

NORTHERN RAILROAD WATER TOWER

Kingwood, Preston County

Constructed in the early twentieth century during the development of the Morgantown & Kingwood Railroad, the water tower was historically used for storage to assist with the fluid operation of the trains hauling building stone, lumber, glass sand, and the enormous coal resources found between Rowlesburg and Morgantown. Situated on a brownfield site and former rail yard, the tower poses a safety threat because of its leaning frame. Friends of the Cheat (FOC) in conjunction with the Preston Rail Trail Committee and the Preston Economic Development Authority have



been working to secure the rail yard for use as a rail-trail system with the preserved water tower acting as a trail head for the Kingwood to Tunnelton rail-trail corridor. However, because the FOC needs to acquire the site for development, it is considering disassembling and moving the tower to another rail-trail. FOC has applied for a FOCUS grant through Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center to determine the community's interest and needs in an effort to develop reuse plans for the rail yard and tower.

**ENDANGERED
PROPERTIES**
Of West Virginia
2012 PAWV



PAWV ENDANGERED LIST 2012



Northern Railroad Water Tower

Kingwood, Preston County

Site: Northern Railroad Water Tower

Description: This tower, a cone-roofed wooden cylinder atop steel supports, is located on a vacant WV Northern Railroad rail yard within the city of Kingwood. Although a brownfield site, the property is in a residential area of the city.

Community: Kingwood, Preston County

Date of Construction: c. 1900

Significance: The Morgantown & Kingwood Railroad developed the rail yard in the late 1800's with a train maintenance shop, storage buildings, and office building. The water tower and above-ground storage tanks of diesel were used to service the trains. This water tower is a good example of a structure that has vanished from the landscape.

Endangerment: Deterioration - The historic water tower is leaning and the metal bands that once supported the wooden structure have loosened and are unstable. Demolition - The tower is situated right along a right of way that is used to access neighboring properties presenting a safety concern to local citizens.

Resources: Once Friends of the Cheat purchase the site, grant funding along with individual, business, and corporate donations will be sought for development of a Rail-to-Trail corridor and community green space.

Next Steps for 2012: Friends of the Cheat is applying for a \$5,000 FOCUS Grant through the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance center to determine the community's wants and needs for the rail yard site. Plans are to straighten and secure the historic water tower, along with seeking community input in regards to the utilization and restoration of the site and former maintenance shops.

Goal: The goal is for complete restoration of the historic water tower on its present site, but Friends of the Cheat is considering alternatives such as dismantling and reassembling the tower at one of the nearby historic rail depots in Tunnelton or Rowlesburg. The predominant idea is for the tower to serve as a trailhead for a Rail-to-Trail corridor in Preston County. Tentative utilization plans for the brownfield site include a playground, community meeting center, city storage facility, and/or farmers' market.

Nominated by: Friends of the Cheat



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**NATIONAL
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FOR
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Preservation Alliance of West Virginia is the statewide grassroots organization devoted to preserving West Virginia's history and culture. In partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, PAWV provides assistance to help save endangered sites. For more information on this year's Endangered List, or if you would like to suggest a site for next year, see the Preservation Alliance website at: www.pawv.org.

