The Appalachian Voice

December 2013/January 2014

FREE

27 Visionaries
Creating the Change They Want To See

Artists
Scientists
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Writers
Students
Educators
Leaders
Activists
Collaborators
Business Owners
Ecologists
Concerned Citizens

ALSO INSIDE: A Nutty Acorn Year • Carbon Rule Controversy • Appalachian Trailbuilding
Investigation Finds Fraud in Black Lung Cases

By Kimber Ray

A year-long investigation revealed evidence on Oct. 30 that the coal industry has engaged in fraudulent practices in order to block workers’ compensation claims for black lung disease. This joint investigation, conducted by the Center for Public Integrity and ABC News, noted the coal industry’s go-law firm Jackson Kelly has repeatedly withheld key evidence in court while, Johns Hopkins University, and former OSHA Black Lung Program consultant Dr. Paul Wheeler—the head of the government’s black lung department—ap- shared that Jackson Kelly is “on a mission” to abet from diagnosing miners with black lung disease.

The disease is an irreversible one, often fatal condition caused by prolonged exposure to coal dust. In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control wrote that, “The prevalence of black lung disease has doubled since 1995, contributing to over 8,000 cases per year.” The government has established only through autopsy. For decades, the Jackson Kelly law firm has worked to block miners’ efforts to join the world’s longest-running citizen science movement, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The disease is a recent phenomenon.

The Voice

Please help us protect our mountains. Join Appalachian Voices today.

Environmental News From Around the Region

Investigation Finds Fraud in Black Lung Cases

Appalachian Voices

Conservation Lobby Day

“Home Sweet Home” Art Show

Pipetown State Park Christmas Band Count

Winter Adventure Weekend

Annual Reelfoot Lake Eagle Festival

Fracking Possible in George Washington National Forest

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**Contaminated Groundwater at TVA Coal Plants**

By Kimber Ray

Nearly five years after the Kingston Fossil Plant coal ash spill unleashed over 2 billion gallons of sludge in Roane County, Tenn., a new report shows that the Tennessee Valley Authority’s mismanagement of coal ash waste has been ongoing for decades, resulting in groundwater contamination at all 11 TVA coal-fired power plants in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama.

The report was released Oct. 7 by the Environmental Integrity Project, a nonprofit organization established by former enforcement attorneys for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Coal ash is a byproduct of burning coal, which is then stored in ponds near the power plant. Contaminants identified at the TVA sites by the report include arsenic, boron, cadmium, manganese, and sulfate, all of which are linked to coal ash contamination. The potential for negative health effects includes neurological damage, heart disease, and cancer.

Through Freedom of Information Act requests, the EIP was able to obtain the TVA’s well monitoring data used for the report. However, the EIP believes this data only begins to touch on the full scope of contamination.

The EIP notes that although the TVA has an extensive network of monitoring wells, the utility fails to regularly test for the pollutants most strongly associated with coal ash. If evidence of contamination becomes apparent despite negligent testing, the TVA has frequently responded by halting data collection.

The TVA released a statement on Nov. 7 outlining efforts to prevent coal ash contamination, but did not directly dispute the report. There are currently no plans to remediate any of the sites.

According to the Chattanooga Times Free Press, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation spokeswoman Kelly Brockman said on Nov. 7 that the department is still evaluating the report. Although the state has rarely held the TVA accountable for groundwater contamination, pending regulations from the EPA may increase protections. On Oct. 29 a federal court sided with public interest groups including Appalachian Voices, the publisher of The Appalachian Voice, and, after four years of delays, the EPA was given 60 days to set a final deadline for submission of its coal ash rules.

**West Virginia National Heritage Areas Proposed**

By Kimber Ray

Legislation to support National Heritage Areas in West Virginia and western Maryland was introduced to Congress on Nov. 4 by Sen. Joe Rockefeller, D-W.Va. The bill would seek funding for the Coal and Wheeling National Heritage Areas — both in West Virginia — and enact a NHA designation for the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, which spans into two Maryland counties.

Congress designates these areas in order to preserve unique resources and landscapes through a public-private partnership. Although National Heritage Areas are not federal lands, the National Park Service provides an amount of technical, planning, and financial support.

In a press release, Rockefeller emphasized the importance of the proposal. “Tourism is such an important part of West Virginia’s economy, creating jobs and enriching people’s lives,” Rockefeller said. “These historic, cultural and natural treasures need to be preserved for future generations of West Virginians.”

The bill is currently under review by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

**Polluted Asheville Well Fans Debate**

By Kimber Ray

In an unprecedented decision, North Carolina officials on Oct. 22 ordered Duke Energy Progress to provide alternative drinking water to a residence near Asheville after testing revealed that the home’s private well was contaminated with heavy metals. Although the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources has previously held Duke accountable for groundwater contamination, this case marks the first time that the utility has been held liable for drinking water issues.

According to Ben Bradford from public radio station WFAE, Duke claims the Asheville well case demonstrates that the state isn’t going easy on them in prosecuting coal ash contamination. In a separate case, citizens and environmental groups in August submitted more than 5,000 public comments expressing the opinion that the state environmental agency is too lenient with Duke in prosecuting coal ash pollution.

**Geared up for the High Country Bike Plan**

By Meredith Warfield

Long-term plans are underway to establish new cycling routes in the seven mountain counties of northwestern North Carolina. The High Country Council of Governments — a regional development agency — initially proposed the High Country Regional Bike Plan in July 2011. Public comments on the plan were taken in October, with final approval pending a vote from each county.

The plan calls for bicycle lanes to be added whenever highway improvements such as widening or resurfacing are scheduled, and also seeks to improve education on bicycle safety and traffic laws.

Celebrating an Old-Fashioned Christmas

Cinnamon, pine, laughter, and the faint sound of jingle bells fill the air. Inside, the warm glow & magic of the holidays welcome shoppers to Mast Store. Gifts of every kind line the shelves and shopkeepers help guests find treasures just perfect for their loved ones. Experience the wonder of Christmases past.
seem to get away.

Appalachian Trail, a footpath — and a September sky disappeared behind the steering wheel, watching as the late trail repairers — member hiking clubs had discovered a hidden ecosystem of weeks with the Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew and the Konnarock Trail Crew and three A.T. After one week in Virginia with

Leaving I-40 South near Newport, and desire to learn about trail building. basecamp. I was reminded of one of the tools and supplies up to the work site in and North Carolina work together to get Back trian use. The trail conservancy and the profit founded in the 1920s to oversee Appalachian Trail Conservancy, a non-

By Davis Wax

The three tiers of trail maintenance: ero -volunteer horsemen fasten the panniers for their journey. Seeing the horses come up the pedestrian anxiety.

or maybe you recall skating along the street, you're familiar with acorns, more round and plump, yet they all sport a similar toupee-like casing. If you've been popped on the head by one nut that then got skipped-down the street, you're familiar with acorns. But do acorns cause more pedestrian anxiety?

acorns are often referred to as a "keystone species of the forest" because of the critical role they play in ecosystem dynamics. Rodents feed heavily on acorns and, in turn, predators such as foxes and hawks are attracted to the area. A drop or increase in the number of acorns will lead to fewer gypsy moths and more acorns come more mice. And more mice lead to fewer gypsy moths and fewer gypsy moths equates to more oaks. In essence, larger acorn crops support large mouse populations and should mature oak trees from the troubles by destructive gypsy moth outbreaks. The moral is: omnivorous in the northeastern United States and in parts of North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, and could endanger further south and west, which would put more trees at risk of defoliation. Day and black bears depend on acorns too. In fact, if a pregnant black bear doesn't consume enough acorns in the fall, her baby is likely to be killed, develop, and if her cubs are born, she won't be able to make enough milk to feed them. And don't forget the oaks themselves. "Of course, acorns are the Forest's Bread and Butter," says USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station's Dr. Katie Gavina. This year, however, the Northern Research Station found only 6 percent of white oaks and 65 percent in red oaks, showed 58 percent tree top coverage in red oaks boasted a slightly higher count at 8 percent. In 2012, the same surveys showed 56 percent tree top coverage in white oaks and 65 percent in red oaks, dwarfing this fall's numbers. So what's with the switch in acorns? Were their heads in a cloud during reproductive season? Not exactly, though clouds might have had some influence. "This year [the acorn shortage] could be because we've had so much rain in the spring and end of the summer," says Gavina.

With this year's acorn mast being low, you might be tempted to leave some food for your deer and black bears depend on acorns too. In fact, if a pregnant black bear doesn't consume enough acorns in the fall, her baby is likely to be killed, develop, and if her cubs are born, she won't be able to make enough milk to feed them. And don't forget the oaks themselves. "Of course, acorns are the Forest's Bread and Butter," says USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station's Dr. Katie Gavina. This year, however, the Northern Research Station found only 6 percent of white oaks and 65 percent in red oaks, showed 58 percent tree top coverage in red oaks boasted a slightly higher count at 8 percent. In 2012, the same surveys showed 56 percent tree top coverage in white oaks and 65 percent in red oaks, dwarfing this fall's numbers. So what's with the switch in acorns? Were their heads in a cloud during reproductive season? Not exactly, though clouds might have had some influence. "This year [the acorn shortage] could be because we've had so much rain in the spring and end of the summer," says Gavina.

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Think of regional visionaries and leaders. Appalachian Voices, the non-profit organization that publishes the Appalachian Voice, it’s impossible to think of this region without considering one of our own — Senior Campaign Advisor Lenny Kohm. His journey into environmental activism began on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and Canada in 1987. Kohm had arrived in the region to help with the construction and green building of a sustainable development grant that would fund bicycle “Fix-it Stations” in the community, an initiative to help communities become better at grassroots organizing. Everyone is passionate about something, Kohm says; the role of professional organizers is to provide people with the tools they need to nurture that passion.

Kohm sees the current fights for environmental and social justice as episodes in a perpetual vigil to achieve perfection, but we can get a lot closer than we are now, he says.

By Lenny Nycz

For Virginia Tech student Nneka Sobers, environmental activism is something she has a passion for — it is an interest that empowers her to promote positive change wherever she goes. Sobers became involved with her university’s Student Environmental Coalition early in her college career, eventually becoming a liaison for the student environmental interests when she joined Appalachian Voices as a part of her final-year project.

Sobers contributed to a successful campaign to save more than 400 acres of old-growth forest on Virginia Tech property from clearcutting, and co-authored a proposal for the university bike-sharing program, as well as a new policy that would restrict and abandon bicycle facilities around campus, giving students free transportation around Blacksburg.

In 1978, student Doug Estep was working on a master’s degree in public library science when he came across a newspaper headline describing the 1920 Matewan shootout — a violent episode in the history of the United States. Estep was interested in learning more about that day, so he went to Matewan to learn more.

“Maybe the work I did moved the needle just a little amount,” he says. “You help the continuation of that tradition,” he says.

By Michele Moore

Considerate Consulting: Andrew Grigsby’s Vision of Sustainability

By Brian Smulov

Andrew Grigsby is a leading sustainability consultant with more than 25 years of experience in the residential construction and green building. But ask him what motivates his work to foster a more sustainable future, and he’ll likely go back to his upbringing in Caldwell, Va.

“It’s just how I was raised, to be thrifty and to be considerate,” Grigsby says.

“Some would see a separation — being thrifty and being environmentally conscious — but I see it more as social justice or environmental issues with the tools they need to nurture that passion. Kohm shares with others through his company, Considerate Consulting: Andrew Grigsby’s Vision of Sustainability.

By Rachel Ellen Simon

For the vast majority of his nearly 47 years, W. Va. Sen. Ron Stout has been one of the mountains’ strongest advocates. A Democrat from West Virginia, Ken Hechler served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 18 straight years, beginning in 1965. During this time, Hechler championed the abolition of strip mining and fought for more stringent environmental regulations for the state’s coal industry.

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Staying Solutions in Harlan County

By RalphElliot Simons

The old adage holds that it takes a village to raise a child. But in Harlan County, Ky., the community has come together to raise more than that, including: theater sets, awareness and, ultimately, spirits.

A series of participatory community theater projects, “Higher Ground” involves 200 Harlan County locals as actors and musicians, working with the community on rural sustainability issues. The original performances confront difficult issues facing coalfield citizens today, as well as celebrate the strengths of the region and its people.

Produced by Robert Gipe, director of the Appalachian Program at Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College, the projects are a result of the center’s “Higher Ground” launched in 2005.

Only God Should Move Mountains

By Nielen Nyckel

For Reverend Ryan Bennett, creation is about more than battling environmental responsibility through the Biblical principles of stewardship. At Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Richmond, Tenn., Bennett uses the philosophy “love the Creation, love His creation,” to discuss the looming threat of mountaintop removal, environmental impacts as well as the current mining interests amongst younger age groups — in supporting green initiatives.

In a recent letter to the Ten- nessee Linoleum Environmental Ap- palachia Fellowship, a faith-based group that charitably distributes educational creation care materials to rural communities, and advocates for political action towards reducing environmental removal. For the past several years, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, the community is asking to reduce the impact on the environment. In his recent writing project on coal mining, Bennett has sought to share his message through the lens of Appalachia.

Bennett hopes that through the lens of Appalachia, the message may be more acceptable to a younger audience.
Nathan Hall was born in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. He grew up surrounded by lush hardwood forests, coal streams and burned moonscapes—the latter courtesy of mountaintop removal coal mining. "It was all around me, in every direction from the house where I grew up within a mile or two," he says. A former undernourished miner and native son of the region, Hall is now passionate about developing solutions to polluted damaged lands and create a more sustainable future for the Appalachian coalfields.

Hall's perception of his home region has changed greatly over the years. Growing up in a place where mountaintop removal was "just a part of the landscape," he once thought of eastern Kentucky as barren moonscapes — the latter courtesy of environmental degradation. "I didn't really think the pollution could hurt us," he says. "It didn't seem like it was a problem to me."

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Returning to the mountains, Hall took on a project to preserve an old farmstead by paying a little more on monthly utility bills, and through continuing to provide affordable energy to their members. "We believe there's a decision to be found here," Couick says. "We're using this as a pilot opportunity on how to market solar."}

Innovating with Electric Cooperatives

Mike Couick, right, poses with a WWE superstar during an event at the WWE Performance Center in Nashville. WWE is one of the many companies that Couick has worked with to inform him of everything that's going on in his industry.}

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Nathan Hall writes to return some soil he was planting in Floyd County, Ky. Photo by Melinda Deloney

Recapturing Appalachia’s Land and Future

By Sarah Kellogg

Seventh grader Anna Belbeko loves to swim in Mountain Island Lake, but two years ago, she learned about the water pollution caused by Duke Energy’s Riverbend coal-fired power plant and began to worry about the impact on her friends’ health, her parents’ health and the health of children’s health. So, for a sixth grade science project, Belbeko tested the anes- ric areas, or coastal areas, whereas in the actual river and hopefully employ as many people as possible of both. While renewable energy and remediation projects were happening more up land in Appalachia that has planted over one million native hardwood trees since its planting in 2014, Behnke worries about how the company will clean up the unlined coal ash ponds which store over 3 million gallons of toxic coal ash and discharge directly into Mountain Island Lake, the drinking water source for one million, and 20 percent by 2020. When it comes to meet- ing the goals of the three-year, fifty megawatt South Carolina, an association of member-owned, non-profit electric providers that created Help My House, a program that prepares at-risk young adults for higher education institutions for further education. SEEDS also seeks to improve access to healthier foods and energy-efficient technologies in low-income neighborhoods.

Another nonprofit, the Knoxville Re- cycling Coalition, has worked for more environmentally sound waste management for over 20 years, offering public workshops and demonstrations about sustainable recycling methods. The coalition created — and still runs — Knoxville’s first multi-material recycling program. In 2011, the city followed suit by offering a single-stream, curbside recycling program for all residents.

Transportation

Partnerships with Oak Ridge National Laboratory, ECOTourism and Tools for Change have enabled Knoxville to electrify their public transportation system, which utilizes propane-powered buses and shuttles registered with particular states for their pollution reduction. Electric vehicle emission travel is incentivized by Smart Trips, an award-winning program where residents who switch to an electric vehicle can earn gift cards of up to $100 by logging how often they walk, bike, telecommute or use public transit.
In the remote coalfields of south- west Virginia, a collaborative grassroots project is taking on the challenge of balancing job creation and envi- ronmental conservation. The Clinch River Valley Initiative, conceived at an environmental conference in 2010, is an award-winning coalition of con- cerned citizens from local environmental and business groups, all dedicated to building creative economies around the Clinch River. What makes the initiative unique is the broad scope of the project, which draws together various interests in a logical embrace. Uniting behind a common love for the Clinch River Valley region and a shared vision of healthy, clean water, the initiative developed five interrelated goals to create an official River Valley Initiative, develops across private, public, and campgrounds around the river, enhances the water quality, provides recreation opportunities, and fosters downtown development. Each goal is represented by stakeholders who address that branch of the project through a team action group.

According to Carol Des, co-chair of the River Valley Initiative, they have already made valuable progress with recruiting volunteers, clearing up abandoned drainages, helping households hazardous waste collection drives. Their efforts will be no greater permanence by the environmental awareness imparted by the downtown development program, which is in the process of moving into a new building in town.

New businesses — such as restau- rants and a riverfront hotel — have started to emerge in the area as a result of the initiative, and community meetings to discuss the project regularly attract nearly 100 people. The Clinch River Valley Initiative stands as an achievement of group success, show- ing the creative power of collaboration.

By Kimber Ray

Democracy Building Opportunity in West Asheville

In the mountains of Western North Carolina, the arts community is taking action to create a more just and equitable society. A new arts organization, The Asheville Center for Art and Collaborative Activism, is dedicated to bridging the gap between culture and sustainability.

“Just like we polluted a river, we are also polluting the earth,” says Fiona Davis, co-founder of the organization.

Davis, along with her husband and fellow artist Tom Davis, began working on the idea for The Asheville Center for Art and Collaborative Activism after attending a workshop on environmental justice.

They hope to use the arts to raise awareness about environmental issues and to inspire action among the public.

“Art can be a powerful tool for change,” says Davis.

At the center, artists will be able to create art with social justice themes.

By Terry Moore

Mental Health

By Rachel Ellen Simon

Post-traumatic stress disorder is most commonly associated with soldiers who served combat roles. Kate Cordial has expanded the scope of PTSD to include environmental trauma.

Cordial found similar symp- toms in the coalfields of Appalachia. Cordial received her doctorate in counseling psychology at Virginia’s Radford University, where she wrote her dissertation on the relationship between physical proximity to mountaintop removal mining and mental health and well-being of Appalachian communities.

Among area residents, Cordial found elevated rates of PTSD, anxiety and emotional distress related to the physical destruction suffered by mountaintop mining projects in the region.

Cordial has spearheaded efforts to connect the residents of this rural area with mental health services. She was named a National Institute of Mental Health Early Career Scientist by the American Psychological Association’s Division 25.

Cordial has been instrumental in connecting residents with mental health services.

By Kimber Ray

Small Town with Big Ideals

Johnny Cummings

For a small eastern Kentucky town, Vicco has been making big headlines. The driving force of this publicity is the town’s young, gay mayor, Wilma Steele.

Wilma Steele and her husband Terry at a Mountain Justice Summer activist gathering. Photo by Andrea Steele

Steele, a soon-to-be graduate of Virginia Tech, met Cummings in January 2013, this community of 1000 people, she was the first openly gay mayor in the United States to be elected in a traditional, non-conservative community.

Since being elected to office in 2012, Cummings has spearheaded efforts to make Vicco an example of what is possible.

“Vicco was on the brink of bankruptcy for nearly 20 years,” says Cummings.

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Anne George: Aquatic Activist

By Peter Recher

When Anna George was a child, she would ponder her mother to take her to zoos and aquariums. As she grew older, she began to appreciate the variety of aquatic environments—from the Deep Sea Life exhibit at the Alabama Aquarium to the Cayman Islands—and her incredible enthusiasm for animals developed into a passion for Appalachian freshwater fish.

As an undergraduate student, George was fascinated by the lakes, streams and rivers of the Mountain States and earned her B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of Washington. Visited by the diversity of freshwater environments—home to more than 25 percent of all vertebrates on land—George was drawn to protect a variety of life that she felt was “in peril and on the rise.”

George studies aquatic life in Appalachia in order to raise awareness about the ways humans can better protect these species’ habitats. She leads the Conservation Institute at Chattanooga’s Tennessee Aquarium, teaches biology at Sewanee: The University of the South, writes books about protecting these species’ habitats, runs summer youth programs and conducts field research. A self-described pro-business conservationist, George believes environmental protection should not be a political issue. “I can be pro-hunting or anti-poaching, I’m an outdoorsman because I’m an outdoorsman,” she says.

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Dr. Ben Stout, a stream ecologist and extremely unknown.”

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By Harrison Dreves

This fall, public listening sessions held by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency served as an opportunity to influence future rules to limit carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the centerpiece of President Obama’s Climate Action Plan.

Commenters submitted by citizens and stakeholders, and the large turnouts and media interest at the 11 listening sessions in cities including Atlanta, Chicago and Philadelphia, reflect the high level of public support and condemnation of the EPA.

On the day of the final listening session, a coalition of environmental groups held a press conference and marched with supporters to EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., where the session was held.

Since the scheduled cities were an announced Appalachian legislators and members of the media criticized the 155 for not scheduling listening sessions closer to Appalachia — a region crucial to the debate surrounding the administration’s plans to cut carbon.

On Nov. 7, the day of the final listening session, a coalition of environmental groups held a press conference and marched with supporters to EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., where the session was held.

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Tennessee Valley Authority Announces Major Coal Cutbacks

By Brian Sewell

After more than 50 years of supplying most of its power plants with coal, the Tennessee Valley Authority announced in late July that it will cut 1,300 megawatts of capacity at eight coal units in Kentucky and Alabama—a disproportionately small portion of its coal-based generation.

Citing market factors, declining demand, and stricter environmental rules, board members of TVA—the nation’s largest public power provider—said the curtailment will move the utility closer to its long-term goal of relying on coal for just 20 percent of its overall generation.

Under TVA’s plan, smaller power will be converted to natural gas and wind energy, and the coal-based units will be retired over the next 10 years. The decision did. The 20-year plan TVA announced in mid-August—known as the “Vision 2040”—sets aside a portion of severance tax revenue that will be “invested in the people of the Valley.”

Units planned for retirement include two of the three at the 50-year-old Paradise Fossil Plant in western Kentucky. Despite making significant investments to upgrade the plant’s pollution controls, the decision to shut it down is no surprise, said it is not in its raters’ best interest to keep the units running.

Those units will be replaced by a 1.6 billion natural gas plant, which TVA said will cost less than installing controls at the Paradise Units. “But air and stricter environmental standards will not adequately protect aquatic life, and will make it harder to meet future requirements to control mountaintop removal coal mining sites throughout eastern Kentucky.”

TVA is proposing all of the changes approved by the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection and the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection. These changes approval of the bill by the Senate—owing to its status on the Senate’s calendar—are likely to weaken the standards. The Clean Power Plan would set limits on their power generation and other states to weaken their own limits on “when we’ll begin to see the benefits of the plan.”

The idea for a future fund in West Virginia has caught on. What are your predictions?

Bechtler: “If history is any guide, you would want to target communities that are going to be hardest hit by the decline of coal production in West Virginia. Investing in early childhood education would be great. In investing in entrepreneurs in small terms of business and loans and grants would be too. But a lot of times, especially in West Virginia, it’s to provide basic infrastructure means including broadband access, water and sewer, and energy improvements that could eventually be funded.

What can West Virginia learn from other states with natural resource funds?

Bechtler: “You need to get a diverse group of community members, advocates and other stakeholders involved in the process and make sure that they see it as being their own, and not just 20 to 30 years down the road but fairly soon that they’ll begin to see the benefits of the plan.”

As Central Appalachian coal production declines, many realize the need to maximize the potential of assets that previously triggered engagement. It will now require fish tissue sampling, to verify that the new standard proposed by EPA does allow for more of the toxin than a standard proposed by the EPA in 2014 that followed a request after a group of the nation’s leading scientists cautioned that “There exists a reasonable possibility that at the 50-year-old Paradise Fossil Plant in western Kentucky. Despite making significant investments to upgrade the plant’s pollution controls, the decision to shut it down is no surprise, said it is not in its raters’ best interest to keep the units running. Those units will be replaced by a 1.6 billion natural gas plant, which TVA said will cost less than installing controls at the Paradise Units. “But air and stricter environmental standards will not adequately protect aquatic life, and will make it harder to meet future requirements to control mountaintop removal coal mining sites throughout eastern Kentucky.”

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Breaking the Resource Curse: Trust Funds Could Spur Economic Development

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What can West Virginia learn from other states with natural resource funds?...
Lost and Found: AV Teams Up With Photographer to Educate the Public

For the past 18 years, photographer Carl Galie has devoted his artistic talent to conservation work, and his latest exhibit is no exception. “Lost on the Road to Oblivion: The Vanishing Beauty of Coal Country” tackles the difficult and painful subject of the devastation wrought by the practice of mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia. The exhibition is designed to reveal the destruction wrought by the practice just prior to demolition of the beautiful places we stand to lose if the practice continues. The exhibit is on display at Appalachian State University’s Thurmond Center for the Visual Arts in Boone, N.C., through Feb. 7, 2014.

Today, the Dodges remain active supporters of Appalachian Voices, and even help to distribute issues of The Appalachian Voice in Washington, D.C. Although the Dodges plan to one day move to Colorado to be closer to their children, Lowell says he will always maintain a connection with the forests of Appalachia. Lowell Dodge is currently involved in researching old-growth tree species in the Pacific Northwest with a publication in the works.

About Our Work Program

Appalachian Voices is committed to protecting the land, air and water quality of the Appalachian region. Our mission is to protect our region’s rich natural and cultural heritage by providing tools and strategies for communities to achieve environmental justice.

OPERATIONS & DEVELOPMENT
Director of Development: Jonathan Hunter
Development Associate: Jessica Barba Brown

Century Media
Director of Communications: Colleen Galie

Member Services
Director of Membership Services: Ann League

Regional Programs
Director of Regional Programs: Kimberly A. Ray
Washington, D.C. Legislative Assistant: Shonna Brown
Policy Associate: Joy Okey

Environmental Law
Executive Director: J.W. Randolph
Deputy Director: Erika Chaney
Associate Director: Theresa Campbell
Senior Campaign Organizer: Galie Galie
Washington, D.C. Legislative Assistant: Susan McConnell

Clean Water Network
Director: Jonathan Hunter
Hydraulic Fracturing Associate: Rick Friends

Carolina Campaign Coordinator: Ann League
Senior Campaign Advisor: Meredith Warrfield

Directors of Regional Programs: Lisa Miller-Closson, Laura Bledsoe, Jessica Barba Brown

By Nicole Nishiy

When it comes to environmentalism, Lowell Dodge is a decorated veteran of more than half a dozen eco- centric organizations. While he calls Washington, D.C., home, for over 35 years Dodge and his wife Diane have spent weekends retreating to their rustic mountain home in Virginia’s Shenandoah region.

Dodge grew up in Connecticut, where he gained an early appreciation for the wilderness through scouting. Not long after earning his bachelor’s degree at Yale and a law degree from Harvard, Dodge was the editor-in-chief of the Environmental Law Reporter. A fledgling publication that has since become a premier resource for environ- mental law.

Dodge later became active in the Lure By Bebe project, where he learned about forestry research and studied tree mortality. Dodge headed the se- rious effort for a short time before helping to form the Trees for the Planet nonprofit, where he spent three years investigating mortality rates of old-growth forests at more than 40 Appalachian research locations. Through that research, Dodge published a report determining that acid rain was contributing to the weakening of forest.

Dodge first became involved with Appalachian Voices when he learned about the growing threat of mountaintop removal mining in the region. “Researching the health of forests was important to me,” Dodge says, “but when I realized the scale of destruction caused by mountaintop-removal prac- tices, I knew it was time to shift gears.” Dodge served as a board member for a time and was an early advocate in the campaign to end the practice.

Working with fellow Appalachian Voices then-board member Matthew Ayers, Dodge co-founded Coal River Mountain Watch, a nonprofit in southern West Virginia focused on informing at-risk communities about local mountaintop removal issues.

In affiliation with Habitat for Hu- manity, Dodge also provided as the ex- ecutive director for General/KME, Inc, a project designing environmentally friendly, affordable housing for low in- come families using recycled materials.

In addition to his environmental work, Dodge started an award win- ning nonprofit, First Time Computers, to help get more than 10,000 recycled computers into the hands of low-income families in the D.C. area.

Dodge doesn’t regret the con- sequences of his strong environmental convictions, including one occasion when he was taken into police custody alongside former West Virginia repre- sentative, Ken Hechler during a march against mountaintop removal.

Today, the Dodges remain active supporters of Appalachian Voices, and even help to distribute issues of The Appalachian Voice in Washington, D.C. Although the Dodges plan to one day move to Colorado to be closer to their children, Lowell says he will always maintain a connection with the forests of Appalachia. Lowell Dodge is currently involved in researching old-growth tree species in the Pacific Northwest with a publication in the works.

Hello and Goodbyes

Appalachian Voices is excited to extend new hellos to two new faces. Amy Adams joins our North Carolina Campaign Coordinator, focusing on coal-related water quality issues in that state. She worked for ten years in the N.C. Depart- ment of Environment and Natur- al Resources and has an educational background in biology and environ- mental science. Ann League, our new Carolina Campaign Coordinator, became involved in mountaintop-removal coal mining issues when a 2,200-acre mine was permitted near her home in Campbell County, Tenn. She spent several years as a community organizer with SOCMA (Statewide Organizing for Community, School, and workplace), and more.

Appalachian Voices is excited to extend a warm hello to two new faces. Amy Adams joins our North Carolina Campaign Coordinator, focusing on coal-related water quality issues in that state. She worked for ten years in the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and has an educational background in biology and environmental science. Ann League, our new Carolina Campaign Coordinator, became involved in mountaintop-removal coal mining issues when a 2,200-acre mine was permitted near her home in Campbell County, Tenn. She spent several years as a community organizer with SOCMA (Statewide Organizing for Community, School, and workplace), and more.

As temperatures dip, make sure your home is packed with the savings. To learn more about our Energy Savings for Appalachia program, visit appvoices.org/energysavings.

We’re here to provide you with the tools you need to make smart decisions about your forest and become a better steward of your land.

Today, the Dodges are a familiar face to those attending the event and more about mountaintop removal coal mining. Among the events planned is an even- ning with a resident from the region impacted by mountaintop removal, giving attendees a chance to talk with someone who deals with the issue on a personal level and ask questions about how their life is affected. Dates of the events are to-be-determined, so stay tuned to appalachianvoices.org and facebook.com/AppalachianVoices for details.

For more information about the exhibition, visit tcva.org.

A recent decision by the EPA will allow the state of Kentucky to weaken a critical water quality standard for selenium — and could have grave consequences for the safety of communities across the entire Appalachian region. Tell the EPA we need them to do their job and keep our water clean and safe.

To join our Business League, visit appvoices.org or call 877-APV-VOICE.
It’s Your Appalachia...

Join Appalachian Voices in our mission to defend Appalachia’s rich environment and natural beauty for your grandchildren to enjoy. Donate today.

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❑ Mountain Protector (monthly contributor) $_________/month ($10 minimum)

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Mail to: Appalachian Voices - 171 Grand Boulevard, Boone, NC 28607 - or call 828-262-1500

Prefer to give online? Visit > AppVoices.org/mountainprotector

Anticipating that songbirds such as this cardinal would flock to his birdfeeders ahead of a forecasted winter storm, Appalachian Voices member D Rex Miller captured this image from the warmth of his living room in North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains. View more of his work at drexmillerphotography.com. From all of us at Appalachian Voices, we wish you healthy and happy holidays and great start to 2014!