

THE HIGH KNOB HERALD

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Clinch Coalition Newsletter

A Digital Preservation of History

The Clinch Coalition unveils an archive of its most prized historical moments.

In celebration of The Clinch Coalition's 25th Anniversary, we are thrilled to announce the unveiling of our digital archive. Dr. Jinny Turman, UVA-Wise professor, and her students developed the archive to showcase TCC's activist beginnings and most influential moments over the past 25 years.



The college students who participated got to learn about the importance of community organizations, as well as an appreciation for the passion of environmental movements such as The Clinch Coalition.

The digital archive features many exhibits and collections, such as the impact of clearcutting on our forests, interviews with longstanding members, a printable historic pamphlet, and exclusive photos from TCC's history that were preserved in scrapbooks.

The Clinch Coalition extends a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Turman and her students for diligently working on this project for three semesters.

Feel free to explore our history on your own by visiting the archive at www.clinchcoalition.org/archive.

A Brief History of
THE CLINCH COALITION

For twenty-five years, The Clinch Coalition (TCC) has utilized activism, education, and outreach for ecological preservation in Southwest Virginia.

- 1998**
The Clinch Coalition was formed during efforts to protect Bark Camp Lake from a 1400 acre timber sale and successfully decreased the effort to 700 acres.
- 2003**
The Clinch Coalition successfully halted an environmentally hazardous ATV trail project on High Knob, and a golf course on the Flatwoods section of the mountain.
- 2006**
The Coalition sponsored an art and essay contest titled, "How do trees save and protect the streams and animals in our forest?" This sparked the creation of the annual "Earth Awareness" contest.
- 2007**
The Clinch Coalition acquired a \$40,000 grant to improve the Chief Benge Scout Trail. The same year, TCC sponsored its first High Knob Naturalist Rally..
- 2008**
Coalition members opposed the construction of the Virginia City Power Plant and sponsored "The Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival" at the Norton, Virginia, Cinema.
- 2010**
Coalition members signed a petition, alongside other environmental organizations, to protect regional 404 designated species under the Endangered Species Act.
- 2014**
The Coalition sponsored the first High Knob Hellbender 10K Race. The group also sponsored their first two day hike of the Chief Benge Scout Trail to celebrate National Trails Day.
- 2015**
The Coalition joined 23 other groups in advocacy of surface mining regulations to conserve freshwater sources. The group also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the High Knob Recreation Area.
- 2018**
The 11th annual High Knob Naturalist Rally was held, with nearly 350 attendees. The Coalition celebrated 20 years of activism, and recognized founding members Dick Austin, Steve Brooks, Joe Scardo, and Gerry Scardo at the rally.
- 2019**
The Coalition successfully reduced the timber sale of the Nettle Patch from 1,499 acres to 577, stopped harmful road developments, and reduced 1,000 acres of prescribed burns.

Page one of the printable historic pamphlet done by Dr. Turman's students.



For 25 Years, We've Relied on Your Support.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Governing Board and Staff of The Clinch Coalition invite you to join us in the celebration of our 25th Anniversary by becoming a member or renewing your membership for 2023. In 1998, local residents came together to challenge the excessive commercial logging in the High Knob area of the Clinch Ranger District in the Jefferson National Forest. It is the support of our members and donors which has sustained The Clinch Coalition (TCC) over the past 25 years and allowed us to expand our advocacy for environmental protections and environmental justice throughout Southwest Virginia.

Advocacy – Forests naturally capture carbon and are being recognized as an important factor in addressing climate change.

TCC's most recent challenge to logging is an area call Devils Hens Nest, over 13,000 acres in the High Knob region between Big Stone Gap and Duffield. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has identified caves and protected plant and animal species in this area and currently this logging project is on hold.

TCC continues to advocate for best management practices in the development of the Spearhead Trails network to protect wetlands, streams and rivers from pollution and destruction. These wetlands and streams are headwaters for the Clinch, Powell, Guest and Russell Rivers.

TCC is taking a leading role in voicing local residents' questions and concerns about the government's plan to install nuclear reactors in Southwest Virginia. Lack of transparency and radioactive waste raise serious environmental justice and public safety concerns.

Education – TCC's High Knob Naturalist Rally will celebrate its 17th year in September, providing a full day of environmental education for all ages with hikes, kayaking, exhibits and presentations. Plan to join us on September 23, 2023!

During the COVID pandemic, TCC provided over 200 copies of a curriculum guide, *Teach the Clinch*, to K-12 environmental science teachers in the five school systems.

In the fall of 2022, TCC engaged with students in the UVA-Wise Environmental Ethics class as part of the college's experiential learning program. Students learned about responsible logging, water quality testing, and hiking trail maintenance.

Recreation – On October 7, 2023, TCC will hold its 10th Annual Hellbender 10K Race from downtown Norton to the High Knob Tower. This event is possible with support of volunteers and the City of Norton.

TCC leads hikes each month on local trails throughout Southwest Virginia. Our April hike will be on Earth Day, April 22nd, on the Chief Bengé Scout Trail. Contact TCCHikingClub@gmail.com.

TCC is a member of the Clinch Ranger District's Forest Recreation Outdoor Group (FROG), which promotes recreation and tourism that will have an economic impact on the surrounding communities. TCC is entering into a partnership with the USFS to help provide trail maintenance.

TCC's Governing Board members are all volunteers and receive no compensation. Your contribution goes to sustaining our advocacy, education and recreation activities and events and supporting our two part-time staff members. Membership is \$10/student, \$25/individual, \$40/family, and \$50/business. You can send a check to The Clinch Coalition, P.O. Box 2732, Wise, VA, 24293, or go to our website at clinchcoalition.org to use a credit card or Paypal.

We are your friends, neighbors and colleagues. Come join us!

Sharon Fisher, President, The Clinch Coalition



Upcoming Events

April 22nd, 2023 @11am: TCC Hiking Club meets at 11am at the Chief Benge Scout Trail. Contact TCC Hiking Club for more information at tcchikingclub@gmail.com.

The Clinch Ranger District is seeking outdoor enthusiasts to serve as campground hosts for the 2023 summer season. Enjoy a full summer stay in the beautiful Cumberland Mountains of Southwest, Virginia for FREE!

High Knob Campground and Bark Camp Lake Campground (up to 4 hosts total)

- Small cabin at both sites.
- Bark Camp RV sites available.
- May 1-October 2 (first three weeks no guests, just prep).
- Apply through Volunteer.gov by searching "Clinch Ranger District Campground Hosts" or call the Clinch Ranger District office at
- 276-679-8370



Photography by Bill Harris

Now is the time to become a new member or renew your membership. Also, consider making a tax-deductible donation. Your support is vital to helping us continue our advocacy for a clean and protected environment. In 2023, The Clinch Coalition enters its 25th year dedicated to working on environmental justice for our communities and protecting our forests, waters, and the vast biodiversity of Southwest Virginia. Only together can we conserve our natural heritage, create excellent recreational opportunities, and build a culture of land stewardship.

Contact Information

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____
 Email: (To receive The Clinch Coalition's Monthly Newsletter) _____
 Phone: (Optional) _____

Renew Membership or Become a New Member

___ Student \$10 ___ Individual \$25 ___ Family \$40 ___ Business \$50

Make check to: The Clinch Coalition, P.O. Box 2732, Wise, VA 24293

Make a Tax-Deductible Donation

Amount: _____

Make check to Virginia Organizing and write on memo line: The Clinch Coalition

Mail check to: The Clinch Coalition, P.O. Box 2732, Wise, Virginia 24293, or go to clinchcoalition.org and click on Donate.

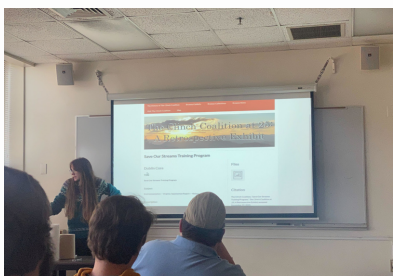
Paypal/Credit Card: Go to clinchcoalition.org and click on Donate to be linked to TCC's PayPal.

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Please considering making a donation to support TCC's efforts in Environmental Justice! To do so, please visit www.clinchcoalition.org.