

*point, found themselves in the passenger seat of my Jeep ...saying pretty much the same thing thing as we round that same curve on Powerhouse...*

---

In fact, every visitor, family member or friend who has dropped by for a weekend or just a day has at some point found themselves in the passenger seat of my Jeep with jaw dropped always saying pretty much the same thing as we rounded that same curve on Powerhouse, "My goodness! That's beautiful!"

This past week I'll wager that along the way — as he and his son and his staff crossed the water on a pontoon boat toward Linville access, Gov. Mike Easley probably said something along the same lines. How could he have not? He knew he was making a major difference in this part of the world on that day, and I'm sure it felt good to be on that boat headed to that place where in just a few minutes he would sign a long sought after document clearing the way for the 3,000 acre Lake James State Park expansion.

He would make history on Thursday. And he would do it in front of admiring constituents, loving environmentalists, excited politicians and vision-filled business people.

But my point is, this past week was about more than nature's beauty. It was about the beauty of working together as a community, grabbing hands and holding on until we found a solution that worked for all.

This week was about cooperation, planning, and vision — vision between many who may never realize it but will be responsible for millions of people far into our future enjoying the magnificence that is Lake James.

Thank you to all those who worked so hard to make the new Lake James State Park happen. Thank you to all those who joined together instead of fighting and thank you to those who pulled the strings necessary to make it all a reality.

Thanks to all of you. I can look forward to forever being able to ride around that beautiful jewel of water, gaze out at those magnificent mountains in the background and say to that one I love sitting next to me, "My goodness — that's so beautiful!"

**DAVE CRAWLEY** is publisher of The News Herald. Contact dave by e-mail at [dcrawley@morganton.com](mailto:dcrawley@morganton.com) or by calling (828) 437-2161, Ext. 13.