

## THE POWER OF OUR TELEVISION;

### WHY A WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL BECAME A FILMMAKER

*By: Elijah Newell*



For the 2024 Enlightened Living Day, the University of Charleston invited former Obama Administration official, Carrie Twigg, for a Q&A session at UC on "Celebrating Our Similarities and Differences." Twigg offered a unique perspective as someone who had worked as a Special Assistant to President Obama and a Director of Public Engagement for Vice President Biden. During an interview at UC, Twigg talked about her current job as co-founder of Culture House, a media production company for movies and television. To an outsider, it may seem like a random decision; Twigg had only ever held jobs related to politics her entire career. Why did she choose filmmaking whenever her job at the White House ended?

When asked about her career decision, Twigg said without any hesitation, "We elected a reality star president."

Twigg's reply clarified the focus of her work throughout her career. Twigg had a desire to be involved in the political system since she was young, and she was motivated to do this by realizing the government's power over people's lives.

"My mom is a social worker.... and that's what she was experiencing as a social worker who was deciding whether or not a parent gets to keep their kid, and she's like, 'We're sitting in a room, deciding how people get to live their lives, and that's a huge responsibility,'" Twigg said.



Twigg first found work in politics at the state level with the Ohio Democratic Party, and then she worked on Obama's first presidential campaign. That propelled her into a job at the White House after Obama won the 2008 election. She described the job for the White House as tough because of the distance it put between her and the people she helped govern.

Twigg said that despite the fact people join the White House because they desire to do public service, ironically, because the job is at the end of the decision-making process, they are far removed from the people they wanted to serve. Her desire to serve, influence, and change the public motivated Twigg to enter politics, but it was the 2016 election that made her decide the best way to achieve that goal was media.

"Whether you agree with him or not... without The Apprentice, the odds of Donald Trump being president are, I think, radically slim. And not being more in touch with the power of our televisions to determine our political outcomes, I think, has been a mistake, particularly on behalf of the Left," Twigg said.

Twigg talked about an example of when she realized television had power over the population back in the White House. One of the creators of the show, CSI, had visited the White House and, during his visit, revealed there had been something close to a 500 percent increase in the number of students taking forensic sciences after the show began to air. This discussion made Twigg realize the importance of TV in modern America.

I got clued into how powerful TV actually is. 2016 really, as someone who hadn't watched much television, made me realize, 'Oh, I thought the place you changed the world had marble floors and columns and was in Washington D.C.... the place you change the world is in people's living rooms on their television sets.'"

Twigg concluded the interview by talking about the kinds of projects she and her company, Culture House, are working on releasing over the next year. One project will be a three-part series on black Twitter, which will premiere at SXSW in Texas in the spring. Another project will be making an entertaining series on climate change-related behavior issues.

Her motivation in politics and media is founded on the same core idea.

"I'm someone who has always been fascinated by America, and who cares a lot about America... so I believe in really doing my best to improve what the gift of being a citizen of this country or improve this country in exchange for being a citizen of it." Twigg said. "That shapes everything I do now... I worked at the White House because I wanted to make the country better, and I make TV because I want to make the country better."

# The i3 Innovation Showcase:

## *Innovative Minds of 2024*

BY: HARRISON SKAGGS

The i3 Innovation Showcase is the largest collegiate innovation competition in West Virginia, in which students compete in an attempt to win prizes of up to \$1500 for first place.

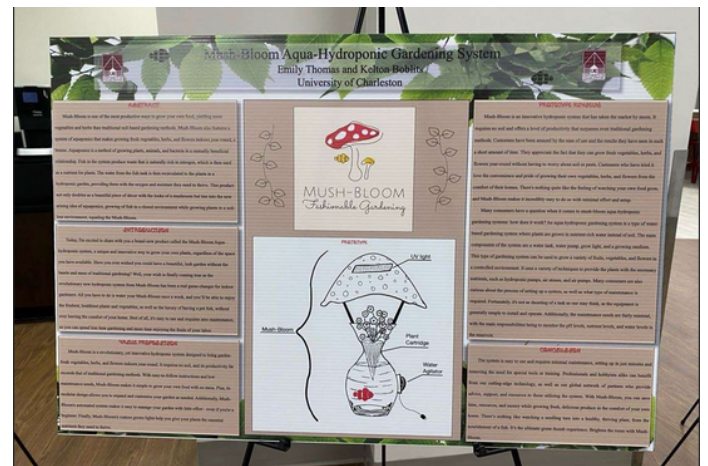
### i3: Ideas, Innovation, Invention

i3 (standing for Ideas, Innovation, and Invention) is dedicated to sharing innovative ideas, products, services, research, case studies, and works of art, according to the University of Charleston's official page on the competition. There are four different competitive categories: Innovative Product, Process, or Service Project; Innovative Work of Art, Design, Performance, or Creation; and Research and Case Study.

As for the top three entries from each separate category, each of them will receive a prize of \$350 for making it to the final round. The winner for each category receives \$1500. An additional \$300 prize awaits the finalist with the top overall score from the judges across all categories.

When asked his reasons for entering the competition, Boblits said, "i3 is an opportunity for me to make my ideas a reality. It gives me an opportunity to push myself to create something that people would enjoy," adding that it provides valuable business experience that will help him significantly in the field.

With the embers of i3 Innovation Showcase lighting up, some students have already expressed their interest in registering and participating this year. Kelton Boblits, who has participated in i3 in the past, has registered already. Boblits took part in i3 2023 with Emily Thomas in the Product or Service category, scoring 2nd place with their project, "Mushroom Aquahydroponic Garden."



Boblits will be entering two different categories this year: the Arts category, specializing in music, and the Research category, delving into concepts of Appalachian identity.

**"i3 is an opportunity for me to make my ideas a reality."**

Zachary Newsome who has not participated in i3 before, is excited about registering for the competition, saying it is an "opportunity to display my ideas and talents, an opportunity to win money, and a great addition to a resume."

Newsome plans to enter two categories: Products and Services, with a foldable solar panel for a windshield to collect solar energy; and in the Arts category, he plans to enter a poem about the topic of environmentalism.



The first round of judging will be conducted on March 8 by a panel of external judges. The top three contestants from each category will move on to the final round, in which the contestants will attend a live, in-person event on April 8.

With the emergence of innovative ideas and products in the i3 Showcase in 2024, there is bound to be an abundance of celebrated products, arts, research, and other developments.



## ***“A GRAND FINALE!”***

### ***WEST VIRGINIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS FINAL CONCERTS FOR 2023-2024***

*By: Elijah Newell*

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra is putting on performances at the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences in Charleston to conclude their 2023-2024 Season. The WWSO, founded in 1939, is composed of an assortment of string, wind, and percussion players that typically play classical and orchestral music. Every year, the WWSO performs with artists of different backgrounds and music styles, and this year is no exception. As of February 2024, the WWSO has six more concerts planned to finish its 2023-2024 music season.



The next WWSO show is “Louis Armstrong and Friends” and will be performed twice, once on March 23rd at 7:30 p.m. at the Clay Center and again on March 24th at 2:30 p.m. at Blennerhassett Middle School. Carmen Bradford and Bryon Stripling, two jazz artists, will be playing some of Louis Armstrong’s greatest hits, including “What a Wonderful World.”

“A Night at The Opera” is the next concert scheduled for this WWSO season. It will be held at the Clay Center on April 13th at 7:30 p.m. and will begin with Richard Strauss’s Rosenkavalier Suite. The concert will then climax with a performance of another Strauss piece, Vier Letzte Lieder TrV 296, by internationally recognized soprano, Carline Waugh. The concert will conclude with a selection of “Choruses from Famous Operas” featuring the WWSO Chorus.

The Season will end with two performances of a show entitled “A Grand Finale!” The concert will start with Matt Jackfert’s “Foggy Moon Over the Gorge,” performed by the WWSO and the West Virginia Youth Symphony. Then, the WWSO will perform Florence Price’s Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, featuring violinist Melissa White. The concert will then conclude with a performance Mussorgsky’ piano suite “Pictures at an Exhibition.” The concert will be held at the Clay Center on May 4th at 7:30 p.m. and at the Blennerhassett Middle School the following day at 2:30 p.m.

According to the WWSO website, the first concert after February for the WWSO is called “A New World of Music” and will be held at the Clay Center on March 9th at 7:30 p.m. It will feature several works, including Duke Ellington’s “Black, Brown, and Beige Suite,” and Saint-Saëns’ Piano Concerto No. 2 played by renowned pianist Sara Davis Buechner. The concert will conclude with a performance of Antonín Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9.

More information about the concerts and opportunities to purchase tickets can be found on the WWSO’s website [wvsymphony.org](http://wvsymphony.org). Tickets can also be purchased at the Clay Center in Charleston near the Appalachian Power Park. Anyone interested in music should consider attending a performance by West Virginia’s premier Symphony Orchestra.



# The Charleston



# DIRTY BIRDS

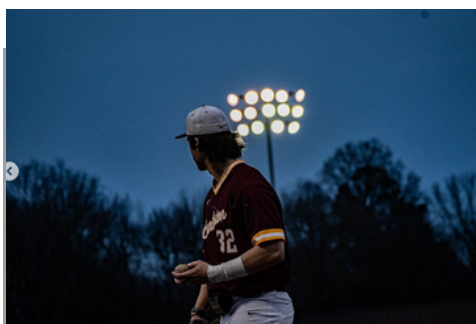
*By: Parker Young*

Right in the middle of Charleston, West Virginia, stands a ballpark that has become a cornerstone of Charleston culture. The Charleston Dirty Birds have gone by many names over its long history, including The Senators, Marlins, Indians, Charlies, Wheelers, Alley Cats, and West Virginia Power. Whatever the name, Charleston's hometown baseball team has always provided solid entertainment.



One of fans' favorite themed days is Furry Friend Friday. On that day, fans are allowed to bring their pets with them to the game. Water bowls are set up around the stadium for the pets to rehydrate, and if you need extra water for your dogs, the concession stands will give you some free of charge.

A game that is played almost every week is the parent/child spelling bee. The winner gets to pie the loser in the face. The host gives the parent a difficult word to spell, like "onomatopoeia," while the child gets a word like "dog" or "car." The child almost always wins and gets to pie their parent in the face, resulting in a laugh from the audience.



Several special events are sometimes held, such as the famous Savannah Bananas last season. The Savannah Bananas are a traveling baseball team that brings entertainment and comedy to the game of baseball. They have set dance routines they do during pitches and at-bats. Their umpire even gets into the fun and dances with them. This outrageous style of baseball has sent them to superstardom, and on April 21 and 22 of 2023, they brought their talents to Charleston to face off against our Dirty Birds and to introduce their style of baseball to the Charleston



Musical acts are also on the agenda. On July 9, 2021, the ballpark hosted Wiz Khalifa, while this past season, the Down 'N' Dirty Music festival was held.

With the 2024 season quickly approaching, fans can't wait for their team to come back to Charleston and face the new and upcoming talent that the division has to offer. The family friendly environment and fun interactive activities keep people coming back every season.



The Dirty Birds will be starting their third full season in the Spring of 2024. With their new mascot Dusty, introduced in the 2023 season, they plan to go into 2024 with new players, new on-field family games, new sponsors, and good food.

The ballpark never fails to come up with new ideas to spice up games, such as special themed days, on-field games, and giveaways to keep the fans engaged and entertained.



# FROM THE PINNACLE OF ATHLETE PERFORMANCE TO LIFE BEYOND A SPORT

By: Rachel Osborne

Graduation marks the end of your time in college. However, for many student-athletes, it also means that the transition to being a former athlete is nearing. What are you going to do without your sport? Behind those gamedays filled with cheering crowds, triumphant wins, painful losses, teammate camaraderie, 6:00 a.m. lifts, and training sessions comes the inevitable retirement. Whether athletes retire from sport by choice, through injury, age, or loss of interest, finding a new normal is difficult to navigate. With the right help and necessary steps, this dreaded transition can become a time of positive change.

Countless hours of training, dedication, and sacrificing personal time means that sport isn't just an activity; it's part of oneself. When there is no longer a usual practice schedule, some can be left wondering where their purpose lies. According to the University of Michigan, athletes can follow a 3-step method to find direction in life after sport.



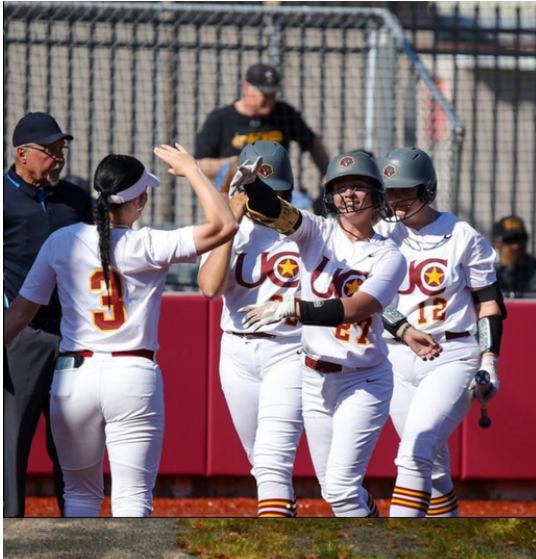
## Step 1 – Establish a Foundation

In the early stages of your journey, it's common to adapt your goals and values to fit in with the team and culture around you. However, as you gain more independence, it becomes vital to reevaluate these values and discern what truly resonates with you as an individual. Building a strong foundation is just as crucial as knowing your destination. Therefore, it's important to establish healthy habits and define your own preferences and values based on your personal aspirations. These healthy habits could be keeping up with physical activity or maintaining a balanced diet to remain a healthy individual. Establishing your foundation can be as simple as processing your new routine like having a full-time job or living on your own after living in college dorms with roommates for the last few years of your life. This process will be pivotal in shaping your identity and fostering personal growth.

## Step 2 – Explore with Curiosity

As an athlete, you've developed a unique skill set for analyzing, preparing, and perfecting strategies to overcome obstacles. With a wider range of challenges ahead, you have the autonomy to shape your own preparation and game plan. Every challenge you encounter offers an opportunity to gain insight into your strengths, preferences, and identity. You can begin to explore new things like that hobby you have always wanted to take further or travel to those places you never had time to visit. Embracing this notion of exploration will prove beneficial as you devise more sustainable long-term solutions for managing your time.





For many athletes, moving on from sport may feel as though you are going through an identity crisis. During this transition, athletes or former athletes are prone to physical and psychological health risks. If you find yourself in this situation, it is important that you seek help when you need it.

You can also find several helpful articles about sports retirement written by the University of Michigan here. <https://athletesconnected.umich.edu/articles/category/resources-for-help/life-after-sports-resources-for-help/>

Athletes for CARE is a nonprofit organization committed to helping athletes before, after, and during retirement. Their website can be found here. <https://athletesforcare.org/>

The University of Charleston also offers free counseling services for students. You can email them at [uc-counselor@ucwv.edu](mailto:uc-counselor@ucwv.edu).

### Step 3 - Reflect with Purpose

As the saying goes, "the tape doesn't lie." Athletes understand this well; it points out inconsistencies between actions and their depiction on film. After some initial confusion and consideration, you're faced with a choice: stick to the familiar or embrace change for better results. Taking time to reflect on experiences with an open mind offers a chance to adjust, reduce stress and maintain alignment. However, it's essential to stay grounded. Transitioning from athletic life can feel like navigating a maze with numerous options and no clear direction. While the newfound freedom may seem exciting, it also presents challenges after years of following a defined path. It is essential to use this freedom productively to avoid falling into a detrimental pattern such as lounging around too much. The right path for you could be anything that makes you happy. For former athletes, going to the gym, picking up other physical activities, or even running marathons is an effective substitute for their sport.





# Upcoming Spring Movies!

By: Parker Young



When it comes to movies, the first half of 2024 has a lot of heavily anticipated movies coming out. The genres vary from superhero to sci-fi to horror, which gives the viewers a wide variety of films to choose from.

The first movie I will be covering is the star-studded spy action comedy, *Argylle*. This movie is about a novelist (played by Bryce Dallas Howard) whose plot for her new espionage novels uncannily matches the actions of an underground crime syndicate. This draws their attention to her, and it's up to an undercover spy (played by Sam Rockwell) to save her. Directed by Matthew Vaughn and starring Henry Cavil, John Cena, Dua Lipa, Bryan Cranston, and Samuel L. Jackson, it was released on February 2, and it gets a 72% audience rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

The newest addition to the Sony Spider franchise, *Madame Web*, is a suspense thriller based on the origin story of Spider Man side character, Cassandra Webb, who goes by the alias Madame Webb. Cassandra Webb is played by Fifty Shades of Grey star, Dakota Johnson, and is set in its own standalone universe outside of the main Spider Man timeline. Also starring Sydney Sweeney, Celeste O'Connor, Tahar Rahim, Emma Roberts, and Adam Scott, it was released on February 14.

The highly regarded Blumhouse Studios is set to release a new horror flick, *Imaginary*. *Imaginary* is an original horror film directed by Jeff Wadlow that follows a woman (played by DeWanda Wise) who moves back into her childhood home with her family. While there, her stepdaughter (played by Pyper Braun) finds a stuffed bear in the basement. She became attached to the bear and the bear mystically compels her to partake in increasingly dangerous games, which causes trouble for her and her family. The film is set to be released on March 8.

At this point, the Kung Fu Panda franchise is no stranger to kids and families all over the world. With three films under their belt, the new Kung Fu Panda 4 is set to be the continuation of the highly regarded trilogy. Jack Black returns as the voice of the beloved chubby, but fierce, Dragon Warrior, Po. In this film, directed by Mike Mitchell, Po faces off against a chameleon foe while searching the land for a new Dragon Warrior to take his place. Starring legendary actors Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, and Angelina Jolie, it is also set to premiere on March 8.



The final movie I will be covering is the next film in the Ghostbusters universe: *Ghostbusters Frozen Empire*. Not much is known yet about the plot, but it will be a direct continuation of the events from the previous movie, *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*.

In that movie, the family of the fallen Ghostbuster, Egon Spangler, moves into his old house after his death. Throughout the movie, Egon's spirit contacts his granddaughter in hopes that she learns about what he was doing before his death, so that she can finish his work and save the world. With the help of the remaining original Ghostbusters and the ghost of Egon, they take out the paranormal threat and save the world.

Actors McKenna Grace and Finn Wolfhard are returning as the family of Egon Spangler, who was portrayed by the late Harold Ramis. They will be joined by Paul Rudd and Carrie Coon. With the return of the firehouse from the original films and possible returns from the surviving original Ghostbusters, it is sure to be something Ghostbusters fans don't want to miss. This film is set to be released on March 22.



# CHARLESTON RESTAURANT WEEK

By: Rachel Osborne

Charleston Restaurant Week is an annual 10-day event where local, participating restaurants offer a three-course meal at a discounted price. It is the perfect time to explore local cuisine, find out your new go-to spots, and treat yourself to some delicious dishes. While you may have missed this year's celebration, here are some restaurants featured that are worth visiting in your own time.



## Dem 2 Brothers and a Grill

Dem 2 Brothers and A Grill offers a range of barbeque-style dishes on Virginia Street in Charleston. Their menu includes the Pacho Nacho (fresh fried pork skins topped with pulled pork, caramelized onions, nacho cheese, barbecue sauce, and crispy banana peppers) and Sticky Short Rib with fried rice (Chinese 5 spiced braised short rib, served with house-made fried rice and purple cabbage). Dem 2 Brothers and A Grill not only serves delicious food but also has a heartwarming story behind their family restaurant that you can read about on their website.

IG: @dem2brothers

Website: dem2brosgrill.com



## Sam's Uptown Café

Sam's Uptown Café, on Capitol Street, puts a Charleston twist on some classic recipes. For appetizers, you can order chicken tenders, cheese sticks, or even Hotzarella sticks (the cheese stick's spicier twin). For entrees, you can choose between burgers, sandwiches, or salads. Burgers include the Samburger, the Southwest Burger while some sandwich options are the Italian Club, Haddock Hoagie, and Frisco Philly (their Philly cheesesteak but with chicken instead). Sam's Uptown Café offers a casual setting for a quick catch-up with friends or family while enjoying some local cuisine.

IG: @samsuptownwv

Website: samsuptown.com



## The Lookout Bar and Grill

Fancy a view with your meal? The Lookout Bar and Grill is situated above the city giving a refreshing view of Charleston. As you take in the scenery, you can enjoy appetizers such as a Caesar salad, loaded waffle fries, or delicious entrees like their pork chop dish (10oz French pork chop, grilled with bourbon butter, served over roasted red potatoes, candied brussels sprouts, and topped with brown sugar apple chutney). The Lookout Bar and Grill can be found in Eagleview but before trekking over there, make sure you have a healthy, working car to climb the steep hill. IG: @thelookoutbarandgrill FB: The Lookout Bar and Grill



Dem 2 Brothers and A Grill, Sam's Uptown Café, and the Lookout Bar and Grill are three out of sixteen restaurants highlighted in this year's Restaurant Week celebrations. Some other places worth visiting include Barkadas at the Fort, Soho's at Capitol Market, Ichiban, and D.T.Prime. You can find out more about Charleston Restaurant Week at [cwwrestaurantweek.com](http://cwwrestaurantweek.com).



# UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON: FORMALS AND DANCES

By: Harrison Skaggs

In the past two years, the University of Charleston has hosted school-funded formals and dances for students, with a variety of activities, music, and decorations.

The first dance was a Masquerade Ball in February of 2023. The Student Government Association and the Student Activities Board, prior to the event, had asked the student body for input for a university Formal. Opinions were thrown around about themes, and, eventually, the school landed on the concept of a masquerade ball with prebought masks for each of the attendees. With a fair number of students in attendance, driving music from the DJ, and tasty finger foods and desserts, the first dance was a success.

This past October, the school hosted a Halloween Costume dance with Halloween-themed soundtracks and modern pop. Costume Contest categories consisted of Scariest Costume, Best Couple's Costume, and Funniest Costume, among others. Chanel Nguyen won Best Costume and Sophia Kurten won Funniest Costume.

The school hosted another Formal in January 2024: Night Under the Stars. This formal did not have a specific theme or motif; instead, all that was required was traditional formal wear. A photo booth, which was introduced at the Halloween dance, gave students an opportunity to commemorate the event.

As successful as the dances have been, some students have suggestions for improvement. For example, some have said that the Ballroom in Geary Student Union would serve as a better location instead of the Rotunda. Others have suggested that the dances play a greater variety of songs--especially slow dance songs.

The success of these events has left UC students pondering what sort of Formal or dance might be planned next.

One UC student said, "After having been gone for so long, I'm personally glad they're coming."



# *A Corq-Driven Journey Through Campus Activities*

*By: Domenica Cruz*

The Corq App has emerged as the go-to navigator for campus life, whether you're a freshman looking for new activities or a senior looking to make the most of your remaining semesters.

The app offers the ability to have real-time updates about general events, RA gatherings, and sports events.

Emma, a sophomore actively involved in campus life, said, "I absolutely love the Corq App! It keeps me informed about everything happening on campus. It's like having a personal event planner tailored to my interests."

However, Alex, a junior, said, "While some events pique my interest, not all align with my taste. It would be great if the app could offer more tailored suggestions based on our preferences."

As we look at the March events lineup, three stand out:

## **Baseball vs. Lock Haven University:**

Kicking off on March 1st at the Welch Athletic Complex, UC Athletics hosts a baseball match against Lock Haven University. Students can help cheer the Golden Eagles to victory.



## **Dune 2 Movie Night:**

On March 19th, Park Place Cinema screens Dune 2. Students can get tickets from GSU 309, courtesy of the Student Activities Board.



## **Women's History Month Tea Party:**

On March 21st, Middle Hall and Residence Life will host a tea party in celebration of Women's History Month. This event is an opportunity for students to reflect on and honor the contributions of women throughout history.

The Corq App provides each student with a unique opportunity to explore their interests.





# Save Coonskin Park

*Residents Come Together to Preserve Coonskin Park  
and Attempt to Halt Plans for Airport Expansion*

By: Indiyah Spetnagel

Coonskin Park, a beloved recreational area in Charleston, has found itself at the center of controversy since plans to expand WV International Yeager Airport were proposed. The expansion will aim to boost tourism in Charleston, generate more job opportunities, and add improvements to the airport infrastructure.



"This plan would generate approximately 7,900 jobs including direct, indirect, and induced," said Yeager Airport authorities. "The improvements will lead to thousands of out of state visitors leading to additional hotel and restaurant jobs and a steady stream of park revenue."



Recognizing the impact the expansion will have on Coonskin Park, many have voiced their concerns regarding the loss of trails and open green space. Charleston residents have utilized various platforms, such as petitions and public meetings, to express their views and to advocate for the preservation of the park's integrity.

According to SaveCoonskinPark.com, Yeager International Airport has proposed a runway extension that would "destroy approximately 400 acres of Coonskin Park, including all the upper shelters and hiking trails and would forever bury Coonskin Branch under hundreds of feet of rubble."

The controversy over the expansion of the Yeager airport and its potential impact on Coonskin Park is a conflict between economic development and environmental preservation. Though there are many benefits to expanding the Yeager airport, such as more job opportunities and a longer, more stable runway to handle bigger planes, the compromise the expansion could have on Coonskin Park would be substantial.

For more information regarding the potential changes to Yeager Airport and Coonskin Park, go [here](#) and [here](#).

