

NATURE

WEST VIRGINIA

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Thomas Minney © The Nature Conservancy

Director's Message

As West Virginia's mountains come alive in the spring, I always look forward to seeing our conservation team out in the field again. However, even when the ground is covered in frost and our field crews are locked inside, we are working hard and making strides for the benefit of nature and our communities. In the story to the right, you'll read about our efforts collaborating across stakeholders to utilize natural solutions for the diversification of the state's economy and to address some of West Virginia's most pressing challenges. Now more than ever, it is essential we come together for a future where we all thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Minney".

Thomas Minney
Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy in West Virginia



West Virginia's stunning views, such as at Bear Rocks Preserve, help promote a robust tourism industry © Kent Mason

The Nature Conservancy Holds Nature and Economy Summit

Investing in nature can contribute to West Virginia's economic diversification

At The Nature Conservancy in West Virginia, we recognize the many values that nature brings to our lives and livelihoods. From keeping communities in touch with the land to serving as a driver for West Virginia's economy, the Mountain State's diverse forests, wild rivers and multitudes of plants and wildlife add richness to our lives and serve as major draws for robust tourism and recreation industries. But, beyond the obvious benefits conservation investments bring to these industries, investments in West Virginia's natural assets offer other nature-based solutions that can address some of the state's most pressing issues — solutions that make West Virginia a place where people love to live, work and play, as well as a place where we all thrive.

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Conserve the Heart of the Appalachians

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to double your conservation impact. For a limited time only, the Heart of the Appalachians Catalyst Challenge is available to match your gift 1:1 in order to conserve West Virginia as the vital Heart of the Appalachians. Unrestricted cash gifts and pledges of \$10,000 or more from individuals and \$25,000 from companies and foundations qualify.

For more information, please contact Amanda Nickeson Cherry at acherry@tnc.org or (412) 296-1852.

DONATIONS:

Go to nature.org/donatewv



Appalachian forests can play an important role in carbon projects that improve forest management practices and offset climate impacts
© Kent Mason

As West Virginia faces major economic challenges due to changing energy markets, it is important now, more than ever, to remember the key connections between nature and the economy that can support West Virginia's future economic diversification. While conservation investments are crucial for the protection of this beautiful backdrop to our lives, additional investments in nature-based solutions can address local and global issues by increasing job opportunities and improving revenue streams.

In order to explore such economic opportunities, the Conservancy recently held a Nature and Economy Summit at Chief Logan State Park in Logan County, West Virginia. The summit brought together more than 40 stakeholders from across the Central Appalachians, including government agencies, representatives of elected officials, local development authorities, conservation-focused non-governmental organizations, funders networks and cutting-edge entrepreneurs.

At the summit, the conversation focused on the significance of West Virginia as a hotspot for biological diversity and a major provider of freshwater resources, current and future trends of West Virginia's economy, and some of the innovative investments being made to provide viable economic opportunities for the benefit of both people and nature. The stakeholders discussed nature-based economic solutions such as enhancing tourism and recreation, mine-land restoration, small-scale and local agriculture, renewable energy projects and forest carbon projects. Each of these opportunities has the potential to protect and restore priority ecological areas while creating jobs, retraining displaced workers, maintaining clean water supplies and managing and offsetting carbon impacts to our climate.

The necessity of collaboration in order to scale up this conversation around natural solutions, as well as the need to strategically cultivate private investment through projects, were major takeaways of the summit. Attendees expressed enthusiasm to expand upon the topics discussed, work together on solutions and include more stakeholders in the conversation.

The Conservancy remains committed to working across stakeholders to discover innovative ways to protect West Virginia's Wild and Wonderful values while also utilizing our natural assets for economic diversification — a win for nature and economy.

NATURE WEST VIRGINIA

One Conservancy

West Virginia trustee Ben Hardesty tells us about how his Mongolia adventure connects to our backyard

The Nature Conservancy's values include One Conservancy — the view that our strength comes from working across borders for our global mission. I had the opportunity to experience this firsthand during a climbing expedition to the summit of Mt. Khuiten, Mongolia's highest point.

West Virginia Executive Director Thomas Minney had worked with



Ben Hardesty (left) and guide hold TNC-Mongolia banner on Mt. Khuiten © Ben Hardesty

Conservancy Mongolia Director Enkhtuya Oidov and introduced me to her. While in the country, I had the chance to talk with Enkhtuya. I discovered that Mongolia's economy is driven by mining, and became inspired by how the Conservancy is working with the government and industry to promote and inform on sustainable development strategies, also known as Development by Design. This concept is used worldwide by the Conservancy, including in West Virginia and the Central Appalachians.

When I finally made it up Mt. Khuiten, I felt proud to hold the TNC-Mongolia banner given to me by Enkhtuya. It truly impressed upon me the spirit of One Conservancy and what we can achieve together.