DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

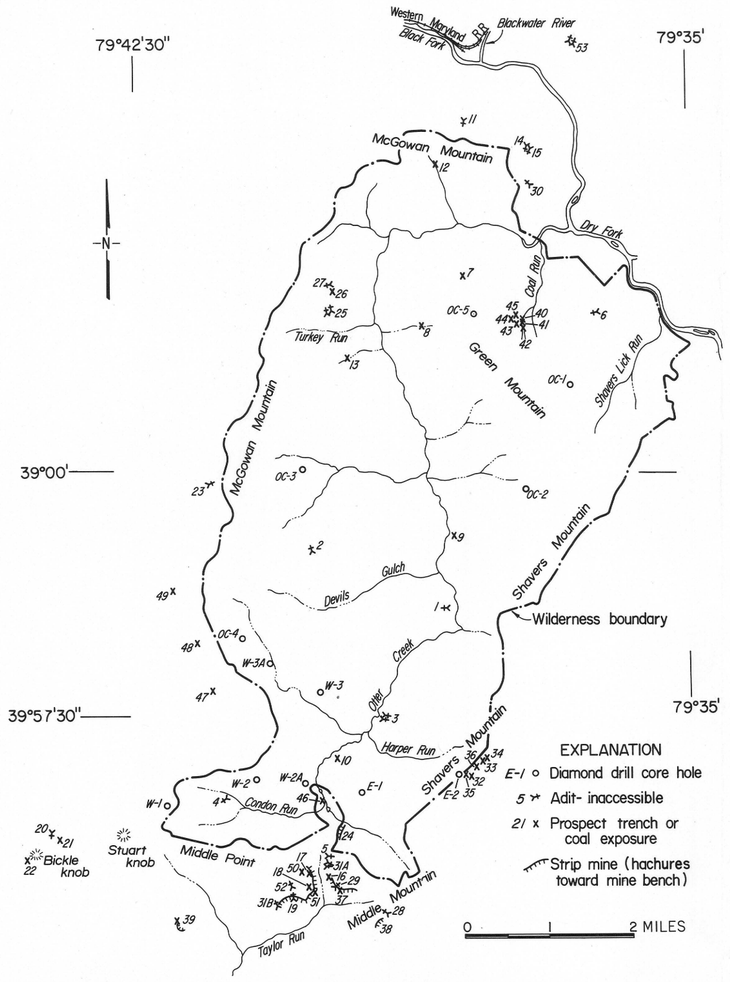


Figure 1.—Locations of coal mines, prospects, exposures, and coreholes.

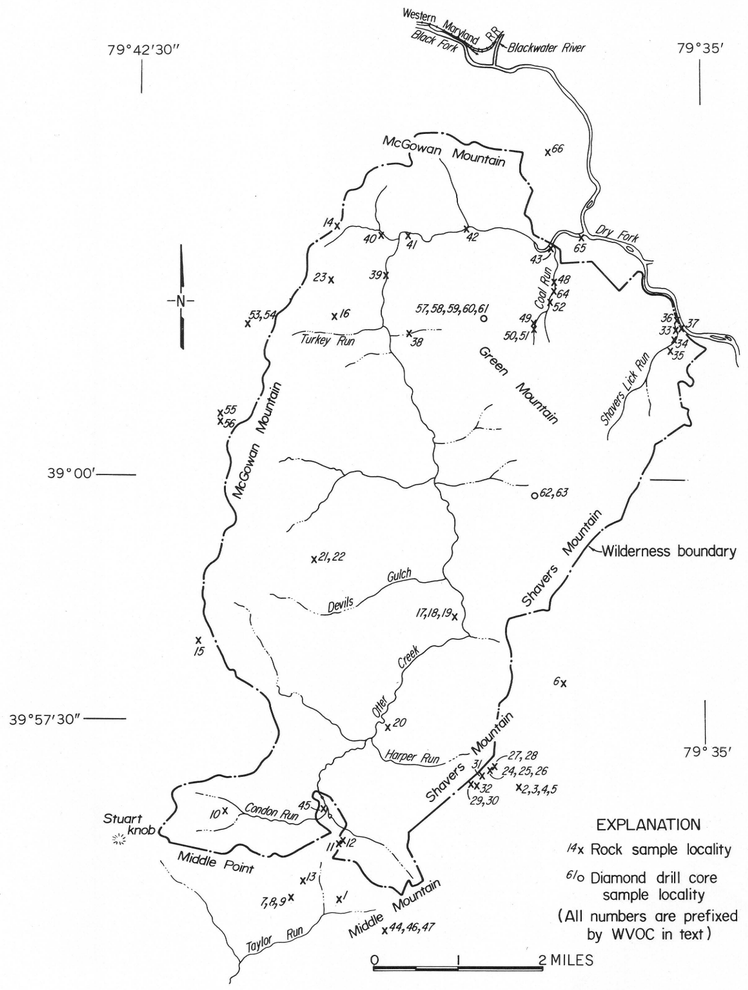


Figure 2.—Localities of rock (coal and limestone) samples and diamond-drill core samples.

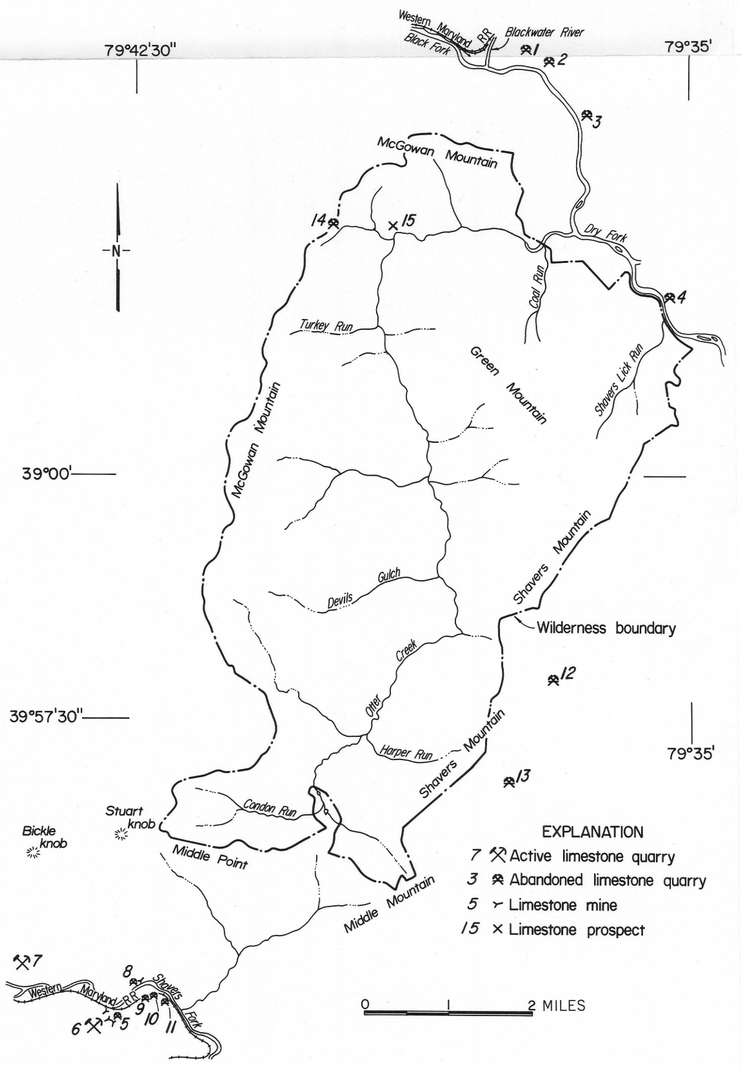
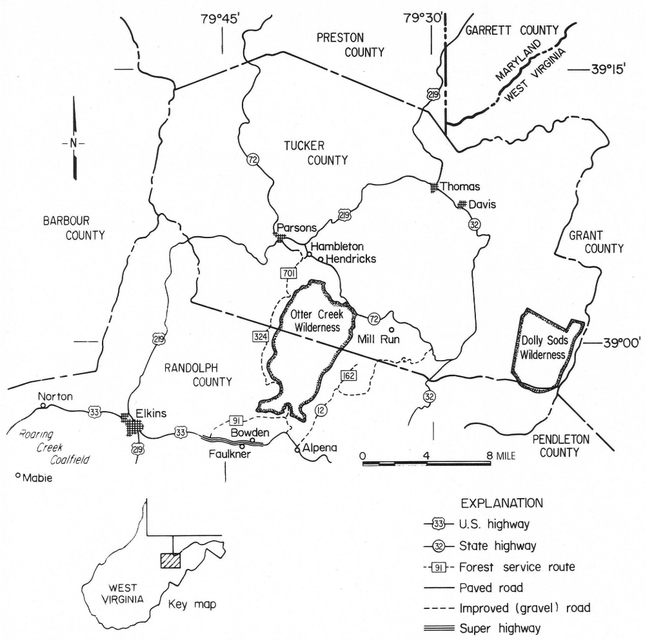


Figure 3.—Locations of limestone mines, quarries, and prospects.



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MISCELLANEOUS FIELD STUDIES
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BEHUM AND MORY—MINES, QUARRIES, PROSPECTS, EXPOSURES IN OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS, W. VA.

STUDIES RELATED TO WILDERNESS

The Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577, September 3, 1964) and related acts require the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines to survey certain areas on Federal lands to determine their mineral resource potential. The act also directs that results of such surveys be made available to the public and be submitted to the Administration and the Congress. This report presents a part of the results of a mineral survey of the Otter Creek Wilderness, Randolph and Tucker Counties, West Virginia, which was established as a wilderness by Public Law 93-622, January 3, 1975.

HISTORY OF COAL MINING AND PROSPECTING

The first known coal mining in the Otter Creek drainage basin was by the Otter Creek Boom and Lumber Company to supply fuel to their haulage locomotives and camps in conjunction with logging operations between 1897 and 1908. Several small mines were developed in the C-1, Kittanning, Sewell(?) rider, and Sewell(?) coal beds (localities 1-5, fig. 1), operating for short periods while logging was performed in that part of the area. Four prospects were also developed by this company (localities 6-9, fig. 1) and were reported by Reger and others (1923) and Reger (1928, 1931).

Field studies by Reger between 1919 and 1927 for West Virginia Geological Survey reports (Reger and others, 1923; Reger 1928, 1931) stimulated further prospecting in the region. Prospecting on the T.J. Arnold estate began by development of several prospects in the Sewell(?) coal bed on McGowan Mountain (localities 11-13, fig. 1). Personnel from the Western Maryland Railroad assisted in this prospecting because at this time the railroad was interested in securing high-heating-value coal. Two prospect adits (localities 14 and 15, fig. 1) were also driven in the Sewell(?) coal bed about this time on an adjacent tract now in U.S. Government fee ownership.

During the same period, several landowners just south and southwest of the area also began coal prospecting. Within the Taylor Run drainage basin, prospect trenches were dug by Arnold Cunningham near U.S. Forest Service Route 91 (locality 16, fig. 1) and by J. B. Ward, Jr., and others on Middle Point (localities 17-19, fig. 1). Other prospects also existed in the Bickle Knob area southwest of the wilderness (localities 20-22, fig. 1), and a prospect adit was reported on McGowan Mountain (locality 23, fig. 1; Reger, 1928, 1931), all in the Sewell(?) coal bed.

Charles A. Roberts, who held an interest in the Otter Creek Coal Company, continued exploration on the former Otter Creek Boom and Lumber Company tracts after he purchased the mineral rights for the coal company in 1923. These rights included all "minerals, coal, oil, gas, and limestone, and rights to removal, subject to rules and regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture." Otter Creek Coal Company purchased the former lumber company's railroad right-of-way, along the west bank of the Dry Fork (now U.S. Forest Service Route 791.2-413.2), to connect their holding in the Otter Creek basin with the Western Maryland Railroad in Hambleton, W. Va. Roberts drove adits along the headwaters of Otter Creek in the early 1930's (at or near locality 24, fig. 1) and on the west side of Coal Run in the mid-1930's. The exact location of the Coal Run adit is unknown, but it was reported to have supplied coal for a commuter railroad that then ran along the Dry Fork. Coal was later mined for domestic use from a small opening in the C-1 coal bed above Turkey Run Road (U.S. Forest Service Route 1331.2, locality 25, fig.1), from 1938 to 1939. Several other prospect adits were also driven north of this mine about this same time (localities 26 and 27, fig. 1). Fuel for local domestic and blacksmithing use was supplied from several small drift mines near the wilderness in the 1930's (localities 28-30, fig. 1).

Commercial mines were first opened in the immediate vicinity of the area when World War II brought an increase in demand for coal. Surface and underground mines were developed south of the wilderness; the largest was the Coberly Mine of the Shavers Mountain Coal Company (locality 31, fig. 1) along U.S. Forest Service Route 91 on the Cunningham tract. About 92,500 short tons of coal was produced from the Coberly mine between 1942 and 1948, nearly all of which was shipped via the Western Maryland Railroad (West Virginia Department of Mines, 1942-1948).

A prospect was developed in 1947 on the headwaters of Otter Creek at the site of an old Charles A. Roberts adit (locality 24, fig. 1). Prospecting involved stripping of about 6 acres of overburden. Although coal was found in place on the site, some coal may have been removed by stripping from the upper part of the coal bed.

Mining and prospecting activity ceased in the 1950's until a core-drilling program was begun by the Otter Creek Coal Company in 1958. Seven holes were drilled in the wilderness (E-1, E-2, W-1, W-2, W-2A, W-3, and W-3A, fig. 1). Within the next few years, A. D. Pittman, under an option from the Arnold estate, reopened and sampled old prospect adits on McGowan Mountain (localities 11, 26, and 27, fig. 1). In the early 1970's, Island Creek Coal Company proposed an extensive core-drilling program to evaluate coal resources within the wilderness. This program, however, was blocked by the court action of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and, in an out-of-court settlement, Island Creek Coal Company consented to a smaller program in which drill equipment was hauled into the wilderness by pack horses for a limited time. Five holes were drilled as a result within the wilderness in 1972 in a joint program with the U.S. Forest Service (OC-1 to OC-5, fig. 1).

Recent prospecting has taken place on the east slope of Shavers Mountain (localities 32-36, fig. 1) by the Mongold Lumber Company. Prospect trenches were driven along timber roads exposing all the correlated coal beds below the Kittanning. Also, a prospect trench was recently opened in the old strip-mine highwall on the Cunningham tract (locality 37, fig. 1) by the Simons Coal and Energy Company of Elkins, W. Va., exposing the Sewell(?) coal bed.

Two small intermittently operated strip mines supplying local domestic fuel exist south of the wilderness (localities 38 and 39, fig. 1).

Numerous natural exposures of the C-1, C-2, and uncorrelated coal beds can be found along Coal Run (localities 40-45, fig. 1), and roadcuts expose the C-1 coal bed at localities 46-49 (fig. 1). U.S. Bureau of Mines personnel reopened three other prospects south of the wilderness (localities 50-52, fig. 1) in the Sewell(?) rider, Sewell(?), and C-2 coal beds, respectively.

U.S. Bureau of Mines personnel sampled coal prospects, adits, trenches, mines, and exposures in and near the wilderness. Sample localities are shown in figure 2.

HISTORY OF LIMESTONE MINING

The Greenbrier Limestone has been extensively mined near Otter Creek Wilderness. U.S. Bureau of Mines personnel sampled many abandoned limestone quarries, prospects, and exposures in and near the wilderness. Sample localities are shown in figure 2. North of the area, four quarries (localities 1-4, fig. 3) furnished stone that was burned for agricultural lime during the early 1900's. The largest quarry (locality 2, fig. 3) also supplied lime to local tanneries. Above this quarry, on Canaan Mountain, a coal mine in the Sewell(?) coal bed furnished fuel for the kilns.

South of the wilderness, near Bowden, W. Va., numerous quarries (localities 5-11, fig. 3) have supplied limestone for agricultural use, road metal, or railroad ballast. The former Faulkner quarry of the Monongahela Construction Company, now the Sam Polino quarry, was the largest operation, having an underground mine off the main quarry and a crushing and loading facility on a railroad siding in Bowden (near locality 5, fig. 3). Two quarries (localities 6 and 7, fig. 3) are active and furnish stone primarily for road metal.

The Civilian Conservation Corps operated a small quarry (locality 12, fig. 3) in the 1930's east of the wilderness, providing stone for road metal in Monongahela National Forest. South of this quarry, the Mongold Lumber Company produced limestone for road metal from a quarry (locality 13, fig. 3) during the late 1960's and early 1970's. A small quarry (locality 14, fig. 3) near the northwest corner of the wilderness was used to supply crushed stone for local U.S. Forest Service roads. The Rhodes limestone prospect is found at locality 15 (fig. 3).

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MAPS SHOWING MINES, QUARRIES, PROSPECTS, AND EXPOSURES IN THE OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS, RANDOLPH AND TUCKER COUNTIES, WEST VIRGINIA

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