



Spring 2011

Spring into action with the West Virginia Botanic Garden

Linda Bagby
WVBG President

Ah, springtime! Isn't it great when the bulbs start to poke their tender leaves up through the earth in response to the pull of the sun's warm rays? Milder temperatures and longer days are appreciated and give rise to feelings of new life and renewal. At the Garden the bright faces of daffodils greet you when you come to visit. They will be some of the first flowers to welcome you to a brand new season of growth.

What other new things are happening? Here is just a sampling, (There is more detail in this newsletter.) We have an expanded schedule of educational walks, workshops and events for 2011. New this year: Erin Smaldone will lead a week-long nature camp for kids! You'll also want to come out and see the new wetland boardwalk. We will officially cut the ribbon to celebrate its opening on Sunday, May 1. There will be some new wrinkles for this year's "Gardens of the Mon" tour of private gardens, Saturday, June 25. Stay tuned! Be on the lookout at the WV Welcome Centers and at local venues for our colorful new rack card. A revised map and trail guide is also in the works.

Last summer's drought emphasized the need to have readily accessible water at the reservoir basin level. Plans are under way to bring a water line down from Tyrone Road so don't be surprised if there is construction happening when you visit this year. That will be an important step for all future development. Another milestone that has been accomplished is the delineation of the wetlands in the reservoir basin. We are extremely grateful to AllStar Ecology, LLC for donating their services for this project.

What's old is sometimes new. Barb Howe and Michael Caplinger have done extensive research on the history of the reservoir at the center of the Garden. Look for a summary of our history in this newsletter!

Everything we do is made possible through the generous financial support of our Friends, whom we gratefully recognize in this newsletter, and our volunteers, who put the dollars to work. Sincere thanks to all who give so willingly and put the "spring" into our steps!



George Longenecker thanks Ryan Ward of AllStar Ecology, LLC. His company delineated the wetlands in the reservoir basin and donated this service to the WVBG. Defining the wetland types and their locations was a crucial precursor to planning future development within and around the basin. We are extremely grateful for this generous donation. Photo by: Linda Bagby

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West Virginia Botanic Garden

714 Venture Drive, PMB #121
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 (304) 376-2717
 Actual location: 1061 Tyrone Road

www.wvbg.org

The West Virginia Botanic Garden, Inc. is incorporated in West Virginia as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit [501c (3)] organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law. West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents for the West Virginia Botanic Garden, Inc. from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Newsletter by Ellen Hrabovsky, Pam Yagle,
 Linda Bagby, Erin Himmel Smaldone, Barbara Howe,
 Mike Caplinger and George Longenecker

Moving Ahead

George W. Longenecker

Executive Director

Starting a botanic garden from scratch is a time-consuming process requiring careful consideration of many different things. In 2003 we started codifying our ideas for the West Virginia Botanic Garden. A master plan identifying the use of different areas was created. This has allowed us to work on a number of projects without disturbing the framework of the master plan. To “make the garden grow,” we must take the next step and make more detailed plans.

Now that we have established a solid financial record and have developed broad community, state and regional backing, we need to take portions of the master plan to the next phase. Plans need to be developed to identify the specific uses and a detailed design of various spaces within the display garden. We also need to study the areas around the proposed display gardens to ensure everything will work together properly.

The five steps that are necessary to complete these plans are: 1. revisit the present master plan to ensure that it is consistent with our current ideas; 2. evaluate the existing site conditions and features; 3. identify what is desired in the way of displays and activities; 4. carefully consider sustainability factors; and 5. seek professional assistance in preparation of the final designs.

1. It has been eight years since the master plan was created, and we have gotten to know the site better. Many new people with fresh ideas have gotten involved. The master plan should be updated to respond to the latest ideas and concerns within the overall mission.

2. In the ten years since the WVBG was started, we have also become more aware of the many positive attributes of the property as well as some of the problems. Future development will need to take these into account and enhance the positive aspects while overcoming the concerns; included here are the beautiful vistas, native vegetation and historical features. Site conditions, such as soils, topography and drainage patterns, and microclimates will have to be taken into account as well. **(Continued on page 8)**

WVBG's former reservoir played a key role in Morgantown's water supply

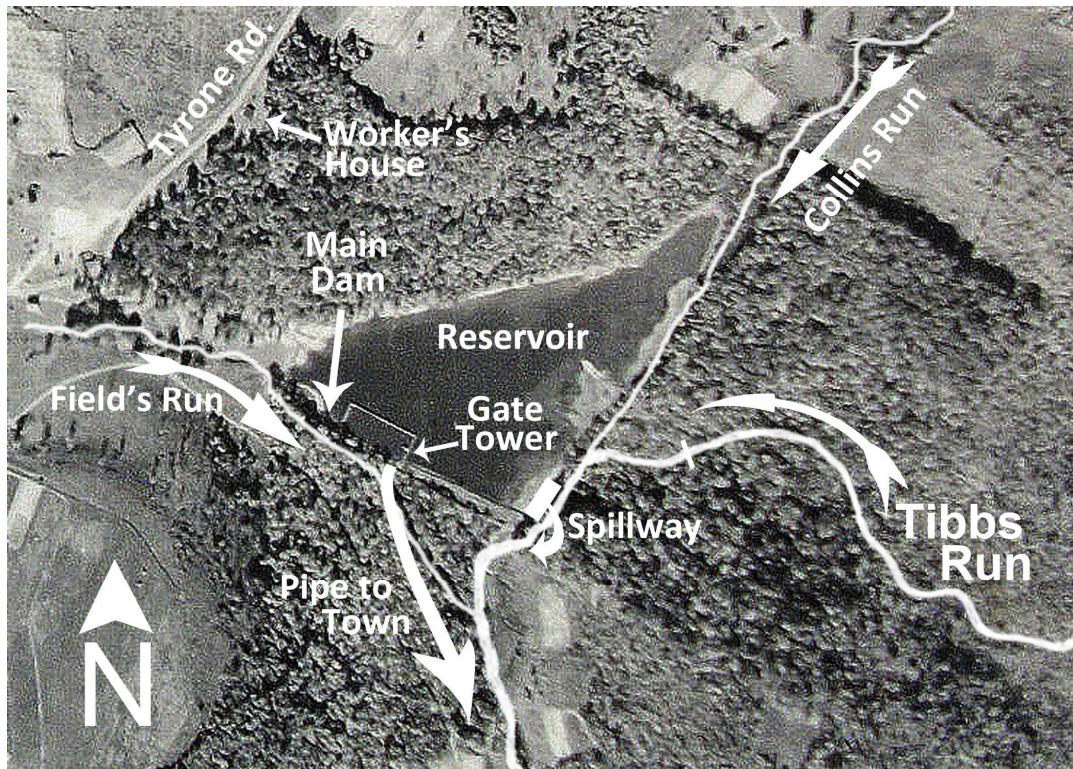
Barb Howe and Michael Caplinger

Morgantown's government first discussed providing water to residents in 1859. Finally, in 1889, the Union Improvement Company (UIC) succeeded in providing the first water system by piping water about seven miles along Tibbs Run and Deckers Creek to Morgantown from the McMechen Tract, 210.86 acres that lie south of the Botanic Garden. Clean Tibbs Run water would help Morgantown grow, prevent water-borne diseases and help the City fight fires.

The UIC acquired the approximately 75 acres that is now the main tract of the Botanic Garden in 1892 and, in 1894, obtained the 2.47 acres along Tyrone Road that provides access to the reservoir basin. The UIC also built a plant along the Monongahela River to treat water from the river, Tibbs Run and some wells.

The Union Utilities Company, a successor to the UIC, started construction on a reservoir on the 1892 tract in 1911 and acquired water rights in 1912 to protect water flowing into the reservoir. It took until November 1912 to clear the 28.1-acre reservoir basin of every tree, stump, and root; build the embankment (main dam), spillway, and gate tower; and lay the pipe to carry water to Morgantown.

Later improvements included a "chemical feed house" and a "wall" of wooden sheet pilings and walkway, both west of the tower, to create a settlement/chemical treatment pond in 1935 and a stone and sheet piling dam in 1947. The boardwalk crosses the wetland created by this dam. The City of Morgantown acquired all the property in 1950 and closed the reservoir in 1969.



This is a close-up of an aerial photo from 1938 with labels (added by Michael Caplinger) identifying the Tibbs Run Reservoir, some key engineering features and general stream flow. The rectangular outline in the impoundment, starting beside the gate tower, is the wooden wall and walkway around the sedimentation/chemical treatment basin added in 1935. (Courtesy of the United States Department of Agriculture)



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Membership in the "Friends of the Botanic Garden" is essential to our progress. We extend our gratitude to all who contributed in 2010.

We apologize for any misspellings or omissions. Please let us know if you see any.

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 to the:**

**Monongalia County
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Student volunteers help us grow

Erin Smaldone

We have had several groups and individuals helping this winter and spring on a variety of projects. Three sets of students in the Multi-Disciplinary Studies (MDS) program are currently working. The first group is organizing potential grant funding opportunities. Their spreadsheet and the conclusions at the end of their effort will surely prove to be valuable as we seek funding for future projects. The second group is developing interpretive text for use on a self-guided trail or on interpretive signs. They are focusing on the Forest Trail. We look forward to using their work as we further develop our interpretive materials in that area of the Garden. The third group is promoting the WVBG and our summer activities on the WVU campus and around Morgantown. We are confident that their efforts will increase our visibility around town and at the University. These MDS students will also conduct some basic demographic research that will help us in future promotional efforts.

Several Pharmacy students have been working with us since last fall in a study of harmful plants. These students will present their work as they lead a walk on Sunday, April 3rd. In addition, they have produced a brochure about some common harmful plants and an on-line list of plants and their properties.

Brandon Rumberg, a graduate student in Electrical Engineering, is assisting on developing summer camp activities and will be helping out at the nature camp. We appreciate his assistance in getting this new camp underway! Thanks to Laura Freeman, Andrew Larsen, Chris Hess, Reed Light, Bridget Coleman, Erick Carlson, Mike Dougherty, Malcolm Peverill, James Weinberg, Tyler Dorworth, Jason Cawley, Matt Loew, Christopher Booth, Brian Balsimo, Jeremy Channell, Ryan Harkness, Timothy Pellegrin and Brandon Rumberg for all of your hard work! We appreciate you.

Brittany Miller joins the WVBG

Erin Smaldone

I am pleased to announce a new member of our volunteer team. Brittany Miller is a WVU student who is taking part in a new AmeriCorps program through the Center for Civic Engagement. The Buckhannon, WV native is a sophomore at WVU majoring in Biology with a minor in Women's and Native American Studies.

Brittany says, "I chose to volunteer with WVBG because I was interested in the project and in forming good relationships with others in my community who share a common interest."

Brittany will be helping out over the course of the next year with various ongoing WVBG projects. We are especially grateful for her assistance with "office" administration, event planning, nature camp, volunteer coordination, public relations and site projects.

If you meet her at one of our events or at the Garden, please join me in welcoming her to the team and thank her for her service.

New this summer: Nature Camp!

Erin Smaldone

The WVBG is now offering a fun way for kids to learn about nature! We will be hosting our Summer Nature Camp July 18-22, 2011.

The day camp is for 7-10 year-olds who are interested in spending the day outdoors and in learning about nature. Campers will focus on flowers, trees, birds, insects and environmental friendliness. This will include hands-on activities, exploration, crafts, journaling and discussions.

In addition, older children (ages 10-12) will act as "Natural Leaders" as they assist with teaching and leading activities on a chosen subject. For more information on becoming a camper or a Natural Leader, see our website www.wvbg.org or contact Erin at (304-216-8704) or Erin@wvbg.org. More information and a registration form for campers will be in the June WVBG newsletter.

INDIVIDUAL (\$25) -- discounts on **Logo Items** (caps, shirts, etc.), periodic **WVBG newsletters**, invitations to special **Members Only** activities, reduced prices for **Special Events** and special previews of **Plant Sales**

FAMILY (\$50) -- the same opportunities that apply to an **Individual** but extended to the immediate family

CONTRIBUTOR (\$100) -- all of the above plus a **Gift Item** and **Discounts at Participating Nurseries and Garden Centers**

SPONSOR (\$250) -- all of the above plus a **Second Gift Item** of your choice

PATRON (\$500) -- all of the above plus a small group **Free Private Tour** of the WVBG

BENEFACTOR (\$1,000) -- all of the above plus a **Home Garden Consultation**

by the WVBG Executive Director

I would like to become a **Friend of the Botanic Garden** at the _____ level and will make my check payable to the "West Virginia Botanic Garden." **You may publish my name.** ___Yes ___No

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Risk management and trail maintenance at the WVBG are daily tasks

Ellen Hrabovsky

We often hear from visitors about how clean and well-kept the Garden is. Because we do not have paid maintenance staff, you may wonder how this happens.

Risk management is an ongoing process. We are constantly on the lookout for tree limbs and trees that are hanging dangerously over the trails. I walk in the Garden almost every day; and if I spot a hazard, I either remove it if I can or notify George to get a chainsaw crew after the problem. During the warm weather months George, Brad Bearce and other volunteers routinely patrol the grounds once a week to look for problem trees and to remove them. They even hired a huge crane to tackle one enormous oak that was dropping very large limbs over a trail.

Trail maintenance is truly a daily job. The water bars on the trails were placed to eliminate erosion from runoff. They need to be cleaned regularly. Picking up all those pesky gum wrappers and cigarette butts thoughtlessly dropped on the trails is another daily chore. I even found a pile of leaves that had been scorched by a discarded cigarette. Dangerous! There are many other pieces of litter that I will not describe; but suffice it to say that if one can carry items into the Garden, how difficult would it be to carry them back out?

Limbs of all sizes fall onto the trails and must be removed. It is amusing to see footprints made in the snow by people who have carefully walked over and around limbs without moving them. Please feel empowered to assist in keeping our trails clean and passable. Some people carry a plastic grocery bag with them to haul out trash. It is OK to move limbs out of the way. If you spot a hazardous situation or other obstacle that you cannot move please call (304) 376-2717 or email George@wvbg.org; we will take care of the problem. Thank you for keeping us clean!



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Come Grow With Us!

Gardens of the Mon"

Saturday, June 25, 2011, 10 AM – 4 PM

Mark your calendars! Preparations are under way for our popular tour of private Morgantown area gardens. Visitors will enjoy lovely landscapes and fabulous flowers as they tour delightful local green spaces.

You'll be sure to find many perfect items for your yard at the annual Plant Sale situated at one of the tour spots.

Nominations for gardens are still being accepted. Volunteer and earn a free tour ticket! Contribute as a Sponsor, and reach hundreds of avid gardeners.
Contact Linda Bagby (304-599-5676) or e-mail lbagby@wvbg.org.

Moving Ahead (con't. from p. 2)

3. When considering the types of display gardens, there are many choices to evaluate. One can make a long list of types and styles of gardens. This list can then be pared down based upon space requirements, ecological factors, community needs and aesthetics to identify what we can do best.

4. When it comes down to the details of what materials will be included, sustainability will play a major role. Along with construction costs, the long-term maintenance requirements must be taken into account.

5. Once many of the decisions are behind us, it would be best to involve a landscape architect who has specific strengths in garden design, along with previous experience with other botanic gardens. That person's responsibility will be to develop the detailed plans we need to move forward.

By pursuing things in a logical, step-wise fashion, we will be able to build new gardens that will respect what we already have, respond to our needs and create new exciting and educational experiences for West Virginia Botanic Garden visitors.