December/January Go North Alliance Newsletter: The year that was, and the year ahead

Some end-of-the-year news

Finally, at the end of December, we got news from the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH): The new target date for the public issuance of the Parsons to Davis draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is June 20, 2025 (originally May 2024). The updated target date for the public issuance of the Wardensville Environmental Assessment is now Feb. 21, 2025.

And some very good news: On Dec. 30, 2024 the Crites family signed over the deeds and sold their property in the Blackwater Canyon to the Monongahela National Forest! After a 25-year campaign, the ENTIRE Blackwater Canyon has become a publicly owned natural and recreation resource.

Go North Alliance kept the pressure on in 2024

Our Alliance kept the pressure on WVDOH to align and design the highway in a way that best serves the needs of our communities and the sensitive environmental and historical areas that surround them. In response, the ***WVDOH finally announced they would study a northern alternative to the ROP*A.**

On the other hand, WVDOH was still tweaking the ROPA to address our demands rather than adopting a northern solution. They have made some design changes to the ROPA based on comments from the Alliance and many concerned local citizens. But tweaking a bad route doesn't make it the best route.

2025 focuses

As 2025 begins, the Go North Alliance will continue our push to ensure WVDOH designs the best highway for our community's needs. Here's what's on our agenda:

- Continue to remind the WVDOH that they have overlooked serious considerations to road safety by ignoring foglight technology, a heated roadway to combat icy conditions, and ensuring cellular connectivity through the dangerous mountainous terrain.
- Evaluate the impact of Corridor H on Blackwater Falls State Park as the park expands its footprint and seeks International Dark Sky Park certification.
- Champion our belief that the roadway footprint is too big and impinges on the Monongahela National Forest, old-growth forest stands, and Big Run Bog, and that it has potential serious impacts on water quality, local residents, and tourism.
- More than ever, we will continue to emphasize what a sustainable, home-grown economy looks like, and will continue to reiterate Edward McMahon's quote: ***"21st century economic development is based on what we already have…don't give away the store."***