responsible Development*** is a citizens group that promotes stewardship of Highland County, Virginia's unspoiled landscape, natural resources and exceptional quality of life. We support policies and activities that are based upon informed community discourse, democratic decision making, prudent land use and sustainable economic development. The newsletter is issued quarterly (February, May, August and November) to provide information on issues of relevance to the citizens of Highland County. Our website – [www.protecthighland.org](http://www.protecthighland.org) – archives past newsletter issues and referenced documents. For questions or to make comments, write [HRD@protecthighland.org](mailto:HRD@protecthighland.org).