

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
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The Highlands Voice

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New Route Proposed for Pipeline

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline has filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission a modified route for its proposed natural gas pipeline that will run from north central West Virginia to Virginia and North Carolina. The new route would leave the originally-proposed ACP route just north of Kumbrabow State Park (at mile marker 47.5), head south through Pocahontas County, cross through the southwest corner of Highland County, enter Bath County at U.S. 220, continue southeast into Bath until turning north into the Deerfield Valley in Augusta County, rejoining the original ACP route at West Augusta (mile marker 115.2). The new route is 95.7 miles long and adds 30 miles to the overall length of the pipeline.

According to Dominion's announcement of the new route, this is supposed to address the criticisms of the United States Forest Service. As reported in the February, 2016, issue of *The Highlands Voice*, the Forest Service had denied permission for the original route based several problems. It had concluded

that the pipeline would do unacceptable harm to threatened or endangered species, particularly the Cheat Mountain Salamander, the Cow Knob Salamander, and the West Virginia Northern Flying



Squirrel. The Forest Service had also concluded that it would interfere with red spruce restoration areas.

The new route is supposed to fix these problems. The new route avoids the habitats of the Cheat Mountain Salamander,

the Cow Knob Salamander, and the West Virginia Northern Flying Squirrel. It also sites of spruce restoration areas. It is possible to overlay a map of the spruce restoration areas and the new route and see how the new route avoids those areas.

Although the new route avoids some particularly sensitive areas, there are still questions. One is very existence of the pipeline. There remains a serious question of whether or not it is wise to invest in major infrastructure such as a natural gas pipeline that supports what many see as a dying technology.

This is doubly true given that there are other proposals for other pipelines that would serve the same purpose as the Dominion Atlantic Coast Pipeline project. Even if we assume that we need a pipeline to move gas from West Virginia to North Carolina and Virginia, we don't need the four that have been proposed. A fair assessment of all the

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Ramblin' the Ridges

By Cynthia D. Ellis

Every Little Green Thing

Each day we make choices based on our notion of what helps conservation.

Here are some choices.

We recycle---lots, if we are lucky enough to live where many items may be put in the bins. That "lots" includes newspaper, cardboard, glass, plastics, and metal. We "pre-cycle"---that is, we look at each purchase and examine its use and its end. We choose glass when possible and look for the Sustainable Forests mark on paper and cardboard. We seek out items without wasteful packaging. We make food choices with some thought to transportation, additives, and non-harmful production. Ditto for health and beauty items, and for car maintenance. Or we might choose no car, but rather mass transport. [Except that here in West Virginia that's not yet often an option.]

We choose what we wear carefully, looking for content, origin, and durability. Old clothes go to Goodwill, Union Mission, or some other. For cleaning, we use rags, or sometimes unbleached or recycled content paper towels. We clean with baking soda and vinegar.

We compost.

So...we do some or all of this...and we feel pretty good about it. This is true even though we may be accused of "hubris" when we recount the things we try to do.

It may come as a shock then, to happen to read articles with titles such as

"Why Green 'Lifestyle Choices' Will Never Save Us" or "Forget Shorter Showers".

Closer examination finds that we are not being urged to give up our small choices. Rather, they are part of a bigger picture. And there is some evidence that change will have to be effected in a big way. One example is Winston Churchill. In 1911, as Lord of the Admiralty in Great Britain, he insisted on the use of oil as fuel for large boats, rather than coal. That led to huge changes, with enormous political and financial ramifications. So there can be much more to learn about small choices and big choices and how they might work together for a more sustainable world.

Perhaps pitching toilet paper tubes into the green bin won't lead to world-wide upheavals. But, since no one is saying that such actions make NO difference, we are not likely to stop. Our grandmas saved string and our mamas made sure every bit of meal-time left-overs got used up. Whatever our age, we see our present-day choices as positive. It only takes a small amount of imagination to see how green choices---in ways that are sometimes roundabout---can help save the mountains.

We make other choices too. We choose political office holders. In this state, legislative members meet in the first three months of the year to hammer out choices for laws. Afterward we evaluate the legislative session and think about choices for the next elections. As the 2016 West Virginia Legislature finishes up, some state voters are already sharing the slogan, "Remember in November." It is not an indication of satisfaction with the votes of many the senators and delegates. [See page five for a legislative update.] [See the website of the West Virginia Environmental Council for updates and a recap~ <http://wvecouncil.org/>] Citizens are unimpressed. This latest session's most positive outcome may be that it prompts so many of us adopt a new awareness of the persons and issues within our state's lawmaking body...and look for ways effect change. One example is the early sharing of information on new candidates--- women and

men with stances more in tune with a clean, green, conservation-protected, caring-for-its-communities Mountain State. [WVHC does make an effort to offer legislative action alerts through our Facebook and Twitter accounts and hopes to do more in 2017.]

One clean, "green" thing could be clear blue water. On March 22, many will note the annual observance of the United Nations-sponsored World Water Day. In West Virginia, sadly, we are no longer a place that can take clean water for granted. Some of us, in areas of extraction of coal and gas, have known water insecurity for a very long time. This year the UN urges us to look broadly at water with themes such as "Water is Work," "Water is Art," "Water is Change." Our own 49 year-old organization continues to work in areas such as protection of headwaters and mine drainage remediation; working toward the clear and the clean, through a variety of actions, some of them seeming [deceptively] among only the "little" things one can do.



Lord of the Admiralty
Winston Churchill



New Route Proposed for Pipeline (Continued from p. 1)

possibilities might lead to the conclusion that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is the least harmful but there is no point in proceeding with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline until that assessment has been performed.

The second set of questions come from concerns that the new proposed route just moves the problems. The pipeline would still result in forest fragmentation. It would still have to be constructed across steep mountains and complex karst valleys. Moreover, Dominion is now proposing to build the pipeline along a path that was initially rejected for being too challenging and hazardous.

Even Dominion acknowledges that the new route will present construction challenges. Its filing notes that

. . . the route crosses 39.8 miles of soils with near surface hard bedrock, 22.1 miles of soils with near surface soft bedrock, 74.5 miles of soils that are highly erodible by water, and 76.4 miles of soils with revegetation concerns. The soils data reflect the terrain conditions along much of the route, which is mountainous. Approximately 24.3 miles of the route crosses slopes greater than 30 percent

and approximately 8.6 miles of the route crosses side slopes greater than 30 percent. A total of approximately 55.5 miles of the route crosses areas characterized by the USGS as having high incidence for landslides.”

Dominion expects to complete field surveys and further studies on the new route in the spring of 2016 and file additional information on the new route with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by July 1.

More Maps of the Pipeline

The Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition has published an online interactive map depicting environmental risks and sensitivities associated with the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The purpose of the ACP-EMS is to organize and provide access to environmental information related to ACP permitting and oversight.

The geographic focus of the ACP-EMS includes approximately 200 miles of the western mountainous and upland section of the proposed pipeline.

Current information layers include:

- Alternate pipeline corridors
- Construction access roads
- Public conservation lands
- Corridor slope steepness
- Corridor erosion potential
- Trout streams
- Surficial karst distribution
- Virginia map-documented sinkholes
- Potential horizontal drilling locations and staging areas
- Cow Knob salamander impact corridor
- Red spruce ecosystem restoration areas
- more to come . . .*

The ACP-EMS is a work in progress undertaken by the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition and partner organizations. They invite suggestions and collaboration. To see and use it, go to pipelineupdate.org and follow the links, both to the maps and to the users guide.

A Chance to Learn More

Dominion Transmission Inc. has scheduled three open houses for affected and interested property owners affected by and others interested in the new proposed route for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. The open houses will be:

- Tuesday, March 9, 5-7:30 pm, Churchville Elementary School, Churchill, VA
- Wednesday, March 9, 5-7:30 pm, Bath County High School, Warm Springs, VA
- Thursday, March 10, 5-7:30 pm, Snowshoe Mountain Resort, Mt. Lodge Ballroom

Supreme Court Stays Clean Power Plan

By John McFerrin

The Supreme Court of the United States has issued a stay of President Obama's Clean Power Plan. The Court also took the unusual step of staying the Plan until after all Court review. The usual path would be to stay activity (such as implementing the Clean Power Plan) only while we waited for the Court of Appeals to decide. Instead, the Supreme Court stayed the Plan both until the Court of Appeals decided and the Supreme Court decided any appeal. Now the Clean Power Plan cannot go into effect until after it has been reviewed in both the Court of Appeals (where it is now) and the United States Supreme Court.

The Clean Power Plan is designed to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. Under the Plan, each state is required to develop a plan on how it intends to achieve the emission reductions. Under West Virginia law, the Governor, with the help of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, will develop this "State Implementation Plan" and it will be reviewed by the West Virginia Legislature before it is submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and Attorneys General from 23 other states filed an action in the United States Court of Appeals which seeks to delay and ultimately invalidate the Clean Power Plan adopted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Several groups from West Virginia, including the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, have intervened in the case in support of the Clean Power Plan. Coal groups, large companies, industry groups, utilities, etc. have intervened in opposition to the Plan. At least seventeen states and six cities have intervened in support of the Plan. Just the list of the lawyers involved goes on, more or less, forever.

What happens next

Right now the lawyers are preparing written arguments to submit. The Court of Appeals has scheduled arguments for June 2, 2016, and (if the lawyers are still talking at the end of the day) June 3. The Court of Appeals will make a decision in late 2016 or possibly 2017. It is possible that when the decision comes everybody will shake hands, say they are glad they got that issue resolved, and go home satisfied. That is

only slightly more likely than pigs flying. The more likely next step will be that all or some of the parties will appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

Then what

One of the tests that the Supreme Court would apply in deciding whether to grant a stay or not is whether or not those asking for the stay will likely win in the end. Since five justices voted for the stay, many infer that five justices think the Clean Power Plan is flawed and that it is only matter of time before the Supreme Court throws it out. That is certainly the position of West Virginia's public officials as they do their happy dance and whistle "Happy Days Are Here Again."

The truth of the matter is not so simple. From an analysis of the past votes of the members of the Court on cases having to do with regulation of climate change, it is easy to conclude that the Court would uphold the Clean Power Plan. For a full discussion of these past votes and what we can conclude, go to http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/ddoniger/whats_next_for_the_clean_power.html

Justice Antonin Scalia was one of the five who voted for the stay. Both this analysis at NRDC and those of the happy dancers assume that Justice Antonin Scalia would be part of the Court when it finally decided the case. Now that he has passed, we move to

What if? X 5

Since the death of Justice Scalia, most prominent Republicans have suggested that Mr. Obama should not even nominate a replacement for Mr. Scalia. They have suggested that even if Mr. Obama nominates a replacement the Senate will not confirm the appointment. What if Mr. Obama takes the advice and doesn't nominate or nominates someone who is not confirmed? If Mr. Scalia's seat is still vacant and the Supreme Court splits 4-4, then the decision of the lower court would stand. Nobody knows how it would rule but, because of the composition of that Court, the smart money is on the Clean Power Plan being upheld in the Court of Appeals. If the Supreme Court is evenly divided, that ruling would stand.

But what if Mr. Obama appoints someone who is confirmed? The conventional wisdom is that he would

appoint someone who would uphold the Clean Power Plan.

But what if the appointee didn't turn out as everybody assumed? When President Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren as Chief Justice everybody assumed that a good status quo Republican would give us a good status quo Chief Justice who would keep the Court chugging ahead, not changing things too much. What we got was a Court that rattled a lot of cages (desegregating the schools, recognizing the rights of the accused, changing voting rights) and led to people marching with Impeach Earl Warren signs.

But what if Mr. Trump, Rubio, Cruz, or Kasich is elected? Or there is a Democratically controlled Senate? There are too many unanswered questions to predict what will happen to the Clean Power Plan in the United States Supreme Court.

What are the states doing?

When the stay was announced, the West Virginia Attorney General (the happiest of the happy dancers) suggested that West Virginia and other states stop working on their state implementation plans. Many have no doubt done this although at least fifteen states have announced intentions to continue planning.

In West Virginia, the situation is a bit different from other states. When the Clean Power Plan was issued, West Virginia did not immediately set to writing its implementation plan. Instead, the West Virginia Legislature had passed a statute requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to study the feasibility of complying with the Clean Power Plan. It was then to report to the Legislature before submitting any Plan to the United States Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

Even if the Clean Power Plan itself is on hold, the statute is still in effect. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection still has a duty to do the feasibility study, something that would involve at least preliminary work on an implementation plan. The Department has made no public statement saying it has stopped working so it is presumably moving ahead as it was.

Legislative News (such as it is)

The West Virginia Legislature is still in session and will be until March 12, 2016. There are several bills that the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and its members are interested in. Here are some of them:

LEEP (local energy efficiency partnerships) (**S.B. 370**). This bill would provide a financing mechanism for businesses who want to fund energy efficiency improvements. At press time the bill was making some progress although things change day by day.

S.B. 625 provides that, when public water utilities involve the public in developing their source water protection plans, they are allowed to share information that is already in the public domain.

S.B. 691 makes a couple of important changes that are essential to the DEP's ability to develop a state implementation plan under the EPA's clean power plan.

S.B. 619 Regulatory Reform Act. It requires that when agencies write legislative rules they consider the impact of the rule on human health. It does this by requiring the Bureau of Public Health to evaluate the proposals.

S.B. 565 would allow drillers to build roads and well pads with only a storm water permit. Under present law, they would have to have a get both a storm water permit and a well work permit. The well work permit would require more extensive review. Although the oil and gas industry favors this bill, Randy Huffman, head of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has spoken out against it.

S.B. 508 takes away the right to file nuisance lawsuits against those who might make their lives miserable via noise, dust, etc., as long as the perpetrator has not broken a law, violated a permit, etc. "Nuisance" law allows landowners to sue someone who is interfering with the use of their property. This bill would take that away.

All of these bills are pending in some committee, being considered by the Senate, being considered by the House, etc. A monthly publication such as *The Highlands Voice* is a terrible source for accurate, current information. Better sources are the websites of the West Virginia Environmental Council (www.wvecouncil.org) or, for matters having to do with oil and gas the, West Virginia Surface Owners Rights Organization (www.wvsoro.org). They are updated and will have more nearly current information.

There is also information on the West Virginia Legislature's website (www.legis.state.wv.us). There you can find the status of bills, schedules of committee hearings, and lots of other information. You can also find the name and contact information for your Senator or Delegate, should you wish to offer them guidance (goodness knows they need it) on how to vote on any particular bill. If, as is always possible, they ignore your advice you have an alternative (see next column)

Prognostication faux pas

The February, 2016, issue of *The Highlands Voice* reported that the Attorneys General had asked for a stay of the regulations before the United States Supreme Court. It also predicted that the application for a stay had almost no chance for success and would be promptly rejected. Then this happened (Story on facing page), In spite of this setback, *The Highlands Voice* will pit its prognostication prowess against that of any groundhog, mano a rodent, any time, any place. He hasn't exactly been setting the woods on fire in the prognostication department lately either.



Are you getting more outraged by the day!? Then join us on the LAST DAY of the legislative session to have the last word -- we're storming the capitol to say loudly and clearly: WE WILL #REMEMBER IN NOVEMBER!

We are West Virginians who value hospitality, fairness, and the right of all of us to access dignified work, health care, education and safe drinking water. We seek an economically just and democratic West Virginia.

West Virginians have a proud history of standing up for our rights against an elite few and standing with each other across our differences. We are the home of Sid Hatfield and Mother Jones and some of the fiercest battles for workers' rights. Right now our values are under attack. The legislature is undermining the rights of workers to fight for better working conditions, of students to access affordable higher education, of women's access to healthcare, of communities to access safe drinking water, of low income families to get the support they need, and so much more. Their strategy is to pit us against each other, using the old tools of racism, sexism and fear to divide us. We are stronger when we rise together.

If you're outraged, if you're scared, if you're looking for some hope -- join us. March 12th will be just the beginning.

If you believe in the sleeping giant that is West Virginia's bold united progressive movement - then let's wake her up. On March 12th!

Note: This is not a West Virginia Highlands Conservancy sponsored event. One of our members called it to the Voice's attention. It may be of interest to our members.



The Highlands Voice is published monthly by the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, P. O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Articles, letters to the editor, graphics, photos, poetry, or other information for publication should be sent to the editor via the internet or by the U.S. Mail by the last Friday of each month. You may submit material for publication either to the address listed above or to the address listed for Highlands Voice Editor elsewhere in this issue. Electronic submissions are preferred.

The Highlands Voice is always printed on recycled paper. Our printer uses 100% post consumer recycled paper when available.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy web page is www.wvhighlands.org.

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit corporation which has been recognized as a tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Its bylaws describe its purpose:

The purposes of the Conservancy shall be to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation—including both preservation and wise use—and appreciation of the natural resources of West Virginia and the Nation, and especially of the Highlands Region of West Virginia, for the cultural, social, educational, physical, health, spiritual, and economic benefit of present and future generations of West Virginians and Americans.

Support the Highlands Conservancy

Amazon (the shopping company, not the river) has a program to support organizations such as ours. To participate, all you have to do is order through Amazon Smile instead of through the regular Amazon website. Just start your shopping by going here: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/55-0523780> and then shop as usual. Amazon will donate a small percentage of your purchases to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

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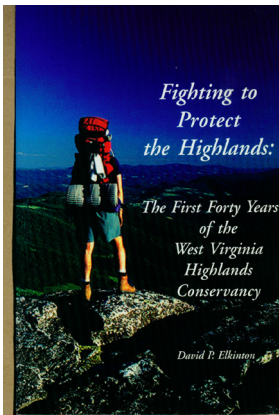
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West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
Working to Keep West Virginia Wild and Wonderful

You may also join on-line at www.wvhighlands.org

GET A GREAT HISTORY BOOK

For the first time, a comprehensive history of West Virginia's most influential activist environmental organization. Author Dave Elkinton, the Conservancy's third president, and a twenty-year board member, not only traces the major issues that have occupied the Conservancy's energy, but profiles more than twenty of its volunteer leaders.



From the cover by photographer Jonathan Jessup to the 48-page index, this book will appeal both to Conservancy members and friends and to anyone interested in the story of how West Virginia's mountains have been protected against the forces of over-development, mismanagement by government, and even greed.

518 pages, 6x9, color cover, published by Pocahontas Press

To order your copy for \$15.95, plus \$3.00 shipping, visit the Conservancy's website, wvhighlands.org, where payment is accepted by credit card and PayPal. Or write: WVHC, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321. Proceeds support the Conservancy's ongoing environmental projects.

Tell a Friend!

If you have a friend you would like to invite to join the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy just fill out this form and send it to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Person you wish to refer: _____

Address: _____

Email _____

Your name: _____

Filling out the form, etc. is, of course, the old school way of doing things. If you prefer, just email the information to Beth Little at blittle@citnet.net.

The way it works: Anyone you refer gets *The Highlands Voice* for six months. At the end of the six months, they get a letter asking if they want to join. If they join, we're happy. If not, then maybe next time.

SUCH A DEAL!

Book Premium With Membership

Although *Fighting to Protect the Highlands, the First 40 Years of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy* normally sells for \$15.95 plus \$3.00 postage. We are offering it as a premium to new members. New members receive it free with membership.

Existing members may have one for \$10.00. Anyone who adds \$10 to the membership dues listed on the How to Join membership or on the renewal form will receive the history book. Just note on the membership form that you wish to take advantage of this offer.

Gas leak in California: could it happen here?**Underground Gas Leak Makes Mess in California**

By Beth Little

The Porter Ranch, CA Gas Leak at the Southern California Gas' Aliso Canyon underground storage facility went on for almost four months, driving thousands from their homes and more away over the holidays. It began on October 23, 2015, and was finally capped on February 18, 2016. It has been compared to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico for its massive impacts – on air instead of water.

Local public health and community impacts were significant. Children became ill, public schools had to be relocated, city officials filed nuisance actions due to the odor in the area and sought injunctions to force the gas company to act more quickly to eliminate the leak and help residents. The leak displaced nearly 2,290 households, requiring families to move into temporary housing and hotels provided by Southern California Gas. Some children experienced nosebleeds; other residents complained of nausea, headaches, and eye and throat irritation.

The company attempted to plug the well several times, but the pressure of the leak overwhelmed the would-be blockages. The failed efforts appear to have weakened the well and increased the risk of a blowout. SoCalGas drilled a relief well to reduce the pressure before plugging the leak.

An examination of state oil and gas records shows, and a state official confirms, that the gas well that failed was being injected in a way that, while legal, can be risky. It's like this: Many wells have both a seven-inch casing and a narrow inner metal tubing. Think of it as a metal straw within another metal straw. Natural gas was being forced down this well through both straws. Injecting and withdrawing only through the inner tubing is safer, and protects the well.

The well, which was drilled in 1953, was used heavily — with injections almost daily. Like many wells its age, it also didn't have a full cement job. Cementing protects underground aquifers and it protects the well, too.

The well also lacked a working safety valve, sparking new questions about how the facility was maintained. Attorneys for residents suing Southern California Gas Co. said the company failed to replace the safety valve when it was removed in 1979.

The safety valve may not have prevented the leak, but it would have stopped the continued release of fumes pouring into the community, attorney Brian Panish said in an interview Sunday. SoCal Gas spokeswoman Melissa Bailey confirmed in an email to The Times that the well did not have "a deep subsurface valve." She said such a valve was not required by law.

The contribution to climate change may be the worst effect of the leak. At its highest level, methane from the site was double the methane emissions from the entire Los Angeles basin. In total, the amount released equaled one quarter of all methane pollution from every other source in the LA basin for the entire year.

Why do we care?

On a human level, we care for the people who suffered through the gas leak. Their lives were made miserable through no fault of their own, just because they had the bad luck to live near an underground gas storage facility. We also care because of the contribution of the methane released to global warming.

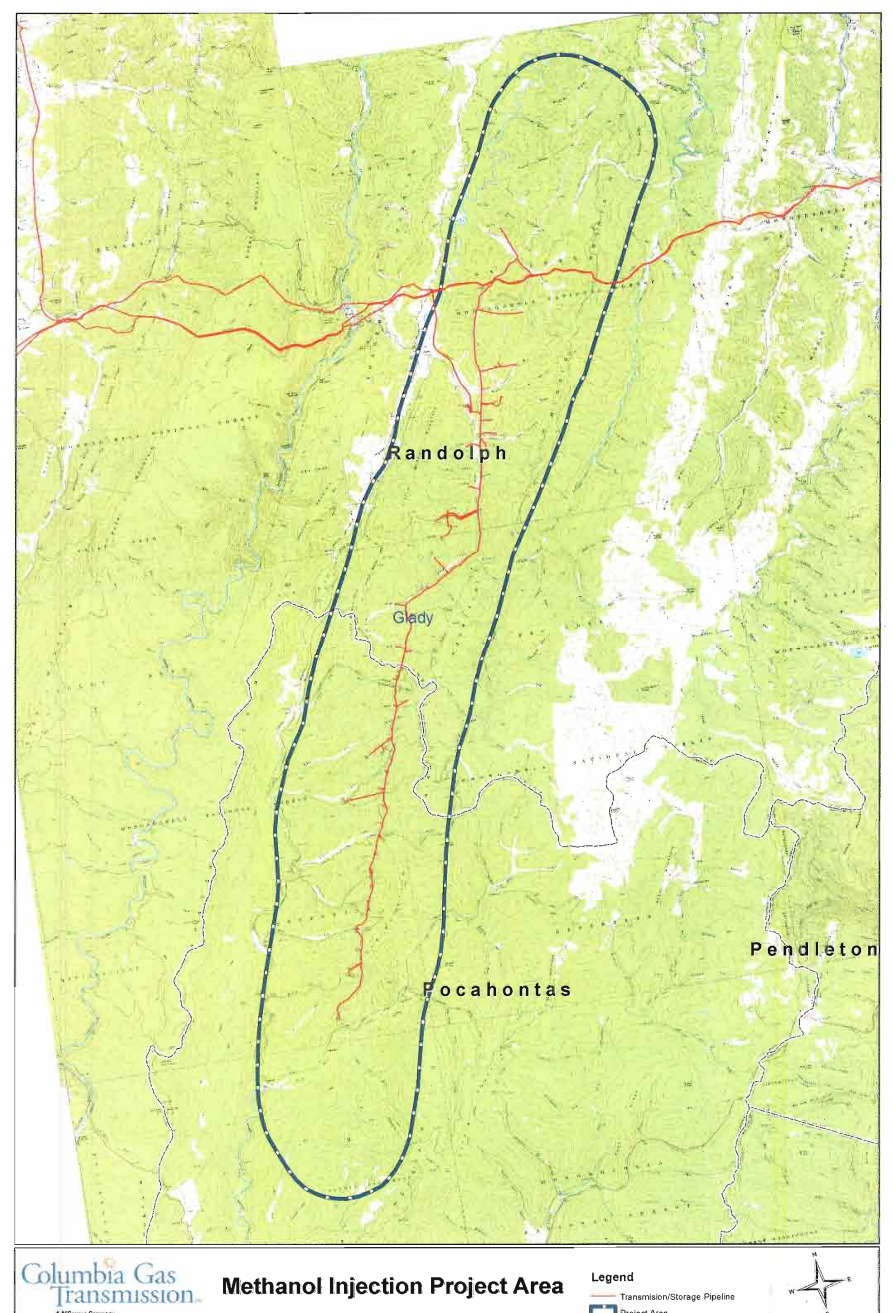
On a more local level, we care because underground gas storage facilities are not just in California. There are underground storage facilities all over the United States, including several here in West Virginia. Of greatest concern to the Highlands Conservancy is the facility under the Monongahela National Forest, which has wells as old as the one in Porter Ranch, although oversight of the facility is more extensive.

Glady Gas Storage Field

The Glady Storage Field consists of a 50,000-acre natural gas storage field

(see map) containing 50 – 60 wells and associated gathering lines that are used for injection, withdrawal and observation. Six of the Pocahontas county wells are late 1950s (1957-1959), ten are from the mid-1960s. Fourteen of the Randolph county wells are late 1950s vintage, seven wells are from the mid-1960s. Natural gas is stored in the Oriskany/Huntersville formations which occur at depths between 4500-5500 feet below the land surface.

NiSource is the parent Company of Columbia Gas Transmission (CGT) which operates the storage field and various natural gas pipelines on the Monongahela National Forest (forest). The Glady Gas

**(More on the next page)**

Gas Leak in California

(Continued from previous page)

Storage Field was initially developed by Atlantic Seaboard Company (which is now called Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC)) in the 1950s/1960s and is administered thru an agreement with the Forest Service.

Columbia Gas employees maintain and operate the Gladly Storage Field every day, 365 days a year. Multiple groups and agencies inspect and check the storage field and lines to ensure compliance and safety. The United States Forest Service is the surface managing agency and conducts annual inspections, meetings and interacts with personnel of CGT/ NiSource often on a weekly and daily basis to ensure safety and compliance. The State of West Virginia agencies also conduct inspections for adherence to safety and compliance.

Other federal agencies such as DOT, BLM, FERC and OSHA also conduct inspections for safety and compliance. Columbia Gas Transmission also conducts structural inspections (pigging) on various segments of the lines at various times of the year to ensure the structural integrity of the lines.

The last incident on the Monongahela Forest occurred over 15 years ago when a segment of line ruptured in the storage field creating an explosion and damaging several acres of trees. No individuals or structures were harmed given the remoteness of the area. That portion was then taken off line.

Questions

Could what happened in California happen here?

Is there a maximum age of viability; i.e. when does a well become too old to be operated safely?

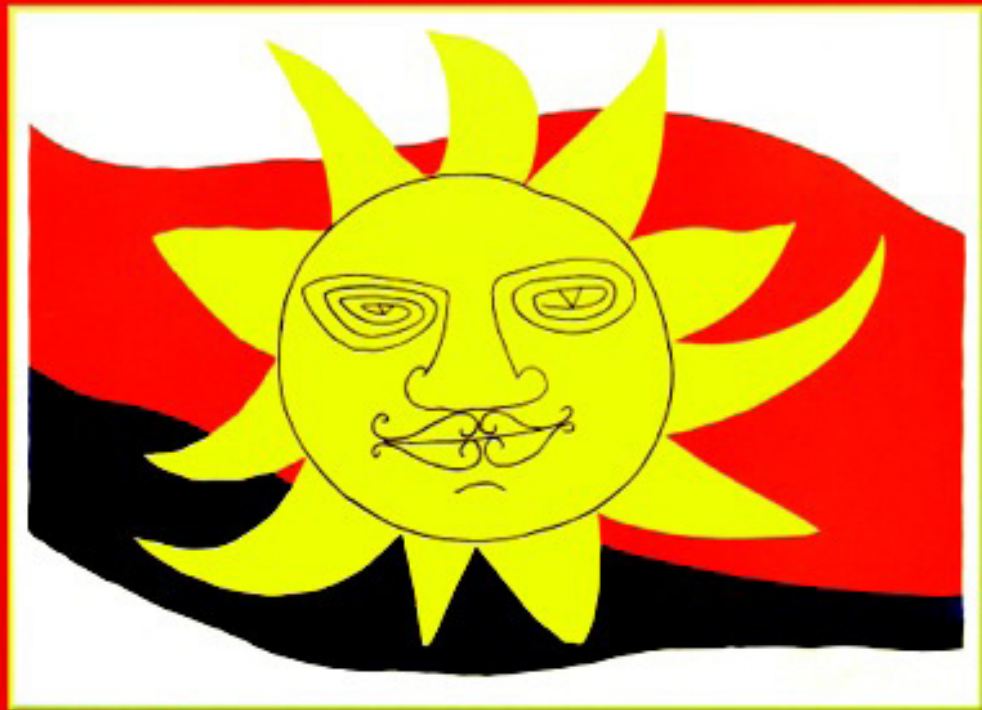
What caused the explosion 15 years ago?

Besides the pigging on the lines, is there structural testing on the wells? If so, how often?

Broader question

Why are we investing billions of dollars in new infrastructure and overseas military adventures when upgrading and replacing our aging infrastructure of roads, bridges, schools, pipelines, etc. would create more jobs and benefit the economy, health and safety of our local communities.

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Spoiler: Our very own Cindy Ellis will be honored with the Mother Jones Award!!!!



Corridor H: What Good Is Delay?

By Hugh Rogers

For fourteen years, the Elkins bypass has stopped at a blocked-off bridge here in Kerens. Now the bulldozers are coming back. Corridor H plaintiffs have been notified that a reevaluation of old environmental impact studies has been approved, a contract has been awarded, and construction will begin on seven and a half miles between Kerens and US 219 west of Parsons.

Since we signed the Settlement Agreement in federal court in 2000, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) has been building westward from Wardensville, near the Virginia line, toward Canaan Valley. Those fifty-some miles were not in dispute. Building there was supposed to shorten the distance for skiers and second-home owners from eastern metropolitan areas, and thus encourage the tourism industry. Now, with the last six miles to Davis expected to open this coming summer, WVDOT's focus has shifted.

The sections from Kerens to Parsons and Parsons to Davis are in their second reevaluation. The Settlement Agreement required a Battlefield Avoidance study to find an alignment that wouldn't affect the Corricks Ford Civil War battlefield. The Federal Highway Administration signed off on the new route in 2003. Twelve years passed. The environmental impact studies grew stale. Last year, new surveys discovered an endangered plant species, the small whorled pogonia. Meanwhile, WVDOT negotiated with the Monongahela National Forest on alignment shifts to reduce impacts to streams.

The remainder of the Kerens to Parsons section, which will cross the Cheat north of Parsons and begin the climb up Backbone Mountain, may be approved for right-of-way acquisition some time this summer.

The same review process is ongoing between Parsons and Davis. There, a Blackwater Avoidance study generated alternatives that would go north around



Small Whorled Pogonia

Thomas rather than crossing Blackwater Canyon. Although WVDOT has so far refused to give up its original preferred alignment, new surveys have found nesting colonies of endangered species of bats that may not be disturbed. WVDOT will have to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement. This section will remain unsettled for years to come.

As construction is set to resume where we stopped it fourteen years ago, one might ask, "What's the use of delay?"

Most directly, the discovery and protection of the bats may help the species survive the scourge of White Nose

Syndrome; the whorled pogonia may avoid extinction; and Laurel Run may last a while longer as one of the increasingly rare refuges for brook trout. Every reevaluation increases the chance that we'll find something we missed. As Dr. Charcot, the founder of neurology, used to tell his students, "You must look at the thing and look at the thing until it speaks!"

Delay enables a more realistic assessment of costs. Higher resolution mapping, closer analysis, and a better understanding of the importance of ephemeral streams have resulted in a huge increase in every measure of the highway's impact on waterways. The cost in dollars jumped to \$30 million per mile. That can't be explained away by inflation, which has been low by historic standards; it's more a concession that earlier figures were lowballed.

Delay can even reduce the expectation of benefits. The reevaluation document's treatment of noise impacts refers to "low projected traffic volumes." Less traffic will "minimize the highway's footprint on the acoustic environment." Does that mean it's OK to build it because they *won't* come?

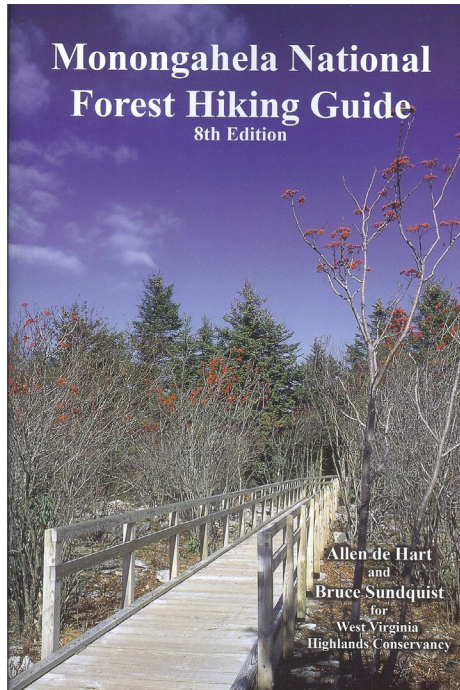
According to WVDOT's current schedule, construction won't begin on the still-disputed Parsons to Davis section, crossing Blackwater Canyon, for another fourteen years. It's time for a comprehensive reevaluation. As more impacts are acknowledged, costs increase, and hyped benefits fade, our state and local officials may agree on a more reasonable approach.

Send Us a Post Card, Drop Us a Line, Stating Point Of View

Please email any poems, letters, commentaries, etc. to the VOICE editor at johnmcferrin@aol.com or by real, honest to goodness, mentioned in the United States Constitution mail to WV Highlands Conservancy, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321.

Leave a Legacy of Hope for the Future

Remember the Highlands Conservancy in your will. Plan now to provide a wild and wonderful future for your children and future generations. Bequests keep our organization strong and will allow your voice to continue to be heard. Your thoughtful planning now will allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness, wildlife, clean air and water and our way of life.



The Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide

By Allen de Hart and Bruce Sundquist

Describes 180 U.S. Forest Service trails (847 miles total) in one of the best (and most popular) areas for hiking, back-packing and ski-touring in this part of the country (1436 sq. miles of national forest in West Virginia=s highlands). 6x9" soft cover, 368 pages, 86 pages of maps, 57 photos, full-color cover, Ed.8 (2006)

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The Highlands Voice is now available for electronic delivery. You may, of course, continue to receive the paper copy. Unless you request otherwise, you will continue to receive it in paper form. If, however, you would prefer to receive it electronically instead of the paper copy please contact Beth Little at blittle@citynet.net. With electronic delivery, you will receive a link to a pdf of the Voice several days before the paper copy would have arrived. The electronic Voice is in color rather than in black and white as the paper version is.

BUMPER STICKERS

To get free *I ♥ Mountains* bumper sticker(s), send a SASE to Julian Martin, 1525 Hampton Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Slip a dollar donation (or more) in with the SASE and get 2 bumper stickers. Businesses or organizations wishing to provide bumper stickers to their customers/members may have them free. (Of course if they can afford a donation that will be gratefully accepted.)

Also available are the new green-on-white oval *Friends of the Mountains* stickers. Let Julian know which (or both) you want.



Groups to Office of Surface Mining: Fix Broken Bonding System

By John McFerrin

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition have given the federal Office of Surface Mining notice that West Virginia is not complying with the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. When, as the groups believe is true in this case, a state is not fulfilling its duties under the Act the Office of Surface Mining has a duty to require that the state come into compliance. According to the Notice, if the Office of Surface Mining does not do so, then the groups will file suit to compel it to do so.

The issue this time is performance bonding. Companies in West Virginia are not providing adequate security to guarantee that mines will be reclaimed. According to the groups who have sent the Notice, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is not doing enough to require that they provide this security.

Background

The 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) included provisions that required companies to post a bond sufficient to complete reclamation if the company couldn't or wouldn't meet reclamation obligations.

West Virginia met this requirement through an 'alternative bonding system.' Under this system, companies would post a flat per acre fee which was designed to be relatively low. The bonds were designed to be inadequate to do the reclamation. At least in theory, these inadequate bonds would be sufficient because West Virginia had its Special Reclamation Fund. All coal companies would pay into this fund based upon the tons of coal they produced. If a company went under or disappeared, the Department of Environmental Protection could forfeit the inadequate bond and then take whatever it needed from the Special Reclamation Fund to pay the rest of the cost of reclamation.

This system only worked in theory. In actual practice, the rate at which companies pay into the Special Reclamation Fund has always been too low to fund all the reclamation at bond forfeiture sites.

For decades, the state of the Special Reclamation Fund has been the *Groundhog Day* of West Virginia environmental issues. Every year or two representatives of the

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy (and occasionally others) would meet with the Office of Surface Mining and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection to talk about the Special Reclamation Fund. All would more or less agree that the Fund was inadequate and that we needed to fix it. Then another year or two would go by, the Fund wouldn't be adequately fixed, and we would have the same meeting again. A year or two later we would have the same meeting again.

Cindy Rank, Mining Committee Chair of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, played the role that Bill Murray played in the movie. She described it this way, "This has gone on too long. We have begged, pleaded and litigated since at least 1990 to make the state comply with the law. The state's response has been to dance around the issue and make only incremental and inadequate improvements. OSM has known about the ever expanding liabilities and issued warning letters, but has not followed through with the necessary enforcement measures to make the state fulfill its legal responsibility under the law. There is little consolation in knowing the predictions and warnings of the past years are coming to fruition in such devastating fashion and there is no excuse for allowing this to continue."

Why now?

This is coming to a head now because of the bankruptcies Patriot Coal and Alpha Natural Resources. So long as they were operating, we could pretend that their reclamation bonds were adequate and that, even if they weren't, the Special Reclamation Fund would always be there to fund whatever reclamation was needed. Now that they may well collapse, it becomes clear that there is not enough money in the Special Reclamation Fund to pay for reclamation and that the bonds posted by these companies are inadequate.

The particular circumstances of each company are different. Alpha Natural Resources had been allowed to "self bond."

Historically, bonds were posted by insurance companies or some other financial institution. Companies would pay the premiums; if the bond had to be forfeited, the financial institution would pay.

There is an alternative called "self bonding." Under that alternative, the mining company in effect becomes the financial institution. It tells the Department of Environmental Protection that it has plenty of money so that if reclamation is ever needed it can pay. If it meets financial standards set forth in the regulations, it is approved for "self bonding" and doesn't have to post a bond backed by an insurance company, etc.

This is what Alpha did. At the time it did it, it was profitable and did have enough money to satisfy the regulations. Now that it is in bankruptcy, it no longer satisfies the regulations and must do something else. As part of the bankruptcy, it agreed to post an actual bond of \$15 million. Its actual reclamation obligations are \$244 million. Alpha's unbonded and unfunded reclamation liability of \$229 million, by itself, could completely wipe out the Special Reclamation Fund, leaving West Virginia with inadequate resources to cover the cost of reclamation at all Alpha sites, let alone any mines forfeited by other operators in the state. West Virginia agreed to this arrangement.

Patriot Coal is in a different sort of a mess. It owns many mines which discharge selenium and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. It has estimated that it would need to spend \$60 million to \$80 million in the next four years to install selenium treatment systems at its mines and an additional \$6 million to \$8 million annually to operate, maintain and monitor those systems.

Selenium problems are not limited to Patriot. According to Department of Natural Resources' records, there are more than four hundred mines where selenium must be treated. If these mines begin to fail, then that would also swamp the Special Reclamation Fund.

The situations of these two companies make it apparent, if it was not already, that West Virginia's bonding program is inadequate. The groups who filed the letter have asked that the Office of Surface Mining require West Virginia to fix its broken program.

Board Highlights

The winter Board meeting was the usual mix of the mundane business of the organization and the more interesting reports on issues we are working on.

We reviewed the year-end financial report and found no surprises, always a good thing. We approved a budget for 2016. We have a budget committee; it had met and done the really hard work. At the Board meeting we decided to increase our support for the lobbying efforts of the West Virginia Environmental Council. Even though that work is a small part of our budget, it is an important part and we wanted to support it.

We talked about the effort to publish a new edition of the Hiking Guide. Hugh Rogers, along with an ad hoc committee, is working with Alan DeHart. There are still several questions to consider, including whether to use color pictures. The commit is leaning in the direction of color pictures and is soliciting pictures to include.

We also heard an update on the refurbished web site. Because of webmaster Jim Solley's ill health and later death, our web site had fallen into disrepair. Now Dan Radamacher is working to whip it into shape. He projected sample pages from the website. Several people made suggestions of people to contact for additional photos that can be used on the site. A plethora of questions and suggestions made for a lively discussion as Dan demonstrated capabilities of the new format. Some of the important suggestions were.

-- The Highlands Voice needs to be front and center with links via thumbnail and the possibility of opening it in another screen. Dan and Voice Editor John McFerrin will work on ways to make it more accessible and searchable by topic and issue.

-- Emphatic support for getting the new site operational and available even in reduced form in the next couple of weeks and continue working on fleshing out details and information for rollout later in the year.

-- Committee heads to be contacted about issues being worked on with links to reports or another website or two of partner organizations where our issues are also being described, etc.... (e.g. Red spruce

project with link to CASRI sites, wind work with link to AHA, mining with link to APPALMAD, etc.) In the future additional pages and issues can be added as committees settle on narrative for various issues (e.g. Under mining: longwall issues, AMD, etc....)

-- The 50th Anniversary in 2017 should be highlighted on the website in particular and on any other paraphernalia and brochures to be printed. We don't know the date of the celebration but we are leaning toward the fall in Canaan Valley.

-- A picture of the goods available through the store should be on the website.

With the business out of the way, we moved on to discussion of issues. Rick Webb reported on the activities of the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition. This included a presentation about the Environmental Mapping Project where the route of the proposed pipeline is shown along with environmental resources along the route. (See story, p. 3) The product of the Mapping Project is available on the Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition website. (pipelineupdate.com)

In non-website outreach matters, Cindy Ellis reported on: booth at WV Environmental Council E-Day at the Capitol, information send to WVU journalism student, MTR resources to child of member, photos of kids in our shirts to T-graphics, and of course maintaining robust presence on Twitter and Facebook.

Our preferred date for the 50th Anniversary Celebration is late September 2017. Marilyn and Jackie are to check with facilities in Canaan Valley for best date, with minimum conflicts (leaf peepers, bird counts, etc., etc.). The Anniversary committee will meet early in March. (March 7th or so).

Frank Young, with help from Don Garvin, updated the Board on matters legislative. Sponsors for the Exempt Wholesale Generator Bill (proposed improved siting rule for construction and operation of some electrical power facilities, including wind facilities) are lining up and we hope the bill should be introduced soon. The Health Impact of Rules Bill would require Department of Health and Human Resources to do at least a literature

search of real and potential health impacts of air and water rules proposed by West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Other associated groups like Energy Efficient West Virginia are taking the lead in LEEP (Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships),

In matters of extractive industries, Cindy Ellis reported on a meeting of about 30 organizations working on gas drilling, fracking and pipeline issues at Jackson's Mill. Beth Little alerted us to a relatively new issue that is a growing source of concern: gas storage fields that are 50-60 years old underlying some 5,000 acres in the Mon Forest (Story, p. 8).

Cindy Ellis reported on a meeting sponsored by Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition where the newest pipeline, the Columbia Gas Mountaineer Xpress line that will run southwest from Marshall County to Putnam and Cabell was talked about. Cindy also reported on the growing concern about development of the Rogersville Shale in the south western corner of the West Virginia.

Cindy Rank reminded all of the various ongoing legal actions to hold accountable coal companies and land owners discharging pollution from current and past mine sites.

Beth Baldwin told of the damage being inflicted by the Leer longwall mine east of Tygart Lake and just outside of Grafton. Some have already suffered damage to their homes and loss of water; the Baldwin farm, pond, home and barn will be undermined in February and the prognosis for extensive damage is bleak. (Story, p. 15) Cindy Rank added that current law requiring "repair and replacement" was written to address subsidence from conventional room and pillar mining and nowhere nearly addresses the "planned" and complete subsidence caused by the newer mining technique of longwall mining.

The Young (and young at heart) family won the door prize, beeswax candles made in West Virginia by some of our favorite pollinators.

Longwall Mining's Long-lasting Impact

By Cindy Rank

With all the news about coal industry bankruptcies, the so-called "war on coal", cheap gas glutting the market, and the Obama Administration and its Environmental Protection Agency's so-called over-reaching "regulatory assault" on the industry, I shouldn't find it surprising that several friends and acquaintances have asked if there is still coal mining in West Virginia.

Say WHAAAAT... ?!

While it is true that coal production is down (e.g. 181 million tons in the heyday of 1997 compared to the 116 million tons reported for 2014), the hard scrabble fact is that coal mining is still going on. And where coal mining is being done, yes some folks are still employed in the mines, but citizens and communities where that mining is going on are also still feeling the sting of it in their lives and health. And the water resources of the state are feeling it as well.

Even though most of the draglines are gone and mountaintop removal per se is no longer being permitted big time, extensions to existing permits are being granted, and new permits continue to be granted for very large strip mines in southern West Virginia. We know selenium pollution and ionic stressors are harming headwater streams below valley fills at the big mountaintop removal strip jobs. And you need only to ask the folks in Whitesville or Dorothy or Prenter or any number of other southern West Virginia towns if their health issues have been addressed.

The greatest amount of coal is now coming from the underground mines in northern West Virginia and the emphasis is once again focused on Northern West Virginia. [Must be cyclical since in 1973 we were told the coal in southern WV had been depleted/mined out ---- Seems our sources were unaware of the machines and engineering that would bring about mountaintop removal !] Serious attention must be given to the hundreds if not thousands of miles of legacy acid mine drainage impacted streams and to the less flamboyant but equally devastating impacts of underground mining – especially longwall mining.

Longwall mining is a form of underground coal mining that allows industry to mine massive blocks of coal more efficiently and with fewer miners than

previous mining methods. Once done with pick and shovel and mules, underground coal mining progressed to using machines that could extract more coal at a faster rate of production. Until the past 50 years or so much of that conventional mining was room and pillar mining that left large pillars of coal in the ground to support the surface and protect homes above. Subsidence was always a possibility as the remaining pillars of coal would deteriorate, but it was often delayed for decades if it happened at all.

In a quest to extract a greater percentage of the underground coal, companies began shaving off and even taking out the supporting pillars as the miners 'retreated' to the surface. Over the years, technology advanced to the point where today companies that can afford the initial investment in equipment are able to extract entire blocks of coal 1,000 – 1,500 feet wide and a mile or two long. Removing such large blocks of coal 5 or 6 feet high with no support left to hold up the surface results in what the industry refers to as "planned subsidence".

Promoted as a more predictable, more controlled, and more quickly finished type of subsidence the actual experience is often far more severe to landowners and freshwater streams and wells as the subsided ground continues to move and settle for months - if not years according to some landowners. Homes and outbuildings on the edge of the longwall panel suffer the most damage, but structures in the middle of the panel will drop several feet and foundations and chimneys are permanently damaged. Streams and wells are often lost or depleted; springs may disappear from one property and reappear elsewhere or not at all.

Longwall mining is done throughout state of West Virginia and accounts for a large percentage of the coal produced in the state in any given year.

According to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's latest 2015 Annual Evaluation Report for West Virginia, our state led the nation in underground coal production in 2014. "Twenty three percent of the Nation's underground coal production comes from West Virginia. Underground mines produce approximately 75 percent of the State's total coal production. ... With twelve longwall

mines operating in the State, West Virginia had more longwall mining operations than any other State in 2014. ... **Longwall mining operations accounted for 57.9 percent of the State's underground coal production and 43.6 percent of the State's total coal production in 2014.**

... Longwall mining has become the predominate method of underground coal production in West Virginia and the Nation."

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy works with members who live over the 6,000 acre LEER Longwall Mine to the east of Tygart Lake, Dam and State Park near Grafton, WV. When Arch Coal/Tygart Valley Coal initially applied for their permits the Taylor County community group TEAM protested the permit because of its proximity to the Tygart Lake and Dam, the potential for subsidence damage to their homes and farms and water supplies, and because of the potential for long term pollution from the slurry impoundment and from water that will fill the mined out area once mining is completed. Unsuccessful in their initial challenges TEAM continues to monitor the mining operations that are now taking place and they comment on permits for expansions and other actions by the company.

We have accompanied TEAM and others on site visits to the operations, attended informational meetings with the company and WVDEP, commented on proposed permit changes, successfully having one ventilation shaft moved further away from the Lake, State Park, and locally owned summer resort community. We work with and have engaged the Morgantown consulting group Downstream Strategies to conduct water testing with TEAM. We cooperate with the local watershed group Save the Tygart, and have provided local citizens with informational material.

Already subsidence has damaged homes, depleted several ponds and springs, and drainage from the slurry cell is impacting at least one stream in the area. And Arch Coal also has permits for two additional mines on the west side of Tygart Lake, so it's going to be a long haul.

[One personal heart rending story of a family living over the LEER Longwall Mine appears elsewhere in this edition of *the Highlands Voice*.]

Longwall Mining: One Family's Story

By Beth Baldwin and family, Taylor Environmental Advocacy Membership

As Leer mine rips through Taylor County one family farm falls to giant coal. The Baldwin farm has fought long and hard to prevent this day from coming, the day when the mine reach their beloved family paradise. But the day has come that they can no long hold back the long wall of destruction.

For more than eight years the family has reviewed every community mine permit, requested every public hearing, joined community organizations and argued all the reasons why mining companies are not the answer to rape the mountains of their coal souls. The family was even were ready to sell all they had in their home to move, so as not to witness the devastation plaguing their lands. But even that rug was pulled from under their feet with the recent bankruptcy filing by Arch Coal in January, 2016.

This once beautiful lake community has begun to sink into deep despair that long wall mining brings. State official will say coal is a job creator and Senators will claim the EPA reaches

too far in a war on coal. But in reality coal is where God placed it, deep in the vein of the mountains . Why, we ask, is ripping the vessels from the very body of earth for personal profit a good idea?

Furthermore, benefits for the community are lost in damage of infrastructure, water, roads and septic. Property taxes decline from once pristine property. The profit is not to the coal miners who could work in clean energy jobs or eco-friendly fishing, hunting and tourism by this lake side community. The profit is to the coal barons that are not even part

of our community and that claim bonuses of millions of dollars as their company falls deeply into bankruptcy debt while they cut the pay and benefit from the miners as well as funds to repair, prevent and protect West Virginians' homes.



The Baldwin Farm

In 2000 we purchased a beautiful farm in Taylor County WV so that my husband and sons would have a place to get away and hunt. Although I thought the property was very pretty and close to Tygart Lake, I never dreamed it would become the center of my family home.

But in 2005 we indeed decided we loved the farm so much that we would sell our Morgantown home and build on our beloved farm. We would move to Taylor County, the community that took our family into it warm embrace.

We began building our dream home. But as soon as we had the foundation completed we were told that a mine would be moving through the area and our new home would be in jeopardy.

I was in disbelief that a company would be allowed to come in and destroy property that we had worked so hard to build and improve.

I reach out to everyone I could find that would listen. I begged and pleaded for someone, anyone to stop this nightmare from taking our family's dreams.

When they came to us in November of 2015 and finally made an offer to buy us out, I convinced my husband that we could not stay and continue to allow this to destroy our health and minds. We began looking for a new WV home. In January of 2016 the mine filed bankruptcy. We were told not to worry, that the buy out could still go ahead.

We could not accept the buy out until we found a place to move. On February 2, 2016, we told Leer we had found a new farm and would accept their offer. O February 4, 2016 we were told it was too late.

This was another crushing blow. We are trapped here as the mind numbing destruction begins. The mine has forced its way onto our property and started to drain our beautiful, fish stocked wild life pond. Our house is shifting, as is the very ground under our feet.

The rights of the land owner against king coal are non existent in WV and we are living proof.

My wish is that sharing this story of destruction will save some family this torment and things will change.

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- ▶ Soft pima cotton adult polo shirts are a handsome earthtone light brown and feature the spruce tree logo. Sizes S-XL [Shirts run large for stated size.] \$ 25.00, 2XL \$26.50

To order by mail [WV residents add 6 % sales tax] make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Online Store, PO Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306

The same items are also available at our on-line store: www.wvhighlands.org

T- SHIRTS

White, heavy cotton T-shirts with the **I ♥ Mountains** slogan on the front. The lettering is blue and the heart is red. "West Virginia Highlands Conservancy" in smaller blue letters is included below the slogan. Short sleeve in sizes: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Long sleeve in sizes S, M, L, and XL. **Short sleeve** model is \$18 by mail; **long sleeve** is \$22. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax. Send sizes wanted and check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
ATTEN: Online Store, WVHC, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306.



HATS FOR SALE

We have West Virginia Highlands Conservancy baseball style caps for sale as well as I ♥ Mountains caps.

The WVHC cap is beige with green woven into the twill and the pre-curved visor is light green. The front of the cap has West Virginia Highlands Conservancy logo and the words West Virginia Highlands Conservancy on the front and I (heart) Mountains on the back. It is soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure.

The I ♥ Mountains The colors are stone, black and red.. The front of the cap has ♥ MOUNTAINS. The heart is red. The red and black hats are soft twill, unstructured, low profile, sewn eyelets, cloth strap with tri-glide buckle closure. The stone has a stiff front crown with a velcro strap on the back. All hats have West Virginia Highlands Conservancy printed on the back. Cost is \$20 by mail. West Virginia residents add 6% tax. Make check payable to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and send to West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Atten: Online Store, P.O. Box 306, Charleston, WV 25321-0306