COTTON HILL FIELD TRIP

On the 7th of April 2012 cars converged on the junction of Routes 16 and 60 in Fayette County WV to follow Rt. 16 to parking spaces where the road parallels the New River. This area is known as Cotton Hill to plant enthusiasts, although Cotton Hill is across the New from there. The twenty or so folks (the attendees keep changing with arrivals and departures on going throughout the day) straggled through the woods and rocks to look for spring flowers that had arrived much earlier than expected. First they went through riparian border forests where they were treated to a view of silver-bells through a screen of pawpaw flowers. As they descended the slope, the woods approached the New and became more riverine, finally the flat rocks along the New, which contained many of the plants seldom found in other locations, appeared. It was a sunny pleasant day appropriate for plant searches and for a picnic lunch on the rocks while viewing the passing kayak and raft traffic.

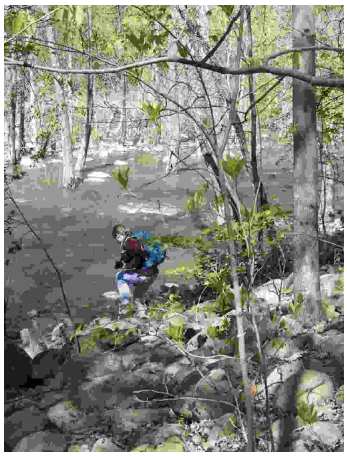

Figure 1 Exploring the New River

Partial plant list

Ferns

Polystichum acrostichoides (Michx.) Schott; Christmas Fern

Trees, Shrubs and Vines

*Asimina triloba (*L.*)* Dunal, pawpaw; *Cornus alternifolia* L. f.*,* alternate leafed dogwood; *C. amomum* Mill., silky cornel; *Halesia tetraptera* Ellis, silverbells; *Ilex opaca* Ait., American holly; *Magnolia acuminata* (L.) L., cucumber tree*; Pyrularia pubera* Michx., Buffalo or Oil Nut; *Toxicodendron radicans* L., Poison Ivy

Wild Flowers

Figure 2 Bulbous Cress

Agrimonia sp. Agrimony*; Arabis laevigata* (Muhl.) ex Willd & Poir , Rock Cress*; Asarum canadense* L., Wild Ginger; *Arisaema dracontium* (L.) Shott., Green Dragon; *A. triphyllum L.,* Jack in the Pulpit*; Cardamine bulbosa (Schreib. Ex. Muhl.) BSP, bulbous cress; Claytonia virginica L. ,* Spring Beauty*; Eleocharis compressa* Sulliv.*,* Flat Stemmed Spike Rush; *Epifagus virginiana (*L.) Bart., Beech Drops; *Euphorbia commutata Engelm.,* Wood Spurge; *Galium triflorum* Michx., Sweet Scented Bedstraw*; Geranium maculatum* L., Wild Geranium*; Geum vernum (*Raf.) Torr. & Gray, Spring Avens*; Goodyera pubescens* (Willd.) R. Br. Ex Ait. f. ;Rattlesnake Plantain; *Houstonia caerulea L.* Bluets; *Hypericum sp.* On rocks, not woody; *Hypoxis hirsuta* (L.) Coville, Yellow Star Grass; *Iris cristata Ait.,* Crested Dwarf Iris; *Maianthemum racemosum* (L.) Link, Plume Lily; *Mertensia*

Figure 3 Rocks of the New River

virginica (L. Pers.), Blue Bells; *Osmorhiza claytonii* (Michx.) C. B. Clark, hairy Sweet Cicely; *O. longistylis* (Torr.) DC, Smooth Sweet Cicely; *Packera aurea (*L.) A. & D. Love, Golden Ragwort; *Phlox maculatua L.,* Wild Sweet William*; Podophyllum peltatum* L.*,* May apple*; Polymnia canadensis* L.*,* White Flowered Cup Plant; *Ranunculus abortivus* L. Kidney leafed crowfoot; *Salvia lyrata* L. Lyre Leafed Sage; *Sangunaria canadensis* L., Blood root; *Sedum tenatum* Michx. Wild Stonecrop; *Thaspium barbinode* (Michx.) Nutt. Hairy Joint Meadow Parsnip*; Tiarella cordifolia* L.*,* foam flower; *Trillium grandiflorum (*Michx.) Salisb., Large Flowered Trillium; *Uvularia perfoliata* L. Mealy Bellwort; U. Sessilfolia L., Sessile Leaved Bellwort, Merrybells; *Viola canadensis* L., Canada Violet; *V. hirsutula* Brainerd, Southern Wood Violet; *V. rostrat*a Pursh., Long Spurred Violet; *V. sroria* Willd.,Common Blue Violet; ,Ait., Striped Violet; *Zizia aptera* (Gray) Fern., Golden Alexanders; *Z. trifoliata* (Michx.) Fern., Mountain Golden Alexanders.

Non Native Invasives

Ailanathus altissima (Mill.) Swingle*,* Tree of Heaven;*, Artemisia vulgaria* L. var. *vulgaris,* Mugwort*; Glechoma hederacea* L.*,* Ground Ivy*; Paulownia tomentosa* (Thumb.) Sieb & Zucc ex. Steud. Paulownia*; Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb & Zucc.*,* Japanese Knotweed *; Rosa multiflora* Thunb. ex. Murr.*,* Rambler Rose*; Rubus phoenicolasius* Maxims.*,* Wine Berry*; Vinca minor* L., Periwinkle, Myrtle.

Figure 4 Spike Rush in rock pocket