

Appalachian Alternatives

Appalachia – Science in the Public Interest

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Demonstration Centers

Livingston: This June will be long remembered for the dedication of the M.E. Fritsch Nature Center and the Michael Francis Zalla Nature Trail. The four-part event occurred during one of our most rainy spring spells on record. Yet despite the weather it was the largest turnout we have ever had at ASPI. We don't know what we would have done had it been sunny. A number of potential participants canceled when they heard predictions for flash floods. The Nature Center, while incomplete, does have a finished wheelchair access rock ramp, furnishings by Mark Spencer, the Gene Wilhelm bird collection on exhibit, a 330 year old hickory disk polished and detailed by Bonnie Chinn, and a substantial display of materials, maps and posters. The Zalla Nature Trail is marked and cleared, the first of three components of our emerging trail network. Hikers regard it as very beautiful.

Mount Vernon: Amid the wettest and coolest spring in our living memory we still had a bumper crop of vegetables on our 16 raised beds – formerly a blacktop parking lot. We had fifty pounds of broccoli, fifteen bushels of mustard, loads of cabbage, radishes, onions, beet greens, Swiss chard, lettuce, endive, kale, kohlrabi, spinach, and peas and more peas. Peanuts, tomatoes, Jerusalem artichokes, peppers, celery, and herbs are on the way. Neighbors want to know how to build their own greenhouses and raised vegetable beds. We are planning a study on the value of such small town gardening – for the individual, the community, and the world as a whole.



Summer interns Bhavana Mody & Danielle Shrader-Frechette at the urban project garden in Mt. Vernon

Appalachian Voices: Al Fritsch wrote an essay for the Lexington Herald on Appropriate Technology in Appalachia prior to the AT Fair. We have received numerous visits and enquiries resulting from that piece.

International Outreach: In late 1996, ASPI volunteers Mark and Trina Schimmoeller traveled to Santa Barbara, Honduras, to continue the alternative stove project that Mark began the previous year. During their month they made 14 solar cookers in the Santa Barbara environs and 15 efficient wood-burning elbow stoves. The improved stove designs use locally available fire-baked roofing tiles, adding durability and more cooking space for larger families. The team also designed an interior stove with baffled fire chamber and chimney. The sunny days allowed them to demonstrate solar cookers extensively, which was enthusiastically received due to increasing difficulty in finding firewood.