

**America's Most Endangered Rivers™: 2010 Edition**  
**River Alert: The Gauley River Needs Your Help**

**Threat: Mountaintop removal coal mining**

The Gauley River is internationally famous for its whitewater, contributing approximately \$16 million in annual revenue to West Virginia from commercial rafting. The river also supports trout and bass, but is scarred by coal mining impacts and subjected to degradation from ongoing mining activity. The process of mountaintop removal mining flattens mountaintops, buries streams under debris, and pollutes water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and cooperating agencies must stop the permitting of mine activity that harms the clean water and natural areas that are essential to the health and heritage of Appalachian communities.

**Partners: Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition**

**To take action:**

1. Complete the form below with your information.
2. Personalize the subject and text of the message on the right with your own words, if you wish.
3. Click the Send Your Message button to send your letter to these decision makers:
  - Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator
  - Jo Ellen Darcy, Army Corps of Engineers Assistant Secretary

**Send This Message:**

**Subject: Protect the integrity of the Gauley River**

Dear [*Decision Maker*]:

Damage to the waterways of Appalachia from the practice of mountaintop removal mining is alarming. I am concerned that West Virginia's Gauley River will be irreparably harmed without swift action from regulators and administrators supporting the clear intent of the Clean Water Act and other related mining laws to protect the integrity of our nation's waters. For this reason, American Rivers has identified the Gauley River as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers™ of 2010.

Mountaintop removal mining allows coal companies to blast the tops off of mountains, extract thin seams of coal, and dump millions of tons of former mountains into streams and valleys. Recent scientific study has once again affirmed that mountaintop removal mining harms streams and drinking water supplies.

In April 2010, new guidance was released to protect the waters of Appalachia from surface mining activity and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stated for the first time that it was, "a high priority...to reduce the substantial environmental and human

health consequences of surface coal mining in Appalachia, and minimize further impairment of already compromised watersheds.” Now is the time to act on decisions pending at the federal level that represent the cumulative impacts of mountaintop removal mining on rivers across Appalachia, including enforcing EPA’s proposed guidance on conductivity, issuing additional guidance for selenium, and thoroughly reviewing the 79 pending permits by EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to prohibit destructive valley fills that submerge streams.

These decisions must not be undermined by further delay or compromise if the Gauley River is to support eastern hellbender and brook trout, internationally renowned whitewater within the Gauley River National Recreation Area, and thriving communities further downstream.

Sincerely,  
[name, city, state]