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Climate Change

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What is Climate Change Doing to the Allegheny Highlands?

By [BETH VORHEES](#) ([/PEOPLE/BETH-VORHEES](#))

How is climate change affecting the Allegheny Highlands of West Virginia? That's a question that will be posed at a conference at Blackwater Falls State Park in June.

Tom Rodd with the organization the Friends of Blackwater says the one day conference will highlight what is at risk from rising temperatures.

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The conference will take place on Saturday, June 7 at Blackwater Falls State Park

"Climate change is a controversial topic in West Virginia and properly so. I mean there's a lot of people with a lot of difference perspectives on it, but I think one thing we all can agree on is that it is real. It's really happening. It's us. We're doing it as human beings to our planet. Now the degree that we're doing in and the impacts of it are things that scientists are still looking at. But we felt that in the Allegheny Highlands which is the most temperature sensitive area in West Virginia where we have a ski industry, where we have lots of endangered species, where we have a whole forestry industry based upon a certain historic climate. That is an area being studied but not enough people in West Virginia really know what science is telling us about the impacts of climate change on the Highlands."

Speakers include West Virginia native Lonnie Thompson, who with his wife Ellen, lead expeditions around the world studying the earth's ice.

"What we're interested in doing is putting out the scientific information. We have people who have been studying the Highlands for 40 years. Like Dr. Tom Pauley from Marshall University and new scientists like Zach Loughman from West Liberty or Nick Zegre from WVU or other scientists who are studying forestry like Dr. Than Hitt from the U.S. Geological Survey who are studying water. We have people studying endangered species in those areas and we're trying to bring them together in one place where members of the public who care about the Highlands. So they can learn about what's at risk and what's at stake. Once we understand what's at risk from climate change and what's at stake and I

don't think there's much division about that then we can start to decide what policies are we going to take. What do we need to do and can we do it, to mitigate and to adapt."

The West Virginia Allegheny Highlands Climate Change conference is set for June 7 at Blackwater Falls.

<http://www.wvalleghenyclimate.org/> (<http://www.wvalleghenyclimate.org/>)

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